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England's Secrets Revealed

Secret Literature and Moral Reform in the English Enlightenment, 1691-1757

by
JINGYUE WU

A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Bristol
in Accordance with the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Arts

Department of English
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ABSTRACT

Secret literature (literary experiments in secret revelation) and the reformation of manners movement in the English Enlightenment tend to be studied separately by scholars as two discrete enterprises. Their complex connections are thus left unduly neglected, especially those connections that are central to our understanding of the period's literary innovations. This thesis is the first in-depth exploration of their nexus. It focuses on five significant secret literary works created by several leading experimental writers of the time at the movement's four critical junctures, namely Charles Gildon's revelation of 'England's secrets' at the outset of the movement (1691), *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail* (1692-93), Nicholas Rowe's and Susanna Centlivre's revelations of 'women's secrets' on the stage at the height of the movement, *The Biter* (1704) and *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret* (1714), Elizabeth Singer Rowe's revelation of 'otherworldly secrets' shortly after the movement started to decline from the mid-1720s, the *Friendship in Death* duology (1728-32), and Eliza Haywood's revelation of 'people's secrets' on the eve of the movement's first revival (1757), *The Invisible Spy* (1754). Through these deliciously fresh revelations of secrets, this thesis argues that secret literature and the movement, contrary to modern assumptions, were not discrete enterprises, but were closely connected. It shows that interest in the movement was a pivotal motivating force behind some of the most significant innovations in Enlightenment secret literature. These innovations, this thesis points out, were not just to advance the movement by helping raise the reading public's awareness of the moral reform's necessity and urgency, but were also used to advance their authors' distinctive plans for reforming the movement itself, particularly its Anglicanism-inflected ideological foundation. Four typical plans are revealed in this thesis: 1) modifying certain facet of the movement's Anglicanism (N. Rowe and Centlivre); 2) replacing its Anglicanism with other native religious resources (Gildon); 3) replacing its Anglicanism with non-native religious resources (E. Rowe); and 4) replacing its Anglicanism with non-religious intellectual resources (Haywood). Unlike other studies of secret literature, this thesis takes into account the recent philosophical and sociological reappraisal of the secret and does not position the secret as merely something that is intentionally concealed, but as an *assemblage*. In doing so, it also contributes to the ongoing studies in the sociology of long-eighteenth-century English literature.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

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.....1 October 2020.....

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INTRODUCTION

The novel is not the only novel thing that ‘rose’ after the Glorious Revolution (1688). The ‘first modern revolution’ also gave rise to another no less novel thing, namely the reformation of manners movement, a ‘moral revolution’, as it is called by some scholars.¹ Started in London in 1691 with the creation of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, this movement ‘for moral and spiritual reform [...] lasted well into the next’.² Although it faded in the late 1730s, it was revived twice in the rest of the eighteenth century, first in 1757 and then again in 1787, and both revivals lasted for quite some time.³ Unlike previous moral regulation projects, the movement was mainly led by the burgeoning middling class and ‘to a significant extent independent of the governing classes’.⁴ For that reason, it is regarded as ‘the first [modern] moral reform movement’.⁵

This ‘essentially modernizing movement’ is significant, not just because it represents, ‘in a sense, a coming of age’ on the part of the ‘middling people’.⁶ It is

¹ On the Glorious Revolution as the ‘first modern revolution’, see Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009). On the reformation of manners movement as the ‘moral revolution’, see, for instance, Dudley W. R. Bahlman, *The Moral Reformation of 1688* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957; repr. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1968); Shelley Burt, ‘The Societies for the Reformation of Manners: Between John Locke and the Devil in Augustan England’, in *The Margins of Orthodoxy: Heterodox Writing and Cultural Response, 1660-1750*, ed. Roger D. Lund (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 149-69 (p. 151); and Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 28-56 (p. 30).

² Faramerz Dabhoiwala, ‘Sex and Societies for Moral Reform, 1688-1800’, *Journal of British Studies*, 46.2 (2007), pp. 290-319 (p. 290).

³ See, for instance, Tim Hitchcock, Sharon Howard, and Robert Shoemaker, ‘Reformation of Manners Campaigns’, *London Lives, 1690-1800* (www.londonlives.org, version 1.1, June 2012) [https://www.londonlives.org/static/Reformation.jsp#fn1_4, accessed 1 October 2019].

⁴ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p. 23.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, LA and London: University of California Press, 1996), p. 102.

significant also because by ‘injecting a greater specificity and a new urgency into discussions of moral reform’, the movement ‘defined the field in institutional and ideological terms [...] for at least the next hundred years’, and ‘bequeathed to future generations a model for action and a vision of order’.⁷ Its significant long-term consequences were closely related to its unusually broad ambitions from the very start. In fact, its ambitions were so broad that no other ‘by-product[t] of the Revolution of 1688’, observes Faramerz Dabhoiwala, was ‘perhaps [...] as broad in its ambitions’ as the movement.⁸ The broadness of its ambitions can be seen in the ‘extraordinary range of activities’ that it had impacted—‘from private prayers to parliamentary legislation, and from the foundation of missionary societies to the promotion of novel types of social and literary intercourse’.⁹ All those activities, in retrospect, had helped shape the modernization of England in the Age of Enlightenment.

As one of the most significant and influential components of the English Enlightenment, the movement has garnered much scholarly attention in the past few decades, but its important impact on the literary realm, unlike its impacts on other facets of society, still remains largely underexplored.¹⁰ This is partly

⁷ Ibid., pp. 102, 124.

⁸ Dabhoiwala, ‘Sex and Societies for Moral Reform, 1688-1800’, p. 290.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ For the studies of the reformation of manners movement, see, for instance, Bahlman, *The Moral Reformation of 1688*; T. C. Curtis and W. A. Speck, ‘The Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study in the Theory and Practice of Moral Reform’, *Literature and History*, 3 (1976), pp. 45-64; Tina Isaacs, ‘The Anglican Hierarchy and the Reformation of Manners 1688-1738’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33.3 (1982), pp. 391-411; David Hayton, ‘Moral Reform and Country Politics in the Late Seventeenth-Century House of Commons’, *Past and Present*, 128 (1990), pp. 48-91; Joanna Innes, ‘Politics and Morals: The Reformation of Manners Movement in Later Eighteenth-Century England’, in *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century*, ed. Eckhart Hellmuth (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 57-118; Shelly Burt, *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688-1740* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 39-63; Robert B. Shoemaker, ‘Reforming the City: The Reformation of Manners Campaign in London, 1690-1738’, in *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750*, ed. Lee Davison, Tim Hitchcock, Tim Keirn, and Robert B. Shoemaker (Stroud: Alan Sutton, and New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), pp. 99-120; Craig Rose, ‘Providence, Protestant Union and Godly Reformation in the 1690s’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3 (1993), pp. 151-69; Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, pp. 101-24; Jessica Warner and Frank Ivis, ‘“Damn you, you informing bitch”: Vox Populi and the Unmaking of the Gin Act of 1736’, *Journal of Social History*, 33 (1999), pp. 299-330; Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge and New

determined by the fact that most scholars who have studied the movement are historians, whose objects of study usually do not include what are nowadays deemed literary works. Nonetheless, current scholarship on the movement has indeed made explicit two pivotal aspects of its profound impact on the contemporaneous literature. First, the movement incited several institutional and ideological controversies, and those controversies clearly informed the literary creations of several major writers of the period, including Daniel Defoe (c. 1660-1731), Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Joseph Addison (1672-1719), Richard Steele (1672-1729), and Samuel Richardson (1689-1761).¹¹ Second, the movement engendered widespread enthusiasm for moral reform, which in turn prompted the creation of the ‘reform comedy’ in 1696, a new dramatic form that enjoyed continued popularity until the mid-eighteenth century.¹²

Besides those two aspects, there is, I argue, another equally pivotal aspect, namely the movement’s impact on the period’s assorted literary experiments that revolved around secret revelation. The current undue neglect of those innovative ‘secret’ literature not just prevents scholars from fully appreciating the breadth and

York: Cambridge University Press, 1996; repr. 2004); Hunt, *Governing Morals*, pp. 28-56; Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution, Volume 1: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 112-20, 192-93; Robert B. Shoemaker, ‘Reforming Male Manners: Public Insult and the Decline of Violence in London, 1660-1740’, in *English Masculinities 1660-1800*, ed. Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (London and New York: Longman, 1999; repr. New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 133-50; Stephen H. Gregg, ‘“A Truly Christian Hero”: Religion, Effeminacy, and Nation in the Writings of the Societies for Reformation of Manners’, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 25.1 (2001), pp. 17-28; M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jennine Hurl-Eamon, ‘Policing Male Heterosexuality: The Reformation of Manners Societies’ Campaign against the Brothels in Westminster, 1690-1720’, *Journal of Social History*, 37.4 (2004), pp. 1017-35; Dabhoiwala, ‘Sex and Societies for Moral Reform, 1688-1800’; Karen Sonnelitter, ‘The Reformation of Manners Societies, the Monarchy, and the English State, 1696-1714’, *The Historian*, 72.3 (2010), pp. 517-42; Jingyue Wu, ‘“Nobilitas sola est atq; unica Virtus”: Spying and the Politics of Virtue in *The Golden Spy; or, A Political Journal of the British Nights Entertainments* (1709)’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40.2 (2017), pp. 237-53; and Amanda B. Moniz, ‘Reforming Expectations: Parliamentary Pressure and Moral Reform’, *Parliamentary History*, 37 (2018), pp. 102-18.

¹¹ See, for instance, Curtis and Speck, ‘The Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study in the Theory and Practice of Moral Reform’; Burt, *Virtue Transformed*, pp. 59-61; Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, p. 101; and Wu, ‘“Nobilitas sola est atq; unica Virtus”’, p. 239.

¹² See Aparna Gollapudi, *Moral Reform in Comedy and Culture, 1696-1747* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), p. 1.

depth of the movement's impact on the literary realm, but also unwittingly compromises their research in a key area in the studies of the movement, namely the movement's connections with the issue of gender. Scholars have already explored what the movement meant to men from various perspectives, such as the movement's complicated impact on the 'judicial aspects' of the 'general decline in public punishment [...] of sexual immorality', its special 'significance in policing masculine heterosexuality', its distinctive contribution to the period's 'decline of violence [...] on the streets of London', and its 'uniqu[e]' ways of 'effect[ing] changes in manliness', to name just a few.¹³ However, 'what the movement meant to women [...] is [still] less clear', as Margaret R. Hunt has regretfully pointed out.¹⁴ It is less clear, according to Hunt, mainly because the period's 'hysteria about sexuality and effeminacy' led to 'the confining of active membership in this movement [...] largely to men', and moreover, because 'the exclusion of women from civic participation was one of the (presumably unconscious) aims of Reformation of Manners activities'.¹⁵ Hunt is surely correct, but she does not realize that women in Enlightenment England, though excluded from 'the active membership in this movement' and also 'from civic participation [...in] Reformation of Manners activities', could actually participate in the movement by taking advantage of the new opportunities proffered them by the development of the literary culture after the Glorious Revolution, not least the reading public's surging demand for secret literature; moreover, despite the period's 'hysteria about sexuality and effeminacy', women, as we shall see, were in fact even encouraged by at least some men of the middling sort to play a larger part in the country's modernizing moral revolution.

To reveal how women participated or were encouraged to participate in the movement via secret literature and no less importantly, how the movement had

¹³ See, for instance, Dabhoiwala, 'Sex and Societies for Moral Reform, 1688-1800', p. 291; Hurl-Eamon, 'Policing Male Heterosexuality', p. 1017; Shoemaker, 'Reforming Male Manners', p. 134; Gregg, "'A Truly Christian Hero'", p. 17; Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, pp. 101-24; and Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution, Volume 1*, pp. 112-20, 192-93.

¹⁴ Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, p. 122.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

profoundly impacted the innovative experimentation in secret literature, this thesis focuses on five innovative secret literary works from 1691 to 1757, a period that has attracted most of the scholarly attention in the study of the movement. Produced at four critical junctures of the movement in this period, these works include Charles Gildon's revelation of 'England's secrets' at the start of the movement, *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail* (1692-93), Nicholas Rowe's and Susanna Centlivre's revelations of 'women's secrets' on the stage at the height of the movement, *The Biter* (1704) and *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret* (1714), Elizabeth Singer Rowe's revelation of 'otherworldly secrets' shortly after the movement began to decline from mid-1720s, the *Friendship in Death* duology (1728-32), and Eliza Haywood's revelation of 'people's secrets' on the eve of the movement's first revival (1757), *The Invisible Spy* (1754). These works are chosen, not just because they were produced at the movement's critical junctures and their experimental innovations in secret revelation propelled by the movement are still not fully appreciated, but also because their innovations, I argue, are of special significance to our understanding of what the movement meant to women at the time, and are therefore of great value for advancing the research in the movement's complex connections with the issue of gender.

As we shall see, even at the outset of the movement, women were already encouraged to participate in the movement by such boldly innovative writers as Charles Gildon and his patron, John Dunton, in *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, or their moral reformist project based on the epistolary revelation of 'England's secrets' (see chapter one). At the height of the movement, when the Collier stage controversy was raging in England, some of the most important dramatists at the time, both male and female, such as Nicholas Rowe and Susanna Centlivre, forcefully argued for the necessity of women's greater participation in the movement. To get this very message across to their target audiences, both Rowe and Centlivre resorted to the experimental revelation on the stage of a *wonderful* woman with a secret (see chapter two). In the late 1720s, shortly after the movement started to decline, Elizabeth Singer Rowe, a writer whose popularity in the eighteenth century rivalled that of Defoe, chose not to reveal any secrets from this side of the grave as her predecessors in secret literary experimentation had done, but to reveal only

secrets from the other side of the grave. Rowe's revelation of 'otherworldly secrets' was not just to amuse her readers, but to hammer home a much treasured 'this-worldly secret' of hers, namely that women, besides attempting to play a greater part in the movement, should aim higher by striving to be the movement's very agents of virtue (see chapter three). Rowe's secret message, in retrospect, was immensely influential. Its influence lasted well into the next century and extended well beyond the English borders. Despite the great influence of her message, the movement itself ultimately declined in the late 1730s. But 'the impetus for [moral] reform [engendered by the movement] did not wholly disappear in the 1740s and early 1750s'.¹⁶ Writing on the eve of the movement's first revival, Eliza Haywood, one of the key founders of the novel in English, took Rowe's 'secret' message one step further by revealing 'people's secrets' through two magical devices of her own invention, 'the Belt of Invisibility' and 'the Wonderful Tablet'. In doing so, she sought to convince her readers, particularly her female compatriots, that to become agents of virtue, women need to become first and foremost Bolingbrokean Patriots by joining the ongoing Patriot fight against the country's widespread decadence and corruption; and that without such strenuous efforts on the part of women, a nationwide moral revolution would not be materialized, still less the great revival of the English nation that many had been eagerly awaiting since the Glorious Revolution (see chapter four).

By examining what the movement meant to women in Enlightenment England, and also how the movement propelled the experimental secret revelations in those secret literary works, this thesis also contributes to the current research in Enlightenment secret literature. Starting in the late 1990s, research in secret literature has been a game changer for long-eighteenth-century studies. As Brian Cowan has recently pointed out in his magisterial survey of the past two decades' secret literature scholarship, the research has successfully dispelled the prejudice among 'an earlier generation of scholars' that secret literature should 'best [be] dismissed as unreliable or confidently ignored as unimportant' due to its 'generic and epistemic uncertainty'; and furthermore, it has also opened up new

¹⁶ Hitchcock, Howard, and Shoemaker, 'Reformation of Manners Campaigns' [accessed 1 October 2019].

opportunities for scholars to explore the complicated ‘boundaries between fact and fiction, and between public and private worlds’ during the period.¹⁷ Thanks to the research, more and more scholars have come to realize the crucial importance of secret literature in the literary realm and also English society of the Enlightenment. Despite its game-changing contributions, the secret literature research of the past two decades or so has several outstanding problems. One of the problems, I suggest, is that it tends to focus on two particular and sometimes overlapping sorts of secret literature, namely secret satire and secret history, even though these two were by no means the only significant sorts of secret literature at the time.¹⁸ There are at least two other sorts of secret literature that were equally significant, namely secret drama and secret miscellany—the two sorts of secret

¹⁷ Brian Cowan, ‘The History of Secret Histories’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 81.1 (2018), pp. 121-51.

¹⁸ For the studies of the Enlightenment secret literature, see, for instance, Robert Mayer, *History and the Early English Novel: Matters of Fact from Bacon to Defoe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 94-112; Annabel Patterson, *Early Modern Liberalism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 183-231; Annabel Patterson, ‘Marvel and Secret History’, in *Marvell and Liberty*, ed. Warren Chernaik and Martin Dzelzainis (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), pp. 23-49; Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire 1660-1702* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662-1785* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 145-62; Eve Tavor Bannet, ‘“Secret History”: Or, Talebearing Inside and Outside the Secretorie’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 68.1-2 (2005), pp. 375-96; Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 469-717; Melinda Alliker Rabb, *Satire and Secrecy in English Literature from 1650 to 1750* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Rebecca Bullard, *The Politics of Disclosure, 1674-1725: Secret History Narratives* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009); Alison Conway, *The Protestant Whore: Courtesan Narrative and Religious Controversy in England, 1680-1750* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2010), pp. 80-109; Srinivas Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), pp. 41-50; Noelle Gallagher, *Historical Literatures: Writing about the Past in England, 1660-1740* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp. 65-110; Rebecca Bullard, ‘Signs of the Times? Reading Signatures in Two Late Seventeenth-Century Secret Histories’, in *The Perils of Print Culture: Book, Print and Publishing History in Theory and Practice*, ed. Eve Patten and Jason McElligott (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 118-33; Rachel Carnell, ‘Slipping from Secret History to Novel’, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 28.1 (2015), pp. 1-24; Rebecca Bullard, ‘Secret History, Politics, and the Early Novel’, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. J. A. Downie (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 137-154; Peter Burke, *Secret History and Historical Consciousness: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (Brighton: Edward Everett Root, 2016); *The Secret History in Literature, 1660-1820*, ed. Rebecca Bullard and Rachel Carnell (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Rebecca Bullard, ‘Eighteenth-Century Secret History in Translation: The Case of *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians* and *Histoire secrète de La reine Zarah, et des Zaraziens*’, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 30.3 (2018), pp. 419-37; and Cowan, ‘The History of Secret Histories’.

literature that this thesis chooses to examine, because of all sorts of secret literature at the time, these two figured most prominently in the period's literary engagement with the movement. Like secret satire and secret history, secret drama and secret miscellany also seek to reveal to their target audiences certain purported secret or secrets. Their main difference resides in the medium of their secret revelation. Different medium means different possibilities of revealing secrets. These different possibilities should not be left untended as they are now, if we are to better appreciate Enlightenment experiments in secret literature and their intended novel effects on society.

Secret drama's medium of secret revelation is the stage. Revealing secrets on the stage is not an Enlightenment invention. For instance, it has already been well acknowledged among scholars that secret revelation played a crucial role in Renaissance plays, particularly in those by Ben Jonson (c. 1572-c. 1637), who as a result is regarded by some scholars as 'a dealer in secrets'.¹⁹ As William W. E. Slights points out, Jonson, 'more than any other writer of the period, [...] implicates his audience in his exploration of secrecy'.²⁰ His dramatic experiments with secret revelation not only represent 'each of th[e] [three] well-known Renaissance categories of secrets', namely 'the *arcana Dei*, *arcana imperii*, and *aracana naturalae*' (i.e. the 'religious, political, and "natural" or proto-scientific' secrets).²¹ They also represent 'the "psychology of secrecy" [...] on stage in its most enticing and destructive guises'.²² It is Jonson's experiments with secret revelation that 'showed other playwrights like [John] Webster [c. 1580-c. 1632] and [Thomas]

¹⁹ William W. E. Slights, *Ben Jonson and the Art of Secrecy* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 9. See also, for instance, D. J. Gordon, 'Rolls and Mysteries' (1965), in *The Renaissance Imagination: Essays and Lectures by D. J. Gordon*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Berkeley, LA and London: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 3-23; Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley, LA and London: University of California Press, 1975); and Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 55-112.

²⁰ Slights, *Ben Jonson and the Art of Secrecy*, p. 10.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Middleton [1580-1627] the dramatic possibilities of secrecy'.²³ Like Webster and Middleton, Rowe was also influenced by Jonson's secret experiments, as can be seen, for instance, in *The Biter*. Although Rowe and his friend, Centlivre, did not invent the dramatic practice of revealing secrets, they did invent in their secret-revelatory city comedies, *The Biter* and *The Wonder*, some new ways of revealing secrets on the stage. Those experimental ways of revelation, I suggest, deserve more scholarly attention, not simply because they can help us better understand their creators' engagement with the reformation of manners movement, but no less importantly, because they are a significant component of Enlightenment experimentation with the onstage secret revelation. Through them we may better appreciate some of the new 'dramatic possibilities of secrecy' proffered by English Enlightenment theatre.

Unlike revealing secrets on the stage, revealing secrets in the miscellany can be deemed an Enlightenment invention. The miscellany refers to a 'broader European tradition of various and miscellaneous writing' ('*varia et miscellanea*'), and 'it was defined as a tradition by the fact that it did not contain anything that could be classified according to the generic and professional norms defined by classical poetics, rhetoric, and philosophy'.²⁴ As a writing tradition, the miscellany has 'a history stretching back to Aulus Gellius [flourished 2nd century AD] and other classical writers'.²⁵ But ancient miscellanies like Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* (*Attic Nights*) have far less to do with secret miscellany than modern miscellanies, which originated with Michel de Montaigne (1533-92). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Montaigne, as Warren Boutcher points out, was regarded 'as the progenitor not of the modern essay, [...] but of "modern Miscellanies"'.²⁶ It was believed that he 'took [the miscellany] out of the humanists' hands and gave it to

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁴ Warren Boutcher, 'The Montaignian Essay and Authored Miscellanies from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century', in *On Essays: Montaigne to the Present*, ed. Thomas Karshan and Kathryn Murphy (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 55-77 (p. 56).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

“the scientific and the moral writer”²⁷ ‘Under the influence of Montaigne and his school, moral and natural philosophy’, observes Boutcher, ‘came to the fore as the principal fields of miscellaneous literary writing, leaving philology and antiquarianism behind’.²⁸ The miscellany’s modernization led to its flowering in the long eighteenth century. It was so popular in this period that the period is called by some scholars the ‘Age of Miscellany’ or the ‘Age of Miscellaneity’.²⁹ It was such unprecedented popularity that, I suggest, induced some of the leading literary innovators of the age—notably Gildon, Rowe, and Haywood—to choose the medium of the miscellany to reveal their secrets, thereby giving rise to quite a few highly original secret miscellanies. For those writers, the popularity of the medium meant that their secrets revealed through it would be more likely to reach a wide audience, which was a requisite, if their experimental secret revelations were to have any practical effects on the movement.

To achieve that very end, Gildon, Rowe, and Haywood, besides choosing a hugely popular medium for their secret revelations, also made the most of the special opportunities provided by that medium for the experimentation in revealing secrets through collecting (or purported collecting). ‘Each [miscellany] writer’, notes Boutcher, could always ‘negotiate anew, relatively unhampered by norms and rules, the particular shape and title to be taken by his or her piece’, mainly because the miscellany was by definition a sort of writing that was ‘mixed in kind, varied in style and content, [and] disordered in composition’.³⁰ Each miscellany, especially one with ‘pretensions to literary distinction’, tended to be

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁹ Michael F. Suarez, S.J., ‘The Formation, Transmission, and Reception of Robert Dodsley’s *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*’, in Robert Dodsley, *A Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, ed. Michael F. Suarez, S.J., 6 vols (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1997), vol.1, pp. 1-119 (p. 2); Frans De Bruyn, ‘The English Afterlife of the *Silva* in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries’, in *La silve: histoire d’une écriture libérée en Europe, de l’Antiquité au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Perrine Galand and Sylvie Laigneau (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 657-88 (p. 670); and Carly Watson, ‘Verse Miscellanies in the Eighteenth Century’, *Oxford Handbooks Online* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016) [doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.114, accessed 1 October 2019].

³⁰ Boutcher, ‘The Montaignian Essay and Authored Miscellanies from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century’, p. 63.

‘unique, [... i.e.] particular to the author’s collecting habits, [...] preoccupations, [and...] circumstances’.³¹ Its uniqueness can be seen in two major respects, namely its distinctive ‘new for[m]’—a form that was ‘mixed, varied, and occasional in its own way’—and its ‘ingenious title’—a title that was created to echo the new miscellaneous form and help ‘distinguis[h] it from others’.³² This correlative mechanism of title and form, for miscellany innovators in the long eighteenth century, was useful to bring out the uniqueness of their miscellanies. For us, the mechanism is useful in helping us to better understand the uniqueness of their experimentation in the miscellany.

By analyzing the correlation between form and title in the secret miscellanies of Gildon, Rowe, and Haywood, we can discern what, in their views, had made their respective miscellanies *sui generis*, or to put it another way, what these creative miscellanists had regarded as the most distinctive aspects of their miscellaneous collecting—or secret revealing. For Gildon, the most distinctive aspect of his collecting and secret revealing is the occasion, so he uses a snappy description of this very occasion—*The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail*—to name his miscellany, which is largely a collection of recently robbed ‘secret’ letters with deft commentary on each of them. Gildon begins this collection with a detailed account of the unique occasion that gave birth to it.³³ According to him, in the summer of 1692, just months before the publication of the miscellany’s first volume, his Club of gentlemen in London decided during a meeting that they would reveal *England’s secrets* in a manner that no one else in the country had ever done. To that end, they robbed several post-boys of their mailbags and acquired hundreds of letters. They then retreated to one of the Club members’ country house to read and discuss those letters. Their discussions were carefully recorded, and then made available to the reading public in installments with the help of a leading publisher in the country, John Dunton, alongside the most intriguing

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 63.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³³ See Charles Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail*, 2 vols. (London: Printed for John Dunton, 1692-3), vol. 1 (1692), sigs. A2r-A6v and pp. 1-16.

letters. Such a unique occasion, Gildon notes, gives his readers an unprecedented glimpse into the secret thoughts of their fellow countrymen and women, and is therefore worthy of their attention.³⁴ In retrospect, this occasion did contribute to his miscellany's popularity among readers in the 1690s and early 1700s, and also succeeded in helping Gildon distinguish his miscellany—or his secret-revealing project—from all others in the same period. Gildon's case clearly shows how effective the occasion of collecting can be in making a miscellany unique. Yet, the occasion, it should be noted, is not the only aspect of collecting that an author can refer to in the title to highlight a miscellany's uniqueness.

Two other possibilities are instantiated in the secret miscellanies of Rowe and Haywood. For Rowe, the most distinctive aspect of her collecting and secret revealing is not the occasion, but the theme, which is accordingly referred to in her title, *Friendship in Death*. This theme is distinctive, partly because it is derived from a brand new theological concept put forward by herself, and also partly because it is made to play an unusual role in structuring her miscellany. That is to say, this theme or concept is used by Rowe to act as a key structural link in the miscellany's peculiar bipartite form: namely between the miscellany's fictional segment of otherworldly secret revelation—that is, letters of departed spirits to their much-loved still-living friends, and the miscellany's non-fiction segment of otherworldly secret revelation—that is, a French theological tract translated by Rowe for her dear readers. As a structural link, the unique concept of the 'friendship in death' successfully joins the two seemingly discrete segments of revelation into an organic whole. As a distinctive theme of the miscellany, this concept guides readers beyond the two segments' revelations of otherworldly secrets and toward a significant 'this-worldly' secret beneath them that Rowe has been trying to instill in her readers from the very outset.

Neither the theme nor the occasion is referred to in the title of Haywood's secret miscellany—*The Invisible Spy*, because for Haywood, the most distinctive aspect of her collecting and secret revealing is the persona, that is, a character who makes the miscellany's collecting possible in the first place. Because of this

³⁴ See also Gildon, *The Compleat Library, or, News for the Ingenious*, July, 1692, pp. 205-07.

distinctive persona—a gender-indeterminate spy with magical powers called Explorabilis, Haywood’s miscellaneous form is different from that of Gildon or Rowe in an important way, namely the use of letters in revealing secrets. Gildon’s revelation of secrets relies completely on letters, and Rowe’s, partly on letters, whereas in Haywood’s, letters are rarely used. On those rare occasions when letters are indeed used, they are only to bolster, not to replace, her primary method of secret revelation, namely through her authorial persona’s invisible spying. Explorabilis can spy on other people’s life behind closed doors invisibly, because his/her mysterious mentor has bequeathed to him/her two magical objects. One of them—the Belt of Invisibility—allows him/her to go anywhere without being seen, and the other—the Wonderful Tablet—automatically transcribes for him/her everything that he/she has heard during those invisible visits. These two magical objects together transform Explorabilis from an ordinary London citizen into an extraordinary secret-revealing collector, a character that is one of a kind among the period’s miscellany personae. This unique persona enables Haywood to present her readers with an equally unique secret miscellany—namely a vivid personal collection of Explorabilis that includes recollections of his/her secret invisible visits, secret discoveries he/she made during those visits, assorted evidence he/she assembled to support those secret discoveries (e.g. letters and the Tablet transcriptions), and also reflections and afterthoughts on his/her secret discoveries. Through this distinctively different persona, Haywood makes visible to her readers the secrets of their fellow citizens, and more importantly, also something that is crucial to their happiness and flourishing but remains invisible to them. Haywood’s persona, Rowe’s theme, and Gildon’s occasion, though distinctive in their own ways, are in a sense also typical of the period’s experimentation with the medium of the miscellany, as they perfectly exemplify the three major aspects of collecting that miscellanists at the time could use to both individualize their miscellanies and to create new possibilities for secret-revealing through collecting.

These three representative experiments with different aspects of collecting, as we shall see, were all prompted by their authors’ engagement with the reformation of manners movement. By examining the connections between the

movement and those three experiments, this thesis also contributes to the current vibrant studies in the miscellany culture of the long eighteenth century. Most research in this field has focused to date only on verse miscellanies, while leaving largely untended the other major type of miscellany at the time—namely prose miscellanies, miscellanies such as those examined in this thesis.³⁵ This imbalance

³⁵ For the study of miscellanies in the long eighteenth century, see, for instance, Arthur E. Case, *A Bibliography of English Poetical Miscellanies 1521-1750* (Oxford: Printed for the Bibliographical Society at the University Press, 1935 [for 1929]); Raymond D. Havens, 'Changing Taste in the Eighteenth-Century: A Study of Dryden and Dodsley's Miscellanies', *PMLA*, 44 (1929), pp. 501-36; Earl Wasserman, 'Pre-Restoration Poetry in Dryden's Miscellany', *MLN*, 52 (1937), pp. 545-55; A. Dwight Culler, 'Edward Bysshe and the Poet's Handbook', *PMLA*, 63.3 (1948), pp. 858-85; Richard Charles Boys, *Sir Richard Blackmore and the Wits A Study of Commendatory Verses on the Author of the Two Arthurs and the Satyr Against Wit, 1700* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1949); George DeForest Lord, et. al. ed., *Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714*, 7 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963-75); Michael E. Connaughton, 'Richardson's Familiar Quotations: *Clarissa* and Bysshe's *Art of English Poetry*', *Philological Quarterly*, 60 (1981), pp. 183-90; Paul Hammond, *The Robinson Manuscript Miscellany of Restoration Verse in the Brotherton Collection* (Leeds: Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, 1982); Ian Michael, *The Teaching of English: From the Sixteenth Century to 1870* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), esp. pp. 135-267; Dianne Dugaw, 'The Popular Marketing of "Old Ballads": The Ballad Revival and Eighteenth-Century Antiquarianism Reconsidered', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 21.1 (1987), pp. 71-90; Margaret Weedon, 'Jane Austen and William Enfield's *The Speaker*', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 11.2 (1988), pp. 159-62; Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Barbara M. Benedict, *The Making of the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literary Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Thomas Bonnell, 'Speaking of Institutions and Canonicity, Don't Forget the Publishers', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 21.3 (1997), pp. 97-99; Suarez, 'The Formation, Transmission, and Reception of Robert Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*' (1997); Laura Mandell ed., *Romanticism on the Net* (Special Issue: *Romantic Anthologies*), 7 (1997) [<https://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/1997/v/n7/>, accessed 1 October 2019]; Julia M. Wright, ' "The Order of Time": Nationalism and Literary Anthologies, 1774-1831', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 33.4 (1997), pp. 339-65; Jonathan Brody Kramnick, *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700-1770* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Stephen N. Zwicker, 'Poems on Affairs of State (London, 1689-1716 and New Haven, 1963-1975), 1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era, 4 (1998), pp. 309-25; Laura Mandell, *Misogynous Economies: The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), esp. pp. 107-28; Nick Groom, *The Making of Percy's Reliques* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Stefanie Lethbridge, Ralf Schneider, and Barbara Korte ed., *Anthologies of British Poetry: Critical Perspectives from Literary and Cultural Studies* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000); Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Anne Ferry, *Tradition and the Individual Poem: An Inquiry into Anthologies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Richard Terry, *Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past, 1660-1781* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Michael F. Suarez, 'The Production and Consumption of the Eighteenth-Century Poetic Miscellany', in *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays*, ed. Isabel Rivers (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), pp. 217-51; Lee Erickson, ' "Unboastful Bard": Originally Anonymous English Romantic Poetry Book Publication, 1770-1835', *New Literary History*, 33.2 (2002), pp. 247-78; Barbara M. Benedict, 'The Paradox of the Anthology: Collecting and *Différence* in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *New Literary History*, 34.2 (2003), pp. 231-56; Roger D. Lund, 'The Ghosts of Epigram, False Wit, and the Augustan Mode',

in attention to the period's two major types of miscellanies is not surprising, if one considers the driving force behind the modern miscellany research. As Jennifer Batt has pointed out in her masterly survey of the past decades' miscellany scholarship, an important reason that 'the study of miscellanies has become vibrant in recent years' is because the study is 'encouraged by controversies about [the country's poetic] canon formation as well as by the growth of interest in [the] reception history [of English poetry]'.³⁶ Despite that, prose miscellanies have indeed received some attention from scholars, most notably Leah Price. In her much-celebrated monograph, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*, Price convincingly shows how a particular kind of prose miscellany—namely collections

Eighteenth-Century Life, 27.2 (2003), pp. 67-95; Adam Smyth, "Profit and Delight": *Printed Miscellanies in England, 1640-1682* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004); Love, *English Clandestine Satire, 1660-1702* (2004); Laura Mandell, 'Putting Contents on the Table: The Disciplinary Anthology and the Field of Literary Criticism', *The Poetess Archive Journal*, 1.1 (2007) [<https://journals.tdl.org/paj/index.php/paj/article/view/29>, accessed 1 October 2019]; Stephen Karian, 'Edmund Curll and the Circulation of Swift's Writings', in *Reading Swift: Papers from the Fifth Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*, ed. Hermann J. Real (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2008), pp. 99-129; James McLaverty, 'The Failure of the Swift-Pope *Miscellanies* (1727-32) and *The Life and Genuine Character of Doctor Swift* (1733)', in *Reading Swift: Papers from the Fifth Münster Symposium on Jonathan Swift*, ed. Hermann J. Real (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2008), pp. 131-48; Thomas Bonnell, *The Most Disreputable Trade: Publishing the Classics of English Poetry, 1765-1810* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Stuart Gillespie and David Hopkins ed., *The Dryden-Tonson Miscellanies, 1684-1709: With a New Introduction, Biographical Dictionary, and Reader's Guides*, 6 vols. (London: Routledge, 2008); Steve Newman, *Ballad Collection, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to New Criticism* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 2008); Victoria E. Burke, 'Manuscript Miscellanies', *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 54-67; Chantal Lavoie, *Collecting Women, Poetry and Lives, 1700-1780* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2009); Alasdair A. MacDonald, 'The Revival of Scotland's Older Literature', in *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland, Volume 2: Enlightenment and Expansion 1701-1880*, ed. Stephen W. Brown and Warren McDougall (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 551-58; Jennifer Batt, '“It Ought Not to be Lost to the World”: The Transmission and Consumption of Eighteenth-Century Lyric Verse', *The Review of English Studies*, 65.255 (2011), pp. 414-32; Leith Davis, 'Imagining the Miscellaneous Nation: James Watson's *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems*', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 35.3 (2011), pp. 60-80; Stephen Jarrod Bernard, 'Edward Bysshe and *The Art of English Poetry*: Reading Writing in the Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 46.1 (2012), pp. 113-29; De Bruyn, 'The English Afterlife of the *Silva* in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' (2013); and Abigail Williams and Jennifer Batt ed., *Eighteenth-Century Life* (Special Issue: *Poetry and Popularity in Eighteenth-Century Poetic Miscellanies: New Findings from the Digital Miscellanies Index*), 41.1 (2017); Carly Watson, *Miscellany, Poetry, and Authorship, 1680-1800* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming in 2021). **There are two useful surveys of miscellany scholarship**, see Jennifer Batt, 'Eighteenth-Century Verse Miscellanies', *Literature Compass*, 9.6 (2012), pp. 394-405; and Carly Watson, 'Verse Miscellanies in the Eighteenth Century' (2016).

³⁶ Batt, 'Eighteenth-Century Verse Miscellanies', p. 395.

of literary excerpts—have profoundly ‘shaped the production of new novels [in the second half of the eighteenth century] more than the reproduction of the literary past’.³⁷ This thesis, by studying another kind of prose miscellany that was equally important at the time, namely secret miscellany, can help further develop the case that Price has made about the importance of prose miscellanies to the literary innovations in the English Enlightenment.

Moreover, by examining how the innovative experimentation of those secret miscellanies and also secret dramas was propelled by their authors’ engagement with the reformation of manners movement, this thesis can also lead to a better understanding of the significant contributions made by prose miscellanies—and by extension, also secret literature—to the rise of the English novel, especially in two important respects. First, it shows that collections of literary excerpts were not the only kind of prose miscellany that contributed to the development of the novel in England, because secret miscellanies were another. Second, it reveals that secret history was not the only kind of secret literature that contributed to ‘the tension between secrecy and communicativeness at the heart of the emergence of the eighteenth-century English novel’.³⁸ This tension, as recent studies in secret histories have shown, is inherent in secret history, and secret history’s popularity in the period prompted early novelists to engage in one way or another with this particular tension in their novelistic creations.³⁹ This tension, as we shall see, is

³⁷ Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*, p. 99; see also, pp. 13-104. Not all collections of literary excerpts, it should be noted, are prose miscellanies. For other studies of prose miscellanies, see, for instance, Weedon, ‘Jane Austen and William Enfield’s *The Speaker*’.

³⁸ Cowan, ‘The History of Secret Histories’, pp. 132-33n42.

³⁹ For the study of secret history to the rise of the novel, see, for instance, Mayer, *History and the Early English Novel* (1997); McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity* (2005); Carnell, ‘“Slipping from Secret History to Novel” ’ (2015); Bullard, ‘Secret History, Politics, and the Early Novel’ (2016); April London, ‘Secret History and Anecdote’, in *The Secret History in Literature, 1660-1820*, ed. Rebecca Bullard and Rachell Carnell (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 174-87; and Miranda Burges, ‘Secret History in the Romantic Period’, in *The Secret History in Literature, 1660-1820*, ed. Rebecca Bullard and Rachell Carnell (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 188-201. For the tension between secret and communicativeness at the heart of the rise of the English novel, see also, April London, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 15-81.

inherent not only in secret history, but also in other kinds of popular secret literature, notably secret drama and secret miscellany.

In the secret miscellanies and secret dramas examined in this thesis, the tension between secrecy and communicativeness is most clearly manifested in their ‘concealing’ through secret revealing, or their double-layered revelation of secrets. The primary layer of their secret revelation would be readily noticeable to their contemporary audiences, because of those deliciously fresh secrets revealed at this layer—including ‘England’s secrets’ (Gildon), ‘women’s secrets’ (N. Rowe and Centlivre), ‘otherworldly secrets’ (E. Rowe), and also ‘people’s secrets’ (Haywood). Though different from one another, these secrets shared a common purpose, namely to advance the movement by helping raise the reading public’s awareness of the nationwide moral reform’s necessity and urgency.

The difference in the kinds of the revealed secrets and also the ways in which those secrets are *revealed*—that is, how those secrets are discovered and then presented to the reading public—constitutes the secondary layer of their secret revelation. It is at this layer that those innovative writers choose to ‘conceal’ their distinctive plans for reforming the movement itself, particularly its Anglicanism-inflected ideological foundation. The reform plan concealed by Gildon shows that for him, Anglicanism is not the movement’s best ideological guide, because there are other native religious resources, most notably English deism, that he believes can help carry out the moral reform across the country more effectively and efficiently (see chapter one). A different view is presented by N. Rowe and Centlivre. Their concealed reform plans indicate that unlike Gildon, they do not think the movement’s Anglicanism needs to be displaced. For them, what needs to be changed to make the moral reform more effective and efficient is just certain facet of its Anglicanism (see chapter two). This shared view of N. Rowe and Centlivre is not shared by E. Rowe and Haywood. E. Rowe’s concealed plan shows that like Gildon, she also believes that the movement’s Anglicanism needs to be displaced. Yet unlike Gildon, the best ideological guide she proposes to replace Anglicanism is not derived from any native religious resources, but is introduced from the other side of the Channel, that is, French Jansenism (see chapter three). Like Rowe and Gildon, Haywood is also alive to the necessity of

displacing the movement's Anglicanism. But unlike her predecessors, she reveals in her concealed reform and also revival plan that the best ideological guide may not be found in religious resources, native or otherwise, but in those secular ones like Lord Bolingbroke's Patriot political philosophy (see chapter four).

Despite this crucial difference between Haywood and her predecessors, she does agree with them on one crucial point, namely that literary experiments in secret revelation should primarily be concerned with facilitating, rather than challenging, the movement, because challenging the movement will likely cause more controversy about it, which ultimately will weaken the public commitment to its moral reform across the nation. Yet a deep personal commitment to the movement and its envisioned nationwide moral reform made it impossible for her and also her predecessors to ignore the huge gap that existed between its vision and reality, and consequently prompted them to challenge it by advancing their own plans for reforming it. The tension between their need to challenge the movement and their desire to facilitate it finds a perfect match in the tension between secrecy and communicativeness inherent in secret drama and secret miscellany. By concealing their reform plans at the secondary layer of their dramatic or miscellaneous secret revelation, these public-spirited writers made it explicit to their audiences that facilitating the movement is their top priority, whereas challenging the movement, though important, is not.

Although challenging the movement was not meant to be seen by contemporary audiences as the top priority in these writers' creative engagement with the movement, it should be treated with high priority in our examination of their creative engagement. An important reason is that their *challenges* to the movement—including the distinctive plans they formulate to reform the movement and also the equally distinctive ways they create to conceal those plans—are the most innovative part of their secret literary experimentation. It is also this part that played a crucial role in rendering their creative engagement with the movement refreshingly unique.

By making explicit how they uniquely engaged with the movement, especially how they uniquely challenged the movement via their experimental concealing through secret revealing, this thesis also proposes a new analytic approach to

studying secret literature in the English Enlightenment. Current studies in Enlightenment secret literature center around secret history, and as Cowan points out in his recent survey thereof, they are primarily concerned with ‘trac[ing] the emergence and development of the secret history genre’.⁴⁰ To that end, scholars spend most of their effort in identifying ‘what texts are “key” to the canon [of the genre]’ and also in ‘studying the reception and adaptation of certain key texts [of secret history]’ as well as those key texts’ ‘relationship with other canonical [literary] texts’ in the period.⁴¹ This analytic approach is undergirded by an implicit belief, namely that secret history’s and by extension, also other sorts of secret literature’s social practices—that is, their engagement with various social entities (e.g. partisan politics)—were subservient to their literary practices—that is, their reception and adaptation of key works of secret literature and also their interaction with the period’s literary canon. This thesis holds a contrary view, namely that for most secret literature in the English Enlightenment, it was their literary practices that were subservient to their social practices. That is to say, most authors at the time produced their secret literary works primarily for the sake of engaging in some sort of interaction with certain entities of society, and only secondarily, if at all, for contributing to the development of a particular secret literary genre. Hence, to better appreciate the innovation of such secret literature, we should give priority to its social practices, particularly to the relationship between its social practices and its experimentation in secret revelation, a relationship that is a pivotal dimension of secret literature’s innovation, but is also a dimension that still remains largely neglected in the current genre-centered approaches to Enlightenment secret literature.

This thesis’ study of the relationship between secret literature’s social practices and its experimentation in secret revelation is made better owing to the recent decades’ philosophical and sociological reappraisal of the secret. As one of the most important concepts in understanding human society, the secret has received over the past few decades the attention of several leading thinkers of our

⁴⁰ Cowan, ‘The History of Secret Histories’, p. 122.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 134.

times, including Carl Schmitt, Georges Bataille, Hannah Arendt, Jacques Derrida, Sissela Bok, Félix Guattari, and Gilles Deleuze. These thinkers have greatly contributed to our understanding of the secret by reassessing this concept from various perspectives, such as through its relationship with ethics, consciousness, language, existence, and sovereignty, to name just a few.⁴² Yet no one has reconsidered the nature of the secret per se except Deleuze and Guattari. Unlike other thinkers, Deleuze and Guattari do not unquestioningly accept the received wisdom that regards the secret as something that is intentionally concealed or as the opposite of revelation. For them, the secret is far more complicated than that, and to help us better understand the complexity that is inherent in the secret, they call our attention to the fact that ‘every secret is a collective assemblage’.⁴³ The ‘assemblage’, or *agencement* in the French original, is a key concept developed by Deleuze and Guattari in their attempt to reconceptualize the social. It refers to ‘a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns—different natures’.⁴⁴ Such a multiplicity makes possible the existence of the secret in the social world, and is also the very source of the secret’s inherent complexity. Deleuze and

⁴² See, for instance, Sissela Bok, *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983; repr. New York: Vintage, 1989); Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy, Volume 1: Consumption*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1988); Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1996); Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1996); Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), pp. 49-146; and Charles Barbour, *Derrida’s Secret: Perjury, Testimony, Oath* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

⁴³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987; London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 335.

⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987; rev. edn., 2007), p. 69. On the term ‘assemblage’, see Graham Livesey, ‘Assemblage’, in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005; rev. edn., 2010), pp. 18-19; J. Macgregor Wise, ‘Assemblage’, in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, ed. Charles J. Stivale (Durham: Acumen, 2005; 2nd edn., 2011; New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 91-102; Gary Genosko and Eugene B. Young, ‘Assemblage’, in *The Deleuze and Guattari Dictionary*, ed. Eugene B. Young, Gary Genosko, and Janell Watson (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013; repr. 2014), pp. 34-37; and Manuel Delanda, *Assemblage Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

Guattari's reappraisal of the secret, I suggest, has the potential to revolutionize our current studies in secret literature.

If we follow them, and position the secret in our studies as a multiplicity or a collective assemblage, we have to change accordingly our understanding of the secret in at least two crucial aspects. The first aspect that we should recognize is that the secret is never a static entity, but is always a dynamic process. Because of this, Deleuze and Guattari choose the term *agencement* to describe it. As J. Macgregor Wise has noted, the *agencement* or 'assemblage' in Deleuze and Guattari's works refers 'not [to] *the arrangement or organization* [of heterogenous elements, material and immaterial] but [to] the *process* of arranging, organizing, fitting together [those elements]'.⁴⁵ This process, as Gregory J. Seigworth and Matthew Tiessen have pointed out, leads to the dynamic intermingling of the 'three overlapping modes', or 'affectual modulations', in the topology of the secret, namely the secret 'as content (secret), as form (secrecy), and as expression (secretion)'.⁴⁶ It also determines that the last mode or modulation, the secret as expression, or secretion, is 'before and immanently beneath the first two modulations', and therefore always 'condition[s] the contents and forms of [the secret]'.⁴⁷ Hence, to understand the content and form of a secret, we need to pay attention to its expression, and to understand its expression, we need to examine its assembling process. The assembling process needs to be examined, not just because it makes possible the expression of the secret in the first place, but also because it *is* the secret.

This process view of the secret transforms what should be regarded as the secret of secret literature and also how we should examine it. Current studies in secret literature regard the secret of secret literature as the secret information revealed by a secret literary work. That is to say, for those studies, the secret of a secret literary work is only part of that particular work. It is only *part*, because a secret literary work usually also contains some non-secret information to help its

⁴⁵ Wise, 'Assemblage', p. 91.

⁴⁶ Gregory J. Seigworth and Matthew Tiessen, 'Mobile Affects, Open Secrets, and Global Illiquidity: Pockets, Pools, and Plasma', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 29.6 (2012), pp. 47-77 (pp. 49-50).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

audiences make sense of its revealed secret information, such as its author's explanation of his or her reasons for and methods of secret revelation. Even if no such non-secret information is proffered in a secret literary work, its bibliographical information also makes its revealed secret information *part* of the work. However, if we follow Deleuze and Guattari, then the secret of a secret literary work is not part of that particular work. Rather, that particular work is only part of its secret. To be exact, the secret of a secret literary work not only includes the secret information that it purports to reveal, but also includes all the elements of its secret revelation within the text, all the elements beyond the text that make its textual secret revelation—that is, the expression of its secret—possible in the first place, and last but not least, also the way those elements, both within and beyond the text, are assembled—that is, arranged, organized, and fitted together—to make its textual secret revelation appear to its target audiences in a particular way. This means that to examine the secret of secret literature, the first step is no longer to just identify what secret information a secret literary work has revealed. Efforts should also be made to reconstruct the work's secret assembling process.

To effectively reconstruct the process, particularly to reconstruct it in a way that can most effectively contribute to our examination of a secret literary work's experimentation in secret revelation, we need to change our understanding of the secret in the second crucial aspect, namely to recognize that the secret is never homogeneous in constitution, but is always heterogeneous. To recognize the heterogeneity of the secret, however, is not just to recognize that the secret, as an assemblage or a multiplicity, is 'made up of many heterogeneous terms [i.e. elements]', but also to recognize the characteristic way those heterogeneous elements are used in making up the secret multiplicity.⁴⁸ To make explicit how the multiplicity is constituted, Deleuze and Guattari conceive of the multiplicity as a 'rhizome'. Originally a botanical term, rhizome refers to 'a form of plant that can extend itself through its underground horizontal tuber-like root system and develop new plants'.⁴⁹ It is used metaphorically by Deleuze and Guattari to

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, p. 69.

⁴⁹ Felicity J. Colman, 'Rhizome', in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005; rev. edn., 2010), pp. 232-35 (p. 232).

highlight two key characteristics of a multiplicity's heterogenous constitution. First, a rhizome or a multiplicity has 'no distinctive end or entry point', because 'any part [i.e. any element or group of elements] within a rhizome may be connected to another part [i.e. another element or group of elements]'.⁵⁰ Second, those heterogeneous elements are 'brought into contact with one another' for the sake of creating certain 'new affects, new concepts, new bodies, new thoughts', or other sorts of new effects in the social world; to put it another way, the assembling of those heterogeneous elements is 'entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real'.⁵¹

Recognizing these two characteristics, I suggest, can give us some pivotal clues about how to effectively reconstruct the secret assembling process. The first characteristic, namely that the heterogenous multiplicity has no distinctive end or entry point and all its heterogenous elements are interconnected, indicates that we can start reconstructing the secret assembling process with any element of its heterogeneous constitution or any group of its heterogeneous elements. The freedom to choose the reconstruction's starting point, however, does not mean that all starting points will be equally conducive to the reconstruction. A method to choose a most conducive starting point, I suggest, is hinted by the second characteristic. According to that, all heterogeneous elements of a multiplicity are assembled—that is, are connected to each other—for the creation of new social effects. This suggests that finding out the intended new social effects of a secret multiplicity should be a key purpose of reconstructing its secret assembling process. To fulfill that purpose, we need to first and foremost identify the core element or group of elements in the secret multiplicity's social experimentation, or its 'experimentation in contact with the real'. That core element or group of elements, due to its central role in the secret multiplicity's social experimentation, can serve as a conducive starting point for the reconstruction. The subsequent reconstruction should then focus on the particular group of elements in the secret

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 234.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 233; Adrian Parr, 'Creative Transformation', in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005; rev. edn., 2010), pp. 59-61 (p. 60).

multiplicity or the particular part of the secret assembling process that is most closely connected to that core element or group of elements. Only in this way can our reconstruction most effectively contribute to our examination of a secret literary work's experimentation in secret revelation.

Following that method, this thesis has identified both the core elements and their most closely connected groups of elements in the selected secret literary works' social experimentation. The core elements of those works are the same, namely the reformation of manners of movement. But their most closely groups of elements vary with each work. In Gildon's *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, the most closely connected group of elements is those elements that are used to differentiate between the work's two editions—the 1692-93 edition and the 1706 edition (see chapter one); in N. Rowe's *The Biter* and Centlivre's *The Wonder*, it is those elements that are used to adapt and reinvent the city comedy's secret marriage plot (see chapter two); in E. Rowe's *Friendship in Death*, it is those elements that are used to structure her bipartite miscellany (see chapter three); and in Haywood's *The Invisible Spy*, it is those elements that are used to create the magical background of her secret revelation (see chapter four). By reconstructing the close connections between these groups of elements and the shared core element, we can find out the new social effects that these works intended to bring about at the time. This also enables us to better understand the complex relationship between these secret literary works' engagement with the movement and their experiments in secret revelation, because the reconstruction allows us to see more aspects of that complex relationship, aspects that may otherwise be easily neglected, if we are without the guidance of the above-mentioned insights into the secret from Deleuze and Guattari. Deleuze once noted that an ideal reader of their philosophy should always be concerned with one crucial question, namely 'does it [i.e. their philosophy] work, and how does it work?'⁵² By applying their philosophical and

⁵² Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 8. These words of Deleuze were later reiterated in varied forms and contexts by Deleuze scholars. See, for instance, Brian Massumi, 'Translator's Foreword: Pleasures of Philosophy', in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987; London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. vii-xiv (p. xiv); and Claire Colebrook, 'Introduction', in *Deleuze and*

sociological appraisal of the secret to the study of secret literature in the English Enlightenment, this thesis hopes to have demonstrated a novel way in which their philosophy can work for literary studies.⁵³ Moreover, in doing so, it also hopes to prompt other scholars to explore more novel possibilities that Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy can be used to contribute to the studies in the sociology of long-eighteenth-century English literature.

Feminist Theory, ed. Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 1-17 (p. 8).

⁵³ For other ways that Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy has been used in literary studies, see, for instance, John Hughes, *Lines of Flight: Reading Deleuze with Hardy, Gissing, Conrad, Woolf* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Ian Buchanan, *Deleuzism: A Metacommentary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); *Deleuze and Literature*, ed. Ian Buchanan and John Marks (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002); Gregg Lambert, *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002); Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003); Mary F. Zamberlin, *Rhizosphere: Gilles Deleuze and the "Minor" American Writings of William James, W. E. B. Du Bois, Gertrude Stein, Jean Toomer, and William Faulkner* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006); Mary Bryden, *Gilles Deleuze: Travels in Literature* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Garin Dowd, *Abstract Machines: Samuel Beckett and Philosophy after Deleuze and Guattari* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007); Alan Bourassa, *Deleuze and American Literature: Affect and Virtuality in Faulkner, Wharton, Ellison, and McCarthy* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Ronald Bogue, *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Eva Aldea, *Magical Realism and Deleuze: The Indiscernibility of Difference in Postcolonial Literature* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011); *Postcolonial Literatures and Deleuze*, ed. Lorna Burns and Birgit M. Kaiser (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Sabrina Achilles, *Literature, Ethics, and Aesthetics: Applied Deleuze and Guattari* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Aidan Tynan, *Deleuze's Literary Clinic: Criticism and the Politics of Symptoms* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012); Suzanne Verderber, *The Medieval Fold: Power, Repression, and the Emergence of the Individual* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Literature*, ed. Ian Buchanan, Tim Matts, and Aidan Tynan (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2015); Ridvan Askin, *Narrative and Becoming* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); Zornitsa Dimitrova, *Literary Worlds and Deleuze: Expression as Mimesis and Event* (New York and London: Lexington Books, 2017); Rahime Çokay Nebioğlu, *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Dystopia* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); and Jane Newland, *Deleuze in Children's Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

CHAPTER 1

‘The World being a Masquerade’: Charles Gildon’s *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail* (1692-93, 1706), England’s Secrets Revealed, and English Deism

‘[C]onsidering *what use might be made of this Discovery* [an accidentally misdirected letter betraying its addressee’s secret villainy...] he back’d with this Observation. That the *World being a Masquerade*, where borrow’d Vizors so disguised e’ry one, that none knew ev’n his own acquaintance, if not privy to his dress; Letters were the pulling off the Mask in a corner of the Room, to shew one another their Faces’.

The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail, vol.1 (1692)⁵⁴

Literary historians now accept Charles Gildon (1665-1725) as not just a famous critic of Daniel Defoe (c.1660-1731) and Alexander Pope (1688-1744), but also an important ‘innovator in the development of English novel’.⁵⁵ His *The New*

⁵⁴ *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail*, 2 vols. (London: Printed for John Dunton, 1692-3), vol. 1 (1692), pp. 8-9. All subsequent references to *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail* are from this edition.

⁵⁵ Paul D. Cannan, ‘Gildon, Charles’, *The Encyclopedia of British Literature 1660-1789*, ed. Gary Day and Jack Lynch (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), pp. 537-41 (p. 537). As Michael McKeon notes, ‘Gildon is the first in a long line of critics who detect a close relation between the errancy of Robinson Crusoe and the remarkable vicissitudes and duplicities of Daniel Defoe’s own career’ (*The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* [Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987; repr. 2002], pp. 315-16). **On Gildon as a famous critic of Defoe and Robinson Crusoe**, see, for instance, Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660-1740: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 139-41, 143-45, 148-49, 177. See also Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), pp. 41, 69, 81; John Robert Moore, *Daniel Defoe: Citizen of the World* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 71; J. Paul Hunter, *The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe’s Emblematic Method and Quest for Form in Robinson Crusoe* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), pp. 20-22, 59n18, 118-19, 175, 176n14; John J. Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-1739* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 14; Pat Rogers ed., *Daniel Defoe: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1972), pp. 4, 12, 41-47; Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 47, 412, 423, 435-37; Michael Seidel, *Robinson Crusoe: Island Myths and the Novel* (Boston: Twayne, 1991), pp. 16, 20, 22-23, 72; Robert Mayer, *History and the Early English Novel: Matters of Fact from Bacon to Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1, 2, 182-83, 192, 196, 224, 237; Maximillian E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 1, 32, 257, 537-38, 566; John Richetti, *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 379n22. **On Gildon as a major opponent of Alexander Pope**, see

Metamorphosis (1708), for instance, is the first attempt by an English author to adapt Apuleius's ancient Roman novel, *Metamorphoses, or The Golden Ass*. His pseudo-sequel to *The New Metamorphosis, The Golden Spy* (1709), has since the 1990s been widely credited as the 'first fully-fledged it-narrative in English'.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, what has attracted most critical attention to date is his first fiction, *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail*, published in two volumes in September 1692 and March 1693, and then reprinted and revised in 1706 as one volume. In *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, Gildon, inspired by the Italian writer Ferrante Pallavicino's *Il Corriero svaligiato* (*The Courier Robbed*, 1641), creates a unusual mail robbery by a club of ten London wits as his frame story for exposing the purported secret letters of English people. Gildon's imaginative exposure of secret letters is important in the history of English literature, as Michael McKeon has pointed out in his magisterial study, *The Secret History of Domesticity*:

Pat Rogers, 'Gildon, Charles', *The Alexander Pope Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2004), pp. 138-39. See also John Barnard ed., *Alexander Pope: The Critical Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge, 1973), pp. 8-9, 75-76, 90-92; Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 148-49, 278, 282, 642, 846n148, 867n278; Pat Rogers, *A Political Biography of Alexander Pope* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010), pp. 47-48; Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad in Four Books*, ed. Valerie Rumbold (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 29, 45, 62, 64, 136, 187, 241, 260.

⁵⁶ Jonathan Lamb, 'Modern Metamorphoses and Disgraceful Tales', *Critical Inquiry*, 28.1 (2001), pp. 133-66, reprinted in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 193-226 (p. 213); Cannan, 'Gildon, Charles', p. 537. Scott Nowka also notes in his encyclopedia entry that 'the [English] object narrative genre began with Charles Gildon's *The Golden Spy* (1709)' ('Object Narratives', *The Encyclopedia of British Literature 1660-1789*, ed. Gary Day and Jack Lynch [Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015], pp. 847-48 [p. 847]). **On *The Golden Spy***, see Malcolm J. Bosse, Introduction, in Charles Gildon, *The Golden Spy or a Political Journal of the British Nights Entertainments of War and Peace and Love and Politics* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1972), pp. 5-9; Christopher Flint, 'Speaking Objects: The Circulation of Stories in Eighteenth-Century Prose Fiction', *PMLA*, 113.2 (1998), pp. 212-26, revised and reprinted in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), pp. 162-86; Scott Nowka, 'Talking Coins and Thinking Smoke-Jacks: Satirizing Materialism in Gildon and Sterne', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 22.2 (2009-10), pp. 195-222; Mark Blackwell, General Introduction, in *British It-Narratives, 1750-1830*, 4 vols. ed. Mark Blackwell et al. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), vol. 1, pp. vii-xxviii; Jingyue Wu, "'Nobilitas sola est atq; unica Virtus': Spying and the Politics of Virtue in *The Golden Spy; or, A Political Journal of the British Nights Entertainments* (1709)", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40.2 (2017), pp. 237-53; Scott Nowka, 'Reason and Revelation in the Fiction of Charles Gildon', in *The Ways of Fiction: New Essays on the Literary Cultures of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Nicholas J. Crowe (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), pp. 177-97 (pp. 190-94). **On *The New Metamorphosis***, see Henry Power, 'The Classics and the English Novel', *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Volume 3 (1660-1790), ed. David Hopkins and Charles Martindale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 547-68 (pp. 552-53); Wu, "'Nobilitas sola est atq; unica Virtus'", pp. 242-45; Nowka, 'Reason and Revelation in the Fiction of Charles Gildon', pp. 187-90.

Public, Private and the Division of Knowledge (2005), in that it ‘constituted a complex modernization’ of the secret history genre in England, an important ‘exercise in treating private *arcana amoris* [or, “amatory secrets of private citizens”] as self-sufficient vehicles for conveying meaning that traditionally would need to be transported to the level of the public signified in order to attain the semantic force of *arcana imperii* [secrets of the state]’.⁵⁷ McKeon is certainly right in his observation. Yet it is interesting to note that although his observation clearly refers to the 1692/93 edition, all his quotes from *The Post-Boy Rob’d* to support that observation come instead from the 1706 edition.⁵⁸ That is to say, for him, the two editions are interchangeable. McKeon is not the first nor the last scholar to believe that there is no need to distinguish between the two editions, when discussing the work’s innovation, a belief that originates with Robert Adams Day’s study of *The Post-Boy Rob’d* in his influential monograph, *Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction before Richardson* (1966). Day’s study lays the foundations for that of subsequent scholars, including McKeon, Christopher Flint, Scott Nowka, Thomas O. Beebee, and also Paula R. Backscheider. In fact, nearly half a century after its publication, it was still regarded by Backscheider (2013) as ‘the best’ discussion of all.⁵⁹ In his discussion, Day assumes that both editions were presented by Gildon as an innovative epistolary fiction adapted from Pallavicino’s *Il Corriero*, so there is no need to distinguish between them when discussing the work’s innovation. That, however, is not the case. The first edition, I argue, should be clearly distinguished from the second, because the first edition is not presented by Gildon as an epistolary fiction, but as a non-fiction letter-based project for moral reform modelled on *The Athenian Mercury* (1691-97), that is, his publisher, John Dunton’s own letter-based project for moral reform. That explains why in the first edition Gildon did not acknowledge, as he did

⁵⁷ Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 568-69.

⁵⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 568-69, 825.

⁵⁹ Paula R. Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of English Novel* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), p. 247n94.

in the second edition, that the work is inspired by Pallavicino.⁶⁰ A clear differentiation between the two editions, I suggest, is essential for a better appreciation of Gildon's brilliant experimental ingenuity in the making of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*.

In the last fifty-plus years, there have been significant advances in cataloguing, bibliographical theory (particularly as it relates to paratexts), and also access to early modern texts, which mean that Day's view of this work should be re-assessed. To begin with, Day does not realize that what is classified as an early modern fiction in modern bibliographies was not necessarily deemed so by its author or contemporary readers. According to Day, his study is 'based on' four bibliographies, namely 'the Chester Noyes Greenough card catalogue of English prose fiction 1475-1830 in the Harvard University Library', 'the Wing short-title catalogue of English printed books through 1700', Charles C. Mish's *English Prose Fiction 1600-1700: A Chronological Checklist*, and also William H. McBurney's *A Check List of English Prose Fiction 1700-1739*.⁶¹ Among them, McBurney's *Check List* lists only new prose fictions published between 1700 and 1739, so it does not include either edition of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*. The Wing short-title catalogue (through 1700) lists the 1692-93 first edition as a work adapted from *Il Corriero*, without identifying its specific genre. In both Greenough's catalogue and Mish's *Checklist*, *The Post-Boy Rob'd* is indeed classified as a prose fiction, but they did not specify that their retrospective classification is just the way the work was originally viewed by Gildon and its first readers.⁶² Even so, Day somehow still unjustifiably equates in his

⁶⁰ It is true that Dunton alludes to 'the Letters of Pallavicino' (i.e. *Il Corriero*) in his 'Advertisement' at the front of the first edition as a piece of evidence to show how common mail robbery is in Europe. Such an allusion is not a frank acknowledgement of *Il Corriero* as an inspiration for *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, and moreover, it will not likely to betray the fictionality of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*; for details, see Part III of this chapter.

⁶¹ Robert Adams Day, *Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction before Richardson* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), p. 237.

⁶² See *ibid.*, pp. 237-39, 243. See also Charles C. Mish, *English Prose Fiction, 1600-1700: A Chronological Checklist* (Charlottesville: Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1967), pp. 80-81. The arbitrariness of those early bibliographers' classification is also noticed by Robert D. Hume. See Hume, 'Authorship, Publication, Reception (2): 1660-1750', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English Volume 1: Prose Fiction in English from the Origins of Print to 1750*, ed. Thomas Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 26-45 (p. 27).

discussion the contemporary perception of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* with the retrospective classification of it in modern bibliographies.

Secondly, Day does not give due importance to the fact that the first edition, unlike the second, is not a stand-alone publication, but a work published in conjunction with an assortment of bespoke paratexts. He has indeed noticed some of those paratexts, such as Dunton's 'The Bookseller's Advertisement to the Reader' in the 1692 first volume, and also readers' queries about the work in *The Athenian Mercury*, but they are without exception given short shrift in his discussion.⁶³ For Day, those paratexts are nothing but 'examples of [Gildon's] elaborate devices of verisimilitude', that is, elaborate devices created to reinforce the authenticity of the robbed letters exposed in *The Post-Boy Rob'd*.⁶⁴ That view of Day ends up discouraging subsequent scholars from re-examining those paratexts, which, as we shall see, are in fact fundamental to our understanding of the first edition's innovation. Despite that, Day's dismissive treatment of the first edition's paratexts is understandable, given the fact that his study was carried out in the 1950s and 1960s, long before the importance of paratexts was widely popularized by Gérard Genette in the 1980s and 1990s (*Seuils*, 1987; trans. as *Paratexts*, 1997).⁶⁵

Thirdly, Day thinks that the substantive textual differences between the two editions are irrelevant to a full appreciation of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, which as we shall see, is far from the truth. That may explain why on the one hand, he briefly remarks in the bibliographical appendix to his study that 'The edition of 1706 (two volumes in one) is somewhat altered from that of 1692-93; at least the order of letters in Vol. I has been changed, and deletions and additions have been made'.⁶⁶ But on the other hand, in his study, he does not enumerate the major deletions or additions made by Gildon in the second edition, nor has he ever tried to account for those changes or the changes made to the sequencing of the letters.

⁶³ See Day, *Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction before Richardson*, pp. 91-92.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁶⁵ See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁶⁶ Day, *Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction before Richardson*, p. 259.

Day's inattention to the textual differences between the two editions is probably caused by the fourth factor that has influenced his discussion, that is, he 'ha[s] not seen the 1693 edition of Vol. II', or the 1693 second volume of the first edition, to be exact.⁶⁷ The accessibility of that volume, admittedly, has long remained a problem. As the English Short-Title Catalogue (ESTC) shows, only five copies have survived, three in the United States (the Huntington Library, the Newberry Library, and the University of Illinois Library) and two in the United Kingdom (the British Library and the Bodleian Library, Oxford). In 1971, the volume was microfilmed by the University Microfilms International, Michigan (UMI), but its accessibility does not seem to have improved as a result. Studies of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* published after 1971 show no sign of having ever considered the second volume, and they continue to believe as Day does in his 1966 book that the two editions can be used interchangeably, so no access to the 1693 volume is not a serious problem. The volume is not included in the Early English Books Online 1473-1700 (EEBO) when the database was first launched in the 1990s, and it was not until its update in 2019 that a copy (from Oxford) became readily accessible to scholars for the first time.⁶⁸

This chapter is the first study to make use of it. The 1693 volume is indispensable to the study of *The Post-Boy Rob'd's* innovation, not only because it enables us to identify all the textual differences between the two editions, but also because its unique prefatory materials, like the other paratexts of the first edition, are essential to reconstructing the contemporary perception of the work when it was first published. Both the contemporary perception and the textual differences, as will be shown, are of equal importance to the differentiation between the two editions, and moreover, they allow us to delve deeper into the work's innovation. Scholars now believe that the innovation of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* rests on three major inventions: 1) its 'mail-robbery' narrative frame adapted from *Il Corriero*, 2) its 'club-device' narrative technique that 'anticipates the *Tatler-Spectator* device of a club [1709-12]', and 3) also part of its narrative known as the Chinese letters,

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ The copy made available is from the Bodleian Library, Oxford (shelf-mark: 8° T 115 Art).

which is the first English ‘fiction of the east’ that features a Chinese correspondent, anticipating Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Citizen of the World; or, Letters from a Chinese Philosopher* (pub. serially, 1760-61; collected edn., 1762) by nearly seventy years.⁶⁹ Those three inventions are shared by the two editions. The first edition, as this chapter will demonstrate, should also be credited with a fourth invention, namely its cross-generic experiment, an invention that calls into question the scholarly belief that the two editions are interchangeable.

To show the necessity of a clear differentiation between the two editions, and also to better appreciate Gildon’s brilliant experiment in *The Post-Boy Rob’d*, the chapter starts by using the paratexts of the first edition to reconstruct the work’s original role in the London print culture of the early 1690s. It reveals that unlike the second edition, the first is not presented as an innovative epistolary fiction adapted from *Il Corriero*, but as a non-fiction project for moral reform modelled on *The Athenian Mercury*. Nowadays, *The Athenian Mercury* tends to be regarded as ‘the first “modern” periodical’ in England, or ‘the first [English] periodical to solicit readers’ letters’, but in its own time, as scholars have already noted, it was more often seen as a ‘question project’ ‘dedicated to supporting the King [William III 1689-1702]’s “published desire for moral reformation”’.⁷⁰ Its signature reformist approach, invented by Dunton (March 1691) and improved by Gildon (May 1692), was to offer expert comments on various readerly questions sent by post, and sought by that means to ‘better equip [its readers] to form an ethical public and encourage social consensus’, which was believed to be crucially

⁶⁹ See Paula R. Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of the English Novel*, p. 69; Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662-1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 44-45.

⁷⁰ Rachel Scarborough King, “‘Interloping with my Question-Project’: Debating Genre in John Dunton’s and Daniel Defoe’s Epistolary Periodicals”, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 44 (2015), pp. 121-42 (p. 121); John Dunton, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton, Citizen of London, With the Lives and Characters of More than a Thousand Contemporary Divines and other Persons of Literary Eminence*, Volume 2, ed. John Nichols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 423; E. J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Culture and Luxury* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 28. See also Manushag N. Powell, ‘Women Readers and the Rise of the Periodical Essay’, in *A Companion to British Literature Volume III: Long Eighteenth-Century Literature 1660-1837*, ed. Robert Demaria, Jr., Heesok Chang, and Samantha Zacher (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), pp. 78-94 (p. 81); and Helen Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Athenian Mercury* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 6.

important for the success of the reformation of manners movement that started after the Glorious Revolution (1688).⁷¹ To blur the generic borders between the non-fiction *Athenian Mercury* and the fictional *Post-Boy Rob'd*, Gildon invents with the aid of Dunton a variety of ingenious paratexts that are unprecedented in the history of English literature. Those paratexts extend *The Post-Boy Rob'd's* reformist project beyond its textual borders into *The Athenian Mercury*, and also make a vital difference in readers' understanding of the club device. Because of those paratexts, readers of the first edition, unlike those of the second, would very likely regard the club device as first and foremost a distinctive reformist approach modelled on that of *The Athenian Mercury* (in other words, the club device is more than just an innovative narrative technique as scholars have believed to date).

The chapter then moves on to demonstrate that those paratexts of the first edition also guide readers toward a different understanding of what the club device seeks to attain, an understanding that is almost impossible to gain without the guidance of those paratexts. That particular understanding can help us solve a problem in the current scholarly discussions of the club device's function. Beebee and Nowka believe that the club device is used to expose 'four broad categories' of 'hypocrisy' in England at the time, and in doing so, it seeks to inculcate 'an overarching interest in revealing the truth behind appearances, a faith in reason over hypocrisy that Gildon first learned in the circle of the Deist Charles Blount'.⁷² But Beebee has also noticed a major hitch in that understanding, namely that not all robbed letters exposed by the Club betray their writers' or addressees' hypocrisy, so he ends up concluding that those letters unrelated to the issue of hypocrisy are a defect in Gildon's fictional experiment. For readers of the first edition, however, those letters would not be deemed a defect, especially if they have paid due attention to the edition's paratexts, which clearly point out that what the club device seeks to reveal is not English hypocrisies, but a 'Knowledge of Humane

⁷¹ Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 28.

⁷² Thomas O. Beebee, *Epistolary Fiction in Europe 1500-1850* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 70; Beebee's discussion of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* therein is first published as an article, see 'The Rifled Mailbag: Reader as Robber in Early European Epistolary Fiction', *Revue de Littérature Comparée* (Jan.-Mar. 1996), pp. 14-36; Nowka, 'Reason and Revelation in the Fiction of Charles Gildon', pp. 177-78.

[sic] Nature', particularly in terms of the relationship between humanity's reason and passions, a knowledge that Gildon believes can help improve both personal happiness and social morality.⁷³ According to those paratexts, the club device also seeks to reveal to the project's readers a method that will facilitate the regulation of their passions with right reason. The said method, as we shall see, is profoundly shaped by Blount's deistic social epistemology, and for Gildon, that method is the very key to attaining one's true happiness and also a thorough moral reform across the entire nation.

The chapter concludes by examining the substantive textual differences between the two editions. It argues that the substantive differences in the second edition are made by Gildon mainly to address two unexpected issues that arise in the reception of the first edition as a nationwide moral reform project modelled on *The Athenian Mercury*. In revealing the necessity of distinguishing between the two editions of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, this chapter helps partly redress the critical neglect of Gildon's literary works in the ongoing re-assessment of the contributions that Blount's deisms have made to the English Enlightenment. Moreover, it also prompts us to revisit that famous controversy between Pat Rogers and J. Paul Hunter over the contributions of *The Athenian Mercury* to the 'rise' of the English novel in the eighteenth century, a controversy that started in the 1990s and was recently raised again by Rogers in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, vol.1: Prose Fictions in English from the Origins of Print to 1750* (2017).

1. *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail* (1692-93): An Experimental Moral Reform Project Modelled on John Dunton's *The Athenian Mercury* (1691-97)

The Post-Boy Rob'd, when first published, was not presented by Gildon as an epistolary fiction, but as a letter-based, non-fiction project for moral reform modelled on *The Athenian Mercury* (1691-97). Day has not recognized that significant fact, largely because he argues that the first edition's paratexts, such as Dunton's 'The Bookseller's Advertisement to the Reader' and epitexts in *The*

⁷³ *The Compleat Library, or, News for the Ingenious*, July, 1692, p. 205.

Athenian Mercury, are nothing but Gildon's 'elaborate devices of verisimilitude', or devices created to reinforce the authenticity of the exposed letters in *The Post-Boy Rob'd*. Those paratexts are indeed 'elaborate devices of verisimilitude', but as we shall see, they are in fact also crucial devices for establishing the connections between the first edition and *The Athenian Mercury*. It is through those connections that Gildon masterfully blurs the generic borders between his fictional 'Club-device' reformist project and his non-fiction model: Dunton's by then already famous Athenian project for moral reform.

'The Bookseller's Advertisement' or notice to the reader is a prefatorial insert in the 1692 first volume between the 'Epistle Dedicatory' and the mail-robbery narrative frame. It is allegedly written by Dunton alone as the publisher, but Gildon may also have a hand in its composition or conception. In it, as Day has noticed, Dunton tries to explain to the readers of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* six unusual aspects of the exposed letters, and in doing so, according to Day, he seeks to 'painstakingly defen[d] [those letters] against all suspicion of being fictitious'.⁷⁴ What Day has not noticed, however, is that in the 'Advertisement', Dunton also tries to establish *The Post-Boy Rob'd* as a project whose reformist approach is inspired by *The Athenian Mercury*, even though the name of *The Athenian Mercury* is not mentioned.

Dunton attains that, I suggest, through soliciting readers' letters on behalf of the Club as a complement to those exposed letters. 'If any Lady or Gentleman', Dunton announces, has 'any Letters sent them either from their *Lovers or ingenious Friends*', or if any of them is willing to write about some extraordinary '*Intragues [sic.] or Occurrences*' they have met with in their life, they may 'direct 'em [those letters] to [his] Shop, at the *Raven in the Poultry*', and he will 'take care to convey them to this Club [of ten London wits]'.⁷⁵ Members of the Club, he assures his readers, 'will be very impartial in their Judgments upon them [letters sent by readers]', just as they have been in their comments on the following exposed letters.⁷⁶ Dunton's solicitation of readers' letters, admittedly, might not be deemed special in today's

⁷⁴ Day, *Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction before Richardson*, p. 91.

⁷⁵ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), sig. A6r.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

world, but in England of the 1690s, it would almost certainly be deemed so. In fact, his special mention therein that all submitted letters will receive impartial judgments would instantly remind contemporary readers of *The Athenian Mercury*, not only because that is its signature reformist approach, but also because ever since its inception in March 1691, Dunton had always insisted on his exclusive right to that approach. It is true that in retrospect, his most famous defense of that exclusive right, as Rachael Scarborough King points out, did not take place until about a decade after the cessation of *The Athenian Mercury* (14 June 1697). That is, in 1706 Dunton angrily accused Defoe of ‘interloping with’ his invention by soliciting reader’s letters on behalf of the Scandalous Club in the essay periodical, *The Review* (1704-13).⁷⁷ However, there is reason to believe that his claim on that exclusive right had already become quite well known by the time of the first volume’s publication (Sept. 1692), due to a very recent success of his. In May 1692, after months of joint efforts with Gildon both in *The Athenian Mercury* and beyond it, Dunton ultimately compelled a notorious imitator of his approach, *The Lacedemonian Mercury* of Tom Brown (Feb.-May, 1692; initially titled *The London Mercury*, Feb. 1692), to cease its publication.⁷⁸ Such a successful defense of his exclusive right would undoubtedly help strengthen in readers’ minds the association between the solicitation of readers’ letters and *The Athenian Mercury*, and that is exactly what Dunton has posited in his proxy submission solicitation. By soliciting readers’ letters for the Club to comment, Dunton is actually telling his readers that the reformist approach of *The Post-Boy Rob’d* is modelled with his approval on that of the successful Athenian project. His highlighting therein of his mediating role in the future conveyance of their letters to the Club is actually just another way of informing his readers that *The Post-Boy Rob’d*, or the Club’s project, also belongs to him, just like the Athenian project.

⁷⁷ See, King, “‘Interloping with my Question-Project’: Debating Genre in John Dunton’s and Daniel Defoe’s Epistolary Periodicals”; and also Robert J. Allen, *The Clubs of Augustan London* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), pp. 195-98.

⁷⁸ The rivalry between Dunton and Brown caused quite a stir at the time. See Gilbert D. McEwen, *The Oracle of the Coffee House: John Dunton’s Athenian Mercury* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1972), pp. 34-47.

In order to make more explicit the connections between *The Post-Boy Rob'd* and *The Athenian Mercury*, Dunton concludes his proxy solicitation with a short request that directly links the Club's project with *The Athenian Mercury*. 'Letters that are sent in according to this *Advertisement*', he emphatically points out, 'shall be markt with an *Astarism* [asterism: a group of three asterisks placed thus (***)], to distinguish 'em from those taken from the Post'.⁷⁹ Dunton does not explain what he means by 'those taken from Post', clearly assuming that the widespread popularity of his Athenian project makes any explanation unnecessary. That is to say, the great success of *The Athenian Mercury* and its signature reformist approach obviously gives Dunton enough confidence to believe that his readers would easily understand that the phrase refers to those letters sent by readers through post to his shop at the Raven in the Poultry for the comments of the Athenian Society, the executive team of his Athenian project. Before *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, all letters sent to Dunton are for the consideration of the Athenian Society. But now readers can choose either the Society or the Club to have their letters commented, so for Dunton the publisher, a practical way has to be figured out to differentiate readers' letters for the Society from those for the Club. That is why he asks his readers to mark the outside of their letters for the Club with an asterism. Dunton's request for a differentiation in letter markings reinforces readers' impressions that a close similarity exists between the reformist approaches of *The Athenian Mercury* and *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, and thus helps firmly establish *The Post-Boy Rob'd* as a reformist project inspired by *The Athenian Mercury*. Meanwhile, his request also serves as an implicit reminder of the two projects' differences. *The Post-Boy Rob'd* has an executive team different from that of *The Athenian Mercury*, and moreover, unlike *The Athenian Mercury*, it is not solely dependent on letters submitted by readers, which are only used by the Club to complement those robbed letters.

Dunton's attempt to establish a close link between *The Post-Boy Rob'd* and *The Athenian Mercury*, it should be noted, is based on his attempt in the 'Advertisement' to establish *The Post-Boy Rob'd* as a credible reformist project in itself. To attain that purpose, Dunton tries to convince his readers of two pivotal things, or the two

⁷⁹ Ibid.

bedrocks of the Club's reformist project, as it were, namely the authenticity of the robbed letters, or the very basis of the project, and also the authenticity of the Club, the project's executive team. Compared with the task to prove the letters' authenticity, the task to prove the Club's authenticity is much more difficult, mainly because the letters can be fully exposed to public scrutiny, but the identities of the Club members cannot (due to their purported involvement in the mail robbery, which though carried out as a mere 'Frolick', was actually a capital offence at the time). Hence, a very special authenticating strategy is devised. To prove the authenticity of the robbed letters, Dunton spares no effort in explaining their six unusual aspects one by one. Yet to prove the authenticity of the Club, he makes 'no effort' at all. That is because for him, the most effective way of convincing his readers of the Club's authenticity would be to lead them to believe that as the publisher, he has not made any effort to prove the Club's authenticity as he has to prove the letters' authenticity, because the Club's authenticity, unlike the letters' authenticity, is beyond doubt.

Such an authenticating strategy is clearly discernable in his proxy submission solicitation. On the one hand, Dunton concentrates all his attention on the solicitation of readers' letters, and makes no deliberate effort at all to prove the authenticity of the Club for whom he is solicitating letters. On the other hand, however, he clearly posits the Club's authenticity throughout the submission solicitation, as he notifies his readers that first, they are very welcome to submit their letters to the Club for comments; second, he will convey their letters to the Club; and third, he is sure that their letters will receive impartial judgments from the Club. Through his notification, readers are implicitly notified that the Club must be real, because first, only the real Club can receive and comment on their letters; second, as the publisher, he has already made some arrangements with the Club members, so they are willing to receive and comment on readers' letters like their model, the Athenian Society; and third, he knows the Club members well enough to vouch for their abilities to pass impartial judgments. In doing so, Dunton instills into his readers the idea that the Club's authenticity is beyond doubt, because he has already borne witness to its existence, while on the other hand, he successfully creates the

illusion that no conscious effort has ever been made on his part to prove the Club's authenticity.

The proxy submission solicitation is only part of Dunton's effort to prove the Club's authenticity, which in fact also includes his explanation of the six unusual aspects of the robbed letters, or his effort to prove the letters' authenticity. That is to say, his explanation does not just seek to 'painstakingly defen[d] [those letters] against all suspicion of being fictitious', as Day has believed, but also seeks to convince readers of the Club's authenticity without their noticing. In his explanation, he again provides no evident proof for the Club's authenticity, but continues to posit the Club's authenticity throughout his two types of explanation.

The first type is explanation by way of attributing the unusual aspects to the agency of the Club, and it is used to explain four of the six aspects, including (1) why in 'such a *time of Action*' (an eventful time), there should 'be no Letters of News, or any account of the late [political] Intreagues [*sic*]' in the robbed letters; (2) why are there 'so few Letters of Business amongst 'em [robbed letters]'; (3) why is that mysterious 'Letter in Figures' (coded letter) in the first volume not decoded; and (4) why are the letters exposed, but not their authors?⁸⁰ As Dunton explains, there are actually 'Letters of News' and accounts of the recent political intrigues in the robbed letters, but they are not included in the first volume 'out of choice', which, admittedly, gives readers a false impression that there is no such letters or accounts; however, 'the Company [i.e. the Club]' will include those letters and accounts in 'the Second Volume' and also 'the following Volumes'.⁸¹ There are 'so few Letters of Business', because 'this Club took copies chiefly of those [letters] that they thought were proper to entertain the Age', and besides, it is also because the Club has already 'sen[t] as directed' those letters that have 'an *honest end*'.⁸² The 'Letter in Figures' in the first volume is not decoded, because when 'one of the Company [i.e. the Club] found a Key for it', it was already 'too late to have it [i.e.

⁸⁰ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), sigs. A6r-A6v.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, sig. A6r.

⁸² *Ibid.*, sig. A6v.

the Key] inserted’, so the Club decided to publish it in the second volume.⁸³ As regards the reason why the letters’ true authors are concealed from readers, it is because ‘their [i.e. the Club’s] Design’ is not to ‘give [i.e. reveal] more particular *Characters of persons*’, but only to reveal their secret villainy. That is why some authors’ names are shown in initials, while others’ are not (especially when the Club believes that there are ‘hundreds both of the same Christian and Sir-name [*sic*] in *England*’).⁸⁴

The second type is explanation by way of defending the Club’s claims of their agency in the creation of unusual aspects, and it is used to explain the remaining two of the six aspects, including (1) do the letters exposed in *The Post-Boy Rob’d* really come from a mail robbery; and (2) why unlike most other letter collections of the time, there are letters in *The Post-Boy Rob’d* that ‘may seem [...] a little too gay and airy’ to ‘the more solid [i.e. sober-minded] Readers’?⁸⁵ As Dunton explains, the Club’s claim that all the exposed letters come from their mail robbery is highly believable, because ‘Accidents of this nature [i.e. mail robberies] happ’ned in [various] Countries [of Europe]’, as, for instance, ‘the Letters of Palavicino [*sic*] [have] demonstrate[d]’, and in England, ‘the Post has [also] too often [...] been robb’d’, ‘as is evident from the [*London*] *Gazette*’.⁸⁶ There are indeed some letters that ‘may seem [...] a little too gay and airy’ to ‘the more solid Readers’, but as Dunton points out, that should ‘not be imputed to the Company [i.e. the Club] as a Fault’, because their design is to ‘expos[e] the (secret) [*sic*] Villanies [*sic*] of Mankind as they were’, and also ‘as they found them’, so they are fully justified to expose letters that are ‘too gay and airy’, even though the exposure of those letters may offend some ‘solid Readers’.⁸⁷

⁸³ Ibid., sig. A6r.

⁸⁴ Ibid., sig. A6v.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., sig. A6r. ‘*Il Corriero*’, as the eminent scholar in Italian studies Albert N. Mancini has noted, ‘non è considerato propriamente un romanzo ma piuttosto un epistolario satirico’ (*Il Corriero* is not regarded as a novel, but as a [non-fiction collection of] satirical letters); see Mancini, ‘Intorno alle traduzioni in inglese di opera di Ferrante Pallavicino: “*Il corriere svaligiato/The Post-boy rob’d of his mail*”’, *Italica*, 88.3 (2011), pp. 465-82 (p. 469).

⁸⁷ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), sig. A6v.

The only thing that has been left unexplained in Dunton's explanation for those six unusual aspects, however, is the foundation of his explanation, that is, the very foundation that enables him to so confidently attribute some unusual aspects to the agency of the Club, and also prompts him to so vigorously defend the Club's claims of their agency in the creation of the others. To put it another way, what makes him so sure that it is the Club that has caused those first four unusual aspects, and moreover, that the Club's claims of their agency in the creation of the other two deserve to be defended? The answer, though never explicitly given, is already made quite obvious in his explanation by implication. Dunton's first type of explanation, in attributing the unusual aspects of the robbed letters to the agency of the Club, actually provides readers with more evidence for his never explained, but clearly implied interactions with the Club. His second type, in defending the Club's claims of their agency in the creation of those latter two unusual aspects, actually proffers more evidence for his trust in the Club and also his approval of their reformist project, which again are supposedly the results of his interactions with the Club. Both types of evidence undoubtedly lend much support to his posit in the Club's authenticity. However, because both of them are only implied, not expressly proffered, they actually also help prove in the meantime that the Club's authenticity is a fact that does not need to be proved at all.

That is very important for establishing in readers' eyes the Club's authenticity as an indubitable fact, because of the prevalence of assorted skeptical reading habits at the time. 'An abiding concern with deception', as Kate Loveman reminds us, 'structured relations between authors and readers' in this period, a concern that made any deliberate authenticating attempt seem highly suspicious to readers, and thus made it almost impossible to establish anything as an indubitable fact.⁸⁸ The Club's authenticity can be established as an indubitable fact, mainly because Dunton's ingenious method of authenticating by implication assures his readers that it is not the result of any deliberate authenticating attempt. In contrast, the

⁸⁸ Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660-1740*, p. 2.

letters' authenticity, as the result of his deliberate authenticating attempt, is only established as a believable fact, or a fact 'at least of a *Probability* of [...] Truth', to use Dunton's own words.⁸⁹ That is by no means just because Dunton has not witnessed the purported mail robbery, but also because in a time when various skeptical reading habits are prevalent, the attempt to establish something as a believable fact, rather an indubitable one, will definitely be more believable to skeptical readers. By deliberately establishing the letters' authenticity as a believable fact, Dunton transforms the fictional Club into a social reality, and lays therewith the very foundations for developing the fictional *Post-Boy Rob'd* into a non-fiction project modelled on *The Athenian Mercury*.

Dunton's attempt to establish *The Post-Boy Rob'd* as a non-fiction project for moral reform is not confined by its textual borders. That is highly necessary, because unlike *The Athenian Mercury*, *The Post-Boy Rob'd* cannot be published on a weekly basis, due to the bulk of its individual volumes (each of the first edition's two published volumes runs to more than 400 pages), but as a reformist project, it still needs to be kept somehow in public view. Dunton's solution is a unique advertising campaign in *The Athenian Mercury*, and in doing so, he extends the Club's project into the textual borders of the Athenian project. He advertises for *The Post-Boy Rob'd* (pub. 29 Sept.) in almost every issue of the bi-weekly *Athenian Mercury* from Tuesday, 27 September, to Saturday, 24 December, 1692. Among his advertisements, there are quite a few that are specially designed to keep readers updated about the project's progress.

The first special advertisement appears in the issue for 15 October. Dunton the publisher informs his readers that 'the *First Volume* ha[s] met with a very kind Reception', and 'the *Second Volume* [...] will be Publish'd about *February* next [i.e. Feb. 1693]'.⁹⁰ The incoming second volume will contain '*A Compleat Secret History of the last 15 Years*' found by the Club in the robbed letters, and also the letters recently sent to him by 'a *Young Lady*' in response to his former 'Advertisement' at

⁸⁹ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), sig. A6r.

⁹⁰ *The Athenian Mercury*, Vol. 8, Issue 14 (Saturday, 15 October, 1692), the back page, right column.

the beginning of the first volume, ‘Letters sent her during a *long Courtship*’.⁹¹ Dunton concludes the advertisement with a slightly modified submission solicitation. All further letters sent in for the comments of the Club, he notes, should still ‘be mark’d with an Asterism’; however, they should not be sent directly to his shop, but instead to ‘*Smith’s Coffee-house in Stocks-market*’ (just like letters for the Athenian Society), and should also be clearly marked with ‘*For Mr. CHAPPEL*’ (one of the ten Club members).⁹² Dunton repeats that special advertisement in the issue for 29 October, but in it, he also notifies his readers that because the ‘very kind Reception’ the first volume has met, ‘the *Second Volume* will be Printed on an Extraordinary *good Paper*’.⁹³ About two weeks later, in the issue for 12 November, Dunton notifies an unnamed gentleman that ‘Copies of all those *Private Letters*’ he ‘sent to Mr. *Chappel*’ have been received, and assures him that those ‘Letters shall be all inserted in the Second Volume [...] with *Observations* upon each Letter’.⁹⁴ Another such notice appears a week later in the issue for 19 November. In it, Dunton acknowledges the receipt of letters sent by a gentleman who styles himself ‘*Lindamor*’ and also by a lady who is a frequent contributor to *The Athenian Mercury*, ‘the Ingenious *Artemisa*’.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, Dunton politely asks ‘Mr. Dudley S—p [...] to send forthwith to Mr. CHAPPEL those two or three Letters that he designs shall be inserted in the Second Volume’, as ‘the said Volume [is] now going to the Press’.⁹⁶ Three days later in the issue for 22 November, Dunton reminds his readers again that ‘the SECOND VOLUME [is] just going to the Press’, so if any of them want their letters to be commented by

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ *The Athenian Mercury*, Vol. 8, Issue 18 (Saturday, 29 October, 1692), the back page, right column.

⁹⁴ *The Athenian Mercury*, Vol. 8, Issue 22 (Saturday, 12 November, 1692), the back page, right column.

⁹⁵ *The Athenian Mercury*, Vol. 8, Issue 24 (Saturday, 19 November, 1692), the back page, right column.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

the Club, 'they are desired to send 'em speedily'.⁹⁷ The last special advertisement for the first volume appears in the issue for 6 December, in which readers are informed that a gentleman is impatient to wait for the promised key in the incoming second volume for that 'Letter printed in Cyphers' on the 'p. 110' of the first volume (i.e. the 'Letter in Figures' mentioned by Dunton in the 'Advertisement'), so he 'has sent in an Explanation' for that letter.⁹⁸ Dunton also asks that gentleman to 'send in those [other] Questions he desires should be Answer'd'.⁹⁹

Shortly afterwards, an advance review of the second volume appears in the December issue of Dunton's monthly book review supplement to *The Athenian Mercury, The Compleat Library, or, News for the Ingenious* (which also published the advance review of the first volume in its July issue). In it, the anonymous reviewer informs readers that all letters of the second volume, unlike those of the first, will be divided into five books, and the fifth book will be devoted entirely to readers' letters, including 'six written by the most Learned and accomplished *Lindamour* [*sic*], who was none of the meanest Correspondents and Friends, of the late Renowned Mr. Boyl [i.e. Robert Boyle, 1627-91]', 'several from an Ingenious and Noble Lady, under the name of *Artemisa*', who is 'one of the chief Glories of her Sex in this Nation', and also 'several others from another Gentleman of no common Parts and Qualifications, under the name of *Philander*, all upon Subjects worthy of their Divine Wits'.¹⁰⁰ All those letters, the reviewer observes, are 'the Products of the free Sallies of the liveliest, and choicest *Wits* of both *Sexes*'.¹⁰¹

The second volume is published on 1 March, 1693. In 'The Preface' to the volume, the Club answers several questions sent by readers about the first volume,

⁹⁷ *The Athenian Mercury*, Vol. 8, Issue 25 (Tuesday, 22 November, 1692), the back page, right column.

⁹⁸ *The Athenian Mercury*, Vol. 8, Issue 29 (Tuesday, 6 December, 1692), the back page, right column.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *The Compleat Library, or, News for the Ingenious*, December, 1692, pp. 70-71.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

and also makes several important announcements. The second volume, the Club notes, ‘swell[s] more than [they] expected’, so they have ‘to take out some of those Letters [they] had promis’d the publick’, such as ‘the remaining part of the [packet of] Love-Letters’ between Lysander and Belvidera in Book III, the promised verse letters ‘mentioned in the *Compleat Library*’, and also some ‘ingenious Letters’ sent by readers, but all those letters will ‘be inserted in the next Volume’.¹⁰² The Club tells readers that after the second volume, they will ‘Print a Volume quarterly’, so that all the 500 robbed letters they have promised in the first volume can be published ‘in six Volumes’.¹⁰³ As regards the promised ‘Letters that contain *a compleat Secret History of the last fifteen Years*’, the Club has ‘judge[d] it proper’, due to some ‘Weighty Reasons’, ‘to defer the Publication of ‘em till that *sixth Volume*’, instead of publishing them in the second volume as they have promised earlier.¹⁰⁴ The Club’s decision to publish more volumes is confirmed by the Athenian Society two weeks later in their answer to one of the letters sent by readers about the second volume.¹⁰⁵ In *The Athenian Mercury* for 18 March, a reader writes to tell the Athenian Society that he has just finished reading the second volume, and he enjoys the letters that contain ‘the Secret History’ of Julietta and Corbulo; he desires to know ‘whether [he] may expect a prosecution [i.e. continuation] of that History in the next Volume’, and meanwhile, he also tells the Athenian Society that he is now ‘in pain for Lysander and Belvidera in the next Book’, as he really ‘want[s] to know the Catastrophe [i.e. upshot] of their Amour’.¹⁰⁶ The Athenian Society replies that they ‘are inform’d, that the *Secret History* [of Juliette and Corbulo] is of some Neighbouring Countrey [*sic*]; and that [he] may expect the

¹⁰² Charles Gildon, *The Second Volume of the Post-Boy Robb’d of his Mail* (London: Printed for John Dunton, 1693), sig. [A8r].

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, sig. [A8v].

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ There are several queries sent by readers about the second volume in the issues of *The Athenian Mercury* for 14 March and 18 March, 1693.

¹⁰⁶ *The Athenian Mercury*, Vol. 9, Issue 28 (Saturday, 18 March, 1693), the front page, left column, Quest 1.

Conclusion of It in the next *Volume*, as well as the Amour of *Belvidera* and *Lysander*?¹⁰⁷

However, the remaining four volumes of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* were never published. It is not until twelve years later that Dunton speaks again of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* in his memoirs, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton, Citizen of London* (1705). In it, he admits for the first time that *The Post-Boy Rob'd* is an 'imposture' (i.e. deception).¹⁰⁸ But it is not a willful deception on his part, notes Dunton, because he did not recognize that when he published its two volumes, and moreover, at that time he 'ha[d] no suspicion of him [i.e. Mr. Gildon]', who, Dunton adds, 'is well acquainted with the Languages, and writes with a peculiar briskness, which [other professional writers] cannot boast of, in regard they want the life and spirit, and the same liberty and extent of genius'.¹⁰⁹ Because he was imposed upon, Dunton calls *The Post-Boy Rob'd* one of the seven regrettable '*Errors of Printing*' in his life that he 'heartily wish[es] [he] had never seen'.¹¹⁰ Yet given that the work 'in general was very well approved' by its first readers, and 'obtained so well, that both Volumes are now out of print', so after some deliberation, he decides to still count it, like *The Athenian Mercury*, as one of the nine most important 'Projects' that he has published as a staunch 'Promoter of Learning and Virtue', and he is very glad to notify readers that it 'will in few months be re-printed'.¹¹¹ The reprinted edition appears several months later in 1706. In its new 'Epistle Dedicatory', Gildon follows in Dunton's footsteps, and acknowledges the fictionality of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*. He also reveals for the first

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ John Dunton, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton, Citizen of London, With the Lives and Characters of More than a Thousand Contemporary Divines and other Persons of Literary Eminence*, 2 vols., ed. John Nichols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), vol.1, p. 159.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 201, 181.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 159.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 201-02. See also pp. 187-202.

time that the work 'is built on the Foundation of the Ingenious *Pallavicini [sic]*, an *Italian Author of Reputation*'.¹¹²

2. Paratexts, English Deism, and Gildon's Club-Device Reformist Approach

Paratexts are not just crucial to establishing the connections between *The Post-Boy Rob'd* and *The Athenian Mercury*, but are also crucial to shaping readers' understanding of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*'s club device. Because of those purpose-designed paratexts, readers of the first edition are very likely to understand the club device and its function in a way completely different from readers of the second edition, who do not have access to those paratexts (as none of them are reprinted), and also from modern scholars, who have not paid due attention to those paratexts. Scholars' lack of attention to the first edition's paratexts, together with their insufficient attention to the influences of English deism on Gildon's creation of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, leads them to conclude that the club device is an innovative narrative technique that 'anticipates the *Tatler-Spectator* device of a club [1709-12]'. However, for readers of the first edition, as we have already seen above, the club device is first and foremost a distinctive reformist approach modelled on that of *The Athenian Mercury*.¹¹³ Paratexts, as the following part will show, also make an important difference in readers' understanding of what the club device seeks to attain.

The club device, as Thomas O. Beebee points out, is used to expose 'four broad categories' of 'hypocrisy' in England at the time, namely '1) financial; 2) amatory; 3) political; and 4) religious'.¹¹⁴ In exposing various sorts of hypocrisy, the device, notes Scott Nowka, also attempts to inculcate 'an overarching interest in revealing the truth behind appearances, a faith in reason over hypocrisy that

¹¹² Charles Gildon, *The Post-Boy Robb'd of his Mail*, 2nd edn. (London: Printed for John Sprint, 1706), sig. [A3v].

¹¹³ See, for instance, Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of the English Novel*, p. 69; McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity*, pp. 568-69; and Allen, *The Clubs of Augustan London*, p. 155.

¹¹⁴ Beebee, *Epistolary Fiction in Europe 1500-1850*, p. 70.

Gildon first learned in the circle of the Deist Charles Blount'.¹¹⁵ Both Beebee and Nowka are right, at least in a certain sense, because the club device is indeed closely related to the issue of hypocrisy. As the frame story shows, the club's purported mail robbery is incited by an unexpected discovery of hypocrisy in a misdirected letter. Mr. Chappel, during a drinking party of the Club, tells the other members that he has 'just receiv'd by a mistake [of the porter of the coffee-house]' a complaint letter 'directed to another of the same Name, who often frequent[s] the same *Coffee-house*', and discovers in it that the other Mr. Chappel, a highly respectable gentleman 'known to [them] all', is actually a hypocrite who 'had not only cheated [his ward] of the greatest part of [the fortune left her by her parents], but very earnestly solicited her to yield her *tender budding Beauties to his shrivel'd Embraces*'.¹¹⁶ That shocking discovery instantly piques the curiosity of the other members to see how prevalent moral hypocrisy is in England. One of them, Mr. Temple, proposes that they need more letters for that purpose, and to acquire more letters, they have to the rob '*the Posts*', which '*are now on the Road*', and that is the only way to 'divert [them] selves with the Scene of *Hypocrisy uncas'd*'.¹¹⁷ Mr. Temple's proposal is carried out straight away by the Club, and their subsequent reading and commenting on 500 of the robbed letters—or, what scholars call the club-device narrative technique—may indeed be seen as the Club's means of 'uncas[ing]' 'the Scene of *Hypocrisy*' hidden in those letters.

That understanding of the club device's function, however, has a major hitch, namely that not all robbed letters read, commented on, and then exposed by the Club betray their writers' or addressees' hypocrisy. Beebee has also noticed the hitch. As he observes, 'there are, for example, letters from whores and madams, not hypocritical at all, but straightforward in their calculations of the profitability of sex'.¹¹⁸ In fact, not just those letters, but what scholars have recognized as a major innovation of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, the 'Chinese letters', is likewise not related to the

¹¹⁵ Nowka, 'Reason and Revelation in the Fiction of Charles Gildon', pp. 177-78.

¹¹⁶ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), p. 7.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹¹⁸ Beebee, *Epistolary Fiction in Europe 1500-1850*, p. 71.

issue of hypocrisy at all. The ‘Chinese letters’ are an embedded narrative, consisting of a framing letter from a Mr. Christ. Roberts to his cousin Mr. Bromly at Gray’s Inn, London, and an attached set of twelve letters purportedly transcribed from the originals sent by a Chinese philosopher named Honan to his dearest English friend, Sir John R—bts, over a period of three years (1686-89), when he was on his way back home from England.¹¹⁹ In the framing letter, Mr. Roberts asks his cousin to pass the transcribed letters on to his patron, an unnamed lord, ‘who is so curious in Enquiring into this ingenious Stranger’s [i.e. Honan’s] Condition’.¹²⁰ For the Club, the twelve attached letters are exposed as the proof for another vice prevalent in England, namely the vice of ‘valu[ing] our home-bred Sence [i.e. written or spoken discourse], [...] less than Foreign, as well as other Commodities’, although those letters *per se*, as the Club notes, have nothing to do with vice, but are full of noteworthy theological and philosophical musings.¹²¹ Given the fact that not all letters in *The Post-Boy Rob’d* are exposed because of their writers’ or addressees’ hypocrisy, Beebee concludes that ‘hypocrisy is the collection’s only unifying theme, but even this does not run all the way through’.¹²² Such a conclusion clearly indicates that for Beebee, those letters unrelated to the issue of hypocrisy are a defect in Gildon’s fictional experiment.

Nonetheless to readers of the first edition, those letters would not be deemed a defect, especially if they have paid due attention to the edition’s paratexts, because according to those paratexts, the project’s unifying theme is not hypocrisy, but human nature. That explains why not all letters exposed and commented on in *The Post-Boy Rob’d* are related to the issue of hypocrisy. As the advance review of *The Post-Boy Rob’d* in *The Compleat Library* (July 1692) clearly points out, what the project seeks to reveal through its club device is ‘the Knowledge of Humane [*sic*] Nature’, namely ‘*Mysterics* relating to the internal motions of men’ and ‘intrigues [i.e.

¹¹⁹ See Gildon, *The Second Volume of the Post-Boy Robb’d of his Mail*, pp. 7-115.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹²² Beebee, *Epistolary Fiction in Europe 1500-1850*, p. 70.

complicated states of affairs] of the *little great Kingdom of the heart*.¹²³ Those ‘Mysteries’ and ‘intrigues of [...] the heart’ include ‘not only all the *hidden Tricks and dark Intrigues* of States-men, but also all the little and great Contrivances too of private Men and Persons of all sorts, from the *Noble* to the *Peasant*, all their *Desires, Passions, Hypocrisies, Tricks, Devices, Designs, &c.*’¹²⁴ The unique way that human nature is revealed in *The Post-Boy Rob’d*, argues the reviewer, distinguishes it from all other works about human nature. According to him, indeed ‘many Moral and Divine Discourses’ have already been written about human nature, but they only ‘tell us the general notions of humane [*sic*] Nature’, and none of them describes human nature in a way ‘*so lively, so naturally and so particularly*’ as *The Post-Boy Rob’d* does.¹²⁵ Moreover, it is true that human nature has already been given a lively and natural depiction in some great literary works, most notably ‘*Don Quixot* [*sic*]’ by ‘the famous *Cervantes*’, ‘our matchless *Hudibrass* [i.e. Samuel Butler’s *Hudibras*]’, and also works of ‘several of our *Dramatick Poets*’, but ‘they have gone little further than [people’s] outside behaviour’ or what people ‘have been pleased to shew [*sic*] in publick’, unlike *The Post-Boy Rob’d*, which focuses exclusively on what ‘PASS[ES] IN THE HEARTS OF MEN’.¹²⁶

To highlight the unique way *The Post-Boy Rob’d* deploys in its revelation about human nature, the reviewer even goes so far as to assert that the project has in a sense fixed that legendary ‘Fault’ in Jupiter’s creation of mankind (as recorded in *Aesop’s Fables*): when the king of the gods asks Momus, ‘the carping God’, to comment on his creation of man, Momus immediately identifies a ‘Capital Fault’ in the man created by Jupiter, namely that the heart of man has no windows in it, so that others cannot see what is hidden inside the heart, still less that they may take

¹²³ *The Compleat Library, or, News for the Ingenious*, July, 1692, p. 205. The importance of this advance review for Dunton/Gildon can be seen partly in the fact that after its publication in July 1692, it was alluded to by the Athenian Society in their reply to a reader’s query letter about *The Post-Boy Rob’d* in *The Athenian Mercury* (Vol. 8, Issue 11, Tuesday, 4 October, the front page, left column, Query 1), and then once more by the Club in their replies to readers’ query letters at the front of the 1693 second volume (sig. [A4v]).

¹²⁴ *The Compleat Library, or, News for the Ingenious*, July, 1692, pp. 205-06.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 205-06.

any precautions against the evil thoughts therein.¹²⁷ By exposing and commenting on those robbed letters—or letters that their writers ‘would not have all the World know of’, to use the words of one of the Club members, Mr. Fountain—the project, observes the reviewer, may be said to have ‘in some measure’ ‘mended [the fault]’, because it ‘mak[es] a breach as ‘twere in [the heart’s] hitherto impenetrable walls’, and ‘lay[s] open the most *inward recesses of the privy Chamber of the humane [sic] Soul, to public view*’, particularly ‘the almost infinite little Sallies and Serpentine motions of [people’s] corrupt Reason’ behind the ‘Masquerade’ of the world.¹²⁸

Readers’ understanding of what the club device seeks to reveal is pushed further in *The Athenian Mercury* (4 Oct. 1692), published five days after the first volume. In the reply to a reader’s query letter about *The Post-Boy Rob’d*, the Athenian Society credits the advance review in *The Compleat Library* with having provided ‘a very true Character’ for the project, and points out that all mysteries and intrigues of the heart exposed therein can be categorized into eight major ‘Passions’ that adversely impact ‘the Life and Actions of Mankind’, or eight major manifestations of humanity’s corrupt reason, including 1) ‘the *softness and the wrecks of Lovers*’, 2) ‘the Intreagues [*sic*] and Extravagancies of *Lust*’, 3) ‘the blind Inveteracy of Hate and Indignation’, 4) ‘the Pretences of the Debauches and Atheists’, 5) ‘the Voraciousness and restless desire of Wealth and Honour’, 6) ‘the *Vanities* that *Pride* betrays us to’, 7) ‘the Effect of Fear and Hope’, and also 8) ‘the subtle windings of *Self-Interest* [...] in Religion as well as Temporal Concerns’.¹²⁹ Such a categorization on the basis of the passions not only deepens readers’ understanding of the exposed mysteries and intrigues of the heart, but at the same time, also helps further highlight the project’s sharp focus on human nature, particularly a pivotal facet of it, that is, humanity’s ‘corrupt Reason’ as manifested in various adverse ‘Passions’ in everyday life.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 205. See also, *Babrius and Phaedrus: Fables*, trans. Ben Edwin Perry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 74-75.

¹²⁸ *The Compleat Library, or, News for the Ingenious*, July, 1692, pp. 205-06; Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), p. 9.

¹²⁹ *The Athenian Mercury*, Vol. 8, Issue 11 (Tuesday, 4 October, 1692), the front page, left column, Quest 1.

Gildon's special focus on human nature, particularly in terms of the relationship between humanity's reason and passions, results from his engagement with the deistic circle that centers around his bosom friend, Charles Blount (1654-93), 'the first Englishman to be identified by his contemporaries as a deist'.¹³⁰ That is to say, the influence of Blount's deistic circle on the creation of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* is by no means only limited to what Nowka has realized, namely 'an overarching interest in revealing the truth behind appearances, [and] a faith in reason over hypocrisy'. Gildon, it should be noted, is very familiar with the deistic ideas of Blount's circle, and has played a crucial role in promoting those ideas among the general public. As Blount's right-hand man and 'Worthy Friend', he compiled and published a few months after the second volume of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* an anthology of deistic letters written by members of Blount's circle at different times between the 1670s and 1693, entitled *The Oracles of Reason* (1693).¹³¹ It can be seen in this anthology that Blount's deistic preoccupation with the study of human nature (particularly in the religious context) starts early in his career as a philosopher. For instance, he observes in a 1678 letter to the philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) that human history is gripped by endless religious controversies; a root cause is that 'mankind ever lived and died after one and the same Method in all Ages, being governed by the same Interests and the same Passions at this time, as they were many Thousand Years before us, and will be many Thousand Years after us'.¹³² The unchanging human nature determines that various religious controversies in the past and the present are often fueled by similar non-religious, self-serving concerns.

Those self-serving concerns are manifestations of one's unregulated passions. The passions, if left unregulated by right reason, not only give rise to more religious controversies, but also pose a grave threat to human happiness. As

¹³⁰ Wayne Hudson, *The English Deists: Studies in Early Enlightenment* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009), p. 60.

¹³¹ Charles Blount, Charles Gildon, et. al., *The Oracles of Reason*, ed. Charles Gildon (London: n.p., 1693), p. 1. Not all letters in *The Oracles of Reason* are dated. The earliest dated letter is from 1678 (pp. 97, 156), and the latest, from 23 March, 1693 (p. 19). The collection was published sometime after the second volume of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* and before Blount's death in late August, 1693.

¹³² Blount, Gildon, et. al., *The Oracles of Reason*, p. 98.

Blount further notes in his first major work, *Anima Mundi* (1679), a study of human nature in terms of the soul and its destiny in the afterlife, ‘passions are generally the causes of Mens [*sic*] destruction, both in Lives and Fortunes’; ‘when not enlightened by judicious and calm consideration, nor repressed by a sober Temper of Mind, [men’s passions] did ever so tyrannize over them’, and in effect, ‘the many abominable passions of Man’s Soul, seem’d to be its Diseases, and to argue [i.e. to betoken] its mortality, as plainly as bodily Diseases do that of the Body’.¹³³ For Blount, a good knowledge of human nature, especially of how ‘the many abominable passions’ are ‘tyranniz[ing] over’ people behind the ‘Masquerade’ of the world, is of crucial importance to anyone who wishes to achieve true happiness in their life. To help readers acquire that particular knowledge, Gildon creates his club device in *The Post-Boy Rob’d*, and uses it to reveal various ‘authentic’ letters that their authors ‘would not have all the World know of’, letters that because of their very secrecy, are believed to contain the most ‘authentic’ expressions of their writers’ or addressees’ innermost passions.

Gildon clearly understands that a good knowledge of human nature is essential to achieving true happiness, because it makes one realize the necessity and importance of regulating one’s passions with right reason. For Blount and his deistic circle, the constant regulation of one’s passions with one’s right reason is the sure path to true happiness, because it is in essence the very means of developing our intellectual love for God, and only an intellectual love for God can liberate us from the tyranny of our passions and bring true happiness to our life. As Blount explains in his 1686 letter to ‘the most Ingenious and Learned Dr. Sydnham [*sic*] (Thomas Sydenham 1624-89, a renowned physician and ‘The English Hippocrates’), ‘reason’ is ‘the first relation of God [to us]’, and it is God that gives us our reason, so this life of ours should be ‘the scene of our obedience [to Him]’ and ‘our conflicts with our Passions’.¹³⁴ Our innate God-given reason enables us to love Him intellectually, not corporeally as we usually do under the

¹³³ Charles Blount, *Anima Mundi, or the Opinions of the Ancients concerning Man’s Soul after this Life* (London: n.p., 1679), reprinted in Charles Blount, *The Miscellaneous Works of Charles Blount, Esq.*, ed. Charles Gildon (London: n.p., 1695), pp. 72, 46, 90.

¹³⁴ Blount, Gildon, et. al., *The Oracles of Reason*, pp. 92, 91.

tyranny of our passions. All kinds of love in this world are ‘Corporeal love’, and as a result, we have to always suffer with the object that we love corporeally, as if we were ‘in a perpetual storm’.¹³⁵ Our ‘intellectual Love’ for God, however, can liberate us from such suffering, in that it makes it possible for us to ‘be assimilated [*sic*] to, and partake of’ that ‘Idea of Perfection, and Intellectual Beauty’ represented by God, but also makes it necessary for us to use right reason to regulate our passions, which are the major impediments to our development of an intellectual love for God, our Creator. And that is ‘the chief true conversion which frees us from all evils’ in this life.¹³⁶

Blount’s explanation is condensed by a member of his circle, ‘A. W.’, into two of the seven key deistic doctrines, or ‘chief Heads’ of natural religion. As he puts it in his letter to Blount on the opposition between the ‘Divine Revelation’ of revealed religion and the deistic ideas of ‘Natural Religion’ (also collected in *The Oracles of Reason*), 1) ‘tis our Duty to worship and obey [the “one infinite eternal God”] as our Creator and Governor’, and 2) ‘our Obedience consists in the Rules of Right Reason, the Practice whereof is Moral Virtue’.¹³⁷ In advancing these two key doctrines, A. W. makes explicit for the first time the social implications of our obedience to God: our constant regulation of our passions with right reason will also help enhance the morality of the society in which we live. And that, I suggest, is the theological underpinning for Gildon’s invention of his club-device reformist approach.

Besides helping readers acquire a good knowledge of human nature that will improve both personal happiness and social morality, the club device, as the advance review in *The Compleat Library* has clearly pointed out, also seeks to promote a method that will facilitate readers’ regulation of passions with right reason. *The Post-Boy Rob’d*, notes the anonymous reviewer (probably Gildon or someone writing under his guidance) in a metaphorical way, ‘shew[s] not only the Flowers, but the Snakes too that lurk under them, with the means how to discover

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 95

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 95.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

the Vermin [i.e. the Snake], and how to Rid human Conversation [i.e. social interaction] from the pernicious Effects of their [i.e. Snakes'] pestilent Venom'.¹³⁸ 'Flowers' is a metaphor for the various pretenses that people keep up in their daily life, or what Gildon calls the 'Masquerade' of the world, and 'the Snakes [...] that lurk under [Flowers]' refers to the hidden passions of the heart, or the various manifestations of 'corrupt Reason'. Both the 'Flowers' and the 'Snakes'—people's outward pretenses and inward passions—constitute the knowledge of human nature that the project seeks to reveal through its club device. Yet what is also meant to be revealed is 'the means how to discover the Vermin [i.e. inward passions]', and 'how to Rid' social interaction of 'the pernicious Effects of [Snakes'] pestilent Venom [i.e. the tyranny of inward passions]'. The said means to attain both ends, as readers of the review will soon discover, is the club device, a distinctive reformist approach that is derived from that of *The Athenian Mercury*, but is different from its model in important ways. One of the most obvious difference is in the method of commentary. Letters in *The Post-Boy Rob'd* are commented on by each member of the Club separately, unlike those in *The Athenian Mercury*, which are commented on by the Society collectively.

The collective method of commentary is Dunton's way of highlighting the authority of the Society's comments on readers' letters. The collectivity of the method is shown through the Society's use of 'the plural form'—we—in all its comments, a plural form that is meant to indicate that its comments are the authoritative consensus reached by its members during their weekly group discussion.¹³⁹ To reinforce the collective authority of the Society, and by extension, also of its comments, additional efforts have also been made. For instance, in the issue for 5 May 1691, Dunton informs his readers that the Society has recruited three new experts, namely 'a Civilian [i.e. a civil law expert], A Doctor in Physick, and a Chyrurgeon [i.e. a surgeon]', with the aim to further

¹³⁸ *The Compleat Library, or, News for the Ingenious*, July, 1692, p. 207.

¹³⁹ Stephen Parks, *John Dunton and the English Book Trade: A Study of His Career with a Checklist of His Publications* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1976), p. 85.

improve its comments in the related fields.¹⁴⁰ A year later (May 1692), readers are informed by Gildon in his *History of the Athenian Society* that the Society now boasts of twelve expert members, including ‘A Divine, A Philosopher, A Physician, A Poet, A Mathematician, A Lawyer, A Civilian, A Chyrurgeon, An Italian, A Spaniard, A French-man, [and] A Dutch-man [the last four serving as translators]’.¹⁴¹ By strategically increasing the Society’s membership to twelve, Gildon tries to convince readers that the Society has ultimately grown into a pre-eminent ‘jury’ of knowledge (a jury in the legal jurisdiction of England usually consists of twelve people), so the collective judgment passed by the Society on their submitted letters will be as impartial and authoritative as that passed by a well-qualified jury on its trials.

The main reason behind Gildon’s decision to have the Club members voice their respective, rather than collective, opinions, I suggest, is to promote a method that can facilitate his readers’ use of right reason in their regulation of passions. Gildon’s method is profoundly shaped by Blount’s deistic social epistemology, the core of which, observes Wayne Hudson, is that each and every individual should be given the ‘right to judge all questions for themselves and to communicate their views to others’.¹⁴² Blount, notes Kenneth Sheppard, has put his epistemology into practice when composing some of his major theological works, and calls the resultant practice his ‘Montaigniz[ing]’ approach (as the approach, according to Blount, is inspired by his reading of the French Renaissance philosopher and essayist, Michel de Montaigne [1533-92]), that is, ‘detailing the diversity of opinion on any given question and leaving the truth of the matter in a state of suspense’ (so that readers can use their God-given reason to form their own opinions; after all, to judge all questions for oneself is not just a right, but also a duty to God).¹⁴³ The ‘Montaignizing’ approach is exactly the method of commentary used by the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. Qtd by Parks.

¹⁴¹ Charles Gildon, *The History of the Athenian Society, For the Resolving all Nice and Curious Questions* (London: Printed for James Dowley, 1692), p. 13.

¹⁴² Hudson, *The English Deists: Studies in Early Enlightenment*, p. 61.

¹⁴³ Kenneth Sheppard, *Anti-Atheism in Early Modern England 1580-1720: The Atheist Answered and His Error Confuted* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), p. 250.

Club, as may be seen clearly in their individualistic comments on Letter I (vol. 1, bk. 1), a letter written by R. Wilson, ‘an Atheist’ and ‘Modern Wit’ in London to dissuade Tom, his friend in Chelmsford (Essex), from taking holy orders.¹⁴⁴ Five members of the Club discuss whether Wilson the atheist can be deemed a man of ‘Wit’ (Mr. Grave), ‘a Man of true Reason’ (Mr. Winter), ‘a Man of Sense’ (Mr. Fountain), ‘a Man of Honour’ (Mr. River), and a man of courage (Mr. River), while the other five (Mr. Brook, Mr. Church, Mr. Temple, Mr. Chappel, and also the narrator, Timothy Weleter) discuss whether one can ever be justified to use one’s ‘Wit and Reason’ to ‘be sawcy [*sic*] with [i.e. to make fun of] Divinity [i.e. God]’.¹⁴⁵ The Club member’s comments, through detailing various perspectives on atheism and the use of wit, prompt readers to ponder a crucial question: whether it is more rational to believe in the existence of God, and safer to live by one’s true reason?

For Gildon, the ‘Montaignizing’ approach’s particular advantage over the Society’s collective method is that it can help resolve two fundamental difficulties—one internal and the other external—in readers’ daily exercise of their innate reason, thereby better facilitating their use of reason in the regulation of their passions. The first fundamental difficulty is the limitations of each individual’s innate reason. As A. W. notes in his letter to Blount, our passions can sometimes grow so strong that they will seriously compromise our practice of right reason. That is why ‘all Men at some times [*sic*] err, even the best in their Actions’.¹⁴⁶ ‘All our Actions are design’d by us to some good which may arise to us’, but under the tyranny of our passions, ‘we often mistake the *Bonum apparens* [the seeming good] for the *Bonum reale* [the real good]’, and let ‘the *Bonum vicinum* [the immediate good/interests] (tho’ it be the less in it self [*sic*]) often carr[y] it before the *Bonum remotum* [the long-term good/interests]’, even though the *Bonum remotum* ‘is greater in its own Nature’.¹⁴⁷ All our immediate interests are the *Bonum*

¹⁴⁴ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), p. 17.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-22.

¹⁴⁶ Blount, Gildon, et. al., *The Oracles of Reason*, p. 206.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

apparens, and the only *Bonum reale* is our obedience to God and intellectual love for Him, which will bring us the *Bonum remotum*, namely, eternal happiness in our afterlife. In contrast, constantly pursuing the *Bonum apparens*, such as the profit from sex trade avidly pursued in those ‘letters from whores and madams’, will ineluctably lead to the loss of true happiness in this life and also eternal damnation in the afterlife. By Montaignizing our actions, that is, to let others, especially those known for their true wit or rationality (such as the Club members, who are all ‘*Youths of true Witt [sic]*’, as Gildon assures his readers), comment on our actions and then scrutinize our actions on that very basis, we are more likely to transcend the limitations of our innate reason, and are less likely to be slaves to our passions by mistaking the *Bonum apparens* for the *Bonum reale*.¹⁴⁸

The second fundamental difficulty is that revealed religion’s (i.e. Christianity’s) virulent opposition to natural religion prevents people from accepting a basic deistic belief, namely the sufficiency of human reason for salvation, which for Blount and his deistic circle, is the essential motivation for one to constantly regulate one’s passions with right reason. Revealed religion maintains that human reason is not sufficient, and to be saved, one needs divine revelation, and part of divine revelation is above and beyond human reason, so to believe in it, one has to suspend one’s reason. That opinion of revealed religion, argues A. W., ‘totally robs God of his Attribute of Mercy’.¹⁴⁹ According to him, all men in this world are created by God, and God is merciful, because he has given all his creatures the means to attain salvation. It is very well known that ‘no Rule of Revealed Religion [i.e. divine revelation of Christianity] was, or ever could be made known to all men’; only ‘the Rules of Right Reason’ [i.e. moral rules made known to men through their God-given reason] are truly universal in this world, and hence human reason alone must be intended by God to be sufficient for men’s salvation.¹⁵⁰ A. W.’s argument is anticipated by Blount’s in a major

¹⁴⁸ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ Blount, Gildon, et. al., *The Oracles of Reason*, p. 209.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-96.

theological work of his that advocates for the sufficiency of natural reason in ‘understand[ing] the nature and destiny of man’, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians* (1680), and is continued by Gildon in his preface to *The Oracles of Reason*.¹⁵¹ As Gildon contends, ‘the Omnipotent CAUSE [i.e. the merciful God...] left not the Mind of Man without its Director in this Maze and Lottery of Things [i.e. this world]; he [i.e. God] gave it Reason, as its sovereign Rule and Touchstone to examin [*sic*] them by’.¹⁵² As ‘the Supream and Primitive Director of e’ery Man’, ‘Reason is [...] able to furnish us with enough to make us happy’; ‘to infringe its [i.e. Reason’s] Liberty of directing, is to invade the common Charter of Nature, and every Man’s Right and Property: so that those [i.e. zealots of revealed religion] that do so, are justly to be look’d on as the Enemies of Human-kind [*sic*]’.¹⁵³ Like A. W. and Blount, Gildon firmly believes that to help people establish their faith in the sufficiency of human reason and also to ultimately displace revealed religion with natural religion, a prerequisite is to challenge and subvert the authority of the established church.

The Montaignizing approach is first created by Blount to serve just that purpose.¹⁵⁴ In *The Post-Boy Rob’d*, Gildon integrates the approach into his club device, and uses it to examine the corruption and depravity of revealed religion’s practitioners from different perspectives (that is why religious hypocrisies figure prominently in the work). The subsequent individualistic examination by the Club members exposes to the embarrassment of the established Church that members of its clergy and laity, beneath their masks of holiness, are no less slaves to their

¹⁵¹ Richard H. Popkin, ‘Polytheism, Deism, and Newton’, in *Essays on the Context, Nature, and Influence of Isaac Newton’s Theology*, ed. James E. Force and Richard H. Poplin (Boston and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), pp. 27-42 (p. 32). As Blount notes in *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, ‘Reason teaches that there is but one only supream [*sic*] God’, and ‘Reason [also] teaches, that the Law of God, viz. that Law which is absolutely necessary to our future happiness, ought to be generally made known to all Men’; see Blount, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians: Or, The Original of Idolatry, Together with the Politick Institution of the Gentiles Sacrifices* (London: n.p., 1680), reprinted in *The Miscellaneous Works of Charles Blount, Esq.*, ed. Charles Gildon (London: n.p., 1695), pp. 23-24.

¹⁵² Blount, Gildon, et. al., *The Oracles of Reason*, sig. A2v.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, sigs. B3r-B3v.

¹⁵⁴ See Sheppard, *Anti-Atheism in Early Modern England 1580-1720*, pp. 250-51.

own passions and corrupt reason. In doing so, Gildon suggests that divine revelation of revealed religion cannot help its believers ‘discover the Vermin [i.e. passions]’ in their hearts, still less to help them ‘Rid’ their social interaction of ‘the pernicious Effects of [Snakes]’ pestilent Venom [i.e. the tyranny of inward passions]’. Only one’s God-given reason can, and to exercise reason, one needs the regular support of the club device’s Montaignizing approach, a method that will help everyone fulfill their duty to God, and will also help the entire nation avert God’s judgement on its widespread moral turpitude. For readers of the first edition, it would not be very difficult to get that message (especially with guidance of the edition’s paratexts). However, for readers of the second edition, it would be well-nigh impossible, not just because no more guiding paratexts are available, but also because the text itself is substantively changed.

3. *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail (1706): An Innovative Fiction Adapted from Ferrante Pallavicino’s *Il Corriero svaligiato* (1641)*

Substantive changes in the second edition, I argue, are made by Gildon in reaction to the two unexpected issues that arise in the reception of the first edition. One issue is that the first edition, despite its great popularity, turns out to be far more displeasing to some ‘solid Readers’ than Dunton and Gildon have expected. As Dunton declares in his 1705 memoirs, the forthcoming ‘re-printed’ *Post-Boy Rob’d* (i.e. the second edition) will be ‘severely corrected’, partly because ‘many unwary and prophane expressions scattered through [both] Volumes [of the first edition]’ have gravely offended some sober-minded readers, and also because the raging Collier stage controversy (1698-1726) has changed his mind about the project’s design to ‘expos[e] the (secret) [*sic*] Villanies [*sic*] of Mankind as they were [in real life]’: ‘I do not think the same reason will justify either the Author or myself, upon which our modern Play-writers build so much—that, because there is wickedness in the Life, the Representation should be so too’.¹⁵⁵ Gildon further notes in the second edition’s new prefatory materials that ‘[he] *ha[s]* cast out many of the least

¹⁵⁵ Dunton, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton, Citizen of London*, vol.1, p. 201.

entertaining Letters; and wou'd more, had [he] been at [his] Liberty; and have added several new ones, which [he] hope[s] will make amends for those which remain'; he 'hop[es] [letters of this new edition] are in no place so dull as to merit Contempt, nor yet so light, as to offend the *truly Pious*, of which peculiar Care has been taken in this Edition'.¹⁵⁶

Gildon never explains what exactly is the 'peculiar Care' he has taken, which, I suggest, includes, first and foremost, his deletion of letters. The second edition deletes 51 letters of the first edition (44 from the first volume and 7 from the second) (for details, see the appended Table, columns 1 and 2). It may be observed that by casting out those 51 '*least entertaining Letters*', Gildon has cast out all letters in the first edition that are most embarrassing to revealed religion or the established Church. Gildon's 'most embarrassing' letters can be divided into three main categories. The first category is letters in which their writers criticize the corruption of revealed religion and the established Church, such as Letter I (vol. 1, bk. 1). In it, its writer, 'an Atheist' in London called R. Wilson launches a scathing attack on the Church of England as a way to dissuade his 'lewd enough' friend in Chelmsford (Essex), Tom, from taking holy orders.¹⁵⁷ 'To me', asserts Wilson, 'there seems no greater Argument of the Imposture of [revealed] Religion, than to see those that teach it us [i.e. the clergy of the Church of England], use God on the Sundays with so familiar a Compellation, when they have acted against all his Precepts the whole Week about'.¹⁵⁸ He then warns his friend that his life as a clergyman will be extremely unpleasant, because the Church of England, Wilson emphatically notes, is nothing but a 'Kingdom of Hypocrisie [*sic*]', while his friend, despite his libertine lifestyle, is 'an honest fellow' all along: 'How canst thee with patience hear the Parson declaim with a thundring [*sic*] Voice on a Sunday morning against Drunkenness, when he has scarce recovered the Saturday Nights [*sic*] Deboch [*sic*] of half a dozen Bottles [...]; or against Usury and Oppression, when he has squabl'd [*sic*] with his poor Parishioner the under Ale-Draper of the

¹⁵⁶ Gildon, *The Second Volume of the Post-Boy Robb'd of his Mail*, sigs. [A3v-A4r].

¹⁵⁷ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), p. 17.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

Village, for the *Tithe Pigg* [*sic*] [...]; Against Whoring, and incontinency, when he came reeking from [...] his Neighbours [*sic*] Wife, that hears all he says against Adultery, as if it were an Alegory [*sic*].¹⁵⁹

The second category is letters by practitioners of revealed religion or members of the established Church, letters that are exposed as evidence for the corruption rampant in the Church, such as Letter XIV (vol. 1, bk. 1). It is a ‘flattering’ letter written by the Reverend Nat. Gold., ‘a Pluralist’ (a member of the clergy who holds two or more benefices or livings concurrently), to his patron in London, T. Prince, Esq., asking for ‘*the Advowson* [i.e. advowson] *of a Third Living in his* [patron’s] *Giff*’.¹⁶⁰ In it, Mr. Gold. first showers his patron with praise for his being ‘a rare Example of Christian Piety’ in such a ‘profligate Age’, and then informs him that another clergyman, a Dr. Goodman, ‘is very ill, and that his Recovery is despair’d of’, so he hopes that Mr. Prince could give Dr. Goodman’s ‘Benefice’ to him, because as he reminds his patron, ‘People are to disrespect the Character of the Clergy, if their Authority, and Reverence be not upheld by that means [i.e. accumulating enough wealth through their benefices]’.¹⁶¹ The Reverend Nat. Gold., for the Club members, is a typical example of the greedy clergy at the time, who ‘*take to the Ministry of the Gospel, for the sake of Mammon, [...] not of Christ*’, and who ‘*make the Ministry [...] a meer* [*sic*] *Temporal Calling*’ by basing their authority solely on their material wealth, thus completely perverting the practices of ‘*the Apostles and primitive Fathers*’, who ‘*gain’d Authority, and Veneration*’ only through their ‘*Humility and Sanctity*’.¹⁶²

The third category is letters that provoke the Club’s incisive criticism of the corruption of revealed religion and the established Church, even though the letters *per se* are not directly related to either revealed religion or the established Church (that is to say, those letters are deleted, because the Club’s individualistic commentaries on them are embarrassing to revealed religion or the established

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 76-77.

¹⁶² Ibid., pp. 77-78.

Church). An example is Letter XLVIII (vol. 1, bk. 1). It is a furious letter sent by Obadiah in Suffolk to berate his friend Mr. Claypool in London for having tried to bring about a reconciliation between him (i.e. Obadiah) and his (i.e. Obadiah's) cousin, and also to assure Mr. Claypool that nothing can assuage his bitter hatred for the said cousin. Obadiah's nasty letter prompts a discussion of hatred and reconciliation, especially with regard to religious pretenders (even though Obadiah is not a religious pretender). For instance, Mr. Grave reminds his fellow Club members of a common view of the time, namely that the '*greatest pretenders to Godliness, are generally the hardest to be reconcil'd*'.¹⁶³ Those religious pretenders, observes Mr. Summer, though 'so taken up with the Name of God', always tend to 'forget his [God's] Nature, Mercy, and Justice'.¹⁶⁴ The true '*God*' of them, adds Mr. Fountain, is actually '*their Passions*', and '*the Gratification of that* [i.e. their passions] *is their Zeal*'.¹⁶⁵

Embarrassing letters are not the only thing that Gildon deletes to avoid offending those '*truly Pious*' readers. He also makes a slight, but significant deletion to the frame story, a deletion that clearly shows how meticulous his 'peculiar Care' is. In the frame story, Timothy Weleter, the narrator of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* and also a member of the Club, informs readers that after Mr. Temple proposes to 'divert [them] selves with the Scene of *Hypocrisy uncas'd*' by robbing '*the Posts*', the Club has a dispute.¹⁶⁶ Six members, under the influence of heavy drinking, all concur with Mr. Temple that they 'cannot have a more agreeable Entertainment' than robbing the posts, but two still relatively sober members, Mr. Winter and Mr. Grave, disagree. They argue that robbing the posts is a capital offence, and it is simply not worthwhile to risk one's life for an entertainment, even though it may bring them pleasure and an unparalleled knowledge of human nature. When Timothy the narrator is asked for his opinion, he sides with the majority or 'the strongest side', as

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 153.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 11. In the second edition, the name of the narrator is shortened to 'Timothy'; see Gildon, *The Post-Boy Robb'd of his Mail* (2nd edn.), p. 5.

he ironically calls it. In his ensuing brief explanation to readers for his irrational decision, he takes a sarcastic swipe at the Christian clergy's blind conformity to authority (which, for supporters of natural religion, results ineluctably from the established Church's requirement for its members to suspend their use of reason in accepting its doctrines and divine revelation). That sarcastic swipe (highlighted below in italics) is silently deleted by Gildon in the second edition:

1692-93 edition:

But these two Opposers [i.e. Mr. Winter and Mr. Grave] were fain to acquiesce in the Judgment of the Company; tho' perhaps I might encline [*sic*] to the Opinion of the few, yet *having a great Veneration for the Clergy*, I chose to imitate them [i.e. the clergy] in siding with the strongest side.¹⁶⁷

1706 edition:

But these two Opposers [i.e. Mr. Winter and Mr. Grave] were fain to acquiesce in the Judgment of the Company; tho' perhaps, I might encline [*sic*] to the Opinion of the few, yet I chose to imitate them [i.e. Mr. Winter and Mr. Grave] in siding with the strongest side.¹⁶⁸

The deletion of Timothy's sarcastic swipe, it can be seen, changes the object of Timothy's subsequent 'imitat[ion]' from 'the Clergy' to the 'two Opposers' (i.e. two members of the Club), thereby redirecting his sarcasm away from the Christian clergy.

Gildon's 'peculiar Care' is supplemented by his addition of new letters and also re-sequencing of the first edition's letters. He adds 33 new letters to the second edition (3 to the first volume and 30 to the second) (for details, see the appended Table, columns 3 and 4). The 33 new letters, admittedly, are very diverse in their subjects, but they have one thing in common, namely that none of them are concerned with the corruption of revealed religion or the established Church. To reinforce the newness of the second edition, Gildon also completely re-sequences the remaining letters of the first edition (for details, see the appended

¹⁶⁷ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), p. 11.

¹⁶⁸ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Robb'd of his Mail* (2nd edn.), p. 8.

Table, columns 2 and 4). His re-sequencing in turn contributes to his attempt to tone down the first edition's criticism of revealed religion and the established Church, in that it helps make those 'most embarrassing' letters silently deleted by him less obvious to readers of the second edition (especially those who also have access to the first).

Re-sequencing, additions, and deletions are not the only substantial changes that Gildon makes in the second edition. His substantial changes, I suggest, also include his acknowledgement that *The Post-Boy Rob'd* 'is built on the Foundation of the Ingenious *Pallavicini* [*sic*], an *Italian Author of Reputation*'.¹⁶⁹ Gildon's acknowledgment is not just a follow-up to Dunton's earlier acknowledgement of the work's fictionality, but also an important response to the second unexpected issue that arises in the reception of the first edition; that is, it is no longer possible to sustain the work's status as a nationwide moral reform project modelled on *The Athenian Mercury*. It is no longer possible for two reasons. First, *The Athenian Mercury* ceased publication in 1697, so in 1706 it became pointless to continue highlighting the connections between *The Athenian Mercury* and *The Post-Boy Rob'd* (after all, readers of the second edition may never have read *The Athenian Mercury*). Second, an unforeseen development in postal services in 1696 did an irreparable disservice to the work's status as a nationwide reform project.

In the first edition, to highlight the work's status as a nationwide reform project, Gildon supplies his readers with an amazingly detailed description of how the Club members rob the posts 'on the Road'.¹⁷⁰ Day has also noticed that description, or a 'long and highly circumstantial account', as he calls it, but for him, it is only an integral part of Gildon's 'authentication', or effort to reinforce the authenticity of the exposed letters.¹⁷¹ Gildon's description, however, has another purpose. In it, Timothy the narrator informs readers that the Club's ten members are divided into five groups, each group containing two members (so that one can restrain the post-boy, and the other can take away his mail-bags). Mr. Chappel and

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., sig. [A3v].

¹⁷⁰ Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), p. 11.

¹⁷¹ Day, *Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction before Richardson*, p. 92.

Mr. Church are asked to rob the posts on ‘the *Kentish Road*’, Mr. Temple and Mr. Summer, the posts on the ‘*Essex*’ Road, and the other three groups (Mr. Brook and Mr. Winter, Mr. Fountain and Mr. Grave, and Mr. River and Timothy the narrator), the posts on other Roads (not named in the text).¹⁷² By detailing the method of the Club’s mail robbery, Gildon is actually foregrounding the fact that the robbed letters in *The Post-Boy Rob’d* are not just an unbiased random sample of contemporary private letters (because all letters are robbed on a random day in June of 1692), but more importantly, also a sample that is truly representative of all private letters ‘*on the Road*’ in England at the time.

The robbed letters can represent all private letters in England, because of the special workings of postal services in the early 1690s. There are only six main Post Roads in England at the time, all starting from London, namely 1) the south-east Road, or ‘the Kent road to Dover’, 2) the north-east Road, or ‘the Essex road to Yarmouth’, 3) ‘the north road to Edinburgh’, 4) the north-west Road, or ‘the Chester road via Holyhead to Ireland’, and also the two west Roads, namely 5) ‘the west road to Plymouth’ and 6) ‘the road to Bristol’.¹⁷³ The Club, readers are told, commit their respective mail robberies at places where Post Roads leave London, and that is why only five, rather than six, groups are needed to rob all six Post Roads (the two west Roads, it should be noted, share the way out of London, so one group can take care of both Roads). Robbing all six Post Roads alone cannot guarantee the representativeness of the robbed letters, which, I suggest, is made possible by another feature of the postal services: in the early 1690s, as Duncan Campbell-Smith notes in *The Authorized History of the Royal Mail* (2012), England did not have cross-posts (i.e. direct posts between different main Roads), and thus ‘all letters despatched on one Post Road to an address on another had to go on being delivered via the Inland Office in London’.¹⁷⁴ Cross-posts were

¹⁷² Gildon, *The Post-Boy Rob’d of His Mail*, vol. 1 (1692), pp. 12-13.

¹⁷³ Ben Weinreb, Christopher Hibbert, Julia Keay, and John Keay, *The London Encyclopedia*, rev. 3rd edn. (London: Macmillan, 2008), p. 660. For maps of the main Post Roads, see Duncan Campbell-Smith, *Masters of the Post: The Authorized History of the Royal Mail* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2012), pp. 52-57.

¹⁷⁴ Campbell-Smith, *Masters of the Post: The Authorized History of the Royal Mail*, p. 64.

invented in 1696, and from then on, not all letters needed to be relayed at London.¹⁷⁵ Such an invention reduces the cost of sending a letter across the Post Roads (because of the less distance a letter needs to cover in this more efficient delivery system), but also reduces the representativeness of Gildon's robbed letters, if readers of the second edition interpret *The Post-Boy Rob'd* according to the postal services of 1706. The robbed letters, as a result, will no longer be regarded as representing all private letters in England. If so, they cease to be a comprehensive representation of the secret passions of people across the entire nation, and that undermines the very foundation of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* as a nationwide moral reform project.

To sustain *The Post-Boy Rob'd's* status as a unique, innovative work, Gildon acknowledges for the first time that it is inspired by Pallavicino, even though *Il Corriero* is just one inspiration alongside Dunton's periodical and Blount's deism. Gildon's acknowledgement is unusual, especially given the fact that the second edition is less influenced by *Il Corriero* than the first. *Il Corriero*, notes the eminent scholar in Italian studies Albert N. Mancini, influences *The Post-Boy Rob'd* in two ways.¹⁷⁶ First, it gives Gildon the idea of mail robbery, and second, some of its 49 letters are silently adapted into the book II of volume I. The first edition includes 26 adapted letters from *Il Corriero*, whereas the second edition, Mancini points out, sees 'una sostanziale riduzione' (a substantial reduction) and includes only 19.¹⁷⁷ Even so, Gildon's acknowledgement is highly necessary, mainly because the influence of *Il Corriero* is far from being obvious to readers (this explains why Dunton dares to allude to *Il Corriero* in the 'Advertisement' as a piece of evidence to show how common mail robbery is in Europe, and is not worried that such an allusion will betray the fictionality of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*).

¹⁷⁵ See J. C. Hemmeon, *The History of the British Post Office* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912), p. 103; and Campbell-Smith, *Masters of the Post: The Authorized History of the Royal Mail*, p. 65.

¹⁷⁶ See Mancini, 'Intorno alle traduzioni in inglese di opera di Ferrante Pallavicino: "Il corriere svaligiato/The Post-boy rob'd of his mail"', pp. 465-82.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

Il Corriero's influence on Gildon's mail-robbery narrative frame is not obvious, because substantial differences exist between *Il Corriero's* mail robbery and *The Post-Boy Rob'd's*. 'Pallavicino', as Mancini summarizes it, 'immagina che un principe italiano, sospettoso che "si negoziassero trattati a' suoi danni", faccia intercettare i dispacci spediti dal governatore spagnolo di Milano a Roma e Napoli[;] Trattenendo per sé le lettere politiche consegna le altre a quattro "Cavalieri della Camera, i quali disegnaronsi sopra un delizioso trattenimento" [the quoted words in Mancini's summary are Pallavicino's]' (Pallavicino imagines that an Italian prince, suspecting that 'they [i.e. the Spanish governor of Milan and the viceroy of Naples] negotiated treaties to his disadvantage', intercepted the letters sent by the Spanish governor to Rome and Naples [;] the prince took away the political letters [by the Spanish governor], and gave the rest [by others] to his four 'gentlemen of the privy chamber, who derived delightful entertainment from them' [and those letters are then published as the main body of *Il Corriero*]). It would be very difficult to identify for sure Pallavicino's mail robbery as an inspiration for *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, if Gildon did not frankly acknowledge it in the second edition. His adaptation of *Il Corriero's* letters would likewise not be obvious to his readers, because no English translation of *Il Corriero* is available at the time (in fact, it remains untranslated today), and therefore most original readers of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* are very likely to have never read *Il Corriero*.

But they would be quite familiar with Pallavicino the author nonetheless, especially with his '*Reputation*' as a pre-eminent religious dissenter (thanks to the translation of his other freethinking works).¹⁷⁸ As Guyda Armstrong notes, in England at the time, Pallavicino is one of the 'the two best-known members of the Incogniti ["a band of elite freethinkers" in Venice]' (the other is the founder of the Accademia degli Incogniti [Academy of the Unknowns], 'the patrician intellectual Giovan Francesco Loredan [1607-61]'), and Pallavicino is known for being 'the figurehead of the Incogniti's religious dissent'.¹⁷⁹ That '*Reputation*' of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., sig. [A3v].

¹⁷⁹ Guyda Armstrong, 'From Boccaccio to the Incogniti: The Cultural Politics of the Italian Tale in English Translation in the Seventeenth Century', in *Seventeenth-Century Fiction: Text and Transmission*, ed. Jacqueline Glomski and Isabelle Moreau (Oxford and New York: Oxford

Pallavicino is exactly what Gildon wants to evoke in his readers' minds. By acknowledging that *The Post-Boy Rob'd* 'is built on the Foundation of the Ingenious Pallavicini [*sic*], an *Italian Author of Reputation*', Gildon is actually trying to attain two things at once. First, he tries to sustain *The Post-Boy Rob'd*'s status as a unique, innovative work by transforming it from an innovative nationwide reform project uniquely modelled on *The Athenian Mercury* into a unique and innovative adaptation of *Il Corriero*, a major work of Pallavicino never translated or adapted in England. Second, he tries to foreground that *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, like its acknowledged inspiration, *Il Corriero*, is also a freethinking work, thereby drawing readers' attention to the freethinking ideas—that is, Blount's deism—that his adaptation seeks to inculcate. Gildon's acknowledgement, in this sense, can be deemed to have also served as his reaffirmation of the value of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*'s deism. By making such an acknowledgement, he wants to reassure his readers that despite his 'peculiar Care' to avoid offending the '*truly Pious*'—that is, his toning down one specific facet of the first edition's deism—its deistic ideas are still of great value to them, not just in helping them to live a happier life, but also in helping England—the country they live in—to become a better society.

This chapter reveals for the first time three key reasons why the two editions of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* should be clearly differentiated from each other, namely 1) different authorial conceptions of the two editions, 2) different authorial guidance for readers of the two editions on how to understand a major innovation of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, that is, the club device, and 3) substantial textual changes made in the second edition to address the two unforeseen issues that arise in the reception of the first edition. In doing so, it enables us to better appreciate Gildon's brilliant cross-generic experimentation in *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, as well as his pivotal role in the popularization of Blount's deism among his contemporaries.

Moreover, it contributes to the scholarly understanding of the relationship between the development of postal infrastructure and services and Gildon's making of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*. Thomas Keymer rightly points out that in this

University Press, 2016), pp. 159-82 (pp. 172, 168, 162, 178). On Pallavicino, see also Edward Muir, *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance: Sceptics, Libertines, and Opera* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 63-107.

innovative work, ‘Gildon offered readers the illicit thrill of secrets revealed, of the private made public, of intimate manuscript exposed in circulating print’; and his ‘perfect idea for [such] a timely literary product’ is inspired first and foremost by ‘the foundation of the London Penny Post and its absorption into a newly centralized, efficient Royal Mail in the 1680s’.¹⁸⁰ *The Post-Boy Rob’d’s* ‘representation of posted letters as pieces of paper moving about the country’, adds Christopher Flint, ‘[helped] naturaliz[e] the way in which British citizens increasingly mediated their social and economic relations’, just ‘like the postal system in the late seventeenth century or the rise of paper credit’ did.¹⁸¹ In revealing the necessity of distinguishing between the two editions, this chapter deepens those valuable insights of both Keymer and Flint, and reveals for the first time that the development of postal infrastructure and services not just inspired the making of *The Post-Boy Rob’d* in the first place, but in fact also profoundly shaped Gildon’s re-making of it in the second edition.

Last but not least, this chapter prompts us to revisit that famous controversy between Pat Rogers and J. Paul Hunter over the contributions of *The Athenian Mercury* to the ‘rise’ of the English novel in the eighteenth century, a controversy that started in the 1990s and was recently raised again by Rogers in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, vol.1: Prose Fictions in English from the Origins of Print to 1750* (2017). As Rogers observes, ‘Hunter is surely right that developments in print culture lie at the heart of the emerging genre [i.e. the novel]’, but ‘not everyone will come up with exactly the factors discussed by Hunter [in his 1990 study, *Before Novels*], which include the idea that the modern, journalistic “Athenianism” of the eccentric bookseller John Dunton posed a challenge to the conservative Augustianism of Swift and Pope [in the 1700s and 1710s], and thus helped to clear the way for innovation and literary experiments’, notably those of

¹⁸⁰ Thomas Keymer, ‘Epistolary Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century’, in *A Companion to British Literature Volume III: Long Eighteenth-Century Literature 1660-1837*, ed. Robert DeMaria, Jr., Heesok Chang, and Samantha Zacher (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2014), pp. 159-73 (p. 159).

¹⁸¹ See Christopher Flint, *The Appearance of Print in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 61-102 (p. 87).

Defoe's from 1719 onwards.¹⁸² This chapter's differentiation between the two editions, I suggest, shows that well before Dunton's 'modern, journalistic "Athenianism" [...] posed a challenge to the conservative Augustianism of Swift and Pope', it had already paved 'the way for innovation and literary experiments'. *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, as this chapter has demonstrated, is one of those inspired literary experiments. It is an experiment that in turn inspires even more innovative literary experiments. Paula R. Backscheider has already noted that *The Post-Boy Rob'd* is a major influence on Elizabeth Singer Rowe's creation of her innovative patchwork fiction, the *Friendship in Death* duology (1728-32), a work that in the eighteenth century was far more popular than Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* trilogy (1719-20).¹⁸³ From Rowe's highly influential duology, as John J. Richetti has rightly pointed out, 'the English novel derives the ideological matrix in which Richardson's *Clarissa*, for example, may be said to achieve a heroism close to sainthood'.¹⁸⁴ *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, it can be observed, is an important, yet unrecognized link between *The Athenian Mercury* and the 'rise' of the English novel. In making this link explicit, this chapter reaffirms the status of *The Athenian Mercury* as an influential innovation in itself, and also prompts further exploration of its crucial contributions to the literary innovation in the English Enlightenment.

¹⁸² Pat Rogers, 'Cross-Sections (4): 1716-1720', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English vol. 1: Prose Fiction in English from the Origins of Print to 1750*, ed. Thomas Keymer (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 89-106 (p. 90). For J. Paul Hunter's insightful discussion, see *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1990), pp. 89-109, 195-224. Hunter's discussion is influenced by two earlier arguments for the importance of *The Athenian Mercury* in the 'rise' of the English novel. See Robert D. Mayo, *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1962), pp. 16-19; G. A. Starr, 'From Casuistry to Fiction: The Importance of the *Athenian Mercury*', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28.1 (1967), pp. 17-32; revised and reprinted in G. A. Starr, *Defoe and Casuistry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 9-50.

¹⁸³ On the influence of *The Post-Boy Rob'd*, see Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of English Novel*, pp. 68-70, 122-23; on the popularity of the *Friendship in Death* duology, see pp. 1-2.

¹⁸⁴ John J. Richetti, 'Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe: The Novel as Polemic', *PMLA*, 82.7 (1967), pp. 522-29; reprinted in *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-1739* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 239-62 (p. 247).

CHAPTER 2

‘Matrimony’s an Uncertain Game’: Collier Stage Controversy, Women’s Secrets Revealed, and Two ‘Human Curiosity’ Comedies in the Reign of Queen Anne (1702-14)

Clev. Matrimony’s an uncertain Game.

Sta. ’Tis so.—But you know we Women love Play.

Nicolas Rowe, *The Biter* (1704), Act I¹⁸⁵

Violante. Hither, to what Purpose?

Isabella. To the great universal Purpose Matrimony.

Violante. Matrimony! Why do you design to ask him?

Isabella. No, *Violante*, you must do that for me.

Susanna Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret* (1714), Act IV¹⁸⁶

Nicolas Rowe’s *The Biter* (1704) and Susanna Centlivre’s *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret* (1714) are two ‘human curiosity’ comedies produced in the reign of Queen Anne (1702-14), when the moral reform movement was at its height. ‘People’ at the time, Barbara M. Benedict notes, ‘can be deemed ‘curious’ [...] not because they inquire but because they have socially irregular aspects’, especially ‘behavioral [...] traits that seem to violate accepted norms’.¹⁸⁷ Those two comedies are chosen for comparison in this chapter for several reasons. First, both of them pivot around a

¹⁸⁵ Nicholas Rowe, *The Biter*, in *The Plays and Poems of Nicholas Rowe, Volume II: The Middle Period Plays*, ed. Michael Caines (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 15-75 (p. 30). All subsequent references to *The Biter* are from this edition, and all newly introduced typos are silently corrected after a collation with the 1705 edition of this play, the only edition published in Rowe’s lifetime.

¹⁸⁶ Susanna Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, in *Eighteenth-Century Women Playwrights, Volume 3: Susanna Centlivre*, ed. Jacqueline Pearson (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), pp. 113-72 (p. 152). All subsequent references to *The Wonder* are from this edition.

¹⁸⁷ Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 3.

woman who keeps a secret: Violante in *The Wonder* and Mariana in *The Biter*. Second, both comedies expose human curiosities through their secret-keeping women's secret marital negotiations. In *The Wonder*, Violante's secret marital negotiation for her bosom friend, Isabella, 'exposes' herself as a 'wonder' woman, because of her unusually heroic commitment to friendship. In *The Biter*, Mariana has to expose Squire Pinch, the notorious biter (a deceiver who amuses himself at another's expense), because he is a main obstacle to her secret marital negotiation for her friend, Angelica. Third, both comedies used their innovative confluences of secret marital negotiation and exposure of human curiosity to gain entrée to the ongoing Collier stage controversy (1698-1726), which was an important component of the moral reform movement. Their confluences, this chapter argues, served as a supple vehicle for attacking the moral absolutism of the theologian Jeremy Collier (1650-1726) and also other moral reformers of the movement under his influence.

This chapter's comparison, I suggest, can better our understanding of both comedies' embeddedness within the Collier controversy. Currently, only Annibel Jenkins and John O'Brien have made some scholarly effort on this score. Jenkins suggested in her pioneering study of Rowe's dramatic oeuvre that *The Biter* is worthy of note as an intriguing illustration of William Congreve's contention in his 1698 response to Collier's infamous attack on English comedy's immorality and contempt for authority; and O'Brien reprinted in his excellent Broadview edition of *The Wonder* much of the Collierite critique of the play by Arthur Bedford (1668-1745), a staunch supporter of Collier, with the aim to raise critics' awareness of the play's close connection with the controversy.¹⁸⁸

Moreover, the comparison also represents a new approach to the study of *The Biter*, an approach that challenges the reigning scholarly orthodoxy about its much-acclaimed Orientalism. Taking their cue from John Genest, scholars have concentrated almost exclusively on the play's innovative Orientalism, exemplified primarily by Sir Timothy Tallapoy, a chinoiserie-mad East India merchant who has

¹⁸⁸ See Annibel Jenkins, *Nicholas Rowe* (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1977), p. 68; O'Brien's edition reprints in Appendix A the first three of about five pages of Bedford's critique, *A Serious Remonstrance in Behalf of the Christian Religion* (London, 1719), pp. 209-12.

returned to England and also the first English Sinophile in British literature.¹⁸⁹ Their almost exclusive attention on Sir Timothy, however, has engendered an insoluble hermeneutic problem: Rowe stands wrongly accused of having produced an incoherent plot, one that is littered with unrelated or ‘illogica[l]’ matter. Most critics, including J. Douglas Canfield, Alfred W. Hesse, and Bridget Orr, have ignored this problem altogether.¹⁹⁰ Only Derek Cohen has tried to reason it out. *The Biter*, he claims, is ‘replete with such matter’; for instance, ‘the action bustles along at a fairly consistent pace until one is suddenly and illogically in the presence of a domestic squabble between the Scribblescrabbles which has little or nothing to do with the plot’.¹⁹¹ Yet as Cohen points out, using such extraneous matter to heighten comic effects is probably acceptable at the time, for it is ‘one of the conditions of farce anticipated by the audience’.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ See John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830*, 10 vols (Bath: Printed by H. E. Carrington, 1832), vol.2, pp. 327-28. Genest is the first to challenge the eighteenth-century condemnation of *The Biter*. *The Biter* was first performed on 4 December 1704 at the Lincoln’s Inn Fields, and the first edition came out in 1705. It ran for six performances in its first season, a moderate success, as it were (see John Downes, *Roscus Anglicanus: A New Edition*, ed. Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume [London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1987], p. 950). Though never revived thereafter, it was reprinted throughout the eighteenth century either individually (1720, 1726, 1732, 1736, 1764) or collectively as part of Rowe’s works (1720, 1725, 1728, 1733, 1736, 1792). Criticism of this comedy in Rowe’s lifetime includes the oft-quoted denunciation thereof by William Congreve in his letter to Joseph Keally on 9 Dec. 1704: ‘Rowe writ a foolish farce called the *Biter*, which was damned’ (Congreve, *Letters and Documents*, ed. John C. Hodges [London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1964], p. 34); and also Charles Gildon’s dismissal of it in his satirical dialogue on Rowe’s dramatic works, *A New Rehearsal, or Bays the Younger* (1714; rev. 2nd edn. 1715). Gildon’s dismissal is presented in two forms. First, both his interlocutors, Mr. Freeman, ‘A Gentleman of a good Taste and Learning’, and Mr. Truewit, ‘A Man of Wit and good Taste’, refuse to talk about *The Biter* and *The Royal Convert* (1708), because ‘these Plays are below Criticism, they are fenc’d round with Stupidity, and dispense such a Dullness all around, that it wou’d be impossible to go through with them and keep awake’; second, Gildon deploys a satiric caricature of Rowe, Mr. Bays, ‘A Pedantic, Reciting Poet, admir’d by the Mob and himself’, to underline the fact that only *The Biter* was not reprinted recently to capitalize on Rowe’s growing fame and popularity (Gildon, *A New Rehearsal, or Bays the Younger* [London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1714], pp. 55, 82).

¹⁹⁰ See, for instance, J. Douglas Canfield and Alfred W. Hesse, ‘Nicholas Rowe’, in *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Dramatists: Second Series*, ed. Paula R. Backscheider (Detroit: Gale, 1989), pp. 262-89; Alfred W. Hesse, ‘Who was Bit by Rowe’s Comedy *The Biter*?’, *Philological Quarterly*, 62.4 (1983), pp. 477-85; and Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage 1660-1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 106, 228-29.

¹⁹¹ Derek Cohen, ‘Nicholas Rowe, Aphra Behn, and the Farcical Muse’, *Papers on Language and Literature*, 15.4 (1979), pp. 383-95 (p. 392).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

As this chapter demonstrates, this hermeneutic problem can be resolved, if Mariana is restored to her central role in *The Biter* through a comparison with *Violante* in *The Wonder*. Though overlooked by modern scholars, the character of Mariana, notes Allardyce Nicoll, was likely to have attracted equal attention from contemporary audiences as Sir Timothy, not least because she was enacted by one of the most celebrated actresses at the time, Anne Bracegirdle (c. 1671-1748).¹⁹³ The comparison will demonstrate, for instance, that the adventitious squabble between the Scribblescrabbles, among other subplots, is rendered extraneous and illogical to the plotline by nothing other than the wrong belief that Sir Timothy, rather than Mariana, is the pivot of the play. The squabble, like Squire Pinch the biter, is an unforeseen barrier to Mariana's secret marital negotiation for Sir Timothy's daughter, Angelica. It is thus one of Rowe's contrivances to bear out her laudable ingenuity and presence of mind. Through the comparison, we can better appreciate the significance of Rowe's inventive characterization of Mariana, and also of his decision to turn her secret marital negotiation into 'an uncertain game', a game that is uncertain in itself and also ends in great uncertainty.

Like Mariana's secret marital negotiation, *Violante's* in *The Wonder* is also an uncertain game. Yet unlike Mariana's, *Violante's* has already received much critical attention. Scholars' main focus is on unpacking its complex connection with Centlivre's Whiggish sympathies. Jacqueline Pearson, for instance, argues that this comedy 'brilliantly' applies 'the Whig ideology of liberty' to women through images of confinement and freedom in *Violante's* secret marital negotiation for Isabella, such as 'locked rooms and gates, keys', 'the emotional "Fetter" of duty', and 'chains literal and metaphorical'.¹⁹⁴ No radical forms of female liberty are propounded 'for her [principal] female characters' as alternatives to marriage, notes Pearson, mainly because Centlivre is 'a comic realist looking at how things are and what is

¹⁹³ Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900*, vol.2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925; 3rd edn. 1952), p. 209. Nicoll's equal emphasis on Sir Timothy and Mariana, however, goes unheeded among scholars.

¹⁹⁴ Jacqueline Pearson, *The Prostituted Muse: Images of Women and Women Dramatists 1642-1737* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), pp. 225, 227.

possible'.¹⁹⁵ Despite that, argues O'Brien, 'Centlivre's optimism about the utopian potential for women of Whig liberty' can still be partly 'justified', because 'the unions [of Violante and Don Felix, and of Isabella and Colonel Britton] do seem to be meetings of equals'— 'a measure of liberty' for these women, as it were.¹⁹⁶ These marriages are Centlivre's attempt to strike a subtle balance between Whig ideology and England's patriarchal norms. Companionate marriage, as Misty G. Anderson contends, is not the only sort of liberty that Centlivre fights hard to achieve for women. Violante's secret marital negotiation for Isabella also enables Centlivre to make a compelling case for women's 'contractual equality' by 'showing that women can make contracts, keep secrets, and otherwise partake of civil society'.¹⁹⁷ Scholars, it can be observed, generally agree that Violante's secret marital negotiation, though offering a veiled criticism of England's patriarchal norms, celebrates the Whig ideology of liberty in one way or another.

However, as the comparison reveals, Centlivre, like Rowe in *The Biter*, has not pursued her political partisanship *à outrance* in *The Wonder*. Although both celebrate the ideology's great potential for ameliorating the realities of gender subordination, they are equally critical of its crucial inadequacy in the cause of female liberty. This chapter begins by examining how both playwrights' innovative confluences of secret marital negotiation and exposure of human curiosity serve as a supple vehicle for attacking the moral absolutism, or singular truths, of Collier and also other moral reformers of the movement influenced by him (Part I). Special attention is then paid to the two specific cases of the plays' innovative representations of multiple truths, or moral relativism: 1) Violante's and Mariana's 'situational conformity' in their secret marital negotiations, through which Centlivre and Rowe clearly show that vice can also be turned into virtue (Part II), and 2) their secret marital negotiations' engagement with Whig ideology (Part III). Whig ideology, as both playwrights

¹⁹⁵ Jacqueline Pearson, Introduction, in *Eighteenth-Century Women Playwrights, Volume 3: Susanna Centlivre*, ed. Jacqueline Pearson (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001), pp. ix-xx (p. xvii).

¹⁹⁶ John O'Brien, Introduction, in *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, ed. John O'Brien (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004), p. 18.

¹⁹⁷ Misty G. Anderson, *Female Playwrights and Eighteenth-Century Comedy: Negotiating Marriage on the London Stage* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 123, 126.

demonstrate, can indeed be deployed to promote the cause of female liberty, but on the other hand, it could also do a disservice to the same cause, due to its inherent paternalism. Despite their superior intellect and moral courage, Mariana and Violante achieve only ‘incomplete’ victories in the end, and their incomplete victories, this chapter suggests, may be deemed the result of both playwrights’ reservations about moral relativism.

1. The Collier Controversy and the Revelation of Women’s Secrets in Nicolas Rowe’s *The Biter* (1704) and Susanna Centlivre’s *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret* (1714)

The Collier controversy, as Lisa A. Freeman cogently argues, is anything but a mere literary debate over English stage’s immorality and contempt for authority; it is essentially a protracted conflict over ‘the more foundational problem of framing truth and assigning value in post-Revolutionary Britain’.¹⁹⁸ For Jeremy Collier, ‘there was only one divinely ordained hierarchical truth and only one way to represent that truth’.¹⁹⁹ This insight, I suggest, is equally true of Arthur Bedford. As Rose Anthony has already noted, Bedford resolutely upholds Collier’s views in his own invectives against English theatre; and both of them, adds Roger D. Lund, are ‘early participants in the effort to codify and limit the uses of wit’.²⁰⁰ Ranged against the Collierite agitation for ‘singular truths’ or moral absolutism, dramatists of various persuasions ‘conducted formal experiments that put into question the very idea of producing [...] singular truths’, and ‘illustrated’ through their plays ‘how multiple versions of the truth could be accommodated, rationalized, or even laid alongside one another’.²⁰¹ Many of them, as Robert Markley aptly observes, choose

¹⁹⁸ Lisa A. Freeman, *Antitheatricality and the Body Public* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), p. 108.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

²⁰⁰ On Bedford’s contribution to the Collier controversy, see Rose Anthony, *The Jeremy Collier Stage Controversy 1698-1726* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1937), pp. 12, 221-23, 227-29, 231, 242-43, 246-48, 263-64, 286, 295; and Roger D. Lund, *Ridicule, Religion, and the Politics of Wit in Augustan England* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), p. 87.

²⁰¹ Freeman, *Antitheatricality and the Body Public*, pp. 109, 112.

to press home in their own ways William Congreve's central thesis in his response to Collier's attack, namely that 'comedy satirizes vice and vanity to secure the socio-economic stability premised on feminine virtue and masculine property right'.²⁰²

Centlivre and Rowe are no exceptions. Their ingenious conflation of the secret marital negotiation and the exposure of the human curiosity gives them plenty of scope to carry Congreve's thesis a step further by elucidating its relation to female liberty. In doing so, they successfully undercut the Collierites' categorical argument for prohibiting all sorts of false wit and for safeguarding the absolute hierarchical authority. Socio-economic stability is a prerequisite for female liberty. Like the Collierites, both playwrights have likewise recognized the dire threat of false wit and also the importance of hierarchical authority (based on masculine property rights) and feminine virtue to England's socio-economic harmony in the rough-and-tumble world after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Yet they are equally cognizant of the flip side of the Collierite argument. As *The Wonder* and *The Biter* lay bare, false wit (especially deceptive wit), though a vice, may also promote socio-economic harmony and the cause of female liberty, whereas hierarchical authority and feminine virtue (notably non-resistance to authority or passive obedience) may sometimes do a disservice not only to female liberty, but also to the all-important socio-economic harmony.²⁰³

Hierarchical authority can breed domestic tyranny, as shown by blocking fathers' abhorrent attempts in both plays to forestall their daughters' companionate marriages, which flagrantly infringe their daughters' liberties and sow much socio-economic discord. In *The Wonder*, Don Pedro, a Portuguese nobleman, devises a ruse to compel Violante into a convent so that he may pocket all her inheritance from her maternal grandfather. Another nobleman Don Lopez decides

²⁰² Robert Markley, 'The Canon and Its Critics', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 226-42 (p. 226).

²⁰³ On passive obedience as a feminine virtue and a Tory doctrine, see, for instance, Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel: Women's Lot in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), pp. 142, 149, 153; and Toni Bowers, *Force or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance, 1660-1760* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 19-20, 51-72.

to ‘sacrifice the lovely *Isabella*’ to a silly old buffer, Don Guzman, partly because Guzman ‘is Rich [twenty thousand Crowns a Year] and well Born’, and partly because Guzman’s foolishness allows Lopez to ‘rule him’ and to ‘keep up the Port of this Life’.²⁰⁴ That, notes Laura Martinez-Garcia, also allows Lopez to reassert his absolute authority and control over the ménage, and to redeem the family honour that is recently compromised by his son Felix’s open defiance of his order to marry Don Antonio’s sister, Elvira.²⁰⁵

Like Lopez, Sir Timothy in *The Biter* also deems choosing a husband for his daughter a good opportunity to assert his ‘Paternal Authority’.²⁰⁶ He thrusts on his daughter Angelica Pinch the biter (son of his friend, Sir Peter), whom neither her nor himself has ever met, and falsely accuses Angelica’s beloved, Mr. Friendly, of being a biter. Friendly, he rants, is ‘one of that execrable new Sect which they call the Biters’, because he has ‘show’d his scurrilous Wit in making a Jest of the worshipful Traders’ of both East India Companies by [selling] his Stock out of the Old *East-India* Company’.²⁰⁷ It is not very surprising that Friendly’s normative stock speculation turns him into a biter in the eyes of Sir Timothy, whose obsession with ‘the flourishing Empire of *China*’ makes him view the world in an absurdly dualistic way.²⁰⁸ As he arrogantly avows, ‘I am no Friend to any thing in the West, and am positively resolv’d [...] never to have any thing to do with *Westminster*, *Westchester*, *West-Smithfield*, or the *West-Indies* [...] always excepting some of the worshipful Traders to the [...] *East-Indies*’; ‘the East’, he stresses, ‘is more properly the Concern of every good and honest Man’.²⁰⁹ Friendly’s stock sale has indeed inadvertently challenged Sir Timothy’s dualistic outlook, but it cannot be regarded as a ‘bite’. ‘A *bite*’, as Jonathan Swift explains to William Tisdall in a letter dated 16 December

²⁰⁴ Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, p. 124.

²⁰⁵ See Laura Martinez-Garcia, *Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century English Comedies as a New Kind of Drama* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2014), pp. 152-53, 207.

²⁰⁶ Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 37.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

1703, is ‘a new-fashion’d way of being witty’, which involves ‘ask[ing] a bantering question, or tell[ing] some damned lie in a serious manner’.²¹⁰ Sir Timothy’s irrational reproaches, like Don Pedro’s and Don Lopez’s avarice and ambition, eloquently bespeak how appallingly hierarchical authority can be abused.

Passive obedience on the part of women will only lead to the *de facto* perpetuation of such domestic tyranny. Yet open defiance is equally far from a viable option. Angelica, stung by Sir Timothy’s reproaches, instantly swears revenge on him, and refuses to make ‘a good Wife’: ‘I shall make [...] such a scurvy, abominable, whimsical, coxcomical, miserable, oddish, exemplary kind of a Husband of [Pinch] that the most potent Cham of *Tartary* [i.e. emperor of China’s Qing dynasty 1644-1912], that you us’d to tell us of so, shan’t show his Fellow among all the merry Men in his Country’.²¹¹ Her sly dig at his Sinophilia gets her nowhere, and only infuriates him even more. Isabella in *The Wonder* fares no better. Her suicide threat drives Lopez to lock her in the bedchamber, and all she can do is jump out of the bedchamber’s window to temporarily escape the pending arranged marriage.²¹² Their fates as unhappy brides would be sealed ultimately, were it not for Mariana and Violante, whose deceptive wit (in the form of their ‘conform-to-confound’ tactics or situational conformity) lets paternal tyranny rebound on tyrannical patresfamilias, and furthermore, diminishes the disruptive effects of their tyrannies on socio-economic harmony. Deceptive wit in such circumstances, as we shall see, may even be transformed from a vice into a virtue.

2. Women’s Secrets Revealed on the Stage: Turning Vice into Virtue

Such a transformation of deceptive wit is brought to the fore by both playwrights’ integration of the secret marital negotiation and the displaying of the human curiosity, which makes situational conformity a core element not just in both

²¹⁰ Qtd in Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660-1740: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), p. 155.

²¹¹ Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 38.

²¹² Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, pp. 128-29.

heroines' triumph over paternal tyranny, but also in both comedies' exposure of their titular human curiosities. In *The Wonder*, Violante pretends to be ignorant of Pedro's designs on her inheritance, and assures him of her resolve to enter the convent within a week. This makes Pedro delirious with joy. He even privately ascribes the 'success' of his ruse 'wholly [...] to [his] Prudent Management'.²¹³ Pedro's complacency gives Violante the opportunity to provide a secret hideaway for her friend Isabella under his very nose, and more importantly, to bring to fruition her secret marital negotiation for Isabella and Britton. Equally effective, yet more dramatic is Mariana's situational conformity in *The Biter* to Sir Timothy's 'oriental' tyranny during her secret marital negotiation for Angelica at the Croydon fair (Croydon is a town in south London; it was part of Surrey in the eighteenth century). By conforming to Sir Timothy's bitter hatred of biting, she succeeds in making the obstinate Sinophile willingly reject his own choice, Pinch; and by conforming to Sir Timothy's grand passion for her, she succeeds in making him accept instead his former reject, Friendly, as his son-in-law.

To better appreciate Mariana's spectacularly successful situational conformity, it is necessary to revisit an embarrassing, yet crucial problem that has disconcerted scholars of Sir Timothy's Orientalism. As scholars have demonstrated, Rowe is meticulous in bolstering up this humour's character's 'monomania' for anything related to the East.²¹⁴ For instance, he names Sir Timothy's servant, a minor character that hardly appears in the comedy, after a famous type of Chinese tea, Bohee (Bohea), so as to match his master's dominant humour.²¹⁵ Yet on the other hand, Rowe endows Sir Timothy with two glaringly 'unoriental' defining characteristics, namely his bitter hatred of biting and his grand passion for Mariana, an English lady who has nothing to do with the East or the East India Company.²¹⁶ The root cause of this problem, I suggest, resides in the current critical consensus

²¹³ Ibid., pp. 157-58.

²¹⁴ See Hesse, 'Who was Bit by Rowe's Comedy *The Biter*?', p. 480; Jenkins, *Nicholas Rowe*, pp. 68-72; Cohen, 'Nicholas Rowe, Aphra Behn, and the Farcical Muse', pp. 383-95.

²¹⁵ Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 20.

²¹⁶ Sir Timothy's passion for Mariana is listed alongside his Sinophilia in 'Dramatis Personae'. See Ibid., p. 20.

that Sir Timothy becomes enchanted with the East mainly because of his commercial success in the East Indies, a consensus problematically founded on the unanimous reference to the following brief account in Act I, Scene I: ‘he got his Estate by the *China* trade in the *East-Indies*, and at that time grew so fantastically fond of the Manners, Language, Habit, and every thing [*sic*] that relates to those People’.²¹⁷ However, a closer scrutiny of this account indicates that the relationship between Sir Timothy’s trade and Sinophilia should be described more accurately as temporal rather than causal.

Mariana’s success suggests that unlike modern scholars, she perfectly understands from the very start that Sir Timothy’s commercial success is not the true cause of his fanatic Sinophilia, and that his two ‘unoriental’ characteristics are in essence profoundly ‘oriental’. To make this fact more explicit to the audience, Rowe has left some clues in his characterization of Sir Timothy. Derek Cohen rightly notes that ‘many of [Sir Timothy’s] “Chinese” references have obviously been fabricated’; unfortunately, for Cohen, this only means that ‘Rowe’s knowledge of China was relatively superficial’.²¹⁸ The ‘fictitiousness’ of Sir Timothy’s Orientalism is also noticed by Michael Caines, who adds that his ‘Orientalist lingo varies between the verifiable and the nonsensical’.²¹⁹ The ‘verifiable’ lingo, I suggest, may be subdivided into two sorts. Familiar terms like Canton, Pekin(g), and Confucius can be found in assorted publications at the time, whereas obscure terms like Xamsi (a province in Northern China), Tutang (a Chinese viceroy), and Lipous (high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Rites), only in few books specifically about China.²²⁰ It is difficult to ascertain which book(s) Rowe has consulted, but he can

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 31. See Orr, *Empire on the English Stage 1660-1714*, p. 228; Hesse, ‘Who was Bit by Rowe’s Comedy *The Biter?*’, p. 478; Jenkins, *Nicholas Rowe*, p. 70; Cohen, ‘Nicholas Rowe, Aphra Behn, and the Farcical Muse’, p. 386.

²¹⁸ Cohen, ‘Nicholas Rowe, Aphra Behn, and the Farcical Muse’, p. 386.

²¹⁹ Caines, ‘Notes’, in *The Plays and Poems of Nicholas Rowe, Volume II*, p. 74n17. See also, Hesse, ‘Who was Bit by Rowe’s Comedy *The Biter?*’, p. 478.

²²⁰ Neither Rowe nor *OED* explains the term Lipou. According to Louis le Comte (1655-1728), ‘*Lipou* [i.e. ministry of rites] is to look after the Antient Customs; to this Court is also committed the care of Religion, of Sciences and Arts, and of Foreign Affairs’ (*Memoirs and Observations [...] Made in a Late Journey through the Empire of China*, [London: Printed for Benj. Tooke and Sam. Buckley, 1697], p. 258).

certainly gather from any of them enough information about China for the play, if he so desires. These fabricated Chinese references readily spice up the character of Sir Timothy, and more crucially, allow Rowe to sarcastically intimate that for this soi-disant Sinophile, what is important is not what Chinese culture actually contains, but what it signifies to his English compatriots. A key feature of ‘Chinese culture that gained especial imaginative currency in England’ during this period, according to Ros Ballaster, is its ‘political and moral absolutism’.²²¹

Admittedly, the linkage between Sir Timothy’s Sinophilia and his absolutist manners has also been suspected by Bridget Orr. Yet for her, his tyranny is merely the effect of his Sinophilia: Sir Timothy’s ‘cultural conversion to the authoritarian manners of the Chinese has not only brutalized his relations with his family, his servants and his peers but suggests madness’.²²² I agree with Orr and Hesse that Sir Timothy represents ‘a growing class of East India merchants returned to England with wealth and tastes imported from the East’.²²³ But certainly not everyone returns as a domestic tyrant, despite their acquired oriental tastes. Besides, if Sir Timothy were a sincere Sinophile, why is there nothing truly Chinese in his ‘Chinese’ references, except a few terms, and why do all his references either confirm stereotypes about Chinese absolutism or serve to foster his own tyranny?²²⁴ Hence, I contend that Sir Timothy’s tyranny is both the cause and the effect of his Sinophilia. He finds in Chinese culture a clever trick to secure his cultural ascendancy and also an ingenious cover for his abuse of paternal authority. For such a calculating autocrat, it is no exaggeration to assert that even without the veneer of Sinophilia, he will still brutalize his family, his servants and his peers.

Mariana must have seen through Sir Timothy’s Sinophilia, so she understands very well the causal relationship between his Sinophilia and his two ‘unoriental’

²²¹ Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662-1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 208.

²²² Orr, *Empire on the English Stage 1660-1714*, p. 229.

²²³ Hesse, ‘Who was Bit by Rowe’s Comedy *The Biter?*’, p. 483.

²²⁴ Sir Timothy’s ‘Chinese’ references foster his tyranny in three (sometimes overlapping) ways: 1) as exemplars to justify his tyranny; 2) as the paraphernalia for his abuse of paternal authority; and 3) as the trappings of his unassailable authority.

defining characteristics, which constitutes the basis for her decision to adopt the tactic of situational conformity. Although she has nothing to do with the East or the East India Company, she does from time to time display in front of him an ‘oriental’ personality, as it were, namely her submissiveness, which renders her ‘most amiable’ in his eyes, and becomes a pivotal reason behind his grand passion for her.²²⁵ Mariana’s situational display of her ‘oriental’ submissiveness proves essential to her success in making Sir Timothy accept Friendly. Mrs. Clever, a family friend of his, is first dispatched to have him misinformed of Mariana’s acceptance of his marriage proposal. She would ‘be his as far as possible’, if he should approve of her decision to ‘par[t] with some of [her] Fortune to a poor Relation’, and be a co-signatory of the deeds thereof.²²⁶ Mariana then reaffirms her submissiveness before signing the deeds. When asked whether she would like to join him on a journey to the imperial capital of China, she meekly answers, ‘We Women are born to obey—Sir *Timothy* may be sure I shall follow my Husband all the World over’.²²⁷ Rejoicing at her reply, he signs off the deeds without a glance, completely unaware that the deeds are actually the marriage contract between Angelica and Friendly.

No less profoundly ‘oriental’ is Sir Timothy’s hatred of biting, which is as intense as his Sinophilia, because his ‘oriental’ absolutism is radically at variance with a prime tenet of biting, that is, nothing is beyond ironical jest, or in Kate Loveman’s words, ‘any topic was fair game’ to biters.²²⁸ Given that, it is no wonder that he will deem every attempt to bite him an insufferable challenge to his unassailable authority. The epitome of this biting tenet is Squire Pinch, a Templar with an overweening pride in his wit, whose biting habit is so obsessive that he tries to tease everyone he meets and to jest about everything he knows, which severely warps his outlook on life and also turns him into a human curiosity. For Pinch, that

²²⁵ Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 38.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²²⁸ Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660-1740*, p. 65.

‘Matrimony [is ...] to prevail’ is as ironical a jest as that ‘the Pope’s a Whig, [...] the *French* King a Reformer, [and] Beauty to be abolish’d’, to name just a few.²²⁹

Mariana has never met Pinch, but she is quick-witted enough to tame him when they first meet at the Croydon fair by feigning conformity to his request of her to be his fair-visiting companion. This paves the way for his becoming a pawn in her hands. He unsuspectingly accepts her invitation to Mr. Scribblescrabble, a London solicitor, to accompany him as another fair-visiting companion. In fact, in order to expose his biting habit before Sir Timothy, Mariana has already covertly instructed the solicitor to tail Pinch wheresoever he goes, and to mislead him, should he ever bump into Sir Timothy. Everything goes as planned. Pinch believes the solicitor’s pack of lies that Sir Timothy ‘was a Mace-bearer to the Lord Chancellor of *Moscow*’, who went mad after being ‘turn’d out of his Place for having more Wit than his Master’, and immediately works himself into a biting frenzy against this ‘Mad-man’ so as to flaunt his own superior wit.²³⁰ It is already too late when the biter and the bitten discover who the other actually is. Sir Timothy is shocked to find that his prospective son-in-law is a hardened biter and thus a grave threat to his ‘oriental’ absolutist authority. Pinch is rebuffed as expected. It is not until then that Sir Timothy discovers the truth of the executed deeds, and also of Mariana’s promise to ‘be his as far as possible’, that is, becoming the wife of his estranged nephew, Mr. Clerimont. But the die is cast.

Situational conformity, as has been shown, is of utmost importance not only to Mariana’s triumph over Sir Timothy’s tyranny, but also to her exposure of the human curiosity. Similarly, Violante’s situational conformity in *The Wonder* also plays a significant part in her unconscious self-exhibiting before the audience of her unusually remarkable commitment to friendship. It is an essential precondition for honouring her promise to act as a secret go-between for Isabella and Britton, and also for keeping Pedro and her reckless fiancé Felix in the dark about her marital negotiation for Isabella. Felix, we are told, would surely forestall his sister’s marriage

²²⁹ Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 33.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

for the sake of family honour.²³¹ Scholars usually believe that it is Violante's proven ability to keep secrets or secret promises that turns her into an admirable 'wonder' woman. Nancy Copeland, for example, argues that Violante becomes a 'wonder' woman, in that she 'supplements the conventional female definition of honour based on chastity with a central component of the male honour code, maintaining a confidence, which in this case explicitly includes keeping her word'.²³² By this 'wonder' woman, adds Anderson, Centlivre highlights 'women's ability to make and keep a promise, in this case a secret', so as to challenge the 'tautology of female inferiority'.²³³ No one, however, has noticed that Violante is by no means the only woman in *The Wonder* to possess such an ability, but is the only one who has been commended for it. Her chambermaid, Mrs. Flora, for instance, can keep her secret promises equally well. In Act II, Flora is confidentially asked by Isabella to find Britton and to deliver her billet-doux to him. Enticed by generous gratuities from both sides, Flora says nothing about her secret errand to anyone including Violante, and remains sublimely indifferent to the potential trouble that her errand may cause for her mistress.²³⁴

The main difference between Flora's and Violante's secret-keeping, I argue, is that Flora's, like others' in the play, is utterly self-seeking, whereas Violante's is at least largely altruistic, so to speak. To honour her secret promise to Isabella, she runs the risk of losing her beloved Felix forever. The secrecy of her marital negotiation arouses his suspicion that she is having an amour with Britton. Were it not for her deeply sincere efforts to dispel his suspicion, Felix would probably never come to realize that her secrecy, far from a sign of infidelity, actually bears testimony to her strength of character and remarkable commitment to friendship. In terms of altruism, Violante can only be rivaled by Mariana, whose situational conformity primarily seeks to snatch the happiness of her husband's friends from the jaws of

²³¹ On the significance of the aristocratic system of honour in *The Wonder*, see Martinez-Garcia, *Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century English Comedies*, pp. 152-53, 207, *et passim*.

²³² Nancy Copeland, *Staging Gender in Behn and Centlivre: Women's Comedy and the Theatre* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 133-34.

²³³ Anderson, *Female Playwrights and Eighteenth-Century Comedy*, pp. 124, 126.

²³⁴ See Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, pp. 134-35, 138.

paternal tyranny. It is altruism, I suggest, that establishes Violante as a ‘wonder’ woman and Mariana as an equally outstanding heroine, and that facilitates the transformation of their situational conformity—or deceptive wit—from a proof of vice into a proof of virtue. To point up the altruism of their deceptive wit, all forms of the self-serving deceptive wit in both comedies are variously condemned. For instance, in *The Wonder*, Pedro’s ruse is foiled, as seen earlier; the low cunning of Felix’s attendant, Lissardo, to court at once Inis (Isabella’s chambermaid) and Flora eventually makes him renounced by both.²³⁵ In *The Biter*, Pinch ends up getting his comeuppance, even though his biting may still be regarded to some degree as a means of revenging himself on his father for his arranged marriage;²³⁶ Scribblescrabble’s chauvinistic boast about his absolute control over his wife, Dorothy, is farcically exploded via the squabble provoked by her sudden appearance at the Croydon fair with her beau, Barnaby Bandileer, a foot soldier;²³⁷ Mrs. Clever’s little trick to swindle more money out of Sir Timothy at Mariana’s cost is teased by the perceptive Clerimont;²³⁸ and last but not least, the silly age fabrication of the 55-year-old Lady Stale to seduce the 25-year-old Friendly is unwittingly betrayed by herself before the audience through one of Rowe’s carefully-crafted, yet easily-missed jests.²³⁹

3. The Secret behind the Revelation of Women’s Secrets: Moral Relativism, Whig Ideology, and Women’s Incomplete Victory

The redeeming altruism, however, is completely brushed aside by the stalwart Collierite, Arthur Bedford. As he observes in his diatribe against *The Wonder*, the only moral we learn ‘from the Example of both Ladies [Violante and Isabella]’ is

²³⁵ In contrast, Britton’s servant, Gibby, somewhat dim-witted and obtuse, yet honest, is rewarded by marriage.

²³⁶ See Rowe, *The Biter*, pp. 33-34.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 46, 55.

'Disobedience to Parents in the case of Marriage'.²⁴⁰ Had Bedford also assessed *The Biter*, his judgment on Mariana and Angelica would probably have been very similar. This should come as no surprise, given his espousal of Collier's singular truths and moral absolutism, not least one of its key doctrines, namely the doctrine of passive obedience. For him, vice can never become virtue, and nor can hierarchical authority be ever abused. Thus, his aspersions on *The Wonder* take none of the older generation to task, despite their outrageous cruelties, but let none of the younger generation escape unscathed, including the altruistic Violante.

To debunk the Collierite singular truths and moral absolutism, Centlivre and Rowe have recourse not just to altruism, but also to Whig ideology in gathering momentum for their dissection of the multiple truths about authority, virtue, and female liberty at the time. Revolution principles of Whigs are used to further justify Violante's and Mariana's situational conformity. 'True loyalty', according to the revolution principles, 'consists of obedience to the law', not to the authority figure, and 'in certain cases of necessity [...] resistance was justified'.²⁴¹ Both Centlivre and Rowe have accordingly accentuated the 'cases of necessity' for their heroines' resistance to paternal authority with their deceptive wit: confronted with gross abuses of hierarchical authority, both heroines are struggling with limited resources, and both are pressed for time. Violante has less than a week, and Mariana, only a day, to fight back on their friends' behalf, and should they fail in these vastly unequal combats, paternal tyranny would surely prevail.²⁴² To consolidate their hard-won victories, Whig legalism is duly invoked by them through the reliance they have placed on the mechanisms of the law and its overriding power (in the form of marriage contract) over the arbitrary authority of tyrannical fathers.

Energized by Whig ideology, both playwrights' participation in the Collier controversy in turn allows them to engage more profoundly with Whig ideology through the very device that makes their voices heard in the controversy, namely,

²⁴⁰ Bedford, *A Serious Remonstrance in Behalf of the Christian Religion*, p. 211.

²⁴¹ Rebecca Bullard, *The Politics of Disclosure, 1674-1725: Secret History Narratives* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009), pp. 104-05.

²⁴² See Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, p. 157; Rowe, *The Biter*, pp. 36-37.

the experimental conflation of the secret marital negotiation and the exposure of the human curiosity. The basis of this more profound engagement with Whig ideology is their experiments with what Freeman has described as the contradictory momentum within the secret marital negotiation—one towards and the other away from the ideal romantic marriage as its formal resolution.²⁴³ The centrifugal momentum comes into being, because certain ‘particularities’ in the secret marital negotiation ‘generate more seams or gaps in character motivation than they do explanation of it’.²⁴⁴ These extra seams or gaps point towards an implied ‘natural outcome’ that queries the ‘entirely satisfactory’ marital union generically conditioned by the formal resolution.²⁴⁵ The consequent inconsistency, or conceptual distance, between the natural outcome and the formal resolution of the secret marital negotiation enables both playwrights to make explicit the grim facts that their heroines’ victories are far from complete, and that their incomplete victories are caused by nothing other than the very inadequacy of Whig ideology in the cause of female liberty, that is, its inherent paternalism.

Such inconsistency is rendered all the more striking by the integration of the centripetal momentum of both heroines’ secret marital negotiations and their acts of displaying human curiosities. Their dual success resulting from the integration, as shown earlier, vigorously defends the nascent Cartesian equality of the mind between the sexes, and suggests that both heroines would fully deserve the entirely satisfactory romantic marriage promised by the generic conventions of the intrigue comedy.²⁴⁶ In *The Wonder*, Violante is made the female counterpart of Centlivre’s spokesman, Frederick, a liberal-minded Portuguese merchant trading between

²⁴³ Lisa A. Freeman, *Character’s Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 148-49.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ On the Cartesian equality of mind, see, for instance, Sarah Hutton, ‘Women, Freedom, and Equality’, in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Peter R. Anstey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 501-18; Karen O’Brien, ‘Women’s Place’, in *The History of British Women’s Writing, 1690-1750*, ed. Ros Ballaster (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 25-28.

England and Portugal.²⁴⁷ Of all characters in the play, only his intellect and loyalty in friendship can match those of Violante, as is borne out by his selfless help to his friends Felix and Britton in their times of need. Yet to highlight Violante's mental and moral capacities, Frederick is relegated to a supporting role in her secret marital negotiation, and his altruism is also downplayed. Similarly, effort has also been made in *The Biter* to highlight Mariana's, which may be better appreciated through a comparison between this play and its two literary precursors.

One of them is Ben Jonson's *Epicæne, or The Silent Woman* (1609). J. Douglas Canfield and Alfred W. Hesse argued in 1989 that the characterization of Sir Timothy is inspired by Morose from *Epicæne*, and *The Biter* has henceforth been regarded as a Jonsonian satire among scholars.²⁴⁸ Of all the shared details in the characterization of both figures, Canfield and Hesse are right to notice that both overbearing uncles have 'become estranged from [their] nephew[s]'.²⁴⁹ What has gone unnoticed, however, is that the role of this estranged nephew has undergone a crucial transformation. The nephew in *Epicæne*, Sir Dauphine Eugenie, is the major designer and executor of the scheme to outwit his tyrannical uncle, Morose, by beguiling him into marrying Epicæne, whose vaunted 'silence' perfectly suits Morose's dominant humour, namely a frantic antipathy to all sorts of sounds. By contrast, the nephew in *The Biter*, Clerimont, is demoted to a mere assistant in carrying out Mariana's plan to outsmart his no less tyrannical uncle Sir Timothy (by deluding him into thinking that the 'orientally' submissive Mariana is amenable to his marriage proposal). Despite his subordinate part, Clerimont is clearly meant as the only moral and intellectual equal of Mariana in the play. It is he who decides to enlist for her the help of Mrs. Clever, without which her secret marital negotiation

²⁴⁷ On Frederick as Centlivre's spokesman, see Copeland, *Staging Gender in Behn and Centlivre*, p. 132.

²⁴⁸ Canfield and Hesse, 'Nicholas Rowe', p. 273. On *The Biter* as a Jonsonian satire, see, for instance, Stephen Bernard and Michael Caines, General Introduction, in *The Plays and Poems of Nicholas Rowe, Volume I: The Early Plays*, ed. Rebecca Bullard and John McTague (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 15; and Michael Caines, Introduction to *The Biter, Ulysses, and The Royal Convert*, in *The Plays and Poems of Nicholas Rowe, Volume II: The Middle Period Plays*, ed. Michael Caines (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 2-13 (p. 4).

²⁴⁹ Canfield and Hesse, 'Nicholas Rowe', p. 273.

would surely encounter even more obstacles.²⁵⁰ Clever successfully helps Mariana keep an eye out for the frivolous Lady Stale, whose amorous pursuit of Friendly at the fair poses a constant threat to her secret marital negotiation.²⁵¹ All this clearly indicates that Clerimont is intelligent enough to know what can facilitate Mariana's success. His status as her moral equal may be glimpsed in his unwavering support to her secret marital negotiation for their friends, even though, as we are told, he is always 'so delicate a Lover', and he knows perfectly well that it requires his beloved to 'make [some amorous] Advances' to his uncle.²⁵²

The other precursor, Canfield and Hesse surmise, is Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), which serves as the inspiration for *The Biter's* setting at the Croydon fair.²⁵³ If Rowe's purpose, according to Canfield and Hesse, were to 'parad[e] across the stage a series of humorous characters' as Jonson has done, why would he reject the well-known Bartholomew fair in favour of the much lesser-known Croydon fair?²⁵⁴ Should not his purpose be equally attained by either of these two charter fairs, which have far more similarities than differences?²⁵⁵ *The Biter's* setting at the

²⁵⁰ See Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 23.

²⁵¹ See, for instance, *Ibid.*, pp. 52-56.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁵³ As Canfield and Hesse note, Rowe 'seems to have Jonson [i.e. his *Bartholomew Fair*] in mind in setting the play during a country fair' (Canfield and Hesse, 'Nicholas Rowe', p. 273).

²⁵⁴ Canfield and Hesse, 'Nicholas Rowe', p. 273.

²⁵⁵ Both fairs can fulfill the play's temporal requirements. *The Biter* was premiered on 4 December 1704, and the latest event alluded to therein, according to Michael Caines, is the Battle of Blenheim fought on 13 August 1704 (See Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 73n4. It is alluded to by Trick, a servant to Friendly [p. 23]). The tidings of victory did not reach England until 'eight days' later, i.e. 21 August 1704 (Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne* [New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2001], p. 187). Both Bartholomew Fair and Croydon Fair took place after this date. The former started each year from St. Bartholomew's Day, i.e. 24 August, and the latter, around St. Matthew's Day, i.e. 21 September (See Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, ed. Suzanne Gossett [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000], p. 44; and Steve Roud, *London Lore: The Legends and Traditions of the World's Most Vibrant City* [London: Arrow Books, 2010], p. 375. According to Roud, there were two fairs held each year in Croydon. 'One was held in the first week in July, and was nicknamed the Cherry Fair'; 'for most of its time [it] was overshadowed by the autumn fair, which lasted the longest and was widely known as *the* Croydon Fair'. '[A]fter the change of the calendar in 1752', the Croydon Fair 'began on 2 October' [*ibid.*]). It will not strain credibility, if someone at either fair appears to have heard of the victory. A supposed difference between these two fairs, admittedly, is put forth by Mrs. Clever in her rejoinder to Lady Stale's quibble over the 'most insufferable filth[iness]' of Croydon (Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 23). 'Methinks [Croydon Fair] is as diverting as those [i.e. May Fair and Bartholomew Fair] are, and the People are as merry here as there, tho' they are

Croydon fair, I argue, is a side effect of Rowe's appropriation of another Jacobean city humours comedy, *The London Prodigal* (1605), an appropriation that forms part of his effort to put front and centre Mariana's mental and moral capacities. This comedy, though regarded nowadays as a component of the Shakespeare apocrypha, was in the Shakespeare canon in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (1664-1734).²⁵⁶ '[U]nambiguously attributed to [Shakespeare] in print in his lifetime', it was first added to the canon in Philip Chetwinde's 1664 second impression of the Third Folio, and 'remained in the Fourth Folio (1685), which was the base text used by Shakespeare's first modern editor, Nicholas Rowe'.²⁵⁷ As editor, Rowe must have carefully perused this play, for he has made a number of emendations to its text.²⁵⁸

not so well dress'd' (Ibid., pp. 23-24). The so-called difference in fairgoers' dress, in fact, is one of Clever's ploys to draw the loud-mouthed Lady Stale out, so as to reveal more of her silliness before the audience (A comparable scene may be found in *Epicæne* Act I, Scene 4, where Sir Dauphine and his friend, Clerimont, use various ploys to draw out the loud-mouthed Sir Amorous La Foole, so as to reveal more of his silliness. See Ben Jonson, *Epicæne, or The Silent Woman*, ed. Richard Dutton [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003], pp. 135-39). Croydon Fair, however, does have a unique feature, namely its heavy consumption of walnuts, so it 'was generally known as the *Walnut fair*' (Roud, *London Lore*, p. 375). Rowe never uses this alternative name in *The Biter*, but he seems to know about it. Three of his characters, Lady Stale, Mrs. Scribblescrabble (Dorothy Pattypan), and Squire Pinch, mention on various occasions that walnuts are among the food available at the fair (See Rowe, *The Biter*, pp. 24, 49, 53). This unique feature, however, is at best part of the minutiae to shore up the play's comic realism. It is certainly not enough to make Rowe choose Croydon Fair over Bartholomew Fair as the play's setting.

²⁵⁶ Besides Rowe, according to Will Sharpe, 'Gerard Langbaine and Charles Gildon, prominent men of letters at the end of the seventeenth century, both coolly asserted Shakespeare's authorship, and their judgement stood for a time' ('Authorship and Attribution', in *William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays*, ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013], pp. 641-745 [p. 701]). On *The London Prodigal*, see, for instance, Santha Devi Arulanandam, Introduction, in 'The London Prodigal: A Critical Edition in Modern Spelling' (unpublished PhD diss. University of Auckland, 1989), pp. 2-74; Richard Proudfoot, 'Shakespeare's Most Neglected Play', in *Textual Formations and Reformations*, ed. Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), pp. 149-57; Paul Matthew Edmondson, Critical Introduction, in 'A Critical Edition of *The London Prodigal*' (unpublished PhD diss. University of Birmingham, 2000), pp. 57-149; and Peter Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha: Negotiating the Boundaries of the Dramatic Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 72-85.

²⁵⁷ Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha*, pp. 77, 23.

²⁵⁸ For Rowe's emendations, see Edmondson, 'Historical Collations' and 'Alterations to Lineation', pp. 312-48. It is not known when Rowe started his Shakespeare editing, and he could have read *The London Prodigal* when he composed *The Biter*.

A keyword search in EEBO and ECCO shows that *The London Prodigal* is the only literary work before *The Biter* that uses the Croydon fair as one of its dramatic settings.²⁵⁹ That only the Croydon fair is selected is probably related to the segment of plotline that Rowe chooses to appropriate for his comedy. Both title characters' visits to the fair share a common motive—marriage. Matthew Flowerdale, the London prodigal, attends 'Croydon Fair / To meet Sir Lancelot Spurcock', and to 'have his daughter Luce'.²⁶⁰ Pinch, the London biter, comes 'down to this very individual Town of *Croydon* to pay [his] Respects to [matrimony]' by marrying Sir Timothy's daughter, Angelica.²⁶¹ Setting *The Biter's* action at the fair may equally be affected by Rowe's attempt to satisfy the neoclassical unities, which also includes his compressing the play's action (i.e. Mariana's secret marital negotiation) into a single day, unlike *The London Prodigal*, whose action covers a minimum of three days, as Paul Edmondson argues.²⁶²

The Rowean biter is an updated version of the 'Shakespearean' prodigal. Flowerdale, though a stock character from the popular genre of the prodigal play at the turn of the seventeenth century, is endowed with a relatively unusual defining characteristic for a prodigal, namely deceitfulness, as may be partly evinced in his father's lamentation, his uncle's admonition, and his father-in-law's indignant threat.²⁶³ After spending years trading in Venice, Old Flowerdale returns to find that his son has become an inveterate deceiver. Flowerdale, he bewails, has 'grown a

²⁵⁹ Admittedly, EEBO and ECCO do have their limits. See Ian Gadd, 'The Use and Misuse of *Early English Books Online*', *Literary Compass*, 6.3 (2009), pp. 680-92; and Patrick Spedding, "'The New Machine": Discovering the Limits of ECCO', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 44.4 (2011), pp. 437-53

²⁶⁰ Anon., *The London Prodigal*, in *William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays*, ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 428, Scene 1, ll. 69-71. All subsequent references to *The London Prodigal* are from this edition.

²⁶¹ Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 33.

²⁶² See Edmondson, 'A Critical Edition of *The London Prodigal*', p. 229n7.

²⁶³ See, for instance, Edmondson, 'A Critical Edition of *The London Prodigal*', pp. 83-92; Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha*, pp. 77-80. On the genre of prodigal son plays, see, for instance, Ervin Beck, Jr., 'Prodigal Son Comedy: The Continuity of a Paradigm in English Drama, 1500-1642' (unpublished PhD diss. Indiana University, 1973); Alan R. Young, *The English Prodigal Son Plays: A Theatrical Fashion of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1979).

master in the school of vice, / One that doth nothing but invent deceit: / For all the day he humours up and down, / How he the next day might deceive his friend'.²⁶⁴ Among the deceived are his uncle and his father-in-law. His uncle earnestly exhorts him to refrain from cozening: 'Cousin [i.e. nephew], cousin, you have unclod [i.e. cheated or swindled] me, / And if you be not stayed, you'll prove / A cozener unto all that know you'.²⁶⁵ When Sir Lancelot discovers that he has been duped into giving consent to Luce's marriage, he threatens to 'sue him upon cozenage'.²⁶⁶ Flowerdale's characteristic deceitfulness has probably caught Rowe's attention, so he likewise makes a deceiver the title role of his play. His choice of a biter rather than a cozener reflects the evolution of the English culture of deception 'in the early 1700s', when biting, notes Loveman, 'was enjoying another wave of popularity', but more importantly, it is intended to serve as a better foil for Mariana's moral fiber and superior intellect.²⁶⁷

Peter Kirwan has shrewdly noticed that *The London Prodigal* and few other prodigal plays in the repertoire of the King's Men 'are uniquely characterized by their balancing of a prodigal protagonist with a strong female counterpart', reworked from 'the Patient Grissel narrative', who is given 'the power, if not the responsibility, to influence the reformation of the man' by 'her own methods of persuasion', 'Luce's disguise', for example.²⁶⁸ A manifestation of her deceptive wit, Luce's disguise as her elder sister Franck's Dutch housemaid proves crucial in her triumph over Flowerdale's deceptive wit, and ultimately even Flowerdale acknowledges that it is testimony to her 'virtue'.²⁶⁹ The superior intellect of the 'strong female counterpart' is writ large in *The Biter*.

²⁶⁴ Anon., *The London Prodigal*, p. 451, Scene 8, ll. 139-42.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 453, Scene 9, ll. 65-67.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 455, Scene 9, l. 114; p. 461, Scene 10, l. 83; p. 471, Scene 13, ll. 212, 306.

²⁶⁷ Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660-1740*, p. 155.

²⁶⁸ Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha*, p. 80.

²⁶⁹ Anon., *The London Prodigal*, p. 472, Scene 13, ll. 262-64.

Mariana's witty riposte to Pinch's request of her to be his fair-visiting companion is a case in point: 'for this Day I receive you for my Servant, and if you don't like me when that's over [...] you shall repair to your Lady Mistress [i.e. Angelica] at Night, and be marry'd to morrow for your Punishment'.²⁷⁰ By throwing back at him his perverted jest about matrimony—'Matrimony [is ...] to prevail', she beats him at his own game. The rule of biting requires that those who get teased should promptly shout out 'bite' to signal their awareness of the jest, if they do not want to be publicly humiliated. However, if he recognizes her riposte as a jest, he discredits himself and his prior jest, and if he does not, he is bitten, because for her and many others, matrimony as a blessing is a universal truth. Either way Pinch is a loser, and Mariana, a victor. This is not the only time that the biter is bitten by his own biting. Later still, for instance, Mariana indulges his itch to bite by allowing him to lure Dorothy away from her inane squabble with Scribblescrabble. In so doing, she timely averts the further disruption that the squabble would cause to her secret marital negotiation, and thus hastens Pinch's downfall—the exposure of him before Sir Timothy.²⁷¹

Despite her superior intellect and moral courage, Mariana, like Violante in *The Wonder*, is not rewarded with an entirely satisfactory marriage, due to Whig ideology's inherent paternalism or lack of concern for women's liberties. Their companionate marriages, though heralding some measure of liberty for them, are surrounded by an aura of uncertainty, an aura arising out of their failure to secure any measure of property—or, the bedrock of liberty in Whig ideology—from their victories over paternal tyranny. Mariana's lack of success on this score can be seen more clearly vis-à-vis Sir Dauphine's dual success in *Epicœne*, which not only makes Morose kiss the rod, but also secures some property for him. After the wedding ceremony, Morose is astonished to discover that the supposedly silent Epicœne is a chatterbox, but he cannot find sufficient grounds for divorce. Sir Dauphine steps in to offer his help on condition of an annuity and a promise to restore his heirship. Desperate to be relieved from his torment, Morose agrees, and only then does Sir

²⁷⁰ Rowe, *The Biter*, p. 34.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

Dauphine reveal that Epicœne is actually a boy in female disguise. By contrast, to suggest the incompleteness of Mariana's success, Rowe inserts a seemingly casual remark in the opening scene. Descrying Sir Timothy's magnificent new mansion, Friendly's servant, Trick says to Clerimont, "Twou'd ha' made your Honour a pretty Seat, if you had not fallen out with him [i.e. Sir Timothy]".²⁷² Clerimont's heirship, however, remains unrestored at the dénouement despite Mariana's brilliant success, even though it could have been easily restored, had Rowe chosen to include it in the deeds signed by Sir Timothy.

Violante fares only slightly better. At the outset of *The Wonder*, O'Brien observes, Violante 'has inherited some independent property of her own, a fact that her father has tried to keep from her', but '[n]o further mention is made of this inheritance'.²⁷³ This inheritance, pace O'Brien, is mentioned once more at the dénouement in the mutual taunts passed between Pedro and Lopez, when they realize that their efforts to pre-empt their daughters' marriages in 'Terreiro de passa' (or the Palace Yard of Lisbon) have come to naught. Pedro, true to form, pretends that Violante's 'twenty Thousand Pounds was left on certain Conditions', so he will 'not part with a Shilling', even though Felix has now become his son-in-law.²⁷⁴ 'But we have a certain Thing call'd Law', Lopez sardonically retorts, it 'shall make you do Justice, Sir'.²⁷⁵ Violante's marriage, it can be observed, transforms the domestic dissension over inheritance between her and her father into a prospective lawsuit between two aristocratic households, a battle of the sexes into a homosocial struggle, and her single-handed fight against patriarchal tyranny into a joint effort to safeguard patriarchal authority. Her marriage, admittedly, boosts the chance of securing her inheritance, but given Lopez's avarice, whether or not she can actually secure it in the end remains shrouded in great uncertainty. By dint of the inconsistency between the formal resolution and the natural outcome of the secret marital negotiation, Centlivre and Rowe craft two distinctively feminist critiques of

²⁷² Ibid., p. 21.

²⁷³ O'Brien, Introduction, p. 18.

²⁷⁴ Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, p. 172.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

Whig ideology's paternalism. In *The Wonder*, Centlivre also reasserts via this inconsistency her belief in the overarching importance of patriarchal authority and its undergirding masculine property rights to the socio-economic stability and harmony in post-Revolutionary England.

Centlivre's feminist critique of Whig ideology, unlike Rowe's, is reinforced via an important, but unrecognized juxtaposition of two icons of English liberty in Violante's secret marital negotiation, Britton and Frederick. Britton is a Scottish army officer on his way back home after three years' fight in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14). As Copeland notices, the 'association between liberty and warfare' makes him 'an unusually positive representative of the [English] nation', particularly its ideology of liberty, yet meanwhile, a great deal of effort has been devoted to depict his rakishness or libertinism.²⁷⁶ For Arthur Bedford, such characterization is contradictory, in that the colonel's libertinism belies Centlivre's affirmation of his 'excellent Principles, and strict Honour'.²⁷⁷ For scholars who are not impacted by the Collierite moral absolutism, this need not be evidence of Centlivre's self-contradiction. Copeland attributes his libertinism to the 'clichéd Scottish "wildness" and sexual incontinence', and Anderson, to Centlivre's attempt to 'allo[w] audiences the pleasure of remembering and disavowing the Roman Catholic Stuarts while revelling in their mythologized rakish charm from a safe political distance'.²⁷⁸ Britton's libertinism, I argue, indeed does not conflict with his status as an icon of English liberty, partly because 'martial libertinism', as Owen Brittan notes, is a key aspect of 'the dominant contemporary stereotype among the civilian population of the British officer in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century'.²⁷⁹ Besides, his libertine excess, manifested primarily as his eagerness to

²⁷⁶ Copeland, *Staging Gender in Behn and Centlivre*, p. 132.

²⁷⁷ See Bedford, *A Serious Remonstrance in Behalf of the Christian Religion*, pp. 209-10.

²⁷⁸ Copeland, *Staging Gender in Behn and Centlivre*, p. 132; and Misty G. Anderson, 'The Scottish Play: Nationalism, Masculinity, and the Georgian Afterlife of *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 27.3-4 (2015), p. 464.

²⁷⁹ Owen Brittan, 'Subjective Experience and Military Masculinity at the Beginning of the Long Eighteenth Century, 1688-1714', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40.2 (2017), p. 273.

satisfy his carnal appetites and the consequent lack of due respect for women's liberties, also corresponds very well with the inherent paternalism of Whig ideology.

Although Britton's attitude towards women, unlike Felix's, has not undergone a dramatic reformation throughout the play, he is rewarded by the companionate marriage nonetheless. His marriage should therefore be regarded as more of a reward for his services to English liberty against French tyranny in the war. By marrying him and Isabella in the Palace Yard—Lisbon's commercial hub and also a symbolic place of Anglo-Portuguese alliance, Centlivre extols Whigs' success of the former year in strengthening the ties between the two countries by defending Portugal's virtual most-favoured-nation treatment against the Anglo-French Commerce Bill (1713) introduced by the Tory Oxford-Bolingbroke ministry.²⁸⁰ Britton's libertinism, however, does not go unpunished. His marriage is rendered far less promising than Felix's in its prospective emotional, spiritual, and material well-being through the inconsistency between the natural outcome and the formal resolution of Violante's secret marital negotiation.

Compared with Felix's, Britton's marriage has a much weaker emotional bond as its basis. Violante and Felix, we are told, have already been in deep love before the start of the play. By contrast, Britton and Isabella have met only twice before their marriage: one is his accidental rescue of her when she escapes from her home, and the other is a brief matutinal assignation in the Palace Yard.²⁸¹ Neither meeting essentially improves their mutual knowledge, and throughout the play, their love remains under the sway of each other's prepossessing appearance. In addition, his marriage, unlike Felix's, is interfaith. The colonel is Protestant, or a professed

²⁸⁰ The Palace Yard, according to Rogério Miguel Puga, is Lisbon's commercial hub: 'Ao longo da peça é referido o local público dos encontros secretos entre Isabella e Colonel Britton, que é também o espaço da felicidade de ambos materializada na união final do casal: o "Terreiro de Passa" [...], que alberga o Paço Real da Ribeira entre o século XVI e 1755, [...] e é nesse centro financeiro da baixa de Lisboa' ('Entre o Terreiro do Paço e Londres: O Jogo de Espelhos Anglo-Português em *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret* (1714), de Susanna Centlivre', *Revista Anglo Saxonica*, 3.2 (2011), pp. 311-34 [pp. 323-24]). The Palace Yard became a symbolic place due to the recent erection of a triumphal arch in it to commemorate the Anglo-Portuguese alliance. See *Supplement* (London), Issue 153 (5-7 Jan. 1709); Gale Document Number: Z2001477894. On the Whigs' success in 1713, see, for instance, Geoffrey Holmes and Clyve Jones, 'Trade, The Scots and the Parliamentary Crisis of 1713', *Parliamentary History*, 1.1 (1982), pp. 47-77 (p. 49).

²⁸¹ Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, pp. 134, 148-49.

member of 'the *Kirk*' (the Church of Scotland), whilst Isabella is Catholic.²⁸² The interfaith marriage between Protestants and Roman Catholics, as G. A. Starr has already noted, is a major 'case of conscience' in this period; although such marriages are deemed 'not sinful', they 'are attended with such '*signal Inconveniences*' that they ought to be avoided'.²⁸³ Last but not least, Britton's marriage confirms Isabella's defiance of parental authority in Lopez's eyes, and thus greatly reduces her chance of securing her dowry of 'ten Thousand Pounds' from him.²⁸⁴ Supposing Isabella would be forgiven by Lopez at last (but no evidence is provided by Centlivre), her fortune is still ten thousand pounds less than Violante's. By awarding Britton such a less promising marriage, Centlivre issues a call for reformation in Britton's and by extension, his embodied ideology's stance on female liberty.

More positive is Centlivre's attitude towards the other icon of English liberty, Frederick, who is made not only an icon through Whig commercialism, but also her spokesman in the play. Centlivre, for instance, warns through him of the corruption of the Whig ideal of liberty. 'Liberty', he ironically asserts, 'is the Idol of the *English*, under whose Banner all the Nation Lists, give but the Word for Liberty, and straight more armed Legion wou'd appear, than *France*, and *Philip* keep in constant Pay'.²⁸⁵ Frederick's counterfactual hyperbole is meant *ipso facto* as an implicit criticism of the Whig ideology's tendency to be abused as a vacuous slogan. As Julian Hoppit shows, England's military conscription in the early eighteenth century 'was not easy' and often 'caused popular opposition', so 'recruiting officers were always wary of possible mob resistance'.²⁸⁶ More importantly, through Frederick Centlivre corrects the key defect of Britton and redefines his embodied ideology by extending its ideal of liberty to the cause of female liberty. Like Violante, Frederick vigorously defends Isabella's freedom to choose her life partner against the tyrannical Lopez.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

²⁸³ G. A. Starr, Introduction, in *Religious and Didactic Writings of Daniel Defoe*, vol.4, ed. G. A. Starr (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006), pp. 12-13.

²⁸⁴ Centlivre, *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, p. 154.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

²⁸⁶ Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 129.

All this makes Frederick a better embodiment of English liberty than Britton, even though he is not a true-born Englishman.²⁸⁷ This is politically suggestive, as it echoes Centlivre's argument in *The Wonder's* effusive dedication—the first ever play, as she proudly declares, from an English author to George Augustus, Electoral Prince of Hanover (and the future George II, reg. 1727-60)—that the German-born Prince George, though a foreigner, has great potential to become an embodiment of English liberty par excellence. Given that, it may be remarked that Frederick allows Centlivre to envision a regendered Whig ideology, and also embodies her hopes for the incoming Hanoverian dynasty.

Exposing the titular human curiosity, it turns out, constitutes only part of what Centlivre and Rowe try to attain via their 'uncertain' secret marital negotiations. As the above comparison reveals, although both playwrights celebrate Whig ideology's great potential for debunking the Collierite moral absolutism and improving women's rights, they also seek to expose its crucial inadequacy in the cause of female liberty. Their engagement with the ideology motivates them to explore the multiple truths about freedom, authority and obedience, thereby making their voices heard in the Collier controversy. Egalitarian marriages, it seems, is far from the only secret end of the secret marital negotiation.

²⁸⁷ Anderson wrongly describes Frederick as 'a British merchant' ('The Scottish Play', p. 460). Frederick is certainly not British, that is why Lopez asks him 'You have been there [i.e. England], what sort of People are the English?' (*The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*, p. 123), rather than 'you are from there' or simply 'you are English'.

CHAPTER 3

‘Curae non ipsa in Morte relinquunt’: Elizabeth Singer Rowe’s *Friendship in Death* Duology (1728-32), Otherworldly Secrets Revealed, and French Jansenism

‘*Curae non ipsa in Morte relinquunt. Virg.*’

Friendship in Death (1728), title-page motto

[Even in death their love-cares do not leave them. Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.444]²⁸⁸

Elizabeth Singer Rowe’s *Friendship in Death* duology (1728-32), according to Paula R. Backscheider, was a far more popular work than Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* trilogy (1719-20) in the eighteenth century.²⁸⁹ It was not just a popular work, but was also a pivotal contribution to the elevation of novel writing and reading in the English Protestant Enlightenment. Its contribution is based on its unusual exploration of the relationship between love, death, and the immortality of the soul, from which, as John J. Richetti argues in his field-defining study that kick-started modern Rowe studies, *Popular Fictions before Richardson* (1969), ‘the English novel derives the ideological matrix in which Richardson’s *Clarissa*, for example, may be said to achieve a heroism close to sainthood’.²⁹⁰ Rowe’s exploration is unusual, Richetti points out, mainly because its ‘assurance of immortality and salvation is provided ultimately through conjugal love (or the capacity for it), which is elevated

²⁸⁸ The translation is by Richard F. Thomas. See *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 164.

²⁸⁹ See Paula R. Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of the English Novel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), pp. 1-2.

²⁹⁰ John J. Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-1739* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 247.

to the status of beatitude'.²⁹¹ He ascribes that to Rowe's innovative 'use [of] the profane instruments of a burgeoning literary genre [i.e. amatory novella] for sacred purposes', and his ascription is widely endorsed by scholars including Backscheider, Susan Staves, Peter Walmsley, and Melanie Bigold.²⁹² Richetti is indeed right, but it is only part of the story. As this chapter argues, Rowe's appropriation of amatory novella is by no means the only source for her unusual exploration, which is equally shaped by her reading in the contemporaneous Jansenist theology of the Catholic Reformation.

Such an argument challenges an emerging scholarly consensus in the recent upsurge of interest in Rowe's fictional experiment, which holds that the *Friendship in Death* duology is an anti-Jansenist work, a consensus that stems from scholars' uncritical reception of Walmsley's argument (2011) about the relationship between *Friendship in Death* (1728)'s secret-revelatory epistles and theological appendix, titled

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 259.

²⁹² Ibid., p. 246. See also, for instance, Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of the English Novel*, pp. 44-45, 52-59; Susan Staves, *A Literary History of Women's Writing in Britain, 1660-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 168-69, 223-25; Peter Walmsley, 'Whigs in Heaven: Elizabeth Rowe's *Friendship in Death*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 44.3 (2011), pp. 315-30; and Melanie Bigold, *Women of Letters, Manuscript Circulation, and Print Afterlives in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 18-91. Although more and more scholars begin to pay attention to Rowe's fiction, 'reconsideration of her fiction', as Backscheider notes, still 'lagged far behind that of her poetry' (Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of the English Novel*, p. 2). On Rowe's religious poetry, see, for instance, Henry F. Stecher, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe, the Poetess of Frome: A Study in Eighteenth-Century English Pietism* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1973); Madeleine Forell Marshall, *The Poetry of Elizabeth Singer Rowe (1674-1737)* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), pp. 1-94; Norma Clarke, 'Soft Passions and Darling Themes: from Elizabeth Singer Rowe (1674-1737) to Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806)', *Women's Writing*, 7.3 (2000), pp. 353-71; Jennifer Richards, 'Introductory Note', in *Elizabeth Singer [Rowe]*, ed. Jennifer Richards (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), pp. ix-xvi; Lori A. Davis Perry, 'Elizabeth Singer Rowe (1674-1737): A Literary History and Critical Analysis' (unpublished PhD diss., Brandeis University, 2003); Paula R. Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 113-74; Sarah Prescott, 'Elizabeth Singer Rowe (1674-1737): Politics, Passion and Piety', in *Women and Poetry, 1660-1750*, ed. Sarah Prescott and David E. Shuttleton (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 71-78; Dustin D. Stewart, 'Elizabeth Rowe, John Milton and Poetic Change', *Women's Writing*, 20.1 (2013), pp. 13-31; Jessica Clement, "'My Bright Love shall all this blackness chase": The Theological Poetry of Elizabeth Singer Rowe', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 41.2 (2018), pp. 289-301; and Melanie Bigold, 'Self-Fashioning and Poetic Voice: Elizabeth Singer Rowe's Authorial Prerogative', *The Review of English Studies*, 70.293 (2019), pp. 74-94.

‘Thoughts on Death’.²⁹³ *Friendship in Death* presents twenty secret epistles written by nineteen departed spirits to their still-living friends. Each epistle unveils some otherworldly secrets—secrets that are supposedly only knowable from beyond the grave—as a means of highlighting the need to live a virtuous life. They are presented alongside a theological excerpt by one of the ‘Messieurs du Port Royal’, or a male hermit of the celebrated abbey of Cistercian nuns near Paris, the Port Royal des Champs. The said ‘Monsieur’ is one of the most eminent Jansenist theologians on the Continent, Pierre Nicole (1625-95), who was also lauded at the time as ‘one of the most beautiful pens in Europe’.²⁹⁴ According to Walmsley, Rowe appends the excerpt by Nicole to her epistles, because ‘she wants her reader to compare Nicole’s approach to the afterlife with her own, which is startlingly different’, and hence her *Friendship in Death* duology is anti-Jansenist in nature.²⁹⁵

This chapter argues that on closer scrutiny, Rowe’s and Nicole’s approaches to death and the afterlife turn out not to be startlingly different, but are essentially one and the same, and so the *Friendship in Death* duology is a Jansenist fiction. Walmsley’s influential argument about their ‘startlingly different’ approaches stems from his non-Jansenist reading of the Jansenist appendix and his literal interpretation of both the epistolary medium of Rowe’s otherworldly revelation and its inevitable imaginative trappings. A literal interpretation thereof should be avoided at all costs, not just because the literal interpretation of the ‘letters of the dead’ is an anachronism in Rowe’s own time, but also because it will lead to a fundamental misunderstanding about the core of her unusual exploration, namely the ‘friendship in death’. As regards the excerpt, Walmsley does not realize that it is an integral part of Nicole’s mild Jansenism in one of his major works on Jansenist practical Christianity, *Essais de morale (Moral Essays)* 4 vols. (1671-78), and therefore, though it is meant to be read as a self-contained piece, it should still be interpreted in the

²⁹³ Walmsley’s argument, for instance, is uncritically cited in Backscheider’s magisterial monograph on Rowe’s fictional experiment, see Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of the English Novel*, p. 239n41.

²⁹⁴ Thomas Palmer, *Jansenism and England: Moral Rigorism across the Confessions* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 62.

²⁹⁵ Walmsley, ‘Whigs in Heaven: Elizabeth Rowe’s *Friendship in Death*’, p. 321.

Jansenist way all the same, that is to say, with two things in mind: first, Jansenism's Augustinianism; and secondly, Nicole's related Jansenist thoughts in the same treatise collection. Walmsley's non-Jansenist reading also leads him to believe that the appendix is solely concerned with death. Rowe appends the excerpt, I suggest, mainly because she wants to show that her unusual exploration of the relationship between love, death, and the immortality of the soul is theologically sound.

To reveal how Jansenism informs and shapes Rowe's duology, not least her unusual exploration therein, this chapter starts by re-assessing the relationship between *Friendship in Death's* epistles and appendix. Special attention will be paid to examining those crucial, yet critically overlooked details in her otherworldly secrets, so as to reconstruct the epistles' overarching stance on death and the afterlife, and also to demonstrate for the first time that what she really means by the 'friendship in death' is by no means what scholars have long believed to be the death-transcending earthly love and friendship (Part I). It is accompanied by a re-reading of the appendix in the very manner originally intended by Nicole, which will show that the appendix is not solely concerned with death, but is equally concerned with love, and that the Nicolean Jansenism is indeed the theological fountainhead for her unusual exploration, not least its proposal of the key concept, the 'friendship in death' (Part II). The chapter concludes by arguing that the Nicolean Jansenism may also be the key to helping us resolve a pivotal, yet perplexing problem in the burgeoning Rowe studies about the 'this-worldly secret' behind her duology: what is the logical connection between her attempt to convince her readers of the soul's immortality in *Friendship in Death*, and her epistolary revelation of living exemplars of Christian virtue in the sequel, *Letters Moral and Entertaining* (1729-32)? (Part III). The duology, as we shall see, is not just 'a literary polemic against unbelief waged on the emotional and human level', as scholars have believed to date, but is also a bipartite program for national reformation of manners in Britain, a program closely modeled on Nicole's bipartite self-reform program for his fellow Christians in the fourth volume of *Essais de morale*.²⁹⁶ In revealing Jansenism's multi-faceted influences on the duology, this chapter also contributes to rethinking the current historiography

²⁹⁶ Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson*, p. 259.

about Jansenism that regards it as a theological movement primarily in early modern France with no known impact on the contemporaneous English literary scene.²⁹⁷

1. Rowe's Otherworldly Secrets for England: Earthly Love, Heavenly Love, and the Friendship in Death

The *Friendship in Death* duology is a Jansenist fiction. To appreciate how its composition is shaped by Jansenism, it is fitting to start with a reappraisal of the crucial relationship between *Friendship in Death*'s epistles and appendix. According to Walmsley's influential argument, Rowe appends this theological extract, because she 'wants her reader to compare Nicole's approach to the afterlife with her own, which is startlingly different'.²⁹⁸ It is bolstered with his two sub-arguments. First, 'where Nicole imagines the newly dead tumbling through a terrible void, Rowe's spirits write from a heaven they fully inhabit and possess'.²⁹⁹ Secondly, 'unlike Nicole, who saw death as 'the cancelling [of] all human Ties', Rowe imagines us passing from earth to heaven not just with our personal identities intact, but bearing our earthly loves as well'.³⁰⁰ Taken together, those two points show that her

²⁹⁷ On Jansenism, see, for instance, Thomas O'Connor, 'Jansenism', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ancien Régime*, ed. William Doyle (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 318-36; Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 176-230; William Doyle, *Jansenism: Catholic Resistance to Authority from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 2000); Dale K. Van Kley, 'Jansenism and the International Suppression of the Jesuits', in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. VII: Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660-1815*, ed. Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 302-28; Brian E. Strayer, *Suffering Saints: Jansenists and Convulsionnaires in France, 1640-1799* (Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2008); Daniella Kostroun, *Feminism, Absolutism, and Jansenism: Louis XIV and the Port-Royal Nuns* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁹⁸ Walmsley, 'Whigs in Heaven: Elizabeth Rowe's *Friendship in Death*', p. 321.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 324. A similar view is held by Richetti, who argues that for Rowe, 'the afterlife is best imagined as a glorified and intensified version of the joys of lovers' and '[earthly] love provides a transition from one world to the next' (*Popular Fiction before Richardson*, pp. 258-59). See also Philip C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 104.

‘friendship in death’ refers to the death-transcending earthly love and friendship between those departed spirits in heaven and their still-living friends on earth.

Walmsley’s construction of Rowe’s overarching stance on death and the afterlife in the epistles is inaccurate. His two sub-arguments, that is, first, ‘Rowe’s spirits write from a heaven they fully inhabit and possess’, and secondly, ‘Rowe imagines us passing from earth to heaven not just with our personal identities intact, but bearing our earthly loves as well’, stems directly from his literal interpretation of the epistolary medium of Rowe’s otherworldly revelation and also its inevitable imaginative trappings. Walmsley is not the only one to have done so. The literal interpretation is initiated by Richetti and continues until now. It may be seen, for instance, in the aforementioned influential argument of Richetti that Rowe’s ‘assurance of immortality and salvation is provided ultimately through conjugal love (or the capacity for it), which is elevated to the status of beatitude’. Richetti’s argument clearly indicates that he, like Walmsley, believes that the heavenly love imagined by Rowe is just the earthly love that remains intact after death, and it is one’s earthly love that is the key to one’s attainment of immortality and salvation after death. Most recently, the literal interpretation leads Bryan Mangano (2017) to further argue that ‘[t]he authenticity of the letter medium is utterly taken for granted’ by Rowe in *Friendship in Death*, because ‘at no point does [she] call into question the authenticity of letters or the relation of speech to private consciousness the way that Richardson’s novels later do’.³⁰¹ Rowe, admittedly, has never called into question the authenticity of her letter medium in the Richardsonian way. It is, of course, partly due to the obvious fact that her morally respectable appropriation of the morally dubious amatory novella, or to use William B. Warner’s term, her ‘attempt to overwrite the novels of amorous intrigue’, predates Richardson’s by more than a decade, as the Richardsonian way was not invented until 1740, when he published his first epistolary novel, *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded*.³⁰²

³⁰¹ Bryan Mangano, *Fictions of Friendship in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 42.

³⁰² William B. Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley, LA and London: University of California Press, 1998), p. xv. For Richardson’s later attempt to overwrite novels of amorous intrigue, see Warner, *Licensing Entertainment*, pp. 176-230.

More importantly, there is no need for that, because the literal interpretation of the ‘letters of the dead’ is an anachronism in Rowe’s time. For Rowe’s contemporary readers, it is the fictionality, not the authenticity, of her letter medium that would be taken for granted. Though a type of epistolary fiction, the ‘letters of the dead’ has a far closer affinity with a hugely popular non-epistolary genre at the time, namely the ‘dialogues of the dead’, than with any other types of epistolary fiction. That should not be very surprising. As Clare Brant reminds us in her magisterial study of the eighteenth-century British epistolary literature, ‘early eighteenth-century writers imagined letters from the dead to the living’ as an important way of ‘represent[ing] [letter-]writing as conversation, in which voice acts as a half-way point between body and consciousness’.³⁰³ Both the ‘letters of the dead’ and the ‘dialogues of the dead’ have classical origins, and as Frederick M. Keener points out, their shared ‘way of mingling trifling fictions with the most awful, sacred truths’ was well-known among readers in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³⁰⁴ Their mingling of trifling fictions with sacred truths is ineluctable, it should be noted, because both have to represent somehow the unrepresentable state of the afterlife, and both have to use earthly language to imagine somehow the unearthly world after death, or what Shakespeare memorably calls ‘the undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveler returns’.³⁰⁵ Rowe’s letter medium and its related lifelike addresses are exactly such trifling fictions—or imaginative trappings—of the letters of the dead. It is thus anachronistic on the part of scholars to literally read those imaginative trappings as the definitive proof for Rowe’s supposed belief in both the departed spirits’ ability to ‘write from a heaven they fully inhabit and possess’ and the intactness of their earthly loves and identities after death.

³⁰³ Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 22.

³⁰⁴ Frederick M. Keener, *English Dialogues of the Dead: A Critical History, An Anthology, and A Check List* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 3-4, 14.

³⁰⁵ *Hamlet*, Act 3, scene 1, ll.81-82. William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare* (2nd Edition), ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), p. 698.

The literal interpretation of the letters of the dead should be avoided at all costs, not just because it is an anachronism, but also because it will lead to a fundamental misunderstanding of the most awe-inspiring, sacred truths that those spirits' epistles seek to convey to their readers about the relationship between love, death, and the immortality of the soul. Their key sacred secret can be summarized as follows. As the soul is immortal and death is profoundly traumatic (for it cancels all human ties, not least earthly identities and loves), it is therefore highly necessary to make provision for one's afterlife when one is still alive, if one does not want to have an afterlife that is equally traumatic. The only means of avoiding eternal damnation and attaining eternal bliss is to practice virtue, that is, to regulate one's passionate self-love for God's creations with one's love for God, the Creator. Blessed are they who do so, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The heavenly kingdom is theirs, because their constant and vigilant regulation of their souls' self-love will secure themselves the 'friendship in death', which is the only support and pleasure the soul may depend on when death dissolves all the pleasure and support it has from anything or anyone it loves in this world. Because of the 'friendship in death', even the profoundly traumatic death will be rendered no longer traumatic to the soul.

What Rowe means by the friendship in death, I contend, is by no means what scholars have long believed to be. According to them, the friendship in death is the heavenly love expressed by those departed spirits in heaven to their still-living friends on earth via their lifelike secret epistles, and the heavenly love is in turn their previous earthly love and friendship that are kept intact after death, so the friendship in death is essentially the death-transcending earthly love and friendship. Such a scholarly consensus has in effect equated three concepts in Rowe's unusual exploration, namely, earthly love, heavenly love, and the friendship in death. The truth, however, is that Rowe has made great effort to distinguish between those concepts. But all her effort is unduly neglected by scholars in their literal interpretations.

Rowe is acutely aware that due to the limits of earthly language in differentiating erotic passions from religious ones, her imagined heavenly love may appear deceptively similar to the earthly love depicted in popular amatory novellas

of the 1720s (such as those by Eliza Haywood, c.1693-1756), so she strives to alert her readers to the false resemblance between the two types of love. Her method is through highlighting in various ways the inadequacy of earthly language in representing everything about the heavenly kingdom. For instance, in the fifth epistle, she notes via Junius' revelation the difference between earthly and celestial languages. Unlike earthly language, '[t]he Language of this charming Region [i.e. God's kingdom] is perfectly musical and elegant, and becoming the fair Inhabitants'.³⁰⁶ In the seventh epistle, she reminds readers via Delia's revelation to Emilia of the great difficulty in making revelations about the heavenly kingdom. 'Twill be impossible for me to give the Intelligence [...] from invisible Regions [i.e. God's kingdom], unless I could translate the Language of Paradise into that of Mortals'.³⁰⁷ However, the said translation from heavenly language into the earthly one of the addressee can never be complete nor be faithful, because in God's kingdom, as an anonymous spirit (XIII) reveals to his friend, Climene, celestial inhabitants 'live, and act in a way inexpressibly superior to mortal Life'.³⁰⁸ As a result, the ultimate inexpressibility of immortal life, or the ultimate inability of earthly language to fully and faithfully represent the heavenly life, is repeatedly brought to readers' minds. The unnamed spirit of epistle XIV, for instance, tries to reveal to his sister in earthly language the 'immortal Bliss' he is now enjoying; yet despite much effort, he finally admits that 'I see, I hear Things unutterable, such as never enter'd into the Heart of mortal Man to conceive'.³⁰⁹ The 'superior Heaven' is inconceivable to mortals, adds Philander (XV) in his revelation to his beloved Henrietta, because 'here Description fails, and all beyond is unutterable'.³¹⁰ Although the heavenly existence is ultimately inconceivable and unutterable in this world, and although it is therefore beyond our comprehension, it

³⁰⁶ Rowe, *Friendship in Death in Twenty Letters from the Dead to the Living* (London: Printed for T. Worrall, 1728), 29. All subsequent references to *Friendship in Death* are from this edition.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 82.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

shouldn't be beyond our attention, because even an imperfect knowledge of it is of great use to our well-being in this life and our salvation in the afterlife. That is why those blessed spirits spare no effort in giving their still-living friends a glimpse of it.

Highlighting the inadequacy of earthly language is not just a warning against misreading the heavenly love as the earthly love that is kept intact after death, but is also a means to calling readers' attention to those crucial details revealed by blessed spirits about the essential difference between the two. Yet all those details are utterly brushed aside in various literal interpretations. As Ethelinda (IV) discloses to her unnamed aristocrat lover, 'the Heavenly Nations' are 'the native Dominions of Love', where God or 'the Substance of Love dwells', whilst 'its Shadow only is to be found on Earth'. Unlike earthly love, heavenly love knows 'no Conflict 'twixt Passion and Virtue', so all inhabitants of God's kingdom can freely enjoy what they love without any restraints.³¹¹ Ethelinda's crucial secret about heavenly love is confirmed by Altamont (II), for instance, who divulges to his friend, Beville, that his recent heavenly reunion with his predeceased lover, Almeria, allows them to 'reve[[] with guiltless and unmolested Freedom'.³¹² Heavenly love is rid of the conflict between passion and virtue, because in heavenly love, as Ethelinda further reveals, 'Nothing selfish or irregular, nothing that needs Restraint or Disguise mingles with the noble Ardour' (i.e. the soul's love for God).³¹³ Admittedly, Ethelinda does not give a name to this 'selfish or irregular' something that 'needs Restraint or Disguise', but Nicole does. It is the soul's self-love (for God's creations). In contrast, earthly love is at best an admixture of the embodied soul's self-love and love for God. It is also true of the holiest type of earthly love, namely devout individuals' passionate love for God, which no matter how pure or noble it is, will always be adulterated to some extent with their self-love. According to Nicole (in paras. 3 and 4 of the appendix), it is because the very origin of the soul's self-love lies in the soul's embodiment in human form, so unless the soul is disembodied at the moment of

³¹¹ Ibid., pp. 23-24; see also Nicole, Treatise I, Bk. III, Ch. IX, in *Moral Essays: The Fourth Volume* (London: Printed for Samuel Manship, 1696), p. 138.

³¹² Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, p. 12.

³¹³ Ibid., p. 23.

death, its self-love for God's creations will always persist. The soul's self-love can therefore be deemed a key feature that differentiates earthly and heavenly love, and by extension, also their respective bases, namely the soul's earthly and heavenly identities.

A lack of self-love determines that the soul's heavenly love, despite its striking resemblance with the soul's former earthly love, should not be interpreted as the 'carnal beatitude', as Nicole notes in *Essais de morale* (Vol. IV, Treatise I, Bk. II, Ch. VIII).³¹⁴ It also determines that the soul in heaven can experience the outpouring of God's love in a direct and unmediated manner totally unimaginable on earth. As the enraptured Delia reveals to Emilia (VII), here '[God's] LOVE reigns in Eternal Triumph, [...] the fair Face of Eternal Love unveils its original Glories, and appears in the Perfection of uncreated Beauty, how wondrous, how ineffable the Vision!'³¹⁵ The blessed soul's unmediated experience of God's love is so powerful that it makes the soul's own expression of love an integral part of the outpouring of the divine love.³¹⁶ In other words, the soul's love for other blessed souls in heaven and for God's potential elect on earth (that is, their friendship in death for their still-living friends) is consequently rendered as selfless and self-sufficient as God's love per se. As Amanda (VI) clearly reveals to her beloved sister, her heavenly revelations are made not because of her former earthly love for her sister (as 'the Engagements of Nature are cancell'd' at death), but purely because 'the superior Obligations of Virtue remain in their full force'.³¹⁷ That is to say, the heavenly love or friendship expressed by Amanda for her sister via her revelatory epistle is by no means the former earthly love or friendship between siblings, but a brand new love or friendship from heaven between a soul blessed by God and a potential elect of God, a selfless friendship that is purely based on virtue and for the sake of virtue. The selflessness of that brand new love or friendship is also highlighted in several other epistles. For instance, as Cleander (XII) notes in his revelation to his dear brother,

³¹⁴ Nicole, *Moral Essays* (IV), p. 135.

³¹⁵ Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, pp. 38-39.

³¹⁶ See also Treatise I, Bk. I, Ch. XII, *Moral Essays* (IV), pp. 43-44.

³¹⁷ Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, p. 31.

‘In this superior State, my Concern for your [future] Happiness must be all abstract and generous’³¹⁸; or as Clerimont (X, XI) reveals to his dear ward, Leonora, ‘when releas’d from their earthly Prison [i.e. the earthly bodies of God’s potential elect...] their Concern for Human Welfare is infinitely more tender and disinterested than before’.³¹⁹

The essential difference between the blessed spirits’ friendship in death for their still-living friends and their former earthly friendship is most clearly represented in the epistle to a grief-stricken Countess by her only son, Narcissus (III), who died recently at the age of two, an epistle that also reveals the very essence of the friendship in death. Rowe regards the earthly love or family affection between the infant Narcissus and his mother also as a kind of friendship, because in her time, the word ‘friend’ had a much broader denotation than it has nowadays. As Naomi Tadmor notes, ‘today the word “friend” is not applied ordinarily to designate familial relationships, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries usages of ‘friend’ to designate kin were extremely common’.³²⁰ When alive, the two-year-old Narcissus could at best express his love for his mother through body language or simple speech. But the instant ‘Elevation of Reason’ after his death enables him to express his love now with Ciceronian eloquence.³²¹ However, the love expressed by him in death is not that of an infant for his dear mother, but is a selfless love from a messenger of God to a potential elect of God that serves a single purpose, a purpose that is shared by all the other blessed souls—or, messengers of God—in *Friendship in Death*, namely, to promote the addressee’s well-being in this life and their future happiness in the afterlife. In his affectionate revelation, Narcissus tells his mother that her unquenchable grief at his death betrays her soul’s strong attachment to earthly grandeur, which in this case takes the form of his former earthly self as ‘the only Hope of an illustrious Family, and Heir to a vast Estate and distinguish’d

³¹⁸ Ibid., p. 70.

³¹⁹ Ibid., p. 58.

³²⁰ Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 167.

³²¹ Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, 18; on the elevation of reason after death, see also Treatise I, Bk. I, Ch. XII; Bk. II, Ch. VII, *Moral Essays* (IV), pp. 42, 78.

Title'.³²² Yet 'all earthly Grandeur', Narcissus reveals, is just 'Pageantry and Farce' only 'proper for the four-footed Animals', if compared to his current 'celestial Glory'.³²³ It is celestial glory, not earthly grandeur, that she should work towards for the sake of her own soul. The first step is to moderate her intense grief, which requires her to place greater trust in God's love for both him and herself, and to accordingly restrain her self-love for that vain creation by God's creations—earthly grandeur.

As a messenger of God, the blessed two-year-old's sacred message for his mother is essentially a token of love and friendship from God Himself to the soul of His potential elect. That is exactly what Rowe means by the friendship in death. God's love needs to be conveyed by a divine messenger like Narcissus, that is, via certain sort of mediation, because the self-love of the addressees' embodied souls makes it impossible for them to experience God's love in a direct and unmediated manner as those souls do in heaven. To requite God's love and friendship, the embodied soul has to practice virtue, which is essentially the constant regulation of its self-love for God's creations with its love for God. Its regulation of self-love will secure itself the friendship in death (that is, God's love and friendship) at the moment of death and also in the afterlife. Those who have not secured God's love and friendship will not only be damned in their afterlife, but will also find their moment of death unbearably traumatic. As Cleander (XII) reveals to his dear brother, one of his brother's friends, Carlos, a dissolute atheist, has just died a most dreadful death, because of his failure to win God's eternal friendship. Death 'gave him [i.e. Carlos] inexpressible Horrors, [...and] never did [any] Mortal give up his Life in a manner more cowardly and inconsistent'.³²⁴ In contrast, for those who have won God's eternal friendship, even the profoundly traumatic death is rendered bearable. As Clerimont (I) reveals to his friend, the Earl of R—, 'never was the last, the closing part of Life, perform'd with more Decency and Grandeur' than the death of the earl's brother, whose 'ready Composure' at that critical moment would

³²² Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, p. 16.

³²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

not have been possible, ‘if he had not been assisted by a Power superior to Nature’, that is, God’s eternal friendship.³²⁵ That is exactly the power of the ‘friendship in death’, a salvific power that can ‘raise the *Heart* of Man, at the Hour of Terror, and in the Jaws of Death’, and also an eternal love that can truly transcend the limits of death.³²⁶ Rowe’s friendship in death, as we have seen, is not what scholars have believed to be the death-transcending earthly love and friendship between the departed spirits and their still-living friends, but is a type of heavenly love between God and His potential elect that is essentially different from earthly love.

2. Nicole’s ‘Thoughts on Death’: Love, Death, and Rowe’s Key Otherworldly Secret

To show that her unusual exploration of the relationship between love, death, and the immortality of the soul is theologically sound, Rowe appends the excerpt by Nicole. The appendix, according to Walmsley, is solely concerned with death. Though entitled ‘Thoughts on Death’, the appendix, if read in the Jansenist way, is actually not solely concerned with death, but is equally concerned with love. In it, Nicole expounds on his complex thesis about the relationship between death and three types of love, namely the embodied soul’s self-love for God’s creations (or creations by God’s creations), its love for God the Creator, and God’s love for the soul, although it is true that none of those three exact terms are deployed. In his aforementioned second sub-argument, Walmsley is indeed right to observe that ‘Nicole [...] saw death as “the cancelling [of] all human Ties”’, but he is not right to observe in his first sub-argument that ‘Nicole imagines the newly dead tumbling through a terrible void’. What Nicole has actually said is that only the newly dead that are damned (that is, those souls that have not secured God’s friendship in death) will ‘tumb[e] through a terrible void’. Walmsley’s first sub-argument is based on his belief that the last paragraph of the appendix (para. 14) is a fair summation of the entire appendix, which is cited by him in its entirety:

³²⁵ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

³²⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

'Tis not possible in this World, to comprehend a State so perfectly miserable, all one can say, to give some Idea of it, is this: 'Tis a terrible Fall of the Soul, by a sudden Removal of all its Supports; 'tis an horrible Famine, by a Privation of its Nourishment, 'tis an infinite Void, by the Annihilation of all that fill'd it; 'tis an extream Poverty, by the entire Loss of that which was its Wealth; 'tis a ghastly Solitude, by the Separation it finds it self in, from all Union and Society, 'tis a dreadful Desolation, by the Want of all Consolation, 'tis a cruel Rapture, which violently rends the Soul from every Object of its Love.³²⁷

The above paragraph also leads Walmsley to conclude that in the appendix, 'Nicole argues that our minds are so dependent on the pleasure and support we receive from material objects and those we love that death must be profoundly traumatic for the soul'.³²⁸ Nicole does argue that death is 'profoundly traumatic for the soul', because death forces the soul to relinquish all the 'pleasure and support' it has received from those things and people it loves on earth. But he never says that death '*must be* profoundly traumatic for the soul' (emphasis mine). In fact, Nicole says in paragraph 12 that for those blessed souls who have secured God's friendship in death, death will not be profoundly traumatic, and their afterlife will be blissfully happy. That particular paragraph underpins Rowe's proposal of the key concept, the friendship in death. However, paragraph 12 has not been noticed by Walmsley, and it is not known whether that was caused by a momentary oversight or by the theological jargons it uses.

Paragraph 14 is never meant by Nicole and Rowe as a summation of all those paragraphs before it. Walmsley has not compared Rowe's translated appendix with Nicole's original text, so he does not know that Rowe's appendix is an incomplete version of the seventh chapter, 'I. Manière de considérer la mort, qui est de la regarder comme la destruction du monde pour chacun des mourans. Effets terribles de cette destruction sur l'âme' ('On the first manner of contemplating death, which is to consider it as the destruction of the world for every dying person, and also on its terrible effects on the soul'), of *Essais de morale's* Volume IV, Treatise I, 'Des

³²⁷ See Walmsley, 'Whigs in Heaven: Elizabeth Rowe's *Friendship in Death*', pp. 320-21.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

quatre dernières fins de l'homme' ('On the Four Last Ends of Man'), Book I, 'De la Mort' ('On Death'). Rowe has in fact only translated about two-thirds of that chapter from its outset, so the last paragraph of her appendix is not the original conclusion of Nicole's chapter.³²⁹ Paragraph 14, together with paragraph 13, as we shall see, is an important component of Nicole's complex thesis that depicts the miserable state of the damned souls at death and in the afterlife, and is meant to be a sharp contrast with the experience of the blessed souls in paragraph 12. To better show the relationship between those paragraphs in the appendix, and also to show how the appendix serves as the theological fountainhead for Rowe's unusual exploration of love, death, and the soul's immortality in the epistles, this chapter will provide a re-reading of the appendix in the very manner originally intended by Nicole.

It is true that throughout the appendix, as Walmsley has noticed, Nicole does not highlight the soul's immortality as Rowe does in her epistles. That is because for Nicole as a Jansenist theologian, the Augustinian doctrine of the soul's immortality is indisputable, so the doctrine is simply used as an essential and self-evident premise for his entire treatise on the four last ends of man. It should not be very surprising. After all, Jansenism, as a much-contested theological movement in the Catholic Reformation, originated from Cornelius Jansen's *Augustinus* (1640), a lengthy and bulky treatise on the predestinarian theology of St. Augustine that 'doubted the scriptural and patristic authenticity of the Jesuits' pastoral and educational ideology' and sought to 'correct it according to the theology of grace outlined in the later, anti-Pelagian works of St. Augustine, the greatest of the Western fathers'; and strongly influenced by the *Augustinus*, all Jansenists espoused rigorous Augustinianism.³³⁰

The thesis of the appendix may be divided into six components. The first component (paras. 1 and 2) starts by identifying a common mistake in the manner of contemplating death. Many people, Nicole remarks, are apt to form their ideas of

³²⁹ See Pierre Nicole, *Essais de Morale Volume 1: Tomes 1-6* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), pp. 321-24 (pp. 40-48).

³³⁰ O'Connor, 'Jansenism', p. 319.

death ‘on what Men cease to do in dying’, rather than ‘on what they begin to do and feel [via their souls therewith]’.³³¹ He then explains why the soul will feel a heightened sense of privation when death occurs (the second component: paras. 3 and 4). The soul, Nicole explains in paragraph 3, is ‘form’d to know and love’, but it is not formed ‘with a Capacity to sustain it self’. That is to say, the soul is not capable of satisfying on its own its inborn inclinations for knowledge and love. Hence to gratify its inclinations, or in Nicole’s parlance, ‘to fill the Void it finds in it self’, it always needs to find ‘some foreign Support’ from ‘[external] Objects’ (the ‘objects of sense’ include not just material objects, but people as well). When one is alive, one’s soul is united to one’s body, so the soul has to perceive its loved objects through the body’s mediation. The soul’s ‘different Ways of [mediated] perceiving are called Sensations’, which enable it to be ‘united [to those objects] by its Passions’. As Nicole emphatically points out, the soul always ‘leans and reposes on them [i.e. its loved objects], when it is not entirely united to God’.³³²

That echoes his famous theory of ‘two loves’ in earlier volumes of *Essais de morale*.³³³ To put it crudely, human love falls into two categories, the soul’s love for God the Creator (which is termed *charité* or charity) and the soul’s self-love for God’s creations (*amour propre* or self-love). For those who want to secure God’s eternal love and friendship at death and in the afterlife, all their actions need to be performed in the spirit of charity, that is to say, with one’s love for God always in mind. Constantly regulating one’s self-love for God’s creations with one’s charity can prevent the embodied soul from falling too deeply into what Nicole calls the sin of ‘*concupiscence*’, namely the preference for oneself over one’s Creator that is consequent upon one’s excessive self-love for God’s creations. The more self-love one’s soul has for God’s creations, the less love it will have for God.

³³¹ Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, p. 116.

³³² *Ibid.*, pp. 117-18.

³³³ See, for instance, ‘*De la charité et de l’amour propre*’ in volume 3. On Nicole’s two loves, see Dale Van Kley, ‘Pierre Nicole, Jansenism, and the Morality of Enlightened Self-Interest’, in *Anticipations of the Enlightenment in England, France, and Germany*, ed. Alan Charles Kors and Paul J. Korshin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), pp. 69-85 (pp. 72-73); E. D. James, *Pierre Nicole, Jansenist and Humanist* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), pp. 108-15.

Such a causal relationship is in effect reiterated in paragraph 3, only in different terms. When the soul is ‘not entirely united to God’, that is, when the soul is not filled with charity or love for God, it necessarily ‘leans and reposes on [its loved objects]’, that is, it must be filled with its self-love for God’s creations. The soul’s constant reliance on its loved objects—that is, the soul’s constant indulgence in its self-love—, Nicole notes in paragraph 4, is so natural that people ‘are not always sensible of these Tyes [between one’s soul and its loved objects]’. Only when death occurs, when the soul is forced to be separated from the body, and all the loved objects of its self-love are snatched away, will the soul have ‘a Sense of the Privation, proportionable to its Union with them’.³³⁴ In other words, the more attached the soul is to its loved objects, the stronger sense of privation the soul will suffer when death strikes.

To be sensible of those ties between the soul and its loved objects before death occurs, Nicole remarks in paragraphs 5 through 9 (the third component), we have to ‘separate our selves from them in our Thoughts’. Such a thought experiment is of crucial importance, in that it makes us aware not only of those ties, but also of the important fact that not all loved objects are ‘true’ or from the material world. Some are ‘false’ or purely imaginary. That explains why the soul, no matter how ‘sick and feeble’ it is, ‘never fails of [finding] something to sustain it’.³³⁵ For instance, even in the most desperate moments before his suicide, the dissolute widower of the blessed soul Amanda (VI) can still find some solace in reading Lucretius’ Epicurean book-length poem, *De rerum natura*, a ‘false’ poem so popular in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that Amanda ‘wish[es] had never been writ’, and assures her dear sister that its author, Lucretius (c.99-c.55 BCE), also feels the same way now.³³⁶ The soul’s reliance on its loved objects, be it real or imaginary, Nicole goes on to insist in paragraphs 10 and 11 (the fourth component), is a ‘Necessity of human Consolations [...] in this Life’, which is ‘not peculiar to vicious Men’, but is ‘in some Degree’ also true of ‘the Vertuous’. Consequently, the universality of the

³³⁴ Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, p. 118.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-21.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

soul's forced repression at death of its irrepressible inclinations for self-love will render death unpalatable for all souls, vicious (the reprobate) and virtuous (the potential elect) alike. After all, death, as Nicole reminds us, is 'the Rupture of all that unites us to the Creatures, a general Separation from the Objects of Sense, the cancelling [of] all human Ties, and every Pleasure the Soul found in them'.³³⁷

Although the separation will befall every soul, Nicole points out in paragraph 12 (the fifth component), its dreadful sense of privation is not insurmountable, at least for the soul of the potential elect who has constantly regulated their self-love when alive. In this paragraph comprised of two longish sentences, Nicole makes it clear that the soul of the potential elect, or what he calls 'the Soul [...] united to God, by a holy Love', will be amply rewarded by God's eternal love and friendship both at death and also thereafter. According to him, when the soul of the potential elect is compelled to forsake its loved objects at the moment of death, it will not be profoundly traumatic, because the soul will be supported by God's eternal love (the first sentence):

INDEED if the Soul, in some Degree, united to these [i.e. its loved objects], finds it self united to God, by a holy Love, though the Privation of the Creatures, causes some Emotion, yet it sinks not into Despair.³³⁸

In order to make that message more readily accessible to her excerpt readers, Rowe makes an intriguing modification to the original text in her translation. She deletes Nicole's remark about the blessed soul's *gradual* reunion with God at death (it is a reunion, because the soul was united to God when it was first created by Him). According to Nicole's original text, the blessed soul's reunion with God is not instantaneous, for there will be some vestiges of its inclinations for self-love that are yet to be cleansed (by His salvific love), and Rowe's deletion thereof is highlighted in italics:

Nicole:

³³⁷ Ibid., pp. 121-22.

³³⁸ Ibid., p. 122.

A la verité, si l'ame qui est encore attachée à ces objets, se trouve en même-tems liée à Dieu par un saint amour, quoique *la rupture de tous ces liens lui cause quelques secousses, & qu'elle sente la privation des créatures avec douleur, parcequ'à cause des attaches qui lui restent, elle ne peut pas encore réunir en Dieu toute la puissance qu'elle a d'aimer*, elle ne tombe pas néanmoins dans le desespoir.³³⁹

The following version is from the anonymous English translation of *Essais de morale* that was first made available in the late seventeenth century:

Anon.:

In truth, if the Soul, which is yet so linked to these Objects, find her self bound to God by a holy Love, although *the rupture of all these Ties cause in her some trouble, and that she bear the being deprived of Creatures with grief, by so much more, as because of some Inclinations which remain, she cannot yet reunite in God all the power she hath of Loving*, she will nevertheless not fall into despair.³⁴⁰

The italic part is deleted, probably because Rowe believes that such a remark about the blessed soul's *gradual* reunion with God at death will make some of her readers mistakenly believe that the soul's earthly love is still kept intact for some time after death occurs. Another no less intriguing modification is made to her translation of the second sentence, which states that the soul will enjoy eternal bliss after death, because all its capacity of love will be gratified by God's eternal love. The modification this time is a slight, but significant change of a phrase, which again is highlighted in italics:

Rowe:

for this divine Principle sustains it, and growing more active, confirms its Hopes, of being shortly united to, and overwhelm'd in that *Abyss of Pleasure*, which alone can satisfy all its Capacity of loving.³⁴¹

Nicole:

Cette attache divine la soutient; & son amour pour Dieu devenant plus fort & plus agissant, la console par l'esperance de s'y réunir

³³⁹ Nicole, *Essais de Morale*, p. 323 (pp. 46-47).

³⁴⁰ Nicole, *Moral Essays* (IV), pp. 23-28 (p. 24).

³⁴¹ Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, p. 122.

bientôt, & de se plonger dans cet *abîme de bonté* qui peut seul satisfaire toute la capacité qu'elle a d'aimer.³⁴²

Anon.:

This excessive Inclination buoys her up; and her Love towards God becoming stronger and more acting, comforts her through hopes of being reunited presently, and plunged into that *Abyss of Bounty*, which is only capable to satisfy all the capacity which she hath to love.³⁴³

The phrase 'abîme de bonté' (abyss of goodness/kindness) is mistranslated in the anonymous English version as 'Abyss of Bounty'. In Rowe's version, she changes the 'abyss of goodness/kindness' to the 'Abyss of Pleasure', and thereby successfully highlights the blissfully happy afterlife of the blessed souls, and also reinforces its sharp contrast with the ensuing 'perfectly miserable' death and afterlife of those damned souls (the sixth component: paras. 13 and 14), which is an 'abyss of Despair', as Nicole calls elsewhere in *Essais de morale*.³⁴⁴

Although it is not possible to fully comprehend in this world how profoundly traumatic the damned souls' death and afterlife are, Nicole still tries his best to furnish his readers with 'some Idea' of it by deploying a septet of similes. The damned souls' death and afterlife are like 'a terrible Fall [...] an horrible Famine, [...] an infinite Void, [...] an extream Poverty, [...] a ghastly Solitude, [...] a dreadful Desolation, [...] and] a cruel Rapture, which violently rends the Soul from *every Object of its Love* [emphasis mine]'.³⁴⁵ It should be noted that Rowe's rendering of the first six similes is a literal translation, whereas only that of the seventh includes a rephrase:

Nicole:

un déchirement cruel par la rupture douloureuse de *toutes ses attaches* [emphasis mine].³⁴⁶

³⁴² Nicole, *Essais de Morale*, p. 323 (p. 47).

³⁴³ Nicole, *Moral Essays* (IV), p. 24.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³⁴⁵ Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, pp. 123-24.

³⁴⁶ Nicole, *Essais de Morale*, p. 323 (p. 48).

Anon.:
a cruel Destruction, by the sad rupture of *all her Inclinations* [emphasis mine].³⁴⁷

She rephrases ‘toutes ses attaches’ (‘all her Inclinations’ [for self-love]) as ‘every Object of its Love’, possibly because she seeks to highlight at the very end the two key themes of her appendix, namely love and death.

As the above Jansenist re-reading shows, Nicole’s Jansenism is indeed the theological underpinning for Rowe’s unusual exploration in the epistles, and their approaches to death and the afterlife are not startlingly different, but are essentially one and the same. Both Rowe’s sacred secret and Nicole’s complex thesis emphasize the causal relationship between what the soul does with its self-love when alive and the kind of death and afterlife it will have, and such a causal relationship is adroitly captured in the title-page motto of *Friendship in Death* (*Aeneid* 6.444): ‘Curae non ipsa in Morte relinquunt’ (‘even in death their *cares* do not leave them’). In the *Aeneid*, the line refers to the afterlife of spirits in a special place in the Virgilian land of the dead, *Lugentes Campi* (the Mourning Fields), where ‘the souls of those “consumed by harsh Love” when alive will ‘endlessly suffer their mortal cares’ resulting from their former indulgence in earthly love.³⁴⁸ For that reason, the *curae* (cares) in the line is rendered by Richard F. Thomas as ‘love-cares’. In *Lugentes Campi*, Aeneas, guided by the Cumaean Sibyl, ran into the care-worn spirit of Dido, the former Queen of Carthage who committed suicide because her passionate love for him went unrequited. Greatly surprised, Aeneas tried to mollify the queen, only to find that she can no longer recognize him (6.467-76). For Virgil, the queen’s afterlife is not exactly a punishment, because all damned souls are sent instead to Tartarus. But it is not a reward, either. Blessed souls, like Aeneas’ father, Anchises, live their happy afterlife in the Elysian Fields, which, as some scholars have already noted, is a ‘near-Christian Paradise’.³⁴⁹ However, as Thomas points out, for

³⁴⁷ Nicole, *Moral Essays* (IV), p. 25.

³⁴⁸ Christine Perkell, ‘lugentes campi’, in *The Virgil Encyclopedia*, Volume II, ed. Richard F. Thomas and Jan M. Ziolkowski (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), pp. 765-66 (p. 765).

³⁴⁹ K. W. Gransden and S. J. Harrison, *A Student Guide to Virgil: The Aeneid* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 2004), p. 76.

eighteenth-century readers the afterlife in *Lugentes Campi* is undoubtedly a punishment, largely due to John Dryden's highly influential 1697 translation of the *Aeneid*, which memorably turns the Mourning Fields into 'a Christian Hell'.³⁵⁰ The pre-Christian line 444 thus acquires a Christian meaning: even in death, the causal effects of their earthly love-cares do not leave them (that is, the effects can still be felt after death), because their earthly 'love-cares' will determine the kind of 'love-cares' they will have in the afterlife. The Christian reading is tenable, mainly because Virgil only says that 'even in death their love-cares do not *leave them*', and he never says that even in death their love-cares do not *change in essence*. When alive, both the vicious (e.g. Amanda's widower [VI]) and the virtuous (e.g. Ethelinda, the chaste nun [IV]) suffer from love-cares, or the cares caused by their inborn self-love. After death, they also have their love-cares, or the cares determined by what they have done with their self-love during their lifetime. For the vicious, their afterlife love-cares are a punishment, whereas for the virtuous, theirs are a reward, which includes, for instance, serving as divine messengers and making God's love known to His potential elect. The virtuous will have afterlife love-cares, because as Amanda has already revealed, although 'the Engagements of Nature are cancell'd' at death, 'the superior Obligations of Virtue [still] remain in their full force'.³⁵¹

3. Rowe's This-Worldly Secret: A Reading Revolution and A Nicolean Jansenist Moral Reform in England

The Nicolean Jansenism is not just the theological underpinning for Rowe's unusual exploration. It may also be the key to helping us solve a pivotal, yet perplexing problem in the burgeoning Rowe studies about the 'this-worldly secret' behind her duology, that is, what is the logical connection between her attempt to convince her readers of the soul's immortality in *Friendship in Death*, and her epistolary revelation of living exemplars of Christian virtue in the sequel, *Letters Moral and Entertaining* (1729-32)? It is generally agreed among scholars that certain connection must exist

³⁵⁰ Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*, p. 163.

³⁵¹ Rowe, *Friendship in Death*, p. 31.

between them, in that *Friendship in Death* and *Letters Moral and Entertaining* were nearly always reprinted as a single volume in Rowe's lifetime and also thereafter in the rest of the eighteenth century. Yet on the other hand, Rowe has never offered any explanation of the connection, so it remains annoyingly unclear to modern scholars. That even leads Kathryn R. King to regard *Letters Moral and Entertaining* as merely 'a sequel of sorts' to *Friendship in Death*.³⁵² The connection, this chapter argues, is modelled on Nicole's bipartite program for his fellow Christians' moral self-reform in the fourth volume of *Essais de morale*.

The first part of Nicole's self-reform program is to help his readers rightly contemplate the four last ends of man, namely death, judgment, hell, and heaven, and its second part is to give them practical advice for cultivating what is termed 'Christian vigilance', namely the practice of keeping oneself always in the presence of God before death strikes. The contemplation is the essential preparation for the cultivation. The contemplation, as Nicole points out, will help his readers develop an unshakable belief in the soul's immortality and instill in them a healthy fear. He particularly notes that contemplating heaven, just like contemplating the other three last ends of man, will be equally productive of that healthy fear, because heaven, though 'an Object of Desire' that inspires hope, is in fact also an object 'of Terror'; after all, 'there is nothing more to be feared than the being absolutely excluded [from heaven in the afterlife]'.³⁵³ The healthy 'Sentiments of Fear' produced by the contemplation will help his readers mentally prepare for 'the particular resolutions [they] ought to make for the regulating of [their] Manners', and ensure that they will 'walk in the way of Salvation', that is, the cultivation of their Christian vigilance.³⁵⁴ To that end, one of the most important ways, according to Nicole, is to listen to St. Augustine's counsel and to learn 'to be attentive to the instructions [God] gives us

³⁵² Kathryn R. King, 'Elizabeth Singer Rowe's Tactical Use of Print and Manuscript', in *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800*, ed. George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 158-81 (p. 171).

³⁵³ Nicole, *Moral Essays* (IV), sigs. A3r-A3v.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, sigs. A3r-A4r.

by all that we see and hear in the world'.³⁵⁵ That is to say, we should regard all people we see and hear of in this world as instructive examples intended by God Himself for the enlightenment of His potential elect, and 'learn to know Men and our selves by the conduct ... [and] the discourse [*les entretiens*] of [... not just 'illustrious'] Men [and] Women [... but also] of the smallest and most limited Wits'.³⁵⁶ When we learn of examples of virtuous men and women, we should try our best to emulate them, and when we learn of examples of vice, we should examine ourselves. By that means, we can always remain vigilant against our souls' over-indulgence in their self-love for God's creations or creations by God's creations, and thereby secure God's eternal love and friendship.

Rowe is a deft and subtle reader of Nicole, so it is barely surprising to find that the connection between the two parts of her duology is closely modelled on his bipartite self-reform program. Her attempt to convince her readers of the soul's immortality is the very foundation for her subsequent epistolary revelation of living exemplars of Christian virtue. Both constitute her program for the national reformation of manners in Britain. At the very end of 'The Preface' to the *Friendship in Death*, Rowe has in fact said in her own way that her attempt to 'impress the Notion of the Soul's Immortality' is part of her moral reform program, but it is misunderstood by scholars. As she states, 'Amusement, for which the World makes by far the largest Demand, and which generally speaking, is nothing but an Art of forgetting that Immortality, the firm Belief, and advantageous Contemplation of which, this Amusement would recommend'.³⁵⁷ Scholars since Richetti have only noticed that 'this Amusement would recommend [...] the firm Belief' in and the 'advantageous Contemplation of' the soul's immortality, which leads them to argue that the duology is 'a literary polemic against unbelief'. For Richetti, that statement is also Rowe's unique way of emphasizing that her otherworldly exploration is an amusement that is 'totally unlike ordinary amusement [e.g. those popular, but

³⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 185-90.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 185-90.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., sig. A4r.

depraved literary productions like amatory fictions]’.³⁵⁸ No scholar, however, has ever noticed the statement’s two other pivotal facets, which are consequently left unexplained. First, why would Rowe equate the world’s ‘by far largest Demand’ for ‘Amusement’ with ‘an Art of forgetting that Immortality’, and secondly, what makes her believe that ‘recommend[ing] [...] the firm Belief in and the ‘advantageous Contemplation of’ the soul’s immortality would be the very cure for the world’s ‘by far largest Demand’ for ‘Amusement’? Neither of those questions can be easily answered, unless one has recourse to the key otherworldly secret revealed by her unusual exploration. The world’s ‘by far largest Demand’ for ‘Amusement’ can be equated with ‘an Art of forgetting that Immortality’, only if the world’s ‘by far largest Demand’ for ‘Amusement’ is comprehended as the excessive reliance of readers’ souls on materials produced for their amusement—that is, creations by God’s creations—in order to gratify their inborn inclinations for self-love. The souls’ excessive reliance on anything or anyone in this world—or their over-indulgence in self-love—can only result in their eternal damnation in the afterlife, because the soul is immortal, and the causal effects of what the soul chooses to do with its self-love when alive determines the kind of death and afterlife it will have. By ‘recommend[ing] [...] the firm Belief in and the ‘advantageous Contemplation of’ the soul’s immortality, Rowe actually seeks to instill in her readers a healthy fear, a fear that will open their eyes to the necessity of regulating their manners, that is, their over-indulgence in their self-love for God’s creations, which is the ultimate cause of the prevalent moral corruption in Britain. Rowe, according to Bigold, ‘lived in constant fear of the decline of religion and spirituality in the polite world’, so the ‘envisioned readers’ of her duology ‘were clearly the educated, and as she believed free-thinking, members of the upper classes’.³⁵⁹ If those educated and free-thinking readers should heed her warnings about the dire causal effects of over-indulging in self-love, and accordingly regulate their manners, the world’s ‘by far largest Demand’ for ‘Amusement’ would certainly be curbed, and

³⁵⁸ Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson*, p. 246.

³⁵⁹ Bigold, *Women of Letters, Manuscript Circulation, and Print Afterlives in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 41.

so would the prevalent moral corruption. In that sense, Rowe is indeed justified in believing that ‘recommend[ing] [...] the firm Belief in and the ‘advantageous Contemplation of’ the soul’s immortality is the very cure for the world’s ‘by far largest Demand’ for ‘Amusement’.

The healthy sentiments of fear produced by Rowe’s attempt ‘impress the Notion of the Soul’s Immortality’ help her readers mentally prepared for their emulation of the exemplars of Christian virtue in *Letters Moral and Entertaining*, which are essentially Rowe’s practical advice for cultivating Christian vigilance, or to be exact, for a vigilant regulation of one’s self-love. Of all Rowe’s exemplars of Christian virtue, women play a prominent role. As Backscheider notes, Rowe’s assorted women exemplars allow her to ‘develop theories of charity’, especially to ‘develo[p] towards a core [charity-based] identity and lifestyle that mirror Rowe’s and Hertford’s private lives and that insistently push the reader to construct herself (or himself) by that model’ (Frances Seymour [1699-1754], Countess of Hertford, is Rowe’s bosom friend and lifelong correspondent).³⁶⁰ Rowe’s emphasis on women’s exemplarity in heroically regulating their self-love for God’s creations is, at least to some extent, animated by Nicole’s emphasis on the equal value of men and women exemplars of virtue to those who want to walk in the way of salvation, and her emphasis is of special significance for her time.³⁶¹ The late 1720s and early 1730s, or what is commonly known as the long shadow of the South Sea crisis (1720), saw a special resurgence of misogyny, as J. G. A. Pocock and E. J. Clery have already noted.³⁶² According to Clery, ‘the involvement of unusually large numbers of women as shareholders’ in the nationwide frenzied speculation in the South Sea Company stock turned women into a scapegoat for its disastrous crash and the concomitant moral degeneracy.³⁶³ Its fallout was equally felt in the literary arena.

³⁶⁰ Backscheider, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe and the Development of the English Novel*, p. 150.

³⁶¹ See Nicole, *Moral Essays* (IV), p. 189.

³⁶² See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 462-505; and E. J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 51-73.

³⁶³ Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 56.

‘Most writers’ at the time—including Defoe, Alexander Pope (1688-1744), and Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733)—all shared the belief that women’s ‘softness’ made them ‘more dangerously impressionable by ruling passions’, and it was their unruly passions that had plunged the whole nation almost to its financial ruin and caused its prevalent moral degeneracy. For them, satirizing or scandalizing women as a major cause of national moral corruption was therefore ‘the ideal means of illustrating the vices of the age’ (besides, of course, attacking the most obvious cause, namely the administration of Sir Robert Walpole [1676-1745], who was deemed by his enemies from the Country party ‘a monster of corruption’, as Pocock notes).³⁶⁴ It was against such a wave of misogyny after the bursting of the South Sea Bubble that Rowe bravely highlighted and illustrated women’s exemplarity in practicing Christian virtue. In doing so, she resoundingly refuted the misogynistic charge that women were the agents of the country’s moral corruption, and convincingly made women the agents of the country’s moral renewal.

Before this chapter, the only attempt to rethink the existing historiography about Jansenism that regards it as a theological movement primarily in early modern France with no known impact on the contemporaneous English literary scene is John C. Traver’s recent study of the Crusoe trilogy (2011).³⁶⁵ According to Traver, in *Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Jansenism offered Defoe a ‘transformed perspective on religious difference’ that would ‘lead to the love and the humane treatment of religious difference’ in ‘Britain’s own religious uncertainties’ after the Bangorian controversies (1716-19).³⁶⁶ Yet Traver also admits that Defoe himself had never explicitly acknowledged that intellectual debt in his trilogy or elsewhere. By comparison, the impact of Jansenism on Rowe’s duology, as this chapter has shown, is much more certain. Nicole’s Jansenism not only serves as the theological underpinning for her unusual exploration of the relationship between love, death, and the soul’s immortality, not least its proposal of

³⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 57; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 477.

³⁶⁵ See John C. Traver, ‘Defoe, *Unigenitus*, and the ‘Catholic’ Crusoe’, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 51.3 (2011), pp. 545-63.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 551, 557.

the key concept, the ‘friendship in death’, but also informs and shapes her program for national reformation of manners in Britain. Moreover, it also animates her defense of women’s capacity as the agents of national moral renewal, which may indeed be deemed successful in retrospect. As Staves observes, ‘Rowe’s success in developing cultural authority as a pious Christian laywoman provided a powerful model for later women writers and reformers like Hannah More [1745-1833], and points forward to the ways in which nineteenth-century women in England and America claimed moral authority and justified their interventions in the public sphere by invoking the imperatives of Christian duty’.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁷ Staves, *A Literary History of Women’s Writing in Britain, 1660-1789*, p. 169.

CHAPTER 4

‘All This World’s Noise Appears to Me,/ But as a Dull, Ill-acted Comedy’: Eliza Haywood’s *The Invisible Spy* (1754), People’s Secrets Revealed, and the Patriot Opposition

Solitude, — darkness, and the profound silence of every thing [*sic*] about me, here contributed to promote the most solemn meditations; I reflected on the extreme folly, as well as wickedness, of giving way to an inordinate gratification of the senses, and the certain danger, and almost certain infamy, which attends the doing so [...] I could not forbear crying out with the inimitable Cowley,

All this world’s noise appears to me,
But as a dull, ill-acted comedy [from Abraham Cowley, ‘The Despair’, 1647].

The Invisible Spy, vol.1³⁶⁸

Eliza Haywood’s *The Invisible Spy* is a ‘book of secrets’, as Stephen Bernard (2014) aptly calls it.³⁶⁹ The secrets in it are revealed by a mysterious, ‘gender indeterminate’ figure, known by the name of Explorabilis, who, as readers are told, received from his/her unnamed mentor two magical objects as parting gifts, ‘the Belt of Invisibility’ and ‘the Wonderful Tablet’.³⁷⁰ The Belt enables the wearer to be ‘invisible to all human eyes’, and the Tablet, when ‘spread open’, can record ‘whatever [is] said within the distance of nine yards’, including ‘the most soft whisper’.³⁷¹ Together they allow Explorabilis to enter various households, mostly in London, without their inhabitants’ ever noticing it, and to reveal to readers assorted

³⁶⁸ Eliza Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, ed. Carol Stewart (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2014; repr. New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 29. All subsequent references to *The Invisible Spy* are from this edition.

³⁶⁹ Stephen Bernard, ‘Rediscovered Secrets’, *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 5824 (14 Nov. 2014), p. 25.

³⁷⁰ Kathryn R. King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), p. 195.

³⁷¹ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, pp. 10, 434.

secrets discovered during those invisible visits. Those secrets are revealed, notes Explorabilis, ‘not to ridicule, but to reform’.³⁷² As a book for moral reform, *The Invisible Spy* was very well received among Haywood’s contemporary readers, as may be seen clearly in a comment by the novelist Clara Reeve (1729-1807) in her influential history of prose fiction, *The Progress of Romance* (1785). *The Invisible Spy*, observes Reeve, is one of ‘those [two] works by which [Haywood] is most likely to be known to posterity’ (the other is *The Female Spectator* [1744-46]).³⁷³ Despite that, the work’s significance was not rediscovered by Haywood scholars until the late 1990s, much later than that of Haywood’s amatory fictions from the 1720s and 1730s. Since then, it has received sustained attention from various scholars, including Paula R. Backscheider (1998, 1999, 2004), Barbara M. Benedict (2001), Juliette Merritt (2004), Anthony Pollock (2009), Rachel Carnell (2014), Eve Tavor Bannet (2014), Manushag N. Powell (2014), Carol Stewart (2014), Christopher F. Loar (2015), Matthew J. Rigilano (2016), Slaney Chadwick Ross (2017), Daniel Froid (2018), and Kathryn R. King (2012, 2020).³⁷⁴

³⁷² Ibid., p. 15.

³⁷³ Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance Through Times, Countries, and Manners*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Printed for Messrs. Price, Exshaw, White, Cash Colbert, Marchbank and Porter, 1785), p. 121.

³⁷⁴ Paula R. Backscheider, ‘The Shadow of an Author: Eliza Haywood’, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 11.1 (1998), pp. 79-102; Paula R. Backscheider, Introduction, *Selected Fiction and Drama of Eliza Haywood*, ed. Paula R. Backscheider (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. xiii-xlvi; Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 144-46; Paula R. Backscheider, ‘Haywood, Eliza (1693?-1756)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Sept. 2010 [doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/12798, accessed 29 Dec. 2016]; Juliette Merritt, *Beyond Spectacle: Eliza Haywood’s Female Spectators* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 95-116; Anthony Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690-1755* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 147-83; King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, pp. 193-201; Rachel Carnell, ‘Eliza Haywood and the Narratological Tropes of Secret’, *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 14.4 (2014), pp. 101-121; Eve Tavor Bannet, ‘The Narrator as Invisible Spy: Eliza Haywood, Secret History and the Novel’, *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 14.4 (2014), pp. 143-62; Manushag N. Powell, ‘Eliza Haywood, Periodicalist (?)’, *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 14.4 (2014), pp. 163-86; Carol Stewart, Introduction, *The Invisible Spy*, ed. Carol Stewart (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2014; repr. New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. xi-xx; Christopher F. Loar, *Political Magic: British Fictions of Savagery and Sovereignty, 1650-1750* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), pp. 181-215; Matthew J. Rigilano, ‘Embodying the Invisible: Materiality and Subjectivity in Cavendish, Manley, and Haywood’, *The Eighteenth Century*, 57.1 (2016), pp. 71-93; Slaney Chadwick Ross, ‘Secret History and Spy Narratives’, in *The Secret History in Literature, 1660-1820*, ed. Rebecca Bullard and Rachel Carnell (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 87-99; Daniel Froid, ‘The Virgin and the Spy: Authority, Legacy, and the Reading Public in Eliza Haywood’s *The Invisible Spy*’, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 30.4 (2018), pp. 473-93; and Kathryn R. King, ‘Women,

Among all the available research on *The Invisible Spy*, there are three landmarks. The first is Backscheider's seminal essay, 'The Shadow of an Author: Eliza Haywood' (1998), which is the first to call for a long overdue recognition of *The Invisible Spy* as a pivotal work in Haywood's oeuvre.³⁷⁵ It is also in this essay that Backscheider makes an argument that is now widely accepted, namely that *The Invisible Spy* 'is about the power of print, its diverse forms and uses, those who enjoy it and use it for good or evil, and its ability to punish and replace satire in a modern world'.³⁷⁶ The second is King's field-defining work in Haywood studies, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood* (2012), which is the first to draw attention to *The Invisible Spy*'s political topicality.³⁷⁷ This work of Haywood, notes King, 'is very much taken up with life in the metropolis in a specific moment in the run-up to the election of 1754, at a time when the Jew Bill [1753], the Marriage Act [1753], the execution of the Jacobite Dr Cameron [7 June 1753] and the speculation swirling around Elizabeth Canning [i.e. the mysterious abduction case of Elizabeth Canning, January 1753-May 1754] made much noise in London'.³⁷⁸ The third landmark contribution is made by Stewart, who produces the first critical edition of *The*

Sex, and the Law in Eighteenth-Century Popular Media: *The Invisible Spy* and the Elizabeth Canning Case', in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Eliza Haywood*, ed. Tiffany Potter (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2020), pp. 177-84.

³⁷⁵ Before Backscheider, *The Invisible Spy* is either neglected or dismissed by scholars. Mary Anne Schofield, for instance, observed that *The Invisible Spy* is one of Haywood's 'slight pieces, unworthy of extended discussion' (Schofield, *Quiet Rebellion: The Fictional Heroines of Eliza Fowler Haywood* [Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982], p. 116); three years later (1985), in her critical survey of Haywood's oeuvre for the Twayne's Author Series, Schofield again commented dismissively on *The Invisible Spy*: 'the tales [of *The Invisible Spy*] become attempts to recapture the excitement and expectations of Haywood's earlier romances, and they fail horribly' (Schofield, *Eliza Haywood* [Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1985], p. 101).

³⁷⁶ Backscheider, 'The Shadow of an Author: Eliza Haywood', p. 101. A year after (1999), in her critical introduction to the Oxford edition of Haywood's selected works, this argument was shortened to its most-quoted version: 'This almost unknown work of hers [i.e. *The Invisible Spy*] is about the power of print—ethical, economic, and political' (Backscheider, Introduction, *Selected Fiction and Drama of Eliza Haywood*, ed. Paula R. Backscheider, p. xl); this shortened version was repeated five years later (2004) in her ODNB entry of Haywood: 'Haywood's last major fiction, *The Invisible Spy*, is about the power of print—ethical, economic, and political' (Backscheider, 'Haywood, Eliza (1693?-1756)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn. [doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/12798, accessed 29 Dec. 2016]).

³⁷⁷ See King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, pp. 193-201.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

Invisible Spy (2014; repr. 2016). In the edition's critical introduction, Stewart furthers King's 'political contextualisation' of *The Invisible Spy*, and examines it as a work 'written from a Patriot perspective'.³⁷⁹ Its engagement with the Patriot opposition, according to Stewart, can be seen in three major respects. First, as she points out, although 'Patriotism was a programme informed and shaped by the writings of Henry St. John, first Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751) in *The Craftsman* (begun 1726), *The Idea of a Patriot King* (1749) and elsewhere', *The Invisible Spy* 'belongs to a late phase of Patriot writing, with the Opposition cause now being taken up by John Russell, fourth Duke of Bedford (1710-71)'.³⁸⁰ It 'takes the same side as Bedford on two significant measures brought before the House of Commons in 1753', namely 'Hardwicke's Marriage Act', and 'the Jewish Naturalization Bill'.³⁸¹ Second, 'the setting for much of the narrative [i.e. "the parliamentary constituency of Westminster"]' is 'politically loaded', as the setting is known at the time for its association with the 'opposition to the court'.³⁸² Third, *The Invisible Spy* is, arguably, a reply to the social pamphlets of Henry Fielding (1707-54), who had been a ministry writer since 1745; some secret tales revealed in it oppose Fielding on several issues, most notably the debates about the growing luxury consumption in England, and also 'one of the century's most fiercely debated *causes célèbres*', the Elizabeth Canning case.³⁸³

Stewart's 'political contextualisation' reveals for the first time *The Invisible Spy*'s close connection with the Patriot opposition, but also leaves open one crucial question. 'It could be argued', Stewart frankly admits at the end of her introduction, 'that the political context outlined above still fails to engage with the stuff of the narrative, its seductions and arranged marriages gone wrong. What, say, has the story of Alinda's corruption by her clerical tutor, Le Bris—a graphic account of

³⁷⁹ Stewart, Introduction, p. xiii.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiii, xiv.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. xv.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. xvi, xvii.

what we would now call sexual grooming—to do with Opposition politics?’³⁸⁴ A tentative answer is proffered: the relationship between the secret tales and the Opposition politics, notes Stewart, is that ‘Opposition writing [i.e. three outlined aspects of *The Invisible Spy*’s engagement with the Patriot opposition] becomes a vehicle for potentially radical thinking [in secret tales], often feminist in nature’.³⁸⁵ For instance, secret tales like Alinda’s reveal that ‘the old [patriarchal] order is rotten’, while others, such as Cleora’s, that ‘socially sanctioned relationships like marriage tend to produce misery’.³⁸⁶ ‘In *The Invisible Spy*’, concludes Stewart, ‘relations between the sexes play out the dynamics of power, with women who think and act independently pointing toward a more just and happier society’.³⁸⁷

This chapter also makes an attempt to resolve that crucial question proposed by Stewart. Stewart is right to observe that those three aspects of *The Invisible Spy*’s engagement with the Patriot opposition serve as a vehicle for feminist thinking in the secret tales. However, the relationship between the secret tales and the Opposition politics, this chapter argues, has another equally important aspect, namely that those secret tales also contribute to the Patriot opposition both directly and indirectly. Stewart has not realized that, mainly because her ‘political contextualisation’ is essentially incomplete. To begin with, the prevalent ‘partial’ way of reading the ‘magical’ frame story among scholars—a way of reading that focuses its attention entirely on the second half of the frame story, whereas utterly neglecting the first half—prevents her from realizing the connection between the frame story, that is, the common link of all secret tales, and the Patriot opposition. It is through this common link, Parts I and II of this chapter argue, that those secret tales contribute indirectly to the Opposition campaign. The magical frame story, if not read ‘partially’, is actually a feminist manifesto for moral reform inspired by the political philosophy of Henry St. John, the first Viscount Bolingbroke. In this manifesto, Haywood seeks to convey to her readers three key Patriot messages. To

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

reveal those messages, Part I examines the first half of the story that still remains unduly neglected by scholars, and Part II re-assesses the current readings of the second half.

The secret tales, as Part III argues, also contribute directly to the Opposition campaign by 1) substantiating the frame story's key Patriot messages with a panoramic view of the populace's undisciplined desires from 1748 to 1754, and 2) by furthering Haywood's distinctively feminist initiative for a great national revival in her earlier Patriot work, *Epistles for the Ladies* (1748-50). This direct contribution is not noticed by Stewart for three reasons. Second, a vital component of her 'political contextualisation', namely her reconstruction of *The Invisible Spy*'s temporal dimension, is incomplete. Like King, Stewart also believes that the work is set in the period from 1753 to 1754, or what King calls 'a specific moment in the run-up to the election of 1754'. *The Invisible Spy*, as Part III reveals for the first time, actually covers the period from 1748 to 1754, that is, almost the entire second broad-bottom administration of Henry Pelham (1747-1754), Sir Robert Walpole's faithful disciple. Third, in her 'political contextualisation', Stewart has not given due attention to the relationship between Haywood's feminist thinking in secret tales and her earlier feminist contributions to the Opposition propaganda campaign. As Part III demonstrates, Haywood's feminist thinking in secret tales is actually an innovative continuation of her distinctively feminist initiative for a Patriot revival in *Epistles for the Ladies*. This chapter, in revealing the ways the secret tales in *The Invisible Spy* contribute to the Opposition politics, enables us to better appreciate its role as a work 'written from a Patriot perspective', and also helps further the ongoing exploration of what Susan Carlile calls 'women novelists[?]...] critical renovation of the novel' and 'recla[mation] [of] it for a proto-feminist project' in the 1750s.³⁸⁸

1. *The Invisible Spy* (1754): A Book for Moral Reform Inspired by Henry St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751)

³⁸⁸ Susan Carlile, Introduction, *Masters of the Marketplace: British Women Novelists of the 1750s*, ed. Susan Carlile (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2011), pp. 11-27 (p. 11).

The secret tales in *The Invisible Spy*, first and foremost, contribute indirectly to the Patriot propaganda campaign through their common link, the magical frame story about Explorabilis' 'attain[ment] [of] the Gift of Invisibility', which, as we shall see, is actually a feminist manifesto for moral reform inspired by the political philosophy of Bolingbroke.³⁸⁹ This contribution has eluded Stewart's attention, mainly because she is impacted by the prevalent 'partial' way of reading the story. This problematic way of reading is 'partial', not just because it utterly neglects the first half of the frame story (this makes scholars miss the first two of the three key messages that the story, or the manifesto seeks to convey), but also because it unduly neglects the available evidence for the contemporary way of reading, and interprets the second half of the magical story in an anachronistic way, that is, by reading it literally and treating its magical elements as if they were real. Anthony Pollock (2009), for instance, asserts that 'readers must simply suspend disbelief', because the story contains 'a series of supernatural devices' (such as 'the Belt of Invisibility' and 'the Wonderful Tablet').³⁹⁰ Although Pollock is the only one to have made an explicit assertion for a literal interpretation, this way of reading has been widely adopted by scholars both before and after him. Their various literal and partial readings lead them to believe that the story is about sexual politics, and has nothing to do with the Patriot opposition. The truth, however, is that we must not suspend our disbelief in our reading of the story, because the story is meant to be read only allegorically (only an allegorical way of reading can reveal the third and also the last key message that the story or the manifesto seeks to convey in its second half), and moreover, also because that is exactly how the story has been read by Haywood's contemporaries.

It can be seen, for instance, in a review of *The Invisible Spy* in the prestigious *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal* (December 1754). As the reviewer observes, 'The gift of invisibility enabled the author to penetrate into the family-secrets of all kinds of people. These are made public, upon the plan [i.e. design] of the *Atalantis*'.³⁹¹ The '*Atalantis*' refers to one of the most reprinted *romans à clef* in the eighteenth century,

³⁸⁹ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 7.

³⁹⁰ Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690-1755*, p. 167.

³⁹¹ *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal*, Vol. XI, December 1754, pp. 498-502 (p. 498).

The New Atalantis (1709) by Delarivier Manley (c.1670-1724). Like *The Invisible Spy*, it is a book of secrets, and its secrets are also revealed through a supernatural frame story. ‘Astraea, the classical goddess of justice’, as Rachel Carnell summarizes it in her critical edition of *The New Atalantis*, ‘returns to Earth and meets her mother, Virtue, at the moment of Queen Anne’s accession to the throne [i.e. 1702]’; they ‘travel by boat [...] to the city of Angela [i.e. London], where they are met by Lady Intelligence, who relates scandals about the court and society figures they observe in their tour of the city’.³⁹² Their tour of the city, it should be noted, is also invisible, just like Explorabilis’ visits. The two goddesses, Astraea and Virtue, have the power of invisibility, and they endow their earthly companion, Lady Intelligence, with the same power, so that she may better assist them in exposing the city’s decadence and corruption. No contemporaries of Manley are known to have ever suspended their disbelief and read this supernatural frame story literally. Rather, it is read as an ‘allegorical travel narrative’ invented to expose the secrets of Whig and Tory magnates, secrets that are supposedly imparted to Manley by some inside sources.³⁹³ In fact, it was because of the prevalent allegorical way of reading (which saw those three mythological figures as allegorical stand-ins for Manley) that she ended up being prosecuted for those goddesses’ ‘seditious’ revelation of secrets. By associating the secret revelation of *The New Atalantis* with that of *The Invisible Spy*, the reviewer is actually suggesting that the supernatural frame story of *The Invisible Spy* should likewise be read allegorically, as the work itself (or at least part of it) is a secret-revealing *roman à clef* modelled on the highly successful *New Atalantis*. The reviewer is not the only one at the time to have read *The Invisible Spy* in this way. Such a way of reading, for instance, can also be discerned in a letter sent by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) to her daughter, Lady Bute (1718-94), dated 22

³⁹² Rachel Carnell, General Introduction, *The Selected Works of Delarivier Manley*, vol. 1, ed. Rachel Carnell (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005), pp. 1-41 (p. 20-21).

³⁹³ Rachel Carnell, *A Political Biography of Delarivier Manley* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), p. 145. For instance, Manley’s prosecutor, Charles Spencer, 3rd Earl of Sunderland (1675-1722) ‘felt sure that must she have an inside source from her old acquaintance from the theatre, the Tory MP George Granville [1666-1735, later 1st Baron Lansdowne], a friend of Henry St John [later 1st Viscount Bolingbroke]’ (Ibid., p. 188), and that the supernatural frame story is just a cover for her seditious secret revelation. See also John McTague, ‘*The New Atalantis* Arrests: A Reassessment’, *The Library*, 15.4 (2014), pp. 439-46.

September 1755. In her letter, Lady Mary first thanked her daughter for sending *The Invisible Spy* to her in Lovere (in Lombardy, northern Italy), and then asked for a key to the book: 'You should have given me a key to the Invisible Spy [*sic*]' (no key, however, is known to have ever published, despite the great popularity of *The Invisible Spy* in the rest of the eighteenth century).³⁹⁴ Both Lady Mary's letter and the review in the *Monthly Review* show that the current literal way of reading is anachronistic, and needs to be redressed.

An allegorical reading of the magical frame story, as we shall see, is an essential prerequisite for recognizing its vital role as a feminist manifesto for moral reform inspired by Bolingbroke, and by extension, also as a contribution to the Patriot propaganda campaign that harks back to her first contribution, *The Adventures of Eovaai*, 'a satirical-allegorical-Bolingbrokean-romantical oriental tale' that 'has long been recognized as an effective and at times hilarious attack on Sir Robert Walpole [1676-1745]', 'the archenemy of moral order' and also 'the dangerous architect of contemporary chaos and corruption'.³⁹⁵ Walpole was long gone by the time of *The Invisible Spy*'s publication (12 Nov. 1754), but what the opposition Patriots saw as Walpolean England's decadence and corruption continued under the administration of his disciple, Henry Pelham. Hence, for Haywood, England is still in dire need of a moral regeneration under the Bolingbrokean principles.³⁹⁶

The first key message that her frame story or manifesto seeks to convey is that her secret-based moral reform in *The Invisible Spy* is inspired by Bolingbroke. This message is conveyed in the story's unduly neglected first half through 1) Explorabilis' explanation of why s/he was asked by his/her dying mentor to choose something from his collection of curious magical objects as a gift; 2) Explorabilis'

³⁹⁴ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, Volume III: 1752-1762, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 89. *The Invisible Spy* is a very popular work. As Stewart notes, it sees 'seven editions [...] in English between 1755 and 1789, and six editions in German [...] between 1791-1814' (Introduction, p. xii); see also Patrick Spedding, *A Bibliography of Eliza Haywood* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2004; repr. London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 579-95.

³⁹⁵ King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, p. 73; Jerry C. Beasley, 'Portraits of a Monster: Robert Walpole and Early English Prose Fiction', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 14.4 (1981), pp. 406-31 (p. 419).

³⁹⁶ See King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, pp. 155-76.

characterization of his/her mysterious mentor; and 3) Explorabilis' observation of his/her mentor's study (where magical objects were kept) before s/he made his/her choice. Those three aspects work together to raise readers' awareness of the close connection between *The Invisible Spy* and Haywood's earlier Bolingbrokean allegory, *The Adventures of Eovaai*. In so doing, they help readers realize that it is Bolingbroke who inspires *The Invisible Spy*'s secret-based moral reform.

Bolingbroke and *The Adventures of Eovaai* are both alluded to in Explorabilis' explanation. According to Explorabilis, s/he was asked to choose a gift shortly before his/her mentor, 'a venerable person', 'quit this busy world'; the mentor desired to leave Explorabilis a gift, readers are told, not just because he always had a high regard for his beloved disciple, but also out of his 'gratitude for the good office [Explorabilis] had done him'.³⁹⁷ The 'good office', adds Explorabilis, is 'a signal service' that s/he has done the mentor 'in the former part of [his/her] life', and s/he still deems it his/her 'good fortune' to be able to do that for him.³⁹⁸ Readers, however, are never told what that 'signal service' or 'good office' is exactly, despite the special significance it obviously holds for both Explorabilis and the mentor. Nor has Explorabilis ever revealed the name of his/her esteemed mentor, despite his crucial importance to the subsequent secret-based moral reform (the magical secret revelation, after all, is not possible without the mentor's magical gifts). Explorabilis, as King has observed, is one of the 'stand-ins' for Haywood.³⁹⁹ The unnamed mentor, I suggest, is an allegorical stand-in for Bolingbroke, and the 'good office' or 'signal service' done him refers very likely to *The Adventures of Eovaai*.

The Adventures of Eovaai can be deemed Haywood's 'signal service' to Bolingbroke 'in the former part of [her] life', not just because it is 'an effective [...] attack on Sir Robert Walpole', Bolingbroke's arch-enemy, but also because of all her Patriot writings influenced by Bolingbroke, it is the only one that promotes

³⁹⁷ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁹⁹ On Explorabilis as a stand-in for Haywood, see King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, pp. 195-96. As King notes, of all the stand-ins created by Haywood for herself in her assorted works, Explorabilis is undoubtedly 'the most richly suggestive with respect to the ambiguities of authorial identity' (p. 196).

Bolingbroke's political philosophy by basing a fictional character on him. In it, Bolingbroke is allegorized into Princess Eovaa'i's mentor, Alhahuza, a 'virtuous Patriot' and 'a truly Great man' of 'Wisdom', who led a righteous rebellion against the 'great Minister', Ochihatou [i.e. Walpole], an evil magician who used his black magic to control the kingdom of Hypotofa [i.e. England] as well as its king, Oeros [i.e. George II, reigned 1727-60].⁴⁰⁰ That distinctive allegorization of Bolingbroke is re-allegorized in *The Invisible Spy* as Explorabilis' mentor. To make such a re-allegorization readily noticeable to readers, Haywood makes the characterization of Explorabilis' mentor perfectly echo her distinctive allegorization of Bolingbroke in *The Adventures of Eovaa'i*.

Both Alhahuza and Explorabilis' mentor are allegorically characterized as master wizards (i.e. political leaders). Alhahuza knows the 'two very different kinds of Magick [i.e. political power]' very well.⁴⁰¹ 'From [his] youth, [he] ha[s] bent [his] whole Application to the Study of that kind of Magick which is acceptable to the celestial Beings' [i.e. white magic, or magic for selfless purposes]', and [his] early Proficiency in that Science [i.e. white magic]' enables him to have a profound understanding of the 'execrable Arts [i.e. black magic, or magic for selfish purposes]' used by Ochihatou to 'rais[e] himself to a Condition not only to give Laws to the whole Kingdom, but also to the King himself'.⁴⁰² Like Alhahuza, Explorabilis' mentor also knows both sorts of magic very well. His knowledge of white magic is handed down to him by his glorious ancestors: 'he was descended from the ancient Magi of the Chaldeans, inherited their wisdom, and was well versed in all the mystic secrets of their art'.⁴⁰³ The Chaldeans, as Stewart rightly points out in her editorial endnote, are 'experts in all types of magical arts, especially astrology' (but she does not notice that magic is actually a common metaphor at the time for political power, which further prevents her from seeing that the mentor is

⁴⁰⁰ Eliza Haywood, *The Adventures of Eovaa'i, Princess of Ijaveo*, ed. Earla Wiputte (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1999), pp. 141, 100, 103, 75. All subsequent references to *The Adventures of Eovaa'i* are from this edition.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101, the first fictional footnote by Haywood.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 7

an allegorical figure).⁴⁰⁴ The mentor's equally excellent knowledge of black magic is reflected by the clear and accurate explanatory labels he writes for those black magic items in his collection, as may be seen, for instance, in the label for 'the Illusive Powder': 'A Small quantity of this powder, blown thro' the quill of a porcupine when the Moon is in Aries, raises splendid visions in the people's eyes; and, if apply'd when the same planet is in Cancer, spreads universal terror and dismay'.⁴⁰⁵ By characterizing the mentor after the allegorical model of Alhahuza, Haywood takes a crucial step in helping readers identify the mentor with Bolingbroke.

It is complemented by her modelling the mentor's associated *mise en scène* on Alhahuza's. Both *mises en scène*, as a result, are symbolically situated at a great height, and both are glorious in their simplicity. Alhahuza's associated *mise en scène* is 'a spacious Castle' on 'the Rock' overlooking a 'direful Vale', accessible only by 'climbing the steep Ascent'.⁴⁰⁶ The *mise en scène* associated with Explorabilis' mentor is a study at 'the top of the house', 'a small square room, built after the manner of a turret' [a turret is a distinctive feature of the castle], accessible only by climbing 'a narrow winding staircase'.⁴⁰⁷ Both *mises en scène* are simplicity itself. 'No Painting, Gilding, or carv'd Work, adorn[s]' the castle, but it 'ha[s] in this plain Magnificence something which shame[s] the pompous Geugaws [*sic* i.e. gewgaws] invented by Luxury and Pride'.⁴⁰⁸ As regards the study, 'all the furniture', according to Explorabilis' observation, 'was an old wicker chair, with a piece of blanket thrown carelessly over it [...]; near it was placed a table, not less antiquated, with two globes; —a standish with some paper, and several books in manuscript'.⁴⁰⁹ Alhahuza's castle, as King has already noted, is 'part of the carefully elaborated political

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 469n3. On magic as a common metaphor for political power at the time, see, for instance, Christine Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole: Politics, Poetry, and National Myth* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; repr. 2001), pp. 174-77; and Elizabeth Frazer, 'Political Power and Magic', *Journal of Political Power*, 11.3 (2018), pp. 359-77.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁰⁶ Haywood, *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo*, p. 96.

⁴⁰⁷ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 8.

⁴⁰⁸ Haywood, *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo*, p. 96.

⁴⁰⁹ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 8.

symbolism' in *The Adventures of Eoavaai*.⁴¹⁰ It is among Haywood's crucial means of helping readers identify Alhahuza with Bolingbroke. The castle's 'rugged simplicity' indicates that its inhabitant, Alhahuza, like Bolingbroke, lives away from 'the corruptions of court culture'.⁴¹¹ It is situated at a great height, because for Bolingbroke, as King points out, 'virtue is seated "on an *Eminence* [i.e. an elevation on the earth's surface; a rising ground]. We may go up to her [i.e. virtue] with ease, but we must go up *gradually*, according to the natural Progression of *Reason*, who is to lead the way and guide our steps"'.⁴¹² By carrying over those two distinctive features of Alhahuza's castle into her depiction of the mentor's study, Haywood supplies her readers with further clues for identifying the mentor with Bolingbroke. Those clues, together with clues from Haywood's allusion and characterization, not only reveal the real-life name of the unnamed mentor, but also enable Haywood to clearly get across her first key message: it is Bolingbroke that inspires *The Invisible Spy*'s secret-based moral reform.

That message is bolstered by her second key message: the secret revelation that undergirds the moral reform is congruent with the Patriot virtues espoused by Bolingbroke. This second message is conveyed through a detailed account of how Explorabilis chose gifts from his/her mentor's collection. S/he rejected four curious dark magic items one after another, including 'the Illusive Powder', 'the Simpathetic [*sic*] Bell', the 'Salts of Meditation', and 'the Shrinking Cap', before s/he finally settled on two white magic items, the Belt and the Tablet.⁴¹³ The four dark magic items, I suggest, symbolize four self-serving ways of representing or dealing with truth, and they are in fact another connection between *The Invisible Spy* and *The Adventures of Eoavaai*. In *The Adventures of Eoavaai*, as Earla Wilputte notes, one of Haywood's preoccupations is 'how Truth is represented and manipulated by

⁴¹⁰ King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, p. 79.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 8-10.

politicians, authors, and lovers to a nation, readers, and women'.⁴¹⁴ This preoccupation, it can be observed, continues well into *The Invisible Spy*.

The first item rejected by Explorabilis, 'the Illusive Power', symbolizes palming off falsehood (illusions) as truth, because as noted above, it can create illusions among people at least twice a month (the moon enters the Aries and Cancer constellations once every month, and stays in either constellation for a little over two days). The second rejected item, 'the Simpathetic [*sic*] Bell' looks like 'a hand-bell [that one] ordinarily see[s] at a lady's tea-table'.⁴¹⁵ 'The least tingle [*sic* i.e. tinkle]' of the Bell can 'not only se[t] all the bells of the whole country, be it of ever so large extent, in motion, without the help of men to pluck the ropes, but also mak[e] them play whatever changes the party [i.e. the person who rings the Bell] is pleased to nominate'.⁴¹⁶ The Bell, in other words, can let all bells in the country ring the same tune at the whim of its owner. It thus symbolizes imposing whatever truth one sees fit on all the people in the country. If the Powder and the Bell are other-directed, then the 'Salts of Meditation' and 'the Shrinking Cap' are self-directed. The Salts, if 'held close to the nostrils, for the space of three seconds and a half, can 'correc[t] all vague and wandering thoughts, —fi[x] the mind, and enabl[e] it to ponder justly on any subject that requires deliberation', and therefore are especially useful for 'physicians' and 'politicians': they can 'prevent [...physicians] from falling into those gross mistakes they are frequently guilty of in relation to the case of the diseased', and moreover, can also prevent politicians 'from engaging in any enterprize [*sic*] they have not abilities or courage to go through with'.⁴¹⁷ The Salts, therefore, symbolize deliberating on particular truths to one's own advantage, or a sort of opportunistic truth-meditation that seeks only to minimize one's disadvantages and maximize one's self-interest. The Shrinking Cap looks like 'a skull-cap, or such a coif as serjeants at law wear'; once 'put upon the

⁴¹⁴ Earla Wilputte, Introduction, *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo*, ed. Earla Wiputte (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1999), pp. 9-34 (p. 9).

⁴¹⁵ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 9.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

head’, it can ‘immediately contrac[t] all the muscles and sinews of the whole body’, and ‘render the person who wears it small enough to enter into the mouth of a lady’s tea-pot, or a quart bottle’.⁴¹⁸ Once the wearer becomes smaller, everything in the world will inevitably appear larger to him/her than usual; therefore, the Cap symbolizes the exaggeration of truth.

In contrast, the two magical objects chosen by Explorabilis—the Belt and its natural ‘concomitant’, the Tablet—symbolize a neutral way of dealing with truth, a way that is consistent with Patriot virtues.⁴¹⁹ The Belt symbolizes uncovering the hidden truth beneath the world’s delusive appearances, and the Tablet, representing the uncovered truth truthfully and accurately. By having Explorabilis choose the Belt and the Tablet over those four black magic items, Haywood is actually pointing up the fact that her secret revelation is not self-serving. To be exact, 1) the secrets revealed by her are facts, not falsehoods (‘the Illusive Power’); 2) her secret revelation is impartial, not biased (‘the Simpathetic [*siz*] Bell’); 3) her deliberation on the revealed secrets is public-spirited, not self-interested (the ‘Salts of Meditation’); and 4) she has not exaggerated the revealed secrets—secret evidence of people’s undisciplined desires, which for Haywood is a pivotal cause of England’s widespread decadence and corruption, besides the corrupting influence of court culture—for the sake of her proposed Bolingbrokean moral reform (‘the Shrinking Cap’). By having the mentor approve of Explorabilis’ choice, Haywood makes it clear to readers that her secret revelation is not just an act that seeks to revive Patriot virtues, but is also an act that lives up to those very virtues.

2. Women and Bolingbroke’s Machiavellian *Ritorno* to Virtue

The third key message that the frame story or manifesto seeks to convey is about women’s essential role in the moral reform, or the revival of Patriot virtues, and also about what women should do to fulfill their essential role, namely a Machiavellian *ritorno* [i.e. return] to virtue championed by Bolingbroke. This message is conveyed

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

by the second half of the frame story. In it, readers are told that although it is very easy to use the Tablet to record things, it is far from easy to have those things expunged (and the recorded things have to be expunged from time to time, because once the Tablet reaches its storage limit, it will stop recording new things, thus preventing further secret revelation). As Explorabilis states, the Tablet

can no way be expunged, but by the breath of a virgin, of so pure an innocence as not to have even thought on the difference of sexes; — after such a one, if such a one is to be found, has blown pretty hard upon it for the space of seven seconds and three quarters, she must wipe it gently with the first down under the left wing of an unfledg'd swan, pluck'd when the moon is in three degrees of Virgo; — this done, the Tablet will be entirely free from all former memorandums, and fit to take a new impression.

Note, That the virgin must exceed twelve years of age.⁴²⁰

To find such a virgin, Explorabilis tried everything s/he could, but to no avail. 'At last, however, a lucky thought got [him/her] over the difficulty; it was this:'

I prevail'd, for a small sum of money, with a very poor widow, who had several children, to let me have a girl, of about three years old, to bring up and educate as I judged proper; — I then committed my little purchase to the care of an elderly woman, whose discretion I had experienced; — I communicated to her the whole of my design, and instructed her how to proceed in order to render it effectual.

The little creature was kept in an upper room, which had no window in it but a sky-light in the roof of the house, so could be witness of nothing that pass'd below; — her diet was thin and very sparing; — she was not permitted to sleep above half the time generally allow'd for repose, and saw no living thing but the old woman who lay with her, gave her food, and did all that was necessary about her.

[... For instance,] [t]o prevent her young charge from falling into any of those distempers which the want of exercise sometimes occasions, she contrived to make a swing for her across the room, taught her to play at batteldor [*sic* battledore] and shittlecock [*sic* shuttlecock], to toss the ball and catch it at the rebound, and such like childish gambols, which both delighted her mind and kept her limbs in a continual motion.⁴²¹

'This regimen' effectively 'maintain'd [the] virgin's purity inviolate', and she was asked to expunge the recorded things on the Tablet 'a few days after she enter'd into

⁴²⁰ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁴²¹ Ibid., p. 12.

her thirteenth year'.⁴²² She succeeded, and her success finally enabled Explorabilis to realize the secret revelation inspired by his/her mentor.

This second half of the frame story makes Pollock (2009) believe that the entire story is about sexual politics, and has nothing to do with the Patriot opposition, a belief that has influenced various studies of *The Invisible Spy* after him, and remains prevalent among scholars. According to Pollock,

Haywood's concern is to establish a clear relationship of interdependency between the prerogatives of the authoritative male voyeur and the confined miseducation of young women. In order for the male narrator to convey his observations to the public, he requires that a commodified, metonymic girl be locked in an attic, kept both from seeing for herself and from socializing with others to find out about the world "outside", starved, and distracted with physical activity so that she will have neither the knowledge nor the time to consider her situation and to voice any complaints about it. Paternalistic cultural authority, in this case, literally requires and perpetuates female ignorance.⁴²³

This argument is built upon a partial literal reading of the story. Pollock 'suspend[s] disbelief', and literally believes that the magical Tablet needs to be constantly expunged by a virgin, and to expunge the Tablet, Explorabilis raised a girl by an unusual confinement method.⁴²⁴ But a literal reading, as mentioned above, should be avoided, because it is anachronistic. Besides, Pollock's literal reading does not give due attention to some important details in the story (including those from the

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690-1755*, p. 169.

⁴²⁴ Pollock oversimplifies the frame story by suggesting that 'a [...] girl [...] locked in an attic' is the only 'require[ment]' for the secret revelation, or 'convey[ing] his observations to the public'. The truth is that *The Invisible Spy*'s secret revelation has not just one but three requirements. Besides the girl, the secret revelation also requires the mentor and Explorabilis. That is to say, there will be no magical secret revelation, if the mentor has not first inspired Explorabilis and given him/her the two magical devices for secret revelation, and also if Explorabilis has not then acted on the mentor's instructions and gone to great lengths to make those magical devices work, including raising the girl. Pollock is also wrong to suggest that the girl is the only requirement for expunging the Tablet. She needs to be furnished with a magical tool procured by Explorabilis, namely 'the first down under the left wing of an unfledg'd swan, pluck'd when the moon is in three degrees of Virgo', and then be taught the special expunging method that Explorabilis learned from the mentor, before she can ultimately work magic. The secret revelation is therefore not based on a mutual relationship between Explorabilis and the girl, as Pollock believes, but rather on a complex triangular relationship between the mentor, Explorabilis, and the girl.

first half), which leads to several misconceptions in his argument.⁴²⁵ Those misconceptions and the literal way of reading, I suggest, are the major obstacles that prevent Pollock and also scholars influenced by him from recognizing the close connection between *The Invisible Spy*'s sexual politics and Patriot politics.⁴²⁶

In his literal reading, Pollock unjustifiably regards Explorabilis as a 'male' figure, and by extension, as the embodiment of '*paternalistic* [emphasis mine] cultural authority', even though Haywood, as King (2012), Bernard (2014), Rigilano (2016), and Ross (2017) have noted, emphasizes (in the first half of the story) that Explorabilis is 'gender indeterminate', and explicitly discourages readers from

⁴²⁵ Pollock is not the only one to have misconceptions about the frame story due to lack of attention to details. For instance, Christopher F. Loar (2015) has not paid due attention to Explorabilis' description of the Tablet, and wrongly asserts that 'we must assume that the child remains illiterate, for otherwise she would surely be corrupted by the very text she must erase' (Loar, *Political Magic*, p. 209; this view of Loar is endorsed by Daniel Froid [2018], 'The Virgin and the Spy', p. 479). Such an assumption is not necessary, because whether the girl is literate or not, she will not understand what is engraved on the Tablet, and therefore will not be corrupted by the text she is asked to erase (that is why Haywood has not mentioned anything about the girl's literacy). Loar and Froid make such an assumption, because they wrongly believe as Matthew J. Rigilano (2016) that 'The Spy could have just easily presented the reader with the engraved pages of the Tablet; instead, he/she produces his/her own transcriptions' (Rigilano, 'Embodying the Invisible', p. 90). In other words, they all believe that what is engraved on the Tablet are exactly the same as the secret tales that readers see in *The Invisible Spy*. The truth is that what is engraved on the Tablet is very different from those secret tales. The Tablet, as Explorabilis clearly points out, when 'spread open', can record 'whatever [is] said [emphasis mine] within the distance of nine yards', including 'the most soft whisper' (Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, pp. 10, 434). That is to say, the Tablet only records (i.e. transcribes) the sounds that Explorabilis has heard during his/her invisible visits; it cannot record what s/he has seen. Hence, if Explorabilis just presents readers with the engraved pages of the Tablet, the only thing readers will get is a jumbled mess of transcribed dialogues and monologues that do not make much sense. Readers will not know, for instance, who said those words, when those words were said, and under what circumstances were they said, to name just a few, and all such essential contextual information must be supplied by Explorabilis based on what s/he has seen during those invisible visits. Besides, the Tablet records '*whatever* [emphasis mine] [is] said within the distance of nine yards', so what is recorded on the Tablet will necessarily include a lot of irrelevant dialogues and monologues. It is up to Explorabilis to differentiate relevant dialogues or monologues from those that are not, and shows readers only those that are relevant. The girl does not have access to the contextual information supplied by Explorabilis, and nor does she know how to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant dialogues and monologues. Hence, even if she is as literate as readers, she will not understand the jumbled mess recorded on the Tablet.

⁴²⁶ For instance, Pollock's argument most recently leads Froid (2018) to further argue that 'Haywood juxtaposes Explorabilis and the virgin in the frame narrative', because she tries to 'dra[w] attention to the responsibilities associated with bestowing knowledge [...]. The virgin cannot access other people or knowledge because she is reduced to a nearly animal-like existence [...]. On the other hand, the invisible Explorabilis has access to knowledge with theoretically few limits' (Froid, 'The Virgin and the Spy', p. 480).

making any attempt to determine the gender of her narrator.⁴²⁷ The gender indeterminacy of Explorabilis is of special significance to *The Invisible Spy*'s engagement with the Patriot opposition, because Explorabilis, besides being an allegorical stand-in for Haywood, also symbolizes anyone who is willing to put the mentor's/Bolingbroke's Patriot virtues into practice, and by emphasizing Explorabilis' gender indeterminacy, Haywood is actually emphasizing that those virtues can be put into practice by men and women alike.

Like Explorabilis, the girl is also a symbol. She symbolizes virtuous women who have achieved a Machiavellian *ritorno* to virtue championed by Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke is a 'carefu[l]' reader of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), and his reading convinces him that Machiavelli's theory of corruption and regeneration (from *Discourses on Livy*), *ritorno ai principii* (return to first principles/original principles/the beginnings), is the best way to deal with England's decadence and corruption.⁴²⁸ According to the theory, a country is naturally subject to decay and corruption, when it strays from the virtuous principles on which it was first founded, and therefore to ensure a country's growth and good governance, it must be periodically restored to its original principles or virtuous beginnings.⁴²⁹ 'The Machiavellian principle of *ritorno*', as King has noticed, 'structures and informs [*The*

⁴²⁷ See King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, p. 195; Bernard, 'Rediscovered Secrets', p. 25; Rigilano, 'Embodying the Invisible', pp. 84-91; Ross, 'Secret History and Spy Narratives', pp. 88, 94-95; despite that, Explorabilis continues to be unjustifiably treated as a 'male' figure by some scholars after Pollock, including Christopher F. Loar (2015) and Daniel Froid (2018). Pollock's male-gendered Explorabilis is a key component of his argument that *The Invisible Spy* is meant to be seen as a 'four-volume essay periodical' and also a 'periodical on the Addisonian model' (Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690-1755*, p. 15). This argument has been convincingly refuted by Manushag N. Powell (2014); see Powell, 'Eliza Haywood, Periodicalist (?)', pp. 163-86 (p. 175).

⁴²⁸ Issac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Cambridge, MA and London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 163. The *ritorno ai principii* is variously translated as 'return to first principles/original principles/the beginnings', see, for instance, as return to 'first principles'/'original principles', in Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle*, pp. 25, 33; as return to 'original principles', in Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, ed. Bernard Crick, trans. Leslie J. Walker, and rev. Brian Richardson (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 385; as return to the 'beginnings', in Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 246.

⁴²⁹ On this theory's influences on Bolingbroke, see, for instance, Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle*, pp. 25, 33, 163-67; H. T. Dickinson, *Bolingbroke* (London: Constable and Company, 1970), pp. 191, 260-61; Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole*, pp. 110, 162, 183; King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, pp. 78-79, 83.

Adventures of] Eovaai on every level’, and ‘is played out most obviously in the story of [Princess] Eovaai’s growth and education’, which is essentially ‘a story of a fall into corruption and return to virtue’.⁴³⁰ In *The Invisible Spy*, the Machiavellian principle of *ritorno* clearly informs the Tablet’s expunging method, particularly its paradoxical core requirement: a virgin who ‘must exceed twelve years of age’, but must also be ‘of so pure an innocence as not to have even thought on the difference of sexes’. Its glaring paradox is noticed by Explorabilis. As s/he remarks, ‘not to have once thought on the difference of sexes, seem’d a thing scare [*sic*] possible after six or seven years of age at most’, much less after twelve years of age.⁴³¹ The twelve years of age, it should be noted, is the age of consent for girls at the time, that is, an age when girls are believed in Haywood’s time to have known the sex differences well enough to be able to lawfully give consent to marriage.⁴³² Hence, what the expunging method requires is essentially a girl who has already reached sexual maturity (‘must exceed twelve years of age’), but who at the same time must have also returned to the sexual immaturity of her early years (before ‘six or seven years of age’). That is certainly not possible. Sexual maturation is genetically determined. It can be delayed, but cannot be reversed. Such an impossible requirement, however, can be rendered possible, if it is interpreted allegorically. That is to say, as a biological development, the return is not possible, but it is possible as a moral development: a girl who has attained sexual maturity (i.e. a woman) can regain and retain the original virtues that she once had during her sexually immature years (i.e. when she had not ‘thought on the difference of sexes’).

The ‘thought on the difference of sexes’ is highlighted in the requirement, because the novel suggests that it is the root cause of an innocent girl’s losing her original virtues. This belief can also be seen in *The Adventures of Eovaai*. In order to cultivate Princess Eovaai’s original virtues, her father, the wise King Eojaeu spared

⁴³⁰ King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, p. 78.

⁴³¹ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 12.

⁴³² Unfortunately, this important piece of information is unduly neglected by all scholars who have examined the frame story. On the age of consent, see, for instance, Kirstin Olsen, *Daily Life in 18th-Century England*, 2nd edn. (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2017), p. 16. See also, Vern L. Bullough, ‘Age of Consent: A Historical Overview’, *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality*, 16: 2-3 (2005), pp. 25-42.

no effort in preventing her from paying too much attention to the difference of sexes. For instance, 'he suffer'd her to converse but little with her *own* Sex, and strictly forbad [*sic*] those of the *other*, to mention Beauty, or any Endowment of the *Body*, as things deserving Praise'.⁴³³ Moreover, 'he employed no Masters expert in the Arts of Singing, Dancing, Playing on the Musick [*sic*], or any other the like Modes of accomplishing young Ladies', but instead only employed 'a Mistress' to 'instruc[t] [her] every thing [*sic*] becoming of her Sex and Rank'.⁴³⁴ After the king died, the evil minister Ochihatou tried to 'lul[l] asleep all Principles of Virtue in her Mind' (so that he could 'inspire [in her] the Lust of arbitrary Sway [i.e. power]' and control her kingdom); the first thing he did is to heighten her awareness of sex differences, particularly her own sexual charms.⁴³⁵ For instance, he presented her with a special bed, 'the Canopy of which was lined with Looking-Glass' (so that she could often see her 'heavenly Person'); besides, he constantly lavished praises on 'her Charms', and also compelled her attendants to 'repeated[ly]' shower her with 'the most gross [i.e. striking] Flattery of her Beauty'.⁴³⁶ All this instantly gave rise to evils of 'Pride and Vanity', which in turn played a crucial role in inducing her to 'thro[w] off' all 'those Principles [of virtue]' that her father had painstakingly taught her.⁴³⁷

In *The Adventures of Eovaai*, Haywood reveals not only the root cause of losing one's original virtues, but also the method of regaining and retaining one's original virtues, that is, to practice Patriot virtues. Princess Eovaai's original virtues would have been lost forever, had it not been for Alhahuza. Under the influence of his ardent Patriotism, she put into practice the Patriot virtues espoused by him, and regulated accordingly her undisciplined desires (as she had become accustomed to 'all the Indulgencies of Luxury' under Ochihatou's corrupting influence).⁴³⁸ That

⁴³³ Haywood, *The Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo*, p. 53.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 74.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72-73.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 78.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

enabled her to regain her original virtues (and her *ritorno* to virtue ultimately enabled her to overcome Ochihatou's black magic, and bring about a national renewal in her kingdom). In *The Invisible Spy*, Haywood again emphasizes that the practice of Patriot virtues is the key to regain and retain one's original virtues. To raise a girl who can still retain her original virtues after she reaches her sexual maturity, Explorabilis devises the unusual confinement method. Through his/her confinement method, Haywood allegorically makes explicit two core elements, or techniques, of practicing Patriot virtues: 1) to live away from the corruptions of court culture by withdrawing from the culture's epicentre, London's fashionable world, and 2) to live a simple life, not a life of luxury and extravagance that is prevalent among the general populace.

Those two core elements are lost on Pollock. A main reason, besides his literal reading, is that his undue neglect of the first half of the frame story prevents him from noticing that the girl's way of living echoes very well that of the mentor's. Both live away from the corruptions of court culture, and both live a simple life. The mentor's living away from the corruptions of court culture is represented symbolically by his associated *mise en scène* at a height (i.e. his study at the top of a house in London), a symbol of Patriot virtues that first appeared in *The Adventures of Eovaai*. To indicate that the girl also lives away from the corruptions of court culture, her associated *mise en scène* is also symbolically situated at a height (also a room at the top of a house in London): she 'was kept in an upper room, which had no window in it but a sky-light in the roof of the house' (so that she 'could be witness of nothing that pass'd below' and not be corrupted by what she had witnessed).⁴³⁹ For Haywood, living away from the corruptions of court culture by withdrawing from the culture's epicentre, London's fashionable world, is crucially important for the practice of Patriot virtues, mainly because such a corrupt culture is highly contagious.⁴⁴⁰ Besides living away from court culture, equally important is a simple

⁴³⁹ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 12.

⁴⁴⁰ The high contagiousness of court culture can be seen not just in the story of Princess Eovaai, but also in quite a few secret tales revealed by Explorabilis in *The Invisible Spy*, such as the tales of Clyamon (Vol. II, Bk. IV, Chs. VII, VIII, IX), Matilda (Vol. III, Bk. VI, Chs. I, II, III), and Clerimont (Vol. IV, Bk. VIII, Chs. III, IV, V, VI).

lifestyle. The mentor's simple living is reflected by the simple furniture in his study, and the girl's, by the simple 'regimen': 'her diet was thin and very sparing; — she was not permitted to sleep above half the time generally allow'd for repose' (that is to say, she refrained from all sorts of indulgences, including the most basic ones like eating and sleeping); and everything in her life is purely necessity-driven, rather than luxury-driven (for instance, those physical activities were driven by the need to 'prevent [her...] from falling into any of those distempers which the want of exercise sometimes occasions').⁴⁴¹

The girl's simple lifestyle, together with her living away from court culture, enables her to achieve a *ritorno* to virtue, and the *ritorno* in turn enables her to expunge the magical Tablet, an act that symbolizes wiping out the undisciplined desires of the general populace (as the Tablet records various forms of undisciplined desires discovered by Explorabilis). Through her expunging, she becomes a pillar of the moral reform, alongside the mentor and Explorabilis. It is significant that Haywood chooses a girl, rather than a boy, to fulfil such an essential role in her moral reform: to help their compatriots get rid of undisciplined desires. Her choice makes explicit the great hopes she has for women in England's national renewal. Meanwhile, it also clearly informs her women readers that if they want to fulfil such an essential role, they have to first effect on a personal level a Bolingbroke-inspired *ritorno* to virtue. The *ritorno* had better be effected on a voluntary basis, so that it will last. The girl's involuntary *ritorno*, after all, did not last very long. It was abruptly terminated by an accident, as Explorabilis sadly reports at the very end of *The Invisible Spy*: one day,

the woman whom I appointed to attend her, accidentally dropp'd from her pocket the picture of a very lovely youth; — the girl [...] took it up, was charm'd with it; — sleep renew'd the pleasing image in her mind, and added life and motion to it; — she dream'd that it was her bedfellow, — that it kiss'd, embraced, and lay within their arms; — so that in spite of all my cares, and without ever having seen the substance of a man, she has received an idea of the difference of sexes.

⁴⁴¹ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 12.

[As a result,] [h]er pretty fingers no longer have the power to cleanse my Tablets [*sic*].⁴⁴²

Such an ending shows allegorically how fragile an involuntary *ritorno* to virtue is. It is fragile, because it cannot always keep one 'awake', and consequently cannot always guard one's original virtues against one's own desires. That makes one an easy prey for the highly contagious court culture. In contrast, the mentor's voluntary *ritorno* lasts to the very end of his life, because it enables him to stay 'awake' at all times. His desires are thus always kept under good control, thereby making it impossible for the highly contagious court culture to corrupt him. Only a voluntary *ritorno* as such, Haywood informs her women readers, will truly enable them to fulfill their essential role.⁴⁴³

A voluntary *ritorno*, albeit highly necessary, is not sufficient for women to fulfill their essential role. For Haywood, to help their compatriots get rid of undisciplined desires, women also need the assistance of feminist Patriot works (like those written by herself). As she allegorically makes it clear through the expunging method, to expunge the Tablet, the woman who retains her original virtues should be aided by a magical swan feather: 'the first down under the left wing of an unfledg'd swan, pluck'd when the moon is in three degrees of Virgo'. Feathers from the swan's left wing were used in the eighteenth century to make high-quality quill pens (left-wing feathers 'were favoured because the feathers curve outward and away from a

⁴⁴² Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, pp. 466-67.

⁴⁴³ This is consistent with what Haywood has done in *Epistles for the Ladies* (1748-49), her Patriot work that was published right before *The Invisible Spy*. As King has noted, in it, Haywood makes withdrawal from London's fashionable world and a simple lifestyle an important feature of its virtuous female characters. For instance,

In London [Astrea] eschews the 'the thousand other Amusements of the Times' [and chooses to live] in 'voluntary Seclusion from all [its] modish Entertainments'. Sophronia leaves 'this noisy, busy, bustling, very foolish Town [i.e. London]' to enjoy the 'more solid Happiness' of the countryside. Mira delays return to town [i.e. London] for as long as possible. [...] Gloriana [...chooses to] 'retir[e] into a little Cell' to study philosophy and live the life of a 'Female Hermit' far away from the 'modish Fopperies' of London (King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, p. 173).

For Haywood, King points out, 'female withdrawal [from London's fashionable world]' is both 'a strategy for [personal] renewal' and also 'part of a process of national re-invigoration', because women's 'personal renewal', according to Haywood, is 'a storing up of energies for the work of [national] reformation ahead' (Ibid. pp. 173-74).

right-handed writer'), so the swan feather required by the method can be deemed a symbol for writings.⁴⁴⁴ It is interesting to note that the required feather is 'the first down [...] of an unfledg'd swan'. In other words, even the feather, like its user, should undergo a *ritorno* (to its beginnings), as it were, before it can serve its magical purpose. To that end, the feather should also be 'pluck'd when the moon is in three degrees of Virgo'—that is, under the influence of the constellation Virgo. The constellation is closely connected to the goddess Astrea (Astraea), a well-known symbol of feminist Patriotism. As King points out, in the classical mythology, Astrea 'promoted justice and virtue on earth but fled to the skies to shine as the constellation Virgo when wickedness got the upper hand among mortals'; hence, she 'had special attraction for both oppositional and women writers', who tried to 'brin[g] the virgin and her civic virtues down out of the ether, as it were, to comment upon the retreat of justice on earth or to argue for its renewal'.⁴⁴⁵ Haywood is one of them. For instance, she names 'the most important figure in *Epistles for the Ladies*' after the goddess, and makes her Astrea 'an exemplar of Bolingbrokean public spirit' who 'embodies the Patriot political conscience of the collection [i.e. *Epistles*]'.⁴⁴⁶ Haywood's fascination with the goddess as a symbol of feminist Patriotism obviously continues well into *The Invisible Spy*. By making a magical feather produced under the influence of Virgo an essential tool for wiping out the populace's undisciplined desires, she is actually emphasizing that feminist Patriot works like hers are indispensable for the country's national renewal.⁴⁴⁷ Meanwhile, this essential tool also serves allegorically as her appeal to other women writers to make their contributions to the Patriot fight against the country's widespread decadence and corruption.

⁴⁴⁴ 'Quill', in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <<https://www.britannica.com/science/quill-feather>> [accessed 1 September, 2019].

⁴⁴⁵ King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, p. 169.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-70.

⁴⁴⁷ It is not known why Haywood would require that the feather be plucked when the moon is 'in *three* [emphasis mine] degrees of Virgo' (the moon enters into Virgo once every month). The number three is probably random, just as other numbers mentioned in the frame story, such as 'for the space of *seven* seconds and *three quarters* [emphasis mine]' (p. 11).

3. People's Secrets Revealed, Henry Pelham's Second Broad-Bottom Administration (1747-54), and the National Renewal of England

Through the magical frame story, or the feminist manifesto for moral reform, Haywood makes explicit that the secret tales in *The Invisible Spy* are revealed for a revival of Patriot virtues. To prove the necessity of such a revival, her secret tales give a panoramic view of the populace's undisciplined desires from 1748 to 1754, that is, Pelham's almost entire second broad-bottom administration (1747-54). However, this is not noticed by Stewart. A main reason, besides her literal reading of the frame story, is that she believes like King that the work is set in the period from 1753 to 1754, or to be exact, 'a specific moment in the run-up to the election of 1754' that saw a variety of key events, including 'the Jew Bill [1753], the Marriage Act [1753], the execution of the Jacobite Dr Cameron [7 June 1753] and the [...] Elizabeth Canning [case] [January 1753-May 1754]'.⁴⁴⁸ Such a belief, it can be observed, is based on the topical allusions in *The Invisible Spy*. I agree with King and Stewart that the latest topical allusions show that the most recent tales in the book took place around the time of the 1754 General Election [18 April—20 May 1754]. But the earliest topical allusions, I argue, are not about the events of 1753, such as the Clandestine Marriage Act, the Jewish Naturalization Act, and the execution of Dr. Archibald Cameron. Rather, they are about the events in the late 1748. Those neglected topical allusions, admittedly, may be less obvious to *The Invisible Spy*'s modern readers than those 1753 allusions, but for its contemporary readers, they would be equally obvious (as what they allude to were part of the contemporary readers' lived experience).

There are two topical allusions related to the year of 1748. Haywood uses them to indicate respectively the time of Explorabilis' first and second invisible visits. The first allusion (Vol. I, Bk. I, Ch. II) is as follows:

⁴⁴⁸ King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, p. 197.

It was in the beginning of that season of the year which affords most food for an enquiring mind, that I had got all things in order to sally forth on my Invisible Progressions; — the king was lately return'd from visiting his German dominions; — the august representatives of the whole body of the people were just ready to assemble; — Hanover had given back our statesman, and Paris our fine gentlemen; — the expounders of the law were hurrying to Westminster-hall, and those of the gospel to pay their compliments at St. James's; — the ships of war were mostly moor'd, and their gallant commanders had quitted the rough athletic toil for the soft charms of ease and luxury; — the land heroes, who having no employment for their swords had pass'd their days in rural sports, now hunted after a different sort of game at the theatres and masquerades;⁴⁴⁹

Stewart supplies two editorial endnotes to two sentences therein. The first endnote is for the sentence that 'the king was lately return'd from visiting his German dominions', and the second, for the sentence that 'Hanover had given back our statesman'. Stewart is right to note that the king 'made regular and lengthy visits to the Electorate of Hanover' during his long reign, and that it was a common practice for 'British diplomats and those eager for preferment, or keen to prove their loyalty, [to] visi[t] Hanover' when the king was there.⁴⁵⁰ Yet for some unknown reasons, she has not made any attempt to determine the exact time of this particular return in the description. Stewart probably believes that because 'the king made regular [...] visits to [...] Hanover', so his return to England would be equally regular; hence, determining the exact time of this particular return is not possible. This belief is probably also the reason behind her neglect of the topical allusion that indicates the time of Explorabilis' second invisible visit (Vol. I, Bk. I, Ch. III), an allusion that is closely related to that particular visit in the first allusion: 'the king had been that day at the parliament house, being the first time of his going there since his return to England'.⁴⁵¹

It is possible, I argue, to determine the time indicated by both allusions, because besides the temporal clues that 'the king was lately return'd from visiting his German dominions', and that it is shortly before the opening of a new parliamentary

⁴⁴⁹ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 471n20, n21.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

session ('the august representatives of the whole body of the people *were just ready to assemble* [emphasis mine]'), Haywood also gives another pivotal clue. It is also a time when Britain has just ended a war: 'the ships of war were mostly moor'd, and their gallant commanders had quitted the rough athletic toil for the soft charms of ease and luxury; — the land heroes, who having no employment for their swords had pass'd their days in rural sports, now hunted after a different sort of game at the theatres and masquerades'. In George II's long reign (1727-60), only the year of 1748 fits the description. It is one of those 12 years when the king visited Hanover (1729, 1732, 1735, 1736, 1740, 1741, 1743, 1745, 1748, 1750, 1752, 1755); in 1748, he returned to England on 24 November and the first time he went to Parliament after his return is 29 November, when he 'open'd the Sessions of Parliament with a most gracious Speech', according to *The London Evening-Post*.⁴⁵² 1748 is also the only year in his reign that saw the end of a war, namely the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48). The peace treaty that ended the war—the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle—was signed by Britain, France, and the Dutch Republic on 18 October, shortly before the new parliamentary session started. Hence, it is in 1748 that the first and second invisible visits occurred; or to be more exact, the first visit occurred sometime between 24 November 1748 and the opening of that year's parliamentary session, and the second, on the session's opening date, namely 29 November 1748.

The reason Haywood chooses 1748 as the starting point of *The Invisible Spy's* secret revelation, I suggest, is the same reason that she chose 1748 to launch her Patriot periodical, *Epistles for the Ladies* (November 1748—June 1750), namely to revive Patriot virtues.⁴⁵³ This particular year was a low point in the Patriot cause,

⁴⁵² *The London Evening-Post*, No. 3288 (From Saturday November 26, to Tuesday November 29, 1748), p. 4, left column. For George II's twelve visits to Hanover, see, for instance, Andrew C. Thompson, *George II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 309 (Index: 'Visits to Hanover'). The return date of George II's 1748 visit is not mentioned in Thompson's definitive biography (see pp. 182-87). For the return date, see, for instance, *The London Evening-Post*, No. 3287 (From Thursday November 24, to Saturday November 26, 1748), p. 4, left column ('His Majesty [i.e. George II] did not embark at Helvoetsluys [i.e. Hellevoetsluis, Netherlands] 'till Monday Morning Ten o'Clock [*sic*], and did not land at Kingsgate [in Broadstairs, Kent] 'till Three on Tuesday in the Afternoon, in an open Boat').

⁴⁵³ For the publication history of *Epistles for the Ladies*, see *Selected Works of Eliza Haywood, Volume 2: Epistles for the Ladies*, ed. Alexander Pettit and Christine Blouch (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000), pp. 1-3.

when the opposition, as King has noted, was much afflicted by the Tory party's 'defeats in the general election of 1747', and also 'the failure of the "Broad-Bottom" experiment [i.e. the coalition administration]' during Pelham's first Broad-Bottom administration (1744-47).⁴⁵⁴ 'Members of the erstwhile Patriot opposition', rather than delivering on their promises of 'eradicating corruption and self-interest', turned out to be 'able to accomplish little beyond securing office' for themselves.⁴⁵⁵ This continued to be the case when Pelham started his second Broad-Bottom administration (1747-54), thus making the promised national renewal further out of the question. To 'keep alive hopes of a Patriot renewal', Haywood launched in November 1748 her Patriot periodical, *Epistles for the Ladies* (1748-50).⁴⁵⁶ In it, she presents for the first time her feminist initiative for a Patriot revival, which as King has observed, is 'a masterly regendering of Bolingbroke's conception of public responsibility and obligation'.⁴⁵⁷ 'For Bolingbroke and other "Country" adherents public service [is] bound up in an ideology of a family-centred paternalism and patriarchal authority'; yet *Epistles* clearly shows that women can also very well 'exemplify [...] the Bolingbrokean "patriarchal" ideal of paternal concern for the good of the people'.⁴⁵⁸ Such a feminist initiative is carried over into *The Invisible Spy*, not just into its frame story, but also into its secret tales.

A key manifestation of this continued initiative in the secret tales, in fact, has already been noticed by Stewart. She is right to observe that by 'play[ing] out the dynamics of power' through the 'relations between the sexes', *The Invisible Spy* foregrounds the fact that 'women who think and act independently pointing toward a more just and happier society'.⁴⁵⁹ However, Stewart has not noticed that such power dynamics in the secret tales is actually a continuation of *Epistles*' 'masterly

⁴⁵⁴ King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, p. 171.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 174.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-75.

⁴⁵⁹ Stewart, Introduction, p. xix.

regendering of Bolingbroke's conception of public responsibility and obligation' (due to her lack of attention to the relationship between *Epistles* and *The Invisible Spy*). It leads her to wrongly conclude that the relationship between the secret tales and the Opposition politics is one-way: 'Opposition writing [i.e. three outlined aspects of *The Invisible Spy*'s engagement with the Patriot opposition] becomes a vehicle for potentially radical thinking [in secret tales], often feminist in nature'.⁴⁶⁰ Stewart's lack of attention to the relationship between *Epistles* and *The Invisible Spy* also leads her to have an incomplete understanding of Haywood's feminist thinking in secret tales. As we shall see, besides its 'potentially radical' aspect, Haywood's feminist thinking in secret tales also has its pragmatic aspect, which, I argue, is an integral part of Haywood's continuation of *Epistles*' 'masterly regendering'. The pragmatic aspect of *Epistles*' 'masterly regendering' is recognized by King. As she observes, although Haywood 'puts the impetus for change [i.e. a Patriot revival] in the hands of women', she 'does not argue for a moral *direct* political role for women, for, say, an extension of the franchise to women—an all-but inconceivable prospect at this time—but rather for a more robust role within existing structure'.⁴⁶¹ In *The Invisible Spy*, the pragmatic aspect is composed of two important parts.

First, Haywood continues to encourage men to make their contributions to the Patriot revival. In *Epistles*, as King has pointed out, Haywood believes that despite 'men's failure to live up to their public responsibilities'—most notably those apostate Patriots' failure to keep their promises during Pelham's first Broad-Bottom administration—, 'men are not be dispensed with', if the Patriot revival is to be realized.⁴⁶² To further encourage her male compatriots to make their contributions, Haywood presents in *The Invisible Spy* several true Patriots, such as Camillus, who before his retirement, has 'so long and so strenuously maintain'd the glorious [Patriot] cause', and 'whom even an endeavour to copy after would be some merit in the attempter' (Vol. II, Bk. IV, Ch. V); Lord Honorius, 'a wise man' and 'a true lover of [the] country', who advises his countrymen in his constituency to choose a

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, pp.172, 176.

⁴⁶² Ibid., pp. 172, 174.

public-spirited MP that can truly serve their long-term interests, rather than ‘b[e]dazzled [*sic*] with [...the] gold [i.e. bribes] and [...] fleeting promises’ of ‘an agent for the ministry’ (Vol. IV, Bk. VII, Ch. IV); and Clyamon, a would-be MP, who despite his father’s instructions that an MP’s ‘business is to please the [Prime] Minister, and to think every thing [*sic*] he [i.e. the prime minister] takes upon him to maintain’, holds firm to his belief that ‘the love of [one’s] Country [... is an MP’s] first and greatest moral duty’, and determines ‘to promote whatever [...] is for the good of the Commonwealth’, rather than whatever the prime minister likes (Vol. II, Bk. IV, Chs. VI-VIII).⁴⁶³

Second, although Haywood has great hopes for her women compatriots in the Patriot revival, she is also well aware that they are as likely to become slaves of their own desires as their male compatriots. That is why on the one hand, she presents examples of virtuous women such as Charlotte, who uses her intelligence to help her fiancé Clerimont to overcome his gambling addiction (gambling is deemed part of the corruptions of court culture) (Vol. IV, Bk. VIII, Chs. III-VI); but on the other hand, Haywood also exposes various other women who leave their desires dangerously unregulated, such as Lady Lamia and Lady Grizelda, two gambling addicts who would stoop to anything to win at gambling (Vol. I, Bk. I, Ch. III). As a warning to women who do not regulate their desires, Haywood includes in *The Invisible Spy* quite a few secret tales about such women, such as the tale about Aglaura (Vol. IV, Bk. VIII, Ch. VIII), in which she clearly shows that women’s undisciplined desires will not only spell disaster for themselves, but will also spell trouble for those who care about them, thus making it impossible to create a just and happy society. Yet such a warning is misunderstood by modern scholars. Daniel Froid (2018), for instance, argues that ‘the book’s endless iterations of misery and violence, specifically as suffered by women, destabilize any sense of ethics’; and the fact that Explorabilis ‘refuses to intervene’ to avert those disasters—or what Pollock calls Explorabilis’ ‘spectatorial inaction’—shows that the book’s claim ‘not to ridicule, but to reform’ is ‘mendacious’.⁴⁶⁴ Explorabilis does not intervene, because his/her

⁴⁶³ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, pp. 200, 198, 389-90, 228, 233.

⁴⁶⁴ Froid, ‘The Virgin and the Spy’, pp. 490, 489, 488; Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690-1755*, p. 175.

intervention will expose him/herself and also his/her magical devices, thus putting an end to his/her secret revelation and by extension, the secret-based moral reform. Moreover, it is also because his/her intervention can at most avert disasters temporarily, as those who do not regulate their desires will sooner or later spell disaster again. By his/her refusal to intervene, Explorabilis wants readers to feel the very despair that s/he has felt at witnessing various people's 'extreme folly' of giving free rein to their desires without realizing that in doing so, their undisciplined desires—that is, their 'inordinate gratification of the senses'—will only result in 'the certain danger, and almost certain infamy' to themselves.⁴⁶⁵ The despair readers feel as a result will make them see the necessity of constantly regulating their desires, and also exhort them to always keep their desires under good control. Explorabilis' refusal to intervene, in other words, is an instrument of reform designed to help women readers fulfill their essential role in the Patriot revival of England.

Haywood's secret tales, it can be observed, not only substantiate the frame story's key Patriot messages with a panoramic view of the populace's undisciplined desires, but also contribute directly to the Patriot opposition by furthering *Epistles'* distinctively feminist initiative for a great Patriot revival. Hence, the relationship between the secret tales and the Patriot opposition is not one-way, as Stewart has believed, but actually mutually reinforcing. By redressing the lacunae in Stewart's political contextualization, this chapter reassesses the secret tales' contributions to the Patriot opposition. The reassessment allows us to better recognize the role of *The Invisible Spy* in Haywood's Patriot oeuvre. Moreover, it also contributes to the study of Bolingbroke's contemporary influences by revealing for the first time that *The Invisible Spy*, like Haywood's earlier Patriot works such as *The Adventures of Evoaai* and *Epistles for the Ladies*, is also profoundly influenced by Bolingbroke's political philosophy. In revealing the close connection between Bolingbroke and *The Invisible Spy*, this chapter also contributes to the study of 'women novelists[...]' critical renovation of the novel as a genre' in 'the 1750s'.⁴⁶⁶ Scholars are right to notice that

⁴⁶⁵ Haywood, *The Invisible Spy*, p. 29.

⁴⁶⁶ Carlile, Introduction, p. 11.

the mid-century is a time when ‘the culture was celebrating the properly hierarchical family as [...] the basis for right social order’, and women writers ‘took advantage of and promoted the mid-century turn to the family itself as significant subject matter, claiming special authority on matters domestic’.⁴⁶⁷ That enabled them to ‘reclai[m] [the novel] for a proto-feminist project, challenging, educating, and joining their readers’.⁴⁶⁸ However, as this chapter demonstrates, their turn to ‘the family’ and ‘matters domestic’ does not necessarily mean their turn away from the political world, as is generally believed among scholars.⁴⁶⁹ In *The Invisible Spy*, for instance, Haywood not just claims special authority on matters domestic (as most secrets revealed therein are ‘domestic’); she also turns those ‘matters domestic’ into matters political by engaging with Bolingbroke’s Patriot philosophy. Haywood’s ‘political contributions’, notes King, are still largely ‘invisible to political historians’.⁴⁷⁰ This chapter, as it were, is an attempt to make some of those as yet ‘invisible’ political contributions visible.

⁴⁶⁷ Susan Staves, *A Literary History of Women’s Writing in Britain, 1660-1789* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 230.

⁴⁶⁸ Carlile, Introduction, p. 11.

⁴⁶⁹ See, for instance, Staves, *A Literary History of Women’s Writing in Britain, 1660-1789*, pp. 228-85; *Masters of the Marketplace: British Women Novelists of the 1750s*, ed. Susan Carlile (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2011); and *The History of British Women’s Writing, Volume Five: 1750-1830*, ed. Jacqueline M. Labbe (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁴⁷⁰ King, *A Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, p. 201.

EPILOGUE

‘It is often said that the British are obsessively interested in secrecy’, observed Sir Bernard Williams (1929-2003), but ‘it is less often said how deep and peculiar this obsession is’.⁴⁷¹ By examining how secrets secreted in those five secret literary works of the English Enlightenment, this thesis hopes to have helped illustrate some part of that ‘deep and peculiar’ obsession with secrecy. In doing so, it also contributes to the ongoing studies in the sociology of long-eighteenth-century English literature in two important ways.

First, this thesis helps us to better situate those innovative secret literary works in the social field of the period. It shows that secret literature and the reformation of manners movement, contrary to modern assumptions, were not discrete enterprises, but were closely connected. By examining how the movement had profoundly impacted the innovative experimentation in secret literature, this thesis enables us to better appreciate the breadth and depth of the movement’s impact on the literary realm, and also the movement’s connections with the issue of gender. Moreover, it reveals that personal interest in the movement was a pivotal motivating force behind some of the most significant innovations in Enlightenment secret literature. These innovations, this thesis points out, were not just to advance the movement by helping raise the reading public’s awareness of the moral reform’s necessity and urgency, but were also used to advance their authors’ distinctive plans for reforming the movement itself, particularly its Anglicanism-inflected ideological foundation.

Second, this thesis introduces a new analytic approach to studying Enlightenment secret literature and its social effects. By taking into account the recent philosophical and sociological reappraisal of the secret and not positioning the secret as merely something that is intentionally concealed, but as an assemblage, we can better appreciate secret literature’s innovative experimentation

⁴⁷¹ Bernard Williams, *Essays and Reviews, 1959-2002* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 226-30 (p. 226).

in secret revelation than the current genre-centered approaches. It is not just because the assemblage view of the secret keeps us well aware of the fact that the secret of a secret literary work is not confined within its material boundaries, but also because it requires us to pay more attention to the heterogeneous elements that make up the secret literary work's secret multiplicity. All this enables us to see more aspects of a secret literary work's complexity and historical contingency. Such an approach, I suggest, may also be used to examine various other sorts of literary experimentation in this period that does not revolve around secret revelation, because at this time, the word 'secret', as H. James Jensen has pointed out, was also used to 'describ[e] a quality, device, or idea in a work of art meant not to be easily discerned or explained'.⁴⁷² By examining those 'secret' qualities, devices, and ideas as a sort of secretion, we can better appreciate how a particular literary experiment functioned as a social component, and no less importantly, how English society in the Age of Enlightenment was defined and connected by its 'deep and peculiar' obsession with secrecy.

⁴⁷² H. James Jensen, *A Glossary of John Dryden's Critical Terms* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 106.

APPENDIX

Textual Differences between Two Editions of *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail* (1692-93, 1706)



Quite a few letters in both editions of *The Post-Boy Rob'd* are misnumbered, so both the wrong number in the text and the correct number are provided in this table, e.g. vol. 1, bk. II, letter I [CIV]. The 'letter I' therein refers to the wrong number given to the letter in the edition, and the 'CIV' in brackets is its correct number.

column 1 First Edition 1692-93	column 2 <u>Letter Number in the Second Edition</u>	column 3 Second Edition 1706	column 4 <u>Letter Number in the First Edition</u>
vol. 1, bk. I, letter I	deleted	vol. 1, letter I	vol. 1, bk. I, letter II
vol. 1, bk. I, letter II	vol. 1, letter I	vol. 1, letter II	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXX
vol. 1, bk. I, letter III	vol. 1, letter XVIII	vol. 1, letter III	vol. 1, bk. I, letter IX
vol. 1, bk. I, letter IV	deleted	vol. 1, letter IV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter X
vol. 1, bk. I, letter V	vol. 1, letter XIX	vol. 1, letter V	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter VI	vol. 1, letter XX	vol. 1, letter VI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter VII	vol. 1, letter XXI	vol. 1, letter VII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XV
vol. 1, bk. I, letter VIII	vol. 1, letter XXII	vol. 1, letter VIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter IX	deleted	vol. 1, letter IX	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLV
vol. 1, bk. I, letter X	deleted	vol. 1, letter X	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLVI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XI	vol. 1, letter XXIII	vol. 1, letter XI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLVII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XII	vol. 1, letter V	vol. 1, letter XII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XIII	vol. 1, letter VI	vol. 1, letter XIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XIV	deleted	vol. 1, letter XIV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XV	vol. 1, letter VII	vol. 1, letter XV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LV
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XVI	deleted	vol. 1, letter XVI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXIV
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XVII	deleted	vol. 1, letter XVII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXVII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XVIII	deleted	vol. 1, letter XVIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter III
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XIX	deleted	vol. 1, letter XIX	vol. 1, bk. I, letter V
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XX	deleted	vol. 1, letter XX	vol. 1, bk. I, letter VI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXI	vol. 1, letter XXIV	vol. 1, letter XXI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter VII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXII	vol. 1, letter VIII	vol. 1, letter XXII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter VIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter	vol. 1, letter XXV	vol. 1, letter XXIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XI

XXIII			
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXIV	vol. 1, letter XXVI	vol. 1, letter XXIV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXV	deleted	vol. 1, letter XXV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXVI	vol. 1, letter XXVII	vol. 1, letter XXVI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXIV
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXVII	vol. 1, letter XXVIII	vol. 1, letter XXVII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXVI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXVIII	vol. 1, letter XXIX	vol. 1, letter XXVIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXVII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXIX	deleted	vol. 1, letter XXIX	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXVIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXX	vol. 1, letter XXX	vol. 1, letter XXX	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXX
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXI	vol. 1, letter XXXI	vol. 1, letter XXXI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXII	vol. 1, letter XXXII	vol. 1, letter XXXII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXIII	vol. 1, letter XXXIII	vol. 1, letter XXXIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXIV	vol. 1, letter XXXIV	vol. 1, letter XXXIV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXIV
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXV	deleted	vol. 1, letter XXXV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXVI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXVI	vol. 1, letter XXXV	vol. 1, letter XXXVI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXVII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXVII	vol. 1, letter XXXVI	vol. 1, letter XXXVII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXVIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXVIII	vol. 1, letter XXXVII	vol. 1, letter XXXVIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXIX
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XXXIX	vol. 1, letter XXXVIII	vol. 1, letter XXXIX	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XL	deleted	vol. 1, letter XL	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLI	vol. 1, letter XXXIX	vol. 1, letter XLI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLII	vol. 1, letter XL	vol. 1, letter XLII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLIV
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLIII	vol. 1, letter XLI	vol. 1, letter XLIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter L
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLIV	vol. 1, letter XLII	vol. 1, letter XLIV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LIV
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLV	vol. 1, letter IX	vol. 1, letter XLV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXVII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLVI	vol. 1, letter X	vol. 1, letter XLVI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXIX
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLVII	vol. 1, letter XI	vol. 1, letter XLVII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLVIII	deleted	vol. 1, letter XLVIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXIV
vol. 1, bk. I, letter XLIX	deleted	vol. 1, letter XLIX	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXVII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter L	vol. 1, letter XLIII	vol. 1, letter L	new
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LI	vol. 1, letter XII	vol. 1, letter LI	new
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LII	vol. 1, letter XIII	vol. 1, letter LII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXVIII

vol. 1, bk. I, letter LIII	vol. 1, letter XIV	vol. 1, letter LIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXIX
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LIV	vol. 1, letter XLIV	vol. 1, letter LIV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXX
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LV	vol. 1, letter XV	vol. 1, letter LV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LVI	deleted	vol. 1, letter LVI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LVII	deleted	vol. 1, letter LVII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LVIII	deleted	vol. 1, letter LVIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXVI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LIX	deleted	vol. 1, letter LIX	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXVIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LX	deleted	vol. 1, letter LX	vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXIX
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXI	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XC
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXII	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XCVI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXIII	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XCVII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXIV	vol. 1, letter XVI	vol. 1, letter LXIV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XCVIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXV	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXV	vol. 1, bk. I, letter XCIX
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXVI	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXVI	vol. 1, bk. I, letter CI
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXVII	vol. 1, letter XLV	vol. 1, letter LXVII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter CII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXVIII	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXVIII	vol. 1, bk. I, letter CIII
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXIX	vol. 1, letter XLVI	vol. 1, letter LXIX	vol. 1, bk. II, letter II [CV]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXX	vol. 1, letter II	vol. 1, letter LXX	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CVI [CVII]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXI	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXXI	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CVIII [CIX]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXII	vol. 1, letter XLVII	vol. 1, letter LXXII	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CIX [CX]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXIII	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXXIII	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CX [CXI]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXIV	vol. 1, letter XLVIII	vol. 1, letter LXXX [LXXIV]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXI [CXII]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXV	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXXXI [LXXV]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXII [CXIII]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXVI	deleted	vol. 1, letter LXXXII [LXXVI]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXIII [CXIV]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXVII	vol. 1, letter XLIX	vol. 1, letter LXXXIII [LXXVII]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXIV [CXV]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXVIII	vol. 1, letter LII	vol. 1, letter LXXXIV [LXXVIII]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXV [CXVI]

vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXIX	vol. 1, letter LIII	vol. 1, letter LXXXV [LXXIX]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXVI [CXVII]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXX	vol. 1, letter LIV	vol. 1, letter LXXXVI [LXXX]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXVII [CXVIII]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXI	vol. 1, letter LV	vol. 1, letter LXXXVII [LXXXI]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXVIII [CXIX]
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXII	vol. 1, letter LVI	vol. 1, letter LXXXVIII [LXXXII]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXXII [CXXIII]
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vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXVII	vol. 1, letter XVII	vol. 1, letter XCIII [LXXXVII]	new
vol. 1, bk. I, letter LXXXVIII	vol. 1, letter LIX	vol. 1, letter XCIV [LXXXVIII]	vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXXIX
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vol. 1, bk. II, letter CX [CXI]	vol. 1, letter LXXIII		
vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXI [CXII]	vol. 1, letter LXXX [LXXIV]		
vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXII [CXIII]	vol. 1, letter LXXXI [LXXV]		
vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXIII [CXIV]	vol. 1, letter LXXXII [LXXVI]		
vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXIV [CXV]	vol. 1, letter LXXXIII [LXXVII]		
vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXV [CXVI]	vol. 1, letter LXXXIV [LXXVIII]		
vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXVI [CXVII]	vol. 1, letter LXXXV [LXXIX]		
vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXVII [CXVIII]	vol. 1, letter LXXXVI [LXXX]		
vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXVIII [CXIX]	vol. 1, letter LXXXVII [LXXXI]		
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vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXXIV [CXXV]	vol. 1, letter XC [LXXXIV]		
vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXXV [CXXVI]	vol. 1, letter XCI [LXXXV]		
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vol. 1, bk. II, letter CXXVIII	deleted		
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vol. 2, bk. I, letter I	vol. 2, letter I	vol. 2, letter I	vol. 2, bk. I, letter I

vol. 2, bk. I, letter II	vol. 2, letter II	vol. 2, letter II	vol. 2, bk. I, letter II
vol. 2, bk. I, letter III	vol. 2, letter III	vol. 2, letter III	vol. 2, bk. I, letter III
vol. 2, bk. I, letter IV	vol. 2, letter IV	vol. 2, letter IV	vol. 2, bk. I, letter IV
vol. 2, bk. I, letter V	vol. 2, letter V	vol. 2, letter V	vol. 2, bk. I, letter V
vol. 2, bk. I, letter VI	vol. 2, letter VI	vol. 2, letter VI	vol. 2, bk. I, letter VI
vol. 2, bk. I, letter VII	vol. 2, letter VII	vol. 2, letter VII	vol. 2, bk. I, letter VII
vol. 2, bk. I, letter VIII	vol. 2, letter VIII	vol. 2, letter VIII	vol. 2, bk. I, letter VIII
vol. 2, bk. I, letter IX	vol. 2, letter IX	vol. 2, letter IX	vol. 2, bk. I, letter IX
vol. 2, bk. I, letter X	vol. 2, letter X	vol. 2, letter X	vol. 2, bk. I, letter X
vol. 2, bk. I, letter XI	vol. 2, letter XI	vol. 2, letter XI	vol. 2, bk. I, letter XI
vol. 2, bk. I, letter XII	vol. 2, letter XII	vol. 2, letter XII	vol. 2, bk. I, letter XII
vol. 2, bk. I, letter XIII	vol. 2, letter XIII	vol. 2, letter XIII	vol. 2, bk. I, letter XIII
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		vol. 2, letter XXXVIII [XXXIX]	new
		vol. 2, letter XXXIX [XL]	new
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		vol. 2, letter XLI [XLII]	new
		vol. 2, letter XLII [XLIII]	new
vol. 2, bk. II, letter I	vol. 2, letter XLIII [XLIV]	vol. 2, letter XLIII [XLIV]	vol. 2, bk. II, letter I
vol. 2, bk. II, letter II	vol. 2, letter XLIV [XLV]	vol. 2, letter XLIV [XLV]	vol. 2, bk. II, letter II
vol. 2, bk. II, letter III	vol. 2, letter XLV [XLVI]	vol. 2, letter XLV [XLVI]	vol. 2, bk. II, letter III
vol. 2, bk. II, letter IV	vol. 2, letter XLVI [XLVII]	vol. 2, letter XLVI [XLVII]	vol. 2, bk. II, letter IV
vol. 2, bk. II, letter V	vol. 2, letter XLVII [XLVIII]	vol. 2, letter XLVII [XLVIII]	vol. 2, bk. II, letter V
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vol. 2, bk. II, letter IX	vol. 2, letter LI [LII]	vol. 2, letter LI [LII]	vol. 2, bk. II, letter IX
vol. 2, bk. II, letter X	vol. 2, letter LII [LIII]	vol. 2, letter LII [LIII]	vol. 2, bk. II, letter X
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vol. 2, bk. III, letter III [IV]	vol. 2, letter LVI [LVII]	vol. 2, letter LVI [LVII]	vol. 2, bk. III, letter III [IV]
vol. 2, bk. III, letter IV [V]	vol. 2, letter LVII [LVIII]	vol. 2, letter LVII [LVIII]	vol. 2, bk. III, letter IV [V]
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vol. 2, bk. III, letter VI [VII]	vol. 2, letter LIX [LX]	vol. 2, letter LIX [LX]	vol. 2, bk. III, letter VI [VII]
vol. 2, bk. III, letter VII [VIII]	vol. 2, letter LX [LXI]	vol. 2, letter LX [LXI]	vol. 2, bk. III, letter VII [VIII]
vol. 2, bk. III, letter VIII [IX]	vol. 2, letter LXI [LXII]	vol. 2, letter LXI [LXII]	vol. 2, bk. III, letter VIII [IX]
vol. 2, bk. III, letter IX [X]	vol. 2, letter LXII [LXIII]	vol. 2, letter LXII [LXIII]	vol. 2, bk. III, letter IX [X]
vol. 2, bk. III, letter X [XI]	vol. 2, letter LXIII [LXIV]	vol. 2, letter LXIII [LXIV]	vol. 2, bk. III, letter X [XI]
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter I	vol. 2, letter LXIV [LXV]	vol. 2, letter LXIV [LXV]	vol. 2, bk. IV, letter I
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter II	vol. 2, letter LXV [LXVI]	vol. 2, letter LXV [LXVI]	vol. 2, bk. IV, letter II
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter	vol. 2, letter LXVI	vol. 2, letter LXVI	vol. 2, bk. IV, letter

III	[LXVII]	[LXVII]	III
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter IV	deleted	vol. 2, letter LXVII [LXVIII]	vol. 2, bk. IV, letter V
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter V	vol. 2, letter LXVII [LXVIII]	vol. 2, letter LXVIII [LXIX]	vol. 2, bk. IV, letter VI
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter VI	vol. 2, letter LXVIII [LXIX]	vol. 2, letter LXIX [LXX]	vol. 2, bk. IV, letter VII
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter VII	vol. 2, letter LXIX [LXX]	vol. 2, letter LXX [LXXI]	vol. 2, bk. IV, letter VIII
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter VIII	vol. 2, letter LXX [LXXI]	vol. 2, letter LXXI [LXXII]	vol. 2, bk. IV, letter IX
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter IX	vol. 2, letter LXXI [LXXII]	vol. 2, letter LXXII [LXXIII]	vol. 2, bk. IV, letter X
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter X	vol. 2, letter LXXII [LXXIII]		
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vol. 2, bk. IV, letter XII	deleted		
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter XIII	deleted		
vol. 2, bk. IV, letter XIV	deleted		
vol. 2, bk. V, letter I	vol. 2, letter LXXIII [LXXIV]	vol. 2, letter LXXIII [LXXIV]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter I
vol. 2, bk. V, letter II	vol. 2, letter LXXIV [LXXV]	vol. 2, letter LXXIV [LXXV]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter II
vol. 2, bk. V, letter III	vol. 2, letter LXXV [LXXVI]	vol. 2, letter LXXV [LXXVI]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter III
vol. 2, bk. V, letter IV	vol. 2, letter LXXVI [LXXVII]	vol. 2, letter LXXVI [LXXVII]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter IV
vol. 2, bk. V, letter V	vol. 2, letter LXXVII [LXXVIII]	vol. 2, letter LXXVII [LXXVIII]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter V
vol. 2, bk. V, letter VI	vol. 2, letter LXXVIII [LXXIX]	vol. 2, letter LXXVIII [LXXIX]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter VI
vol. 2, bk. V, letter VII	vol. 2, letter LXXIX [LXXX]	vol. 2, letter LXXIX [LXXX]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter VII
vol. 2, bk. V, letter VIII	vol. 2, letter LXXX [LXXXI]	vol. 2, letter LXXX [LXXXI]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter VIII
vol. 2, bk. V, letter IX	vol. 2, letter LXXXI [LXXXII]	vol. 2, letter LXXXI [LXXXII]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter IX
vol. 2, bk. V, letter X	deleted	vol. 2, letter LXXXII [LXXXIII]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter XII
vol. 2, bk. V, letter XI	deleted	vol. 2, letter LXXXIII [LXXXIV]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter XIII
vol. 2, bk. V, letter XII	vol. 2, letter LXXXII [LXXXIII]	vol. 2, letter LXXXIV [LXXXV]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter XIV
vol. 2, bk. V, letter XIII	vol. 2, letter LXXXIII [LXXXIV]	vol. 2, letter LXXXV [LXXXVI]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter XV
vol. 2, bk. V, letter XIV	vol. 2, letter LXXXIV [LXXXV]	vol. 2, letter LXXXVI [LXXXVII]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter XVI
vol. 2, bk. V, letter XV	vol. 2, letter LXXXV [LXXXVI]	vol. 2, letter LXXXVII [LXXXVIII]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter XVII
vol. 2, bk. V, letter XVI	vol. 2, letter LXXXVI [LXXXVII]	vol. 2, letter LXXXVIII [LXXXIX]	vol. 2, bk. V, letter XVIII

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