

‘Elite Women and the Change of  
Manners in Mid-Eighteenth-Century  
Scotland’

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**DECLARATION OF OWN WORK**

I declare that this thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted for any other degree.

Signed: Katharine E. Glover November 2006.

## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis examines the social and cultural roles and experiences of the women of the mid-eighteenth-century Scottish elite. It focuses predominantly, if not exclusively, on the women of lowland gentry families. Theirs was a society preoccupied with ideas of improvement, in which a perceived ‘change of manners’, incorporating new and diverse social roles for elite women, played a defining role as an indicator of progress. Yet until now, the lived experience of these women has remained relatively under-studied. Through archival research into both women’s and men’s correspondence, supplemented by accounts, bills, memoirs and other family papers, this thesis examines various aspects of elite women’s involvement in the society in which they lived. Commencing with girls’ education and upbringing, it then considers women’s reading and their relationship with various print genres. It investigates the impact of polite culture and the forms of sociability in which elite women’s participation was expected, and moves on to relate this to women’s involvement in other aspects of public life; in particular, in the machinations of politics. It ends with an analysis of women’s travels, both domestic and overseas.

In relating recent developments in eighteenth-century British women’s and gender history to the specific social context of the early Scottish Enlightenment, this thesis demonstrates that even the most well-known archives can provide insights into important fields of historical enquiry when re-examined in a new light. It argues for the importance of epistolary evidence and of studying individual experience. It adds weight to the arguments for a wide-ranging interpretation of Enlightenment culture which takes account of a female readership and audience, and contributes to scholarship which explores the complexities of regional and national variations on polite culture within Britain. Most importantly, it adds a Scottish dimension to the growing body of work which argues for the diversity of elite and specifically genteel women’s social roles in eighteenth-century Britain.

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Edinburgh, November 2006.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
<i>BJECS</i>	<i>British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies</i>
<i>BOEC</i>	<i>Book of the Old Edinburgh Club</i>
<i>ECL</i>	<i>Eighteenth-Century Life</i>
<i>ECS</i>	<i>Eighteenth-Century Studies</i>
<i>EUL</i>	Edinburgh University Library
<i>Fasti</i>	Hew Scott, <i>Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae: The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> edn.)
<i>GUL</i>	Glasgow University Library
<i>HJ</i>	<i>The Historical Journal</i>
<i>HLQ</i>	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
<i>HWJ</i>	<i>History Workshop Journal</i>
<i>NAS</i>	National Archives of Scotland
<i>NLS</i>	National Library of Scotland
<i>NRAS</i>	National Register of Archives (Scotland)
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (online edn., 2004)
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> (online edn.)
<i>OPR</i>	Old Parish Records
<i>P&amp;P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>SECC</i>	<i>Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture</i>
<i>SHS</i>	<i>Scottish History Society</i>
<i>SHR</i>	<i>Scottish Historical Review</i>
<i>STS</i>	<i>Scottish Text Society</i>
<i>TransRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>

## NOTE ON THE TEXT

Original spelling, punctuation and capitalisation have been retained in quotations throughout. The dates of letters (which have been standardised in form) are reproduced as given unless indicated otherwise.



## Introduction

### Overview

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, an elderly Scottish gentlewoman by the name of Elizabeth Mure attempted to fill what she saw as a gap in the recent historiography of her nation by composing for posterity ‘some remarks on the change of manners in my own time.1700-1790’.<sup>1</sup> In the eighteenth century, ‘manners’ did not simply imply the rules of courtesy. Samuel Johnson defined ‘*Manners* in the plural’ as ‘General way of life; morals; habits’<sup>2</sup>: ‘manners’ was an all-embracing concept which encompassed, in the words of Paul Langford, ‘social customs as they reflected the character of distinct cultures.’<sup>3</sup> Thus David Hume, in his essay ‘Of National Characters’, acknowledged ‘that each nation has a peculiar set of manners’.<sup>4</sup> Through this role of definition, helping to demarcate not just national and temporal social distinctions but those of rank, the concept of ‘manners’ achieved a totemic status in the conscience of individuals and the opinion-formers of the national community.

Eighteenth-century Scottish society was self-consciously obsessed with improvement, not just in its physical manifestations, but in the social interactions which contemporary thinkers believed lay at the heart of civilised society. Yet whilst progress could be difficult to achieve in terms of improving Scotland’s built environment or economy, a ‘change of manners’ was, perhaps, an easier transformation to set in motion. Central to this was fashionable ‘polite’ culture, which emphasised mixed-gender socialising. This created new avenues through which elite women could engage in and interact with society, and a new focus was directed on their social behaviour as a means of expressing Scotland’s place as a civilised nation. Yet whilst an extensive scholarship has developed around the

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Mure, ‘Some Remarks on the Change of Manners in my Own Time. 1700-1790’, in *Selections from the Family Papers Preserved at Caldwell*, ed. W. Mure, Maitland Club, 71 (Glasgow, 1854), vol.1.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755), vol.2.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Langford, ‘British Politeness and the Progress of Western Manners: An Eighteenth-Century Enigma’, *TransRHS*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser. 7, (1997), p.55.

<sup>4</sup> David Hume, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, 1995; 1<sup>st</sup> published 1741-1777), p.197. Similarly, Voltaire published his history of France under the title *Essai sur les Moeurs* (1756), see Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), p.6, n.4.

gender theories which, as a result of this, late-eighteenth-century Scotland produced in abundance, little interest has been expressed in the lived experience of the women of immediately preceding generations, who adopted and adapted this culture.

Using correspondence, supplemented by accounts, bills, memoirs and other family papers, this study uses the recorded thoughts and deeds of individual women to examine the changing social and cultural roles and experiences of the women of the mid-eighteenth-century Scottish elite. It does this through an analysis of the diverse ways in which the women of the mid-eighteenth-century Scottish elite engaged with the society around them, throughout the course of their lives and in a variety of contexts. It focuses largely, if not exclusively, on the gentry: particularly the minor landowning families, often with legal connections, who were at the heart of the management of post-Union Scottish society. Whilst aristocratic experience in this period was increasingly directed towards London, it was the gentry who pushed forward the new ideological agendas aimed towards the remodelling of Scotland in the aftermath of the Jacobite risings. Their concerns were parliamentary interest and agricultural and industrial improvement; their tea-tables were the haunt of the Enlightened literati; their desire was to create a modern Scotland as part of a Hanoverian British state. Whilst still inhabiting a world in which gentlewomen's practical responsibilities were expected, the women of these families participated in the greatly increased social life of the towns and the intellectual discussion of the Scottish Enlightenment, and enjoyed access to an increasing variety of print genres.

Influenced primarily by recent developments in British women's history, this study retains a consciousness throughout of the specific national context in which Scottish women were operating as a result of both historical and contemporary concerns. Thus, it provides a specific Scottish angle to scholarship which explores the complexities of regional and national variations on polite culture within Britain, and to that which argues for a wide-ranging interpretation of Enlightenment culture taking account of a female readership and audience. It thus provides new insights into both mid-eighteenth-century Scottish society, and to the experience of elite women in eighteenth-century Britain.

## Outline of Chapters

Broadly speaking, the chapters of this study progress in widening arcs through elite women's social experience, from the earliest education of young girls at their mothers' knee, to at the end of the final chapter, the overseas travel of one highly self-confident and opinionated gentlewoman.

The first chapter sets out the historical and historiographical contexts of the thesis, then provides a brief biographical overview of the families and individual women whose lives, as they can be pieced together through surviving documentation, form the basis of this thesis. (More detailed biographies are given in Appendix 1.) Given the prevalence of epistolary sources amongst this documentation, it examines the use of letters as a source, then ends with a brief overview of the life-course of an eighteenth-century Scottish gentlewoman.

The second chapter deals with women's education and upbringing. Focusing on a social interpretation of education as a preparation for the future roles an individual was expected to fulfil, it starts off by arguing that all education had in some way a 'practical' aim. It then examines what girls were taught, and why, before moving on to examine educational experience in a more holistic sense as the creation of a social being and as a form of prestige, illustrating this with a case study of a London boarding-school education. It ends by examining women's access to aspects of education beyond the conventions of what was deemed socially necessary, and asks what purpose this served in their lives.

The third chapter examines women's relationship with print culture and reading. It starts off by looking at women's access to print, then looks at women's reading practices, and attitudes thereto. Working through several genres read by women, it examines how they responded to their reading and how this helped to redefine their relationship to society. It moves on to consider women's participation in the production of print culture, in a case-study of one woman's contribution to one of the most important works of Scottish Enlightenment history. It ends by considering women's own use of the written word.

The fourth chapter examines the different ways in which women were active in polite society. It starts off by examining ideas surrounding tea-tables, gossip, and women's conversation, then considers the importance of women's language and

manners to polite status. It continues by looking at the practical workings of sociability in domestic and public settings, ending with a section on the theatre as a still-contested environment in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland. Throughout, it emphasises the role of performance in women's role in polite society.

Chapter five considers women's engagement in those areas of the 'public' with which women have tended to be less closely associated. It examines the ways in which women's family duties and responsibilities enmeshed them in the workings of patronage, thus granting them a degree of influence. It investigates women's participation in the maintenance of family electoral interest. All of this, it emphasises, was normal, but reactions towards women involved in the 1745 Jacobite rising demonstrate the fears that arose when women's political activity was deemed inappropriate. It ends by considering how women's inner spiritual world legitimised an autonomous involvement with the church, and, in turn, how this broadened out to enable them to feel part of a national public.

Chapter six deals with travel and mobility. From an exploration of the peripatetic nature of women's existence, and its links to the life-cycle, it moves on to examine the emerging popularity of spa resorts and both rural and urban tourism, asking how women used these to reconfirm or renegotiate their social position. All this contributed towards the expansion of women's mental horizons. It ends with a case-study of the ways in which women could use travel writing as a means of expressing opinions about home and abroad, and thus their perceptions of their relationship with the society in which they lived.

## 1. The Historical and Historiographical Background

### Introduction. Some 'remarks on the change of manners'

About the 40 riches began to inccress considerably. Many returned from the East and West Indias with good fortunes who had gone abroad after the Union. These picked up estates thro' the Country, and lived in a higher Style than the old Gentry. The rebellion in the 45 still more increased our riches. From this time the Country took a new form. Whether the dread of Arbitrary power disposed us for more liberty, or if another cause, I shall leave the more knowing to determine, but surely it had powerful effects on the manners. It was then that the slavery of the mind began to be spoken off; freedom was in every bodys mouth. The Fathers would use the Sons with such freedom that they should be their first friend; and the mothers would allow of no intimasies but with themselves. For their Girls the outmost care was taken that fear of no kind should inslave the mind; nurses were turned off who would tell the young of Witches and Ghosts. The old Ministers was ridiculed who preched up hell and damnation; the minds was to be influenced by gentle and generous motives alone.<sup>1</sup>

In her 'remarks on the change of manners in my own time. 1700-1790', Elizabeth Mure was in no doubt as to what was, to her, the importance of the mid-eighteenth century as a period in which Scotland reinvented itself as a new, improved country, emerging from the bloodshed of the years 1745-6 purged of its bellicose past redolent of arbitrary power and religious fanaticism. She depicted a country in which, through the imperial opportunities opened up by the Union of 1707, commerce was gaining supremacy over feudalism, liberty over factionalism, affection over fear, and politeness over the pulpit. She was in no doubt that she had lived through a period of substantial change, manifested in, as her title stated, a change of manners; that is to say, in the way in which men and women behaved and interacted with each other in society. Whilst purporting to shy away from the attribution of causes, she closely associated the 'new form' taken on by post-Culloden Scotland, with these new manners, and the emergence of this with the triumph of liberal ideas arising from a fear, and the subsequent conquest, of despotism. If but slowly, she believed Union had brought increased access to the

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Mure, 'Some Remarks on the Change of Manners in my Own Time. 1700-1790', in *Selections from the Family Papers Preserved at Caldwell*, ed. W. Mure, Maitland Club, 71 (Glasgow, 1854), vol.1, p.270.

wealth and opportunities of empire, encouraging a climate of conspicuous consumption which was to ruffle the feathers of the older, established gentry. For Mure, these perceived political and economic changes were inextricably linked with the change of manners which she was depicting.

As shall be seen, current historical scholarship would question some of Mure's chronologies and conclusions. Yet her work provides an insight into what those who had lived through the eighteenth century perceived to be the most striking transformations in Scottish society, reflecting as it does contemporary fascination with the causes and rapidity of social change.<sup>2</sup> She imputed the effects of this change into that most intimate sphere of society, the family, affecting children as well as adults, and, most importantly for this study, women as well as men. In the act of writing this memoir Mure most potently embodied the change in women's experience she sought to describe. She presented caveats to her suitability to be the author of such a work, emphasising how little time she had spent 'in the world', and noting that 'its only the men of genius' who could represent 'the good or ill consequences the changes may have on society.' She was careful to point out that she was writing 'for my own use.'<sup>3</sup> Yet this gentlewoman of rural, genteel background evidently believed in the significance of her own experience as symbolic of a wider 'change of manners'.<sup>4</sup>

To begin this study, which uses contemporary sources and modern scholarship to investigate this perceived 'change of manners' as it affected the women of the mid-eighteenth-century Scottish elite, this first chapter commences with a brief examination of the political, economic, social and cultural attitudes and changes which influenced their lives. It then considers the historiography of the eighteenth-century Scotswoman, and recent developments in that of women in eighteenth-century Britain. The next section explains the methodology, introduces

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<sup>2</sup> E.g., John Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland, drawn up from the communications of the ministers of the different parishes* (Edinburgh, 1791-9); Thomas Somerville, *My Own Life and Times 1741-1814*, with an Introduction by Richard B. Sher, (Bristol, 1996; 1<sup>st</sup> edn., 1861); John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alexander Allardyce, 2 vols., (Edinburgh, 1888).

<sup>3</sup> Mure, 'Change of Manners', p.259.

<sup>4</sup> Ramsay of Ochtertyre also believed his retired life enabled him to depict the 'minute revolutions in manners and sentiments which other historians think below their notice', quoted in B. L. H. Horn, 'Ramsay, John, of Ochtertyre (1736-1814)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65043>, accessed 27 Sep 2006].

the sources used, and gives brief biographical backgrounds to the families upon whom this thesis has been based. Since most of these sources were letters, it then considers the use of epistolary sources. The chapter ends with an overview of the life-course of the eighteenth-century Scottish gentlewoman.

### Mid-eighteenth-century Scottish Society: Enlightenment, Improvement and the Impact of Union

The agenda and thematic structure put forward by Mure above, depicting the eighteenth century as *the* century of progressive, ameliorative and liberalising change in Scottish history, was for a long time representative of mainstream attitudes towards eighteenth-century Scottish society, and has retained an influence on popular histories to the present day.<sup>5</sup> Yet most historians now stress the continuities between seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland, emphasising that the cultural developments of the mid-eighteenth century were not at odds with the Scottish past.<sup>6</sup> Whilst T. M. Devine recently argued that ‘To move from [the] Scotland of the 1690s to that of the middle decades of the eighteenth century is to enter a different world’, he emphasised the ways in which that mid-eighteenth-century world emerged as the natural product of its predecessor.<sup>7</sup> The 1707 Union need no longer be seen as the self-apparent herald of civilisation, the natural parent of the Scottish Enlightenment, or the door to improvement, yet its influence pervaded the cultural, intellectual, social and political worlds of eighteenth-century Scotland.

For Colin Kidd, it was practical rather than cultural concerns which shaped eighteenth-century attitudes towards the effects of Union.<sup>8</sup> By the 1740s, according

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<sup>5</sup> E.g., Henry Gray Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1900; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1899), 2 vols.; Marjorie Plant, *The Domestic Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1952). More recently, James Buchan, *Capital of the Mind: How Edinburgh Changed the World* (London, 2003) made strikingly similar claims, and the notion also underpins Arthur Herman, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots' Invention of the Modern World* (London, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> This tends to be most closely associated with the work of David Allan, especially *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment: Ideas of Scholarship in Early Modern History* (Edinburgh, 1993). For immediately pre-Union culture, see Hugh Ouston, ‘Cultural Life from the Restoration to the Union’, in Andrew Hook (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol.2, 1660-1800 (Aberdeen, 1987); also idem, ‘York in Edinburgh: James VII and the Patronage of Learning in Scotland, 1679-1688’, in John Dwyer, Roger A. Mason and Alexander Murdoch (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation: 1700-2000* (London, 1999), pp.65, 67-70.

<sup>8</sup> Colin Kidd, ‘Eighteenth-Century Scotland and the Three Unions’, in T. C. Smout (ed.), *Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1603 to 1900* (Oxford, 2005), p.171.

to Devine, Scots had seen little improvement in living standards, agricultural yields remained low, and ‘the predicted economic miracle was still an illusion’.<sup>9</sup> Christopher Whatley dated ‘the extraordinary “lift off” in Scottish economic fortunes’ to the 1740s and 1750s, yet acknowledged that the precise reasons for this remain uncertain.<sup>10</sup> If the hoped-for economic benefits of Union were slow to take hold, so too was any sense of cultural unity. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Scots were beginning to realise that, even if they loyally addressed their letters home to ‘North Britain’ rather than ‘Scotland’, ‘South Britain’ remained both nominally and ideologically ‘England’, even amongst Scots. After the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-6, the association of Scots with rebellion and despotism became commonplace in England, posing difficulties for those Whigs keen to take up the opportunities afforded by the Union and identify themselves more closely with the English. This Scottophobia, as it was termed, culminated during the premiership of Lord Bute in 1762-3, a Scottish Earl and British Prime Minister whom the radical John Wilkes famously and almost certainly unjustly parodied for his supposed affair with the King’s mother.<sup>11</sup>

Even prior to 1760, however, Scots were being parodied on the London stage,<sup>12</sup> and pro-British Scots were aware of the need to prove their British loyalties. Although, at a more popular level, even those who argue for a widespread dissemination of the idea of Britishness tend to locate it in the later-eighteenth century,<sup>13</sup> the political and intellectual circles surrounding the women on whom this

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<sup>9</sup> T. M. Devine, ‘The Modern Economy: Scotland and the Act of Union’, in T. M. Devine, C. H. Lee and G. C. Peden (eds.), *The Transformation of Scotland: The Economy Since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2005), p.27.

<sup>10</sup> Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism, towards Industrialisation* (Manchester, 2000), p.6.

<sup>11</sup> John Brewer, ‘The Misfortunes of Lord Bute: A Case Study in Eighteenth-Century Political Argument and Public Opinion’, *HJ*, 16:1 (1973), pp.3-43, esp. pp.19-22; Karl Wolfgang Schweizer, ‘Stuart, John, third earl of Bute (1713–1792)’, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26716>, accessed 9 June 2006].

<sup>12</sup> Paul Langford, ‘South Britons’ Reception of North Britons, 1707-1820’, in T. C. Smout (ed.), *Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1603 to 1900* (Oxford, 2005), pp.144-5.

<sup>13</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 1992) is widely recognised as having provoked the modern debate on the topic of Britishness. The late-eighteenth century is generally regarded as the period in which modern concepts of national identity emerge, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Modern Nationalism* (London 1983, rev. 1991), and E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, 1990 rev. 1992), although it should be stressed that feelings of national identity had existed in Scotland for centuries, see Dauvit Broun, R. J. Finlay and Michael Lynch (eds.), *Image and Identity: The Making and Re-making of Scotland Through the Ages* (Edinburgh,



study is based were already dealing with the need to integrate into a British political system, and to market their books towards a British public. Amongst some sections of Scottish Whig society, the idea of Britishness was promoted as ‘an umbrella of constitutional stability, personal liberty and commercial culture’,<sup>14</sup> associated not just with liberty, its habitual bed-fellow, but with all that was forward-looking and progressive. The need to deal with the problems inherent in being accepted as Britons provided a context for the construction of a practical framework in which individuals could demonstrate their commitment to the patriotic ideals of a modern, civilised nation.

Intermeshed with these concerns was a whiggish, self-conscious desire, evident in Mure’s memoir as in so many contemporary writings, for improvement. Described by John Dwyer as ‘a cultural imperative rather than a strictly factual observation’<sup>15</sup>, the ‘age of improvement’ was about far more than draining ditches, encouraging industries, or building roads. The men who sat on the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Fisheries and Manufactures or the Annexed Estates Commission saw these more practical manifestations of improvement as only one aspect of a wider social project.<sup>16</sup> For Dwyer, the meaning of improvement ‘rested in a critical way in the civic consciousness and discourse of those patriotic Scotsmen who linked economic advancement and polite learning with the creation of a stable modern polity.’<sup>17</sup> Although referring here to a slightly later period, the importance given to polite manners in this process of improvement was not confined to the later eighteenth century. In 1752, Sir Gilbert Elliot, second baronet (Later Lord Minto),

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1998), essays 1-6. Amongst work on Britishness in a Scottish context is that of Colin Kidd and Alexander Murdoch, see Kidd, ‘North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-century British Patriotisms’, *HJ*, 39:2 (1996), pp.361-382; Kidd, ‘The Ideological Significance of Robertson’s *History of Scotland*’ in Stewart J. Brown (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge, 1997); Kidd, ‘Integration: Patriotism and Nationalism’, in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth Century Britain* (2002); Alexander Murdoch, *British History 1660-1832: National Identity and Local Culture* (London, 1998); Alexander Murdoch, ‘Scotland and the Idea of Britain in the Eighteenth Century’, in T. M. Devine and J. R. Young (eds.), *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: New Perspectives* (East Linton, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Alexander Murdoch, ‘A Crucible for Change: Enlightenment in Britain’, in Martin Fitzpatrick, Peter Jones, Christa Knellwolf and Iain McCalman (eds.), *The Enlightenment World* (London and New York, 2004), p.113. See also Murdoch, *British History*, p.98.

<sup>15</sup> John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1987), p.2.

<sup>16</sup> For the Board of Trustees, see John Stuart Shaw, *The Management of Scottish Society* (Edinburgh, 1983), ch.6; and for the Annexed Estates Commission, Alexander Murdoch, *The People Above: Politics and Administration in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1980), pp.73-84.

<sup>17</sup> Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse*, pp.1-2.

put forward some *Proposals for carrying on certain public works in the City of Edinburgh*, to deal with the problems caused by overcrowding in this densely-populated, precariously high-rise conglomeration, in which all ranks of society were crowded together. He felt that the city still lagged far behind London as a centre of refinement, because ‘so many local prejudices, and narrow notions, inconsistent with polished manners and growing wealth, are still so obstinately retained’.<sup>18</sup> Elliot believed ‘a capital should naturally become the centre of trade and commerce, of learning and the arts, of politeness and refinement of every kind.’ Edinburgh needed to develop physically, commercially and culturally, he argued, for the good of all Scotland as a modern, that is to say, a commercial and civilised nation.<sup>19</sup>

In the mid-eighteenth century, the practical aspects of such improving agendas were often yet to travel from the realms of aspiration to those of reality, and it would be some decades before the New Town was actually built. Yet as Mure did in an historical context, Elliot’s plans neatly exemplify in an aspirational mode the ways in which as early as the 1750s, the attempt to achieve the ideals of civilisation and progress was believed to be vested in a concern for broad-spectrum social and cultural improvement which connected commerce with refinement, and dismissed the impolite as the provincial. It implied the requested support of the elite through all their activities and behaviour, social as well as economic, and from women as well as men. Central as these ideas were to be to what has become known as the Scottish Enlightenment,<sup>20</sup> it is in no way insignificant that they should have found their expression at the hands of a member of the legal profession and towards such practical ends as the physical amelioration of Edinburgh’s built environment. Whilst ‘improvement’ must be understood as ideological, so must the Scottish Enlightenment be understood as practical, rooted in the economic and social concerns of mid-eighteenth-century Scottish society.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> [Gilbert Elliot, Lord Minto] *Proposals for carrying on certain Public Works In the City of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1752), p.8. His name is not cited on the pamphlet but it is attributed to him by both the NLS and EUL.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>20</sup> Unlike ‘improvement’, which was a contemporary term in everyday use, the term ‘Scottish Enlightenment’ was only coined in 1900. Paul Wood, ‘Introduction: Dugald Stewart and the Invention of “the Scottish Enlightenment”’, in Wood (ed.), *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation* (Rochester, New York, 2000), p.1.

<sup>21</sup> Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707-1830*, p.12.

Recently described as ‘one of the greatest moments in the history of European culture’,<sup>22</sup> the Scottish Enlightenment is the term applied to the ‘extraordinary outburst of intellectual ability’<sup>23</sup> which took place over the mid-to-late eighteenth century. From the late 1750s there was an awareness amongst Scots that something quite extraordinary was happening in their society.<sup>24</sup> This outburst caught the attention of thinkers across Europe, even if Voltaire’s famous claim of 1762 that ‘It is from Scotland that we receive rules of taste in all the arts’<sup>25</sup> tended towards hyperbole. The Scottish Enlightenment has been, and remains, the subject of interpretations as wide-ranging as its interpreters,<sup>26</sup> but over the last few decades it has become more usual amongst Enlightenment scholars in general to move away from what Roy Porter has called the “‘great man, great minds, great books” bias’.<sup>27</sup> Richard Sher has recently pleaded for a broad understanding of the Scottish Enlightenment as extending to those ‘who read their [i.e., the literati’s] writings, attended their lectures, heard their sermons, and discussed or adopted their ideas and beliefs’.<sup>28</sup> It is in this light, as a phenomenon which saturated all aspects of polite, urban society, that the culture of the Scottish Enlightenment creates a context for this study. As Jane Rendall recently pointed out, women’s and gender historians have been prominent in promoting this re-conception of Enlightenment culture, which affords ‘opportunities for reassessing women’s relationship to enlightened sociability

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<sup>22</sup> Alexander Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Historical Age of the Historical Nation* (Edinburgh, 2001), p.5.

<sup>23</sup> David Daiches, ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’, in David Daiches, Peter Jones and Jean Jones (eds.), *The Scottish Enlightenment 1730-1790: A Hotbed of Genius* (Edinburgh, 1986, rev.1996), p.1.

<sup>24</sup> E.g., Alexander Wedderburn’s famous letter to Gilbert Elliot, NLS, MS11008 ff.58-59, 2 July 1757, Edinburgh; NAS, GD18/4923, James Adam to Jenny Adam, 16 January 1762, Rome, ‘I dare say it will turn fashionable for them to go down & visit that Country the mother of so many great men, as a necessary journey to compleat a gentile Education.’; NAS, GD18/4873, James Adam to Peggy Adam, 24 September 1760, Venice: ‘in short it looks as if the genius of Caledonia was rising superior to all difficulty, & determin’d to carry every thing before it without opposition.’ He had previously commented with pleasure on the reception of his cousin William Robertson’s history in Venice.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in David Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century: Union and Enlightenment* (Harlow, 2002), p.127.

<sup>26</sup> See Wood (ed.) *The Scottish Enlightenment*, especially the essays by Wood, Robertson, and Sher. For a recent summary of conflicting agendas, see Alexander Broadie, ‘Introduction’, to Alexander Broadie (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2003). John Robertson argued for the importance of the intellectual perspective in *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680-1760* (Cambridge, 2005), esp. pp.21, 28.

<sup>27</sup> Roy Porter, *The Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 1990), p.44.

<sup>28</sup> Richard B. Sher, ‘Science and Medicine in the Scottish Enlightenment’, in Wood (ed.) *The Scottish Enlightenment*, p.110. Donald Witherington suggested an even broader understanding of the term in his chapter ‘What was distinctive about the Scottish Enlightenment?’, in Jennifer J. Carter and Joan H. Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987).

and practice, and the significance of the Enlightenment in reshaping concepts of femininity and desired forms of gender relations.’<sup>29</sup> Although characterised by exclusive, all-male clubs, to some extent extensions of the universities which were at its core, the sociability of the Scottish Enlightenment was not confined absolutely to men.<sup>30</sup>

‘The women’s century in Scotland’?

The author of a recent popular history of Enlightenment Edinburgh proclaimed that ‘The eighteenth century was *the* women’s century in Scotland.’ This he attributed to the existence of a peaceful society post-1746, a lessening of superstition, improvements in Scotland’s economy and public health, and ‘a new domesticity’ and the creation of a cult of femininity.<sup>31</sup> Yet these are late-eighteenth-century developments. By the end of the century, one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the Scottish attempt to come to terms with commercial society was the prominence given to ideas of gender, leading John Dwyer to argue for a re-interpretation of the ‘Age of Reason’ as the ‘Age of the Passions’ in which women’s superior sensibility was to exert a moral role over the men around them.<sup>32</sup> This concern with femininity reached its most celebrated manifestation in what became known as stadialist history. Characteristically a product of post-Union Scotland in its relocation of the development of modern civilisation away from the political institutions of the state to the realm of manners, in charting the progress of society from hunter-gatherer to modern commercial society contemporary historians used

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<sup>29</sup> Jane Rendall, ‘Women and the Enlightenment in Britain c.1690-1800’, in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Women’s History: Britain, 1700-1850. An Introduction* (London and New York, 2005), p.9.

<sup>30</sup> For clubs, see Davis Dunbar McElroy, ‘The Literary Clubs and Societies of Eighteenth-Century Scotland, and their influence on the literary productions of the period from 1700-1800’ (Edinburgh University PhD thesis, 1952); Davis D. McElroy, *Scotland’s Age of Improvement. A Survey of Eighteenth-Century Literary Clubs and Societies* (Washington, 1969); N. T. Phillipson, ‘Culture and Society in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Province: The Case of Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment’, in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *The University in Society, Volume II, Europe, Scotland, and the United States from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Princeton, 1974); Phillipson, ‘The Scottish Enlightenment’, in Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (eds.), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge, 1981); more generally, Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Buchan, *Capital of the Mind* (London, 2003), pp.241-2.

<sup>32</sup> John Dwyer, *The Age of the Passions: An Interpretation of Adam Smith and Scottish Enlightenment Culture*, (East Linton, 1998); also idem, *Virtuous Discourse*, esp. chap. 5.

‘the rank and condition of women in different ages’<sup>33</sup> as a monitor for societal development. Thus William Robertson argued in his *History of America* (1777) that ‘To despise and degrade the female sex, is the characteristic of the savage state in every part of the globe’,<sup>34</sup> whilst a society in which women were afforded some respect, and their supposed virtues valued, was a truly civilised one. ‘Women – virtuous women, that is, for no wantons or whores need apply –’ were made ‘the very cornerstone of modern civilization.’<sup>35</sup> Yet this ideology could serve to contain women, advice manuals like James Fordyce’s *Sermons to Young Women* (1765) and, to a lesser extent, John Gregory’s posthumous international best-seller *A Father’s Legacy to his Daughters* (1774) urging the cultivation of a nationally-beneficial sensibility through a domestic role for women.<sup>36</sup> To quote László Kontler, ‘The survival chances of the entire edifice of Europe’s old regime modernity seemed to depend on both acknowledging women’s civilizing roles and confining them to their proper place.’<sup>37</sup>

Earlier in the century, Francis Hutcheson had emphasised the marital bond as a foundation-block of society,<sup>38</sup> whilst the promotion of affectionate marriage for the good of the wider community is evident in Allan Ramsay’s verse-play *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725) and in poems published in the *Scots Magazine* in the 1740s and 50s.<sup>39</sup> In a Scottish context, Ramsay’s poetry helped to shape the culture of politeness, the dominant social discourse in the period with which this thesis is concerned. Both a code of behaviour essential to all who wished to move in elite society, and a descriptor of their activities and interests and the arenas in which they

<sup>33</sup> The title of a chapter of John Millar, *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771).

<sup>34</sup> From Robertson’s *History of America*. Quoted in Jane Rendall, ‘Introduction’ to William Alexander, *The History of Women from Antiquity to the Present Time*, vol.1 (Bristol, 1995), p.x.

<sup>35</sup> Donald T. Siebert, ‘Chivalry and Romance in the Age of Hume’, *ECL*, 21:1 (1997), p.67.

<sup>36</sup> John Gregory, *A Father’s Legacy to his Daughters* (Edinburgh, 1821; 1st edn. 1774). For Gregory’s popularity see Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London, 1995), p.391; Mary Catherine Moran, ‘From Rudeness to Refinement: Gender, Genre and Scottish Enlightenment Discourse’ (Johns Hopkins University PhD thesis, 1999), pp.123-131.

<sup>37</sup> László Kontler, ‘Beauty or Beast, or Monstrous Regiments? Robertson and Burke on Women and the Public Scene’, *Modern Intellectual History*, 1:3 (2004), p.329.

<sup>38</sup> Francis Hutcheson, ‘A System of Moral Philosophy’ (1755), in *Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*, vol.6, ed. and prep. by B. Fabian (Hildesheim, Zurich and New York 1990); Jane Rendall, ‘Virtue and Commerce: Women in the Making of Adam Smith’s Political Economy’, in Ellen Kennedy and Susan Mendus (eds.), *Women in Western Political Philosophy: Kant to Nietzsche* (Brighton, 1987).

<sup>39</sup> Dwyer, *Age of the Passions*, chap 5, esp. p.120.

were carried out,<sup>40</sup> politeness was formed, in the words of Peter Borsay, of ‘triple constituents of civility, sociability and improvement’,<sup>41</sup> or, of Philip Carter, ‘propriety or decorum’, good manners, and ‘the display of generosity and accommodation to one’s companions.’<sup>42</sup> Emphasising ‘ease and informality’ as opposed to ‘constraint and ceremony’,<sup>43</sup> at the core of the idea of politeness promoted by Addison and Steele in the *Spectator* (1711-12, 1714) later developed by David Hume in his *Essays* (written with a female readership in mind) was the notion that men and women should socialise and converse together in an urban context. This, they believed, improved the manners not only of those involved, but of the national community as a whole.<sup>44</sup> Thus, although ever-attended by fears of the corrosive potential of too much refinement, participation in the new world of polite sociability was a means of promoting national improvement in which women, as well as men, could engage.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the characteristics of politeness which could appear problematically unmasculine for men were ideally suited to women.<sup>46</sup>

In his assertion if not his reasoning, Buchan’s portrayal of the eighteenth as ‘the woman’s century’<sup>47</sup> is reminiscent of the nineteenth-century biographers, memoirists and popular historians, fascinated by the eighteenth-century gentlewoman who had grown up untouched by prescriptive discourses of sensibility and domesticity. Enjoying a liberty at odds, their biographers suggested, with the

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<sup>40</sup> R. H. Sweet, ‘Topographies of Politeness’, *TransRHS*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 12 (2002), p.357. Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), p.18, notes the difficulty of defining eighteenth-century notions of ‘polite society’. For a magisterial survey of the multifarious uses of the term by both contemporaries and historians, see Lawrence E. Klein, ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’, *HJ*, 45:4 (2002).

<sup>41</sup> Peter Borsay, ‘Politeness and Elegance: The Cultural Re-Fashioning of Eighteenth-century York’, in Mark Hallett and Jane Rendall (eds.), *Eighteenth-Century York: Culture, Space and Society* (York, 2003), p.8.

<sup>42</sup> Carter, *Emergence of Polite Society*, p.21.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Langford, ‘The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness’, *TransRHS*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 12 (2002), p.315.

<sup>44</sup> David Hume, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, 1995; 1<sup>st</sup> published 1741-1777); Lawrence E. Klein, ‘Gender, Conversation and the Public Sphere in Early Eighteenth-century England’, in Judith Still and Michael Worton (eds.), *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices* (Manchester, 1993); idem, ‘Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in Early Eighteenth-Century England’, *HJ*, 32:3 (1989), p.587; Paul Langford, ‘British Politeness and the progress of Western Manners: An Eighteenth-Century Enigma’, *TransRHS*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 7 (1997), p.54. Carter, however, implied Hume’s *Essays* are part of the move towards sensibility, normally associated with the later part of the century. Carter, *Emergence of Polite Society*, pp.28, 30.

<sup>45</sup> For a recent summary of politeness with regards to women, see Ingrid H. Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp.165-6.

<sup>46</sup> Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 1996), p.74.

<sup>47</sup> See p.12 above.

conformity expected of a later age, whilst nevertheless retaining a superior morality, they were characterised as no-nonsense, down-to-earth and practical.<sup>48</sup> Whilst this fascination is to be thanked for much of what remains today in printed sources, collected not just by individuals interested in their family past or in recording the eccentrics of their youth, but sponsored by the historical clubs and societies,<sup>49</sup> it should be borne in mind that they were seeking the exceptional and the eccentric, and focused on the individuals who stood out from the norm. In line with more recent historians of the eighteenth-century gentlewoman, this study seeks to uncover the less untypical attitudes and activities current amongst the ladies of the Scottish elite.

### Historiographical Contexts

This study relates recent developments in historical scholarship on elite women in eighteenth-century Britain to the specific Scottish situation outlined above. Whilst acknowledging the wider European context,<sup>50</sup> and, where relevant, the work of literary scholars<sup>51</sup> and that which examines eighteenth-century constructions of

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<sup>48</sup>E.g., the memories of Alison Cockburn held by Sir Walter Scott who wrote ‘I am apt to think that the *vieille cour* of Edinburgh rather resembled that of Paris than that of St. James’s’, *Letters and Memoir of her own Life, by Mrs Alison Rutherford or Cockburn*, with notes by T. Craig-Brown (Edinburgh, 1900), p.xxvii; Louisa Stuart, *Some Account of John Duke of Argyll and his Family*, (London, 1863; orig. comp. 1827); Sarah Tytler and J. L. Watson, *The Songstresses of Scotland* (London, 1871); Henry Gray Graham, *A Group of Scottish Women* (London, 1908); Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of His Time by Lord Cockburn*, ed. and abridged by W. Forbes Gray (Edinburgh, 1945; 1<sup>st</sup> edn., 1856), p.48; John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alexander Allardyce (Edinburgh, 1888), vol.2, ch.9, ‘Some Scottish Ladies’, emphasised that easier, less formal manners were associated with women of that generation, e.g., Lady Hamilton of Rosehall, *ibid.*, p.144.

<sup>49</sup> E.g., Robert Scott-Moncrieff (ed.), *The Household Book of Lady Grisel Baillie, 1692-1733*, SHS 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., vol.1 (Edinburgh, 1911); Mure, ‘Change of Manners’ was published by the Maitland Club in 1854.

<sup>50</sup> Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe Vol.1, 1500-1800* (London, 1995); Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2005); Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge (eds.), *A History of Women in the West, Vol.3, Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1993); Deborah Simonton (ed.), *The Routledge History of Women in Europe since 1700* (London and New York, 2006).

<sup>51</sup> Influential work by literary scholars includes Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York and Oxford, 1987); Toni Bowers, *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture, 1680-1760* (Cambridge, 1993); Lynne Vallone, *Disciplines of Virtue: Girls’ Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Yale, 1995); Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago and London, 2000).

gender and femininity,<sup>52</sup> it is recent developments in archival research into the lived experience of elite women in eighteenth-century Britain which provide the primary historiographical context. Popular biographies, often the product of meticulous research, have done much to open up the world of a few celebrated and very wealthy individuals,<sup>53</sup> which, like scholarship on women writers like the bluestocking circle, can provide more general insights into aspects of elite women's experience.<sup>54</sup> Inevitably, perhaps, it has been the views and pronouncements of these highly untypical few which have tended to become enshrined in anthologies,<sup>55</sup> yet in their untypicality they exemplify the plurality of potential experiences amongst women of the eighteenth-century elite. Whilst aware of the dangers of posing a strict dichotomy between practice and prescription,<sup>56</sup> this study is influenced predominantly by research concerned with the identification of more typical aspects of elite women's lives, often genteel rather than aristocratic, or provincial as opposed to metropolitan.<sup>57</sup>

Particularly relevant is Amanda Vickery's influential study *The Gentleman's Daughter*, an impressive analysis of the lives of the provincial gentlewomen of

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<sup>52</sup> Anthony J. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London, 1995); G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago and London, 1992); Michael McKeon, 'Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760', *ECS*, 28:3 (1995). For masculinity, see Carter, *Emergence of Polite Society*; Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity*. This also deals quite extensively with femininity. For the later-eighteenth-century Scottish debate, see pp.12-13 above.

<sup>53</sup> In particular, Stella Tillyard, *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox 1740-1832* (London, 1994); Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (London, 1998).

<sup>54</sup> E.g., Guest, *Small Change*; Sylvia Harcstark Myers, *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1990); Bridget Hill, *The Republican Virago; The Life and Times of Catherine Macaulay, Historian* (Oxford, 1992); Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg (eds.), 'Reconsidering the Bluestockings', *HLQ*, 65:1 (2002); Norma Clarke, *The Rise and Fall of the Woman of Letters* (London, 2004).

<sup>55</sup> Bridget Hill (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century Women: An Anthology* (London, 1984); Vivien Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity* (London, 1990).

<sup>56</sup> Klein, 'Gender, Conversation and the Public Sphere', p.112; idem, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure', *ECS*, 29:1 (1995), p.101.

<sup>57</sup> For recent work on the English provinces, penned, on the whole, by scholars with a keen awareness of gender, see Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995); Helen Berry, 'Promoting Taste in the Provincial Press: National and Local Culture in Eighteenth-Century Newcastle upon Tyne', *BJECS*, 25 (2002); Helen Berry, 'Creating Public Space: The Organisation and Social Function of the Newcastle Assembly Rooms', in Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (eds.), *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830* (Aldershot, 2004).



Yorkshire and Lancashire based on their own correspondence, memoirs and diaries.<sup>58</sup> Vickery's most significant achievement has been to question theoretical assumptions which have for too long constrained seventeenth- to nineteenth-century women's history. In a highly influential article, she argued against the often chronologically-conflicting trajectories from a 'golden age' of practical economic fulfilment towards idle domesticity, and questioned the usefulness of attempts to squeeze women's lives into artificially constructed gendered public and private spheres.<sup>59</sup> Supported by the work of scholars like Lawrence Klein, who has argued for the complexity of eighteenth-century interpretations of the terms 'public' and 'private',<sup>60</sup> the removal of this conceptual framework has enabled women's lives to be examined from new and less constricted perspectives. Vickery's call for 'Case studies [...] of the economic roles, social lives, institutional opportunities and personal preoccupations' of women to reassess the categories of women's history<sup>61</sup> has been heeded by Elaine Chalus and Hannah Barker. They argued that the essays in their volume on *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*<sup>62</sup> showed that 'exploring gender through contemporaries' understandings of themselves' revealed 'the complexity and multiplicity of gender roles in a society where the boundaries between 'public' and 'private', or 'social' and 'political', were blurred and permeable.'<sup>63</sup>

One consequence of this has been a renewed interest in 'what women were able to do, not what they were prevented from doing.'<sup>64</sup> Perhaps nowhere is this

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<sup>58</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998).

<sup>59</sup> Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *HJ*, 36:2 (June 1993), esp. pp.412-4. Depressingly, however, in the most recent text-book on eighteenth-century Scotland, David Allan repeated the old assumption that rising incomes led the women of 'property-owning and professional members of the middle class' to 'inhabit a separate sphere from their menfolk, becoming purely domestic in their function, overseeing a growing number of paid household servants and standing as the guardians of family morality, religion and culture.' Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, p.114. He tempered this slightly on p.121, noting merely that 'well-to-do women [...] were increasingly headed for a life of domesticity', and elsewhere acknowledged the role of intellectual discussion in some women's experience (p.132).

<sup>60</sup> See Klein, 'Gender, Conversation and the Public Sphere'; idem, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction'; John Brewer, 'This, that and the other: Public, Social and Private in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Dario Castiglione and Lesley Sharpe (eds.), *Shifting the Boundaries: Transformation of the Languages of Public and Private in the Eighteenth Century* (Exeter, 1995).

<sup>61</sup> Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', p.414.

<sup>62</sup> For masculinity, see Carter, *Emergence of Polite Society*; Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity*.

<sup>63</sup> Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus 'Introduction' to idem. (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth Century England* (London and New York, 1997), p.3.

<sup>64</sup> Anne Laurence, *Women in England, 1560-1760: A Social History* (London, 1994), p.273.

more evident than in Chalus' own work on women in politics, which has been instrumental in demonstrating the way in which previously well-used archives can offer up new perspectives to even such a thoroughly researched area of scholarship as political history, showing that women's habitual presence in a supposedly exclusively masculine area of life had only to be sought in order to be found.<sup>65</sup> Although some scholars have been reluctant to part company with gendered public/private spheres,<sup>66</sup> Harriet Guest warning that 'we should be careful not to throw out infant political possibilities in the discourses of publicity along with the bathwater',<sup>67</sup> it is significant that Guest still felt she could best locate what she wanted to say as a literary scholar into recent developments in historical scholarship:<sup>68</sup> developments which have been made largely without these constraints.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, Barker and Chalus were able to assert in the introduction to their latest edited volume that, 'The study of women's history in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain is well established and the field a diverse one', arguing that it was the 'rich, colourful and wide-ranging' historiography emerging from this which necessitated the collection as an introduction to recent research.<sup>70</sup> Yet whilst making every effort to write an inclusive British history, many of their contributors had to acknowledge the comparative dearth of scholarship on eighteenth-century

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<sup>65</sup> Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c.1754-1790* (Oxford, 2005); Chalus, "'That Epidemical Madness": Women and Electoral Politics in the Late Eighteenth Century', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*; Chalus, "'My Minerva at my Elbow": The Political Roles of Women in Eighteenth-Century England', in Stephen Taylor, Richard Connors and Clyve Jones (eds.), *Hanoverian Britain and Empire* (Woodbridge, 1998); Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics, and the Political World of Late Eighteenth-Century England', *HJ*, 43:3 (2000), pp.669-697; Chalus, "'To Serve My Friends": Women and Political Patronage in Eighteenth-Century England', in Amanda Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present* (Stanford, 2001); Elaine Chalus and Fiona Montgomery, 'Women and Politics', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850. An Introduction* (London and New York, 2005).

<sup>66</sup> Most notably, Tague, *Women of Quality*, esp. pp.6, 166. Her focus was aristocratic.

<sup>67</sup> Guest, *Small Change*, p.13.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>69</sup> Although Barker and Chalus noted the need for further investigation of 'the concerns at the heart of older models', 'Introduction' to *idem.* (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth Century England*, p.24.

<sup>70</sup> Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, 'Introduction', to Barker and Chalus (eds.), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850*, pp.4-5. For Wales, see Simone Clarke, 'Aspects of Female Gentility in Eighteenth-Century North Wales' (University of Wales, Aberystwyth, PhD thesis, 1999); Michael Roberts and Simone Clarke (eds.), *Women and Gender in Early Modern Wales* (Cardiff, 2000). For Ireland, see S. J. Connolly, 'A Woman's Life in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Case of Letitia Bushe', *HJ*, 43:2 (2000), p.435; Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O'Dowd (eds.) *Women in Early Modern Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1991).

Scotswomen, whilst their Scottish counterparts continue to lament the exclusion of women from the overall narratives of Scottish history. In a recent volume on *Gender in Scottish History since 1700*, Lynn Abrams noted that ‘Despite more than two decades of research into Scottish women’s history, and the existence of theories of gender relations which offer frameworks for thinking about male and female roles in the past, the “right of women to exist historically” in the Scottish narrative [...] is still a battle to be fought.’<sup>71</sup> New offensives continue to be launched, most notably the *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* to which the volume was written as an accompaniment,<sup>72</sup> but historical Scotswomen continue to suffer a ‘double marginalization’ through both gender (as marginal to men) and nationality (as marginal to England).<sup>73</sup>

Scotland’s important contribution to the late-eighteenth-century ‘feminization debate’ and thus to the inception of modern ideas of gender identity has ensured that in the English-speaking world outside of Scotland, few works on eighteenth-century femininity fail to make some mention of the Scottish attitudes towards women and gender outlined above.<sup>74</sup> Yet, with the notable exception of the work of Jane Rendall, which has demonstrated the importance of Scottish ideas about gender in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to a wider understanding of both the European Enlightenment and Scottish identity in that period,<sup>75</sup> these ideas have

<sup>71</sup> Lynn Abrams, ‘Introduction: Gendering the Agenda’, in Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon, Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes Yeo (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2006), p.3.

<sup>72</sup> Elizabeth Ewan, Sue Innes and Siân Reynolds (eds.), co-ordinating editor, Rose Pipes, *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women: From the Earliest Times to 2004* (Edinburgh, 2006)

<sup>73</sup> Esther Breitenbach, Alice Brown and Fiona Myers, ‘Understanding Women in Scotland’, *Feminist Review*, 58 (Spring 1998), passim, esp. pp.44, 62. Overall, women have not been well-served by Scottish history. It has been pointed out that whilst much effort has been put into the re-writing of Scottish history in recent years, new angles brought to old topics, and whole new areas of research brought to light, women have remained largely absent. Terry Brotherstone, ‘Women’s History, Scottish History, Historical Theory’, in Terry Brotherstone, Deborah Simonton and Oonagh Walsh (eds.), *Gendering Scottish History: An International Perspective* (Glasgow, 1999), p.252.

<sup>74</sup> E.g., E. J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (Basingstoke and New York, 2004), ‘Introduction’; Guest, *Small Change*, p.17; Norma Clarke, ‘Lost and Found: the Woman Writer in the Eighteenth Century’, *Gender and History*, 15:2 (August 2003), p.368; Sylvana Tomaselli, ‘The Enlightenment Debate on Women’, *HWJ*, 20 (1985), pp.101-24; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, ‘Women and the Enlightenment’, in Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz and Susan Stuard (eds.), *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston, etc., 1987), p.253; Vivien Jones, ‘Introduction’ to Vivien Jones (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800* (Cambridge, 2000), p.5.

<sup>75</sup> Rendall, ‘Virtue and Commerce’; idem, ‘Tacitus Engendered: “Gothic Feminism” and British Histories, c. 1750-1800’, in Geoffrey Cubitt (ed.), *Imagining Nations* (Manchester, 1998); Rendall, ‘Introduction’ to Alexander, *History of Women*; Rendall, ‘Writing History for British Women:

been more widely investigated by historians of women in America than of their contemporaries in Britain.<sup>76</sup> Noticing this, Mary Catherine Moran sought in her PhD thesis to redress that balance through an investigation of the Scottish reception of the texts on which she focused to explore ‘the significance of Scottish Enlightenment discourse for the construction of femininity in eighteenth-century Britain’.<sup>77</sup> However, attention has tended to be concentrated in the later part of the century, and on theory rather than practice. The argument that that Scottish historians continue to present a narrative which tells ‘only a partial, patriarchal version of the past’<sup>78</sup> holds more weight for the middle decades of the century, whilst archival research into the day-to-day lives of women in eighteenth-century Scotland remains in its infancy.

The modern pioneer of eighteenth-century Scottish women’s history was Rosalind Marshall, who in the 1970s and early 1980s ventured into largely uncharted territory in the Scottish archives to demonstrate that Scottish women were worthy of investigation in their own right.<sup>79</sup> Her work remains the only published research on many aspects of eighteenth-century Scotswomen’s experience, and should not be

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Elizabeth Hamilton and the *Memoirs of Agrippina*, in Clarissa Campbell Orr (ed.), *Wollstonecraft’s Daughters: Womanhood in England and France 1780-1920* (Manchester 1996); Rendall, ‘Cleo, Mars and Minerva: The Scottish Enlightenment and the Writing of Women’s History’, in T. M. Devine and J. R. Young (eds.), *Eighteenth Century Scotland: New Perspectives* (East Linton, 1999).

<sup>76</sup> Mary Catherine Moran, ‘From Rudeness to Refinement: Gender, Genre and Scottish Enlightenment Discourse’ (Johns Hopkins University PhD thesis, 1999), p.xiv. She cites the work of Ruth Bloch on women in revolutionary America, and that of Rosemarie Zagari on the ‘Republican Mother’.

<sup>77</sup> Moran, ‘From Rudeness to Refinement’, p.xii. See also idem, ‘*L’Essai sur les femmes/Essay on Women: an Eighteenth-Century Transatlantic Journey*’, *HWJ*, 59 (2005); idem, ‘“The Commerce of the Sexes” – Gender and the Social Sphere in Scottish Enlightenment Accounts of Civil Society’, in Frank Trentman (ed.), *Paradoxes of Civil Society: New Perspectives on Modern German and British History* (New York and Oxford, 2000).

<sup>78</sup> Yvonne Galloway Brown and Rona Ferguson, ‘Introduction’, to Yvonne Galloway Brown and Rona Ferguson (eds.), *Twisted Sisters: Women, Crime and Deviance in Scotland Since 1400* (East Linton, 2002), p.2. However, in *Scottish Society 1707-1830*, Whatley points out that work has begun and that he has been able to incorporate women into his narrative, p.13, and issues of women in eighteenth-century Scottish society are discussed by Richard B. Sher in his chapter on the eighteenth century in the latest multi-authored survey of Scottish history. Richard B. Sher, ‘Scotland Transformed: The Eighteenth Century’, in Jenny Wormald (ed.), *Scotland: A History* (Oxford, 2005), p.201.

<sup>79</sup> Rosalind K. Marshall, *Women in Scotland 1660-1780* (Edinburgh, 1979); Rosalind K. Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980* (London, 1983); Rosalind K. Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne: Life in the Household of the Duchess of Hamilton 1656-1716* (East Linton, 1973, 2000); She also authored over a dozen entries on eighteenth-century Scotswomen in the *ODNB*.

ignored.<sup>80</sup> Since then, however, few have ventured into the archives in search of the eighteenth-century Scotswoman. Elizabeth Sanderson's survey of *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh* demonstrated the visibility, once sought, of even non-elite women, in this case in the world of business.<sup>81</sup> Leah Leneman's work on sexuality and marital relations provided invaluable insights into some of the most private aspects of women's lives whilst demonstrating the potential of the archives to bring to life the personalities of individual women across the social spectrum.<sup>82</sup> Although Leneman's work at times touched on the elite, it is at this level that eighteenth-century Scotswomen have been least well-served. One notable exception, however, is Stana Nenadic's article 'Experience and Expectations in the Transformation of the Highland Gentlewoman, 1680-1820'.<sup>83</sup> Although covering a much longer time-span, in its use of epistolary evidence to ask questions of the lived experience of gentlewomen in eighteenth-century Scotland it set an important precedent for this, and further work on the eighteenth-century Scottish gentlewoman. Influenced by all this research, this study helps to close the gap in the historiography of Scottish gentlewomen, demonstrating that the sources remain in the archives for their experiences to be subjected to the same processes of historical analysis as their counterparts elsewhere. It is hoped that the much fuller picture of women's experience which emerges contributes both to the historical understanding of eighteenth-century Scottish society, and that of elite women in Britain.

#### 'Mintos Miltons, Such as them': Sources and Family Backgrounds

Unsure of whether or not to enter Roman high society in 1755, the aspiring architect Robert Adam decided in the mean time to go into 'genteel tho' not noble Conversations, Such as we woud Reckon, Mintos Miltons, Such as them compar'd

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<sup>80</sup> As it was by every contributor to Abrams, et al (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History since 1700*, many of whom referred to a lack of eighteenth-century research, thus biasing the volume heavily towards the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

<sup>81</sup> Elizabeth C. Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-century Edinburgh* (Basingstoke, 1996)

<sup>82</sup> Most relevant here is Leah Leneman, *Alienated Affections: The Scottish Experience of Divorce and Separation, 1684-1830* (Edinburgh, 1998). See also Leah Leneman and Rosalind Mitchison, *Sin in the City: Sexuality and Social Control in Urban Scotland, 1660-1780* (Edinburgh, 1998); Rosalind Mitchison and Leah Leneman, *Girls in Trouble: Sexuality and Social Control in Rural Scotland, 1660-1780* (Edinburgh, 1998).

<sup>83</sup> Stana Nenadic, 'Experience and Expectations in the Transformation of the Highland Gentlewoman, 1680-1820', *SHR*, 53, No.210, (October 2001).

with Breadalbinses, Lady Tweedales or such like.’<sup>84</sup> The present study encompasses Adam’s own socially aspirational family, of slightly lower social status, perhaps, but within the sphere of the genteel; whilst the papers of the Tweeddales were also researched as comparative aristocratic material. Overall, however, it is concerned with those ‘genteel tho’ not noble’ families, not least the Elliots of Minto and the family of Andrew Fletcher, Lord Milton, themselves. This section provides a brief overview of the families on whose papers this study is based. More information on family backgrounds in general and biographical details on individual women is provided in Appendix 1, entries being denoted by bold print in the text below.

This study has grown out of an undergraduate dissertation, from which a Masters thesis later developed. Both were concerned solely with the women of the Fletcher of Saltoun family, using the National Library of Scotland (NLS) Fletcher of Saltoun papers. The impact of this initial work remains, not just in the way in which this extensive archive remains at the heart of the thesis, but in the time-frame which it covers, and (as detailed in the next section) in the research methodology used. One of the largest family collections in the NLS, the Saltoun Papers have been used extensively by historians researching the politics and government of Scotland in the middle years of the eighteenth century. Both Alexander Murdoch’s *People Above*, and John Stuart Shaw’s *Management of Scottish Society* were greatly indebted to this archive,<sup>85</sup> which has also been used by scholars of the Scottish Enlightenment.<sup>86</sup> But whilst most of these scholars, understandably given their own agendas and the richness of the sources, have focused on the sources relating to the men of the family, very little use has been made of the women’s correspondence,<sup>87</sup> a situation mirrored,

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<sup>84</sup> NAS, GD18/4767, to Jenny Adam, 14 March 1755, Rome.

<sup>85</sup> Murdoch, *The People Above*; Shaw, *Management of Scottish Society*; Ian G. Lindsay and Mary Cosh, *Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll* (Edinburgh, 1973).

<sup>86</sup> E.g., Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1985); John Robertson, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue* (Edinburgh, 1985).

<sup>87</sup> An exception is Mary Catherine Moran, who used two of William Robertson’s letters to Margaret Hepburn in her thesis ‘From Rudeness to Refinement’, pp.101-103. As she noted, this was earlier used in John Rae, *Life of Adam Smith* (London, 1895), p.133, although Rae and Moran confuse Margaret with the Jacobite Hepburns of Keith. See also Lindsay and Cosh, *Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll*, the only published work to make more than a passing reference to the Fletcher women; and Sher, *Church and University*, which used the correspondence between Margaret Hepburn and William Robertson (albeit citing letters almost certainly to and from Margaret as to Milton, and once misnaming her as Janet.) This is not to criticise such tiny slips, but they do indicate the way in which

to a lesser extent, by the other archives consulted for this study. Yet this thesis demonstrates that even some of the most well-known and thoroughly researched archives can yield new information of relevance when examined in a new light, and that the mid-eighteenth-century papers of Scottish families are ripe for reassessment along gendered lines.

Initially, it had been hoped to use the Masters research to identify social and correspondence networks around the Fletcher family, and for these to form the source base for this thesis. This, however, proved impossible; no papers are known to exist for some of the families with whom the Fetters had close family or friendship ties, whilst, in general, their correspondence networks ranged widely and the nature of their social and geographical situation meant that attempting to delineate a 'social circle' would have been impossible. Although, as shall be apparent throughout, the families whose papers were eventually chosen as the principal source material were often connected through blood, politics and sociability, in the end, archives were chosen on the basis that consultation of catalogues and indices, and trial research, suggested quantitatively significant content relating to women. Linked by their shared experience as members of the Scottish elite, their lives coloured by the political debates and social and cultural imperatives which were outlined earlier in this chapter, the women on which this research is based are not intended to form a discrete body. Some families were involved in politics; others more interested in cultural developments. Some were more secure of their social position than others. Overall, however, they form a group which reflects most of the concerns and experiences; the manners and priorities of the Scottish gentry, who, unlike their aristocratic counterparts, still spent most of their time in Scotland, and, although influenced by British-wide trends, maintained a distinctively Scottish culture. If it is inclined somewhat towards the experience of lowland gentry families, and, in terms of urban centres, towards Edinburgh, this mirrors the priorities of the gentry themselves (certainly, as reflected in the sources), for whom Edinburgh was the capital of Scottish social life.

The **Fletchers of Saltoun** were an East Lothian gentry family who in this period enjoyed an exceptional prominence in the public life of Scotland through the

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the priorities of the historians who have previously used this collection have quite understandably lain elsewhere.

position of Andrew Fletcher, Lord Milton, as chief sub-minister to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Argyll. Milton was at the heart of Scottish management, actively involved in many of Scotland's most ambitious plans for improvement. This study is concerned with Milton's wife **Elizabeth** (d.1782) and daughters **Margaret** (1723-1776), **Mary** (1723-1778) and **Elizabeth** (1731-1758); his sisters **Martha** and **Mary** (bap.1698), and Mary's daughter **Margaret Hepburn** (bap.1734, d.1759). Friends of the Moderate literati, and with links to the highest levels of Scottish society, their activities ranged from the maintenance of family political interest through an interest in literature, to the promotion of new forms of public sociability. A distant cousin of these women, **Margaret Macdonald** (ca.1716-1799), experienced the impact of politics in a quite different way through her involvement in the 1745 Jacobite uprising, spending the later decades of her life in London.

Another major legal dynasty with political and cultural connections was the **Elliots of Minto**, a landed Borders family. Unlike the Fletchers, they were yet to achieve their heyday, which came with late-eighteenth-century involvement in the Indian empire. Yet in this period the family self-consciously transferred, under the auspices of Sir Gilbert Elliot 3<sup>rd</sup> baronet, to London and the British political stage, Sir Gilbert becoming a noted parliamentary orator. Before his wife **Agnes Murray Kynnmound** (1731-1778) joined him in London, the couple corresponded during lengthy periods of separation. Elliot's long-lived and opinionated mother Helen, Lady Minto and poet sister Jean are also worthy of note. The **Clerks of Penicuik** were another family with political and cultural interests, which stayed closer to home on estates in Midlothian. Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, second baronet, a commissioner for the 1707 Union and active improver, antiquarian and musician, married **Janet Inglis** (b. ca.1686, d.1760), who kept a spiritual diary throughout her married life. Apart from this, however, disappointingly little remains in this extensive archive to document her life and that of their several daughters, including Johanna (Jackie), in this period.

A schoolfriend and parliamentary colleague of Gilbert Elliot's was William **Mure of Caldwell**, whose sister **Elizabeth** (1714-1795) was the author of the 'Remarks on the change of manners' with which this chapter began, and, like the Elliots, an old friend of David Hume. She was the cousin of the Jacobite political



economist Sir James **Steuart Denham**, whose wife, Lady **Frances Wemyss** (1722-1789), penned a manuscript memoir of her married life, much of which was spent in exile in France and the Low Countries. For a period in 1756, they were joined by Sir James' sister **Margaret Steuart Calderwood** (d.1774), wife of Thomas Calderwood of Polton, who composed a memoir of her travels in England and the Low Countries.

The **Adam** family of architects were connected by marriage with the Clerks of Penicuik. William Adam, one of Scotland's premier architects, was married to **Mary Robertson** (1699-1761), aunt to the historian William Robertson, and the subject of a portrait by Allan Ramsay. As well as the famous architect Robert Adam, they had a number of daughters, to whom their brothers wrote home from abroad.

At the least fortunate end of the social spectrum of women covered by this study are the illegitimate daughters of George **Innes of Stow**, Deputy Receiver of the Land Tax in Scotland. Although little remains to shed light on his wife, Marion, papers document the education of not only their daughters Marion and **Jean** (1748-1839), but of Innes' illegitimate daughters **George Hamilton Innes** (1742-1758) and **Jean Graham** (1742-1762). An obsessive archivist, he also kept the letters sent to him by Jean Graham's mother **Elizabeth Graham** (d.1747) and her family, with whom the child was brought up.

This was supplemented by research into a number of other family archives, including the vast collection of correspondence relating to the business and family of the Edinburgh lawyer John **Mackenzie of Delvine**, perhaps the most successful of a large legal dynasty which bestrode the eighteenth century; the **Strange and Lumisden** family, **Isabella** (1721/2-1808), the sister of Andrew Lumisden, private secretary to the Old Pretender, and wife of the Jacobite engraver Sir Robert Strange (1725-1792) having left a forthright correspondence, some of it with her cousin, the physician and poet John Armstrong; the papers of another of her cousins, Sir Alexander **Dick Cunynghame of Prestonfield**; and of the **Dalrymples of North Berwick**. For comparative purposes, research was also carried out in the papers of aristocratic families, including the **Earls of Hopetoun**, for whom the Adams built one of their most celebrated commissions, Hopetoun House near South Queensferry;

and of the **Marquises of Tweeddale**, singled out by Adam in the quotation above as representing high society.

'Everywhere and nowhere': Women in Epistolary Sources

Although augmented by occasional memoirs, and, more frequently, accounts, bills and receipts, correspondence was by far the most significant source for this research. Studies of epistolarity, with a stress on eighteenth-century women's correspondence, have lately become rather fashionable.<sup>88</sup> Yet despite the association of the middle years of the eighteenth century with a self-conscious, stylised yet 'familiar' female epistolary culture influenced by the letters of Madame de Sevigné and the novels of Samuel Richardson,<sup>89</sup> very little mid-eighteenth-century gentlewomen's correspondence remains in Scottish archives today, and only a tiny proportion of that conforms to this stereotype. As the editors of one recent volume noted, 'Like the diary form, the letter is personal and immediate; it is not fiction but it is not fact';<sup>90</sup> letters were constructed to influence or persuade, to put across an impression or a point of view, and, like any other source, their contents need to be treated with caution. Yet the issues raised by the sources consulted here revolved less around interpretation than the very scarcity of their existence.

In October 1755, Robert Adam settled down to write his regular epistle from Rome to his family back home in Scotland, on this occasion addressed to his sister Jenny. He started off with the standard compliments, and the all-important note of letters received, from whom, and when, but then moved on to the following:

During the Course of my Last expedition, I have re read all Your Letters from Scotland in the Chaise, & tore in pieces all Such as

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<sup>88</sup> Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot, 1999); Caroline Bland and Máire Cross (eds.), *Gender and Politics in the Age of Letter-Writing, 1750-2000* (Aldershot, 2004). This interest was originally manifested amongst literary scholars, e.g. Janet Gurkman Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Ohio, 1982); Elizabeth C. Goldsmith (ed.), *Writing the Female Voice: Essays on Epistolary Literature* (London, 1989). For an earlier period, see James Daybell (ed.), *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700* (Basingstoke, 2001). As Susan Whyman noted, epistolary sources have until recently been marginalised by historians, Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999), p.9.

<sup>89</sup> Earle, 'Introduction: Letters, Writers and the Historian', in Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves*, p.6; Janet Gurkman Altman, 'Women's Letters in the Public Sphere', in Elizabeth C. Goldsmith and Dena Goodman (eds.), *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France* (Ithaca and London, 1995), p.99.

<sup>90</sup> Máire Cross and Caroline Bland, 'Gender Politics: Breathing New Life into Old Letters', in Bland and Cross (eds.), *Gender and Politics*, p.7.

containd nothing of Business or importance, which for your Honours be it Spoken were very few in Number, So that many Miles were Strew'd with the Fragments.<sup>91</sup>

Whilst the letters sent home from the respective Grand Tours of Robert and later his brother James were preserved, if more for reasons of business than of sentiment, the other side of the correspondence, written by the women of the family, ended up in pieces in the dirt at the Italian roadside. A more exotic resting place, perhaps, than the majority of letters written by Scottish gentlewomen in this period, which, it can be assumed, went onto the fire and up the chimney, it is nevertheless indicative of their fate, just as Adam's classification of letters into 'important' (worthy of keeping) and 'unimportant' (to be destroyed) is representative of the contemporary devaluation of the sorts of sources which would have been of use in reconstructing the everyday life of the eighteenth-century Scottish gentlewoman. The Adam correspondence makes it strikingly clear that a newly-received letter was an object of high value and meaning, but the idea of that same letter as having a long-term emotional value appears to have been less pronounced.

In their work on women in early-modern England, Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford discussed the difficulties faced by archival scholars of women's lived experience, arguing for the need to develop 'techniques of reading against the grain' to deal with the problem that 'women are everywhere and nowhere in the archives.'<sup>92</sup> As an analysis of the women of the mid-eighteenth-century Scottish gentry based solely on letters written by or to women would have been impossible, it is on such 'against the grain' research strategies that this thesis is largely based. In most selected archives, the need for contextualisation necessitated the consultation of all correspondence dated between around 1740 and the mid-1760s.<sup>93</sup> Predominantly from one man to another, and concerned with politics or the minutiae of business, sandwiching the 'meat' of many such letters was more personal news on health, family, births, deaths, children, and, occasionally, social activities.

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<sup>91</sup> NAS, GD18/4788, to Jenny Adam, 14 October 1755, Rome.

<sup>92</sup> Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford, 1998), p.9.

<sup>93</sup> Exceptions to this were made when lengthy runs of correspondence, catalogued specifically as business, transpired to suggest no greater relevance when trial bundles or folders were consulted.

For instance, over a period of two years in the mid-1740s, in a run of correspondence primarily concerned with the collection of Scotland's Land Tax, is a series of friendly and informal letters in which Thomas Fordyce of Aytoun included advice from his wife (or 'Master', as he called her) to George Innes' less-experienced wife Marion on breast-feeding, an activity then enjoying a renewed popularity amongst elite mothers.<sup>94</sup> 'My Wife says Mrs Innes is right to Nurse if She has abundance of milk, but if there is a Scarcity, it will doe harm to the Child & her self' wrote Fordyce to Innes. Through her husband, Mrs Fordyce also advised on weaning and the dangers of breastfeeding when the mother had a cold, Fordyce's letters articulating a hidden dialogue between two women otherwise almost or entirely voiceless in the archives.<sup>95</sup> Very little remains of Marion Lauder's own correspondence for this period, and few details of her life or personality come across in that of her husband. Yet whilst the variable degrees of reference to the social activities of women may to some extent indicate a difference in family cultures, absences should never be taken to prove a negative. As Deputy Collector of the Land Tax, much of Innes' correspondence was with individuals whom he did not know personally, and, working from an office in the Royal Bank of Scotland, his work was separated from the home far more than that of a political figure like Lord Milton whose public role necessitated home entertainment and the cultivation of personal relationships in which his wife and daughters had an important part to play.<sup>96</sup>

The privileging of 'business' as a criterion for the preservation of correspondence is probably the single most important reason why so few women's letters remain. Although in some archives a lack of women's correspondence merely reflects a more general scarcity of correspondence from a particular period, other, well-preserved archives like the Saltoun papers contain proportionately little in the

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<sup>94</sup> Valerie A. Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding* (Edinburgh, 1986), pp.116, 121-2. This could potentially be construed as evidence of men's assumption of an authoritative role in their children's feeding, although there is no direct evidence for this. See Toni Bowers, "'A Point of Conscience": Breastfeeding and Maternal Authority in *Pamela 2*", in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 7:3 (1995).

<sup>95</sup> NAS, GD113/3/220/8, 25 March 1745, Ayton; GD113/3/227/18, 1 July 1745, Ayton; GD113/3/236/12, 10 February 1746, Ayton; GD113/3/252/20, 6 April 1747, Ayton. In 1729, Fordyce married Elizabeth Whitefoord, presumably a member of the family of Innes' employer, Allan Whitefoord. See OPR index to marriages, Midlothian.

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter 5, pp.162-166; 170-173.

way of female correspondence, perhaps because it was regarded as personal rather than familial. Intimacy may have compelled destruction, privacy endangered not just at the hands of posterity: Margaret Sainthill desired her husband Sir Hew Dalrymple to burn her letters ‘for if not when your Coat is Bruckd they are read in y<sup>c</sup> Kitchen that I know to be true.’<sup>97</sup> Yet this was in response to his comment that he always kept her latest letter, to ‘read over and over’, giving him ‘all the joy imaginable.’<sup>98</sup> In this case, emotional attachment ensured the letter’s immediate survival. On the other hand, it is probably no coincidence that most of the few surviving letters written to Margaret Hepburn are from men of note. Replying to a letter from her friend William Robertson on his *History of Scotland*, she declared that although she would not share her letter at present, she would ‘preserve it with your History for Succeeding ages, as the Romans did their medals, and their other claims to immortality.’<sup>99</sup> This suggests preservation and privacy were unusual act for her; a recognition of the letter’s rare value. Although men of business often kept letter-books which are extant,<sup>100</sup> hardly any women’s draft letters remain. Peggie Adam’s brother-in-law mentioned in a letter that she made ‘notandums of what [she had] formerly wrote, that [she] may not give the same dish over again’<sup>101</sup> but unsurprisingly, these have not survived.

Some insight into how and why women chose to retain their correspondence may be gleaned from the actions of Lady Frances Steuart Denham, who, in January 1789, aged sixty-six, returned to the correspondence which she had previously ‘preserved for memory’ in December 1762, the month in which she returned from exile. She explained her task thus:

having again once more taken up some of the Letters and papers here inclosed to Carry on a Little further the Reading Over and arranging of them I Shall wrap or tye up Each Persons Letters in a Parcel by themselves – and shall not destroy many at least until (from all now Lying) I shall conclude so to Parcel them up [...] but when so done to take down and add them to those formerly made up and then to Pick out from the whole what to burn and what to

<sup>97</sup> NAS, GD110/970/18, to Sir Hew Dalrymple [at North Berwick House], 31 August 1744, Wandsworth.

<sup>98</sup> NAS, GD110/1084/8, 9 August 1744, New Baith.

<sup>99</sup> NLS, MS16521 f.189, 12 March 1759, Monkridge

<sup>100</sup> E.g., Lord Milton’s many drafts and letter books in NLS Saltoun, and the bound volumes of General Humphrey Bland, NLS, MS304.

<sup>101</sup> NAS, GD18/5486/4/1, John Clerk, 4 September 1763, Penderick.

Preserve and in order to assist in that also as I go Allow to mark on  
Each Lett if its Contents whether to make it worth preservation or  
not.<sup>102</sup>

Whether this was a note to herself, or a justification of her methodology to the historian or descendent, viewed in relation to other sources it suggests a determination to manage her historical reputation. Letters from her gardener, for instance, record her drafting a text to be inscribed on a plaque commemorating the growing together of two elm trees in her garden as symbolising the relationship between herself and her husband, influenced, perhaps, by Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*.<sup>103</sup> That she was as keen to present a self-sculpted image in her personal written archive as she was in her garden is supported by her attempt to down-play her husband's Jacobitism in a lengthy memoir, dramatically superscribed 'Francess Stuart – Widow – Melencholy Title'.<sup>104</sup>

The above-quoted passage shows her refining a previous selection process for what she must have been aware would almost certainly be the last time. Presumably, she did indeed burn that part of her correspondence which she deemed unworthy of preservation. It is impossible to know, however, whether it was tainted with Jacobitism (although this would probably have been destroyed long before, like the letter Lady Margaret Macdonald was reported to have received from Charles Edward Stuart, which she kissed upon receipt, but later burned<sup>105</sup>); whether it was uncomfortable or undesirable for other, perhaps personal reasons; or whether it was simply mundane. What do remain are the comments she made on those letters which were ultimately preserved. Some suggest Lady Frances had not initially believed them worth keeping: a letter from her aunt, Lady Northesk, written shortly after Frances' flight to the Continent in 1746, for instance, is marked 'no Contents at all demanding of preservation.'<sup>106</sup> Another letter, in which the same aunt wrote of how

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<sup>102</sup> EUL, MS2291/15/33.

<sup>103</sup> EUL, MS 2291/15/25, James Bell, 10 June 1782, ?Faulsikes, and /30 for a sketch of her intended inscription. The *Gentle Shepherd* contains a passage describing two elms as a bride and bridegroom growing together over the years. Quoted in Dwyer, *Age of the Passions*, p.108.

<sup>104</sup> EUL, MS E2002.28.

<sup>105</sup> *The Lyon in Mourning or a collection as exactly made as the iniquity of the times would permit of speeches letters journals etc. relative to the affairs of Prince Charles Edward Stuart by the Rev. Robert Forbes, A. M. Bishop of Ross & Caithness 1746-1775* ed., Henry Paton (Edinburgh, 1975; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1895), p.8.

<sup>106</sup> EUL, MS2291/15/2, M. Northesk, 13 May 1746, Edinburgh.

she believed herself to be dying, was kept despite the pleadings of its author to ‘burn this confused Scroll,’ because ‘the contents are moving to me’,<sup>107</sup> whilst another, from her sister Helen, ‘does Justice against Lyes about French Jaling Charges against her.’<sup>108</sup> The letters concerning her only son, James, from whom she was unhappily separated at that time, fared less well. One detailing the memoirist Elizabeth Mure’s attempts to cut off a lock of young James’ hair to send to his mother (exactly the sort of letter an absent mother might have cherished) was casually marked ‘of Ja:<sup>s</sup> not much.’<sup>109</sup> Perhaps her memory of her feelings upon the reception of these letters when unhappy and far from home had exaggerated the impression she held of their contents. Forty years later, on initial re-reading in less emotionally-heightened circumstances, she may have been disappointed that the letters did not seem as strikingly precious as they had done when first received, and only later rediscovered their subtle value.

As Cross and Bland argued in the introduction to their recent volume, ‘The letter articulates more than the voice of its author. The recipient is also present.’<sup>110</sup> Occasionally through annotation or censorship, more often, the presence is that of what might be termed a ‘silent recipient’, whose written responses and provocations no longer exist. In an age when (unless franked by a Member of Parliament) letters were paid for by their recipients, it is perhaps not surprising that conscious thought was often given relating to the recipient of the letter. As the literary scholar Janet Gurkman Altman pointed out with relation to epistolary fiction, ‘the letter is by definition never the product of [...] an “immaculate conception”, but is rather the result of a union of writer and reader’ in which the reader ‘plays an instrumental generative role’.<sup>111</sup> If slightly muddled in her theology, the point which she was clearly trying to make is one which historians using epistolary sources would do well to bear in mind: a letter is not a letter unless it is written to someone, and who that ‘someone’ is, is vital to its interpretation. Through the reactions in a letter to that which had preceded it, it is possible to reconstruct something of the attitudes and ideas of the person who wrote it. This is complicated somewhat by the fact that

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<sup>107</sup> EUL, MS2291/15/4, M. Northesk, 28 October 1746, Edinburgh.

<sup>108</sup> EUL, MS 2291/15/28-9, Lady Helen Wemyss, n.d.

<sup>109</sup> EUL, MS2291/15/11, from Elizabeth Mure, 20 February 1747, Glan[derston].

<sup>110</sup> Cross and Bland, ‘Gender Politics’, p.4.

<sup>111</sup> Altman, *Epistolarity*, p.88.

letters could be read aloud to an assembled group of family, or passed around. They were not private, and writers indicated where they wished them to be so: ‘Look you Megg this Letter is not intend’d for common Eyes it is entre nous of the upper house of Adam’, Robert Adam informed his sister.<sup>112</sup> Most importantly for this thesis, the desire to cater for the interests of the recipient meant that insights can be gained into the lives of those ‘silent recipients’ whose own extant correspondence is almost or totally non-existent. For instance, from the letters from Robert and James Adam to their sisters and mother emerge vivid representations of the women’s characters and interests, the sorts of relationships which prevailed within the family, and even something of the way they spoke.<sup>113</sup>

### The Life-course of a Scottish Gentlewoman

‘[W]hat a chequered life we live births and Deaths and births again O then let me not be to much Cast down nor to much lifted up.’<sup>114</sup> Thus Janet Clerk of Penicuik philosophised on the ups and downs of human existence, and the entries and exits of the people who formed the *dramatis personae* of her own long life. The patterns and rhythms of women’s lives differed considerably from those of their male counterparts; yet whilst elite men’s experiences tended to vary widely once they completed their education, women’s lives tended to follow one of two broad trajectories depending on whether or not they married, although there were, of course, many variations on this general rule.<sup>115</sup>

The need for families to produce an heir meant that, early on in a marriage, it was for sons rather than daughters that expectant parents hoped. After George Innes of Stow had fathered three daughters (two outside of marriage), John Dalrymple of Ayr joked that his friend was ‘a Bad workman’, recommending he ‘should take a Cup of Claret more liberally, for there lyes the masculine Gender’.<sup>116</sup> For some, the birth of a daughter may have been regarded as an unfortunate occurrence, but on the whole, once the family had produced the requisite ‘heir and a spare’, the arrival of a daughter could be welcomed: Margaret Macdonald’s husband seemed quite happy

<sup>112</sup> NAS, GD18/4796, 10 January 1756, Rome.

<sup>113</sup> See Chapter 4, p.129.

<sup>114</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/472, 19 August 1754, Penny.

<sup>115</sup> For the ascents and descents of the ‘ladder of life’, see Hufton, *Prospect Before Her*, pp.57-8.

<sup>116</sup> NAS, GD113/3/249/1, 15 November 1746, Air.



when, after two boys, his wife ‘produced a Nymph.’<sup>117</sup> Although a drain on financial resources, daughters could be welcomed as companions for their mothers.<sup>118</sup> Once baptized into the community, even the most privileged daughters faced an uncertain future from the ever-present threat of small-pox and other deadly diseases. But despite the fragility of their existence, most seem to have been loved and appreciated, and money was spent on sweets, toys and other presents.<sup>119</sup>

As the next chapter shall demonstrate, most elite girls received some kind of education, first at home and later with masters, at times representing a substantial financial investment. Encouraged in the polite accomplishments necessary for their entrance into the polite world and the quest for a marriage partner, by their teens, the lives for which young women were being prepared could already be diverging. Not all women married, nor did their parents want them to,<sup>120</sup> most families keeping at least one daughter at home. For the Elliot sisters, ensconced at the peak of London society, this was a primarily social role, whereas for Mary Mackenzie, sister of John Mackenzie WS, it entailed rural isolation in a dilapidated Perthshire farm house, with an aged and ill mother and a sister who suffered from recurrent bouts of melancholy. Issues of estate management were her primary concern, although in later years she was relieved of this responsibility and took up residence in Dunkeld.<sup>121</sup> Urban centres were more attractive to single or widowed women. Similarly, Martha Fletcher spent her younger adulthood assisting her ailing mother with estate business, in this case at Saltoun in East Lothian, later living with her widowed sister with whom she eventually set up home in the Castlehill in Edinburgh. In her case, the

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<sup>117</sup> Sir Alexander Macdonald to Forbes of Culloden, 3 November 1745, Mugstot, in *More Culloden Papers*, vol.4, p.154.

<sup>118</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.289.

<sup>119</sup> E.g., NAS, GD113/4/165/1063, 27 February 1748, records George Innes of Stow's purchase of sugar candy for his illegitimate daughter George, whilst he bought his daughter Jean a doll when she left to be schooled in Wemyss, GD113/3/1138/21, George Innes's Pocket Expenses 8 March 1755 to 25 December 1756. Robert Gardiner sent a fan to the young Elizabeth Wedderburn, NLS, MS16735 f.13, to Lady Milton, 29 April 1766, London. Craig Beveridge identified new attitudes towards children in the decades after 1750. Craig Beveridge, 'Childhood and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', in Dwyer, et al (eds.), *New Perspectives*, p.280.

<sup>120</sup> For instance, rising dowry rates meant that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one third of Scottish aristocratic daughters remained unmarried. Hufton, *Prospect Before Her*, p.64. For unmarried women, see Bridget Hill, *Women Alone: Spinners in England 1660-1850* (New Haven and London, 2001); Amy M. Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005).

<sup>121</sup> EUL, MSS1121-2.

lack of wifely responsibilities appears to have facilitated an active commitment to reading, particularly history.<sup>122</sup>

Those who did not marry were often younger daughters, as dowry rates declined with birth-order, making them a less-attractive proposition in what could be a highly unromantic business, as the following proxy proposal of marriage suggests. Sent to Lord Milton by a daughter of Susanna, Countess of Eglinton, it solicited the hand of his second son, Captain Henry Fletcher, for the daughter of a physician at Greenwich Hospital, who had been given ‘the finest Education London Can afford.’ She wrote that ‘if he Can be plased with a prety young Lady 17 years old plays fienly on the organ and about four Thousand pound, I will use My interest for him.’<sup>123</sup> Whilst it neatly demonstrates the importance of family, money, musical accomplishments and the prestige of a London education, it is unlikely that it was taken very seriously by Henry’s parents. Marriage in this period was rarely the product of parental negotiations alone: George Innes and John Dalrymple proposed arranged marriages between their infant children in an entirely jocular manner.<sup>124</sup> Yet despite a certain degree of freedom given to young people in choosing their partners, the situation varied across families and social groups, and factors of familial expediency continued to play a role.<sup>125</sup> Most genteel marriages, if not ultimately forced on the participants, retained an element of the economic and political.

The main reason why it is unlikely that the Fletchers would have given serious consideration to this proposal is that they would have gained little from it politically. Henry’s sister Margaret, the eldest daughter of one of Scotland’s most influential political managers, seems to have been a target for those with more cynical attitudes towards marriage. A draft letter from her father advising her to accept a marriage proposal is revealing in a number of ways:

Upon enquiring into Mr Forres [?] circumstances, he has good  
3000st a year & a good tempered ~~man~~ sencible well bread man to

<sup>122</sup> See Chapter 3, p.87-9; 102-104.

<sup>123</sup> NLS, MS16689 f.2, Katie Nugent, 15 January 1754, Air. She had for some years been suffering from a form of mental illness.

<sup>124</sup> NAS, GD113/3/315/11, John Dalrymple to George Innes, 14 February 1750, Air; GD113/3/341/11, John Dalrymple to George Innes, 18 April 1751, Air; GD113/3/1058/36, Copy George Innes to John Dalrymple, 4 April 1750, Edinburgh.

<sup>125</sup> See Tanya Evans, ‘Women, marriage and the family’, in Barker and Chalus (eds.), *Women’s History*, p.63, for elements of patriarchal and companionate marriage co-existing.

~~make anybody happy & to have the~~ is possessed of what may make his wife very happy and as he has made an offer of him self to you, it is my duty to ~~tell~~ give you my ~~opinion~~ advice, ~~that~~ I think you should ~~not accept of his offer~~ not neglect so good an offer.

[...]

~~You are not so young~~ your youth will soon pass & you know well that it is not in my power to make you live comfortable after I'm dead & gone, therefore hearken to my advice & ~~if you do not yule request it but once~~ as I had your hapiness in view[.]<sup>126</sup>

Whatever his own feelings, he was aware of the inappropriateness of 'telling' her what to do, but knew that it was his role to do more than give opinion. He reminded her that her future was not hers to give away without the consent of both himself and her mother, but he was aware of the need to influence her in as delicate a way as possible. In the end, the marriage did not take place, and a few years later, in 1750, Margaret's hand was sought by John Grant of Easter Elchies, son of Patrick Grant, Lord Elchies. On this occasion, pressures exerted by Elchies seem to have played a principal role in determining her future, aided by the tact of her aunt who urged Milton that 'to meet her with Gentilness and kindness, will have more power with her, than any other method you can take, to make her obay you.'<sup>127</sup> Eventually, the pressure paid off, and within a month she was informing her father that his 'tenderness and affection have nou conquerd my former inclinations'.<sup>128</sup> Yet such compulsion was becoming increasingly rare, and when the Fletchers' youngest daughter married for love in what was a suitable marriage in all other respects too, it was viewed positively by all who commented upon it.<sup>129</sup>

Marriage generally brought with it a household to run, often with substantial numbers of servants to oversee, and sometimes major responsibilities over estates and people. Whilst trapping some, it gave others a degree of influence and authority, which could be extended through motherhood.<sup>130</sup> General Humphry Bland jokingly recommended a friend to keep clear of marriage on the grounds that 'tho' it may

<sup>126</sup> NLS, MS16513 ff.190-1, 11 August 1746.

<sup>127</sup> NLS, MS16671 ff.24, 26,28, Lord Elchies to Lord Milton, February to March 1750; MS16514 ff.150-150a, Mary Hepburn to Milton, 10 March 1750.

<sup>128</sup> NLS, MS16515 f.261, 27 March 1750.

<sup>129</sup> E.g., NLS, MS16703 f.85, Sir Henry Bellenden to Milton, 23 February 1758, Dover St; MS16520 f.19, Andrew Fletcher to Milton, 21 February 1758; MS16704 f.66, Mary Campbell to Milton, 31 January 1758, Boquhan; MS16705 ff.227-8, John Home to Milton, [London, March 1758]

<sup>130</sup> Bowers, *Politics of Motherhood*, esp. p.14.

appear sweet at first it grows Sower at last particularly when your House is encumber'd w:th a parcel of Squeal:g Brats & not much to give them'.<sup>131</sup> The main function of marriage, linked to its purpose of uniting families, was to produce children, and repeated pregnancies appear for most married women to have been an unavoidable part of life. In a letter to his mother, Robert Adam asked to be remembered to Mrs Clerk, probably his sister, Susanna Clerk of Eldin, adding:

I am Sory She is hinderd from dancing & diverting herself through the Day, as She ought Occason'd by that unlucky Accid[] that has so often befallen her, If she had lived in Italy she never woud have been Subject to these Disasters, And in France after a Certain number of Children, much inferiour to the number She has whelped, The man & wife never lye together more; a very effectual method to prevent racking Agony \_ The Husband takes a mistress & the Wife fends for herself.<sup>132</sup>

Susanna's mother-in-law Jean Clerk was surprised to find herself pregnant with her sixteenth child at around fifty years old, an age when many of her contemporaries were beginning to succumb to the illnesses of old age.<sup>133</sup> Although most women survived the hazards of multiple pregnancies, and medical advances were being made in this period, even those who took the advice of the best doctors and availed themselves of the new-fangled male midwives could die of the complications of childbirth, as did Betty Fletcher who developed what was known as milk fever, and died four days after the birth of her only daughter, despite the attendance of Drs Munro, Home & Young, some of Scotland's foremost medical experts.<sup>134</sup>

For most women, however, the onset of motherhood marked the commencement of a busy period in their lives. The practical ramifications of bringing up a large family, even with servants, should not be ignored. Isabella

<sup>131</sup> NLS, MS304 ff.98-9, Letter-book of General Humphrey Bland, Copy letter to Col. Duroure, 6 September 1748, Edinr.

<sup>132</sup> NAS, GD18/4782, 1 August 1755, Rome. For the difference between eighteenth-century France, where family limitation strategies appear to have been deployed, and Britain where they were not, see Angus McLaren, *A History of Contraception from Antiquity to the Present Day* (Oxford, 1990), pp.166-7.

<sup>133</sup> *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, 1676-1755*, ed. John M. Gray, Scottish History Society ser.1, vol.13 (Edinburgh 1892), p.146.

<sup>134</sup> NLS, MS16707 f.52, Mary Nisbet to Milton ?Curvobon Closs 8 o' clock. Frances Home was the brother-in-law of Betty's mother, and Alexander Monro was a professor of medicine at Edinburgh University, the first of a prominent medical dynasty. For the debate on maternal mortality and fears thereof, see Adrian Wilson, 'The Perils of Early Modern Procreation: Childbirth with or without Fear?', *B.JECS*, 16 (1993), pp.1-19; Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, pp.97-8.

Strange, annoyed at their intrusion on her business responsibilities, lamented, 'their noise sometimes is like thunder'.<sup>135</sup> Yet she often excused the fondness of her comments on her children as typical of mothers.<sup>136</sup> Nowhere is maternal affection more apparent than in the distress mothers expressed over the agonising issue of whether or not to inoculate their children against smallpox. Jackie Clerk reported the distress of the Countess of Glencairn, who gave up her will to that of her husband and allowed her children to be inoculated: 'I never was more Moved than at this Scene, after all was over they were brought one by one to her Room where She kiss'd & Bless'd them & pray'd God might preserve them, the infants Look'd in her face & Lordy in particular Manner Seem'd Surpriz'd at his Mother's Distress and was for Wiping her Eyes.'<sup>137</sup> Women could expect to see some, if not several, of their children and grandchildren die before them. After learning of the death of her son Adam in Jamaica, Jackie's mother Janet Clerk pleaded, 'I might never hear of or see any more of them dye for I have had enough of this world.'<sup>138</sup>

The death of Janet's son came only a few months after the loss of her husband. Women's experience of widowhood was dependent upon a number of factors, including the age at which they were widowed, family financial resources, and the widow's relationship with her children. If she had none, she was likely to find herself in an especially bad position. Janet, whose relationship with her children was generally good, and who had unmarried daughters with whom to retire to a townhouse upon her son's accession to the Clerk of Penicuik estates, was largely complacent about her status. Having been allowed to live so long, she wished to be useful, but acknowledged, 'I must own I think I am of very little use in my own family'.<sup>139</sup> Margaret Macdonald, on the other hand, had been widowed for twenty years when, devastated by the death of her eldest son Sir James, she was propelled by the ill-treatment she received at the hands of his successor, her second son, Sir Alexander, to commence repeatedly bemoaning the fate of the widow. Their

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<sup>135</sup> NLS, MS14263 f.28, to Andrew Lumisden, June 1763.

<sup>136</sup> E.g., 'as to my Infantry a mothers description of her Children is so well known and so little minded that I will not plague you with a tedious detail of that kind with which I could fill a vollom.' NLS, MS14254 f.6, to Dr Armstrong, Sepr 1761, London. Armstrong was a well-known poet and physician, see James Sambrook, 'Armstrong, John (1708/9–1779)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/660>, accessed 24 Oct 2005].

<sup>137</sup> NAS, GD18/5474/5, to John Clerk, 4 April 1751, Finlaystone.

<sup>138</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/517, 12 August 1756, M'bank.

<sup>139</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/301, 22 March 1745, p'cook.

deteriorating relationship meant that not only was she not paid her portion, but her influence over the management of much of Skye and Uist suddenly ceased, and she found herself, as she put it, ‘for the first Time of my Life indigent, & dependent without the Means of purchasing the necessary’s of life.’<sup>140</sup> Subjected in early widowhood to unusual political interference,<sup>141</sup> she had nevertheless been able to enjoy elements of the ‘maximum female autonomy’<sup>142</sup> which widowhood could bring for those with money, companionship, and ideally a townhouse. For others, widowhood could entail real uncertainty and even fear.

Propelled by a Calvinist obsession with death, and the effects of seeing so many of her friends, children and grandchildren predecease her, Janet Clerk spent many years convinced that her time to die was imminent. In 1757, she recorded in her diary that she believed she may soon be going to die for ‘I have many remembrances among others I dreamt [ ] other night that my Dear Mother said she would take me away in a coach with her on fryday’.<sup>143</sup> This rather touching dream is a reminder that death, after a long and wearied life, could have its welcoming aspects as well as the fearful. The next chapter, however, returns to the start of women’s lives, examining their upbringing and education.

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<sup>140</sup> NLS, MS1309 ff.174-5, to John Mackenzie, 24 July 1767, London.

<sup>141</sup> See Chapter 5, pp.177-9.

<sup>142</sup> Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, p.180.

<sup>143</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/538, 25 August 1757, p’cook.

## 2. Education and Upbringing

### Introduction. 'The length of doing for herself': Education for a Purpose

In the early hours of the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1752, the young George Hamilton Innes died of a consumptive illness in her mother's house in the Marquis of Tweeddale's Close near the Netherbow in Edinburgh. One of two daughters born illegitimately to George Innes of Stow to different mothers in the summer of 1742, her death prompted Innes to write a short memorandum detailing her life and the manner in which she died, which he ended with the following:

All the Expence of this Childs Birth, Maintainance, Education, Sickness, Clothing, Burial & every thing else relateing to her I have paid preceding this 9 May 1752. I have neither Scrimped nor grudged in any part of it \_ & if it had pleased God to spare her, I would have been content to set her into the World the length of doing for herself.<sup>1</sup>

Over the course of her brief existence, George Hamilton Innes had received at least some educational basics.<sup>2</sup> Had she lived longer, her education would probably have resembled that of her illegitimate half-sister, Jean Graham, who in May 1750, started at the sewing school in Ratho,<sup>3</sup> and four years later, at twelve years old, was 'Entered to stay w<sup>t</sup>. Mr Lauder Staymaster'.<sup>4</sup> She was to be taught mantua-making for three years from July 1755, and in 1759 she was sent to a pastry school to learn basic cookery skills.<sup>5</sup> As early as 1754, she had been sewing shirts for her father, and by

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<sup>1</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1001.

<sup>2</sup> Innes referred to the name 'they usually put on her School Books', NAS, GD113/4/165/1001.

<sup>3</sup> NAS, GD113/7/5, 'Material produced during a court case of Feb 1857, *In Causa Frederick Mitchell*' (illegitimate child of Gilbert Innes, son of George Innes), Expenses for George and Jean, 1750, 5 May. By July, he was noting that she continued to attend every day, 'tho' with greater reluctance now than at the beginning', GD113/3/325/13, John Graham to George Innes, 19 July 1750, Ratho. She was still attending the sewing school two years later, GD113/4/165/1112, 22 May 1752, 'Jean's sewing school fees.' During this time she was 'perfected' in 'White Seem' by Mary Fergus, GD113/4/165/1108, 17 September 1754, and given writing lessons, see n.50 below.

<sup>4</sup> NAS, GD113/7/5, Expenses for George and Jean, 1754, 10 May. She continued to board with him until at least 1758. GD113/3/1156/16, Receipt Jean Graham to William Lauder, including board, dated 3 June 1758.

<sup>5</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1105, William Lauder paid Elizabeth Irvine, mantua maker, four pounds sterling to teach Jean 'Mantua making for the Space of Three years from 5 July 1755', see also GD113/7/5, 8 July 1755; GD113/7/5, 16 June 1759, 'Gave Jean for Pastrie Scholl &c, 2 - -.' For girls' cookery instruction, see Alexander Law, *Education in Edinburgh in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1965), pp.186-7.

1759, he was paying her to do this.<sup>6</sup> Jean's education had been practical in its aims, to enable her to support herself in adult life.<sup>7</sup> Yet although the necessity to be able to 'do for themselves' may have been most pressing for illegitimate or less fortunate daughters who were not provided for in a marriage contract, this chapter argues that, no matter how seemingly impractical, all girls' education is best understood in the light of the intention to prepare girls to 'do for themselves' in whatever roles they were expected to fill in later life.

The historiography of women's education in eighteenth-century Britain is surprisingly thin; 'a virtual desert', to quote one recent commentator.<sup>8</sup> The Scottish situation is even worse.<sup>9</sup> Whilst a number of older, more general works shed some light on women's education in this period,<sup>10</sup> Susan Skedd's unpublished DPhil thesis on 'The Education of Women in Hanoverian Britain, c.1760-1820' is rare in its use of new archival sources to attempt to contextualise and revise this older scholarship,<sup>11</sup> probably because such sources tend to be elusive.<sup>12</sup> The work of

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<sup>6</sup> NAS, GD113/3/424/4, John Graham to George Innes, 2 October 1754, Ratho; GD113/7/5, Expenses for George and Jean, 1759, 27 February, 'Gave Jean for making 5 shirts'.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Sanderson believed subsistence, above marriage prospects, was the most important reason for educating girls in this way. Elizabeth C. Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh* (Basingstoke, 1996), p.85. For girls' mantua-making apprenticeships, see *ibid.*, pp.90-1.

<sup>8</sup> Deborah Simonton, 'Women and Education', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850. An Introduction* (London and New York, 2005), p.33. Simonton presented a good overview of recent scholarship.

<sup>9</sup> Lindy Moore, 'Education and Learning', in Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon, Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes Yeo (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2006), claimed that eighteenth-century women's education 'await[s] investigation', p.111. Yet, if not new, some research has been carried out in this area, see Law, *Education in Edinburgh*, esp. chapter 5, 'Private schools and private teachers'; Rosalind K. Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980* (London, 1983), chapter 10.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, Josephine Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girls' education in English history* (London, 1965); Mary Cathcart Borer, *Willingly to School: A History of Women's Education* (Guildford and London, 1976). Women are considered in Rosemary O' Day, *Education and Society 1500-1800: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain* (London and New York, 1982), a survey weighted towards the seventeenth century, and Margaret E. Bryant, *The London Experience of Secondary Education* (London and New Jersey, 1986). For even older work, see Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School: A Study of Women's Education through Twelve Centuries* (London, 1929); Nicholas Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1951), chapter 10.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Skedd, 'The Education of Women in Hanoverian Britain, c. 1760-1820', (Oxford University DPhil thesis, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> A scarcity of sources on girls' education is implied in Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), pp.343-4, n.86. Significantly, Simone Clarke's unpublished PhD thesis, 'Aspects of Female Gentility in Eighteenth-Century North Wales' (University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999) was initially conceived as a study of women's education in early modern Wales, but took its final form (which devotes only a short section of a chapter on 'Cultivation and Erudition' to education), partly due to the lack of sources and background research required. *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.



Michèle Cohen, although concerned largely with the later eighteenth century, and, on the whole, text-based rather than archival, maintains an awareness of the place of gender in analyses of education, and may open up new directions of scholarship in this field.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps because of this lack of source material, studies have tended to focus less on women's education than on 'educated' women, the highly atypical few who received elements of a male, classically-derived schooling.<sup>14</sup> Recently, however, following on perhaps from Linda Pollock's emphasis on education as individual 'life-role' socialisation,<sup>15</sup> women's historians have begun to argue for the redefinition of the 'educated' woman. In a rare collection of scholarship concerned specifically with women's education in this period, Barbara J. Whitehead argued that:

education is to accomplish a social task, to define the worth, value, and responsibility of the individual in society. To be an educated woman was to have learned the skill necessary to accomplish her social task [...] To be an 'educated' woman was to fulfil a social idea; this was an idea valued by society, but nonetheless distinct from the definition of what it meant to be an educated man.<sup>16</sup>

A similar definition has been proposed by Deborah Simonton, who, with reference to the schooling of impoverished girls, notes the need, 'to identify the important features of that educative experience, instead of subsuming them within a male constructed society with male definitions of significance'.<sup>17</sup> Most recently, Michèle

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<sup>13</sup> In particular, Michèle Cohen, "'To think, to compare, to combine, to methodise": Girls' Education in Enlightenment Britain', in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2005). See also Cohen, 'French Conversation or "Glittering Gibberish"? Learning French in Eighteenth-Century England', in Natasha Glaisyer and Sara Pennell (eds.), *Didactic Literature in England, 1500-1800: Expertise Constructed* (Aldershot, 2003); Cohen, 'Gender and the Private/Public Debate on Education in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Richard Aldrich (ed.), *Public or Private Education? Lessons from History* (London and Portland, OR, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Sylvia Harcstark Myers, *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-century England* (Oxford, 1990); Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago and London, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> See also Linda Pollock, "'Teach her to live under obedience": The Making of Women in the Upper Ranks of Early Modern England, *Continuity and Change*, 4:2 (1989), esp pp.235, 248.

<sup>16</sup> Barbara J. Whitehead (ed.), *Women's Education in Early Modern Europe: A History, 1500-1800* (New York and London, 1999), p.xv, also p.xii.

<sup>17</sup> Deborah Simonton, 'Schooling the Poor: Gender and Class in Eighteenth-Century England', *BJECS*, 23, (2000), p.183. Elsewhere, Simonton acknowledged the 'less formal' context of education, 'Women and Education', p.34. See also, Jane Roland Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman* (New Haven and London, 1985), p.179: 'If conversation about women's education is to be incorporated in the history of educational thought, the definition of that discipline's

Cohen has pointed out the need to reconsider uncritical assumptions, for instance, about the superiority of male education, and the devaluation of education in the home.<sup>18</sup> In agreement with such views, this chapter argues that the education of women must be understood in terms of the society in which it was undertaken, and that the blanket interpretation of ‘education’ which historians have tended to use is deeply anachronistic.

A wider-ranging concept of ‘education’ is reinforced by contemporaries. In the 1755 edition of his *Dictionary of the English Language*, Samuel Johnson defined ‘to educate’ as ‘to breed; to bring up; to instruct youth’, whilst ‘education’ was the ‘formation of manners in youth; the manner of breeding youth; nurture.’<sup>19</sup> For Johnson, education was social. Only when it is acknowledged that basic academic learning, or ‘instruction’, as it was then termed, cannot be disentangled from the other, less formal aspects of a child’s upbringing, can formal educational experiences be properly understood. Focusing on this social interpretation of education reflecting Johnson’s ‘formation of manners’, this chapter examines the educational experiences of the daughters of the mid-eighteenth-century Scottish gentry, and asks what these experiences were intended to achieve. It starts off by asking what girls were taught, and why, before moving on to consider educational experience in a broader sense, examining a case-study of London boarding-school education as a form of prestige. It ends with a section considering women’s access to aspects of education beyond the conventions of what was deemed socially necessary, and asks what purpose this could serve.

### ‘The Different Parts of a Girls Education’

In 1739, in a series of letters to be copied by his daughter Margaret, Professor Alexander Monro *Primus* set out a programme of education for a young gentlewoman, offering his opinions on that which such girls usually received. ‘Girls

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subject matter must be expanded to include the processes of society with which women’s lives have historically been intertwined.’

<sup>18</sup> Cohen, “‘To think, to compare’”, esp. pp.225, 237-8.

<sup>19</sup> Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755), vol.1. Legally, too, the term implied girls’ general upbringing. Negotiating the marriage contract of her daughter Mary, Margaret Carnegie desired ‘she may be burthened with alimending and educating of their children the daughters till they be maried and the sons till they be the Age of eighteen or otherwayes provided.’ NLS, MS16504 f.205, to Andrew Fletcher, 24 November 1719, Salton.

of your Station', he wrote, 'are generally taught Reading, Writing, Arithmetick, Dancing, Musick, Sowing with all the other Parts of what is called Women's work, Dressing, Repetitions of some pious Performances'.<sup>20</sup> Monro's summary of 'the different Parts of a Girls Education' stressed basic literacy and numeracy; needlework and domestic economy skills; the polite accomplishments, and an emphasis on piety. Sadly, whilst parents and guardians invested substantial time and consideration in planning and discussing boys' education and preparing them for a career, often only one or two lines, or a couple of receipts, remain to give an insight into their sisters' education.<sup>21</sup> Yet what little does exist suggests that girls could expect to receive at least the basics of instruction outlined by Monro, generally with some additional elements which he himself recommended.<sup>22</sup> This section examines what constituted these 'different Parts of a Girls Education', and asks how they helped to prepare a girl for her future roles.

Girls' earliest education took place in the home, at the hands of their mothers or other female relatives. Although largely unrecorded in the Scottish archives, the expectation remained that girls would grow up to manage households, and needlework, cookery and household management continued to be handed down from mother to daughter by example, experience and word of mouth, in a domestic setting.<sup>23</sup> Thus in 1760, at the age of eleven, Janet Dick was deemed capable of receiving a weekly annuity and being responsible for the keeping the house-book in order during her mother's illness.<sup>24</sup> By around five years old, girls were stitching their samplers and learning plain sewing, the notion that a woman's fingers should never be idle early introduced into girls' experience.<sup>25</sup> During the ten months from

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<sup>20</sup> Alexander Monro (Primus), 'The Professor's Daughter: An Essay on female Conduct', ed. P.A.G. Monro, *Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 26:1, supplement no.2 (January 1996), p.9.

<sup>21</sup> In the NLS Minto papers, for instance, there are several volumes of correspondence devoted entirely to the education in England, France and Scotland of Isabella Elliot's two eldest brothers, but there survives today barely a mention of her own development between infancy and the onset of her own correspondence as a young woman in the 1770s.

<sup>22</sup> Monro, 'Essay on female Conduct', p.9.

<sup>23</sup> John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alexander Allardyce, (Edinburgh, 1888), vol.2, p.59, highlighted the centrality of family management to early eighteenth-century girls' education.

<sup>24</sup> NAS, GD331/5/11, Janet Dick to Sir Alexander Dick, 8 March 1760, Prestonfield.

<sup>25</sup> Some time in the 1770s, Beatrix Maxwell reported of her nieces aged seven and five, 'the girls are taught at home yet, Fanny can read very well & has Sowed her Sampler & can Sow Some plain Work,

September 1756 the eight-year-old Jean Innes spent boarding with the Reverend Hary Spens and his family, she was kept busy making stockings of an evening. Whilst doing so, she took turns with Spens' son Jack at reading aloud.<sup>26</sup> The philosopher George Turnbull's belief that no child was too young to benefit from the integration of elements of instruction into her experience<sup>27</sup> reflected widespread practice, and the anonymous author of *Education of Young Children* (1742) believed that 'when a child can talk, 'tis time he shou'd read'.<sup>28</sup> Alison Cockburn (born 1713) was unable to remember having had a formal lesson as she 'was begun so early and so easily'.<sup>29</sup> At four-and-a-half years old, Jean Graham was learning her alphabet from a book<sup>30</sup> and by five was 'beginning to read her spelling book & Catechism tolerably well'.<sup>31</sup> Two years later, Innes responded to her uncle's request to buy her 'Dyckes Guide to the English Tongue'.<sup>32</sup> Concerned chiefly with pronunciation, in particular the placing of stress on the correct syllables, this would help her to read aloud fluently and make a practical contribution to domestic sociability.<sup>33</sup>

Reading also enabled girls to receive moral instruction from the Bible, and, as John Graham suggested, to learn their catechism.<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Mure, writing of girls' education in the early part of the century, believed 'The chief thing required was to hear them repeat Psalms and long catechisms, in which the were employed an hour

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Barbara is learning her Sampler & can read tolerably for her years'. NAS, GD113/4/66D, to Mrs Innes in Edr, 22 July, [n.y. (prob. 1770s)] Pollock.

<sup>26</sup> NAS, GD113/3/467/4, Hary Spens to George Innes, 21 September 1756; GD113/3/467/17, Hary Spens to George Innes, 27 September 1756, Wemyss.

<sup>27</sup> George Turnbull, *The Principles of Moral Philosophy. An Enquiry into the Wise and Good Government of the Moral World* (London, 1740), vol.1, p.450.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Victor E. Neuberg, *Popular Education in Eighteenth Century England* (London, 1971), p.57.

<sup>29</sup> 'A Short Account of a Long Life' Written 10 May 1784 Dedicated to the Rev Mr Douglas of Galashiels, in *Letters and Memoir of her own Life, by Mrs Alison Rutherford or Cockburn*, with notes by T. Craig-Brown (Edinburgh, 1900), pp.1-2. Her father taught her arithmetic the same way.

<sup>30</sup> 'She can say the alfebeat exce[ ] the letter R She Cannot pronounce it but calls it L She is to bring her Book with her you may hear her say it over.' NAS, GD113/5/385/17, Elizabeth Graham to George Innes, 20 March 1747. In the seventeenth century, Ralph Josselin's daughter Anne was "'to learn her book"' (probably ABC and primer)' aged 3 years and 10 months. O'Day, *Education and Society*, p.52. See also Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, p.90.

<sup>31</sup> NAS, GD113/3/3268/6, John Graham to George Innes, 4 October 1747.

<sup>32</sup> NAS, GD113/3/311/18, John Graham to George Innes, [November 1749]. GD113/7/5, Expenses for George and Jean, 1749, records the purchase of the 34<sup>th</sup> edition of Thomas Dyche, *A Guide to the English Tongue* (1<sup>st</sup> edn., London, 1707).

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 3, pp.86-7.

<sup>34</sup> Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, p.90.

or more every day, and almost the whole day on Sunday.’<sup>35</sup> In 1756, Hary Spens still regarded the catechism as vital, noting approvingly at the end of Jean Innes’ first week with him that ‘Yesternight along wt. our boys she went through the questions of the Catechism most distinctly & we shall take care that she shall not forget them’.<sup>36</sup> This was not just the preoccupation of a church minister: Jean Graham’s uncle informed Innes, ‘I do not omitt any opportunity of causing her get by heart the shorter & Mother’s Catechism, and some of the Psalms in Metre’.<sup>37</sup> Religion remained at the heart of girls’ education, essential to the moral responsibilities they would hold as mothers. Through the catechism they were taught the beliefs which lay at the core of their society’s moral code, not only to mould their own characters, but to ensure the continuation of this code in subsequent generations. Hence Andrew Fletcher recollected that his grandmother Lady Saltoun ‘first laid that happy foundation of religion, without which all things are but nothing,’ whilst James Boswell lamented the ‘gloomiest doctrines’ of Calvinism with which his mother catechised him.<sup>38</sup>

The following passage, made into a label for Marion Innes’ travelling trunk, suggests the seriousness with which learning the catechism was taken:

This Trunk is bestow’d by Mr Innes upon his Daughter Marion as a Reward for haveing got by heart & now said without Book the Answers of all the Questions in the Shorter Catechism & under Condition that she is not to forget them, And she agrees to the Condition & says that if she fail in repeating them Readdily withough Book at any time after recovering 3 days nottice to prepare for it then she shall return this trunk to be sold or disposed of as her father shall think ffitt.<sup>39</sup>

This emphasis on rote learning ensured the training of a child’s memory, providing a sound basis for the rest of her education. Faith and morality could be reinforced

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Mure, ‘Some Remarks on the Change of Manners in my Own Time. 1700-1790’, in *Selections from the Family Papers Preserved at Caldwell*, ed. W. Mure, Maitland Club, 71 (Glasgow, 1854), vol.1, p.262.

<sup>36</sup> NAS, GD113/3/466/8, 6 September 1756.

<sup>37</sup> NAS, GD113/3/409/13, 9 January 1757, Ratho.

<sup>38</sup> NLS, MS16511 f.64, to Milton, 26 August 1740, Oxford; *James Boswell: The Earlier Years 1740-69*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle (London, 1966), p.2. For Mure, ‘Religion was just recovered from the power of the Devil and fear of Hell, taught by our mothers and grandmothers.’ ‘Change of Manners’, p.269.

<sup>39</sup> NAS, GD113/3/1078/13, Copy of Label on Marion’s Trunk, December 1751.

from many angles. One wintry Sunday, Jean Innes and her tutor's son were not taken to church, but instead employed in 'writing a piece of a Psalm; and in the evening they read by turns in the Bible – History & said over the Catechism'.<sup>40</sup> On another occasion Spens noted approvingly that Jean brought home from church 'a most excellent note of the Sermon.'<sup>41</sup> If influenced by Jean's position in the household of a Presbyterian minister, such instances nevertheless aptly illustrate the way in which religious and moral instruction continued to provide a framework on which other learning was hung.

Only once children could read fluently were they taught to write.<sup>42</sup> Thus, in February 1743 the eleven-year-old Betty Fletcher proudly ended a laboriously-crafted short note to her father with the postscript, 'This is misses own hand'.<sup>43</sup> Hary Spens' first mention of his plans for the eight-year-old Jean Innes was that 'she Shows a disposition for learning to write, & we are setting her to it',<sup>44</sup> and she attended writing masters prior to the commencement of the school at Wemyss.<sup>45</sup> It would appear that this was about as early as girls were taught to write,<sup>46</sup> girls' relatively advanced age and the deployment of professional masters indicating the seriousness with which it was treated as a skill or accomplishment. As with other areas of formal instruction, girls were taught either at home or in classes in town, lessons taking place two or three times a week, concentrated in the winter months which families spent in town. Betty Fletcher's elder sisters, Peggy and Mally, were taught for three to three-and-a-half months by William Grainger in the winters of 1737 and 1738, and the spring of 1741, alongside their younger brothers in Edinburgh.<sup>47</sup> In 1737, Peggy was thirteen years old and Mally was eleven, yet the

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<sup>40</sup> NAS, GD113/3/476/11, Hary Spens to George Innes, 10 January 1757, Wemyss.

<sup>41</sup> NAS, GD113/3/474/6, to George Innes, 29 November 1756, Wemyss.

<sup>42</sup> Hary Spens told George Innes to 'tell Mr Gibbie [Innes's son, Gilbert] from me, that he must first be a fine reader before he can begin to the writing.' NAS, GD113/3/477/4, 25 January 1757, Wemyss. In *The Christian School-Master* (1707), the Rev. James Talbott ascertained writing was only to be begun 'when children could read "competantly well"'. Quoted in Neuberg, *Popular Education*, p.57.

<sup>43</sup> NLS, MS16512 f.83, 14 February 1743 [London].

<sup>44</sup> NAS, GD113/3/466/8, to George Innes, 6 September 1756.

<sup>45</sup> NAS, GD113/3/470/3, Hary Spens to George Innes, 18 October 1756, Wemyss; GD113/3/471/14, Hary Spens to George Innes, [October 1756, Wemyss].

<sup>46</sup> The earliest mention of Jean Graham's writing dates from when she was seven. NAS, GD113/3/308/11, John Graham to George Innes, 3 October 1749, Ratho.

<sup>47</sup> NLS, MS16864 f.166; MS16865 f.160; MS16868 f.176.

existence of a letter from Peggy dated 1734 is a reminder of the length of time deemed necessary to master correct writing.<sup>48</sup>

George Innes was greatly concerned with the writing skills of both his legitimate and illegitimate daughters.<sup>49</sup> He even appears to have bought Jean Graham, who laboured under a repressed left-handedness over which her mother was already despairing when the child was so young she was only pretending to write, a writing desk.<sup>50</sup> The year after the desk was purchased, Jean's uncle wondered whether Innes would be willing to buy 'Snell's or Clark's writing books', which provided examples of moralising texts or bills and accounts in a variety of hands for young people to copy. As Graham acknowledged, however, they were expensive, and there is no evidence that Innes bought them for his daughter.<sup>51</sup> Snell advised his readers that their handwriting should be 'as *Legible, Expedious, and Beautiful*' as possible.<sup>52</sup> Essentially a practical skill, which Jean Innes could have expected to need to write bills and receipts, writing was also an essential ingredient of polite education. As Peter Motteux put it in his poem *The Pen*:

An artless Scrawl, the blushing Scribbler shames  
All shou'd be Fair that Beauteous Woman frames.<sup>53</sup>

The marked inability to form characters and lack of grammatical knowledge which characterises many of the extant letters of the grandmothers and even mothers of this generation reinforces Mure's claim that 'Reading and writing well or even spelling

<sup>48</sup> MS16509 f.179, to Lady Milton, 13 December 1734.

<sup>49</sup> Jean Graham's uncle regularly sent examples of her writing, accompanied by letters in which he despaired of her lack of progress. E.g., NAS, GD113/3/296/3, 20 April 1749, Ratho; GD113/3/313/5, December 1749 (in which he noted some progress); GD113/3/319/2, 14 April 1750, Ratho; GD113/3/325/13, 19 July 1750, Ratho; GD113/3/388/13, 22 March 1753, Ratho; GD113/3/409/13, 9 January 1754, Ratho. For Jean Innes, see e.g. NAS, GD113/3/472/19, Hary Spens to George Innes, 15 November 1756, Wemyss; GD113/3/482, as above, 29 March 1757.

<sup>50</sup> NAS, GD113/3/309/10, John Graham to George Innes, 18 October 1749, Ratho. For her left-handedness, see GD113/5/385/17, Elizabeth Graham to George Innes, 20 March 1747, and GD113/5/385/18, 21 March 1747, as above. She attended a writing school whilst apprenticed to William Lauder. GD113/4/165/1097, account of George Innes to William Lauder, 19 December 1754, includes 'Coals for the writing School, 1Sh 6d'. There are also accounts for two quarters' writing instruction by Robert Dewar, from 13 May 1754, GD113/4/1110 and 1106.

<sup>51</sup> NAS, GD113/3/330/8, John Graham to George Innes, 9 October 1750, Ratho. These are Charles Snell, *The Art of Writing in It's [sic] Theory and Practice* (London, 1712) (advertised for 5s by its publishers in 1739), and John Clark, *Writing Improv'd; or, Penmanship made easy ... With various examples of all the hands now practis'd in Great Britain* (London, 1714).

<sup>52</sup> Snell, *Art of Writing*, 'General Directions.'

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in prefatory material to Snell, *Art of Writing*.

was never thought off' in these earlier generations.<sup>54</sup> Yet as the dictates of sociability extended to include paper, an ability to write not just legibly and grammatically,<sup>55</sup> but in a fine cursive style and with articulate expression was becoming a prerequisite of gentility amongst women.

Teachers of writing also taught arithmetic and accounts. Jean Innes had at least one quarter's paid arithmetic lessons with a Mr Ewing,<sup>56</sup> and aged ten was also being taught at home by her uncle, who reported, 'I have begun her the Arithmetic, in which she makes a tolerable good proficiency [...] She has gone through Addition of Money and several Sorts of Measure and Weights, and is come in to subtraction.'<sup>57</sup> Already attending the sewing school during the day, numerical proficiency would be a prerequisite for her work as a mantua-maker, but women across the social spectrum had to make business transactions, to deal with weights and measures, and to keep household accounts.<sup>58</sup> Monro urged his daughter to get enough knowledge of these things 'as might enable you to put pertinent Questions when you ask Advice about Business and to prevent your being imposed upon in the most common affairs.'<sup>59</sup> As well as a belief that the correct keeping of books would ensure the financial well-being of the household, women's ability to keep accounts can be read as a wider metaphor for their ability to regulate themselves.<sup>60</sup> Both writing and book-keeping had performative elements, enabling girls to display their

<sup>54</sup> Mure, 'Change of Manners', p.262.

<sup>55</sup> Linda C. Mitchell, *Grammar Wars: Language as Cultural Battlefield in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century England* (Aldershot, 2001), pp.141-153, examines girls' grammar books. The only reference to girls' grammatical learning in these sources is a comment of John Graham's that he would 'endeavour to make known to [Jean] the Nature of the English Nouns and Verbs', NAS, GD113/3/409/13, to George Innes, 9 January 1754, Ratho. Ninety-four 'Female Scholars', including Jean Innes, are appended to GUL, Y4-h.27, *List of Scholars educated by the late Mr James Mundell, Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1789), pp.23-6. Whilst in *Education in Edinburgh*, p.162, Law cited Mundell as a classics teacher, in 'Teachers in Edinburgh in the Eighteenth Century', *BOEC*, 32 (1966), p.145, he listed him as 'Teacher of a private grammar school'. Thus it is more likely that these girls were being taught grammar than classics.

<sup>56</sup> NAS, GD113/7/5, 26 July 1759. Ewing, who published *Institutes of Arithmetic* (Edinburgh, 1773), taught 'mathematics, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, surveying, navigation, geography, etc.', Law, 'Teachers in Edinburgh', p.125.

<sup>57</sup> NAS, GD113/3/409/13, John Graham to George Innes, 9 January 1754, Ratho.

<sup>58</sup> Accounting formed part of the expensive London education of Lady Betty Hope, daughter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Hopetoun. NRAS888 Marquises of Linlithgow, Box 59/1, 'School expenses for Lady Betty Hope, 1749'.

<sup>59</sup> Monro, 'Essay on Female Conduct', p.18.

<sup>60</sup> Rebecca Elizabeth Connor, *Women, Accounting, and Narrative: Keeping Books in Eighteenth-Century England* (London and New York, 2004), pp.43-4 for financial well-being; chapter 1 for the general discussion of these ideas.



physical and mental regularity through their ability to form attractive, regular shapes and patterns.

Girls had to learn to express themselves not just on paper, but through conversation.<sup>61</sup> Thus Alexander Monro, whilst emphasising the use of history as conduct literature, recommended its study as ‘it affords good Subject of Conversation’ adding that, ‘Whoever intends to read any History even the common news Papers’ ought to know some geography.<sup>62</sup> For Charles Withers, ‘geography was a means to polite education, a way of promoting sociability through description of foreign countries, informed use of the globes and measured discussion of maps.’<sup>63</sup> Polite sociability demanded that women were expected to know more of the world in which they lived than had been previously necessary, and whilst instruction in areas like history and geography does not necessarily appear in accounts and bills,<sup>64</sup> this tended to form part of a more general plan of education to be gained from reading. Hary Spens proposed such a plan for Jean Innes, encompassing ‘some History of the Bible with prints of the more remarkable pieces of history’, ‘some little book containing the history of the Heathen Gods’, national and ancient history, geography with an emphasis on God the creator; ancient and modern poetry and then-fashionable novels.<sup>65</sup> He acknowledged he was ‘launching out too far’ with this ambitious scheme of reading, but in his enthusiasm he presented the elements of received knowledge and ancient and modern literature, acquaintance with which would prepare a child to take her place in the drawing rooms of enlightenment Scotland.

Yet there she would be required to perform in other ways. Alongside practical concerns like ‘Washing gauzes’, ‘Boning fowls’ and ‘Pickling and colouring’, an advertisement in the *Edinburgh Gazette* of 1703 for a school near

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<sup>61</sup> For James Barclay, ‘reading with an eye to conversation’ was ‘the greatest occasion most people have for education.’ *A Treatise on Education: Or, An easy method of acquiring Language, and Introducing children to the knowledge of History, Geography, Mythology, Antiquities, &c* (Edinburgh, 1743), p.193. For conversation, see Chapter 4, pp.118-124.

<sup>62</sup> Monro, ‘Essay on Female Conduct’, p.19. For reading history, see Chapter 3, pp.99-108.

<sup>63</sup> Charles W. J. Withers, *Geography, Science and National Identity: Scotland since 1520* (Cambridge, 2001), p.123.

<sup>64</sup> An early exception is Grisie, daughter of Grisel Baillie, who was taught geography in 1710. *The Household Book of Lady Grisel Baillie, 1692-1733*, ed. Robert Scott-Moncrieff, SHS ser.2, vol.1 (Edinburgh, 1911), p.21. It also featured in the expensive London education of Lady Betty Hope.

<sup>65</sup> NAS, GD113/3/475/1, to George Innes, 13 December 1756, Wemyss.

Dundee emphasised decorative crafts like ‘wax-work, ‘philligrim-work’ and ‘Japan-work’.<sup>66</sup> Long a feature of aristocratic, courtly society, the ability to sing, play, dance, draw and speak French, had, by the mid-eighteenth century, become expected of a much wider constituency of elite women, entrance into polite society essentially contingent upon proficiency in these ‘polite qualifications’, as Robert Adam termed them.<sup>67</sup> Through such activities, girls demonstrated their possession of ‘taste’, an amorphous but socially differentiating quality which, for James Barclay, was demonstrated in ‘a certain graceful ease, beyond the power of art, which is informed by the soul, and directed by the natural sentiments of a noble mind.’<sup>68</sup> If, from a young age, girls were taught to dance or sing, to appreciate music or painting, this would become an intuitive habit accompanying them throughout their lives.<sup>69</sup>

Dancing was perhaps the most universal accomplishment. Alexander Monro’s opinion that ‘the Customs of the Times have made it to be thought a necessary Accomplishment to all who are any Degree above the meer vulgar’<sup>70</sup> is supported by the attendance of the apprentice staymaker Jean Graham at a ‘Publick and the ball’ in 1755, as a preparation for which she had attended classes.<sup>71</sup> Essential to the courtship ritual which demanded participation in balls and assemblies, dancing provided a context for young women to exhibit their elegance of posture and control of carriage. Dances had to be learnt and order maintained, demonstrating dancers’ awareness of the latest fashions and creating ‘a visual affirmation of social position’<sup>72</sup> reinforced through the prestige of the dancing-master attended. In Edinburgh, Pierre La Motte seems to have reigned supreme as dancing master, teaching the Fletcher girls and Agnes Murray Kynynmound.<sup>73</sup> When a dancing

<sup>66</sup> Robert Chambers, *Traditions of Edinburgh* (London and Edinburgh, 1868; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1825), pp.253-4.

<sup>67</sup> He referred to singing and dancing as his two ‘polite qualifications’, NAS, GD18/4739, to Nelly Adam, 11 May 1753, Fort George.

<sup>68</sup> Barclay, *Treatise on Education*, p.155.

<sup>69</sup> Turnbull, *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, vol.1, p.99.

<sup>70</sup> Monro, *Essay on female Conduct*, p.11.

<sup>71</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1096, Account Jean Graham to Wm Lauder, 1755; GD113/7/5, 14 October 1754, ‘Pd Mr Lauder to give Mr Picque for ¼ Jean’s dancing to be entered tomorrow’. It was also probably the earliest accomplishment to be expected of Scotswomen, Elizabeth Mure believing it was one of the few aspects of education deemed important to early-eighteenth-century girls, ‘Change of Manners’, p.263. See *Household Book of Lady Grisel Baillie*, pp.6-7, 12, 14, 32-3, for Grisell and Rachel Baillie’s dancing lessons, 1701-1715.

<sup>72</sup> Leppert, *Music and Image*, p.71; ch.5 in general.

<sup>73</sup> NLS, MS16585 f.165, To Peter La Motte, Mally & Peggy, 3 months to June 1737 @ £1, 1, - per month, ‘Teaching both the Ladys One Month in the School from the 25<sup>th</sup> May 1738’; MS16868 f.175,

master ('one of the best of the kind that visets Country Towns') set up in Wemyss, Jean Innes was enthusiastic, and began 'to practice the Dance'.<sup>74</sup> Spens agreed with her father that too much 'might do more hurt than Good',<sup>75</sup> an excessive fondness for dancing associated with a laxity at odds with the control it would ideally provide the opportunity to demonstrate. But he acknowledged that some knowledge of dancing was essential for the young gentlewoman. As Jean practiced dancing of an evening with her young friends,<sup>76</sup> she was rehearsing the skills which defined her gentility and which would be necessary as she negotiated her future place in polite society.

By the 1740s, music and singing were becoming similarly popular amongst the genteel.<sup>77</sup> Whilst Robert Adam was endeavouring to climb the social ladder in Italy, he encouraged his sister Nelly in taking lessons from Niccolo Pasquali to enhance her natural enthusiasm for music, urging her to spare no expense in this, one of several ways in which his family could advance their claim to gentility.<sup>78</sup> As one contemporary observed, music 'is most to be esteemed in *women*, and in women of fortune and polite education; for others can hardly find time to apply to it.'<sup>79</sup> Keyboard instruments were the most popular for women, their ownership denoting wealth and status,<sup>80</sup> but Nelly Adam's performance of Italian airs demonstrated skills only the genteel had time or money to acquire. As performance signalled comprehension, it signified a degree of understanding available only to the elite, for

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11 July 1741, Edinr, To teaching Miss Fletcher Dancing Two months at one Guinea pr. Month £2, 2, 0, Teaching Miss Mally for Do/ @Do Do, 2 tickets for ball £0, 10, 0 & servant £0, 2, 0; For Agnes, see NLS MS12950 ff.102, 135. Lamotte also taught Cosmo George and Charles, sons of the Duchess of Gordon, in the 1730s. Barbara L. H. Horn, *Domestic Life of a Duke: Cosmo George, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Gordon* (Edinburgh University PhD thesis, 1977), pp.180-181. Janet Dick recorded attending La Motte's ball aged eleven in 1760, NAS, GD331/5/11, to Sir Alexander Dick, 8 March 1760, Prestonfield. Frenchmen were the most sought-after dancing masters, Leppert, *Music and Image*, p.76.

<sup>74</sup> NAS, GD113/3/471/14, Hary Spens to George Innes, [October 1756, Wemyss].

<sup>75</sup> NAS, GD113/3/472/10, Hary Spens to George Innes, 9 November 1756, Wemyss.

<sup>76</sup> NAS, GD113/3/478/11, Hary Spens to George Innes, 8 February 1757, Wemyss.

<sup>77</sup> For the musical education of daughters, see Helen Goodwill, 'The Musical Involvement of the Landed Classes in Eastern Scotland, 1685-1760' (Edinburgh University PhD thesis, 2000).

<sup>78</sup> E.g. NAS, GD18/4746, to Nelly Adam in Canongate, [London]; GD18/4773, to Nelly Adam, 24 May 1755, Rome; GD18/4780, to Betty Adam, 19 July 1755, Rome. 'An Impartial and Genuine List of the Ladys on the Whig or Jacobite Partie', NLS, MS293, f.3, lists her as 'a good singer'. Pasquali was brought to Scotland by the Edinburgh Musical Society in 1753, Jennifer Macleod, 'The Edinburgh Musical Society: Its Membership and Repertoire 1728-1797,' (Edinburgh University PhD thesis, 2001), p.142. He died in 1757.

<sup>79</sup> Jonas Hanway, *Thoughts on the Use and Advantages of Music, and Other Amusements Most in Esteem in the Polite World* (London, 1765), quoted in Leppert, *Music and Image*, p.45.

<sup>80</sup> Leppert, *Music and Image*, p.154.



as John Gregory recognised, what would now be termed classical music was ‘for the learned in the science.’<sup>81</sup> In London, Betty Fletcher was initially ‘to learn every think but Musick,’<sup>82</sup> but bills show she received lessons on the spinet, and it was almost exclusively on her musical development that family and friends commentated as her ability to sing brought her to the notice of the opinion-makers of the polite world.<sup>83</sup>

Alexander Carlyle imputed the ‘ungainly manners’ of women in 1740s Glasgow to the lack of teachers of not just music, but French. Alison Cockburn wrote of learning ‘Dancing, French, etc., in the common course’,<sup>84</sup> but the travel memoirs of both Margaret Steuart Calderwood and Frances Steuart Denham make it clear that they were unable to speak French at the time they went abroad.<sup>85</sup> By the late 1730s and early 1740s, the Fletcher girls were being taught French by Mons. Demainbray, and this continued when the youngest, Betty, had returned from London, and the older girls were approaching their twenties.<sup>86</sup> The ability to read French provided access to a wider array of print, but teaching tended to focus on pronunciation, ensuring girls could correctly pronounce the occasional French word

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<sup>81</sup> Quoted in David Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1972), p.4.

<sup>82</sup> NLS, MS16590 f.45, Lady Somerville to Milton, 4 February 1741/2, London.

<sup>83</sup> NLS, MS16723 f.31, includes bills for singing lessons and tuning the spinet. Expenses for Miss Fletcher from January to April 1745. MS16592 f.7, Sir James Carnegie to Milton, 22 November 1743, London, ‘Tell my Lady that Bess [...] Sings and plays, to admiration, So I was told yesterday by Miss Coutts who is a very good Judge and performs.’; MS16595 f.189, Somerville to Milton, 20 December 1743: ‘Miss Fletcher [...] Sung ye other night to a Lady that was here \_ and the best judge in England’; MS16595 f.190, Somerville to Milton, 22 December 1743. It appears at least one of her sisters was receiving lessons in singing and spinet from Mr Palma in Edinburgh in 1741. NLS, MS16868 f.178. Palma does not appear in Law, ‘Teachers in Edinburgh’.

<sup>84</sup> Cockburn, ‘Short Account of a Long Life’, p.2.

<sup>85</sup> Margaret Steuart Calderwood, ‘A Journey in England, Holland, and the Low Countries’ (1756), in *Coltness Collections, 1608-1840*, Maitland Club (January 1842), p.154. ‘Mr Calderwood spoke to him in French, but he answered in very good English, which I was very glad of, as it was dull for me to travel a whole day with folks I did not understand.’ EUL, MS E2002.28, ‘Frances Steuart – Widow – Melencholy Title’ (unpublished memoir, Coltness, 1881), notes she had not a word of French when she first left home in 1746.

<sup>86</sup> NLS, MS16872 f.131, account from Demainbray for 3 Fletcher girls for varying periods of French teaching, 3 French grammars, a Telemachus, and Boyer’s dictionary. As well as running a boarding school for girls in Edinburgh in the 1740s (which the Fletcher girls appear only to have attended as day scholars), Stephen Demainbray was a natural philosopher and astronomer who became tutor to the Prince of Wales, later George III. See Alan Q. Morton, ‘Demainbray, Stephen Charles Triboudet (1710–1782)’, *ODNB*, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7467, accessed 25 May 2006]. Mainie Innes, Jean’s older sister, was being taught French, presumably in Edinburgh, in 1757-8, and Jean in 1760. NAS, GD113/3/1160/23, George Innes’s pocket expenses, 25 December 1756-21 October 1758; GD113/3/1188/11, pocket expenses, 22 October 1758-1 February 1761.

or phrase in their conversation, a good French accent being ‘one of the most desirable of accomplishments.’<sup>87</sup> Vitally important for those wishing to enter London society,<sup>88</sup> the French language was central to the efforts Robert Adam expected of his sisters in preparation for their relocation to the capital. ‘I rejoice’, he wrote, ‘at Your firm resolution in becoming French Ladys & think you judge right, in employing the best Master Edinr affords for Your instruction. I shall be glad to hear of your progress & insist on having a Scrape of each letter in that Language & will give you two in Return.’<sup>89</sup> He wrote to them of his pleasure at ‘Your diverting Yourselves with the French Language’:

Jen will have got over all the Syke facks of it. Tho not without Some difficulty, & half a Doz proverbs, Ald Sparras &c: Nells Love for the Polite world who about London Speak nothing else wil be her Spur to acquiring en peu de tems un grand Sçavoir, Bess with her unwearied application will I doubt not Stand her ground & Miss Meggy with her natural parts, & from the Mirth & fun to be always carried on during the time of Study, will merrily Suck in the Seeds of this universal Dialect. Thus I have sett you all in a fair way of doing well[.]<sup>90</sup>

For Adam, it seems, an acquaintance with French would facilitate his sisters’ ability to ‘do well’ in London. By this time, they were past the first flush of youth. Evidently, French had not been thought necessary for the daughters of an Edinburgh architect growing up in the 1730s and 40s, but their anticipated change in social status and in location meant that the Adam sisters, as young women rather than girls, had to become educated anew.

Adam’s letter highlights the individual methods and motivations through which his sisters would learn. Girls were granted some degree of autonomy in what they were taught. In the 1720s, Alison Cockburn had refused to learn singing as she ‘was disgusted with hearing some Misses who had been taught to squeal horribly’,<sup>91</sup> whilst Jeanie Innes was encouraged in drawing as her particular talent, although Hary

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<sup>87</sup> Cohen, ‘French Conversation or “Glittering Gibberish” ?’, p.116.

<sup>88</sup> Notably, it was only in London in 1715 that Rachel Baillie began French lessons. *Household Book of Lady Grisel Baillie*, pp.31-33.

<sup>89</sup> NAS, GD18/4793, to Nelly Adam, 13 December 1755, Rome.

<sup>90</sup> NAS, GD18/4792, to Peggy Adam, 15 November 1755, Rome.

<sup>91</sup> Cockburn, ‘Short Account of a Long Life’, p.2.

Spens cautioned that it should not be allowed to occupy too much of her time.<sup>92</sup> Yet although girls were being encouraged in skills that could give them real pleasure, suggesting attention was at least sometimes paid to individuality in educational experience, the condemnation of such accomplishments as puppetry was not without foundation. James Buchanan lamented in *The British Grammar* (1761) that ‘unthinking’ men so often treated girls ‘rather as Dolls, than as intelligent social Beings [...] though in Point of Genius they are not inferior to the other Sex’. Tellingly, he believed his point that girls ought to be educated with ‘solid Principles’ and ‘useful Knowledge’ was best promoted through the argument that men ‘derive much social Happiness from the right Education of Females’.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, Thomas Somerville, discussing the education of young ladies, asserted, ‘I do not lament the change of manners in this respect’, arguing against the late-eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century belief that ‘refined taste and the possession of high accomplishments’ distracted women from their duties as wives and mothers.<sup>94</sup> Seeing no evidence for this himself, he noted instead the ‘augmentation of their influence in elevating the general tone of society.’<sup>95</sup> Educating women, although not without its advantages for those who received it, was still largely directed towards the benefit of the men around them.

#### ‘Sweetness of Temper’, Sophistication and Schooling

In 1739, the eight-year-old Agnes Murray sat for her portrait to the up-and-coming young artist Allan Ramsay. Bedecked in the finest satin and a powdered wig, her portrait depicts her as a precocious young woman on the cusp of adulthood. To quote Rosalind Marshall, ‘Innocence and sophistication combine in this picture, which looks forward to her future as an eligible woman rather than back to the childhood she has scarcely left [... it] epitomises the contemporary view of girlhood as a prelude to marriage’.<sup>96</sup> Girls like Agnes may not have been expected to ‘do’ for themselves in the way that George Hamilton Innes was, but, as part of a wider

<sup>92</sup> NAS, GD113/3/467/4, to George Innes, 21 September 1756.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Mitchell, *Grammar Wars*, p.149.

<sup>94</sup> Somerville, *My Own Life and Times*, p.349.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p.350.

<sup>96</sup> NLS, MS12950 f.55, Receipt from Allan Ramsay, 1 October 1739; Marshall, *Women in Scotland*, p.13.

strategy, they were certainly expected to 'do' for their family, if in a rather different way. Marriageability remained the ultimate practical aim of girls' education as it was for their seventeenth-century foremothers,<sup>97</sup> and it was through marriage that girls could make the greatest practical contribution to their family, a 'good' marriage potentially opening up new interest and patronage networks. Yet if this vocation remained unchanged, the qualifications required for entry, although still dominated by wealth and status, could be boosted by the social skills detailed in the previous section, especially for those of lesser status or with smaller dowries. Gentility, by the eighteenth century, was increasingly dependent on behaviour as opposed to merely birth,<sup>98</sup> and what children were actually taught was often less important than who taught them, and where. In this light, this section considers the education of daughters as an investment by parents with a clear concept of the 'cultural product' they wished to create.

Girls' formal education tended to be episodic and fragmentary, dependent upon family movements and inclination. Yet this need not suggest that their education itself was without goal, nor that individual girls were not singled out for specific educational experiences. Continuing an older culture of fosterage, it was not unusual for parents to send their children, daughters as well as sons, to board with distant family or friends for part of their education.<sup>99</sup> Ostensibly strengthening and perpetuating bonds between allied families, this enabled children to learn social and practical skills through integration into a new household.<sup>100</sup> In 1756, Jean Innes was sent to board for eight months with the family of the Reverend Hary Spens, minister of Wemyss in Fife, to attend school and be taught by masters in Wemyss, and more importantly, to be supervised in her studies and development by Spens himself. Described by William Robertson in 1779 as 'learned, decent, and worthy, and

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<sup>97</sup> Janet Todd, 'Introduction', to *Female Education in the Age of Enlightenment*, vol.1 (London, 1996), p.x, argues early modern education was vocational, and that women's 'vocation was marriage and towards this any training was aimed.'

<sup>98</sup> Lawrence E. Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *HJ*, 45:4 (2002), pp.876-7.

<sup>99</sup> Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe Vol.1, 1500-1800* (London, 1995), p.65.

<sup>100</sup> For instance, Alexander Monro advised his daughter to observe the housekeeping 'of all the families she has occasion to be in', in order to learn from their good and bad arrangements. 'Essay on female Conduct', p.18.

eminent for an uniform adherence to [...] moderate and rational principles,'<sup>101</sup> Spens was no ordinary provincial Church of Scotland Minister. In 1769, he baptised a West Indian slave, and was involved in the resultant campaign to enable him to stay in Scotland.<sup>102</sup> More significantly in this context, he was the author of the first English translation of Plato's *Republic*, to which he prefaced 'a preliminary discourse concerning the philosophy of the ancients'.<sup>103</sup>

In this 'Preface', Spens commended Plato's 'many excellent remarks on education,' praising his recognition of children's individual educational needs.<sup>104</sup> Spens' correspondence with Jean's father, George Innes, provides one of the most complete programmes of girls' education in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland. Although, as has been seen, Spens provided her with a solid grounding in the educational basics, he viewed them as part of a wider plan of polite education which emphasised her physical environment and the potential for personal development through other, 'improving' activities into which her time was structured. Noting that she was engaged in a variety of studies, and that this inevitably impeded progress in any one of them, Spens added, 'But if the variety exercises her genius & relieves her spirits it contributes to her health.'<sup>105</sup> Augmented, perhaps, by his Platonic interests, Spens' correspondence reveals the possibility for girls' usually unrecorded home education to be both highly structured and concerned with far more than basic instruction.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Admittedly, Robertson was petitioning for him to fill the post of Professor of Divinity at St Andrews. Richard B. Sher, 'Spens, Henry (1714-1787)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65578>, accessed 13 Jan 2005].

<sup>102</sup> Andrew Storar Cunningham, *Rambles in the Parishes of Scoonie and Wemyss* (Leven, 1905), pp.154-5, 221; Iain Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery, 1756-1838* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp.9-10, 22.

<sup>103</sup> Hary Spens, 'Preface' to *The Republic of Plato in ten books. Translated from the Greek by H. Spens, D. D. With a preliminary discourse concerning the philosophy of the ancients by the translator* (Glasgow, 1763). This apparently received no interest from contemporaries, and was never reprinted from 1763-1906. R. Garnett, 'Introduction', to *The Republic of Plato in ten books translated from the Greek by H. Spens D.D.* (London and Toronto, 1906), p.vii. He is also attributed co-authorship of a pamphlet arguing for the promotion of the study of Plato as an aid to religion and morality, [?] Chambers and H. Spence, *An Inquiry Concerning a Plan of a Literary Correspondence* (Edinburgh, 1751).

<sup>104</sup> Spens, 'Preface', p.xxxi.

<sup>105</sup> NAS, GD113/3/472/10, to George Innes, 9 November 1756, Wemyss.

<sup>106</sup> For recent scholarship emphasising that home education need not be seen as unstructured, see Cohen, "'To think, to compare'", p.231.



A picture emerges of a rather gentle educational experience<sup>107</sup> involving light exercise in the form of short walks,<sup>108</sup> and time spent in a natural environment. Spens emphasised ‘the easy access she has here to the Garden and the fields’,<sup>109</sup> and when spring arrived she was given a piece of ground to make into her own garden.<sup>110</sup> In this, his views are reminiscent of David Fordyce’s *Dialogues Concerning Education* (published anonymously to considerable success in 1745 and 1748<sup>111</sup>), which, although concerned with the education of both boys and girls, to some extent presaged the work of his younger brother James, whose hugely popular *Sermons to Young Women* (1765) epitomised the late-eighteenth-century sentimentalisation of women.<sup>112</sup> Linking woman with nature throughout the *Dialogues*, Fordyce urged girls to shun the ‘false’ pleasures of the town for those of the country. Fordyce also believed that the education of a daughter, much like the improvement of land, was to be a gentle coaxing out of an inherent social utility; a man-made enhancement of the resources which nature had provided to be worked upon for wider social betterment.

Spens prioritised the moulding of Jean’s character, acknowledging that ‘what is preferable to all her studies she discovers a most engaging sweetness of temper’,<sup>113</sup> writing of how her ‘life & spirits [...] keeps us all in good humour’<sup>114</sup> and how she diverted his family ‘with her good humour & her Questions.’<sup>115</sup> Over winter, she was educated entirely at home, not just because of the cold and dirt encountered on the journey to school and the physical discomfort of ‘a great many’ children around one fire, but because ‘she works more at home & seems to be happier, & does not weary as she has company within doors.’<sup>116</sup> In emphasising the ‘liberty of the Court

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<sup>107</sup> ‘[I]n order to engage the youth to learning, gentle and persuasive means alone must be used; but compulsion and force are never to be apply’d.’ Spens, ‘Preface’, p.xxxii.

<sup>108</sup> E.g., NAS, GD113/3/467/17, Hary Spens to George Innes, 27 September 1756, Wemyss; GD113/3/478/11, as above, 8 February 1757, Wemyss; GD113/3/482/12, Hary Spens to George Innes, 5 April 1757, Wemyss; GD113/3/484/14, 3 May 1757, Wemyss.

<sup>109</sup> NAS, GD113/3/466/8, to George Innes, 6 September 1756, Wemyss.

<sup>110</sup> NAS, GD113/3/480/16, Hary Spens to George Innes, 8 March 1757, Wemyss.

<sup>111</sup> David Fordyce, *Dialogues concerning Education* (London, 1745 and 1748) (2 vols.); Fordyce was Professor of Moral Philosophy at Aberdeen University, see Alan Ruston, ‘Fordyce, David (*bap.* 1711, *d.* 1751)’, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9877>, accessed 11 Feb 2005].

<sup>112</sup> John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1987) p.119.

<sup>113</sup> NAS, GD113/3/469/4, to George Innes, 12 October 1756, Wemyss.

<sup>114</sup> NAS, GD113/3/472/10, to George Innes, 9 November 1756, Wemyss.

<sup>115</sup> NAS, GD113/3/484/7, to George Innes, 26 April 1757, Wemyss.

<sup>116</sup> NAS, GD113/3/476/4, Hary Spens to George Innes, 3 January 1757, Wemyss.

& Garden', as opposed to the 'confinement and restraint' which would be imposed on her at school,<sup>117</sup> Spens, like Fordyce, privileged the rural home as an environment in which girls could be gently socialised into their future domestic social role. Yet the home was to be preferred precisely because it permitted her better academic development.

In the brevity of this period of schooling away from home, and in the visiting of masters, Jean's experience was typical. In other ways (perhaps because, unlike landed gentry families, hers was permanently settled in the town), the move from town to country was less so. Although some contemporaries voiced doubts on the wholesomeness of urban versus rural living *per se*,<sup>118</sup> in encouraging girls away from the town, David Fordyce was working against the predominant social trend. In the eighteenth century, the ancient alliance between women and nature became complicated by a new association of women with civilisation.<sup>119</sup> Over the course of the century, older patterns of fosterage took on a new resonance as the town grew in status as the crucible of polite society.<sup>120</sup> David Hume, in his essay 'Of Refinement in the Arts', first published in 1754, explicitly linked the development of refined taste to an urban, social setting. Men 'flock into the cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture [...] Both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner, and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace.'<sup>121</sup> This required not just the acquisition of the fashionable accomplishments outlined above, but cultivation in polite behaviour. To quote Ingrid Tague, 'Behaving naturally in polite society showed that one deserved a place in that society, but it took many years to learn that "natural behavior"'.<sup>122</sup> Like most forms of eighteenth-century education, it was generally agreed that these skills were best learnt *in situ*,

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<sup>117</sup> NAS, GD113/3/481/10, to George Innes, 14 March 1757, Wemyss.

<sup>118</sup> R. A. Houston, *Social Change in the Age of Enlightenment: Edinburgh 1660-1760*, (Oxford, 1994), pp.150-2.

<sup>119</sup> Mary Catherine Moran, 'Between the Savage and the Civil: Dr John Gregory's Natural History of Femininity', in Knott and Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, pp.9-10.

<sup>120</sup> For urban sociability, see Chapter 4 generally, esp. pp.116-7; 138-145.

<sup>121</sup> David Hume, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, 1995; 1<sup>st</sup> published 1741-1777), p.271.

<sup>122</sup> Ingrid H. Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760* (Woodbridge, 2002), p.169.

and through practice.<sup>123</sup> If women's role was to participate in urban society, the logical progression was that their educational preparation for this should also take place in an urban context, a sense of what even very small urban centres could bestow evident, for instance, in the upbringing of the daughters of the Highland gentry.<sup>124</sup>

Evidence has been found of a girls' boarding establishment in Edinburgh in 1662,<sup>125</sup> and already by the early eighteenth century elite girls 'were generally sent to Edinr for a winter or two, to lairn to dress themselves and to dance and to see a little of the world'.<sup>126</sup> By 1728, Sir Alexander Maxwell of Monreith, husband of Jean Montgomerie, sister of Margaret Macdonald, felt it necessary to stipulate in a memorial of 1728 that any of his daughters that had not 'been educated at Edinburgh' before his death were 'to be sent there to stay two years to learn what is thought proper for them by there friends.'<sup>127</sup> By the middle of the century there was a real awareness that being socialised into the roles of the urban gentlewoman had become an essential part of a girl's educational experience: Beatrix Maxwell wrote to her cousin Marion Innes, probably in the mid-1740s, asking whether her sister Annabelle could spend the winter in Edinburgh with Marion, as 'all the education She wants is only to be a little more in Company.'<sup>128</sup> Much more typical than Jean Innes' experience is the only documented period of Agnes Murray Kynynmound's formal education. From April 1745 to summer 1746, excluding one quarter spent in the country, she was sent with a personal servant to be boarded and educated in Edinburgh by Mrs Mary Warder, where she was visited by masters in dancing,

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<sup>123</sup> For an emphasis on imitation, or 'early accustomance', and habit forming, see Turnbull, *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, pp.99, 101.

<sup>124</sup> Stana Nenadic, 'Experience and Expectations in the Transformation of the Highland Gentlewoman, 1680-1820', *SHR*, 80:2, No.210 (October 2001), pp.206, 212-3.

<sup>125</sup> Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos*, p.133.

<sup>126</sup> Mure, 'Change of Manners', p.263. This habit probably grew alongside the practice of women accompanying their husbands to town for the legal 'session'. Helen M. Dingwall, *Late Seventeenth-Century Edinburgh: A Demographic Study* (Aldershot, 1994), p.226, cites evidence from the 1694 Poll Tax of the daughter of a Glasgow merchant boarding with an Edinburgh family 'being for a little tyme at schools'.

<sup>127</sup> William Fraser, *Memorials of the Montgomeries, Earls of Eglinton* (Edinburgh, 1859), vol.2, p.345.

<sup>128</sup> NAS, GD113/5/56/66C/3, to Mrs Innes at her house in Parliament Close, Edinburgh, 16 Oct n.y., Pollock. Annabella was born in 1728; Beatrix (Betty) in 1716. William Fraser, *Memoirs of the Maxwells of Pollock*, vol.1 (Edinburgh, 1863), pp.99-100.

writing and French.<sup>129</sup> This period of education at the hands of Edinburgh's fashionable masters, in which she could hope to gain a familiarity with urban social life was the necessary finishing process to complete the image of the marriageable young lady that Ramsay had so skilfully portrayed.

Schools, particularly boarding schools could be amongst the most effective institutions conveying this status. By 1766, the *Scots Magazine* was complaining of the trend amongst parents, even 'down to the lowest tradesman or mechanic', who sent their daughters to boarding schools following the habits of their social superiors, and where 'they learn principally to dress, to dance, to speak bad French, to prattle much nonsense, to practice I know not how many pert, conceited airs and in consequence of all, to conclude themselves accomplished women.'<sup>130</sup> Although widely mocked in terms of educational provision, such establishments had other purposes, as those parents satirised in the *Scots Magazine* were well aware. Alison Cockburn, who recalled boarding with 'the politest Lady of the age', remarked that she 'was early connected with the best families through intimacy at school'.<sup>131</sup> Even at adolescence, girls were being introduced into a form of public society – that is to say, one in which relationships were made other than those conducted through their own family, if not remote from familial networks – in which they could make connections which would influence them for the rest of their lives. Prestige was the *raison d'être* of this kind of education, and girls seem usually to have been sent as far away, or to as fashionable a location, as family connections and finances allowed.

### 'Polite London Children'

In March 1757, eighteen years after sitting for her portrait, Agnes Murray Kynynmound headed south to London with her own children, to join her husband, Gilbert Elliot, later 3<sup>rd</sup> baronet, as he pursued his political career. Six months later, Gilbert's mother, Lady Minto, wrote of how she often thought of her granddaughter Isobel, and longed to hear her and her brothers 'speak English & behave like polite

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<sup>129</sup> NLS, MS12950, passim. Teachers' fees were paid separately to Messrs la Motte (Pierre la Motte was a dancing master), William Grainger (writing) and Charles Farquhar (French). These were Edinburgh teachers.

<sup>130</sup> Quoted in Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos*, p.208. For the debate on girls' boarding schools which emerged in the late 1760s, see Cohen, "'To think, to compare'", pp.227-230.

<sup>131</sup> Cockburn, 'Short Account of a Long Life', p.2.

London Children.’<sup>132</sup> Although initially reluctant to see the youngest generation of her family removed *en masse* from Scotland, she implied a clear understanding of the sorts of ‘improvements’ which this geographical move could be expected to have on her grandchildren’s social and cultural standing. After the Union, closer political and economic links with England witnessed increasing numbers of Scottish elite families educating their sons at English schools and colleges, in preference to the colleges in the Low Countries to which young men had customarily been sent since the Reformation.<sup>133</sup> Aimed ostensibly at preparing Scotsmen to operate in parliament in what was essentially an alien language and culture, the biculturalism which this produced amongst the political elite became a status symbol, and an acquaintance with London society and manners at least desirable, if not essential, amongst those with pretensions to gentility. This was the most prestigious location in which the mid-eighteenth-century Scottish gentlewoman could be schooled.

In November 1741, just before her tenth birthday, Betty Fletcher was taken to London by Lord and Lady Somerville, who supervised her schooling and upbringing there for the next three-and-a-half years.<sup>134</sup> Although sent with the explicit purpose that she be put to school, neither the Fletchers nor the Somervilles had a particular institution in mind, and once they arrived Lord Somerville began consultations, noting that, ‘the dearest, was not alway’s the best’. He promised to send ‘reports of the different characters and prices’ of the schools,<sup>135</sup> ‘the Scheme of the School that we have the best accounts of’ being duly sent to Lady Milton.<sup>136</sup> Somerville noted that ‘the few Ladys that have been with my wife Seem to fix on Chelsea,’<sup>137</sup> and by early February Lady Somerville was reporting to Lady Milton that she had taken

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<sup>132</sup> NLS MS11009 f.51, to Gilbert Elliot, 8 September 1757, Minto.

<sup>133</sup> E.g., *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, 1676-1755*, ed. John M. Gray, SHS, ser.1, vol.13 (Edinburgh 1892), pp.87, 99; Rosalind K. Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne: Life in the Household of the Duchess of Hamilton 1656-1716*, (London, 1973; reissued East Linton, 2000), pp.230-231. This was also, to varying degrees, the case with the sons of the families concerned here.

<sup>134</sup> NLS, MS16511 f.136, Martha Fletcher to Milton, 31 October 1741, Salton, notes Betty’s departure, whilst the last-dated London account is for the quarter from January to April 1745, MS16723 ff.30-3. Somerville, who resided at The Drum near Edinburgh, was travelling south to take his seat in the House of Lords as a representative peer. Lady Frances Somerville was his second wife, originally from Kent, and they were accompanied by Somerville’s daughter from his first marriage.

<sup>135</sup> NLS, MS16586 f.144, Lord Somerville to Lord Milton, 14 November 1741. He consulted with ‘Ld J\_\_\_\_\_’ and Mr Middleton, who, along with his wife, supervised Betty’s brothers when they were at school in and around London. MS16514 f.206, Andrew Fletcher to Milton, 14 May 1749, London.

<sup>136</sup> NLS, MS16586 f.148, to Milton, 24 November 1741.

<sup>137</sup> NLS, MS16586 f.144, to Milton, 14 November 1741.

Betty to Miss Aylesworth's school in Chelsea, where they parted 'not without Wet Ey's'.<sup>138</sup> Then a green suburb outside of London, Chelsea had emerged as one of the most fashionable locations for girls' boarding schools.<sup>139</sup> Mid-way between town and country, it was an idealised setting for the upbringing of young girls, morally as well as environmentally unpolluted: something mid-eighteenth-century London itself could never claim to be. Lady Somerville took pains to reassure Betty's parents of her surroundings, noting 'The air she is in is fine & Clear, The place chearfull & neat to a degree, the Mistress carefull & well bred',<sup>140</sup> whilst another visitor described the school as 'a very agreeable place [...] reckoned exceeding wholesome and they are very discreet people who have the charge of her.'<sup>141</sup>

One of the few scholars to have written on girls' boarding schools in this period has suggested that, given the bad academic and moral reputation of such establishments, 'it must be presumed that many girls were sent to school simply in order to get them out of their parents' way.'<sup>142</sup> Yet whilst doubtless sometimes the case, the attention the Fletchers' correspondents paid to these physical and moral concerns suggests they expected Betty's parents to be genuinely anxious about all aspects of her wellbeing. Such correspondence, of course, had its role to play in the maintenance of her parents' political and social networks. But as Mary Joe Hughes found with the daughters of the Colliers family of Hastings, 'it was determination to ensure their happiness away from home which prompted the principal attentions of [girls'] family and friends'.<sup>143</sup> Scots, particularly familiar faces from home, tended to dominate the social world of Scottish children in London, responsible for their immediate moral, financial and medical supervision.<sup>144</sup> Miss Aylesworth appears to

<sup>138</sup> NLS, MS16590 ff.45-6, to Milton, 4 February 1742, London.

<sup>139</sup> Bryant, *London Experience of Secondary Education*, p.146.

<sup>140</sup> NLS, MS16590 f.45, to Milton, 4 February 1742, London. Her husband later praised 'the neatness of the place, & the great order we saw 60 girls in.' MS16595 f.88, to Milton, 5 April 1743.

<sup>141</sup> NLS, MS16589 f.48, Lord Newark to [?Lady Somerville], 5 June 1742, London.

<sup>142</sup> Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, p.135.

<sup>143</sup> Mary Joe Hughes, 'Child-Rearing and Social Expectations in Eighteenth-Century England: the Case of the Colliers of Hastings', *SECC*, 13 (1984), p.88.

<sup>144</sup> When ill, both Betty Fletcher and Henrietta Hope were attended by Mr Middleton, surgeon, presumably a member of the Scottish diaspora family. NLS, MS16595, f.39, Lady Somerville to Milton, 22 February 1742; MS16595 f.50, Somerville to Milton, 15 January 1743; 'Train up a Child: 300 Years of Educating the Hopes (South Queensferry, 1994), p.37. Religion may perhaps have played a role in this, although parents rarely made an issue of religious differences when sending their children to school in England as opposed to Catholic France, e.g., Hume's reassurances that the

have had over sixty girls, quite different from the quasi-familial set-up of some schools,<sup>145</sup> but their protection was given high priority. In 1744, a friend of the Fletchers remarked of a visit: 'I had as much Ceremony to go thro', before I could gain admittance as if it had been a Cloyster, being question'd, who I was, what I was, & from whom I came, to which questions having given Satisfactory answers, the young Lady, at last was call'd down but in the presence of two old Duennas.'<sup>146</sup> Although joking, he was providing vital reassurance about their child's safety and reputation.

Of the three Fletcher daughters, only the youngest and apparently the favourite appears to have been given this exclusive schooling. London education was expensive, as Susanna, Countess of Eglinton discovered when taking her daughter Margaret Montgomerie (Betty Fletcher's second cousin, later Lady Margaret Macdonald), to be educated there from 1729-30.<sup>147</sup> The Fletchers paid around £40 a year to Mrs Aylesworth for 'Board, Education & Disbursements', and Somerville reckoned that 'the whole Expences for Miss Fletcher will amount to about Sixty pound p annum', a considerable sum.<sup>148</sup> In comparison, boarding fees in Edinburgh were only about twenty pounds *per annum* in the late 1740s,<sup>149</sup> although the aristocratic Lady Betty Hope, daughter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Hopetoun, who was sent to London aged thirteen for twenty months from November 1748, incurred even larger bills. Boarding mainly in the townhouse of Lady Charlotte Erskine, for which she was charged £2.00 a week, she was taught by masters in drawing, music (harpsichord, spinet and violin), writing, accounting, geography, and Italian, the total payment for which in one six month period from May to November 1749 came to the vast sum of £92 5s. 7d.. She was bought maps, a globe, musical instruments and 'pinsels & brushes for drawing,' the necessary accoutrements for this aristocratic

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Elliot's sons need not attend mass at the École Militaire in Paris, see *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J.Y.T. Greig, vol.1, (Oxford, 1932), pp.473, 482.

<sup>145</sup> See note 133 above. However, in the 1780s, the Misses Stephenson's school had 220 girls. Susan Skedd, 'Women Teachers and the Expansion of Girls' Schooling in England, c. 1760-1820', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London and New York, 1997), p.114.

<sup>146</sup> NLS, MS16595 f.221, John Guerin to Lady Milton, 23 July 1744, London.

<sup>147</sup> William Fraser, *Memorials of the Montgomeries, Earls of Eglinton* (Edinburgh, 1859), vol.1, pp.348-9.

<sup>148</sup> NLS, MS16871 ff.130-1, Money paid for Miss Fletcher, 1741-3; MS16871 f.132, Money paid for Miss Fletcher, June y<sup>e</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 1744.

<sup>149</sup> Law, *Education in Edinburgh*, p.183.

‘finishing’ education.<sup>150</sup> Such sums suggest parents regarded the education of their daughters as worthy of substantial financial investment. Moreover, a family like the Fletchers, who sent only one daughter, would appear to have deliberately singled out the girl most likely to benefit from that environment and emerge at the end of the process as the desired cultural product.

Evident in the letters of both the Fletchers and the Somervilles is a consciousness that Betty’s time in London was aimed towards a specific agenda with a desirable outcome. On several occasions Lady Somerville and her husband asserted to the Fletchers the expectation that their not inconsiderable expense would be repaid, and early on in her stay Lady Somerville enthused to Milton that ‘She has more life, Spirit, Wit, & Humour than Ever I saw in one of her age, accompanied with Strong Sense, & reason, these are ground Works that can’t fail, & I make no doubts but She will answer her friends best hopes, & expectations.’<sup>151</sup> This begs the question of what were these mutually understood hopes and expectations. Although Betty Fletcher’s intelligence was often commented on – and the racing-mad Earl of Portmore found her ‘so quick and sharp as so to even a match in many things for a Newmarket Jockey,’<sup>152</sup> mental agility, as Lady Somerville’s quotation above demonstrates, was admired primarily as a social skill, just one part of an assemblage of other qualities and accomplishments which raised her value on the marriage market. A couple of weeks later Portmore wrote to her father, ‘Indeed Miss Fletcher is an exceeding clever girl, and likely to be a perfect Beauty, w:<sup>ch</sup> is no bad thing my Dr Lord as it helps at a proper Season to pack ’em off w:<sup>th</sup> out parting w:<sup>th</sup> too much of ye Readys’.<sup>153</sup> A London education was not universally regarded in this respect,

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<sup>150</sup> She travelled south with Mrs Betty Short, a family servant who was to be responsible for her day-to-day supervision and the management of her accounts. NRAS888 Bundle 585, ‘General Account of Lady Betty Hope’s Expenses at London From November 1748 to July 1751’, ‘Personal and Household Accounts, Eighteenth Century’. She was taught harpsichord by John Keeble, Italian by Jean Tualbert Bottarelli (possibly through the medium of French, as it was in that language which he wrote his bills), writing (which included accounting and geography) by John Jeffrys jnr., drawing by John Atwood and dancing by Mons. Desnoyer. NRAS888 Box 59/1, ‘School expenses for Lady Betty Hope, 1749’. A decade later, in 1760, her fourteen-year-old sister, Harriet or Henrietta, made the same journey. Hopetoun Research Group, *Train up a Child:*, p.37.

<sup>151</sup> NLS, MS16590 f.45, 4 February 1742, London.

<sup>152</sup> NLS, MS16592 f.86, to Milton, 19 June 1743. Charles Colyear, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Portmore, was of partially Scottish descent, but lived in London and Surrey. He was married to Juliana, widow of Peregrine, Duke of Leeds.

<sup>153</sup> NLS, MS16592 f.90, 30 June 1743, Weybridge.



however, the marriage of Lady Margaret Montgomerie to Sir Alexander Macdonald of Sleat provoking the comment that ‘her London education will not be thought an equivalent for any [drawbacks on her portion] in the Isle of Sky’.<sup>154</sup>

Implicit in the quotation from Lady Minto with which this section began is a sense that the polite accent a child could hope to acquire in London would act as a badge of membership of London polite society. Later in the century, the blue-stocking Elizabeth Montagu declared of London boarding schools, ‘What girls learn at these schools is trifling, but they unlearn what would be of great disservice – a provincial dialect, which is extremely ungentle’.<sup>155</sup> English, as Alexander Carlyle was at pains to point out, was ‘in some respects a foreign tongue’ to eighteenth-century Scots,<sup>156</sup> and the necessity for boys who would need to operate in British public life to be able to communicate effectively with their English colleagues was often cited as amongst the most pressing reasons for educating them in London.<sup>157</sup> Yet whilst Betty Fletcher’s brother Andrew noted upon his arrival at Winchester School that, ‘I find the little english that I learned at London is of great use to me here’,<sup>158</sup> the only mention of his sister’s progress in this field is that, after only a few days in London, she had got ‘All the cries of the town’ to perfection, by listening out of the Somerville’s parlour window.<sup>159</sup> Mimicking the advertising ditties of London’s street vendors may not, perhaps, have been her parents’ intention, but it demonstrated nonetheless her linguistic adaptability, and her potential ability to pick up the words and intonations which would act as signifiers of her expensive London education at home, or facilitate her moves in metropolitan society itself. The Elliot

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<sup>154</sup> Quentin Crawford to Milton, Irvine, 7 April 1739, NLS, MS16577 fol.144. Margaret was the daughter of the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Eglinton.

<sup>155</sup> John Dolan, *A Lady of the Last Century (Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu): Illustrated in her Unpublished Letters* (London, 1873), p.181. The date is attributed 1773.

<sup>156</sup> *The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, ed. John Hill Burton, with a new Introduction by Richard B. Sher (Bristol, 1990; reprint of 1910 edn.), p.543. For more on language, see Chapter 4, pp.124-130.

<sup>157</sup> *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*, pp.87, 99; Marshall, *Days of Duchess Anne*, p.231.

<sup>158</sup> Andrew Fletcher to Milton, 1 February 1737, NLS, MS16510 f.116.

<sup>159</sup> Somerville to Milton, 14 November 1741, London, NLS, MS16586 f.144. In the *Spectator*, Addison wrote, ‘Vocal cries are of a much larger Extent, and indeed so full of incongruities and Barbarisms, that we appear a distracted City, to Foreigners, who do not comprehend the meaning of such Enormous Outcries.’ Quoted in Peter M. Briggs, “‘News from the little World’: A Critical Glance at Eighteenth-Century British Advertising”, *SECC*, 23 (1994), p.31.

family, not surprisingly given their permanent habitation in the capital, became known for their ability to speak English ‘properly’.<sup>160</sup>

The main feature of Betty Fletcher’s London bills is the amount spent on hairdressing and clothing.<sup>161</sup> The immediate concern of new arrivals in the British capital was to be fitted out in London clothes, without which no social mixing was possible in a culture which put such an emphasis on fashion and luxury in dress. Within days of Betty’s arrival, pink damask had been purchased, and a coat made up.<sup>162</sup> Once her London things were ready, she was invited to visit Charlotte and Jane (Jean), the daughters of the Duke of Atholl, who, like their English mother, were accustomed to splitting their time between highland Perthshire, Edinburgh and London.<sup>163</sup> The girls had probably become acquainted in Edinburgh, but amongst the most important outcomes of any time spent in London was the cultivation of acquaintance amongst the circles of the rich and influential, and the ability to be at ease with their social practices.<sup>164</sup> In January 1742, Somerville wrote to her father that she was, ‘just now going with us in high dress to Dinner, at Lady Abercorns, where she is particularly invited.’<sup>165</sup> Later on, Betty spent a holiday with the Duchess of Leeds and her husband, the Earl of Portmore. Even after a year and a half in London, her first moves into the society of the Portmores required preparation, indeed initiation: ‘My wife has been at Chelsea’, wrote Lord Somerville ‘to see Miss Betty fitte’d out and to give her advice as to her behaviour while She is at Ld Portmores where She goes in a day or two.’<sup>166</sup> Yet she became a favourite there too, treated, as Portmore informed her father, like one of the couple’s own children, and striking up a friendship and correspondence with their daughter

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<sup>160</sup> Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, p.543, n.1.

<sup>161</sup> NLS, MS16871 ff.130-1, 132.

<sup>162</sup> NLS, MS16871 ff.130-1. Frances Burney referred to the process as ‘Londonizing’ in her novel *Evelina, Or the History of a Young Lady’s Entrance into the World* (Harmondsworth, 1994; 1<sup>st</sup> edn., 1778), p.28.

<sup>163</sup> NLS, MS16586 f.150, Somerville to Milton, 28 November 1741; *Chronicles of the Atholl and Tulibardine Families*, collected and arranged by John, Seventh Duke of Atholl, K.T. (Edinburgh, 1908) vols.2 and 3.

<sup>164</sup> The young Lady Margaret Montgomerie was afforded marks of unusually high status by her kinswoman the Duchess of Buccleuch, when visiting from school in London. Chambers, *Traditions of Edinburgh*, p.346.

<sup>165</sup> NLS, MS16590 f.60, 31 January 1742, London.

<sup>166</sup> NLS, MS16595 f.107, to Milton, 14 May 1743.

Caroline.<sup>167</sup> Later on, Somerville reported that the girls ‘sent her a Card invitation in the fashionable way.’<sup>168</sup> This was not just childish mimicry of adult practices, but inculcation in the rites and rituals of fashionable society.

Early in Betty Fletcher’s stay a friend reported home to the Fletchers, ‘I hear Bess is well and in love with London and the Trade thereof, and is soon to see both Plays and Operas.’<sup>169</sup> Similarly, Lady Betty Hope’s expenses suggest a fairly busy social life. In March and April 1749, for instance, she attended ‘the Oritoriya’, ‘the play’, Vauxhall gardens, and breakfasted at Ranelagh.<sup>170</sup> In 1751, she was present at the celebrated annual charity performance of Handel’s *Messiah* in aid of Thomas Coram’s Foundling Hospital, an event which brought together the British preoccupations of pleasure, patriotism, and charity.<sup>171</sup> Motivated by fashion, social ambition and perhaps by politics, Betty Fletcher’s time in London was designed by her family to initiate her into the social world of the metropolitan fashionable classes, able to operate with ease in the fashionable locations of mixed-gender public socialising which acted as crucibles for the display of conspicuous consumption and the demonstration of taste. She became the pet of high-ranking members of the British aristocracy, accustomed to their habits in socialising and all aspects of fashion. She sang in their drawing rooms, ate at their tables, gasped at their masquerade dresses,<sup>172</sup> and, occasionally, amused them with her breaches of the social code, including the incident in which, aged eleven, she snapped at Col. Lescelles, who had been in Edinburgh during the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion: ‘You old fusty Soldier mind your own business.’<sup>173</sup> The social circles in which she moved included Scots, English and the Welshman Gwynn Vaughan, thus initiating her into the notion of a society which was genuinely British in its composition, with London as the communal, if never neutral, meeting-point of these sometimes conflicting

<sup>167</sup> NLS, MS16592 f.84, 24 May 1743; f.88, June 1743. Nothing is known to remain of this correspondence.

<sup>168</sup> NLS, MS16595 f.186, to Milton, 13 December 1743.

<sup>169</sup> NLS, MS16586 f.155, Somerville to Milton, 16 December 1741, London.

<sup>170</sup> NRAS888 Bundle 585; Box 59/1

<sup>171</sup> NRAS888 Bundle 585, Small expenses, February-July 1751. For Handel and the Foundling Hospital, see Ruth K. McClure, *Coram’s Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven and London, 1981), pp.69-71.

<sup>172</sup> E.g., NLS, MS16592 f.7, Sir James Carnegie to Milton, 22 November 1743, London; MS16592 f.84, Portmore to Milton, 24 May 1743, Weybridge; MS16595 f.186, Somerville to Milton, 13 December 1743.

<sup>173</sup> NLS MS16595 f.74, Somerville to Milton, [?23 February] 1743.

cultures. Lady Betty Hope would have been brought up to expect to move in this sort of society, her London experience a vital preparation for the life of a post-Union Scottish aristocrat. But for Betty Fletcher, born into a gentry family which had elevated itself to unusual prominence through politics, a move into not just Scottish, but British aristocratic circles would seem to indicate a family cultural and political agenda, in which the London education of a promising daughter was part of a wider assertion of the rights of Scots as Hanoverian North Britons to partake in the opportunities offered by Union.

Two-and-a-half years after her arrival in London, Somerville reported to Milton that ‘Miss Fletcher is without flattery much Improved – She Says She will not Come to Brunston [Brunstane, the Fletchers’ house near Edinburgh] to be the youngest Sister, that she will live with Lady Somerville.’<sup>174</sup> Although she did return home in spring 1745,<sup>175</sup> her experience had, not surprisingly, given her a sense of status above that which might have been expected of the youngest daughter of a minor gentry family. The parents of boys educated in England worried that those who spent their formative years there would become accustomed to luxuries and patterns of conspicuous consumption beyond their means, and never settle to living in Scotland.<sup>176</sup> Clearly, this was more important where issues of estate inheritance were involved; girls, if they married, became the financial responsibility of another family. Their experience would give them a veneer of sophistication which could help them to acquire a wealthy, high-ranking husband, with whom they could continue to live in the style to which their upbringing had accustomed them. Perhaps the London experience of Scottish elite girls may be best understood, like the Grand Tour, as an ‘invisible academy’. An essential part of the education of young noblemen, and increasingly gentlemen too, the ideology of the Grand Tour demonstrated the centrality of not only non-school-based development, but of experiencing other cultures, to eighteenth-century pedagogical beliefs. Regarded as essentially educational, it nevertheless had a primarily social focus in most cases, and, like the education of girls in London, implied membership of a socially polished cultural elite, with access to certain types of knowledge and experience that imparted

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<sup>174</sup> NLS, MS16602 f. 236, 14 May 1744, [London].

<sup>175</sup> NLS, MS16604 f.11, David Anderson to Milton, 16 May 1745, London.

<sup>176</sup> *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*, p.99.

status and prestige. Just as a spell in Rome, the highlight of the eighteenth-century Tour, was designed to instil into young gentlemen an awareness of the common European heritage of classical antiquity so important to eighteenth-century ideas of virtue and civilisation, so, perhaps, enjoying the entertainments of London, that centre of modern commerce and Hanoverian triumphalism, helped to instil in children an implicit sense of the interconnectedness of commercial society and the refinement of manners, and of the role of British liberties in permitting this sort of society to flourish.

‘A real and lasting pleasure’? The Value of Knowledge

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold, she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.<sup>177</sup> (Proverbs 3:13-15)

This biblical sanction of the intrinsic value of education was one of a number of ‘improving’ texts copied out by Jean Graham to be sent to her father as a specimen of her hand-writing. In January 1754, when this was sent, the eleven-year-old was already attending the sewing school as a preparation for the dressmaker’s apprenticeship she was later to serve; that her education was directed towards the ability to earn her living through practical skills was already evident. Yet, if she stopped to ponder the meaning of what she copied, its emphasis on the intrinsic value of learning may not have appeared incongruous. Beyond what has been cited in this chapter, little remains to document Jean’s education, but she appears to have been encouraged at home by her schoolteacher grandfather, and her uncle, who frequently reported on her progress to her father. In March 1753, he casually remarked, ‘As for the Latin she has come in to the Comparisons, and has a tolerable Knowledge of what she has come thro’ tho’ not as perfectly as I could wish.’<sup>178</sup> Since the Renaissance, classical languages had become something of a rite of passage for the boys of the higher social ranks, a mark of differentiation for the governing elite.

<sup>177</sup> NAS, GD113/3/1103/15, Specimens of Jean’s writing, January 1754.

<sup>178</sup> NAS, GD113/388/13, to George Innes, 22 March 1753, Ratho. This is the earliest remaining reference to Jean’s classical education. On 9 January 1754 he mentioned, ‘I [...] keep her up in what Latin she has got’, GD113/3/409/13, Ratho.

Hary Spens, the classicist who educated Jean's legitimate half-sister Jean Innes, had implied a more typical assumption of the unsuitability of classical learning for girls when he noted his charge wanted 'to be at every thing she sees going on; Latin itself hardly excepted'.<sup>179</sup> Latin was perceived as a masculine language, and if education was fundamental to the maintenance of gender divisions, nothing symbolised this more than the fortress of masculine learning into which the classical languages had been built, any breach of which by women was a breach of gender norms and could be perceived as an attack on society itself.<sup>180</sup> In a society in which the maintenance of order was paramount, education was a key instrument of social segregation, reinforcing both rank and gender. Amanda Vickery found 'no evidence of classical erudition' in the sources she studied,<sup>181</sup> yet here was a girl whose future lay in dressmaking, who would never need to demonstrate knowledge of the classics in any practical or social context, being encouraged in this branch of learning without any apparent sense of unsuitability.

Jean Graham was being taught not only Latin, but also, through that most respected and culturally acceptable vessel, the Bible, the value of a 'learned' education for the internal mental resources it could bestow, particularly for those who, like her, could hope for little in the way of material wealth. So far, this chapter has argued for a social understanding of education as a preparation for the life a girl could expect to lead as an adult. It has argued that most young gentlewomen were not uneducated; rather, that they were educated to carry out the specific tasks expected of their rank and gender. This section asks whether, and, if so, how, such learning could provide women with intellectual stimulation and an inner mental world often lacking in the kinds of education hitherto outlined.

When Alexander Monro engaged a tutor to teach his daughter Margaret 'the Latin Rudiments', he claimed this was to help her with reading aloud in English, rather than to 'have any Pretensions to be a Critick in Languages, that might give you too much a Taste for Books and make you neglect the necessary female Offices'.

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<sup>179</sup> NAS, GD113/3/479/5, to George Innes, 15 February 1756, Wemyss.

<sup>180</sup> For Bridget Hill, 'The learned lady becomes a pervasive metaphor for the unnatural woman who refuses to perform the natural functions of her sex and who actively usurps the functions of the male sex.', *Women Alone: Spinners in England 1660-1850* (New Haven and London, 2001), p.83.

<sup>181</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.259. Michèle Cohen maintained that girls could and did learn Latin, but in a less methodical manner than men, "'To think, to compare'", p.327.

Despite presenting Latin as effectively ornamental, Monro echoed convention in hoping she had ‘good Sense enough’ not to display this knowledge, her punishment, if she did, being to leave her ‘as ignorant as I can of everything beyond what relates to the plainest domestick Life.’<sup>182</sup> Whilst his threat was the withdrawal not just of Latin, but other areas of instruction too, it indicates he understood his daughter to derive entertainment and intellectual fulfilment from the activity of learning and application to study. It also acts as a reminder that this aspect of education may be even more hidden in the archives than others, although evidence exists to suggest some women’s unfamiliarity with the language.<sup>183</sup>

The role of Latin in expanding women’s inner mental world was articulated more fully by Dr William King, Principal of St Mary Hall, Oxford. In 1754 he wrote to Margaret Hepburn, ‘You are so complete a mistress of the English language and seem so desirous of further improving your self, that I cannot help repeating, what I so often recommended to you, I mean, to acquire a competent skill in ye Latin tongue.’ He continued that he believed her aptitude for learning was such that in six months she would be able ‘to read with pleasure the works of ye Roman poets, & to distinguish their beauties.’ Yet he noted she must be prepared to encounter some resistance:

Don’t be diverted from this undertaking by ye jeers and reproaches of silly women or ignorant men, who look upon all accomplishments, which they cannot attain themselves, to be pedantrys; and think it an impertinence in their neighbour, especially in a young Lady, to read Latin, when perhaps they are not able to read English.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Monro, ‘Essay on Female Conduct’, p.17. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu famously advised that her granddaughter should ‘conceal whatever learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness’, Elizabeth A. Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818* (Cambridge, 1995), p.2. Fordyce, *Dialogues Concerning Education*, passim. emphasised that a girl ought to hide all but the most basic of education, and that anything which might suggest a girl to be ‘learned’ had to be concealed with particular care.

<sup>183</sup> For instance, the laboured handwriting employed by Martha Fletcher in copying the Latin titles of books, NLS, MS17802, f.1; MS110087 f.198, a letter in French from Gilbert Elliot (later 1<sup>st</sup> earl of Minto) to his sister Isabella, 17 October 1765, Paris, in which he quoted Virgil, then asked pardon that he had ‘écri[t] du Latin à une jeune Demoiselle’, going on to translate the Latin into French, a more appropriate language for a young lady.

<sup>184</sup> NLS, MS16688 f.78, 19 January 1754, London. Addressed only to ‘Madam’, it is almost certainly to Margaret. MS16512 f.153, to Margaret from Eleanor Wallace dated 12 March 1759, Bath, makes reference not only to their shared friendship with King, but his encouragement that Margaret learn Latin. David Greenwood, *William King, Tory and Jacobite* (Oxford 1969), makes no reference to his ever having travelled to Scotland, instead spending most of his life in Oxford with occasional trips to London and Bath. It was probably on one of these that he met Margaret during her visit to England in

It appears Margaret followed King's advice, as five years later a friend wrote from Bath on King's instructions, hoping that she would reply to him 'in his favourite languish,' and wishing that she could be in Oxford to hear King's Latin oration at the instalment of Westmorland as Chancellor, 'to hear fine Musick, [tear] what you'd value more, y<sup>e</sup> Doctor's Oration'. Eleanor added her regret that she herself would be unable to understand it, as unlike Margaret, she had not had King to advise her education.<sup>185</sup> Against the grain of stereotype, King argued that Latin was ideally suited to the specific, gendered problems faced by women who had been brought up to be valued for superficial qualities and to perform roles as wife and mother which they could long outlive, exhorting Margaret to learn the language so that 'when your youth and beauty are gone, you will have a real and lasting pleasure left.'<sup>186</sup> Around the same time, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu gave similar advice to her granddaughter, for the similar but more immediate reason that it would 'not only [...] make solitude tolerable, but agreeable.'<sup>187</sup> Perhaps it is no coincidence that these examples date from a period which witnessed the promotion, in works like George Ballard's *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain, who have been Celebrated for their Writings or Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences* (Oxford, 1752), and John Dunscombe's *Feminiad* (1754), of educated men's ability to recognise learning as 'a properly feminine accomplishment', as a patriotic means of demonstrating taste.<sup>188</sup>

Despite this, King maintained that getting 'a good husband' would be 'the most important affair of your Life.'<sup>189</sup> Whether genuinely felt, or a nod towards convention, he did not see marriage and classical learning (particularly when directed towards the appreciation of literature) as mutually exclusive, and perhaps his

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1752. See NLS, MS16516 f.93, Mary Hepburn to Milton, 26 April 1752, Beltonfoord, and MS16516 f.95, Mary Hepburn to Milton, 24 September 1752, Bath. Nothing is known of Eleanor or her family.

<sup>185</sup> NLS, MS16712 f.153, Eleanor Wallace to Margaret Hepburn, 12 March 1759, Bath. King's oration was in Latin, see Greenwood, *William King*, p.289.

<sup>186</sup> NLS, MS16712 f.153, as above.

<sup>187</sup> Quoted in Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, p.103.

<sup>188</sup> Guest, *Small Change*, ch.2, esp. p.59.

<sup>189</sup> NLS, MS16688 f.78.



definition of a good husband was one who would encourage her studies.<sup>190</sup> Combining intellectual interests with feminine virtue could shield women from some of the worst attacks against learned ladies,<sup>191</sup> as Elizabeth Halkett understood when, in a passage redolent with the sentimentality of the 1780s and with that of a daughter whose mother died only days after her birth, she detailed her mother Betty Fletcher's intellectual qualities. Describing her 'Acquisitions in Science' in which 'she was equall'd by few among the Ladies, surpass'd by still fewer among the gentlemen', her supposed 'Strength of Understanding, Force of Imagination & perspicuity of discernment, equall'd by few of either sex, her Curiosity & Avidity in philosophic researches' and 'her thirst for Knowledge & Patience in the Investigation of truth', Halkett made sure to note that 'These Mental accomplishments' were 'connected with all that is elegant & amiable Mild gentle and modest in female Characters'.<sup>192</sup> Despite the hyperbole, and in the absence of a fuller contemporary account, it suggests that Betty Fletcher can be regarded as another young gentlewoman whose mental resources went much further than those her expensive London schooling had provided.<sup>193</sup> Jean Graham and Margaret Hepburn also died young, rendering impossible the assessment of the long-term impact of their classical education. No insights remain into their own views on this, so it cannot be known whether they were indeed able fill otherwise mundane hours with this learning. But the notion seems to have been present, at least in circles surrounding men with university connections like Monro and King (which, in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St

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<sup>190</sup> One of the reasons why it was often deemed better to leave a girl relatively uneducated was that it would make her role as a wife seem less pointless to her. The 'double bind' which Myers has perceived as dogging Hester Thrale meant that after having been encouraged to use her mind since childhood, she suddenly found herself upon marriage circumscribed in all respects. Myers, *Bluestocking Circle*, p.254.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, p.2.

<sup>192</sup> EUL, MS La III 364, Elizabeth Halkett, 'Memoir of the Fletchers of Saltoun', (written some time before 1782), pp.103-4. Pocock points out that contemporary usage of 'philosophy' could denote a temper of mind which 'promoted the socialisation and secularisation of thinking and debate as an activity appropriate to civil society.' John Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Volume 2: Narratives of Civil Government* (Cambridge, 1999), p.21.

<sup>193</sup> As demonstrated in Chapters 3 and 4, she was well-read, and, as her daughter noted, friends with some of the leading lights of the early Scottish Enlightenment. Unaware of her formal education, Rosalind Marshall concluded in her DNB article that it was noteworthy that she had made these achievements with no formal education – it is arguably more noteworthy that she did so despite such an education. Rosalind K. Marshall, 'Fletcher, Elizabeth (d. 1758)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64080>, accessed 11 Feb 2005]. This was updated in October 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64080>, accessed 13 Nov 2006].

Andrews, formed a not-insignificant part of genteel society), that women's lives could be enriched through intellectual activity.

References to women's access to academic knowledge are often haphazard or dislocated. A nineteenth-century memoir informs the reader that Agnes, Lady Buchan, sister of Margaret Calderwood, was a woman of extraordinary intellect who studied mathematics under Colin MacLaurin, yet elaborates no further<sup>194</sup> whilst a letter from Beatrix Maxwell to her cousin Marion Lauder casually mentioned, 'I have no news, only I have been throng attending lessons of Phylosophy'.<sup>195</sup> Her apparent belief that this required no explanation suggests she saw it as in no way abnormal: philosophy was closely associated with the polite, and public lectures probably best viewed as an arena of public sociability rather than serious learning, emphasising again the need to reassess women's 'educational' opportunities within the context of their wider activities. In England, professional lecturers toured the fashionable resort towns, speaking on subjects like science in a style intended 'as much to amuse as instruct'.<sup>196</sup> But in 1745, Colin MacLaurin only reluctantly agreed to admit ladies to the 'College of Experiments' he gave as a benefit for the daughter of his predecessor as professor of mathematics at Edinburgh. Even then, he took 'no Notice of their being there'.<sup>197</sup> In doing so, however, he may have permitted a greater equality of access to knowledge to the 'many Ladies' who attended, than those popular lecturers in English resort towns who may well have talked down to their audience. Moreover, access to ideas did not necessarily depend on physical presence. As a student, Robert Adam was reportedly mesmerised by MacLaurin's astronomy lectures and 'took pleasure in repeating & explaining [them] daily to his sisters'.<sup>198</sup> University education, like most aspects of serious learning, remained off-limits to women, but those who lived in its physical proximity, and enjoyed the support of

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<sup>194</sup> Alexander Fergusson, *The Honourable Henry Erskine, Lord Advocate for Scotland, with Notices of Certain of his Kinsfolk and of his Time*, (Edinburgh, 1882), pp.48-9.

<sup>195</sup> NAS, GD113/5/66A/12, to Miss Lauder at Mr Cummin's House in Edinburgh, 12 February [n.y., pre-1743] Glasgow.

<sup>196</sup> Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), p.137.

<sup>197</sup> MacLaurin to Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy, 21 February 1745, in *The Collected Letters of Colin MacLaurin*, ed. Stella Mills (Nantwich, 1982).

<sup>198</sup> NAS, GD18/4982, 'Life of Robert Adam', by John Clerk of Eldin, p.2. For MacLaurin, see Erik Lars Sageng, 'MacLaurin, Colin (1698-1746)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17643>, accessed 26 July 2006].

men who appreciated the benefits the development of intellectual interests could bring, could access the learned world through indirect routes.

### Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the education of eighteenth-century elite women must be understood as encompassing much more than academic learning. Through considering girls' upbringing in a wider, social context, it considered the early years of girls' lives more generally as a preparation for their adult life. Mid-eighteenth-century Scottish society can be identified as transitional with respect to two important aspects of elite girls' educational experience. Firstly, an examination of the standard curriculum common to the experience of most young gentlewomen demonstrated that whilst girls received instruction in a broader range of areas than in the earlier eighteenth century, the importance of those skills needed to run a household continued to be emphasised, as was piety and religious knowledge. Increasingly, however, especially amongst more prestigious families with pretensions towards participation in polite circles, girls' instruction was biased towards the social skills and a girl's ability to comport herself in polite society.

At least as important as what girls were taught, was where. Some believed that the country was the best location for the teasing-out of girls' 'natural' qualities, and the introduction through example into the household roles they would be expected to fulfil in later life. The growing trend, however, was towards the town as the place where girls could be socialised into the world of polite society, learning the manners, language and social mores which would enable them to move with ease in this society as they grew up. It also helped them to make social connections which could be of use in later life. For those that could afford it, a London education was perhaps the most desirable in imparting social prestige. Both experiences emphasised the importance of girls spending time in households other than their own, and of first-hand experience of social roles as a means of instruction.

This social focus, often denigrated, could, given the right circumstances, provide the basis for a broadening of girls' experience into elements of academic education more normally considered to be exclusively male. Those who promoted classical learning, for instance, expressed a belief that this could help to give women

inner mental resources which would remain with them throughout their lives. The next chapter goes on to demonstrate the ways in which the growing availability of print facilitated this potential for elite women to cultivate autonomously their intellectual faculties.

### 3. Reading and Print Culture

#### Introduction

From the vantage point of her old age in the 1790s, Elizabeth Mure wrote of early-eighteenth-century Scotland that, ‘The weman’s knowlege was gain’d only by conversing with the men not by reading themselves, and not picked up at their own hand, as they had few books to read that they could understand. Whoever had read Pope, Addison & Swift, with some ill wrot history, was then thought a lairnd Lady, which Character was by no means agreeable.’<sup>1</sup> Women, she suggested, were both practically and prescriptively unable to access information through print; even a slight acquaintance with the world of letters was enough to label a woman as excessively learned. Yet, Mure implied, this situation changed over the course of her lifetime; indeed, women’s increasing involvement in literary culture ‘as writers and as readers’ has been described as ‘one of the most striking phenomena of the eighteenth century’.<sup>2</sup> By mid century, the association of the gentlewoman with literary culture had become a commonplace which, according to Vivien Jones, has been ‘rediscovered and confirmed by twentieth-century feminist literary scholarship’.<sup>3</sup> From an historical perspective, Amanda Vickery similarly concluded that the mid-to-late-eighteenth century gentlewoman ‘enjoyed unprecedented access to the public world of print’.<sup>4</sup> Although it must be borne in mind that access to

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Mure, ‘Some Remarks on the Change of Manners in my Own Time. 1700-1790’, in *Selections from the Family Papers Preserved at Caldwell*, ed. W. Mure, Maitland Club, 71 (Glasgow, 1854), vol.1, p.269. The importance of the printer and book-trader Agnes Campbell to the late-seventeenth/early-eighteenth century Scottish book trade is, however, a reminder that women were participating in aspects of print production. See Jane Rendall, ‘Campbell, Agnes (Lady Roseburn)’, in Elizabeth Ewan, Sue Innes and Siân Reynolds (eds.), co-ordinating editor, Rose Pipes, *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women: From the Earliest Times to 2004* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp.61-2.

<sup>2</sup> Jacqueline Pearson, *Women’s Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge, 1999), p.22.

<sup>3</sup> Vivien Jones, ‘Introduction’, to Jones (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800* (Cambridge, 2000), p.1. Writing on art, Roger Chartier argued that ‘In the eighteenth century the iconography of reading is exclusively female and secular’, in ‘The Practical Impact of Writing’, in Chartier (ed.), *A History of Private Life, vol.3, Passions of the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 1989), p.147. The most recent overview of eighteenth-century Scotland singled out elite women’s relationship with print. See David Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century: Union and Enlightenment* (Harlow, 2002), p.121.

<sup>4</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), p.259.

reading was not automatically liberating,<sup>5</sup> and that women's access to print remained subject to far more limitations than that of the men around them,<sup>6</sup> their entrance into the literary sphere was as important a development in the lives of individuals as it was for the nation as a whole, and, as this chapter shall demonstrate, by the 1740s, the world of print and literary culture seems to have been a significant factor in the lives of the women of the Scottish gentry.

In recent years, the relationship between reader and text has come under scrutiny, as historians have sought to understand the 'deceptively simple'<sup>7</sup> act of reading through more sophisticated analyses of the social and cultural context in which it was carried out.<sup>8</sup> A more holistic approach to the study of reading has emerged, which views the reader as an integral part of the process of writing and dissemination, bringing them into a realm not just of experience but of influence, and helping to blur the distinction, once perceived as rigid, between writing that is 'public' printed text, and that which is handwritten and 'private'.<sup>9</sup> This chapter considers women's relationship with print culture and writing in this wider sense, asking how it helped to incorporate them into a world of letters in which their experiences were shared with other, unknown and potentially distant, readers. It also

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<sup>5</sup> 'The history of reading is not self-evidently a history of improvement and enlightenment, of progress from lesser to greater literacy, from ignorance and barbarism to democracy, humanitarianism and virtue. Reading is not necessarily liberating and can be an imprisoning experience. We must ask what reading inspired and what it constrained.' James Raven, 'New Reading Histories, Print Culture and the Identification of Change: The Case of Eighteenth-Century England', in *Social History*, 23:3 (1998), pp.268-287, p.286. For a more specifically gendered version of this argument, see Kathryn Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture: The construction of femininity in the early periodical* (London and New York, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> For some cautionary remarks on this, see Elspeth Knights, "'Turned Loose in the Library": Women and Reading in the Eighteenth Century' (Sussex University DPhil thesis, 1998), esp. p.173. Overall, however, Knights agreed with the above conclusions.

<sup>7</sup> Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago and London, 1998), p.384.

<sup>8</sup> Ian Jackson, 'Approaches to the history of readers and reading in eighteenth-century Britain', *HJ*, 47:4 (2004), pp.1041-54; Robert Darnton, 'First Steps Towards a History of Reading', in *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (London and Boston, 1990); Johns, *Nature of the Book*; Bernadette Cunningham, 'Introduction: The Experience of Reading', in Bernadette Cunningham and Máire Kennedy (eds.), *The Experience of Reading: Irish Historical Perspectives* (Dublin, 1999). For the approaches of literary theorists to this topic, see Andrew Bennett (ed.), *Readers and Reading* (London and New York, 1995). Popular interest in the topic is evidenced in Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (London, 1996), a lively book aimed at a general readership.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Darnton, 'What Is the History of Books?' in *Daedalus*, vol.111 no.3 (1982), esp. p.67, Fig.1, p.68; Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Baltimore and London, 1999), esp. p.2; Johns, *Nature of the Book*; George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker (eds.), *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800* (Cambridge, 2002).

examines the role played by text in cementing women's relationships within their own social circles. It starts off by examining women's access to print, then asks why and how women read, before investigating women's relationship with the different genres which they read. It considers the ways in which women participated in print culture, not only as consumers, but, in a more personal way, in its production, before ending with a section on women's own use of the written word.

### Access to Books and Print

Elizabeth Graham, one-time mistress of George Innes of Stow died a washerwoman-cum-seamstress, but also a disappointed gentlewoman, whose letters suggest at least a basic education at the hands of her schoolteacher father. In the inventory of her belongings which her brother compiled at her death in 1747 was the following list of books:

The Holy Bible  
 The Whole Duty of Man  
 Moral Instructions from a Father to his Son.<sup>10</sup>

Another, undated inventory of 'Mrs Graham's things lying in her father's house' records alongside 'written Books' and 'loose papers' of pastry and cookery recipes, recipe books, and records of disbursements:

A sermon by Mr Cumming  
 A Scots pastoral Comedy, called ye Gentle Shepherd  
 A written Arithmetick Book.<sup>11</sup>

Fourteen years later, the inventory of her daughter Jean's belongings at the time of Jean's death included:

A Pocket Bible  
 The Whole Duty of Man  
 Pilgrim's Progress  
 Craighead on the Sacrament  
 A Small Psalm Book.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1061, 'Inventory of Mrs Grahams Cloths &c Came by her Brother's Letter to me I received the 27 October 1747'.

<sup>11</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1114, 'Inventory of Mrs Graham's things lying in her father's house.'

<sup>12</sup> NAS, GD113/3/1199/7, 'Inventory of Jeanie Graham's Clothes & other things remaining at her death the 3 Jany 1762, made up by to her uncle John Graham'.

These were not wealthy women, although their unusual situation had ensured better access to print than most women of their social rank. But in these lists lie the fundamentals of women's relationship with the world of text in the early to mid-eighteenth century. The 'written Arithmetic book' and recipes are a reminder of how literacy, writing and the book were integrated into women's household responsibilities, whilst the religious texts testify to the central place of the book as an instrument of devotion and guidance in women's lives. With the notable and not insignificant exception of Allan Ramsay's pastoral drama in verse, *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725),<sup>13</sup> and Dufour's *Moral Instructions of a Father to his Son* (1677), a translation of a French conduct manual,<sup>14</sup> devotional text dominates this list, in the eyes of contemporaries as practical and as vital to the shaping of woman's task as her pastry books.<sup>15</sup> The books that passed from mother to daughter were those in which the reader would find solace or advice, their inherent value augmented by the meaning placed on an object that was intrinsic to family ritual.<sup>16</sup>

The books these women owned are suggestive of an 'intensive' style of reading, in which a few, mainly religious texts, were read repeatedly; their contents privileged by this process as an affirmation of belief. Historians once believed this to have been replaced, by the end of the century, with 'extensive' reading, the consumption of 'new and varied' texts 'for information, and for private entertainment in particular', encouraging the challenging of accepted values.<sup>17</sup> Although generally agreeing that an increase in the variety of reading did take place,

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<sup>13</sup> Ramsay's play enjoyed immense popularity in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland, helping to promote a cult of affectionate marital relationships which may have influenced Elizabeth's correspondence examined on pp.109-110 below. See John Dwyer, *The Age of the Passions: An Interpretation of Adam Smith and Scottish Enlightenment Culture*, (East Linton, 1998), pp.104-111.

<sup>14</sup> Published by Ruddiman in Edinburgh in 1743 for the Company of Teachers, this had probably come into the family through Elizabeth Graham's schoolteacher father.

<sup>15</sup> Devotional reading is examined on pp. 88-91 below.

<sup>16</sup> Writing of Bunyan, Elspeth Jajdelska suggested that amongst the poor, ownership of even cheap pious literature, imposed 'something of the status of a luxury good.' Elspeth Jajdelska, 'Income, ideology and childhood reading in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries', in *History of Education*, vol.33:1 (2004), p.60.

<sup>17</sup> This thesis was originally proposed by Rolf Engelsing in 1974. Richard Wittman, 'Was there a Reading Revolution at the End of the Eighteenth Century?', in Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (eds.), *A History of Reading in the West*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Oxford, 1999; 1<sup>st</sup> published 1995), pp.254-5. The late-eighteenth-century context of the title focused more on the development of the sentimental reader which grows out of this trend. The roots of the aspect of this 'revolution' discussed above can be found in the late seventeenth-century, see Steven R. Fischer, *A History of Reading* (London, 2003), p.255.



most scholars now propose a more gradual process of change, in which ‘old’ and ‘new’ reading practices were practised alongside each other.<sup>18</sup> For those who experienced it, this move from a primarily reverential relationship with text, to one that was largely or at least partly consumer-driven, was a significant one. Despite a lack of detailed sources pertaining to how and what women read in Scotland in this period,<sup>19</sup> glimpses can be gained into the ways in which, for women wealthier than Elizabeth Graham, access to a variety of texts was becoming an intrinsic part of life by mid-century.

Books remained expensive; family wealth probably the most important determinant in women’s access to reading material. This was followed by a familial literary culture. John Clerk of Penicuik was the patron of no less a figure than Allan Ramsay senior, whilst Gilbert Elliot of Minto corresponded with Hume and Smith, amongst others, on the subject of their writings. Lord Milton bought large numbers of books on a wide range of subjects, and was the guardian of an equally eclectic library compiled by his uncle, Andrew Fletcher ‘the patriot’.<sup>20</sup> Yet whether the Fletcher women had access to their family’s substantial libraries is unknown. Around this time, the libraries of some English country houses were in use as family rooms, and Robert Adam commemorated Lady Grisell Baillie and her daughter Lady Murray in busts in the library at Mellerstain,<sup>21</sup> suggesting the acceptance of a female presence in what had traditionally been viewed as a ‘male’ space.<sup>22</sup> Yet when Milton left his library to his younger children, they returned it to his eldest son, Adam

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Darnton, ‘First Steps Towards a History of Reading’, pp.165-6, argued that the Engelsing thesis was built upon only slim evidence, but noted that a study of New England produced similar results. For Darnton, the late eighteenth century was a turning point in the availability of reading matter, but this increase in variety was not accompanied by decreased intensity of reading. John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997), pp.170-171; Robert DeMaria, jr., *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Reading* (Baltimore and London, 1997), p.18;

<sup>19</sup> For the reading of Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock (1745-1815) in the 1770s, see Mary Catherine Moran, ‘From Rudeness to Refinement: Gender, Genre and Scottish Enlightenment Discourse’ (Johns Hopkins University PhD thesis, 1999), pp.76-90. Máire Kennedy, ‘Women and Reading in Eighteenth-Century Ireland’, in Cunningham and Kennedy (eds.), *Experience of Reading*, discusses a similar lack of sources in Ireland.

<sup>20</sup> NLS, MS17866, is a list of books at Brunstane in 1760, running to twenty-four pages.

<sup>21</sup> Colin Cunningham, ‘“An Italian house is my lady”: Some Aspects of the Definition of Women’s Role in the Architecture of Robert Adam’, in Gill Perry and Michael Rossington (eds.), *Femininity and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture* (Manchester, 1994), p.65; *Mellerstain, Gordon, Berwickshire: Home of the Earl and Countess of Haddington* (Derby, 1994), p.3.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (Harmondsworth, 1980), pp.179-80.

Ferguson remarking approvingly of Mally Fletcher's renunciation of her claim as, 'a piece of proper Respect to [her] Ancestors.'<sup>23</sup> Younger sons and daughters were, in his view, no more the proper recipients of the family's collected and inherited print culture than property or a title. However, women had their own lines of inheritance: Milton's paternal grandmother, Katherine Bruce, left an 'inventer of my Bookes' listing around one hundred and fifty mainly religious titles. These she left to her daughter-in-law Margaret Carnegie who passed them to her own daughter Martha.<sup>24</sup> 'Female' books, or those specified as belonging to women, rarely occur in archival bibliographic lists, probably because they were kept separate from the mainstream of family libraries, and rarely deemed worth recording. Moreover, the unbound texts most likely to have been owned and read by women are the least likely to have survived.

Yet women did not need to own books in order to read them, nor was their experience of print always separate from that of men. Betty Fletcher's hands may never have turned the pages of Bolingbroke's letters, but her brother read them aloud to her.<sup>25</sup> Books were shared amongst friends, Beatrix Maxwell sending Marion Lauder 'a great many thans for the lone' of the latter's copy of *Gil Blas*.<sup>26</sup> Whilst circulating libraries did not feature significantly in women's experience until later in the century (although Grisell Baillie's daughter was philanthropically involved in one of the earliest such libraries in Scotland<sup>27</sup>), the booksellers which Mure depicted as enabling women to choose their own reading matter<sup>28</sup> were being patronised by women, if through the mediation of men. In 1741, Thomas Fordyce of Ayton wrote to George Innes, later Marion's husband, that his wife 'Sayes if you'd get the Dutches of Marlborows Memoirs from Wm Kincaid & send them her by the Carrier wt the Magasins She'll be oblig'd to you, if She likes them, She'll keep them, if not

<sup>23</sup> NLS, MS16735 f.24, to John Fletcher, 25 January 1767, Edinburgh. He worried that it would be sold and split up.

<sup>24</sup> NLS, MS17861 ff.39-42; MS17607 f.4, Dictation by Margaret Carnegie, 5 December 1744.

<sup>25</sup> NLS, MS16746 f.233, ?Elizabeth Fletcher to ?Margaret Hepburn, 1751.

<sup>26</sup> NAS, GD113/5/66A/4, 25 May n.y. (pre-1743) Pollock. For Alain-René Lesage's romance, *Gil Blas*, see pp.97-8.

<sup>27</sup> After her death in 1759, the Reverend George Ridpath 'wrote a letter as Preses of the Library meeting, [...] to Mr. Baillie at Mellerstain, acknowledging the favours of Lady Murray to our Library, and desiring the continuance of them on his part.' James Balfour Paul (ed.), *Diary of George Ridpath, Minister of Stichel 1755-1761*, SHS, 3rd series, vol.2, (Edinburgh, 1922), p.283

<sup>28</sup> Mure, 'Change of Manners', p.269.

She'll return them Carefully Soon.'<sup>29</sup> By the 1740s, then, women of even the lesser gentry living in the vicinity of Edinburgh had access to various print genres from several sources, and could choose what they read on the grounds of personal preference rather than mere availability. Further up the social scale, when Frances, Marchioness of Tweeddale wanted to construct a shell grotto at Yester, her husband was informed of the 'best' text on conchology, 'L'Histoire Naturelle E'claircie', that 'There is but ane copie of it in Town that I know of in ye Advocates Librery [...] for it is not a Sale book for the Shops if my Lady or your Lordship choise to turn it over I shall Sent it when you please.'<sup>30</sup> Admittedly, few women would have enjoyed even indirect access to the Library of the Faculty of Advocates. But the Marchioness was living in a culture, as yet inaccessible to most of the population, and only relatively recently so even to the elite, in which, if she desired specialised knowledge, she could consult the published word. For those with access to print, information was no longer confined to what could be gleaned from word of mouth or manuscript circulation. Although social networks may still have controlled access, women were increasingly able to engage with an 'imagined community'<sup>31</sup> (in this case, international) of those pursuing common interests.

The impact of this was not confined to text. When the Duke of Argyll sent the Fletcher girls song-books from London,<sup>32</sup> he was perpetuating a shared aural culture far more precise than repetition by ear or through manuscript copying, whilst when their cousin Margaret Hepburn framed prints of his portrait and of the celebrated Gunning sisters,<sup>33</sup> she was indicating her conformity to standardised national taste in politics and in beauty.<sup>34</sup> As well as being up-to-date with the latest fashionable prints, Margaret's correspondence suggests relatively unrestricted access

<sup>29</sup> NAS, GD113/3/168/15, 17 May 1742, Ayton. For Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, see Ophelia Field, *The Favourite: Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough* (London, 2002). Kincaid was an Edinburgh bookseller and printer. Richard B. Sher, 'Kincaid, Alexander (1710–1777)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65021>, accessed 3 April 2006].

<sup>30</sup> NLS, MS14422 f.142, John Spottiswoode to Tweeddale, 11 December 1755, Edr. This was probably A.-J. Dézallier d'Argenville, *L'histoire naturelle éclaircie dans deux de ses parties principales: la lithologie et la conchyliologie* (Paris, 1742).

<sup>31</sup> See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Modern Nationalism* (London, 1983, rev. 1991).

<sup>32</sup> NLS, MS16595 f.175, Duke of Argyll to Milton 27 October 1744, London.

<sup>33</sup> NLS, MS17607 f.39, Account 26 May 1753, Gavin Hamilton [bookseller] to Miss Peggy Hepburn.

<sup>34</sup> Stana Nenadic, 'Print Collecting and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *History*, 82, (1997), pp.213-4; idem, 'The Enlightenment in Scotland and the Popular Passion for Portraits', *BJECS*, 21 (1998), pp.179-181.

to a wider range of books than the ‘Poems Plays Novels and Romances’ which Alexander Monro believed girls studied ‘without being desired’.<sup>35</sup> In 1755, the poet Edward Young, celebrated author of the highly popular *Night Thoughts* (1742-6), replied to her request for recommended reading. As, he noted, ‘all the Shades, & all the Heroes & Sages of antiquity [...] are your old acquaintance & [...] very good friends’, he advised her to curb her rural loneliness with the works of Duncan Forbes, ‘Dr Hill on God & Nature in answer to the Lord Bolingbroke’, and ‘Doctor Newton’s Discourses on the Completion of Prophecy’. Young believed the latter two to be ‘the best productions of the Winter, & excellent in their kind’.<sup>36</sup> As well as implying the breadth and depth of her reading, Young’s letter assumed she would have little difficulty in gaining access to the latest religious and philosophical tomes, suggesting he had no notion that these were ‘unsuitable’ reading for a young woman.

For Young, reading was a means of distraction from the periods of rural isolation and loneliness which punctuated women’s lives. A similar note was struck by the historian William Robertson, who lamented to Margaret in 1759 following the death of her cousin and their mutual friend, Betty Fletcher, ‘It is very unlucky that the inactivity of the female life, does not present you with any business, which is the great amusement & resource of men under distress’. After admitting that he knew not how to supply this defect, he asked, ‘is there no History which is new to you, & which you would wish to read?’, describing the comfort which reading Davila had been to him during his own greatest sorrow.<sup>37</sup> Although acknowledging the role of reading as a panacea for both men and women, he suggested that this was heightened for women, for whom fewer alternative means of distraction were available. Lady Tillicoultry spent time in the country, ‘reading the Lives, of some great men, and

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<sup>35</sup> P.A.G. Monro (ed.), ‘The Professor’s Daughter: An Essay on female Conduct, by Alexander Monro (Primus)’, *Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 26:1, supplement no.2, (January 1996), p.9.

<sup>36</sup> NLS, MS16693 f.222, 13 January 1755, [postmarked Welwyn]. He recommended John Hill, *Thoughts concerning God and Nature: In answer to Lord Bolingbroke’s Philosophy* (London, 1755), and Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies, which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling in the world*, vol.1 (London, 1754). Around the same time, Young was corresponding with Samuel Richardson and Mary Delaney, see *The Correspondence of Edward Young, 1683-1765*, ed. Henry Pettit (Oxford, 1971), pp.415-9

<sup>37</sup> NLS, MS16711 f.231, 12 January 1759, Edinburgh. Enrico Davila wrote an account of the late-sixteenth-century French Civil Wars, in which he fought.

Antient Romans whose Noble Sentiments of honour, I much admire.’<sup>38</sup> Yet whilst reading could act as a substitute for company, to consider it generally as a silent, solitary past-time would be anachronistic.

### ‘How they cuddle & huddle’: Reading as a Social Practice

Some time in the 1750s, Andrew Fletcher, political secretary to the third Duke of Argyll, jotted down in his notebook, amongst poems about balls and romantic intrigues, the following ditty on his youngest sister, ‘that B.[etty] Fletcher, wha’s always a reading’, her cousin Peggy Hepburn, and their friend Jean Campbell of Carrick:

The Missies should study domestic Affairs,  
 Instead of dull Authors, to give y<sup>r</sup>selves airs,  
 Her bocom Companions, what strange sort of Elves,  
 How they cuddle & huddle so close by y<sup>m</sup> selves,  
 W Pegie & Jeanie, she keeps such a pother  
 Well what can they find to say to each other  
 Repining forsooth upon Virtue & merit,  
 The frighten the lairds, have you patience to bear it,  
 Wise Prudent good Huswives, have often declared  
 That women should ne’er presume to be learned,  
 For what does y<sup>r</sup> Wisdom & learning avail.  
 Thrice happy the Maids who imploy all y<sup>r</sup> Care  
 In Sweeping & Cleaning & nice bills of fare,  
 Yet few of our Misses such Council will take,  
 But as they do brew, even so they must bake.<sup>39</sup>

The poem highlights a number of issues surrounding the unchaperoned venturings of young, unmarried women into the unknown, public world of text: the fear that it would not only distract young women from the domestic education needed to run a household, but would discourage potential husbands; a condescending belief that women were reading primarily for fashion as opposed to the seriousness of male

<sup>38</sup> NAS, GD110/937/10, to Sir Hew Dalrymple, n.d., [1740s].

<sup>39</sup> NLS, MS17890 f.19, ‘Epistle to E.[izabeth] F.[letcher]’. It is undated, but probably post-1750, as it makes reference to Peggy Hepburn preceding Andrew to Roseneath, one of the stops on the annual tour to Inveraray. Jean Campbell of Carrick was the daughter of Capt. John Campbell of Carrick, a brother of the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Argyll, and his wife Jean, who found herself at the centre of a high-profile court case when after the Captain’s death it transpired he had also been secretly married to the woman assumed to be his mistress. See Leah Leneman, ‘The Scottish Case That Led to Hardwicke’s Marriage Act,’ *Law and History Review*, 17:1 (Spring 1999).

<<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/lhr/17.1/leneman.html>> (29 April. 2003).

learning; and a patronising dismissal of literary-influenced female-only conversation. Whilst its tone is affectionate and good-natured, to be taken as a light-hearted joke as opposed to serious censure, it exemplifies the ambivalence of the way in which women often became participants in the world of letters less through a recognition of their intellectual abilities, than through a culture which on the whole humoured, rather than condemned, such activity.

The poem suggests a marked difference in attitudes towards male and female reading habits, male reading being associated with the silent and solitary atmosphere of the study, whilst female reading is presented as a social activity, carried out in a group, albeit one which is small, exclusive and intimate.<sup>40</sup> But whilst a shared interest in reading and discussing texts may have helped to define this all-female friendship group, the exclusivity of the ‘huddle’ is key to this gendered interpretation of reading. Whilst the solitary male reader could be expected to leave his study and venture into the social realm to discuss his ideas as part of a larger reading public, the readership community presented here extends no further than this close circle of intimates, and, in an age which put such an emphasis on the social, this rendered it less valid. Fletcher conflates this by his suggestion of the inappropriateness of their ‘wisdom and learning’. Yet, as shall be seen, these women did discuss the intellectually demanding works which they read, not just outside their closed ‘huddle’, but with some of the leading thinkers of their day in Scotland and beyond.

Reading is presented here as incompatible with the sorts of ‘useful’ things that girls should be doing in preparation for their future role as wives. Indeed, only recently have historians begun to question the assumption that reading took elite women away from their domestic duties, and instead to pay more attention to the voices of those like Jackie Clerk, who remarked, when staying with the Countess of Glencairn at her Clydeside home of Finlaystone in 1751, that ‘the Seams and Reading goes on by turns.’<sup>41</sup> Naomi Tadmor has shown that reading was suited to a female lifestyle, not because women had nothing else to do, but rather because it was a hobby and a form of intellectual improvement which could be integrated into the

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<sup>40</sup> Chartier is often accused of over-emphasising the individuality and introspectiveness of the silent reader, but he also acknowledged its role as a group activity, as depicted in many eighteenth-century paintings. ‘Practical Impact of Writing’, p.151.

<sup>41</sup> NAS, GD18/5474/2, to John Clerk of Penicuik, 12 March 1751.

busiest of lifestyles, more often social than solitary.<sup>42</sup> Unlike the huddle of the Fletcher girls, reading aloud was regarded as morally improving for the familial, therefore public good, encouraging ‘improving’ interaction between text, reader and listeners. Alexander Monro advised proficiency in the practice so a girl could ‘entertain her Companions’ and later ‘amuse and instruct her Husband’.<sup>43</sup> When the young Jean Innes was boarding with the Reverend Hary Spens in 1757, Spens reported to her father that on Sunday evening Jean had read to his family from the ‘Book of Job’, ‘& entertained us highly w. her remarks.’<sup>44</sup> Whether prompted or voluntarily, the child was engaging with and responding to the text. As with the Fletcher girls, it was the sharing of not just the text itself, but of its interpretation and discussion, which formed the social bonds of the reading community. Moreover, when women put pen to paper to express their own thoughts, this sharing of reading matter could transcend the boundaries of physical space: during a period of separation, Betty Fletcher wrote to Margaret Hepburn, ‘in obedience to you, my Dear, I must tell you I am all most done reading Warburton’s critic on Pope, for which, I assure you, I thank heaven.’ In teasing her cousin, whom she knew to have read the work, with her opinions on the book and its author, she used their common experience of the text and its contexts to maintain the intimacy of their relationship.<sup>45</sup>

Merely reading a text did not necessarily imply comprehension or intellectual gain; Hester Chapone, writing on the reading of history in 1773, emphasised that to be committed to memory it should be read not once but twice, and, if possible, shared with a friend.<sup>46</sup> Another common technique was note-taking, an activity pursued at length by Betty’s aunt, Martha Fletcher, who left dozens of pages of

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<sup>42</sup> Naomi Tadmor, ‘“In the even my wife read to me”: Women, Reading and Household Life in the Eighteenth Century’, in James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor (eds.), *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.162-70. See also Patricia Howell Michaelson, ‘Women in the Reading Circle’, *ECL*, 13:3 (1989), pp.59-69.

<sup>43</sup> Monro, ‘Essay on female Conduct’, p.9.

<sup>44</sup> NAS, GD113/3/485/7, to George Innes, 10 May 1757. This situation of domestic reading aloud after the day’s work was done represented the ideal engagement of the female reader with text. See the passage in which Elizabeth Hamilton’s Harriet in *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* is read to by an orphan girl she had taught, as she worked at her sewing having completed the day’s domestic tasks. Quoted in Katherine Binhammer, ‘The Persistence of Reading: Governing Female Novel Reading in *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* and *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*’, *ECL*, 27:2 (Spring 2003), p.16.

<sup>45</sup> NLS, MS16746 f.135, n.d., [1751].

<sup>46</sup> Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, (1773; Edinburgh edn., 1821), pp.123-4, 128.

extracts and notes.<sup>47</sup> She collected the salutary characters of public figures from whom she could hope to learn, took down biblical quotes towards her spiritual development, and copied out lengthy passages from histories.<sup>48</sup> The longer extracts may have been taken down from borrowed works to keep as her own copy, or, alternatively, she may have been involved in the education of one or more of her nieces, and copied or took digests of works to help them learn.<sup>49</sup> But such uses seem unlikely, as there remain some very obvious errors which have not been corrected, suggesting Martha never looked back at her writings.<sup>50</sup> Probably, as this was a common practice amongst men as well as women, indulged in by her father, it was simply part of the reading and learning process, helping her to remember, and feel involved in, her reading. In Scotland, such practices may well have been influenced by the Calvinist tradition which imbued the written word with heightened meaning, and viewed copying almost as an act of reverential self-implication. Martha's notes suggest a woman who perceived reading not as passive, but as a process in which she was actively involved.

#### 'Entertaining as well as instructive': Devotional and Religious Reading

If any one concern dominated Martha Fletcher's note-taking, it was religion, be it in the twenty pages of notes she took 'Out of John Calvin,'<sup>51</sup> or the fifty pages

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<sup>47</sup> Most of Martha's notes are undated, and could have been made at any time between her early years and her death in the 1770s. However, publication dates suggest most of her extant copyings were made in the 1740s and 50s. The collection contains a report on the death and funeral of the third Duke of Argyll (published in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* and *Scots Magazine* in May 1761), written by her brother, Lord Milton. NLS, MS17774 f.270. For the identification of authorship, see Alexander Murdoch, *The People Above: Politics and Administration in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1980), pp.101-2. In her transcriptions of works concerning the religious wars of the seventeenth century, the date 1642 is erroneously written on a number of occasions as 1742, pointing perhaps towards the year when this was copied. E.g. MS17802 ff.5-6, 75-6 (twice on each page). For other examples of readers' responses, see D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000), ch.3 (mostly slightly earlier); Stephen Colclough, 'Recovering the Reader: Commonplace Books and Diaries as Sources of Reading Experience', *Publishing History*, 44 (1998) (largely nineteenth-century).

<sup>48</sup> NLS, MS17774 ff.256-271 ('characters of various persons'); MS17778, ff.123-143 ('commonplaces and extracts from books'); MS17802 ff.1-167 ('historical notes') (poss. also 170-3).

<sup>49</sup> Anna Larpent (b.1758) did this when educating her children and step-children. John Brewer, 'Reconstructing the reader: prescriptions, texts and strategies in Anna Larpent's reading' in Raven et al (eds.), *Practice and Representation of Reading*, pp.230, 240.

<sup>50</sup> See n.47.

<sup>51</sup> NLS, MS17778 ff.123-132.



she copied on the seventeenth-century wars of religion in the British Isles.<sup>52</sup> The notes she took from Davila's *History of the Civill Wars of France*, and a translation of Voltaire's 'History of France Age of Louis XIV' also emphasise the religious aspects of these popular histories.<sup>53</sup> Whilst this suggests an historical interest in the politics of religion, she also took down biblical extracts.<sup>54</sup> As aforementioned, interaction with text played a vital role in women's devotional practices, and, as such, an intrinsic role in women's daily lives. The Reformation had placed an emphasis on autonomous engagement with the Bible, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, women's experience of print tended to focus on devotional literature.<sup>55</sup> The books bought in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by Anne, Duchess of Hamilton, probably the most powerful Scotswoman of her age, were mainly religious in subject,<sup>56</sup> as were those owned by James Boswell's grandmother, who had 'many books of Divinity' in English, French and Dutch.<sup>57</sup> The predominance of religious texts in the inventories of the Graham women quoted above are a reminder of the influence of the printed sermon in the dissemination of theological thinking, and of the continued importance of seventeenth-century works of piety (like Richard Allestree's *Whole Duty of Man* (1658), 'perhaps the most popular religious self-help book' in eighteenth-century Britain<sup>58</sup>) to the mid-eighteenth-century reader, especially to those who could afford only a few books.

The value readers placed on spiritual texts is evident in a letter Jean Graham's uncle wrote to her father as she lay on her deathbed:

There is a Book which she is very fond of, & desires you would take the trouble of procuring for her & send it out w<sup>th</sup> the Bearer, and that is Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Parts, & she desires it may be a large Type as her Eyes are but weak \_ The Book

<sup>52</sup> NLS, MS17802 ff.46-80 (excl. 60-70). The first two pages, including any title, are missing.

<sup>53</sup> NLS, MS17802 f.24; MS17802 ff.25-8. For Davila, see n.37.

<sup>54</sup> NLS, MS17778 ff.133-4, 137.

<sup>55</sup> Although Elizabeth Mure added 'long Romances' to 'books of devotion' as constituting the mainstay of women's reading by the early-eighteenth century. 'Change of Manners', p.263.

<sup>56</sup> Rosalind K. Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne: Life in the Household of the Duchess of Hamilton 1656-1716* (London, 1973; reissued East Linton, 2000), p.118. See also Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos*, pp.137-8.

<sup>57</sup> *My Very Dearest Sweet Heart, or, Boswell Before Boswell. Letters of the Lady Elizabeth Boswell (1704 to 1711, and 1733) Life before the Biographer*, ed. David R. Boswell (Bath, 2003), pp.68-70.

<sup>58</sup> DeMaria, jr., *Johnson and the Life of Reading*, p.129.

I know is entertaining as well as instructive, and may prove amusing to her.<sup>59</sup>

One of her last recorded actions was her receipt of the book with ‘great pleasure.’<sup>60</sup> Offering hope to the faithful in, as Graham pointed out, an accessible and entertaining format, Bunyan’s moral fable was extremely popular in the eighteenth century. The attractiveness of this book to a young woman approaching death was augmented, as Graham suggested, by the comfort of reading a known and much-loved text whose moral journeys were familiar to her; the authority and immutability of print reconfirming her in her faith. Jean’s legitimate half-sister Jean Innes, a keen young bibliophile who contended with Hary Spens’ son Jack over who had the largest book collection, also happily entertained herself with the book of her own accord.<sup>61</sup> The reading of devotional literature continued into adult life, yet unlike most other genres, religious reading was essentially private, shared with children and possibly intimates, but rarely discussed in general conversation.<sup>62</sup> In her spiritual diary, Janet Clerk often wrote of the religious texts she had read, and her reactions to them,<sup>63</sup> yet discussion of such texts in correspondence is rare. On one occasion, she recorded that, ‘On the 21<sup>st</sup> was kept from church the Duke and Dutches Queensberie being here but [?the/she] made up my staying at home by reading most devoutly one hour and three quarters on bishop Leightons comentarie by which I was edified.’<sup>64</sup> Although the duchess was her first cousin, Janet was recording an unusual intimacy.

This kind of reading may not have brought women into a community of sociability, but it opened up for them an inner spiritual world. An intrinsic part of the devotional process, Janet Clerk regarded it as her right, even duty, to think about and respond to these texts as a preparation for the afterlife. In 1744 she recorded that:

<sup>59</sup> NAS, GD113/3/586/11, John Graham to George Innes, 7 December 1761, Ratho.

<sup>60</sup> NAS, GD113/3/587/1, John Graham to George Innes, 11 December 1761, Ratho.

<sup>61</sup> NAS, GD113/3/479/17, Hary Spens to George Innes, 15 February 1757, Wemyss.

<sup>62</sup> For instance, Hannah More only discussed her religious reading with her children. Brewer, ‘Reconstructing the Reader’, p.239.

<sup>63</sup> NAS, GD18/2098, Religious Diaries of Janet Clerk of Penicuik, 1710-1759.

<sup>64</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/470, 23 July 1754, Penny. For the Duchess of Queensberry, see Rosalind K. Marshall, ‘Douglas, Catherine, duchess of Queensberry and Dover (1701–1777)’, *OBNB*, online edn, Oct 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7876>, accessed 7 Nov 2006].

as it is my earnest desire to be both ready and willing to dye so I'm endeavoring to prepare for that great change and therefor chuse to read what may be helpfull to me and in particular I've found benefit by a little book called Serious reflections on time and Eternity by John Shower I desire to bless the Lord that I found I had in some measure folowed the derections given especialy as to Covenanting with God[.]<sup>65</sup>

She was relieved to find in her reading confirmation of her devotional practice over the forty years during which she had been covenanting. Like her diary itself, her recorded reading tended to centre around the sacrament, and the personal covenants which she compiled.<sup>66</sup> It was an interactive process, if of a different kind from other reading. Reading 'Mr Goodwine on the return of prayer' gave her 'to hope from his reasons that I am heard and Shall be answered in gods own time and way which is best for me.'<sup>67</sup> Yet, whilst acknowledging the comfort she found in reading 'Wederburn on the Covenant', she noted that it was 'a plain book and what many would not be att pains to read.'<sup>68</sup> Although the popularity of more emotionally-charged religious texts would continue, the near-monopoly which devotional text had once enjoyed was coming to an end,<sup>69</sup> leaving as its legacy to other genres an uneasy relationship between print and 'truth'.

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<sup>65</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/285-6, 23 June 1744, p'cook. John Shower's *Serious Reflections on Time and Eternity* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 1689) was on its 7<sup>th</sup> edition by 1752.

<sup>66</sup> E.g., NAS, GD18/2098/374, 12 September 1748, penny, 'Since my comeing home I have been reading of the due carriage of a receiver after the sacrament.'; GD18/2098/374, 9 October 1748, penny, recorded that she still felt the good effects of her last sacrament, and longed for another, 'and for this end I've been reading willison's catechism on the sacrament by which Im much edified it being a plain practical Piece.' One of the few items of print to be owned by Jean Graham was R. Craighead, *Advice to communicants, for necessary preparation, and profitable improvement of the great and comfortable ordinance of the Lord's Supper* (Glasgow, 1740), NAS, GD113/3/1199/7, 'Inventory'.

<sup>67</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/276, 5 November 1743, pennycook. This is Thomas Goodwin, *The Return of Prayers* (London, 1638).

<sup>68</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/460, 2 February 1754, Penny. Alexander Wedderburn, *David's testament opened up in forty sermons, upon 2 Samuel 23. 5; wherein the nature, properties, and effects of the Covenant of Grace are clearly held forth*. The author died in 1678, but the most recent edition on COPAC is dated 1721, apparently confirming Janet's belief that this was no longer fashionable reading.

<sup>69</sup> Having said this, Shower and Goodwin were being reprinted in the early nineteenth century.

The Periodical Press: Where Personal and National Met

From 1712 to 1757, England's newspaper circulation increased eight-fold.<sup>70</sup> Taking the waters at Harrogate in 1763, Lady Minto, the elderly mother of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> baronet, was horrified to find herself isolated from the world of newspapers: 'one word of News or Polliticks is never spok in this House & excep Mr Meller[the bookseller, Andrew Millar]s Newspaper ther is not ane other amongst one hundred folks the Gentellmen in our Country would have ten tims more news.' Thus, she decided to 'keep mighty will with him', with the result that he showed her, she reported, 'all the papers.'<sup>71</sup> Lady Minto had come to regard access to newspapers as expected, wherever she went. Her interest seems to have been in keeping up-to-date with news and politics, but by the 1760s, periodicals combined news, fashion, advertisements, literary reviews, poetry and other writing, relaying and reinforcing the interests and agendas of polite society from court to provincial breakfast table.

The popularity of newspapers has been imputed to their adaptability to different reading practices, 'either alone or in company, and from start to finish or in part', alongside their 'sense of immediacy and reader interaction.'<sup>72</sup> On the most basic level, they provided entertainment for otherwise isolated women; in 1735, Martha Fletcher asked her brother to send the English papers, as they 'devert my mother', whilst twenty years later Mary Campbell had the newspapers sent to Boquhan from Stirling every post for the same purpose.<sup>73</sup> For such women, ageing and remote from the town, newspapers helped to reaffirm their sense of cultural belonging to that world, separation a mere practicality. Access to periodicals tended to be assumed, and correspondents frequently reported 'No news other than in the

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<sup>70</sup> Fischer, *History of Reading*, p.258.

<sup>71</sup> NLS, MS11009 f.175, Lady Minto to Minto, Tuesday, 1763, Harrogate; f.176 as above, n.d. Alexander Carlyle was at Harrogate at the same time (which he described as 'critical' ) and recorded the popularity which Millar's two papers sent by each post conferred upon him, *The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, ed. John Hill Burton, with a new Introduction by Richard B. Sher (Bristol, 1990; reprint of 1910 edn.), p.456.

<sup>72</sup> Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics, and English Society, 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000), p.64

<sup>73</sup> NLS, MS16509 f.226, 16 June 1735, to Milton, Salton; MS16691 f.38, Mary Campbell to Milton, 2 January 1755, Boquhan.

papers',<sup>74</sup> unconsciously underlining the indivisibility of personal and public news for the sorts of political families with which this thesis is concerned. It was frequently first through the press that women learned about the events taking place within their own extended families, although they were well aware of the potential of the newspapers to be inaccurate,<sup>75</sup> and it is unlikely that it was only the Jacobite Miss Craig who 'laugh[ed] at the London Gazette as all lias'.<sup>76</sup> This helped confirm individuals' sense of their – and their family's – place in society. Belonging, even distantly, to families who did not just read, but featured in the periodical press, was one of the most important ways in which women could assert their inclusion on what Kathleen Wilson has termed 'the right side of the vast social and cultural chasms between those who profited from the processes of imperial expansion and those who did not.'<sup>77</sup> This was particularly evident in wartime, when it was to the newspapers, particularly the *Gazette*, that the women of families like the Fletchers, Clerks, and Elliots looked for news of the national effort and simultaneously of the role of their sons or brothers therein.<sup>78</sup> This sort of periodical print culture was a defining influence on the development of national identity, and for those who could read about the actions of members of their own family as part of issues of national importance, a sense of a relationship with the British nation may have grown along with their family interest as a double helix of identity.

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<sup>74</sup> NLS, MS16705 f.116, Robert Gardiner to Milton, 20 September 1758, Edr; MS16534 f.89, Andrew Fletcher to Mally Fletcher, 16 January 1762, London: 'no sort of news here, but what you would have in the Chronicle'.

<sup>75</sup> E.g., 'It gave me great pleasure to see by the Newspapers Mr John Grants being made a Barron he Deserves every thing that is good I wish him and you Joy of it.' NLS, MS16691 f.76, Mary Campbell to Milton, 20 October 1755, Boquhan; MS16514 f.133, Mary Hepburn to Milton, 18 May 1748, 'If we may belive the newes papers your to have an ease of this troble, for the future.'

<sup>76</sup> NLS, MS293, 'An Impartial and Genuine List of the Ladys on the Whig or Jacobite Partie', f.3.

<sup>77</sup> Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 2003), p.33.

<sup>78</sup> E.g., after the reduction of Martinique, Andrew Fletcher sent his father the 'Gazette Extraordinary' mentioning the action of his brother Henry. NLS, MS16523 f.115, Andrew Fletcher to Milton, 23 March 1762, London. Writing to his sister, Margaret, Henry assumed that she would have read the published account of the battle prior to the arrival of his letter, MS16523 f.172, Henry Fletcher to Margaret Grant, 28 February 1762, Martinique, Camp at S<sup>t</sup> Piere. The London *Gazette* was a government publication, carrying official news and proclamations, which came into its own in wartime. See Bob Harris, *Politics and the Nation: Britain in the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2002), p.109. Digests were also reproduced in the Edinburgh papers. The army was 'the first major British institution to be colonized by ambitious Scots', Colin Kidd, 'Integration: Patriotism and Nationalism', in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2002), pp.371-2.

Prior to 1745, the Scots newspapers were relatively undeveloped, and even by the later 1750s consumer-orientated advertisements tended to be limited to books published, shipments of oranges and lemons, and patent medicines.<sup>79</sup> Scots read both English and Scottish papers.<sup>80</sup> The Scottish papers, like their provincial English equivalents, lifted much of their content directly from the London press, providing women with an implicit reinforcement of the place of London the centre of news, fashions and gossip, and their own world as part of, but peripheral to that. As Helen Berry found with regards to Newcastle, newspapers promoted a sense of the local, but did so largely within a metropolitan frame of reference.<sup>81</sup> To Scottish readers, too, the reiteration in print of the term 'Great Britain', the very stuff of which subliminal notions of identity are made, was probably more effective towards the creation of a sense of British national identity than would have been the case had not the Scottish editors carefully replaced the erroneous uses of 'England' with 'Great Britain' instead.<sup>82</sup> Particularly important to this type of print culture was a sense of synchronicity, of reading the same newspapers, at roughly the same time, as other members of an imagined community.<sup>83</sup> Yet Scottish readers of English papers would have always been aware that the news they read was by then old news in London, emphasising their remoteness from, and yet linkage to, the centre.<sup>84</sup>

If newspapers helped to foster a sense of national identity, the 'moral weekly' has been identified with the constrictive redefinition of gender identities during the eighteenth century.<sup>85</sup> Addison and Steele's *Spectator* (1711-12, 1714) was the bible

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<sup>79</sup> See, for instance, the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of 1758-9. For the lack of involvement in the promotion of consumption in the pre-1745 Edinburgh press, see Hamish Mathison, 'Tropes of Promotion and wellbeing: Advertisement and the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Periodical Press', in Joad Raymond (ed.), *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain* (London and Portland OR, 1999), p.208. Bob Harris noted the need for a modern study of the eighteenth-century Scottish press, in *Politics and the Rise of the Press: Britain and France, 1620-1800* (London and New York, 1996), p.12.

<sup>80</sup> For requests for English papers see NLS, MS16509 f.165, 21 May 1734, Salton; MS16511 f.16, Margaret Carnegie to Milton, 16 July 1740.

<sup>81</sup> Helen Berry, 'Promoting Taste in the Provincial Press: National and Local Culture in Eighteenth-Century Newcastle upon Tyne', *BJECS*, 25 (2002), pp.1-17

<sup>82</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 1992), p.43. She cites the *Scots Magazine* of 1739. See also Harris, *Rise of the Press*, pp.82-4.

<sup>83</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.35.

<sup>84</sup> In April 1758, the *Scots Magazine* noted a proposal to reduce London-Edinburgh mail times from ten-and-a-half to seven days. See Mary Elizabeth Craig, *The Scottish Periodical Press, 1750-1789* (Edinburgh, 1931), p.12.

<sup>85</sup> Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture*, esp. pp.1, 198.

of politeness, consistently recommended in advice literature, and re-issued in multiple editions ('several score' in Edinburgh and 'at least a dozen' in Glasgow) throughout the century.<sup>86</sup> Hary Spens considered it a necessary part of Jean Innes' education,<sup>87</sup> although James Barclay believed it above the apprehension of children.<sup>88</sup> The moral, rather than political content of such periodicals, and their role in creating a sense of a new, urban code of manners, meant they were viewed as particularly appropriate for women, and their theoretical female input in the form of correspondence enabled women to feel that they could participate, through their reading, in national debates. Sociologists have shown that women exhibit signs of a more involved response to texts in which they can identify with a protagonist of their own gender,<sup>89</sup> and by the 1740s specifically female-orientated publications like Eliza Haywood's *Female Spectator* were enjoying sustained success.<sup>90</sup> There are, however, no references to this periodical in the sources on which this thesis is based. In 1751, during her visit to Finlaystone, Jackie Clerk remarked on her access to Samuel Johnson's periodical, the *Rambler*.<sup>91</sup> Published twice weekly for two years from March 1750, it both provided an outlet for the writings of some of Johnson's Bluestocking friends like Elizabeth Carter, Catherine Talbot, and Hester Mulso, and infuriated Carter and Mulso with the restrictive attitudes towards women which it promoted.<sup>92</sup> This ambiguity in attitudes towards women, at once prescribing them a domestic role, and encouraging them into the public world of print, is typical of what women like Jackie Clerk were reading in periodicals like this. However, she left no comments on her reactions to this, and whether it had any influence on her own sense

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<sup>86</sup> Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, p.131. For its popularity at mid-century, see Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (Harmondsworth, 2000), pp.196-197.

<sup>87</sup> NAS, GD113/3/475/1, Hary Spens to George Innes, 13 December 1756, Wemyss.

<sup>88</sup> James Barclay, *A Treatise on Education: Or, An easy method of acquiring Language, and Introducing children to the knowledge of History, Geography, Mythology, Antiquities, &c* (Edinburgh, 1743), p.64.

<sup>89</sup> Mary Crawford and Roger Chaffin, 'The Reader's Construction of Meaning: Cognitive Research on Gender and Comprehension' in Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocino P. Schweickart (eds.), *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts* (Baltimore and London, 1986), p.16.

<sup>90</sup> Paula R. Backscheider, 'Haywood, Eliza (1693?-1756)', *ODNB*, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12798, accessed 8 April 2006]. Women's role as 'correspondents' in the periodical press goes back to the 1690s, see Helen Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Athenian Mercury* (Aldershot, 2003).

<sup>91</sup> NAS, GD18/5474/5, to John Clerk of Penicuik, 4 April 1751, Finlaystone.

<sup>92</sup> Sylvia Harcstark Myers, *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1990), pp.157-9, 262 on women contributors; pp.79, 147 for Carter and Mulso's reactions.

of what it meant to be a woman in the mid-eighteenth century. Yet such periodicals were instrumental in instigating a feminised culture of print, which, as shall be seen, expanded to include other genres.

‘Turning the Head and corrupting the Heart’? Fiction and Morality

When the niece of John Mackenzie, WS, died, leaving two teenage children, Mackenzie advised her brother (his nephew, who had taken them into his household) ‘Let your wife discourage Self Conceit & Reading Romances in the Girl Least they Leave Such Improper Impressions as I have Seen happen.’<sup>93</sup> More than any other literary form, it was novels, or, more particularly, romances, which were blamed for their capacity to ‘turn the Head and corrupt the Heart’.<sup>94</sup> Charlotte Lennox’s *Female Quixote* (1752) satirised (or satirised the satires of) the dangers of a young woman spending too much time in the company of romances.<sup>95</sup> Possibly a manifestation of earlier worries about readers being distracted from spiritual concerns,<sup>96</sup> fears surrounding the novel were a product of the seriousness with which reading was regarded: if religious texts were automatically ‘improving’ for the reader, it was a natural progression that ‘immoral’ or ‘untrue’ works would be morally corrosive in an equal and opposite manner. Such an ideology must have resonated loud in a Calvinist society like Scotland, which privileged the redemptive power of the written word. Similarly, the Calvinist condemnation of the ‘false’ as diabolical would have further stigmatised fiction, although, as the controversy over John Home’s play *Douglas* demonstrates, by the late 1750s such notions were contested.<sup>97</sup>

The mid-eighteenth century has been proposed as a watershed in the British debate on the novel. Prior to the works of Richardson and Fielding, William B.

<sup>93</sup> NLS, MS1136, to Robertson of Faskally, 6 January 1768.

<sup>94</sup> Monro, ‘Essay on female Conduct’, p.16. According to the OED, novels were distinguished from romances in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by being shorter and less detached from reality, although Monro seems to have used the terms indiscriminately. This culturally enduring division has recently been dated to the early-seventeenth century, when elite authors, concerned about the proliferation of cheaper, more easily accessible texts, sought to denigrate these works in their own writings. Lori H. Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York, 2002), p.78.

<sup>95</sup> Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote, or, The Adventures of Arabella* (London, 1752).

<sup>96</sup> James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, (Cambridge, 2001), p.111.

<sup>97</sup> See Chapter 4, pp.145-148, 150.



Warner has suggested, ‘those who attacked novels attacked all novels’ on the sort of theological basis outlined above. Thereafter, however, the debate moved away from the acceptability of novels as a genre, towards the suitability of different kinds of novels.<sup>98</sup> Jackie Clerk wrote of Tobias Smollett’s latest novel, ‘We have Peregrine Pickle here. but I Don’t think either Lady Glencairn or me will be at the trouble of reading it. any time for reading I have I wou’d incline it to be disposed on Such Books as may improve my Mind.’<sup>99</sup> She may have desired to impress her father by presenting herself as serious rather than frivolous in her literary tastes, criticism of romances implying connoisseurship and superiority of understanding,<sup>100</sup> or she may have been influenced by her mother’s devout religiosity, at least so far as to feel she had to protest. Although some women were keen to read it,<sup>101</sup> the novel in question made few concessions to the propriety of a young, unmarried woman, as her brother-in-law James Smollett pointed out the very same day: ‘We have been very much Diverted with my Cousins Book of which he sent me a present [...] at the same time I wish my friend had spared the Ladys some blushes for it is really hard upon them to read some parts of his book.’<sup>102</sup>

Jackie may not have condemned all novels, however, as incapable of ‘improving her mind’. Hary Spens, for instance, believed that he ‘must not omit Cyrus Travels, Telemaque, Gil Blas, & the incomparable D. Quixote,’ (all of which were also recommended for children by Alexander Monro) from the education of his young pupil Jean Innes.<sup>103</sup> Spens asked Jean’s father to send her a copy of Fénelon’s *Telemachus*, (a ‘mirror for princes’ work for his pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, heir to

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<sup>98</sup> William B. Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley, CA, and London, 1998), p.8.

<sup>99</sup> NAS, GD18/5474/5, to John Clerk of Penicuik, 4 April 1751, Finlaystone. James Smollett of Bonhill, the author’s cousin, married Jackie’s sister Jean in 1740, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, 1676-1755*, ed. John M. Gray, SHS ser.1, 13 (Edinburgh 1892), p.155.

<sup>100</sup> Edith Snook, *Women, Reading, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2005), p.15.

<sup>101</sup> Joanna Martin, *Wives and Daughters: Women and Children in the Georgian Country House* (London, 2004), p.237.

<sup>102</sup> NAS, GD18/4526/1, to Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, 4 April 1751, Bonhill.

<sup>103</sup> NAS, GD113/3/475/1, to George Innes, 13 December 1756, Wemyss; Monro, ‘Essay on Female Conduct’, pp.16-17. Agnes Murray Kynynmond bought a copy of *Les Aventures de Gil Blas*. NLS, MS12950 f.169, Accounts of Sir David Dalrymple.

the French throne,<sup>104</sup>) as, 'it would be instructive & amusing reading for her, & in a profitable & useful way acquaint her with the most material parts of ancient History, of Mythology & the Heathen Gods a Kind of Knowledge necessary to all who get polite Education.'<sup>105</sup> Here, fictive literature was to present, in an 'accessible' way, the core values of genteel education. The other novels recommended by Spens and Monro belong to the popular picaresque genre, carrying a moral on an entertaining story; indeed, Monro described *Don Quixote* as 'a pretty ridicule on Romances.'<sup>106</sup> Just as with other genres of writing, girls were taught to think about their reading of novels, and what they could learn from them.<sup>107</sup>

Yet other than prescribed childhood reading, references to Scotswomen reading novels in this period are scarce. It may be that letters about novel reading were deemed insufficiently important to keep, or novels may not have been regarded as worth discussing in the first place. Perhaps, like the huddle of the Fletcher girls and their friends, the sort of correspondence in which novels were discussed was private, and was burned shortly after reading. Overall, this absence reflects recent research which suggests that the association of women with the novel indicates contemporary fears about the effects of imaginative writing on women's minds, and thus wider social stability, rather than representing actual practice.<sup>108</sup> Some references do remain, for instance when Gilbert Elliot mentioned to his wife, Agnes, 'You tell me that you was prevented from writing last post by the 2 last volumes of Sir Char: Grandison'.<sup>109</sup> Four hundred miles apart from her husband, intensive novel-reading served not only to pass the time, but to bridge the gap between her

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<sup>104</sup> François de Fénelon, *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, (edited and translated by Patrick Riley) (Cambridge, 1994) (composed 1693-4). Significantly, this has most recently been published as part of the political theory series 'Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought.'

<sup>105</sup> NAS, GD113/3/485/7, to George Innes, 10 May 1757. Its popularity is supported by Spens's belief that Innes need not send a copy from Edinburgh, as it should be available in Fife. *Telemachus* and Aesop's *Fables* were also recommended in Barclay, *Treatise on Education*, p.223

<sup>106</sup> Monro, 'Essay on Female Conduct', p.17.

<sup>107</sup> In Ireland, Bishop Synge of Elphin's letters to his daughter (1746-52) included requests for the 'moral conclusions' she drew from the fictional characters about whom she read. Toby Barnard, 'Reading in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: Public and Private Pleasures', in Cunningham and Kennedy (eds.), *Experience of Reading*, pp.63-4.

<sup>108</sup> Jan Fergus, 'Women Readers: A Case Study', in Jones (ed.), *Women and Literature*, examined the papers of two Midlands book-sellers, one of which covers the period of this thesis, concluding that women were no more likely to borrow or buy novels than men, nor more likely to read novels than other forms of fiction.

<sup>109</sup> NLS, MS11006 f.36, to Agnes Murray, 5 January 1754, London.

own world and that of her husband in London, who was encouraged by this to read the last volume himself. Preparing for life in London herself, she may even have viewed reading Richardson as a means of cultural initiation.<sup>110</sup> Margaret Calderwood recognised the potential cultural specificity of novels, writing to her daughter from the Low Countries that ‘All Richison’s books are translated, and much admired abroad; but for Feilding’s, the forreigners have no notion of them, and do not understand them, as the manners are so intirely English.’<sup>111</sup> Although some could transcend national boundaries, other, more idiosyncratic novels, perhaps, could act as identifiers of social and cultural belonging. Margaret may have been rampantly anglophobic,<sup>112</sup> but she was acknowledging that, by the 1750s, the Scottish novel-reading public had gained an exposure to English manners which enabled them to understand Henry Fielding, in a way that other Europeans had not.

The Study of History: ‘An occupation [...] the best suited [...] to their sex’

Jackie Clerk may have turned up her nose at *Peregrine Pickle*, but her comments on what she did believe had the potential to ‘improve her mind,’ are revealing: ‘History &c &c I have read Since I Came here the Second Voll of Fitzosborn’s Letter, & Pliny’s Letters in two Voll: by the Same hand.’<sup>113</sup> Far more than novels, the reading of history dominates in the sources on which this thesis is based. In his essay *On the Study of History* David Hume wrote that:

There is nothing which I would recommend more earnestly to my female readers than the study of history, as an occupation, of all others, the best suited both to their sex and education, much more instructive than their ordinary books of amusement, and more entertaining than those serious compositions, which are usually to be found in their closets.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> See Chapter 6, pp.213-4.

<sup>111</sup> Margaret Steuart Calderwood, ‘A Journey in England, Holland, and the Low Countries’ (1756), in *Coltness Collections*, 1608-1840, Maitland Club (January 1842), p.205.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. pp.105-121.

<sup>113</sup> NAS, GD18/5474/5, to John Clerk of Penicuik, 4 April 1751, Finlaystone. *Letters on Several Subjects*, by the late Sir Thomas Fitzosborne (London, 1748). Fitzosborne was the fictional creation of William Melmoth, who also published the translations of Pliny’s letters’, see Penelope Wilson, ‘Melmoth, William, the younger (bap. 1710, d. 1799)’, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18536>, accessed 8 May 2006].

<sup>114</sup> David Hume, ‘Of the Study of History’, in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, 1995; 1<sup>st</sup> published 1741-1777), p.563.

The importance of women to Hume's formation of contemporary historical readership is striking, as is his belief in the suitability of history to the female life. Traditionally regarded as an exemplar from which to train men for public life, historical authors had become aware from the mid-seventeenth century of the importance of a female readership,<sup>115</sup> and the new focus on manners which emerged in historical writing in the mid-eighteenth century meant history became increasingly perceived as a genre particularly suited to women readers.<sup>116</sup> It combined the sense of unfolding narrative and insight into character found in novels, with the moral and intellectual instruction which Adam Smith believed central to history's purpose.<sup>117</sup>

In 1754, Hume wrote to his friend William Mure of Caldwell, soliciting opinions on his *History of England*. 'The first Quality of an Historian is to be true and impartial; the next to be interesting', he wrote. 'If you do not say, that I have done both Parties Justice, & if Mrs Mure be not sorry for poor King Charles, I shall burn all my Papers, & return to Philosophy.'<sup>118</sup> Caldwell and his wife, Katherine, were longstanding and close friends of Hume, Katherine's drawing room in Abbeyhill supposedly his 'favourite evening haunt, when resident in Edinburgh.'<sup>119</sup> Hume hoped to use his friends to trial his strategy in writing history, and the gendered responses it was designed to provoke. By 'interesting', Hume meant something along the lines of 'empathetic', playing on the sympathies which women's supposedly softer minds were best suited to feeling. Hume's comment is echoed by William Robertson, writing to Gilbert Elliot of Minto. Having informed Elliot that his publisher would be sending him a copy of his *History of Scotland*, he sent his compliments to Elliot's wife Agnes, adding that 'though she will not approve of

<sup>115</sup> D. R. Woolf, 'A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800', *AHR*, 102:3 (June 1997), esp. pp.657-8. He stressed that women were already reading history regularly by 1700, *ibid.*, p.676.

<sup>116</sup> Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740-1820* (Princeton, 2000), esp. ch.4; *idem*, "'If Mrs Mure be not sorry for poor King Charles": History, the Novel, and the Sentimental Reader', *HWJ*, 43 (1997); Karen O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Cambridge, 1997); *idem*, 'The History Market in Eighteenth-Century England', in Isobel Rivers (ed.), *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (London and New York, 2001), p.109.

<sup>117</sup> 'Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, Delivered in the University of Glasgow by Adam Smith, Reported by a Student in 1762-3', Lecture 17, in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* ed. J. C. Bryce (Indianapolis, 1985), p.90.

<sup>118</sup> Hume to Mure of Caldwell, October 1754, in *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J.Y.T. Greig, vol.1, (Oxford, 1932), p.210.

<sup>119</sup> *Family Papers preserved at Caldwell*, vol.1, p.37.

Mary's conduct, I hope she will be touched with her misfortunes.'<sup>120</sup> Here, the woman was expected to judge, but for that judgement to be overruled by feeling.

Whilst men, like women, were encouraged to read history for polite conversation,<sup>121</sup> women were expected neither to write history themselves nor to put their reading into practice in public life.<sup>122</sup> For Pocock, the history women were recommended to read was 'both the record and the effect of their transition from slavery to gallantry, but not to agency.'<sup>123</sup> Having received no formal training, they had to read history and the classics in a specifically gendered way.<sup>124</sup> James Barclay believed history heightened 'every tender passion', and taught 'a moving softness', virtues to be directed towards women's domestic and emotional roles. Thus, '*Andromache* increases the fondness of the kindest wife, wanton luxury is taught to blush at the examples of *Lucretia* and *Octavia*.'<sup>125</sup> Jackie Clerk reported with assiduity to her father on her reading of Pliny's letters, but she did not attempt to respond to them as a classically trained male would have been expected to do. Instead, she related Pliny to the domestic and familiar, demonstrating her affection for her father:

I Admire both the Stile and Good Sense that runs thro' the whole. One letter put me in Mind of you Papa Writing to his friend he tells him, he was turn'd a great Sportsman but that at the time they were Disposing & Seting their nets he was writing not to Loss any time, that if he got no game he was Sure to Come home with his papers full that nothing Enliven'd the genius more than exercise & this with the agreeable wild Scene nature exhibited to his View made his productions on Such occasion very pretty this is the best of my Remembrance is what he says & Subject of the letter[.]<sup>126</sup>

<sup>120</sup> NLS, MS11008 ff.80-81, 4 January 1759, Edinburgh.

<sup>121</sup> Indeed, recent scholarship into readers' responses has argued this was the main use to which historical reading was put. Daniel Woolf, 'Speaking of History: Conversations about the Past in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century England', in Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain, 1500-1850* (Manchester, 2002), p.133.

<sup>122</sup> Woolf, 'A Feminine Past?', p.656. John Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Volume 2: Narratives of Civil Government* (Cambridge, 1999), pp.181-2.

<sup>123</sup> Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol.2, p.190.

<sup>124</sup> Pam Perkins, "'Too Classical for a Female Pen'?: Late Eighteenth-Century Women Reading and Writing Classical History', *Clio*, 33:3 (Spring 2004), p.242.

<sup>125</sup> Barclay, *Treatise on Education*, p.237.

<sup>126</sup> NAS, GD18/5474/5, to John Clerk of Penicuik, 4 April 1751, Finlaystone.

It is not difficult to see the character of Clerk of Penicuik, keen man of letters and country sportsman, in this episode. Whether this suggests that women always felt the need to mediate their responses to the ancients through the personal, and whether this implies that any other reaction was unacceptable, it exemplifies the ability of women to justify their reading of even archetypal 'male' texts, through a specifically female reaction.

Jackie's reading of Pliny to emphasise the personal rather than the political (she also described the death of Pliny the elder who 'was Suffocated with the Sulphur being a fat Corpulent Man') is typical of the change in the expectations of the historical readership away from constitutional history which tended to ignore the relationship of the personality of the individual to their actions, towards an emphasis on the role of character.<sup>127</sup> As well as in the quotations from Hume and Robertson above, this interest is evident in Martha Fletcher's copyings, which include short passages on the characters of historical figures, from ancients such as Vestricius Spurinna, to the heroes of her own age like the Duke of Marlborough, and Frederick the Great, who emerges ever so slightly the victor in a 'Parallel twixt Julius Caesar and the King of Prussia.'<sup>128</sup> Yet, implicit in many of these character sketches, and in her selections from histories like the more than thirty pages quarto she copied on the characters of early seventeenth century British courtiers,<sup>129</sup> was an interest in the arts of government which transcended the male-imposed boundaries of what women were meant to take from their reading of history. Many of the works she read fall very much into the category of the 'real solemn history...the quarrels of popes and

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<sup>127</sup> For the role of character in Robertson's slightly later work, see Neil Hargraves, 'Revelation of Character in Eighteenth-Century Historiography and William Robertson's *History of the Reign of Charles V*', *ECL*, 27:2 (2003), pp.23-48.

<sup>128</sup> Vestrius Spurinna, from '3 Book Pliny's Epistle 1', NLS, MS17802 f.103; Duke of Marlborough MS17774 ff.256-7, 'Parallel twixt Julius Caesar and the King of Prussia', MS17774 f.267.

<sup>129</sup> NLS, MS17802 ff.30-45.

kings' that Jane Austen's Catherine Morland found so dull,<sup>130</sup> suggesting, perhaps, a connection between her interest in history, and her brother's role in public life.<sup>131</sup>

Of the three factors Natalie Zemon Davis identified as contributing to early modern women's desire to write history, she prioritised 'a sense of connection, through some activity or deep concern of her own, with the areas of public life then considered suitable for historical writing – namely, the political and the religious.'<sup>132</sup> The reasons why a woman like Martha, closely connected to the world of politics, chose to read this sort of material (and to do so with such close attention), may not have been so far removed from those which traditionally prompted men to seek therein instruction in the arts of government. Ramsay of Ochertyre recounted an anecdote in which Mrs Dundas of Blair claimed to Lady Rachel Drummond that, had she been a man during the 1689 revolution, she would have supported it. In response to the latter's reply that this marked a change of opinion, Mrs Dundas retorted that 'in *these* days I had not read history'.<sup>133</sup> Women did not read history in a political vacuum, but used their reading to reaffirm or to challenge their own beliefs.

As well as older works, however, Martha's reading of Voltaire, who was instrumental in accustoming the British readership to the notion of the historian as philosopher, demonstrates her willingness to engage with newer forms of history.<sup>134</sup> 'It was the philosophical history, of the progress of arts, sciences and society, which was recommended to women readers', as opposed to 'the harsher and more arcane history of war, statecraft and intrigue'.<sup>135</sup> Amongst British historians who emphasised the progress of society was William Robertson, still a local church minister and a friend of Martha and her nieces when his *History of Scotland during*

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<sup>130</sup> From *Northanger Abbey*, quoted in Jane Rendall, 'Clio, Mars and Minerva: The Scottish Enlightenment and the Writing of Women's History', in T. M. Devine and J. R. Young (eds.), *Eighteenth Century Scotland: New Perspectives* (East Linton, 1999), p.134. As well as the more modern history cited here, she copied up to 50 pages (possibly more, as other extracts concerning the ancients may be from this too) from *An Universal History, from the Earliest Account of Time to the Present: Compiled from Original Authors and Illustrated with Maps, Cuts, Notes, Chronological and Other Tables*, vol.1 (London, 1736). Martha's quotation is from the preface, starting from the second page, p.vi.

<sup>131</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>132</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Gender and Genre: Women as historical writers, 1400-1820', in Patricia H. Labalme (ed.), *Beyond their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past* (New York and London, 1980), p.155.

<sup>133</sup> John Ramsay of Ochertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alexander Allardyce, (Edinburgh, 1888), vol.2, p.172, n.1.

<sup>134</sup> NLS, MS17802 ff.25-8; O'Brien, 'History Market', pp.117-8.

<sup>135</sup> Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol.2, p.185.

*the reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI till his Accession to the Crown of England* was published to enormous acclaim in February 1759.<sup>136</sup> Of the passage concerning the feudal constitution, Martha's niece Margaret Hepburn wrote:

my aunt was so much struck with it, that she declared, that it might be pronounced of you, what was said of the great Condé as a general, that you was Born a Historian. Now as you know my aunt never speaks a degree higher than her meaning, so is seldom guilty of flights I don't know But you Should be as much pleased with this as any applause you have yet received.<sup>137</sup>

This might be interpreted as the sort of negative jibe made against older, unmarried women who were widely read and dared to express an opinion. Yet this was one of the key passages in which Robertson sought to strike a chord with his readership, and to distance eighteenth-century Scotland from its past. Margaret's comment suggests Martha understood what Robertson was trying to achieve with his history, and that she felt herself suitably qualified to judge his performance as an historian. Moreover, the seriousness with which Margaret took her own reading of Robertson's history suggests she wrote this, to a man whose previous letter had contained news of the praise he had received from David Garrick, William Warburton, and Horace Walpole, perhaps only half-jokingly.<sup>138</sup>

#### Margaret Hepburn and William Robertson's *History of Scotland*

This correspondence between Margaret Hepburn and William Robertson, written as he dealt with the book's extraordinary reception and prepared for the second edition, provides an unusually detailed insight into one woman's response to one of the most influential histories written in eighteenth-century Britain. Their discussion ranged over a number of topics dealing with the reading of history and its practical and emotional applications, many of them areas which historiographers would identify as central to early Scottish Enlightenment history. Mark Phillips, writing of John Bennett's *Letters to a Young Lady on Useful and Interesting Subjects Calculated to Improve the Heart* (1789) summarised that he expected:

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<sup>136</sup> He had been publishing since 1755, but this was his first major success. *The Works of William Robertson*, (London, 1996), p.xviii.

<sup>137</sup> NLS MS16521 f.190, from Margaret Hepburn, 12 March 1759, Monkridge.

<sup>138</sup> NLS, MS16711 f.234, to Margaret Hepburn, 20 February 1759, Edinburgh.



women should know something of the history of their own country, including a general character of the kings and queens, the manners and customs of the primitive Britons, the ways in which the present state of civilization was introduced, the causes of the Reformation, and the development and advantages of the British constitution.<sup>139</sup>

Three decades earlier, Margaret had used almost precisely these same subject areas when writing to Robertson of her reactions to his history. She demonstrated an awareness of the problems inherent in writing about this period of Scottish history for a British audience, and singled out the death of Queen Mary as one of her favourite passages, remarking also on her character and Robertson's delicate treatment of that of Elizabeth. She commented negatively on the feudal constitution, less so on that of the ancients, and implied her admiration for modern civilisation, and post-Reformation society. Margaret was either consciously aware of the ways in which current British fashion expected women to react to historical writing, or doing so instinctively, led, perhaps, by the agendas within what she read.

Her comments demonstrate not only an ability to read history in the appropriately gendered way, but a clear consciousness of the importance of Robertson's *History* to contemporary Scotland, not least Scotland's place in the Union in this post-Culloden period. Margaret congratulated Robertson on 'Steering with Such propriety through the reformation. as that Subject was Delicate',<sup>140</sup> aware not just of the thorny role which religious differences had had in Scotland's past, but of their continuing capacity to hinder the integration of the British nations into one. Commenting on Robertson's treatment of the English Queen Elizabeth, she remarked approvingly, 'you Blame her with the Severity, and Dignity, of a Historian; yet in such a manner as not to Shock John Bull. I daresay he is as much amazed that we were of Such Consequence, as that a Scotch man can write English'.<sup>141</sup> Growing up in a political family, she was in a better position than most both to identify herself with the nation, and to note the need to tread with caution in Anglo-Scottish relations. Furthermore, in admitting her expectation that John Bull would be

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<sup>139</sup> Phillips, "'Mrs Mure'", p.116.

<sup>140</sup> NLS, MS16521 f.189, 12 March 1759, Monkridge.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. For eighteenth-century Scots' use of John Bull as personifying English 'difference' as a cultural construct, see Miles Taylor, 'John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England c.1712-1929', *P&P*, 134 (1992), p.101.

surprised at the past importance of Scotland, she tapped into another area which has become the focus of modern Robertson scholarship.

Even at this early stage in Robertson's career, Margaret seems to have been aware that part of what her friend was trying to do was to show that Scotland, currently regarded by many English as at best a provincial backwater, and at worst an uncivilised hotbed of rebellion, had once been an important player on the European stage.<sup>142</sup> By the late twentieth century it had become customary amongst Scottish intelligentsia to blame the Enlightenment historians, Robertson chief amongst them, for a betrayal of national self-confidence and the fostering of an inferiority complex which they perceived as dogging modern Scottish culture.<sup>143</sup> Yet Margaret, imbued with the Whig notion that patriotism lay not in what Robertson termed 'antiquated prejudices',<sup>144</sup> but in the commercial modernisation and 'improvement' of the nation through integration into the British state (in which her family was deeply involved), undoubtedly had a sense of the need for Scots to assert themselves patriotically, and believed that this was what Robertson was doing. Regretting the amount of 'treachery and cruelty' in the work, she admitted that she imagined 'it was partly the effect of the Feudal Constitution where Courage was the Ruling Virtue in place of public spirit';<sup>145</sup> a rejection of feudalism, still topical in its contemporary association with Jacobitism, was inherent to the Whig project (promoted, in Margaret's view, by 'public spirit') for Scotland's 'improvement'.

Nevertheless, she admitted that 'in more ancient times that Courage caught the imagination Vastly',<sup>146</sup> imagination being key to the sympathy Robertson and Hume expected their female readers to feel. Most notable on both sides of the correspondence is the importance given to character. When Margaret described the character and death of Queen Mary as her 'favourite passages' of the *History*,<sup>147</sup> she was identifying with one of the key aims of Robertson's new approach to historical writing. This was the section of his *History* into which Robertson had put most

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<sup>142</sup> O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment*, pp.100-101.

<sup>143</sup> This interpretation of Enlightenment history is discussed in Colin Kidd, 'The Ideological Significance of Robertson's *History of Scotland*', in Stewart J. Brown (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge, 1997), pp.122-3.

<sup>144</sup> From Robertson's *History*, vol.1, p.87, quoted in Kidd, 'Ideological Significance', p.144.

<sup>145</sup> NLS, MS16521 f.190, 12 March 1759.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

effort to portray the Queen as a woman, hoping to incite sympathy from across the political or national divide on the grounds of her femininity and distress. Margaret was here giving another typically gendered response to the work: Hume had expected Katherine Mure to ‘understand that history is often most absorbing when the fate of an individual, not the clash of principles or parties, is at stake.’<sup>148</sup> Through the sympathy felt by one human being for another, character-based history could, Robertson hoped, help to heal rifts between nations. Moreover, in demonstrating the ability (lacking amongst Mary’s contemporaries) to appreciate the queen’s refined femininity, Margaret could highlight the superiority of the eighteenth-century reader, liberated from the feudal constitution.<sup>149</sup>

This was not the first time Margaret had read Robertson’s work on Mary, or discussed the ill-fated queen with him. After informing her that the copy of his history with which he was presenting her was ‘the only copy, except one to Lord Milton, which I shall give to any person in Scotland’, he went on to add: ‘Queen Mary has grown up to her present form under your eyes, you have seen her in many different shapes, & you have now a right to her.’<sup>150</sup> Clearly, therefore, she had had some kind of involvement in the text prior to publication. Robertson prepared his *History* with a firm eye to its marketability. He showed parts of it to David Hume (‘that virtuous Heathen’, Robertson joked<sup>151</sup>) and David Dalrymple, later Lord Hailes,<sup>152</sup> and, since he aimed to take advantage of the new female readership, it made sense that he utilise her as a test of its appropriateness.<sup>153</sup> Ever mindful of the need to keep her mind active in the wake of her cousin’s recent death, he invited any comments for the second edition on which he was already working, asking her to point out anything of which she did not approve in his book.<sup>154</sup> Sadly, Margaret did not live to experience the full extent of her friend’s success, dying only three months after the *History*’s publication, but in her correspondence with its author she

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<sup>148</sup> Quoted in Phillips, “‘Mrs Mure’”, p.112.

<sup>149</sup> László Kontler, ‘Beauty or Beast, or Monstrous Regiments? Robertson and Burke on Women and the Public Scene’, *Modern Intellectual History*, 1:3 (2004), pp.321-3.

<sup>150</sup> NLS, MS16711 f.235, 20 February 1759, Edinburgh.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> O’Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment*, p.96.

<sup>153</sup> See Chapter 4, pp.147-8 for John Home’s similar use of the Fletcher women prior to the performance of his play *Douglas*.

<sup>154</sup> NLS, MS16711 f.236, 20 February 1759, Edinburgh.

demonstrated several of the ways in which reading and discussing history enabled women to express opinions on issues relating to the public and the nation.

### Completing the Circle? Women as Writers

this is pritty good paper & pens not exceeding good either but so so or so O Ld Belhaven you are a tiresome Man your stink is bad I would rather sit in a common sewer as in your company nasty old filthy creatur born a ffoole bred up & down in short I won't spend time upon him.<sup>155</sup>

As Agnes Elliot warmed up her mind and her pen by scrawling vitriolic comments on her 'friends', she demonstrated the sense of ease which had come to represent the relationship between that minority of women for whom paper and ink were not luxuries, and the physical act of writing as a means of unself-conscious expression. Even for women of genteel status, this relationship was relatively new,<sup>156</sup> yet by the time Agnes wrote this, gentlewomen engaged in the act of writing as part of their daily lives, whether compiling accounts, copying medical recipes, or communicating via written correspondence. This last section examines how the relationship between women and print culture related to and fed into that between women and writing, bearing in mind the unusual capacity of the act of writing to register at both ends of the public/private scale. Whilst genuinely private journals were intimate and personal, the concept of reaching out to a wider, unknown public through the medium of print was still fraught with difficulty, and, as far as can be seen, something Scotswomen did not do until the later-eighteenth century. Most writing was situated on the continuum between these two extremes, neither public nor private, but belonging to the realm in which women intersected with the social world.

Central to the relationship between women, reading and writing, is correspondence. The first chapter concluded with a discussion of the letter as a

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<sup>155</sup> NLS, MS12822 f.13. Undated, this was probably written in the 1760s, referring to either the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Belhaven.

<sup>156</sup> Siskin emphasised 'writing' as a new technology, to which people had to adapt. *Work of Writing*, p.31. Previously, the use of scribes had enabled illiterate women to correspond, yet this denied privacy and was confined to a limited elite, James Daybell, 'Introduction', to idem (ed.) *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp.4-5, 7.

source; although, in comparison with those of men, few women's letters survive from this period, those that do attest to the place of writing as a means of communication intrinsic to the experience of literate women in this period. Elizabeth Graham, daughter of the school teacher at Ratho, and former 'woman' to the wife of Allan Whitefoord, Collector of the Land Tax in Scotland, had lost her position and her reputation when found to be pregnant with the child of George Innes, Whitefoord's deputy.<sup>157</sup> Claiming (perhaps unconvincingly) she had understood their sexual relationship to have been a prelude to marriage, she wrote with fervour to Innes of her sense of betrayal at his rejecting her in favour of marriage to a woman of his own social rank.<sup>158</sup> A powerful evocation of the potency of the written word to castigate, cajole and provoke, her letters convey a sense of deep injustice which is largely biblical in its inspiration, often quoting at length from psalms.<sup>159</sup> Her reading of the Bible had given her a vocabulary of justification to assert her belief that she had been wronged by Innes. For instance, she sent Innes an extract from I Corinthians VII Chap:34-46 ending: 'if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin if she pays the flower of her age and need so require let him do what he will he sinneth not let them marry and I hope and beleives you will think upon this and do it when you think it proper.'<sup>160</sup> Access to pen and paper, and an ability to write, enabled her to present her case which Innes, perhaps surprisingly, preserved for posterity. Yet it is the influence of the printed word on her writings, her lack of grammatical training merging the word of God with her own usage for her own ends, that makes her appeals so potent.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Although a contemporary anecdote related that Innes had tendered his resignation to Whitefoord, he was forgiven and allowed to continue employment. NAS, GD113/4/165/1175, Margaret Graham to Elizabeth Graham, 8 November 1742, Ratho.

<sup>158</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1008, 21 August 1743, Parkside.

<sup>159</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1080, 16 October 1743, quotes from psalm 128. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of September she had sent twenty-four verses from the 31<sup>st</sup> psalm, GD113/4/165/1167. For the prominence of biblical references in women's life-writing, particularly references to the psalms, see 'Introduction', to David Mullan (ed.), *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c.1670-c.1730* (Aldershot, 2003), p.17.

<sup>160</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1071, 9 October 1743 rec'd 14 December.

<sup>161</sup> For the impact of print on 'the way in which private communication was conducted and the self presented', see John Brewer, 'This, that and the other: Public, Social and Private in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Dario Castiglione and Lesley Sharpe (eds.), *Shifting the Boundaries: Transformation of the Languages of Public and Private in the Eighteenth Century* (Exeter, 1995), p.15.

Whether this can be termed a correspondence is debatable. Apart from one brief copy letter of September 1743, the only mention Innes made to any response was an otherwise blank sheet of paper on which he noted, 'I never wrote to E.G. any letters, but one refusing her to come and satisfy me anent some Reports were laid in her name'.<sup>162</sup> Whether or not she received written replies, her persistence in writing is testament to her belief in the power of what she hoped her writing could achieve. Elizabeth Graham's letters are raw, not just with emotion, but because their author's education very probably did little to initiate her in the way of formalised epistolary culture. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, there is little in the extant correspondence of mid-eighteenth-century Scottish gentlewomen to suggest an absorption of the feminised epistolary culture supposedly popularised by Richardson's novels,<sup>163</sup> but, particularly towards the end of the period, there emerged an expectation that polite, conversational letter-writing was a required skill amongst gentlewomen. Parents fretted over their daughters' development in and attitudes towards this vital art. Agnes Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound wrote of her daughter that:

She excells at a French letter beyond all her Kindred & I must say her last English one was very explicit & intelligent but the young Woman is like other People would prefer reading her Book & working her work or even diverting herself with her own thought taking a Pinch of snuff & a chat at the fire Side to writing a letter<sup>164</sup>

For Elizabeth Graham, letter-writing was an outlet for desperation; for others, it was a social obligation, one which, as Agnes' letter suggests, was not without its rivals for demands on young women's time. Written correspondence was no less governed by rules and regulations, or at least, by social expectations, than any other aspect of sociability. It was deemed improper to correspond with someone with whom a formal relationship was not yet established; a disgrace not to respond to the letters of those with whom one existed. Isabella Strange commented to her cousin, the poet and physician John Armstrong, that she was so ashamed by not replying to his previous letter that she 'was almost resolv'd to be silent for ever when I said this

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<sup>162</sup> NAS, GD113/4/1073, Copy of George Innes' letter 6 September 1743; GD113/4/165/1010; On 25 November 1743, thanking him for 3s 6d he had sent, she added 'I hope there his been no writing in with it for I received none.' GD113/4/165/1022, Ratho.

<sup>163</sup> See p.26.

<sup>164</sup> NLS, MS11005 f.149, to Mainie Elliot, 12 April 1766.

to our good friend Miss Eliot She said Tut Tut never mind that black-and-white will never blush so now I have took courage knowing 'tis better late thrive than never do well'. She continued that she found relief in writing as his letter of eleven months before had 'these many mounths haunted me like a ghost'.<sup>165</sup> In not writing, she had committed a social *faux pas* excusable only by the bonds of close friendship. Eighteen months later, it was again her turn to write, and after apologising again for her long silence, she declared: 'I'll even take a ram-race fearless I'll get to the bottom of this paper Sence or nonsense Alls Fish that comes in the net'.<sup>166</sup> What was actually written was secondary to the importance of fulfilling her social obligation. Letter-writing was, for many women, an activity inseparable from other household tasks: in a line which takes the reader into the cramped conditions of her Edinburgh lodgings, and reminds the historian that probably very few women's letters were written in the calm, isolated surroundings of the closet, Elizabeth Graham once informed George Innes that she was 'in such a heat with toasting my Tarts I Can write no more'.<sup>167</sup> Similarly, there is a hint of desperation in the postscript Elizabeth Chambers wrote to her brother-in-law John Mackenzie that 'My Cousin Severs who has been talking to me all ye while I have been writing desires her service to you.'<sup>168</sup>

Letters were not the only form of written sociability in which women engaged. 'Lay your Orders on Meggy to send me a Cobby of her Lousy Poem, Corrected or not, for twixt us, all passes, & I am not judge enough nor ill naturd enough to find fault,'<sup>169</sup> wrote Robert Adam to his mother. Separated by much of the European continent, brothers and sisters of the Adam family seem to have been exchanging poems (sadly non-extant) on the subject of head-lice.<sup>170</sup> Otherwise unable to share each other's society, this family used the creatively-written word to consolidate the emotional intimacy of their physically distant relationships, through

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<sup>165</sup> NLS, MS14254 f.6, September 1761, London.

<sup>166</sup> NLS, MS14254 f.10, 23 March 1762, London. The OED defines 'ram-race' as Scottish or northern English dialect meaning 'a headlong rush, like that of a ram'.

<sup>167</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1158, 2 February 1743, Edinburgh.

<sup>168</sup> NLS, MS1127 f.53, 7 February 1735 (NS 36), n.p. For more instances of letter-writers remarking on the busy, social situations in which their letters were composed, see Chapter 4, p.135.

<sup>169</sup> NAS, GD18/4821, to Mary Adam, 9 October 1756, Rome

<sup>170</sup> NAS, GD18/4827, Robert Adam to Willy Adam, 18 December 1756, Rome; GD18/4828, Robert Adam to Betty Adam, 25 December 1756, Rome; GD18/4830 Robert Adam to Peggy Adam, 14 January 1757, Rome.

the repeated exploration of the most domestic and apparently trivial of subjects in an interactive, game-like manner. The above-quoted 'Epistle to B: F:' by Andrew Fletcher is one of several remaining family letters in doggerel form, and although no replies exist, such correspondence almost certainly anticipated a similarly-composed response.<sup>171</sup> Margaret Hepburn wrote poetry, none of which seems to have survived, but, like those of her cousin, her poems may well have centred on society gossip. In an undated letter, Elizabeth Fletcher wrote to Margaret that 'every body is talking of a very ill Natured Poem laid in your name upon the Marquise of Clidsdale I contradicted most violently without letting you know of it but I heard last night that some body had sent it to Duke Hamilton without a name.'<sup>172</sup> Whether or not Margaret wrote the poem in question, she had evidently gained a reputation which made it a possibility in the public mind.

On the whole, however, the composition of poetry was regarded as a suitably feminine activity for young women. In this sharing of topical, social rather than literary poetry, Isobel Grundy has identified the emergence of a kind of young women's counter-culture: 'they did not aspire to be learned ladies; their exchanges of poetry were a living element in their own kind of popular culture.'<sup>173</sup> In Rome, Robert Adam shared his sisters' poems with the new female acquaintance he was cultivating in preparation for the family's move to London. Although his sisters could not travel to Italy themselves, their introduction at the breakfast table, through their compositions on head-lice, and, he hoped, more serious pastoral poetry, provided a succinct means of expressing his sisters' accomplishments and gentility, and hence his family's suitability to be introduced to the London friends of the ladies with whom he was socialising in Rome.<sup>174</sup> Even 'private' writing could help women gain entry to new social spaces, signifying the mutability of women's writings to bend from a piece of personal reflection to pass the time, to something

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<sup>171</sup> Sir Alexander Dick and his wives exchanged poetic messages with the poet Allan Ramsay, NAS, GD331/5/1-5.

<sup>172</sup> NLS, MS16746 f.230, n.d. n.p. In another letter describing the marriage of Mary Hamilton and William Nisbet in 1747, Margaret wrote to her mother of how Mally Fletcher had shown some of her poems to a Mr ?Crow, who had pointed out some faults, but on the whole admired them. MS16746 f.188, to Mrs Hepburn of Monkridge at Salton.

<sup>173</sup> Isobel Grundy, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her daughter: the changing use of manuscripts', in Justice and Tinker (eds.), *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas*, esp. p.198.

<sup>174</sup> NAS, GD18/4830, Robert Adam to Peggy Adam, 14 January 1757, Rome.



which was destined to represent them or their views amongst people with whom they were entirely unacquainted.

Kathryn Shevelow argued that ‘from the legitimization of women as readers it is only a small historical step to the legitimization of women as writers, as the emergence of published female novelists (and poets and translators) later in the century so powerfully demonstrates.’<sup>175</sup> Although a few Scotswomen (sometimes reluctantly, sometimes less so) published poetry, this move was much less pronounced in Scotland than in England.<sup>176</sup> A nineteenth-century biographer recorded that Margaret Calderwood composed a manuscript novel, ‘The Adventures of Fanny Roberts, wrote to a friend, by herself’, describing it as ‘a dull novel, somewhat in the style of Richardson, partaking of the licence of Fielding’.<sup>177</sup> Like the letters she sent home from England and the Low Countries in 1756,<sup>178</sup> whose composition suggests they were not merely intended for her daughter to whom they were addressed, this was probably intended for a wider, if contained, readership. More typically, Margaret’s sister-in-law, Frances Steuart, composed a lengthy memoir of her married life, focusing on, but not confined to, the period she and her husband spent in exile.<sup>179</sup> It was in the area of family memoirs that women seem to have felt most at liberty to move from reading to writing; at once private and instructive, memoirs were the literary representation of women’s role in the family.<sup>180</sup> Frances’ experiences as the wife of a successfully published author had

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<sup>175</sup> Kathryn Shevelow, ‘Fathers and Daughters: Women as Readers of the *Tatler*’, in Flynn and Schweickart (eds.), *Gender and Reading*, p.121.

<sup>176</sup> Jean Adam, a Greenock schoolteacher, published a volume of poetry in 1734, but Alison Cockburn, whose ‘Flowers of the Forest’ was published in 1765, was reluctant to publish more of her poetry. Sarah Tytler and J. L. Watson, *The Songstresses of Scotland*, vol.1 (London, 1871), pp.34-5; Dorothy McMillan, ‘Cockburn, Alison, n. Rutherford’, in Ewan, *et al* (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, p.78. For the expansion of published female writing in eighteenth-century England, see Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago and London, 2000); Myers, *Bluestocking Circle*; Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* (London, 1989); Cheryl Turner, *Living By the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 1992); Bridget Hill, *The Republican Virago: The Life and Times of Catherine Macaulay, Historian* (Oxford, 1992); Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>177</sup> ‘Family Notices’, in *Coltness Collections*, p.396.

<sup>178</sup> Calderwood, ‘Journal’. This is examined in more detail in Chapter 6, pp.219-26.

<sup>179</sup> EUL, MS E2002.28, Frances Steuart’s memoir. See Chapter 6, pp.221-2, 224.

<sup>180</sup> Zemon Davis, ‘Gender and Genre’, pp.161-2. Other family memoirs by eighteenth-century Scotswomen include EUL, MS La III 364, Elizabeth Halkett, ‘Memoir of the Fletchers of Saltoun’, possibly written as an attempt to write herself back into a family from which she was at risk of estrangement, but outwith the time-frame of this thesis; Grisell Murray, *Memoirs and Lives of the*

brought her into much closer contact with the world of print than most of her compatriots, particularly after his death when she corresponded at length with the publisher of the French translation of his *Political Economy*, a work she had ‘Copied over and Red with Him’ as he wrote it.<sup>181</sup> As a one-time acquaintance and correspondent of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, she had sustained contact with one of the most celebrated, if notorious, published women of her day,<sup>182</sup> yet she chose to keep her own opinions confined to a more personal sphere. Recent scholarship, however, has emphasised that print did not replace manuscript in literary culture, the latter continuing to suit the needs of many women writers as a form of publication not viewed as intrinsically inferior to that of print.<sup>183</sup> Indeed, in circulating manuscripts, women were playing a role which occupied a similar position on the public/private spectrum to that which they performed in the arenas of ‘polite’ sociability which shall be investigated in the next chapter.

### Conclusion

In line with findings elsewhere, this chapter has suggested that by the 1760s, a knowledge of literary culture had become expected of elite women in Scotland, far beyond the devotional literature to which their foremothers had been largely confined. Such texts did continue to dominate some women’s reading, but more importantly, the role they played at the heart of women’s lives had facilitated the emergence of a culture in which women were able to consult print for advice and information on an increasingly diverse range of subjects. This chapter has suggested that the women of the Scottish elite enjoyed a relatively un-restricted relationship with text, and that they were assumed to possess autonomous access to and choice of reading. For such women, fortunate enough to have access to books and other printed materials, the increase in the production and accessibility of print culture over

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*Right Honourable George Baillie of Jerviswood and of Lady Grisell Baillie, by their daughter Lady Murray of Stanhope* (Edinburgh, 1822). The notes which Agnes Murray Kynynmound made on the edges of her husband’s correspondence, and some fragments of notes, suggest that she may have been considering writing a memoir of her husband, but she is unlikely to have done this before the death of her husband in 1777. See Chapter 5, p.166

<sup>181</sup> EUL, MS2291/12; MS E2002.28, Frances Steuart’s memoir.

<sup>182</sup> EUL, MS E2002.28, Frances Steuart memoir. However, the correspondence suggests a warmer relationship between Lady Mary and Sir James, than with his wife, see *Letters from the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 1709-1762*, with an introduction by R. Brimley Johnson (London, 1906). See also Chapter 6, p.221.

<sup>183</sup> Justice and Tinker (eds.), *Women’s Writing and the Circulation of Ideas*.

the course of the eighteenth century provided entrance to an expanding cultural arena in which they could engage with society beyond their immediate circles. Reading was a social activity: social in that it created and cemented bonds between individuals who may or may not have shared a physical space; active in that it encouraged an engagement, often a verbal or written response, on behalf of the reader. Even those who did not have the chance to discuss their reading in person or on paper were encouraged to think about and digest what they read.

Samuel Johnson believed that 'Books have always a secret influence on the understanding.'<sup>184</sup> This chapter has shown some of the ways in which this operated. Contrary to the novel-consuming stereotypes of convention, elite women used their reading to gain access to a wide scope of opinion and experience, even when physically isolated. Access to print culture reconfirmed women's religious beliefs, and kept them up-to-date with the worlds of politics and fashion, thus helping to integrate them into a sense of being part of a national public. Whilst in many ways empowering for women, the growth of print was accompanied by the development of regulatory ideas which prescribed how women ought to respond to text in a specifically gendered way. Yet, as Margaret Hepburn's correspondence with William Robertson demonstrates, the expectation that women would discuss what they read gave them a platform to express their views on a wide range of subjects relating to topics of contemporary national importance. Reading gave women the opportunity to think for themselves and to formulate ideas: the next chapter moves on to consider how women operated in the social settings in which such ideas were discussed.

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<sup>184</sup> Samuel Johnson, in *The Idler and Adventurer*, No.173, quoted in Porter, *Enlightenment*, p.476.

#### 4. Sociability

##### Introduction. 'Growing polit with the rest of the world'

The institution of the first assembly rooms in Edinburgh in 1723 prompted the initially sceptical Countess of Panmure to comment to her exiled husband that 'att last [...] Old Reeky will grow polit with the rest of the world.'<sup>1</sup> The Countess was witnessing the spread of what Peter Borsay has termed the English 'urban renaissance',<sup>2</sup> which initiated an urban social life based not around the court, but formed by and for the elite inhabitants of the town, with their own improvement in mind. It both emanated from and contributed towards a society of public leisure and social tastes in which substantial female involvement was assumed. For Elizabeth Mure, this assembly and private subscription balls 'took place of marrages, baptisams, and burials',<sup>3</sup> echoing John Ramsay of Ochertyre's oft-quoted remark that prior to the eighteenth century, 'the Scottish ladies made their most brilliant appearance at burials.'<sup>4</sup> Although Ramsay recorded that balls were held at Holyrood when the Duke of York held court in the 1670s,<sup>5</sup> the Edinburgh social life of even so eminent an aristocrat as the Duchess of Hamilton seems to have been based largely on domestic sociability in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Rosalind K. Marshall, *Women in Scotland 1660-1780* (Edinburgh, 1979), p.69.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), esp., chs.5, 6, 9, 10. For an overview of urban leisure, see Peter Clark and R. A. Houston, 'Culture and Leisure 1700-1840', in Peter Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, vol.2, 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> She added that 'there were the only public places where the Ladys went in full dress'. Elizabeth Mure, 'Some Remarks on the Change of Manners in my Own Time. 1700-1790', in *Selections from the Family Papers Preserved at Caldwell*, ed. W. Mure, Maitland Club, 71 (Glasgow, 1854), vol.1, p.267.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p.109; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 1992), p.257; Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), p.276. See Mure, 'Change of Manners', p.265, for a description of women's pre-eighteenth-century funereal role. Thomas Somerville described women forming the rear of funeral processions as far as the kirkyard gate in his early lifetime, in *My Own Life and Times 1741-1814*, with an Introduction by Richard B. Sher, (Bristol, 1996; 1<sup>st</sup> edn., 1861), pp.367-8.

<sup>5</sup> John Ramsay of Ochertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alexander Allardyce, (Edinburgh, 1888), vol.2, p.62. He lamented the 'abundantly loose' manners of this court, 'a thing very offensive in a country which was then remarkable for seriousness and decorum.'

<sup>6</sup> Rosalind K. Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne: Life in the Household of the Duchess of Hamilton 1656-1716* (East Linton, 1973, 2000), ch.5. See also Rosalind K. Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980* (London, 1983), p.167.

Yet Ramsay went on to argue that there had been a ‘wonderful change upon female manners’ ‘in consequence of playhouses, assemblies, and concerts.’<sup>7</sup> Echoing the Countess of Panmure and, indeed, received contemporary wisdom, he argued that these institutions of urban public sociability, ‘gave a new turn to the sentiments and behaviour of the ladies [...] served to polish manners, and to promote ease and elegance of behaviour.’<sup>8</sup> In polished, easy manners, Ramsay was describing the basics of politeness.<sup>9</sup> Increasingly, the polite were defined by their leisured activities, at the core of which, as the first chapter showed, was the notion that men and women socialising together not only improved the manners of the individuals involved, but in so doing contributed to the process of national civilisation. This took place within a broader framework privileging the sorts of leisure activities which were ‘socially harmonious’, leading Roy Porter to claim that ‘The Enlightenment’s great historical watershed lay in the validation of pleasure.’<sup>10</sup> The notion that in (the right kind of) pleasure lay progress and patriotism had obvious attractions for the genteel, so that by the late 1750s, a pamphleteer could satirically declare that: ‘Of all the many improvements our country has of late received, none ought to strike the breast of a *North British* patriot with so sensible a pleasure, as the amazing progress we have made in cultivating a taste for amusements and diversions’.<sup>11</sup>

Recently, it has been cautioned that ‘The sense of cultural transformation, of the new sociable importance of women, of new entertainments, of the secularisation of social life, is striking, acute – and exaggerated’.<sup>12</sup> As Amanda Vickery has pointed out, much of what has been written about women’s involvement in the new forms of sociability associated with polite culture has been in a theoretical mould, women’s presence being ‘either asserted or denied’ by scholars. The lack of actual historical research on this topic has led, she argued, to ‘an extraordinary mismatch between the precision of the conceptual claims made about women in public and the

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<sup>7</sup> Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, pp.60-61.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.2, p.62.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 1, pp.13-14.

<sup>10</sup> Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (Harmondsworth, 2000), pp.265, 258.

<sup>11</sup> *The Usefulness of the Edinburgh Theatre seriously considered. With a proposal for rendering it more beneficial* (Edinburgh, 1757), p.1.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Clark and R. A. Houston, ‘Culture and Leisure’, p.575. They emphasised that these changes were only part of a bigger picture

exceeding murkiness of historical knowledge.’<sup>13</sup> As the previous two chapters have demonstrated, by the mid-eighteenth century, the young women of Scottish gentry families were being brought up in the expectation that new forms of socialising would form part of their experience in at least some stages of the life-course. This chapter asks what can be deduced about the ways in which these women participated in the arenas of sociability and politeness in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland. It starts off by examining ideas surrounding women and conversation, focusing in particular on the tea-tables. It then considers the way women presented themselves through language and behaviour. Next, it looks at the practical workings of sociability in domestic and public settings, ending with a section on the continuity of conflicting attitudes to the theatre amongst and concerning women.

#### The Company of Virtuous Women? Tea-tables, Gossip, and Reputation

‘Among the ancients, the character of the fair-sex was considered as altogether domestic; nor were they regarded as part of the polite world or of good company. This, perhaps, is why the ancients have not left us one piece of pleasantry that is excellent.’<sup>14</sup> So wrote David Hume in his essay on ‘The Rise of Arts and Sciences’. He went on to ask:

what better school for manners, than the company of virtuous women; where the mutual endeavour to please must insensibly polish the mind, where the example of the female softness and modesty must communicate itself to their admirers, and where the delicacy of that sex puts every one on his guard, lest he give offence by any breach of decency?

He implied that at the time he was writing in the early 1740s, women were not considered to be ‘altogether domestic’, but on the contrary had been accepted as integral to polite society, where their company helped to improve the manners of men. Historians have noted the somewhat patronising tone which Hume often adopted when referring to the fair sex,<sup>15</sup> but whilst textual sources demonstrate that

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<sup>13</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.227. Her own work helps to redress the balance.

<sup>14</sup> David Hume, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, 1995; 1<sup>st</sup> published 1741-1777), p.134.

<sup>15</sup> See, for instance, Mary Catherine Moran, ‘From Rudeness to Refinement: Gender, Genre and Scottish Enlightenment Discourse’ (John Hopkins University PhD thesis, 1999), pp.92-3; Donald T. Siebert, ‘Chivalry and Romance in the Age of Hume’, *ECL*, 21:1 (1997), pp.64-5; Kathleen Wilson,

at very least his tongue was in cheek, the companionable relationships which archival sources indicate he had with women suggest he was by no means universally sceptical of women's abilities, and in 1776, not long before his death, he wrote in his memoir 'On My Own Life' that he 'took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women.'<sup>16</sup> Although it was in coffee-houses and exclusively male clubs such as the 'Select' and 'Speculative' societies that thinkers like Hume honed their ideas and debating skills far from the company of women, issues of women's social roles surfaced repeatedly in their debates.<sup>17</sup>

Politeness emphasised conversation,<sup>18</sup> and, as Hume argued in another essay, it was 'the Fair Sex, who are the Sovereigns of the Empire of Conversation.'<sup>19</sup> Adam Smith linked sociability with commerce as similarly improving social trends, prompting Mary Catherine Moran to argue for the significance of 'the Commerce of the sexes' to the ideals of the Scottish Enlightenment.<sup>20</sup> The concept of the sociable woman as improving was a cornerstone of polite culture, popularised in Scotland through Addison and Steele's early eighteenth-century periodical *The Spectator*.<sup>21</sup>

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*The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 2003), p.111.

<sup>16</sup> 'My Own Life', in Hume, *Essays*, pp.xl-xli. Many of his female friends in Scotland and France, from the famous Comtesse de Boufflers to less celebrated women like Betty Fletcher, Elizabeth and Katharine Mure and Alison Cockburn, were by any standards intelligent, forthright women. For an argument that Hume viewed women positively, see Annette C. Baier, 'Hume on Women's Complexion', in Peter Jones (ed.), *The 'Science of Man' in the Scottish Enlightenment: Hume, Reid and their Contemporaries* (Edinburgh, 1989), esp. p.50.

<sup>17</sup> For instance, NLS, MS.Adv.23.1.1, 'Minutes of the Select Society'. 'Whether ought we to prefer ancient or modern manners, with regard to the Condition and treatment of Women?', debated 4 December 1754, pp.32-3; 'Whether can a Marriage be happy where the Wife is of an understanding superior to that of the husband?', debated 28 January 1756, pp.79, 81; 'Whether it would be of advantage that the Women held Places of Trust and Profit in the State?', debated 22 July 1760, p.157. Several other such topics were amongst those deemed proper for debate. John Gregory was reportedly 'laughed at and run down' for 'enlarging on his favourite topic, the superiority of the female sex', in the Poker Club. *The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, ed. John Hill Burton with a new Introduction by Richard B. Sher (Bristol, 1990; reprint of 1910 edn.), p.484. For clubs, see Chapter.1 n.30.

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence E. Klein, 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in Early Eighteenth-Century England'. *HJ*, 32:3 (1989), p.587.

<sup>19</sup> Hume, *Essays*, p.535. He later withdrew this essay.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Catherine Moran, "'The Commerce of the Sexes' – Gender and the Social Sphere in Scottish Enlightenment Accounts of Civil Society", in Frank Trentman (ed.), *Paradoxes of Civil Society: New Perspectives on Modern German and British History* (New York and Oxford, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> In an early edition, Addison wrote: 'It was said of Socrates, that he brought Philosophy down from Heaven, to inhabit among Men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses'. Quoted in Lawrence E. Klein, 'Gender, Conversation and the Public Sphere in Early Eighteenth-Century England', in Judith Still and Michael Worton (eds.), *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices* (Manchester, 1993), p.100. Assemblies and

By 1748, David Fordyce was noting in his *Dialogues Concerning Education* that ‘Speech is one of the best Instruments of Female Power, by which they calm the Storms of Passion, and charm our rude Natures into a softer Kind of Humanity.’<sup>22</sup> Through the genteel arts of conversation, women could act for the good of the nation in helping to mould the supposedly ‘rude’ male shape into the polite gentleman whose manners and courteous treatment of women signalled the civilised society. Thus, in 1767 the young Gilbert Elliot, later 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Minto, whose Parisian education had been supervised by Hume, wrote to his mother that he believed:

A wide step to Debauchery and indeed every species of vice is a disregard and even an aversion to the company of Women of Modesty and accomplishments, instances of which we have in Edinbr not a few and some of my age. On the other hand a strong tie to Virtue both in Sentiment and practice is not only the company in general of women of Sense and Education but I will likewise say an attachment to a safe object worthy of engrossing your affection.<sup>23</sup>

The qualification that the women in question were of good character (modest and virtuous) was vital: it was only the right sort of woman, able to demonstrate the appropriate social rank and breeding through cultivated manners and an understanding of the priorities of polite society, who could impart this societal good.

Ambiguities over the effects of women’s company and conversation are evident in contemporary debates on the location where, according to Ramsay of Ochertyre, ‘polite conversation was chiefly carried on’: the tea-tables.<sup>24</sup> James Boswell’s father, Alexander, Lord Auchinleck, recorded in his memoirs that in his youth, ‘tea was not come in to be common, so that though my Mother always had it in the house, it was not used except when strangers came’, but by 1742 Duncan Forbes of Culloden was complaining that ‘the Servants, particularly the Females in

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tea-tables, at least, were heterosocial environments. Klein outlined the development of this concept since the Renaissance, *ibid.*, pp.105-112.

<sup>22</sup> David Fordyce, *Dialogues Concerning Education* vol.2, (London, 1748), p.111. See also ‘Lecture 2’, in Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed. J. C. Bryce (Indianapolis, 1985; as recorded by a student in 1762-3), p.4: ‘It is commonly said also that in France and England the conversation of the Ladies is the best standar[d] of Language, as ther is a certain delicacy and agreableness in their behaviour and adress’.

<sup>23</sup> NLS, MS11012 f.19, to Agnes Elliot, 19 May 1767, Edr. For the association of the seventeenth-century French salons with improving female conversation, see Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 1996), esp. ch.1.

<sup>24</sup> Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, p.73.



better families make it their Morning & Afternoon Diet.<sup>25</sup> By this time, as the diary of George Ridpath, a Borders church minister, demonstrates, the drinking of tea in mixed company in the late afternoon had become standard amongst the gentry.<sup>26</sup>

Redolent with connotations of gentility and conspicuous consumption, women reigned supreme over a physical location which straddled public and domestic socialising.<sup>27</sup> As much a part of the assembly room as the home, the rituals of tea-drinking were at the heart of changing habits of sociability in eighteenth-century Britain.<sup>28</sup> Staying on after a wedding, probably in 1747, Margaret Hepburn wrote to her mother of how ‘I am left & Miss Mally Very Solitary When Miss Hamilton is gone however I spend my time most agreeably as Mrs Hamilton is always wery Civill I keep the key of the Cupard where y<sup>c</sup> tea cups is & Miss Mal maks the tea’.<sup>29</sup> What she was describing was no mere routine task, but rather the initiation of these two young women on the cusp of adulthood (Mally was around twenty years old at this time, Margaret probably just turned thirteen) into the rites in which they would be expected to participate as married women. The brewing and pouring of tea was considered so important that it was not left to servants, who merely provided the hot water, but was carried out by the lady of the house, or, sometimes, her eldest daughter.<sup>30</sup> A ritualised ceremony, it was dependent on not just the china tea set of which Peggy Hepburn had been made guardian, but on ‘the narcissistic display’ of her body which, Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace has argued,

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<sup>25</sup> *My Very Dearest Sweet Heart, or, Boswell Before Boswell. Letters of the Lady Elizabeth Boswell (1704 to 1711, and 1733) Life before the Biographer*, ed. David R. Boswell, (Bath, 2003), p.53; NLS, MS14427 p.52, Lord President Duncan Forbes to Tweedale, 1 January 1742/3 Stony-hill. Between 1720 and 1760, tea imports into Britain increased five times. Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1997), p.22. Mure believed ‘the regular teatables’ came into fashion around 1720, ‘Change of Manners’, p.269. Ramsay suggested a similar timescale, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, p.72.

<sup>26</sup> *Diary of George Ridpath, Minister of Stichel, 1755-61*, ed. James Balfour Paul, SHS ser.3, vol.2 (Edinburgh, 1922), passim.

<sup>27</sup> For the dominant position of women in portraits of family tea-drinking, see Philip Lawson, ‘Tea, Vice and the English State, 1660-1784’, in Lawson, *A Taste for Empire and Glory: Studies in British Overseas Expansion, 1660-1800* (Aldershot, 1997), p.8.

<sup>28</sup> Philip Lawson, ‘Women and the Empire of Tea: Image and Counter-Image in Hanoverian England’, in Lawson, *Taste for Empire and Glory*, p.1.

<sup>29</sup> NLS, MS16746 f.188, Margaret Hepburn to Mrs Hepburn of Monkridge at Salton, n.p., n.d., which, given that she was writing of a marriage party and making frequent reference to the Hamiltons, may relate to the marriage of Mally Fletcher’s cousin, Mary Hamilton, to William Nisbet of Dirleton. Their marriage contract was signed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1747. NAS, GD205/42/12, Mrs H Nisbet’s Separate Aliment, 1753.

<sup>30</sup> Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, p.25; Jane Pettigrew, *A Social History of Tea* (London, 2001), pp.30, 56.

‘becomes part of the ceremony’ itself.<sup>31</sup> These performative elements stressed a young woman’s femininity and gentility, demonstrating her social and sexual preparedness for marriage. Allan Ramsay wrote of the erotic potential of tea-drinking, asking what man would not want to ‘act the Part of Tea’ when:

Kisses on thee the haughty *Belles* bestow,  
While in thy Steams their coral Lips do glow;<sup>32</sup>

Serving and drinking tea was about the demonstration of civilised behaviour, patriotic consumption and the improvement of manners, but beneath the control that was emphasised in this activity were undercurrents of socially threatening female power over men.

In 1757, Gilbert Elliot’s father, later the third baronet, wrote to Lord Milton of the controversies surrounding John Home’s *Douglas*, satirically regretting the vehemence of the charges laid against ‘poor Carlile, & some other of the young Brethren, who most certainly are seen too often at your Lordships table, & I hear, have even more than once been guilty of drinking tea with the young Ladys.’<sup>33</sup> For those like the Elliots and Fletchers who embraced polite culture, the tea-tables were the ideal location to pursue that mixed-gender sociability lauded by Hume in the quotations above. For Ramsay of Ochertyre, they ‘contributed not a little to soften and polish manners’,<sup>34</sup> but for others, however, not least those who remained loyal to older social codes, they were socially de-stabilising.<sup>35</sup> If ‘good’ women could influence men – and therefore, wider society – in a positive way, then ‘bad’ women were capable of corrupting not only individual men, but the nation as a whole. Elizabeth Mure neatly summarised the ambiguity of the tea-tables when she commented that there ‘all the young and gay [...] pulled to pieces the manners of

<sup>31</sup> Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, p.29.

<sup>32</sup> From ‘The Morning Interview’, in *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, ed. Burns Martin and John W. Oliver, STS, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, 19 (Edinburgh and London, 1945), vol.1, p.8.

<sup>33</sup> NLS, MS16700 f.29, Gilbert Elliot, 12 April 1757, London. He was referring to Alexander Carlyle and his fellow ‘Moderate’ ministers. For the *Douglas* scandal, see pp.145-148, 150 below.

<sup>34</sup> Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen* vol.2, p.73.

<sup>35</sup> This dichotomy is explored in Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, ‘Tea, Gender, and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century England’, *SECC*, 23 (1994), esp. pp.140-141. She concluded that views varied with individual women’s economic and social circumstances, p.143. For more on satires of women and tea-drinking in visual imagery, see Philip Lawson, ‘Women and the Empire of Tea’, in which he noted (p.15) that the vindictiveness against women was greatest in mid-century, when their role at the tea-table was relatively new. Alexander Monro associated the tea-tables with envy. Alexander Monro (Primus), ‘The Professor’s Daughter: An Essay on female Conduct’, ed. P.A.G. Monro, *Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 26:1, supplement no.2 (January 1996), p.42.

those that differed from them; every thing was matter of conversation; Religion, Morals, Love, Friendship, Good manners, dress. This tended more to our refinement than any thing else.<sup>36</sup> ‘Refinement’, then, came not just from these ‘all new and all entertaining’<sup>37</sup> conversation topics reflecting the fashionable concerns of the genteel, but from a gossip-generated pressure towards conformity.

Michèle Cohen has differentiated between women’s ‘conversation’, which was ‘civilized and civilizing, polite and pleasing’, even when concerned with the trivial, and what she called ‘tongue’, which was ‘undisciplined and unregulated’.<sup>38</sup> Leisured women were associated with socially destabilising unproductive speech, gossip in particular.<sup>39</sup> In July 1759, Hary Barclay informed Mally Fletcher that he had no news, ‘and as a proof of it, I could not pick up a Single article, tho’ I past the afternoon Yesterday with the Minto Girls, in a large circle of Company, Such as, The Chief Baron and two of his daughters, Sir Adam Fergusone &c, &c, &c.’<sup>40</sup> Letter-writers anxious for news would ask after the talk of the tea-tables, as it was there that scandal and news were discussed and spread: ‘G\_\_\_e’s wife’s Story makes a devilish noise here, & they tell me ye whole tea tables in Edr are ringing about it,’ wrote John Maule, friend of the Fletcher family.<sup>41</sup>

Gossip could be a powerful force. Jean, daughter of the Duke of Atholl, complained in 1746 that Lady Milton ‘has used us this winter excessively ill, & [...] has never taken the Least notice of us, but to spread untruths’ on Jean and her sister. She continued that she ‘wish[ed] to God she would mend her own behaviour & her Daughter’s before she pretends to blast innocent people’s Reputations.’<sup>42</sup> In 1758, one of Lady Milton’s daughters, Mally, found herself at the centre of an unspecified

<sup>36</sup> Mure, ‘Change of Manners’, p.269.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p.269.

<sup>38</sup> Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity*, p.20.

<sup>39</sup> Clare Brant examined the negative connotations of women’s speech in ‘Speaking of Women: Scandal and the Law in the Mid-Eighteenth Century’, in Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (eds.), *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760* (London, 1992), p.248. The greatest fears surrounding women’s speech involved the potential effeminising of men. See Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity*, esp. ch.3.

<sup>40</sup> NLS, MS16708 f.66, 2 July 1759. The chief baron was Robert Ord, whose daughter Nancy has been romantically linked with David Hume. John Valdimir Price, ‘Hume and Nancy Ord. Three New Letters’, in William B. Todd (ed.), *Hume and the Enlightenment: Essays Presented to Ernest Campbell Mossner* (Edinburgh and Austin, Texas, 1974).

<sup>41</sup> NLS, MS16585 f.239, Maule to Milton, 17 January 1741, London.

<sup>42</sup> *Chronicles of the Atholl and Tullibardine Families*, collected and arranged by John, Seventh Duke of Atholl, K.T. (Edinburgh, 1908) vol.3, p. 349, Lady Jean to Duke James, 23 December 1746, Edinburgh.

scandal, referred to at the time by her father as ‘this hellish Malice’ which saw ‘innocence it self attempted to be defamed in the most tender point, & left to be judged by a world too void of Charity,’ perhaps suggesting it was sexual in nature. In what reads as an anguished testimony to the pain that such a circumstance could bring about, he admitted to Hary Barclay that ‘it so deeply affected me, that I hardly knew what I was doing’.<sup>43</sup> As Janet Todd has noted, ‘Calumny murdered since for women reputation was identity’,<sup>44</sup> whilst Amanda Vickery has described ‘propriety’ as ‘the watchword of genteel women in Georgian England’.<sup>45</sup> Yet Barclay’s reply hastened to convince Milton of the needlessness of his despair:

So far I am satisfied of the truth of this, That, Upon all the tryalls I have of late made, To introduce your Lops Family as a subject of Conversation, I have not met with any one Person who discovered a Consciousness, That such a report had reach’t them \_ So That, Even Supposing A thing of that kind might once have been said, I am quite convinced It has gain’d so little ground as to be now entirely forgot<sup>46</sup>

Although Milton may have preferred a more subtle method of investigation, Barclay’s investigations suggest that the sheer volume of scandal generated by a society obsessed with gossip had the potential to protect some of its erstwhile victims.

### Language and Behaviour

This emphasis on the power of speech and conversation entailed the scrutiny of both what was said and how, and by the end of the period in question, speech was prescribed as never before.<sup>47</sup> By the summer of 1761, Thomas Sheridan was lecturing the men and later ladies of Edinburgh on ‘correct’ English pronunciation

<sup>43</sup> NLS, MS16703 f.66, Milton to Hary Barclay, 29 September 1758, Roseneath.

<sup>44</sup> Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* (London, 1989), p.130.

<sup>45</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman’s Daughter*, p.284.

<sup>46</sup> NLS, MS16703 f.67, Hary Barclay to Milton, 7 October 1758, Edr.

<sup>47</sup> Five times as many works on elocution appeared between 1760 and 1800 as did prior to 1760. Lynda Mugglestone, *‘Talking Proper’: The Rise of Accent as Social Symbol* (Oxford, 1995), p.4. Richard J. Watts, ‘Mythical Strands in the Ideology of Prescriptivism’, in Laura Wright (ed.), *The Development of Standard English, 1300-1800: Theories, Descriptions, Conflicts* (Cambridge, 2000), p.30, agreed with Mugglestone that the eighteenth century was a particular age of prescriptivism, but emphasised the heritage of this idea. For the Scottish situation, see Charles Jones, *A Language Suppressed: The Pronunciation of the Scots Language in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (Edinburgh, 1995), ch.1.

and with it, the ability to sound polite,<sup>48</sup> leading one pamphleteer to proclaim mockingly:

Mr Sheridan, by directing to repeat with proper emphasis, that curious and interesting question, *Shall I ride to town to-day?* has taught Ireland, and North Britain, and South Britain, Yorkshire and Wales not excepted, the just pronunciation of the English language. And thereby he has done more to promote among all ranks, public spirits, and reformation of manners, than ever was done, shall be done, or can be done, by all the vigour of magistrates, by all the wisdom of legislators, by all the examples of the great, by all the moral philosophy of the schools, by all the doctrines and precepts of religion, or by any else, except Tristram Shandy's six volumes, and the dramatic works of my dearly beloved brother Mr John Home<sup>49</sup>

Fashion dictated that conformity in vocal expression was every bit as important a criterion of politeness as an acquaintance with the latest literary successes. As Sheridan would inform them, all dialects other than that of the court had 'some degree of disgrace annexed to them', and since court pronunciation could be 'acquired only by conversing with people in polite life, it is a sort of proof that a person has kept good company'.<sup>50</sup> This could be achieved through schooling, but that was an option open to only the wealthiest few.<sup>51</sup>

In London, Isabella Strange reacted sceptically to Sheridan, informing her cousin, 'I assure you it will take a' your Greek and Hebrew now to support a polite conversation amonges the fair Nymphs of this Kingdom Mr Sheredon has so Lector'd them'. She added 'I had one touth of him altho it does not appear you know Send a fool to France &c Ald Sparrows are ill to tame So I'll attempt no more Acquair'd knowledge in the Litteraray way the experimental way must be mine And

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<sup>48</sup> Jones, *Language Suppressed*, pp.7-9; Davis D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement. A Survey of Eighteenth-Century Literary Clubs and Societies* (Washington, 1969), p.57. Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution: Together with Two Dissertations on Language; and Some other Tracts relative to those Subjects* (London, 1762) contains a list of around two thirds of those who attended the lectures (the other names having been lost), including 'Miss Margaret Adams', 'Miss Jane Elliot', 'Miss Mariame Elliot' (perhaps a misreading for Marianne?), and 'Miss \_\_\_\_ Fletcher', who may or may not have been the women of those names featured in this thesis.

<sup>49</sup> *A Paper dropt from Tristram Shandy's Pocket-book* (Edinburgh, 1762), pp.19-20. For Home's plays, see pp.145-8.

<sup>50</sup> Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p.30.

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter 2, pp.65-6.

that we are told teaches fools.<sup>52</sup> Jacobitism may have influenced this vernacular rejection of the artificial acquisition of polite speech, reinforced through the use of a Scottish proverb, but the period under consideration was one of transition, and, as shall be seen, women of even the most loyally Hanoverian families remained defiantly Scots in their speech. In the 1730s, Elizabeth Mure believed, women were ‘undelicate in their conversation and vulgar in their manners’,<sup>53</sup> and modern scholarship suggests that language and manners were in general much more robust in the mid-eighteenth century than in later decades: Leah Leneman’s work on divorce cases, for instance, demonstrated that ‘witnesses’ explicit descriptions of the sexual act, quite usual in the early eighteenth century, were gradually replaced by standard, anodyne phrases.<sup>54</sup> Yet there is some evidence that even before the onset of self-consciousness about ‘Scotticisms’ in the early 1760s,<sup>55</sup> gentlewomen’s use of overtly Scots language was deemed worthy of comment, and carried messages about behaviour and attitudes.

In a short dramatisation of an imagined conversation between Lord and Lady Milton, Hary Barclay gave Lord Milton standard English dialogue but portrayed Lady Milton’s speech as avowedly vernacular, peppering her sentences with Scots words and flagging up the horror with which she had noticed the changes visited on Barclay since he ‘gaed amang the englishes.’<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Gwyn Vaughan, a London-based Welsh friend of the Fletchers, once wrote of Lady Milton to her husband, ‘wee both have the same failing of speaking *Loud*, but I declare y<sup>t</sup> I would hear her most submissively for a hour without Contradiction, for she has seen and

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<sup>52</sup> NLS, MS14254 f.10, to Dr Armstrong, 23 March 1762, [?London].

<sup>53</sup> Mure, ‘Change of Manners’, p.267.

<sup>54</sup> Leah Leneman, *Alienated Affections: The Scottish Experience of Divorce and Separation, 1684-1830* (Edinburgh, 1998), esp. pp.4-5. Emily, Duchess of Leinster reminisced that Caroline Townshend had continued to display an old-fashioned taste in bawdiness ‘many years when it was quite out of fashion, but she was singular.’ Amanda Vickery, ‘Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women’s History’, *HJ*, 36:2 (June 1993), p.399.

<sup>55</sup> For instance, Pat Rogers, ‘Boswell and the Scotticism’, in Greg Clingham (ed.), *New Light on Boswell: Critical and Historical Essays on the Occasion of the Bicentenary of The Life of Johnson* (Cambridge, 1991).

<sup>56</sup> NLS, MS16655 f.64, Hary Barclay to Milton, 29 November 1758, Heigington. This is cited in full in Chapter 5, p.161. Kames reported that when representatives of the Lords of Justiciary had to speak in the House of Lords concerning the Porteous affair, they were mostly, to varying degrees, unintelligible, but Milton, ‘though no elegant speaker, was well heard, and his meaning comprehended.’ Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, p.543, n.1.

*Kenns* more than any of you, and I honour that old Rebeliouse Lesly Spirrit in her.<sup>57</sup> He stressed an admiration for her refutation of anglicised speech in favour of talking long and loud in Scots, linking this to her ‘rebellious’ covenanting military heritage, her knowledge based on experience rather than prescriptive teachings, and down-to-earth, if forceful personality. In so doing, he suggested that those who were brave enough to ignore the rules of speech were also less constrained by other dictates of sociability.

Just as Allan Ramsay had written his more bawdy poems in Scots and his more ‘polite’ poems in English,<sup>58</sup> a refusal to be bound by ‘mannered’ language was often accompanied by more rowdy behaviour. Not only was Lady Milton ‘loud’ and talkative, but she was a favourite of colourful characters. She was ‘My Gossip’ to John Maule; Hary Barclay was her ‘Chichi.’<sup>59</sup> On one occasion Maule wrote to Milton wishing his ‘Gossip’ was in Inveraray with him, as ‘My Lady Sheriff does not agree wt our Constitutions So well as we cou’d wish, & we can have no riot wt the females of this place’:<sup>60</sup> unlike, he implied, with the Fletchers. In her language and behaviour, Lady Milton was signalling that she had the status, acquired through the extraordinary achievements of her husband and her own practical or political skills, to ignore the conventions of polite society. The robust language used by Lady Milton’s Irish contemporary Letitia Bushe who, despite declaring ‘I cannot abide your Robustious, swaggering, gentlemanlike kind of women’, used words like ‘turdy’ and ‘shit’, has been related to her independent status as a wealthy single woman.<sup>61</sup> In their very flouting of the rules, such women were demonstrating themselves to be above those whose social status rested on their ability to work within them. Yet Lady Milton was also demonstrating more generally the ambiguity of the way in which women spoke and behaved in practice, in a society obsessed

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<sup>57</sup> NLS, MS16612 f.50, Gwyn Vaughan to Milton, 15 October 1745, London. Lady Milton’s maternal grandfather had fought for Cromwell in the 1640s, later commanding the covenanting army in favour of Charles II. T. F. Henderson, ‘Leslie, David, first Lord Newark (1601–1682)’, rev. Edward M. Furgol, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16486>, accessed 29 March 2006]. Both these men were expressing the informality of their relationships with the Fletchers.

<sup>58</sup> *Works of Allan Ramsay*, vol.1; *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, ed. Alexander M. Kinghorn and Alexander Law, vol.3, (Edinburgh and London, 1961).

<sup>59</sup> E.g., NLS MS16677 f.56, Hary Barclay to Milton, 26 September 1752, Edr.

<sup>60</sup> NLS, MS16650 f.162, Maule to Milton, 3 September 1747, Inveraray. The Sheriff was Archibald Campbell of Stonefield.

<sup>61</sup> S. J. Connolly, ‘A Woman’s Life in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Case of Letitia Bushe’, *HJ*, 43:2 (2000), pp.438-9.

both with politeness and with the necessity of avoiding the excesses of fashionable manners.

In his journal, James Boswell occasionally lamented the ways in which his Scots compatriots, Lady Betty Macfarlane (daughter of the Earl of Kellie) and her sisters reproduced in London ‘the Edinburgh women’s roughness of manners’ or ‘the worst Edinburgh tea-drinking afternoons’; worst of all, perhaps, ‘the Fife tongue’.<sup>62</sup> Yet Boswell’s concern with politeness was obsessive, and such criticisms of impolite behaviour were not overt in the sources on which this study is based. Perhaps, however, Edinburgh standards of politeness did differ from those of London. In a more compassionate mood, even Boswell acknowledged that what Lord Elibank called the ‘plain *hameliness*’ of the Scots ladies, if inferior to the ideal of politeness, was preferable to the ‘kind of character perfectly disguised, a perfect made dish, which is often found, both male and female, in London.’<sup>63</sup> Others prided themselves on the common-sense of the Scots ladies, James Adam writing home from Italy in 1761:

I am never surpris’d to find my male correspondents writing to me with Sence & spirit, but when I get a letter from any of the Lassies tis a stile so different from the female conversation of this Country that they make me start, like a man waked through his sleep.<sup>64</sup>

The robust manners of the Adam women as expressed in their correspondence seem to have been welcomed by their brother as a release from the formality of their Italian counterparts. In a similar vein, his cousin, the historian William Robertson, wrote to Margaret Hepburn of how the London premiere of their friend John Home’s *Agis* was delayed for ten days because of the despair into which the leading actress, the famous Mrs Cibber fell upon treading on her canary. Robertson asked, tongue firmly in his cheek: ‘Are you not ashamed of yourself & your countrywomen who are unacquainted with all these artificial passions, & pretend to think & speak with reason’?<sup>65</sup> Although disapproval of the excesses of metropolitan manners was a

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<sup>62</sup> *Boswell’s London Journal, 1762-1763*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle (1<sup>st</sup> published 1950; reprinted New Haven and London, 1992), pp. 80, 70, 116.

<sup>63</sup> *Boswell’s London Journal*, pp.176-7.

<sup>64</sup> NAS, GD18/4888, to Mary Adam, 27 February 1761, Rome.

<sup>65</sup> NLS, MS16707 f.92, William Robertson to [Margaret Hepburn], 22 February 1758, London. Mrs Cibber was a celebrated actress, part of a leading theatrical dynasty. Lesley Wade Soule, ‘Cibber ,



commonplace amongst visitors to London, in contrasting the actress's over-reaction to the death of her pet bird with the 'reason' of Scotswomen like Peggy Hepburn, Robertson was proposing a notion of a national character amongst Scotswomen not dissimilar to that his cousin had suggested, safely remote from the excesses of sensibility.

The vernacular language could be used to denote a commonsense practicality altogether more subdued and serious than that of Lady Milton. Mary Adam's often unconsciously phonetic letters give a strong indication of how she may have sounded,<sup>66</sup> and the Adams frequently slipped into the vernacular to gain effect when quoting each other. Having encouraged his sisters to learn French, for instance, Robert Adam jokingly suggested he might start them on Italian too, but rejected the idea: 'besides I think I hear my Mother Say; Stupid Calland what does he filling his paper with these barbarous tongues, its right fair if he can write Sence in his Ain Mither tongue.'<sup>67</sup> Here, the vernacular signified his affection for his mother's down-to-earth common sense, as opposed to the frivolity of those obsessed with fashion and all things foreign. It may also have symbolised intimacy, even across the geographical distance to which his family was subject, hinting at the personal nature of verbal, rather than formal written (i.e., English) communication. Mary Adam's portrait by Allan Ramsay depicted her as a solemn, black-clad widow, suggesting, perhaps, a serious, pious woman.<sup>68</sup> Her children frequently referred to her devout religiosity, but they also openly used robust language in letters which would be sure to pass her eyes; in a rant against Betty Fletcher, Lady Milton was referred to as 'the bitch her mother',<sup>69</sup> whilst a story about the Prince of Borghese's daughter's intrigue with the Maltese ambassador ended with the Prince pacing the room, 'counting his beads and crying oh what a whore my Daughter is & indeed he might safely have

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Susannah Maria (1714–1766)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5417>, accessed 29 June 2006].

<sup>66</sup> E.g., NAS, GD18/4742/1, Mary Adam to Peggy Adam, 7 July 1753, Moffat. For women's letters as a source for changing speech modes in a slightly earlier period, see Anneli Meurman-Solin, 'Change from above or from below? Mapping the *Loci* of Linguistic Change in the History of Scottish English', in Laura Wright (ed.), *The Development of Standard English, 1300-1800: Theories, Descriptions, Conflicts* (Cambridge, 2000), esp. pp.164-5.

<sup>67</sup> NAS, GD18/4799, to Betty Adam, 14 February 1756, Rome.

<sup>68</sup> See Appendix 2, Fig.4.

<sup>69</sup> NAS, GD18/4745, Robert Adam to Bess and Meg, 21 September 1754, Inveraray (quoted in full, Chapter 5, p.165).

joind his wife too.<sup>70</sup> Whether or not Nelly Adam ever followed her brother James' instructions to 'let Mr Fairholm understand when you see him, that his friend Mr Dunlop [...] is a Cold mercantile son of a Bitch',<sup>71</sup> such passages suggest that even such an upwardly-mobile family as the Adams relished their informality as a sign of intimacy in a world in which the public expression of the appropriate manners was of increasing importance. They demonstrate the concept of language as an accessory, to be changed or adapted depending on context. Whilst women cultivated the appropriate language, accent and behaviour to be able to move in polite society, many of them maintained an awareness of how and when to use the vernacular, whether language or manners, as indigenous culture came to symbolise a sense of family, intimacy, and down-to-earth practicality.

### Domestic Sociability

I have seen Vauxhal & Ranelagh, those great Rane Shews, and I had the honour to see much better Entertainment, Company I thought much better, finer musik and far prettier Ladys, at your Lops hous, than at either, this is a real truth, so far as I can Judge.<sup>72</sup>

So wrote one of Lord Milton's guests in 1746, flattery no doubt an influence, but giving an insight nevertheless into the household as a venue for sociable, mixed-gender entertainment, high-ranking company, good music and attractive women. The household was an extension of the world of work, crammed with house guests and visitors, petitioners and business contacts. Families and individuals were frequently on the move, sometimes dropping in to spend a day or two with friends on their way to another destination, at other times staying for weeks on end.<sup>73</sup> More local company would drop in for afternoon tea,<sup>74</sup> or breakfast, dinner or supper and evening entertainment.<sup>75</sup> Visits were so frequent that a family home like that of the

<sup>70</sup> NAS, GD18/4902, James to Betty Adam, 11 July 1761, Rome.

<sup>71</sup> NAS, GD18/4743, 19 November 1754, Rotterdam.

<sup>72</sup> NLS, MS16619 f.218, Patt: Duff to Milton, 24 May 1746, London. The OED gives an obsolete definition of 'rane' as 'continuous'.

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 6, pp.192-3.

<sup>74</sup> E.g., NLS, MS16659 f.202, Belhaven to Andrew Fletcher, 13 December 1748, Edr. 'I was doun thes afternoon drinking tea with My Lady Milltoun in her new house'.

<sup>75</sup> Dinner hour was 1.00pm until 1745, when it moved to 2.00pm. Henry Gray Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1900; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1899), vol.1, p.89. Alexander Carlyle remembered the Fletchers dining at 2.00pm in the late 1750s, *Autobiography*, p.344. Ramsay of Ochertyre recorded that dining at 2.00pm was 'regarded as a mark of fashion and figure' in the

Fletchers was rarely occupied by its permanent inhabitants alone; Francis Fletcher wrote to his father, Lord Milton, regretting the disruptive influence of ‘those who are continually crowding about a person of your station.’<sup>76</sup> This obvious but sometimes neglected point has serious implications for those who would seek to equate ‘domestic’ with ‘private’, and the supposedly ‘private’ as ‘public’ is one of the platforms on which Lawrence Klein has argued against a gendered public/private dichotomy entailing female domesticity.<sup>77</sup> The home, particularly the townhouse, was rarely a refuge from the public, but rather an extension of the worlds of business, politics and sociability, which, far from isolating women from the public, encapsulated them within it. This meant that young women growing up in such households were exposed from an early age to a wide mix of political and intellectual company.

With reference to the early eighteenth century, Elizabeth Mure argued that as a result of the small, enclosed social circles in which children grew up, ‘There was no enlargement of mind [...] From this education proceeded pride of understanding, Bigotry of religion, and want of refinement in every useful art.’<sup>78</sup> For Mure, the increased sociability of the household was a vital factor in the ‘change of manners’ towards what she saw as an improved society. Lord Auchinleck (James Boswell’s father) remembered that when his father was at home in the country, there was company almost every day, but that when he went away to Edinburgh, Auchinleck’s mother ‘draped herself in very plain clothes’ as ‘no company was expected’.<sup>79</sup> This suggests a form of conviviality which, whilst not exclusively masculine, operated only when men were present. But developments in travel and the growth of the urban ‘season’ enabled the increased participation of women and even children in domestic sociability focused around the townhouse, and by 1739, Alexander Monro was lamenting the frequency of ladies’ visits to the most distant acquaintances, with whom their conversation would consist of ‘no more than a ceremonious Enquiry

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later 1740s. *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, p.67. By ca.1760 it was 3.00pm, Graham, *Social Life*, vol.1, p.107. Supper was at 8.00pm, *ibid.*, vol.1, p.91.

<sup>76</sup> NLS, MS16515 f.129, Francis Fletcher to Milton in Edinburgh, 4 January 1749, Pencaitland. He was at that time a student.

<sup>77</sup> Lawrence E. Klein, ‘Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure’, *ECS*, 29:1 (1995), esp. pp.104-5.

<sup>78</sup> Mure, ‘Change of Manners’, p.262.

<sup>79</sup> *My Very Dearest Sweet Heart*, p.53.

after a few of their nearest friends and relations, some Observations on the Weather, or at most a Rehearsal of some paragraphs of the public Newspapers, and the uncertain Hearsay of the Town.’<sup>80</sup> Acknowledging the potential such visits brought for young women to get into bad company, he nevertheless believed that it had become such a requirement amongst the polite that she should not shun this habit altogether.<sup>81</sup>

Susan Whyman has described the ‘visit’ as a ‘locus of power’, ‘one of the public places where gentility was won or lost’.<sup>82</sup> This made the home a locus of polite sociability, a show-case not just for the requisite taste in furnishings and consumer goods, but, in at least some instances, for conversation more in-depth than that mocked by Monro above. Katherine Mure’s drawing room circle in Abbey Hill has been described as ‘Hume’s favourite evening haunt, when resident in Edinburgh,’<sup>83</sup> although little remains in the family papers to give any insight into what was actually discussed. The Gilmerton home of Lady Milton’s sister-in-law, Harriet Kinloch, was reputed by Alexander Carlyle to be ‘a great resort for John Home and his friends of the clergy’ not just because ‘the husband was shrewd and sensible’, but because his wife was ‘beautiful, lively, and agreeable, and was aspiring at some knowledge and taste in belles-lettres.’<sup>84</sup> The Fletcher women discussed John Home’s and William Robertson’s writings with their authors, and were the friends of many of the Scottish literati of the 1740s and 1750s,<sup>85</sup> whilst Mary Adam enjoyed David Hume’s company once he had been anonymously introduced at her dinner table.<sup>86</sup> The Adam household in Edinburgh was also frequented by, amongst others, William Robertson, John Home, Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson and James Hutton.<sup>87</sup> As James Van Horn Melton has argued of England, the lack of formal institutions such as *salons* did not necessarily impede women’s opportunities to participate in

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<sup>80</sup> Monro, ‘Essay’, p.57.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p.58.

<sup>82</sup> Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999), p.95.

<sup>83</sup> *Family Papers preserved at Caldwell*, p.37.

<sup>84</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.214.

<sup>85</sup> See Chapter 2, pp.104-108; Chapter 5, pp.162-6; and p.147 below.

<sup>86</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, pp.285-6.

<sup>87</sup> NAS, GD18/4981.

literary debate.<sup>88</sup> Yet these women represented a small segment of Scottish society. Whilst Siân Reynolds acknowledged the ‘informal contacts’ which women could make, she was probably right, given the current state of knowledge circumscribed by an apparent lack of sources, to emphasise that these did not pose a risk to the Scottish Enlightenment’s ‘specifically masculine culture’.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, there remained what Kathryn Gleadle has called the ‘duality of female engagement’, the acknowledgement that ‘women could inhabit the same space as men and yet remain excluded from the civic meanings perpetuated therein’.<sup>90</sup> Citing the later eighteenth-century conversation notebooks of Dorothy Alison, wife of the preacher Archibald, and daughter of John Gregory, she noted that Dorothy conversed unrestrainedly with the anti-slavery campaigner Thomas Clarkson, but did so generally outwith the ‘physical and temporal’ locations of formal sociability such as the drawing room, in which she normally presented herself as a ‘privileged spectator’ to the conversations between her male friends.<sup>91</sup> Thus Robert Adam could call Allan Ramsay’s wife Margaret Lindsay ‘a Sweet, agreeable, Chatty body, tho’ Silent in Company’,<sup>92</sup> without any sense of contradiction. Although in this case possibly constrained by her unusual position as an artist’s wife in Italy, it is a reminder that outside their most intimate circles, women were operating in a social climate which could potentially commend female passivity as part of a prioritisation of male conversation. Sadly, it is impossible to know to what extent women were able to participate as equal partners in the conversation of the Edinburgh drawing rooms frequented by the women concerned here, and whether that conversation was deliberately crafted to suggest an inferior female intellect.

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<sup>88</sup> ‘The fact that salons played a less visible role in eighteenth-century English culture reflected the existence of more, not fewer, opportunities for female participation in the literary public sphere.’ James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, (Cambridge, 2001), pp.214-5. For French women in salon culture, see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca and London, 1994).

<sup>89</sup> Siân Reynolds, ‘Gender, the Arts and Culture’, in Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon; Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes Yeo (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp.178-9.

<sup>90</sup> Kathryn Gleadle, “‘Opinions Deliver’d in Conversation:’ Conversation, Politics, and Gender in the Late Eighteenth Century”, in José Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford, 2003), p.72.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.67-70.

<sup>92</sup> NAS, GD18/4768, Robert Adam to Nelly Adam in Edinburgh, 22 March 1755, Rome.

Women were expected to perform specific social roles based on age and status in the household. It had become expected that any polite domestic social environment be presided over by a woman, usually the lady of the house, her indispensability such that, in the absence of any other candidate, Lady Milton was called upon to perform this function for the third Duke of Argyll during his visits to Inveraray in the late 1740s and 1750s.<sup>93</sup> Private and exclusive, yet characterised by a degree of informality and an awareness of being part of a wider public, this was the setting in which older women ruled supreme as hostesses, whilst their daughters were able to converse and make male friends with relative freedom. Yet they were also engaged in a social task, to demonstrate the relevant skills and accomplishments to make good wives. A friend of the Fletchers, anticipating a visit to Inveraray, wrote to Lady Milton that he expected to ‘pas my time very agreeably, Sometimes in disputing with His Grace [...] and at other times in learning Wisdom from Miss Fletcher, Economy from her mother & in hearing Miss Mally Sing the Highland lady by way of desert.’<sup>94</sup> Despite his humorous tone, he indicated the centrality of women to domestic social amusements, and the specialised roles performed by individual female family members. Lady Milton was showing off her house-wifely knowledge as befitted a middle-aged matron, whilst her eldest daughter conversed on more abstract topics, perhaps demonstrating her polite education. Her next daughter, meanwhile, provided the musical entertainment with which young women were so closely associated in domestic settings.<sup>95</sup>

The poet Allan Ramsay recorded an evening with the Clerks of Penicuik at Penicuik House, in which a discussion of potential war with France was ‘concluded with a concert of vocal musick led on by Miss Jackie’, followed by ‘a Dance which for Dignity we Shall call a Ball’.<sup>96</sup> For Paul Langford, fashionable activities such as dancing, singing and playing music were ‘less important than the forum which they

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<sup>93</sup> Ian G. Lindsay and Mary Cosh, *Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll* (Edinburgh, 1973). For more on this, see Chapter 5, pp.163-166; Chapter 6, pp.204-5.

<sup>94</sup> NLS, MS16668 f.123, Dr Stuart [Charles Stewart] to Milton, 25 March 1749. Stewart was a physician and ‘old friend’ of the third Duke, with whom he lived in London. Lindsay and Cosh, *Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll*, p.12.

<sup>95</sup> Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1988). However, his positioning of all eighteenth-century women’s music-making within the framework of a restrictive, male-imposed, uniform domesticity must be tempered somewhat.

<sup>96</sup> NAS, GD331/5/30, to Lady Dick, 1 August 1755.

created for social and sexual mixing'.<sup>97</sup> Chapter Two examined the 'polite qualifications' upon which women's participation in genteel society was contingent.<sup>98</sup> This was, of course, the same for men, but for women, access to the realms of sociability was of far greater significance as a new and mentally-broadening experience. Dancing, in particular, necessitated the active participation of women, whilst card-games (cribbage was especially popular) provided a socially-accepted platform on which women could compete for prestige and social status.<sup>99</sup> Several activities could take place simultaneously: Lady Ancram excused a scrawled note (dated '10 Ocr 1746, ten o' clock at night') to Milton with the line, 'I hope you will pardon this hurry'd letter writ in a room where some are singing & others talking Politicks'.<sup>100</sup> The young Margaret Hepburn once described a domestic scene in which she was:

sitting in the Low Dining Room Mr Simson Beside me reading the English paper Mr James Hamilton Mrs Hamilton Mr Hamilton & Miss Mally [Fletcher] is all in the Drawing Room at a party at Cards & to Compleat My Journall has the prettyest Lap Dog one My knee that ever was its no bigger nor a Candlestick & the fine is Sleeketest skin that ever was<sup>101</sup>

The frequency of extended visits meant that social activities in any one household could be continuous, leading to a multi-focused sociability which fostered an air of informality.<sup>102</sup> The potential for boredom as a product of, as well as a trigger for such patterns of sociability should not be ignored,<sup>103</sup> yet behind quotations like that of Ramsay above is a hint that on a practical level, domestic polite sociability could be unstructured and chaotic.

<sup>97</sup> Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p.101.

<sup>98</sup> Chapter 2, pp.49-54.

<sup>99</sup> Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.249-50. E.g., NLS, MS16605 f.53, Sheriff Archibald Campbell to Milton, 16 August 1745, Inveraray 'My wife begs to be rememberd to my Lady & the young Ladies, and bids me tell you She longs to touch some of your money at Cribbage.' In 1747 his wife hoped Milton would be playing cribbage at Inveraray that summer, MS16641 f.140, as above, February 1747; MS16697 f.63, Hary Barclay to Milton, 28 March 1757, 'I cannot think it woud cost Miss Betty so much trouble to let me know How you all Do, Than to Play a whole evening at Cribbage with a very bad Partner'; 'Dorothea Primrose saluted Lord Milton with Love She and Cribbage wait with impatience for his Lops arrival at Salton', MS 16722 f.78, Lady Dorothea Primrose to Milton at Brunstane, June 1761. 'Sometimes we take a game at piquet', NAS, GD18/5474/2, Jackie Clerk to John Clerk, 12 March 1751, Finlaystone.

<sup>100</sup> NLS, MS16627 f.262, Lady Ancram was Lady Caroline D'Arcy, daughter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Holderness.

<sup>101</sup> NLS, MS16746 f.188, to Mrs Hepburn of Monkridge at Salton, n.d. n. p.

<sup>102</sup> Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (Harmondsworth, 1980), p.193.

<sup>103</sup> Whyman, *Sociability and Power*, p.95.

The dominance of male homosocial drinking habits ought also not to be ignored. Ramsay of Ochertyre believed that ‘In consequence of this fondness for the bottle, the company of the ladies was greatly neglected by the gentlemen. Even in Edinburgh, where softer manners might have been expected, the men of the last generation spent their evenings abroad, without thinking how their wives and families were entertained at home.’<sup>104</sup> Even when men and women supped together, practice dictated that the men would remain in the dining room whilst the ladies withdrew to the drawing room where they would be rejoined later by the gentlemen. One of the few references to this practice is in a story related by Milton’s associate John Watson, of how ‘Mr H:[ary] B:[arclay] of C.[ollarney] The favourite of the Ladys, and [...] now turned a Drunkard,’ had, with some friends, been distracted on his way to join the ladies by ‘another bottle of wine, which turned out to be two’, then five more. That Watson spun such a tale in the hope that it would ‘make your Lop and the Ladies laugh a little’<sup>105</sup> may suggest such an occurrence to have been less common than might be supposed, or it may be that it was noteworthy merely because of the individual involved, but tales such as this are a reminder of the freedom of men to dictate their own social rules in a way which was denied to women.<sup>106</sup> Behaviour depended on context: the Duke of Hamilton, husband of Elizabeth Gunning, was reported to be ‘very debauched in bad women’s company; but amongst ladies he was one of the politest and best-behaved men in Great Britain.’<sup>107</sup>

It is similarly important not to over-emphasise the frequency of company, particularly in the country. Women’s experiences of domestic sociability could differ immensely, and were mediated to a large extent through factors like individual family culture and geographical location. For some women, the country house could be little short of a prison. Jean Stewart, Lady Tillicoultry wrote to Sir Duncan Dalrymple, not without bitterness:

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<sup>104</sup> Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, p.77. Somerville believed drunkenness and subsequent ‘courseness of thought and language’ to have ‘made a wider separation in domestic intercourse between the sexes’, *My Own Life and Times*, p.374.

<sup>105</sup> NLS, MS16702 f.198, John Watson to Milton, 11 October 1757, Edr. Watson was a Writer to the Signet.

<sup>106</sup> For drinking practices in eighteenth-century Edinburgh, see Billy Kay and Cailean Maclean, *Knee Deep in Claret: A Celebration of Wine and Scotland* (Skye, 1994; 1st edn. 1983), chs.7-9.

<sup>107</sup> John Macdonald, *Memoirs of an Eighteenth-Century Footman*, with an introduction by John Beresford (London, 1927; 1<sup>st</sup> published 1790), p.58.



I suppose you will doe as Sir Robert has done att present carry your wife to the Mansion house of North Berwicke and leave your self in the Gay world att large, but don't imagine I am quite confined here Knight, no I am only Prisoner att large, and have libertie for severale miles round Edenburgh only excepted nor is access denied to travellers or any strayed people to this Castle.

My present amusements are very innocent, Draying a winter Landshep of the fields or feeding poor little birds, who take shelter under my windows, Varietie is delightful Sir Duncan the other day surrounded by a croude of Beaux, now of birds.<sup>108</sup>

She portrayed marriage as creating a potentially restrictive situation for women.

Similarly, Margaret Fletcher discovered that the form of domestic heterosociability with which she had grown up, although probably standard amongst the political gentry families of Edinburgh, was not universal, particularly in parts of Scotland further removed from the capital. In 1750, shortly after her marriage, she accompanied her husband John Grant to his father's estate of Easter Elchies in Speyside, from where Grant set out to perform his duties with the Circuit Court.

There she found a very different kind of social life:

As for Cumpany we have been so lucky as not to be trubled with maney since we cam & those wer people who neither require much Drunk nor attendance most of our Females in this nighbourhood are I understand not in a way of travelling & aney of the Gentlemen who have Business with Mr: Grant meets him once a week at Elgin;

Provisions of all kinds are extreemly cheap here & wines at half price however the Captain generaly administers Punch & my Husband is at liberty to drink what he chuses;<sup>109</sup>

Whilst presenting a brave face to her father, she evidently felt the lack of female company: even the social life which she had come to expect male business contacts to provide was removed from a domestic to a 'public' yet conversely exclusive, homosocial setting. Her reference to punch suggests that an exclusively male drinking culture prevailed, as opposed to that which to she had been accustomed in

<sup>108</sup> NAS, GD110/937/6, to Sir Duncan Dalrymple, Dela[coultrie], 18 December 1742. Jean was the daughter of William Calderwood of Polton, hence the sister-in-law of Margaret Steuart Calderwood. James Balfour Paul (ed.) *The Scots Peerage* (Edinburgh, 1905), vol.2, p.296.

<sup>109</sup> NLS, MS16516 f.269, Margaret Grant to Milton in Edinburgh (Inveraray crossed out), 18 August 1750, Elchies.

mixed company at home.<sup>110</sup> Additionally, her marriage had confirmed her social status as a member of the provincial gentry, removed from the more elevated circles in which she had been brought up. Two years later she still had to resign herself to the fact that ‘we had very fine folks in our neighbourhood Lord & Lady Hoptoun & Lord & Lady Finlater but thanks to the bad roads they did not come here.’<sup>111</sup> Whereas such high-ranking couples may well have gone out of their way to pay a visit to Lord Milton, this was a social anomaly due to his political seniority, and they would not have been expected to call on someone of her rank.<sup>112</sup>

### ‘Both useful and amusing’: Urban Sociability and Public Social Spaces

Jean Stewart’s isolation was not permanent, however, and in another letter describing the quieter country life she also anticipated going to Edinburgh, where she would ‘have plenty of Company, Noise and Nonsense, Beaux and Balls.’<sup>113</sup> Repeatedly, eighteenth-century writers encouraging polite sociability emphasised the urban setting, with its purpose-built crucibles for the formation of polite society through restricted public socialising.<sup>114</sup> The status of towns as centres of the consumer revolution was extrapolated to include the consumption of conversation and ideas, and with it, the role of women as consumers therein. Amusements had a social purpose which went beyond mere entertainment: attendance at the appropriate gatherings indicated not just taste, but social standing. Most ‘public’ social events were in fact highly exclusive, participation dependent upon high rank whilst providing a platform on which to strengthen that position. When Robert Adam departed on his Grand Tour he advised his sisters that ‘As diversions cannot [bu]t be both useful & amusing I insist you decline none of them.’<sup>115</sup> Admitting that they

<sup>110</sup> For the popularity of homosocial male punch drinking, see Stana Nenadic, ‘Middle-Rank Consumers and Domestic Culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow 1720-1840’, *P&P*, 145 (1994), pp.147-150; Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, p.78.

<sup>111</sup> NLS, MS16516 f.183, Margaret Grant to Lady Milton, 29 August 1752. This time she added, ‘I have been so hurrayd with putting my house in order & receiving the welcome of our troublesam Nighbours that I have never had an moment to my Self tho we have been here almost a fourtnight’.

<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, this may have been political, the Earl of Findlater being a ‘well-known anti-Argyll’ figure. Alexander Murdoch, *The People Above: Politics and Administration in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1980), p.38. Argyll and Milton were out of favour with the ministry at this time. See Chapter 6, p.213, n.121.

<sup>113</sup> NAS, GD110/937/10, to [Sir Hew Dalrymple], n.d., prob. 1742.

<sup>114</sup> Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), pp.36-9.

<sup>115</sup> NAS, GD18/4746, to Nelly Adam in the Canongate, [?October 1754, London].

provided an opportunity for enjoyment, he was nevertheless conscious of the importance of his sisters' participation in polite society as part of his drive for status.

In Scotland, Edinburgh was the undisputed centre of urban life;<sup>116</sup> home, until recently, to the parliament, and thereafter to the courts which in many ways took its place. Although, as has been seen, the neo-classical New Town was an ideal yet to be made reality throughout the period covered by this study,<sup>117</sup> its inhabitants keenly embraced the social aspects of the urban renaissance. Edinburgh's social season was concurrent with the sitting of the Court of Session, running from November to August.<sup>118</sup> The focus was on the winter season, after which families headed home to their estates: 'the throng of our Diversions here seems to be now over,' noted Lord Belhaven in April 1758, 'and people are preparing to goe to ye countrey if ye weather would sett in warm.'<sup>119</sup> These seasonal patterns helped to ensure a greater mix of society, saving leisured elite lifestyles from 'the endemic threat of becoming intolerably boring'.<sup>120</sup> But summer did not necessarily bring a drought of urban entertainment. This is how the teenage Elizabeth Fletcher (whose Chelsea schooling had exposed her to such metropolitan amusements as Vauxhall gardens<sup>121</sup>) described to her brother the supposedly quiet social life of Edinburgh in July 1746:

the town is very empty at present Colonel Leese regiment keeps it alive it helps assemblys & plays thers two plays every week & the

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<sup>116</sup> Although other towns participated in this new urban culture, Edinburgh was recognised as predominant, and this is reflected in the sources. Carlyle reported fortnightly assemblies, but few dinners or concerts, in Glasgow in the winters of 1743-4 and 1744-5, *Autobiography*, pp.83-4. By 1753, General Wolfe found plays, concerts and balls in Glasgow, see Graham, *Social Life*, vol.1, p.142. At this time, Edinburgh had more than twice the population of Glasgow, Aberdeen being half as small again, Richard B. Sher and Andrew Hook, 'Introduction: Glasgow and the Enlightenment', in Andrew Hook and Richard B. Sher (eds.), *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (East Linton, 1995), p.2. Bob Harris found little evidence for the institutions of polite sociability in Dundee or Montrose prior to the last third of the eighteenth century, see Bob Harris, 'Towns, Improvement and Cultural Change in Georgian Scotland: The Evidence of the Angus Burghs, c.1760-1820', *Urban History*, 33:2 (2006), pp.202-3. For brief descriptions of the development of aspects of polite society in Aberdeen, see E. Patricia Dennison, Anne T. Simpson and Grant G. Simpson, 'The Growth of Two Towns', in E. Patricia Dennison, David Ditchburn and Michael Lynch (eds.), *Aberdeen Before 1800: A New History* (East Linton, 2002), p.40; Shona Vance, 'Schooling the People', in *ibid.*, p.321; Murray G. H. Pittock, 'Contrasting Cultures: Town and Country', *ibid.*, pp.369-71.

<sup>117</sup> See Chapter 1, pp.9-10.

<sup>118</sup> Jenny Burchell, *Polite or Commercial Concerts? Concert Management and Orchestral Repertoire in Edinburgh, Bath, Oxford, Manchester, and Newcastle, 1730-1799* (New York and London, 1996), p.9.

<sup>119</sup> NLS, MS16705 f.207, Belhaven to ?Andrew Fletcher, 4 April 1758, Edr.

<sup>120</sup> Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p.142.

<sup>121</sup> NLS, MS16601 f.68, John Maule to Milton, 2 June 1744, London. He remarked she had just come from 'Fauxhall', perhaps a joke on the artificial pleasures of such places. See also Chapter 2, p.67.

last assembly is to be on thursday Lady Ancrim [sic] has a drawing room every Wednesday so the twon [sic] is tolerable gay tho few company in it [...] the Meadow is vastly frequented in fine weather<sup>122</sup>

Here then, were assemblies, plays, outdoor promenades and a ready supply of men in military uniform: the essential ingredients not only to maintain a lively social atmosphere for young girls like Betty and her sisters, but also to create a sense of Edinburgh as a centre of politeness. Her comments, like David Fordyce's efforts to persuade girls away from the 'false' entertainments of the town to the 'natural' pleasures of the country,<sup>123</sup> suggest that by the 1740s, young women of the Scottish elite simply expected such entertainments to form a part of their existence. In 1760 Betty's sister Mally wrote to their father pointing out that she had been 'so much in the country these four years and there deprivd the society of all females', noting that 'the Envious and Malicious [...] Are Often employd in Giveing bad Reasons for those Who lifes in a Way of Life from others of thy<sup>f</sup> Age and Station', and arguing that 'the Desire of My being a Little More in the Gay World is Not proceeding from Love of Entertainment But it is in Justice to My Self. And the desire I have of being thought Worthy the Name I bear'.<sup>124</sup> Absence from town had connotations of disgrace for young women,<sup>125</sup> but by this time Mally was thirty-four years old, her parents' last unmarried daughter, and thus the main purpose of the financial investment that was required to maintain a daughter in town was of little relevance to her.

Often described in the military metaphors so popular in this period, young women's participation in public urban sociability was dictated by parents' desire to find their daughters a suitable husband. Lord Belhaven described the social situation in Edinburgh in 1748 to Betty's brother Andrew as follows:

As to what you call our Ed:r Campaign, the Assemblies here have hitherto been so very thin, that one may justly say (in your own Dialect) The fair sex have not as yett taken ye field in earnest, Butt

<sup>122</sup> NLS, MS16513 f.193, Elizabeth Fletcher to 'brother', 15 July 1746.

<sup>123</sup> Fordyce, *Dialogues*, vol.1, p.4.

<sup>124</sup> NLS, MS16522 f.134, 22 January 1760, n.p.

<sup>125</sup> For similar arguments, see *Chronicles of the Atholl and Tullibardine Families*, vol.3, p.349, Lady Jean to Duke James, 23 December 1746, Edinburgh, which refers to 'the Bad Look of our sudden Departure, just as if we had stole something, when your Grace promised we was to be in Edinb<sup>f</sup> every winter'.

seem still to be in closs quarters noe doubt preparing implements of war for some vigourous attack<sup>126</sup>

Once that winter's 'campaign' had got underway, he reported that 'Miss Mally F\_\_\_\_r danced with Mr Campbell younger of Calder, I don't think that she points her artilery amiss.'<sup>127</sup> Whilst young women probably enjoyed less autonomy in these matters than such metaphors suggest, and whilst daughters were in theory heavily protected and chaperoned, there is some evidence that urban sociability afforded greater opportunities for unrestricted socialising for young girls. Margaret Calderwood's comment that in Catholic countries, 'There is no such thing as girls running about giddy at their own hand, as they are never allowed to go to publick places, unless under their parents' eye, or somebody that has the charge of them,'<sup>128</sup> suggests that she had somewhere experienced the opposite. The very fact that Mary Adam felt the need to remind her daughters from Moffat in 1753, 'I fore gote to tel al you three young folks before I left the towne not to go with any young gentelmen unless you had some married Lady to escort you, young folks carectour is verey soon hurt', indicates real fears that they would do just that.<sup>129</sup>

Her fears are supported by the following piece of doggerel, attributed to the English artist Paul Sandby, describing an illicit visit to a concert by three of Mary Adam's daughters:

The sick p\_\_\_\_r sends his comp's  
 To three ungracious giddy romps.  
 He hoped that Susy, Bets and Nelly  
 For going o'er their mother's belly  
 To St Cecilia in such weather  
 Have penance all endured together.  
 He hopes that Sue was handed out  
 By sixty limping with the gout,  
 That Betsy couldn't hear the singer  
 Because a Fop did squeeze her finger  
 That Nell (pray Heaven it mayn't dispatch her)  
 Received not one kind glance from \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yet hopes no headache, prinkle, cholick,

<sup>126</sup> NLS, MS16659 f.200, Belhaven to Andrew Fletcher, 5 December 1748, Edr.

<sup>127</sup> NLS, MS16659 f.204, Belhaven to Andrew Fletcher, 17 December 1748, Edr.

<sup>128</sup> Margaret Steuart Calderwood, 'A Journey in England, Holland, and the Low Countries' (1756), in *Coltness Collections*, 1608-1840, Maitland Club (January 1842), p.179.

<sup>129</sup> NAS, GD18/4742/1, Mary Adam to Peggy, 7 July 1753, Moffat.

Have follow'd on so rash a frolick.<sup>130</sup>

The role of such venues as stalls in the marriage market emphasised the importance of young women to polite society. From this new social climate, Isobel Grundy has argued, emerged a kind of teenage girl culture in which young women had 'become a constituency with their own standards and attitudes.'<sup>131</sup> Although difficult to discern precisely, what little evidence remains of young Scotswomen's attitudes towards the balls and assemblies they visited does indicate that participation in these events, and the chance for mixing with the opposite sex that they afforded, had become integral to the sense of what it meant to be a young gentlewoman in that society. Thus, Fanny Dunlop joked to Betty Fletcher, 'I wonder you did not go to the assembly, perhaps you Might have kill'd a peer', and reported the safe delivery of Betty's message to Miss Myreton 'Who is glad to hear She has made a conquest'.<sup>132</sup> These institutions of urban sociability boosted the opportunities afforded by reading and writing for young women's autonomous engagement with the society around them. In this period of their lives, it fulfilled a purpose and, when adequately supervised, was to be encouraged. Upon marriage, however, attendance at public places was no longer always so necessary, but women could be reluctant to part with the habits they had acquired: 'tis pittie your husband was along [in Edinburgh] for he would only be an interruption to the Galantray, which one natuerally imagens to be going on in Such a place,' wrote Ann Dalrymple to her sister-in-law. Her sister Eliza's husband, she reported, had been 'so Jealouse of his wife [...] when he heard of her gadding about to all the publick places' that he removed her from town.<sup>133</sup> If older married women could enjoy a sense of autonomy as they introduced their children to society, the morals of young wives required much closer scrutiny.

The St Cecilia's concerts were organised annually around the feast day of St Cecilia, the patron saint of music, by the Edinburgh Musical Society who held a

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<sup>130</sup> Quoted in John Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle in Edinburgh and Rome* (London, 1962), pp.100-101, attributed possibly to the English artist Paul Sandby, who was chief draughtsman of the Ordnance Survey of Scotland from 1747 to 1752, and whose brother Thomas had previously studied with William Adam. 'Introduction' to *The Art of Paul Sandby*, comp. Bruce Robertson, (New Haven, 1985), p.9.

<sup>131</sup> Isobel Grundy, 'Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her Daughter: The Changing Use of Manuscripts', in George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker (eds.), *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800* (Cambridge, 2002), p.186

<sup>132</sup> NLS, MS16687 f.108, Fanny Dunlop to Betty Fletcher, 22 May 1754, Gogar.

<sup>133</sup> NAS, GD110/1082/3, Ann Dalrymple to Lady Dalrymple, 7 August 1744, Barginay.

number of other 'Ladys Consorts' predominantly during the winter season.<sup>134</sup> The programme usually consisted of one of Handel's oratorios, which combined the entertainment of the rousing music of Britain's then favourite composer, with the moral propriety of the religious text.<sup>135</sup> Yet, impeded by the Society's financial resources, these concerts were held only four or five times a year, the core audience at the Society's weekly concerts consisting entirely of 'connoisseurs' at a time when connoisseurship was an almost exclusively masculine attribute. Women had other opportunities to hear music, however, in pleasure gardens or at the theatre, the very existence of which was justified by the advertisement of plays as 'concerts',<sup>136</sup> and it was an essential part of any social event which included dancing.

As Betty Fletcher mentioned, promenading was a popular past-time.<sup>137</sup> Public walks, like most venues of sociability, had a pronounced performative element, drawing attention to women's clothes, language, posture and manners, and the very way that they walked.<sup>138</sup> It was, however, in the profusion of balls and assemblies that women ranked foremost as participants in urban social life. The assembly to which the Countess of Panmure referred in the quotation at the start of this chapter had become irregular, but in 1746 it was reconstituted by Gavin Hamilton, bookseller and treasurer of the infirmary, and James Stirling, a merchant and treasurer of the charity workhouse. Although founded by men, who were to oversee most aspects of its management,<sup>139</sup> the Assembly's minutes stated 'That all Dancing in the Assembly Hall and every thing relating thereto Shall be under the Inspection and Management of Ladies Directresses.'<sup>140</sup> Operating on a rota system, the original five were the Countesses of Leven, Glencairn and Hopetoun; Lady

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<sup>134</sup> Macleod, 'Edinburgh Musical Society', pp.70-1, 73, 81, 121, 125.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p.129. Melton noted the same use of morality amongst enlightened defenders of the stage, *Rise of the Public*, p.165.

<sup>136</sup> Thomas Somerville, *My Own Life and Times 1741-1814*, with an Introduction by Richard B. Sher, (Bristol, 1996; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1861), pp.113-4.

<sup>137</sup> Mark Girouard, *The English Town* (London and New Haven, 1990), p.145.

<sup>138</sup> Carter, *Emergence of Polite Society*, p.38. See also Peter Borsay, 'The Rise of the Promenade: The Social and Cultural Use of Space in the English Provincial Town c.1660-1800', *BJECS*, 9 (1986), pp.125-140, esp. pp.130-1.

<sup>139</sup> Hamilton and Stirling met with their colleagues in such archetypal masculine environments as 'John Walker's Vintner.' 'Minutes of the Edinburgh Assembly 1746-1776', Edinburgh Central Library, MS YML 28A, p.16. Lady Directresses, when invited to take up their posts, or in the event of any issue concerning them, were waited upon at home.

<sup>140</sup> 'Minutes of the Edinburgh Assembly', p.5.

Milton and Lady Minto.<sup>141</sup> For the first time in Edinburgh, as in towns across Britain, women were transposing their private, domestic role as hostesses, into an official, public setting where they presided over a company consisting of both women and men.<sup>142</sup> This, the social realm, was that over which women had come to be perceived as the natural rulers, the physical manifestation of Hume's 'Empire of Conversation.'<sup>143</sup> Although Oliver Goldsmith portrayed the Edinburgh Assembly in 1753 as a site of dour gender apartheid,<sup>144</sup> it was a popular entertainment, Lord Belhaven informing Andrew Fletcher in April 1748 that the assembly 'was verry numerous, there was eight setts of dancers.'<sup>145</sup> Figures from 1746 show that 335 people attended the first assembly of the summer season; the lowest attendance was fifty nine.<sup>146</sup>

The idea behind the reconstitution of the assembly was that 'so good a Design for the improvement and intertainment of the Nobility and Gentry of both sexes and such a Considerable Fund of Charity for the Poor should not be lost.'<sup>147</sup> It thus promoted a veritable holy trinity of eighteenth-century values (improvement, entertainment and charity), all associated, if not exclusively, with women. Through dancing and mixed-gender conversation, young men and women would be schooled in the necessities of politeness in an enjoyable manner.<sup>148</sup> The assembly-rooms were governed by a set of regulations displayed on the walls, ensuring appropriate dress and behaviour, but most importantly promoting the assembly as an institution of order and regulation. Like all so-called public venues of sociability, it prided itself

<sup>141</sup> James H. Jamieson, 'Social Assemblies of the Eighteenth Century', *BOEC*, 19 (1933), p.42. NLS, MS16872 f.163, 'Accompt of Moneys Received & paid out by Hugh Clerk Junior Merchant in Edinburgh, as Treasurer to the Edinburgh Assembly' records six assemblies taking place from 23<sup>rd</sup> May to 17 July 1746, two presided over by the Countess of Leven, two by Lady Milton, one by Lady Minto and one by Lady Ancrum.

<sup>142</sup> The notion of formal male management with informal female involvement was common in English provincial assemblies too, although stewardship roles tended to be performed by men. Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850* (Harlow, 1998), pp.278-9.

<sup>143</sup> See p.119.

<sup>144</sup> *The Collected Letters of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Katherine C. Balderston, (Cambridge, 1928), pp.10-11.

<sup>145</sup> NLS, MS16659 f.191, Belhaven to Andrew Fletcher, 16 April 1748, Edr. He mentioned amongst those present Lady Hopetoun, Lord Northesk, Lady Ann Lesly, and the Earl of Wigtoun. Early on in the next season, he reported three sets. MS16659 f.204, Belhaven to Andrew Fletcher, 17 December 1748, Edr.

<sup>146</sup> NLS, MS16872 f.163, 'Accompt of Moneys Received & paid out', 1746.

<sup>147</sup> 'Minutes of the Edinburgh Assembly,' Preamble.

<sup>148</sup> Lady Mary Wortley Montagu believed assembly rooms provided 'a kind of public education, which I have always thought as necessary for girls as boys.' Quoted in Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.227.



on its exclusivity on the grounds of both behaviour and rank,<sup>149</sup> its commitment to the privileges of rank also expressed through its charitable aspirations. The profits of the assembly were split into three: one third to the infirmary, one third to the workhouse, and one third was divided amongst the Lady Directresses to distribute to charitable causes of their choosing. The badge worn by the presiding Lady Directress as a marker of her formal status depicted on one side a pelican on her nest feeding her young, with the motto 'Charity', whilst on the reverse was the figure of a woman representing charity leaning upon a shield of the arms of the town of Edinburgh, with a child leaning against her knee, and the word 'Assembly'.<sup>150</sup> Thus, charity was represented as a female virtue, and more importantly, institutionalised in such a way that recognised and cemented both the relationship of elite women to charitable giving and that of female public socialising to the wider social good.

#### 'Schools of lewdness'? Theatre and Morality

Aspects of polite sociability could nevertheless remain contested territory, as the uproar over the Reverend John Home's tragedy *Douglas*, staged in Edinburgh in December 1756, demonstrates.<sup>151</sup> This is how Janet Clerk recorded the controversy in her spiritual diary:

On the 10<sup>th</sup> we had a solemn humiliation day by order of the king throahout this kingdom [...] sure never were there more need for humiliation storms scarcitie of bread our great losses abroad cofusion amongst our great folks and to crown all our young ministers of the gospel one writing a play others going to see it which follies has occasion much uneasie debates and strife with contention and abusive writing amongst us O infinite wise powerful good god put a stope to these Events and Strengthen the hands of the other ministers who are endeavouring to hinder these abuses and give them and other young ministers that has not gone into these follies to be the more earnest and careful to discharge there dutie aright.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>149</sup> The rules are printed in Jamieson, 'Social Assemblies', p.51. Ramsay of Octhtertyre related tales of the Countess of Panmure barring her nephew, the Earl of Cassills, for being drunk, and informing a brewer's daughter that she was not 'entitles to attend assemblies', *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, p.62, n.1.

<sup>150</sup> 'Minutes of the Edinburgh Assembly', p.11.

<sup>151</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.325. See the collection of 'Home's Douglas Pamphlets', NLS, H.1.a.15. See also John Robertson, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue* (Edinburgh, 1985); Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1985). *Douglas* was staged in London in March 1757.

<sup>152</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/530, 13 February 1757, Edr.

In her mind, Home's authorship of the play, Alexander Carlyle's attendance, and the resultant pamphlet war, ranked above food shortages caused by high grain prices<sup>153</sup> and the losses of and political crises caused by the Seven Years War.<sup>154</sup> As she suggested, there were many who disapproved of a church minister such as Home turning playwright, and Alexander Carlyle became the Kirk's scapegoat for the affair, charged by the Presbytery of Dalkeith with associating with actors, attending the rehearsal, and 'appearing openly' in the theatre.<sup>155</sup> *Douglas* exposed a fault-line running through Scottish society, between those who regarded the theatre as an instrument for the spread of politeness, and others, dismissed by Home as 'those Goths & Vandals, who think themselves obliged to persecute an Ecclesiastical Bard',<sup>156</sup> who like Janet Clerk retained a closer allegiance to the church of the Covenanters.<sup>157</sup>

Carlyle recorded that alongside the author himself, it was 'some female friends of his having heated me by their upbraidings' which convinced him to attend his friend's play.<sup>158</sup> Support for *Douglas* became associated with the ladies of the fashionable elite, its sentimental reception amongst the 'misses' mocked by John Maclaurin (son of the mathematician Colin Maclaurin, and later Lord Dreghorn) in the form of Miss Weepwell, Miss Pity, Miss Sob and Miss Blubber in a short satirical play, *The Philosopher's Opera*.<sup>159</sup> A year later, William Robertson reminded the real-life Peggy Hepburn of the tears she had shed at the play's reading,<sup>160</sup> whilst another minister, George Ridpath, recorded the 'naturalness' and

<sup>153</sup> For high grain prices in 1756-7, see A. J. S. Gibson and T. C. Smout, *Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.138-141, figs.4.1-4.4. I am grateful to Philipp Roessner for discussing this with me.

<sup>154</sup> For political resignations caused by war with France, and the creation of an unstable ministry in late 1756, see Jeremy Black, *Parliament and Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2004), p.94.

<sup>155</sup> The charges are quoted in Sher, *Church and University*, p.82.

<sup>156</sup> NLS, MS16695 f.71, Home to Milton, 1 March 1756, Athelstanford.

<sup>157</sup> Her husband, however, had been active in the campaign for an Edinburgh theatre in 1737, even arguing that it taught the young ministers delivery skills. R. A. Houston, *Social Change in the Age of Enlightenment: Edinburgh 1660-1760*, (Oxford, 1994), p.208.

<sup>158</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.330.

<sup>159</sup> Anon. [John Maclaurin] *The Philosopher's Opera* ([Edinburgh], 1757), p.18. See Buchan, *Capital of the Mind*, p.112, and Lionel Alexander Ritchie, 'MacLaurin, John, Lord Dreghorn (1734-1796)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17645>, accessed 27 Jan 2006].

<sup>160</sup> 'I dare say you will not shed so many tears at the action of the one [*Agis*] as you did at the reading of the other [*Douglas*].' NLS, MS16707 f.93, William Robertson to [?Margaret Hepburn], 22

‘uncommon degree of spirit’ with which Home’s future wife gave a private performance of an extract from the play, accompanied by Ridpath’s own wife-to-be.<sup>161</sup> Written partially in response to the inequality between Scotland and England in the militia law, and performed as the parliamentary debates on Scotland’s right to raise militias grew to a climax, declarations of support for the play enabled elite women to signal their support for not just this patriotic cause, but for the notion that polite culture, in this case, the theatre, and women’s involvement therein was inherently improving for society.

Women thus formed a key part of Home’s theatrical audience. Some time around 1754, he decided to:

communicate [*Douglas*] to his friends, whereof there were some of the soundest judgment, and of the most exquisite taste. Of the first sort there were Drs. Blair and Robertson, and Mr. Hew Bannatine; and of the second, Patrick Lord Elibank, the Hepburn family, and some young ladies with whom he and I had become intimate - viz., Miss Hepburn of Monkkriggs, Lord Milton’s niece; Miss Eliza Fletcher, afterwards Mrs Wedderburn, his youngest daughter; and Miss Campbell of Carrick, at that time their great friend.<sup>162</sup>

Carlyle recorded that it reached ‘the perfection with which it was acted’ through ‘the corrections of all the friends I have mentioned.’<sup>163</sup> Thus, even before it was staged, Home had used Peggy Hepburn and her cousin Betty Fletcher to test *Douglas*’ impact on young women. With the exception of Elibank, excluded, perhaps, by his Jacobitism, the split between those of ‘judgment’ and those of ‘taste’ is along gendered lines, reminiscent of the way in which David Hume had anticipated a gendered reaction to his historical writing, between male judgement and female emotional empathy.<sup>164</sup> Although Carlyle was writing towards the end of his life,

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February 1758, London. Mally Fletcher attended *Agis*, in Edinburgh, ‘and had the pleasure to See it very Well Received. tho the House not so ful as We Wish’d.’ NLS, MS16520 f.141, Mally Fletcher to Lady Milton, n.d. [1758].

<sup>161</sup> This took place at Eccles Manse on Tuesday, 17 October 1758, *Diary of George Ridpath*, p.208.

<sup>162</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.244. Patrick, Lord Elibank was known for his cultured sensibilities in addition to his Jacobite sympathies, which were tolerated by his Whig friends. It was the singing of the old ballad ‘Gill Morrice’ by the wife of one of the Hepburns of Keith which Carlyle believed inspired Home to write the play, *Autobiography*, p.243. For Jean Campbell of Carrick, see Chapter.3 n.39.

<sup>163</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.244.

<sup>164</sup> Mark Salber Phillips, “‘If Mrs Mure be not sorry for poor King Charles’: History, the Novel, and the Sentimental Reader”, *HWJ*, 43, (1997), p.111. See Chapter 3, p.100.

possibly affected by a later-eighteenth-century sentimentality, the inclusion of young women as arbiters of taste is indicative of the importance of genteel women to Home's prospective theatrical audience.

The *Douglas* controversy was not primarily a gender issue, but it created an opportunity for criticisms of women's attendance at plays less wholesome than Home's. Part of the attraction of theatrical entertainment was no doubt its slightly risqué edge: one can almost hear the relish in Marion Maxwell's voice as she wrote to her cousin Marion Lauder that 'we have got the famous Madam Violante to Glasgow who Certainly is a great Curiosity tho ane imodest Slut as ever was.'<sup>165</sup> The appeal of Madame Violante, who performed acrobatics, high-wire and trapeze, was of course in the very fact of her transgression of gender norms. John Witherspoon railed against 'ladies who frequently attend the stage, who if they were but once entertained with the same images in a private family, with which they are often presented there, would rise with indignation, and reckon their reputation ruined if ever they should return'. He continued, 'No woman of reputation (as it is called in the world) much less of piety, who has been ten times in a play-house, durst repeat in company all that she has heard there. With what consistency they gravely return to the same schools of lewdness, they themselves best know.'<sup>166</sup> As far as Witherspoon was concerned, women were regularly attending plays which he considered debauched, although, if unintentionally, he acknowledged that this did not seem to be affecting their own manners or the standards of politeness they expected from others.

Whilst most of those who considered themselves genteel would condone elite women's appearance at the theatre as audience, they could not be countenanced as performers. In December 1759, the Honourable Mrs Ann Shirley wrote to Lord Milton of her 'very great & singular Distress';<sup>167</sup> her daughter, also Ann (who, as her mother remarked, was closely related to no less than thirty of the nobility<sup>168</sup>) having

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<sup>165</sup> NAS, GD113/5/66B/4, Marion Maxwell to Marion Lauder, n.d. (fragment). For Madame Violante, see Donald Campbell, *Playing for Scotland: A History of the Scottish Stage, 1715-1965* (Edinburgh, 1996), p.2; Alasdair Cameron, 'Theatre in Scotland 1660-1800', in Andrew Hook (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature, Volume 2, 1660-1800* (Aberdeen, 1987), p.106. In 1737, Alexander Carlyle attended her dancing school in Edinburgh, *Autobiography*, p.54.

<sup>166</sup> John Witherspoon, *A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage* (Glasgow, 1757), p.63.

<sup>167</sup> NLS, MS16712 f.30, Milton to the Hon Mrs Shirley, (Scroll) December 1759.

<sup>168</sup> NLS, MS16712 f.32, Ann Shirley to Milton, 14 December 1759, London. This was not the worst incidence of unfortunate behaviour amongst Mrs Shirley's children: the following month, after several

run away from her family in London to join the theatre in Edinburgh. Milton, ever the pragmatist, regarded the situation more calmly than the girl's frantic mother. Aware that, as the manager of the playhouse had told him, 'if he should receive a virtuous Lady of such high Rank into his Company of Actors on the Stage he would very soon have his playhouse shut up,' he knew there was little real danger to the girl's morals. He went to see her, reporting back that 'her cheif Amusement is to read plays & act parts of them by her self. She lives very retired & frugal.' Milton clearly saw himself here in a reconciliatory role:

She then told me in a very cool but determined manner that She had considered that matter fully & was resolved upon it [ ...]

Upon so short an acquaintance I did not think it would be of any use to persist in that Argument but turned the Discourse on her Great Relations in England – particularly Generall Townshend whom I had the happiness to be acquainted with & for whom I had the highest Esteem. This led on a Conversation about the News & realy this was very entertaining. I then proposed that my wife & my Daughter should wait upon her & that she should return their visit.<sup>169</sup>

The placatory tone is unmissable, combining his attempt to emphasise the normality of what was admittedly an abnormal situation, with the vital message that he was happy to let his wife and daughter exchange visits with the girl, demonstrating that he did not regard her actions as serious enough to provoke pariah status. Despite Ann's threats to join a company of strolling players in York, the situation was effectively defused. This was almost as much an issue of rank as of gender: a decade earlier George Skene had written to Milton to thank 'Lady Milton and Your Daughters for the Countenance They were pleased to shew to a Cusin of mine Robert Simson who contrary to the inclination of all his Friends had entered player in Drury Lane playhouse a good Many Years ago and who came to Edr the

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years of unpleasant behaviour including the incarceration of his wife, her eldest son committed a premeditated murder for which he was hanged. Richard Davenport-Hines, 'Shirley, Laurence, fourth Earl Ferrers (1720-1760)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25432>, accessed 29 April 2005]. Previously, he had mistreated his wife, see Elizabeth Foyster, 'At the Limits of Liberty: Married Women and Confinement in Eighteenth-Century England', in *Continuity and Change*, 17:1 (2002), pp.43-4. The family also had close links with the developing Methodist community, which may explain the intensity of her horror at her daughter's behaviour, see Edwin Welch, 'Shirley, Walter (1725-1786)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25438>, accessed 29 April 2005].

<sup>169</sup> NLS, MS16712 f.31, Milton to Mrs Shirley, scroll, December 1759.

Other Year & had a benefit there.’<sup>170</sup> Not only do the Fletcher women seem to have been unaffected by concerns that it was improper for them to be associated with such people; on the contrary, they were probably quite aware that their presence was a socially legitimising one.

By the 1750s, according to one pamphleteer, the inhabitants of Edinburgh had the opportunity to see plays three times a week,<sup>171</sup> and ladies were able to influence which plays were performed.<sup>172</sup> The *Douglas* affair, which was decided in Carlyle’s favour at the General Assembly of that year, was more or less the last gasp of anti-theatrical sentiment in Edinburgh.<sup>173</sup> Somerville attributed this to the contemporaneous appearance of ‘performers, of both sexes, of merit far superior to any who had before appeared’ which removed the connection with scandal<sup>174</sup> By helping to form an audience, women were becoming part of a shared public with those who had seen the same play, in the same theatre and elsewhere. Theatrical attendance assumed a participation in a dialogue which in turn worked towards the creation of a sense of a public as plays were discussed and the issues they highlighted given cultural prominence.<sup>175</sup>

Conventionally, it is argued that touring theatre companies spread ideas about ‘polite dress and manners’ from London.<sup>176</sup> Yet whilst there is no doubt much truth in this, the impact of touring companies was probably more complex. Even if apocryphal, Ramsay of Ochtertyre’s anecdote about a young country girl who attended what a more sophisticated friend called ‘smutty’ plays, but was unconcerned as they spoke in ‘high English, and I did not understand it’,<sup>177</sup> serves as a cautionary tale in this respect. When travelling in Essex, on the other hand,

<sup>170</sup> NLS, MS16676 f.100, Geo: Skene of that ilk to Milton, 26 April 1751, Skene.

<sup>171</sup> *The Usefulness of the Edinburgh Theatre seriously considered. With a proposal for rendering it more beneficial* (Edinburgh, 1757), p.6. For reviews of one summer season, see [James Boswell], *A View of the Edinburgh Theatre during the Summer Season, 1759* (Los Angeles, 1976; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1760).

<sup>172</sup> Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos*, p.171.

<sup>173</sup> Sher, *Church and University*, pp.85-6. In Dundee, however, the authorities were still against the presence of a theatre in 1784. Harris, ‘Towns, Improvement and Cultural Change’, p.205.

<sup>174</sup> Somerville, *My Own Life and Times*, pp.116-7.

<sup>175</sup> See Kathleen Wilson, ‘Pacific Modernity: Theater, Englishness and the Arts of Discovery, 1760-1800’, in Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman (eds.), *The Age of Cultural Revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820* (California and London, 2002).

<sup>176</sup> Girouard, *English Town*, p.7. The belief that it would help Scots to lean the English accent was one of Lord Glenorchy’s justifications for supporting the theatre after it was closed in 1737. Campbell, *Playing for Scotland*, pp.12, 16-17.

<sup>177</sup> Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, vol.2, p.63, n.1.

Margaret Calderwood felt able to use the theatre, with which she knew her daughter to be familiar, to describe the people she met:

Miss Dondie was a girl about eighteen, not ill-lookt, quite a cockney, she has exactly the voice of the stage, and might be made a player, had she as much sense or feeling as to enter into the spirit of her part. Peter you have often seen acted by Stamper; [...] he's just the figure of a young squire who would be married to a cast-mistress, if some good-natured person in the drama did not prevent it.<sup>178</sup>

Exposure to the accents and manners of actors from other parts of the country, and the conventions and stereotypes perpetuated in the plays they performed, created a common currency of understanding amongst audiences, not just with relation to the theatre itself, but to the culturally diverse nation in which these audiences lived.<sup>179</sup>

### Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ways in which mid-eighteenth-century Scottish gentlewomen acted out the roles demanded of them by the institutions and formulations of polite sociability. The growing popularity of tea-drinking and its accompanying rituals brought elite women to the fore in both domestic and public social settings, focusing attention on their person and their conversation, and providing new opportunities for these women to engage with society. Yet the *Spectatorial* concept (further promoted by David Hume) of women's conversation as improving was probably rare in practice, whilst the tea-tables simultaneously promoted a culture of gossip which could be deleterious to women's social standing. Similarly, whilst both women's speech and behaviour were becoming increasingly prescribed, there is evidence that individual women of secure social standing were able, at least until the 1760s, to some extent to reject or to manipulate these prescriptions. Although this was possibly dependent on social context, in doing so they do not appear to have damaged their polite status. On the contrary, they could be lauded as patriots, preserving a vernacular common-sense in the face of alien fashions. In mid-eighteenth-century Scotland, the institutions of polite culture

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<sup>178</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', p.126. For Stamper, see Boswell, *View of the Edinburgh Theatre*, passim.

<sup>179</sup> For travelling theatre companies, see Sybil Rosenfeld, *Strolling Players and Drama in the Provinces, 1660-1765* (Cambridge, 1939).

appear to have been the site of an interplay, rather than a conflict of cultures, between a refined ideal, and a reality that was often far less formal.

This chapter has argued for the importance of acknowledging the domestic as a potentially public environment in which women could demonstrate their skills in such 'polite qualifications' as singing or playing music as much as they did when they paraded the public walks and gardens, or were conveyed out in their sedan chairs to attend the balls and assemblies to which women's input was vital. Most gentlewomen could expect to participate in polite society at some stage of their lives, but the importance given to these forms of sociability in the process of finding a marriage partner ensured their prominence in the shared experience of young women in particular. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind the impediments which stood between women and autonomous social activity, mediated as it was by age, rank, marital status and geography. Male homosociability continued, its institutionalisation in clubs and societies becoming one of the hallmarks of Scottish Enlightenment society. Moreover, elements of polite sociability remained contested territory in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland, criticism of elements of theatrical entertainment particularly strong until near the end of the period in question.

Through their activities in the realm of polite sociability, genteel women were partaking in a series of communal rituals experienced by others, unseen but subconsciously acknowledged, in other towns and cities across Britain. This enabled them not only to participate visibly in the public life of their own town, but to feel part of a national public. The next chapter shall demonstrate the ways in which elite women's roles in polite sociability created a context in which they could participate directly in other areas of that public; namely, the realms of patronage and politics.



## 5. Patronage, Politics and Religion

### Introduction. 'Troubled about the Publick'?

In 1756, Margaret Steuart Calderwood wrote from Brussels of the distress felt over public affairs by a Jacobite acquaintance, Lord Bellow, an Irish peer. 'I tell him I wish I may never have the toothack till I be troubled about the publick',<sup>1</sup> she reported. The previous two chapters investigated women's engagement with the public worlds of print culture and sociability. For Habermas, these formed the 'literary' public sphere, differentiated from the 'political public sphere' by the 'factual and legal' exclusion of women and dependents.<sup>2</sup> Margaret Calderwood's protestations of lack of interest in 'the publick' might appear to support this exclusion, but the rest of her journal, allied to other activities, suggests a more complex picture. She continued that she could nevertheless 'speak as much jacobitism as [Bellow] pleases,' whilst her correspondence elsewhere exposes her as determinedly attempting to manage a campaign for her husband's election to parliament. As the next chapter shall demonstrate, she travelled abroad with a conscious sense of national identity. She may have been less interested than her friend in the affairs of state and high politics, and she may, like her Irish contemporary Letitia Bushe, have viewed aspects of politics and war as simply unworthy of her attention,<sup>3</sup> but, despite her claims, aspects of the 'publick' infused her existence.

As Lawrence Klein has demonstrated, contemporaries used 'public' to mean much more than just 'pertaining to the state';<sup>4</sup> indeed, it often referred to the arenas of sociability examined in the last chapter. Not surprisingly, Habermas' statement

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Steuart Calderwood, 'A Journey in England, Holland, and the Low Countries', (1756) in *Coltness Collections, 1608-1840*, Maitland Club, (January 1842), p.266. This was perhaps John Baron Bellew of Duleek, who died in Lille in 1770. George E. Cockayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct or Dormant*, vol.2 (London, 1912).

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Massachusetts IT, 1989; 1<sup>st</sup> published Darmstadt and Neuwied, 1962), p.56.

<sup>3</sup> S. J. Connolly, 'A Woman's Life in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Case of Letitia Bushe', *HJ*, 43:2 (2000), p.451.

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence E. Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure', *ECS*, 29:1 (1995), p.104.

has been the starting point for much debate and analysis which has sought to demonstrate that women's *de facto* exclusion from offices of state did not expand to exclude women from any involvement in public concerns,<sup>5</sup> aspects of which permeated society.<sup>6</sup> Amanda Vickery, citing women's multiple uses of the word 'publick', has argued that although women 'were obviously severely disabled when it came to institutional power, they did not lack access to the public sphere, *as they understood it*.'<sup>7</sup> How, then, did gentlewomen understand 'the public sphere' and their relation thereto? Hilda L. Smith, arguing for 'a broader and more inclusive understanding' of politics amongst seventeenth-century women than exists today, suggested that 'as with others of their era, they would have thought more about obligations, less about privileges, and little about rights when discussing politics'.<sup>8</sup> Whilst the early modern period witnessed the increasing exclusion of women from rights to office or civic duties,<sup>9</sup> Jane Rendall has pointed out that a focus on rights 'has meant the obscuring of women's broader political culture.'<sup>10</sup> Recent scholarship has examined women's involvement in various public arenas beyond those of literature and sociability examined in previous chapters. At the local level, urban historians have begun to investigate the ways in which middle-rank women were influencing aspects of urban government,<sup>11</sup> whilst women's relationship to the nation

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<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona Ó Gallchoir, and Penny Warburton (eds.), *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830* (Cambridge, 2001); Carole Pateman, 'Conclusion: Women's Writing, Women's Standing', in Hilda L. Smith (ed.), *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition* (Cambridge, 1998), p.370, in which she argued, 'Women were incorporated into the political order and not merely excluded or left in "the state of nature", but their manner of incorporation was different from that of men, and involved exclusion from major rights of citizenship and, hence, lesser standing.' Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford, 1998), p.49, note that the ambiguity of civic status was not confined to women.

<sup>6</sup> Scholars of Thomas Turner's diary have been struck by the absence of politics, but Naomi Tadmor argued that this was because the presence of politics was so all-permeating. Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), p.232.

<sup>7</sup> Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *HJ*, 36:2 (June 1993), p.412.

<sup>8</sup> Hilda L. Smith, 'Introduction: Women, Intellect and Politics: Their Intersection in Seventeenth-Century England', in idem (ed.), *Women Writers*, p.2. She argued, 'They considered local office holding, political obligations of families among the governing class, as well as voting and political rights, as constituting politics.', *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, pp.49-58.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Amanda Vickery, 'Introduction', to Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege, and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present* (Stanford, 2001), p.2.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., Rosemary Sweet and Penelope Lane (eds.), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England: On the Town* (Aldershot, 2003).

in later-eighteenth-century Britain has been explored by Linda Colley and more recently by Kathleen Wilson.<sup>12</sup> Most relevant to this thesis, however, is the work of Elaine Chalus, who has emphasised the unexceptional nature of elite women's involvement in electoral politics,<sup>13</sup> arguing for the re-integration of women into the political life of the elite through a focus on 'the personal, familial, and social aspects of politics'.<sup>14</sup> Yet in a Scottish context such work remains in its infancy.<sup>15</sup>

It is with this connection between the world of polite sociability examined in the previous chapter, personal or familial loyalties or obligations, and aspects of the 'political' in its broadest sense encompassing not just the management of local family interests but also women's relationship with the church (an undoubtedly public body subject to political control and influence) that this chapter is concerned. It starts off by examining the ways in which family expectations and local

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<sup>12</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 1992); Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 2003). Wilson also covers aspects of women's political involvement in Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c.1754-1790* (Oxford, 2005); idem, "'That Epidemical Madness': Women and Electoral Politics in the Late Eighteenth century", in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London and New York, 1997); Chalus, "'My Minerva at my Elbow": The Political Roles of Women in Eighteenth-Century England', in Stephen Taylor, Richard Connors and Clyve Jones (eds.), *Hanoverian Britain and Empire* (Woodbridge, 1998); Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics, and the Political World of Late Eighteenth-Century England', *HJ*, 43:3 (2000), pp.669-697; idem, "'To Serve My Friends": Women and Political Patronage in Eighteenth-Century England', in Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege, and Power*; Elaine Chalus and Fiona Montgomery, 'Women and Politics', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850. An Introduction* (London and New York, 2005). For other work on eighteenth-century women in politics, see Karl von den Steinen, 'The Discovery of Women in Eighteenth-Century English Political Life', in Barbara Kanner (ed.), *The Women of England from Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present* (London, 1980); Philip Hicks, 'The Roman Matron in Britain: Female Political Influence and Republican Response, ca. 1750-1800', *The Journal of Modern History*, 77 (March 2005); Ingrid H. Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760* (Woodbridge, 2002), ch.7. Anna Clark, 'Women in Eighteenth-Century British Politics', in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2005) is more concerned with later-eighteenth-century debates on women's political involvement.

<sup>14</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.5. She emphasised the need to understand the social arena as political and not just focus on where women 'made a difference.' Ibid, p.78.

<sup>15</sup> See Sue Innes and Jane Rendall, 'Women, Gender and Politics', in Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon, Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes Yeo (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp.43-50; Karl von den Steinen, 'In Search of the Antecedents of Women's Political Activism in Early Eighteenth-Century Scotland: the Daughters of Anne, Duchess of Hamilton', in Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle (eds.), *Women in Scotland c.1100- c.1750* (East Linton, 1999). Women's role in a politicised society is acknowledged in Margaret Sankey and Daniel Szechi, 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism 1716-1745', *P&P*, 173 (2001), pp.90-128. For accessible work on female Jacobites, see Maggie Craig, *Damn' Rebel Bitches: The Women of the '45*, (Edinburgh, 1997); idem, 'The Fair Sex Turns Ugly: Female Involvement in the Jacobite Rising of 1745', in Yvonne Galloway Brown and Rona Ferguson (eds.), *Twisted Sisters: Women, Crime and Deviance in Scotland Since 1400* (East Linton, 2002).

obligations created a climate in which women's involvement in patronage was expected, then considers the significance of women's social networks to female influence in public life. It then examines women's involvement in electoral politics, before looking at the 1745-6 Jacobite rising as a counter-example of women's untypical political activity. It ends with a consideration of the way that religion also helped to legitimise women's involvement in the public.

'Too weak for such a load of cares'? Family Responsibilities, Patronage and Petitioning

At the time of her marriage in 1737, Eleanor Elliot's brother Gilbert, later 3rd baronet of Minto, set out for his sister a conventional narrative of the relationship between husband as patriot, wife as domestic comforter, and the outside world of 'State' and 'business':

Tis Modesty alone your Sex endears,  
 Tis Modesty alone mankind revers,  
 Nature first plac'd you in a private sphere  
 Womens grand business is domestick care;  
 There exercise the virtuous talents givn  
 And live contented wt the boon of Heavn,

But chiefly meddle not w<sup>t</sup> State affairs  
 Woman's too weak for such a load of cares.  
 That be your Husbands task – the female mind  
 Was ne'er for business or for toil design'd  
 'Tis his the world tempestuous waves to prove  
 'Tis yours a softer humbler task – to love

'Tis his to act, 'tis yours alone to please  
 And the firm Patriot from his cares release,  
 Sooth every pain, & every toil allay  
 Seldom advise, & never disobey.<sup>16</sup>

A variant, perhaps, on the letter of advice sent by fathers to their sons as they entered overseas tertiary education, he suggested the change of status Eleanor was undergoing was fraught with temptations and dangers against which she needed to be

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<sup>16</sup> NLS, MS12816, 'Poetry, Book No.1', ff.9-10, 'To Mis Helenor Elliot upon Her Marriage, wt. John Rutherford Esqr.' (1737) (extract). She married John Rutherford of Edgerston, who died at Ticonderoga in 1758. George Francis Stewart Elliot, *The Border Elliots and the Family of Minto* (Edinburgh, 1897), p.350.

advised, and her expected role defined. His message is clear: as a wife she was to leave the business of politics and patriotic endeavour to her husband, whilst providing a loving, domestic refuge from his worldly concerns. Subordinate to her husband's orders, she was permitted occasional rights to advise him, but, vitally, not to 'meddle' (a term loaded with connotations of incompetence, intrusion and unsuitability) in high politics.

The pomposity of this poem may be attributed at least in part to Gilbert's youth (he was only fifteen) but, in this restrictive prescription, Gilbert was conforming to contemporary norms.<sup>17</sup> Supporting Hilda Smith's proposition that although 'women had a clear, widespread, and real presence in political and economic structure', 'that language was constructed as to deny both the reality and the significance of their standing', the picture he presented, however, cannot but have been at variance with his own experience.<sup>18</sup> The notion that women were not designed for business or toil ignores the many practical concerns in which women of all ranks were daily involved, from those working in the fields to those overseeing them, and from those running small businesses in the towns, to those whose purchases from such outlets were part of a household management role which could demand highly developed organisational skills. This latter role was lived out by his own mother, an efficient, practical woman, who took an avid interest in the newspapers.<sup>19</sup> As Lawrence Klein has argued, 'even when theory was against them, women in the eighteenth century had public dimensions to their lives,'<sup>20</sup> whilst for Elaine Chalus, 'the conflict between the ideal and the real constitutes the essential paradox that besets eighteenth-century women's political involvement.'<sup>21</sup>

As well as warning women away from interference in the public, conduct books reminded them of their duty to contribute towards their husband's family's interests.<sup>22</sup> The concept of the family as private is, as Sylvana Tomaselli has pointed

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<sup>17</sup> Inspired by female factionalism in 1711, Addison argued in the *Spectator* that female virtues were domestic, but if they desired, they could show 'their Zeal for the Publick' by healing internecine conflicts like the Sabine women. Hicks, 'Roman Matron', p.43.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, 'Introduction: Women, Intellect and Politics', p.9.

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter 3, p.92.

<sup>20</sup> Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction', p.102.

<sup>21</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.22.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25. The conflicting arguments about women's political roles could be used by women in different ways. Caroline Lennox used 'conventional arguments against women's political

out, not only inaccurate, but distorts any attempt to understand the roles which women have played in a number of realms.<sup>23</sup> Family and politics were intertwined in a society in which power and influence were mediated through a patronage system which sustained the social hierarchy through the maintenance of vertical social bonds, and to which family connections were of primary importance.<sup>24</sup> This ensured that even the most domestic of environments was thoroughly infused with the issues of the wider world. Whether Gilbert was consciously aware of it, his sister was inextricably bound up in her family's public role, at this time dominated by their father's position on the Bench as Lord Minto.<sup>25</sup> Nelly Rutherford left Scotland for America in 1744,<sup>26</sup> but returned after the death of her husband at Ticonderoga in 1758,<sup>27</sup> and by 1760 was complaining of the petitions and solicitations which were an unavoidable part of life for the women of political families: 'I never was in Scotland but I had Sume \_thing of this sort to Plague me and make me glad to live it and affraid to return'.<sup>28</sup> No-one, not even the brother who penned the above-quoted paean to female domesticity, would have thought it anything other than her duty to bear up to this family responsibility.

The wives, sisters and daughters of men in powerful positions were the recipients of regular petitions and patronage requests, binding them into the web of patronage and thus into both the power and the responsibility which were integral to landed status. As Frances Steuart Denham noted of her attempts to petition the Earl of Bute through his wife, 'she allwise told me that my lord never Allowd Her to

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involvement' as an excuse to limit political involvement, whilst her sister Emily used arguments about her duty as a wife 'to forward her own involvement.' Ibid, p.12.

<sup>23</sup> Sylvana Tomaselli, 'The Most Public Sphere of All: The Family', in Eger et al (eds.), *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere*, p.239. However, the rest of her article is concerned with the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft rather than developing this idea in a more general context.

<sup>24</sup> Chalus noted that the study of patronage is currently out of vogue, "'To Serve My Friends'", p.61. For an overview of its workings, see Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880* (London, 1969), pp.44-51; with reference to eighteenth-century Scotland, Alexander Murdoch, *The People Above: Politics and Administration in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1980); John Stuart Shaw, *The Management of Scottish Society: Power, Nobles, Lawyers, Edinburgh Agents and English Influences* (Edinburgh, 1983); Ronald M. Sunter, *Patronage and Politics in Scotland, 1707-1832* (Edinburgh, 1986). For the suitability of women to patronage roles, see Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, pp.111-112.

<sup>25</sup> For the Elliot family in public life, see Appendix 1, pp.246-8.

<sup>26</sup> NLS, MS11003 ff.11, 13, John Rutherford to Lord Minto, document their departure in September 1744. Rutherford had gone to Albany in 1742, *ibid.*, ff.5-6, to Lord Minto. In 1754, Nelly appears to have been in New York, MS11005 f.82, John Rutherford to Minto.

<sup>27</sup> See n.16 above

<sup>28</sup> NLS, MS11008 f.109, to Gilbert Elliot, 23 October 1760, Edr.

Medle in busness, however it was natural for me to hope that some how or other she might influence Him in favour of me.<sup>29</sup> Whatever women claimed about their lack of involvement in their husbands' public affairs, they were expected to use the influence which they 'naturally' held over the men around them to solicit for petitioners jobs, pensions, political favours, or mercy from persecution.<sup>30</sup>

Mid-eighteenth-century Scotland was governed by a system of management, and the influence wielded by Lord Milton over so many areas of Scottish administration and government<sup>31</sup> meant the women of the Fletcher family were frequently petitioned as 'brokers' by individuals or their representatives seeking posts, interest, money or contacts in the many areas of Scottish life in which Milton had an influence, from burgh government, the church and universities, to the customs service and linen industry.<sup>32</sup> Sometimes petitions would appeal for help in other areas, in the hope that their status could carry weight. David Fletcher, distantly related to the Fletchers of Saltoun, travelled to Bengal as a merchant, was unable to find any business, and forced to join the East India Company's military service. In December 1763, he wrote to Mally Fletcher, begging her, in a letter tingled with real desperation, to get him a role in the Company's civil service. He stressed her responsibility in trying to get this post for him in terms that could not be doubted: 'as my only hope is in you, for heaven's sake do not now draw in your hand, and let me perish, but still be a Fletcher and boldly conduct me through.'<sup>33</sup> Despite her inability to serve her country in parliament or trade or with arms, Mally could still 'be a Fletcher', and take an active part (for to 'boldly conduct' is active indeed) in the

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<sup>29</sup> EUL, MS E2002.28, 'Frances Steuart – Widow – Melencholy Title' (unpublished memoir, Coltness, 1881).

<sup>30</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.134. She refers to the '5 p's': 'place, pension, preferment, parliament, and peerage.' Ibid., p.113.

<sup>31</sup> Murdoch, *People Above*, esp. p.12; Shaw, *Management of Scottish Society*.

<sup>32</sup> For women as 'brokers' see, Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, pp.135-145. For the limitations even Milton's influence experienced with getting appointments for Scottish posts through the system in London, see Murdoch, *People Above*, p.9. He quoted a letter from Andrew Fletcher to his father in 1754, lamenting 'many of our countrymen imagine that it only costs their friends a word to provide for them'.

<sup>33</sup> NLS, MS16524 ff.118-9, from 'the camp at Gopalgore in the Kingdom of Bengall'. This letter, and another to Mary Hepburn in which he refers to her as his 'Aunt', along with Milton's letters of recommendation to the East India Company, MS16724 ff.102, 103 and 16726 f.88 (1762), suggest he was close to Milton's family, despite their nearest common ancestor being Milton's great-great-grandfather, who died in 1613 (MS17858 f.18, genealogical notes).

welfare of her kinsman, and by extension her country, through the influence she could wield in her own family.

Communicating through correspondence, women's relationship with the patronage system defies the misguided categorisation of eighteenth-century women's letters as 'private'.<sup>34</sup> Had Mally wished to act upon this letter, she would have had to use her status as Milton's daughter to influence the individual she judged most likely to be able to grant her request. This demanded both an understanding of the workings of the patronage system, and an up-to-date awareness of who held influence in which area.<sup>35</sup> Except in very rare circumstances, it was almost always a man who determined the final outcome of any patronage request, yet whole chains of female networks could be employed in reaching that point. Status and 'connexion' were more important factors than gender in determining the success of a petition, and on the whole, women's patronage requests were no different from men's.<sup>36</sup>

But women's supposedly 'softer' qualities rendered them particularly adept at personal influence. Elizabeth Halkett wrote of her grandmother that:

Such was Lady Miltons Address that success seldom failed to be the Effect of her Attempts, to gain points in which other means had been used in vain. Few could more Skillfully employ those talents which are best Calculated to win the assent. & tho Lady Milton seldom interferd in Political Manoeuvres her Address Often prevaild over Obstacles which others of sound judgement believed to be insurmountable[.]<sup>37</sup>

Despite the necessary caveat proclaiming the infrequency of Lady Milton's political 'interference', the passage suggests that Lady Milton's personality was ideally suited to her position as a political wife, her ability to exert influence where other means had failed giving her a unique role in the family's public life, of which Hary Barclay, a friend of the family and never one to write a dull letter, was clearly aware. When he wanted Milton's help in clearing his debts, he presented a dramatised scene of

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<sup>34</sup> Sarah Richardson, "'Well-neighbour'd Houses': the Political Networks of Elite Women, 1780-1860", in Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (eds.), *Women in British Politics, 1760-1860: The Power of the Petticoat* (Basingstoke, 2000), p.58. Tague, *Women of Quality*, p.197: 'Although influence was *personal*, it was not *private*'.

<sup>35</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.114.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.116.

<sup>37</sup> EUL MS La III 364, Elizabeth Halkett, 'Memoir of the Fletchers of Saltoun', (written some time before 1785), p.51.



how he imagined his letter would be received at Brunstane, portraying first Milton's reluctance to help Barclay, and then Lady Milton's intervention on behalf of her friend:

Supposing my self accidentally at your Elbow when this comes to hand I think I overhear the following Soliloquy. \_ What the Devil can possess this Hary Barclay, That he presents me at such a rate with letters. \_ He will not [?take] the Pett I find, At my giving him no answer, I must therefore try, what an Illnatured One can do, \_ But, as I never yet said any thing of that kind to him, He may not take it in earnest. \_ John, \_ Send Willie Jackson to me immediatly. \_ Enter Willie. Here Sir Take that letter, and write such an answer to it as may at once Put ane end to a troublesome correspondence.

Dear Toddie (Says Lady Milton from the Couch) What can ail you at poor Hary Barclay – He was aye so willing to do what you bade him, that I never thought He (by any body) could have anger'd you. \_\_\_ It seems he must be muckle changed since he gade among the Englishes, - Hegh Sirs, Wha wad a thought it, \_\_\_ But sit down, My Toddie, to your dinner, and fash your head nae mare about it. These broth are damnably Hot, \_ I must try the fish till they cooll. \_ O Toddie I winna suffer you to eat fish, I'll blaw the broth with my ain mouth.

In the mean time, The Passion coolls was well as the Broth, and the letter is pulld out again, to be revised[.]<sup>38</sup>

Milton, as the authority figure to whom the letter was addressed, was portrayed as initially unsympathetic towards Barclay's pleas for help. But it was the intervention of Lady Milton, lounging on her couch yet not removed from the scene of action, cooling her husband's resentment as she did his broth, which enabled her friend's case to be reconsidered. Delivered not insignificantly in the vernacular, creating a kind of moral superiority through supposedly 'natural', unmannered, common sense,<sup>39</sup> her intervention used sympathetic language – and deeds – to influence her husband's mood. Without actually telling him what to do, Lady Milton changed his mind through a mild-mannered agreement with his reactions, supporting her granddaughter's claim that she 'Allay'd with an Art & address peculiar to

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<sup>38</sup> NLS, MS16655 f.64, Hary Barclay to Milton, 29 November 1758, Heigington. Jackson was Secretary to the Post Office in Scotland.

<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 4, pp.124-130.

herself,' 'The heat of temper peculiar to the family'.<sup>40</sup> Barclay's dramatisation emphasised the role of the conjugal relationship as the starting point for the wider world of interest networks and bonds of loyalty which formed the very basis of eighteenth-century society. Whilst the criticisms of 'petticoat' influence which intensified with the onset of radical politics from the 1760s tended to portray this kind of political influence as scandalously sexualised, in reality those who played this role tended to be middle-aged wives like Lady Milton.<sup>41</sup>

#### 'Friends behind the curtain': Social Connections and Influence

The previous chapter examined the cult of politeness, which prioritised women's role in mixed-gender conversation around the tea-tables and in the assembly rooms. Far from removing women from the realm of the political, this emphasis on heterosociability could help to integrate them into it. Their integration into networks of sociability brought them the opportunity, Elaine Chalus argued, not just to participate in political debate, but 'to forward specific cases or causes'.<sup>42</sup> As Hary Barclay's letter shows, the women of political families were recognised as exercising, through their friendships and power to make introductions, a considerable degree of influence. Elizabeth Halkett went so far as to claim 'that Drs Robertson Ferguson Smith Wilkie and John and David Humes owed their Connections with the Duke of Argyle & Lord Milton & their Introduction to fortune and fame' to her mother, Betty Fletcher.<sup>43</sup> Halkett's 'Memoir' abounds with hyperbole and inaccuracies, and it is unlikely that these men, part of a society in which interconnectedness was almost universal, would not have come across other means of gaining the attention of such high-profile political figures. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that Robertson at least was introduced to Milton through more standard procedures: in 1755 Robertson asked Gilbert Elliot to write to Milton recommending him as a minister in Edinburgh,<sup>44</sup> since he had 'very small connexion'

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<sup>40</sup> Halkett, 'Memoir', p.50.

<sup>41</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, pp.136-138.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>43</sup> Halkett, 'Memoir', pp.104-5. Halkett never knew her mother, although as her uncles, who were her guardians, kept in touch with John Home and Adam Ferguson, she may well have been acquainted with the literati and heard tales from them.

<sup>44</sup> NLS, MS16692 f.1, Gilbert Elliot to Milton in Inveraray, October 1755.

with Milton and Argyll, in whose hands the decision lay.<sup>45</sup> Yet it demonstrates a contemporary assumption that the cultivation of female acquaintance could be a valid route to preferment.<sup>46</sup>

Betty Fletcher also apparently played a conciliatory role between her father and some of the literati after Milton lost his patience with David Hume over the conflicts surrounding John Home's play *Douglas*. Alexander Carlyle recorded that 'Milton soon repented, and David would have returned, but Betty Fletcher opposed it, rather foregoing his company at their house than suffer him to degrade himself [...] Had it not been for Ferguson and her, John Home and I would have been expelled also.'<sup>47</sup> Through the role granted women by polite sociability, she had the power to make or break relationships between these ambitious young men and her influential father, who according to Carlyle (who described Betty as 'a friend behind the curtain'), would take his daughter out in his coach with him to settle his mind when perturbed.<sup>48</sup>

As Elizabeth Halkett noted, the friendship of the Fletcher women could bring introductions not just to Milton, but to the third Duke of Argyll, the most influential individual in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland. In the absence of a more suitable candidate, Lady Milton acted as hostess during his visit to his ducal seat at Inveraray each September, this organisational and social role meaning that she, more than her husband, was indispensable on these visits.<sup>49</sup> Although essentially a private role, the company that gathered at Inveraray was formed of the highest ranks from Scotland,

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<sup>45</sup> NLS, MS16693 f.95, William Robertson to Gilbert Elliot, 15 October 1755, Gladsmuir.

<sup>46</sup> For instances of elite women making politically decisive introductions, see Chalus and Montgomery, 'Women and Politics', p.227.

<sup>47</sup> *The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, ed. John Hill Burton, with a new Introduction by Richard B. Sher (Bristol, 1990; reprint of 1910 edn.), p.346.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p.345.

<sup>49</sup> Argyll had separated from his wife, who died 1723, and Mrs Williams, the mother of his two children, was evidently deemed unsuitable to accompany him. Alexander Murdoch, 'Campbell, Archibald, third duke of Argyll (1682-1761)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4477>, accessed 7 June 2006]. After many months of planning and organisation, Argyll first arrived in Inveraray, with a small party including Lord and Lady Milton, in August 1744. Although the next year the Duke and Milton only got as far as Rosneath before turning back upon news of the Young Pretender's landing at Moidart, Lady Milton stayed on, continuing arrangements for the new castle. These annual 'campaigns,' which by the 1750s included the younger Fletcher daughters, became something of an annual expedition from 1747 until the Duke's death. Ian G. Lindsay and Mary Cosh, *Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll* (Edinburgh, 1973), pp.4, 9-18, 48.

Britain and beyond. Her brisk and cheerful personality<sup>50</sup> won over guests like Signor Gastaldi, the Genoese Minister to London, who described himself as ‘in love with Lady Milton [...] the politest finest Lady ever he met with,’<sup>51</sup> whilst the customs secretary Corbyn Morris wrote in 1752 to thank her for her ‘obliging Manner of extending his Grace’s condescending Civilities to me at Inveraray’.<sup>52</sup> Appointed by Argyll’s then adversary, Henry Pelham, this was Morris’ first opportunity to win the favour of the Argathelian faction, in which, from the tone of his letter sending Lady Milton ‘the form of ye printed Letter dispatched by me this post to all ye ports, for terminating y<sup>e</sup> four Quarters under ye late Act for correcting y<sup>e</sup> calender’, he appears to have succeeded. In joking, ‘I imagine miss Betty Fletcher will observe, [this] is a misfortune to such Gentlemen, as myselfe, in hurrying me on in one night eleven days older’,<sup>53</sup> he at least attempted to seal with informality what could be an important political relationship.

The Fletcher women thus occupied a strategic position, able to grant or deny access to the Duke. Alexander Carlyle wrote tellingly that the playwright John Home was taken ‘by Lord Milton’s family to Inveraray, to be introduced to the Duke’ in 1756.<sup>54</sup> Carlyle, who acknowledged that he had first entered the Fletchers’ circles through an acquaintance with Margaret, Milton’s eldest daughter, and who described Betty, the youngest, as a ‘much valued’ friend,<sup>55</sup> first met the Duke at the Fletcher’s house at Brunstane in 1757. On this occasion, Mally Fletcher tried to persuade him that his ‘bread was baked’ by the Duke’s mistaking him for a favourite cousin, the Earl of Home.<sup>56</sup> Mally was well aware of the importance of this connection for her friend, and Carlyle’s consciousness of the Fletcher women’s role in this is evident in his report of his visit to Inveraray the following year, during

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<sup>50</sup> Her grand-daughter described her ability to diffuse cheerfulness, adding that ‘Almost on any Occasion her Gaity was Inviolable, & no one left the Company without being Satisfied with every Attention vanity itself could expect,’ Halkett, ‘Memoir’, pp.51-2.

<sup>51</sup> NLS, MS16679 f.167, Alexander Lind to Milton, 22 September 1752, Gorgie.

<sup>52</sup> NLS, MS16679 f.239, Corbyn Morris to Lady Milton, 26 September 1752, Edinburgh. Morris, an Englishman, had been appointed secretary of the customs and salt duty in Scotland the previous year, and sent there ‘to inquire into the state of the customs and the practices of smugglers. Alexander Murdoch, ‘Morris, Corbyn (1710–1779)’, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19302>, accessed 7 June 2006].

<sup>53</sup> NLS MS16679 f.239, Corbyn Morris to Lady Milton, 26 September 1752, Edinburgh.

<sup>54</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.325.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p.271.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.344-5.

which, he recorded, 'The ladies told me that I had pleased his Grace, which gratified me not a little, as without him no preferment could be obtained in Scotland.'<sup>57</sup> Whilst other channels of influence were open to men, their route to success could be eased considerably by female friends who, through family connections, were able to introduce them to the right people, and who understood the importance of their role in the process.

Such influence, however, could cause envy amongst those who failed to gain the favours they desired. In 1754, Robert Adam was at Inveraray, working on the Duke's new castle and hoping in vain for patronage and introductions to help him on his way to Rome.<sup>58</sup> He suggested the position that the Fletcher women enjoyed at Inveraray caused them to put on airs above their station:

Miss Betty Fletcher told me to day that Her great Taste was for Painting, that she envy'd my Happiness and wish'd she cou'd accompany me. This from the Stinkingest of Mortals I look'd on as no small compliment till next disdainful look from her Nizzety Gabb, wipt entirely away all impression of it. Mally with as much pride as can dwell in one Carcasse, As much overbearing as, as plague on't ... as the Bitch her Mother, I nevertheless give the preference, on account of Her speaking what vice she utters, with greater virulence.<sup>59</sup>

Often colourful in his language, this is one of Adam's most virulent surviving outbursts. From the ending of his letter, it may be that some romantic overtures to Betty Fletcher had been spurned, but the vehemence of his comments about her sister and mother suggest there to have been some underlying animosity, which may well have been widespread amongst those who were less than captivated by the Fletcher women. Alexander Carlyle did not expand on his hint that 'there was much weakness and intrigue in the mother and some other parts of the family',<sup>60</sup> although Elizabeth Halkett's apparent need to use her 'Memoir' to whitewash the reputation of her aunt, Mally Fletcher, whose simplicity of heart, she argued, had 'betrayed her into the Artifices of designing persons about her',<sup>61</sup> highlights the potential for the abuse of friendship. That Lady Milton was 'So much taken up with Highnesses &

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<sup>57</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.400.

<sup>58</sup> John Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle in Edinburgh and Rome* (London, 1962), p.107.

<sup>59</sup> NAS, GD18/4745, to Bess and Meg, 21 September 1754, Inveraray.

<sup>60</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.273.

<sup>61</sup> Halkett, 'Memoir', pp.100-101.

Excellences' may have been a matter for congratulatory teasing from an old friend,<sup>62</sup> but for those who failed to gain from it, this kind of social climbing, and the powers of influence gathered *en route*, could throw into relief their own impotence.

### Women and Family Political Interest

In the 1770s, the Elliot family used a very simple cipher when they discussed politics in their correspondence, in which they supplanted the names of politicians with some of the most frequently used ladies' names.<sup>63</sup> This they could do because women did not hold offices of state, nor make the sorts of decisions which were being made by the fictional Peggy (the Duke of Cumberland) or Agnes (Lord North). Yet it was a real Agnes, the wife of Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> baronet, by this time a prominent MP, who was using this code to communicate to her son news from the highest level of British politics. Despite being denied access to formal government posts, the lives of women in political families were not remote or disconnected from the world of party politics. Earlier on, when Elliot had only recently arrived in London and his family remained at home in Scotland, he used another code, this time based on clothing, ('which', remarked Sir Gilbert ironically, 'like a right woman you are anxious about') to communicate with his wife on government affairs and his hopes of getting a post in the ministry.<sup>64</sup> Whilst it is hardly surprising that she took an interest in her husband's success in a career which would be decisive in determining her own future, Agnes would have needed at least some degree of comprehension of the high politics of government in order to make sense of his letter. Later in life, she demonstrated her interest in her husband's political career by annotating his correspondence with explanatory notes, and started to write a memorandum which demonstrates an understanding of her husband's use of the mechanisms of political interest networks to further his early London career.<sup>65</sup> She may not have been 'meddling' in state affairs, against which her husband had warned his sister decades earlier, but neither was she containing herself to his restrictive

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<sup>62</sup> NLS, MS16637 f.279, Charles Stewart to Milton, 2 March 1745/6, London.

<sup>63</sup> NLS, MS12952 e.g., f.46, Agnes Elliot to Hugh Elliot, 12 June 1772, London.

<sup>64</sup> NLS, MS11007 ff.14-15, 4 November 1756, London.

<sup>65</sup> Her notes are spread throughout his letters in NLS, MSS11006, 11007; for drafts of fragments of her memoir see MSS11036 ff.144-7, and 12822 ff.8-12. London society was, not surprisingly, far more politicised than elsewhere, see Chalus, 'Elite Women and Social Politics', pp.675-6.

vision of women's role. By the 1770s, an easy acquaintance with the high politics of state had become an intrinsic part of her day-to-day life, and although she could neither vote nor stand for parliament, the machinations of high politics held few mysteries for her.

As Elaine Chalus pointed out, 'Eighteenth-century women were social beings and, at a time when politics permeated elite society and men as well as women used the social arena politically, this fusion of society and politics ensured politicization.'<sup>66</sup> If to a lesser degree than in London, party spirit infected Scottish social life too, particularly in the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite rising. In October 1746, Lady Buchan remarked to her recently exiled sister, Frances Stuart Denham:

we are to have a very gay toun this winter by which you will see our Spijets are not much the lower by our Missfortons on thursday first there is to be a great Asembly in honour of the kings birthday every body is to be there the Loyal folks from Love to the Day and the Jacobets for fear of being obnoxious to them for whom they are not matches there is 4 generals in toun and vast Numbers of officers which can not fail to put the toun in the Spijet of gayety as they are looked on as preferable to all other gentelmen by the Ladys in this place on account of there Success in destroying the Rebels in the North the brags they make of this at all the Tea Tables in toun wold fill a volum tho some of there best freinds think it wold be better they wold hold there toun.<sup>67</sup>

Lady Buchan portrayed women gossiping at the assembly and the tea-tables, whilst military men were lauded as brave liberators and defenders, a conservative stereotype of gender roles. But the tea-table discussion centred on martial exploits, whilst the assembly for the King's birthday was presented not as a neutral event, a conventional opportunity for enjoyment merely cloaked in the royalist culture of the day, but a genuinely politicised one which all attending would perceive as such. Lady Buchan suggested that the world of sociability outlined in the previous chapter was infused not just with a sense of connection to the wider world of the public, but with party. General Humphrey Bland once recorded his hope that Lady Milton

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<sup>66</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.77; ch.3 in general. See also Wilson, *Sense of the People*, p.53, presumably with reference to a slightly later period: 'the discourses of politeness and the cult of sensibility could work to legitimize women's participation in print culture and sociability in ways that washed over into politics.'

<sup>67</sup> EUL, MS2291/15/6, 28 October 1746, Edr.

would ‘always shine at the Head of the Whig party’,<sup>68</sup> but women’s political beliefs – not unlike those of men – can be difficult to disaggregate from family loyalties. In the lead-up to the 1754 election the 10th Earl of Eglinton joked about his hostility to his second cousin ‘that divel betty’ Fletcher, whom he was ‘sure [...] wishes for Mure Campbell,’<sup>69</sup> referring to her as ‘that little Loudonite’.<sup>70</sup> Yet it would be impossible to attribute this with any certainty to an ideological political attachment, and in any case, to support the Duke of Argyll’s preferred candidate was hardly an exceptional move for a Fletcher. As in most societies, some women were very interested in the intrigues of the political world, some less so, and others not at all. This section is concerned primarily with the political activity deemed normal amongst mid-eighteenth-century gentlewoman.

Too long dominated by the activities of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and her aristocratic friends in Westminster in 1784,<sup>71</sup> elite women’s political roles were generally far more mundane; their involvement in no sense considered unusual, but rather, as Elaine Chalus has found in England, ‘generally accepted, often expected, and sometimes demanded’<sup>72</sup> as part of a family responsibility. As Susan Whyman put it, ‘Wives ran campaigns, aunts wrote letters for votes, and daughters influenced husbands.’<sup>73</sup> For Chalus, the Elliot correspondence is evidence that Agnes was a ‘confidante’, the most widespread of the four categories into which she has split women’s political activity.<sup>74</sup> Whilst this was a mainly passive role, dependent largely upon gaining a husband’s or brother’s trust and taking an interest in their work, the next category of ‘adviser’ involved providing and relaying political

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<sup>68</sup> NLS, MS304 f.91, Letter-book of General Humphrey Bland, Copy letter to Normal McLeod, Esq., (after 11 Aug 1748, Edinburgh). He had yet to meet Lady Milton.

<sup>69</sup> NLS, MS16683 f.257, Eglinton to Milton, 10 August 1753, Edr. Mure Campbell was the cousin of Lord Loudoun who stood against a coalition of Archibald Montgomerie (Eglinton’s brother) and Patrick Craufurd, who lost when the Duke of Argyll and the ministry gave their support to Mure Campbell. Andrew M. Lang, ‘Craufurd, Patrick, of Auchenames (c.1704-1778)’, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64092>, accessed 19 July 2005]

<sup>70</sup> NLS, MS16688 f.196, Eglinton to Milton, 6 June 1754, Eglinton.

<sup>71</sup> Judith S. Lewis, ‘1784 and All That: Aristocratic Women and Electoral Politics’, in Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege, and Power*; Amanda Foreman, ‘A Politician’s Politician: Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the Whig party’, in Barker and Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*.

<sup>72</sup> Chalus, “That Epidemical Madness”, p.153.

<sup>73</sup> Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999), p.173. Chalus described politically active families as ‘working units’, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.173.

<sup>74</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, pp.55-59. For the Elliots, see p.55.



information.<sup>75</sup> The ‘agent’<sup>76</sup> extended this to encompass ‘increasingly public, direct, and autonomous political involvement’,<sup>77</sup> whilst the ‘partner’, a rarer, and often individualistic creature, had a greater degree of independent action.<sup>78</sup>

At the upper end of this scale, Margaret Steuart Calderwood apparently felt no qualms in proclaiming herself the active force in her husband’s unsuccessful campaign to be nominated for the Edinburghshire by-election of February 1751.<sup>79</sup> Writing to John Clerk of Penicuik that it was a fear of Jacobitism rather than ‘Vices of intresst,’ along with the offer of Clerk’s support (which he later denied) ‘which Determind me to Desire him’ to stand for parliament,<sup>80</sup> suggests that she saw no inappropriateness in her admission that she was the motivating force in Calderwood family politics. Another correspondent on the topic presents the same impression: it was Mrs Calderwood who had Clerk of Penicuik ‘fast bound both by words and writing,’ she who ‘found it expedient to send Robert Calderwood to him to encourage him to resist the attack of the Enemy’, she who was reported as discussing her husband’s chances with others, and so on throughout a lengthy letter in which Thomas Calderwood appears only as the tool of his wife’s machinations.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps not surprisingly, given the force of personality which emerges from her travel journal,<sup>82</sup> she appears to have assumed a dominant organisational role in electoral politics without any notion that this could be considered unbecoming her sex. Reconciling this with her proclaimed indifference towards the ‘publick’ with which this chapter began might appear problematic, yet, despite her protestations to Clerk of Penicuik above (and her willingness five years later to ‘speak Jacobitism’ casts doubt on a fear of Jacobitism as a motivating factor), her campaign to get her husband elected need not have been influenced by the state politics which she may have understood the term to mean. Had her attempts to be successful, the benefits of prestige and influence would have been immediate and personal.

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<sup>75</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, pp.59-67.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.68-69.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.70-74.

<sup>79</sup> Romney Sedgwick (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1715-1754*, vol.2 (London, 1970), p.385 records the election was uncontested.

<sup>80</sup> NAS, GD18/3274/2, Margaret Calderwood to John Clerk of Penicuik, 17 October 1750, Polton. This includes a copy of his reply of 25<sup>th</sup> January 1751 in which he apologised for his inability to assist Thomas Calderwood.

<sup>81</sup> NLS, MS16676 ff.69-69a, William Ross to Milton, 3 January 1751, Melville.

<sup>82</sup> See Chapter 6, pp.219-226.

As Natalie Zemon Davies has found with women elsewhere, family connections were the most decisive factor in making women feel closely involved in the affairs of the nation.<sup>83</sup> Mary Hepburn, for instance, commented to her brother Lord Milton in 1746: 'I'm glad our publick affairs simes to be in a better way. I feel a more intimate concerin about them, as you have so much of the direcktion.'<sup>84</sup> Her relationship with her brother not only enabled her to feel this concern in national affairs, it actively required her participation in the maintenance of the local political interest on which the power enjoyed by the men of her family ultimately rested. Consequently, she bore a large part of the responsibility for the maintenance of Fletcher family political interest in East Lothian.<sup>85</sup> Frank O'Gorman has stressed the importance of 'local relationships involving local élites with local ambitions and obligations' to British electoral politics, arguing that, 'The stability of the Hanoverian regime rested, in the last analysis, upon the smooth and successful functioning of local deference structures.'<sup>86</sup> Yet deference alone was not enough; local interests had to be actively managed, and hopes for the success of potential future patronage requests maintained.<sup>87</sup> Lord Milton's position meant a constant awareness of the need to maintain favour with the local political classes was part of the daily lives of the Fletcher women, but when Andrew Fletcher first stood for parliament as a candidate for the Haddington burghs in 1747, the more precarious nature of electoral politics demanded an even keener involvement for his aunts.<sup>88</sup> Two months before the election Mary announced she had 'just now come from my travels' before proceeding to list the results of the day's researches, which had shown one potential elector to be with a regiment in England, another dead, a third 'not

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<sup>83</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Gender and Genre: Women as Historical Writers, 1400-1820', in Patricia H. Labalme (ed.), *Beyond their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past* (New York and London, 1980), p.155, with reference to what inspired women to write history.

<sup>84</sup> NLS, MS16513 f.101, 12 January 1746, Salton.

<sup>85</sup> Lady Milton's involvement in this is much less clear; as she generally lived with her husband, there was no need for any written political communication.

<sup>86</sup> Frank O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England, 1743-1832* (Oxford, 1989), p.6. Similarly, Ronald Sunter stressed that 'Elections in eighteenth-century Scotland were won or lost, not in London or Edinburgh, but in the constituencies, and the successful politician was the one who could best manage such difficult voters as burgh councillors and county freeholders.' Sunter, *Patronage and Politics*, p.233.

<sup>87</sup> Sunter, *Patronage and Politics*, p.193.

<sup>88</sup> According to Sunter, a contested Scottish burgh election was 'the least attractive' means of entering parliament in the eighteenth century. *Ibid.*, p.194.

sold' and a fourth present but to leave before the election.<sup>89</sup> Sometimes, Mary would direct male family members to carry out the canvassing for her. Alexander Kinloch reported back that 'According to your desire, I sent for Tho.<sup>s</sup> Croumbie, and told him that I wanted him to Vote for my Cousin Mr Andrew Fletcher, and that I would take no refusal, which favour he granted me after a good deal of Argument.'<sup>90</sup> Her depth of involvement suggests she may be seen as an 'agent'.

Mary's house at Monkrig even seems to have acted as an election centre.<sup>91</sup> That female family members appear to have been more involved in Andrew's campaign in East Lothian than in Linlithgow where Andrew's brother Henry was standing as an absentee candidate against Lawrence Dundas<sup>92</sup> is a reminder of how women's contribution to family political management was vested in their local knowledge and social contacts.<sup>93</sup> The English wife of Sir Hew Dalrymple, MP for the neighbouring county seat, fretted over accusations that her nationality was hurting his interest.<sup>94</sup> Yet whilst Sir Hew explained that this was merely propaganda,<sup>95</sup> there is no doubt that a local wife would have been politically more expedient. Being closest to the locality, women could be the first to hear of an issue which could come to be potentially troublesome to their family, as was Mary Hepburn when Andrew Fletcher's attitude towards proposals for turnpikes affecting his constituency risked damaging his popularity.<sup>96</sup> Groundwork like this required patience and skills of persuasion which were suited not only to the aspects of

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<sup>89</sup> NLS, MS16514 f.10, Mary Hepburn to Milton, May 1747. Margaret Calderwood kept a similar list. MS16676 f.69, William Ross to Milton, 3 January 1751, Melville.

<sup>90</sup> NLS, MS16649 f.10, Alexander Kinloch to Mary Hepburn, 20 June 1747, Gilmerton.

<sup>91</sup> NLS, MS17746, Andrew Fletcher's notebook, 5 July 1747 – after hearing that Pringle was setting up as delegate, he 'went immediately to Monkrig, talk over the matter wt some of our Friends, and early in the morning went to Haddington.'

<sup>92</sup> Sunter, *Patronage and Politics*, p.173. Milton had originally hoped this would be the best way to get Henry 'out of his banishment in Gibraltar', where he was serving with the army, but after considerable campaigning by the Fletchers, the Duke of Argyll came to oppose his candidacy for the Linlithgow burghs, favouring another candidate. Sunter concluded the Fletcher campaign machine had had a far better prospect of beating Dundas, due to their financial outlay. *Ibid.*, p.176.

<sup>93</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.207; *idem*, "'That epidemical Madness'", p.153.

<sup>94</sup> NAS, GD110/970/5, 28 August 1744, Wandsworth.

<sup>95</sup> NAS, GD110/1084/17, to Lady Dalrymple, 26 August 1744, North Berwick House: 'people who have a mind to do me harm in this country and with my friends, endeavour to perswade them that I am become an English man, and have forgote the ties I have to my native countrey since I married out of it, and all my actions must show the contrary or yeald to their Calumny.' He later emphasised that his interest could be nothing but parliamentary, NAS, GD110/1084/27, to Lady Dalrymple, 22 September 1744, North Berwick House.

<sup>96</sup> NLS, MS16671 f.61, Henry Hepburn to Mary Hepburn, 12 June 1750.

character which were supposed to be idiosyncratically female, but also to the social networks which were an accepted part of a female lifestyle.

Sometimes Mary talked directly to the male voters involved;<sup>97</sup> sometimes she worked through standard female social visits.<sup>98</sup> Women's political visiting was unexceptional, worthy of comment only when the unusual occurred, such as when 'pretty Mrs Gordon in a tour of political visits for the Interest of a certain Marquess thought fit to drop a Son at Bellfield w<sup>t</sup> Mr Douglas to the Deversion of the good town.'<sup>99</sup> As Elaine Chalus has pointed out, in the run-up to an election, 'Mundane or intimate socializing over tea or cards, and even the classic social performance of visiting, could become openly politicized.'<sup>100</sup> Thus on 25 June 1747, Mary Hepburn reported drinking tea with 'Deacon Wood's daughter Mrs Wright' in Haddington,<sup>101</sup> a visit no doubt recorded because of the political implications of Andrew Fletcher's aunt drinking tea with an elector's daughter. Elite female social activities enabled women to form 'semi-independent networks of sociability of their own',<sup>102</sup> their personal social connections opening up avenues of influence otherwise potentially closed to an interest. The popularising of female visits for tea created a pretext, less formal than dinner,<sup>103</sup> under which women had the excuse to visit other women, to exchange political news or attempt to influence voting outcomes, which was entirely within the norms of polite female behaviour, yet could contribute considerably towards the workings of a family interest. If elections themselves were, in Janet Clerk's opinion, imbued with an 'abominable Air of Drunkness and [...] evill practicess',<sup>104</sup> redolent precisely of that image of the political public sphere which can appear inimical to the involvement of genteel women, much of the preparatory electioneering was carried out fully within their domain.

<sup>97</sup> E.g., NLS, MS16514 f.17, Mary Hepburn to Milton in Edinburgh, 13 June 1747.

<sup>98</sup> NLS, MS16514 f.23, Mary Hepburn to Milton, 23 June 1747, recorded having had a conversation with Mrs Newton who was afraid 'the Marquis' [of Tweeddale] would have an impression on Mr Newton.

<sup>99</sup> NLS MS1136 f.98, John Mackenzie to Sir Alexander Macdonald, 17 October 1739, Edinr.

<sup>100</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.172.

<sup>101</sup> NLS, MS16514 f.25, Mary Hepburn to Milton, 25 June 1747. See also NLS, MS16690 f.13, Will: Alston to Milton, 7 September 1755, Cannongate, 'When I left Lady Milton, one part of our Scheme was, that her Ladyship & Miss Mally should visite Mr Cardonnell at Tea time, to sollicite in Behalf of Hutchison.'

<sup>102</sup> Sankey and Szechi, 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism', p.103; also p.119.

<sup>103</sup> Dinner suggested a more intimate connexion, Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.76.

<sup>104</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/355, 26 June 1747.

Nevertheless, the political underpinning of visiting networks could leave those without obvious political clout in an isolated position. Mary Campbell of Boquhan, first cousin to the third Duke of Argyll, took a keen interest in all sorts of public affairs,<sup>105</sup> and when she complained about the rudeness of her Member of Parliament, Captain Campbell, in not paying her visits, she framed these grievances in an explicitly political way:

Our Member Capt. Campbell last Week made a Tower of Visits to Some of his Voters to the West of this but I never have the Honour of a Visit from him or dos he so much as Send in a Servant when going throu the Parks and high Grounds of Boquhan Hunting his wife Mrs Campbell was to See me in an afternoon this week [...] but ye Capt did not favour me to Come with his Lady.<sup>106</sup>

Three years later, at the time of the next election, she made the same connection again: ‘they pass’d me last Summer to ye Highlands & returned but never Sent in a Servant to inquire for me or ever since has sent I never tak any Notice of their Neglecting a piece of Common Civility Did a Woman Vote I wou’d got a Send to attend ye 29<sup>th</sup>.’<sup>107</sup> The Captain’s visiting schedule was linked directly to his political status, whilst her disposable status as a woman ineligible to vote was underlined by her treatment in being ignored.

‘Forfeiting the Regards which were due to them’? Women and Jacobitism in the ’45

In the summer of 1745, Charles Edwards Stuart, son of the Old Pretender, landed on Eriskay. By mid-September, his army had marched on Edinburgh, sending prominent Hanoverians like Lord Milton into hiding, and throwing into turmoil the entente between Hanoverian and Jacobite. This inspired an anonymous individual to draw up ‘An Impartial and Genuine List of the Ladys on the Whig or Jacobite Partie.’<sup>108</sup> The author explained this was ‘Taken in hand merely to show that the

<sup>105</sup> Her father was the younger brother of the first Duke. See Shaw, *Management of Scottish Society*, p.64.

<sup>106</sup> NLS, MS16714 f.67, to Milton, 17 May 1760, Boquhan. Her animosity may have been fuelled by the fact that Capt. Campbell of Ardkinglass was at that time transferring his allegiance from Argyll to Bute. Lewis Namier and John Brooke (eds.), *The House of Commons 1754-1790* (London, 1964), vol.2, p.185.

<sup>107</sup> NLS, MS16727 f.99, to Milton, 26 December 1763, Boquhan.

<sup>108</sup> NLS, MS293. It was written prior to Robert Craigie’s removal from the post of Lord Advocate in February 1746, see note on f.3, and John W. Cairns, ‘Craigie, Robert, of Glendoick (*hap.* 1688, *d.*

Common Acusation and Slander, Rashly Thrown on The Female Sex As to Their being all Jacobites is False and Groundless. As upon a Calculation the Whigs are Far Superior in Number and not inferior either in Rank, Beauty or Sollidity.’ Sadly incomplete, this exercise in the promotion of unrevolutionary femininity includes a column for the ladies of families with names beginning A to C, in which remarks were made on their ‘Characteristics and Graces.’ Although the author acknowledged that like their Whig counterparts, some Jacobite ladies were ‘genteel’ or ‘well lookt’, others were ‘masculine’, ‘crane necked,’ ‘terribly bigotted’, ‘conceited’, ‘thrawn’ and ‘apostate’: hardly a panoply of feminine virtues.<sup>109</sup> On the contrary, in presenting Jacobite women as unfeminine; at best physically unattractive if not actually deformed, the author – whilst acknowledging women’s attachment to party – suggested that their attraction to a cause which was deemed socially destabilising was unwomanly, hence unnatural and disturbing. This section examines attitudes towards women’s involvement in the 1745 Jacobite rising, an issue of major national significance, as a counter-example of women’s political activity outwith the socially sanctioned channels outlined above. It asks what can be learnt about attitudes towards women’s place in the public from the simultaneous condemnation and sentimentalisation of their behaviour during this episode, ending with a case-study which details the seriousness with which genuinely politicised women with real influence could be treated.

In March 1746, a friend of the Fletchers wrote from London, wryly advising Milton:

when [Mally Fletcher] sings her Scots songs to our Generals to forget the highland lady or if she be rash enough to venture upon it, let her be sure not to doe it with that spirit bravura with which she used to sing it to me, least it shou’d savour of disaffection & give offence to the Ed<sup>f</sup> volunteers, in which case it wou’d certainly be wrote up here, for every post brings us such important pieces of Intelligence.<sup>110</sup>

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1760)’, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6585>, accessed 18 July 2006]. Maggie Craig, for unspecified reasons, assumed the author to be female. Craig, *Damn’ Rebel Bitches*, p.73.

<sup>109</sup> NLS, MS293 ff.3-4.

<sup>110</sup> NLS, MS16637 f.279, Dr Charles Stewart to Milton, 2 March 1746, London. Allan Ramsay’s *Tea-table Miscellany* contains a song entitled ‘The Highland Lassie’, which may be the one in question. *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, vol.3, ed. Alexander M. Kinghorn and Alexander Law, (Edinburgh and London, 1961), pp.56-7.

It is clear what Stewart thought of the rumours of such ‘disaffection’, yet whilst most intelligence reports focused on the actions of bands of armed men,<sup>111</sup> women’s involvement in the rising provoked much alarmed comment. According to Duncan Forbes of Culloden, ‘all the fine ladies, except one or two, became passionately fond of the Young Pretender and used all their arts and industry for him in the most intemperate manner,’<sup>112</sup> whilst General Campbell, then heading the manhunt for Charles, claimed that ‘The Women in most parts of the Country are under a sort of possession, they depart altogether from their Character, & really Forfeit the regards which are due to them.’<sup>113</sup> Accusing not just women, but ladies, of being passionate, intemperate and manipulative, even ‘possessed’ against the government, highlighted the ‘unnaturalness’ of the Rebellion, which Campbell confirmed by emphasising that ‘in these horrid disorders’ the ladies had ‘too often had a much larger share than that of bare compliance.’<sup>114</sup> ‘Bare compliance’ was perfectly acceptable in a theoretical context which legitimised female political involvement when subjugated to male agency. But as Campbell suggested, by acting in this ‘unfeminine’ way, ladies had broken the unspoken contract balancing the roles and responsibilities of gender and social rank on which social stability rested. The medical connotations of ‘Intemperance’ and ‘disorder’ imply a disease of the body politic in a country highly conscious of the precariousness of the ledge on which all ‘civilised’ societies perched.

Around the same time, Milton felt compelled to quash rumours of ‘outward misbehaviour amongst the Females at Edinburgh on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June’, adding that there was not ‘so much as a Single white Rose.’ Yet he acknowledged that ‘the violent Spirit that possesses the Jacobite Ladys so unbecoming their sex, no doubt

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<sup>111</sup> In the NLS Tweeddale papers, for instance, there is almost no mention of women in this context, unlike the Saltoun papers.

<sup>112</sup> Quoted in Craig, *Damn’ Rebel Bitches*, p.72.

<sup>113</sup> NLS, MS16616 f.176, to Milton, 29 June 1746, Fort Augustus. Unbeknown to him, on this very day Charles Edward Stuart first arrived at the house of Lady Margaret Macdonald of Sleat, accompanied by the most famous female Jacobite of all, Flora Macdonald. *The Lyon in Mourning or a collection as exactly made as the iniquity of the times would permit of speeches letters journals etc. relative to the affairs of Prince Charles Edward Stuart by the Rev. Robert Forbes, A. M. Bishop of Ross & Caithness 1746-1775*, ed. Henry Paton, (Edinburgh, 1975; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1895), vol.2, p.13.

<sup>114</sup> NLS, MS16616 f.178, General Campbell to Milton, 29 June 1746, Fort Augustus.

has greatly contributed to blowe the Coal and foment the Rebellion.<sup>115</sup> Although the involvement of young, attractive women, bringing sex into politics, was archetypally destabilising,<sup>116</sup> an emphasis on female support for the rising could effectively dismiss Jacobitism as an ideology, highlighting the significance of misguided emotion rather than political acumen in attracting followers to the cause.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, depicting women's political activities as based solely or largely on the supposed sexual magnetism of the Young Pretender was a mechanism for the trivialisation of women's political beliefs, and the denigration of female opinion as sentimental or sexualised. Although for some women, commitment to the Stuart cause entailed serious political and military engagement,<sup>118</sup> decades of suppression had encouraged the development of a magnetic culture of codes and messages, intrigue and mystery.<sup>119</sup> By 1745, many once-Jacobite families had superficially switched allegiance to the Hanoverians, but retained cultural loyalties, and many young women must have grown up with Jacobite songs and stories.<sup>120</sup> Whilst 'Miss Fletcher' had 'her own faith [...] greatly at heart',<sup>121</sup> some Hanoverian ladies were less able to resist the glamour and excitement of a royal prince and attendant court.<sup>122</sup>

Magdalen Pringle described ladies hanging out of Edinburgh's windows, throwing their handkerchiefs and clapping as James was proclaimed King from the mercat cross, but cautioned 'Don't imagine I was one of those Ladies. I assure you I was not.'<sup>123</sup> A month later, however, she had visited Charles in camp, and was rhapsodising over his person which 'seems to be Cut out for enchanting his beholders and carrying People to consent to their own slavery in spite of themselves', adding 'I

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<sup>115</sup> He took several drafts to work out the precise wording of this passage. MS16621 ff.214-218, scrolls to Sir Everard Fawkener [secretary to the Duke of Cumberland], July 1746. Haydn Mason, 'Fawkener, Sir Everard (1694–1758)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9228>, accessed 18 July 2006].

<sup>116</sup> Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p.29.

<sup>117</sup> *The Female Rebels: Being Some Remarkable Incidents of the Lives, Characters, and Families of the Titular Duke and Dutchess of Perth, the Lord and Lady Ogilvie, and of Miss Florence M'Donald, containing Several Particulars of these Remarkable Persons not hitherto published* (Edinburgh, 1747), esp. pp.5-6.

<sup>118</sup> Craig, *Damn' Rebel Bitches*; Craig, 'Fair Sex Turns Ugly'.

<sup>119</sup> Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics*, p.22

<sup>120</sup> Sankey and Szechi, 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism'.

<sup>121</sup> NLS, MS16627 f.97, Col. Sir G. Howard to Lady Milton, 19 July 1746, Stirling.

<sup>122</sup> Gwyn Vaughan lamented the reported presence at Holyrood of Ladies on the Exchequer's charity roll. NLS, MS16638 ff.82-3, to Milton, 11 March 1745-6.

<sup>123</sup> To Isabella Pringle, Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 1745, Edinburgh, in Henrietta Taylor (ed.) *A Jacobite Miscellany: Eight Original Papers on the Rising of 1745-1746*, Roxburghe Club, (Oxford, 1948), p.39.



don't believe Cesar was more engagingly form'd nor more dangerous to ye liberties of his country'.<sup>124</sup> Attendance at Holyrood may have been as much a product of curiosity as it was a sign of deeper allegiance; a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness not just royalty but the very incarnation of centuries of Scottish history. For those with a vested interest in the Hanoverian regime, however, the potency of Charles' personal attraction appears to have been genuinely disturbing.

Eighteenth-century Jacobitism has been described as 'a mobile script' which 'was deployed in a variety of contexts and could generate multiple meanings'.<sup>125</sup> The expression of Jacobite sentiments or muted admiration for the cause could be used as 'an idiom of defiance'<sup>126</sup> in ways that were not directly political, and it is in this light that Margaret Calderwood's above-quoted comments on 'speaking jacobitism'<sup>127</sup> ought probably to be seen, as expressing a general disaffection with the political *status quo*. But it is difficult to imagine such sentiments predominating during the rising itself, especially when the inhabitants of Edinburgh were caught up in a real military conflict in which lives were lost in the city streets. In October 1745, the teenage Lady Jean Murray informed her father James, Duke of Atholl, of how 'we saw daily cannon balls entering into the opposite houses, and killing people just at our Door.'<sup>128</sup>

When elite women's Jacobite actions were not considered to transgress gender norms, they did not need to suffer any long-running consequences. But where their involvement was understood to be more seriously political, and, more importantly, where the women in question held real influence and authority over land and people, repercussions could be far more serious. This is evidence in the contrasting treatment of Jacobitism's most famous heroine, Flora Macdonald, and her kinswoman, Lady Margaret.<sup>129</sup> The former was sentimentalised even whilst imprisoned in London, her smuggling of the Young Pretender across Skye presented as leaving her 'still the Character of a Woman, possessed of all that amiable Softness

<sup>124</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> October 1745, Edinburgh, in Taylor (ed.) *Jacobite Miscellany*, p.40.

<sup>125</sup> Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford, 1998), p.53.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50.

<sup>127</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', p.266.

<sup>128</sup> *Chronicles of the Atholl and Tulibardine Families*, collected and arranged by John, Seventh Duke of Atholl, K.T. (Edinburgh, 1908) vol.3, pp. 60-61, from La Mancha [Major Cochrane's house outside Edinburgh].

<sup>129</sup> Brought up by an Episcopalian Jacobite mother, she married into a family which was Jacobite in 1715, and pro-government in little more than name in 1745.

of Temper and Constitution that adorn the Fair', her only fault being to carry 'these social and endearing Virtues of Mercy and Compassion to an unreasonable Height.'<sup>130</sup> Yet the actions of Lady Margaret, suspected, with much justification, of aiding the Pretender in a number of ways, not least in offering her house as a hiding place (an offer reneged upon when Flora arrived with him)<sup>131</sup> were viewed as overtly political.

Although she used her connections to high-ranking Hanoverian officials to escape immediate repercussions,<sup>132</sup> government agents such as General Humphrey Bland were well aware of the political clout which this widowed mother of a young clan chief could hope to wield over large swathes of Skye and Uist, not just during her young son Sir James' minority, but through her influence on him during his formative years. By 1754, she had moved away from the island, but returned that summer to inspect the management of her son's lands. Bland informed the Earl of Holderness that her remaining there:

is very improper at this Juncture, as it can only tend towards her keeping up the Spirit of Disaffection amongst the People there, and inspire her son with the high notions of Clanship, and the Arbitrary proceedings Exercised by his Ancestors towards their Tennants and followers, which we must by all Means prevent, and make him know that he is only a Subject, and not King of the Isles, as that Family Vainly imagined themselves, but shew him that he is as lyable to the Law as the meanest of his Tenants. I have given such Orders to the Captain who is now march'd into the Isle of Sky with a Detachment of General Skelton's Regiment, as will make that Place too hot for her continuing there much longer; and make her think it more prudent for her to return to Edinburgh with her son.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> *The Female Rebels*, p.54.

<sup>131</sup> 'Captain Donald Roy MacDonald's narrative', in *The Lyon in Mourning*, vol.2, pp.7-16, 26, 29, 33; 'Hugh MacDonald of Balshar's paper', *Ibid.*, p.100.

<sup>132</sup> Although she protested her innocence to Duncan Forbes of Culloden (24 July 1746, Skye in H. R. Duff (ed.), *Culloden Papers* (London, 1815), pp. 290-1) her cover was blown by her husband, Alexander Macdonald to Lord President Culloden, 29 July 1746, Fort Augustus, in *Culloden Papers*, p.291. Lord Milton had been her tutor since the death of her father, the 9th Earl of Eglinton, in 1729. As Sankey and Szechi have shown, personal and familial connections not only cut across the fault-lines of political party, but, they argued, seriously reduced the potential for the successful outcome of this rising. 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism', esp. pp.127-8.

<sup>133</sup> The National Archives [hereafter TNA] State Papers, SP54/44/15A, 13 June 1754, Edr. I would like to thank Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart for pointing me towards these references. For more on this, see Glasgow University Archive Services, UGD37 John Campbell, J.A. Campbell and J. L. Campbell & Lamond, /2, 'Papers of MacDonald of MacDonald.' I am very grateful to Alex Murdoch for first acquainting me with the existence of this fascinating source.

Lady Margaret's influence over the people of Skye was deemed sufficiently damaging to Whig political interests for armed forces to be deployed. Although Bland acknowledged his impotence in calling her to account unless she 'wore the Highland Dress and Carried Arms contrary to Law, or committed Theft', he knew he could hurt her through her tenants, and subsequent letters referred to the prosecutions he carried out amongst Macdonald's people in Skye, acknowledging, 'I acquainted the Trustees that her behaviour brought these Prosecutions on her People, and that I would certainly carry them on, unless she consented to her Sons being Educated in England.'<sup>134</sup> Bland knew that despite Lady Margaret's popularity in Skye, her authority over the population there and in Uist was tenable only through her relationship with her son. His ultimate aim was that Lady Margaret should agree to hand over Sir James, who, it was rumoured, was being educated by a known non-juror,<sup>135</sup> to be educated in Hanoverian principles in England. He eventually succeeded, Sir James, who remained close to his mother until his early death, being educated at Eton and Oxford in what was essentially an acknowledgement of a mother's ability to exert a political influence not just the over her son, but over the people who lived under her authority.<sup>136</sup> Lady Margaret's experience is a reminder of the degree to which women's lives could be politicised, and, in an exceptional circumstance, of the seriousness with which women's political activity could be taken.

### Women, Presbyterianism and the Public

For many gentlewomen, the one state institution which was regularly frequented and comfortably familiar was the church, attendance at which almost certainly figured as a more important event in the life of a woman who, perhaps, had few opportunities to leave her country house and meet with other people, than that of

<sup>134</sup> TNA, SP54/44/34, to Earl of Holderness, 13 August 1754, Edr.

<sup>135</sup> TNA, SP54/44/15C, Copy to Margaret Macdonald, 12 June 1754, Edinburgh.

<sup>136</sup> Chalus and Montgomery interpret this episode slightly differently, using Lady Margaret's petitions in the British Library Newcastle Papers as evidence of 'financial scheming' to get the government to pay for Sir James' education, and to secure the support of the administration in local power struggles, 'Women and Politics', pp.230-1. The education of the Highland gentry had been politicised since at least 1609, when James VI decreed in the Statutes of Iona that they should educate their sons in the Lowlands. See also Rosalind K. Marshall, 'Gordon, Henrietta, duchess of Gordon (1681/2-1760)', *ODNB* [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/72726>, accessed 8 Aug 2006]. Henrietta was paid a government pension to bring up her children as protestants, but this was cancelled after she served Charles Edward Stuart a roadside breakfast in 1745.

a man for whom it was just one component of a busy week. However, Bridget Hill noted that feminist historians have on the whole tended to underplay the importance of religion to women,<sup>137</sup> whilst historians of eighteenth-century Scotland have similarly tended to overlook the continuing significance of devotion, particularly amongst the elite.<sup>138</sup> This section argues, however, that the intensely personal relationship between women and piety created one of the most important channels for elite women's participation in the public.

In a recent work on *Women's Life-writing in Early Modern Scotland*, David Mullan asked how women's experience of religion compared with that of men:

Was women's religious experience somehow more intense, more internal, more unrelenting in its psychological significance? Were women subject to a greater tendency toward melancholy and depression? And if so, might this be related to many of them having fewer means of escape from an internal world dominated by Augustinian notions of the self, but lacking his, and contemporary man's passage into an exterior world of activity and power and self-worth?<sup>139</sup>

Whilst clearly impossible to answer in full, a tentative overall 'yes' may be posited. Women had fewer means of escaping their own mental world and finding distraction in the hurry of business, whilst the dangers of childbirth could bring death frequently and alarmingly close.<sup>140</sup> Religious reading, as has been seen, dominated women's literary experience at a time when print culture was one of the few meaningful ways

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<sup>137</sup> Bridget Hill, *Women Alone: Spinsters in England 1660-1850* (New Haven and London, 2001), p.143. In comparison, in an early modern context, Mendelson and Crawford argued that religious devotion was one of the most important factors in shaping women's experiences, *Women in Early Modern England*, p.255. In Wales, the primacy of women's participation in early Methodism was one of the starting points for the study of eighteenth-century women's history, Eryn M. White, 'Women, Religion and Education in Eighteenth-Century Wales', in Michael Roberts and Simone Clarke (eds.), *Women and Gender in Early Modern Wales* (Cardiff, 2000).

<sup>138</sup> E.g., this is noted in David Allan, 'Protestantism, Presbyterianism and National Identity in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650-c.1850* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. pp.193-196. His attempt to re-insert religion into the mainstream of eighteenth-century Scottish history is most obvious in its prominence in his survey, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century: Union and Enlightenment* (Harlow, 2002). John R. McIntosh, *Church and Theology in Enlightenment Scotland: The Popular Party, 1740-1800* (East Linton, 1998), p.1, attributed this relative lack of attention to the importance of churchmen to the Scottish Enlightenment, leading scholars to focus on other areas of their lives, e.g., Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1985).

<sup>139</sup> 'Introduction', to David Mullan (ed.), *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c.1670-c.1730* (Aldershot, 2003), p.19.

<sup>140</sup> Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe Vol.1, 1500-1800* (London, 1995), p.192.

in which many women could engage with the world beyond their homes.<sup>141</sup> As Patricia Crawford has argued, although it suited the educated male mind to make a 'natural' link between women's 'less reasoned' minds and religion because 'it involved belief rather than reason', female piety was in fact the product of a society which allowed women few means of self-expression.<sup>142</sup> Yet as well as emphasising women's submissive role, the Bible could legitimise women's spiritual authority,<sup>143</sup> and in Scotland, the religious struggles of the seventeenth century witnessed autonomous female involvement in radical religion which left as its legacy a concept of a religious public sphere in which women could participate with the justification of God. This gave women an element of choice in the spiritual leaders they chose to follow, in the exercising of which they regularly pursued a very different path from that of their husbands.<sup>144</sup> The Calvinist soul was in charge of its own spiritual destiny, necessitating constant self-examination.<sup>145</sup> Presbyterianism emphasised predestination and the need for individuals to undergo a profound conversion experience, potentially presenting Presbyterian Scotswomen with a strong, if subconscious, legitimising basis for an engagement in the world beyond their own soul.

Women and the young, especially unmarried women, tended to predominate in religious revivals:<sup>146</sup> conspicuously, subordinate social groups. The revival at Cambuslang in 1742 was particularly associated with women, although largely of the lower social ranks.<sup>147</sup> The spiritual diary kept by the devoutly religious Janet Clerk, wife of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, suggests she had difficulty working out how to react to the revival. In September 1742 she wrote:

since I came home I have been reading a narrative of the Lords dealings with the people att Kelsith and other parishes where there seems to be a great down powering of the spiret by the many

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<sup>141</sup> See Chapter 3, pp.88-91.

<sup>142</sup> Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England 1500-1720* (London and New York, 1993), pp.185, 75-5. Bridget Hill presents a similar argument in *Women Alone*, p.147.

<sup>143</sup> Anne Stott, 'Women and Religion', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850. An Introduction* (London and New York, 2005), p.102.

<sup>144</sup> 'Introduction', to David Mullan (ed.), *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c.1670-c.1730* (Aldershot, 2003), p.17.

<sup>145</sup> William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin, A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (Oxford, 1988), pp.179-80.

<sup>146</sup> Ned Landsman, 'Evangelists and their Hearers: Popular Interpretations of Revivalist Preaching in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Journal of British Studies*, 28 (April 1989), p.131.

<sup>147</sup> T. C. Smout, 'Born Again at Cambuslang: New Evidence on Popular Religion and Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *P&P*, 97 (1982), pp.116-117.

convictions and conversions of the people Lord go on conquering and to conquer and pardon me wherein I have thought or said amiss concerning this work and now O heavenly father for thy son's sake spread this work over all[.]<sup>148</sup>

On the whole, the gentry were not attracted to radical religion, and the subversion of order which was implied by its popularity amongst those of lowly status. Janet's husband wrote to her brother blaming Whitefield for encouraging men to take time off work, and assessing the damage of the revival in terms of its cost to the national economy,<sup>149</sup> but the ambiguity of her own position as both a woman and a member of the landed classes is evident in the uncertainty of her reactions. In the above quotation, she seems to have been repenting previous sceptical views on the revival, yet her ambivalence over how to react to radical preaching was still evident in 1751, when she begged, 'Oh Lord forgive me if it be a fault that I cannot follow Mr Whitfield as a great many even good people doo you seem to think and say he does more good by his preaching than any of the ministers of the church of Scotland ever did this was a hard saying to me.'<sup>150</sup> Janet saw God's approval in the popularity of the nonconformist preachers, and was evidently prepared to give some thought to the issue, yet loyalty to the established church was instinctive in one of her rank. The very fact that she kept such a diary, reminiscent of seventeenth-century practices which had become distinctly old-fashioned,<sup>151</sup> testifies to her unusually devout Presbyterianism.

References to church-going as a regular part of elite women's social lives proved largely elusive in the sources on which this thesis has been based. When speculating on how life would be if he had his family with him in Rome, Robert Adam noted that his mother would have no reason to stir from his apartment as 'there is no Church which is her greatest temptation'.<sup>152</sup> This may be interpreted as the action of a particularly devout older woman; Janet Clerk attracted criticism for self-

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<sup>148</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/262-3, 21 September 1742. A number of works were published on the Cambuslang revival in 1742.

<sup>149</sup> Smout, 'Born Again at Cambuslang', p.117.

<sup>150</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/412, 2 August 1751.

<sup>151</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), p.287.

<sup>152</sup> NAS, GD18/4803, to Jenny Adam, 25 March 1756, Rome.

righteousness on the basis of attending week-day sermons in Edinburgh.<sup>153</sup> Yet attendance at church appears to have been expected of women, playing a regular part in their lives: when Jean, the teenage daughter of James, Duke of Atholl eloped with Lord Crawford, it was by ‘pretending to go to Lady Somervill’s, from whence she was to go to Chappell’, that she managed to escape successfully.<sup>154</sup> In 1742, Beatrix Maxwell wrote to Marion Lauder of how she feared her minister’s head had been turned by disappointment in love, ‘for he raves at the Strangest rate ever you heard’, sometimes talking ‘of nothing but pretty women [...] at other times again he rails at the whole Sex and Calls them Coquetts and deceitfull and I dont know what’. Although this appears to refer to conversation as opposed to sermons, she nevertheless believed Marion would be able to tell from this what sort of preachings they would get.<sup>155</sup> By the 1750s, the pulpits of Moderate ministers like Hugh Blair, William Robertson and Alexander Carlyle were acting as organs for the spread of politeness in and around Edinburgh.<sup>156</sup> For some, attending church may have been almost a form of polite sociability and entertainment; for others, perhaps more isolated, acquaintance with a minister may have afforded a rare opportunity for conversation with an educated man. Elite women’s social responsibilities towards the poor could coincide with those of churchmen.<sup>157</sup> The church thus had the potential to perform multiple functions in the relationship between women and the society in which they lived.

In her spiritual diary, Janet Clerk often referred to worship in church as ‘publick’, as opposed to her private devotions at home,<sup>158</sup> and there is a sense that at least some women felt a real possessiveness, possibly vested in their own spirituality, in their relationship with the church as a public institution. Janet felt no qualms about using this diary to criticise her minister at Penicuik, Mr Brown. On one

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<sup>153</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/301, 22 March 1745, p’cook.

<sup>154</sup> Capt. Murray to James, Duke of Atholl, 3 March 1747, Edinburgh, in *Chronicles of the Atholl and Tullibardine Families*, vol. 3, p.356.

<sup>155</sup> NAS, GD113/5/66A/7, 7 January 1742. This was the Rev. Robert Wodrow, whose marriage in 1743 hopefully ended these troubles. *Fasti, vol.3, Synod of Glasgow and Ayr*, (Edinburgh, 1920; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1868), p.136.

<sup>156</sup> For the preaching styles of the Edinburgh ministers, see Thomas Somerville, *My Own Life and Times 1741-1814*, with an Introduction by Richard B. Sher, (Bristol, 1996; 1<sup>st</sup> edn., 1861), pp.57-62.

<sup>157</sup> Somerville wrote of the help he was given by Agnes Elliot in mitigating the sufferings of the poor when minister at Minto. *Ibid.*, p.126. He was ordained there in 1767 (*ibid.*, p.118).

<sup>158</sup> E.g., NAS, GD18/2098/510, 6 June 1756, Mavisbank,

occasion in 1755 she noted that she had not attended the church, as he was 'not behaving in his parish as [she] and every good Christain could wish.'<sup>159</sup> Four years previously he had annoyed her by going away on the grounds of his wife's health and not providing the promised replacement minister, forcing her to provide her own devotions at home.<sup>160</sup> She made quite clear her sense of her own private responsibility for making up the shortcomings of her publicly-appointed minister.

Women of all ranks were well-known for their outspoken verbal, sometimes physical, attacks on ministers of whom they disapproved, a not insignificant issue in an era when church patronage and the right of landowners to appoint ministers was a major political concern.<sup>161</sup> Mary Mackenzie wrote to her brother, John Mackenzie WS, of how 'the Female audience' at the church of Kinclaven would not allow the new minister, Mr Freer, to preach, 'but drag'd [him] out of the pulpit & threw stones' at him.<sup>162</sup> Similarly, Willy Alston wrote to Milton from Duns of how a Mr Dickson had been newly ordained as a minister there, 'with no Disorder, Except from the tongues of a few idle Women.'<sup>163</sup> As Mary Campbell of Boquhan, who often tried to influence church appointments, pointed out, 'few knows but those who lives near where Ministers are put in intirely against a Whole Parish Except three or four Hretors what ill Blood it makes and Carreys away Numbers to the Seceders.'<sup>164</sup> Although as keen as any landowner to manipulate the patronage system when it

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<sup>159</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/501, 14 December 1755, penny. No controversy is noted in Brown (ordained 1746)'s entry in *Fasti, vol. 1, Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale* (Edinburgh, 1915; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1866), p.345.

<sup>160</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/410, 1 July 1751, Penny.

<sup>161</sup> The 1712 Patronage Act reintroduced the right of landowners, rather than congregations, to appoint church ministers. Although part of a wider range of measures aimed at appeasing the Scottish landowning classes for the losses incurred by Union, it was deeply unpopular amongst most of the population who saw it as out of kilter with the Presbyterian church.

<sup>162</sup> NLS, MS1211 f.111, 30 November 1741, Delvin. This was presumably a temporary minister, his predecessor (who continued to preach after his deposition by the General Assembly, first in the church and then in a tent) having left for an Associate Presbyterian congregation in Glasgow the preceding month, *Fasti, vol. 4, Synods of Argyll, and of Perth and Stirling* (Edinburgh, 1923; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1869-70), p.162.

<sup>163</sup> NLS, MS16669 f.27, 23 September 1750. This lack of disorder is perhaps not surprising given the military protection he was afforded, his presentation having been ordered by the House of Lords. *Fasti, vol. 2, Synods of Merse and Teviotdale, Dumfries, and Galloway* (Edinburgh, 1917; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1867), p.10.

<sup>164</sup> NLS, MS16699 f.91, to Milton, 30 July 1757, Boquhan. James Boswell's grandmother's letters show a similarly active interest in local church patronage, *My Very Dearest Sweet Heart, or, Boswell Before Boswell. Letters of the Lady Elizabeth Boswell (1704 to 1711, and 1733) Life before the Biographer*, ed. David R. Boswell (Bath, 2003), esp. pp.74-5, 80-1.



suiting her, she was also aware of how to use the issue itself to influence what she, without any apparent sense of inappropriateness, referred to as ‘our Cause.’

Mostly, such issues emerged from women’s sense of involvement in and responsibility for the local, which was embedded in their familial responsibilities. But, as Janet Clerk’s diary shows, through her charting of the successes and failures of British military endeavours, women’s private religious beliefs could provide a means of relating to the national. With reference to ‘our affairs abroad’,<sup>165</sup> she acknowledged that ‘prayer is the only thing poor I am capable of’, pleading:

thou wouldst be pleasd to be on our side when men rise up against us O inspire our armies and fleets with Courage and conduct and our king and his Counsillers with judement to give right advice and let the whole be under they devine derection and protection for Christs sake that so no weapon formed against our Church or state may prosper.<sup>166</sup>

For her, it was ‘our armies and fleets’, ‘our’ king, ‘our’ church, and ‘our’ state, and although she described herself as only ‘weak,’ she could feel some sense of patriotic endeavour through prayer. In 1748 she had reacted to news of the British defeat at Maastricht by ‘returning to prayer and meditation and reading.’<sup>167</sup> Although her actions were entirely within the most conservative prescriptions for elite women’s behaviour, she was neither emotionally nor ideologically isolated from the concerns of Britain as a nation at war; nor, to her mind, was she unable to intercede.

For Janet, these were primarily wars of religion. In 1744, during the War of the Austrian Succession when Britain was engaged against France and Spain, she prayed ‘that the Lord will not give his [...] praess to Graven Images.’<sup>168</sup> Her diary suggests she saw Britain as a nation of Protestants united against a Catholic other, and herself as part of a British community of prayer.<sup>169</sup> Yet whilst appearing from this to conform to Linda Colley’s thesis of Britishness, which plays down the fissions within the Protestant community to emphasise the much greater rift between

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<sup>165</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/313, 16 August 1745, Penicuik.

<sup>166</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/509, 23 May 1756, Mavisbank.

<sup>167</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/356, 4 July 1747, Penicuik.

<sup>168</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/281, 13 March 1744.

<sup>169</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/347, 8 January 1747, penny, refers to the ‘many joint prayers put up throw britain’.

Protestants and Catholics ‘forged’ during the many wars of the eighteenth century,<sup>170</sup> she was deeply aware of herself as a Presbyterian with separate devotional practices from those who worshipped in the Church of England.<sup>171</sup> Colley’s emphasis on ‘otherness’ has been questioned: for Claydon and McBride, Protestantism ‘defined the outer circle of nationality’ but was not an unstoppable dynamic uniting force.<sup>172</sup> David Allan has noted the utility to eighteenth-century thinkers in the period of and after the Seven Years War, of equating both Scottish and English interests ‘with the triumph of what were held to be quintessential protestant values – including thrift, industry, tenaciousness and self-sacrifice’:<sup>173</sup> a much more malleable concept than the privileging of precise theological positions.

In the following admittedly rather confused account of a dream she had had thirteen months before, Janet seems to have transferred to the British nation the conversion experience which all Calvinists ought to undergo:

being much encouraged this day in hopes of some favourable event to britain I must remark a Dream I had the begining of may last year that I saw the british arms in great Glorie in the Sky and Darkness in the opposite side this I saw affter my coming throw many dificulties and fancing the place was on fire this night dreaming of fire wakt in a fright but am made to hope  
I remark that on opening my bible the scriptur Mathew 5.18 was the first words I observed which surprized me and led me to Isaiah 51.6 left up your eyes to the heaven &c this brought the dream in my mind with confidence in hops of the goodness of god to us however undeserving we are.<sup>174</sup>

It may be that in her mind the perils of rebellion at home and the War of the Austrian Succession overseas were transformed into a kind of conversion crisis from which Britain would emerge strengthened and complete, and not without traces of the

<sup>170</sup> Colley, *Britons*; Linda Colley, ‘Britishness and Otherness: An Argument’, *Journal of British Studies*, 31 (1992), esp. pp.316-321.

<sup>171</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/159, 16 September 1734.

<sup>172</sup> Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, ‘The Trials of the Chosen Peoples: Recent Interpretations of Protestantism and National Identity in Britain and Ireland’, in Claydon and McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity*, p.26.

<sup>173</sup> Allan, ‘Protestantism and Presbyterianism’, p.197.

<sup>174</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/368, 18 April 1748, Penny. Matthew 5.18 reads: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled,’ whilst Isaiah 51.6 reads: ‘Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look up on the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.’

'missionary' zeal which Claydon and McBride believe characteristic of eighteenth-century British Protestantism.<sup>175</sup> Similarly, in 1745 Janet wished for a victory 'over these our enemies who have risen up against us O my Lord thou can bring good out of Evil and can make our present distress a mean to establish they Church and the state more firm.'<sup>176</sup> These sorts of desires also fit Claydon and McBride's suggestion that Protestantism in a British context is best viewed as 'an anxious aspiration, rather than as a triumphal description,' with Britons united by a conveniently unspecified desire to work towards an ideally reformed state (and perhaps their anxieties about not yet having done so).<sup>177</sup> For Janet Clerk, there appears to have been no contradiction in a mental and emotional affiliation between the emergent British state and a Scottish church which carried connotations of far older loyalties, and her understanding of the workings of Calvinist Protestantism helped to make sense of the growth of British common interests in a Protestant context.<sup>178</sup>

If unusual in their old-fashioned spirituality, Janet Clerk's diaries show that whilst Scots could retain their sense of religious difference, they did not necessarily perceive it as a negative force which was essentially disruptive to British unity. If not in every family, differences between Presbyterian and Episcopalian, which had so scarred the seventeenth century, were increasingly eliding under not just the influence of the Moderate party in the church, but from the increasing incidence of intermarriage between the Scots and English elite. The fourth Marquis of Tweeddale, who married an Englishwoman and whose children grew up mainly in London, was given the approval of his father-in-law Lord Granville to have one of his daughters baptised in the Church of Scotland, since she happened to be born there.<sup>179</sup> Similarly, John Gregory, whose daughters, like their mother, were brought up in the Church of England, wrote in his best-selling *Father's Legacy to his Daughters* that 'You will probably wonder at my having educated you in a church

<sup>175</sup> Claydon and McBride, 'Trials of the Chosen Peoples', p.7.

<sup>176</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/321, 2 November 1745, Durham.

<sup>177</sup> Claydon and McBride, 'Trials of the Chosen Peoples', pp.27-29.

<sup>178</sup> David Allan provided examples of other eighteenth-century Scots who used traditional Presbyterian modes of writing to ponder the afflictions of Britain during, for instance, the Seven Years War. Allan, 'Protestantism and Presbyterianism', pp.200-202.

<sup>179</sup> NLS, MS14420 f.132, Granville to Tweeddale, 15 March 1749-50, Hannes. He wrote 'I intirely agree with yr Lp, yt ye child shou'd be Baptized, according to ye Church of Scotland in ye bosom of wch, She has been born; & as I have reason to have an opinion of my Daughters good sense, I can't Suppose but yt she will be sensible of ye decency, & propriety of such a proceeding.'

different from my own. The reason was plainly this: I looked on the differences between our churches to be of no real importance, and that a preference of one to the other was a mere matter of taste.<sup>180</sup> What had less than a hundred years previously been a matter of enmity and bloodshed, had come down, in some if not all sections of elite society, to that most polite of eighteenth-century preoccupations: taste.<sup>181</sup>

### Conclusion

Whilst the formal aspects of public life remained off-limits to women, and the dictates of prescription demanded women refrain from ‘interfering’ in the public, an analysis of women’s activities demonstrates that women were not removed from political activity. Family responsibility required participation in the networks of patronage which held together eighteenth-century society, a task which demanded an understanding of the workings of the system and an up-to-date knowledge of who held the strings of power. The powers of persuasion that women were believed to hold over their politically powerful husbands, fathers and brothers coloured their own social relationships, potentially politicising women’s friendships, and giving some women a real degree of influence in deciding where favour should be directed. The workings of the patronage system contributed towards the maintenance of family interests in the locality, which, at election times, demanded even greater participation from women, whose relationship with the locality was often closer than that of their menfolk. The social networks in which the women of political families moved were infused with the political, and women could use the venues and relationships of feminine sociability to open up otherwise closed avenues of political influence or information.

Yet whilst these modes of participation in the public were expected of elite women and regarded as entirely normal, when women did appear to be behaving in a destabilisingly politicised way, as during the 1745-6 Jacobite rising, their actions were viewed as symptomatic of wider social and political malaise. This revealed

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<sup>180</sup> John Gregory, *A Father’s Legacy to his Daughters* (Edinburgh, 1821; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1774), p.160.

<sup>181</sup> Somerville portrayed a decline in animosity towards Episcopacy during his life-time, *My Own Life and Times*, p.65. Lady Jean Murray’s disgust at being ordered to attend kirk rather than chapel may be attributed to her generally rebellious behaviour. To Duke James, 19 December 1745, Edr, in *Chronicles of the Atholl and Tullibardine Families*, vol. 3, pp.128-9.

both the theoretical importance of appropriately feminine behaviour to the stability of the body politic, and the potency of female support as a means of belittling a political cause. The actions taken against women who held real political influence are a reminder of the seriousness with which women's political authority could be treated.

Finally, women's inner spirituality provided another channel through which, in combination with their sense of connection with their locality, gentlewomen could form a sense of responsibility to express opinion as part of a public. Although invested primarily in the local, this could extend to create a sense of being part of a much wider national public, a relationship which, as formed through travel, the next chapter shall examine in more detail.

## 6. Mobility and Travel

### Introduction. 'Removing from place to place'

'We propose to go for Mavisbank on the 7<sup>th</sup>' wrote Janet Clerk of Penicuik in her devotional diary in June 1748. 'O that my removing from place to place may not hinder me in my dutie but rather stir me up.'<sup>1</sup> Writing, as was her habit, from the family house at Penicuik, she had only just arrived back from a visit to her daughter Janet at Bonhill in the Vale of Leven, with time spent at Luss on the shores of Loch Lomond. Later that summer, she travelled south-west to Dumcrieff near Moffat to visit her son George and his wife.<sup>2</sup> What she was recording was by any standards a busy travel schedule, yet one that was by no means exceptional amongst the women of the mid-eighteenth-century Scottish gentry. 'Travel served to educate young men; women, apparently, could be educated at home', argued Kristi Siegel in a recent work on women's travel writing.<sup>3</sup> Yet, as has been seen, if women's education did not encompass overseas travel, neither was it confined to the home, and young women did travel to stay with other households and attend school.<sup>4</sup> Eldest sons could expect to die in the same house in which they were born; younger brothers perhaps on another family property, but women, brought up to enter a new family upon marriage, could expect to spend their adult lives somewhere quite alien to where they grew up. Having experience of different places and ways of doing things was thus arguably as important a preparation for adult life for daughters as it was for sons. That this was not what Siegel meant when she used the word 'travel' is obvious, but such statements throw into light the perhaps surprising reluctance of scholars to consider the multiple connotations of 'travel' beyond the very self-conscious act of tourism.

Historical interest in travel tends to focus on the later-eighteenth century, particularly from the 1770s, which witnessed the popularising of travel (not least in

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<sup>1</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/369, 5 June 1748, penny.

<sup>2</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/373, 14 August 1748, penny.

<sup>3</sup> Kristi Siegel, 'Women's Travel and the Rhetoric of Peril: It is Suicide to Be Abroad', in idem (ed.), *Gender, Genre and Identity in Women's Travel Writing* (New York, 2004), p.58.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 2, pp.55-69.

Scotland) based around an appreciation of aesthetics and the picturesque,<sup>5</sup> whilst the earlier period has been dominated by the elitism, masculinity and classicism of the Grand Tour.<sup>6</sup> Yet this was not travel as experienced by most men, and even less so by women.<sup>7</sup> An over-reliance on published travel narratives and travel writing, often composed long after the event and written with attractiveness to publishers and a readership in mind, has led to a skewed impression of eighteenth-century travel experiences.<sup>8</sup> Recent work by Katherine Turner has provided a welcome diversion in its focus on the increasing numbers of middle-rank travellers, and particularly women, whose narratives began to emerge around the middle of the century.<sup>9</sup> This chapter argues that an examination of travel's more workaday meanings is necessary to any attempt to understand the ways in which women moved from one place to another, and interpreted these journeys and destinations. It therefore examines travel both as a simple means of getting from place to place, and as the loaded concept, with implications of a critical investigation of difference and otherness, which tends to form the basis of most scholarly works on travel. In viewing both of these as part of a continuum of movement which was a constant in gentlewomen's lives, it asks what can be learnt about women's sense of their relationship to their society from the ways in which they responded – or did not consider it worthwhile to respond – to the environments in which they found themselves.

This chapter begins by stripping the act of travel to its basics, and examining the normality of movement from place to place in the lives of elite women. It moves

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<sup>5</sup> E.g., Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Aldershot, 1989); Alastair J. Durie, *Scotland for the Holidays: A History of Tourism in Scotland, 1780-1939* (East Linton, 2003); Katherine Haldane Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland, 1770-1914: Creating Caledonia* (Aldershot, 2005); on a more popular level, Lynne Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel, 1750-1915* (London, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> E.g., Jeremy Black, *The British and The Grand Tour* (London, 1985); Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (New York and Stroud, 1992); Christopher Hibbert, *The Grand Tour* (London, 1987); Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830* (Manchester and New York, 1999). For earlier context, see John Stoye, *English Travellers Abroad, 1604-1667: Their Influences in English Society and Politics* (1952, rev. New Haven and London, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> For women's travel, see Elizabeth A. Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818* (Cambridge, 1995) (including a chapter on Mary Wortley Montagu from a literary perspective); Barbara Korte, *English Travel Writing: From Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*, trans. Catherine Matthias (Basingstoke and New York, 2000; 1<sup>st</sup> published Darmstadt, 1996); Siegel (ed.), *Gender, Genre and Identity*.

<sup>8</sup> Black, *British Abroad*, p.xiii.

<sup>9</sup> Katherine Turner, *British Travel Writers in Europe 1750-1800: Authorship, Gender and National Identity* (Aldershot, 2001).

on to examine the emerging preoccupations of leisured travel, asking how women responded to the country houses and estates they visited, and examining their use of spa resorts to reconfirm or renegotiate their social rank. With this in mind, it considers London as a destination particularly associated with female sociability. It ends by looking at women and overseas travel, focusing on Margaret Steuart Calderwood's 'Journey in England, Holland, and the Low Countries',<sup>10</sup> as a case study of the ways in which women could use travel writing as a means of expressing opinions about home and abroad.

#### 'This so journeying way of life:' A Peripatetic Existence

Janet Clerk's diary records a veritable merry-go-round of journeys between Edinburgh, Clerk estates at Penicuik and Mavisbank, and visits to her children, particularly those mentioned above, leading her to plead, 'O Lord help me in this so journeying way of life'.<sup>11</sup> Although the fact that it was almost always at Penicuik that she wrote her spiritual diary suggests it was there that she felt most at home, or at least had fewest demands on her time, 'home' and 'family' were concepts that could be associated with a number of different locations. Broadly speaking, landed families spent the winter in town and the summer on their estates, but even on a day-to-day level (if concentrated in summertime) the lives of the eighteenth-century landed elite were at times almost constantly peripatetic. If the Clerks' manoeuvres were more complex than many, the sense of movement *in perpetuum* is palpable in the correspondence of many gentry families, the act of moving from place to place an integral part of elite women's lives, as families and parts thereof moved from house to house and paid visits to friends.<sup>12</sup>

Most landed families inhabited more than one property, so that even the Fletcher family, whose estate at Saltoun was not far from Edinburgh, still spent most of their time at Brunstane, a property situated about six miles east of the city, which

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<sup>10</sup> Margaret Steuart Calderwood, 'A Journey in England, Holland, and the Low Countries' (1756) in *Coltness Collections*, 1608-1840, Maitland Club, (January 1842).

<sup>11</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/400, penny, Sep 10<sup>th</sup> 1750. The next year she thanked God 'that the pleasure I had in thee weekly sermons in some measure helped to make up the uneasiness the removing from place to place made, GD18/2098/412, 2 August 1751.

<sup>12</sup> For a postillion boy's-, later a footman's-eye view of this in the household of the sister of Lady Frances Steuart, see John Macdonald, *Memoirs of an Eighteenth-Century Footman*, with an introduction by John Beresford (London, 1927; 1<sup>st</sup> published 1790), esp. pp.30-68.



they rented from the Duke of Argyll.<sup>13</sup> Prior to the completion of their Canongate townhouse, they rented a flat in town for the winter season.<sup>14</sup> In early summer, at least some of the family would spend a few weeks at health resorts either in the southern Highlands or closer to home in Moffat, whilst later on in the summer they would accompany the Duke of Argyll to Inveraray.<sup>15</sup> Individually tailored to each family's circumstances and commitments, these cycles of movement formed a fairly regular pattern for the older and unmarried Clerk and Fletcher women over the years, and were relatively contained in geographical terms. In families whose head was a Member of Parliament, women could experience a wider circle of movement, encompassing London and possibly excursions to resorts like Bath and Tunbridge Wells.

If the lives of most gentlewomen were cyclical on an annual basis, this was played out within the larger orbit of their life-cycle. Far more than those of men, women's lives were subject to external forces, and how and where they lived was as seldom the product of their own agency when viewed over the course of a lifetime as it was over any one year. Yet most gentlewomen could expect their lives to follow a general pattern. Despite the unusually politicised factors influencing them,<sup>16</sup> Lady Margaret Macdonald's movements demonstrate some of the ways in which stages in women's life-cycle were associated with particular types of location and life-style.<sup>17</sup> As a young girl she had experienced a spell in Bath with schooling in London,<sup>18</sup> and later on she and her sisters were admired as beauties as they were carried in their sedan chairs to the Edinburgh assembly.<sup>19</sup> Girlhood ended in 1739 with her marriage

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<sup>13</sup> Ian G. Lindsay and Mary Cosh, *Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll* (Edinburgh, 1973), p.17. Lord Milton and his family seem never to have used Saltoun as a regular residence, his mother and unmarried sister residing there until the death of the former in 1746, after which it passed to his son, Andrew.

<sup>14</sup> In December 1748, for instance, they were busy moving furniture to their new house, rented from Lord March, whilst Lord and Lady Cassilis took their former lodging. NLS, MS16659 ff.200-1, Belhaven to Andrew, 5 December 1748, Edinburgh. Plans for the house were underway by February 1755, NLS MS16690 f.35, Hary Barclay to Milton, 22 February 1755, Allantoun.

<sup>15</sup> For Moffat, see pp.206-210 below. For Inveraray, see Chapter 5, pp.163-6; pp.204-5 below.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 5, pp.177-9.

<sup>17</sup> For similar cycles, see Stana Nenadic, 'Experience and Expectations in the Transformation of the Highland Gentlewoman, 1680-1820', *SHR*, 80:2, No.210 (October 2001), pp.205-8; Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), pp.265-272.

<sup>18</sup> Rosalind K. Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980* (London, 1983), p.205.

<sup>19</sup> Henry Gray Graham, *A Group of Scottish Women* (London, 1908), p.165.

to a prominent Highland landowner, Sir Alexander Macdonald, 7th baronet of Sleat, soon after which they left Edinburgh for his estates in Skye. The sense of cultural dislocation felt by her second cousin Margaret Fletcher, brought up in and around Edinburgh, and taken briefly to Speyside on her marriage to John Grant of Easter Elchies, was examined in Chapter 4,<sup>20</sup> but the remoteness of the island situation in which Margaret Macdonald found herself was more pronounced than most, and, being a Gaelic-speaking area, one in which cultural distance was amplified.

On first arriving, she shrugged off the effects of the West Highland summer weather in keeping her indoors,<sup>21</sup> and seems initially to have thrown herself into the duties of the Highland lady with some gusto. In 1742, her first child was born, but it is unlikely that she was able to travel to town in order to lie in, as most women desired.<sup>22</sup> In the summer of 1743, she travelled south, presumably as far as Edinburgh,<sup>23</sup> but on her return, citing the effects of a growing family on dwindling finances, and the need to live frugally which was to dog her for the rest of her life, she noted to her friend and lawyer, John Mackenzie of Delvine, 'We talk'd pretty positively of Staying all nixt year in the Isle of Sky, which, for the Sake of your friends, you'll Lend your prayers to prevent.'<sup>24</sup> The following summer, her 'jant' was a rent-collecting mission to Uist,<sup>25</sup> and by this time she was already embarked on a campaign to point out to Mackenzie that 'our Retreate from the World has more the Shew of frugality than the Substance'<sup>26</sup> and that the couple ought to return south. By August 1746, provoked by her husband's projected solitary trip to London, she was becoming increasingly resentful about her isolation, declaring that her husband's company was 'the only bribe I have Ever had to make this Remote Corner tolerable', grudgingly adding 'I Shall never be So blind to Reason, or fond off my Self, as not to

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<sup>20</sup> See Chapter 4, pp.137-8.

<sup>21</sup> NLS MS1309 f.2, Margaret Macdonald to John Mackenzie, 8 July 1739, n.p. [Skye].

<sup>22</sup> Certainly, her three younger children were born in Skye. For Alexander: NLS, MS1308 f.185, Alexander Macdonald to Mackenzie, 11 March 1744, Mugstot; for Susan: Duncan Warrand (ed.), *More Culloden Papers*, (Inverness, 1923-30), vol.4, p.154, Sir Alexander Macdonald to Forbes of Culloden, 3 November 1745, Mugstot; for Archibald: NLS, MS1309 f.72, 19 July 1747, Mug<sup>s</sup>. Thomas Fordyce fretted over how to get his 'Extreamly Unwieldie' wife into Edinburgh.' NAS, GD113/3/219/10, to George Innes, 11 March 1745, Ayton; GD113/3/220/8, 25 March 1745, Ayton.

<sup>23</sup> NLS, MS1309 f.5, Margaret Macdonald to John Mackenzie, 1 June 1743, Falkirk.

<sup>24</sup> NLS, MS1309 f.9, 29 October 1743, Sky. This would seem to suggest that she might have hoped to leave the island at least once a year. As there is no extant correspondence for the period between 1739 and 1743, her previous movements remain unknown.

<sup>25</sup> NLS, MS1309 f.14, Margaret Macdonald to John Mackenzie, 1 July 1744, Sky.

<sup>26</sup> NLS, MS1309 f.17, 4 July 1744, Sky.

make a greater Sacrifice iff necessary, than adding one winter to the many I have pass in this Solitary Habitation.’<sup>27</sup>

Whilst her husband had political reasons for his projected visit, which he could have expected nevertheless to combine with pleasure, there was simply no practical reason why the wife of a debt-bound family, mother to three small children, should be afforded the opportunity she desired to spend a winter in Edinburgh. Although exacerbated by her highly specific political situation, some degree of isolation and withdrawal from ‘the world’ was not uncommon for women with growing families and shrinking purses.<sup>28</sup> If a man travelled to town alone, he could live relatively cheaply in an inn, but if accompanied by his wife, he would be expected to set up a household and entertain at home, a much more expensive prospect.<sup>29</sup> Margaret was angered by the subordination to family finances of what she saw as her right to see her friends, eventually comparing her situation unfavourably to that of a prisoner in Edinburgh castle, but she knew that even though her husband vowed he would never live in Edinburgh, the educational needs of her eldest son might provide an excuse for her to spend some time there.<sup>30</sup> Even when her husband died unexpectedly in 1746, she was constrained by a combination of pregnancy, estate business and the seasonal restrictions of travel with a young family, unable to leave the island for nearly two years.

Eventually, she moved south to the Scottish Lowlands, and later to London where she spent the remainder of her days, moving in the social circles surrounding her brother, the 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Eglintoun.<sup>31</sup> The town, with its easy access to provisions, company and amusements, was a desirable location for widows.

<sup>27</sup> NLS, MS1309 f.30, Margaret Macdonald to John Mackenzie, 27 August 1746.

<sup>28</sup> Nenadic, ‘Highland Gentlewoman’.

<sup>29</sup> Boswell, who was able to rent fairly cheap lodgings on the grounds that few would see them, pitied Lady Betty Macfarlane’s husband for having ‘house and footmen and coach and dress and entertainment of all kinds to pay’, *Boswell’s London Journal, 1762-1763*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle (1<sup>st</sup> published 1950; reprinted New Haven and London, 1992), pp.58, 64.

<sup>30</sup> NLS, MS1309 f.33, to John Mackenzie, 29 September 1746, Sky. Women could hope to spend time in town whilst their children were being educated there.

<sup>31</sup> Boswell recorded her presence amongst ‘a most elegant company’ at a breakfast and concert in Eglintoun’s townhouse on 7 December 1762, *Boswell’s London Journal*, p.70; NLS, MS1127 f.84, Elizabeth Mackenzie (née Chambers) to John Mackenzie, WS, 7 June 1768, Kensington, refers to her talking of her son’s marriage (of which she disapproved) ‘in all Publick Assemblies’. Initially, at least, she appears to have kept a house in Edinburgh, and spent some time there. NLS, MS16696 f.150, Margaret Macdonald to Lady Milton, April 1756. In June 1773, James Beattie saw her at Elizabeth Montagu’s. *James Beattie’s London Diary, 1773*, edited, with an Introduction, by Ralph S. Walker (Aberdeen, 1946), p.53.

Although in later life Frances Steuart Denham frequently bemoaned the amusements and social claustrophobia of the town, she continued to spend winters there in the company of close female relatives.<sup>32</sup> Margaret Macdonald continued to manage her concerns in Skye and Uist from her distant London townhouse, if not quite conflating the contrasting roles of the gentlewoman in London and in the Highlands, then at least showing that they could coexist in the mind, even if differentiated by much more than mere geographical distance.<sup>33</sup> Over the course of her lifetime, a woman could spend long periods of her life in very different abodes and locations, associated with contrasting expectations of female duties and behaviour, and yet this seems to have provoked remarkably little comment amongst contemporaries. Perhaps it was simply taken for granted.

Widows, at least those with adequate financial resources, were unusual in their ability to dictate their own movements. Although Thomas Fordyce joked to his friend George Innes of his wife's plans to go to town, 'She Says She won't goe wtout me, you Know if She order it soe I must obey,'<sup>34</sup> the decision of when and where to travel was rarely in practice in the hands of women. Writing from Fort George, Robert Adam recorded the intense bitterness of a Mrs Fern, who, despite an avowed dislike of Edinburgh had 'arriv'd at Such a point of discontent' at being left at home when her husband travelled to England 'that She even begrudges his looking well, his Eating heartily, & being fat, Saying he coud never have grown so had be been affected as he ought to be with her Condition.'<sup>35</sup> Four months later, she had, it appears, come no closer to forgiveness:

she coud not help envying Mr Fern every happy Moment he enjoy'd all the while he was in England, as she had no Share in it, Nay She wish'd he had been miserable, that he might have known what she felt, in his Abscence. Unles the Woman had Said these Words to myself nothing coud have Convinc'd me that Human Nature was Capable of Such depravity<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> EUL, MS2291/16/19, to her daughter-in-law, 14 July 1781; MS2291/17/29, to Jamie Steuart Denham in Paris, 21 January 1765, Edr; MS2291/17/37, as above, 28 March 1765, Coltness.

<sup>33</sup> For the interconnectivity of women's work, domesticity and public leisure, see Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *HJ*, 36:2 (June 1993), p.411.

<sup>34</sup> NAS, GD113/3/336/6, 14 January 1741.

<sup>35</sup> NAS, GD18/4739, to Jenny Adam, 11 May 1753. Nothing further is known of the Ferns.

<sup>36</sup> NAS, GD18/4741, Robert Adam to Susy Adam, Merchistone, 14 September 1753, Fort George.

It is difficult to know to what extent Adam's tongue was in his cheek as he wrote of her depravity,<sup>37</sup> and without knowing more about Mrs Fern (whether, for instance, a journey might have facilitated contact with a distant family) it is hard to quantify the extent to which her annoyance was justified. Whilst clearly embittered, she exemplifies the frustration of many women who were denied agency in their movements, forced to wave goodbye to their husbands as they set off to places that they may themselves have desired to visit.<sup>38</sup>

Not just financial, but practical reasons dictated the prioritisation of family resources towards male, business-related travel needs. On one occasion, Sir Harry Bellenden wrote to Milton that he had decided 'to leav my horse & chaise for ye use of my two nymphs Miss molly & miss Betty, that they might not be Presing You, for yrs, wch you wanted your self.'<sup>39</sup> Unlike later generations, gentlewomen in this period still travelled on horseback: discussing her return to Edinburgh from Moffat in 1763, Mally Fletcher informed her father that she would hire a chaise in the event of bad weather, otherwise, her horse would do perfectly well.<sup>40</sup> However, as she suggested, women's plans were more liable to disruption by bad weather, and their endurance for this mode of transport viewed as less than that of men.<sup>41</sup> Again, mobility was dictated by location as well as age: in Skye, Margaret Macdonald

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<sup>37</sup> Adam was not averse to entertaining his correspondents with sharp satire, and she was not a favourite of his, with some justification since she had informed him that she disliked all his family save his mother. NAS, GD18/4741, as n.35 above.

<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth Foyster noted that by this time, wives were denouncing their husbands in legal cruelty suits for domestic confinement on the grounds that they were unable to participate in polite society, although acknowledges this was at least partly due to the protection afforded by the proximity of neighbours. Elizabeth Foyster, 'Creating a Veil of Silence? Politeness and Marital Violence in the English Household', *TransRHS*, 12 (2002), pp.404-5.

<sup>39</sup> NLS, MS16673 f.75, 31 October 1751, Petersham.

<sup>40</sup> NLS, MS16524 f.114, 5 July 1763, Moffat. 'The ladies sometimes rode on side-saddles, but more frequently upon a pillion behind a man', John Ramsay of Ochertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alexander Allardyce, (Edinburgh, 1888), vol.2, p.89. Coaches and chaises, he wrote, were not widespread amongst the gentry until after 1745. *Ibid.*, p.90. Yet Ann Dalrymple, sister of Sir Hew Dalrymple MP thought it worth commenting on the 30 mile horse-ride which was entailed by 'an expedition in to Galowa, wher no whille mashine could go.' NAS, GD1082/2, to Lady Dalrymple, 26 July 1744, Barginay. A decade later, her sister-in-law ordered her chair to be sent out from Edinburgh to Ayrshire so that she could be carried over those sections of the road her coach was unable to traverse, whilst her husband rode on horseback. Macdonald, *Memoirs*, pp.36-7. For genteel women's modes of transport, see also Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, pp.304-5, n.54.

<sup>41</sup> As late as the 1750s, men travelled to London on horseback, Henry Gray Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1900; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1899), vol.1, p.44, whereas concern was expressed over women riding much shorter distances, NLS, MS1212 f.10, Mary Mackenzie to John Mackenzie, 18 August 1746, Delvin.

travelled on horseback over rough, stony roads,<sup>42</sup> but as an older woman in London, her movements seem to have been more constrained. In 1767 Elizabeth Chalmers, the sister-in-law of John Mackenzie, wrote that Lady Margaret had paid her a visit in Lord Eglinton's coach,

& told me she would have seen me long before had she an Equipage of her own, & as Ld E\_\_\_n was now in the Country, she had taken that opportunity of coming in his, she said, she had Once attempted to walk, but a Violent Rain stop'd her in the Park, that she could proceed no farther, [...] but that now it is Summer she will walk out & see us.<sup>43</sup>

Although tinged with scepticism about the difficulties Lady Margaret was claiming to have encountered, Elizabeth's account is a reminder that, particularly in urban settings, infringements on mobility were not merely practical, but limited by fashion and expectations of prestige. In London, ladies could not be expected to make visits in a state of weather-beaten dishevelment, whilst the ostentatious gesture of visiting by coach announced status.

Over longer distances, travel entailed not just discomfort but real dangers, overturning a fairly common occurrence.<sup>44</sup> Sir Alexander Macdonald commended his wife for being 'so blyth all the Road'<sup>45</sup> on her first journey north, a necessary quality in a woman who could expect to spend make long journeys on rough roads between distant destinations. Although many women remained isolated and unable to choreograph their own movements, for those families keen to engage in all aspects of fashionable sociability, what might be termed conspicuous mobility had become loaded with cultural meanings. As summarised by one scholar, 'The 'polite' were [...] defined, to some extent, [...] by their mobility. Improvements in transport – better carriages, turnpike roads – allowed them to move with relative ease from

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<sup>42</sup> '[W]hen she travelled through the island, the people ran in crowds before her, and took the stones off the road, lest her horse should stumble and she be hurt.' James Boswell, *The Journal of A Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LLD* edited and with an introduction by Peter Levi, (reprint of 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., Harmondsworth, 1984; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1785), pp.316-7.

<sup>43</sup> NLS, MS1127 ff.70-71, Elizabeth Mackenzie (née Chambers) to John Mackenzie WS, 13 June 1767, Kensington. Another visit on foot is recorded the following April, *ibid.* f.81, as above, 16 April 1768.

<sup>44</sup> E.g., NAS, GD18/2098/388, 12 December 1749, Penny, 'last night we returned here safe tho by the bad road in hazard of being overturned which was the occasion one of the coach glases was brok.'; NLS, MS16677 f.223, Donald Campbell of Airds to Milton, 30 November 1752, Airds, 'I heard My Ladys and Miss Bettys Chaise was Oversett the day you Sett out, and that Miss was hurt.'

<sup>45</sup> NLS, MS1308 f.168, to John Mackenzie, 12 June 1739, Bernera.

country house to country house, from spa to spa, to race meetings and assemblies.<sup>46</sup> Full participation in the polite world necessitated mobility for women.

### Domestic Tourism: Landscape and Country Houses

These improvements in transport contributed towards the emergence of the concept of tourism as a fashionable activity amongst the propertied classes. By 1759, Lord Breadalbane was noting that ‘it has been the fashion this year to travel into the highlands, many have been here this summer from England, I suppose because they can’t go abroad.’<sup>47</sup> The Seven Years War had turned travellers away from the Continent, forcing those who wished to travel for leisure, education and improvement to consider the possibilities for tourism within Britain. This created a fashion in which a much larger proportion of the landed population could hope to participate than Continental tourism, not just for practical reasons, but because the ways in which the tourist was expected to observe Britain did not require the classical education necessary for a learned understanding of Mediterranean antiquities.

Prior to the impact of Burke’s *Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) and, more specifically in a Scottish context, James Macpherson’s *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1759), *Fingal* (1761) and *Temora* (1763) there was little interest in uncultivated Highland scenery.<sup>48</sup> By 1765, Alison Cockburn could tease David Hume about the power of a ‘Highland expedition’ to affirm belief in god: ‘These mountains, and torrents, and rocks, would almost convince one that it was some being of infinite power that had created them. Plain corn counties look as if men had made them; but I defy all mankind together to make anything like the Pass of Gilicranky.’<sup>49</sup> Yet even as late as 1758, the English traveller Sir William Burrell made regular references to the unattractiveness of the Highland landscape, describing Glen Croe (on the road to Inveraray) as being ‘remarkable only for the most savage and barbarous appearance’, and Glen Kinglas

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<sup>46</sup> Tom Williamson, *Polite Landscapes: Gardens and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, 1995), p.110.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Andrews, *Search for the Picturesque*, p.200.

<sup>48</sup> On Ossian and tourism, see Leah Leneman, ‘The Effects of Ossian in Lowland Scotland’, in Jennifer J. Carter and Joan H. Pittock (eds.), *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987).

<sup>49</sup> Cockburn to Hume, Castle Hill, Edinburgh, 21 September 1765 in *Letters and Memoir of her own Life, by Mrs Alison Rutherford or Cockburn*, with notes by T. Craig-Brown (Edinburgh, 1900), p.45.

as 'equally horrible, barbarous and disagreeable.'<sup>50</sup> Although increasing in number throughout the century, published accounts of travel in Scotland became much more numerous from the 1770s.<sup>51</sup>

The dominant discourse of domestic tourism concentrated on improvement, evident in Alexander Carlyle's *Journal of a tour to the North of Scotland*<sup>52</sup> and John Clerk of Penicuik's *Memorial of a Goat Whey Campaign at Lawers*.<sup>53</sup> Such regions, on the boundaries of wilderness and of cultivation, enabled tourists to see in action the 'progress' of society from the pastoral to the modern stage, and by witnessing and writing about it, to implicate themselves in this patriotic process. John Clerk was accompanied on his 'Campaign' by his wife and two of his daughters, and Mally Fletcher spent time in nearby Kincaigie. Yet, as Elizabeth Bohls has pointed out, women did not fit into the categories of 'heroic explorer, scientist, or authoritative cultural interpreter';<sup>54</sup> men understood the places through which they travelled along a number of well-worn channels, related to their own personal and professional interests, which were on the whole inaccessible to women.<sup>55</sup> Learning how to be a tourist, and further, how to write about being a tourist (even if just in private correspondence) necessitated the acquisition of a set of skills, but there was as yet little tradition of published women's travel writing for other women to follow.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Sir William Burrell's Northern Tour, 1758* ed. John G. Dunbar (East Linton, 1997), p.83. This echoes Defoe's well-known description of the Highlands as a 'frightful country full of hideous desert mountains.' Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, edited and with an introduction by Pat Rogers (Harmondsworth, 1978; 1st published 1724-6), p.672.

<sup>51</sup> Fifteen accounts of tours and travels in Scotland were published between 1740 and 1769, whilst fourteen were published in the next decade alone, with the numbers rising thereafter. See table 'A List of Travels, Tours etc. Relating to Scotland', by Arthur Mitchell, in Stana Nenadic, 'Land, the landed and relationships with England: literature and perception 1760-1830', in S. J. Connolly, R. A. Houston and R. J. Morris (eds.), *Conflict, Identity and Economic Development: Ireland and Scotland, 1600-1939* (Preston, 1995), p.151.

<sup>52</sup> Alexander Carlyle, *Journal of a Tour to the North of Scotland*, ed. Richard B. Sher (Aberdeen, 1982), esp. pp.12, 14. He exhibited a preoccupation with the virtuous effects of the linen industry and agricultural improvement, which he contrasted with the poverty of areas under the Catholic Gordons, pp.19, 21.

<sup>53</sup> *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, 1676-1755*, ed. John M. Gray, SHS, ser.1 vol.13, (Edinburgh 1892), p.257. His other great passion was for antiquities.

<sup>54</sup> Bohls, *Women Travel Writers*, p.17.

<sup>55</sup> This is not to say that women did not comment on these supposedly male concerns. When Margaret Fletcher travelled north after her marriage to John Grant of Easter Elchies in Speyside, she reported that 'The Cuntrey about this is extremely agreeable & I understand very profitable.' NLS, MS16515 f.269, to Milton, 11 August 1750, Elchies.

<sup>56</sup> Prior to Mary Wortley Montagu's Turkish Embassy letters in 1763, the only published woman's travel narrative was Elizabeth Justice's *Voyage to Russia* (1739). Turner, *British Travel Writers*,



One way in which women related to cultivated landscape was through an appreciation of the picturesque. As early as 1712, Addison was commenting in the *Spectator* that ‘We find the Works of Nature still more pleasant, the more they resemble those of Art.’<sup>57</sup> In 1759, Mally Fletcher was sighing over ‘the Agreeable Groves of Sweet Kincaraigie,’<sup>58</sup> and Jackie Clerk responded in a similar manner to the gardens of Finlaystone, the house of the Countess of Glencairn: ‘This is a Charming place,’ she wrote, ‘the Cascades, & Walks here are beautifull and Wild.’<sup>59</sup> These women were responding to the same phenomenon which was appreciated by their fathers and menfriends: a cultivated landscape, nature ‘improved’ by civilisation; the epitome of taste. Women were beginning to learn to react aesthetically to what they saw, yet in confining their comments to the effects of improvements on private property, they were concentrating their remarks on topics which were of immediate relevance to their own lives as members of the landed classes. Perhaps Jackie Clerk felt so comfortable commenting on the improvement of landscaped gardens, waterworks and plantings because of her own family’s interest in improving and landscaping their properties at Mavisbank and Penicuik.<sup>60</sup> When she wrote of Finlaystone, ‘the trees grow Wonderfully well here [...] the Soil must be very Good, for you wou’d think their Rooting very Slight’,<sup>61</sup> she was demonstrating a personal knowledge of soil conditions and arboriculture, perhaps reassuring her father of the efficacy of his teaching.

Similarly, the emphasis on interiors in early country house guide-books gave women who inhabited houses where display was integral to decoration and furnishings an ability to relate to what they saw on their visits. Jackie’s sister Betty Pringle wrote to their father about the paintings and tapestries she saw at Windsor and Hampton Court in 1749,<sup>62</sup> whilst (at her father’s request) Jackie described in

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p.127. Celia Fiennes’ travels were not published until 1812, (David Hey, ‘Fiennes, Celia (1662–1741)’, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37414>, accessed 28 June 2006]).

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Andrews, *Search for the Picturesque*, p.viii.

<sup>58</sup> NLS, MS16521 f.186, to ?Lucy Scott, 27 September 1759, Roseneath.

<sup>59</sup> NAS, GD18/5474/2, to John Clerk, 12 March 1751, Finlaystone.

<sup>60</sup> In his influential, though unpublished poem, ‘The Country Seat’, her father stressed a natural and informal setting as ideal for the country house. See A. A. Tait, *The Landscape Garden in Scotland, 1735-1835* (Edinburgh, 1980), pp.18-21, esp. p.20.

<sup>61</sup> NAS, GD18/5474/3, to John Clerk, 19 March 1751, Finlaystone. She also described the garden’s water-works.

<sup>62</sup> NAS, GD18/5423/43, Betty Pringle to John Clerk, 19 September 1749, Bath.

detail a painting at Finlaystone by the Italian artist Rodolfo Marzoni, adding her own emotional and critical responses to the painting.<sup>63</sup> Although little remains of their correspondence, letters such as these suggest that the daughters of John Clerk of Penicuik had been introduced to at least some of their father's many interests spanning antiquarianism through music and the fine arts to architecture and landscape design.

Sometimes women framed their responses to the houses they visited in very personal terms. Lucy Scott of Thirdpart wrote to Lord Milton on Mally Fletcher's reactions to Blair Atholl:

the House indeed is fitted up with the utmost Elegance & made so deep an impression on Miss Fletcher that I was on the very point of letting her off with her visit to Thirdpart & began to pity you on her return Home till coming into a room furnished with sewings which Lady Amelia [Halkett] pronounced the greatest in the whole House Miss Fletcher with great Spirit declared that there was a much handsomer bed at Salton only with this difference you may tell my Lady that the Dukes is on white cloth instead of green sattin the garrets next afforded some consolation she being of opinion that yours in Edin<sup>r</sup> were preferable & the comparison of the Dairy with that at Brunstane brought her away in perfect good humour however that this may be permanent I think that you cannot too Early set about compleating your Edinr habitation[.]<sup>64</sup>

Although clearly light-hearted, her suggestion that Mally would view her own family home in the same critical light she did Blair is telling. These women were reacting to the house not as an abstract museum piece, but as a lived-in home like those they inhabited themselves. Their tourist experiences were rooted in their responsibilities as housekeepers and their own sense of the importance of combining functionality with tasteful furnishings in houses that were for public display as much as inhabitation. Lucy went on to give Lady Milton various pieces of advice on the decoration of their new house in the Canongate, based on what they had seen. Like Celia Fiennes, who toured England in the 1680s and 90s, these women were most

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<sup>63</sup> NAS, GD18/5474/2, Jackie Clerk to John Clerk, 12 March 1751, Finlaystone.

<sup>64</sup> NLS, MS16712 ff.20-21, 29 July 1759, Kincairnie. This bed was described by Sir William Burrell on his visit the previous year as 'a bed said to be worked by the Dutchess de la Tremouille, daughter to the Prince of Orange and Lady Derby, her daughter, set on white cloth, the bed posts Gothic pillars.' *Burrell's Northern Tour*, p.69.

inspired by the (relatively) new.<sup>65</sup> In a similar vein to the responses of men to improved landscapes, they looked for the efforts of recent owners to modernise the dwelling, and the efficiency with which they maintained it, comparing this with their own family properties.

Of the policies surrounding Blair Atholl, Lucy Scott reported ‘the place [...] I cannot say answered my expectations every thing seems done at great expence & more artificial than natural beauties.’<sup>66</sup> The training she is likely to have received as a prudent, frugal housekeeper seems to have come to the fore, although she was less disapproving of those at Taymouth which were ‘of longer standing & come to greater perfection & thou I believe done at equal expence have more the appearance of nature.’<sup>67</sup> Perceptions emerged from the visitor’s personal experience, hence these women could not, unlike Thomas Pennant, remark on the resemblance of the lands around Taymouth to ‘the great slope opposite the grande Chartreuse in Dauphine.’<sup>68</sup> Instead, Lucy viewed her role as a tourist as a largely practical one, reporting, ‘I cannot say that Taymouth produced any thing very interesting in point of conversation. [...] The House is remarkable for nothing but its extraordinary cleanness w<sup>ch</sup> as you enjoy in the utmost perfection at Home think I have no message atall for My Lady.’<sup>69</sup>

Yet already in the 1750 edition of his guidebook *The Beauties of Stowe*, George Bickham had presented Stow and its contents as ‘a national asset’: ‘If our Nation had nothing of this Kind to boast of, all our Neighbours would look upon us

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<sup>65</sup> Adrian Tinniswood, *A History of Country House Visiting: Five Centuries of Tourism and Taste* (Oxford, 1989), p.63; Christopher Morris, ‘Introduction’ to *The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes, 1685-c.1712* ed. Christopher Morris (London, 1982), pp.14-15. D. R. Woolf cited her antiquarian interests, ‘A Feminine Past? Gender, Genre and Historical Knowledge in England, 1500-1800’, *American Historical Review*, 102:3 (June 1997), p.647, but these are not so dominant in her text. Blair castle was a resolutely modern building; having been garrisoned by troops during the ’45, the Duke had taken the decision to turn the castle into a home (‘which he is fitting up and furnishing in a most elegant manner’) so that it could never again be used in such a way. *Burrell’s Northern Tour*, p.69.

<sup>66</sup> NLS, MS16712 f.20, to Milton, 29 July 1759, Kincairnie.

<sup>67</sup> NLS, MS16712 ff.23, to Milton, 5 August 1759, Kincairnie. In 1770, Elizabeth Montagu supposed ‘there is hardly a spot in Europe where the sublime & beautiful are so happily united.’ Quoted in Ian Ross, ‘A Bluestocking Over the Border: Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu’s Aesthetic Adventures in Scotland, 1766’, *HLQ*, 23:3 (1965), p.214.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland, 1769*, with an introduction by Brian D. Osborne (Edinburgh, 2000), p.58. He had travelled widely in continental Europe in 1765, ‘Introduction’, p.x.

<sup>69</sup> NLS, MS16712 ff.22-3, to Milton, 5 August 1759, Kincairnie.

as a stupid tasteless Set of People, and not worth visiting.’<sup>70</sup> In an era when expenditure on estates was seen as an act of patriotism, those who visited country houses were often doing so in the understanding that their presence as visitors implicated them in this. Of course, it can be difficult to distinguish between a commitment to the nation and to the aristocratic families who continued to shape it: Lady Minto informed her son, Gilbert, ‘I really invy’d your jaunt to the Contrey as the places you ware in would have been high intertainment to me, tho I am perswad’d the seeing of Atterbery would have given me more pleasure then Stow as it was the works of John Duke of Argyle.’<sup>71</sup> The extent to which she prioritised Argyll for personal or patriotic reasons is unclear, but the two came together at Inveraray, where John’s brother and successor Duke Archibald was rebuilding his castle and a new planned village. Joining Taymouth and Blair on the recognised tourist itinerary, when the Duke was in residence for a few weeks each summer this ideal tourist location, which combined an affirmation of the Argathelian regime with sociability, Highland landscape and Improvement, became almost a place of pilgrimage where Scotland’s governing Whig elite reaffirmed their priorities and their privileges.

As has been seen, Lady Milton’s role as hostess on these annual ‘campaigns,’ was vital,<sup>72</sup> yet conducted in difficult physical circumstances. Inveraray castle remained unfinished at the Duke’s death in 1761, and that at Roseneath where visitors often broke their journey was initially almost a ruin.<sup>73</sup> She had made her reputation as an efficient chief of camp as early as 1746 when, as the Hanoverian army marched north, Charles Stewart joked to Milton that the Duke of Cumberland had ‘certainly committed a great oversight in not carrying My Lady Milton into ye highlands with him; how often will he wish for her, when he wants a dinner or a bed, a supper or a fire? [...] She wou’d have been, in my opinion, impayable.’<sup>74</sup> The similarities between the qualities needed to run a military campaign and those

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<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Carole Fabricant, ‘The Literature of Domestic Tourism and the Public Consumption of Private Property’, in Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown (eds.) *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature* (New York and London, 1987), p.265. The house and gardens at Stowe in Buckinghamshire were amongst the most admired in eighteenth-century Britain.

<sup>71</sup> NLS, MS11009 f.50, Lady Minto to Gilbert Elliot, 8 September 1757, Minto.

<sup>72</sup> See Chapter 5, pp.163-6.

<sup>73</sup> Lindsay and Cosh, *Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll*, p.181; p.18 for Roseneath, which (p.92) was completed in 1757.

<sup>74</sup> NLS, MS16637 f.279, 2 March 1746, London.

displayed by Lady Milton on tours to Inveraray are clear. Organisational skills were paramount, and just like the army generals she entertained at home, she was supposedly bringing order and rationality to parts of the country requiring improvement, yet doing so through the female domains of sociability and housekeeping.

#### 'Visits, Dances Bowls & Scandal': Spas and Health Resorts

Mally Fletcher and Lucy Scott had not travelled to Perthshire with the sole intention of viewing country houses. This was only one element of a tour which centred around a spell in Kincaigie (near Blair Atholl) where Mally's father, Lord Milton, had been drinking goat whey, a cure as fashionable amongst the wealthy classes of eighteenth-century Scotland as the more enduring mineral waters. Belief in the health-giving properties of goat whey or spa waters should not be underestimated,<sup>75</sup> particularly when viewed alongside the potential ameliorative effects of a change of society and situation. But as well as the seriously ill,<sup>76</sup> spa resorts received flocks of perfectly healthy family and friends accompanying invalids or those feeling a little under the weather, as part of the annual migration patterns identified above. In 1739, Milton's mother informed him she was glad he was being accompanied to the goat whey by his wife and Lord Hyndford, as 'deversion & ane agarable comorad is half the cure.'<sup>77</sup>

Over the course of the eighteenth century, spa resorts developed rapidly across Britain, providing a series of locations purpose-built for the distillation of the most important concerns of eighteenth-century polite society.<sup>78</sup> For Robert Adam

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<sup>75</sup> One patient, for instance, recorded having consulted the advice (whether in person or through publications is not clear in the case of the latter two) of Drs Francis Home, William Cullen and Alexander Monro, three of the most prominent physicians in Scotland, over whether to go to Moffat or Duns, eventually following the advice of Drs Cullen and Monro to go to Moffat. NLS, MS16707 f.212, John Watson to Milton, 21 June 1758, Bellfield. Mary Mackenzie hoped her sister-in-law would 'have pattience to Stay & use them [the Moffat waters] 8<sup>t</sup> or ten weeks' to heal her injured leg. NLS, MS1212 f.47, Mary Mackenzie to John Mackenzie, 4 July 1748 [docketed '47], Delvin.

<sup>76</sup> Francis Home, *An Essay on the Contents and Virtues of Dunse-Spaw in a Letter to my Lord [Marchmont]* (Edinburgh, 1751), p.208. Most of the cases of medical success he cited were local people whose names suggest them to have been of relatively lowly status. Home was Lady Milton's brother-in-law.

<sup>77</sup> NLS, MS16510 f.205, 21 June 1739, Salton.

<sup>78</sup> Peter Borsay, 'Health and Leisure Resorts 1700-1840', in Peter Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, vol.2, 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000); Phyllis Hembry, *The English Spa 1560-1815: A Social History* (London, 1990).

‘the intention & design of most of the frequenters of Mineral Waters’ was ‘Visits, Dances Bowls & Scandal.’<sup>79</sup> It was at such resorts that, as Paul Langford has put it, ‘three of the great motive quests of middle-class life, marriage, health, and diversion, came together.’<sup>80</sup> In prioritising these concerns, spas became associated with female interests and influence, and the quest for not just pleasure, but prestige. In Britain, the hierarchy of desirability was topped by Bath, outstanding because of the high society which it attracted, and its openness to various ranks of travellers.<sup>81</sup> Scots tended to comment on the acquaintances they had made, and on card assemblies and balls, in reports often tinged with disapproval of the excesses of Bath society. In 1749, Betty Pringle wrote to her father John Clerk of Penicuik that ‘to the rooms one Must go some-times but As gameing is all the deversion I very soon tire.’<sup>82</sup> Although she was related to high-ranking members of the aristocracy (her letter also debated whether or not to travel to visit her mother’s cousin the Duchess of Queensbery) she hinted that money spoke louder than breeding, at the expense of gentry like herself: ‘the Chief diversion seems to be playing at Cards and accordingly a Man or Woman is thought of As they can play well, & high, so in this respect Babie & I are in no hazard of cutting a figure.’<sup>83</sup> Yet it seems probable that it was at Bath that the young Margaret Hepburn, travelling with her mother in 1752, made the acquaintance of the scholar William King, who encouraged her to learn Latin.<sup>84</sup> so long as women had access to the right connections and social circles, it could be an intellectually fulfilling location as well as a frivolous one.

Although nowhere near as developed as Bath or Tunbridge Wells, Scotland had, by the mid-eighteenth century, produced two spa resorts at Moffat and Duns, the former of which was longer-established and to which Edinburgh society decamped in early summer.<sup>85</sup> Unlike the celebrated architectural splendours of the English urban

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<sup>79</sup> NAS, GD18/4778, to Jenny Adam, 5 April 1755, Rome.

<sup>80</sup> Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p.102.

<sup>81</sup> Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p.241.

<sup>82</sup> NAS, GD18/5423/43, 19 September 1749, Bath. For the intensity of gaming at Bath, see Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.249-50.

<sup>83</sup> NAS, GD18/5423/43, as above.

<sup>84</sup> See Chapter 2, pp.71-3.

<sup>85</sup> Moffat well had been known for over 150 years prior to the writing of the first Statistical Account, whereas that at Duns had only been discovered in 1747. See John Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland, drawn up from the communications of the ministers of the different parishes* (Edinburgh, 1791-9), vol.2, p.296 (Moffat), and vol.4, p.379 (Duns). In addition to these, there were numerous

spas, the Scottish spas were small, rural and relatively underdeveloped.<sup>86</sup> In 1755, Milton was informed of the two best houses available for lodgings at Duns, ‘they have scarcely any English blankets, no matrisse, & [...] they dont furnish bed or table Linnen nor forks or knives, so you must cause these things be brought here.’<sup>87</sup> As late as 1759 an advertisement in the *Edinburgh Chronicle* was announcing the construction of ‘a new long Room, with proper divisions and conveniences, where those who incline may drink the Mineral Waters fresh from the fountain, and the Goat Whey new made’, noting that ‘hitherto it has been a common complaint, that there neither was shelter, retirement, or any kind of accommodation at the well for the Company.’<sup>88</sup> Yet, for those reared on Ramsay’s *Gentle Shepherd*, set in a village not far from Edinburgh, in which the bonds of community were founded on ‘friendship, kindness, love and mutual respect’, the countryside of the southern uplands and its small settlements, neither untouched nor over-influenced by the modern world, were associated with the emergence of Scotland’s own cult of sensibility.<sup>89</sup> Frequenting spa society enabled women to feel they were spreading the culture of enlightened manners and polite society - the balls and walks and the other accoutrements of enlightened sociability, to the sorts of rural areas in which their menfolk were encouraging agricultural improvement.<sup>90</sup> The aforementioned advertisement emphasised the wholesome, natural surroundings, proclaiming, ‘Great plenty of GOAT WHEY is to be got this season. As the goats feed amongst rocks and glens which abound with wild, aromatic plants near the well, Physicians are of opinion, that the milk cannot be anywhere in greater perfection.’<sup>91</sup> Although the views of medical experts were not to be dismissed, the attempt to market the resort in terms of proximity to nature is clear.

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smaller resorts around the Borders, Loch Lomond and the Dunkeld area in which goat whey could be drunk.

<sup>86</sup> As late as the 1760s, most houses in Moffat were in a state of disrepair. W. A. J. Prevost, ‘Moffat Spa in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries’ in *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol.43 (1966), p.141.

<sup>87</sup> NLS, MS16692 f.95, from Alexander Hume, 25 August 1755, Duns.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in R. A. Houston, *Social Change in the Age of Enlightenment: Edinburgh 1660-1760*, (Oxford, 1994), p.220.

<sup>89</sup> John Dwyer, *The Age of the Passions: An Interpretation of Adam Smith and Scottish Enlightenment Culture*, (East Linton, 1998), p.173.

<sup>90</sup> For English spas as *rus in urbe*, see Borsay, ‘Health and Leisure Resorts’, p.800.

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Houston, *Social Change*, pp.219-220.

Spa-goers lived together in close quarters, participating in the same events (both health-focused and social) with the same people, and experiencing what Borsay has termed ‘an intensely corporate lifestyle [...] encouraged by the existence of a set of mores and norms that stigmatized privacy and aloofness, and of a rigid daily cycle of activities requiring the company to be in the same place, doing the same thing, at the same time.’<sup>92</sup> James Boswell remembered as an adolescent being ‘put into a horrible tub, a scanty covering [...] thrown over me’ and remaining there under the supervision of ‘a barbarian of a Presbyterian preacher’ for half an hour.<sup>93</sup> But generally, the emphasis appears to have been on drinking rather than bathing. Francis Home noted that the waters were believed to be most efficient if drunk at source, and early in the morning,<sup>94</sup> thus bringing together all those drinking the waters in the vicinity of the wellhead at the same time of day. At Duns, in August 1750, Thomas Fordyce reported ‘Great Crouds at the Well, Yesterdays morning there were 18 Cheases there, and this morning 20, and that Increasing.’<sup>95</sup> The company then returned to breakfast,<sup>96</sup> Alexander Carlyle remembering ‘twenty-four or twenty-five [...] in a very small room’, after which the company spent the morning at the bowling-green,<sup>97</sup> or ‘went an airing’.<sup>98</sup> Afternoons might be spent at riverside parties, eating fish, playing cards, promenading along the Tweed, or dancing on the grass; evenings at balls.<sup>99</sup>

This ‘corporate lifestyle’ ensured, as Adam hinted in his reference to scandal, that spa society was introspective, and much attention was paid to who was present, what they were doing, and with whom.<sup>100</sup> In 1744, Andrew Fletcher wrote to thank

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<sup>92</sup> Peter Borsay, ‘Urban Life and Culture’, in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth Century Britain* (Oxford, 2002), pp.203-4.

<sup>93</sup> *Boswell in Holland, 1763-4, including his Correspondence with Belle de Zuylen (Zélide)*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle (London, 1952), p.44.

<sup>94</sup> Home, *Essay*, p.208.

<sup>95</sup> NAS, GD113/3/326/19, Thomas Fordyce to George Innes, 11 August 1750, Dunse.

<sup>96</sup> Macdonald, *Memoirs of an Eighteenth-Century Footman*, p.29.

<sup>97</sup> *The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, ed. John Hill Burton, with a new Introduction by Richard B. Sher (Bristol, 1990; reprint of 1910 edn.), p.277. Thomas Somerville recorded that in his youth, there was a public bowling-green frequented by all ranks in every county town, and that ladies played too on the private greens of country houses. Thomas Somerville, *My Own Life and Times 1741-1814*, with an Introduction by Richard B. Sher, (Bristol, 1996; 1<sup>st</sup> edn., 1861), pp.345-6.

<sup>98</sup> Macdonald, *Memoirs*, p.29.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p.29.

<sup>100</sup> Walter Scott was to satirise the introspection of slightly later Scottish rural spa society in his novel *St. Ronan's Well* (1824).



his mother for the provisions she had sent to the party in Moffat which, he said, 'have greatly refreshed us, and proved the happy means of contracting many valuable friendships.'

We lately received a strong reinforcement, Lord and Lady Cassels, Lady Haddington, two Ladies of Rothes, Thomas Graham of Balgowan, Lady Christy Graham, Lady Margaret Hope, so that upon occasion we cou'd shew a fine battalion of Quality – of money'd folks the Miss Hunters of Dalkieth are first upon roll, who knowing the mercenary designs of mankind, have strongly intrench'd themselves by the Mill, and are not to be forced from their lines, without a full display of the most heroick patience and fortitude.<sup>101</sup>

Detachedness provoked comment in a small, isolated spa community. Few were as lucky as the aging Lady Minto, who reported to her husband from Harrogate spa in 1763, that 'what with your Conections & folks that knows my Sons ether Gibie Andrwe or Jack, I meet with great servility so has nothing to doe but not to loose the regard my family has procurr'd me.'<sup>102</sup> For those on what Fletcher, given his propensity for military metaphor, might have termed 'the offensive', the 'corporate' and ritual qualities of spa society were ideal for the breaking-down of otherwise rigid social barriers.<sup>103</sup>

In 1755, Robert Adam was in Rome, having taken a huge financial gamble in order to acquire the knowledge, taste, and social connections to establish himself as an architect in London. But, as previous chapters have shown, he was aware of the importance of his whole family to his enterprise, encouraging his sisters to take advantage of any opportunities affording similar potential for social elevation. In a letter to his sister Peggy, he set out his approval of the Adam women's use of spa society as a means of social mobility, commending them on their achievements and outlining his hopes for the continuation of the effects of their efforts when they returned to the normality of their Edinburgh routine:

Your Situation at Moffat & Your intimacy & familiarity with genteel & as you tell me good Company makes me mighty happy. I hope you have not, nor will not find them change in behaviour

<sup>101</sup> NLS, MS16512 f.135, Andrew Fletcher to Lady Milton 24 July, 1744, Moffat.

<sup>102</sup> NLS, MS11009 f.176, Lady Minto to Minto, n.d. [1763], Harriget. For the Elliot men's careers, see Appendix 1, pp.246-7.

<sup>103</sup> Borsay, 'Health and Leisure Resorts', pp.792-3.

from their changing their abode, a continuance of Intimacy & constant visiting is not to be expected, but complaisance, ceremonious visits & politesse is to be hoped for, & I am convinced will be show'd You. Your other friends will be every day less & less troublesome as they perceive an increase of better Company frequenting You they will insensibly decrease the number of their Visits, till at last they drop all intercourse & only look on you as Patrons, not friends, ask & court your protection, not desire or hope for Your Conversation.<sup>104</sup>

Although warning them against unduly raised expectations, Adam seriously believed in the potential of their Moffat visit to enable his sisters to exchange their acquaintance for a more elevated variety. They appear to have succeeded in this, for by October he was congratulating them on 'having acquit Yourselves so manfully at Moffat, In retaining familiarity & friendship with the good & Great.'<sup>105</sup> Just like the similarly condensed, isolated, and palpably impermanent expatriot communities which Adam was frequenting in Italy, Moffat spa society could be a crucible for the formation of enduring social bonds.

#### 'Curiosity must be gratify'd': The Lure of London

Despite the growth throughout Britain of such provincial centres of sociability, public entertainments increasingly being expected of any large town,<sup>106</sup> the fashions and concurrent attractions of London; the array of theatres, pleasure gardens and balls, remained unchallenged in their supremacy, supported by the constant presence of large numbers of people of 'quality.' For James Boswell's travelling companion in 1762, London may have been 'just [...] a place where he was to receive orders from the East India Company',<sup>107</sup> but for the many Scots who, like Boswell, were enticed by its fashions and society, it was a magnetic destination of great cultural significance. In an age which put a premium on the modern,

<sup>104</sup> NAS, GD18/4787, Robert Adam to Peggy Adam, 13 September 1755, Rome.

<sup>105</sup> NAS, GD18/4788, Robert Adam to Jenny Adam, 14 October 1755, Rome.

<sup>106</sup> E.g., Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989).

<sup>107</sup> *Boswell's London Journal*, p.44. This was the eldest son of Stewart of Ardsheal, who had been forfeited after the '45. *Ibid.*, p.41.

London was seen as the archetypal modern city.<sup>108</sup> As the editor of the *London Guide* declared, ‘This city...is now what ancient Rome once was; the seat of Liberty; the encourager of arts, and the admiration of the whole world.’<sup>109</sup> Yet whilst Rome was associated with a culture of antiquarianism and classical learning which was the prerogatives of classically-educated men, London, as a centre of consumerism and heterosociability, was associated with the skills and accomplishments pertaining to elite women, constituting the ideal setting in which they could demonstrate cultivation in matters of taste, manners, and the polite arts. The growth of the print media fostered the capital’s reputation, which perpetuated itself through travel itself: ‘we will Communicate to the female part of the family, the present modes of London, which we are fully instructed in, & will be Silent to every body else on that head till we see them,’<sup>110</sup> promised visitors to the Fletcher family fresh off the coach from London. Nowhere was more associated with the polite, the modern, the civilised, and the commercial; nowhere was more capable of imparting prestige upon those who could boast of a visit, or more guaranteed to provoke envy amongst those who could not. It is little surprise, then, that with improved opportunities for transport, women were keen to seize on any opportunity to travel there: ‘I intend to carry my Yoke fellow along with me’, wrote William Mure of Caldwell to his friend Gilbert Elliot as he prepared to set off to parliament in 1756, ‘Curiosity must be gratify’d.’<sup>111</sup>

For the Adams, the move to London was calculated to provide grander architectural opportunities for the men of the family. But Robert Adam knew the attractions of the metropolis for his most fashionably-inclined sister, and when, in June 1753, he wrote to Nelly of his plans for his future, he worked her projected desires into his own hopes:

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<sup>108</sup> For travellers’ accounts, see Roy Porter, ‘Visitors’ Visions: Travellers’ Tales of Georgian London’, in Chloe Chard and Helen Langdon (eds.), *Transports: Travel, Pleasure, and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (New Haven and London, 1996).

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 1997), p.52. Although he was writing in 1782, the sentiment can also be applied to this earlier period.

<sup>110</sup> NLS, MS16683 f.25, (Jamie) Campbell and Graham of Dougalstone to Milton, last day April, [1753], Edr. From 1754, the stagecoach went fortnightly, taking ten days in summer and twelve in winter. Graham, *Social Life*, vol.1, p.44.

<sup>111</sup> NLS, MS11014 f.25, 13 September 1756, Caldwell. In the seventeenth century, women were much less likely to travel to London, even the wealthiest peeresses visiting only perhaps twice in their lifetimes. Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos*, p.128.

I often think what a pity it is that Such a genius Shou'd be thrown away upon Scotland, where Scarce will ever happen an opportunity of putting one Noble thought in execution. It would be a more extensive Scheme to Settle a family also in England & Let the Adams's be the Sovereign Architects of the united Kingdoms, woud you have any objections to a London Life Nell, To your Coach & Livery Servants to the best of Company, & the most exquisite diversions[?]<sup>112</sup>

Adam was careful to combine fantasies about his own future architectural dominance with an exalted existence for his sister as a metropolitan lady. Yet whilst his predictions about his own life proved, for a while at least, surprisingly accurate, the Adam women 'avoided fashionable society' in London.<sup>113</sup> As has been seen, Nelly had been encouraged in the polite accomplishments, suggesting Adam may originally have intended his sisters to enter London society as part of his networking exercise. Perhaps he merely exaggerated his hoped-for riches. But there is little doubt that in the end, Nelly's presence was required primarily as a housekeeper.<sup>114</sup>

The Adam sisters were accompanied to London by their mother,<sup>115</sup> whom Robert had once thought 'woud have great objections to leaving Scotland at her time of life'.<sup>116</sup> Yet older women, mothers in particular, often had practical reasons for travelling to London. Some sought employment for their sons in the army or navy,<sup>117</sup> others, a husband for their daughters.<sup>118</sup> In 1750, the Duchess of Hamilton expressed surprise that Lady Galloway had 'been at no less than four publick place's this summer, & is now settle'd in Town for the Winter, which I thought would neither agree with her gravity, or religion, but prehaps she doe's it with a good

<sup>112</sup> NAS, GD18/4779, 12 July 1753, Rome.

<sup>113</sup> Margaret H. B. Sanderson, *Robert Adam and Scotland: Portrait of an Architect* (Edinburgh, 1992), p.34.

<sup>114</sup> 'I can think of no other way of removing the Plague of it than by calling to my aid Some of our Females, Two of whom transporting themselves to London by the time I arrive, will with Judgement & Aeconomy aid me in Domestick determinations, & leave me more time to transact my Worldly Interests.' NAS, GD18/4811, Robert Adam to Jamie Adam, 24 July 1756, Rome.

<sup>115</sup> E.g., James wrote to 'My Dearest Mother' 'at her house in Lower Grosvenor St', January 1760, Harwich.

<sup>116</sup> NAS, GD18/4770, Robert Adam to James Adam, 18 April 1755 Naples.

<sup>117</sup> Elizabeth Mackenzie reported to her brother-in-law John Mackenzie that Mrs Macdonald of Kingsborough had been twice to London seeking employment for her sons in the army or navy, which she described as 'a Wild & very expensive scheme,' acknowledging that this would have been regarded as more normal in the 1730s. NLS, MS1127 f.158, 31 January 1771, Kensington.

<sup>118</sup> Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos*, p.177.

design, & is in hope's of disposing of her Daughter's to the best advantage.<sup>119</sup> Whether or not a daughter was actually found a marriage partner in the capital may well have been less important than the veneer of sophistication their experiences could be hoped to endow, aiding their marriage prospects at home in Scotland.

Although Betty Fletcher was too young to enter into society when sent to school in London,<sup>120</sup> it is not improbable that a quest for husbands was behind the idea that Milton's family would accompany him on his projected journey south in 1752 (at which point he had three unmarried daughters, all in their twenties). The journey, however, was cancelled on the orders of the Duke of Argyll, who wrote to Milton in March of that year suggesting that he would be needed at home in order to disprove falsehoods. He added that he 'would probably be so ill received in some places as to be very disagreeable to you, & be a great drawback in the diversion you would otherwise have by the jaunt.'<sup>121</sup> Milton's reply can only be guessed, but Argyll evidently felt the need to take another tack in his response, explaining that the Princess of Wales was not holding court to see company that winter, emphasising 'I do think that it may be of use to you & your family to be introduced to the Princess & be known to her', which was best done through the Earl of Bute, and would be impossible for a year.<sup>122</sup> Lost in the grubby intrigue of eighteenth-century politics, then, was the chance of the Fletcher girls to be presented at court, and the visit never was made, although Margaret Fletcher lived in London with her husband later in life. Like many families, the Fletcher connection with the British capital seems to have become normalised for women only later in the eighteenth century.

Even for those who made it to London, acceptance into society was not automatic, and, as Gilbert Elliot made clear, the process could be even more difficult for women than for men. Admitting that he preferred to go into company relatively little, he acknowledged that when he did frequent company of an evening, it was less on his own account than that of his wife, yet to travel to London:

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<sup>119</sup> NLS, MS16672 ff.5-6, Duchess of Hamilton to Lady Somerville, 26 December 1750, London. Lady Tweedale had been in Scotland in May 1750, see MS16672 ff. 62-3, Somerville to Milton, May 1750, Somerville House.

<sup>120</sup> See Chapter 2, pp.60-9.

<sup>121</sup> NLS, MS16677 f.119, 26 March 1752, London. At this time Milton and Argyll were under the accusation of harbouring Jacobites because of their original plans for the parliamentary bill for annexing the forfeited estates. Alexander Murdoch, *The People Above: Politics and Administration in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1980), pp.38-9.

<sup>122</sup> NLS, MS16677 f.122, to Milton, 6 April 1752, London.

If you come up here you woud wish to be in good company, which for men is easie, but for Ladys most excessively difficult: there are some here, who have live'd for years at a great expence & of good rank too, who I find have have [sic] not at all succeeding in this point. If one sets out in a wrong channel, it is almost irreperable: I am now establishd perfectly with all that family of Ladys, whom you know I meant chiefly to cultivate.<sup>123</sup>

Women's social progress in the capital was a matter of great seriousness, to be managed through the cultivation of the correct people; something over which this couple had evidently strategised prior to Elliot's removal from Scotland. It is perhaps ironic that the importance of women's social networks in London meant that their paths had to be prepared by men. Elliot also oversaw his wife's negotiation of the dictates of epistolary sociability: 'you may write one Letter more to Lady Hester [Pitt], & one to Lady Bute congratulating them &c add that afterwards youll trust to my giving accounts of them, & will not trouble them wt more letters: they are both very sincerely your friends.'<sup>124</sup> Contact needed to be made, but carefully and according to rules. Agnes seems to have been as successful in her negotiations of the pitfalls of London society as her husband was as a politician, and as early as 1756 William Mure expressed his disappointment that Agnes would not be in London that winter to ease his own wife's first foray into London society. Even though the women had never met, he observed that 'Katie depended on her as a Friend and Introducator.'<sup>125</sup> Perhaps the absence of such a figure was one reason why, by February the following year, David Hume was commiserating with Mure that Katie had not found London as agreeable as she had expected. Yet he encouraged her to persevere: the role of the politician's wife was not to be taken lightly.<sup>126</sup>

As much as awe of London was expected, so was a degree of criticism of the excesses and frivolities of the metropolis. In 1750, the Duchess of Hamilton described how she was going to very few public places, as Lady Dashwood and Lady Talbot 'the folk's I go most about with' were not in town. Yet she still went to see Garrick at the playhouse three times a week, and continued:

<sup>123</sup> NLS, MS11006 f.24, to Agnes Elliot, 14 April 1753, London.

<sup>124</sup> NLS, MS11007 f.22, to Agnes Elliot in Kinghorn, 18 November 1756, London.

<sup>125</sup> NLS, MS11014 f.25, to Gilbert Elliot, 13 September 1756, Caldwell.

<sup>126</sup> October 1754, in *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J.Y.T. Greig, vol. I, (Oxford, 1932), p.243.

Rout's go's on much as usual, but as I never play, I dont often frequent them, but am sorry to hear Brag prevail's more than ever, the other night somebody ask'd Lady Tweeddale if they play'd at that game in Scotland, & her answer was, they had more wit, which you may be sure did not very well please, but she rave's of the beauty's of Scotland, & says she hope's in God my Lord will go there next summer, but sure all the Scotch Lady's are not so fond of their Country, or there would not be so many here, for they come thick & threefold[.]<sup>127</sup>

Lady Tweedale, like Elizabeth Gunning, the Duchess of Hamilton, was not a native Scot, but marriage enabled her to express some kind of identification with a notional Scottish common sense in comparison with the purported frivolity of London society. For the relationship which Scots had with London even before the Scotophobia of the early 1760s was complex. Gilbert Elliot, having settled on London as the best place to pursue a political career, initially left his young wife and growing family at home in Scotland. From their correspondence there emerges a sense of Gilbert's mounting anxieties about London society, simultaneously the apex of politeness and the pit of depravity. His friend David Hume referred to London's 'Luxury & Vice',<sup>128</sup> the negative products of too much refinement. Elliot cautioned his wife that the city could be improving to women 'if they have only sense & resolution to think a little for themselves without being hurried away either with the dissipation of it, or blinded by the fashion, & yet this requires much more firmness than you can well imagine.'<sup>129</sup> For Janet Clerk, London was a place of 'follies', 'temptations & snares' for her young sons,<sup>130</sup> whilst Robert Adam wrote of his sister Peggy, 'If she gives a loose Reine to her passion I Shant dare venture to carry her to London \_ where temptations Your Layships knows are to frequent exposing the tender Youth to Itches & other inveterate Maladys, Youth of both Sexes becoming hardned in Vicious practices, will never Stop'.<sup>131</sup>

Elliot used the behaviour of women in London to express his distaste for aspects of the *Beau Monde*: 'I wish all Women, that we regard, were what we

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<sup>127</sup> NLS, MS16672 ff.5-6, Duchess of Hamilton to Lady Somerville, 26 December 1750, London. Lady Tweedale had been in Scotland in May 1750, see MS 16672 ff. 62-3, Somerville to Milton, May 1750, Somerville House.

<sup>128</sup> Hume to John Wilkes, 8 October 1754, Edr, in *Letters of David Hume*, vol.1, p.195.

<sup>129</sup> NLS, MS11006 f.42, 7 April 1753, London.

<sup>130</sup> NAS, GD18/2098/444, 17 May 1753, Penny; GD18/2098/453, 17 October 1753, penny.

<sup>131</sup> NAS, GD18/4788, to Jenny Adam, 14 October 1755, Rome.

desired them to be, \_ there is One here your Heroine, I hope Shell continue so, I even believe it yet some suspect otherwise, you know I laughed at the Story as impossible & will not believe it readily.'<sup>132</sup> In general, he hinted at the outrageous and unattractive behaviour of these women in what was supposed to be the apex of polite society: 'Variety here is without end \_ & dissipation prevails almost universally.'<sup>133</sup> To criticise the excess and immorality of this section of society was nothing unusual, but it is evident that he realised the misbehaviour of elite women to be a more powerful metaphor for the immorality of London society in general, than, for instance, that of men. Gilbert Elliot seems to have been grappling with the problem that if women were not behaving in what he regarded to be a civilised manner, then London really was not the highpoint of civilisation it made itself out to be, or was becoming degenerate, yet in the end he was happy to make it the home of his wife and family.

Perhaps he believed the movement into London society of respectable provincial gentry like his own family could help to improve it, like a blast of fresh country air into the smog of the city. For many pro-British Scots in this period, the notion that they as Scots had something to contribute to the formation of British identity was an important one. As Alexander Murdoch has argued, 'Scots who adopted British national culture as part of their identity were able to retain [...] a sense of superiority as a poor but virtuous people, morally superior both to the luxury-ridden degeneration of metropolitan England and the primitive underdevelopment of traditional Scottish rural society.'<sup>134</sup> Elliot's criticisms of metropolitan women, unlike those made by his friends such as John Home and William Robertson,<sup>135</sup> were not presented along national lines, but along those common amongst the English, of town versus country, and gentry versus aristocracy.<sup>136</sup> Perhaps Elliot's difficulties stemmed from the appearance that he, far more than most of his contemporaries, seems to have conformed more closely to

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<sup>132</sup> NLS, MS11006 f.97, Gilbert Elliot to Agnes Elliot, 12 December 1754, London, to N [Queens]Ferry.

<sup>133</sup> NLS, MS11006 f.45, to Agnes Elliot, 14 April 1753, [London].

<sup>134</sup> Alexander Murdoch, 'Scotland and the Idea of Britain in the Eighteenth Century', in T. M. Devine and J. R. Young (eds.), *Eighteenth-Century Scotland: New Perspectives* (East Linton, 1999), p.116.

<sup>135</sup> NLS, MS16707 f.92, William Robertson to [Margaret Hepburn], 22 February 1758, London (See Chapter 4, pp.128-9); MS16700 f.191, John Home to Milton, February 1757, London; MS 16700 f.197, John Home to Milton, 9 April 1757, London.

<sup>136</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, pp.11-12, 172-4.



Colin Kidd's model of Britishness which emphasises the emulation, even adoption of Englishness as a strong component,<sup>137</sup> and felt unable to express a sense of Scottish superiority.

Yet, perhaps because of this sense of difference, Scots, like other minorities in London, were aware of themselves as a distinct group, spending much time in each others' company<sup>138</sup> and working through their own interest networks to provide for each other in a way that became the subject of quite invidious satire under Bute's premiership.<sup>139</sup> Even those women who do not appear to have been accepted into the more fashionable end of London society still helped their families by participating in interest networks. If never presented at court, the Adam women were still able to use their contacts within the world of London Scots to help procure their brothers one of their most important commissions, that of Kedleston house in Derbyshire.<sup>140</sup> Robert Adam reported to his brother that 'Nelly Says she just hinted my introduction to Sr Nathaniel Curzon by Ld Charles Hay [the younger brother of the fourth Marquis of Tweeddale], I went to his House, & in two hours after Sir Nat. came to mine to See my Drawings & was Struck all of a heap with wonder & Amaze.'<sup>141</sup> The following Saturday afternoon Robert Adam went back and spent two hours with Sir Nathaniel and his wife Lady Caroline, irrespective of the fact that Curzon had already commissioned another architect to work on his house. Unfortunately, the context in which this introduction was made is unspecified, but even if the Adam women ventured little into public society, the society they entertained at home, where their cousin the historian William Robertson occasionally stayed, may well have been attractive to ex-patriot Scots.

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<sup>137</sup> Colin Kidd, 'Integration: Patriotism and Nationalism', in Dickinson (ed.), *Companion to Eighteenth Century Britain*, p. 376.

<sup>138</sup> *Boswell's London Journal*; Carlyle, *Autobiography*. This is also apparent in family papers, notably the letters of Andrew Fletcher MP, who lived with the third Duke of Argyll. NLS, Saltoun papers.

<sup>139</sup> See Chapter 1, p.8.

<sup>140</sup> Kedleston was 'perhaps the most consistently praised country house' of the mid-to-late eighteenth-century, Tinniswood, *Country House Visiting*, p.102.

<sup>141</sup> NAS, GD18/4854, to Jamie Adam, 11 December 1758, Grosvenor St.

Overseas Travel, Travel Writing and Difference

Writing from Lyons *en route* for Italy in 1754, Robert Adam advised his sisters: 'As you are become Geographers Look at your Map, & follow my Route.'<sup>142</sup> For Robert, ahead lay the excitements of Italy and the Grand Tour, whilst for his sisters, the European continent could only be experienced through a map at home in Edinburgh. On the whole, it was through such indirect means that most of the women concerned here experienced overseas travel, receiving letters from brothers and sons travelling with the military, or for their education.<sup>143</sup> Their descriptions tended to focus on the military exploits they experienced, rather than touristic impressions. But the effect of this increase in male travel, and of the efficiency of the international postal system in broadening the mental horizons of even those women who could have no hopes of venturing overseas, should not be underestimated. Travellers' letters home carried more than just descriptions of where their authors were and what they saw; they created a sense of engagement with the concerns affecting loved ones in Italy or America. Without leaving their own homes, the Adam women became conversant with the goings-on of Italian high society, and the etiquette of negotiating the social hierarchy of a country they were almost certain never to visit. Through mechanisms such as describing his sisters' Moffat visits as 'villagiatura', Adam extended to his sisters the new culture he was experiencing as much as he did through his promises to send the latest Italian arias to his music-loving sister Nelly.<sup>144</sup> In their performance, even if only to a small audience, she was broadcasting a reminder of her brother's highly modish social progress. Moreover, as travellers talked of their experiences, Scottish gentlewomen became comfortable with a much wider frame of cultural reference. Although Lady Milton is known to have travelled no farther south than London, she confidently declared of a journey to Inveraray that 'the heat we sufferd in Glencro was beyond Mt Etna'.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> NAS, GD18/4751, to Bess Adam, 5 December 1754, Lyons.

<sup>143</sup> E.g., the Fletcher women received letters from their brother John at college in Groningen and travelling in France (NLS, MS16513, MS16519 ff.170 & following), and later from their brother Henry in Martinique and Cuba during the Seven Years War (MS16523 ff.172, 174, 178).

<sup>144</sup> E.g., NAS, GD18/4773, Robert Adam to Nelly Adam, 24 May 1755, Rome; GD18/4780, Robert Adam to Betty Adam, 19 July 1755, Rome.

<sup>145</sup> NLS, MS16516 f.104, to Milton in Edinburgh, 9 August 1752, Inveraray.

The study of overseas travel in the eighteenth century has tended to over-emphasise the Grand Tour; strictly speaking, the two to four years during which young aristocratic men toured the cultural and antiquarian highlights of Europe, particularly Italy. This has not only perpetuated a highly specific image of Continental travel as the preserve of this male elite, but distorted that of women travellers. Brian Dolan's *Ladies of the Grand Tour* could easily leave the casual reader with the impression that the only British women to travel for most of the eighteenth-century were debauched aristocrats travelling to ease their melancholy, to perpetuate affairs or hide their unfortunate results; and a small group of intellectuals who followed more closely the interests of male grand tourists.<sup>146</sup> Yet whilst in the mid-eighteenth century foreign travel remained more unusual for women than it was for men, women did cross the waters of the North Sea or the English Channel for a variety of purposes.

Margaret Steuart Calderwood's 'Journey in England, Holland, and the Low Countries' (1756) was written as a series of letters to her daughter. Published posthumously in the mid-nineteenth century, it has been described as 'more sophisticated than many published eighteenth-century travel writings in its fluent interleaving of descriptive minuteness, social anecdote, and cultural analysis.'<sup>147</sup> As her use of the personal anecdote (for instance, describing a fellow passenger on a Dutch post-wagon as 'a youngish sort of lad, with a wigg as big as Lord Milton's'<sup>148</sup>) suggests, she was not writing with the direct intention of publication, although she may have expected her journal to be circulated quite widely amongst friends and family. This may be one reason why she felt no need to indulge in the custom, almost universal amongst later-eighteenth-century women travel writers, of justifying their journeys by stressing that they were undertaken with their husbands and hence essentially domestic;<sup>149</sup> intentionally or not, Mr Calderwood first appears on the

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<sup>146</sup> Brian Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour* (London, 2001).

<sup>147</sup> Turner, *British Travel Writers*, p.134.

<sup>148</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', p.167.

<sup>149</sup> Kristi Siegel, 'Intersections: Women's Travel and Theory', in idem (ed.), *Gender, Genre and Identity*, pp.2-3; Turner, *British Travel Writers*, pp.144, 156. She argues that this helped their publication, and that only aristocrats and radicals failed to comply. Ibid., p.53. However, Calderwood did make frequent reference to the fact that the ultimate aim of her journey was to meet her brother, Sir James Steuart Denham, whom she had not seen for eleven years.

twenty-third page of the published narrative, suffering from sea-sickness.<sup>150</sup> Recent scholars of women's travel writing have cautioned against assumptions of a huge gender division in travel writing,<sup>151</sup> and Margaret Calderwood seems quite happily to have assumed the mantle of travel writer, feeling no need to excuse herself for doing so as a woman.

Early on in her journal, she set out her position vis-à-vis the priorities of her narrative, in characteristically blunt style:

Many authors and correspondents take up much time and pains to little purpose in descriptions. I never could understand any body's description, and I suppose no body will understand mine; neither do I intend to say any things which have ever been thought worthy to be put in print, so will only say London is a very large and extensive city.<sup>152</sup>

As far as she was concerned, the role of her journal was not simply to repeat what had been said before; besides, what she had to say was more important than mere description. In asserting the need to counter stereotype, she located herself within a tradition of travel writing. Of a journey in the Netherlands, she wrote: 'All the afternoon we travelled through the same barren country, with neither house nor town: if that happens to any body in Scotland, it is sure to be recorded as an instance of the barrenness of the country, so I shall record it of a country famous for its fertility and populousness.'<sup>153</sup> Her purpose was to be original, and to justify her travels in terms of the wider public good. 'Travelling may be an advantage to wise men,' she wrote, 'and a loss to fools, and the weight of anybody's brain is well known, when they are seen out of their own country. The proper use of it is to learn to set a just value upon every country, or the things they possess.'<sup>154</sup> Irrespective of gender, she saw herself as not only able, but expected to pass moral and intellectual judgement upon the societies through which she passed. As her statement suggests, she believed in the wider societal value of what she wrote about her travels as a woman observing, learning, and judging on her own initiative.

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<sup>150</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', p.128.

<sup>151</sup> Korte, *English Travel Writing*, p.109; Siegel, 'Intersections', p.5.

<sup>152</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', p.114.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p.169.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p.238. For eighteenth-century travel writers' perception of themselves as researchers, see Charles L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-century Travel Literature* (Berkeley, CA and London, 1978), p.7.

Robert Adam reported that the portraitist Allan Ramsay's wife was unable to enter into society because of her husband's status as an artist, commenting that 'there can be nothing more Mortifying than for a Lady who is respected in her own Country, to be utterly debarred the Company of Genteel people in others.'<sup>155</sup> Thankfully for her, she could enjoy the domestic company of other British ex-patriots, but Frances Steuart Denham, who spent seventeen years with her exiled Jacobite husband in France, Germany and the Low Countries, remembered episodes of rejection from British communities abroad with some bitterness, despite the lapse of time between the events which she described and the writing of her memoir in 1781.<sup>156</sup> Being ignored by Mr Murray, the British resident at Venice, in the summer of 1758, meant that she would be invited into no other company there. This she believed to be 'carying Political considerations to too great a hight,' supported by Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who 'brock with & Lampoon'd' the guilty party.<sup>157</sup> Others suffered far more seriously. The young Jacobite Lady Ogilvie, who had accompanied her husband in the Jacobite army in 1745, was in 1748 exiled in Paris 'seven months gone with Child in very great distress'. An anonymous letter blamed her unhappy situation on her husband's adoption of French attitudes towards women: 'She is realy to be pittyd my Lord has used her extreemly ill ever since She has been with him, by the advise of my lord aboyn who has persuad'd him that no man of quality Love there wifes in france and made him keep a mistress.'<sup>158</sup> Describing the ill-treatment of women was an easy way of denigrating other societies, but for Sir John Houston, who took his wife Eleanora Cathcart abroad immediately upon their marriage in the mid 1740s, absence from any regulatory forces of family or neighbours enabled him to pursue an extended campaign of verbal and physical violence against his wife.<sup>159</sup> Women abroad were, as those debauched aristocrats so beloved of popular histories knew only too well, outwith the moral regulation of their own society, but this could affect their agency in a far from positive sense.

<sup>155</sup> NAS, GD18/4801, to Mary Adam, 28 February 1756.

<sup>156</sup> EUL, MS E2002.28, 'Frances Steuart – Widow – Melencholy Title' (unpublished memoir, Coltness, 1881). This was punctuated by visits to London to petition for her husband's pardon.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. To add to her distress, Murray's friend Lady Wentworth head-hunted her English maid.

<sup>158</sup> EUL, MS2291/15/12-13, [?] to [?], 23 April 1748, Paris.

<sup>159</sup> Leah Leneman, *Alienated Affections: The Scottish Experience of Divorce and Separation, 1684-1830* (Edinburgh 1998), pp.304-8. Of course, domestic abuse occurred at home as well, but abroad, women were more isolated from help from friends or family.

More frequently, however, the experience of being abroad merely produced a sense of difference which highlighted the individual's attachment to the manners and society of their home country. Although Frances Steuart explicitly stated that she did 'not intend to enlarge in mentioning any Account of Countrys and their Inhabitants or Customs that woud ingross this small Memorandum Book of Privet History too much', her memoir exemplifies how women were no less able than men to refrain from comparing the habits of the different societies through which they travelled, with those of their own. Of the time she and her husband spent remote from other foreign company in Angoulême, she commented, 'the French (everyone knows) are a joyous People [...] constantly in Company, Balls, \_ Assemblys Parties of all kinds, to the Britesh who have Less Levity \_ the constant Company \_ & never an hour of the day to spend Allone in ones own Family \_ becomes rather a fatigue.'<sup>160</sup> Pointing to commonly-observed differences in national character, she aligned herself with a sense of British identity. Yet, Katherine Turner's recent work found the writings of British travellers in Europe to be less influential in the creation of a sense of Britishness than might have been expected, instead delineating the various ways in which British identity was fragmented through 'gender, class, profession, religion and region', rather than as one united nation against an 'other'.<sup>161</sup>

Several of these strands are evident in the writings of Margaret Calderwood. The heroes of her tale were her common-sense practicality and patriotic Scottishness. From Brussels, she recorded with some passion the following exchange with her countryman Captain Hew Dalrymple over the size of the theatre there, which she had remarked was small.

"Small," says he, "madam, do you know it is as big as the playhouse at Drury Lane?" "For that I shall not say," answered I; "but it is very little bigger than the one at Edinburgh;" at which he gave a prodigious laugh. "The Scots folk," says he, "are so nationall, that they expose themselves by it when they come abroad." "I have seen nothing, since you will have it, to make me otherways yet," says I

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<sup>160</sup> Steuart, 'Memoir'.

<sup>161</sup> Turner, *British Travel Writers*, pp.1, 7.

Despite her efforts to get the children present to support her assessment of the illusory effects of the high ceiling, the captain nevertheless remained unconvinced, and she continued:

I was so intraged to hear an old idiot speak such nonsense, that I was resolved to have the dimensions of both taken to confute him; for which reason you will get me that of Edinburgh, from my Lady Bredalban's box to the Duchess of Hamilton's, and from the front of the stage to the front box, that I may compare them; and likeways the distance from one door of the stage to another.<sup>162</sup>

This passage demonstrates the lengths to which highly 'nationall' feelings could take the overseas traveller, even if the main prompt to her outburst was a fellow Scot. Her conscious sense of nationality was even more pronounced in her travels through England at the start of her journey,<sup>163</sup> yet her narrative is not merely xenophobic, but demonstrates an awareness of the issues which affected the Scottish drive towards improvement which is far more nuanced in its patriotism.

She commented regularly on what could be imported to improve Scotland, at one point recommending how a Dutch method of river crossing might be used into Scotland,<sup>164</sup> and at another digressing onto the supposed 'secret' of Dutch linen bleaching.<sup>165</sup> When she asked 'How often have I heard us blamed for the Dutch excelling us so much in both whiteness and cheapness in their bleaching?' she was, with no sense of inappropriateness, implicating herself in the patriotically charged linen industry. Similarly, she unselfconsciously referred to her consideration of issues of trade as something to which she had given thought, not just as she travelled, but in the past too: 'I once thought that Scotland might carry on a greater trade than it does, from its advantageous situation for the sea.'<sup>166</sup> With no sense of inappropriateness, she travelled as a citizen of her country, and implicit within the notion that she, as well as her country, could be improved by her travels, is a sense that she saw self and nation as intertwined. Yet how typical she was in this cannot

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<sup>162</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', pp.263-4. Hew Dalrymple was the husband of her sister-in-law Lady Nelly Wemyss, sister of Frances Steuart Denham. Eighteenth-century travel writers frequently interpreted the foreign through a competitive comparison with the familiar. See Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, p.42.

<sup>163</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', esp. pp.105-121.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p.137.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p.143.

<sup>166</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', p.144.

be known. She distanced herself from her female British compatriots, declaring of Brussels, 'All the British in this town (that is, the women) are mostly what I call adventuresses',<sup>167</sup> thus contributing to the impression of a sensible, patriotic gentry (represented by herself) in opposition to a flighty, irresponsible aristocracy. Whilst the latter's travels tended to be denounced as profligate and unpatriotic, she was unflinching in her representation of her own travels as directed towards the national good.

Like most travellers writing for a private readership, ideological comment was largely restricted to religion,<sup>168</sup> on which she focused as a primary indicator of difference. One of her first comments on England was a predictable attack on the English church,<sup>169</sup> but her worst criticisms were reserved for Catholics, to the extent that her nineteenth-century editor felt obliged to censor her 'coarse satire upon the doctrine of transubstantiation.'<sup>170</sup> Frances Steuart noted that her son's maid's 'Parents woud not on any Acc.t Allow her to go with me to a Papest Country',<sup>171</sup> suggesting a real fear of Catholicism remained amongst lower social groups. But Margaret Calderwood tended to ridicule Catholicism rather than portraying it as fearful, thus belittling her subjects and ensuring her superiority in their difference. Despite cautioning against sending sons to be educated in Catholic countries,<sup>172</sup> she was willing to admit that both boys' and girls' education in all Catholic countries was 'on a much better footing than we at home.'<sup>173</sup> She excused the Catholicism of those she liked: Father Daniel was 'just a Scots pedantick scholar' who had 'found a life of study and idleness could be had without an estate, or so much as a farthing.'<sup>174</sup> In presenting Protestantism as misunderstood,<sup>175</sup> she sought to do justice to those who were followers of Catholicism, whilst still presenting herself, a representative of Protestant British liberties, as superior. On another occasion she challenged a baron from Ghent over why he would be saved and she go to hell. "'You do not obey the

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p.245.

<sup>168</sup> Black, *British Abroad*, p.215.

<sup>169</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', p.105.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p.174n.

<sup>171</sup> Steuart, 'Memoir'.

<sup>172</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', p.181.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p.179.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p.188.

<sup>175</sup> Calderwood, 'Journey', p.244.



pope,” says he. “Why, the pope and I are perfectly agreed.” said I.<sup>176</sup> Although essentially conciliatory, in this brief statement she managed to convey a sense of Protestant superiority in the casual assumption that her own spiritual authority equalled that of the Pope.

Like most eighteenth-century Britons who travelled, Margaret Calderwood went abroad only once in her lifetime,<sup>177</sup> providing her with one, unparalleled opportunity to observe and opine. Perhaps the act of being abroad was more important than experiencing any particular culture. She believed travel had afforded her insights into the politics of other nations. There is a sense at times in her narrative that her perception of ‘abroad’ united most of western Europe, and writing of why ‘the King of France and his parliament have fallen out most terribly’ she noted that ‘I never understood this French dispute til I came from home, so I suppose you may stand in need of the same information’, which she went on to do by comparing the situation of the Jansenists with Lord Kames.<sup>178</sup> Although she had at no time entered France, she had come into contact with an international society of travellers which, she clearly believed, had educated her. She ended her narrative by commenting on what she herself had learned on her travels, presenting a conclusion which, given the tone of her journal, is perhaps surprisingly broad-minded:

I beleive, when accompts are ballanced, the favours of Providence are more equally distributed than we rashly imagine; what one country wants another can supply, which links men into one common society [...]. The people on the continent have their minds more at large with regard to the rest of the world than those in an island; they have opportunity of converse with all nations, which takes off prejudice, except when it is politicall, and even then it does not extend to individuals. Their behaviour is politer, because they are often amongst strangers.<sup>179</sup>

Her recommendation of travel is essentially an application of ideas about the benefits of sociability discussed throughout this thesis. Isolation is bad, sociable interaction good for both individuals and nations, and its ultimate result was that most desirable preoccupation of the eighteenth-century gentry: politeness. An individual who

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p.203.

<sup>177</sup> Black, *British Abroad*, p.4.

<sup>178</sup> Calderwood, ‘Journey’, p.274.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., pp.237-8.

travelled abroad, mixed in company and, most importantly, thought about the places in which they travelled, was thus, whether male or female, simultaneously improving him or herself, and society at large.

### Conclusion

This chapter has emphasised the degree to which travel interpreted in its broadest sense of moving from one place to another cannot be construed as alien to elite women's experience in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland. On the contrary, both the experience of physical relocation and of spending time in contrasting cultural and geographical milieux was merely what Scottish gentlewomen could expect to experience over the course of their lifetimes, and, in many cases, over the course of the year. Yet whilst familiar patterns of travel brought women into a wider sphere of experience than is often considered, changes in this cycle, particularly those prompted by marriage, could bring them into quite alien territory, precipitating a sense of dislocation and 'foreignness.'

Prior to the expansion in travel-writing and the popularising of the cults of the picturesque and sublime, it was primarily through their own experiences as members of landed families that gentlewomen tended to react to the landscapes and country houses which they visited. Yet this form of incipient tourism could nevertheless help to affirm a sense of both patriotism and social status, the latter highlighted by opportunities afforded by local spa resorts which acted as a solution in which social bonds could be dissolved and re-formed. For the socially ambitious, destinations like London and Bath held the potential to confer prestige upon those who visited and were able to enter society there, at the same time acting as an 'other' against which Scotswomen could measure themselves.

Finally, whilst few extant sources pertain to overseas travel amongst this group of women, and those which do cannot be taken as representative of a typical gentlewoman's experience, they nevertheless provide an insight into the means through which elite women could form and express opinions relating to the most pressing practical concerns facing mid-eighteenth-century Scottish society. Through their opportunities to physically move from one place to another, to compare what they saw and to help spread the manners and fashions of polite society, women

experienced in their most physical manifestation the new opportunities open to them to be a visible and opinionated part of the society in which they lived.

## Conclusion

In recent years, British historians have sought to reach beyond the instruments of state and those who wielded them; beyond the metropolis and its dominant culture, and into a much more varied hinterland of historical experience. The study of women through the use of personal sources like correspondence has, in an English context, been one of the most fruitful ways in which eighteenth-century society has been reinvestigated, and, indeed, its historiography re-invigorated. This study focuses on the lived experience of Scotswomen whose lives have hitherto remained hidden in the archives, providing a new angle on this re-examination of British history from a non-constitutional, non-male, non-metropolitan viewpoint. Through an analysis of the ways in which these women operated in polite society in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland, it presents a new perspective on the way in which localised forms of polite culture developed across Britain. It contributes not just to the historical understanding of elite women in eighteenth-century Britain, but to that of Scottish society in the Age of Enlightenment. In so doing, it contributes to the ongoing scholarly agenda that seeks to give women a voice in what has been a very masculine historical tradition.

In the 'Introduction' to the recently-published *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, the editors discussed the problematic ways in which the history of women in Scotland has tended to be told:

'Women' had frequently been treated in groups, rather than representing a broad range of human experience. Their history has a tendency to be told collectively, in terms of assumptions about motherhood and exclusions from most other spheres of life: from the churches, from military matters, from politics, from education, from employment, from proper wages.<sup>1</sup>

Lumped together irrespective of social status or life experience, in a manner which would appear immediately ridiculous if transferred to 'men', 'women' have thus been characterised through blanket negative definitions and biological experiences which were far from universal. As the editors pointed out, women have not been

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<sup>1</sup> 'Introduction', to Elizabeth Ewan, Sue Innes and Siân Reynolds (eds.), co-ordinating editor, Rose Pipes, *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women: From the Earliest Times to 2004* (Edinburgh, 2006), p.xxvii.

ignored by the “new Scottish history”, but ‘they do not often emerge from recent historical writing as complex individuals.’<sup>2</sup> The *Biographical Dictionary*’s editors did not criticise their colleagues whose job it is to write overviews and text-books, but lamented the lack of scholarship which has resulted in a situation in which ‘authors have sometimes had to make bricks without straw.’<sup>3</sup> In order to create the basic blocks from which to construct a more representative Scottish history, they noted the need ‘to re-people the Scottish landscape with more women than the few famous figures of whom everyone has heard.’<sup>4</sup>

This call for re-population, to which the *Biographical Dictionary* itself has made a significant contribution, acknowledges the real and important insights that can be gained into any historical period or society through research which probes the often strikingly apparent complexities of individual lives and experiences, female as well as male.<sup>5</sup> Through research into family papers relating to women less celebrated than most of those who grace the pages of the *Biographical Dictionary*, this study shows that the lived experience of individual women, and their recorded opinions and comments, however sparse, can demonstrate that they were excluded from neither church, nor politics, nor education, nor indeed many other areas of life. It does this by considering women’s involvement in such activities on their own terms. Their involvement may not have been the same as that of men, and their influence often less transparent, but this does not mean that their experience and deeds should be ignored, nor that it is unworthy of integration into the mainstream historical narrative.

In taking this approach, this study follows recent scholarship on elite women in eighteenth-century England, providing a Scottish perspective which can be compared with this better-developed historiography. With reference to the genteel, by far the most relevant work is that of Amanda Vickery.<sup>6</sup> Like Vickery’s work and

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Introduction’, to Ewan et al (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary*, p.xxvii. In the companion volume Lynn Abrams took a more critical perspective. ‘Introduction: Gendering the Agenda’, in Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon, Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes Yeo (eds.), *Gender in Scottish History since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2006), p.3. See Chapter 1, p.19.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Introduction’, to Ewan et al (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary*, p.xxvii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xxvii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xxviii.

<sup>6</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998).

that of Elaine Chalus on elite women in politics,<sup>7</sup> this research is based primarily on personal sources in family archives. Women's thoughts, experiences, opinions and beliefs are in most historical societies more difficult to uncover than those of men, and that with which this research has been concerned was no exception. Yet this work demonstrates the possibilities, in the absence of women's diaries or detailed or lengthy runs of correspondence, for seeking and finding female experience in what might be termed 'male' sources. It shows that hidden away within large volumes or numerous bundles of correspondence from one man to another lie references to women's activities which, taken together, can help to reconstruct a hitherto fragmented historical landscape. Thus, in letters between their husbands, Marion Innes and Mrs Fordyce of Ayton shared the trials of infant feeding and weaning. From Robert Adam's letters home from Italy resonate the sometimes raucous voices and day-to-day preoccupations of his mother and sisters, whilst the liveliness and precociousness of the adolescent Betty Fletcher as she ventured into London high society leaps out in letters from family friends to her parents. This approach, like any other, has its dangers and disadvantages: in particular, the comments and opinions of third parties cannot be assumed to present a wholly accurate representation of the sentiments of the individuals concerned. Similarly, care must be taken not to interpret this small amount of evidence in a way which would be unrepresentative of wider experience.<sup>8</sup> Yet the very fact of this sparse and fragmented evidence serves as a constant reminder of the dangers of generalisation, in turn ensuring this is as far as possible avoided.

The persuasiveness of Vickery's and others' arguments against the relevance of gendered 'separate spheres' to understanding eighteenth-century society has created an historiographical context in which women's experience need no longer be constrained within this theoretical mould.<sup>9</sup> In agreement with this, this study adds to the argument that eighteenth-century men and women perceived women's roles and obligations as integrated into the workings of extra-domestic society at almost every

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<sup>7</sup> For Chalus, see Chapter 1 n.65.

<sup>8</sup> Anne Laurence noted that many of the women who appear in her book 'do so only because their untypicality was remarked upon and that is why we know they existed', adding, 'It is only by painstaking work in the archives, looking at thousands of individual cases, that it is possible to develop a sense of what is typical.' Anne Laurence, *Women in England, 1560-1760: A Social History* (London, 1994), pp.274-5.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 1, nn.59-60.

level. Although women were aware that their relationship to aspects of the 'public' was not the same as that of men, they exerted influence in some of the most theoretically male preserves. Supporting the conclusions of Elaine Chalus, for instance, it demonstrates Scotswomen to have been active participants in a variety of political activities, with no apparent sense of unsuitability. Thus it shows Mary Hepburn actively managing her nephew Andrew Fletcher's parliamentary election campaign of 1747, whilst Andrew's mother and sisters exercised the power to make introductions to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Argyll, the most powerful individual in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland who ruled the country in an almost vice-regal fashion. Whilst the level at which this family was operating was unusual, their use of the day-to-day roles and activities demanded of polite gentlewomen to further the political interests of family and friends reveals the political importance of women's social networks, and the influence they could wield through them. Whilst it acknowledges that the idea of women's concerns as primarily domestic was evident in prescription even at family level, it points out that often this occurred in a fairly light-hearted way, perhaps as a means of making sense of the conflicts between the real-life situations in which these men and women found themselves, and those about which they read in periodicals or conduct literature.

Like Amanda Vickery's *The Gentleman's Daughter*, this work is not, on the whole, concerned with 'nonconformity or rebellion'.<sup>10</sup> Whilst not wishing to disparage the importance of scholarship on those rare individuals whose actions or writings tried to, or really did change the world, it argues for the importance of studying women who performed no extraordinarily remarkable deeds and offered few if any criticisms of, or even comments on, the society in which they lived. Instead, it shows that despite the existence of obstacles, many of women's societally-accepted activities enabled them to expand their mental horizons, to exert influence, or to enjoy autonomy. Unlike *The Gentleman's Daughter*, however, many of the families on whose papers this research is based were closely connected to influential political and literary circles. Thus, the degree of politicisation amongst the women of some of the families researched was greater than is apparent from Vickery's work, whilst, perhaps because of the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment (examined in

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<sup>10</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.285.

greater detail below), women's engagement with print culture appears to have loomed larger in the sources. Yet, whilst on the one hand representing the idiosyncrasies of individual family cultures, taken together they suggest a more important difference, expressing the distinctiveness of the lowland Scottish gentry as the inhabitants of a former political and current cultural capital, to some extent inherited from an increasingly distant aristocracy.

The gentry of south-east Scotland were not, unlike their northern English counterparts, unproblematically provincial. In Edinburgh, they lived in a city which had only within living memory lost its national parliament, and it continued to be the centre of national concerns. It was not just the presence of the law courts which helped to give those who flocked to Edinburgh for the winter season the sense that they were in a town from which the affairs of a nation were still at least partially governed. Enterprises which controlled much of the country's affairs, like the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Fisheries and Manufactures and later the Annexed Estates Commission, were administered by prominent inhabitants; lawyers and judges like Lord Milton. These enterprises represented Scotland's attempts to modernise within the framework of a British state, yet they also embodied the continuing sense that Scotland remained in many ways a separate political and economic entity. In the light of the reactions of Margaret Hepburn to William Robertson's *History of Scotland*; in Margaret Macdonald's reluctance to send her son to be educated in London; in the responses to London of even such a passionately pro-British individual as Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> bt., the arguments of those who continue to claim simplistically that, for instance, Scotland's 'dominant élites were uncompromisingly Unionist and assimilationist',<sup>11</sup> must surely be questioned. Whilst accepting the political and cultural situation in which they found themselves, willing to embrace the Union and aspects of polite culture which could be constructed as 'assimilationist', the Scottish gentry continued to maintain a sense of difference.

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<sup>11</sup> Bruce P. Lenman, 'From the Union of 1707 to the Franchise Reform of 1832', in R. A. Houston and W. W. J. Knox (eds.), *The New Penguin History of Scotland: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London, 2002), p.349.



Within England, the complexities of provincial polite culture have been probed in the work of Helen Berry on the North-East of England.<sup>12</sup> Berry has demonstrated that the relationship between provincial and metropolitan culture was not simply one of imitation. If the polite sociability of north-east England operated within a frame of reference ever-conscious of the potency of the metropolitan as a source of fashion and prestige, it was also self-consciously local. In a similar vein, this study shows that just as Allan Ramsay used his poetry (to the publication of which members of many Scottish elite families subscribed, amongst them the Clerks of Penicuik and Elliots of Minto<sup>13</sup>) to promote a polite culture which stressed elements of the indigenous, there existed in Scotland a culture of politeness which, whilst part of this wider British culture, was also distinctively Scottish. It demonstrates that Scots experienced polite culture in physical spaces which were far removed from London's elegant squares or the crescents of Bath. In Edinburgh, the Scottish elite acted out the movements of polite sociability on a stage which, in terms of spatial environment, was essentially medieval. Until the 1770s, the orderly squares and gardens of the New Town existed only in the imagination of the Scottish improving classes. When Ladies Milton and Minto donned their badges as Lady Directresses of the Edinburgh assembly, they did so in rented rooms in an Old Town close; only in 1766 did the assembly move to purpose-built settings in Bell's Place, and even these were not ideal.<sup>14</sup> The ostentatious rooms which remain in George Street today, like those which once served the South Side elite in Buccleuch Place, were the product of the 1780s.

Similarly, passing a few weeks in summer at a small, relatively undeveloped spa resort like Moffat was an essential element of the Scots polite calendar; as Robert Adam's letters to his sisters and mother make clear, it could be viewed as a vital strategic stop-over *en route* to genteel status. But Bath it was not, and the notion of *rus in urbe* considerably less of an artificial construct, enhanced not just by the out-

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<sup>12</sup> In particular, Helen Berry, 'Promoting Taste in the Provincial Press: National and Local Culture in Eighteenth-Century Newcastle upon Tyne', *BJECS*, 25 (2002); Helen Berry, 'Creating Public Space: The Organisation and Social Function of the Newcastle Assembly Rooms', in Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (eds.), *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830* (Aldershot, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Allan Ramsay, *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, vol.1 (poems: 1721), ed. Burns Martin and John W. Oliver, STS, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, no.19, (Edinburgh, 1945), pp.xxxi-xxxvi.

<sup>14</sup> James H. Jamieson, 'Social Assemblies of the Eighteenth Century', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* 19 (1933), pp.55, 57-9.

of-town wells from which health-seekers drank, but by the practice of drinking goat whey. Combined with the polite institutions of balls and assemblies was a consciousness of the proximity of the Scottish rural landscape by which those who took the waters and the goat whey were surrounded, coloured, perhaps, by the contemporary popularity of Ramsay's pastoral poetry, not least *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725). Yet, if this kind of resort appears somewhat deviant from mainstream British polite culture, it was not contained by the national boundaries within Britain, small goat whey resorts being frequented across the Border in northern England too.

The Scottish gentry were not unacquainted with London modes of politeness and the fashionable resorts of the south. London was taking on an increasingly important role in elite women's lives, not just as the centre from which fashions spread, but as a place to which they travelled, perhaps with husbands or fathers attending parliament. A degree of criticism of metropolitan manners may have been fashionable, yet many still hoped to acquire the veneer of sophistication associated with familiarity with the British capital. In a society which emphasised the vocational in education, and the notion of learning social roles through observation and practice, it took on a particular resonance as a place in which young girls could be brought up to learn from an early age to act with ease in the company of the most fashionable circles. Whilst some families, like the Innes' of Stow, continued older practices of fostering children with rural households, emphasising a family environment, others like the Fletchers of Saltoun embraced urban culture and invested in an expensive London boarding school education for their youngest daughter. Young women so educated could expect not only to move naturally in English company as adults, but to speak, when necessary, using English words and stresses at a time when Scottish words and phrases could appear, to their users at least, to pose a potential barrier to acceptance in polite society there.

Whilst in Lowland Scotland, language was a considerably less contentious issue than in the Gaidhealtachd, in Wales or in Ireland, this study contends that it is worthy of greater interest from historians than it has been to date. Even before the British-wide obsession with spoken communication gained momentum in the 1760s, elite Scotswomen were actively deploying language as a means of signalling both rank and social and cultural affiliation. In a society which put a premium on

women's role in polite conversation, women learnt to employ language in different ways in a variety of settings, and to encapsulate messages in how they chose to speak in any given situation – whether loudly or softly, whether with aspirationally English or with defiantly Scots words and pronunciation. Yet whilst the use of overtly Scottish language tended to signify a rejection of the excesses of politeness, those who did so were far from being excluded from polite society. Lady Milton, as early as the 1740s caricatured not only as a speaker of unabashedly unreformed Scots, but as gossipy, loud and defiant of mannered convention, was in that same decade appointed one of the Lady Directresses of the Edinburgh Assembly, perhaps the most public recognition of polite status that could be conferred on a woman in Scotland at that time. This suggests again the need for further research on the complexities of the ways in which Scots adopted and adapted polite culture.

It was the intensity and self-consciousness of the intellectual developments of what has become known as the Scottish Enlightenment which most distinguished the experience of the Scottish elite from that of other parts of Britain in this period. The concept of 'Enlightenment' is, as was discussed in the first chapter, open to many interpretations, but this study supports those who have demonstrated the fruitfulness of the reinterpretation of Enlightenment culture to embrace not just the literati themselves but those who read their works and were influenced by their views, who formed a much broader strand of society.<sup>15</sup> Historians across Europe have recognised this development as particularly important in terms of understanding women's relationship with Enlightenment,<sup>16</sup> but its significance is heightened in a country like Scotland where there is no evidence that the women who lived in the early Enlightenment period made a written contribution to its intellectual output. Mary Catherine Moran demonstrated that Scotswomen's access to print enabled them to respond to the Enlightenment culture which was taking place around them;<sup>17</sup> this study adds to that by considering elite women's relationship with print culture in

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<sup>15</sup> E.g., Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (Harmondsworth, 2000), p.xxii: 'Our social vantage on enlightened ideologues must be nuanced, taking in the view 'from below' as well as 'from above', from the provinces as well as the metropolis, embracing female no less than male responses.'

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor, 'General Introduction', to Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2005), esp. p.xv.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Catherine Moran, 'From Rudeness to Refinement: Gender, Genre and Scottish Enlightenment Discourse' (Johns Hopkins University PhD thesis, 1999).

the wider context of other aspects of their engagement with the social world. It demonstrates, for instance, how opportunities to travel meant Margaret Hepburn could form relationships which expanded the variety of her reading, and the ways in which Margaret Calderwood's reading informed the way she viewed other countries as a traveller.

An ability to feel part of a world of letters both stemmed from and contributed towards other new social experiences. Ideas were disseminated not just through print, nor through the debates of the clubs and societies which form the characteristic spatial settings of the Scottish Enlightenment, but in new social settings such as assemblies and tea-tables, which brought together men and women for conversation. Of course, it is important to acknowledge that the extent to which women were able on a regular basis to actively participate in enlightened conversation in the assemblies and drawing rooms of Edinburgh (as opposed to merely being present) remains unknown. However, this study demonstrates that women like Betty Fletcher and Peggy Hepburn conversed with the literati, understood their aims and objectives, and were valued in doing so for representing a wider female audience or readership towards which writers like William Robertson and John Home were consciously addressing their works. In examining women's involvement in some of the most celebrated works of the Scottish Enlightenment, it suggests that the notion of the development of Scottish Enlightenment thought as taking place in exclusively masculine environments, if still largely representative, ought not to be regarded as without exception. If women formed an integral part of the readership of Enlightenment texts, or the audience at the theatre; and, more importantly, if Enlightenment authors were keenly aware of this as they composed their works, then the essence of that Enlightenment culture cannot be construed as entirely masculine. In the light of Margaret Monro's clandestine Latin tuition and the Adam sisters' second-hand astronomy lectures, it also suggests that the prominent role of the universities in the Scottish Enlightenment need not be viewed as entirely detrimental to women's ability to expand their mental horizons. Rather, the social position of the universities in Scotland's principal burghs may have created climates more amenable to women's acquisition of learning than existed elsewhere, although this must be treated with caution in the absence of detailed research.

Most importantly, the Scottish Enlightenment promoted an intellectual culture which was open to the proliferation of new ways of thinking about the nature of society. Having witnessed at first-hand the bloodshed and turmoil of two civil wars which presented their country in the eyes of the world as riven by feudal faction, the desire to build a new, more civilised society was widespread in thinking circles. Scotland's hoped-for economic transformation remained elusive, and proposals for agricultural change, even when put into effect, often yielded little in the way of results. As has been seen, physical change was also slow to manifest itself in the material transformation of Scotland's urban environment. But if practical progress was difficult to bring about, what could be achieved was a change of manners, a change in the ways in which not only men, but women, too, behaved in society. Ever aware of the need to prove themselves, Scots were acutely conscious of the patriotic potential of their demonstration of civilised behaviour through the adoption of polite manners and the forms of sociability with which they were associated. It was, perhaps, the belief promoted initially by Addison and Steele and later extrapolated by David Hume, that women's participation in public social settings signified the civilisation of modern society, their conversation improving for the nation as a whole, which marked the most significant 'change of manners' experienced by the women of this generation. In this way, women, through frequenting the institutions of public sociability and behaving there in appropriately polite ways, helped to promote Scotland as a civilised nation.

When the social and economic effects of industrialisation and urbanisation began to be felt, the anxieties this aroused would be expressed through texts which demonstrated a concern that women's supposedly unfeminine behaviour was symptomatic of greater social instability.<sup>18</sup> For Linda Colley, this was symbolised by the changing gender-dominance of Edinburgh's assembly rooms between the 1750s and 1780s, by which time the most fashionable were presided over by a man.<sup>19</sup> Whilst, to date, most academic attention has been concentrated on this later period, this work focuses on the less-well-documented decades prior to this, adding context to the picture Colley suggested of a mid-century social climate in Scotland which was comfortable with the notion of women in a public social role. It suggests that in

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<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 1, p.13.

<sup>19</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 1992), p.257.

this earlier period, few of the anxieties which were to beset later thinkers were apparent, and instead that those families like the Fletchers and the Elliots, which were most closely associated with promoting other areas of improvement and modernisation towards an ideally-civilised society, were amongst those in which women's public social activities were most accepted. Yet this research demonstrates the dual roles expected of elite women in this period, showing that the training received by girls in their formative years continued to emphasise the importance of practical responsibilities alongside increasing expectations that they would be required to operate as public social beings.

Finally, this study makes the case for the importance of chronologically contained, but wide-ranging research. In her survey of women in early-modern Europe, Olwen Hufton discussed Braudel's belief that long-, medium- and short-term studies were all necessary in order to study the changing experiences of men and women in history. Hufton argued that the study of medium time-frames covering, for instance, a generation or those who lived during a particular reign, could reveal insights into life as experienced by individuals at any one specific time which could be overlooked in the investigation of long, overarching time-periods.<sup>20</sup> A time-frame of a few decades such as that covered here enables elite women's lives to be considered in detail for this period, facilitating a broad-spectrum analysis. It explores the 'change of manners' in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland through six areas of elite women's lives, from their first steps in learning to read, sew and write; through their increasing opportunities not just to learn about the world around them, but to actively engage with it, through print culture and writing; through the growing expectation that they would be able to converse and act as social beings in the institutions of polite sociability; through their integration into the networks of patronage and influence; through the centrality of movement and cultural adaptation to their experience. Ending with a highly outspoken narrative of overseas travel, it acknowledges that the experiences it charts were not all experienced by all gentlewomen. Much of what this study has revealed was the expansion of horizons that were mental rather than physical, yet the importance of this should not be discounted, not just as an engine for further change, but as a development in itself.

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<sup>20</sup> Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe Vol.1, 1500-1800* (London, 1995), pp.487-8.

## APPENDIX 1: Biographical backgrounds

### Fletcher of Saltoun

The Fletchers were a not-untypical East Lothian gentry family, yet one which for two generations in the early- to mid-eighteenth century enjoyed an exceptional prominence in the public life of Scotland. Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1655-1716) is today best remembered for his impassioned campaigning against the Union of 1707. Exiled and condemned to death by the Restoration regime, his reputation as an orator and author of works of republican rhetoric was still highly regarded in the rapidly changing intellectual climate of the mid-eighteenth century. It was he who was responsible for raising the Fletcher of Saltoun name to national prominence, and forging the link between the Fletchers and the national interest. His brother Henry inherited the Saltoun estates, whilst Henry's wife Margaret Carnegie (d.1745) was said to have made an undercover journey to Holland to acquire the secrets of linen manufacture and the processing of pearl barley.<sup>1</sup> Her remaining letters, almost entirely concerned with estate management (it was to her, rather than his son, that her husband left the running of his estates) and the health of her family, suggest a busy, capable and autonomous businesswoman.

But it was Margaret's son, also Andrew Fletcher (1691-1766), who was the most immediately important figure in shaping the lives and influencing the social and intellectual experiences of the women examined in this thesis. Described as 'by far the most effective politician left in Scotland in the half century or so after the Union,'<sup>2</sup> he rose through the legal system under the patronage of Lord Ilay (from 1743 third Duke of Argyll) to become Lord Justice Clerk, and the most prominent 'sub minister' managing the Argathelian interest in Scotland for much of the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> As Lord Milton he was at the forefront of new trends in Scottish society and government, playing a prominent role in the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Fisheries and Manufactures, the British Linen Company, and the

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<sup>1</sup> EUL, MS La III 364, Elizabeth Halkett, 'Memoir of the Fletchers of Saltoun', (unpublished MS, written some time before 1782), pp.41-2.

<sup>2</sup> John Stuart Shaw, *The Management of Scottish Society: Power, Nobles, Lawyers, Edinburgh Agents and English Influences* (Edinburgh, 1983), p.186.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Fry, 'Fletcher, Andrew, Lord Milton (1691/2–1766)', *ODNB*, online edn., Oct 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9721>, accessed 12 Nov 2006].

Annexed Estates Commission, the bodies most closely concerned with the spread and implementation of ideas relating to agricultural and industrial improvement. Although without doubt a wily political operator, he was nevertheless widely viewed as bringing reason and humanity to his politics, and the causes which he chose to support were undeniably forward-looking in character, particularly in the post-1745 period. It is this moderate, forward-looking, and pro-British agenda which makes the study of the women of this family so pertinent. The Saltoun Papers in the National Library of Scotland are richly detailed for the period until the early 1760s, but thereafter become extremely sparse. Hence, much less is known about the later lives of this family. Generally, the women's lives are less well-documented than those of the men of the family.

#### **Mary Fletcher** (bap.1698<sup>4</sup>)

Mary Fletcher, daughter of Margaret Carnegie and Henry Fletcher, was found by her parents in summer 1718 to be pregnant and secretly married to George Hepburn of Monkrig. Initially cast out of the family home, Mary's mother and brother were helping to draw up her marriage contract by November 1719,<sup>5</sup> and she appears to have been later fully reconciled to the family. Little is known of Hepburn himself, who died in 1739.<sup>6</sup> They later had one daughter, Margaret (see below), as far as is known, their only surviving child. Mary's remaining letters show her to have played an active role in the maintenance of the Fletcher family electoral interest in East Lothian. Later in her life, she took a townhouse in the Castlehill in Edinburgh.

#### **Martha Fletcher**

Milton's other surviving sister was also active in the running of Fletcher family estates, which dominates her surviving correspondence. The many pages of notes she left on her reading, however, from dozens of pages copied from histories, to collections of characters ancient and modern, to lists of definitions from a

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<sup>4</sup> OPR Index to Baptisms, East Lothian.

<sup>5</sup> MS16504 f.205, Margaret Carnegie to Milton, 24 November 1719, Salton, and f.223, Margaret Carnegie to [?].

<sup>6</sup> NLS, MS17607 ff.20, 35, 36. Also MS16510 f.237, Peggy Fletcher to ?Andrew Fletcher, 20 February 1739, Brunstane. He was a member of a local gentry family, which was prominent in the medical profession. James Alexander Duncan, *The Descent of the Hepburns of Monkrig*, (Edinburgh, 1911), p.80.



dictionary, give a glimpse into the mind of an avid reader.<sup>7</sup> After her mother's death in 1746, she appears to have lived principally with her sister Mary.

**Elizabeth Kinloch** (d.1782<sup>8</sup>)

Milton married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Francis Kinloch of Gilmerton, it seems clandestinely in the summer of 1718.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the standard attributes of charity, piety and domestic economy, her granddaughter praised her brisk and cheerful personality and her ability to charm and influence people in ways that suggest she was possessed of qualities ideal for the socially active political wife,<sup>10</sup> although she appears also to have tended towards silliness and Alexander Carlyle referred to her as being possessed of much 'weakness and intrigue.'<sup>11</sup> In 1746, she was made one of the Lady Directresses of the Edinburgh Assembly,<sup>12</sup> and in the following years, she acted as hostess during the third Duke of Argyll's annual visits to Inveraray. The couple spent most of their married life at Brunstane, a house near Musselburgh rented from the Duke of Argyll, also taking rooms in Edinburgh during the winter, and eventually building a townhouse in the Canongate. Lady Milton had nine children who survived infancy. The eldest, Andrew, (1721<sup>13</sup>-1779) was elected to parliament and acted as political secretary to the third Duke of Argyll. Henry (1724-1803), like many second sons joined the army, ending his career as a General, a pattern followed by his youngest brother, John (1737<sup>14</sup>-1806). Two other sons, Francis and Archibald, died young, Archie as a schoolboy and Francis in London, where, having fallen out with his parents, he was engaged in composing a lengthy work on the classics. This present work, however, is more concerned with Lady Milton's three daughters.

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<sup>7</sup> Martha and Mary had two other sisters, Katherine and Margaret, neither of whom left any correspondence in the Saltoun papers. Apart from two short letters referring to Katherine's death in 1759, in which Martha noted she had not told anyone as she was 'little known in the World', (MS16520 f.7, Martha Fletcher to Milton, 8 February ?1759) nothing is known of them.

<sup>8</sup> NAS, CC8/126/603, Testament of Elizabeth Kinloch.

<sup>9</sup> NLS, MS16504.

<sup>10</sup> Halkett, 'Memoir', pp.50-52.

<sup>11</sup> *The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*, ed. John Hill Burton with a new Introduction by Richard B. Sher (Bristol, 1990; reprint of 1910 edn.), p.273.

<sup>12</sup> 'Minutes of the Edinburgh Assembly 1746-1776', Edinburgh Central Library, MS YML 28A, p.42.

<sup>13</sup> The dates of birth here, unless otherwise noted, are from the list of Milton's children in NLS, MS16998 f.3.

<sup>14</sup> NLS, MS17858 f.13, Genealogical notes.

### **Margaret Fletcher (1723-1776)**

Margaret (Peg) was educated in Edinburgh, and married in 1750 to John Grant of Easter Elchies, the son of Lord Patrick Grant of Elchies, a colleague of Milton's as a Senator of the College of Justice and a figure of considerable influence in Scottish public life.<sup>15</sup> The marriage appears to have been at least partly political in motivation, and may have been entirely against her will, although her niece later emphasised the closeness of their relationship.<sup>16</sup> Soon afterwards, Grant was appointed a Baron of Exchequer in Scotland. They had no surviving children and lived mainly at Castlesteads near Dalkeith, where Grant had been given a post as chief commissioner to the Buccleuch Estates.<sup>17</sup> In 1768, Margaret was greatly angered and distressed by her husband's attempts to make her give up her jointure, investing her money instead in West Indian property.<sup>18</sup> In 1771, Grant purchased a house in Soho Square, which he employed the Adam family to refurbish, although financial constraints had forced him to move away, to Greek Street, then Dean Street, by 1774.<sup>19</sup> Margaret died in London in 1776, and her husband in Grenada, where he had purchased an estate, not long thereafter.<sup>20</sup> Little, however, is known about these later years of their lives.

### **Mary Fletcher (1725-1778)**

Mary Fletcher, known usually as Mally, 'was said to be the darling of her father' according to her niece.<sup>21</sup> Educated with her elder sister in Edinburgh, her niece emphasised the vivacious aspects of her character, and she may well have been

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<sup>15</sup> See, H. D. MacWilliam (ed.), *The Letters of Patrick Grant, Lord Elchies, with Memoir, etc.* (Aberdeen, 1947)

<sup>16</sup> Halkett, 'Memoir', pp.95-7.

<sup>17</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.271.

<sup>18</sup> E.g., NLS, MS16735 f.55, Margaret Grant to Andrew Fletcher, 6 April 1768, Castlesteads; MS16735 f.62 Margaret Grant to Andrew Fletcher, 9 May 1768; MS16735 f.73, ?Henry Fletcher to Margaret Grant August 1768; MS16735 f.69 (prob. August 1768), Jo: Mackenzie to 'Sir', presumably either Andrew or Henry Fletcher.

<sup>19</sup> F. W. Sheppard (gen. ed.), *Survey of London, vol.33, The Parish of St. Anne Soho* (London, 1963), pp.69-70.

<sup>20</sup> NLS, MS17860 f.2, Genealogical notes. MacWilliam (ed.), *Letters of Patrick Grant*, p. 27 agrees that she died in London, but gives her date of death as 6 April 1775. Various branches of the Grant family had Caribbean interests, see Hamilton, Douglas J., *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750-1820* (Manchester, 2005), esp pp.57-8. No mention is made of Grant of Easter Elchies, however.

<sup>21</sup> Halkett, 'Memoir', p.99.

more easily influenced than was ideal for the daughter of a political family. Never marrying, she died in 1778, after a 'long and painful illness'.<sup>22</sup>

### **Elizabeth Fletcher (1731-1758)**

The Fletchers' youngest daughter Elizabeth, or Betty, was born in 1731<sup>23</sup> and sent to school in Chelsea, where she stayed for four and a half years, at only nine years old.<sup>24</sup> Her friend Alexander Carlyle, who had originally been introduced into the family through her eldest sister, described her as 'one of the first females in point of understanding as well as heart that ever fell in my way to be acquainted with.'<sup>25</sup> The friend of David Hume, William Robertson, and John Home, she was described by her daughter as possessing 'Strength of Understanding, Force of Imagination & perspicuity of discernment, equalld by few of either sex, her Curiosity & Civictity in philosophic researches her thirst for Knowledge & Patience in the Investigation of truth'.<sup>26</sup> In February 1758 she married Captain John Wedderburn of Gosford in what was widely regarded as a marriage based on affection, but died of a 'milk fever' ten months later following the birth of her daughter, Elizabeth. Wedderburn was then serving in Guadeloupe, only returning to Britain and the news of his wife's death the following summer.<sup>27</sup> Betty Fletcher is included in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, although the entry is based largely on an uncritical reading of her daughter's 'Memoir', and her appellation as 'scholar' exemplifies both the inappropriateness of categorising women in this period, and the difficulties inherent in how this source should really be read.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Halkett, 'Memoir', p.102.

<sup>23</sup> NLS, MS16508 f.200, Henry Fletcher to Milton, 27 December 1731.

<sup>24</sup> NLS, MS16511 f.136, Martha Fletcher to Milton, 31 October 1731, Salton.

<sup>25</sup> Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p.273.

<sup>26</sup> Halkett, 'Memoir', pp.103-4.

<sup>27</sup> NLS MS16521 f.118, Andrew Fletcher to Milton, 7 August 1759, London. Young Elizabeth Wedderburn was brought up by her mother's family at Brunstane, and Wedderburn remarried not long afterwards, taking the title Sir John Halkett upon inheriting the Halkett of Pitfirrane estate. Elizabeth can be seen playing the lute as her many half-brothers and -sisters dance and play, in a family portrait of 1781 by David Allan, which hangs in the National Gallery of Scotland on the Mound. After being educated in a French convent, she married Trophime Gerard, Comte de Lally Tollendal, the son of an exiled Irish Jacobite, who was an early convert away from the French Revolution, and fled to England in 1789, where he engaged in political and historical writing.

<sup>28</sup> Rosalind K. Marshall, 'Fletcher, Elizabeth (d. 1758)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64080>, accessed 17 Nov 2005]

**Margaret Hepburn** (bap. 1734<sup>29</sup>, d.1759)

Elizabeth Fletcher's early death was followed in May by that of her cousin and close friend Margaret Hepburn, the only surviving child of Milton's sister Mary.<sup>30</sup> A scrap from a bill of 1744 from Lauchlan Campbell, writing master in Edinburgh, is all that remains as evidence for the schooling of this intelligent and well-read woman.<sup>31</sup> She was the friend of William Robertson, discussing with him his *History of Scotland*,<sup>32</sup> shortly before her last illness in which she was attended by the physician William Cullen.<sup>33</sup> Never marrying, she lived with her widowed mother and maiden aunt Martha Fletcher, at her father's estate of Monkrig.

Also connected:

**Mary Campbell of Boquhan**

The daughter of James Campbell of Burnbank, Mary was the first cousin of both Lady Milton and the third Duke of Argyll, the latter connection being a great source of pride. Living alone with her aging mother at Boquhan, a few miles west of Stirling, she maintained an active interest in public affairs, particularly church patronage, and sending frequent petitioning letters to Lord Milton.

**Margaret Macdonald** (ca. 1716-1799)

Another cousin to both Lady Milton and Mary Campbell was Susanna Kennedy, Countess of Eglinton.<sup>34</sup> With her husband, the 9th Earl, she had several daughters (all of whom were under the legal tutelage of Lord Milton after the death of their father in 1729), all celebrated for their beauty.<sup>35</sup> Over two hundred folios of letters from Susanna's daughter Margaret Montgomerie to her lawyer, John Mackenzie of Delvine, one of the legal curators of her own son, remain in the

<sup>29</sup> OPR index to baptisms, East Lothian.

<sup>30</sup> It does not appear that the child her mother was found to be carrying in 1718 survived. NLS MS16684 f.225, a draft letter in Margaret's handwriting, which seems almost certain to be referring to Elizabeth's death, claims that 'Our attachment had begun in infancy'. Unnamed and undated, this was indexed with correspondence dating to 1753, for no apparent reason, as it seems to be part of a series of letters exchanged with the historian William Robertson in 1759 on the subject of her cousin's death.

<sup>31</sup> NLS, MS17607 f.39. An advertisement for his services placed in the *Caledonian Mercury* of August 1751, is the only information relating to Campbell in Alexander Law, 'Teachers in Edinburgh in the Eighteenth Century', in *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 32 (1966), p.119

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter 3, pp.104-108.

<sup>33</sup> NLS, MS16521 f.7, Mary Hepburn to Milton, 9 May 1759.

<sup>34</sup> NLS MS17858 f.6 records that Lady Eglinton's mother was the sister of Lady Milton's mother (who became Lady Forglen on her remarriage), both daughters of General Leslie, Lord Newark.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Gray Graham, *A Group of Scottish Women* (London, 1908), p.165.

Lauriston Castle Muniments in the NLS.<sup>36</sup> Although their friendship eventually came to an end, this series of letters is one of the most complete of any mid-eighteenth-century Scotswoman, from which Lady Margaret emerges as a determined, opinionated woman.<sup>37</sup>

As a child Margaret was taken to Bath and from 1729-30 sent to schools in London.<sup>38</sup> In 1739, she married Sir Alexander Macdonald of Sleat, 8<sup>th</sup> baronet, and moved with him to Skye. The couple had four children, James (1742-1766), Alexander (1744-1795), Susan (1745-1755) and Archibald (1747-1826).<sup>39</sup> When James Boswell travelled to Skye in the 1770s one of his hostesses informed him that 'Lady Margaret was quite adored in Sky'<sup>40</sup> but her correspondence suggests that she was tiring of the isolation from her friends and family by the time her husband died in 1746, shortly after her inauspicious involvement in the plot to smuggle Charles Edward Stuart to safety after his defeat at Culloden.<sup>41</sup> Her politics and influence in Skye resulted in a battle over her eldest son's education, and in 1748 she left Skye for the Lowlands, where William Mossman painted the well-known portrait of her

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<sup>36</sup> NLS MS1309.

<sup>37</sup> She also petitioned the Duke of Newcastle, see British Library Add. MS32736 ff.478-9, Lady Margaret Macdonald to the Duke of Newcastle, 7 September 1754, Ed<sup>f</sup>; Add. MS32852 f.11, Lady Margaret Macdonald to the Duke of Newcastle, 1 January 1755, Queen's Street Golden Square; Add. MS32855 ff.248-9, Lady Margaret Macdonald to the Duke of Newcastle, 29 May 1755, London; Add. MS32861 f.528, Lady Margaret Macdonald and Sir James Macdonald to the Duke of Newcastle, n.d., n.p., [1755]. See Elaine Chalus and Fiona Montgomery, 'Women and politics', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850. An Introduction* (London and New York, 2005), pp.230-1. For a recent biography, see Stana Nenadic, 'Macdonald, Margaret, of Sleat, n. Montgomerie', in Elizabeth Ewan, Sue Innes and Sian Reynolds (eds.), co-ordinating editor, Rose Pipes, *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women: From the Earliest Times to 2004* (Edinburgh, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> William Fraser, *Memorials of the Montgomeries, Earls of Eglinton* (Edinburgh, 1859), vol.1. pp.348-9.

<sup>39</sup> For Alexander: NLS, MS1308 f.185, Alexander Macdonald to Mackenzie, 11 March 1744, Mugstot; Susan's name and date of death is given in Glasgow University Archives, UGD37/2/1 p.51. Her birth is recorded in Duncan Warrand (ed.), *More Culloden Papers*, (Inverness, 1923-30) vol.4, p.154, Sir Alexander Macdonald to Forbes of Culloden, 3 November 1745, Mugstot. For Archibald, see David Lemmings, 'Macdonald, Sir Archibald, first baronet (1747-1826)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17429>, accessed 12 Dec 2005]. His birth is recorded in NLS, MS1309 f.72, 19 July 1747, Mug<sup>s</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> James Boswell, *The Journal of A Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LLD* (1984 edn.), pp.316-7. However, to put this into perspective, his hostess also noted that her husband, Sir Alexander, who had been involved in a people-trafficking attempt in 1739, was 'also remembered with great regard.'

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 5, pp.177-9.

two eldest sons in 1752.<sup>42</sup> In 1754, she moved to London, her son having been sent to Eton.<sup>43</sup> Boswell's *London Journal* shows that in London she moved in the circles surrounding her dissolute eldest brother, the 10th Earl of Eglinton.<sup>44</sup> Profoundly disturbed by the death of Sir James in 1766, her relationship with her second son, his heir, disintegrated, and she was left embittered, with neither influence nor income.

### **Elliot of Minto**

Another major legal dynasty, although of wealthier landed stock, was the Elliot of Minto family. Unlike the Fletchers, they were yet to achieve their heyday, which came with late eighteenth-century involvement in the Indian empire. Yet the family in this period are worthy of interest for their self-conscious transfer from the Scottish to the British political stage. This was carried out under the auspices of Sir Gilbert Elliot 3<sup>rd</sup> baronet (1722-1777), the heir of Gilbert Elliot Lord Minto (baptised 1663, d.1766). Minto was MP for Roxburghshire from 1722-26, and thereafter a judge, succeeding Lord Milton as Lord Justice Clerk in 1763. He combined this with musical, antiquarian and literary interests.<sup>45</sup> He married Helen (baptised 1696, d.1774) daughter of Sir Robert Stewart of Allanbank, whose correspondence depicts her as one of those old-fashioned, down-to-earth Scotswomen so beloved of nineteenth-century memoirists. She combined this with an active involvement as Lady Directress in that most fashionable of heterosocial institutions, the Edinburgh Assembly.<sup>46</sup> Their daughter Jean (1727-1805) has been celebrated as the author of the ballad *The Flowers of the Forest*, and the heroine of an episode in which she protected her father from the Jacobites during the '45, but little remains of her personal correspondence from the period covered by this study.<sup>47</sup> She had a sister, Marianne (1730-1811), and another, Anne, who married Charles Congalton of

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<sup>42</sup> Nenadic, 'Macdonald, Margaret, of Sleat, n. Montgomerie', p.221. The portrait now hangs in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

<sup>43</sup> As is demonstrated in the correspondence of General Humphrey Bland in the National Archives State Papers 54/44, this was highly politicised.

<sup>44</sup> *Boswell's London Journal, 1762-1763*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle (1<sup>st</sup> published 1950; reprinted New Haven and London, 1992), p.70.

<sup>45</sup> Jane Blackie, 'Elliot, Sir Gilbert, second baronet, Lord Minto (bap. 1693, d. 1766)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8659>, accessed 24 Nov 2005].

<sup>46</sup> 'Minutes of the Edinburgh Assembly 1746-1776', Edinburgh Central Library, MS YML 28A, p.42.

<sup>47</sup> Murray G. H. Pittock, 'Elliot, Jean (1727-1805)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8665>, accessed 17 July 2006]

Congalton in 1762.<sup>48</sup> Three of the couple's sons were celebrated in their day. John was captain of a naval fleet which killed the French captain Thurot, feared to be planning an invasion of Britain, off the coast of the Isle of Man in 1759, provoking national rejoicing.<sup>49</sup> Andrew (1728-1797) travelled to America, first achieving success in a shopkeeping business. He returned to Britain in 1763, at which point he was appointed Collector of Customs at New York, where he later became Governor.<sup>50</sup>

**Agnes Dalrymple Murray Kynynmound (1731-1778)**

This thesis is more closely concerned, however, with the family of the Elliot's eldest son, Sir Gilbert, third baronet. He married Agnes Dalrymple Murray Kynynmound, the only daughter of Hugh Dalrymple Murray Kynynmound (d. 1741) the second son of David Dalrymple, 1<sup>st</sup> baronet of Hailes. She was brought up after Murray's death by her mother and the latter's second husband, Charles Murray, partially at Newhailes House near Musselburgh (and the Fletchers' residence at Brunstane) where Allan Ramsay's portrait of her aged nine hangs today.<sup>51</sup> In 1746, aged fifteen, she eloped with Gilbert, spending the first few years of her married life with her parents-in-law whilst her husband pursued a legal career in Edinburgh and later integrated himself into London politics and society. His claims to Englishness famously spurred David Hume into one of the most famous declarations of involuntary Scottishness amongst the pro-British literati of the mid-eighteenth-century.<sup>52</sup> The Elliots counted many of the Scottish literati amongst their friends, Thomas Somerville encountering Hume, John Home, Elizabeth Montagu, John Gregory, Lord Kames and William Robertson at their estate at Minto in the Borders in the late 1760s.<sup>53</sup> Gilbert commented on the works of several of these individuals, but was most celebrated during his lifetime for his glittering parliamentary career, his reputation as an orator founded on his speeches on such instances of critical

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<sup>48</sup> George F. S. Elliot, *The Border Elliots and the Family of Minto* (Edinburgh, 1897), p.324.

<sup>49</sup> J. K. Laughton, 'Elliot, John (1732-1808)', rev. A. W. H. Pearsall, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8667>, accessed 1 Oct 2006]

<sup>50</sup> *Border Elliots*, pp.319, 438-441

<sup>51</sup> See Appendix 2, Fig.1.

<sup>52</sup> *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J.Y.T. Greig, vol.1, (Oxford, 1932), p.470.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Somerville, *My Own Life and Times 1741-1814*, with an Introduction by Richard B. Sher, (Bristol, 1996; 1<sup>st</sup> edn., 1861)

importance to Scotland's place in the British Union as the militia debates of 1757.<sup>54</sup> In 1757, Agnes joined her husband in London, where she later integrated into London society, becoming friends with, amongst others, Hester Pitt.<sup>55</sup>

Whilst few of her own letters remain for the period under investigation, many of her husband's letters to her give an insight into her personality. Later family memoirs portray her as an emotionally complicated woman, an image backed up by her husband's long-suffering correspondence.<sup>56</sup> After her husband's death she annotated his letters, and appears to have attempted to write a memoir of his political career.<sup>57</sup> The couple had six children, of whom Gilbert, 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Minto (1751-1814) became Governor-General of Bengal after a long parliamentary and diplomatic career,<sup>58</sup> whilst his next brother, Hugh, followed him to India as Governor General of Madras after a tempestuous career as a European diplomat.<sup>59</sup> Alexander also went to India, becoming secretary to Warren Hastings, but died in 1778.<sup>60</sup> Sadly, few archival sources remain to document the lives of her daughters Isabel (Tibby) (1749-1803)<sup>61</sup> and Eleanor (1758-1818), who married William Eden, later Lord Auckland<sup>62</sup> during the period covered by this thesis.<sup>63</sup>

### **Clerk of Penicuik**

Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, second baronet (1676-1755), is perhaps best remembered as one of the Commissioners for the 1707 Union, and later served

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<sup>54</sup> Philip Carter, 'Elliot, Sir Gilbert, of Minto, third baronet (1722-1777)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8660>, accessed 13 Dec 2005].

<sup>55</sup> *Border Elliots*, p.358.

<sup>56</sup> Countess of Minto, *A Memoir of the Right Honourable Hugh Elliot* (Edinburgh, 1868). She is particularly scathing of the bad results of Agnes' favouritism in bringing up her children, pp.2-3. NLS, MSS11006-7.

<sup>57</sup> Her notes on Gilbert's letters are spread throughout his letters in NLS, MS11006 and 11007, and drafts of fragments of her memoir exist in a number of forms in MSS11036 ff.144-7, and 12822 ff.8-12.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Duffy, 'Kynynmound, Gilbert Elliot Murray, first earl of Minto (1751-1814)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8661>, accessed 17 July 2006]

<sup>59</sup> H. M. Scott, 'Elliot, Hugh (1752-1830)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8664>, accessed 17 July 2006]

<sup>60</sup> Duffy, 'Kynynmound, Gilbert Elliot Murray, first earl of Minto (1751-1814)'

<sup>61</sup> Elliot, *The Border Elliots*, p.428.

<sup>62</sup> Elliot, *The Border Elliots*, p.429.

<sup>63</sup> For a nineteenth-century perspective on the Elliot correspondence of the later eighteenth century, which gives an insight into the characters of Isabella and Eleanor, see Countess of Minto, *A Memoir of the Right Honourable Hugh Elliot* (Edinburgh, 1868).



briefly as a member of the British parliament.<sup>64</sup> An active improver, antiquarian and musician, who has been described as ‘the leading Scottish patron of arts and sciences’<sup>65</sup> from 1720-1750, it is disappointing how little remains in the Clerk of Penicuik papers, deposited in the NAS GD18, to document the lives of his wife and several daughters for the period with which this thesis is concerned.<sup>66</sup>

**Janet Inglis** (b. ca.1686, d.1760)

The main extant source is the spiritual diary kept by Janet Inglis, his second wife whom he married in 1709, when she was around twenty-two years old.<sup>67</sup> Covering the period from 1710 to 1759, it becomes more detailed from around 1740 when she had fewer, if still many, childcare responsibilities.<sup>68</sup> It suggests immersion in a mental world of intense Calvinism which might seem slightly at odds with that inhabited by her husband, yet he described her as ‘a most religious verteous woman, and one who in all respects might suit my humure and circumstances to rub through the world in a sober and privat state of Life.’<sup>69</sup> Whether this interior perspective was evident in her involvement with the outside world is difficult to determine given the lack of any substantial body of correspondence, but her homes at Penicuik and Mavisbank were the haunt of many of Scotland’s literati, in particular the poet Allan Ramsay, who in 1730 celebrated the couple in his poem ‘The Happy Man’.<sup>70</sup> William Aikman depicted her as a glamorous young woman.<sup>71</sup>

With Clerk, she had sixteen children, the last born when she was fifty-one years old. Of these, several were daughters, but only Johanna (Jackie) figures significantly in this study, due to a short series of fascinating letters covering a variety of topics from books to landscape gardening which she sent her father during

<sup>64</sup> Rosalind Mitchison, ‘Clerk, Sir John, of Penicuik, second baronet (1676–1755)’, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5617>, accessed 30 Nov 2005]. See also *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, 1676-1755*, ed. John M. Gray, Scottish History Society ser.1, vol.13 (Edinburgh 1892).

<sup>65</sup> Ian Gordon Brown, ‘Modern Rome and Ancient Caledonia: the Union and the Politics of Scottish Culture’, in Andrew Hook (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol.2, 1660-1800 (Aberdeen, 1987), p.34.

<sup>66</sup> NAS, GD18. The published memoir of his life lists his sixteen children by Jean (Jennet) Inglis on the first page: *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*.

<sup>67</sup> *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*, p.75.

<sup>68</sup> NAS, GD18/2098.

<sup>69</sup> *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*, p.75.

<sup>70</sup> Alexander M. Kinghorn and Alexander Law (eds.) *The Works of Allan Ramsay* (Edinburgh and London, 1970) vol.4, pp.10, 216.

<sup>71</sup> See Appendix 2, Fig.2.

a sojourn with the Countess of Glencairn at the latter's house Finlaystone on the Clyde in 1751. According to Allan Ramsay the Elder, she had 'one of the best & Sweetest voices in Brittain'.<sup>72</sup>

### **Mure of Caldwell**

The Mure family has been described as 'typical of those dominating public life in the west of Scotland: strongly presbyterian but attracted to enlightenment and improvement in the framework of a conservative social order.'<sup>73</sup> William Mure of Caldwell (1718-1776) was the school-friend and parliamentary colleague of Sir Gilbert Elliot. From 1742-61 Caldwell was a Member of Parliament for Renfrewshire, after which he served as a Baron of the Scottish Exchequer until his death. In February 1752 he married Katherine (1734-1820) daughter of the judge James Graham, Lord Easdale (1696-1750) by whom he had two sons and four daughters. Katherine 'called cousins' with David Hume<sup>74</sup> and from the tantalising glimpses given by what remains of their correspondence, he appears to have been a close friend of hers, frequenting her drawing-room in Abbeyhill in Edinburgh.<sup>75</sup> Described as distinguished by 'wit, and a certain lively eccentricity of character',<sup>76</sup> she is perhaps best remembered for advising Hume on his deathbed to 'Burn a' your wee bookies'.<sup>77</sup> In addition, she corresponded with Lady Hester Pitt and other literary characters,<sup>78</sup> yet whilst the Mure of Caldwell papers are preserved in the NLS, the focus, like so many others, is on a later period than that covered by this thesis.

### **Elizabeth Mure (1714-1795)**

William Mure's sister Elizabeth was the author of the 'Remarks on the change of manners' which is used throughout this thesis. In this, she wrote of how

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<sup>72</sup> NAS, GD331/5/30, to Lady Dick, 1 August 1755.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Fry, 'Mure, William, of Caldwell (1718-1776)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19563>, accessed 15 March 2005].

<sup>74</sup> *Letters of David Hume*, vol.1, p.43, n.3

<sup>75</sup> *Selections from the Family Papers preserved at Caldwell*, Maitland Club 71 (Glasgow, 1854) vol.1 p.38.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1, p.36.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1, p.43.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.1, pp.36-8.

she lived largely apart from ‘the world’.<sup>79</sup> Like her brother, she was a childhood friend of David Hume. Never marrying, she was principally responsible for the running of the Caldwell estates during the minority of her nephew, and she died aged 81 in 1795.<sup>80</sup> She was the cousin of Sir James Steuart Denham.

### **Steuart Denham**

Sir James Steuart Denham (1713-1780) was eighteenth-century Scotland’s most celebrated political economist prior to the publication of Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776. The author of *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy* (1767), he spent seventeen years in France, Germany and the Low Countries as a Jacobite exile. Prior to that, his household at Goodtrees near Edinburgh had been described as ‘a rendezvous for all the partizans of the House of Stuart’ where Steuart, ‘who aimed at making as many converts to this cause as he could, kept a good establishment, entertained all his friends, had many schemes, and added many to the number of the supporters of the Stuarts in Scotland.’<sup>81</sup> He had several sisters who appear to have been active literary women. Elizabeth composed spiritual writings, many of which remain in EUL, but which date from a period too late for this thesis,<sup>82</sup> whilst Agnes, who became Lady Buchan, is said to have studied mathematics under Colin Maclaurin and was at the centre of an intellectual circle in St Andrews.<sup>83</sup> She was the mother of the antiquary Lord Buchan.

### **Lady Frances Wemyss (1722-1789)**

Frances Wemyss was the sister of the Jacobite General, Lord Elcho, and daughter of the Earl of Wemyss. She married Sir James Steuart Denham in 1743, and they had one son, James, (b. 1744) later a colonel in the army. In 1745 the

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<sup>79</sup> Elizabeth Mure, ‘some remarks on the change of manners in my own time.1700-1790’, in *Family Papers preserved at Caldwell*, vol.1.

<sup>80</sup> *Family Papers preserved at Caldwell*, vol.1, pp.258-9. See also Deborah A. Symonds, ‘Mure, Elizabeth, of Caldwell, in Ewan, et al. (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*. This gives her dates as ca.1715-ca.1791.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Extract from the diary of David, Lord Elcho’, translated from the French, in Henrietta Taylor (ed.) *A Jacobite Miscellany: Eight Original Papers on the Rising of 1745-1746*, Roxburghe Club, (Oxford, 1948), p.134. For Elcho generally, see David, Lord Elcho, *A Short Account of the Affairs of Scotland in the in the years 1744, 1745, 1746*, with a Memoir and Annotations by the Hon. Evan Charteris (Edinburgh, 1993; facsimile of 1907 edn.).

<sup>82</sup> See EUL MSS2291/39-43.

<sup>83</sup> Alexander Fergusson, *The Honourable Henry Erskine, Lord Advocate for Scotland, with Notices of Certain of his Kinsfolk and of his Time*, (Edinburgh, 1882), pp.60, 48-9.

complications of a miscarriage took her to Edinburgh during the Jacobite occupation, at which time her husband was persuaded to become a messenger for the Jacobites, resulting in his exile. Lady Frances, and later their son, joined him for the remainder of his exile, during which Frances returned twice to London to appeal for clemency, granted only in 1762. Her response to her husband's death was to compose a manuscript memoir of her married life, an emotionally-charged description of their life together in several countries recently deposited in EUL Special Collections.<sup>84</sup> In conjunction with her correspondence in the Coltness Papers (also in EUL), this creates an image of a determined, if perhaps easily insulted woman.

#### **Margaret Steuart Calderwood (1715-1774)**

Margaret<sup>85</sup> was the sister of Sir James Steuart Denham, and the daughter of Sir James Steuart of Goodtrees and Coltness. Little is known of her early life, but in 1735 she married Thomas Calderwood of Polton, shortly prior to which she sat for her portrait to Allan Ramsay, causing the latter's father to remark 'I begin to think it not a bad politick for young Beautys to be seen and known in my Son's painting Room where so many of the Beau-Monde so frequently resort'.<sup>86</sup> In 1751 she appears to have been the principal motivator in her husband's unsuccessful attempts to found a political career.<sup>87</sup> In 1756 she and her husband embarked on a journey through England and the Low Countries, which she documented in a series of letters to her daughter Anne, published in the nineteenth century as a lengthy and opinionated travel journal.<sup>88</sup> At some point in her life, she composed a manuscript novel, 'The Adventures of Fanny Roberts, wrote to a friend, by herself', described by a nineteenth-century family biographer as 'a dull novel, somewhat in the style of

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<sup>84</sup> EUL, MS E2002.28, 'Frances Steuart – Widow – Melencholy Title' (unpublished memoir, Coltness, 1881).

<sup>85</sup> Stuart W. McDonald, 'Calderwood, Margaret (1715–1774)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4376>, accessed 7 Nov 2006]

<sup>86</sup> See Appendix 2, Fig.3.

<sup>87</sup> E.g., NAS, GD18/3274/2, Margaret Calderwood to John Clerk of Penicuik, 17 October 1750, Polton; NLS MS16676 ff.69-69a, William Ross to Milton, 3 January 1751, Melville. .

<sup>88</sup> Again, most of Lady Frances' letters in this collection relate to a later period than that covered by this thesis, including a series of letters relating to the publication of the French edition of his political economy. Margaret Steuart Calderwood, 'A Journey in England, Holland, and the Low Countries' (1756), in *Coltness Collections*, 1608-1840, Maitland Club, January 1842.

Richardson, partaking of the licence of Fielding'.<sup>89</sup> She was also well-known for the efficient management of her estates, and commitment to improvement.

### Adam

William Adam was one of early-eighteenth-century Scotland's premier architects,<sup>90</sup> his most famous commissions including Duff House and Hopetoun House. His four sons all to some extent became involved in the family business, most notably Robert, who after four years studying classical style and cultivating influential acquaintance in Rome, set up business in London, eventually fulfilling his dream of becoming one of the most fashionable architects in eighteenth-century Britain.<sup>91</sup>

#### **Mary Adam** (1699-1761) and her daughters

Mary Robertson,<sup>92</sup> daughter of William Robertson of Gladney, minister of Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh, is perhaps most well-known as the subject, as a widow, of a portrait by her son Robert's sometime friend Allan Ramsay, and as the stern but kind matriarch who presided over the family's domestic entertainments in their Canongate home, and was won over by the conviviality of David Hume.<sup>93</sup> She was the aunt of the historian William Robertson, who spent much time with the Adam family after the death of his parents, later frequenting their London townhouse.<sup>94</sup>

John Clerk of Eldin variously recorded the couple as having had four sons and six daughters, and five sons and eight daughters.<sup>95</sup> Their daughters included Jenny, who married Thomas Kennedy of Dunure, MP for Ayrshire, Betty, Nelly, Peggy, Mary, who married John Drysdale, clerk to the General Assembly of the

<sup>89</sup> 'Family Notices', in *Coltness Collections*, p.396.

<sup>90</sup> James Macaulay, 'Adam, William (bap. 1689, d. 1748)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/107>, accessed 30 Nov 2005].

<sup>91</sup> A. A. Tait, 'Adam, Robert (1728-1792)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/105>, accessed 30 Nov 2005].

<sup>92</sup> See Stana Nenadic, 'Adam, Mary n. Robertson', in Ewan, et al. (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*.

<sup>93</sup> See Appendix 2, Fig.4. For the Hume story, see John Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle in Edinburgh and Rome* (London, 1962) pp.101-2.

<sup>94</sup> Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle*, p.81; also NAS, GD18/4873, James Adam to Peggy Adam, 24 September 1760, Venice.

<sup>95</sup> NAS, GD18/4981-2, notes on the life of Robert Adam by John Clerk of Eldin.

Church of Scotland,<sup>96</sup> and Susannah, who in 1753 married Jean Clerk's eldest son, John Clerk of Eldin.<sup>97</sup> Although few of their own letters from the period covered by this thesis remain, from the pages of the detailed, affectionate, often highly gossipy letters written to them by their brothers Robert and James in Italy spring their interests and personalities, and even their voices. Nelly was musical and fashionable; Peggy similarly fond of amusements although prone to melancholy; Betty a capable manager. Their Cowgate home, like that of so many of the families considered here, was the haunt of the literati, Clerk of Eldin noting that 'the uninterrupted cordiality in which they lived, their conciliatory manners and the various accomplishments in which they severally made proficiencie, formed a most attractive society and failed not to draw around them a set of men whose learning and genius have since done honour to that country which gave them birth.'<sup>98</sup> By 1760, however, Mary Adam and some of her daughters had moved south to London, where they helped with the management of the household and family architectural practice.

### **Innes of Stow**

George Innes of Stow was Deputy Receiver of the Land Tax in Scotland residing mostly in Edinburgh. An obsessive archivist of personal correspondence and financial records, his evident reluctance to dispose of any written material produced one of the most detailed archives consulted in the process of researching this thesis (NAS, GD113, Innes of Stow). Although largely a business archive, it affords insights into aspects of girls' education rarely recorded in the Scottish archives, and into the experiences of women of a less-privileged social rank than that covered by most family papers. Innes. In 1743, he married Marion (b.1711), daughter of Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall.<sup>99</sup> Amongst Marion's extant

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<sup>96</sup> For the Adam daughters, see Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle*, and Margaret H. B. Sanderson, *Robert Adam and Scotland: Portrait of an Architect* (Edinburgh, 1992). For Drysdale, see Richard B. Sher, 'Moderates, Managers and Popular Politics in Mid-Eighteenth Century Edinburgh: The Drysdale 'Bustle' of the 1760s', in John Dwyer, Roger A. Mason and Alexander Murdoch (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1982).

<sup>97</sup> Michel Depeyre, 'Clerk, John, of Eldin (1728–1812)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5618>, accessed 30 Nov 2005].

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle*, p.5.

<sup>99</sup> The marriage papers are dated November 1743, NAS, GD113/5/77/1. For her reminiscences of visiting her grandfather, Lord Fountainhall, as a child, see Robert Chambers, *Traditions of Edinburgh* (London and Edinburgh, 1868; 1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1825), pp.74-5.

correspondence is that with her cousins, the Maxwells of Pollock (near Glasgow), who in the 1740s were friends with the memoirist Elizabeth Mure.<sup>100</sup> With Marion, Innes had two daughters, Marion and Jean, and two sons, Gilbert and Allan.<sup>101</sup>

#### **Jean Innes (1748-1839)**

Jean (known in later life as Jane), born 13 August 1748, was Innes' second daughter by his wife.<sup>102</sup> In September 1756, she was sent to board for ten months with the Reverend Hary Spens,<sup>103</sup> the first translator into English of Plato's *Republic*, and his family at Wemyss in Fife. Spens' correspondence with her father provides a vivid insight into one man's ideas of the appropriate educational experience for a young daughter of the Scottish gentry, although there remains little other information on her life during this period with which to contextualise this. Her financial status as a younger sister rendered impossible her desired marriage to her second cousin John Row, and she died unmarried in 1839.<sup>104</sup>

#### **Elizabeth Graham (d.1747)**

In 1741, George Innes commenced a sexual relationship with Elizabeth Graham, the 'woman' of the wife of his superior, Collector of the Land Tax Allan Whitefoord, and the daughter of William Graham, schoolteacher in Ratho, and his wife Margaret. She gave birth to a daughter in September 1742, a child she claimed had been wished for by both parents, conceived under the understanding that marriage would follow. Despite claiming never to have responded to them, Innes kept the many letters she sent him. These provide a rare insight into the injustice felt by a wronged woman, at first pleading for marriage and later using her hold on him to attempt to ameliorate her position as best as possible. Moving around between temporary lodgings, and eventually, it seems, ending up back in Ratho with her

<sup>100</sup> For background on the Maxwells, and some of their slightly later correspondence, see William Fraser, *Memoirs of the Maxwells of Pollock* (Edinburgh, 1863), vol.1, and GD113/5/66. There is little of relevance to this period in T-PM115, Records of the Maxwells of Pollock, in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

<sup>101</sup> In March 1747, Innes wrote to Capt Dalrymple to inform him of the birth of a son, Allan. NAS, GD113/3/1021/22 (copy letter). Gilbert was an active member of the Edinburgh Musical Society in the later-eighteenth century.

<sup>102</sup> NAS, GD113/3/1038/34, copy letter George Innes to Mrs Stewart, 13 August 1748, Edr, and GD113/3/1039/14, Copy, Innes to Thomas Fordyce, 1 September 1748.

<sup>103</sup> See Richard B. Sher, 'Spens, Henry (1714-1787)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65578>, accessed 13 Jan 2005].

<sup>104</sup> I am grateful to Alison Duncan for information on Jean Innes' later life, and generally for discussing her with me.

parents, Elizabeth maintained contact with Innes until her death in 1747, reporting on their daughter's progress and carrying out needlework and laundry tasks for him.

#### **Jean Graham (1742-1762)**

Jean Graham was born in September 1742, the illegitimate daughter of George Innes and Elizabeth Graham.<sup>105</sup> Her father's accounts demonstrate that he maintained responsibility for her financial upkeep, and took an interest in her throughout her brief life. Initially, she was brought up in Ratho with her mother's family, where she was given an education at the hands of her uncle (desirous of following in his father's steps as a schoolmaster) which included Latin. At the same time, she was being trained in the skills necessary to become a seamstress or mantua-maker. Destined to work for her living, Jean was carrying out mending work even in her last illness.<sup>106</sup> She died in January 1762.

#### **George Hamilton Innes (1742-1758)**

George Hamilton Innes was born on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1742 to a mother with the initials E. L., of whom no more is known.<sup>107</sup> The girl was 'Baptized by the name Geo Hamilton', 'but those she dwelt among, & at Schools, calld her Joe or Joan Innes, which last name they usualy put on her School Books.'<sup>108</sup> Innes paid her expenses, occasionally bought her treats, and continued to make payments to her mother until at least 1760.<sup>109</sup> After her death from a consumptive illness in April 1758, her father penned a brief memoir detailing her life and the manner in which she died.<sup>110</sup>

#### **Mackenzie of Delvine**

The correspondence of the lawyer John Mackenzie of Delvine WS, is one of the largest components of the Lauriston Castle Muniments in the NLS. Whilst John Mackenzie was based in Edinburgh for practical purposes, his Perthshire estates were supervised by the women of his family, in particular his sister Mary, who over a

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<sup>105</sup> Jeanie Graham was born on 20 September 1742, see NAS, GD113/4/1053, Elizabeth Graham to George Innes in the New Bank, 21 September 1742.

<sup>106</sup> In 1761, Jean 'condescended to go to Dalmahoy House in order to right some Gowns belonging to One M<sup>rs</sup> M<sup>c</sup>farlane Lord Morton's House-keeper there, where she has been these Ten Days bypast.' NAS, GD113/3/583/17, John Graham, to George Innes, 15 October 1761, Ratho.

<sup>107</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1001.

<sup>108</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1001.

<sup>109</sup> NAS, GD113/7/5, 'Material produced during a court case of Feb 1857, *In Causa Frederick Mitchell*' (illegitimate child of Gilbert Innes, son of George Innes).

<sup>110</sup> NAS, GD113/4/165/1001.



number of years wrote to him from the dilapidated farmhouse which she shared with their sister Christian, whose depressive illness was a constant source of concern, and their mother until the latter's death in 1752 after which she went to live with her sister, Anne Robertson of Faskally, first at Faskally, then, in 1758, in Run- or Rinrorie near Killicrankie, then later in Dunkeld.<sup>111</sup> Whilst the correspondence of John Mackenzie's own wife, Cecilia, is almost entirely nonexistent, other Mackenzie correspondence remains, including that of his sister Anne Robertson of Faskally and her son (who joined the Pretender's army in the '45), and Mackenzie's widowed English sister-in-law Elizabeth Chambers, who wrote to him from London during the years 1735-71.<sup>112</sup>

### **Strange and Lumisden; Dick Cunynghame of Prestonfield**

Isabella Lumisden (1721/2–1808) was the sister of Andrew Lumisden, private secretary to the Old Pretender, married the engraver Sir Robert Strange (1725–1792), a fellow Jacobite, in 1747.<sup>113</sup> She was also the cousin of the physician and poet John Armstrong, with whom she corresponded whilst he was abroad in Germany.<sup>114</sup> Isabella and Robert's eldest daughter, Mary Bruce, was baptised in 1748, and Isabella was left to look after her whilst Robert went to France, but by 1750 the couple had set up home together in London. A number of other children followed, and later on Isabella was left alone managing both the family and the business whilst her husband was in Italy. Like so many of the archives consulted, the Strange and Lumisden papers in the NLS contain far more women's correspondence for the later eighteenth century, but it is nevertheless revealing for its

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<sup>111</sup> NLS, MSS1121-2, which covers the period 1736-76; NLS, MS1212 f.136, Mary Mackenzie to John Mackenzie, 23 October 1765, Dunkeld

<sup>112</sup> For Cecilia see NLS, MSS1131 and 1208; for the Robertsons, MS1136 and for Elizabeth Chambers, MS1127. There is a break, however, from 1740-1766. Whilst on the whole slightly too late for this thesis, it nevertheless gives interesting insights into an Englishwoman's reactions to marrying into a Scots family in this period.

<sup>113</sup> Timothy Clayton, 'Strange, Sir Robert (1725–1792)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26638>, accessed 24 Oct 2005]

<sup>114</sup> James Sambrook, 'Armstrong, John (1708/9–1779)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/660>, accessed 24 Oct 2005].

insights into the views of one volatile and forthright woman on marriage, motherhood and the conventions of epistolary culture.<sup>115</sup>

Sir Alexander Dick was the cousin of Isabella Strange. The student of Boerhaave in Leiden, he qualified as a physician and later toured in Italy with the portraitist Allan Ramsay.<sup>116</sup> By his first wife, his cousin Janet Dick, he had three children, including Janet (b. 1759), the subject – with her doll – of a charming portrait by William Millar, painted in 1754.<sup>117</sup> His house was frequented by James Boswell, and visited by Benjamin Franklin. In 1762 he remarried what appears to have been his housekeeper, a Welshwoman by the name of Mary Butler. The NAS Dick Cunynghame of Prestonfield Muniments (GD331) is a relatively thin, yet fascinating archive.

### **Dalrymple of North Berwick**

Sir Hew Dalrymple, second baronet (1712-1790) first entered parliament as MP for the Haddington burghs in 1742, remaining in parliament until 1768, despite only one recorded utterance in the House.<sup>118</sup> In January 1743, he married Margaret Sainthill, the daughter of a London surgeon, whom he was forced to leave at home in Wandsworth during his visit to his Scottish estates shortly after the birth of their first child in 1744.<sup>119</sup> A fascinating insight into the conflicts created by the necessities of maintaining an English wife and Scottish estates, this is supplemented in the NAS Hamilton of North Berwick Muniments (GD110) by other correspondence affording glimpses into the lives of Sir Hew's Scottish female friends and relatives. His eldest brother was married to Anne, daughter of the Earl of Wemyss and sister of Lady Frances Steuart Denham, aspects of whose lives during the 1750s were detailed by their footman, John Macdonald.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> NLS, MS14253, Letters to Sir Robert Strange, 1750-1791, n.d., mainly from his wife Isabella; MS14254, Letters to Lady Isabella Strange, 1746-1805 (with some outgoing); MS14263, Letters to Andrew Lumisden, 1753-92, from his sister Lady Isabella Strange.

<sup>116</sup> Robert Harrison, 'Dick, Sir Alexander, third baronet (1703-1785)', rev. Patrick Wallis, *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7592>, accessed 30 July 2006].

<sup>117</sup> Reprinted in Rosalind K. Marshall, *Women in Scotland 1660-1780* (Edinburgh, 1979), p.9.

<sup>118</sup> Romney Sedgwick (ed.) *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1715-1754*, vol.1, (London, 1970), p.601.

<sup>119</sup> NAS, GD110/970 for Margaret's letters to Hew; GD110/1084 for Hew's letters to her.

<sup>120</sup> John Macdonald, *Memoirs of an Eighteenth-Century Footman*, with an introduction by John Beresford (London, 1927; 1<sup>st</sup> published 1790).

### **Hope of Hopetoun**

John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Hopetoun (1704-1781) married 3 times, and had a number of children, but the only one who features in this thesis is his eldest daughter Lady Elizabeth (Betty) Hope (b. 1736)<sup>121</sup> for whose London education extended accounts are systematically catalogued in what is otherwise a rather unwieldy archive with little of obvious use for the study of women in this period.<sup>122</sup> Depicted by Ramsay in a double portrait with her brother Charles as a child, ca.1745-6,<sup>123</sup> Lady Betty married the Earl of Drumlanrig (son of Janet Inglis' cousin, the Countess of Queensberry) in 1754, only a few months before he shot himself provoking much debate over whether or not this was accidental or suicide.<sup>124</sup> She died only two years later. Lady Betty's mother was Anna (d. 1759), the daughter of James Ogilvy, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Findlater.

### **Tweeddale**

John Hay, fourth Marquis of Tweeddale, was a Squadrone peer who held the official title of Secretary of State for Scotland from 1742-1746, but had very little influence in Scotland and was unable to wrench power away from the Argathelians. In 1748, he married Frances (d.1758), daughter of his political benefactor, John Carteret, Earl of Granville. They had four sons and two daughters.<sup>125</sup> An example of the integration into English society of Scottish aristocratic families, the couple nevertheless spent some time at their estate in Yester, East Lothian, and some, if not much, correspondence remains in the NLS Hay of Yester Papers.

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<sup>121</sup> Alastair Smart, *Allan Ramsay: 1713-1784* (Edinburgh, 1992), p.106.

<sup>122</sup> The Hopetoun archive, NRAS888, has been used more extensively by Helen Goodwill in her thesis 'The Musical Involvement of the Landed Classes in Eastern Scotland, 1685-1760' (Edinburgh University PhD thesis, 2000).

<sup>123</sup> Reproduced in Smart, *Allan Ramsay: 1713-1784*, p.106.

<sup>124</sup> See *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*, p.231, in which it was described as an accident.

<sup>125</sup> Richard Scott, 'Hay, John, fourth marquess of Tweeddale (1695-1762)', *ODNB*, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12730>, accessed 30 July 2006]

## APPENDIX 2: Portraits



Fig. 1. Agnes Dalrymple Murray Kynynmound (1731-1778), later Agnes Elliot, by Allan Ramsay (1739).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alastair Smart, *Allan Ramsay: 1713-1784* (Edinburgh, 1992), plate 4, and p.101.



Fig.2. Janet Clerk of Penicuik, née Inglis (b. ca.1686, d.1760), by William Aikman.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*, ed. John M. Gray, Scottish History Society ser.1, vol.13 (Edinburgh 1892), plate VIII, opp.p.74.



Fig.3. Margaret Calderwood, née Stuart (1715-1774), by Allan Ramsay (1735).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Stuart W. McDonald, 'Calderwood, Margaret (1715-1774)', *ODNB*,  
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4376>, accessed 7 Nov 2006]



Fig. 4. Mary Adam, nee Robertson (1699-1761), by Allan Ramsay.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Smart, *Allan Ramsay*, plate 19 and p.115.

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/4981-2, Life of Robert Adam by John Clerk of Eldin, with drafts

/5289, Letters to Sir John Clerk 1<sup>st</sup> bt, and Sir John Clerk, 2<sup>nd</sup> bt, from Janet Inglis, wife of 2<sup>nd</sup> bt., 1715-42

/5340, Letters to Sir John Clerk from his son, James Clerk, 1723-50

/5396, Letters between Sir John Clerk, George Clerk (later of Dumcrieff) his son, and Dorothea Clerk, his wife, 1732-51

/5423, Letters to Sir John Clerk from Elizabeth Clerk, his daughter, and Robert Pringle, advocate, her husband, 1738-49

/5445, Letters to Sir John Clerk from his daughter, Anne Clerk, on personal and family matters, 1741-2

/5486, Letters to William and Margaret Adam from John Clerk of Eldin and Susanna Adam, his wife, on a visit to London in 1756

- /5459-5462, Miscellaneous Clerk of Penicuik correspondence  
 /5463, Letters to George Clerk of Drumcrieff from his brother James, 1744-83  
 /5464-5473, Miscellaneous Clerk of Penicuik correspondence  
 /5474, Letters to Sir John Clerk from his daughter Jackie, 1749-51  
 /5476, Letters concerning the marriage of Janet, daughter of Sir John Clerk, to James Carmichael, 1750-1  
 /5477, Letters on miscellaneous topics, 1750-51  
 /5478, Letters to Sir John Clerk from John Balfour, sending books, 1751  
 /5482, Letter to George Clerk of Dumcrieff from Capt. Henry Fletcher, 1755  
 /5483-4, Miscellaneous Clerk of Penicuik correspondence, 1755

*GD110 Hamilton of North Berwick Muniments*

- /928-936, Personal Correspondence  
 /937-939, Personal Correspondence  
 /970, Letters of Margaret Sainthill to her husband Sir Hew Dalrymple, 1744  
 /971-985, General correspondence  
 /1078-1089, Correspondence of Margaret Sainthill, first wife of Sir Hew Dalrymple of North Berwick, 1742-1747

*GD113, Innes of Stow*

- /3/165-589, Papers of George Innes, 1742-1762  
 /3/981-1199, Miscellaneous Items Collected by George Innes, 1743-1762  
 /4/165/999-1175, Papers relating to mistresses and illegitimate children of George Innes of Stow, mainly letters from Elizabeth Graham, 1742-57  
 /5/60, Letters from Jean Stewart to her cousin, Marion Lauder  
 /5/66, Letters from the Maxwells of Pollock to their cousin, Marion Lauder, later Innes  
 /5/77, Papers relating to the marriage settlement of George Innes and Miss Marion Lauder  
 /5/385, Letters concerning the health and welfare of Jeanie, daughter of George Innes, and of her mother, 1746-7  
 /5/507, Letters to George Innes and his wife, 1725-66  
 /7/5, Material produced during a court case of February 1857, *In Causa* Frederick Mitchell (illegitimate child of Gilbert Innes)

*GD205 Hamilton of Pencaitland (in Ogilvy of Inverquhar)*

- /42/12, Mrs H Nisbet's Separate Aliment, 1753. [Largely correspondence relating thereto]

*GD331, Dick Cunyngham of Prestonfield Muniments*

- /1, Letters to Mary Butler, 2<sup>nd</sup> wife of Sir Alexander Dick, from her parents (1748-62)  
 /5, Letters to Dr Cunninghame, later Sir Alexander Dick, and Lady Dick, 1733-66  
 /7, Letters and papers relating to Benjamin Franklin, ca. 1760  
 /8, Social and personal letters from Lady Isabella Strange in London & Paris, to Sir Alexander Dick, 1758-66

/11-12, Boswell connections for 1760s and 1770s  
 /40, Personal letters to Janet, wife of Sir Alexander Dick, 1737-1758.

### **National Library of Scotland**

MS.Adv.23.1.1, Minutes of the Select Society

MS293, 'An Impartial and Genuine List of the Ladys on the Whig or Jacobite Partie'

MS304, Gen: Humphrey Bland – letter book 1747-1749; 1753-1754

#### *Lauriston Castle Collection: Mackenzie of Delvine Papers*

MS1101, Letters and papers of John Mackenzie, Advocate, and his three wives, Helen, Katharine, and Margaret, 1681-1752, n.d.

MS1127, Letters of the wives of George Mackenzie, Advocate: Margaret, née Malcolm, 1716-23, and Elizabeth, née Chambers

MS1131, Letters of John Mackenzie, W.S., son of John Mackenzie, Advocate, to his wife 1753-4

MS1136, Letters of John Mackenzie, W.S., to Sir George Robertson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bart, of Faskally, 1755-74, n.d.; Sir Alexander Macdonald, 7<sup>th</sup> Bart., of Sleat, with accounts, 1738-47

MS1208, Correspondence and Papers of Cecilia Mackenzie, née Renton, wife of John Mackenzie W.S., 1764-97; and of children of John Mackenzie, Advocate: Christian, 1728-41; Janet, 1739-73; Jean, 1741-76; Katherine, 1739

MS1211, Letters of Mary Mackenzie, daughter of John Mackenzie, Advocate, 1736-45, with letters to her from John Mackenzie W.S., 1737, and Ann Fotheringham, 1739

MS1212, Letters and Papers of Mary Mackenzie, 1739-76

MS1303, Correspondence of Ranald Macdonald of Clanranald, 17<sup>th</sup> chief

MS1306, Correspondence of Macdonald: several families incl. Kingsborough

MS1308, Macdonald of Sleat, esp. Sir Alexander, 7<sup>th</sup> Bt. Letters 1732-1746; Papers 1731-1744

MS1309, Macdonald of Sleat, 1739-70. Margaret, wife of the 7<sup>th</sup> Bart., Letters 1739-70; Papers 1765-7. Sir James, 8<sup>th</sup> Bart., Letters 1759-65; Papers 1756-64

MS1310, Macdonald of Sleat, 1763-74. Sir Alexander Macdonald, 9<sup>th</sup> Bart., Letters 1765-74, & Sir Archibald, his brother (among others)

MSS1311-1312, Correspondence: Macdonald and Macdonell (various), 1683-1771

MS1394, Correspondence: Munro, Monro, Monroe (various), 1686-1764, n.d.

MS1395, Correspondence: Montgomery, Susanna, Countess of Eglinton, 1740-76

MS1396, Correspondence: Montgomery, 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Eglinton, 1745-69

MS1397, Correspondence: Montgomery, Earl of Eglinton, 11<sup>th</sup> Earl and daughters, 1747-75

MS1398, Montgomery, Earl of Eglinton, papers, 1746-1777

MS1400, Correspondence: Moray of Abercairny

MS1426, Robertson of Faskally, correspondence of Anne, wife of 1<sup>st</sup> Jacobite Bart.

MS3142, Jacobite papers

*Mure of Caldwell Papers*

MSS4941-2, Correspondence, 1643-1763

*Pitfirrane Papers*

MS6407, Correspondence, 1578-1759, n.d.

*Elliot of Minto Papers*

MS11001, Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bart., to his father, Lord Minto, Lord Justice Clerk, 1744-1762

MS11002, Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bart., to his father, Lord Minto, Lord Justice Clerk, 1763-66

MS11003, Letters to Lord Minto, Lord Justice Clerk, 1732-1764

MSS11004-5, Family and General Correspondence, chiefly of Lord Minto, Lord Justice Clerk, 1730-66

MSS11006-8, Letters, Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bart., to his wife, Agnes Murray Elliot, daughter of Hugh Dalrymple Murray Kynynmound of Melgund, 1748-1776

MS11008, Family and General Correspondence of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bart., principally from the family, 1756-1770

MSS11009-10, Family and General Correspondence, chiefly of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bart., but including letters to his wife, 1743-1767

MS11012, Letters of Gilbert Elliot (later 4<sup>th</sup> Bart. and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Minto) to his parents, 1760-75; with letters of Professor George Stuart, Robert Liston, and others, 1762-72

MS11013, Letters of Hugh Elliot, 1763-76, largely to his parents

MS11014-11018, General Correspondence of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bart., 1755-1767

MS11030, Papers concerning feu contract, family settlements, and marriage contracts of the Elliot family, 1692-1776

MS11036, ix, Copies of memoranda of Agnes, Lady Elliot, n.d., mostly transcribed by Gilbert, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Minto, and concerning the political career of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bart.

MS12815, Commonplace Book of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bt., ca.1745-60

MSS12816-12818, Albums of verse by Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bart., 1745-77

MS12822, Papers in the hand of Lady Elliot

MS12949, Accounts of Hugh Dalrymple Murray Kynynmound of Melgund and Kynynmound

MS12950, Personal and household accounts of Hugh Dalrymple Murray Kynynmound of Melgund and Kynynmound, 1737-42; Personal and household accounts of Agnes Murray Kynynmound (Lady Elliot of Minto), 1741-6

MS12952, Letters to Hugh Elliot from members of his own family, 1771-1775

*Strange and Lumisden Papers*

- MS14253, Letters to Sir Robert Strange, 1750-1791, n.d., mainly from his wife Isabella  
 MS14254, Letters to Lady Isabella Strange, 1746-1805 (with some outgoing)  
 MS14263, Letters to Andrew Lumisden, 1753-92, from his sister Lady Isabella Strange

*Yester Papers*

- MS14420, Family Correspondence, 1716-60  
 MSS14421-14422, Political and general correspondence, 1716-66  
 MS14423, Correspondence, 1762-6, with Robert Dundas of Arncliffe  
 MS14426, i, Letters and enclosures, 1744 of Lord Milton  
 MS14427, Private Correspondence, 1742-1745  
 MS14428, vi, Letters, 1755-7, largely of the Countess of Dalkeith and Lord Glendoick, concerning the affairs of the Earl and Countess of Dalkeith  
 MS14430, Mostly Military Correspondence to Lord Charles Hay  
 MS14434, Family Correspondence of the 6<sup>th</sup> Marquis of Tweeddale (1710-87)  
 MS14435, General Correspondence, 1742-87  
 MS14660, Accounts (various)  
 MS14661, Travel and London expenses, 1713-64

*Fletcher of Saltoun Papers*

- MS16504, Correspondence, 1718-19  
 MSS16505-16524, Family Correspondence 1720-1765  
 MSS16570-16733, Lord Milton's General Correspondence (also to members of his family) 1737-1765  
 MSS16735-7, Correspondence, 1766-86  
 MS16746, Undated Letters (18<sup>th</sup> century)  
 MS16747, Part of an autograph collection formed in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Lady Charlotte Fletcher  
 MSS16867-16885, Personal and Household Accounts 1740-1760  
 MS16889, List of dates of birth of Lord Milton's children  
 MS17607, Accounts and other papers relating to Mary, Martha and Margaret Fletcher, sisters of Lord Milton  
 MS17745, Andrew Fletcher, Diary, 10 Oct 1736-20 Jan 1739, recording mainly travel and activities in London during holidays from Winchester  
 MS17774, Characters of various persons collected by Martha Fletcher  
 MS17778, Commonplaces and Extracts from books (incl. by Martha Fletcher)  
 MS17781, Catalogue of Books ca. 1757  
 MS17802, Miscellaneous historical notes (incl. Martha Fletcher)  
 MS17858, Genealogical notes and trees, 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries  
 MS17859, Genealogical Memoirs of the Family of Fletcher of Saltoun c.1780  
 MS17860, Amended and amplified version of MS 17859, 1796  
 MS17861, Lists of Books, 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> centuries  
 MS17866, 'Catalogue Books Brunstane' ca. 1760  
 MS17895, Poems by Andrew Fletcher 1743-57

**National Register of Archives (Scotland)**

*NRAS888 Marquis of Linlithgow (Hope of Hopetoun)*

Box 59/1, Vouchers of school expenses for Lady Betty Hope, 1749

Bundle 584, Personal Correspondence, 1751-9 (mostly between Hopetoun and his son James)

Bundle 585, Personal and estate accounts, including bills paid for Lady Betty Hope in London, 1748-51

Bundle 589, Personal Correspondence 1760-5

Bundle 638, Miscellaneous accounts, 1743-67

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