

ROMANTIC WOMEN WRITERS AND THEIR
COMMONPLACE BOOKS

A Dissertation

by

DEBORAH LYNN PFUNTNER

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	Susan B. Egenolf
Committee Members,	Margaret J. M. Ezell
	Mary Ann O'Farrell
	James M. Rosenheim
Head of Department,	Maura Ives

August 2016

Major Subject: English

Copyright 2016 Deborah Lynn Pfuntner

ABSTRACT

Women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries changed the genre of commonplace books. During the Romantic period, women shifted emphasis away from classical texts and conduct literature toward colloquial, individualized compilations. This generic shift, fostered by the advent of print culture, suited women's practical needs and creativity. Scholarship has often excluded the commonplace books of women—especially Scottish, Welsh, and Irish women—from discussions of genre or textual studies. Building upon the scholarship of David Allan and Earle Havens, I redress this oversight. I analyze literary, financial, and political compilations, as an emerging *trivium* in commonplace books, comprising significant subject areas in women's commonplacing.

Case studies of women writers in this dissertation demonstrate the significance of commonplace books as workspaces for composing and revising self-authored and other-authored literary works—especially poetry. Angela Reyner, Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock Castle, and Dorothy Wordsworth included various modes of poetic expression and emendation in their commonplace books. Wordsworth's commonplace books, correspondence, and journals suggest how and why she edited and versioned her poetry, which circulated through social networks and coterie.

Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby (the Ladies of Llangollen), Rose, and Wordsworth exemplify in their commonplacing how and why women compiled shopping memoranda, registers, and asset inventories. Ponsonby's commonplace book

especially demonstrates how property was recorded using cartographic accountancy, which conflates sketching, surveying, and mapping with accounting. Women's commonplacing suggests that they kept valuatory records of ownership or stewardship that indicate what women valued, revealing their long-term investment perspectives.

Women valued sociability and included the public sphere of shared ideas in their commonplace books. In crafting commonplace books with resources from periodicals and the domestic sphere or commonplacing the domestic domain itself, women expressed cultural, economic, and socio-political opinions and voiced controversies in relation to identity and community. Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson), Ponsonby, and Butler resisted English hegemony by incorporating into their commonplacing Celtic inter-linkages, Gothic artifacts, or cultural-political awareness of new nationalism.

Commonplace books continue to evolve. On digital Internet sites, such as Instagram, Pinterest, and Facebook, commonplacing maintains the relevant need to share and retain ideas—informing social networks of communication.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Kevin J., Carol, Kasey, Harper, Joshua, Kevin V., Beth & Joy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Susan B. Egenolf, and committee members, Dr. Margaret J. M. Ezell, Dr. Mary Ann O'Farrell, and Dr. James M. Rosenheim, for their insightful guidance and invaluable support throughout the course of this research project and dissertation.

Thanks also go to friends, colleagues, faculty, and staff in the Department of English for making my time at Texas A&M University an enriching experience. Special thanks go to Dr. Sally Robinson, Dr. Claudia Nelson, and Paulette Hoelscher.

I want to express my appreciation to the Melbern G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research and the Department of English for their generous Graduate Research Fellowship and travel support. I want to express my appreciation as well to the College of Liberal Arts for funding the Texas A&M University and Aberystwyth University PhD Fellowship Exchange and the Vision 2020 Dissertation Improvement Award from which my research benefitted greatly. Special thanks go to Dr. Margaret Ezell and Dr. Sarah Prescott for their vision in initiating the Texas A&M University and Aberystwyth University exchange program.

I also want to express my gratitude to Jeff Cowton MBE, Rebecca Coombe-Turner, and the Wordsworth Trust Library, as well as express my gratitude to the National Library of Wales, the National Library of Ireland, and the Cushing Memorial Library. This dissertation was made possible by their help and generous access to archives.

I want to extend my appreciation and gratitude to those who were absolutely vital as my second pair of eyes, technical support, and moral support as I battled the long and many late hours of researching, writing, editing, and formatting my dissertation:

Rebecca Renfro, Dr. Dane Bozeman, and Kevin Pfuntner.

Special thanks to my sister, Dr. Susan Rose, for being an inspiration and for introducing me to the Lake District, the home of the Wordsworths.

Finally, cheers to friends and colleagues in Wales who helped me in more ways than there are lines to write: Camilla Calder, Nigel Jones, Sarah Jones, and Mark Herbert-Lloyd.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION: A SALMAGUNDIAN “COLLECTION OF A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS, ORIGINAL PIECES, PIECE-MEALS OF ECONOMY, AND CONTROVERSIES AND OPINIONS” IN WOMEN’S COMMONPLACE BOOKS	1
CHAPTER II “NAY, ILL THOSE WORDS BEFIT”: THE LITERARY WORKSPACE OF POETIC COMPOSITION IN WOMEN’S COMMONPLACE BOOKS	72
CHAPTER III “ALL THAT IS YOUR OWN”: THE VALUATORY WORKSPACE OF COMMONPLACE BOOKS	132
CHAPTER IV “VENTURE FORTH, A NOBLE PEOPLE DWELL THERE”: COMMONPLACING CULTURAL AND SOCIABLE POLITICS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE OF LADY MORGAN’S, SARAH PONSONBY’S, AND ELEANOR BUTLER’S COMMONPLACE BOOKS.....	190
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION: COMMONPLACE BOOKS AND DIGITAL COTERIES.....	263
WORKS CITED.....	272
WORKS CONSULTED.....	289

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
<p>Fig. 1. Snippet view of inaugural first page of Lady Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 878</i>. This page contains a published print clipping of Thomas Moore’s poem, “The Periwinkles and the Locusts: A Salmagundian Hymn” (ca. 1827), in which he includes an excerpted passage from François Rabelais’s “Third Book of the Heroic Deeds and Sayings of the Good Pantagruel” (ca. 1550) featuring the term Salmagundi as a synecdoche for political excess. (MS 878). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1825).</p>	4
<p>Fig. 2. An ephemeral organic stain from a flowering plant in Dorothy Wordsworth’s shared commonplace book with William Wordsworth, <i>Book of Verse DCMS 89</i>. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1820).</p>	12
<p>Fig. 3. Inner front cover fly leaf of Camilla Calder’s Victorian scrapbook. This family heirloom designates the provenance of the manuscript with inscriptions written in pencil and ink. Reprinted with permission from Camilla Calder (“Camilla Calder” 1850).</p>	24
<p>Fig. 4. Two-page spread from Camilla Calder’s scrapbook. This layout depicts Victorian interest in handcrafted commonplacing utilizing colored and gray-scaled images readily available in a print culture of abundant and affordable media. Reprinted with permission from Camilla Calder (“Camilla Calder” 1850).</p>	27
<p>Fig. 5. Snippet view of Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 881</i> (ca. 1837-1850) featuring two dime-sized remnants of newsprint adhered with sealing wax. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1837).</p>	32
<p>Fig. 6. Snippet view of Aubrey [Thomas] de Vere’s sonnet, “There is no remedy for time misspent” (ca. 1842), and Sir George Head’s “Extracts from Forest Scenes & Incidents in the Wilds of North America” (1829). The extracts in Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> exhibit mixed genres in close proximity. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1842).</p>	36
<p>Fig. 7. William Lisle Bowles’s “Sonnet VI” or “Evening” from Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22969A</i>. Remnants of a paper overlay and sealing wax exhibit the physicality of editing excerpts in women’s commonplace</p>	

books (22). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1789).....	39
Fig. 8. Snippet view of Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Irregular Verses” from <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Stitched paper overlay used for edits and revisions. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).	41
Fig. 9. Snippet view of Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Irregular Verses” in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Stanza underneath paper overlay shows creative revisions. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).	42
Fig. 10. Dorothy Wordsworth’s 1820 Continental tour copied in commonplace book/journal, <i>Rydal Journal DCMS 104.10</i> . Exhibits book-keeping with literary work. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1828).	43
Fig. 11. From <i>Commonplace Book MS 878</i> (ca. 1825-1828) a snippet view of a French news clipping announcing a costume ball at a Viscountess’s residence in which Morgan is unnamed but personally becomes a catalyst for mentioning Rose Bertin’s (1747-1813) politicized career as a fashion designer for France’s <i>ancien régime</i> . Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1826).	51
Fig. 12. Full view of newspaper clipping of <i>London Morning Chronicle</i> hidden under a French newspaper article in Lady Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 878</i> . Both articles report Lady Northland’s costume ball given on 29 September 1826; Morgan dressed as Rose Bertin, France’s pre-revolution fashion designer. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1826).	54
Fig. 13. A floral illustration from Angela Reyner’s commonplace book (WLMS 35/2), which is embossed with the title of “Scrap Book” on the book cover spine. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Angela Reyner”1822).	67
Fig. 14. From Eleanor Butler’s <i>Journal MS 22976B</i> includes a newspaper clipping about hydrophobia, memorandums noting letters received, and a medicinal recipe (28). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Eleanor Butler” 1821).	69
Fig. 15. <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> bearing a worn label and cover boards. This manuscript was Dorothy Wordsworth’s primary commonplace book.	

Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1820).....	73
Fig. 16. Page from “Irregular Verses” showing Dorothy Wordsworth’s use of paper overlays for revising her poetry. This poem is found in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).	75
Fig. 17. Detail of “Irregular Verses” from Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Domestic art of needlework applied to the craft of composition. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).	76
Fig. 18. Angela Reyner’s <i>Scrapbook WLMS 35/2</i> with gilded, tooled cover boards. Blank gift books were often used for commonplace books. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Angela Reyner” 1822).	81
Fig. 19. Watercolor painting of forget-me-not flowers in Angela Reyner’s commonplace book. Illustrates Amelia Opie’s poem and meaning of “Forget Me Not” (WLMS 35/2). Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Angela Reyner” 1822).	85
Fig. 20. First stanza of Angela Reyner’s prefatory poem (WLMS 35/2). Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Angela Reyner” 1822).	91
Fig. 21. William Wordsworth’s inscription in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 26</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“William Wordsworth” 1800).....	94
Fig. 22 Dorothy Wordsworth’s first entry in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 26</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1802).....	95
Fig. 23. Excerpt from Thomas Wilkinson’s <i>Tour to the British Mountains</i> . Copied into William Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 26</i> and a source for “The Solitary Reaper.” Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“William Wordsworth” 1808).	97
Fig. 24. Pencil note in William Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 26</i> . This note (not written in W. Wordsworth’s hand) attributes excerpt from Thomas Wilkinson’s <i>Tours to the British Mountains</i> to W. Wordsworth’s “The Solitary Reaper.” Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“William Wordsworth” 1808).	99

Fig. 25. A working-copy poem of Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Loving and Liking. Irregular Verses Addressed to a Child” in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1832).....	104
Fig. 26. Dorothy Wordsworth’s poem, “The Worship of This Sabbath Morn (1849), inserted into <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Copied by D. Wordsworth for Mr. Graham. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1849).	109
Fig. 27. The word “Sunday” inserted into title “On a most beautiful morning” (1824). This five-stanza poem is one of several versions of Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Sabbath Morn” (1832) in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1832).....	111
Fig. 28. Painting of a butterfly from Anne Baxter’s album, <i>A Sister’s Gift WLMS 35/1</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Anne Baxter” 1824).	113
Fig. 29. Descriptive title of poem “Lines written (rather say begun) on the morning of Sunday April 6th the third approach of Spring-time since my illness began.” This fifteen-stanza poem is a version of Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Sabbath Morn” (1832) in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1832).	116
Fig. 30. Detailed view of stanza from “On a most beautiful Sunday morning.” This poem is from Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1824).....	117
Fig. 31. “Lines intended for Edith Southey’s Album” shows revision Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1832).....	120
Fig. 32. Detailed view of overlay base text, lines 47-55, from “Irregular Verses” in Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).	123
Fig. 33. Detailed view of original page, lines 47-55, from “Irregular Verses” under stitched overlay in Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).....	125

Fig. 34. Snippet view of William Wordsworth’s poem “Poet’s Dream” from <i>Book of Verse DCMS 89</i> . Demonstrates use of paper overlays in the editing process. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1842).....	128
Fig. 35. Dorothy Wordsworth’s poem, “A Holiday at Gwerndovennant: Irregular Verses” in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Includes a register of credits or debits sharing the same space. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1826).....	133
Fig. 36. Snippet View of stanza from Dorothy Wordsworth’s poem “A Holiday at Gwerndovennant” (DCMS 120) This stanza alludes to the textual aid of books to keep memory and the past from being faded and forgotten. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1826).....	135
Fig. 37. Snippet view of register from Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Rydal Journal DCMS 104.4</i> . Shows the initial for a debtor as opposed to full name. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1825).	139
Fig. 38. Detail of register on a page with poem, “A Holiday at Gwerndovennant,” in Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1825).	140
Fig. 39. Stanza 4 from “A Holiday.” Dorothy Wordsworth in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 120</i> compares textiles and nature. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 18).....	144
Fig. 40. Snippet view of Dorothy Wordsworth’s memorandum of household accounts from <i>Rydal Journal DCMS 104.7</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1828).....	146
Fig. 41. Dorothy Wordsworth lists inventory of linen titled “account of Mary’s Linen which came from Penrith” in <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 26</i> . Shows a close association with inventorying assets and investment. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1802).	150
Fig. 42. List of linen in Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Commonplace Book DCMS 26</i> . Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1802).....	152
Fig. 43. Register of items in Dorothy Wordsworth’s <i>Rydal Journal DCMS 104.4</i> . One of the most extensive registers in her commonplace books. Reprinted	

with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1825-1826).	153
Fig. 44. From Eleanor Butler’s inner front cover of <i>Journal MS 22976B</i> . Clippings of potential investments or inventories of material assets. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Eleanor Butler” 1821).	156
Fig. 45. Snippet view of Eleanor Butler’s <i>Pocket Book MS 22968A</i> with publisher’s preprinted pages titled as <i>The Ladies New and Elegant Pocket Book for the Year 1784</i> , providing information for selling, transferring, and receiving stocks, government securities, and dividends (7). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Eleanor Butler” 1784).	161
Fig. 46. Snippet View of “A Table of Expences” from Eleanor Butler’s <i>Pocket Book MS 22968A</i> , which is a publisher’s guide for daily, weekly and/or monthly expenses (63). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Eleanor Butler” 1784).	163
Fig. 47. Snippet view of color-coded guide to Plas Newydd’s library books from Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Catalogue of Our Books MS 22980C</i> (2). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1792). ...	167
Fig. 48. Cover page to Sarah Ponsonby’s free-standing <i>Catalogue of Our Books</i> (1). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1792).	169
Fig. 49. Sarah Ponsonby’s list of miscellany or commonplace books in <i>Catalogue of Our Books</i> (41). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1792).	170
Fig. 50. A few gardening books from Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Catalogue of Our Books</i> (13). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1792).	171
Fig. 51. A register for “Expenses for the Dairy” from Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22969A</i> (2). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).	174
Fig. 52. Detailed view of the tools of the surveyor and cartographer from Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22969A</i> (36). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785). ...	178
Fig. 53. Sarah Ponsonby’s sketches of trees in <i>Commonplace Book 22969A</i> (23). Shows ownership of property using trees as boundary markers. Reprinted	

with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).	181
Fig. 54. From Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22969A</i> , a cameos sketch of Plas Newydd (on the right) with an overview of Ponsonby and Butler’s landscape garden, including a summer hut on the hillside and Dinas Bran just out of view in the background (29). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).	183
Fig. 55. From Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22968A</i> a sketch of trees as symbolic of rootedness (24). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).	185
Fig. 56. Full view of newspaper clipping folded in Lady Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 878</i> reporting Henry Villiers-Stuart’s public dinner speech on Catholic emancipation. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1826).	191
Fig. 57. Snippet view showing the juxtaposition of Henry Villiers-Stuart’s speech on Catholic emancipation next to a book review of Lady Morgan’s national tale <i>The O’Briens and the O’Flahertys</i> in <i>Commonplace Book MS 878</i> as an aspect of meaning-making in commonplacing. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1826).	194
Fig. 58. Book review of Lady Morgan’s national tale, <i>The O’Brien’s and the O’Flahertys</i> in her commonplace book (MS 878). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1826).	200
Fig. 59. Snippet view of Lady Morgan’s handwritten banner annotation in <i>Commonplace Book MS 878</i> , overarching two news clippings: Henry Villiers-Stuart’s speech on Catholic emancipation and a book review of <i>The O’Briens and the O’Flahertys</i> . Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1826).	201
Fig. 60. From Lady Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book 878</i> , “But what is a Journal?” article. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” n/d).	202
Fig. 61. Snippet view of notation from Lady Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 879</i> stating title of her book, <i>The Book of the Boudoir</i> . Unapologetically underscoring that its topic is about her musings (using a quotation in French to make the point) and noting her place of residence and date, “Dublin, Kildare Street, April 1828.” Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1828).	208

Fig. 62. Welsh tune, “Mentra Gwen,” collected in Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22969A</i> suggests cultural and political interests in bardic traditions and national identity (79). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).	216
Fig. 63. The northernmost head of the Vale of Llangollen (facing toward Snowdonia) on the outskirts of town. Reprinted from my personal photopgraph (“Deborah Pfunter” 2012).....	222
Fig. 64. Plas Newydd with the fortress ruins of Dinas Bran seen on the peak in the background. The far right section of the structure from the second chimney to the third, with the mismatched windows, was added by subsequent owners after Sarah Ponsonby succeeded Eleanor Butler in death in 1831. Reprinted from my personal photograph (“Deborah Pfunter” 2012).....	223
Fig. 65. Colophon sketch from Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22969A</i> (16). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).....	225
Fig. 66. Plas Newydd library bay window in which found, given, or commissioned carvings from Gothic interiors form the facade design. Reprinted from my personal photgraph (“Deborah Pfunter” 2012).	228
Fig. 67. Doodled turret from Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22969A</i> correlates with rounded foundation in garden used for Eleanor’s Butler’s overlook into the garden (45v.). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).....	231
Fig. 68. Not all current structures at Plas Newydd are original to the landscaping projects that Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler implemented. This turreted overlook above the gardens below has been built from the foundational hardscape from Butler’s bower, but the upper portion is a recent reconstruction. Reprinted from my personal photograph (“Deborah Pfunter” 2012).....	232
Fig. 69. Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler’s Gothic style grotto beside the Cyflymen, a stream with natural rivulets that fill the ecclesiastical font that originated from Valle Crucis Abbey placed in a semi-circular enclave with a pointed Gothic archway. Reprinted from my personal photograph (“Deborah Pfunter” 2012).....	234
Fig. 70. From <i>Commonplace Book 22969A</i> Sarah Ponsonby’s test of inks that incorporates a sketch of hardscape foundation, possibly for a grotto (28). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).....	236

Fig. 71. “Facades” from Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS22969A</i> showing seven different visual fields using various types of mapping geographic features (32). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).....	240
Fig. 72. From Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22969A</i> an adhered page of a hand drawn map of Wales (40). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).....	243
Fig. 73. From Lady Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 880</i> , journaling noting her farewell to Ireland, June 23, 1832. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1832).	247
Fig. 74. A clipping of a news article that discusses the Irish famine, including journaling from Lady Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 881</i> that mentions her state of mind. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1847).	250
Fig. 75. Snippet view from Lady Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 881</i> of a newspaper clipping, <i>The Times</i> , London, retrospectively discussing the year 1846 and the Irish famine. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1846).	251
Fig. 76. Snippet view of playbill from Lady Morgan’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 879</i> for the performance of the comedy <i>First Love</i> with attached clipping reporting the Morgans’ attendance. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1829).	258
Fig. 77. A sketch of a female nude bust wearing a medallion from Sarah Ponsonby’s <i>Commonplace Book MS 22969A</i> titled “Serve Ye the Stranger” (43). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).....	260

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: A SALMAGUNDIAN “COLLECTION OF A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS, ORIGINAL PIECES, PIECE-MEALS OF ECONOMY, AND CONTROVERSIES AND OPINIONS”¹ IN WOMEN’S COMMONPLACE BOOKS

The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* defines a commonplace book as “a book in which ‘commonplaces’ or passages important for reference were collected, usually under general heads; hence, a book in which one records passages or matters to be especially remembered or referred to, with or without arrangement” (“Commonplace Book”). Passages organized “under general heads” or headings typify only one among many sundry methods of arranging excerpts and entries in commonplace books. Earle Havens contextualizes this general definition of commonplace books in *Commonplace Books: A History of Manuscripts and Printed Books from Antiquity to the Twentieth*

¹ This quote is excerpted from the title of Thomas Medley’s commonplace book, *Hotch Potch* (1774), also known as *The Shandysonian* (1779). The full title of Thomas Medley’s commonplace book is *Hotch Potch Containing A Conclamation of Original Pieces, A Higgledy-Piggledy of Controversies and Opinions on various interesting Subjects; Detections and Confutations of Vulgar Errors, And Errors not Vulgar; Extraordinary Incidents And A Salmagunda of Lucubrations, Intended as the true Pabulum Mentis: Consisting of Morsels of History, Physiology, Fragments of Art, Portions of Humour, Goblets of Ratiocination, Crumbs of Comfort, Piece-Meals of Oeconomy [sic], &c. Adapted to all Climes and Capacities, And composed of such useful Materials that no wise Person in the World ought to be without* (1774). A 1779 edition of Medley’s commonplace book exchanges the term *Hotch Potch* for *Shandysonian*. The term “hotch potch” derives from hodgepodge, meaning a thick stew made with a variety of ingredients. The closest equivalent definition for shandysonian in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is an entry for the adjective “shandy” (1691), meaning something “wild, boisterous, visionary, empty-headed, and half-crazy.” The word “shandy” also correlates with Laurence Sterne’s novel *Tristram Shandy* (1759), which is a raucous tale of misfortunes and misunderstandings that includes excerpts of sermons, essays, and miscellaneous documents, resembling the generic conventions of commonplace books.

Century (2001). He reminds us that “Renaissance humanists, teachers, and students were among the first to deliberately invoke the term ‘commonplace book’ to describe collections of quotations organized for the express purpose of demonstrating the best moral wisdom and rhetorical felicity of the ancient Greek and Latin authors” (25). Early modern methods of organization and the intended purposes for commonplace books shifted in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries toward personalized and vernacular modes of commonplacing. An emphasis on classical texts and conduct literature in commonplace books was becoming passé in the Romantic period, especially for women commonplacers. As notable generic changes in commonplacing accrued from the advent of the printing press to early nineteenth-century print culture, a few generic conventions, though, remained relatively consistent. For example, the first entry or excerpt in a commonplace book² usually sets the tenor, alluding to the organization, purpose, context, or emphasis of the text’s diverse contents.

As a case in point, Lady Morgan’s (Sydney Owenson)³ first excerpt in *Commonplace Book MS 878* (ca. 1825-1828) suggests that her initial and primary purpose for commonplacing revolved around political critique. On the first page of Lady

² The *OED* also notes that the term “commonplace book” first appeared in 1578 in Thomas Cooper’s *Thesaurus*.

³ When discussing Sydney Owenson’s (Lady Morgan) life (ca. 1781-1859) and works generally or her literary works prior to her marriage to Sir Thomas Charles Morgan in 1812, I refer to her as Owenson; otherwise, I refer to her as Lady Morgan. When I discuss her commonplace books MS 878-884 (ca. 1825-1859), I refer to her as Morgan because these commonplace books were compiled and written after her marriage.

Morgan's first of seven volumes of commonplace books (ca. 1825-1859),⁴ she had affixed a newspaper clipping with straight sewing pins. Morgan's annotation above this print copy of Thomas Moore's verse "The Periwinkles and the Locusts: A Salmagundian Hymn" (ca. 1827) states "I think this book was begun about 1825" (MS 878). At the head of the poem, Moore excerpts a passage from François Rabelais's "Third Book of the Heroic Deeds and Sayings of the Good Pantagruel" (ca. 1550), serving as an epigraph for "A Salmagundi Hymn" (see fig. 1). In this epigraph, Rabelais satirizes the self-indulgent, financial gluttony of the fictitious "Laird of Salmagundi." The Laird represents rulers who, as Moore's poem implies, become "a prosperous crew" at the expense of "those, like me and you" (Moore 241).⁵ Moore's brief excerpt of Rabelais's tale tells us that this corrupt Laird was paid an extravagant sum "yearly worth 6,789,106,789 royals" for his governorship. Yet, as the full tale tells, he still lived beyond these lavish means (Rabelais 264).⁶

⁴ The National Library of Ireland (NLI) houses Lady Morgan's seven volumes of commonplace books, MS 878-884, which impressively contain over two thousand pages of commonplacing. Additional volumes of Morgan's commonplace books exist outside of the NLI archives, such as in the UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library. This collection houses three volumes of Owenson's commonplace books (1800-1810) totaling approximately 132 pages. UCLA's online library catalogue description of these manuscripts indicates that these three volumes of commonplace books hold extracts of general knowledge and literary works, as well as house Owenson's working copies of her poetry that will be discussed in Chapter II.

⁵ A nearly identical image of Thomas Moore's "The Periwinkles and the Locusts: A Salmagundian Hymn" (ca. 1827), as compiled by Morgan, can be accessed online in Google Books in the 1833 edition of *The Works of Thomas Moore, Esq.: Accurately Printed from the Last Original Editions with Critical Notes* (713).

⁶ Images reprinted and texts quoted from Lady Morgan's commonplace books are presented in this dissertation by the kind permission of The National Library of Ireland.

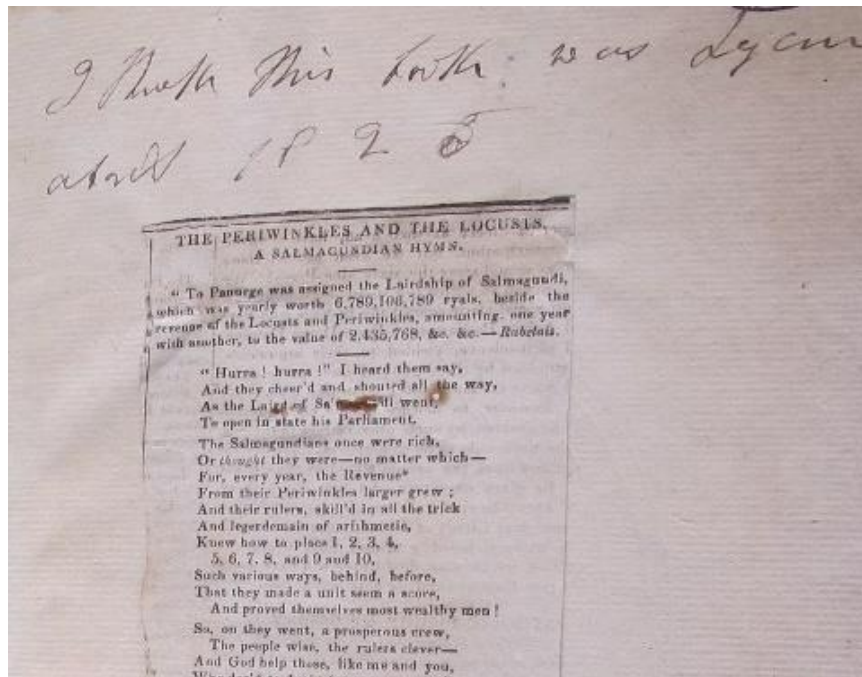


Fig. 1. Snippet view of inaugural first page of Lady Morgan’s *Commonplace Book MS 878*. This page contains a published print clipping of Thomas Moore’s poem, “The Periwinkles and the Locusts: A Salmagundian Hymn” (ca. 1827), in which he includes an excerpted passage from François Rabelais’s “Third Book of the Heroic Deeds and Sayings of the Good Pantagruel” (ca. 1550) featuring the term Salmagundi as a synecdoche for political excess. (MS 878). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1825).

In addition to Rabelais’s allusion to Salmagundian abundance and political corruption, “A Salmagundian Hymn” takes its meaning from other references, such as a popular seventeenth-century dish called a Salmagundi.⁷ A Salmagundi refers to a mixed salad comprised of a layered or tossed assortment of fruits, vegetables, meats, poultry,

⁷ The OED notes that the term Salmagundi, written in *Glossographia* in 1674, is Italian in origin and refers to “a dish of meat made of cold Turkey and other ingredients.”

fish, eggs, nuts, and occasionally flower blossoms all dressed with oil.⁸ The subtitle to Thomas Medley's *Hotch Potch* (1774), *A Salmagunda of Lucubrations*, as a commonplace book containing an assortment of mixed texts, also informs the diction of Moore's subtitle. As a rich mixture of literary texts, "piece-meals of economy," and "controversies and opinions," Medley's commonplace book portends Morgan's compilations. Her interests in Irish and Continental politics and her literary career often became conflated in and integral to her commonplacing. Morgan's inaugural clipping imaginatively triangulates the political, aesthetic, and generic attributes of her commonplacing. Morgan gestures with the clipping of "A Salmagundian Hymn," the presence of Laird Salmagundi, an allusion to Salmagundian dishes, and an evocation of *Salmagunda of Lucubrations*, the abundantly diverse array of texts, images, and ephemera in commonplace books. A Salmagundian type of abundance in commonplacing becomes evident in both the manner of incorporating content and the purpose for including content in women's commonplace books during the Romantic period.

Lady Morgan's choice for a first extract to commonplace reveals her wry sense of humor mixed with an adroit solemnity. Morgan unapologetically signals with this extract (and throughout her commonplace books) that she intends to satirize politics while serving a fascinating, cultural assortment of intellectually and aesthetically intriguing textual ingredients. Morgan's seven volumes of commonplace books attest to

⁸ For visual examples of Salmagundi salads, Sally Butcher's *Salmagundi: A Celebration of Salads from around the World* (2014) is a useful resource.

her visual, tactile, and textual creativity that, more often than not, served a sociable, political purpose. Morgan's commonplacing would have resonated with many women from the Romantic period, who also compiled manuscripts that were often political and uniquely customized while retaining some semblance to the generic conventions of commonplace books. Yet, this semblance was often tenuous as women's commonplace books evolved during the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century, beginning from a different point of reference than men's commonplace books.

Typically, men's commonplace books in the medieval and early modern periods, generically, followed the classical *trivium* of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, which were considered the essentials of men's education. Men's commonplacing during this time period, according to Haven's, produced *florilegia*,⁹ a textbook-like commonplace book that contained "a series of short excerpted passages"—usually "overwhelmingly, often exclusively religious" (19). My study shows that in addition incorporating aspects of a classical *trivium* (religious or philosophical rhetoric) into their commonplace books, women increasingly participated in creating a new *trivium* consisting of literary, valuatory,¹⁰ and socio-political content. This new *trivium* is clearly identifiable in a

⁹ The Latin word "*florilegia*" translates to mean a "book of flowers," containing the best excerpts commonplaced into a book metaphorically similar to the way bees gather nectar from flowers.

¹⁰ I use the descriptive term valuatory to indicate an assessment of worth for pecuniary and non-pecuniary assets that may or may not be assigned a monetary value. A wide variety of assets are often listed in personal inventories and represent personal investments that may or may not be readily transferable as material assets. The language of accountancy that describes and evaluates methods of assessing and tracking monetary or fiscal assets over time lacks the nuance of meaning needed to convey what value meant to women who kept lists, inventory records, and registers in their commonplace books. Therefore, providing a term, such as the word "valuatory," becomes necessary in order to encompass women's ideation of value in their commonplace books.

portion of Medley's long subtitle to *Hotch Potch: A Collection of a Variety of Subjects, Original Pieces, Piece-Meals of Economy, and Controversies and Opinions*. This new orientation in content in women's commonplacing meant having a greater "variety of subjects" that tended to be less "exclusively religious" or "overwhelmingly" obliged to conduct literature. This variety includes three main subject areas: "original pieces" of literary work, "piece-meal" accounting records, and "controversies and opinions" of cultural, socio-political concerns. My research suggests that religious precepts were neither overtly rejected nor had they completely disappeared from women's commonplace books. Instead, excerpts of religious precepts and conduct literature were increasingly crowded out, over time, by a variety of other interests and needs in women's pursuit of an active life of "doing and writing."

Walter Benjamin's in his essay, "One-Way Street" (1928), notes the dynamics of "doing and writing," active work and literary forms, which, I posit, are applicable to women's commonplacing:

Significant literary effectiveness can come into being only in a strict alternation between doing and writing; it must nurture the inconspicuous forms that fit its influence in active communities better than the pretentious universal gesture of the book—in leaflets, brochures, articles, and placards [...]. Opinions are to the vast apparatus of social existence what oil is to machines: one does not go up to a turbine and pour machine oil over it; one applies a little to hidden spindles and joints [...] that one has to know. (444)

The "literary effectiveness," the textual impact of women's commonplace books, owes much to the practical use of the page leaf as an experimental and experiential workspace for composing literary works, keeping valuatory records, and engaging in political discourse—new discursive practices grafted onto to the genre's classical roots. The page

leaves of these workable commonplace books resemble “inconspicuous forms” that operate like the “hidden spindles and joints” of a turbine, with annotations of news clippings, literary works, illustrations, and the ephemera of social events functioning like oil applied to these mechanisms. Effectively, women’s subtle commonplacing of a practical *trivium* befitting their interests, needs, and common activities supplanted the overt influence and persuasive rhetoric of religious precepts and conduct literature—the tracts, the “articles and brochures.” Women began to reveal their range of interests and work-life by the extracts they commonplaced, such as Morgan’s book reviews of her novels compiled in her commonplace books. These excerpted reviews made her commonplace books an experiential space, which connected commonplacing to her experiences of literary work. Both experimental and experiential commonplacing involved the “doing” of writing. Such writing workspaces complimented women’s full and varied social existence, which, I contend, was unsatisfactorily supported by strictly traditional forms of *florilegia*.

In this dissertation, my case studies demonstrate the significance of women intentionally using their commonplace books as compositional workspaces featuring the poetics of either their own work or the work of other poets. These case studies also show that women thoughtfully inscribed ownership of personal and real property onto the pages of their commonplace books. Furthermore, my studies of commonplace books reveal how women consciously wrote, clipped, affixed, and sketched sociable, cultural, and political involvement into their commonplacing with a resourcefulness as unique as their own individuality. In my analysis of how and why women utilized commonplacing,

I argue that commonplacers should be thought of as writers primarily rather than as readers. They were active rather than passive commonplacers, readerly writers compiling extracts, actively journaling, composing, editing, and circulating the content of their commonplace books. Women spent a significant amount of time and effort invested in the handcrafted physicality and artful customization of their manuscripts. Perhaps initiated by reading, refined by adding their knowledge and own viewpoints, and enhanced with clippings or other tactile ephemera, women transformed their commonplace books into a public sphere of shared ideas.

David Allan argues in *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (2010) that “commonplace books may yet provide the most revealing insights into the nature and consequences of reading” (19), and he proceeds “to claim for commonplacing the significant place [...] it warrants in the unfolding history of English reading” (21). Allan implies that “our own starting point” for understanding commonplace books should focus on a “clear sense of the place within the history of reading” that is staked out by commonplacing (5). Though I agree with Allan’s supposition that commonplacing warrants a noteworthy place in the history of reading, my dissertation takes a different approach that focuses on the centrality of writing for understanding women’s commonplace books. Women as readerly writers had to make a variety of choices about what outside print and scribal sources to use, as well as consider whether or not to include their own compositions, valuatory records, political commentary,

artistic renderings, and miscellaneous ephemera. They also had to decide how to present these choices in their commonplace books through various book-making techniques.¹¹

William St Clair in *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (2004)

emphasizes that readers made choices concerning what and how they read, and I would add that along with their choices they interact textually in ways that are indicative of commonplacers as writers:

We need to recognize that readers had freedom, within their circumstances, to choose which texts to read and which passages to give most attention to, to skip, to argue, to resist, to read against the grain, to be influenced by irrelevances, to be careless, to misunderstand, to be distracted, to slip into dreams, to disagree but to continue reading. [...] Readerly autonomy also included the opportunity to pass on opinions and impressions. (5)

St Claire's depiction of "readerly autonomy," as a range of tendencies to choose and read texts that suits the needs, desires, or whims of readers, resonates with women's autonomous commonplacing as readerly writers. As demonstrated in this dissertation, women textually argued with passages in their compilations. They employed layout designs, artistic renderings, and their own written contributions that went against the grain of social, cultural, or political discourse, seizing "the opportunity to pass on their opinions and impressions." Women also utilized their readerly, or rather writerly, autonomy to align their opinions with compilations of copied excerpts and printed clippings. By choosing particular extracts to compile and annotate in their commonplace

¹¹ In this dissertation, I use the term book-making in a broad sense to mean any manipulation or organization of physical pages, binding, or cover boards that contribute to the unique features of a book or manuscript. Book-making techniques used in commonplace books were as unique as individual commonplacers devised them to be to suit their interests and needs.

books, women signaled literary forms, material interests, and controversies that were significant to them. Women paid careful attention to the text, images, and ephemera that they commonplaced and how these compilations were exhibited. Though book-making techniques in commonplace books may at times seem deceptively simple or off-hand, women frequently produced thoughtfully-crafted manuscripts that served the purpose of aiding their everyday lives.

The social, aesthetic, physical, and intellectual work women performed at home and in their communities often became enmeshed in the workspaces of their commonplace books. The art of performing and visually displaying work in women's commonplace books employed the handcrafted techniques of book-making. Handcrafted book-making enlivened women's textual engagement with their commonplace books as manuscripts of distinct physicality. This physicality meant incorporating tactile, visually interesting, and occasionally ephemeral or organic entries and excerpts. One of the most fascinating functions of a substantial commonplace book was to harness the physicality of its weight to serve as a plant press. For example, two adjoining pages in D. Wordsworth's¹² shared commonplace book with W. Wordsworth, *Book of Verse DCMS 89* (ca. 1820-1850), expose a dual shadow-image from the stain of a pressed plant. This image, the result of book-craft, demonstrates the occasional transitory, organic physicality of the content in commonplace books (see fig. 2). Ariane Fennetaux in

¹² In this dissertation, the nomenclature for Dorothy Wordsworth will be D. Wordsworth. In regard to names of other members of the Wordsworth family, I will also use the beginning initial to designate their identity, except when two members have the same first initial.

“Female Crafts: Women and *Bricolage* in Late Georgian Britain, 1750-1820,” asserts that “crafts could be subverted and used by women to their own ends” (92). The pressed flower image in *Book of Verse* evokes the hobby of plant specimen gathering and sketching to create herbals. D. Wordsworth writes in her journal on 16 May 1800 that she “carried a basket for mosses, & gathered some wild plants,” and in a flash of desire, she exclaims “Oh! that we had a book of botany” (*Grasmere Journals* 2). This shadowed outline suggestive of the type of sketches found in a botany book such as John Gerard’s *The herbal, or, Generall historie of plantes* (1636), may have served to recall to mind D. Wordsworth’s journal entry. The reminiscent physicality of this organic image makes D. Wordsworth ownership and involvement with this commonplace book (DCMS 89) more personalized, marking her wish for a book of botany with a visual, tangible reminder.



Fig. 2. An ephemeral organic stain from a flowering plant in Dorothy Wordsworth’s shared commonplace book with William Wordsworth, *Book of Verse* DCMS 89. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1820).

Dorothy Wordsworth and other women conflated craft-making and collecting with visual and tactile book-making techniques in their commonplace books, such as affixing paper overlays and layering newsprint clippings to the page by using tape, sealing wax, straight pins, or thread. Other book-making techniques included inverting content on the page and reversing the manuscript's front to back orientation; adding pages or ephemera to the binding or gutter margins; and enhancing the utility or appearance of the leaves and cover boards with descriptive labels and decorative images. I have noticed throughout my research that associative relationships exist between these book-making methods and the content of women's commonplace books. When women artfully crafted customized and practical book-making methods that layered or mixed together print, handwritten text, images, or ephemera, they proportionally demonstrated a greater degree and combination of poetic innovation, financial management, and socio-political engagement. I have also observed that when women's commonplacing comparatively lacked personalized handcrafting, then formal conduct literature, texts of general knowledge (ostensibly for the sake of improving moral character), and other-authored¹³ literary works were more prominently featured than self-authored¹⁴ works and textual representations of a varied life of doing and writing.

¹³ I use the term other-authored as a way to distinguish from works that are self-authored. I define other-authored works as literature not primarily composed by the author herself or himself.

¹⁴ I use the term self-authored as a way to distinguish from other-authored works. In this context, a literary work is primarily composed by the author herself or himself, but still presumes some degree of social authorship in the composition process.

Entries and excerpts neatly copied into women's commonplace books present a different generic dynamic than the associative relationship between the scrap-like customization of the physical manuscript and the creativity of its content. For example, Angela Reyner's commonplace book (1822-1828; WLMS 35/2),¹⁵ written in her impeccably neat handwritten script with beautifully executed paintings, displays uncluttered pages devoid of scraps of newsprint clippings or other ephemera. Her elegantly executed headings introduce a variety of advice-orientated topics and general knowledge, such as "On Friendship," "On Gratitude," "Forget Me Not," "There's nothing true but Heaven," and "Supposed Population of the World" (WLMS 35/2). Reyner's commonplacing in flowingly precise calligraphy seems aesthetically sophisticated, but her choice of subjects reveals a lack of personalization, variety, and complexity indicative of women's commonplace books represented in my case studies of Eleanor Butler (1739-1829), Elizabeth Rose (1747-1815), Sarah Ponsonby (1755-1831), Dorothy Wordsworth (1771-1855), and Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan (1781-1859). Though Reyner's commonplacing reveals a certain degree of naiveté, her entries appear to be more substantial than merely schoolgirl lessons on morality, general knowledge, or the art of calligraphy, which typifies Sarah Foster's *Dictates Given at Mr. and Mrs. Kemplay's Ladies' Boarding School, Leeds, 1807*. Reyner's commonplacing, in fact, attempts to maintain classical generic conventions that had receded during the Romantic

¹⁵Angela Reyner's commonplace book *Scrapbook DCMS 35.2* referenced in this dissertation is housed at the Jerwood Centre in Grasmere. Visuals and quotations from DCMS 35.2 are used in this dissertation with the kind permission of the Wordsworth Trust.

period. By the Victorian era, these conventions were relatively outdated, as the inclusion of print media assumed a primary role, supplying greater diversity of sources for content. Yet, in the meantime, manuscripts, such as Reyner's, deflected substantive generic changes taking place during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Conversely, Lady Morgan commonplacing a newsprint clipping of Moore's poem based upon Rabelais's Laird Salmagundi generically differs from Reyner's copy of a poem "Accept, my Friend, this feeble lay" (WLMS 35/2). Reyner's extract of an anonymous poem contemplating religious affirmation of friendship and duty contrasts sharply with Rabelais's texts that contain earthy, burlesque folk humor of literary phantasmagorias. Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* (1965) discusses Rabelais's carnivalesque oeuvre and the "nonconformity of his images to the literary norms and canons" (2), which Morgan would have been artistically sentient to as an innovator of the Irish national tale. According to Bakhtin, Rabelais's "images have a certain undestroyable non official nature [...] opposed to all that is finished and polished, to all pomposity, to every ready-made solution in the sphere of thought and world outlook" (3). Laird Salmagundi characterizes this Rabelais-esque world of satiric, carnivalesque caricatures of unpolished images. Though Morgan excerpts "A Salmagundi Hymn," she demonstrates that she was also capable of producing "polished" extracts supportive of moral- or self-improvement, such as a fair copy of an epitaph by Thomas Moore in *MS 878*. However, throughout most of her manuscripts, Morgan intentionally chose to experiment with informal arrangements of text, images, and ephemera. Similar to Rabelais's work, Morgan's commonplacing does not quickly become passé with

“ready-made solutions” in regard to “world outlooks.” Excerpted didactic works in women’s commonplace books, though, become dated as the culture and politics of society changed. Conversely, the authenticity of women’s experience and experimentation, such as in Morgan’s commonplacing, remains a relevant record of who these women were and what they thought, felt, and accomplished.

Lady Morgan’s commonplacing represents the complex navigation of generic conventions and experimentation with innovative, scrapbook-like displays of images, printed and handwritten text, and miscellaneous ephemera. Allan detects the scrapbook-like aesthetic of commonplace books coming into their own during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These emerging modalities signify a general shift in the genre:

The Georgian commonplace book was not in practice restricted to copying out evidence of reading. In fact, particularly after around 1800, constant exposure to cheap newsprint was encouraging some readers to rethink commonplacing entirely, and to see it as the process of compiling not a collection of handwritten transcriptions, but a scrapbook of original cuttings from printed sources. (29)

Allan’s statement underscores what I have noticed to be particularly congruent with Morgan’s and contemporary women’s commonplace books; in addition to a substantial amount of handwritten annotations or marginalia, journaling, drawings, and ephemera in commonplace books, they display a mélange of print media. Due to the advent of print culture and changes in cost and availability of print, women during the Romantic period were engaged inventively with this medium in their commonplace books to a greater degree than before the early nineteenth-century. H. J. Jackson in *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia* (2005) points out that buying cheap periodicals, which I recognize as frequently utilized sources for clipping excerpts, had the equivalent modern

economic “impact of a movie ticket” (38). Jackson recognizes that in addition to inexpensive periodicals and cheap editions of books, published anthologies of books were “cheap to produce” (40) and made print media more affordable and available.

Paradoxically, Jackson reminds us, “although books can be said to have been plentiful in the Romantic period, they were also in a sense scarce, so everyone shared” (38). She demonstrates that the conundrum of both abundance and scarcity of print media stems from the fact that “almost no one could acquire all the books he or she might want or need, or have access to them all in one place” (40). Print media had become cheap and available during the Romantic period but only in relative terms and in complex and incomplete modes of circulation. This relative and complex surfeit of inexpensive and available print that was clipped or copied into women’s commonplace books was derived from both books and periodicals. These emerging sources of print added to the general availability and variety of content that could be publically circulated. Importantly, this greater variety and abundance of content gave women more discretion in how they chose to shape the process of commonplacing. The relatively plentiful and affordable availability of print during the Romantic period allowed women the luxury to “rethink” what they needed and wanted from the genre of commonplacing.

Rethinking the genre requires a necessary re-examination of early modern methods of commonplacing that continued on into the Romantic and Victorian periods and had an influence on how women compiled commonplace books. Prior to the advent of print culture, a textbook-like mode of note-taking was commonly used in commonplace books by men studying for the clergy, law, or medicine. Often these

textbooks were written in Latin and later published in print rather than remain in manuscript form.¹⁶ Havens suggests that when early modern commonplace books remained in manuscript form, they typified “practical, written extensions of reading” rather than “works of reference” (9). In other words, if a manuscript commonplace book had educational merit, particularly for men’s professional and academic education, then these commonplace books tended to be published in print form.

The implication of this contextual book history means that women’s “practical” commonplace books, written in the vernacular for nonprofessional or nonacademic purposes, remained in manuscript form. These realities of print publication in the early modern period suggests conditions leading to a relative lack of printed women’s commonplace books. Havens’s survey of commonplace books in the early modern period suggests as well that, proportionally, women’s printed commonplace books, also known as miscellanies,¹⁷ were virtually non-existent. Ann Moss’s own survey of early modern printed commonplace books in *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (1996) mirrors Havens’s results, stating “women,

¹⁶ Earle Havens in *Commonplace Books: A History of Manuscripts and Printed Books from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (2001) notes that the Renaissance commonplace book, *Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophers* (1477) was one of the first print commonplace books—interestingly, published by William Caxton (23).

¹⁷ Commonplace books went by many names, as discussed later in this chapter. Yet, it is reasonable to generalize that early modern period commonplace books tended to be called miscellanies. Joshua Eckhardt and Daniel Starza Smith in *Manuscript Miscellanies in Early Modern England* (2014) define miscellanies consistent with definitions for commonplace books: “miscellanies typically feature texts from multiple sources and contributions from several hands” (2). Though there are differences in early modern miscellanies and Romantic period commonplace books, for the purpose of discussion, the term miscellany or miscellanies used in this dissertation are generally considered to be generically equivalent to commonplace books and vice versa.

being excluded from the Latin school, were not among the makers of commonplace-books” (viii). To qualify Moss’s statement, she is referring strictly to early modern printed commonplace books as works of reference or, rather, textbooks.

Certainly, though, women’s manuscript commonplace books were compiled and occasionally, albeit rarely, published in print during the early modern period. By comparison, women’s commonplace books were more frequently printed in later periods. For example, Felicia Hemans’s *Young Woman’s Companion, or Female Instructor* (1835) and Mary Berry’s *Extracts of the Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry, from the Year 1783 to 1852* (1865) are commonplace books that were printed during the Romantic and Victorian periods respectively. Though, Marcy L. North adopts a different approach than Havens or Moss in “Women, the Material Book and Early Printing” (2009). North notes that “the numbers of women authors in print do not come close to those of male authors, but women were conspicuous enough in early print to make female authorship a relatively familiar, even conventional, phenomenon” (68). Women’s “conspicuous enough” authorship alludes to extant women’s printed commonplace books, such as Aphra Behn’s *Miscellany, Being a Collection of Poems by Several Hands Together with Reflections in Morality, or Seneca Unmasked* (1685).¹⁸

Echoing North’s assertions but focusing on women’s manuscript commonplace books, Victoria E. Burke in “Manuscript Miscellanies” (2009) states that “miscellanies

¹⁸ This print copy of Aphra Behn’s miscellany or commonplace book, *Miscellany, Being a Collection of Poems by Several Hands Together with Reflections in Morality, or Seneca Unmasked* (1685), is housed in the Cushing Memorial Library on Texas A&M University campus, College Station, TX.

compiled by women do not survive in the same numbers as those compiled by men, nor are they as easily identifiable with known sites of manuscript production and circulation of verse, such as the universities, Inns of Court, and coffee houses” (64). Yet, as Burke demonstrates with images from Constance Fowler’s and Ann Bowyer’s miscellanies (ca. 1630) reproduced in her article (59, 61), women’s commonplacing was fairly common—even in the early modern period. The textual evidence cited in Joshua Eckhardt and Daniel Straza Smith’s *Manuscript Miscellanies in Early Modern England* (2014) and Laura Lunger Knoppers’s *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women’s Writing* (2009) suggests that the number of women’s manuscript commonplace books would likely prove to be substantial if they were indeed recoverable. They make such assumptions based upon the ubiquitous influence of commonplacing in determining significant financial decisions regarding book purchases. Eckhardt and Smith state that “the act of acquiring an early modern text regularly involved deciding whether or not to include it, or part of it, in a commonplace book” (1). Decisions to copy and circulate excerpts of other texts (print or scribal) into their commonplace books were made by women and were driven by their preferences of production, use, and dissemination of content. Knoppers states that “like their male counterparts, women preferred manuscript writing and (sometimes) circulation for their [...] miscellanies” (10). Perhaps not as many women’s commonplace books were published in print, but this distinction meant little to men and women who had opportunities for and actually preferred scribal publication.

When commonplace books or miscellanies lacked specific designation, these texts often bore titles suggestive of generic commonplacing by including the substitute term “companion.” For example, Hannah Woolley’s *The Gentle Woman’s Companion* (1673)¹⁹ and Hemans’s *Young Woman’s Companion* (1840) bear this alternative nomenclature for commonplacing used in print publications of commonplace books. Wendy Wall in “Women in the Household” notes that Woolley “imagines writing as a household art. Directing governesses how to teach girls, Woolley classifies needlework as a ‘practice’ of the ‘pen’ and groups writing alongside preserving and distilling” (97). Woolley, in imagining a role for writing or, rather, commonplacing in the domestic sphere metaphorically associates the genre with the domestic arts of needlecraft. Also, according to Wall, “For Woolley, writing is a manual skill fundamental to the ‘laudable Science’ of housewifery” (100). By associating her writing or commonplacing, with needlecraft and housewifery, Woolley, distances the genre from its classical roots as a male avocation.

Hannah Woolley’s *Gentle Woman’s Companion* as an early modern text would likely be classified by scholars as a miscellany rather than called a commonplace book. Though, Arthur F. Marotti in *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (1995) frequently makes associations between these two nomenclatures. For example, he

¹⁹ The subtitle of Hannah Woolley’s *The Gentle Woman’s Companion* includes the following: *A Guide to the Female Sex: Containing Directions of Behavior, in all Places, Companies, Relations, and Conditions from Childhood down to Old Age With Letters and Discourse upon All Occasions [...] added a Guide for Cook-Maids, Dairymaids [...]*. The book has strong elements of conduct literature along with piece-meals of information or general knowledge and contains various subgenres, representing the variety of texts common in commonplace books.

cites *The Workes of the Lady Ann Sothwell* (1626) as a “commonplace book of verse and prose” (50). More studies need to be conducted analyzing the fine-grained generic differences between miscellanies and commonplace books, as well as their commonalities. Current textual evidence and scholarship indicates that women’s commonplacing flourished in the early modern and Romantic period under both titles. Yet, my research indicates that early modern nomenclature for commonplacing primarily designated the genre as a miscellany. This term faded out of use during the Romantic period for the preferred term--commonplace book. Further changes in nomenclature occurred in the late Romantic period and early Victorian era with commonplace books being frequently designated as scrapbooks or albums. These shifts in nomenclature often reflected both subtle and significant changes in generic conventions while retaining attributes of commonplacing, as discussed in detail throughout this dissertation.

During the Victorian era commonplacing extracts became more visual and tactile and less textual than Romantic period commonplace books. Women placed more emphasis on commonplacing artistic renderings, needlecraft, lithographs, and images in vibrant colors than on copied or printed excerpts of text. These generic changes in commonplacing transformed commonplace books into miscellanies of scraps or, rather, scrapbooks. For example, Camilla Calder’s manuscript²⁰ serves as an exemplar of women’s uniquely customized Victorian commonplacing that generically resembles a

²⁰ While I was staying in Wales during my fellowship exchange with Aberystwyth University, I met Camilla Calder who shared with me her scrapbook that was a legacy gift to her from her mother. Calder has kindly granted me permission to use images and text from her scrapbook and to discuss its provenance and contents.

scrapbook. According to Calder, her scrapbook was handed down through familial maternal lines in the mid-nineteenth century, originating with Edith A. Burges who was Calder's great-great aunt. According to Calder, the provenance of this scrap book begins with Burges who "must be a sister of Eirene Burges who was Rose's Mother [Rose Richardson being Camilla Calder's grandmother]." Recalling her family lineage and the contents of the scrapbook, Calder writes:

I don't know what relation she [Burges] had to Rose Bootle Wilbraham, after whom Rose Richardson was named. Randle Sparrow has a beautiful portrait in oils of this lovely lady--I don't know whether this is a self portrait but she was certainly a very good artist as her animal paintings in this scrap book show. Randle Sparrow (Camilla's first cousin) also has a water colour sketch painted in 1888 by Rose Bootle Wilbraham. It is a view of Nice as seen from the hills above and was entered in the Times competition for watercolour artists in that year. On the plate with the Epps's Cocoa, the little stamps come from letter head envelopes of personal engraved initials. (Calder)

As Calder's description of the provenance and some of the content in this scrap book demonstrates, many of these types of manuscripts were and continue to be kept as women's personal heirlooms rather than stored away in library archives. From Calder's description of the oil and water colored paintings and sketches by Sparrow and Wilbraham, the handcrafted artistry of this manuscript makes it a valuable treasured heirloom as well. Similar to many mid- or late-Victorian scrap books, this manuscript contains more ephemeral visual media than the text-laden commonplace books of the Romantic period (see fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Inner front cover fly leaf of Camilla Calder's Victorian scrapbook. This family heirloom designates the provenance of the manuscript with inscriptions written in pencil and ink. Reprinted with permission from Camilla Calder ("Camilla Calder" 1850).

The unprecedented quantities and heightened visual qualities of media made available by print culture provided women with the means to exchange text for visual media. Victorian scrapbooks like Calder's seem to be neither readerly nor writerly; instead, they display visual rhetoric as the primary mode of meaning-making, creating especially personalized manuscripts. According to Ellen Gruber Garvey's "Scissoring and Scrapbooks: Nineteenth-Century Reading, Remaking, and Recirculating" in *New Media, 1740-1915* (2003), "the maker of the scrapbook carved an individual creation suited to individual interests out of mass-distributed material" (219). Such individual creations from mass produced print included miscellaneous print ephemera as well. For

example, stamps that came from “letter head envelopes of personal engraved initials” and common “Epps's Cocoa” product labeling are found in Calder’s scrapbook. Calder’s scrapbook also contains numerous high quality family-related paintings combined with print media and occasionally some text. As Garvey notes, “scrapbook makers straddled the personal and the mass-circulated” (225). We can see this mix of personal artistry and print medium in Calder’s scrapbook.

A pronounced shift from text-centered to visual-laden content creates a tipping point at which commonplacing produces a scrapbook rather than a commonplace book. At this tipping point where text recedes, shopping lists, asset inventories, and financial registers²¹ also faded from women’s commonplacing. The disappearance of these valuatory records in commonplace books or missing from scrapbooks, such as Calder’s scrapbook during the Victorian, era poignantly stands out as a considerable generic change in commonplacing. This substantial shift in commonplacing heralded the adoption of new generic conventions, including one in which “many scrapbook makers reused old books” (215) for creating repurposed manuscripts. According to Garvey, these old books with “their tedious contents made them more empty than blank books and making them into scrapbooks redeemed them from limbo” (215). It so happens, as Garvey points out, these “reused books commonly included used ledger books and

²¹ In this dissertation, I have broadly defined a register as an account record posting entries of financial transactions. Registers often include descriptions and numerical summations, but these are not necessary and not always included.

daybooks” (217) purportedly discarded because they were egregiously dull but functional enough to be repurposed as scrapbooks.

Replacing ledgers in commonplace books for richly pigmented chromolithographic²² cutouts of “Victoriana,”²³ epitomizes some of the essential differences between Victorian era scrapbooks and Romantic period commonplace books. Accounting records in commonplace books signaled the activities of women’s work-life, their doing and writing in public and private spheres. Valuatory records registered women’s ability to make independent purchases, investments decisions, and to mark the accretion of wealth--as well as to manage debt. The exchange of asset record-keeping for the exhibition of abundant colored images of posies, as well as lithographs of natural, exotic, and domestic scenes, speaks to a change in the generic conventions of commonplacing. This alteration also reflects a shift in the wants, needs, and desires of women during the nineteenth century evident in their commonplacing. Though this remarkable generic transformation would be a fruitful area for further research, suffice to say that these changes in women’s commonplacing also exposes noteworthy shifts in cultural, social and political priorities and perspectives. The images in Calder’s Victorian scrapbook have an especially rich, sensual quality to their coloration along with

²² A patent for chromolithography was first awarded in 1837 for a process of lithography that added pigment to a different stone for each color in a manner similar to producing color woodcuts or silkscreen prints. According to Priscilla Dunhill in *A Victorian Scrapbook*, “by the end of the century, with the advent of mass advertising, mass magazines, and a four-color photochemical printing process, labor-intensive chromolithography was no longer viable” (15).

²³ Images in Priscilla Dunhill’s *Victorian Scrapbook* provide numerous examples of Victoriana, which is a term for compiled Victorian print images and text but mostly images. The term “ana” simply means commonplacing or a commonplace book, as in Hester Thrale Piozzi’s *Thraliana*.

clippings of grayscale engravings or lithographic etchings reminiscent of images found in travel and conduct literature. These images are the result of innovations in the production methods of print media during the nineteenth century made possible by advances in technology. Women’s vibrant and artistic manuscripts, as exhibited by a two-page spread in Calder’s scrapbook, underscores the advances of technology as much as or more so than women’s change in taste (see fig. 4). Though vastly different from the registers and inventory lists, as discussed in detail in Chapter III, Calder’s Victorian scrapbook keeps current with the innovations and the progression of that time.



Fig. 4. Two-page spread from Camilla Calder’s scrapbook. This layout depicts Victorian interest in handcrafted commonplacing utilizing colored and gray-scaled images readily available in a print culture of abundant and affordable media. Reprinted with permission from Camilla Calder (“Camilla Calder” 1850).

The above layout from Calder's scrapbook comprises three main handcrafted sections of cutouts. All three cutouts have been accessorized with needlework. They display lacey filigree, bejeweled decoration, or floral trimming, which surrounds a cameo portrait of a woman amidst other embroidered and painted floral designs. Though we may understand this stitchery to be feminine in a constructed sense, according to Rozsika Parker in *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (1989), "the Victorians identified embroidery with femininity in the context of rigidly defined sex roles" (215). The colorful female portrait and flowers embellished with needlecraft on the verso page of Calder's scrapbook in figure 4 certainly lends itself to identifying "femininity with embroidery." However, Goggin cites Parker's study and questions the idea of embroidery as a feminine art. Goggin reminds us that "Parker's historical study of gender and embroidery traces and clearly establishes how needlework became gendered under modernity; that is, it *was constructed* as 'women's work,' despite the fact that historically men have always plied a needle" (2). Too easily we may overlook that men had needlecraft skills with florals as a primary design element in needlework or that flowers were once the domain of men. Parker, herself, reminds us that "today flower embroidery is so closely associated with women that it is easy to overlook that in the sixteenth century that flowers were not considered primarily the province of women. Gerard in his herbal, *Generall historie of plantes*, wrote that they [flowers] "Admonish and stir up a man" (72). The wispy floral sketches suffused with pastel and saturated coloration in Calder's scrapbook, though, differ markedly from the

quasi-realism of line drawings in Victorian botanical illustrations in such works as Jane Loudon's print *Botany for Ladies* (1842), retitled *Modern Botany* (1851).

The elaborate floral designs in Calder's scrapbook differ from the simpler floral drawings found in women's commonplace books from the Romantic period, which tend to exclude, conflate, or balance vibrant coloration and handcrafted embellishment with the subtler detail of line drawings reminiscent of printed herbals.²⁴ D. Wordsworth's stained outline image from a pressed flower in figure 2 resembles the sketches found in botany books more so than the renderings of florals in Calder's scrapbook. Calder's and D. Wordsworth's common interest in florals regardless of differences in generic styles of commonplacing seems apparent and reinforces what scholars have observed throughout the Romantic and Victorian periods. According to Ann B. Shteir in *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science* botany, as a leisure pursuit, "was a rational recreation" (173) enjoyed by women and men alike. Seen in figure 4 of Calder's scrapbook, the cameo portrait of a woman positioned as though surrounded in a field of flowers and dressed in a shawl and sunhat suggests that she is outfitted for enjoying the hobby of collecting botanical specimens. This Victorian portrait easily matches how we may imagine D. Wordsworth with her basket of moss, gathering plant specimens, and wishing for a book of botany. This mutual interest in flora evident in D. Wordsworth's and Calder's manuscripts reminds us that not all aspects of generic commonplacing between the

²⁴ For examples of renderings that were typical of floral illustrations in women's commonplace books during the Romantic period, see figures 1.13 and 2.5 from Angela Reyner's commonplace book (WLMS 35/2).

Romantic period and Victorian era became inveterately separate. Women's commonplace books and later scrapbooks still shared some commonalities and generic conventions.

This contextual background to commonplacing from the early modern period to the Victorian era, including the case study of Calder's scrapbook, provides a useful context for understanding the generic attributes of commonplace books in manuscript and in print forms during the Romantic period. Though, keeping in mind, as Margaret J. M. Ezell reminds us in *Writing Women's Literary History* (1993), "to publish was the exception for both men and women, and the most common practice was the circulation of manuscript copies" (34). The focus of this dissertation remains on manuscript commonplace books, though print commonplace books and print media in commonplace books and scrapbooks had significant generic implications for the genre. Women's manuscripts or their content during the Romantic period, such as excerpts of D. Wordsworth's poetry from *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*, were well-circulated by a network of coteries through familial and communal lines of readership and inheritance. The circulation of D. Wordsworth's poetry from her commonplace book²⁵ will be discussed in detail in Chapter II.

Given the generic development of commonplace books, a different exigency for academic men and non-academic women existed. This exigency required divergent adherence to the generic conventions of commonplacing in which men tended to

²⁵ In this dissertation, when Dorothy Wordsworth's commonplace book is not specified, by default it refers to her manuscript, *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*.

conform to the classical needs of education and women to the needs of housewifery. Generally, the absence of expectations for women to produce works of reference or textbooks gave them tacit license to produce highly individualized manuscript commonplace books that included not only everyday matters of personal interests but also matters of temperament. The advent of print culture made it an easier task for women to find a variety of topics to explore that helped them to hand tailor their commonplace books. Women personalized their commonplace books with excerpts from cheap books, annotated news clippings, and print playbills. They developed clever means for attaching and detaching both print and scribal content, By having flexibility to add and remove text and images, compilers could change their minds and remove print clippings as their opinions, interests, and needs for information and expression changed over time. This textual flexibility provided women with an optimum workspace for dynamic interaction with their commonplace books.

For example, Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 881* (ca. 1837-1850) has two dime-sized remnants of newsprint on a verso page adhered with sealing wax. These former remnants of Morgan's commonplacing indicate that a clipping once covered her writing or was removed prior to journaling (see fig. 5). Morgan's controversial opinions about society and politics were distinctly radical and remarkably consistent over time. However, in regard to her manner, according to Julie Donovan in *Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan and the Politics of Style* (2009), "she remained a frenetic, flighty character, constantly shifting and forever on the go. Embracing restlessness, she took pride in her fidgety ways, and lauded that which facilitated and reflected them" (131). Being able to

adjust the content of her commonplace book, as indicated by its remnants, Morgan's commonplacing could accommodate her propensity for restlessness.

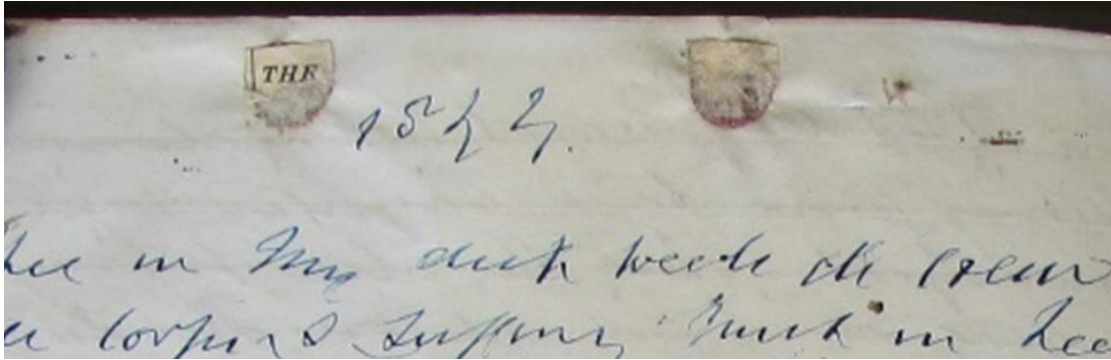


Fig. 5. Snippet view of Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 881* (ca. 1837-1850) featuring two dime-sized remnants of newsprint adhered with sealing wax. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland ("Sydney Morgan" 1837).

Ann Blair in "Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book" (1992) makes a point that illuminates how and why women's commonplace books show considerable flexibility in their use of generic conventions, both visually and textually. Blair argues that "as a tool for composition which opened many possibilities but required none in particular, the commonplace book is supremely tolerant of cognitive dissonance" (547-48). In this statement, Blair alludes to one of the key aspects of the genre: commonplacers may or may not have an audience or coterie for their compositions in their commonplace books—the possibility of having readers is imaginable, often probable, but not necessary or "required." This conundrum or generic "cognitive dissonance" of commonplacing fosters a freedom to explore literary

experimentation because there are no requirements imposed upon the commonplacer as a writer.

A significant generic evolution occurring in commonplacing during the early modern and Romantic periods increasingly framed commonplace books as tools or workspaces for composition rather than as merely receptacles of classical learning or housewifery. Women during the Romantic period, as non-academics or as non-clergy²⁶ free from the generic constraints of textbook-like commonplacing, seemed especially willing to experiment with employing commonplace books for composing literary works. Women's complex constructions of textual content and meaning, the "cognitive dissonance" inherent in commonplacing and annotating a variety of texts of different genres without clear explanation in commonplace books invite literary explication. This literary invitation extends beyond *prima facie* literature in women's commonplace books and potentially includes all varieties of text, images, and ephemera. As Terry Eagleton concludes in *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), "it is most useful to see 'literature' as a name which people give from time to time for different reasons to certain kinds of writing within a whole field of what Michel Foucault has called 'discursive practices'" (178). I contend that women initiated discursive practices in their commonplace books purposely to open up to possibilities, to inspire, and to invite literary interpretations. Though women's commonplace books were pegged early on in

²⁶ I am narrowly defining academics and clergy in this context as professionals associated with British establishment academia and religion, such as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the Church of England.

book history as being nonacademic texts, they profoundly incorporate discursive and literary practices.

In book history, the parameters of literary genres and their literary merit in relation to each other have not always been clear. In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (1981), Bakhtin theorizes about the novel and its literary merit as a genre relative to other genres, which suggests applicable parallels with commonplace books and their literary significance:

The novel gets on poorly with other genres. There can be no talk of a harmony deriving from mutual limitation and complementariness. The novel parodies other genres [...]; it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and re-accentuating them. (5)

Bakhtin's apologetics of the novel as a genre discusses attributes that are analogous to the literariness of women's commonplace books. Bakhtin suggests, that which makes the novel both unique and relevant resides in the genre's ability to "parody other genres." Commonplace books parody other genres as well but through incorporating them within their cover boards—burlesquing letters, travelogues, poetry, and renderings through fragmented copies, clippings, mappings, and paper overlays of emendations. Epistles, travel journals, poetry, short fiction, epigrams, eulogies, and political discourses etcetera remained integral to commonplacing to the degree that without their presence in commonplace books to some varying degree, it would be difficult to generically classify a manuscript as a commonplace book.

Compilers understood the significance of the "reformulation and re-accentuating" of genres in their commonplace books, which speaks to the Salmagundi or

often scrap-like appearance of extracts in commonplace books. Morgan and many other women commonplacers acquired additional volumes or new quire leaves rather than “squeeze out” a wide range of genres. They included excerpts to caricature and juxtaposition, often commonplacing them in satiric or poetic formulations.

Commonplace books typically mix together multiple genres, thereby creating distinctive reformulations of literary works. Yet, the “conventionality” of literary forms (lyric and prose) and “their language” (syntax, diction, tone, symbolism, irony, and point of view) in the entries and excerpts make a commonplace book a literary text rather than simply an idiosyncratic version of journaling. Extracts in commonplace books of disparate genres may be explicated and make meaning together as cohesive, coherent literary texts. For example, in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*, D. Wordsworth had placed on the verso page a print sonnet and on the recto page a transcribed travel narrative (see fig. 6). The sonnet, “There is no remedy for time misspent” (ca. 1842), in the form of a newsprint clipping, bears attribution to Aubrey [Thomas] de Vere (1814-1902). The travel narrative excerpt from “Extracts from Forest Scenes & Incidents in the Wilds of North America” (1829), authored by Sir George Head (1782-1855), is copied on the recto page by D. Wordsworth. Together these two texts of different genres convey dialogic, literary meaning.

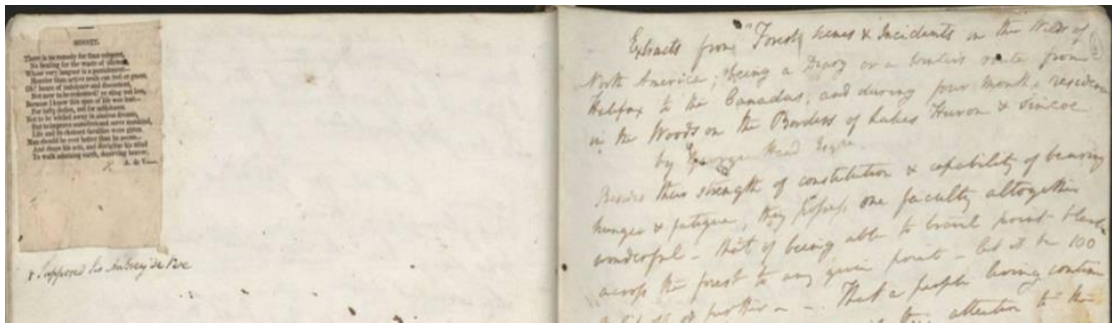


Fig. 6. Snippet view of Aubrey [Thomas] de Vere’s sonnet, “There is no remedy for time misspent” (ca. 1842), and Sir George Head’s “Extracts from Forest Scenes & Incidents in the Wilds of North America” (1829). The extracts in Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* exhibit mixed genres in close proximity. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1842).

Dorothy Wordsworth’s commonplacéd mix of print and scribal text, of sonnet and travel narrative, is separated by a considerable degree of white space. Usually, on such pages as this example in figure 6, D. Wordsworth would have also included a few stanzas of her own verse, an annotation, an epigram, or perhaps a eulogy. The absence of additional excerpts or entries on the verso page might easily escape our notice, but the careful economizing of paper practiced by the entire Wordsworth household in their letter-writing, repurposing of manuscripts, and commonplacing in general suggests the intentional presence of white space. Without including other extracts and entries on the two pages, the two genres of extracts converse in dialogic conversation with each other.

De Vere’s sonnet speaks to the traditional precept of giving a good account in the hereafter of one’s time and efforts on earth: “Man should be ever better than he seems-- / And shape his acts, and discipline his mind / To walk, adorning earth, with hope of heaven” (DCMS 120). Head’s narrative in his travelogue also speaks to one’s walk upon

the earth, but it is in relation to “four months residence in the Woods” and rooted in physicality and earthly contexts. Head admiringly notes that the inhabitants “Besides their strength of constitution & capacity of bearing hunger & fatigue, they possess one faculty altogether wonderful—that of being able to travel point-blank across the forest to any given point” (DCMS 120). These two extracts together have dual perspectives: heavenly and earthly, spiritual and physical. The sonnet advises a perspective of unwavering spiritual focus on cultivating moral action and a “disciplined mind” with one’s sights set straight ahead on the “hope of heaven.” The travel narrative becomes an earthly metaphor echoing the sonnet’s call for a spiritual walk with a “point-blank” focus, keeping steadily on the forest path of life. Bakhtin’s discussion of the novel that “exposes the conventionality” of other genres and “their forms and their language” informs our own understanding of D. Wordsworth’s commonplacing of these two literary excerpts. This understanding guides a conflated literary analysis of De Vere’s sonnet with Head’s travel narrative. Without limiting genre and constructing generic barriers, we may read these two excerpts in tandem. D. Wordsworth essentially imbues these extracts with literary meaning by structuring them on adjoining pages in such a way as to invite literary explication of the two texts in relation to each other.

When I examine the discursive practices of women’s commonplace books from the Romantic period, I am impressed with the materiality of the handwritten text, print media, and ephemera. For example, in Ponsonby’s *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* (ca. 1785-1789), she excerpted William Lisle Bowles’s “Sonnet VI” (1789), “Evening” (as she titles it), displaying her relatively neat handwriting. Yet, this page has a tactile and

visual degree of untidiness. On the recto page, Ponsonby²⁷ had crossed out and emended her misattribution of Bowles's sonnet to Charlotte Smith. Also, visibly noticeable fragments of sealing wax with traces of cellulose newsprint in the four corners of the sonnet suggest that Ponsonby had altered the contents of this page with a paper overlay (see fig. 7). The sealing wax remnants from a paper overlay covering Bowles's sonnet reminds us of the dime-sized wax and paper fragments seen in the Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 881* in figure 5. The materiality of these textual alterations suggest that women produced commonplace books with literary workspaces that were interactive, aesthetically intriguing, and often made untidy by purposeful emendations with pen and ink or by adding on, taking away, and hiding under paper overlays various excerpts and entries. Women resourcefully used manuscript space to copy and emend literary works in their commonplace books that included an entire range of other-authored, collective,²⁸ and self-authored works.

²⁷ Images and texts from The National Library of Wales, which include the Hamwood Archives, the commonplace books and journals of Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler, and other manuscripts are presented in this dissertation by their kind permission.

²⁸ In this dissertation, social authorship is presumed as a generic attribute of commonplace books.

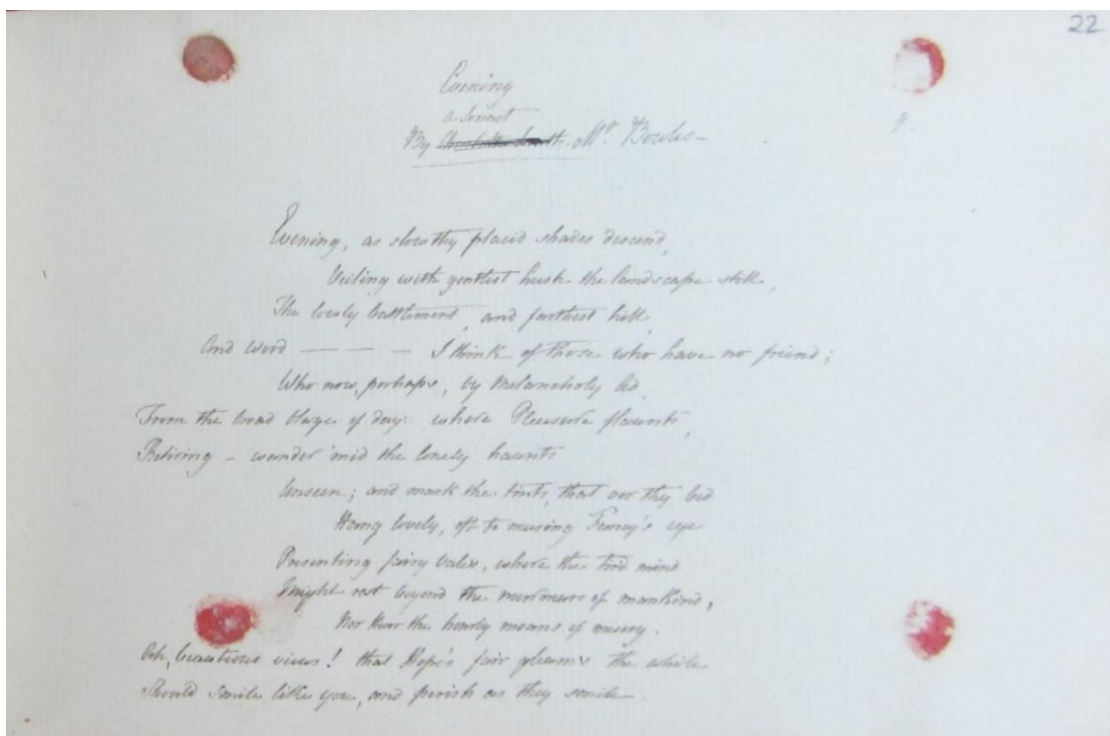


Fig. 7. William Lisle Bowles's "Sonnet VI" or "Evening" from Sarah Ponsonby's *Commonplace Book MS 22969A*. Remnants of a paper overlay and sealing wax exhibit the physicality of editing excerpts in women's commonplace books (22). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1789).

During the Romantic period, self-authored women's writing was commonplace, as Allan notes, at a time when there was an "acceptance of a legitimate role in commonplacing for readers' own compositions" (129). This claim could be made for women's compositions in the early modern period, especially regarding poetry. Marotti in *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* coins a term for self-authored poetry, calling it "compiler poetry." Marotti states the following reasons why self-authored or compiler poetry was included in early modern commonplace books:

One of the most important features of the system of manuscript transmission is the inclusion of verse composed by those who owned or transcribed text in collections. Compilers, owners, and other individuals

who put their own poetry in manuscripts did so for various reasons: to introduce collections [...]; to record their autographs as the owners or borrowers of the documents; to imitate, answer, or parody the work of others [...]; to take part in poetic competition or other forms of poetic exchange; or to pass on the manuscript to another or to thank someone for the loan of such a document. (171)

Marotti suggests that the workspace in women's manuscript commonplace books, as an experimental and experiential open space for editing and revising, encouraged an incipient desire to try one's hand at composing poetry. This multivalent desire of women commonplacers to compose their own poetry in their commonplace books became increasingly evident during the Romantic period. As a case in point, D. Wordsworth composed the majority of her poetry in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* (1820-1849). Her handcrafted methods of poetic composition included experiments with attaching paper overlays to the page stitched with thread or adhered with sealing wax, as discussed in detail in Chapter II. For example, D. Wordsworth revised "Irregular Verses" by stitching the right-side edge of a paper overlay (with lines of verse) onto the page, covering up lines of verse underneath the overlay (see fig. 8).

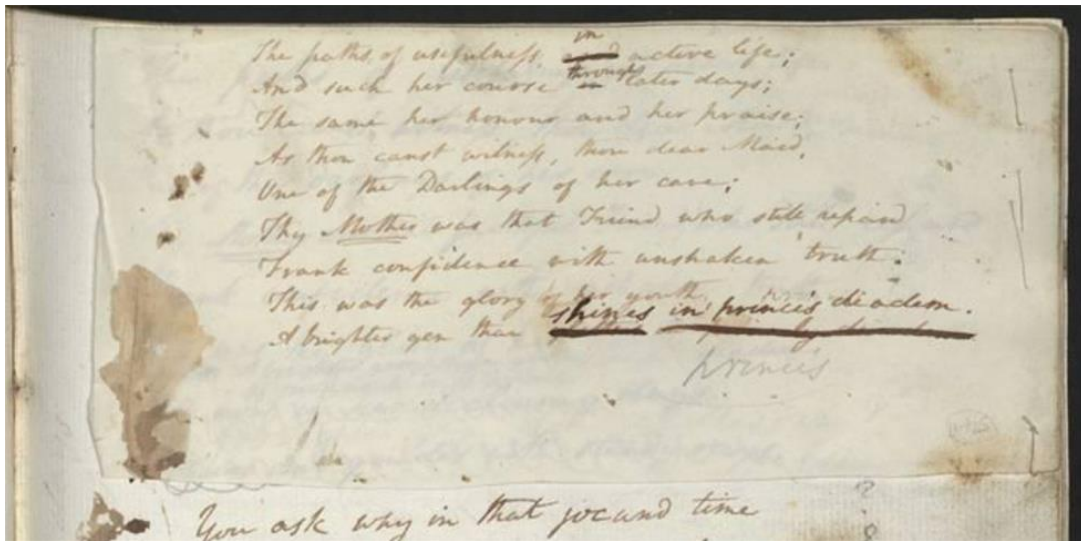


Fig. 8. Snippet view of Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Irregular Verses” from *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Stitched paper overlay used for edits and revisions. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).

In the stanza written onto the stitched paper overlay, we notice in the first line of the poem D. Wordsworth had changed the word “and” to “in” and in the second line the word “through” replaces “in” followed by two additional lines of poetry. These two additional lines become the new third and fourth lines of the poem: “And such her course through later days; / The same her honour and her praise” (DCMS 120). The book-making method of creating paper overlays for word and line edits and revisions allowed D. Wordsworth to flip the overlay back and forth to experiment and analyze her process of poetry-making (see fig. 9). These relatively few written edits and revisions on the paper overlay are typical of the type of emendations that D. Wordsworth would make in the interlinear space of her poems. Remarkably, D. Wordsworth attached this and other overlays with thread, stitching the paper onto the leaf of her commonplace book.

The materiality of book-making as a creative mix of editing methods provided the foundation of D. Wordsworth's poetics, as discussed in detail in Chapter II.

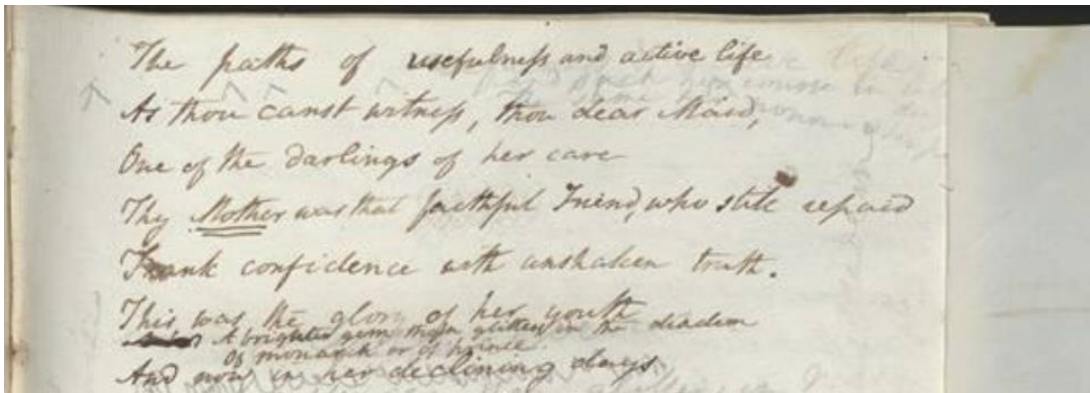


Fig. 9. Snippet view of Dorothy Wordsworth's "Irregular Verses" in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Stanza underneath paper overlay shows creative revisions. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Dorothy Wordsworth" 1827).

As scrappy as D. Wordsworth's composition and revision processes may seem with her use of paper scraps for overlays stitched on with needle and thread, no other discursive practice seems messier or, rather, more incongruently matched with other texts than accounting records. At first glance, women's financial registers, ledgers, shopping lists, and asset inventories appeared to me to be as unrelated to literary entries and excerpts as the ingredients of fish with flower blossoms in a Salmagundi salad. Yet, like ingredients in a Salmagundi salad, these mixed discursive practices work together to create exceptional commonplace books literarily and aesthetically. For example, D. Wordsworth's registers, shopping notations, and lists of material possessions are

interspersed throughout her commonplace books and commonplace books/journals²⁹ along with her poetry and travel-writing. For example, D. Wordsworth's *Rydal Journal DCMS 104.10* (1828-1829) has accounting registers recorded along with "Notes of Continental Tour: Geneva to Paris, 1820,"³⁰ recollected from her tour with William and Mary Wordsworth (see fig. 10).

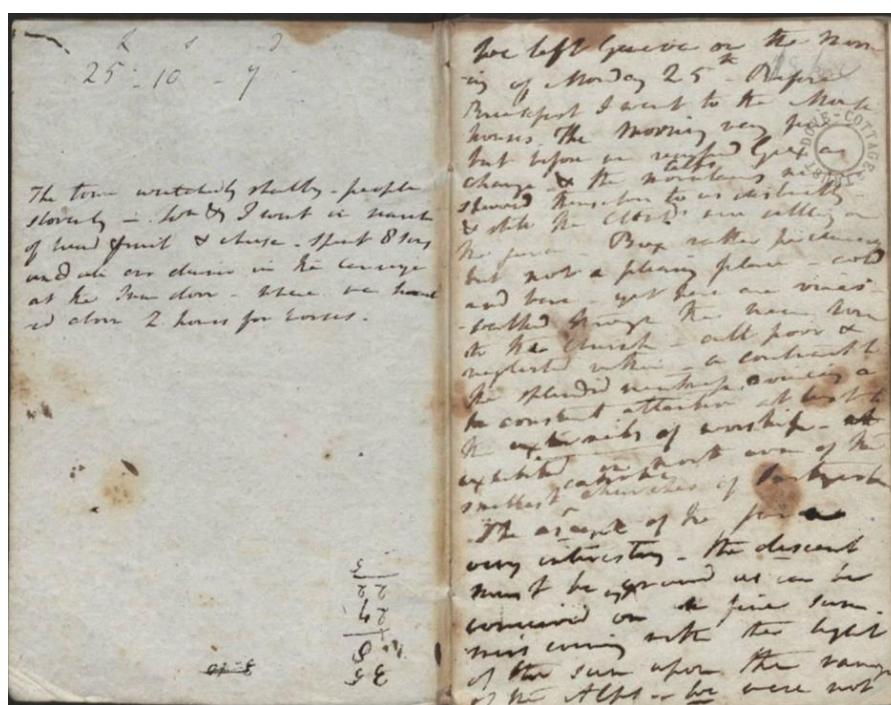


Fig. 10. Dorothy Wordsworth's 1820 Continental tour copied in commonplace book/journal, *Rydal Journal DCMS 104.10*. Exhibits book-keeping with literary work. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Dorothy Wordsworth" 1828).

²⁹ For purposes of discussion in this dissertation, when a manuscript or book has the essential qualities of a commonplace book but labeled as a journal or some other type of life-writing, I initially conflate the two different generic labels. For example, Dorothy Wordsworth's *Rydal journals* are initially referred to as commonplace book/journals. Though, in further discussion I refer to them as commonplace books.

³⁰ D. Wordsworth's "Notes of Continental Tour: Geneva to Paris, 1820" in *Rydal Journal, DCMS 104.10* represents only a small portion of her travel notes of the 1820 tour.

Specifically, in the front matter, three sets of financial registers (verso side) frame a travel annotation and border D. Wordsworth's 1820 tour narrative (recto side) with two sets of inverted registers with one of the entries crossed out at the bottom of the page.³¹ These three account registers appear to be jotted down hastily in the moment, as though a necessity to record transactions quickly before they were forgotten or miscalculated--similar to the way the travel notes seem dashed onto the page. Notably, the numerical entries in the three registers lack identification or context similar to the lack of detail designating place and time in D. Wordsworth's adjoining annotated mention of "the town wretchedly shabby--the people slovenly--Wm & I went in search of fruit & cheese" (DCMS 104.10). Adding to the unclear spatial and sequential bearings in this annotation, the Continental tour narrative begins in *media res* with the other tour members unidentified: "we left Geneva on the morning of Monday 25th--Before Breakfast I went to the work houses" (41). As readers, we lack context for understanding who comprises the group, why the group went on a Continental tour, how they arrived in Geneva, and what were D. Wordsworth's personal interests in visiting the workhouses. Similar to the lack of context in the tour notes, D. Wordsworth's notation of "25£ - 10s - 7d" (pounds, shillings, and pence respectively) does not inform us whether this is a debit or credit and to whom the money is owed or loaned (41). Though these three registers

³¹ *Rydal Journal DCMS 104.10* is a manuscript with two different front orientations because the commonplace book/journal has cover labels with accompanying inverted pages differentiating D. Wordsworth's "Notes of Continental Tour" from her "Diaries." Therefore, the front matter could also be considered the back matter because D. Wordsworth indicates no preferential front or back orientation for *DCMS 104.10*.

and travel notes are opaque and represent dissimilar genres, they work together, as discussed in the following paragraphs, to compose an interrelated text comprising a literary narrative, a valuatory record, and a social-political assertion implied by D. Wordsworth's visit to the workhouses.

Helen Boden provides an explanation for D. Wordsworth's opaque tour recollections in the introduction to *Her Write His Name: The Continental Journals, 1798-1820* (1995). From Boden's observations, we may gather insights about D. Wordsworth's tersely written tour notes and financial records and how they work together narratively and what they can tell us about generic commonplacing:

A fuller impression of the Continent and of this tour can be pieced together from the various accounts, which resist formulation into a single image, as they resist conforming to the criteria for any one genre. The different versions allow for factual discrepancies to be highlighted, refusing authority to any one of them (or allowing it to all of them). That even the dating varies between the different accounts, and between journals and letters from the same author, lends a tantalizing air of fictionality to the whole tour. (xxx-xxx1)

Boden's depiction of D. Wordsworth's *Continental Journals* strikes a chord with generic commonplacing, which also comprises "pieced together" texts that resist a single "image" or theme, "any one genre," or, at times, a single version of a literary work. Similar to Boden's assertion about D. Wordsworth's journal accounts, commonplace books are also notorious for lacking clear and consistent dating of entries. Indeed, commonplace books, similar to D. Wordsworth's *Continental Journals*, have a "tantalizing air of fictionality." Boden's perspective on D. Wordsworth's journaling accords with my contention that a commonplace book should not only be considered life-writing but should also be considered a literary work in its entirety.

According to Boden, D. Wordsworth created streams of narrative about the 1820 tour of which *Rydal Journal DCMS 104.10* houses just one of several versions recounted in various manuscripts. Boden suggests that D. Wordsworth's various accounts of the Continental tour resist conformity to the generic conventions of a singular, authoritative travel narrative in order to make the tour more, rather than less, evocative as a literary work. The "different versions" and "factual discrepancies" shade the veracity of her experiences, leaving them open to "fictionality" from both D. Wordsworth's and the reader's perspective, inviting literary interpretation. As a case in point, any reading of D. Wordsworth's intent for inspecting the workhouses,³² philanthropic or otherwise, becomes complicated by her adjoining annotation assessing a town as being "wretchedly shabby" and the people "slovenly." Similarly, the intent of D. Wordsworth's visit to both the workhouses and the town is complicated by her vague book-keeping entries in close proximity to her travel notations.

These financial records imply more than perfunctory jottings of vague, unnamed transactions; instead, they become imaginatively entwined with the tour narrative itself. These registers stir speculation about possible linkages between the group's activities, their destinations, the costs of the tour, and the extent of D. Wordsworth's philanthropy. To fully engage textually with D. Wordsworth's *Rydal journal* (DCMS 104.10), readers

³² It was not unusual for women of Dorothy Wordsworth's class to visit or, rather, inspect public workhouses as charitable work and give a modest donation for the tour. Eventually, this practice of philanthropic visitation was formalized in the Workhouse Visiting Society in 1858. In the *Journal of the Workhouse Visiting Society* (1859), they state that their "general aim is 'the promotion of the moral and spiritual improvement of Workhouse inmates'" (3).

must not only storyboard in their imagination a coherent version of the 1820 tour but also create a context for her account registers. This imaginative effort creates integration between genres and modes of commonplacing in which accountancy becomes a part of the story-making of D. Wordsworth's Continental tour. As D. Wordsworth's *Rydal Journal* (DCMS 104.10) demonstrates, in addition to supporting and integrating a compiler's work-life, valuatory records--the discursive practice of tracking value in women's commonplace books--have literary implications given how and where these records are situated in relation to poetic and narrative entries and excerpts.

The placement of financial records and asset inventories in women's commonplace books, as discussed in greater detail in Chapter III, elicits bifurcated perspectives beyond the literary and the practical management of everyday life. Through an interpretive lens, we may view women commonplacing valuatory records as resisting "formulation into a single image" (borrowing from Boden's words) of gendered domesticity in the management of households and estates. Women purposefully managed their physical environment and the textual workspaces in their commonplace books. Commonplacing monetary and material assets kept women closely connected to their intricate financial life. Women assigned valuations associated with their possessions and their work, illuminating what they valued in both pecuniary and non-pecuniary measures. Women intentionally tracked what they owned and managed in their commonplace books, such as linens, books, and landscaping plants. They also tracked their physical labor and their professional, intellectual work in private and public spheres and domains of work. As a case in point, in her 1820 tour notes, D. Wordsworth

records shopping for fruit and cheese, visiting a workhouse, and accounting for finances, bringing her into both public and private spheres. In the public sphere, she traversed terrain, transacted trade, and participated in charitable works, and in the private sphere of her commonplace book (provisionally, a public sphere as well) she recorded her finances and her assessments of people and places.

Women circulating their poetry or travel narratives to coteries as transcribed excerpts from their commonplace books inserted in letters, or, more rarely, as whole manuscripts was a form of interaction in sociable networks. Sociability was also aided simply by compiling opinions in printed and handwritten form, providing a more intimate means of engaging in cultural and socio-political discursive practices. In *Romantic Readers*, Jackson argues that readers were engaged in debate in the public sphere through their personalized textual connection with reading and marginalia. She asserts that people formed opinions by annotating print and ephemeral media as a means of engaging in public discourse:

The general assumption was that reading equipped people for conversation. The owners of books free to write in the margins were therefore in the happy position of preparing themselves for the social circle even as they indulged themselves by talking back to the author. There is seldom a clear line to be drawn between these two functions, and in conversation with books as in conversation proper it is hard to say whether an opinion is expressed in the conversation or formed by it. Readers annotating books must be forming their opinions [...] as they go. (136)

Notably, as Jackson describes, the textual practices that readers perform writing in the margins, “annotating books,” and being “in conversation with books” to form their opinions are the type of discourse practices that women performed in their commonplace

books. Jackson provides an example of a woman who engaged with socio-political opinions and controversies through reading and annotating, engendering sociability and conversation in the public sphere: “Of many books and pamphlets annotated in [Jane] Austen’s opinionated way, as preliminary to conversation or practice for it, the most common are those that deal with politics and matters of public debate” (136). Using Austen as an example, Jackson implies that readers’ engagement in socio-politic debate begins with writing marginalia in books to help solidify their opinions. Jackson’s assertions relate to similar phenomenon in Morgan’s and other women’s annotated commonplace books in which the juxtaposition of entries and excerpts figuratively “talk back” with each other and the commonplacer. Though, I contend, women cultivated socio-political ideas in their commonplace books with perhaps more focused intent than just “forming opinions as they go.”

In addition to the sociable effect of marginalia, I posit that women’s painstaking, physical, and tactile investment in the material and textual properties of their commonplace books also creates socio-political engagement. A silent “conversation” develops between compilers and their creative, intellectual work through the investment of time and effort associated with gathering, clipping, cropping, layering, stitching, pinning, adhering, sketching, painting, and jumbling together print and non-print texts, images, and ephemera. Ephemera and marginalia of cultural, socio-economic, and political content in women’s commonplace books embody the modern axiom that the

personal is political,³³ and, I would add, the sociable is political as well. For example, in Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 878* (ca. 1825-1828) she commonplaces a French news article reporting "*l'occasion de la belle fête à Northland House*," a grand ball with international social and political undercurrents.

Written above the news clipping, Morgan annotates that "Lady Northland's fancy Ball" was held at the Viscountess's residence in "Dungannon, Sept³⁴ 1826" (MS 878; see fig. 11). Morgan's underscored header reinforces the French news article's heading, *Mademoiselle Jules Bertin*, which euphemistically refers to Morgan's portrayal of Marie-Jeanne Bertin (1747-1813) at Northland's ball. Marie-Jeanne Bertin, who was commonly referred to as Rose Bertin, was known for her fashion design work in France and Europe prior to the French Revolution. The news article's subheading, "*Ci- Divant [sic] Marchande De Modes De Sa Majeste la Reine de France*," mentions that Bertin was an *ancien régime* fashion designer who associated with the French monarchy (MS 878). The first part of the article, written in the past tense, details Bertin's life as a

³³ Lady Morgan demonstrates the axiom that the personal is political in her national tales through which the politics she elicits in her writing exhibited through her fictional characters has personal resonance while framing larger political issues. For example, in *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) the Irish landscape is a personal, intimate space infused with ancestral, cultural meaning for the female protagonist, Glorvina, but it also a site of British Ascendancy and Irish insurgency.

³⁴ Julie Donovan notes in *Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan and the Politics of Style* (2009) that Northland House, Dungannon is in County Dublin (73), but my research has shown that a Northland House, Dungannon belonging to Viscount Thomas Knox exists in County Tyrone, Ulster. Morgan's annotation contributes to the ambiguity of the location by writing in a scrawling hand either the abbreviated word "Sept" or "Dubl" after the word Dungannon. I contend that "Sept" is the correct transcription of the word given that a newspaper article, as Donovan notes, was taken "from *The Morning Chronicle* for Friday, September 29, 1826" (73).

supporter of “*contrarevolution*” and as a personal stylist for “*les filles de St. Louis*”--
 women such as Marie Antoinette (MS 878).³⁵

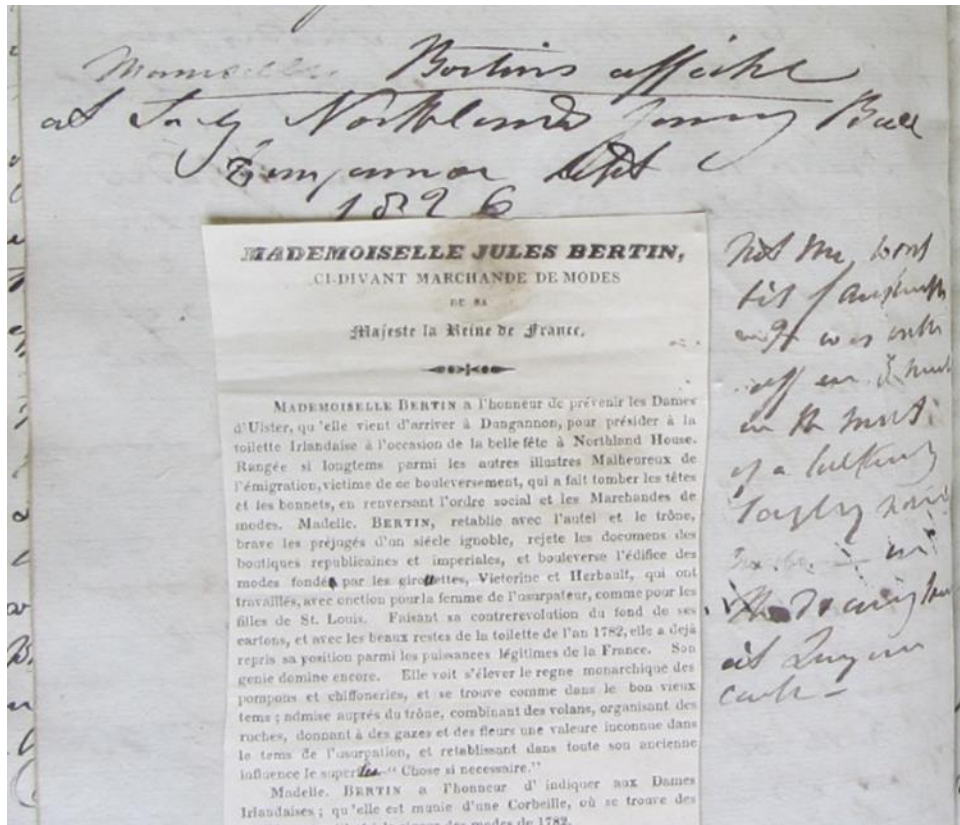


Fig. 11. From *Commonplace Book MS 878* (ca. 1825-1828) a snippet view of a French news clipping announcing a costume ball at a Viscountess’s residence in which Morgan is unnamed but personally becomes a catalyst for mentioning Rose Bertin’s (1747-1813) politicized career as a fashion designer for France’s *ancien régime*. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1826).

³⁵ I would like to thank Dr. James M. Rosenheim, Dr. Dane Bozeman, and Raphael George Louge for their insightful suggestions for translating and transcribing this clipping from a French periodical and Lady Morgan’s annotations written in French that are reprinted in this dissertation.

Arguably, all that was most decried as decadent aristocratic excess, visually represented in the person of Antoinette, was fashioned by Bertin or Antoinette's personal hairdresser, Léonard Alexis Autié. Will Bashor, in *Marie Antoinette's Head: The Royal Hairdresser, the Queen, and the Revolution* (2015), discusses the various ways in which both stylists excelled in a form of hairdressing with extravagant accessories known as poufs. Bashor notes Autié's astute evaluation of the volatile political climate in speaking of another form of decadent luxury that was enjoyed by the French monarchy--extravagant sleighing parties. Suggestive of his own inadvertent role in exasperating political tensions, Autié states "add misery to any political oppression, and you will soon have revolution. That which perhaps contributed a great deal to the breaking out of ours, was the luxury which the nobles displayed at a time when the people were overwhelmed with calamities" (Autié qtd. in Bashor 107). In this sense, Autié's and Bertin's influence on eighteenth-century fashion in aristocratic circles in France was incendiary and helped to spark the French Revolution.

In this French news article, the mention of Bertin in connection with "*les filles de St. Louis*," such as Antoinette, indicates more than just background context for reporting Northland's ball and Morgan's costume. The article alludes to political tension and resentment in France, still very much alive, decades after the beginning of the French Revolution. After briefly recalling Bertin's biography associated with the Revolution, as a supposed counter-revolutionary by association, the French news article switches to the present to describe Northland's ball. As previously mentioned, though this news article does not specifically cite Lady Morgan's attendance at the ball by name, it references her

stylized Bertin costume that she wore at the ball. The news article describes how “she” [Morgan] carries around in a basket “*pompons et chiffoneries*,” tassels and elegant fabrics (MS 878). The article implies that Morgan performs the political act of “*donnant à des gazes et des fleurs une valeur inconnue dans le tems [sic] l’usurpation*,” giving some tulle and flowers an exalted position or a value that has been unknown since the time of revolution (MS 878). This wordplay on “*valeur*” in regard to tulle and flowers alludes to the French fashion of poufs, which supported valuable and elaborate hair accessories by teasing women’s hair to extremely exaggerated heights.

Layered underneath this French news article and unnoticeable at first glance in Morgan’s *Commonplace Book MS 878*, another news article recounts the Northland ball. This hidden clipping, taken from the *London Morning Chronicle* for “Friday, the 29th” (1826), with the headline *Grand Fancy Ball at Northland House*, repeats some of the same information about the ball as the French news article. The *Chronicle* identifies Morgan costumed “*as Mademoiselle Bertin, ci-devant Marchande de Modes* to the Queen of France” (MS 878) and prominently describes her attire and activities at the ball (see fig. 12). From the *Chronicle*’s relatively lengthy and enthusiastic report, we may surmise that Morgan’s portrayal of Bertin elicited considerable positive attention from journalists. *The Chronicle* states that Morgan was “*exquisitely dressed in the costume of 1780 [...] Her Ladyship enacted her character with her usual spirit and humour*” (MS 878). The news article elides the historical and political controversy surrounding Bertin’s career and does not overtly mention the French Revolution or Bertin’s controversial role in fashioning pre-revolutionary decadence. Actually, Morgan dressed

as Bertin represented simply one of many incendiary caricatures present at the ball, such as “Irish peasants,” a French peasant,” “Confucius,” “a beautiful Sultana,” “an Hungarian Lady,” “a Greek slave,” “Louis XIV” and various members of his court (MS 878). Clearly, Morgan’s attire was not the only politically provocative costume at the ball; however, her choice of dressing as Bertin indicates her self-aware sense of the sardonic irony of conflating a *mélange* of the oppressed and oppressors.

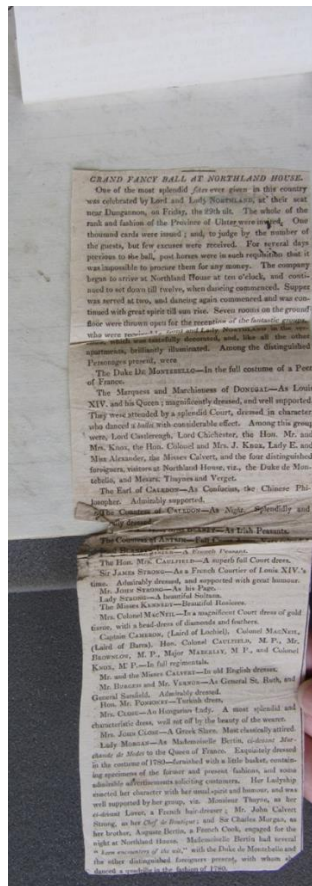


Fig. 12. Full view of newspaper clipping of *London Morning Chronicle* hidden under a French newspaper article in Lady Morgan’s *Commonplace Book MS 878*. Both articles report Lady Northland’s costume ball given on 29 September 1826; Morgan dressed as Rose Bertin, France’s pre-revolution fashion designer. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1826).

Political undercurrents carefully code and pervade Northland's sociable ball, the untitled French news report, *The Chronicle's* report, and Morgan's commonplacing of these two articles that were consciously layered together. Lady Morgan's book-making techniques of juxtapositioning or layering newsprint clippings, evident in commonplacing the French and British reports of Northland's ball, involved Morgan in political polemics. The French Revolution was still a sore point politically for both France and Britain, and Morgan exasperated political tensions with her portrayal of Bertin at the ball. Each article provides a different political perspective on Morgan's attendance and costume. The tone of the French report conveys residual resentment towards Bertin and *ancien régime* decadence, refusing to name Morgan specifically as the costumed impersonator of Bertin. Conversely, the enthusiastic tone of the British report protests, unconvincingly, that the event was apolitical. The British report averts political tension by focusing on Morgan's celebrity and her costumed portrayal of Bertin, while insisting that the entire event was all in good fun: "Her Ladyship enacted her character with her usual spirit and humour" (*Chronicle*). Morgan intentionally layered the two news articles together, conflating their divergent tone and her own political scruples, giving positional preference to the French news article. These two stacked clippings in Morgan's commonplace book resonate with the ideological conflation of her socio-political beliefs. Her belief in the ideals of the French Revolution coexisted with her dubious reservations about the violent enactment of revolution that she struggled to politically reconcile, as had also Helen Maria Williams and Mary Wollstonecraft.

We know from the milieu and tenor of Morgan's literary work and from biographical evidence that she "sympathized with the ideals of the French Revolution and expressed immense enthusiasm for Britain's former nemesis, Napoleon Bonaparte" (Donovan 9). The fact that Bonaparte was Britain's enemy and the embodiment of all that the British government vilified in its remembrance of the war with France would have been all the more reason for Morgan to be pro-Bonaparte. As Donovan notes, "in her defense of Napoleon in *France*, Owenson was rebelliously supportive of the ways in which he had unnerved Britain" (139). Morgan's layering of the French article over the British clipping in her commonplace book gestures a desired suppression of English hegemony or English-Britishness.³⁶ In doing so, Morgan demonstrates a close alliance with contemporary France, as a sympathetic champion with Ireland for republican ideals, and a close connection to a broader European community. These two articles reporting Northland's ball in Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 878* exemplify how women were often personally, socially, and politically associated with the content in their commonplace books. Morgan's and other women's compilations of personal ephemera tended to commonplace the cultural artifacts of pleasurable sociable events that had political undercurrents, as discussed in detail in Chapter IV. For example, musical score, maps, architectural renderings, handwritten and printed menus, theater playbills, soiree announcements, visitor cards, and invitations to balls in commonplace books show how

³⁶ I explicate the term British-Englishness throughout this Chapter IV as a signifier of socio-political and cultural tension and ideation in which the British Isles are conflated with England, eliding historical parliamentary union with Scotland, Wales, and Ireland as distinct nations. The term connotes a presumption of or an assumed primacy in hierarchies of social strata, political power, and cultural capital.

women kept engaged in the public sphere through various sociable events, venues, and cultural linkages.

David Allan in his foundational work on commonplace books addresses specific topics with primarily descriptive, textual analysis of commonplacing; however, significant gaps in research and analysis of women's commonplace books from the Romantic period still exist. Allan, noting the influence of Earle Havens on his scholarly approach to his own study of commonplace books and reading, begins by quoting Jacques Derrida's statement that "reading is transformational" (3). Throughout Allan's work, he emphasizes the role of commonplacers as readers rather than as writers in compiling, copying, and composing the contents of their commonplace books. Allan states that "within the history of reading," he examines "the relationship between commonplacing and reading" (5). He avows this position though commonplacers clearly appear to be authoring entries, copying extracts, and annotating or journaling their thoughts and feelings in their commonplace books.

Other scholars on the other hand, such as Clifford Siskin in *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain 1700-1830* (1998), contextualize writing and genre with a focus on "putting Literature into a history of writing" (7). For a significant proportion of the Georgian period (and Romantic period), reading was not as substantial of a factor in the development of literature and social change as writing. Siskin points out that proportionally "literate may not have increased during the first eight decades of the eighteenth century, but what did grow was the amount of writing" (3) Siskin furthermore states that "writing proliferated then as something new through, in large

part, writing about writing” (2). Rather than writing about reading or reading about writing, literates were actively engaged in self-conscious forms of writing, being keenly aware of “writing about writing.” I contend that, other than epistolary writing perhaps, no other genre engenders more self-conscious awareness of the writer, by the writer, than commonplacing. I contend that audiences are more conscious of the compiler as a writer in commonplace books than the actual authors of various extracts—if extracts are attributed at all. For example, many women’s commonplace books from the Romantic period begin with a prefatory or a dedicatory poem--writing about writing—such as Angela Reyner’s anonymous poem, “Accept, my Friend, this feeble lay” (WLMS 35/2). As briefly mentioned previously, this poem, which is discussed in detail in Chapter II, features self-conscious, spiritualized introspection about the significance of writing, and, as an inaugural poem, this translates to a meditation on the significance of writing in commonplace books. Having the privileged position as the first line, on the first page of Reyner’s commonplace book, “Accept, my Friend, this feeble lay,” underscores the close connection between writing, commonplacing, and poetics.

Though Allan acknowledges that reading and writing are “separate skills” that “develop in quite different ways” (11) and that some readers wrote their own compositions in their commonplace books (129), he sees this as a problem rather than an advantage of commonplacing. He asserts that “the problem of the reader striving also to be an author” [...] [is that he or she] “rarely possess the talent to match their ambition” (170). The implication being that viewing commonplace books from an authorial, writing perspective potentially undermines commonplacing as a literary genre. My

approach to theorizing about commonplacing, on the other hand, places an emphasis on the compiler's efforts, amateurish or not, to compose literary works and employ other discourse practices. In Allan's study, a majority of his examples of readers (as commonplacers) are represented by men commonplacing in manuscript and print forms. This dissertation on the other hand, primarily discusses women's manuscript commonplace books.³⁷ Though Allan provides examples for analysis from the commonplace books of women such as Felicia Hemans and Hester Thrale Piozzi, the omission of Morgan's, D. Wordsworth's, Ponsonby's, Butler's, Rose's, and many other women's commonplace books warrants an re-examination of this under-represented area of Romantic literature and genre studies. Allan takes a topical approach to his genre study of commonplace books, discussing such subjects as the ubiquity of epigrams, encyclopedic knowledge, memoirs, and travel-writing. My study expands upon his work by introducing additional topics. I examine the topics of poetics, valuatory records, and politics in women's commonplace books, interpreting and making meaning from the contents.

My approach to theorizing about commonplace books broadens the scope of commonplacing to include women from Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, along with England. Katie Trumpener, in *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (1997), notes that "most existing studies of this [Romantic] period have treated

³⁷ Women's print commonplace books from both the early modern and Romantic period would be a worthy topic of study as an underdeveloped area of research; however, it is outside the scope of my dissertation.

[...] Anglo-Celtic literary cultures as imitative footnotes to a broadly English culture or, although significant in their own right, as isolated from England and from each other” (xi). Instead, in her book, she “establishes their centrality, interconnection, and international influence” (xi). In this dissertation, I recognize the significance of Anglo-Celtic literary cultures and examine interconnections between English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish women commonplacers. This approach reflects the reality that Morgan, Ponsonby, Butler, Thrale Piozzi, D. Wordsworth, and Rose were women who had diverse talents, interests, and ambitions. They were women who had lived in or visited various regions and countries, or were, at least, well-read about other places. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV, these women displaced London (and, by extension, England to a certain degree) as the center of the British Isles in their commonplace books, underscoring, instead, their interconnections to Anglo-Celtic cultures.

My research travels in the British Isles has taken me to the following libraries, museums, archives and record offices: The National Archives of Scotland & General Register Office for Scotland and The National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, The National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth,³⁸ Bangor University in Bangor, The National Library of Ireland in Dublin, The Wordsworth Trust Library in Grasmere, Chawton

³⁸ Due to Dr. Margaret J. M. Ezell’s and Dr. Sarah Prescott’s dedicated work and vision in establishing the Texas A&M University (TAMU)-Aberystwyth University (AU) PhD Fellowship Exchange through TAMU’s College of Liberal Arts and AU’s Department of English and Creative Writing, along with funding from TAMU’s College of Liberal and the Department of English, I was able to conduct the majority of my research at libraries in Britain and Ireland. Please see Acknowledgements.

House Library in Chawton, The Wedgwood Museum Archive in Barlaston, and The British Library in London. I have examined archives of women's commonplace books or miscellanies, along with related scrapbooks, albums, journals, diaries, pocket books, daybooks, accounting records, and various ephemera. The archives I have examined range from the early modern period to the Victorian era but mainly encompass the Romantic period. The majority of my research involved a close examination of works that were written or compiled by women and exist in manuscript or scribal form. I have also examined from these time periods commonplace books, miscellanies, and related genres that are housed at the Cushing Memorial Library in College Station.³⁹

I have utilized various digital archives available on library websites, such as digital reproductions of commonplace books from the Harry Ransom Center, the Harvard/ Houghton Library, and the Huntington Library collections. In my estimation, conservatively, I have examined approximately 400 commonplace books, miscellanies, and related genres in scribal, print, and digital forms, including unbound collections of ephemera. In addition, my research included a study of commonplacing in scholarly books and journal articles that hold reproductions of images of rare manuscripts and print commonplace books. My research and analysis is not a quantitative comparison between men and women commonplacers, Anglo and Celtic cultures, print and manuscript commonplace books, or early modern, Romantic period, and Victorian era

³⁹ Due to the generous grant of the 2012 Cushing-Glasscock Graduate Humanities Research Scholarship awarded to me by the Cushing Memorial Library and the Melbern G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research, I was able to spend the summer of 2012 researching the archives at the Cushing Memorial Library at Texas A&M University.

commonplacing, though my study includes research in all of these areas. Through researching numerous examples of women's commonplace books, my study has led me to conclude that women were compiling commonplace books concurrently with men with impressive creativity, sophistication, and dedication throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Women advanced the genre of commonplace books considerably in a manner befitting their wide range of work, talent, needs, desires, and resources.

In the following chapters, I will discuss only a handful of the various textual, visual, and ephemeral forms of commonplacing that I have examined. However, a few commonplace books that have surprised and delighted me, that are easily accessible, but I will not be analyzing in this dissertation are worth mentioning. For example, a folio-sized facsimile of the *Trevelyon Miscellany* (1608), housed in the Cushing Memorial Library at Texas A&M University, is one of the most visually stunning commonplace books that I have examined, featuring numerous colored images of engravings and woodcuts throughout the text. The *Trevelyon* has dazzling, intricate medieval and renaissance designs—abstract, floral, and bestiary—combined with miscellaneous common knowledge of geographic distances and place names, along with various commonplacéd excerpts of poetry. Ponsonby's *Commonplace Book MS22969A*, in certain ways, mimics this early modern work visually and textually.

In addition to my research abroad and at the Cushing Library, online access to digital archives of commonplace books have been helpful in my research. For example, the Harry Ransom Center houses the Brontë Family Collection, which includes a commonplace book (MS 0526) with entries and images compiled by Patrick Branwell

(brother of the Brontë sisters) and by Mary Pearson (1846), which is fully accessible online. Branwell and Pearson's commonplace book shares Morgan's penchant for affixing newsprint clippings that often cover the handwritten journaling. The Branwell-Pearson manuscript suggests that Morgan's commonplace books exhibit generic commonplacing methods that were ushered in by print culture, became adopted in the Romantic period, and gained increasing popularity in the Victorian era. Conveniently, the Harvard/Houghton Library Collection offers full online access to many of their archives, which has also been helpful to my research. For example, the availability of Hester Thrale Piozzi's *Minced Meat for Pyes MS ENG 231* (ca. 1788-1821) in the Houghton Library's online digital archives made it possible to compare this manuscript commonplace book with Thrale Piozzi's methods of commonplacing in her multi-volume commonplace book, *Thaliana*, as it was published in print form.⁴⁰

Without the expertise of library staff and the availability of sophisticated digital library databases and indexing systems utilizing search terms, the initial discovery and subsequent study of commonplace books would be problematic. Often the titles of commonplace books include recognizable terms, such as "miscellany," "commonplace book," "collection," "scrapbook," "album," or "companion,"⁴¹ but they often include serendipitous words as well, as seen with Medley's *Hotch Potch* or Thrale Piozzi's

⁴⁰ I have not examined Hester Thrale Piozzi's original manuscript volumes of *Thaliana* in the Huntington Library.

⁴¹ The commonplace books that I have researched and examined do not have the term anthology in their titles or subtitles, though this term existed during the Romantic period to mean an excerpted collection of literature. Therefore, I have excluded "anthology" from my discussion of like terms for commonplace books.

Minced Meat for Pyes.⁴² Many titles of commonplace books, though, provide some clue to their contents. For example, Joanna Baillie's *A Collection of Poems Chiefly Manuscript, and From Living Authors* (1823) has a title that refers to a miscellaneous collection of poetry, suggesting that the text likely, and, indeed, is a commonplace book. Commonplace books or miscellanies usually have relatively long, descriptive titles or subtitles noting a collection of mixed genres, mode of writing, or an announcement stating the purpose of the text, such as Anna Jameson's *A Commonplace Book of Thoughts, Memories, and Fancies* (1855) or the anonymous *A commonplace book, upon the plan recommended and practiced by Mr. Locke* (ca. 1820-1850).⁴³ Women added to the diversity of nomenclature in commonplacing as they sought to creatively customize their commonplace books by personalizing their titles, such as Thrale Piozzi's *Thraliana* (1776-1809) and her posthumously published *Piozziana* (1833), both titles conflating the French term *ana* with Thrale Piozzi's first or second married names respectively.

According to Katharine C. Balderston, in her editorial introduction to *Thraliana*, "The English commonplace-book [...] was distinct from the *ana*," which was "a collection of pious or beautiful quotations, rather than anecdotes of living people and treasures of wit" (xi). Balderston posits that commonplacing excerpts from living authors

⁴² Hester Thrale Piozzi's title to her commonplace book, *Minced Meat for Pyes*, fosters expectations that this will be a text of housewifery, when, in fact, it contains generic features of commonplacing, such as snippets of general knowledge, religious excerpts, miscellaneous poetry (with occasional editing and revising), and a few financial registers.

⁴³ A commonplace book, upon the plan recommended and practiced by Mr. Locke is an anonymous commonplace book cited in Earle Havens's *Commonplace Books: A History of Manuscripts and Printed Books from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century*, published in 2001 (96).

is distinctly an “English” form of commonplacing different from the French *ana*. The title of Baillie’s commonplace book, *A Collection of Poems Chiefly Manuscript, and From Living Authors*, seems to suggest that Balderston’s generic distinctions between commonplacing contemporary writers and classical sayings were made by some commonplacers as well. Balderston identifies Thrale Piozzi’s *Thraliana* as an exemplar of commonplace books despite its title, associating commonplacing with anecdotes concerning contemporaries and compilations of amusing *bon mots*. However, my research of commonplace books shows that all genres were mixed together, side-by-side, including eulogies and pious quotations with satiric verse and anecdotes of both contemporary, living authors and the deceased. Ponsonby’s commonplace book (MS 22969A) serves as an exemplar of commonplacing a eulogy as an amusing *bon mot*. By copying the “Epitaph of Dr. Johnson” by the Right Honorable Henry Flood into her commonplace book (MS 22969A), Ponsonby conflates the generic attributes of the *ana* with commonplace books.

As a case in point, Henry Flood’s epitaph eulogizes Johnson’s role in “immortalizing” English, “his native language,” within strongholds of classicism--the pithy tombstone inscription being the very last holdout for “pious collections” of *florilegia*. Flood implies that, as a relatively learned, intelligent person, Johnson (as a wit) had “no need of Latin or Greek” (76). In this epitaph, Flood suggests that a dynamic change has taken place not only in the conduction from mortality to immortality but also in the transmission of knowledge from classical languages to English. Given that the “Right Honorable” Henry Flood likely received a classical education, he would have

been aware of a transition in the genre of commonplacing from Latin and Greek to the vernacular for male scholars. Balderstone's subtle inference that commonplacing in the English language was itself a distinctive generic attribute speaks to this change in commonplace books that was becoming the norm by the end of Johnson's lifetime. In fact, it may be argued that Johnson and his work in English lexicography influenced a shift in commonplacing to the vernacular for both men and women, scholars and non-scholars alike. A shift in commonplacing that minimized distinctions between the *ana* and the commonplace book also occurred as commonplacing absorbed a broader range of generic conventions, which speaks to its growing popularity among all groups.

Commonplacers began to exhibit a preference for the liveliness of print culture, focusing on contemporary news, Romantic poetry, and "living people," who were often portrayed in lithographic prints, rather than dead languages (and dead authors). A generic shift in commonplacing with the advent of print culture did not mean that print was present in every commonplace book. Occasionally, women adopted in their commonplacing the appearance of visual print media. They created bold, bright graphic effects that anticipated chromolithography in their commonplacing but without including any actual print in their commonplace books. For example, Reyner's commonplace book, *Scrapbook DCMS 35.2* (ca. 1822), does not include any print media. Yet, Reyner's colorful images in her manuscript, all painted by hand, bear a striking resemblance to the vibrantly colored print floral graphics of Victorian scrapbooks (see fig. 13).⁴⁴ This more

⁴⁴ I have determined that Angela Reyner's illustrations in her commonplace book (WLMS 35/2) are hand painted on thick card stock paper, which prevented bleed-through of pigmented medium. The vibrant

visual and contemporary manner of commonplace began in the Romantic period and was further developed throughout the Victorian era. Though Reyner's *Scrapbook DCMS 35/2* exhibits highly decorative tooling embossed in gold leaf with the title of "Scrap Book" on the spine, it still has the generic qualities of a commonplace book.



Fig. 13. A floral illustration from Angela Reyner's commonplace book (WLMS 35/2), which is embossed with the title of "Scrap Book" on the book cover spine. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Angela Reyner" 1822).

colors in Angela Reyner's illustrations (ca. 1822-1828) were only later reproducible in print for a mass market with chromolithographic print technology first patented in 1837.

The term “journal” is often as equally problematic as the term scrapbook when discussing the genre of commonplacing. The nomenclature of journal is used in titles of commonplace books almost as frequently as miscellany, scrapbook, or album but with different nuances. As a case in point, Mary Berry’s three volumes of posthumously published *Extracts of the Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry, from the Year 1783 to 1852* exemplify how generic distinctions during the Romantic period frequently overlapped, conflating other forms of life-writing with commonplace books.

For example, the second volume of Mary Berry’s print journal contains her correspondence with family and friends, poetry, and records of sociable events excerpted from these letters, such as casting for a play performed at Strawberry Hill Theatre in 1800. Berry also includes sections for extracts and journaling topics with headings: “Detached Thoughts” (46), “Thoughts on Government” (51), “Plan for Encouraging Painting” (53), “Thoughts on the Reign of George III” (55), and “Thoughts on Architecture” (108). Indicated by these examples from Berry’s second volume of journals, the variety of genres and topical content of her journals qualify as commonplace books, warranting a secondary classification as journals.⁴⁵

For many women in the Romantic period, like Berry, journaling went beyond actively recording one’s private thoughts or personal events of the day and included broader types of literary and miscellaneous excerpts typical of commonplace books. For

⁴⁵ Eleanor Butler’s *Diary MS22968A* (1783-1784) is similar in content and format to her journals, which have attributes of generic commonplacing. In the case of Butler’s diary, it is fairly synonymous with her other journals. However, in general, in regard to like-terms or genres for commonplace books, I would not consider diaries typically synonymous.

example, Butler's six volumes of journals (1788-1821) include specifics about the weather, local events in Llangollen, and mention of visitors to her home, but she also included such excerpts as reading lists, correspondence, and newspaper clippings of general information. For example, a two-page spread from Butler's *Journal MS22976B* (1821) includes a newsprint clipping about hydrophobia, memorandums noting letters and notes received, and a medicinal recipe, noting that she had excerpted the prescription from a letter dated March 26th, 1821. Throughout her journals, Butler records her personal thoughts about her life and activities, but the variety of content in various genres comprises the very definition of commonplace books (see fig. 14).

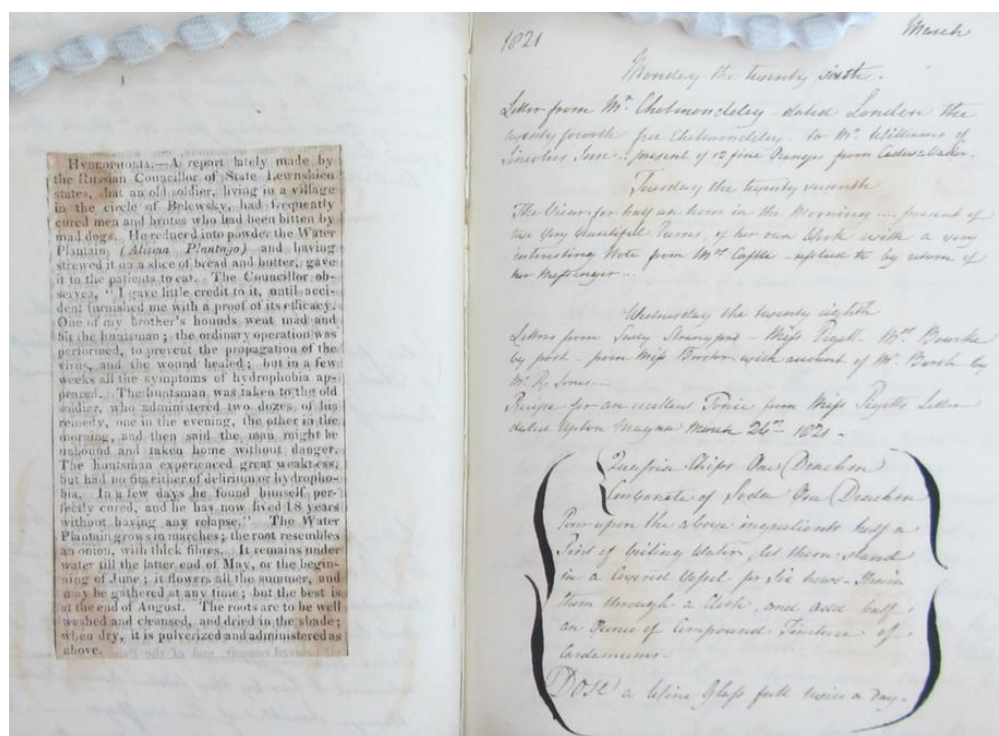


Fig. 14. From Eleanor Butler's *Journal MS 22976B* includes a newspaper clipping about hydrophobia, memorandums noting letters received, and a medicinal recipe (28). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Eleanor Butler" 1821).

The generic and personal scope of women's writing in my case studies of women commonplacers revolved around their activities and intellectual work. Mona Scheurmann, in *Her Bread to Win: Women, Money, and Society from Defoe to Austen* (1993), makes the observation that in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novels work operates within the boundaries of class: "women who are pictured in the 'act' of work are almost always servants" (9). In real life, servants were not the only people who worked in the domestic domain. The activities of work that Butler, Thrale Piozzi, Rose, Ponsonby, D. Wordsworth, and Morgan performed often involved the routine of managing their households or estates. The women mentioned in my case studies were all fairly well educated.⁴⁶ They came from or married into the genteel class; although, their actual pecuniary wealth occasionally fluctuated. Overall, their position in society would have qualified them to be "silken shepherdesses."⁴⁷ In imagining women's lives of relative social and economic privilege, we may easily picture them in silks (or calicoes). In art, portraits of the nobility and genteel classes rarely depict the full range of work performed by women at home or in their communities. Though, upon close examination of women's commonplace books, we see that they worked with great diligence and fortitude in a variety of domestic duties and responsibilities beyond the home. This dissertation closely examines the work and the commonplace book workspaces of the women in my study, who were remarkably dedicated and diverse in the work they

⁴⁶ In this context, being well educated assumes nothing other than having had access to books in the arts, humanities, and sciences and having had a desire and aptitude for self-improvement.

⁴⁷ John Barrell coined this term, "silken shepherdesses" in *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. (51).

pursued. One of their pursuits that required time and dedication was the work of keeping commonplace books. In their commonplace books that we may “observe” these women in the “act of work” –physical and intellectual--with a significant part of their work efforts engaged in writing.

Clifford Siskin notes that “the proliferation of writing, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain [...] re-forming knowledge into disciplines--including Literature as the disciplinary home of writing itself [...] altered work, enabling and valorizing newly specialized forms of intellectual labor” (104). The work of intellectual labor for Butler, Thrale Piozzi, Rose, Ponsonby, D. Wordsworth, and Morgan included the “specialized forms” of commonplace books that included literature, accountancy, and politics. Managing households and estates and designing gardens all required paperwork, making commonplace books a readily available workspace. Butler, Morgan, Ponsonby, Rose, Thrale Piozzi, and D. Wordsworth coded a variety of activities into observable work and intellectual labor within the workspaces of women’s commonplace books.

CHAPTER II

“NAY, ILL THOSE WORDS BEFIT”: THE LITERARY WORKSPACE OF POETIC COMPOSITION IN WOMEN’S COMMONPLACE BOOKS

*Commonplace Book DCMS 120*⁴⁸ was Dorothy Wordsworth’s primary commonplace book. In this manuscript, she cleverly experimented with poetics using pen, ink, needle, thread, sealing wax, and paper, and created a lovingly worked appearance to the scuffed, marble-papered cover boards. A well-worn label adheres to D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book suggestive of the scrap-like contents of the manuscript (see fig. 15). For example, in the process of composing and emending “Irregular Verses” (1827), D. Wordsworth had stitched pieces of scrap paper directly onto the page leaves of this poem. Scrap paper covers three previously composed lines, bearing these revised lines on the overlay: “When we are seeking mirth and gladness? / Nay, ill those words befit the Maid / Who pleaded for my Christmas rhyme” (DCMS 120).⁴⁹ As these lines of poetry indicate, befitting words mattered to D. Wordsworth. When she deemed words an ill fit in a poem, they were crossed-out and replaced or hidden with a paper overlay, resulting in a well-used commonplace book always in a state of revision.

⁴⁸ Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* is housed at the Jerwood Centre in Grasmere. Images and text from DCMS 120 and other manuscripts at the Wordsworth Trust Library are used in this dissertation with the kind permission of The Wordsworth Trust.

⁴⁹ Pagination written in pencil throughout *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* does not match Dorothy Wordsworth’s handwriting, especially as it deteriorated over time. Therefore, it does not contain true pagination.

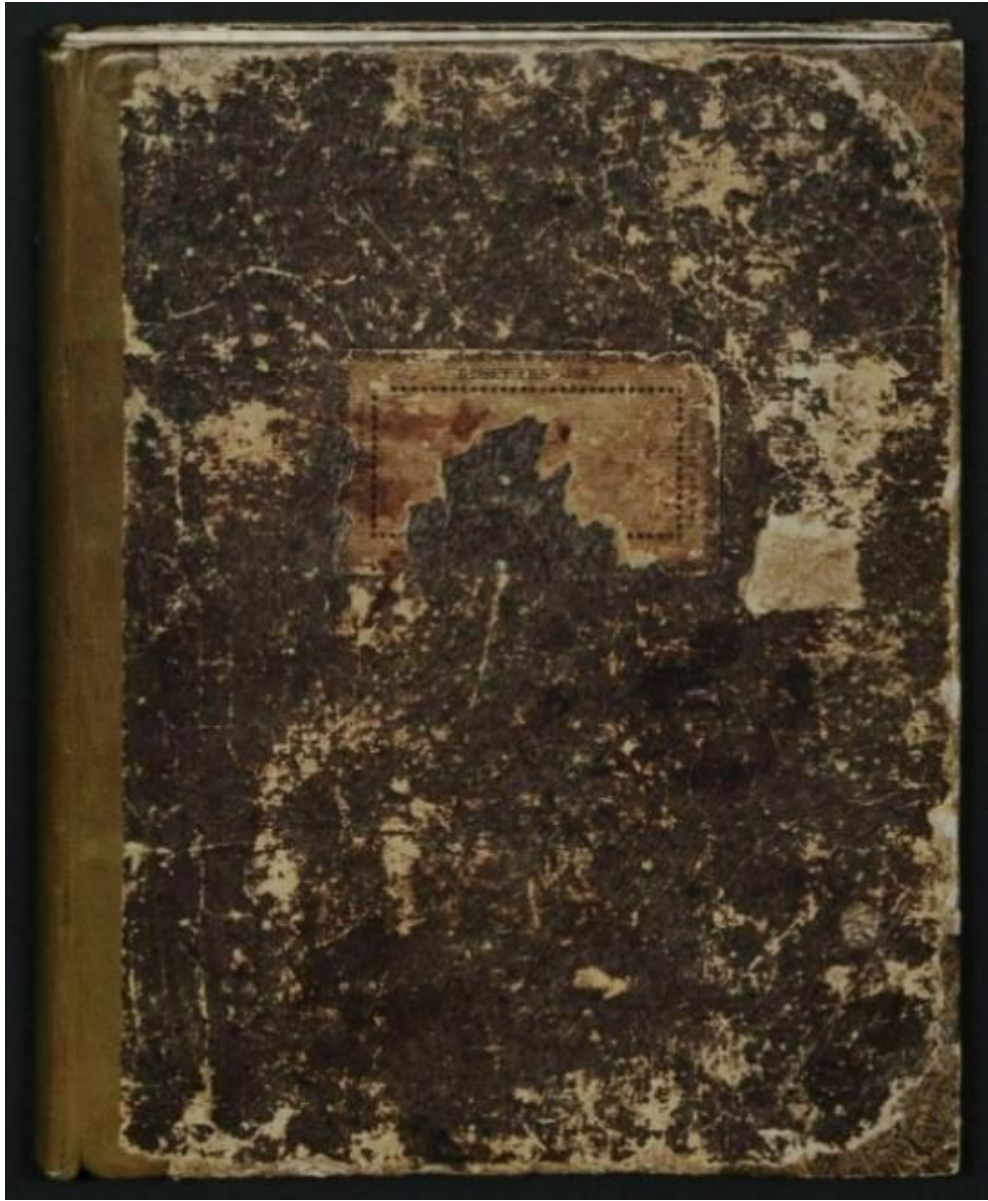


Fig. 15. *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* bearing a worn label and cover boards. This manuscript was Dorothy Wordsworth's primary commonplace book. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Dorothy Wordsworth" 1820).⁵⁰

⁵⁰ D. Wordsworth's commonplace book has a green leather spine, marbled-papered cover boards, and measures approximately eight by eleven inches, which is notably larger in size than her *Grasmere Journals*. The relatively large size of D. Wordsworth's commonplace book suggests that this manuscript allowed for easier edits and revisions using book-making techniques that would have been more difficult to execute with a smaller manuscript

Dorothy Wordsworth concealed former lines of poetry in “Irregular Verses” using another method different from the majority of her emendations of pen and ink cross-outs (see fig. 16). Most cross-outed emendations remain, if not clearly legible, then, at least discernable. Another method of emending “Irregular Verses” involves the labor and inconvenience of threading a needle and stitching a paper overlay⁵¹ onto the page while handling the awkwardness of bound pages without damaging the manuscript. When both sides of a paper overlay are stitched to the page, former composition remains inaccessible. This manner of editing displays a degree of personal resourcefulness, forethought, and effort similar to D. Wordsworth’s method of revision using paper overlays with sealing wax. The first time that I came across the pages of “Irregular Verses,” I was astonished by both the creativity and the practicality of D. Wordsworth’s use of needlecraft for editing. Her revisions with needle and thread in *Commonplace Book DCSM 120* made this manuscript a workspace for mending poetry like her domestic domain was a place for mending home furnishings and clothing. As demonstrated in “Irregular Verses,” household sewing items used for this poem’s physical and literary alterations comprised the everyday work materials from D. Wordsworth’s domestic sphere brought into her writing environment (see fig. 17).

⁵¹ Revision methods with paper overlays occur in both sections of Dorothy Wordsworth’s commonplace book. However, stitched overlay emendations are absent in the labeled front cover board section of recto-orientated pagination; instead, papered revisions are adhered with gummed, narrow paper strips (tape) and sealing wax. The taped overlays in this front cover board section are used to affix loose pages of D. Wordsworth’s poetry not written in her hand. D. Wordsworth kept two physically distinct sections in her commonplace book evident by inverted pages, the presence or absence of stitching, and the methods by which paper overlays adhere to the page.

Stifled ambition, checked the aim
 Of e'er by chance "the numbers came"
 - Nay even the mild maternal smile,
 That oft-times would repress, beguile
 The over-confidence of youth,
 Even that dear smile, to own the truth,
 Was decided by a fond self-love;
 "Inglance on me ~~and to reprove~~
~~From kindly come, and to reprove~~
 Or "sweet wrong in childhood's school")
 "Will point the sting of ridicule."

 And now, dear Girl, I hear you ask
 Is this your lightsome, chearful task?
 You tell us tales of forty years,
 Of hopes extant, of childish fears,
 Why cast among us thoughts of sadness
~~When we are seeking mirth and gladness?~~
 When we are seeking mirth and gladness?
 Nay, all those words befit the Maid,
 Who pleaded for my Christmas rhymes

 No pleasure for my Christmas rhyme
 Mirthful she is; but placid - staid -
 Her heart beats to no giddy chime
 75

Fig. 16. Page from "Irregular Verses" showing Dorothy Wordsworth's use of paper overlays for revising her poetry. This poem is found in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Dorothy Wordsworth" 1827).

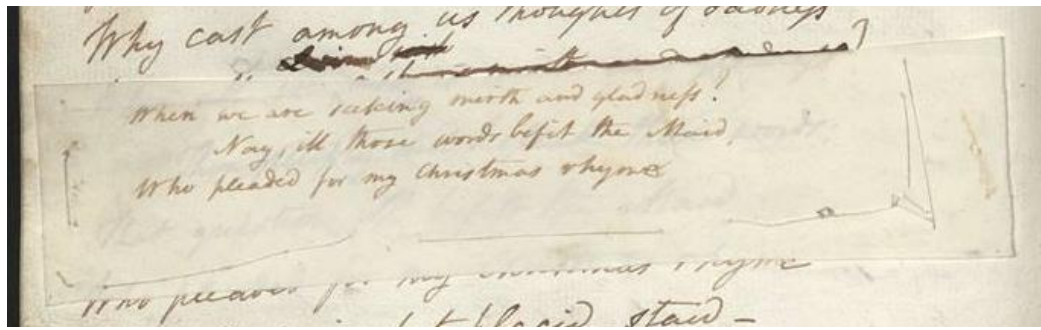


Fig. 17. Detail of “Irregular Verses” from Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Domestic art of needlework applied to the craft of composition. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).

Alan Liu describes the writing environment of D. Wordsworth’s other literary work, the *Grasmere Journals* (1800-03), as being a product and representation of D. Wordsworth’s “dome of labor” in which her writing and domestic activities were “matched” (117). In this chapter, I argue that D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book itself became a “dome of labor.” *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* became a literary workspace encompassing D. Wordsworth’s labor of composition that was synchronic with domestic arts, with doing and writing, and sociability. For example, the poems (self-authored and other-authored) in her commonplace book are surrounded by or situated in close proximity to such entries and excerpts as a household accounting ledger, homeopathic prescriptions, a garden landscape map, a travel mileage list, a travel narrative, newspaper clippings, and anecdotes about public figures and members of the community. This varied compilation of composed and extracted texts, images, and ephemerae indicates the relatively vast dome under which D. Wordsworth operated and the centrality of her commonplace book in that space for engaging in both private and public spheres. D. Wordsworth’s use of a broad range of topics and types of genres in her

commonplacing represents many of the generic conventions often found in other women's commonplace books. She also demonstrates the genre's adaptability for integrating domestic and public spheres that other women utilized as well in their commonplacing during the Romantic period.

In this chapter, as a case study, I demonstrate how D. Wordsworth developed her poetics within the genre of commonplacing. By focusing primarily on *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*, I analyze her ongoing, evolving compositional methodologies that included editing, revising, and the versioning⁵² of her poetry. I argue that an analysis of D. Wordsworth's poetics becomes a more complete project by assessing the development of her poetry on the pages of her commonplace books rather than apart from their textual context. The formal poetic elements of D. Wordsworth's poetry, such as themes, symbolism, imagery, and diction, are informed by her innovations in and the generic conventions of commonplacing. Through the contextualization of D. Wordsworth's poetics in her commonplace books, we gain a fresher understanding of her poetry and the genre of commonplace books. Angela Reyner's *Scrapbook WLMS 35/2* (ca. 1822-1828) and Anne Baxter's *A Sister's Gift WLMS 35/1* (ca. 1824-1834) and D. Wordsworth's *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*, especially exemplify a variety of poetics found in women's commonplace books from the Romantic period.

⁵² I use the term "versioning" to describe Dorothy Wordsworth's particular methodology of using various creative methods of composition in which multiple versions of her poems are purposely retained throughout the process of editing, revising, and circulating texts. D. Wordsworth used versioning in her commonplace books and correspondence to create and keep multiple versions of poetry, allowing for the expansion and customization of her base texts.

Dorothy Wordsworth's composition of "Irregular Verses" underscores her participation in the process of expanding the generic conventions of commonplace books. She demonstrates this generic expansion of commonplacing by including self-authored compositions along with other-authored works in her commonplace book. This process, though, originated with the convention of commonplacing other-authored works, involving searching for and reading books, periodicals, and literary extracts. Commonplacers engaging in the physical and intellectual activity of gathering, clipping, attaching, copying, editing, and illustrating entries and excerpts for their commonplace books engender intimate involvement in commonplacing. David Allan in *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (2010) notes that commonplacing "automatically enhanced readers' intimacy with what they copied" (112). This personal investment in commonplacing fostered a close familiarity between compilers and other-authored works that went beyond simply copying literary texts. Women's involvement in copying extracts encouraged readerly writing. According to Margaret J. M. Ezell in *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print Culture* (1999), "the dynamic network of writer and reader that [...] characterizes manuscript literary culture and social authorship is created by the process of being an author" (40). For D. Wordsworth and other women, a connection to coterie was an outcome of compiling commonplace books, and commonplace books were a type of a textual coterie creating a conducive atmosphere for social authorship, for an open workplace and pathway supporting composition and for becoming a writer.

With many observations applicable to British commonplacing, Ellen Gruber Garvey's studies of American commonplace books and scrapbooks in "Scissoring and Scrapbooks: Nineteenth-Century Reading, Remaking, and Recirculating" (2003), note the literary trajectory of commonplacing. She remarks that "the commonplace book, in which passages from other works are copied out by hand, [...] makes a new book of it" (210). Garvey goes on further to discuss how commonplacing creates a "new book" of other-authored texts. She explains: "A trail of crumbs or references may mark the way back, but more likely leaves the reader of the commonplace book with something new: a collection of passages that lead nowhere, but have become freestanding 'quotes' and sayings. The reader becomes an author" (210).⁵³ Garvey is suggesting that by personal involvement, by copying "out by hand" other-authored works an authorial role ensues for commonplacers. A commonplacer forms a "freestanding" text, "something new"—a commonplace book fashioned from texts that might otherwise have "led nowhere." As discussed in the introduction, critical scholarship of commonplace books often conflates commonplacers with readers. Commonplacers are mistakenly given one and same identity with readers perhaps because commonplacing typically begins with reading the works of others. Ezell and Garvey, on the other hand, offer helpful insights into the writer and reader dynamics of manuscript culture applicable to commonplacing. They

⁵³ In this dissertation, print publication is not considered the sole marker of being an author or writer. The Circulation of literary works in the Romantic period existed in both manuscript and print forms. Manuscript publication infers circulation or publication within coteries. Writers who were primarily manuscript authors, such as Dorothy Wordsworth, may have been better known than some contemporary authors who published primarily or exclusively in print. In Chapters I and IV, I discuss differences between print and manuscript commonplace books.

emphasize the significance of social authorship overlooked in critical scholarship on commonplace books but essential to its generic formation and literary development.

The first of many authorial decisions made by commonplacers was the outward appearance of their commonplace books. Women often chose manuscripts constructed of practical, marbled-papered cover boards, such as D. Wordsworth's *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. They also chose or were given as presents lavishly gilded and tooled blank gift books, such as Baxter's *A Sister's Gift WLMS 35/1* or Reyner's *Scrapbook WLMS 35/2* (see fig. 18). As practical or highly decorative manuscripts, commonplace books provided a reasonably permanent housing for other-authored and self-authored works. D. Wordsworth's, Reyner's, and Baxter's commonplace books convey tacitly, through visual and tactile suggestion, the relative permanence and, hence, the importance of the codex. Accustomed to preserving the works of others in their commonplace books, women expanded the genre of commonplacing to include their own compositions. Allan posits that the move toward commonplacing self-authored poetry bears the "entirely logical conclusion that one's own compositions might themselves be made to endure" in commonplace books (167). We may imagine how both the understated decorative functionality of marbled-papered blank journals and elaborately gilt-tooled gift books, along with copying extracts, might enthrall commonplacers to try their own hand at composition. Perhaps the unattributed (and untraceable) poems interspersed with attributed works in Reyner's and Baxter's handsomely tooled manuscripts with meticulously executed calligraphy may, in fact, be their own poetry.

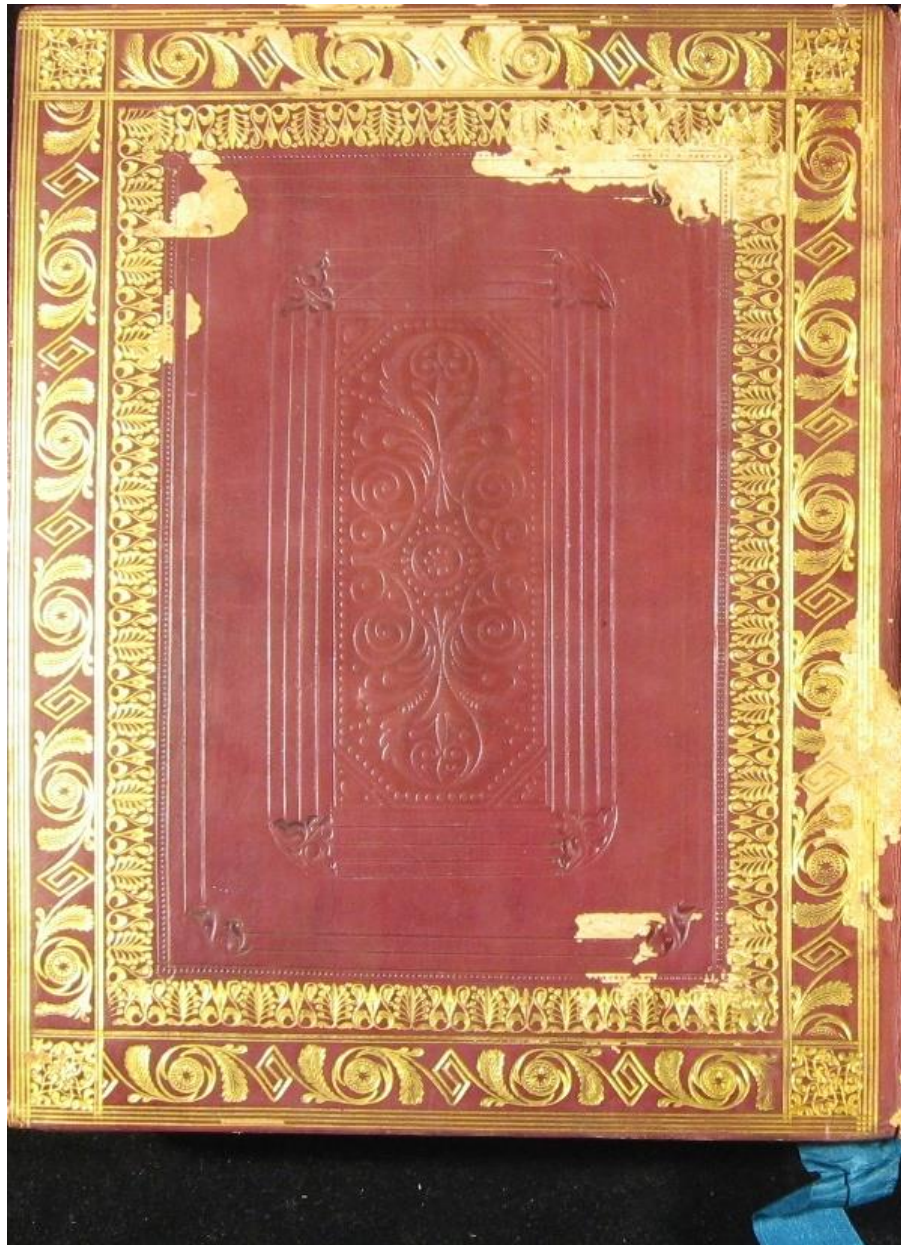


Fig. 18. Angela Reyner's *Scrapbook WLMS 35/2* with gilded, tooled cover boards. Blank gift books were often used for commonplace books. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Angela Reyner" 1822).

In my research, I have recognized a generic shift in commonplacing from copying other-authored works to composing original works, exemplified clearly, as already mentioned, in the poetic works of D. Wordsworth in her commonplace books.

Allan similarly notes this generic shift in commonplace books, making the observation that “a great deal of Georgian commonplacing actually revolved around manuscript poetry—in other words, handwritten verse that was not simply copied from a published source but which was instead wholly original in character” (159). Allan asserts that “manuscript poetry” developed into a ubiquitous feature in commonplace books, regretfully noting that such compositions were “of wildly fluctuating merit” (159). Though the literary quality of self-authored compositions in commonplace books may have been, at times, amateurish, such a focus misses the point that a significant literary, generic convention was emerging in commonplacing that orientated women’s commonplace books toward being a more writerly genre.

This writerly generic convention in commonplacing evolved in unexpected ways, namely, grafting or merging one’s own literary efforts or emendations onto or with other-authored works. Garvey suggests that memorizing, copying, and eliding the author’s name “very effectively” makes a poem one’s own (210). If commonplacers did not literally make other-authored works their own, they effectively made such extracts an intimate, self-reflexive work of commonplacing. I would add that with or without authorial attribution, commonplacing other-authored works complicates authorship as commonplacers earn a stake in literary works through laboriously and devotedly incorporating such contents into their commonplace books. A problematic sense of ownership particularly becomes heightened when commonplacers emend or embellish other-authored literary works. Ezell observes that “the role of the reader of manuscript text becomes conflated with the roles of editing, correcting, or copying the text and

extending its circulation of readers” (*Social Authorship* 40). The implication of Ezell’s observation and my own examination of women’s commonplace books suggests that commonplacing inextricably links every aspect of authorship, from composition to publication, with social authorship.

As a case in point, in the poetry commonplace book of Scottish chieftain Elizabeth Rose, *Poems MS GDI 726.7* (1783), Rose blurs authorial distinctions between other-authored and self-authored poetry. Her commonplace book contains copies of other-authored lyric⁵⁴ (usually with attribution), rather than self-authored works that she modified with her own emendations or revisions. Rose excerpted poetry written by Samuel Johnson, Horace, Henry Mackenzie, and others, editing and revising their poetry to suit her own sense of poetics. For example, from Johnson’s “On the Death of Mr. Robert Levet” (1783), in line ten, “Obscurely wise & coarsely kind” (130-32), Rose writes the word “plainly” above Johnson’s word choice “coarsely.” In a passage from Johnson’s eulogy, she offers optional diction rather than draws a line through his word choices. The words plainly and coarsely are similar in meaning, but they also carry different connotations. Being plainly kind implies a naturalness and ease of manner, whereas, being coarsely kind conveys a roughness that may also be natural but not particularly well-mannered. Rose grafts her jottings onto Johnson’s poem, which alters its meaning and expands its context. Taking into account Johnson’s contemporaries’ and their disagreement regarding the brashness of his personality, Rose’s edits tacitly draws

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Rose’s commonplace book of poems includes extracts of odes, sonnets, hymns, ballads, and eulogies, which would have been available to her from print and manuscript sources.

her into the national debate on Johnson's character, amplifying her role as a readerly writer.

Women illustrating poetry with watercolor paintings, pencil sketches, and other media in their commonplace books also amplifies the role of commonplacers and the effect of making a poem their own. For example, in *Scrapbook DCMS 35/2* (ca. 1822-28), Reyner attributes "Forget Me Not" (ca. 1825) to Amelia Opie, while quite effectively customizing the poem with a watercolor painting that enhances the meaning of both the poem and the painting (see fig. 19). Reyner's painting of forget-me-not flowers laterally strides across the top of the page of a neatly copied poem like a descriptive title. The azure color of the flowers in the painting corresponds to the first line of "Forget Me Not": "Fond memory's flower, of azure die" (WLMS 35/2). This line suggests that remembrance like the "flower of azure" inevitably dies, but Reyner offers a more complex reading through her painting of forget-me-nots and the textual and visual homonym of die and dye.

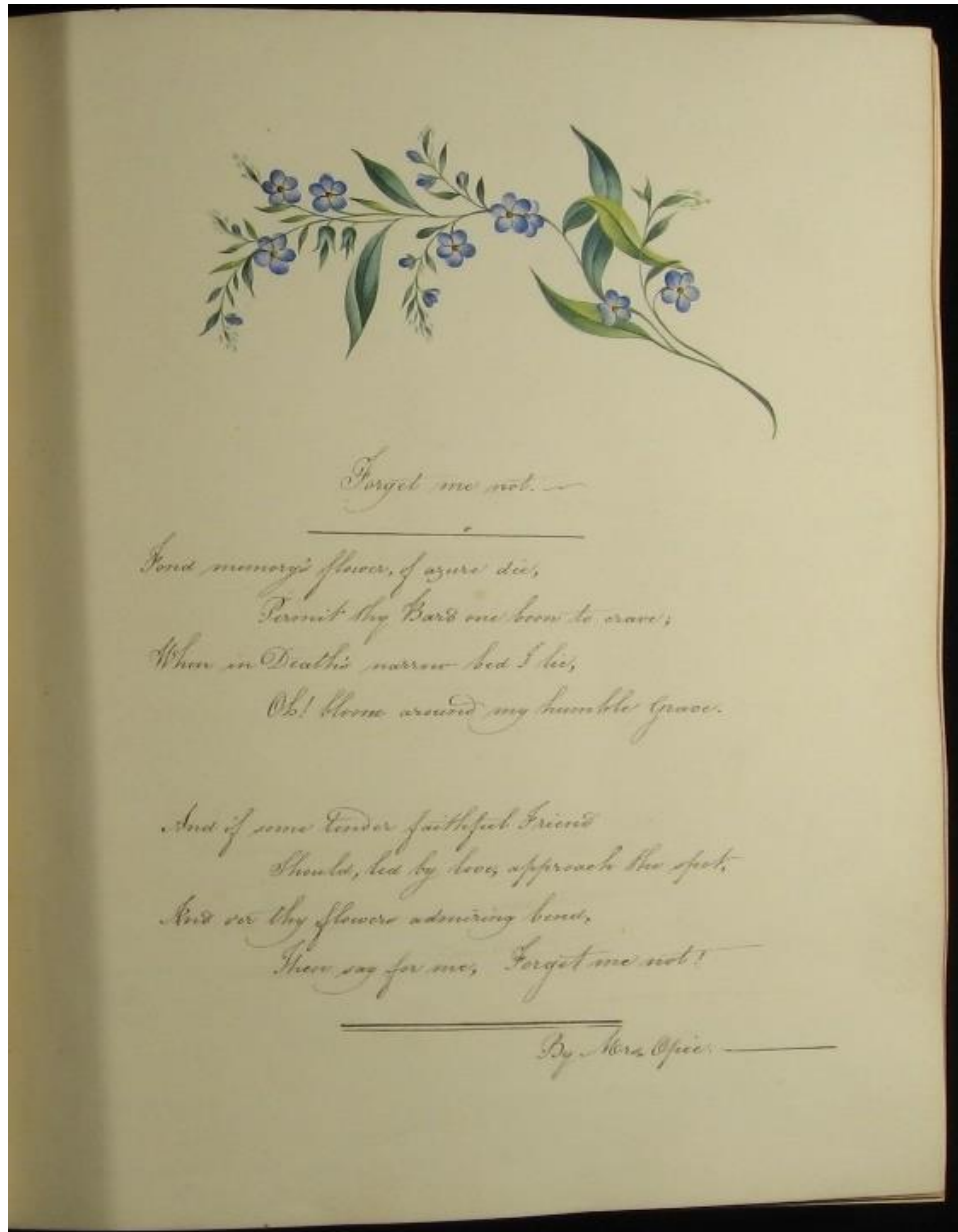


Fig. 19. Watercolor painting of forget-me-not flowers in Angela Reyner's commonplace book. Illustrates Amelia Opie's poem and meaning of "Forget Me Not" (WLMS 35/2). Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Angela Reyner" 1822).

In Angela Reyner's commonplacing of the poem "Forget Me Not," the azure color dye in her painted illustration becomes a metonym for the vibrant color of the

azure flowers as a living organism, symbolizing the vibrancy of remembrance beyond death. Forget-me-not flowers die just as remembrance of an individual dies, but on the page both are immortalized through poetry and painting. Reyner's illustration references the speaker's declared desire that when on "Death's narrow bed," flowers will continue to "bloom around my humble grave" (WLMS 35/2). Forget-me-nots are not specifically mentioned by the speaker, but they are alluded to in the double meaning of the title and the descriptive first line. The title and the color azure are linked to the flowers around the grave by an absence of competing textual or visual imagery. In this absence, Reyner asserts her own imagery upon Opie's poem with an interpretive watercolor painting that becomes associated with remembering the individual, who is the "me" in both "Forget Me Not" and forget-me-not flowers. Reyner visually reifies Opie's poem and deepens the reader's experience and understanding of the poem while emphasizing the preservation of memory as an integral generic function of commonplacing. With her watercolor painting of forget-me-nots matched with Opie's "Forget Me Not" poem, Reyner fosters connections between the compiler, the authorial text, and the commonplace book—merging them together. She illuminates with visual imagery the meaning of the poem and the significance of commonplacing as a compositional investment by the commonplacer. Though the illustration of "Forget Me Not" seems to overshadow or effectively elide Opie's authorship, Reyner's commonplace book preserves this poem and the author through remembrance and commonplacing, which comprises one of the key generic purposes of commonplace books. Essentially, this illustrative painting represents Reyner's compositional investment in Opie's poem,

employing the genre of commonplacing to refine meaning and ensure the preservation of “Forget Me Not.”

Dorothy Wordsworth, also asserts a compositional investment in poetry shaped by the genre of commonplacing but through the labor of revising her own poems rather than focusing on and emending or illustrating the works of other poets. The developmental quality of D. Wordsworth’s poems commonplaced in multiple stages of composition and revision makes us aware of her wide range of literary capabilities beyond prose writing, such as found in the *Grasmere Journals* (1800-1803), *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland, 1803*, and *A Narrative of George and Sarah Green* (1808). D. Wordsworth’s composition of “Irregular Verses,” like the authorial practices of other Romantic poets, was an ongoing search for befitting words.

As mentioned previously, Angela Reyner conventionally begins her commonplace book with an unattributed prefatory poem, “Accept, my Friend, this feeble lay” (WLMS 35/2). Generically, prefatory poems in commonplace books allude to the conventions of commonplacing, often setting the tone and purpose of commonplace books. This prefatory poem resonates with D. Wordsworth’s steady commitment to commonplacing with the lines 13, 14, and 15 stating “On this, and each succeeding day / While here you tread life’s thorny way / May you his blessing share” (WLMS 35/2). These first three lines in the third stanza metaphorically allude to the ongoing nature of commonplacing as a habitual practice integrated into the commonplacer’s life-journey or “thorny way.” The analogy suggests that keeping a commonplace book is a discipline to be practiced irrespective of life’s vicissitudes, suggesting that commonplacers should

faithfully write in their commonplace books in both good and bad times. Interestingly, some of D. Wordsworth's most productive years of writing poetry in her commonplace book during the 1830s coincided with her worst years of chronic physical illness and mental instability. During 1832, she wrote no fewer than six poems, and a couple of them exemplify her most acclaimed verses.

Ernest de Selincourt, biographer and editor of D. Wordsworth's literary works, remarks that "as Dorothy lay upon her sick bed one of her chief pleasures was the writing of verses" (388). He notes that D. Wordsworth's poems from this period of her life "reflect a real part of her mind, chastened and subdued as it was by her prolonged suffering. Their prevalent tone is religious suggesting the spiritual strength she drew from that simple orthodox piety which, during the last twenty years, had gradually superseded the natural piety of her youth" (388). In a letter written to Edward Quillinan on 25 May 1832 from Dora Wordsworth (D. Wordsworth's niece), she notes that her aunt's poetry reflects the poet's true state of mind and physical limitations. Anticipating de Selincourt's assessment of D. Wordsworth's condition and her poetry, Dora writes, "I hope she will sometime let me send you an affecting poem which she has written on the pleasure she received from the first spring flowers that were carried up to her when confined to her sick room" (qtd. in de Selincourt 387). The "affecting poem" that Dora Wordsworth refers to is "Thoughts on my sick-bed" (1832). Dedicated to the poems of Dorothy and William Wordsworth's past, "Thoughts on my sick-bed" reminisces about "the daffodil dancing in the breeze" and *Tintern Abbey*—"I saw the green Banks of the Wye" (DCMS 120). In D. Wordsworth's commonplace book, "Thoughts on my sick-

bed” is one of the few poems composed in her hand that comes close to being a fair copy, yet even this carefully written poem includes a dozen or more word and phrase emendations. Ironically, this poem about being chronically ill and able to do little else but reminisce, in fact, shows evidence of careful handwriting and editing—D.

Wordsworth working diligently on composition despite her limitations.

In addition to her poems, D. Wordsworth’s letters to family and friends conveyed a sense of her physical condition and state of mind. She writes to Elizabeth Hutchinson on 14 September 1834 stating that “this is not one of my vigorous days [...] I lie upon my back in bed and with uplifted knees form a desk for my paper” (*Letters* 187). D. Wordsworth in her letter gives us a glimpse into her writing environment and *modus operandi* for revising her poetry; more than half of D. Wordsworth’s poetry was likely written in the manner that she describes to Hutchinson in her letter. Remarkably, we have a window into seeing how D. Wordsworth wrote in her commonplace book and may imagine the importance that commonplacing held for her while convalescing. D. Wordsworth’s ill health was chronic but sporadic with coherent periods during which much of her commonplacing remained lucid.

However, a letter (misquoting Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queen*) written in the spring of 1838 to Dora Wordsworth shows an overall decline: “My own thoughts are a wilderness—‘not perceivable by power of any star’” (190). Though D. Wordsworth’s thoughts may be disorientated, she admirably manages to include an apt literary allusion to describe her lost state of mind. In this same letter in which D. Wordsworth expresses to Dora Wordsworth that she feels as though her mind is in a hopeless fog, she writes

with poetic clarity and poignant imagery that “I have fought and fretted and striven—and am here beside the fire. The Doves behind me at the small window—the laburnum with its naked seed-pods shivers before my window and the pine-trees rock from their base” (190). The poetic imagery of the doves “at the small window” and the shivering “naked seed-pods” rivals any vignette that D. Wordsworth had written in her *Grasmere Journals* decades earlier. This letter suggests that D. Wordsworth’s refined, affecting poems in her commonplace book were not anomalies; rather, she was at the height of her literary abilities, with years of revising poetry making the work of choosing befitting words seem effortless. By 1838, it seems as though D. Wordsworth would have stopped writing poetry in her commonplace book, but, in 1840, she went on to write a fairly extensive eulogy, “A tribute to the Memory of the Rev’d John Curwen.” D. Wordsworth probably continued making commonplacing her avocation for nine more years, with 1849 being the last year marked on a poem inserted into her commonplace book.

For women, such as D. Wordsworth and Reyner, an ancillary benefit to making commonplacing an avocation, beyond the work it helped them to produce, was that it fostered and expanded social interaction through networks of friends and family. These coterie provided readers and writers opportunities for responding to the contents of commonplace books. Commonplacing and the sociability of circulating texts were complementary aims during the Romantic period. Allan notes that “so normal was manuscript circulation at this time that it became the subject of its own poetic reflection” (160). Manuscript or content circulation, a crucial aspect of commonplacing, is the

ostensible subject of Reyner's poetic reflection in her commonplace poem, "Accept, my Friend, this feeble lay" (see fig. 20).

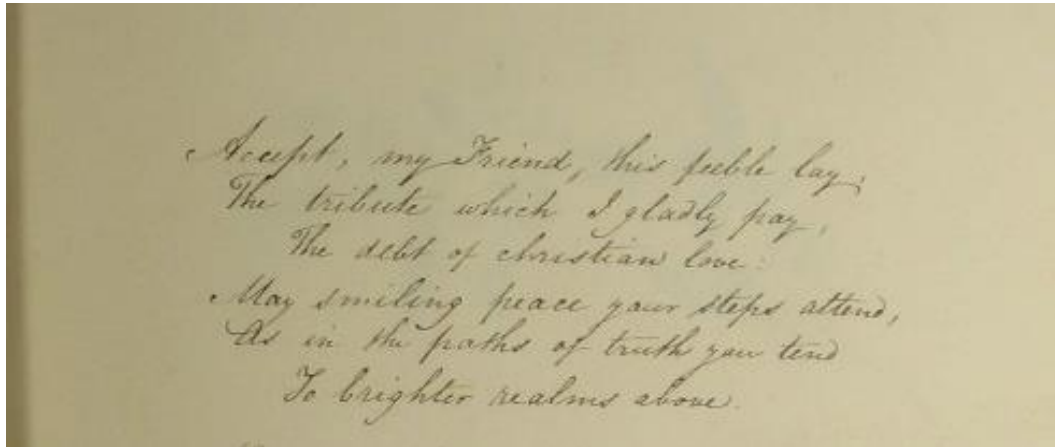


Fig. 20. First stanza of Angela Reyner's prefatory poem (WLMS 35/2). Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Angela Reyner" 1822).

In this poem, Reyner inculcates awareness of the virtues of commonplacing and sharing the content of commonplace books. For example, the speaker offers the poem, the "lay," as a "tribute" or a gift, which the speaker would "gladly pay" as a "debt of christian [*sic*] love"; indeed, the poem acts as a sociable offering. As a prefatory to her commonplace book, Reyner's spiritualized poem serves as a synecdoche for commonplacing, advocating "loveliest virtues," being a "blessing" by sharing "to all around," and striving to "reflect the light." (WLMS 35/2). The lofty phrasing in "Accept, my Friend, this feeble lay" when disassociated from religious contexts, aptly describes Reyner's fine calligraphy, painted illustrations, and the pleasure and insight others might receive from perusing through the pages of her commonplace book. For example, the

flowers and idyllic landscape paintings are rendered with careful attention to detail with their vibrant, “image bright,” saturated colors both absorbing and reflecting light—they would conceivably be a “blessing” to see. Though commonplace books, generically, were meant to be shared “to all around,” unlike diaries perhaps, the extent of the content that was shared and the manner in which it was circulated varied with commonplacers. The Wordsworths were known to circulate entire manuscripts, such as Dora Wordsworth’s album, while visiting friends. D. Wordsworth, though, seemed to prefer circulating her poetry from her commonplace books through the postal system.

Dorothy Wordsworth sharing her poetry from her commonplace book while confined to a sick bed, exemplifies the vital and resourceful sociability of commonplacing. Ezell describes in *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* different methods women used to share their literary writings and household manuscripts. She reminds us that “we have little or no sense of the actual scale of women’s literary participation in manuscript culture apart from a few celebrated examples” (22-23). Most of D. Wordsworth’s methods of circulating her poetry remain a mystery, but we are able to trace some of her activity. We have evidence that D. Wordsworth shared a copy of “Irregular Verses” with Mary Jones, which ended up in Jones’s album. “Irregular Verses” happens to be one of D. Wordsworth’s most laboriously revised poems in her commonplace book. Harkening back to Reyner’s prefatory poem, it makes sense that D. Wordsworth would circulate and share a poem that exacted a considerable sacrifice of her time and effort. In the spiritualized rhetoric of “Accept, my Friend, this feeble lay”

that D. Wordsworth would have well-understood, she had offered something of value to her friend, the “tribute” of a poem.

Sharing a commonplace book went beyond circulating the contents or the entire manuscript with a coterie of readers or a network of friends, associates, and relatives. Manuscripts were occasionally shared with others posthumously, such as Camilla Calder’s scrapbook, as discussed in Chapter I. For example, Felicia Hemans bequeathed her commonplace book to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who continued on with commonplacing poetry in Hemans’s manuscript. Commonplace books were also shared concurrently. W. Wordsworth shared commonplace books with D. Wordsworth concurrently:⁵⁵ *Commonplace Book DCMS 26* (1800-1808)⁵⁶ and *Book of Verse DCMS 89* (1820-1846).⁵⁷ Though D. Wordsworth may have begun writing in her own commonplace book (DCMS 120) in 1820, according to Adam Matthew Digital, since 1802 she was commonplacing entries and excerpts in *Commonplace Book DCMS 26*. *Commonplace Book DCMS 26* bears an inscription in W. Wordsworth’s hand on the inner front fly leaf that includes his name, place, and date: “Wm Wordsworth / Grasmere / Jan’ry 1800” (DCMS 26; see fig. 21).

⁵⁵ William Wordsworth’s *Book of Verse DCMS 89* is not specifically titled as a commonplace book, but it bears the characteristics of commonplacing that are essential to the discussion and scope of this dissertation. In this dissertation both W. Wordsworth’s *Commonplace Book DCMS 26* and *Book of Verse DCMS 89* will be called commonplace books, but when necessary to avoid confusion, DCMS 89 will be called *Book of Verse* rather than a commonplace book.

⁵⁶ Commonplace books DCMS 26 and DCMS 89 do not have true pagination generated in William Wordsworth’s or Dorothy Wordsworth’s hand.

⁵⁷ William Wordsworth’s and Dorothy Wordsworth’s shared commonplace books referenced in this dissertation are housed at the Jerwood Centre in Grasmere. Visuals and quotations from DCMS 26 and 89 are used in this dissertation by the kind permission of the Wordsworth Trust.

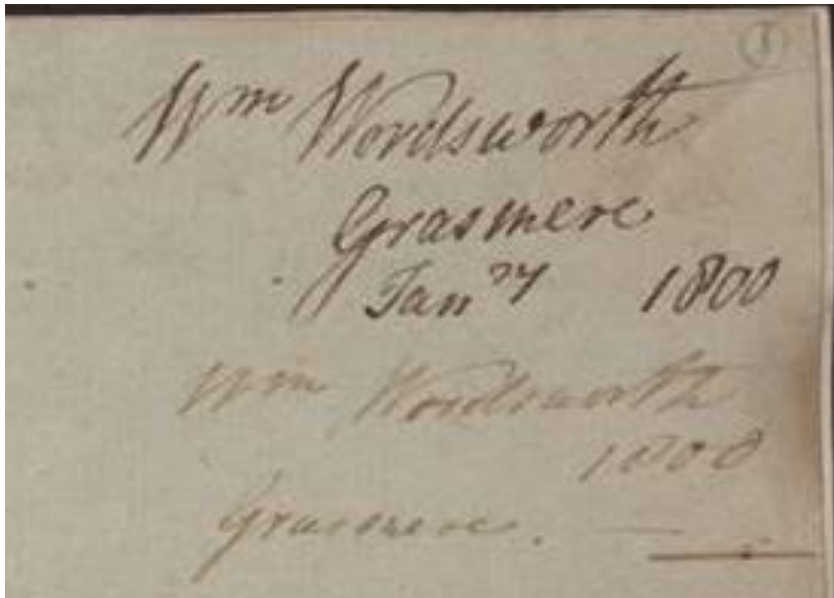


Fig. 21. William Wordsworth's inscription in *Commonplace Book DCMS 26*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("William Wordsworth" 1800).

William Wordsworth's nomenclature inscribed on the inner front fly leaf of this commonplace book marks this manuscript as his possession and establishes provenance. D. Wordsworth made her own mark of ownership as well in this same commonplace book by writing on the inverted back fly leaf the inscription "Grasmere November 1802 / account of Mary's Linen which came from Penrith" (DCMS 26; see fig. 22). Seventy-seven blank pages separate W. Wordsworth's last dated entry from the last page of D. Wordsworth's inverted back section (if viewed from the perspective of W. Wordsworth's section), W. Wordsworth having the clear majority of pages. A copied letter and a second linen inventory comprise the end parameters of W. Wordsworth's and D. Wordsworth's inverted sections, appearing to be the last entries in their shared

commonplace book.⁵⁸ Pamela Woof, in *Dorothy Wordsworth: Wonders of the Everyday* (2013), observes that this commonplace book “seems not to have been used at all after the date of the letter to the Revd. Francis Wrangham, 5 June 1808” (91). Though accurately dating the active use period of commonplace books usually proves to be problematic, both Wordsworths appear to have moved on from commonplacing in *Commonplace Book DCMS 26* by 1808.

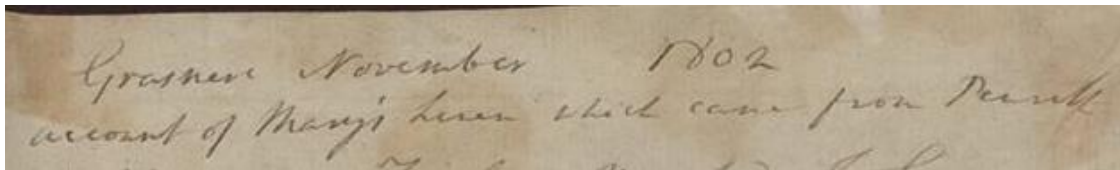


Fig. 22 Dorothy Wordsworth's first entry in *Commonplace Book DCMS 26*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1802).

In quitting *Commonplace Book DCMA 26*, by 1820, W. Wordsworth commonplaces in *Book of Verse DCMS 89* and D. Wordsworth commonplaces in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* for the remainder of their respective lives. D. Wordsworth's entries in *Commonplace Book DCMS 26* include linen inventories, household accounts, notation of her nephew's baby-talk, medicinal prescriptions, and a

⁵⁸ In *Commonplace Book DCMS 26*, W. Wordsworth's commonplacing covers pages one to sixty-three, but not all of the excerpts are written in W. Wordsworth's hand. Similar to *Book of Verse DCMS 89*, some of the excerpts throughout have been identified as being in the hand of D. Wordsworth and other women in the Wordsworth household. The inverted back section entries of this commonplace book are in D. Wordsworth's hand and comprises pages 145 to 141, in this order. As with other commonplace books associated with the Wordsworth household, the pagination was probably added posthumously and only the recto-side leaves are paginated.

recipe for making ink. Unlike W. Wordsworth's section, though, D. Wordsworth's entries in this shared commonplace book exclude historical excerpts and other-authored literary works. D. Wordsworth's entries in *Commonplace Book DCMS 26* may seem mismatched with W. Wordsworth's extracts. Yet, D. Wordsworth's dated inscription on the flyleaf along with commonplacing her own (primarily domestic) interests, effectively stakes her claim of ownership to *Commonplace Book DCMS 26*.

In William Wordsworth's commonplace book (DCMS 26), extracts comprise self-authored works of poetry as well as a variety of excerpted ballads, travel-writing, and historical narratives, such as Thomas Wilkinson's *Tours to the British Mountains* (1824) and David Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs* (1769, 1776, and 1791 editions). W. Wordsworth excerpted works from his commonplace book to write travel and historical narratives in *Guide to the Lakes* (1810 and 1835 editions). W. Wordsworth used excerpts to aid in the composition of his poetry as well. For example, W. Wordsworth's poem, "The Solitary Reaper" (1807) owes its invention to an excerpt copied into his commonplace book (stanza form) from Wilkinson's *Tours* (see fig. 23).

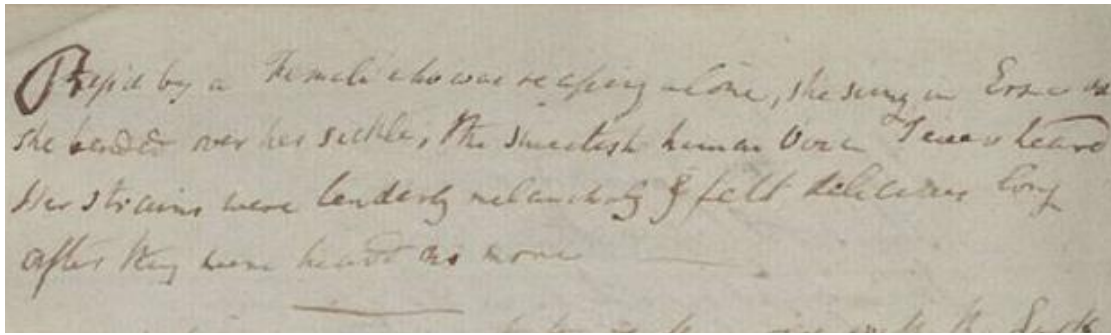


Fig. 23. Excerpt from Thomas Wilkinson's *Tour to the British Mountains*. Copied into William Wordsworth's *Commonplace Book DCMS 26* and a source for "The Solitary Reaper." Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("William Wordsworth" 1808).

A note penciled on the same page as the excerpt from Wilkinson's *Tours* (not in W. Wordsworth's hand) states that the "sentences are in the writing of Thomas Wilkinson on the former [i.e. the above commonplaced section], the form of the Solitary Reaper is taken from his 'Tours to the British Mountains'" (see fig 24).⁵⁹ Comparing Wilkinson's *Tours* with W. Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" verifies the note's assertion that the poem is taken from Wilkinson's *Tours*,⁶⁰ revealing the mechanics of

⁵⁹ Mary Moorman mentions the extract from Wilkinson's *Tour to the British Mountains* and its use by W. Wordsworth's to compose "The Solitary Reaper" in her *Notes and Queries* article regarding *Commonplace Book DCMS 26* (1957). She draws our attention to a few of his other poetic works as well, such as "The Thorn." In a succinct article that provides a descriptive overview of W. Wordsworth's commonplace book, Moorman discusses how W. Wordsworth excerpted source materials for several of his poems, though, she does not delve into how commonplacing as a genre was influential in his invention methods. Moorman views W. Wordsworth's commonplace book as being a manuscript "of considerable interest" in which "one or two of the extracts make it possible to add footnotes to Wordsworth's own poems" (400). Moorman's statement speaks to the devalued status of commonplace books in scholarly research in 1957 rather than of her under appreciation of his commonplace book.

⁶⁰ William Wordsworth's excerpt from *Tours to the British Mountains* copied in his commonplace book has slight variations from Wilkerson's published version; see Wilkerson's 1824 publication of *Tours*.

social authorship in commonplacing. This example provides insight into how women may have used excerpts in their commonplace books for composition and revision.

The following stanza is W. Wordsworth's excerpt from Wilkinson's *Tours*:

Pass'd by a Female who was reaping alone, she sung in Erse
as she bended over her sickle, the sweetest human voice I ever heard:
Her strains were tenderly melancholy & felt delicious long
after they were heard no more. (DCMS 26)

The following lines 1-4 are excerpted from W. Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper":

"Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!" (*Collected Poems* 289).

As we can see from these two excerpts, the "Female who was reaping alone" while singing "in Erse" in Wilkinson's narrative provides inspiration for W. Wordsworth's "Yon solitary Highland Lass," in his poem whose singing in her native language, as a Highlander, would be Erse or Scots Gaelic. Both Wilkinson's narrative and Wordsworth's poem emotively portray the sound and imagery of a Scottish female's isolated singing. Wilkinson identifies the singing as being "tenderly melancholy" and haunting, feeling as though the notes are "delicious long." W. Wordsworth's poem also conveys a melancholy tone, entreating readers to stop and listen or "gently pass!" in a reverential manner often used to tell of a mortal passing-away. The speaker emphasizes this imperative with an exclamation point. The lone reaper has poignant meaning in both Wilkinson's travel narrative and W. Wordsworth's poem; she signals something amiss.

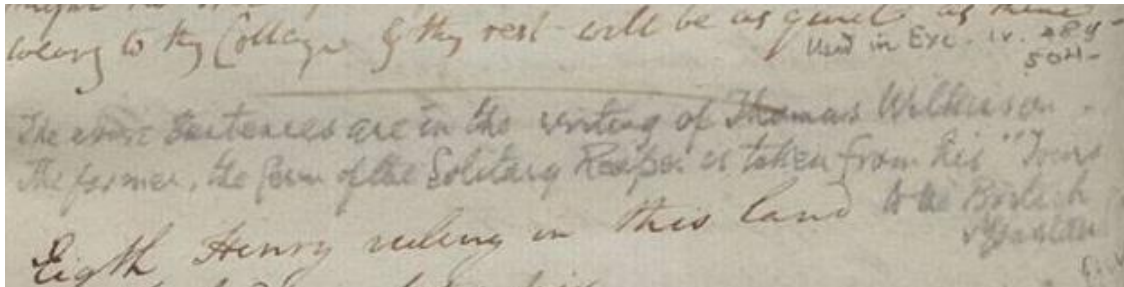


Fig. 24. Pencil note in William Wordsworth's *Commonplace Book DCMS 26*. This note (not written in W. Wordsworth's hand) attributes excerpt from Thomas Wilkinson's *Tours to the British Mountains* to W. Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper." Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("William Wordsworth" 1808).

In rural Britain, reaping was often a family event--indeed, a communal activity. In both literary works, the absence of family or community to help with the reaping suggests a loss of men or neighbors due to the protracted war with France and the Highland Clearances in Scotland. In both the excerpt of Wilkinson's *Tour* and W. Wordsworth's "Solitary Reaper," the importance of community and sociability are underscored by their apparent absence. Literary production in the Romantic period, like reaping, was a communal effort; ideally, writers did not produce literary works in complete social isolation, such as the solitary reaper in W. Wordsworth's poem. Michelle Levy in *Romantic Authorship and Romantic Print Culture* (2008) reminds us of the "essential sociable nature of much Romantic authorship," noting that "many authors worked within a manuscript culture" that relied upon "reciprocal roles," "domestic 'coteries,'" and "the collaborative nature of its productions" (2). Writers such as W. Wordsworth and D. Wordsworth were very much a part of a sociable, manuscript culture. The textual imagery, sentiment, and word-for-word nearness of W. Wordsworth's poem with Wilkinson's narrative may cause modern audiences unease.

Yet, W. Wordsworth's mode of composition, borrowing similar imagery, tone, and diction, to create new literary work was still a common practice during the Romantic period. Levy argues that social authorship was a normal mode of literary production until "asserting one's proprietary rights became imperative as authors grew increasingly dependent on the market, as opposed to patronage, for their livelihood" (9). Levy's assessment of social authorship during the Romantic period dovetails with the generic conventions of commonplace books. Her argument that literary production in manuscript culture was a collaborative effort is clearly demonstrated in W. Wordsworth's commonplace book and his poem "The Solitary Reaper."

As a shared manuscript representing familial reciprocity and demonstrating communal literary production, the social authorship exhibited in *Commonplace Book* (DCMS 26) between other-authored works and W. Wordsworth's poetry would have resonated with D. Wordsworth and her own modes of invention in her commonplace book (DCMS 120). D. Wordsworth did not compose her poetry in the same manner as W. Wordsworth by using excerpts of other-authored works as textual resources; instead, she used self-authored works as source material. The pervasively vague familiarity or similarity that her poems share with each other, such as multiple versions of "Sabbath Morn" and "Thoughts on my sick-bed," exemplify D. Wordsworth's mode of self-reflexive commonplacing and poetics. With excerpted fragments of domestically collaborative authorship between W. Wordsworth's and her often recursive poetry, D. Wordsworth created new and different versions of her poems. For example, as already mentioned, lines from D. Wordsworth's "Thoughts on my sick-bed" resonate with W.

Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud" and "Tintern Abbey." Also, D.

Wordsworth's descriptive titles "Lines written (rather say begun) on the morning of Sunday April 6th" echoes with "On a most beautiful Sunday morning—April 1824." The workspace of D. Wordsworth's commonplace book makes this mode of poetics possible where most of her poems are readily accessible, not only for revising but also for versioning—making a new version of a poem from a base text or similar topic.

Different composition methods existed simultaneously in women's commonplace books, and many compilers never felt compelled to write their own poetry. However, D. Wordsworth's desire to continue writing, editing, and revising her poetry while in the worst of health speaks to the significance of commonplace books as a supportive workspace for composing literary works. I contend that women's commonplace books are not only compilations of entries and extracts but also sources of invention. D. Wordsworth's *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*, especially, exemplifies how commonplacing generically becomes a mode of poetic composition.

As important as *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* was for D. Wordsworth's composition, edits, and revisions of her poetry, one should keep in mind that her poems appear in other commonplace books as well, such as the *Coleorton Commonpl Book*,⁶¹

⁶¹ Susan M. Levin identifies this commonplace book (MS 219422) as the "Coleorton Commonplace Book" (176), but I propose that it should be identified according to Pierpont Morgan Library's catalogue title, *Beaumont Commonplace Book*, which reflects primary ownership of the manuscript by Lady Beaumont. In this dissertation, I will refer to MS 219422 as Lady Beaumont's commonplace book or the *Beaumont Commonplace Book* rather than as the *Coleorton Commonplace Book*.

also known as the *Beaumont Commonplace Book MS 219422*.⁶² However, I focus on D. Wordsworth's commonplace book (DCMS 120) where the majority of her poems are written in her own hand. Unlike Lady Beaumont's commonplace book (MS 219422), *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* was under D. Wordsworth's direct ownership and control. D. Wordsworth's commonplace book contains twenty self-authored poems with additional copies, versions, and variant fragments of verse; no other commonplace books come near to housing as much of her poetic works in her own hand. Levin is one of the few scholars to first identify and discuss D. Wordsworth's poetry in her commonplace book as a distinct body of work.⁶³ In the appendix to *Dorothy Wordsworth and Romanticism* (1987) and later in her anthology, *Dorothy Wordsworth* (2009), Levin outlines the chronology and publication history of D. Wordsworth's poems.

Most of D. Wordsworth's poetry written by her in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* shows varying degrees of legibility, revision, and versioning. Her commonplace book contains a few neat, fair copies of her poetry, but these are not the norm. Levin describes all but two poems written in D. Wordsworth's commonplace book as being

⁶² The *Beaumont Commonplace Book MS 219422* housed in the Pierpont Morgan Library contains the second most extensive collection of Dorothy Wordsworth's poems, five poems written in "several unidentified hands" ("Beaumont Commonplace Book" Morgan Catalogue), which may or may not be in D. Wordsworth's handwriting. The Library's catalogue description of the Beaumont Commonplace Book states that "An old description indicates that many of the items were transcribed during April-May 1806 under the direction of Lady Beaumont" ("Beaumont Commonplace Book" Morgan Catalogue).

⁶³ Susan M. Levin acknowledges William Knight's, Ernest De Selincourt's, and Mary Moorman's scholarly contributions toward recognizing the literary merit of Dorothy Wordsworth's poetry. However, the scholarly contributions of Knight, De Selincourt, and Moorman primarily take the form of identifying the existence of D. Wordsworth's poetry in various commonplace books or publishing a few of her poems. To date, Levin still remains the only scholar to have published and explicated all of D. Wordsworth's poetry as literary works.

fair copies; only “Lines intended for Edith Southey’s Album” and “Loving and Liking. Irregular Verses Addressed to a Child” bear Levin’s designation of “working copy” (218; see fig. 25). The two paper overlays attached to “Loving and Liking. Irregular Verses Addressed to a Child” make the poem appear to be all the more a working copy, conveying the sense of a poem-in-progress. D. Wordsworth’s “fair copy” poems, such as “Irregular Verses” looks as well-worked as the two above mentioned working copies. My examination of D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book leads me to conclude that although Levin identifies most of D. Wordsworth’s poems as fair copies, they are in fact all working copies, more or less. These working copies were composed directly onto the page, worked, reworked, edited, revised, and often versioned with a variety of materials. The few fair copies of D. Wordsworth’s poetry in tidy or print-ready condition tend to be written on stationery, inserted between or adhered onto manuscript leaves, or written in someone else’s hand. For example, “Lines intended for my Niece’s Album” (1832) and “Lines to Dora H.” (1835)⁶⁴ were neatly transcribed by the hand of an unidentified “L. H.” and by Elizabeth Hutchinson respectively. D. Wordsworth’s poems written in her own hand on stationery, as passably fair copies, were sent out to friends, such as Catherine Clarkson, Lady Beaumont and many others. These fair copies of circulated poems engendered recirculation, creating additional versions with slight differences.

⁶⁴ A copy of “Lines to Dora H” does not exist in Dorothy Wordsworth’s own hand in her commonplace book, but numerous fragments in her own hand do exist in her Rydal journal.

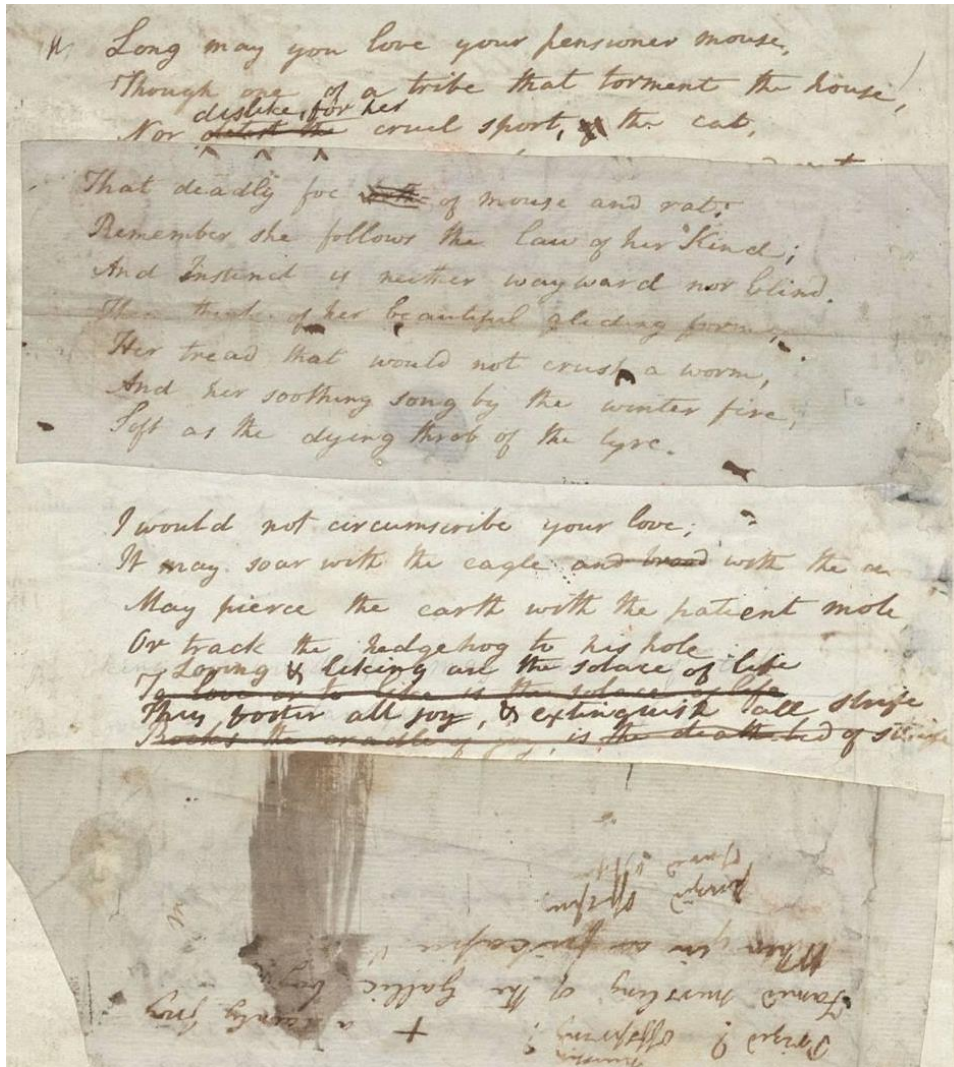


Fig. 25. A working-copy poem of Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Loving and Liking. Irregular Verses Addressed to a Child” in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1832).

According D. Wordsworth’s letters, the manner in which she circulated her poetry was usually in response to friends and family who would ask directly for a poem as a personal request. She would also send out her poetry when thinking that so-and-so would probably like to receive a copy of such-and-such poem. D. Wordsworth would respond positively to a “friend of a friend” requesting copies as well. For example, in a

September 1837 letter to Hannah Hoare, which appears to be in response to a direct request for a copy of a poem, D. Wordsworth responds, writing, “I will give you some of my verses which have slipped from me I know not how” (*Letters VI* 455). In the mid to late 1830s, D. Wordsworth often seems to imply that, due to poor health, she writes her poetry as if by some sort of mysterious or divine inspiration, when, in fact, her commonplace book shows considerable practical and quite non-mysterious hard work on her part editing and revising compositions. In her correspondence to Hoare, D. Wordsworth includes all three stanzas of “To Thomas Carr, My Medical Attendant” (1835). Oddly, this poem was one of D. Wordsworth’s favorite verses to insert in her letters to friends, but it is one of the very few poems not included in *Commonplace Book DSMS 120*.

Perhaps some of the most delightful instances of D. Wordsworth circulating her literary work occurs when the impetus to send out her poetry stems from her own enthusiastic initiative. In a letter dated 8 October 1837, addressed to her “dear Cousin Edward” Ferguson, D. Wordsworth writes, “I *must* [emphasis D. W.’s] send you some of My Many Verses” (*Letters VI* 473). Once again, D. Wordsworth includes “To Thomas Carr, My Medical Attendant” in her correspondence. The great appeal of this poem to D. Wordsworth, evident in her letter to Ferguson, seems understandable given her almost decade-long struggle with chronic illness. In another letter, dated October 1835 to James Greenwood, D. Wordsworth includes “To Thomas Carr, My Medical Attendant,” stating that “Mary Fisher tells me your wish for a Copy of some of my verses” (101). In responding to “friend of a friend” request for some copies of her poetry, D. Wordsworth

expanded her coterie of readers. By extending her readership beyond the network of people she knew relatively well to those whom she did not likely know at all, the circulation of her poetry, in a certain sense, began to seem like print culture. The circulation of D. Wordsworth's poetry to coterie underscores Levy's point that "the flood of print did not eradicate the practices of manuscript transmission" (6). Indeed, D. Wordsworth's scribal transmission of her poetry was hardly overshadowed by her previous print publications of a few poems. At least, D. Wordsworth did not seem to feel compelled to make disparaging comparisons.

These examples of D. Wordsworth's correspondence and her tributes of "To Thomas Carr" to a receptive audience indicates that her poetry circulated and recirculated, having a broad readership that may have rivaled some of the print runs of other writers and poetry collections. William St Claire in *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (2004) reminds us that "although the record is fragmentary, a range of 250 to 2,000 copies per edition seems to have been normal, with a few editions with runs as low as 100 to 50 copies" (21). Clair notes that these figures are taken from the print runs of the early modern period, but he goes on to assert that "the figures for British edition sizes of books in the early nineteenth century were not all that different from those found in the two previous centuries" (21). Certainly some of these lower print runs would have matched D. Wordsworth's own manuscript circulation of her poems over several years. Also, to keep in mind, not all print runs sold well, meaning that the circulation of poetry in print editions did not necessarily reach a larger audience than D.

Wordsworth's methods of manuscript publication. Given her circumstances, D.

Wordsworth's methods of publishing her poetry were relatively efficient and effective.

Noticeably, D. Wordsworth favored sending "To Thomas Carr" to friends and strangers alike. Her favoritism toward this poem may seem quaint, but it gestures back toward commonplacing as a mode of composition. Though "To Thomas Carr" does not appear in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*,⁶⁵ as mentioned previously, the poem bears remarkable similarities to versions of "Sabbath Morn" and "Thoughts on my sick-bed," which are commonplaced. D. Wordsworth's primary mode of composition was writing what she knew and had already written—versioning her poetry. A certain level of textual familiarity must have been bolstering as she attempted to create new, self-authored works while fatigued by her health problems. The fact that "To Thomas Carr" alludes to her poor health and physical transcendence would have made the poem all the more compelling for D. Wordsworth to share with others, as indicated by the following:

Five years of sickness & of pain
This weary frame has travell'd o'er
But God is good--& once again
I rest upon a tranquil shore. (qtd in Levin 226).

Comparing the following stanza from "Thoughts on my sick-bed" (1832) to "To Thomas Carr" (1835), we see how the one poem informs the other:

I felt a power unfelt before,
Controlling weakness, languor, pain;
It bore me to the Terrace walk
I trod the Hills again;-- (DCMS 120)

⁶⁵ "To Thomas Carr, My Medical Attendant" (ca. 1835) easily may have been included on one of the many incised pages missing from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*.

In both “To Thomas Carr” and “Thoughts on my sick-bed,” D. Wordsworth conveys a sense of chronic ill health that has for “five years” been a “controlling weakness.” In both stanzas, D. Wordsworth specifically uses the word “pain” to describe the physical sensation of ailment. This diction suggests an ongoing condition of infirmity that refuses to relinquish control over her body until “God” or “a power” intervenes, at least temporarily as a respite. By using concrete diction and clear imagery denoting the physicality of the body and nature in both stanzas, she describes a transcendent moment in which she is transported seemingly out-of-body through her imagination and memory to the concrete place of the outdoors. In “To Thomas Carr,” this place is “a tranquil shore,” alluding to the afterlife. In “Thoughts on my sick-bed” “the Terrace walk” in view of “the Hills again” represents, presumably, the terrace walks at Rydal Mount (her home), as tranquil as heaven itself to where her fond memories bore her away (DCMS 120). Again, commonplacing was a mode of composition for D. Wordsworth, though, “To Thomas Carr” does not exist in any of her commonplace books. However, the fact that D. Wordsworth textually connects this poem to her other commonplaced poems draws it into the milieu of commonplacing and meaning-making.

As instrumental as D. Wordsworth’s correspondence was in circulating such poems as “To Thomas Carr,” she had other options. Occasionally, family members were the means by which D. Wordsworth’s poetry reached her audience and her audience was expanded. For example, as discussed previously, Dora Wordsworth mentions in a letter to Edward Quillinan that she will request an “affecting poem” from her aunt to give to him. A couple years later after this letter, Dora Wordsworth and Quillinan were married.

As the extended Wordsworth family grew, so too did D. Wordsworth's network of readers. A couple of fair copies or, rather, versions of D. Wordsworth's poetry were collected, inserted into her commonplace book, and perhaps kept on hand to circulate among family members—and perhaps, never left her possession. For example, a fair copy of “The Worship of This Sabbath Morn” (1849) was meant to be given to Mr. Graham but, instead, remains in D. Wordsworth's commonplace book. Given the date that D. Wordsworth inscribed on “Sabbath Morn” (1849) Mr. Graham likely refers to the father-in-law of W. and M. Wordsworth's son, William (see fig. 26).

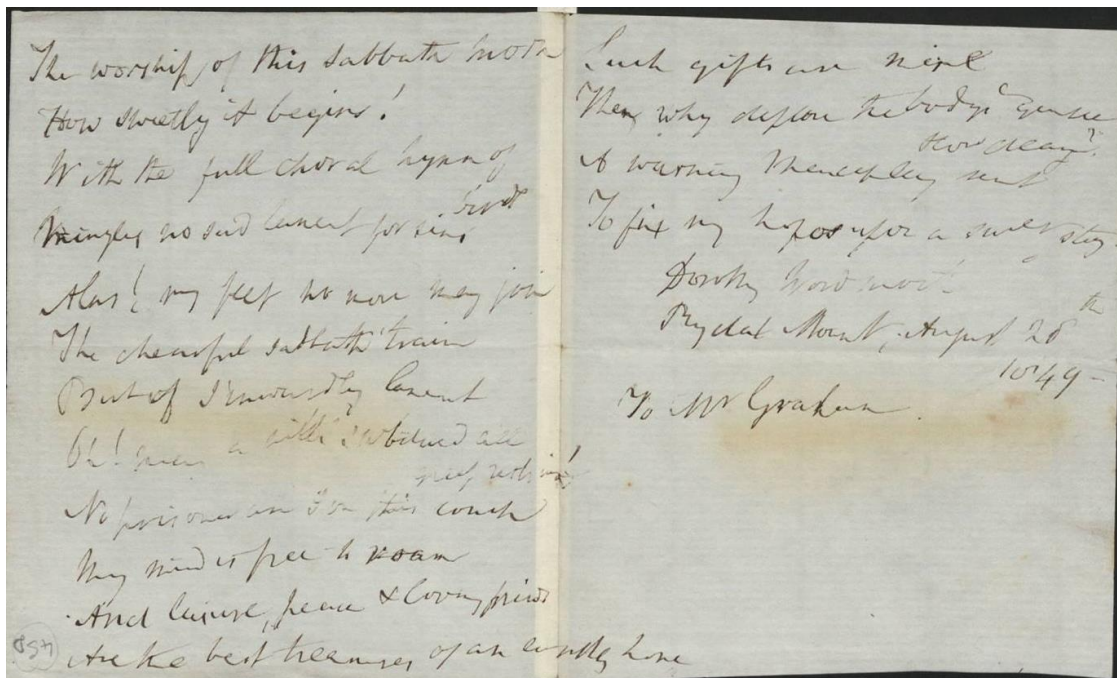


Fig. 26. Dorothy Wordsworth's poem, “The Worship of This Sabbath Morn (1849), inserted into *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Copied by D. Wordsworth for Mr. Graham. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1849).

In a letter written to Reginald Graham on 14 September 1846, W. Wordsworth writes to the father of his future daughter-in-law, Fanny, to acknowledge the engagement. W. Wordsworth states, “I must request you to accept my congratulations upon the prospect of an event which, from what I have heard, I trust will confer happiness upon our children, and prove a comfort to their Parents. Your Daughter will, I hope, accept through you my blessing.—We shall be glad to welcome her as a Guest under our roof” (*Letters VII* 799). Given that Fanny and William Wordsworth (son) married in 1847, D. Wordsworth would have likely copied “Sabbath Morn” for her nephew’s father-in-law, Mr. Graham, as a new addition to the Wordsworth family circle. The reason for D. Wordsworth not giving Mr. Graham her copy of “Sabbath Morn” or the cause of the poem being returned and placed in D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book remains a mystery. Bearing in mind (by 1849) D. Wordsworth’s physical condition had deteriorated significantly, her impressively copied poem suggests that she meant it to be a gift copy for Mr. Graham.

Literary works composed by others in D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book are written as relatively neat fair copies and include such poems as W. Wordsworth’s “Sunday Evening” (1830), “Chatsworth” (1831), and “Lines written as a school exercise at Hawkshead” (published in 1888). These poems and brief excerpts such as William Shakespeare’s aphorism, “If the cap fits let him wear it,” forego D. Wordsworth’s usual emendations. These emendations tended to cast a scrap-like visual quality over the contents of her commonplace book. Revisions using stitched or waxed paper overlays were certainly a part of D. Wordsworth’s complex, handcrafted, bookmaking techniques,

but most of her editing employed simpler forms of emendations. For example, in “Sabbath Morn,” the word “Sunday” has been inserted into the descriptive title, “On a most beautiful morning—April 1824” (*DCSM 120*; see fig. 27). Adding the word “Sunday” to the title provides additional contextual clarity by denoting an association with the Sabbath, it also unites all the multiple versions of “Sabbath Morn.”

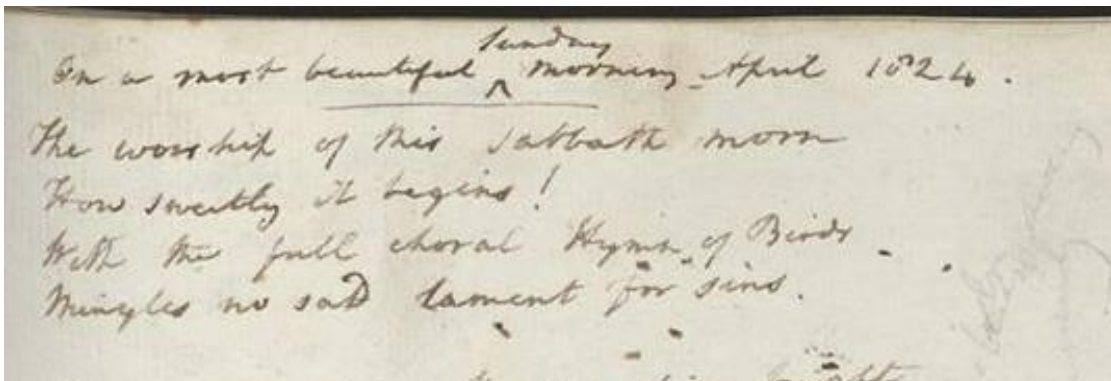


Fig. 27. The word “Sunday” inserted into title “On a most beautiful morning” (1824). This five-stanza poem is one of several versions of Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Sabbath Morn” in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1832).

Dorothy Wordsworth’s intentional efforts to be her own best editor often overrode other considerations, such as writing fair copies rather than working copies of her poetry or creating an aesthetically elegant commonplace book, such as Reyner and Baxter chose to produce. For example, Baxter’s elegantly rendered painting of a vibrantly hued violet and indigo butterfly rests by itself on the recto page without text, competing images, or emendations, like the adjoining, blank verso page. The only other painting in Baxter’s commonplace book is another superbly rendered butterfly. These

beautiful, naturalist paintings exemplify the versatility and artistry found in many women's commonplace books and demonstrate Baxter's particular skills as an artist and commonplacer (see fig. 28). Baxter's *A Sister's Gift* WLMS 35/1, like Reyner's *Scrapbook* WLMS 35/2, exhibits different nomenclature than its generic qualifications as a commonplace book. For example, following an elaborately designed, printed colophon on the inner fly leaf that bears the inscription "From Jane to Anne," a heading written in ornate calligraphy announces, "The First Lines of my Sister's Album" (WLMS 35/1). Jane likely gave her sister, Anne Baxter, this expensive, gold embossed journal as a gift, hence the gilt-engraved front cover title *Anne Baxter / A Sister's Gift* (WLMS 35/1).

As discussed in Chapter I, nomenclature such as "album" or "scrapbook" often reflects only the secondary generic attributes of a manuscript, which are subordinate, generically, to the primary attributes of being a commonplace book. Baxter's album has the generic qualities of a commonplace book, comprised of poems, with varied excerpts such as "Love and Friendship," "The Happy Mind," "Nature," "Talking," "Duty," and "Lamentations on the Death of a Young Lady" (WLMS 35/1). Similar with many women's traditional commonplace books, with a focus on conduct literature, eulogies, and general knowledge, Baxter's commonplace book is a mix of attributed and non-attributed poetry written in her own, Jane's, and other hands. Her commonplace book varies from many women's traditional commonplace books as well by including both self-authored and other-authored literary works. Unlike D. Wordsworth's commonplace books, though, the entries and excerpts consist of very neat, fair copies.

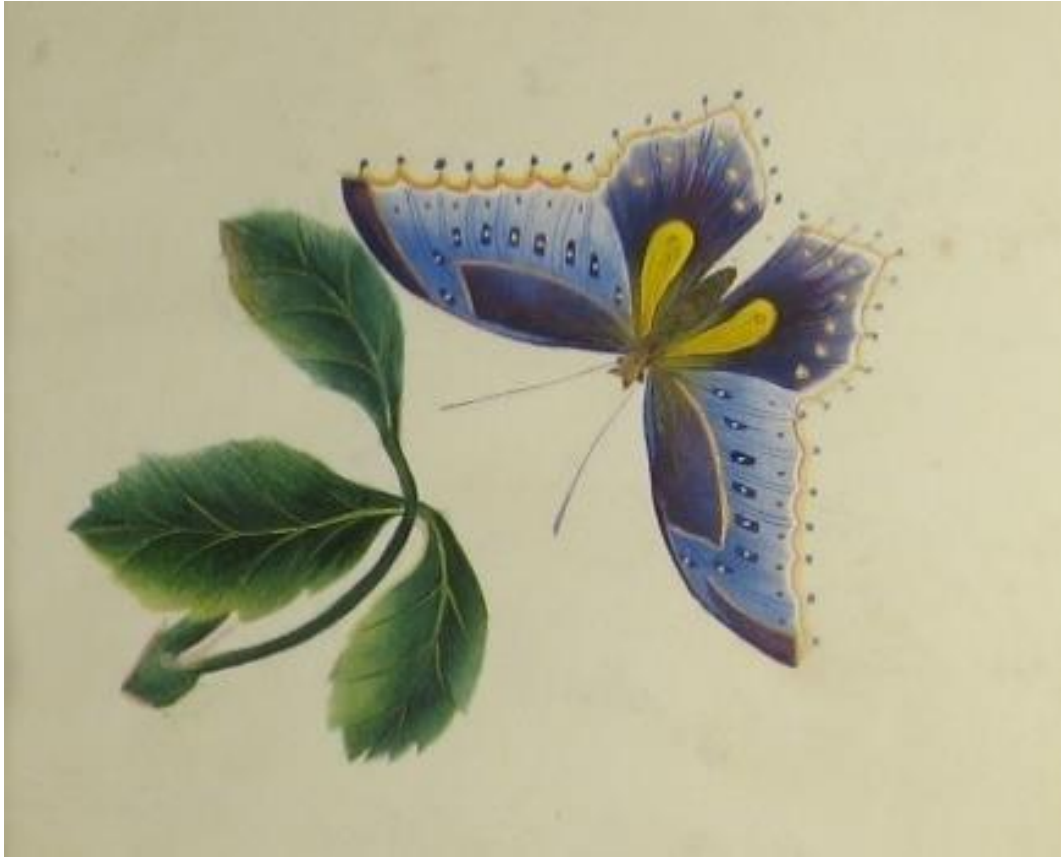


Fig. 28. Painting of a butterfly from Anne Baxter's album, *A Sister's Gift WLMS 35/1*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Anne Baxter" 1824).

In H. J. Jackson's *Romantic Readers* (2005), she observes that "the practices of collectors overlapped with those of more casual readers who talked back to their books, filed scraps of information and extracts in them, or approached them as though they (the readers) were editors" (247). I posit that Jackson's "collectors" are effectively commonplacers, and her depiction of their books with varied contents accords with the genre of commonplace books. In regard to being collectors with commonplace books "filed" with "scraps of information and extracts," both Baxter and D. Wordsworth are on relatively common ground. The primary difference, then, that sets D. Wordsworth's

commonplacing apart from Baxter's lies not as much in the particular content of their commonplace books as in their "approach" to commonplacing. I contend that D.

Wordsworth would be considered more of an editor in her approach to commonplacing than many other women commonplacers.

The implication of Jackson's statement is that "editor"-types would "talk back," to their commonplace books. In other words, the editor-type commonplacer would be more actively engaged with the contents of their commonplace books. Understanding D. Wordsworth's role as an editor of her commonplace books begins with looking at multiple versions of her poetry. "Sabbath Morn," similar to "Thomas Carr," was one of D. Wordsworth's most frequently circulated poems, and, according to Levin, seven extant versions were generated; two versions were written onto the pages of her commonplace book and two additional versions were adhered (225). However, I have discovered, during the course of my research, a photocopied eighth version of "Sabbath Morn" (n. d.) in the British Library, which has not been noted by Levin in her appendix or anthology of D. Wordsworth's poetry. This "lost" copy written in D. Wordsworth's hand, I attest, includes stanzas 1, 2, 13, 14, and 15 found in "Lines written (rather say begun) on the morning of Sunday." An inscription written in the top left corner states that the poem had been "copied for her kind Friend Lady Farquhar by Dorothy Wordsworth" (MS RP7580). I have seen the majority of D. Wordsworth's extant versions of "Sabbath Morn" and have concluded that D. Wordsworth incorporated various levels of edit except when making copies intended as gifts. Offering her poetry as gifts through scribal publication was one way that D. Wordsworth could exert a

degree of influence over her literary legacy. Yet, once a copy of her work circulated to readers, textual control became elusive, if not impossible.

Dorothy Wordsworth was able to develop her work as a poet over time through levels of edit and revision processes in her commonplace book. As previously mentioned, the insertion of the word “Sunday” into the title of “On a most beautiful Sunday morning—April 1824” aligns with “Lines written (rather say begun) on the morning of Sunday April 6th” (see fig. 29). These two versions of “Sabbath Morn” cohere through common key terms in the title: “morning,” “Sunday,” and “April” (DCMS 120). Both versions also cohere by means of an identifying beginning line: “The Worship of this Sabbath morn.” Versions of “Sabbath Morn” share the commonality of a beginning line and fifteen stanzas but vary in the selection and edit of these stanzas through a revision process dating from approximately 1824 to 1849. According to Levin, “Dorothy would work with lines, sometimes for years, before placing them into an extended version of the poem. Occasionally, she would extract stanzas to put together a short version” (176-77). Though the appearance of D. Wordsworth’s edits may seem haphazard, she had techniques and long term strategies for editing her poetry in the workspace of her commonplace books.

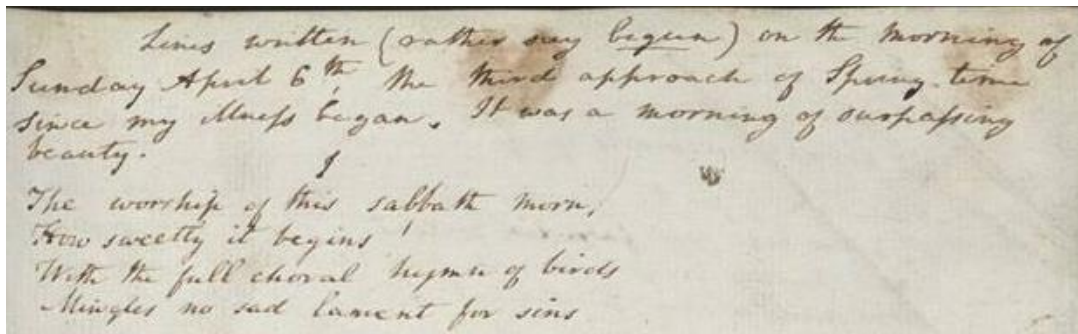


Fig. 29. Descriptive title of poem “Lines written (rather say begun) on the morning of Sunday April 6th the third approach of Spring-time since my illness began.” This fifteen-stanza poem is a version of Dorothy Wordsworth’s “Sabbath Morn” in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1832).

One of Dorothy Wordsworth’s most basic strategies consisted of editing at the word level to refine or change the meaning of a poem. For example, in the poem “On a most beautiful Sunday morning,” the word “chastened,” written above the line “A softened call of bleating lambs,” replaces the lightly crossed out word “softened” (DCMS 120; see fig. 30). This emendation suggests a degree of ambivalence between D. Wordsworth’s enjoyments of an idyllic spring time morning and a feeling of remonstrance. Emending the line with the word “chastened” troubles the poem with a sense of authoritarianism, as if originating from on high (from a higher power) echoed in the bleating that “drops steadily from that lofty Steep” (DCMS 120). The lambs’ “softened call” becomes a chastened call to worship beyond the “choral hymn of birds,” “living lake,” and the “verdant field” that comprise the “holy shield” in which “the very

earth seems sanctified” (DCMS 120). In this poem, D. Wordsworth crossed out the softer imagery of “natural piety”⁶⁶ for harsher, religious chastisement.

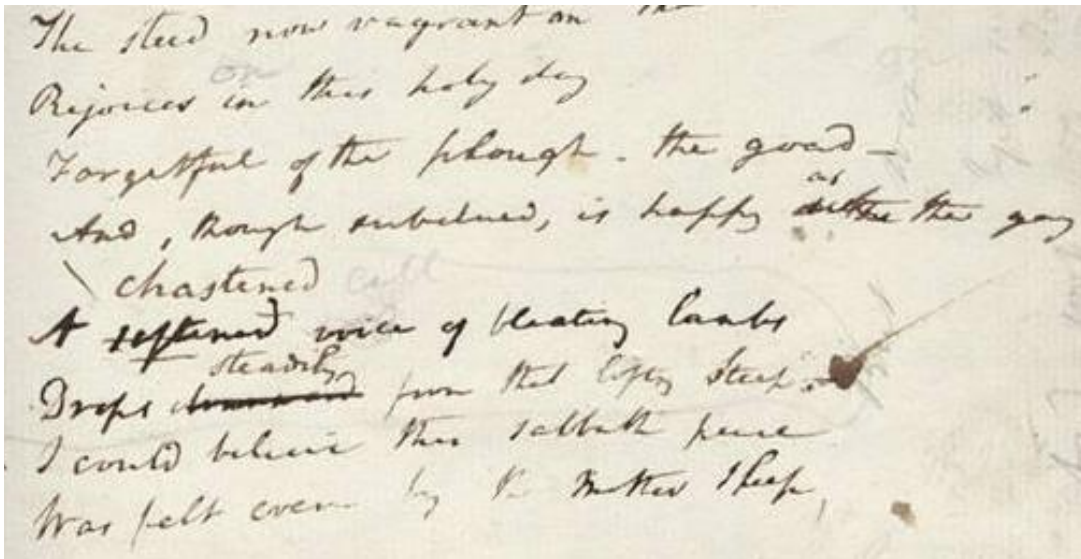


Fig. 30. Detailed view of stanza from “On a most beautiful Sunday morning.” This poem is from Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1824).

The tension between pantheistic or natural reverence and proscribed religion, as contrasting forms of worship on a Sunday morning, are complicated by another version of “Sabbath Morn,” which is the poem “Lines written (rather say begun) on the morning of Sunday.” In this poem, D. Wordsworth’s hears from her sick-bed “the chapel bells invite” worshipers, but she acknowledges that “Alas, my feet no more may join / The

⁶⁶ This phrase is taken from William Wordsworth’s poem, “My leaps up when I behold” (1802). William Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth shared similar viewpoints about nature and religion throughout their lifetimes. Both of them had a more Deist view of religion in their younger years that changed over the decades to a more orthodox perspective on religion.

cheerful Sabbath train” (DCMS 120). Both versions of “Sabbath Morn” exhibit a reverence for nature, but stanzas 6-15 of “Lines written (rather say begun) on the morning of Sunday” delve more complexly into the meaning of worship than the five stand-alone stanzas of “On a most beautiful Sunday Morning.” Levin’s explication of the fifteen stanzas in “Lines written (rather say begun) on the morning of Sunday” notes that D. Wordsworth’s “failing body, the inability to be in nature, should push her to absorption in a conventional Christian God”; however, words that “Dorothy crosses out ... challenges what has been asserted about the compensations religion offers” (129-130). In her commonplace book, D. Wordsworth crossed out many words and lines in her role as editor of her own poetry, so it is problematic determining how a single poem and a set of edits speak for her spiritual frame of mind that had changed over time. Yet, I propose that the word “chastened” in the fifth stanza of “Sabbath Morn” indicates that conventional Christianity still exerts a significant presence in the poem and had influence over D. Wordsworth’s sense of allegiance or interest in religious observance. Religious orthodoxy appeals to D. Wordsworth, but it is also in competition with natural piety for her heart and mind, vying throughout all the “Sabbath Morn” poems. The malleable literary workspace of D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book allows these two versions of “Sabbath Morn” to be thoughtfully worked out over time, to coexist, and to be in conflict or contradiction with each other.

Dorothy Wordsworth conducted revisions to her poetry that were often more extensive than single word insertions or deletions. Many of these revisions involved omitting, reworking, or rearranging entire lines and stanzas of poetry. These revisions

resulted in a refinement of poetics that reveal D. Wordsworth's capabilities as a poet. For example, in "Lines intended for Edith Southey's Album," D. Wordsworth crosses through a couple of lines and hash-marks the full fifth stanza, as seen here (see fig. 31):

Indeed it were a needless task
Is not the Maid by all approved
--Enough to say why she's *obeyed*
Because she ever is beloved.⁶⁷ (DCMS 120)

Levin notes in her appendix that, in addition to *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*, the rest of the poem after stanza 6 exists in a letter from D. Wordsworth addressed to Edith Southey. The letter states, "I enclose a 'Continuation' of the lines addressed to you—or rather I should say the lines written at your request" (qtd. in Levin 218). D. Wordsworth's conversational diction and syntax in the letter echoes the diction and syntax of the descriptive title "Lines written (rather say begun) on the morning of Sunday." This title to "Sabbath Morn" and the letter to E. Southey use the metalanguage, "rather say begun" and "rather I should say," respectively. D. Wordsworth intentionally removes in metalanguage in "Lines intended for Edith Southey's Album" by eliminating the fifth stanza (DCMS 120).

⁶⁷ Though Dorothy Wordsworth's crossed out the fifth stanza on this page, Susan Levin chose to keep this stanza in her appendix and anthology of D. Wordsworth's poetry, noting that this stanza was omitted in Edith Southey's manuscript but without mention that it was crossed out in D. Wordsworth's commonplace book as well. Perhaps for the sake of thoroughness in transcribing an extant version of "Edith Southey's Album," Levin includes the fifth stanza. Given the tangled textual variants and poetic fragments in D. Wordsworth's commonplace book, editorial choices must be made. Levin expresses the necessity, perhaps the frustrating responsibility, as an editor, to choose base texts in order to construct coherent versions of D. Wordsworth's poetry, stating that "sometimes the choice of a base text is purely arbitrary" (175).

Lines intended for Edith Southey's Album,
 Composed in June 1832 in recollection of a request made by her some
 years ago, & of my own promise till now unfulfilled.

Fair Edith of the Classic Hill
 Pleads for a tributary Lay
 In memory of her long-known Friend;
 And I with willing heart obey.

The "Laureate's Child" though Edith be,
 Queen regent of ~~that honours Mount,~~
 yet will she not disdain the verse
 That issues from ~~the Cowly Mount,~~ ^{a Cowly Mount}

For truth is all that she requires,
 Truth steadfast, unadorned;
 The studied phrase of flattery
 She from her infant days has scorned.

And though the truth might rouse the Bard
 To sound her praise in transport high,
 Tell of her goodness and her grace,
 I would not wound her modesty.

~~My own in spirit or in speech
 I would not wound her modesty
 I would not wound her modesty
 I would not wound her modesty~~

Indeed ~~It might be said for all appeared
 enough to say why she obeyed
 Because she ever is beloved.~~

Let this page a record stand
 Of ~~unworn~~ love which may not die,
 Friendship betwixt the Old and young,
 The growth of faithful sympathy.

Turn over girlish days

Fig. 31. "Lines intended for Edith Southey's Album" shows revision Dorothy Wordsworth's *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Dorothy Wordsworth" 1832).

With the deletion of the fifth stanza, the previous and subsequent bordering lines flow together seamlessly. For example, the last two lines of stanza 4 and the first two lines of stanza 6 are congruent in meaning and form the following coherent stanza:

Tell of her goodness and her grace
I would not wound her modesty.
But let this page a record stand
Of tender love which may not die. (DCMS 120)

The elimination of distracting chatter in the fifth stanza, such as “Indeed,” “Is not,” and “Enough to say,” underscores D. Wordsworth’s developed sense of poetics in which she omits words, lines, and stanzas that do not contribute to her poem’s meaning or lyricism. Though the descriptive titles of D. Wordsworth’s poems lack the concise editing of her poetry, they follow the generic conventions of the period rather than indicate inconsistencies in her poetics.

Dorothy Wordsworth’s modes of compositional revision went beyond conventional methods of editing and revising poetry with pen and ink. As discussed briefly at the beginning of this chapter and in Chapter I, D. Wordsworth used her sewing skills to edit her poems with paper, needle, and thread.⁶⁸ Paula McDowell in “Women and the Business of Print” (2000) notes that “bookbinding [...] was a ‘feminized’ area of the print trades” and that it used “sewing skills most women already had” (140). The book-making techniques that D. Wordsworth utilized in her commonplace books, likewise, made use of the sewing skills that not only “most women already had” but that she had frequent opportunity to learn and perfect. As a young woman living in the home of her grandparents, the Cooksons, who were drapers, D. Wordsworth was expected to spend her time productively sewing. She writes to Jane Pollard, her childhood friend, in

⁶⁸ Thick thread, similar in strength and thickness to dental floss, was used for stitching on layers of paper in Dorothy Wordsworth’s commonplace book and appears in keeping with other threading used in D. Wordsworth’s later journals.

November 1787, recounting, “I sit for whole hours without saying anything excepting that I have an old shirt to mend” (*Letters I* 10). As the first line of “Irregular Verses,” “Ah Julia! As a Christmas rhyme,” indicates, this poem is addressed to Julia Marshall who was the daughter of Jane Marshall, née Pollard. D. Wordsworth wrote a version of “Irregular Verses” in response to Julia’s request for a poem, providing an opportunity to circulate her poetry. For example, “Irregular Verses,” sent as a Christmas gift to Julia, subsequently circulated around until it came to reside in Mary Jones’s album.

Dorothy Wordsworth especially puts her needlecraft skills to work editing “Irregular Verses” with stitched paper overlays on two pages in two sections of the poem, employing multiple levels and layers of edit. For example, in the poem, a paper overlay covers and revises lines 47-55 that are written on the page leaf of D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book. The overlay that rewrites these lines comprises a part of the main text of “Irregular Verses” that Levin published in her appendix and anthology of D. Wordsworth’s poetry. For purposes of discussion, I call these rewritten lines on the overlay and in the main text of Levin’s editions of “Irregular Verses” the base text.⁶⁹ The lines written under the overlay, on the original page leaf, I designate as “original” lines. The following base text section⁷⁰ of verse written on top of the overlay

⁶⁹ The base text serves as a core text or a base from which other versions are identified.

⁷⁰ As the title of this poem indicates, the lines of verse are grouped into irregular sections of varying length rather than structured into stanzas of consistent groupings of lines.

is stitched along the right side but remains intentionally unstitched and open on the left
(see fig. 32):⁷¹

The paths of usefulness, in active life;
And such her course through later days;
The same her honour and her praise;
As thou canst witness, thou dear Maid,
One of the Darlings of her care:
Thy *Mother* was that Friend who still repaid
Frank confidence with unshaken truth:
This was the glory of her youth,
A brighter gem than shines in prince's diadem. (DCMS 120)

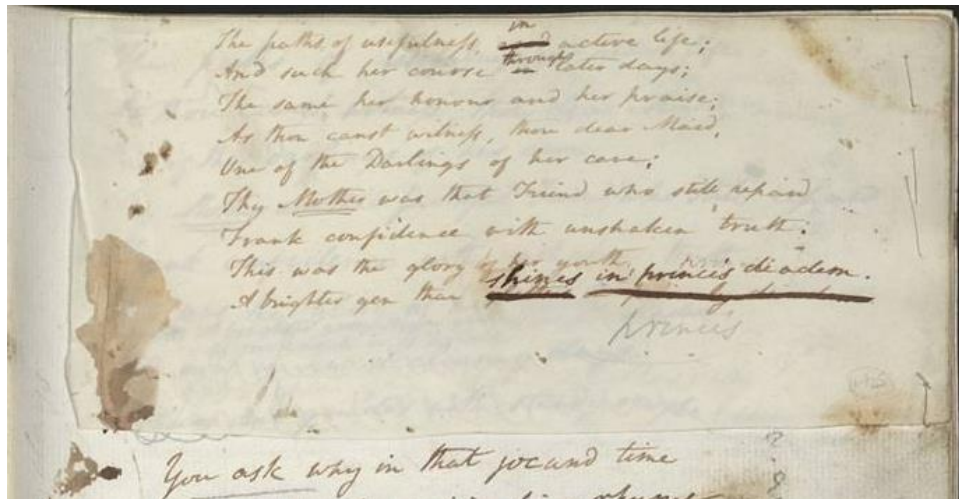


Fig. 32. Detailed view of overlay base text, lines 47-55, from “Irregular Verses” in Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).

⁷¹ The open, left side of the paper overlay for lines 47-55 of “Irregular Verses” lacks any evidence of needle pricks, remnants of thread, wax, or tape, suggesting that Dorothy Wordsworth intentionally wanted to keep this other version available for use. This type of accessibility is important for versioning a poem.

The following original section of verse written underneath the overlay remains accessible to view (see fig. 33):

The paths of usefulness and active life
As thou canst witness, thou dear Maid,
One of the darlings of her care
The *Mother* was that faithful Friend, who still repaid
Frank confidence with unshaken truth.
This was the glory of her youth
A brighter gem than glittered on the diadem of monarch or of prince
And now in her declining days
It cheers and guides with steady ways. (DCMS 120)

One of the highest levels of edit and the most noticeable revisions in “Irregular Verses” are the rearrangement of the line positions with accompanying changes in diction and syntax. For example, on the original page, line 49, “One of the darlings of her care,” has been moved to line 51 on the overlay base text, along with the other lines that were shifted into different line positions. Only the position of line 47, “The paths of usefulness and active life,” remains the same in both versions. D. Wordsworth’s willingness to reorder lines of verse demonstrates a willingness to rethink the structure of her poem. This level of edit is more complex than adding, deleting, or exchanging a few words or crossing out a line of verse here and there. Rearranging these lines in “Irregular Verses” had the potential to unravel D. Wordsworth’s poem into a heap of words scrawled across the page, causing her to lose her train of thought and the intended meaning she had wanted to convey. D. Wordsworth’s use of a paper overlay helped her to perform this high level of edit by keeping the potential textual chaos limited to a scrap of paper that could be easily removed. This scrap paper-like aid also provided help in editing the diction and syntax for two of the original lines that had been altered in the

base text of the overlay, which bore little resemblance to the original. For example, “And now in her declining days / It cheers and guides with steady ways” on the original page, lines 54 and 55, have become “And such her course through later days; / The same her honour and her praise” on the overlay base text, lines 48 and 49, respectively. D. Wordsworth astutely emended the diction of these last two lines from the original page, projecting a more positive image and tone in the overlay base text. The words, “declining days,” alludes to dying and D. Wordsworth’s struggle with chronic illness, which does not fit the more positive tone or the topic at the beginning of the poem, which focuses on Julia’s mother and D. Wordsworth’s warm remembrance of her.

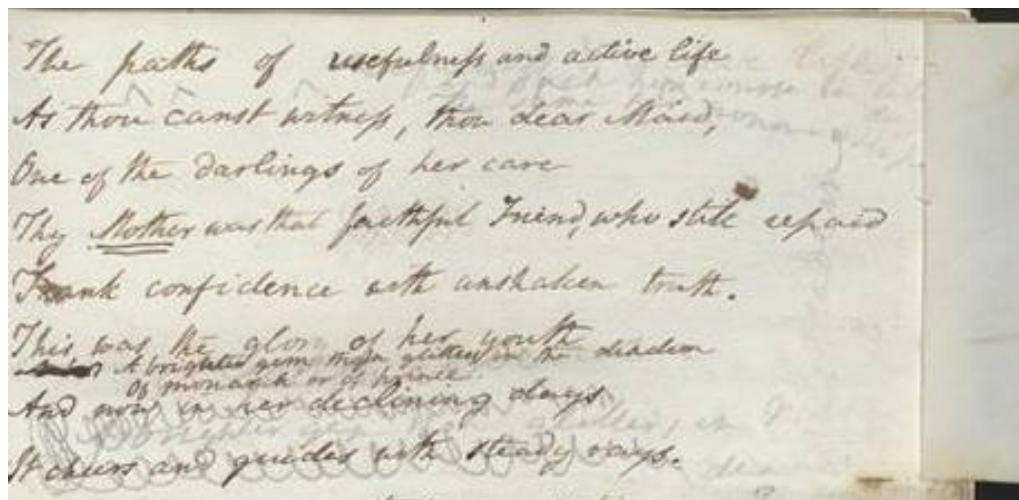


Fig. 33. Detailed view of original page, lines 47-55, from “Irregular Verses” under stitched overlay in Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1827).

Additionally, a certain degree of clunky diction and rough syntax pervades the original lines with awkward phrasing, such as “diadem of monarch or of prince.” The

more cogent phrasing in the overlay base text, “shines in prince’s diadem,” is a welcomed improvement. Some awkward diction and syntax is to be expected in poetry as a device to slow down readers and call attention to the imagery, but the syntax of “diadem of monarch” fails to evoke an image as well as “prince’s diadem.” These edits and revisions, overall, show that D. Wordsworth worked toward improving her craft as a poet, demonstrating her willingness to experiment with techniques like using paper overlays. By lifting up and flipping the paper overlay back and forth, rapidly comparing the original page with the overlay base text, we can *see* the development of “Irregular Verses.” We can imagine D. Wordsworth using the paper overlays and the original leaves of workspace in her commonplace book in such a way. Her edits and revisions show that she contemplated the most befitting lines, diction, and syntax, as well as considered the proper tone and focus that befitted her intended topic and meaning.

Dorothy Wordsworth used another method of attaching overlays for revising her poetry in addition to needlecraft. She melted small wafers of sealing wax onto scraps of paper that adhere like glue to her commonplace books. The wax wafers are multicolored and about the diameter of a small coin. Many of the original wafers still stick to the pages of D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book, yet traces of missing wax indicate that this was not as optimum of a means of affixing paper overlays as using needle and thread. These creative, handcrafted emendations demonstrate that D. Wordsworth made composing self-authored works of poetry a priority. She also devoted considerable amounts of time to editing and revising these works, making her commonplace book a workspace in form and function, conducive to engendering the development of a poem.

The revisions made to “Sabbath Morn” and “Irregular Verses” are especially indicative of D. Wordsworth’s compositional practices that demonstrate the role of commonplacing in the development of her poetics, and, by extension, the development of Romantic poetry.

Except for W. Wordsworth’s and D. Wordsworth’s shared *Book of Verse DCMS 89*, I have not materially examined another manuscript like D. Wordsworth’s *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* that incorporates paper overlays into book-making techniques for composing literary works in a commonplace book. However, I have examined Thrale Piozzi’s digitized commonplace book (1741-1821), *Minced Meat for Pyes* (MS Eng 231), which is available online through the Houghton Library. Thrale Piozzi’s commonplace book has a few examples of paper overlays that appear to have been attached by an unknown globular-like, sticky substance that does not appear to be sealing wax. Her paper overlays seem intended for adding additional information, such as word definitions and amusing *bon mots*, rather than for the purpose of editing literary compositions. On the other hand, W. Wordsworth used paper overlays in *Book of Verse* exclusively for editing and revising his poetry. I estimate that approximately twenty percent of W. Wordsworth’s poetic compositions in *Book of Verse* are written in Dorothy’s, Mary’s, or Dora’s hand, with only a few of these compositions using paper overlays.

As a case in point, W. Wordsworth’s poem, “Poet’s Dream” (publ. 1842) is primarily inscribed in Dora’s Wordsworth’s handwriting, but on the page leaf he crossed out a section of Dora Wordsworth’s transcription and made his own re-edits. “Poet’s

Dream” is revised with a paper overlay with Dora’s handwritten edits on top of the overlay. This overlay is affixed to the page on the left side and covers up the majority of W. Wordsworth’s re-edits of Dora Wordsworth’s original transcription of W. Wordsworth’s poem (see fig. 34). Though this seems a tangled, convoluted process of editing, I imagine that Dora Wordsworth’s paper overlay allowed W. Wordsworth to look at previous and subsequent edits in order to consider or reconsider his revision options. As we see from this example in *Book of Verse*, W. Wordsworth and D. Wordsworth employed similar methods that used pen, ink, scraps of paper, and sealing wax to edit and revise their poetry; however, stitched overlays are not included in W. Wordsworth’s commonplace books.

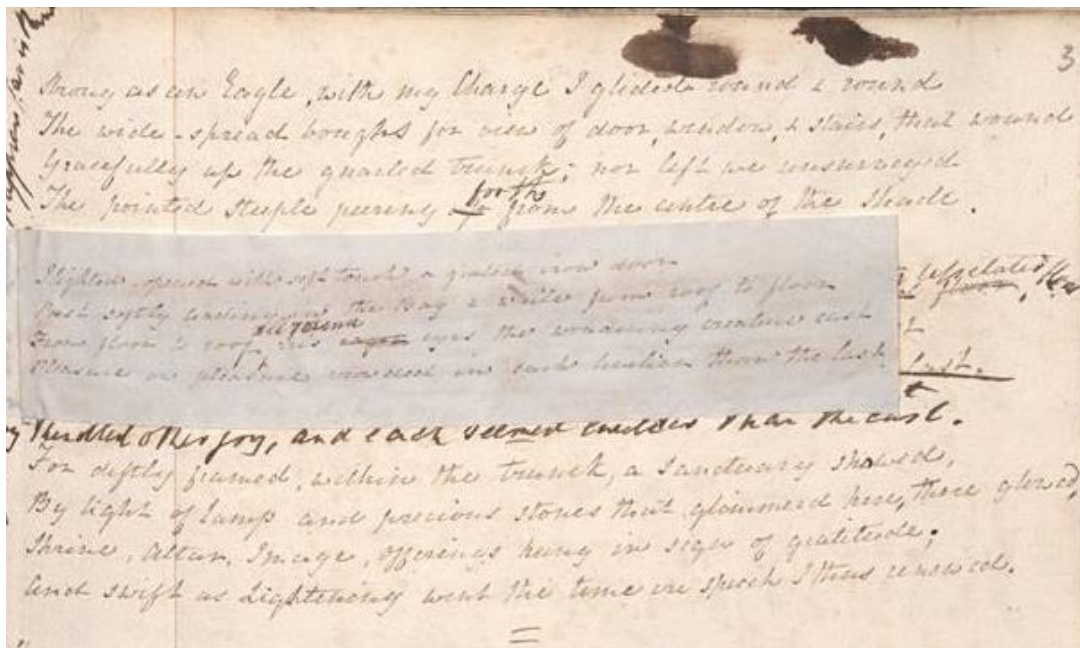


Fig. 34. Snippet view of William Wordsworth’s poem “Poet’s Dream” from *Book of Verse DCMS 89*. Demonstrates use of paper overlays in the editing process Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1842).

Dorothy Wordsworth's experimentation with her poetry created opportunities to refine her craft, resulting in different versions of the same poem or similar poems. Versioning, as intentionally creating and preserving different versions of her poems, was fostered by the workspace of D. Wordsworth's commonplace book. Creating versions of her poetry was also encouraged by the multiple requests D. Wordsworth received to copy and send her poetry to friends and family. Except for "Lines to Dora H," all of D. Wordsworth's poems in her commonplace book have a representative version written in her own hand, and, except for "Lines intended for my Niece's Album," all additional versions are written in her hand as well. Of the approximately eighty existing copies of D. Wordsworth's poetry, seventy are written in her own hand; more than eighty-seven percent of extant copies were personally produced by D. Wordsworth.⁷²

Dorothy Wordsworth's commonplace book shows that when more than one copy is present, the poem always exhibits textual variants. This holds true regardless of whether or not the poems had been copied and circulated, returned, kept as extra copies on hand, or versioned through edits and revisions. Moreover, all of D. Wordsworth's poems in her commonplace book (except "To D," "Memory of Rev'd John Curwen," and a few fragmentary verses) have at least one other variant version copied in her hand

⁷² I have derived this figure from my research with manuscripts at the Wordsworth Trust Library and calculating the versions and sources of D. Wordsworth's poetry footnoted in Levin's appendix to *Dorothy Wordsworth and Romanticism*.

into another journal or commonplace book, circulated in a network of readers,⁷³ or published in her lifetime—she was at the very center of the circulation of her poetry.

Dorothy Wordsworth was not only the writer of her poetry, but she was also her best impresario. Jerome McGann, in *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1992), reminds us that many “works exist which it can be said that their authors demonstrated a number of different wishes and intentions about what text they wanted to be presented to the public” (32). McGann’s remark aptly describes the nature of D. Wordsworth’s poetics. As we have seen from D. Wordsworth’s correspondence, she favored certain poems to send to out to friends, family, and acquaintances—but these poems varied. Her extant copies show that her wishes and intentions varied as well with her audience’s experience of her poetry enriched by multiple versions. Her poems are similar enough so that when one comes across a certain version, there is a feeling of familiarity. Yet, some of D. Wordsworth’s poems, such as “Sabbath Morn” appear to have been versioned to a degree that her friends and family may well have felt that they were receiving a real gift of a poem rather than a rote copy.

In addition to *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*, Pamela Woof notes that the poem, “Thoughts on my sick-bed,” consists of “fragments and drafted lines [...], repeated and varied, [...] written on the facing pages” of D. Wordsworth’s “home-made notebook” [*DCMS 51*] (142). I have seen this notebook at the Wordsworth Trust Library,

⁷³ I have concluded this observation from my examination of D. Wordsworth’s manuscripts and from Levin’s appendix (*Romanticism*) footnotes, which cite where D. Wordsworth’s poems are collected outside of her commonplace book and in whose hand they were written when knowable.

and I would say that it resembles a commonplace book that has been made into a thin booklet. Woof notes that the fragment lines from “Thoughts on my sick-bed” are “much concerned with the past” (142): “It bore me to the Terrace walk / I trod the Hills gain” (qtd. in Woof 142). These are, once again, familiar lines or some version of the lines that we have seen before in D. Wordsworth’s correspondence and commonplace book. Woof reminds us that D. Wordsworth’s journal (or commonplace booklet), in contrast to the poem itself, is concerned “with the present”—concerned with the weather, her health, and nature (142). We know these things about D. Wordsworth from her letters, journals, and commonplace books, these familiar themes and concerns expressed in her poetry that are as well-worn as *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. McGann points out that “literary works remain human products” (121). I have difficulty imagining any other literary works or genre that exhibits characteristics of human production than D. Wordsworth’s poems and commonplace books.

CHAPTER III

“ALL THAT IS YOUR OWN”: THE VALUATORY WORKSPACE OF COMMONPLACE BOOKS

Dorothy Wordsworth composed, edited, and revised her poetry in the literary workspaces of her commonplace books.⁷⁴ She managed money and material assets, creating valuatory workspaces in her commonplace books as well.⁷⁵ Occasionally, these literary and financial workspaces shared the same page. For example, in *Commonplace Book, DCMS 120* (1820-1849),⁷⁶ the white space surrounding the following two final stanzas from D. Wordsworth’s “A Holiday at Gwerndovennant: Irregular Verses” (1826) share the same page with a financial register. This register, written in the left, bottom corner of the page, links literary and financial contexts. The stanzas provide an imaginative frame for understanding the juxtaposition of these two entries that comprise different discourse practices in D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book (see fig. 35):

And trust me, whatsoe’ver your doom.
Whate’ver betide through years to come,
The punctual pleasures of your home
Shall linger in your thoughts—

⁷⁴ Dorothy Wordsworth’s poetics of composition, editing, and revising practices are discussed in Chapter II.

⁷⁵ D. Wordsworth compiled entries and excerpts in other commonplace books, as discussed in Chapter II, but *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* was her primary commonplace book.

⁷⁶ My dating of D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book (DCMS 120) differs from Susan M. Levin’s 1826-1832 and Adam Matthew Digital’s 1820-1836 dating of the manuscript. I use Adam Matthew’s dating for the manuscript’s inception date of 1820 and use 1849 for its conclusion date, which is based upon the 1849 inscription date of the “Sabbath Morn” poem copied for Mr. Graham and included in DCMS 120.

More prized than any future hope,
 Though Fancy have her freest scope.
 And Oh! Too soon your hearts shall own.
 The past is all that is your own. (DCMS 120)

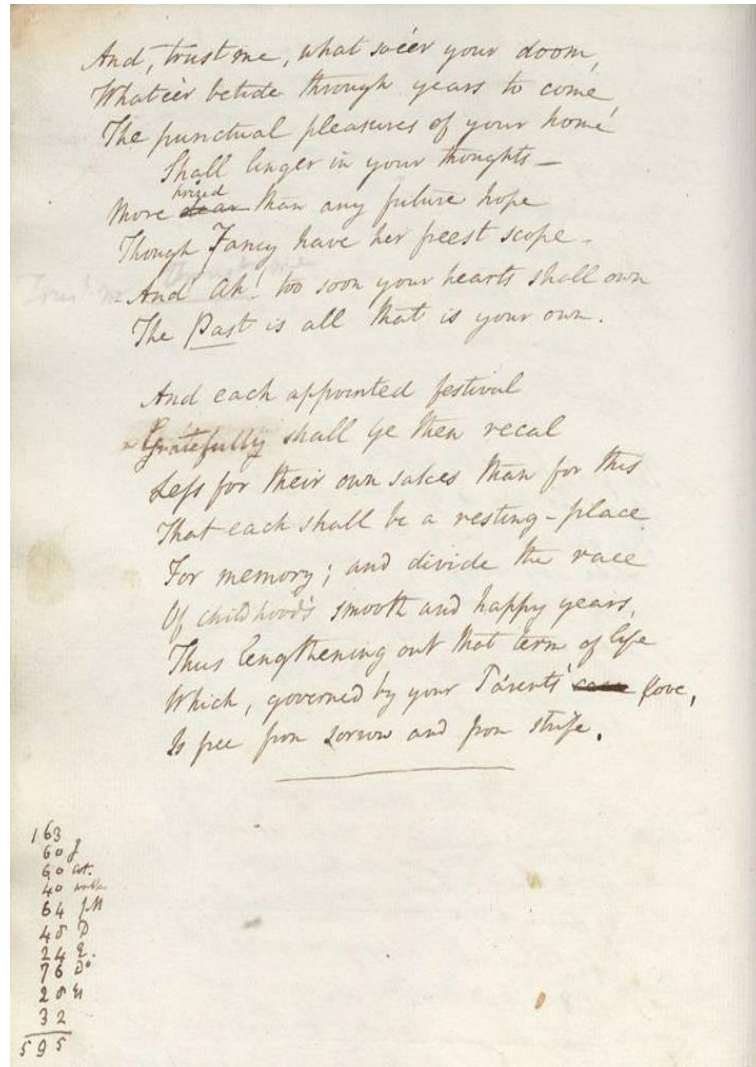
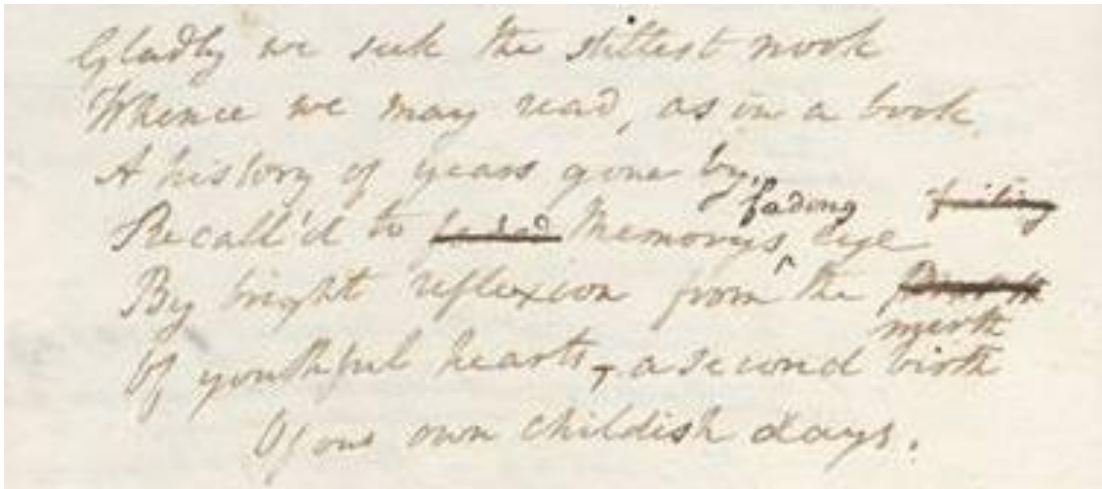


Fig. 35. Dorothy Wordsworth's poem, "A Holiday at Gwerndovennant: Irregular Verses" in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Includes a register of credits or debits sharing the same space. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Dorothy Wordsworth" 1826).

In the last line of this stanza, the word “Past” is underscored, emphasizing the overarching theme in the poem, which is the value of remembering. Susan M. Levin in *Dorothy Wordsworth and Romanticism* (1987) states that “the poem becomes a consideration of the workings of time and memory” (126). I would add that the “workings of time” are equivalent to the passages of time actively undoing memory and crumbling the foundations of the past itself. In the poem, this disintegration of the past runs contrary to the desire for past memories to be owned and preserved like assets.

Dorothy Wordsworth crosses out the word “faded” and replaces the word and its position in the line, writing “Memorys fading eye” (DCMS 120). The emendation to the line conveys that loss of memory and the past is an ongoing struggle rather than a foregone conclusion. A remedy for the inevitable disintegration of memory that preserves the recollection of the past, and, hence, the past itself, is textual: “Whence we may read, as in a book / A history of years gone by, / Recall’d to Memorys fading eye” (DCSM 120; see fig. 36). The mention of the role of “a book” as a preserver “of years gone by” presents hope that, ultimately, the past will not become irretrievably lost—fading, perhaps, but not hopelessly faded or forgotten. This poem suggests that a family’s or one’s personal history may be preserved as something valuable and kept in safe-keeping like valuatory records in commonplace books.



The title, "A Holiday at Gwerndovennant," implies that, for the vacationer, a certain tacit degree of value resides in the form of status for having the presumed ability to afford the cost and leisure of a holiday. Linking the poem with a financial register, sharing the same page together, symbolically reinforces the idea that holidays have an intrinsic value, beyond accruing fond memories. D. Wordsworth would have understood the inherent value of holidays as markers of social status signifying the Wordsworth household's ability to afford such luxuries. Beyond the appeal of writing poetry and recording fond vacation memories, D. Wordsworth also creates a valuatory record of her vacation through the composition of "A Holiday" in her commonplace book.

Dorothy Wordsworth's placement of a financial register along with her composition, "A Holiday," suggests that memory, commonplacing, and valuatory records are generically compatible. As a case in point, in the introduction to Richard

Cromleholme Bury's commonplace book, *Of Common Places, Memorial Books* (1681), Earle Havens states that the title "clearly illustrates the common connection made in the early modern period between commonplace books and discourses of the art of memory" (iii). Furthermore, Bury mentions that "a few words might here be added concerning the account-book and memorandum table [...]. But these things are obvious and may be easily learned by being once seen which you may at any time when you please" (5). Commonplace books, traditionally considered as aides to memory, have a historical connection with book-keeping that traces back to early modern manuscripts, such as Bury's commonplace book. Bury asserts that accountancy may be learned by exemplars in commonplace books. In women's commonplace books from the Romantic period, we are able to see a range of examples showing various "account-book" methods and interpret their purpose. D. Wordsworth, Eleanor Butler, and Sarah Ponsonby exhibit in their commonplacing--inventories, lists, registers, and images generated for the purpose of investing, managing, and mapping out ownership or stewardship.⁷⁷ Women commonplaced forms and signifiers of ownership.

In my dissertation, I focus on women's "doing and writing":⁷⁸ the doing of having individual, communal, creative, and practical work and the writing of a literary, financial, and sociable, political life inscribed into their commonplace books. With an

⁷⁷ From here on in this chapter, it will be presumed in the term ownership is equivalent to stewardship because in the British Isles it was not uncommon for tenancy leaseholds to be lifelong, such as with the Wordsworths. For the Wordsworths, investment in improvements were made to their property as if the buildings and land were freeholds.

⁷⁸ As discussed in Chapter I, the phrase "doing and writing" references Mikhail Bakhtin's essay on genre in "One-Way Street" (1928).

emphasis upon women expanding the practicality of commonplacing during the Romantic period, I analyze in this chapter how women integrated their financial life with their interests, talents, and capabilities. D. Wordsworth, Butler, and Ponsonby employed modes of valuation over a period of time that showed an overall accretion of wealth in their commonplace books. They accumulated what would have been considered semi-luxuries or luxuries for their time period, beginning with access to periodicals, books, paper, blank journals, gift albums, the postal service, and leisure time for commonplacing.

These women also transparently commonplaced their debts and records of mundane procurement of goods and services. I contend that keeping track of “all that is your own” in commonplace books was a significant personal commitment given that ownership was not always a straightforward proposition for women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I am not suggesting that commonplace books essentially became daybooks or account records during the Romantic period. Instead, I am claiming that the work of accountancy makes a notable appearance in women’s commonplace books, reflecting an essential aspect of reality: women owned, shared, inherited, and managed assets, and they conducted business. Given this reality, I argue that women employed generic commonplacing as a means of keeping track of what they owed, owned, managed, or valued--book-keeping meant safe-keeping their assets.

In women’s commonplace books, we see a wide variety of markers of wealth and status operating as sources of investment and security. Margarida Durães’s (et. al) in “Historicizing Well-Being from a Gender Perspective” (2009) asserts that “well-being

can be defined as the ability to be secure against poverty” (41). Durães’s study discusses the strategies that women and men developed, historically, to achieve some sense of stable financial well-being. Inventories, shopping lists, registers, and mappings as textual representations of ownership in women’s commonplace books were not traded publically like securities at a stock exchange. Yet valuatory records represented forms of wealth and the portability of assets-on-paper that women, arguably, would have been able to transfer to others. I contend that these alternative personal “securities” were recorded and kept for safe-keeping in women’s commonplace books. Commonplacing these personal and household financial assets was essential to the utility of managing a household and forming wealth and status.

The utility of using a commonplace book to write poetry and as an account book and memorandum table was as seemingly “obvious” to D. Wordsworth as it would have been to Bury. For example, she tallies ten numerical figures in the register adjacent to “A Holiday.” I have deduced that the letter initials in the register represent people who were at some point financially indebted to the Wordsworths, or they may signify vendors or individuals to whom the Wordsworths were indebted. My supposition is based upon similar registers in D. Wordsworth’s other manuscripts,⁷⁹ such as *Rydal Journal DCMS*

⁷⁹ Dorothy Wordsworth’s Rydal journals and notebook are sufficiently consistent with commonplace books generically to include them in the arguments presented in this chapter and throughout this dissertation. Hereon in Chapter III, when I generally mention D. Wordsworth’s commonplace books, it should be assumed that I am including her fifteen Rydal journals in the discussion unless otherwise noted. Other manuscripts presented in this chapter are almost generically consistent with commonplace books, such as Eleanor Butler’s 1784 pocket book, *Diary MS 22968A*. In such situations, I analyze the valuatory records in these texts that illuminate accountancy in commonplace books. Yet, I recognize the generic attributes of pocket books, scrap books, albums, diaries, journals, and catalogs that make these distinctly different genres.

104.4 (1825-1826) in which the names of debtors or creditors are identified by initials but material objects are spelled out or abbreviated. For example, in this register, D. Wordsworth writes the entry “Mrs H owes me 17/6,” whereas, in the subsequent entries she writes out such items as “Gloves” and “Silk”⁸⁰ priced as “8/ ” and “4/ ” respectively (DCMS 120; see fig. 37).

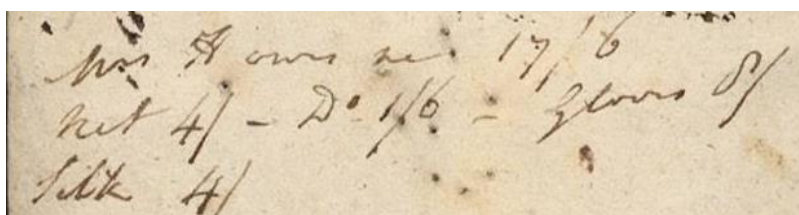


Fig. 37. Snippet view of register from Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Rydal Journal DCMS 104.4*. Shows the initial for a debtor as opposed to full name. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1825).

These entries are comparable to those in the register next to “A Holiday” in which D. Wordsworth wrote the initials “J,” “JM,” “D,” “E,” “D°,” and “Es,” but she abbreviated “cot.” for cotton and writes out the word “silk” (DCMS 120). To numerically represent people and objects together in a financial ledger may seem unusual, but the final summation, in fact, accurately totals £595 (see fig. 38).⁸¹

⁸⁰ In Giovanni Federico’s *An Economic History of the Silk Industry, 1830-1930*, Table AIX: “Prices of silk relative to other textiles in the United Kingdom” shows cotton prices persistently higher than silk, sometimes exceeding twice the price of silk (212).

⁸¹ Given that the numerals for cotton and silk are figured into the sum of £595 along with credits or debits, these two figures represent inventoried value or the cost of purchasing cotton and silk but not yardage. Also of note, the entry figures would have to be in GBPs in order for the sum to accurately total £595.

Though unusual in modern accounting, registers in commonplace books, pocket books, and journals are typical of “waste-books” that contain odd jumbles of entries for debits and credits (see fig. 38). According to William Gordon’s *The Universal Accountant, and Complete Merchant in Two Volumes* (1770), in accountancy, it was “judged expedient to have one common place book, in which, as a general register, transactions are immediately recorded as they occur, which is called the *Waste-book*” (16).

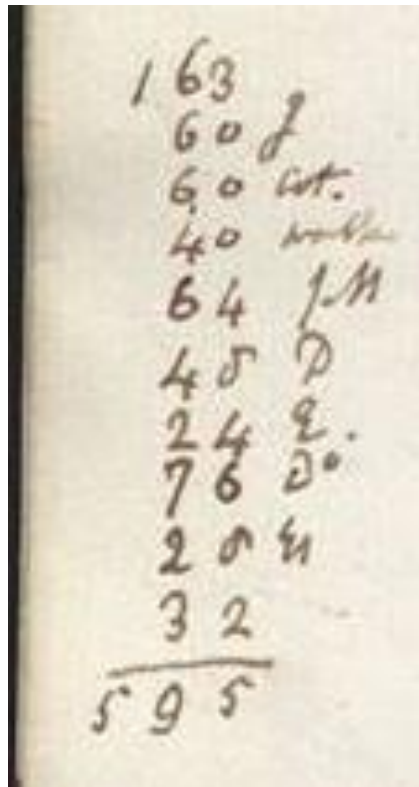


Fig. 38. Detail of register on a page with poem, “A Holiday at Gwerndovennant,” in Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Commonplace Book DCMS 120*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1825).

Gordon and Bury would have likely called a few of D. Wordsworth's commonplace books "Waste-books" and would have recognized the convenience and expediency of recording the ten entries in the register into her commonplace book before they may have been forgotten. As both Gordon and Bury suggest, accounting records, such as registers, were a normal, reoccurring function of life and of keeping commonplace books. D. Wordsworth and other women merged their financial routines with commonplacing, and a part of their routine included accountancy.

Dorothy Wordsworth's register shown next to her poem in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* tells us many, perhaps, surprising things about of her financial life, such as the appraised worth of £60 for "cot." and £40 for "silk." Buying £100 of fabric would be a significant purchase even in today's prices, but this luxury would have been much more remarkable when D. Wordsworth wrote these entries almost two hundred years ago. The affordability, prudence or extravagance of these two line items in D. Wordsworth's personal or household budget remains somewhat of a mystery. Yet, we need to keep in mind that the Wordsworths erratically earned or received considerable sums of money at various times; their financial well-being fluctuated between wealth and near poverty. For example, ten years prior to D. Wordsworth's composition of "A Holiday," D. and W. Wordsworth received a legacy from their deceased brother's share of the Lonsdale settlement,⁸² which was initially for the amount of £3825 (WLMS

⁸² The Lonsdale settlement was financial reparation for Dorothy, William, John, Richard, and Christopher Wordsworth who legally challenged Lord Lowther for money owed to their father and was theirs by inheritance.

2/2.33).⁸³ The anticipation of a relatively large influx of funds from the settlement with Lord Lowther had led D. Wordsworth to make a significant purchase, as stated in a letter to her brother Richard Wordsworth, dated 15 and 19 June 1803: “Having calculated upon receiving, at least, the interest of my share of the 3,000£ already paid, I laid out nearly 20£ in clothes” (*Letters 1787-1805* 394). D. Wordsworth, at times, had or anticipated having sufficient funds to buy expensive textiles.

Dorothy Wordsworth’s register entries for cotton and silk reasonably represent the purchase and inventory of textiles for her or the Wordsworth household as an investment in their comfort and pleasure. These register entries for cotton and silk may also represent another type of investment as well. Indeed, the notation in D. Wordsworth’s *Rydal Journal* 104.7 (1827-1828) mentioning “Calico for Mrs C” suggests bartering or community exchange with friends and neighbors pooling their resources and shopping excursions (DCMS 104.7). Conceivably, these register entries in her commonplace book double as both an investment in the well-being and comfort of the Wordsworth household and D. Wordsworth’s actual investments in textiles.

Maxine Berg, in *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2005), notes that fine cottons, also known as calicoes or muslins, “were decent, high-quality semi-luxuries” that households (such as the Wordsworths, I would suggest) were beginning to buy (Berg 50). The juxtaposition of “A Holiday at Gwerndovennant” with

⁸³ An image of a letter from Dorothy and William Wordsworth’s solicitor concerning this legacy settlement along with a discussion of D. Wordsworth’s financial autonomy is reproduced later in this chapter.

D. Wordsworth's register invites us to make meaning and contextual relevance between this poem and the global economics of trade in high-quality goods. The luxuries of Asian and African bazaars were domesticated within the furnishings of British homes, and D. Wordsworth's poem, alludes to attempts to accommodate their vibrancy. In "A Holiday" the luxuriously rich carpets of foreign salons are compared and contrasted with the deep hues of nature at home (see fig. 39):

Our carpet is her verdant sod;
A richer one was never trod
In princes' proud saloon,
Purple & gold & spotless white,
And quivering shade & sunny light
Blend with the emerald green. (DCMS 120)

Reminiscent of a Shakespearean-like "blessed plot," the "verdant sod" of Britain is compared with the "Purple & gold & spotless white" carpets of, presumably, foreign princes. When seen in the "quivering shade and sunny light," the vibrant, rich colors of purple and gold "blend" with nature's "emerald green." The evocative colors of fabrics from other lands adopt the hues of nature and become as familiar domestically as "the punctual pleasures of your home" (DCMS 120). This line from "A Holiday" suggests that imported luxuries may have been assimilated into D. Wordsworth's domestic sphere by becoming incorporated into the common household routine of sewing clothing and fashioning interior décor.

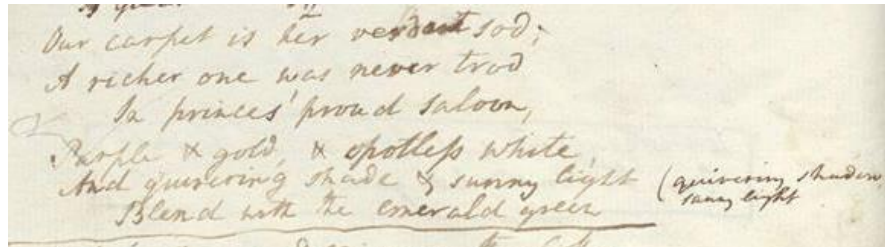


Fig. 39. Stanza 4 from “A Holiday.” Dorothy Wordsworth in *Commonplace Book DCMS 120* compares textiles and nature. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1825).

Margaret and Robert Cochrane, in *Housekeeping with Dorothy Wordsworth at Dove Cottage* (2001), note D. Wordsworth’s household routines from her years at Dove Cottage (1799-1808) in which “she would take up her sewing. She made, altered and mended their clothes. For the house she made mattresses, curtains and bed hangings” (18). Curtains and bed hangings were the type of furnishings that brought the international luxuries of cotton and silk into the familiar setting of the Wordsworth household to be displayed, enjoyed, and “made at home” in the domestic sphere. Berg notes that “modern luxuries [...] relied upon a perception of the exotic and oriental provenance of traditional luxury goods [...] to be used and displayed in domestic and civilized settings” (45). D. Wordsworth’s sewing projects using cotton and silk luxuries in the home may have seemed a defensible expense given the patina of social class and the “exotic and oriental provenance” they conveyed for a family, such as the Wordsworths, struggling at times to maintain their genteel social position.

Evidenced by the textile entries in the register and memorandum, D. Wordsworth continued to work on sewing projects at Rydal Mount (1813-1855);⁸⁴ these two accounting records provide an idea of her expenses, activities, and the broader implications associated with needlecraft. According to Maureen Daly Goggin in her introduction, “Threading Women,” in *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles* (2009), for women, needlework had “been a significant cultural practice of meaning-making” (3). With Lady Fleming as their neighbor and landlord, the social stakes of maintaining visual markers of gentility were all the higher at their manor home in Rydal than at Dove Cottage. The leasehold of Rydal Hall and inclusion in Lady Fleming’s elevated social circle seemed contingent upon the Wordsworths being the right sort of neighbors. Linda McDowell in *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (1999) informs us about space and place and states, “the house [...] is a key link in the relationship between material culture and sociality: a concrete marker of social position and status” (92). D. Wordsworth knew the cost and thus likely knew the high status of the fabrics she sewed. Fine textiles were markers of privilege and social standing, which made keeping a record of their cost in her commonplace book something of a status symbol. (see fig. 40).

⁸⁴ During my tour of Rydal Mount, I was informed that Dorothy Wordsworth had handcrafted many of the textile furnishings for this Wordsworth home.

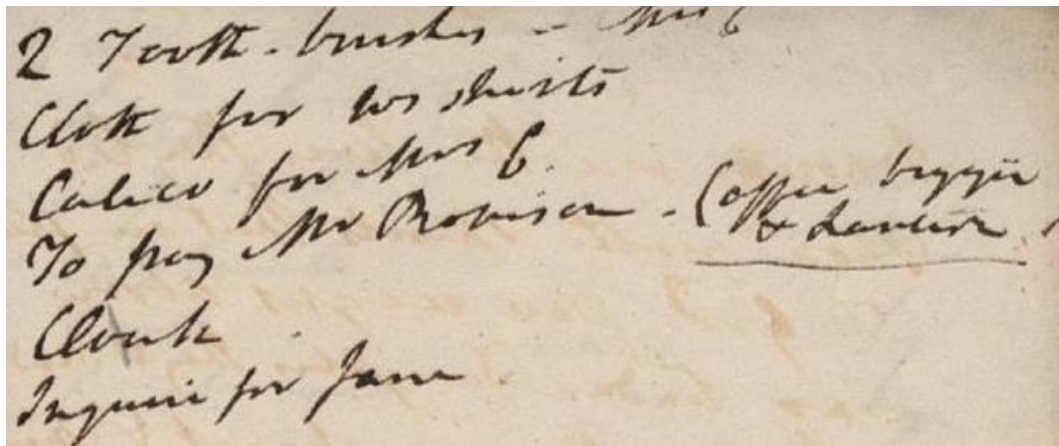


Fig. 40. Snippet view of Dorothy Wordsworth's memorandum of household accounts from *Rydal Journal DCMS 104.7*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Dorothy Wordsworth" 1828).

In *Rydal Journal DCMS 104. 7* (1828), D. Wordsworth wrote the above shopping to-do list and household account memorandum. Most of the entries in this list refer to the supply of fabric for clothing, such as "Cloth for Wm shirts," "Calico for Mrs C," and "Inquire for Jane," presumably, about a "Cloak" (DCMS 104.7). The textiles mentioned and implied in this list signify D. Wordsworth's domestic sphere of sewing projects and her public sphere of sociability, both with linkages to the workings of global trade—bazaars selling calicoes and silks. As Judy Attfield in *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life* (2000) explains, we have an intimate relationship with fabrics that connect us with otherness "because clothes make direct contact with the body, and domestic furnishings define personal spaces inhabited by the body, the material which forms a large part of the stuff from which they are made—cloth—is proposed as one of the most thing-types that materializes the connection between the body and the outer world" (122). Attfield asserts that we interface with the outer world through the medium

of textiles. Textiles were significant “thing-types” in valuatory records, connecting women to the outer world beyond the domestic domain. D. Wordsworth’s inventories of calicoes, silks, and linens connected her to a broader world of social significance.

Social standing was an important consideration for most women of genteel class during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to Edward Copeland’s article “Money” in *Jane Austen in Context* (2005), “sandwiched between commerce and the landed gentry, the pseudo-gentry made use of consumer goods to assert their claims to social consequence” (319). Most of the women in this study would have been considered “pseudo-gentry,” with the exception of Rose and Butler,⁸⁵ and may have felt the vulnerability of being “sandwiched” between classes with little solidity to their genteel social position. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the majority of the inventories recorded in the commonplace books of the women studied in this project list luxury or semi-luxury goods that women could have displayed “to assert their claims to social consequence.” Maintaining or elevating one’s social standing by conveying identity with inventories of assets was a possible long-term social strategy. For example, in D. Wordsworth’s shared commonplace book she listed an “account of Mary’s Linen which came from Penrith,” dated 1802 (DCMS 26), which was the year W. Wordsworth and Mary Hutchinson married. As a new bride, M. Wordsworth’s valuable contribution of linens would have added to the Wordsworth household’s general sense of gratification

⁸⁵ Chieftain Elizabeth Rose descended from Scottish chieftains who owned the tenancy leaseholds of the Rose clan, and Lady Eleanor Butler descended from an aristocratic family, as well, who were landed gentry.

and overall material wealth. In commonplace books, the most valuable material objects or rights of ownership are often listed without mention of monetary appraisal.

Dorothy Wordsworth does not mention in the list that M. Wordsworth's linens represent a type of dowry, yet such an assumption was implied by D. Wordsworth making a detailed linen inventory. D. Wordsworth would have understood the socio-historical associations, the marital symbolism, and the social status of linens as textiles, which are too valuable to lose. She would have been informed by W. Wordsworth's close association with his fiancé, the Frenchwoman, Annette Vallon, According to Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, in "To Remarry or Not: Well-Being, Female Property and Widowhood in Early Modern France" (2009), before 1789 "nearly all marriage contracts, which were notarized, mentioned the amount and composition of the bride's dowry" (417). Of course, the French Revolution changed social conventions and class structures, but material symbols often retain residual meaning and significance.

In noting a connection between marriage contracts and linen that would have resonated with the Wordsworths, Fauve-Chamoux's historical sociological study reminds us that "mention" of certain material objects comprised a contract; the paper representation of the material object may be as significant as the object itself. According to Fauve-Chamoux, these contracts used precise wording for dowries stating, "goods and rights of the bride consists all together of movables, clothes, *linen*, and money from her earnings and savings" [emphasis added] (417). Linens represent a unique category of luxury items by virtue of their historical association with trousseaus, dowries, and bridal contracts. The historical association of linen with monetary bridal transactions, though a

French tradition, was not lost upon D. Wordsworth; she wrote the word “account” in the title of her inventory of M. Wordsworth’s linen (DCMS 26). D. Wordsworth could have chosen other words to title the page, such as “a list of Mary’s Linen,” but by writing the word “account” in the title, D. Wordsworth acknowledged that the list of M.

Wordsworth’s linens represented more than a list of textiles (see fig. 41). The list of linens was a conscious inventorying of material objects that were inherently and sociably valuable. This list provides an account record without monetary valuations but conveyed significance for the wealth and well-being of the Wordsworth household. Dorothy Wordsworth’s linen inventory record represented a long-term, nonsalable investment (from a cultural perspective), though, eventually transferable and certainly a valuable source of social or class capital. Dorothy Wordsworth listed how many and what type of linens transferred from the Hutchinson to the Wordsworth household. Mary Wordsworth’s linen, similar to expensive books, had provenance.

Gosmen November 1802
 account of Mary's linen which came from Penrith
 2 Flukabak Towels Marked J. S.
 1 Do. ————— J M
 3 Unmarked ————— J M M
 1 old fashioned ————— M. M.
 3 deeper Napkins little table. M. M.
 3 Do 1 good 2 old unmarked
 2 good fine smaller unmarked
 2 Damask Do smaller marked M. C.
 1 small Damask Table Cloth
 1 large Do
 2 deeper Table Cloths 1 marked M. the other unmarked
 1 old deep Do
 2 deeper breakfast cloths or marked the other unmarked
 2 large Flukabak Table cloths marked M.
 1 large smaller Do Do J M C
 2 small coarse & strong or marked by the unmarked
 3 breakfast Do Do
 1 pair fine sheet — Marked M. M.
 1 pair ————— J J
 1 pair ————— M. C.
 1 Do ————— W M. 3
 1 Do old ————— M. C. 2

Fig. 41. Dorothy Wordsworth lists inventory of linen titled “account of Mary’s Linen which came from Penrith” in *Commonplace Book DCMS 26*. Shows a close association with inventorying assets and investment. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1802).

For example, of the twenty-two line items of linens listed in the inventory, only a few of them are listed as being “unmarked.” Most of the entries identify the linen as being “marked.” Following a “marked” designation, the list provides initials identifying

the previous owners. For example, one line item in the list of Penrith linens records “1 old fashion---...[“towels marked”]...”J M M” (DCMS 26). According to a note inserted into D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book, these initials are suggestive of John and Margaret Monkhouse, who were the grandparents of M. Wordsworth. This inventory indicates that most of the linens are marked with the initials of M. Wordsworth’s relatives, suggesting that these linens are a type of dowry or trousseau and represent transferrable assets as a family legacy. The linen inventory operates as a type of personal stock or securities certificate in D. Wordsworth’s commonplace book.

Separated by a list of her nephew’s baby-talk, “John’s Language,” an accounting register, a to-do list, an ink formula, two medicinal cures and a miscellaneous register (DCMS 26), D. Wordsworth’s shared commonplace book (DCMS 26) includes a shared list of her own or the Wordsworth household linens (not from Penrith). Noticeably, this list does not include entries for marked linen with initials, except for one line item that records “14 pair of sheets mark’d W. W.” (DCMS 26). A couple more line entries state that the linens are marked with blue thread. Arguably, these linens lack provenance, as if D. Wordsworth and W. Wordsworth had to start all over in the world as orphans (which, indeed, they were) with limited family heirlooms. Understandably, D. Wordsworth inventories this list of linens (written in her hand), as a significant, material asset and marker of her social status (see fig. 42).

^{large}
 2 Damask Table Cloths - 1 Do. - Buckfast
 8 large Diaper Do. 6 small Do. 2 more
 2 large Huckaback Do. 6 small Do.
 Huckaback Towels. 6 Diaper Napkins 1 old (spiced)
 4 Damask Napkins - 6 Course Towels No. 6. ~~4~~ No 12
 8 Tea Towels No 8. 11 Knife Cloths one wanting marked 12
 1 pair of Sheets mark'd. W. W. 1. 2. 3. 4. to 14.
 6 Do. W. 1. 2. 3. 4. etc
 6 Bolsterslips. 3 pair of Pillowslips (one wanting)
 4 ~~pair~~ mark'd with blue thread. 10 Calico Do. marked 9
 1 pair of old fine sheets marked with blue thread

Fig. 42. List of linen in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Commonplace Book DCMS 26*. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust ("Dorothy Wordsworth" 1802).

Women determined the level of detail they needed or wanted to compile in creating book-keeping records in their commonplace books. In addition to the linen inventories, one of the most extensive valuatory records in all of D. Wordsworth's commonplace books is a register titled "Laid out since I left Hereford" in *Rydal Journal 104.4* (1825-1826). This register records miscellaneous entries of transactions. Strikingly on the page, the word "memory" eerily peeks through the Hereford register mid-page and in large script (DCMS 104.4). Both age and illness had seriously weakened D. Wordsworth's memory by the time she would have written this word in pencil noting the essential function of commonplace books and valuatory records and recognizing her own dwindling capacity to remember. At first glance, the entries in the Hereford register appear to be primarily concerned with domestic items for D. Wordsworth's personal use and for the household. Certainly, purchasing fabric still played a significant role in

making provisions of clothing for herself and clothing for others—with a reminiscent purchase of “Silk for Mrs H” (DCMS 104.4). D. Wordsworth’s register also includes several charitable donations for a church letter, a church sermon, and cathedral visit, as well as a donation for a prison visit (see fig. 43).

Laid out since I left Rydal	
Letters at Worcester	2 - 6
Pencil	6
Cathedral	4 - 8
2 yds net - 2/4	4 - 6
9 yds do - 6	4 - 6
2 yds do 2 ^d c ^d	6
Church sermon	10 - 6
9 yds net - 2/4	3 - 6
Prison 12/4/23	6
Prison	1 - 8
Gloves	4 -
4 ^d silk for Mrs H	9 -
2 pr shoes	4 - 6
Mrs W's servant &c	1 -
Thin oil	4 - 6
Savonier water	1 -
Savonier to a water	4 -
Washing	6
Prison	1 -
Church letter	1 - 8
Gown & ribbon	3 -
Washing &c	6
Prison	6
Prison	6

Fig. 43. Register of items in Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Rydal Journal DCMS 104.4*. One of the most extensive registers in her commonplace books. Reprinted with permission from The Wordsworth Trust (“Dorothy Wordsworth” 1825).

In this register, we see D. Wordsworth as the writer, traveler, philanthropist, walker, and household, goodwill manager. These depictions of her are intimated by the items in the register and common knowledge about her life. Upon closer inspection, the entries in this register may be categorized as things that are related to a clean appearance: lavender water, new clothes, new shoes, new gloves and hair oil. Notably, D. Wordsworth's Rydal years, while she was in good health, were concerned with making W. Wordsworth look good to the public physically and socially, such as: sewing his clothes, complimenting W. Wordsworth in her letters to Lord or Lady Beaumont, or making accommodations for frequent guests who were influential to W. Wordsworth's career in some way. In a very real sense, D. Wordsworth invested in W. Wordsworth and his career, and this register, as D. Wordsworth's ghosted writing in pencil indicates, was a valuable record of her efforts.

In contextualizing women's commonplace books in the Romantic period, we learn from a precursor to women's commonplacing in the early modern period. Margaret J. M. Ezell discusses in "Domestic Papers: Manuscript Culture and Early Modern Women's Life Writing" (2007) Elizabeth Freke's (1671-1714) manuscripts, and she states that the contents in "the opening pages are of recipes followed by sections of 'diary' mingled with accounts and other materials" (43). Ezell's description of Freke's domestic papers⁸⁶ establishes that household finances were a part of women's

⁸⁶ Margaret J. M. Ezell notes in "Domestic Papers: Manuscript Culture and Early Modern Women's Life Writing" that Elizabeth Freke's "two manuscript volumes" are classified by modern editor Raymond A. Anselment "as 'commonplace books'" (42).

commonplacing at least as far back as the early modern period. The content of D. Wordsworth's Rydal journals accords with Ezell's depiction of Freke's manuscripts and seems to closely resemble Freke's placement of valuatory records in the "opening pages." In *Commonplace Book DCMS 26* and in all but one of D. Wordsworth's fifteen Rydal journals, the majority of valuatory records are found in the front and back matter (including the inverted back sections), making these records easy to access (see fig. 44).

Eleanor Butler commonplaced records associated with investments in the front and back matter of her *1821 Journal MS 22976B*. Butler's book-making techniques in her journal included affixing clippings of advertised goods and services for sale on the inner cover boards and flyleaves. Print advertisements for gourmet food, wine, and a premier intercontinental delivery service should be understood in the context of how Butler and Ponsonby received the luxury items they ordered and the luxury items up for auction at their estate sale. As a case in point, the estate records of Butler and Ponsonby, excerpted in John Hicklin's *The "Ladies of Llangollen"* (1847), catalogues their investment in luxury items. For example, under the heading "Rare Wines and Liqueurs," the listed items include "Old Port, Sherry, Madeira, Lisbon, Bucellas, Vidonia, Maraschino, Noyeau, Eau de la Reine, and other estimable Liqueurs" (11). These listed wine and liqueur imports are in keeping with those listed in the bottom clipping on the inner front cover board of Butler's *1821 Journal*, which a London shop on 210 Piccadilly advertises as "a choice collection" of Champagne Mousseux et non Mousseux, and a small quantity of Burgundy clos de Vougeot, 1815" (MS 22976B). This London advertisement in Butler's journal suggests that these connoisseur items

represented a potential investment to Ponsonby and Butler. Butler sectioning these advertisements in the front and back matter of her journal allows us to see that how commonplacers intentionally used the front and back flyleaves for storing significant “matters of ownership.”

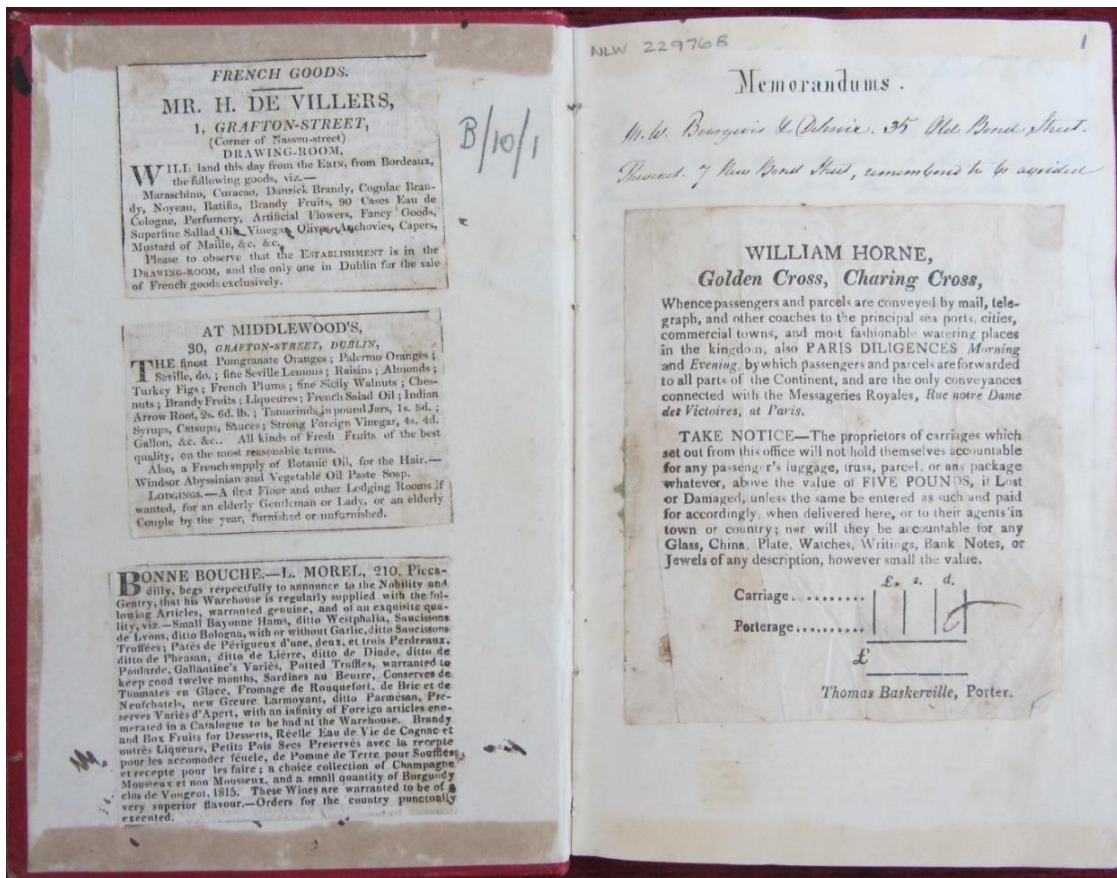


Fig. 44. From Eleanor Butler’s inner front cover of *Journal MS 22976B*. Clippings of potential investments or inventories of material assets. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Eleanor Butler” 1821).

Maintaining inventories of material assets and financial registers was broadened by the print publication of information on book-keeping. In Felicia Hemans’s print

commonplace book, *Young Woman's Companion, or Female Instructor; Being a summary of useful knowledge; calculated to form the intellectual, the moral, and the domestic character* (1835), she covers the basics of mathematics along with money, weights, measures, and accountancy.⁸⁷ A section called "Directions for keeping a regular Account of Expenses, useful to Housekeepers and others" (215) provides an early published set of accountancy instructions accessible to women for household accounting. The competitive marketplace of print publication responded to women's interest in book-keeping throughout the Romantic period. Practical financial and management information marketed to women was often written by women, such as Hemans, at least in part. Also, Charles Vyse's *The Lady's Accomptant [sic]* (1771) contains an extensive section on accounting written by Mrs. Wilson with useful accountancy tutoring along with instruction in the domestic arts narratively titled "In a Separate Apartment, Young Ladies are Correctly Taught English, French, Needle-Work, Writing, Accompts,⁸⁸ Drawing, Dancing, &c."

The title of Hemans's commonplace book and the subtitle of Wilson's section of her miscellany both begin by directly addressing young women: "Young Woman's" and "Young Ladies." The nomenclature suggests that the supposed audience and the texts themselves are both gendered. Wilson's subtitle implies gendered division by labeling the instruction for young ladies as being "In a Separate Apartment." Hemans's subtitle

⁸⁷ In keeping with the historical development of accountancy, unless indicated otherwise, I use the term "accountancy" to mean book-keeping or keeping valuatory records as an accounting skill rather than as the profession of accountancy.

⁸⁸ The term *accompts* or *acompt* is an outdated word for accounts or the discipline of accountancy.

underscores the separateness of private and public domains for young women by asserting that the intent of her book is to “form” their “domestic character.” Yet, a central feature of both Hemans’s and Wilson’s works is essential knowledge of accountancy needed in order for women to manage their household accounts, operate businesses, and to have agency in the public sphere. The actual content of their economic instruction circumvents the gendered rhetoric of these two books. In fact, these two books show that accountancy was a readily available female instruction.

Felicia Hemans’s commonplace book and Wilson’s miscellany are only a sampling of the materials that were available for women to learn accountancy. As Rebecca Elizabeth Connor in *Women, Accounting and Narrative: Keeping Books in Eighteenth-Century England* (2004) reminds us, by 1749 “accounting texts” and “the popularity of accounting soared in England” (29). Consequently, women began to have access to a variety of print information on how to manage finances from multiple sources. In D. Wordsworth’s manuscript and Hemans’s print commonplace books, women’s skills of accountancy were neither usurpation of men’s presence in the public sphere nor an abdication of a women’s domestic sphere. During the Romantic period, the profession of accountancy itself was in flux and was deemed neither a masculine nor a feminine occupation. In fact, it was not considered an “occupation” or a profession at all; it was considered a skill.

According to David Sugarman in “Who Colonized Whom? Historical Reflections on the Intersection between Law, Lawyers and Accountants in England” (1995), “until the late eighteenth century accountancy was a skill rather than an occupation as such”

(227). The profession of public accountant or chartered accountancy did not officially exist until societies of accountancy in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen received a royal charter in 1854. John R. Alexander, though, in his monograph, *The History of Accounting*, suggests that the initial establishment of the profession of accountancy may be traced back thirty years prior to the formation of chartered accountancy. He cites an early nineteenth-century advertisement circular for book-keeping services for hire that includes a “list of duties which Mr. James McClelland attached to the circular, dated 12th March 1824, in which he announced that he had commenced business on his own account” (12). McClelland’s circular lists the following freelance accountancy skills and duties for hire: “management of heritable or other property,” “keeping and balancing of all account-books,” “making up of statements, reports, and memorials on account-books,” and “looking after and recovering old debts and dividends” (qtd. in Alexander 12-13). This list resembles the accounting skills and duties that women were learning and practicing in the workspaces of their commonplace books.

Besides published books about accountancy, print culture generated financial guides printed in the front and back matter of blank diaries called pocket books. The frame positioning of these financial materials mimics the placement of valuatory records in the front and back flyleaves of women’s commonplace books. Typically, pocket books were small in size and inexpensive with soft-bound covers, though style and expense varied greatly. They were used for writing memoranda and keeping track of financial transactions. Publishers marketed pocket books to women by including the type of information they felt women were interested in reading and that would make their

product competitive with similar products. The preprinted pages often resembled extracts in miscellanies or commonplace books but with less emphasis on literary excerpts and more attention paid to financial information and general knowledge. Publishers included the most salient topics to grab the attention of upper class women who had access to some classical education, who had the time and financial resources to travel, and who could consider financial investments. For example, Butler's *Pocket Book MS 22968A*, titled by the publisher as *The Ladies New and Elegant Pocket Book for the Year 1784*, contains the following information: "Description of Bath" with a section on the "New Assembly Rooms" and emphasis on proper etiquette, "Holidays Kept in 1784," and "The Names of the Gods and Goddesses of the Heathens & with those of the Muses, Graces &etc." (1-12). These excerpts show how publishers sought to please a certain demographic of women and to create pseudo-commonplace books by including a variety of preprinted extracts with blank pages for women to add their own commonplacing, valuatory records, and miscellanies of extracts in their pocketbooks.

One page in particular stands out in Butler's pocket book titled in print "An exact Account of the Days and Hours for buying and accepting, or selling and transferring the several Stocks, or Government Securities, and receiving the Interest of Dividends due thereon, at the Bank, India-House, or South-Sea-House" (11). This excerpt about the time and days to conduct securities trade at the Bank, India-House, or South-Sea-House is stunning given the fact that a royal or government established securities exchange did not exist as yet in 1784. Granted, as the "Account of Days and Hours" suggests, the Bank of England and other financial Houses served as a type of

securities exchange (see fig. 45).⁸⁹ However, as Edward Stringham notes in “The Emergence of the London Stock Exchange as a Self-Policing Club” (2002), even in the venerable Bank of England, where trading took place under the Rotunda, “brokers were noisy and were generally considered with disrepute” (7). The publisher’s schedule of days and hours for securities trade appears to seductively entice women to enter into the fray of trading with brokers and “many cunning artists among them” (Houghton qtd. in Stringham 6). Against this dubious backdrop of public trade and investment, some women would have felt ambivalent about exchanging stock.

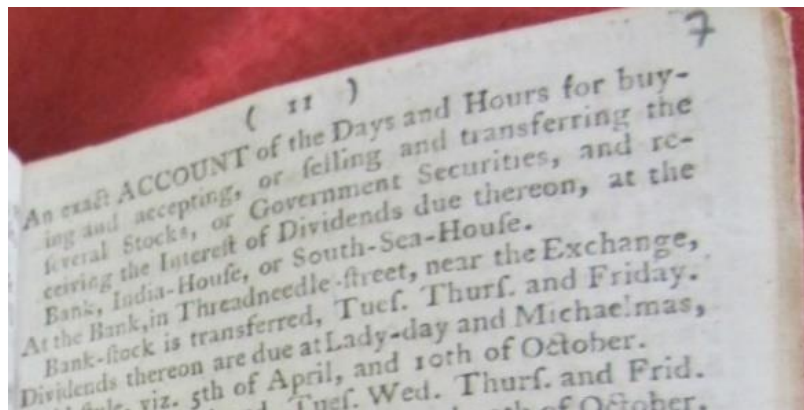


Fig. 45. Snippet view of Eleanor Butler’s *Pocket Book MS 22968A* with publisher’s preprinted pages, titled as *The Ladies New and Elegant Pocket Book for the Year 1784*, providing information for selling, transferring, and receiving stocks, government securities, and dividends (7). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Eleanor Butler” 1784).

⁸⁹ The year prior to the date of Butler’s pocket book diary, a relatively suitable venue for securities exchange was established, which, as a large coffeehouse, was called simply Jonathan’s Coffee House and, subsequently, this was the beginning of the London stock exchange, but membership was exclusive.

The convention of commonplacing useful financial information in the front and back matter of commonplace books and pocket books conveyed a certain familiar reassurance. The publisher of Butler's *Pocket Book MS 22968A* completes the genre's physical frame by commonplacing "A Table of Expences" (63) in the back matter. This table provided a clever way for women to budget their expenses on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. For example, by first establishing one's budget for an increment of time, let us say a year, a woman could determine how much she would be able to consistently spend in a day, week, or month (see fig. 46).

Conversely, a woman would have been able to use this table to determine a consistent income stream or savings plan. Whether this table was actually used by Butler in her daily life would be difficult to determine, but the important point is that its inclusion in the pocket book indicates that the publisher assumed women customers would want a table for budgeting their finances. Both guides in Butler's pocket book, one for the high-finance market of the stock exchange and the other for daily budgeting, convey a sense that women were presumably involved in managing substantial assets and handling daily personal and business expenses. Connor's measure for appreciating women's accounting skills, such as suggested by this pocket book budgeting table, is helpful: "Accounts did not need to be elaborately calibrated to fulfill most people's financial needs—namely, to insure against fraudulent dealings and to keep track of credit and debt obligations" (29). The access women had to accountancy instruction, such as the guides in Butler's pocket book, had a profound influence on culture, as Connor

alludes to in reminding us that accounting was “a skill whose mundane nature belied its power as a cultural force” (28).

(121)

A TABLE of EXPENCES.

By the Day.		By the Week.			By the Month.			By the Year.		
s.	d.	l.	s.	d.	l.	s.	d.	l.	s.	d.
0	1	0	0	7	0	2	4	1	10	5
0	2	0	1	2	0	4	8	3	0	10
0	3	0	1	9	0	7	0	4	11	3
0	4	0	2	4	0	9	4	6	1	8
0	5	0	2	11	0	11	8	7	12	1
0	6	0	3	6	0	14	0	9	2	6
0	7	0	4	1	0	16	4	10	12	11
0	8	0	4	8	0	18	8	12	3	4
0	9	0	5	3	1	1	0	13	13	9
0	10	0	5	10	1	3	4	15	4	2
							8	16	14	7

Fig. 46. Snippet View of “A Table of Expences” from Eleanor Butler’s *Pocket Book MS 22968A*, which is a publisher’s guide for daily, weekly and/or monthly expenses (63). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Eleanor Butler” 1784).

Other effects of the cultural force of accountancy have resonance in other milieus, such as in fictional literature. Mona Scheuermann in *Her Bread to Earn: Women, Money, and Society from Defoe to Austen* (1993) provides evidence from novels of women’s acumen with finances. She argues that female characters had a much more avid mind for business than we might suspect. Scheuermann notes that “the greatest surprise in the research has been that the ubiquitous concern in these novels is money” (3). In analyzing Daniel Defoe’s *Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress*, she notes that in

“looking at Roxana’s saving, investing, and managing money we see a woman who is intensely capable” (2). Fictional characters, such as Defoe’s Roxana and her dramatic rags-to-riches story provide an archetypal narrative symbolic of women’s actual experiences with financial struggle and success. Roxana’s financial fluidity in the novel reflects underlying gendered, socio-economic, and cultural challenges that contained an aspect of reality for women during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Women expanding the practicality of commonplace books during the Romantic period meant recording their financial life and keeping track of public and personal investments. Personal investments of relatively valuable material objects for many women would have been an attractive alternative to the concern and ambivalence of trade on the floor of the Bank of London. It is uncertain whether or not Ponsonby and Butler invested in publically traded securities, but, clearly, they would have been able to identify with the character, Mrs. Morgan, and her exultant exclamation when surveying the communal estate depicted in Sarah Scott’s *Millenium Hall* (1762): “Behold our riches” (78). Enjoying the physicality and present pleasure of material objects and inventorying them certainly would have been a compelling investment strategy as opposed to investing in financial instruments or securities. In fact, it would have been considered a safer and more prudent investment. Money, itself was suspect. According to Copeland (2005), paper money was a constant focus of public anxiety and discontent during the war years and beyond” (318). Conversely, valuable objects did not seem ephemeral, fluctuating wildly in value or their value virtually disappearing. Semi-perishable or non-perishable objects, such as wines, liqueurs, textiles, and books, seemed

like solid investments that did not need numerical appraisal. In fact, virtually all inventories of valuable objects in women's commonplace books that I have examined did not contain numerical valuations. If women's investments in valuables was a long-term strategy, then there would be little point in determining valuations—if such a thing could be done accurately. Fundamental differences existed in women commonplacing registers of relatively consumable goods and services and commonplacing inventories of material objects that were highly valued. Usually, the more an object was valued, the less likely a monetary value would have been assigned. Some material assets were seen as long-term investments in which sale for profit was not necessarily anticipated or desired, differing markedly from value/cost-centered mercantile systems.

Yet, upon occasion, in both real life and in fiction, it was admitted that actual currency was a necessity, with investment in annuities being a common financial practice. D. Wordsworth had a modest, but steady income from annuities that she discussed in a letter she wrote to her brother Richard Wordsworth, dated 10 June 1802, stating, “sixty pounds a year is the sum which would entirely gratify all my desires” (*Letters* 51). In the novel, *Millenium Hall*, the utopian West London “charity school” project benefactors also admitted to the necessity of money at times. The narrative of the novel states the following:

The activities of the Millenium Hall ladies were made possible by the combination of two forces. First, there was the desire to serve, and second, there was sufficient money to make this possible. The following list will show the basic wealth of the combination:

Mrs. Mancel inherited 40,000 pounds from her mother.

Mrs. Morgan inherited 6,000 pounds from her father, and at the death of her husband received the Millenium Hall property plus 2,000 pounds in ready cash and 1,400 pounds per year in rents.

Lady Mary Jones inherited 10,000 pounds plus jewels and silver.

Mrs. Selvyn inherited 3,000 pounds from her father and 12,000 pounds from her mother's estate.

Mrs. Trentham inherited 11,000 pounds from her parents and 4,000 more from her grandmother.

The total wealth amounted to 86,000 pounds, and in addition, the property which housed the central activity belonged to Mrs. Morgan. This was truly a large amount of money, which, when used wisely, gave the ladies of Millenium Hall the power to accomplish surprising enterprises. (20-21)

In this excerpt from the novel, we see an eighteenth century hybrid form of accountancy that is part inventory, part single-entry register, and part memorandum, which is the type of accounting records that Rose used in her commonplace books just a couple of decades after *Millenium Hall* was published. The presence of this narrative register, as well as another narrative inventory of the Millenium Hall estate, suggests that women would have been familiar with various methods of book-keeping and were developing their accountancy skills.

Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler, unlike Dorothy Wordsworth and Elizabeth Rose, inventoried their impressive library in *A Catalogue of Our Books MS 22980C*, which is separate from their commonplace books. Though this manuscript is a catalogue, it shares generic qualities with commonplace books as a collection of a variety of literature—the variety happens to be in the listing rather than the excerpting of books. The catalogue has diverse categories of titles, such as “Gardening,” “Miscellanies,” “Geography,” “Poetry,” “Novels and Tales,” “Travels and Descriptive Works,” and “In the Boudoir” (MS 22980C). Ponsonby and Butler’s *Catalogue of Our Books MS 22980C*

also employs a color-coded ink and font system found in her commonplace book (MS 22969A) and their other manuscripts. In the front matter of the catalogue, Ponsonby wrote a note explaining her system of typography: “Note: The Titles of Books,” written in Blue Ink & Roman Print, denote their having been the valued Gifts of Friends. Those written in Italick [*sic*] Print with Red Ink were given by the Authors” (2). This note provides a useful key to understanding the use of color and font to categorize the books in the catalogue (see fig. 47). Of the 895 books and manuscripts listed in Ponsonby and Butler’s catalogue, 131 titles in blue ink were gifted to Ponsonby and Butler by friends, 13 titles in red ink were given to them by the authors of the work itself, and 4 titles in multiple ink colors were given to them by an author or a friend. This leaves 748 books titles in black ink that Ponsonby and Butler had likely purchased on their own.

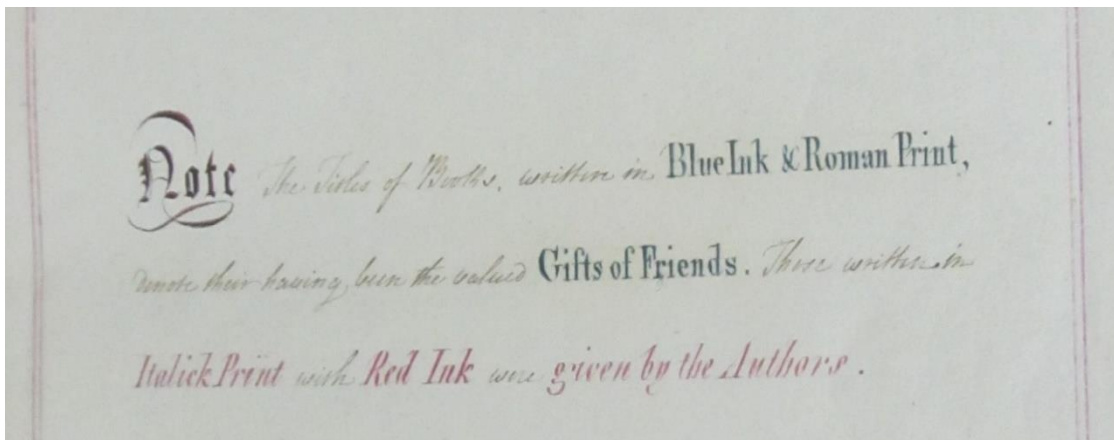


Fig. 47. Snippet view of color-coded guide to Plas Newydd’s library books from Sarah Ponsonby’s *Catalogue of Our Books MS 22980C* (2). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1792).

The significance of this note resides in the fact that not only does it provide a key to understanding the provenance of their library books, but it also helps us to understand how Ponsonby and Butler inventoried their books and other material objects that they highly valued by using similar color-coded methods. Essentially, Ponsonby and Butler used color as a valuation system, whereas someone else might have employed a cost accounting system using a register or ledger. With this note and their library catalogue, Ponsonby and Butler assert the social capital of their books, “given by the Authors,” and the status of the library itself. Jackson notes that “a library was among other things a status symbol. Possession of a library showed that the owner had leisure, and taste” (49). Ponsonby and Butler personally enjoyed their books and their library, which, as Hicklin notes, had windows “of ancient painted glass *shedding their dim religious light*” (6). The intent of Ponsonby to commonplace inventories of their valuable possessions seemed imbued with a certain timeless sense of ownership, resulting in Ponsonby listing their inventory of books in fine calligraphy in a handsome *Catalogue of Books*. The catalogue provides room for writing down additional book titles. I have observed that no titles have been crossed out or corrections made to the catalogue. Ponsonby and Butler’s procurement of books and other luxuries seems to have been enjoyed as a pleasurable activity conducted leisurely, by correspondence in their library, while enjoying the excitement and status of receiving shipments of luxury goods from the Continent. The intangible value that Ponsonby and Butler placed on their collection of rare and expensive books finds expression in the carefully executed calligraphy on the front flyleaf of their “Catalogue Of Our Books” (see fig. 48).

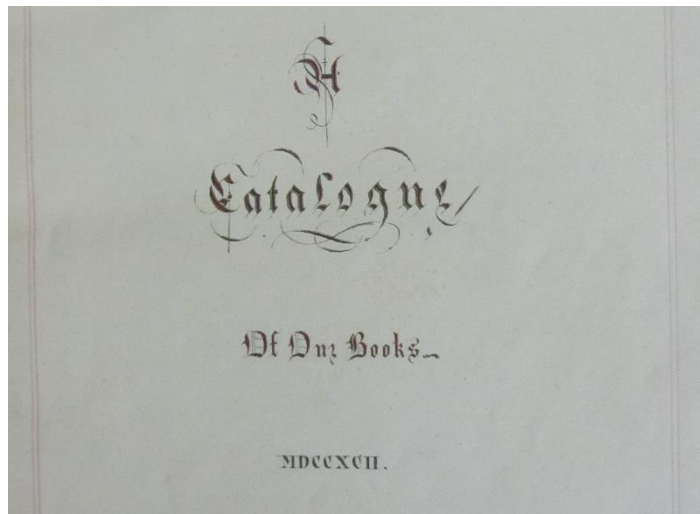


Fig. 48. Cover page to Sarah Ponsonby's free-standing *Catalogue of Our Books MS 22980C (1)*. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1792).

In this catalogue of rare and expensive books, Ponsonby and Butler list their major books in order according to subjects. They included their own system of where to locate the books in their library. Jackson notes "few people owned so many books that they could afford to neglect or forget about them" (253). Books were a type of social currency, serving as evidence of taste, education, and one's position in society, as the titles and genre of Ponsonby and Butler's books affirm. In Ponsonby and Butler's library catalogue, they included a page dedicated to the genre of miscellanies, simply titled "Miscellanies." As discussed in Chapter I, miscellanies and commonplace books generically share many similar attributes. In a sense their inventory of miscellanies is a listing of commonplace books. Though, by title, it appears that Ponsonby and Butler's miscellanies may bear a stronger resemblance to anthologies than commonplace books.

A couple of examples of titles listed under “Miscellanies” in their library catalogue include *Beauties of Celebrated Authours* and *Chatterton’s Miscellanies* (see fig. 49).

	Vol.
<i>MISCELLANIES</i>	
<i>Wotton's Works.</i>	Oct. 1
<i>Montague on Republicks.</i>	Oct. 1
<i>Chatterton's Miscellanies.</i>	Oct. 1
<i>Letters of Criticism.</i>	Oct. 1
<i>Smith's Maxims and Reflections.</i>	Oct. 1
<i>Works on the Sublime.</i>	Oct. 1
<i>Miscellanea Critica.</i>	Oct. 3
<i>Wotton on Speeches.</i>	Duo. 2
<i>Stani's Works.</i>	Duo. 10
<i>Origin of Poetry in Spain.</i>	Oct. 1
<i>Morality of Shakespeare, By Mrs Griffith.</i>	Oct. 1
<i>Montague on Shakespeare.</i>	Oct. 1
<i>Wotton on Pope.</i>	Oct. 2
<i>Stani's Elements of Criticism.</i>	Oct. 2
<i>Beauties of Celebrated Authours.</i>	Oct. 14

Fig. 49. Sarah Ponsonby’s list of miscellany or commonplace books in *Catalogue of Our Books MS 22980C* (41). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1792).

Though Ponsonby and Butler may have spent more money on landscaping their garden over a period of decades than they had spent on books, the list of books under

“Gardening” is surprisingly limited. Ponsonby and Butler spent not only considerable sums on landscaping, they also had spent the remainder of their day in their garden when they were not in their library reading and writing letters. A couple of examples of book titles listed under the heading of “Gardening” include *Miller’s Gardener’s Dictionary*, and *Chamber’s on Oriental Gardening* (see fig. 50). These titles seem to show that Ponsonby and Butler were focused on the technical and intellectual aspects of gardening as well as the aesthetics. They were cosmopolitan in their gardening taste, showing interest in “oriental” gardening. They also devoted a separate list to French gardens, with the heading *Jardinage*.

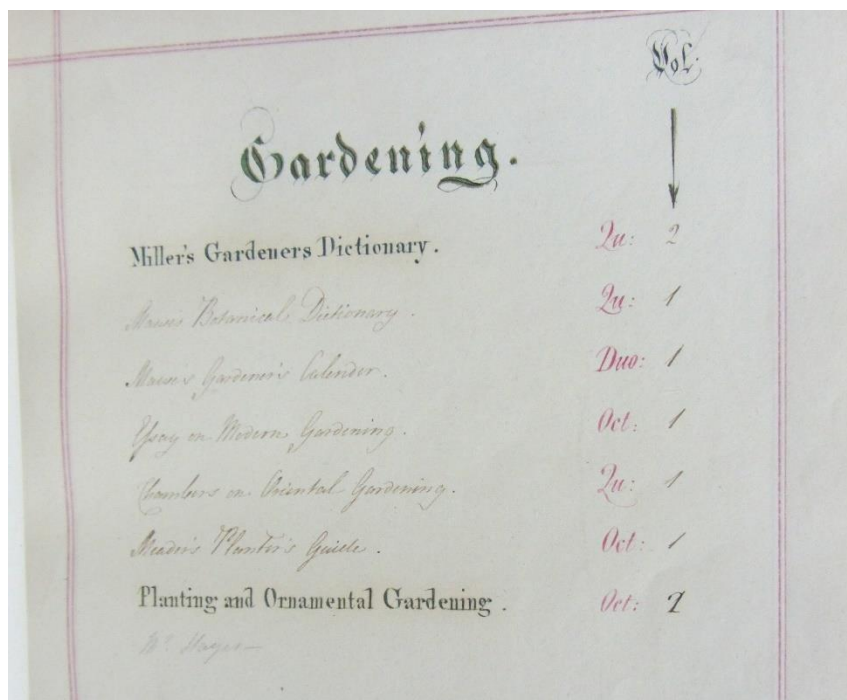


Fig. 50. A few gardening books from Sarah Ponsonby’s *Catalogue of Our Books MS 22980C* (13). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1792).

In her commonplace book (MS 22969A), Ponsonby inventories enjoyable, prized possessions of interest and value to both of them in a manner similar to their library catalogue. For example, she lists forty-nine different varieties of roses, which she titled “Catalogue of Roses in the Shrubery” [*sic*] (9). In Ponsonby’s commonplace book, this valuatory list of shrubs is separated into three, red-lined vertical sections on a single page that resemble a ledger holding space for recording £, *s*, and *d*, pounds, shillings, and pence, respectively. If we use Ponsonby’s note in her *Catalogue of Books* as a key for understanding her system of meaning for ink color, then the red ink signifies specialness. The red draws attention to the vertical lines, indicating that they have special meaning, which, suggests that Ponsonby and Butler equated this inventory with book-keeping methods of tracking and safe-keeping investments of valuable assets.

An auction record of Ponsonby and Butler’s estate demonstrates that, in fact, the rose bushes were a highly valuable investment. Hicklin’s extracts from the auction catalogue describing Plas Newydd’s gardens states that “many shaded and gravel walks encircle the Elysium which is adorned with curious and rare Shrubs and Flowers” (6-7). The unusual inclusion of the rose bushes (typically considered fixtures of real property) in the auction catalogue treated as personal property, along with fine wine and antique books, speaks to the high value of the rose bushes and Ponsonby’s and Butler’s enjoyment of this landscaping investment. Allan states that “of all the functions it performed, the commonplace book may have been most important for its Georgian exponents as a tool in the construction of the polite and cultivated individual” (142-43). As demonstrated with other material objects, such as linen and libraries as markers of

cultural capital, Ponsonby and Butler's inventory of their rose bushes speaks to their aesthetic tastes evident as an entry in Ponsonby's commonplace book.

In addition to this register of rose bushes, Ponsonby kept other book-keeping registers and memoranda in her commonplace book. For example, on page one, the privileged page of a commonplace book, Ponsonby inventoried plantings for their landscape garden and the kitchen garden. This memorandum notes that 400 plantings for the landscape garden and an assortment of exotic and rare nectarine, peach, plum, and cherry fruit trees for the kitchen garden were planted on 29 and 30 March 1785. On page two, Ponsonby included a descriptive register titled "Expences [*sic*] of the Dairy" dated 1785 (see fig. 51). She notes "Simon digging the foundation April 28 29 & 30" for a cost of "3[£].10[*d*]," and "John James mason and Brother at the Building," which had cost "3[£].8[*d*]" (2-3). As "consumable" goods and services, this page bears account records that resemble a register and has different meaning. In a sense, construction work on the dairy is an investment of ownership, but it did not resonate in the same way with Ponsonby and Butler as a luxury item of long-term or semi long term investment status. What women valued and how they showed value for material objects differed in the inventory records in their commonplace books as personal and subjective choices rather than as purely financial decisions.

Expenses of the Dairy 1785

Women digging the foundation April 21. 24 & 30. at 12 with 3 lorry.	3.10
Edward Lewis Cart, Quarrying Stone and Stones May 2 ^o .	4.
John Jones Mason & his Son Quarrying May 2 ^o . at 1.10 each	3.0
Walter . . . and Walter - began to build May 5.	3.0
W. Lubbock serving them same day	1.-
John Jones and his Son building May 6 th	3.8
Women carrying them	1.2
Edward Lewis, Cart Quarrying Stones 6 ^o	4.-
John Jones and Son building May 7 th	3.8
His Son in-law serving them.	1.2
John Jones & Son building May 9 th	3.0
W. Lubbock serving them	1.2
John Jones & Son building May 10 th	3.0
W. Lubbock do	1.2
Edward Lewis Quarrying Stones	4.3

a load home May 9th
 at 10^o
 May 10th
 at 10^o

Fig. 51. A register for “Expenses for the Dairy” from Sarah Ponsonby’s *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* (2). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).

Sarah Ponsonby recorded the cost of building the dairy in her commonplace book, but she did not include the cost of the exceptional plantings and trees. I contend that Ponsonby made these different distinctions in her commonplacing because women accounted for things differently in their commonplace books based upon value versus cost. Things women commonplaced that were valuable as “symbols of distinction” were not subjected to pedestrian evaluations of cost in commonplace books. In addition to recording minor, day-to-day household transactions, book-keeping in women’s commonplace books was concerned with the social currency of material objects and long-term investment in valuables as a form of safe-keeping. Consumable goods and services, such as labor needed to build a dairy, were low symbolic markers of distinction, so their actual numerical costs tended to be recorded in commonplace books.

Therefore, we know how much Ponsonby paid to the mason for “dressing stones” for the dairy but not for their “Samoma plum” tree for the kitchen garden. This distinction of value versus cost, however, does not determine the significance of various valuatory records in women’s commonplace books. In fact, the completed dairy was a significant investment in Plas Newydd that gave Ponsonby and Butler a great deal of personal satisfaction in their home and estate.

Once Ponsonby and Butler had eloped with each other from Ireland and settled in Wales in a cottage on the outskirts of Llangollen, they rarely left their Plas Newydd estate for any extended period of time. Instead, they focused their time, energy, and money on improving the cottage and surrounding gardens, changing it into a gothic manor house with extensive grounds of landscaping. Ponsonby and Butler’s attachment to Plas Newydd became legendary. Ponsonby and Butler’s emotional attachment to their home and gardens was often expressed in their commonplacing in the form of inventories, registers, memoranda, and architectural and landscape sketches that mapped their estate in relation to the surrounding territory. These various valuatory forms of expressing ownership are reminiscent of Mrs. Morgan’s narrative mapping of Millenium Hall that appraises the communal estate like a register, pointing out all of its valuable features:

You may behold our riches; that building, (pointing to what we thought a pretty temple) which perhaps you imagine designed only for ornament or pleasure, is a very large pigeon house, that affords a sufficient supply to our family, and many of our neighbors. That hill on your right-hand is a warren, prodigiously stocked with rabbits; this canal, and these other pieces of water, as well as the river you saw this morning, furnish our table with a great profusion of fish.[...] so that, with the help of a good dairy, perhaps no situation more amply afforded all the necessities of life. (Scott 78)

In Elizabeth Mavor's biography of Ponsonby and Butler, *The Ladies of Llangollen: A Study in Romantic Friendship* (1971), she intimates that Scott's novel was the inspiration for Plas Newydd. Mavor speculates that Ponsonby and Butler's aim was to "devote hearts and minds to self-improvement; to eschew the vanity of society; to beautify their surroundings and to better [...] the lot of the poor and unfortunate" (59). Ponsonby and Butler's construction of their dairy and ornamental grotto alongside a stream that they channeled with the estate situated with a prospect of the surrounding hills, certainly could have been modelled after the utopian Millenium Hall. I posit that the characters in the novel assert their investment and stewardship of Millenium Hall by embedding accountancy in the narrative through descriptive appraisals of the property and architecture, the landscape and hardscape, as "riches" along with the narrative mapping of how these "necessities of [a good] life" are situated in place and space. Ponsonby and Butler also assert their position of freehold ownership and investment in Plas Newydd through "mapping"⁹⁰ as a form of accountancy with inventively customized sketches or "maps" in Ponsonby's commonplace book

⁹⁰ Besides the physical thing of a map versus the act or process of mapping that may or may not produce a map, the difference between a map and mapping is also complicated by the meaning of space and place. According to Mona Domosh and Joni Seager in *Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers Make Sense of the World* (2001), "'space' refers to the three-dimensionality of life—to its material forms. We think of material forms, such as houses and communities and cities, as organized in certain ways. Their patterning and organization, as well as their relative location" (xxii). Domosh and Seager further explain that "'Place' has a different connotation. We use it to refer to spaces that have been invested with meaning. [...] So we might say that 'spaces' become 'places' when we have some personal association with them" (xxii). Domosh and Seager's explanation of space and place enables us to better understand the nature of maps and mapping, which can be applied to Sarah Ponsonby's mapping in her commonplace book. Maps of space tend to capture the technicalities of ownership, whereas, the mapping of place expresses "personal associations" of ownership in visual and narrative form. Ponsonby's commonplace book has both maps and mapping of space and place.

Sarah Ponsonby's "mappings" in her *Commonplace Book 22969A* (1785) are often fragmentary. The sketched renderings show contour lines, boundaries, hachuring, and gradations of shading that create suggestive rather than precise pictorial effects. In Ponsonby's commonplace book, eighteen out of a total of eighty-one pages in some way relate to maps or map-making. Most geographic theorists and cartographers would agree that maps and mapping display a type of ownership. According to J. B Harley in *The New Nature of Maps*, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power (2001), "on English estate maps, microcosmic symbols of landed wealth, it is the coats of arms, the country house, and the hunting activity of the proprietors which are represented. To own the map was to own the land" (75). In Ponsonby's commonplace book (MS 22969A), several pages are devoted to sketches of colophons and renderings of images that are reminiscent of heraldry on a coat of arms. One drawing in particular exhibits qualities that connect "microcosmic symbols" to Plas Newydd, and connect Ponsonby and Butler to this "map" of ownership. Front and center on the page, the colophon-like sketch portrays a woven basket shaped like a tall water vessel that is filled with and surrounded by surveying and cartographic instruments. Behind the basket is a grouping of axes. The axes are arranged in a crossed fashion, which is balanced on each side of the basket. On each side of the basket, three axe heads are facing downward at an acute angle. Two plain rods also cross behind the basket. One rod is round and the other has edges and are notched like a surveying measuring rod or range pole. The basket contains five objects that are smaller than the axes and appear to be the size of hand tools. Three objects

clearly resemble compasses for measuring angles. One of the objects in the basket resembles a wooden handle with a rope attached to it (see fig. 52).

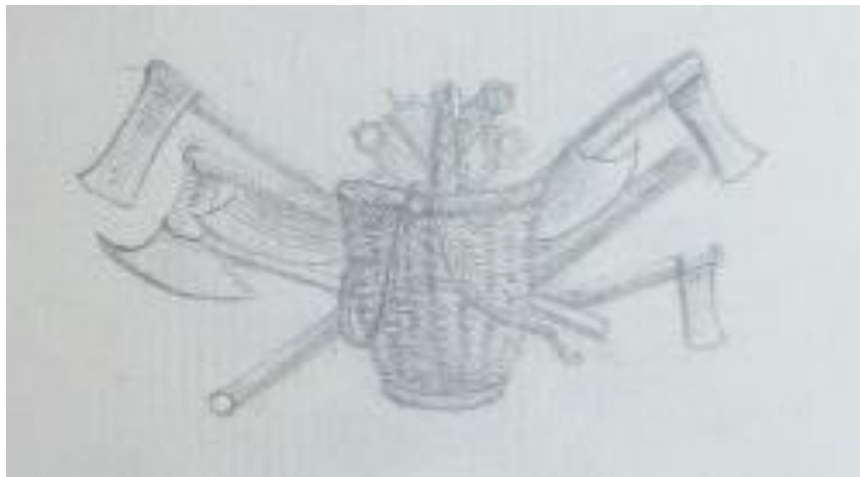


Fig. 52. Detailed view of the tools of the surveyor and cartographer from Sarah Ponsonby's *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* (36). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1785).

Given the likely appearance of these objects and given the fact that Ponsonby and Butler were keenly interested in geometry,⁹¹ suggests that the drawing depicts the tools of a surveyor or cartographer. The axes may seem incongruent with the grouping of surveying instruments; however, the most difficult and labor-intensive part of surveying (before GIS and GPS) was clearing a line of sight. The surveyor had to be able to have a clear line of sight in order to make an accurate reading of direction across a distance. The axes would have been needed to cut down small trees and brush that stood in the

⁹¹ Sarah Ponsonby created a manuscript of geometry lessons, which is in the *Hamwood Papers* archives, circa 1785.

way. These tools represent the necessary steps that would need to be taken to create a cartographic map.⁹²

Sarah Ponsonby's colophon-like drawing of a basket of surveying instruments employs the microcosmic symbolism of the landed gentry, the coats of arms. Jess Edwards's analysis of Cressy Dymock's tract, *A Discovery for New Divisions* (1653), discussed in *Writing, Geometry, and Space in Seventeenth-Century England and America: Circles in the Sand* (2006), provides insight into the visual rhetoric of Ponsonby's sketch. According to Edwards, in seventeenth-century literature the ideal bounded farm was compared to a well-kept wife with the manor house at the center. Dymock's tract is an example of gendering the "older paradigm of patriarchal stewardship" in which women are equated with property and become a part of the estate map (Edwards 60). Ponsonby and Butler's *Catalogue of Books* shows that they were well acquainted with seventeenth-century ideas of patriarchy with no less than twenty-four books on "Divinity" and nineteen books on "Antiquities" listed in their library; if not specifically acquainted with Dymock's tract, they would have been familiar with similar writings and gendered ideas of patriarchal stewardship. Ponsonby's cartographic colophon suggests that she had intuited a way to redefine this "older paradigm" in her commonplace book. The symbolism of the coats of arms, country house, and hunting sport that J. B Harley references are all highly gendered. Ponsonby and Butler did not

⁹² The tools and the occupation of the surveyor and the cartographer in the eighteenth century were often one and the same.

necessarily overtly reject all of the gendered symbols of landed wealth and proprietorship; rather, they had their own symbols with which to represent land and ownership: the tools of the surveyor and cartographer. They identified with these new applications of geometry, science, and mathematics that were associated with professionalism rather than with an old order of patriarchy.

One way in which Ponsonby and Butler inscribed ownership into their commonplacing was through the drawing of trees. Trees not only had special significance in surveying as metes and bounds boundary marker markers, but they also were valuable natural property. Douglas Davies remarks in “The evocative symbolism of trees,” in “The Iconography of Landscape” (1988), that trees have symbolism in addition to their commercial value. He states, that “trees are the most universal and successful of all plants” and “they have done so because they possess not only a variety of parts but because they stand over and against human generations” (41). Ponsonby and Butler invested in trees, as much, if not more, than flowering plants for their garden (see fig. 53).



Fig. 53. Sarah Ponsonby's sketches of trees in *Commonplace Book 22960A* (23). Shows ownership of property using trees as boundary markers. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1785).

In addition to Ponsonby's colophon of surveying instruments, she also sketched Plas Newydd and its surrounding estate grounds in her commonplace book. On the recto side, the page is visually divided in half with a miniature cameo of Plas Newydd (on the right) and a sketch of Dinas Bran foregrounded with a tree (on the left), as it imaginatively would have been prior to being a ruin. As one of three primary visual fields, the tree is the focus of this left-sided visual ground and of the entire planographic surface. An overview of Ponsonby and Butler's picturesque home and landscape garden

in the cameo includes a summer hut on a wooded hillside located in the top left part of the sketch. The eye is drawn to the tree line to the left and follows the curvature of cameo border, which leads up to the hut. If the visual field continued beyond the bounded parameters of the cameo, the ruins of Dinas Bran would be a part of the scene. Ponsonby complicates the idea of ownership by placing the drawing of Dinas Bran adjacent to Plas Newydd. The castle is restored to its former grandeur as a castle, yet, it is excluded from her cameo drawing (see fig. 54). Ann Bermingham reminds us in *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (1989) that “landscape gardening and drawing were not ideologically neutral [...]. they actively inscribed or became the sights of specific ideological attitudes and ambivalences” (78). Ponsonby’s allusion to past historical, fortress-building in Wales and present normative, cottage architecture (hidden and reimaged), inscribes both desires and ambivalences onto the cameo sketch. The sketch suggests a desire to remake Plas Newydd into a restored castle.

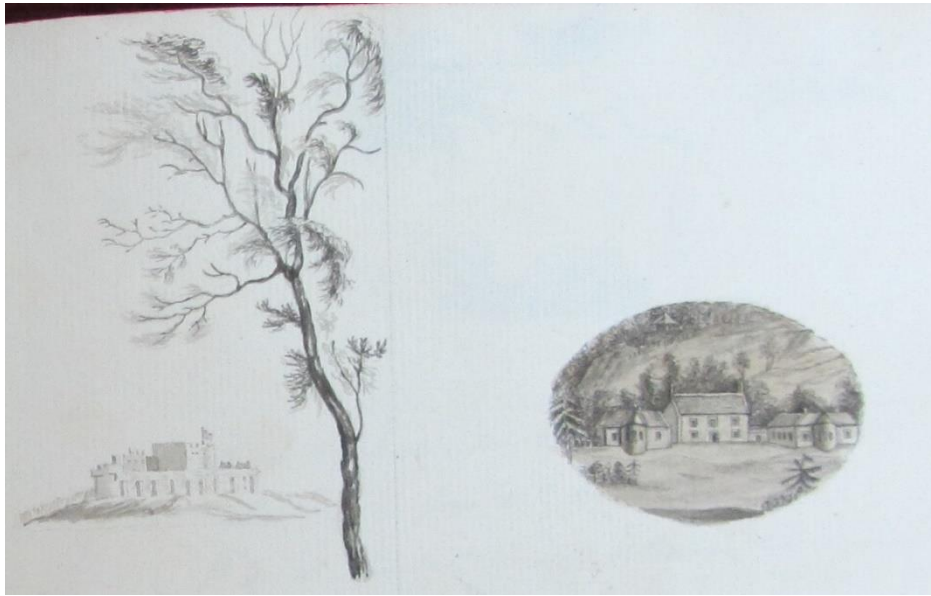


Fig. 54. From Sarah Ponsonby's *Commonplace Book MS 22969A*, a cameos sketch of Plas Newydd (on the right) with an overview of Ponsonby and Butler's landscape garden, including a summer hut on the hillside and Dinas Bran just out of view in the background (29). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1785).

The drawing also suggests a projection of the ambivalences of both leaving improvements incomplete and fully investing their efforts in some other place than Ireland. The investment that this mapping is suggesting, remaking a castle would have been daunting for Ponsonby and Butler, especially early on when they had just settled in Llangollen with a seemingly habitual shortage of funds. The cameo drawing of their home is an elevation view of the cottage before they transformed it into a Gothic manor, and the drawing of Dinas Bran frames it in a time period before it was a ruin. Just as the ruins of Crucis Abbey supplied much of the Gothic refurbishment of Plas Newydd, such as their stained glass windows, Dinas Bran figuratively supplies a map for remaking the cottage into a grand manor house with gardens as grand as those of any landed nobility.

Though Ponsonby's commonplace book informs us that 400 plants had been planted at Plas Newydd in the spring of 1785, trees were the primary feature of their naturalistic landscape designs. Ponsonby's commonplace book has more sketches of trees than any other organic species (see fig. 55). Trees were some of the most valuable assets that Ponsonby and Butler owned. Hicklin excerpts the auction catalogue's depiction of the trees on the Plas Newydd estate: "Everything in grace and beauty, united with a great variety of foliage. Upon the Freehold is a considerable quantity of valuable Timber which over hangs a deep and hollow glen" (7). In this excerpt, the valuableness of trees as "timber," like the rose bushes, seems to subvert the idea that they are fixtures of real property. Yet, it is interesting to note that under common law practice of coverture, regarding the control of assets, trees were considered separate from real property. The valuatary records of trees sketched in Ponsonby's commonplace book are comparable to the inventories and registers of linens, books, and other material objects represented in women's commonplace books; they were seen as investments without any intention to sell or trade them. The presence of a long-term investment was simply recorded, or, in the case of the trees on the Plas Newydd estate, they were sketched as a significant record of ownership. Records of quiescent investments were kept for safe-keeping and reassurance of wealth and social status in women's commonplace books for one's well-being. This ideation of investment exhibited in women's commonplace books is perhaps one of the most difficult perspectives to recognize--the presence of valuatary records of investments without apparent intent to sell for profit.



Fig. 55. From Sarah Ponsonby's *Commonplace Book MS 22968A* a sketch of trees as symbolic of rootedness (24). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1785).

Nine volumes of commonplace books are associated with Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock Castle (1747-1815), chieftain of the Rose clan, dating from 1731 to 1825, which are housed at the National Records of Scotland⁹³ in Edinburgh. Rose inherited some of these volumes, added to them, and some volumes were compiled posthumously by others, as necessary for the continuation and continuity of clan responsibilities and property ownership. Rose kept inventories of material assets and account registers of estate business in her commonplace books as a part of her responsibilities as clan

⁹³ Unfortunately, I am unable to provide images of Elizabeth Rose's commonplace books or quote and paraphrase from her manuscripts. This hindrance is due to being denied permission from the National Records Office of Scotland because of uncertainty about private copyright holder ownership rights to the archives. Therefore, in this dissertation, I am describing what I remember of Rose's commonplace books.

chieftain. Tellingly, she chose to keep financial records of estate business, such as the debts of tenants, alongside her annual reading lists of literature, philosophy, history, and natural science. I posit that by combining excerpts from early modern, enlightenment era books along with her financial affairs, Rose signalled her desire for a leadership style that strove to base decisions upon rational governance and knowledge inspired by the Scottish Enlightenment.

Under the Scottish clan system, Rose's tenants may have been historically related to her, at least in the sense of kinship bonds of rather loose lineal descent. The question of family kinship poses some interesting quandaries about what exactly constitutes the domestic sphere. Blurred distinctions and questions arise about who are family, who are the public, and what constitutes the domestic domain when one is a chieftain? In her commonplace books, Rose recorded tenancy transactions with many people for whom were not necessarily related to her. Given the size and complexity of running the Rose clan estate, it is likely that Rose had financial records drawn up by an agent or solicitor as well. Yet, having her own records available in her commonplace books to quickly and amicably resolve disputes, would certainly have advantages. Consequently, the registers and ledgers that I perused in her commonplace books are more comprehensive than any I have seen in other women's commonplace books.

Elizabeth Rose compiled together in her commonplace books the things she valued or needed, which were copious excerpts from books that were primarily philosophical or religious. She corresponded with her cousin, Henry Mackenzie, and kept a copy of his novel, *The Man of Feeling* (1771). They had a close relationship and

corresponded frequently. Mackenzie shared excerpts from his books and asked her for her opinion on the novel as he was writing it. Rose had a few novels in her library, but, in view of her excerpts and annual register of reading lists, it seems to be a genre that she did not read or, perhaps, she preferred to not reveal her interest in reading novels in the semi-private genre of commonplace books. From my brief glance through Rose's extensive inventories of books and reading lists in her commonplace books, one would be tempted to draw the conclusion that her library was an odd and a bit dated jumble of books, seeming more like the library suited for an elder clergyman than a young woman. Allan's comments in *Making British Culture* (2008) regarding an antiquarian library seems to describe Rose's library fairly well: "The accidental effects of inheritance [...] shaped individuals' ownership of books. For most of the largest collections were in practice the product of decades, even centuries, of zealous purchasing within often-byzantine kinship groupings" (96). Inheriting the clan estate, Kilravock castle, the library, and its books, surely, was a factor in Rose writing list upon list of book titles in her commonplace books. Regardless of their contents, these inventories of books signified social stature and wealth. Surrounding herself with markers of authority and status was perhaps all the more necessary given the protracted legal battle that embroiled her in a battle to retain her right and title as Chieftain.

Elizabeth Rose had a firm understanding of owning property for herself and for the Rose clan. As "owner" and steward of a castle estate with extensive legacies of art, literature, and furnishings, she was responsible for extensive amounts of property: real estate and personal property. Claire Lamont notes in "Domestic Architecture" in *Jane*

Austen in Context (2005) that in the home, “a library was usually a public room” (230). I would imagine that the library as a public space would be all the more a socio-political space, a meeting point for public and private spheres, and conflated with the authority of the castle itself. In Rose’s commonplace books, she kept valuatory records of her books more than any other asset, even more than registers of estate business. The primary manner in which Rose accounted for her books, listing them in her annual reading lists in her commonplace books. Next to each line item entry for each title on the right side, she placed a number for how many volumes she has of that particular title. It was not uncommon for her to numerically indicate two or three volumes of a book; as I recall, *Vicissitudes: a Novel* is listed as having six volumes. At the bottom of the list of books, she tallied-up the total number of volumes in the category. For the year, Rose listed seventy-eight volumes in her commonplace book. Multiple volumes of a single title suggest that she had lend out and borrowed library books, and if exchanges of books were common and Kilravock Castle served as a type of lending-library, then Rose had all the more reason to take careful stock of her library. I posit that the reading lists and book inventories “with the accidental effects of inheritance” serve as valuatory records in her commonplace books.

It was commonplace for women to track what they owned or owed in their commonplace books. Women commonplacated luxury goods to not only to keep track of what they owned but also to be reminded that “thing-types” (Attfield) were good investments. Women favor particular categories of material objects as stable sources of status and wealth and well-being. According to Berg, “women provided very detailed

descriptions of their things; clothes, light furnishings, marked and table linens, tea and china ware were personal and expressive goods, conveying identity, personality, and fashion” (238). Berg’s list suggests a helpful overview of the thing-types women inventoried in their commonplace books, allowing for individual taste and interest in types and forms of valuatory records. Women’s valuatory records are some of the most personal and individualized records that women wrote in their commonplace books.

CHAPTER IV

“VENTURE FORTH, A NOBLE PEOPLE DWELL THERE”: COMMONPLACING CULTURAL AND SOCIABLE POLITICS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE OF LADY MORGAN’S, SARAH PONSONBY’S, AND ELEANOR BUTLER’S COMMONPLACE BOOKS

In the descriptive subtitle to the late eighteenth-century miscellany *Hotch Potch* (1774), Thomas Medley lists “controversies and opinions” as one of three main subject areas in his commonplace book. During the Romantic period, many women’s commonplace books featured controversies and opinions through the inclusion of various entries and excerpted genres, often incorporating different types of print media and modes of written expression. As a case in point, Lady Morgan compiled poetry and prose in print and scribal form along with annotated periodical clippings and ephemeral mementoes of social and political import in her commonplace books. Though Morgan expressed her opinions in the public sphere through her published works, soirees, and attendance at social events, such as Lady Northland’s ball,⁹⁴ she also conveyed socio-political viewpoints in her commonplace books. For example, on a verso page in *Commonplace Book MS 878*, Morgan includes a newspaper clipping indicative of her interest in the cause of Catholic emancipation in Ireland. The clipping runs vertically

⁹⁴ See Chapter 1 for a detail discussion of Lady Morgan’s attendance at Lady Northlands’s ball.

along the outer left margin and unfolds, extending beyond the manuscript by several inches (see fig. 56).

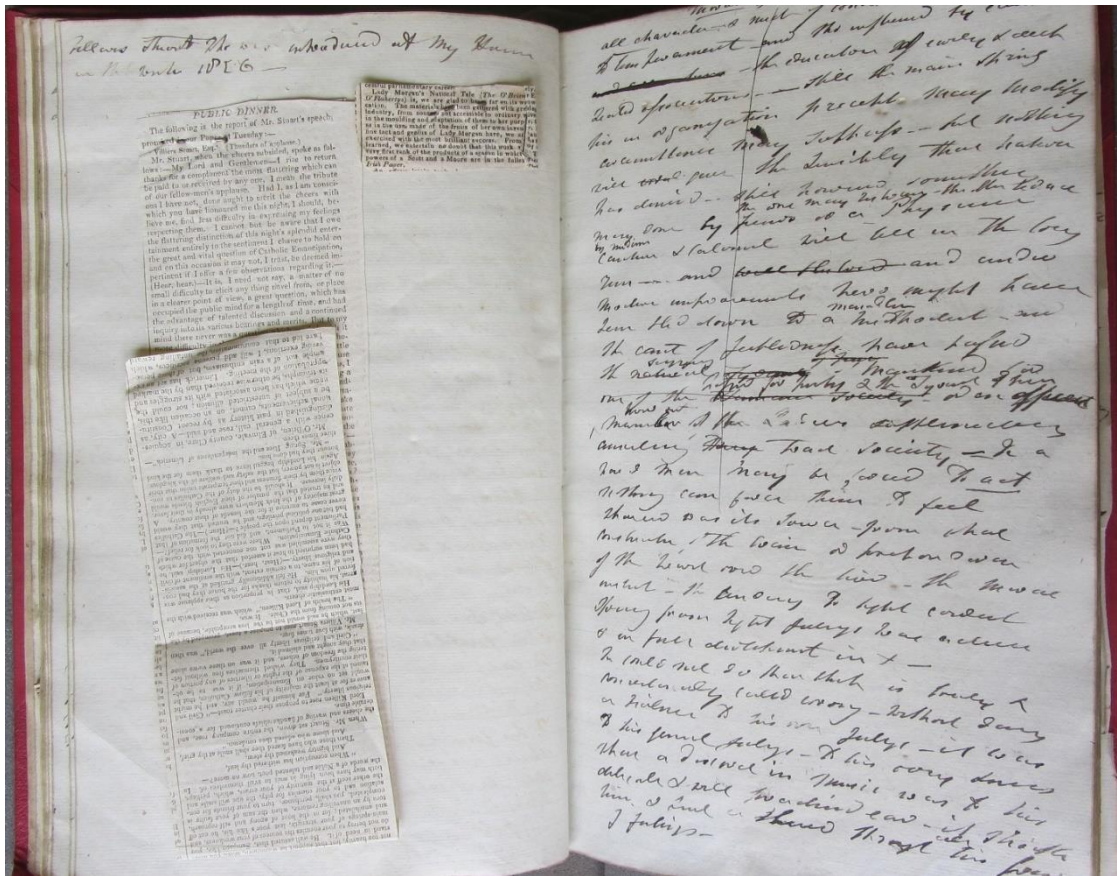


Fig. 56. Full view of newspaper clipping folded in Lady Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 878* reporting Henry Villiers-Stuart's public dinner speech on Catholic emancipation. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland ("Sydney Morgan" 1826).

This clipping recounts a speech given, as the title indicates, at a "Public Dinner."

The clipping includes a descriptive subheading declaring that "the following is the report

of Mr. Stuart's⁹⁵ speech, promised by our Paper of Tuesday" (MS 878).⁹⁶ Baron Henry Villiers-Stuart's public dinner speech dovetails with his politics and his 12 February 1827 speech in the online edition of *The History of Parliament: House of Commons 1820-1832* (2009); D. R. Fisher notes that Villiers-Stuart "at the 1826 general election [...] came forward as a liberal Protestant supporter of Catholic emancipation" ("Henry Villiers Stuart"). According to Fisher, Villiers-Stuart's post-election maiden speech "urged the necessity of emancipation, disputing claims that Catholic doctrines were 'totally incompatible with the British constitution' and contrasting the enlightened rule of India and Canada with the 'persecution and oppression' of Ireland" ("Henry Villiers Stuart"). Both Villiers-Stuart's public dinner and post-election speeches question England's oppressive governorship of Ireland compared to its rule of other British Isle and commonwealth nations.⁹⁷ In appealing to his audience to support emancipation, Villiers-Stuart makes the pragmatic case that religious freedom in Ireland ensures the

⁹⁵ First Baron Henry Villiers-Stuart (1803-1874) represented the County Waterford, Ireland, as a Tory Member of Parliament from 1826-1830.

⁹⁶ This newspaper clipping has been cropped, leaving the publication date and publisher unidentified.

⁹⁷ Julie Donovan in *Lady Morgan and the Politics of Style* (2009) points out Morgan's news clipping of Villiers-Stuart's dinner speech. She notes that "Scotland was allowed an established Presbyterian church," which begs the question: "Why force the Irish to be beholden to a church not of the majority?" (77). Villiers-Stuart's public dinner speech responds to this implicit objection. He argues that "the [Irish] Catholic has a common law right to eligibility," to full eligibility to participate in society regardless of religion just as the Scottish Presbyterian currently enjoys such rights (MS 878). According to Villiers-Stuart, religious freedom aligns with common law and common sense, giving the example of how the "Scotch had adopted Presbyterianism as best suited to their creed and opinions" (MS 878). He concludes that the same political allowances should be applied to Ireland and "adduce in the favor of the measure" for granting Catholic emancipation (MS 878). He also argues that the Irish are not more prone to rebellion against England than the Scottish, who, in fact, instigated rebellion under James II yet enjoy the rights of religious freedom. Villiers-Stuart further argues that "till Catholicism in Ireland be placed on the same footing as has Presbyterianism in Scotland, she cannot be otherwise than as she is—a burthen to herself and others" (MS 878).

best interests of everyone, Protestant and Catholic alike, which resonates with Morgan's own viewpoint expressed throughout her published works and commonplace books.

This news report invites the reader's engagement in public debate on Catholic emancipation in Ireland by including audience responses in parenthetical notations, such as "(Thunders of applause)," "(Hear, hear)," "(Loud cheers)," and "(Continued cheers)" (MS 878). A sense of participation in Villiers-Stuart's political address would have been heightened by the auditory reading habits practiced in the Romantic period. Naomi Tadmor in "Women, Reading and Household Life in the Eighteenth Century" (1996) reminds us that reading "was often a sociable rather than a solitary experience and this was especially manifested in the regular habit of reading aloud" (165). Karin Littau in *Theories of Reading* (2006) also notes the historical social habit of reading aloud and that this habit continued well into the first half of the twentieth century. She argues that "the practice of reading aloud [...] was not only often implied in literary texts themselves, such as numerous references to a listening reader [...], but continued to be a favoured mode of reading, perhaps even as recently as the invention of television, to provide entertainment for the family or in a social circle" (15). The parenthetical acclamations transcribed in the "Public Dinner" report not only imply a "listening reader" but also provide auditory cues, which, when read aloud, involved readers in a sociable performance on the politics of Catholic emancipation. The performativity of reading aloud a public speech, such as Villiers-Stuart's, has implications in women's commonplacing.

The performativity of reading aloud, transliterating, clipping, copying, sketching, annotating, and juxtapositioning socio-political opinions from a variety of sources in various forms were modes by which women actively participated in the exchange of ideas. Through the generic process of commonplacing, the women in my case studies explored and pondered contemporary issues, formulating their opinions as they applied book-making techniques to exhibit and preserve compilations of text, images, and ephemera. For example, the side-by-side, top-by-top juxtaposition of Villiers-Stuart's speech with a book review of *The O'Brien's and the O'Flahertys* (1827) in Morgan's commonplace book (MS 878) symbolically aligns her writing with contemporary Irish politics. Though the book review ignores the political implications inherent in the novel, Morgan associates her public position as a writer with Villiers-Stuart's role in the public debate on Catholic emancipation in Ireland (see fig. 57).



Fig. 57. Snippet view showing the juxtaposition of Henry Villiers-Stuart's speech on Catholic emancipation next to a book review of Lady Morgan's national tale *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* in *Commonplace Book MS 878* as an aspect of meaning-making in commonplacing. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland ("Sydney Morgan" 1826).

Methods of commonplacing were performative acts of socio-political involvement, placing women amid a textual as well as a sociable public sphere. Morgan commonplacing Villiers-Stuart's speech acts as a textual Habermasian coffee house of sociable political engagement. To understand women's performativity in the public sphere in relation to commonplacing, one would do well to understand an analogous point of reference in the relation between an autobiographical subject and gender as constructed reality. Felicity Nussbaum in *The Autobiographical Subject* (1989) argues that "the relation of autobiographical discourse to the real is opaque, highly codified, and politically charged; it is entangled in the material reality of lived experience" (xiii). Similarly, discourse in the public sphere in relation to the private activity of commonplacing is complicated with opaque divisions between different spheres that are culturally, socially, and politically inflected. The public sphere in the Romantic period was an amorphous domain. As an "entangled reality," this sphere included the sociability of women's multifaceted lives with their commonplacing. Nussbaum in "Sociability and Life Writing: Hester Lynch Thrale Piozzi" (2012), when addressing "private-in-the-public" writing, states that "in its rich variety, and because of its potential to expose nearly everything, proved to be an important means for intellectual women to contribute to producing a nation's identity, taste and values" (70). The implication of women's entangled private/public life writing that exposed "nearly everything" suggests that women's commonplace books also represent cultural identity, taste, and values.

I argue throughout this chapter that women's commonplace books include a rich variety of "private-in-the-public" life writing that contributes to forming a nation's

collective oeuvre, its cultural legacy. I contend that, by their very existence, women's commonplace books form a part of society's political landscape. As participants in creating the public sphere, women compiled matters of cultural or national identity, taste, and values in their commonplace books. In this chapter, I show how controversies and opinions flowed between private and public spheres in women's commonplace books through creative book-making techniques that incorporated different types of media and modes of expression. Using Morgan's and Ponsonby's commonplace books as case studies, I argue that women creatively engaged in socio-political discursive practices in their commonplacing that intersected with cultural or national identity and aesthetics. Altogether in Morgan's and Ponsonby's commonplacing, these discursive practices included clippings of socio-political articles from print periodicals, extracts informed by bardic traditions, renderings evocative of Gothic architecture, and cartographic representations delineating geo-political boundaries. Morgan and Ponsonby engaged in political controversies and formulated opinions with cultural linkages and artifacts⁹⁸ in the context of British-Englishness, "new nationalism,"⁹⁹ and modes of imagining an extended sense of community.¹⁰⁰ Morgan's and Ponsonby's resistance to British-Englishness and the embracement of new nationalism, which often evokes

⁹⁸ Linda McDowell in *Gender, Identify and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (1999) discusses nationalism as being determined by symbolic markers of cultural artifacts.

⁹⁹ Katie Trumpener in *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (1997) defines new nationalism as a way to identify re-energized post conquest nationhood hearkening back to an original state of collective autonomy (24-25).

¹⁰⁰ Benedict Anderson discusses "imagined political communities" in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983, 2006 ed.).

tension and anger, remains evident throughout their commonplace books. However, the tension and anger often associated with rejection of English hegemony, becomes positively redirected and reframed in Morgan's and Ponsonby's commonplace books through affirmations of community and personal engagement in the public sphere.

British-Englishness as a presumption, which assumes British geopolitical and nationalistic identity conflated with England or rather heavily weighted as Englishness, was onerous for the Celtic nations of Ireland and Wales. Sarah Prescott in *Eighteenth-Century Writing from Wales* (2008) remarks upon England's ethnocentrism in regard to Wales,¹⁰¹ which, I would add, applies to other Celtic nations as well. She identifies this skewed perspective of Britishness as "the English fallacy of 'contributionism,'" denoting the idea (and attitude) from a hegemonic perspective that "Welsh traditions are important only in relation to what they can offer England" (71). British-Englishness conveys the attitude that the geopolitical pluses and cultural legacies of Wales and of other Celtic nations only matter to the extent that they benefited England. The governing power of parliament at Westminster and the monarchy as head of the Commonwealth, seated primarily in London, further fueled assumptions of primacy in which Britishness was essentially equated with England. England's over-reach in the British Isles was both problematic and motivating for Celtic nations developing individual and common

¹⁰¹ A contributing part of this ethnocentrism may be due to the fact that as recently as 1967 Wales had not been designated (since 1746) as a separate entity from England in name and geographic boundaries. Furthermore, it was not until 1998 that governing powers were returned to Wales by the Government of Wales Act, establishing the National Assembly for Wales followed by further devolution through referendums and legislation from 2006-2011.

cultural identities. According to Katie Trumpener in *Bardic Nationalism: The Romanic Novel and the British Empire* (1997) a Celtic “sense of culture” that could have withered altogether under the “enforced imposition” of empire survived in the form of “new nationalism.” Trumpener associates new nationalism with “a new sense of history and of collective identity,” as well as with a polity’s “new belief in their political agency” (24). She states that “a new nationalism may be called into being in several parts of Britain, but only where a firm sense of national identification, pride and anger, has long preceded it” (25). From a cultural and historical perspective, I would add that this new nationalism was indicative of Celtic nations who were a part of a union with England, forcibly coerced or not, but whose pride and anger has eventually led to a state of political devolution. New nationalism was determined by a commitment to keep alive and to access one’s cultural legacy while being within a political union with England in which Celtic national anger was positively redirected. A positive redirection of national anger surfaces in both Morgan’s and Ponsonby’s commonplace books, as demonstrated throughout this chapter.

Lady Morgan was known for her oppositional politics toward British rule, a governance that had bred thinly veiled Irish anger. She embedded the politics of this tense relationship into not just her novels, but into her commonplace books as well. The considerably smaller clipping on the right side of the same page containing Villiers-Stuart’s public dinner speech is a book review of *The O’Briens and the O’Flahertys* excerpted from the *Irish Paper* (ca. 1827). This book review of Morgan’s novel measures approximately three by two inches and was attached near the top of the page

with a straight sewing pin in a manner similar to other clippings. The review extols the author's "industry," use of "sources" and "adaptation of them to her purpose," praising the novel as a work of the "very first rank" (MS 878; see fig. 58). Utilizing sources "to her purpose" in the novel encompassed the significant use of glosses, as Susan B. Egenolf demonstrates in "'Have you Irish?': Heroism in Morgan's *The O'Brien's and the O'Flahertys*" in *The Art of Political Fiction* (2009). Egenolf notes that in keeping with Morgan's politicization of glosses, the Preface marks "the contemporary era in Ireland" as (quoting from the Preface) "an epoch of transition between the ancient despotism of brute force, and the dawning reign of public opinion" (*Political Fiction* 158). Egenolf asserts that this transition moves toward "the efficacy of female agency [...] to right the wrongs of an oppressed nation," which she posits as the central theme of the novel (158). The turning away from "brute force" to "female agency" is commensurate with Morgan's growing belief in public opinion to right political wrongs. The book review of *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* itself signals Morgan's agency in creating constructive political discourse in her national tales and the power to influence public opinion. The interplay of the public medium of the book review with Morgan's commonplace book and the political theme of *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* provides a model for new nationalism.

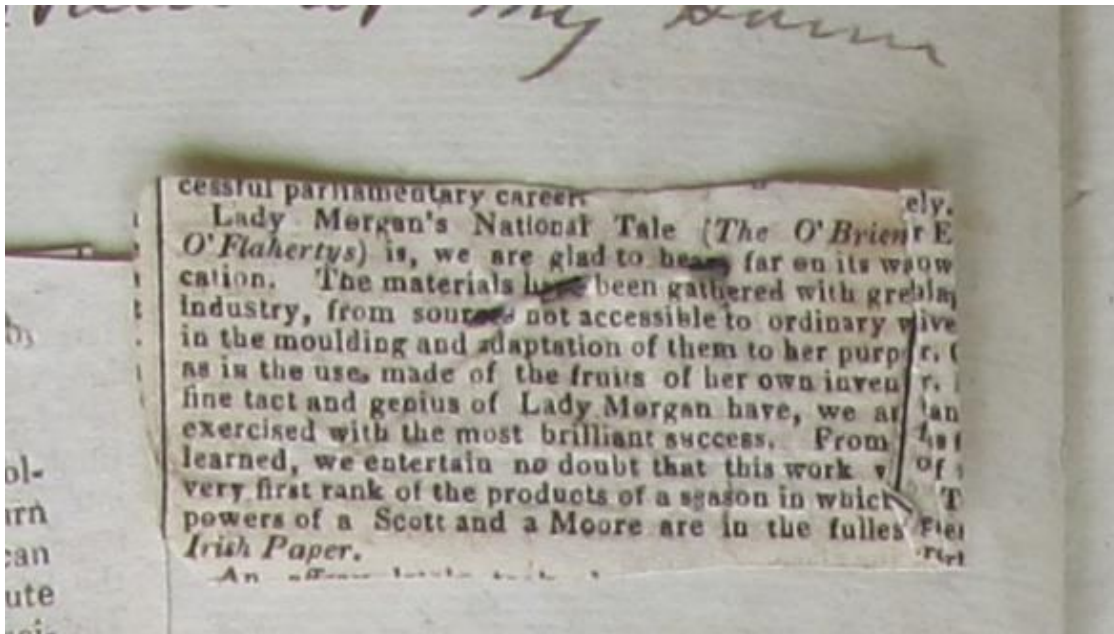


Fig. 58. Book review of Lady Morgan's national tale, *The O'Brien's and the O'Flahertys* in her commonplace book (MS 878). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland ("Sydney Morgan" 1826).

Lady Morgan's compilation of the book review and Villiers-Stuart's public dinner speech ideologically connects through a shared hope, implicit and explicit, for a new epoch of Irish freedom. Morgan's banner on this verso page unifies the news clippings that follow separate generic conventions, creating an overarching synthesis of the two distinct texts. The banner-like header proclaims Morgan's close association with the Tory Member through the declaration "Villiers Stuart Who was Introduced at My Home in the Winter 1826" (MS 878; see fig. 59). Serving parliament for County Waterford and being an outspoken champion for Catholic Emancipation were reasons enough for Morgan to invite Villiers-Stuart as a guest to her home. Morgan's political views in favor of Catholic emancipation and her status in Dublin society, as a writer and

a Lady of noteworthy social standing, were sufficient reasons for him to accept her invitation. The banner annotation above the public speech and book review in Morgan’s commonplace book identifies Villiers-Stuart as a personal guest, overlapping the private sphere of hospitality with Morgan’s domestic sphere. The public sphere of the dinner event also overlaps with the political sphere in the content of his speech. All three texts together, as diverse media, convey Morgan’s cohesive message of support for Irish national causes, subtly establishing a discursive role for commonplace books.

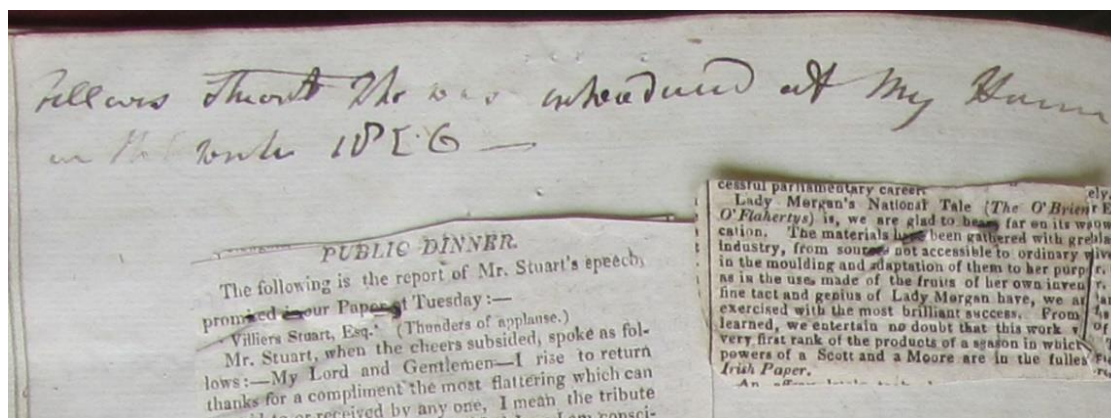


Fig. 59. Snippet view of Lady Morgan’s handwritten banner annotation in *Commonplace Book MS 878*, overarching two news clippings: Henry Villiers-Stuart’s speech on Catholic emancipation and a book review of *The O’Briens and the O’Flahertys*.¹⁰² Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1826).

¹⁰² See Appendix D for an overview of the verso page in *Commonplace Book MS 878* holding the two news clippings of Henry Villiers-Stuart’s speech on Catholic emancipation and a book review of *The O’Briens and the O’Flahertys*, including Lady Morgan’s overarching handwritten banner annotation.

Morgan was a successful published author, and she extended her abilities into other modes of writing, as her dedication to commonplacings reveals. Susan J. Wolfson reminds us in *Borderlines: The Shiftings of Gender in British Romanticism* (2006) that during the Romantic period, “like Wollstonecraft, [...] women did not murmur in the peace of the home, but wrote in address to the public sphere” (15). Morgan attests to effectiveness of commonplacings as textual participation in the public sphere with a unique responsibility to enlighten and expose social ills and political wrongs. Morgan avers this belief by attaching in of her commonplace books an unattributed cropped periodical article (n. d.) that rhetorically asks the question, “But what is a journal?” (see fig. 60).

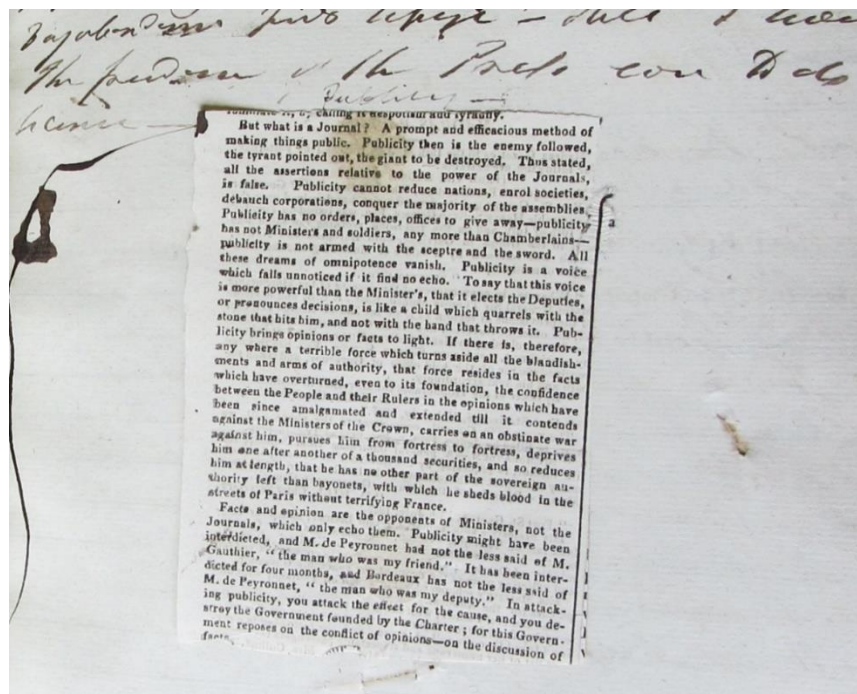


Fig. 60. From Lady Morgan’s *Commonplace Book* 878, “But what is a Journal?” article. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” ca. 1825-1828).

The article critiques ensconced authority, “Ministers” as tyrants who pose a threat to “the People” (MS 878), through addressing the leading question by stating that a journal is a “prompt and efficacious method of making things public” (MS 878). In noting that journals act as a means of vital communication for “the people” in the public sphere, the essay equates journals positively with the word “publicity” (MS 878). Morgan focuses on the significance of journals and “publicity” by writing the word above the clipping, indicating that she intended to remember the word as a meaningful term in relation to the article and commonplacing (MS 878). Given the context of being a printed journal article, the author of the essay likely meant that publicity associated with the efficaciousness of journals applies to print publication. Though, I suggest, in commonplacing this essay, Morgan gives the terms “publicity” and “journal” broader scope of meaning and import. By including this article in her commonplace book, Morgan relates “making things public” to commonplacing. From Morgan’s vantage point of commonplacing private-in-the-public writing, the idea of public writing in the journal article accommodates the significance of political engagement in commonplace books and commonplacing as a method of political discourse.

The article forwards the argument that journals, essential to public discourse, serve a politically important function in which “publicity [...] is the enemy followed, the tyrant pointed out, the giant to be destroyed” (MS 878). The article presumes that tyrants need secrecy to further their corrupt agenda. Stemming from this supposition, the article presents a rhetorical straw-argument asserting that journals are inconsequential because they do not have brute, legal force to stop the enemy or tyrant. The refutation of this

straw-argument in the essay, with the statement that “Publicity brings opinions or facts to light” (MS 878), implies that the machinations of political corruption are thwarted by not only the light of publicity but also by the advancement of opinions and facts.

Underscoring these points, the essay posits that “any where [*sic*] a terrible force which turns aside all the blandishment and arms of authority, that force resides in the facts [...]. Facts and opinions are the opponents of Ministers, not the Journals, which only echo them” (MS 878). This statement places primary political significance on having facts and opinions at hand with journals being secondary as means to facilitate to the open communication of facts and opinions. Whether journals are print publications or manuscript commonplace books, the essay appears to support the notion that generating ideas in the public sphere thwarts tyranny. Morgan commonplacing this article suggests that the generic significance of commonplace books in the public sphere, fosters the development of facts and opinions for the good of society.

Ina Ferris in *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (2002) remarks that “the centrality of public opinion was fundamental to Morgan’s liberal understanding of the modern nation,” and “for the notion of the public sphere, Morgan had a nostalgic affection” (68-69). Morgan’s understanding of modernity and her nostalgic affection for her readers provided reassurance that, regardless of medium or genre, her opinions mattered in the public sphere. According to Ferris, “for Morgan, this public acted as against both the powers of force and the more sinister powers of government secrecy and control. To this public she dedicated her *Memoirs*. Opposed to it stood the professional criticism that was her target, a discourse she charges with being

in secret and cowardly complicity with government power and party aims” (69). Morgan’s *The Book of the Boudoir*, which she characterizes as a collection of “extracts” (v), expresses a conviction that she can count on her readers rather than Tory or Whig critics. Morgan was convinced that her critics, such as those from the *Edinburgh Review*, had a political agenda in their negative reviews of her work. However, in “absolute defiance against their fulminations” (*Boudoir* 206), Morgan vows to keep writing her opinions to a receptive audience citing “the attack on ‘*France*’ as an example in which controversy had helped to promote books sales to the point that it sold two editions” (208). In other words, the notoriety that her critics generated in their negative reviews of Morgan’s literary work served to increase books sales. Morgan’s *The Book of the Boudoir*, travel memoirs, and her national tales, like her commonplace books, consisted of a “bulwark of ‘opinion’” (Ferris 69) against the British government and their sycophants, the literary critics.

In Lady Morgan’s opinion, the professional literary critics lacked “openness,” trustworthiness, and honor (69). This political vacuum suggested a role for Morgan in the public sphere in which writing opinions could be relied upon to provide a type of pseudo-democratic representation for Ireland. Egenolf in “Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson) and the Politics of Romanticism” (2011) notes that Morgan understood the “potential for the writer, the artist, to influence republican tendencies” (116). Morgan certainly had a bulwark of publications to assist her in such an endeavor. Egenolf outlines an impressive list of Morgan’s published literary works stating that “in a writing career that spanned almost 50 years, Morgan penned a biographical romance, nine

novels, numerous pamphlets, memoirs, histories, and short commentaries; she also wrote two immensely popular and controversial travel commentaries, *France* (1817) and *Italy* (1821)” (“Politics” 110). This wide range of Morgan’s printed literary works along with her manuscript commonplace books complemented each other with their various generic modes of writing and created a compendium of controversies and opinions, demonstrating her ability to generate political discourse. For Morgan, writing her political opinions and having them put forth in the public sphere, having “publicity,” was an end in itself. If Catholic emancipation had failed to become a reality, Morgan would have likely considered her work of compiling, writing, and responding to political discourse as time well and meaningfully spent. I suggest that commonplacing opinions was an end in itself like representative government, the process had inherent public value.

Lady Morgan’s *The Book of the Boudoir* (1829), which is a print commonplace book of miscellaneous extracts of political critique, travel vignettes, historical and cultural anecdotes, and personal memoirs, particularly underscores her penchant for political discourse. Egenolf in noting that Morgan politicized her Preface to *The O’Briens and the O’Flahertys*, asserts that “Morgan boldly defends her ‘meddling in politics’ and eschews the more standard preface that claims modesty and usefulness” (*Political Fiction* 158). Morgan adopts a similar authentic, though satiric, tone in her Preface to *The Book of the Boudoir*. Morgan’s lack of false modesty, evident in her prefaces, echoes in a note from *Commonplace Book MS 879* (1828-1831). In this note, Morgan writes the title “*Book of the Boudoir*” and its topic, quoting a French saying:

“Des memoires par moi memme [*sic*]—pour moi memme,” which translates to mean “Memories of myself—for myself” (MS 879). Notably, as discussed in Chapter I, Morgan often code-switches between French and English with misspellings, her own system of abbreviation, and shorthand. Mary Campbell in *Lady Morgan: The Life and Times of Sydney Owenson*, notes “Sydney’s habit of interlarding everything with French phrases, sometimes wildly inaccurate” (31), suggesting that literal translations of Morgan’s journaling in her commonplace books are problematic.¹⁰³ The subtitle that Morgan chooses for *The Book of the Boudoir*, “Myself and the world I live in” dated “April 1828” (MS 879), which predates the book’s publication in 1829 (see fig. 61).¹⁰⁴ Morgan indicates by her subtitle for *The Book of the Boudoir* and her subsequent memo that she is unapologetic for publishing a book about her commonplacéd musings featuring her world as a theme. Her subtitle and annotation arguably presumes an audience interested in knowing more about her ideas and political opinions, but if she has miscalculated their interests, her book will at least satisfy her own purpose for writing a commonplace book “for herself.” Yet, Morgan anticipated a receptive

¹⁰³ According to Mary Campbell in her biography *Lady Morgan: The Life and Times of Sydney Owenson* (1988), Sydney Owenson was properly taught French for three years at Madam Terson’s boarding school in Clontarf. The following years at Mrs. Anderson’s Finishing School in Dublin was an establishment “where Sydney found both the French and the manners inferior” (32). Possibly, Owenson acquired her habit of switching between French and English and adopting her own system of spelling in her journaling while under Mrs. Anderson’s inferior tutelage. Equally plausible, Owenson used misspellings and semi-indecipherable scribbles of French and English to provide some privacy of thought and feeling in the private-in-public genre of commonplacing.

¹⁰⁴ I would like to thank Dr. James M. Rosenheim, Dr. Dane Bozeman, and Raphael George Louge for their insightful suggestions for translations and transcriptions of Lady Morgan’s writings in French.

audience, and except for her harshest critics, such as Francis Jeffrey, she was correct in assuming people would be receptive to her viewpoints.

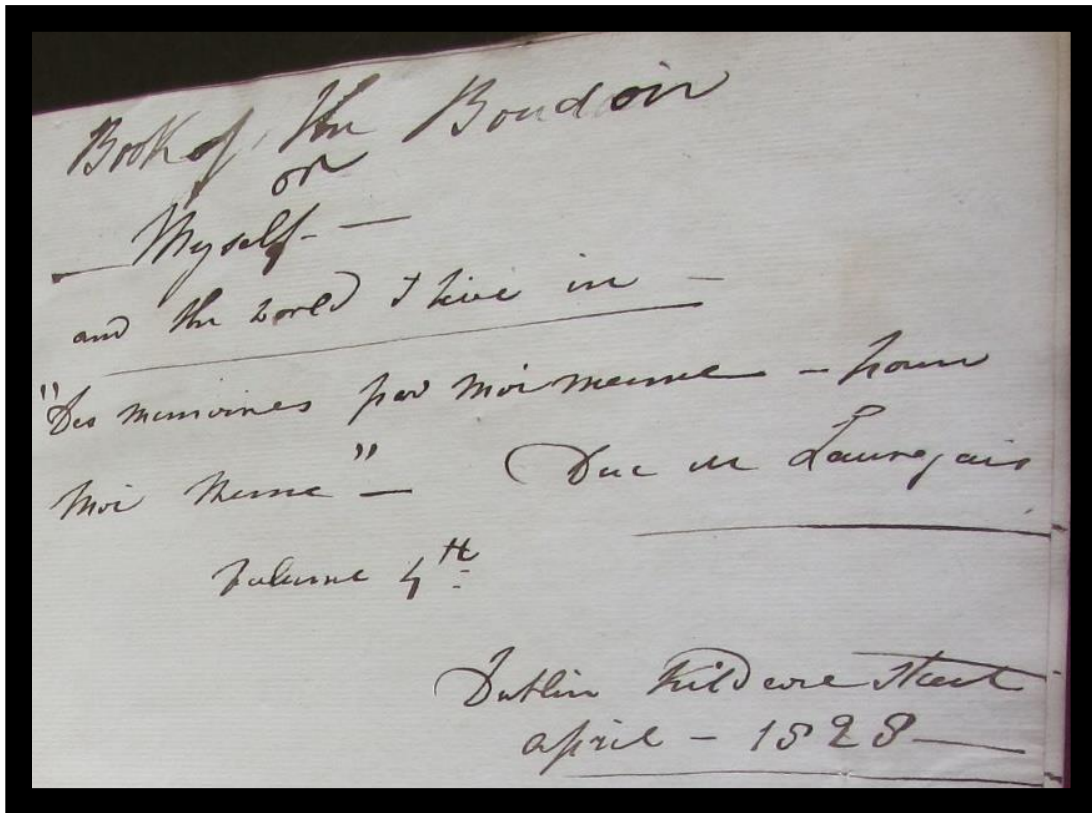


Fig. 61. Snippet view of notation from Lady Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 879* stating title of her book, *The Book of the Boudoir*. Unapologetically underscoring that its topic is about her musings (using a quotation in French to make the point), and noting her place of residence and date, "Dublin, Kildare Street, April 1828."¹⁰⁵ Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland ("Sydney Morgan" 1828).

¹⁰⁵ This image is a partial view of the recto page in Lady Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 879*, but it contains her full notation regarding *The Book of the Boudoir*.

As Lady Morgan warns in her Preface to *The Book of the Boudoir*, “I have said much” and that “any severity which may have appeared in my writings has been directed against principles rather than persons” (iv). Though Morgan is characteristically bold in this prefatory statement, she makes the astute rhetorical move of preemptively reassuring readers that the severity of her wit is aimed at political rather than personal targets. In Mary Campbell’s introduction to her biography of Morgan, *Lady Morgan: The Life & Times of Sydney Morgan* (1988), she notes Morgan’s mode of directly addressing her readers, always seeming to interpose politics regardless of the genre; Campbell writes:

In the writing of prefaces one could do worse than to follow the example of Lady Morgan. She loved making direct statements to her readers, and produced new forewords for different editions of her books. Often these were political and patriotic manifestoes—more earnest than the actual content of the work in hand. She would state magisterially that Ireland was her vocation, and her constant theme. (ix)

I would add to Campbell’s assessment that Morgan made Ireland her “constant theme,” noting that keeping commonplace books was as life-long a vocation as was her interests in Irish and European politics. Indeed, Morgan’s commonplace books textually supported her role as a political activist. I differ with Campbell, though, noting that the actual content of *The Book of the Boudoir* as a collection of Morgan’s wide topical range of commonplacing, exhibits numerous viewpoints that are as earnestly political as her prefaces.

Lady Morgan states in her Preface to *The Book of the Boudoir* that it serves as an entertaining genre of the type likely to be titled “Elegant Extracts [...] &c,” meant to “amuse the loungee of the moment,” and unlikely to be found “in the catalogue of the library” (v). Yet, in her Preface, Morgan confides to her audience that she feels

compelled to always write about “Ireland and its wrongs,” which she has done from her “youth, up” (iv). Morgan irrepressibly conveys her hopes for Catholic emancipation; in speaking directly to her readers, she states the following:

But the day is now fast approaching, when all that is Irish; will fall into its natural position; when fair play will be given to national tendencies, and when the sarcastic author of the O’Donnells and the O’Briens, having nothing to find fault with [...] Among the multitudinous effects of Catholic emancipation, I do not hesitate to predict a change in the character of Irish authorship. (iv)

In the Preface, Morgan depicts herself as the “sarcastic author” of Irish national tales, who wryly notes that she will have “nothing to find fault with” once Catholic emancipation becomes a reality. Morgan has warned her readers of her sarcastic streak that produces a hyperbolic optimism infused with a degree of disheartened pessimism concerning Ireland’s political future. Morgan has probably gauged her audience correctly; the weightiness of her political perspectives would not suit the generic conventions of “Keepsake” albums, and she subtly warns her audience through satire to not expect her print commonplace book, *The Book of the Boudoir*, to be as such *belles lettres*.

In significant essentials, *The Book of the Boudoir* is a commonplace book. At least to Morgan, generically, little difference existed between print and manuscript commonplace books except filtering content through an editorial process. Morgan states in the Preface that “the MS volumes, from which its pages were extracted, have composed themselves; and I have copied not always what was best, but what was safest and most inoffensive” (iii). The generic similarities and differences between Morgan’s print commonplace book and her manuscript commonplace books are noteworthy. They

both include a broad range of topics and socio-political controversies with her wit and sense of irony well-tuned to the topics at hand. Subheadings in *The Book of the Boudoir*, such as “Philosophy of Grammar,” “Irish Union,” “Suicide,” “Mathematical Ladies,” “The Spirit of the Age,” and “My Reviewers” belie any notion that Morgan’s published commonplace book lacks generic gravity, stints variety, and intends to be apolitical. A random sampling of Morgan’s manuscript commonplace books would reveal similar results. For example, *Commonplace Books MS 878* and *MS 881* contain such titles or headings and topics as “Alas! We live in an ov’r righteous age,” (MS 878), Irish famine (MS 881), and “Mania of Disposition” (MS 881).

In the form of print extracts, such as Villiers-Stuart’s speech, Morgan allows other voices of expertise, social stature, or political astuteness to speak in her commonplace books--effectively creating a forum of ideas and opinions. Morgan intentionally created a distinction between her own socio-political commentary and those of others expressed in print periodicals, clipped, and placed into her manuscript commonplace books. It was one thing for Morgan to be witty in her own essays, but she rarely dared to be overtly satiric when including the words of others. Morgan preferred, instead, to use subtler forms of commentary, such as creating unusual juxtapositions with content to leave room for making meaning that often disrupts narrative conventions. For example, in the section titled “Irish Union” in *The Book of the Boudoir*, Morgan begins with biting wit, protesting the 1801 Act of Union with Britain:

Twenty thousand pounds defeated the opposition to the Scotch union—a sum barely sufficient to stop the eloquent patriotism of a single voter, when Lord Castlereagh sold Ireland, ‘wholesale, retail, and for exportation.’ Who will say that the Irish are not a civilized people? (109)

Morgan's satiric critique of putting a price on nationalism and selling out Ireland's political freedom like a commodity is cryptically worded with unusual juxtaposition of phrases, such as "[...] the eloquent patriotism of a single voter" followed by "when Lord Castlereagh sold Ireland [...]" (109). This jarring style of writing in *The Book of the Boudoir* imitates the often surprising juxtapositions of text, images, and ephemera in Morgan's manuscript commonplace books that are meant to disrupt narrative flow and along with it conventional perspectives.

In her manuscript commonplace books, Morgan is typically as polite to her "textual guests" as if they were embodied and visiting in her home or meeting with her in public. She was mindful of being in conversation textually with others and exchanging ideas with them—to Morgan, her commonplace books were an authentic public sphere or publicity. Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite speak to manifestations of textual conversation with others in their introduction to *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770-1855* (2002). They suggest that in imagining a Romantic model of Jürgen Habermas's public and private spheres,¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ According to Jürgen Habermas, in his book *The Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1991), "the public sphere itself appears as a specific domain—the public domain versus the private" (2). Simply put, that which is not the private sphere is the public sphere. Habermas gives a brief etymology of the term public, but he settles upon a definition of the public sphere in which "The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people coming together as a public" (27). This essentialized definition of the public sphere within the historical frame of Enlightenment era bourgeois society in the eighteenth century is theorized from a feminist perspective of the Romantic period in *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770-1855* (2002), edited by Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite. Russell and Tuite re-examine the Habermas's construct of the public sphere as "strongly identified with male sociability" and take into account "a more diverse range of sites of sociability, ... which are more inclusive of female modes of sociability" (5). Habermas's theoretical models of the public and private sphere, re-evaluated by

“conversation within print and between writer and reader ‘grows out’ of, implicitly displacing or exceeding, the actual conversation of the coffee-house” (12-13). I would add to Russell and Tuite’s model¹⁰⁷ that “conversation” between writers and readers also takes place within scribal manuscripts, such as Morgan commonplacing and annotating newsprint clippings as “conversation” on the social exchange of ideas and political opinions.

For Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, the social exchange of ideas and political opinions was often an organic, cultural process. The inter-cultural connections between Celtic nations were actualities that complicated the paradigm of England as a synecdoche for the British Isle nations. Arguably, stronger and more extensive networks of cultural linkages often existed between Wales,¹⁰⁸ Scotland, and Ireland than between these Celtic nations and England. Affinities also developed between subsets of geographic regions within the Celtic sphere. For example, according to E. W. McFarland in *Ireland and Scotland in the Age of Revolution* (1994), “the Scottish Highlands often

Russell and Tuite’s critiques of Habermas, inform my use of the terms public and private spheres in relation to women’s commonplace books discussed in this chapter and dissertation.

¹⁰⁷ Russell and Tuite also re-examine Habermas’s performative privacy or “audience-orientated privacy” (Habermas 51). They assert that the performative sociability of the individual is “predicated upon an understanding of the individual not as an isolate, but as a socially recognized entity who is required to *perform* his or her individuality within a repertoire of codes and modes of affect” (9). Understanding commonplace books from the perspective of sociability and shifting performativity in public and private spheres, which Habermas’s theoretic model cannot fully accommodate, we may imagine how they might serve new nationalism, creating linkages between Celtic nations and circumventing England’s hegemony.

¹⁰⁸ Until recently, literary and cultural studies of the British Isles have tended to exclude Wales in discussions of nationalism. In this dissertation, I include Wales in discussions of Celtic nationalism and cultural identity when the topic is germane. For example, West Wales shared cultural linkages with both Ireland and Scotland in literary works, such as the *Ossian* cycle of epic poems and the ballad “Mentra Gwen,” which will be discussed later in detail.

displayed stronger affinities with the western periphery of Ireland, in institutional and cultural terms, than with the Scottish Lowlands,” and he reminds us that “Ulster too remained ‘another Ireland,’ with closer practical links into the southwest of Scotland than with the southern Irish provinces” (31). England’s cultural influence within the Celtic sphere was not monolithic, as David Duff and Catherine Jones remind us in their introduction to *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic* (2007). They argue that “cross-cultural linkages and mirrorings, [...] overturn the single-nation paradigm on which historical scholarship has often rested, and complicate too the triangular model that sees Scotland and Ireland as mutually contrasted ‘Others’ against which an English ‘self’ is asserted” (13). The mutual connections between Celtic nations undermined the perception of a “single-nation paradigm” of British-Englishness, but, I would argue, such linkages did not eliminate it completely. Further cultural, social, and political energy in the Celtic sphere continued to be expended throughout the Romantic period resisting English hegemony.

The Celtic nations had a stake in undermining England’s hegemony in which the bards played or were expected to play a part. For example, historically, as Prescott remarks in citing Thomas Carte’s *A General History of England* (1747-55; 1750), “from a Welsh perspective it is precisely the bards’ function as ‘inciters of the people to sedition’ which constitutes their value” (64). The Welsh and other Celtic nationalities had a strong interest in the lyric traditions and survivability of the bards—particularly as political protests and protesters. Prescott notes the remarkable survivability of the bardic tradition despite melancholy predictions of its demise: “Yet even as the bard sings about

the end of poetry, he and his poem attest its survival” (66). Bardic traditions continued to be a cultural and political force during the Romantic period through the modality of lyric, especially in ballad form, which women often compiled in their commonplace books. For example, in *Commonplace Book MS 22969A*, Ponsonby included a musical score (without lyrics) of the traditional Welsh ballad, “Mentra Gwen” (79). As the case with many ballads of oral tradition, a date for the tunes and lyrics for “Mentra Gwen” are unknown.¹⁰⁹ Similar to traditional hymnody, ballads were a mix-and-match genre with tune and lyric given different names or both conflated under a single nomenclature.¹¹⁰ The nomenclature, “Mentra Gwen,” separately designates the ballad lyrics and the Welsh harp tune of the same name, which is translated into English as “Fair Gwen,” (see fig. 62). The two musical scores for “Mentra Gwen” anthologized in Phyllis Kinney’s *Welsh Traditional Music* (2011) bear no resemblance to Ponsonby’s notations of the ballad in *Commonplace Book MS 22969A*.

¹⁰⁹ According to Phyllis Kinney’s discussion of “Mentra Gwen” in *Welsh Traditional Music* (2011), “the earliest Welsh version of the tune was set down without words by the fiddler John Thomas in the mid-eighteenth century” (112). Yet, she reminds us that the oral tradition of “Mentra Gwen,” as a ballad, can be dated back to the sixteenth century (112).

¹¹⁰ As example, the tune and lyrics of “Mentra Gwen” together have been published under the title of “Song of Welcome.” A collection of sheet music arranged by Kurt Schindler (1917) and titled *Two Old Welsh Songs*, includes *Song of Welcome and Men of Harlech*; the “Song of Welcome” version of “Mentra Gwen” bears little resemblance to the musical score found in Ponsonby’s commonplace book.



Fig. 62. Welsh tune, “Mentra Gwen,” collected in Sarah Ponsonby’s *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* suggests cultural and political interests in bardic traditions and national identity (79). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).

Phyllis Kinney reminds us that “Mentra Gwen” became “increasingly popular with carol and ballad writers, with considerable diversity,” such as in the “tune modes and the meter of the words” (112). Given a strong tradition of ballad-making in Wales, Ponsonby’s score of “Mentra Gwen” in her commonplace book could be one of many possible tunes in circulation. In fact, many tunes would have been used for the following lyrics of “Mentra Gwen,” relying on bardic tradition as a means of transmission:

You’re known to Welshmen free,
Fairest Gwen, Fairest Gwen,
From Gower to Anglesey,
Fairest Gwen,

That castle by the dell there,
A noble people dwell there.
This night we can spend well there.
Won't you come now? Come now, Gwen. ("Contempletor")

Two additional verses traditionally follow this stanza and are similar reiterations of the first. According to Kinney, the "meter of the words" had "considerable diversity" (112) but, my research of "Mentra Gwen" has shown that whilst the tunes varied significantly, the lyrics stayed relatively consistent.

As a popular ballad, "Mentra Gwen" would have been an effective patriotic song to use as a rallying point, as a common source of Welsh nationalistic pride and sentiment. The relatively stable lyrics and the variety of tunes, which allowed for regional distinctiveness, made "Mentra Gwen" a prospect not only for cultural reclamation but also for asserting independence. According to Marion Löffler in "The 'Marseillaise' in Wales,"¹¹¹ the "Marseillaise March" was recognized in Wales and the rest of the Anglo-Atlantic world "by radicals and loyalists alike" as an anthem of resistance to foreign invasion and associated with revolution (96). I posit that the popularity of "Mentra Gwen" suggests that as a ballad it would have been recognized similarly as an anthem of resistance—code for Welsh nationalism just as the "Marseillaise March" was associated with the French revolution. Ponsonby's inclusion of the musical score of "Mentra Gwen" in her commonplace book was a dissident political act like humming the "La Marseillaise." Löffler reminds us that "political

¹¹¹ The tune for France's national anthem, "La Marseillaise," was written in 1781 and the lyrics in 1792. It became known as a march or song associated with the French Revolution, though, the lyrics originally referenced France's fight against foreign invasion by Austria.

Welsh radicalism in the 1790s was not an organized mass movement, but a fragile web of like-minded men [and women] who dared oppose the hegemony of landowner, state and Church in their under-urbanized world” (98). I would add that Ponsonby and Butler were a part of this “fragile web,” opposing British-Englishness through the sociability of rural life in Llangollen, immersion in Welsh culture, and through the enjoyment of recalling the ballad lyrics and the musical score for “Mentre Gwen.”

In the above lyrics, “Mentra Gwen” contains various layers of contexts that created meaning. The setting of the ballad is “that castle by the dell.” The presence of the castle in the poetic narrative conveys an undercurrent of ambiguous sovereignty: the castle and laird may have been Welsh or English. With numerous castles built in Wales by Edward I for the purpose of surveillance and military control, an ambivalent subtext alluding to English hegemony in the lyrics would have been difficult to ignore. The first line of the first stanza, “You’re known to Welshmen free,” implies that the ballad is “known to” us through bardic transmission, which is self-referential to the generic form of the ballad itself. Within the larger historical context of the Celtic struggle for autonomy, the inverted syntax of “Welshmen free” at the end of the line places the emphasis on the speaker addressing a free people. They are free in spirit through their cultural heritage if not entirely free from England politically. In the sixth line, “A noble people dwell there” suggests a fitting nobleness attached to a Welsh homeland. In this ballad, the bard speaks for free Welsh men and women and is an instrument of their self-identity and autonomy.

Katie Trumpener reminds us that “for nationalist antiquaries, the bard is the mouthpiece for a whole society” (6). As antiquaries themselves, Ponsonby and Butler collected numerous artifacts of antiquity, such as a lock of Mary Queen of Scots’ hair (Hicklin 10). A version of “Mentra Gwen” added to Ponsonby’s commonplace book (MS 22969A) would have been a natural addition to their collection of nationalist artifacts and politically inflected antiquities. The ballad’s long history of transmission and adaptations has made “Mentra Gwen” akin to a national treasure, if not, then indeed a national anthem. Duff and Jones remark that “the concept of ‘national song’ (a term current in the late eightieth century) parallels that of ‘national’ tale as an example of the late eighteenth-century territorializing of genre, and of the self-conscious deployment of an art form for the purposes of cultural identity-formation” (21). In the Celtic sphere, “cultural identity-formation” was complex and interwoven with inter-cultural exchanges, such as with the ballad “Mentra Gwen” and its “origins outside Wales” (Kinney 112). According to Kinney, “the distinctive stanza pattern can be found in Scotland as far back as the sixteenth century” (112). The significance of cultural connections between “Mentra Gwen,” Wales, and Scotland would not have been lost upon Ponsonby and Butler, as well-read as they were in Celtic and European history and culture. With keen neophyte enthusiasm, as Irish women, they built upon personal and cultural linkages already in place between Ireland and Wales. This meant lifelong correspondence with those whom they left behind in Ireland, as well as collecting cultural artifacts from throughout the British Isles and Europe usually given to them by visitors or received through the post. For Ponsonby and Butler, cultural identity-formation was a Celtic

(Irish and Welsh especially), national, and personal project, evidenced by their inclusion of “Mentra Gwen” in Ponsonby’s commonplace book.

Sarah Ponsonby’s commonplacing exhibited traits that Trumpener describes as being conscious political awareness: “Nationalist consciousness began with the recognition of imperial occupation and with the attempt to grasp its economic, political, and cultural consequences, from the appropriation of land and the loss of self-government to the alienation of cultural inheritances” (26). If self-governance was lost during the Romantic period along with a nation’s full economic potential stifled by imperialism, then at least recovery from alienation in a broad sense with the aid of inter-connecting cultural linkages was possible. As a case in point, through the bardic transmission of ballads we have seen inter-cultural linkages of shared tradition that allow for strong mutual cultural survivability in the Celtic sphere. For example, “Mentra Gwen’s” Scottish-Welsh” shared origins, followed by its Irish-Welsh transmission into Ponsonby’s commonplace book, adds to the cultural survivability of the ballad while accommodating different tunes. Ponsonby and Butler were aware of employing inter-cultural linkages; they were themselves a linked embodiment between two Celtic nations, as women who left Ireland as adults and immigrated to Wales. Ponsonby and Butler descended from Anglo-Irish and Catholic-Irish nobility respectively; Lady Butler came from more aristocratic lineage than Ponsonby. They easily adopted a new nationalism and culture, but through shared cultural links.

Ponsonby and Butler devoted more time, effort, and finances to the transformation of their simple Welsh cottage into a Gothic manor house and landscape

garden than any other endeavor throughout their lifetime. It was an ongoing series of long-term projects of recovering and discovering inter-cultural linkages in the Celtic sphere. These projects began after Ponsonby and Butler extensively toured Wales, beginning in 1778, and had settled in the secluded Vale of Llangollen, permanently by 1780 (see fig. 63). They lived in a leasehold cottage, then called Pen y Mas and later renamed Plas Newydd, buying it as a freehold estate in 1819. We know from Ponsonby's and Butler's commonplace books, journals, diaries, catalogues, pocket book, accountancy records, and architectural evidence that tenancy status of Plas Newydd did not prohibit them from making improvements to the house and grounds from 1782 onward. Decades of construction projects produced a decidedly Gothic character and ambiance to Plas Newydd. The architectural intricacy of its Gothic design of home and its fanciful, almost monastic, landscape garden, indeed became a tourist attraction. Their extensive building projects had also economically reinvigorated Llangollen and the surrounding region for decades. Plas Newydd was an architecturally stunning, Gothic Revival estate that integrated Ponsonby's and Butler's Irish origins, their individuality, and successful adoption of a Welsh homeland.



Fig. 63. The northernmost head of the Vale of Llangollen (facing toward Snowdonia) on the outskirts of town. Reprinted from my personal photograph (“Deborah Pfunter” 2012).

Ponsonby and Butler were sensitive to native Welsh forms of the Gothic. The Welsh ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey where Ponsonby and Butler had spent many leisure hours were within a relatively short walking distance from Plas Newydd. The Welsh prince, Madog ap Gruffud Maelor (1191-1236) had established an abbey in 1201. The medieval castle ruins of Dinas Brân, which began as an Iron Age hill fort (600 B.C.), was the residence of this same prince and the site of many battles. Trumpener reminds us about the Gothic in relation to past battles and when “eighteenth-century Britain and Ireland were full of historically resonate ruins, full of abandoned abbeys” (149). She

notes that “the Gothic topos of the haunted house resonates with the half-repressed memory of these cultural defeats” (149). Every day Ponsonby and Butler could walk out their door and see a romanticized Welsh Gothic ruin,¹¹² experience the haunted feeling of past religious and political battles between the Welsh and English simply by looking up (see fig. 64).



Fig. 64. Plas Newydd with the fortress ruins of Dinas Bran seen on the peak in the background. The far right section of the structure from the second chimney to the third, with the mismatched windows, was added by subsequent owners after Sarah Ponsonby succeeded Eleanor Butler in death in 1831. Reprinted from my personal photograph (“Deborah Pfuntner” 2012).

¹¹² By the term “romanticized Gothic,” I mean that the ruins may not have had typical architectural features of a Gothic structure, such as Valle Crucis Abbey, but the ruins are associated with the lore and time period of the mediaeval to early modern period. Dinas Brân would have been strongly associated with Madog ap Gruffud Maelor, Valle Crucis Abbey, and the time period of Gothic architecture.

In her commonplace book, Ponsonby commonplacéd modes of Gothic sensibility. In studying Ponsonby's emblematic colophon in *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* and having personally examined the blackened wood façade trimmings at Plas Newydd, I have been intrigued by the recognizable similarities between Ponsonby's Gothic-inspired drawing and the manor house's exterior carvings. For example, within the rectangular frame of Ponsonby's colophon, two hounds face toward a Roman medallion in the center of the frame. The Romanesque arch and pillar in the medallion are copied in the background frame as a symmetrical pair of arches and pillars, which alludes to the Italian and Romanesque origins of Gothic architecture, such as found in Durham Cathedral. According to current scholarly research on Romanesque and Gothic architecture, "later renovations and Gothics constructions would have shown evidence of their evolution from the Romanesque" (Cain). For example, the architectural elements sketched in Ponsonby's colophon accord with findings that "Romanesque elements such as barrel vaults, semi-circular arches, and thick piers with engaged columns could be evidence of the Gothic period as well as the Romanesque, as they often existed as contemporaries within the same structure" (Cain). According to Pittock, Gothic literature "operated as a warning about trespass or usurpation; it posited the recrudescence of a world ignored or suppressed; and it either admitted the supernatural or defamiliarized the natural" (*Scottish and Irish* 211). The Gothic aesthetics of Ponsonby's colophon operate similarly to Pittock's assessment of Gothic literature, warning the observer, the outsider, to not trespass.

Colophons were often placed in the back matter of books or on the front flyleaf occasionally, and they comprised publication information, established the provenance of the book, or warned against book theft—similar to modern graphic art printed book plates. This colophon would have been *apropos* for a number of Ponsonby and Butler’s many expensive, classical books found in their library. Interestingly, Ponsonby chose instead to include a copy or keep this as an original colophon in the middle pages of her commonplace book as a design exemplar (see fig. 65). The foliate border, typical of Neo-Gothic or Gothic Revival design, and the inter-frame draping represent organic forms that appear highly stylized or “defamiliarized.” Ferris describes this Gothic sense of dread as “the gothic power of the shudder, which is always anticipatory even though prompted by the recoil of the past, lies in its rendering eerie the very notion of the future as premise” (122-23). Gothic dread serves as a reminder of decline, death, and decay.



Fig. 65. Colophon sketch from Sarah Ponsonby’s *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* (16). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).

Sarah Ponsonby's colophon in her commonplace book is suggestive of the Gothic aesthetics and exterior architecture and designs original to Ponsonby and Butler's manor house. Design elements seen in Ponsonby's colophon decorate the main portico and two ground floor windows encasements. According to the Denbighshire County Council's pamphlet (DCC), *Plas Newydd: A Brief History* (2003), "the windows contain fragments of early 16th century glass from Valle Crucis abbey, and some later glass incorporating heraldic devices of local families" (14). In Elizabeth Mavor's biography, *The Ladies of Llangollen: A Study in Romantic Friendship* (1971), she recounts Ponsonby and Butler's visit with friends to Crucis Abbey: "Mrs. Tighe's son, Harry, and his wife, Mary, also a poetess; had, as a climax to her visit, been invited, at the Ladies' instigation, to a 'rural dinner' given by Mrs. Ormsby, among the ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey" (126). Crucis Abbey, akin to Tintern Abbey, is a Cistercian, Gothic ruin set in a picturesque Welsh valley near a river. The abbey was a tourist attraction during Ponsonby's and Butler's lifetime, and it was common for people to use the grounds as parkland. Fragments of this abbey had been taken by local individuals to be placed in their homes or to be repurposed as construction materials, such as the before mentioned stained glass.¹¹³ Considering the significance of the abbey as a local attraction surrounded in a picturesque vale and the incorporation of abbey fragments embedded into Plas Newydd, the absence of a sketch of Crucis Abbey in Ponsonby's commonplace

¹¹³ Likely, the stained glass, in addition to two stone fonts, from Valle Crucis Abbey were given to Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler as gifts from visiting friends and neighbors. Most of their artifacts, antiquities, and miscellany curiosities were given to them as gifts. Also, by the time Ponsonby and Butler had moved to Llangollen, the abbey would have been stripped of virtually everything of value or interest.

book is surprising. Yet, we can see an intimation of a Gothic ruin in Ponsonby's colophon. In the lower left, bottom border, a section of leaf motif is colored in with green ink with a red background. The rest of the colophon remains completely devoid of color, representative of how Gothic structures begin to decay. Medieval and early modern abbeys and cathedrals were often brightly painted, and when they started to decline, the painted walls and ceilings were no longer maintained--they began to resemble Ponsonby's colophon—having patchy sections of color visible only here and there.

For many, the word Gothic evokes a mental image closely associated with haunted ruins that would hardly be described as charming. Gothic Revival architecture, in contrast, was often appealing, tailored to fit the personalities and needs of the owners, such as Ponsonby and Butler's Gothic design of Plas Newydd. The hood, cusps, and front facade of the two original window encasements on the house are carved in dark wood with designs analogous to Ponsonby's colophon. For example, the library window encasement has front facade carvings that are compartmentalized in a contiguous series of rectangular frames. Most of these frames include Romanesque arches and pillars that replicate the architectural features found in Ponsonby's colophon (see fig. 66). Stylized foliate carvings border most of these embedded frames on the front elevation facade and are also interspersed on the cusps. The two carved heads at the apex of the cusps face each other and are suggestive of the two hounds in Ponsonby's colophon. A significant amount of the carved figures are not related to modern Christian iconography; instead, they appear more as medieval Gothic, Classical, and Eastern mythological constructions-

-meant to intimidatingly warn rather than contemplatively inspire. The figures that are most noticeable in the wooden carvings are the caryatids, which are shaped as odd, part-human pedestals. They are grouped on opposing sides of the window: two relatively large caryatids centered left and right, four caryatids positioned along the side frame like centennials. Ponsonby's colophon also portrays figures—two Roman guards and a watchdog in the medallion; in addition to the two hounds in the frame drawing, these figures also appear to be warning intruders away while guarding Plas Newydd.



Fig. 66. Plas Newydd library bay window in which found, given, or commissioned carvings from Gothic interiors form the facade design. Reprinted from my personal photograph (“Deborah Pfuntner” 2012).

The carved encasement surrounding the library window acts as an iconographic, visual, and physical barrier protecting the window by a fascinating puzzle board of carefully fitted pieces. Ponsonby and Butler received the carved wood bit- by-bit, in pieces from friends and visitors. The specific sources for the library window carvings are not known, but the DCC notes “a major source of carvings to The Ladies would have been those discarded in the remodeling and upgrading of churches that took place in the 18th and into, the 19th centuries” (9). I am unable to determine which came first, Ponsonby’s colophon or the carvings. However, what seems clear to me is that the iconography in Ponsonby’s colophon and the intimidating carvings on the ground floor windows and main doorway serves as a warning for visitors to not trespass. No doubt, Ponsonby and Butler appreciated the Gothic aesthetics of these carvings, but their purpose was more than mere fashionableness or taste. Considering the many uninvited visitors and tourists to Plas Newydd, such physical barriers and iconographic warnings against trespass would have been needed to discourage people from trying to peek into the library window or trample the rose bushes. The most forceful messages about boundaries in Plas Newydd’s architecture and Ponsonby’s colophon are political. I contend that the ever-present ruins of Castell Dinas Brân, the ruins of Crucis Abbey, and reminders of alienated Welsh culture imply that England is a far greater trespasser than tourists who come and go for a season. In Ponsonby’s colophon, Romans are in the center of the frame and become the concentrated focus of the medallion. They symbolize empire and imperial government as the greatest trespasser.

Ponsonby and Butler were as keenly interested in improving the estate grounds as the house itself. Much thought went into the design of the hardscape and layout of the plants, which we see in Ponsonby's commonplace book, such as the account records for work done on the estate and lists of rare and expensive plantings, as discussed in Chapter 3. Her commonplace book entries suggest that even when Ponsonby was attending to other matters, she still thought about the garden—doodling hardscape with various landscaping projects in mind (see fig. 67). Remnants of Ponsonby and Butler's landscape garden still exists at Plas Newydd, such as a lookout over the garden, a grotto, and a series of bridges spanning a stream. Kathleen Mahoney in *Gothic Style: Architecture and Interiors from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (1995) describes the parameters of a Romantic Gothic aesthetic that is applicable to Ponsonby and Butler's landscape garden:

The introduction and the development of Gothic as an expression of the Romantic Movement [...] was marked by a decidedly new form, which emerged as a release from classical restraints. It was exuberant, borrowing Gothic elements in a whimsical, lighthearted manner. From mock ruins and other fanciful garden follies to flamboyant manor house interiors. (10)

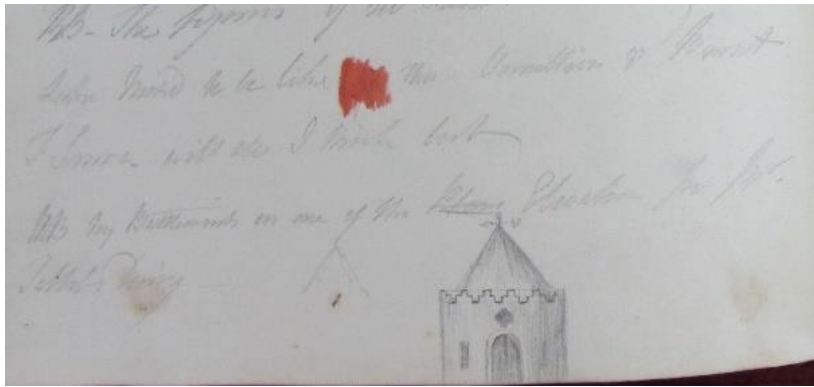


Fig. 67. Doodled turret from Sarah Ponsonby's *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* correlates with rounded foundation in garden used for Eleanor's Butler's overlook into the garden (45v.). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1785).

Ponsonby and Butler developed the landscaping to follow the undulations of the hills and vales and the meandering streams on their estate--they were "released from classical restraints" through topography. They chose the Romantic aesthetics of the picturesque that eschewed the geometric layout of formal gardens. Indication of a couple "fanciful garden follies" are sketched in Ponsonby's commonplace book. For example, along with Ponsonby describing and testing vermillion pigment, at the bottom of the page she sketches a turret with Gothic style elements: battlements, center quatrefoil, and narrow archway. Ponsonby and Butler's house did not have turrets, but a rounded foundation base remains, to my knowledge, from their landscaping, which echoes Ponsonby's sketch in her commonplace book. The current wooden, turreted structure that overlooks Plas Newydd gardens is a reconstruction, but its base is congruent with

stone work of the still intact garden grotto (17).¹¹⁴ The photograph that I have taken of Butler’s bower from the viewpoint of the gardens below show the rebuilt upper portion of the turret (see fig. 68).



Fig. 68. Not all current structures at Plas Newydd today are original to the landscaping projects that Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler implemented. This turreted overlook above the gardens below has been built from the foundational hardscape from Eleanor Butler’s bower, but the upper portion is a recent reconstruction. Reprinted from my personal photograph (“Deborah Pfuntner” 2012).

¹¹⁴ Denbighshire County Council’s *Plas Newydd: A Brief History* (2003) does not include the bower (or the grotto) in its lists of hardscape that has “disappeared, but work has begun to recreate,” stating that “Lady Eleanor’s bower at the back of the house overlooks the valley through which the Cyflymen stream flows” (17).

Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler’s fanciful, Romantic landscape garden is and was a Gothic ruin evoking a historical past with time-worn natural materials (stone and wood), picturesquely situated and served as a reminder of former power and mystique. The two stone fonts from Valle Crucis Abbey placed in the front and back gardens, not to mention the carvings repurposed in their house that were cast-off from medieval and early modern churches, underscore Mahoney’s point that “Gothic ruins abounded throughout the countryside. When proximity permitted, real monastic ruins [...] were actually incorporated into adjoining gardens, capitalizing on their evocative and decorative qualities” (Mahoney 21). This historical scenario contextualizes the incorporation of monastic ruins from the Valle of Crucis Abbey into Plas Newydd’s landscaping—it was the thing to do. According to the DCC, Ponsonby and Butler “erected a temple, and set up a font¹¹⁵ from Valle Crucis abbey” (17). This grotto evokes a meditative, monastic-like scene, like the ruined Cistercian abbey itself (see fig. 69). Therein lies part of the political nature of the Gothic: the power to induce contemplative thought. Ponsonby introduces in her off-handed Gothic sketches a meditative state in her commonplace book. I posit that it is more than a curious coincidence that the only two pages for testing art medium correlate with sketches or doodles of Gothic garden features. For both doodling and gardening, strict rules of form did not apply. In discussing Gothic Revival architecture that I consider similar to Ponsonby and Butler’s construction projects, Trevor Yorke in *Victorian Gothic House Styles* (2012) notes that

¹¹⁵ Another stone font from Valle Crucis Abbey is currently situated in the front yard gardens at Plas Newydd.

“houses of the upper and middle classes could be designed free from the rules of symmetry” (4-5). The ideological shift in gardening toward a more naturally picturesque, organically evolving style of landscaping was beginning to make an appearance in the sister art of Gothic Revival architecture with preferences of asymmetry, circles, and semi-circles.



Fig. 69. Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler’s Gothic style grotto beside the Cyflymen, a stream with natural rivulets that fill the ecclesiastical font that originated from Valle Crucis Abbey placed in semi-circular enclave with a pointed Gothic archway. Reprinted from my personal photograph (“Deborah Pfuntner” 2012).

In addition to doodling in her *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* a turret on a test page for pigment, Ponsonby also doodles hardscape, fitting for the garden grotto, on a

test page for inks (see fig. 70). She writes: “Specimens of inks made from ink prodix[?] early in May-- / Filtered[?] and tryed [*sic*] June 27th 1786” (28). Ponsonby and Butler’s habit of utilizing freely provided resources coupled with the variety of plant specimens in their garden suggests that Ponsonby made her own organic inks. With these test inks, she draws an elevation sketch for the grotto’s substructure foundation. The base of blocks on the right side of the sketch reasonably portrays the dimensions of one of the wings of the grotto as well as its overall proportions--or at least as Ponsonby imagines the grotto while doodling it. Informed by my walks around the landscape garden at Plas Newydd, I notice in Ponsonby’s sketch the imaginatively stylized incline inferred by the tree branches and foliage that is fairly suggestive of the topography, which the sketch presents as a gentle wooded hillside with the perspective of peering down into the gardens below. Mahoney reminds us that follies were “positioned on hilltops with sweeping vistas of picturesque gardens below or at the edge of man-made lakes [...]; many were placed at the end of garden paths, while others were tucked away in a secret grove [...] It was in the design of these fanciful garden structures that the Gothic Revival had its beginnings” (Mahoney 23). The turret and grotto suggested in Ponsonby’s drawings within her commonplace book seem to fit Mahoney’s general depiction of these “fanciful garden structures which at Plas Newydd are beside the Cyflymen stream and “tucked away in a secret grove.”

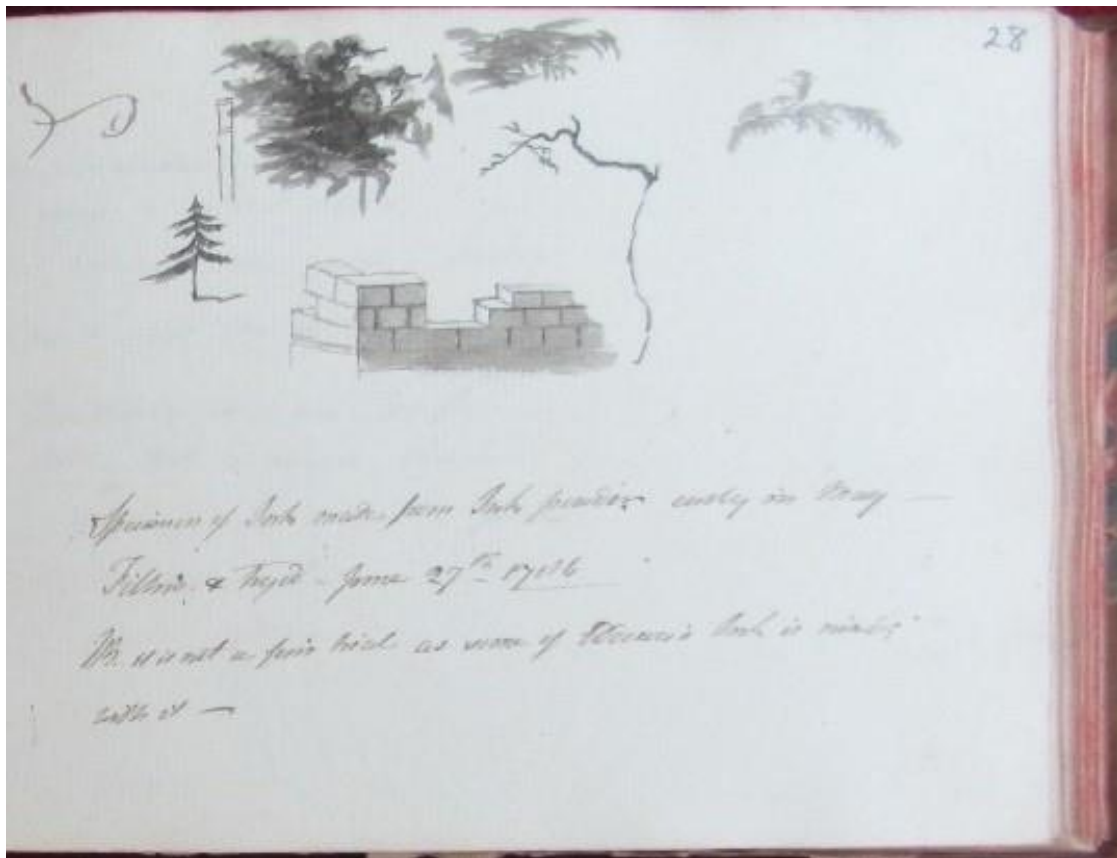


Fig. 70. From *Commonplace Book 22969A* Sarah Ponsonby's test of inks that incorporates a sketch of hardscape foundation, possibly for a grotto (28). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1785).

John Hicklin describes Plas Newydd in *The Ladies of Llangollen, As Sketched by Many Hands* (1847) noting the aesthetics of Ponsonby and Butler's garden: "A remarkably unique and somewhat grotesque style of architecture; and laid out gardens, pleasure grounds, and rural walks and grottoes, temples, conservatories, rustic bridges, and other accessories for enjoying the undisturbed quiet of their own domain, the natural charms of their picturesque retreat" (2). Hicklin likely uses the term "grotesque" for denoting the Gothic, which does not necessarily imply negative associations; throughout

the estate catalogue he highly praises the aesthetics of both the house and gardens. Hicklin provides us with a glimpse of what Ponsonby and Butler's contemporaries thought about Plas Newydd. Anne Seward provides another perspective, remarking that "their fairy Palace is curiously adorned; it is a little Temple consecrate to Friendship, & the Muses, & adorned by the hands of all the Graces. Their Lawns and Bowers breathe the same spirit of consummate elegance. Devoted as they are to each other, their expanding hearts have yet room for other warm attachments" (qtd. in Moore 114). Lisa L. Moore in *Sister Arts: The Erotics of Lesbian Landscapes* (2011) notes Seward's poetic and erotically-charged enthusiasm: "the gardens at Plas Newydd are described using the erotic conventions that Anna Seward had developed in her landscape poetry for Honora" (115). Seward recognized a *simpatico* romantic connection between her poetics, Ponsonby and Butler, and Plas Newydd's picturesque gardens.

During my visit to Plas Newydd, I had discovered that the two women commonplacéd excerpts and inscribed them (usually in an ephemeral form) throughout their garden, attached to, on, or near the hardscape. These texts, naturally, have not survived unless in copied form. Stephanie Ross in *What Gardens Mean* (1998), remarks that "eighteenth-century gardens were expected to perform the tasks of their sister arts, to offer messages visitors could 'read' and scenes they could savor" (xii). I would add that these messages also comprised opinions on subjects of interest for the two women and their visitors. Though messages (poetic or not) and opinions were an interesting part of Ponsonby and Butler's gardens metaphorically, they were also a literal part of Plas Newydd. The words "Sincerity, Fidelity, and Industry" are still clearly carved above the

exterior side of the door, on the gabled, dairy-facing side of the house. Over the doorway of the front portico, the text “Tanquam non reverturus,” (“Be careful, do not revert back”). The sister arts appear to have merged seamlessly at Plas Newydd with the landscape itself. From a certain viewpoint, the topography of the estate with a stream running along the property like the spine of an opened book, bears similarities to Ponsonby’s commonplace book. Figuratively, Ponsonby and Butler commonplacéd inscribed excerpts and iconography, which were placed on the house and throughout the gardens, resonating with generic commonplacing.

The term viewpoint denotes having an opinion, but it also denotes having a vantage point or perspective typically overlooking geographic terrain or the representation of terrain in a medium such as maps. Topographic perspectives, bifurcating geography and discursive viewpoints take the form of maps in Ponsonby’s commonplace book. These mappings of place and space are inflected with political meaning and significance as discursive sites of resistance and assertion in the public sphere. As J. B. Harley notes in *The New Nature of Maps* (2001), “maps are a class of rhetorical images [...] just as surely as any other discursive form” and become “a political force in society” (54). As most modern geographers would agree, maps are powerful because mapping is political. For example, according to Harley, “on English estate maps, microcosmic symbols of landed wealth, it is the coats of arm, the country house, and the hunting activity of the proprietors which are represented. To own the map was to own the land” (75). Maps are not singularly about geography. They often connote the privilege of power and wealth to symbolize and codify the objects and activities of

wealth and status. Conversely, Ponsonby's mappings in her commonplace book of the Welsh terrain and its former geopolitical boundaries provocatively re-orientate the visual rhetoric (inherent in all maps), symbolically shifting the power dynamics away from British-Englishness and toward a new Welsh nationalism.

Maps have a notable presence in Ponsonby's commonplace book, though often fragmentary. Of the approximate eighty pages in Ponsonby's commonplace book, about a dozen of those pages are related to mapping of some type. An interesting example of mapping, dated 29 November 1785 and titled "Facade," is best described as a cartographic study (32). The visual field of "Facade" is divided into seven unequal areas displaying various sketches, showing both natural and human-derived features present in the landscape (see fig. 71). One sketch suggests a partial drawing of an unidentifiable shore line and labeled only as "Small Lake," though its mapping more reasonably resembles an unspecified section of the west coast of Wales or possibly Ireland. On another section on the page, a vignette of a mountain range stretches east to west. Other mountain ranges or peaks dot the page. Additional renderings include a row of six churches, which are drawn as if seen from a far off distance and barely distinguishable. An almost semi-circular, open, fence-like study in the bottom right section of the page is the last planographic object in the visual field. The map view of these different sketches differ in visual effect. The mountains and the front elevations of the six churches vary in gradations of dimensionality. Concerning the "Small Lake," the taxonomic line blurs the boundary between land and water. Considering the various facade that Ponsonby demonstrates on the page, an abundant amount of open white space remains with some

renderings having less visual weight and taking up less space on the page than other sketches.

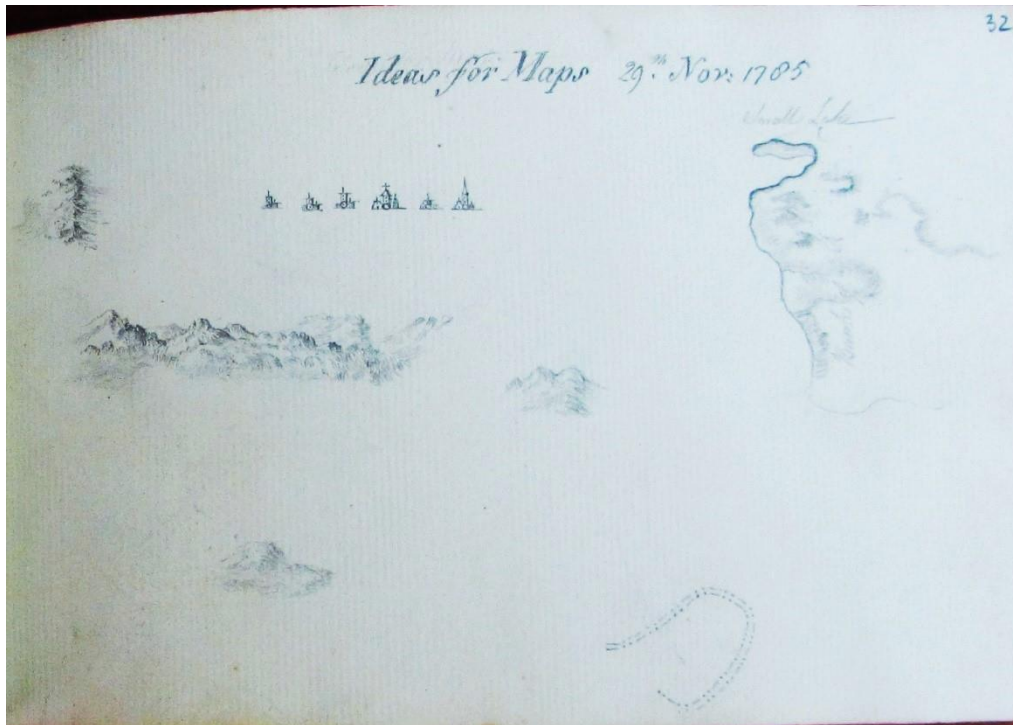


Fig. 71. “Facades” from Sarah Ponsonby’s *Commonplace Book MS22969A* showing seven different visual fields using various types of mapping geographic features (32) Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales (“Sarah Ponsonby” 1785).

Symbolically, maps depict preferences; the preference embodied in Ponsonby’s “Facade” exhibits a predilection for unboundedness, though mapping usually seeks to set boundaries. In Ponsonby’s ideas for mapping, she exhibits a reluctance to depict topography that appears reasonably measurable, which was the purpose for commissioning surveys and maps in the eighteenth century. Trumpener reminds us that “in Britain and Ireland the measurement and mapping of land, the remaking of rural

topography, in the name of the agricultural improvement, reawakens and renews questions of ownership, tradition, and occupation” (25). Other pages in Ponsonby’s commonplace book, demonstrate that she was not opposed to the profession of surveying and cartography. Yet, this page resists any implied sense of mapping land ownership. Mountain ranges, churches, a water front, and an open sheepfold hardly convey the idea of mapping for the purpose of enclosure or agricultural improvement; in fact, these vignettes imply resistance to the imposition of “the remaking of rural typography” by government survey ordinance or the political economy of landowners. This resistance, despite Ponsonby and Butler’s own position as landowners, echoes with a fraught historical past and, what Pittock describes as being “the performance of nationality displaced into a reading of the other as the unachievable self: cultural alterity as a response to political defeat” (240). Mapping is a “performance of nationality,” and Ponsonby, at least in her “Ideas for Maps,” shifts to a “cultural alterity” that resists a topographic model gesturing toward enclosure of common land and the displacement of rural tenants. Each sketched vignette represents “waste lands” (mountains and water fronts) that are economically inefficient for enclosure, or they signify other property (sheep or cattle gates and ecclesiastical land) that presents unique legal challenges to enclosure. Ponsonby and Butler were surrounded by reminders of political defeat; as mentioned earlier, the peak behind Plas Newydd was the sight of several battles between Wales and England, as evidenced by the castle ruins of Dinas Bran.¹¹⁶ Yet Ponsonby’s

¹¹⁶ See figure 4.9 that shows the peak behind Plas Newydd with the castle ruins of Castell Dinas Brân clearly noticeable in the topmost right corner of the photograph.

“Ideas for Maps” demonstrates an assertive alterity refusing to accept the idea of political and cultural inevitabilities associated with the loss of land.

In “Romantic Belongings” (2000), Angela Keane notes that the “pastoral fantasy of plenitude and local sustenance is symptomatic of the altering condition we define as ‘modernity’ and the enforced mobility of populations under the burgeoning capitalism of the eighteenth century” (2-3). This nostalgia for a pre-enclosure Britain underscores Ponsonby’s “Idea for Maps” as a longing for a similar pastoral past with strong connections to Welsh community. Ponsonby’s cartographic study is nostalgic of an era before emerging capitalism made landowners concerned only for their own self-interests—a time when there was enough common land for tenants. According to Keane, this pastoral fantasy “is all the more potent [...] in a decade of radical upheaval such as the 1790s, when, due first to revolution and then to war” (2-3). Ponsonby’s commonplace book (1785-1789) was compiled during a time of European upheaval, imminent revolution, and enclosure in Britain. This map conveys an implied nostalgia for Wales as a nation with distinct Welsh regions. These regions were drawn by transposing a map of Wales onto a grid (see fig. 72). This map of Wales includes primary flowlines of rivers and the outline of national boundaries with an absent eastern border along the Welsh Marches, underscoring Wales’s ambivalent geographic relationship with England.



Fig. 72. From Sarah Ponsonby's *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* an adhered page of a hand drawn map of Wales (40). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1785).

Sarah Ponsonby also includes the historic administrative counties of Wales made with dotted lines, using a different ink for differentiation. At the time when Ponsonby included this map in her commonplace book (1785-1789), Wales did not legally exist; from 1746 until 1967, it was not a separate entity from England in name or geographic boundaries. Ponsonby's drawing of the boundaries of Wales, especially historical, regional, and self-governing boundaries was a radical, political act. By drawing the boundaries of Wales and alluding to a new nationalism in her commonplacing Ponsonby troubles imperialistic England through her commonplace book. Keane remarks that

“despite the frequent elision of ‘national’ and ‘public’ life in critical commentary, it is impossible to simply map out on ‘the nation’ to ‘the public sphere’” (4). However, in this particular instance, Ponsonby performs this very gesture of superimposing her map of Welsh nationhood onto the public sphere through her commonplacing. In reframing Wales’s political place in Britain or the British Isles, Ponsonby symbolically exchanges with England its periphery position¹¹⁷ for a central nation-space. Erin C. Blake in *New Media, 1740-1915* (2003) remarks that “acts of mapping are acts of visualizing, conceptualizing, recording, representing and creating spaces graphically. It is this living relationship between the observer and the zograscope view [...] that allows for the active simulation of space, not just its passive representation” (13). Active versus passive mapping of the representation of place and space, as Blake implies, speaks as much to the role of the “observer” doing the mapping as to the map itself.

This “living relationship” between mapper and map enabled Ponsonby to express a viewpoint about the loss of Welsh self-governance. Caroline Franklin in “Wales as Nowhere: The Tabula Rasa of the ‘Jacobin’ Imagination” (2013), writes that “since 25 July 1689, when the Council of Wales was abolished, Wales had no civil institutions and it possessed no capital or metropolis. This made it a *tabula rasa*” (11). From this blank slate, Ponsonby constructed her own mappings, clean of misperceptions of Wales’s standing in a world compared to and subsumed by England. I contend that Ponsonby did not necessarily need a map of Wales, *per se*, in her commonplace book as much as she

¹¹⁷ In Ponsonby’s map of Wales, England is placed in such an outer periphery position that not even its shared western border with Wales shows up on the map.

needed to map her place in relation to England, Wales, and the Celtic sphere. According to Mary-Ann Constantine in “Writing the Revolution in Wales” (2013) “Of the four [Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and England], Wales has been the Cinderella nation, misrepresented and overlooked” (2). Constantine states that “the reasons for this neglect are complex,” occurring much as the “result of its early union with England” (2), and, I would add, if effectively “lacking a metropolis,” Wales was in “early union” with London as well. Though, like Ponsonby’s map, London’s undisputed centrality and power was challenged as well.

During the Romantic period, the notion of London being the center of politics and commerce was beginning to be seriously challenged. According to Alan Baker and Mark Billinge in “Material and Imagined Geographies of England,” London lost some control of “mercantile monopolies” through the decentralizing of industrial prosperity and demographic shifts to the North; (10-11). This economic, industrial shift included Wales as well. According to Stephen R. Hughs in *Collieries of Wales* (1994), “the coal industry of south and north-eastern Wales first reached truly large proportions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries feeding the fuel-hungry iron and copper industries” (9). He further goes on to state that the coalmines in Wales “were of world importance” and the “economic foundation of many communities” (9). As the industrial revolution vitalized and expanded England’s northern cities and other cities in the British Isles, London, no longer remained unchallenged as the economic center—now there were many economically significant cities in the British Isles.

Lady Morgan had settled into her home in London by 1837. She was partly motivated to leave Dublin for London because of the honor in becoming “the first female recipient of a literary pension of £300 per annum [...] at the behest of Lord Melbourne’s government” and partly discouraged by “the prospect of an Ireland no longer amenable to her political vision” (Donovan 185). Morgan included in *Commonplace Book MS 880* a handwritten journaled farewell to Ireland expressing sentiments that she similarly articulates in *Commonplace Book MS 881*: “Farewell Ireland, you have always slighted and often persecuted me, yet I worked on your cause humbly but earnestly.” In her earlier journal entry, dated June 23rd 1832, Morgan begins this leave-taking address similarly (see fig. 73): “Oh at last— Adieu Dublin! Adieu to your [...] ignorant and presumptuous ascendancy society—adieu” (MS 880). The journaling continues in the same vein with adieus listing what she ascertains to be intractable problems with Dublin society and Ireland generally, which has worn her down over the years. She ends her open letter to Dublin by stating that “with such odious & unclean things adieu, my gifted, innocent, & lovely adieus! If I had you with me, now [...], Dublin the capital of literature in Ireland—which is now at the 2nd of a country whom Swift named it in his lines—off for [...] London” (MS 880). Morgan enjoyed a tremendously successful social life in Dublin and achieved great success as an author with respected political views. However, as her preface to *France 1829-30* suggests, she felt slighted and persecuted by the literary critics. Morgan’s repositioning herself in London society was a choice that she had decided upon in her own best interests. She makes it clear in these two open letters that she has endured enough “odious” society for

the cause of Ireland while living in Dublin. Though not overtly stated, Morgan hints in her address (MS 880) that she may be more useful to the Irish cause as a “gifted” writer in London, where she is renowned and where she would be able to effectively bring peripheral national identity to the forefront.

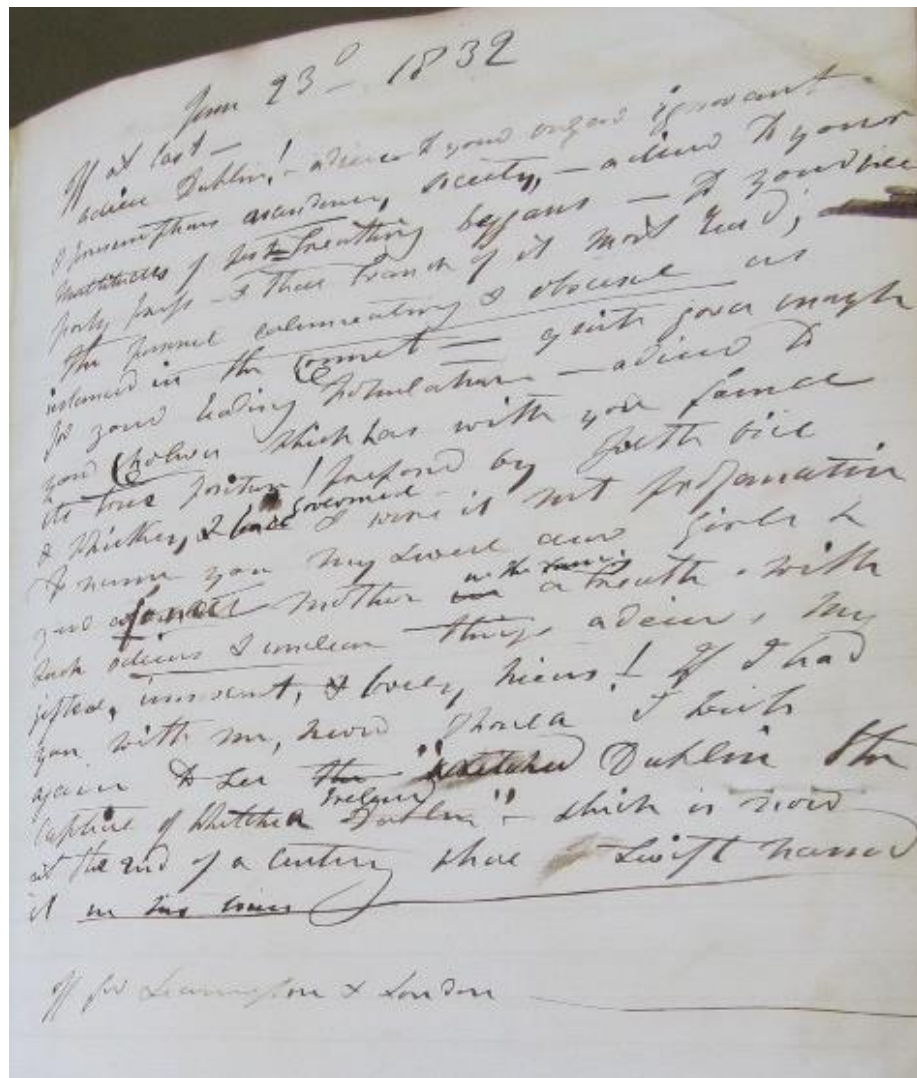


Fig. 73. From Lady Morgan’s *Commonplace Book MS 880*, journaling her farewell to Ireland, June 23, 1832. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1832).

Lady Morgan's London years covered a significant portion of her commonplace books (MS 881-884), which include extracts of obituaries, reports of soirees, book reviews of her literary works, and news reports of her philanthropy and celebrity. She expanded upon her interests in global politics and European society, clipping articles for her commonplace books such as the "State of Europe." Morgan's "tales and other writings," states Egenolf, "engage in a generic playfulness and global awareness" ("Politics" 109-110). This shift in Morgan's cultural, social, and political interests to a greater international awareness becomes particularly noticeable when comparing commonplace books MS 878-MS 880 to commonplace books MS 881-884. Morgan began *Commonplace Book MS 881* (1837) when she moved to London, and her interests became notably more global; however, Morgan stayed connected to Ireland through commonplacing periodical clippings about Irish politics, employing her commonplace books as a public sphere.

The political discursive practices of the women in my case studies from the Romantic period provided alternatives to hegemonic narratives and the discourse of radical rebellion during an age of revolution. Trumpener states that "Nationalist historical narratives [...] posit the noninevitability and undesirability of radical cultural transformation, stressing instead the organic accretion of cultural practices" (29). The idea of incremental cultural, social, and political progress as a desirable process with opinions and controversies shaping that process is exemplified in Morgan's newspaper clippings and annotations in her commonplace books. The majority of Morgan's commonplacing exhibits deliberative political arguments in news clippings, which she

often annotates. These extracts advocate Irish nationalism without radical rebellion, such as the news clipping of Villiers-Stuart's speech on Catholic emancipation. The newspaper clippings, about Morgan's masquerade as Rose Bertin, as discussed in detail in Chapter 1, also show the nuances of her political opinions and her ideological support of the French revolution. Many of Morgan's news clippings are political to some degree, ranging from local Dublin politics to Catholic emancipation, yet it is important to keep in mind that Morgan's commonplace books (MS 878-884) begin with the year 1825, when both the French Revolution and the Irish Rebellion are decades in the past with few periodicals reporting specifically on these events.

The most notorious event and dire topic that Morgan commonplaces pertain to the Great Irish Famine. A newspaper clipping from *The Times* (London) placed in *Commonplace Book 881* provides a retrospective recapitulation of the momentous events of 1846. This clipping placed partially folded under expands beyond the edge of the page. A note next to the clipping in the top right corner approximates the publication date of the article and/or her journaling: "January or February 1847" (MS 881). Below the date, Morgan includes journaling that fills in the right side of the page (see fig. 74).

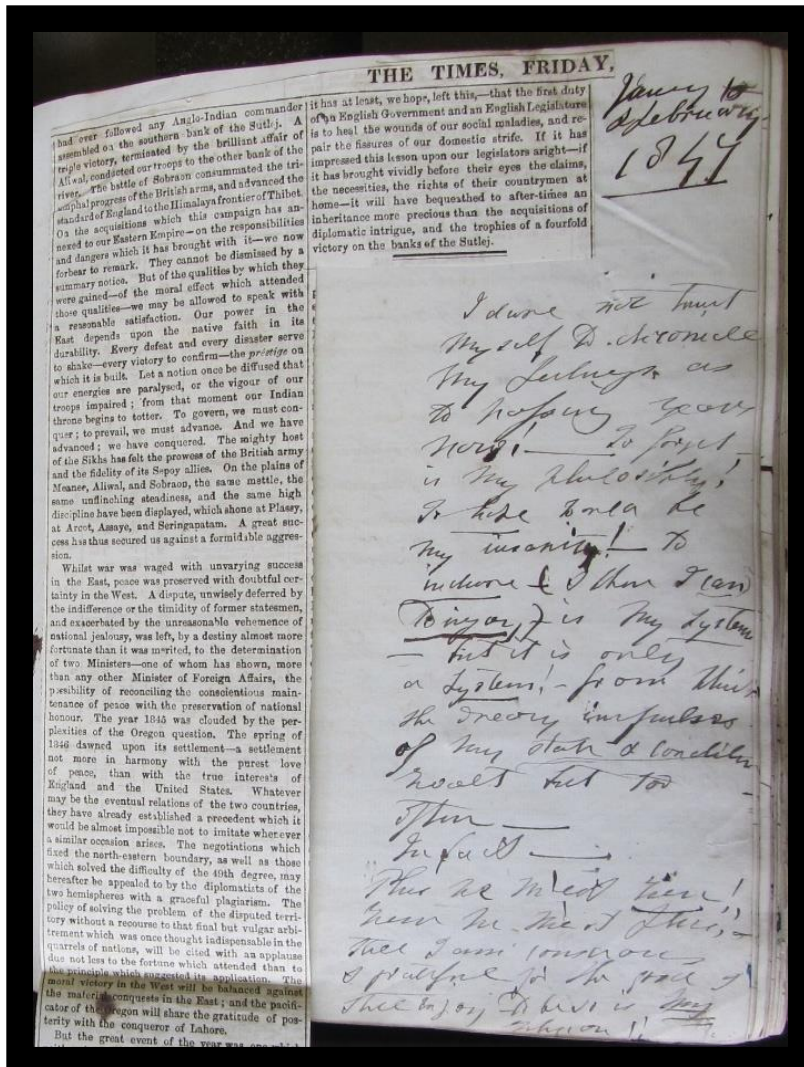
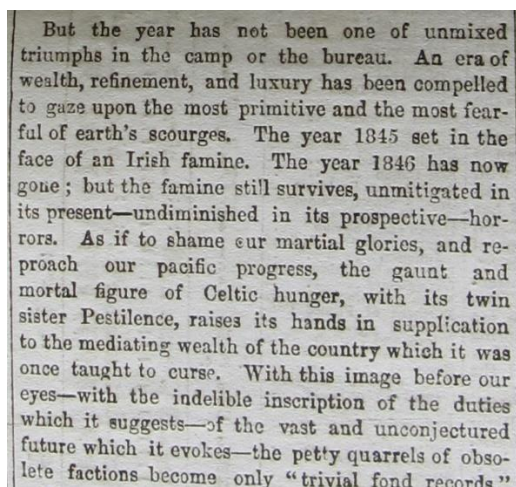


Fig. 74. A clipping of a news article that discusses the Irish famine, including journaling from Lady Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 881* that mentions her state of mind. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland ("Sydney Morgan" 1847).

The newspaper article calls attention to the Irish famine, reproaching Britain's indifferent response to "the most fearful of earth's scourges": An era of wealth, refinement, and luxury has been compelled to gaze upon the most primitive and the most fearful of earth's scourges. The year 1845 set in the face of an Irish famine. The year

1846 has now gone; but the famine still survives, unmitigated in its present—undiminished in its prospective—horrors. As if to shame our martial glories, and reproach our pacific progress, the gaunt and mortal figure of Celtic hunger, with its twin sister Pestilence, raises its hand in supplication to the mediating wealth of the country which it was once taught to curse. (*Times* qtd. in Morgan MS 881; see fig. 75). This article points out the hypocrisy and ethical dishonesty of not responding adequately to the “Celtic hunger,” to the pestilence of the Irish famine that “raises its hands in supplication to the mediating wealth” of the British government. The article asks what good is it for Britain to be a world leader if it lets the famine continue “unmitigated in its present—undiminished in its prospective—horrors.” The article asserts that for all Britain has accomplished, its “martial glories” and “pacific progress,” its shame will deepen if the famine is not directly addressed.



But the year has not been one of unmixed triumphs in the camp or the bureau. An era of wealth, refinement, and luxury has been compelled to gaze upon the most primitive and the most fearful of earth's scourges. The year 1845 set in the face of an Irish famine. The year 1846 has now gone; but the famine still survives, unmitigated in its present—undiminished in its prospective—horrors. As if to shame our martial glories, and reproach our pacific progress, the gaunt and mortal figure of Celtic hunger, with its twin sister Pestilence, raises its hands in supplication to the mediating wealth of the country which it was once taught to curse. With this image before our eyes—with the indelible inscription of the duties which it suggests—of the vast and un conjectured future which it evokes—the petty quarrels of obsolete factions become only “trivial fond records.”

Fig. 75. Snippet view from Lady Morgan’s *Commonplace Book MS 881* of a newspaper clipping, *The Times*, London, retrospectively discussing the year 1846 and the Irish famine. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland (“Sydney Morgan” 1846).

Lady Morgan's journaling next to the clipping does not explicitly discuss the contents of the article or mention the Irish famine specifically. Instead, I argue, Morgan's juxtaposition of her journaling next to the article intentionally forges a connection between her opinions and a controversial topic—between her sensibility and the Irish famine. Morgan journals: “I dare not trust myself to chronicle my feelings, as to hoping years now – to forget,—is my philosophy! To hope would be my insanity!—to indure [sic] it [...] I can; to ignor [sic] is my System--but it is only a System! —from which the dreary impulses of my state & condition boast[?] but too often” (MS 881). Morgan appears to cope with stress through her journaling. Given the proximity of her journaling to this article and, as mentioned previously, Morgan's tendency toward subtly and rarely being overtly hyperbolic in her manuscript commonplace books, suggests that “dreary impulses” fairly depicts her state of mind. Furthermore, Ireland in the grip of famine likely becomes the source of these anxieties. Morgan at the time of this journaling has been away from Ireland for a decade. She is far from Dublin at a time when Ireland seems to need her most. As her journaled farewells to Ireland and her prefaces indicate, the Irish are her community for whom she feels a strong attachment that the years had not diminished.

Lady Morgan could well have pondered as she was journaling next to the *Times* news clipping that the magnitude of the famine is far beyond her resources as a writer to mitigate—leaving her feeling helpless and hopeless about Ireland's future. Such was not the case during the years before leaving Ireland when Morgan, in her own way, had tried to facilitate broadening the base of Ireland's economy through her support of textile

manufacturing—hoping to forestall future crisis. We can see evidence of Morgan’s interest in this topic early on in *Commonplace Book MS 879* (1828-1831) where she commonplaces extracts from periodicals concerning the support and encouragement of silk manufacturing in Ireland. Donovan remarks that as context for *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), Owenson (Lady Morgan) “uses her country’s historical prowess in textile manufacture to demonstrate how Ireland could take its place as part of Europe and the world rather than linger as a lesser dominion of Britain” (20). Donovan further notes that Owenson “exercised genuine activism on behalf of Irish textile manufacturers, which she directly linked to her patriotism” (48). The causes of the Great Irish Famine were far more complicated than simply not having enough textile manufactures in Ireland, but it is easy to see how, from Morgan’s perspective, she may have taken the famine personally. The failed years of Ireland being able to avert a future crisis like famine is what Morgan has been for years “hoping to forget.” From the frustrating position of helplessness, I contend that Morgan’s self-talk in her journals help her cope with the famine crisis. Morgan’s resolve to “endure” and “ignore” news about the famine may be her “philosophy” or “the “System,” though likely a flawed system probably doomed to fail, with the alternative of becoming “insane” with worry and regret.

Lady Morgan’s strong feelings of community with the Irish and her relocation to England creates an impression in her commonplace books of a longing for a re-imagined communality encompassing the entirety of the British Isles—a new model for national identities. Benedict Anderson’s theoretical construct of “imagined political communities,” I posit, provides a useful model for understanding the sociable aspect of

politics in the commonplace books of women in my case studies. His theories about imagined communities that deliberate national identity add nuance to an understanding of resistances to British-Englishness and assertions of new nationalism in the Celtic sphere. For example, in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983, 2006 ed.) Anderson writes: “I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community-- imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6). Anderson suggests that all communities and national identity formations are in the imagination. We really cannot know *that* many people in a lifetime or connect to *all* others in the aggregate in order for it to be anything but imaginary. The fluidity of imagined community would be an asset in forming national identities because it could contain multiple versions of national identity without a center and without a periphery.

In Morgan’s and Ponsonby’s commonplace books, certainly, there are examples of nationalistic binaries, socio-political tensions, textual strategies, and aesthetic modes for resisting England’s hegemonic reach. As well though, Morgan and Ponsonby provide “images of their communion” that have cultural, political, sociable, and even emotional aspects to being a community, nation, or political union. Historically, Anderson considers nationalism to be a relatively recent “anomaly,” a “cultural artefact,” and a type of political community that would “make things easier if one treated it as if it

belonged with ‘kinship’ and ‘religion’¹¹⁸ rather than ‘liberalism’ or ‘fascism’” (5). For example, Morgan’s offhanded placement of cultural, sociable-political artefacts in her commonplace books shows her comfortable approach to nationalism. Indeed, Morgan’s unofficial position as spokesperson for Ireland was neither staid nor didactically radical but rather empathetic, as one feels and acts when in communion with others. Anderson posits that nationalism is not ideological, it is cultural, which is how “it came into being” (12). Morgan’s and Ponsonby’s commonplace books provide examples of commonplacing artifacts and aesthetics as a new cultural nationalism that is integrated with a sense of community--or the public sphere, if you will.¹¹⁹

In regard to nationalism, Linda McDowell argues that Anderson’s approach to understanding political community and national identity is useful, but she adds in *Gender, Identity and Place* (1999) that “a nation is a cultural artifact, constructed through maps, flags, buildings, monuments, common customs, sport, and political rhetoric in order to include its citizens in a common project” (195). McDowell asserts that in addition to theory, feeling, or even imagination people need tangible visual and symbolic markers to bond them to “a common project” of community and nationhood. Morgan’s commonplace books (1825-1859) exhibit a compilation of ephemerae as visual markers of sociable activities performed in public and private venues in Dublin

¹¹⁸ Benedict Anderson has in mind with his allusion to ‘religion’ a non-fundamentalist religiosity that is like belonging to a social club.

¹¹⁹ The women in my case studies participate in the type of community connections that Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite imagine in a Romantic model of Jürgen Habermas’s public sphere as a type of “imagined coffeehouse,” which is suggestive of Anderson’s theorized imagined political communities.

and London that have symbolic significance of mixed political and cultural intent for socializing--a dialogic between the social and political spheres. A sampling of Morgan's ephemerae from her commonplace books includes programs for the play *La Fausse Agnés* at Theatre François (MS 879), a *Petite Comedie [sic]* (MS 879), and a *Soiree Musicale* (MS 879). Morgan also commonplaces hand-written invitations and newspaper clippings announcing Mrs. Stanley's Childs Balls (MS 879 and MS 880)¹²⁰ and entertainment at Lord Morpeth's ball held "at his residence¹²¹ in the Phoenix Park"(MS 879). Other ephemerae attest to yet another ball sponsored by Lord Morpeth given at the Chief Secretary's Lodge, "which was honored by the presence of his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, and attended by all the nobility and Gentry now in town" (MS 879). Two of these newspaper clippings that report Lord Morpeth's balls, also list both "Sir Charles and Lady Morgan" as attending guests. These sociable events appear political because they offered access to some of the most powerful politicians and their aristocratic supporters in Ireland, who in amenable, social environments could be susceptible to subtle persuasion.

The Morgans' privileged access to political power would not have been available to the average person in Dublin. Yet within a paradigm of social and political exclusion, the communal project of cultural national identity continues. For example, a playbill for the comedy *First Love* as well as the "dramatization of the *Ballad of Xaripa*" in

¹²⁰ A Childs Ball means a sociable gathering attended by the knighted class, which includes a formal dance. Sydney Morgan's husband, Sir Thomas Morgan, was a knighted public figure.

¹²¹ This residence was known as the Chief Secretary's Lodge, which housed British cabinet members who acted as governors of Ireland.

Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 879* has an attached clipping that reports the Morgans and others in attendance at the performance. Ironically, the venue for *First Love* was in Phoenix Park, (a large estate given to the people of Dublin in 1745) and performed at the retained Royal residence maintained within this public space—historically, a Royal hunting ground (see fig. 76). The print image of a scene from the comedy, *First Love* shows various characters with initials written above each figure, corresponding to the cast of characters listed farther below on the playbill. The list of aristocratic “actors,” such as Lord Frederick Paulet and Lady Francis Leveson Gower and the genteel attendees, such as the Morgans, suggests that this performance was not open to the general public but rather to politically well-connected and fashionable individuals in Dublin society only (MS 879). Yet, these newspaper accounts symbolically include the general public in the common project of national identity. The literary fan or the curious public reading about Morgan's attendance at Lord Morbeth's balls imaginatively connects everyone (Lord, Lady, and commoner) symbiotically in a community. Arguably, this diverse polity has varying levels of political access or social and cultural privilege that are not beneficial to all, but communal connection exists through concrete cultural modes and medium.



Fig. 76. Snippet view of playbill from Lady Morgan's *Commonplace Book MS 879* for the performance of the comedy *First Love* with attached clipping reporting the Morgans' attendance. Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Ireland ("Sydney Morgan" 1829).

Sarah Ponsonby commonplaced the type of texts and images representative of what McDowell would identify as examples of national artifacts: cultural customs, maps, and architecture. Ponsonby asserted her sense of Welsh self-identity by commonplacing "Mentra Gwen," maps of non-enclosable land and Wales, and Plas Newydd's Gothic aesthetics. Ponsonby also commonplaced her own sense of national identity in the form of feminine munificence. According to Maureen M. Martin in *The Might Scot* (2009), "female figures are often used to represent the enduring spirit of the nation" (131). In

Commonplace Book MS 22969A, Ponsonby has drawn a stylized nude female bust wearing a medallion. Three thistles both intertwine the chain of the medallion and help to create the *trompe-l'oeil* of bared breasts. Though the thistle emblematically represents Scotland, “the thistle is a Celtic symbol of nobility of both character and birth” as well (“Windsorscottish”). The drawing in the top, far left section of the page suggests a close-up, inset detail of the decorative rim around the medallion, stylistically alluding to daffodils iconically associated with Welsh identity.

In the medallion, an angelic-like figure is dressed in flowing robes and has wings; to the right side of the sketch of the medallion is a caption: “Serve Ye the Stranger” (43). I propose that Ponsonby intended the bust and the inscription to serve as a motto to live by as an inspirational exemplar of her symbolically distilled vision of admirable Classical and Celtic qualities, having more significance than simply being the title for a sketch (43). Ponsonby had likely taken this caption from Deuteronomy 10:19, which reads “Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” (KJV). Ponsonby uses the word “serve” rather than “love” for her motto (see fig. 77). Often early modern translations, such as the King James Version of Biblical passages use the term “charity” in place of love, as in “now abideth faith, hope, and charity” (I Corinthians 13:13). Charity as an aspect of love, certainly, could be understood to mean “serve.” I posit that Ponsonby and Butler associated personally with the second part of the verse from Deuteronomy, providing a rationale for love, charity, or service toward others: they were once themselves vulnerable and alone as strangers in a foreign land. Ponsonby and Butler as new arrivals in Wales would be able to identify with the need to

rely on the compassion of others until they were more financially established and had developed a sense of community with their neighbors. After several years, Ponsonby and Butler were as much a part of the community in Llangollen as the Reverend Robert Jones; they were sought out as benefactors and often gave charitably to others, remembering perhaps their beginning years of unreliably sporadic income.

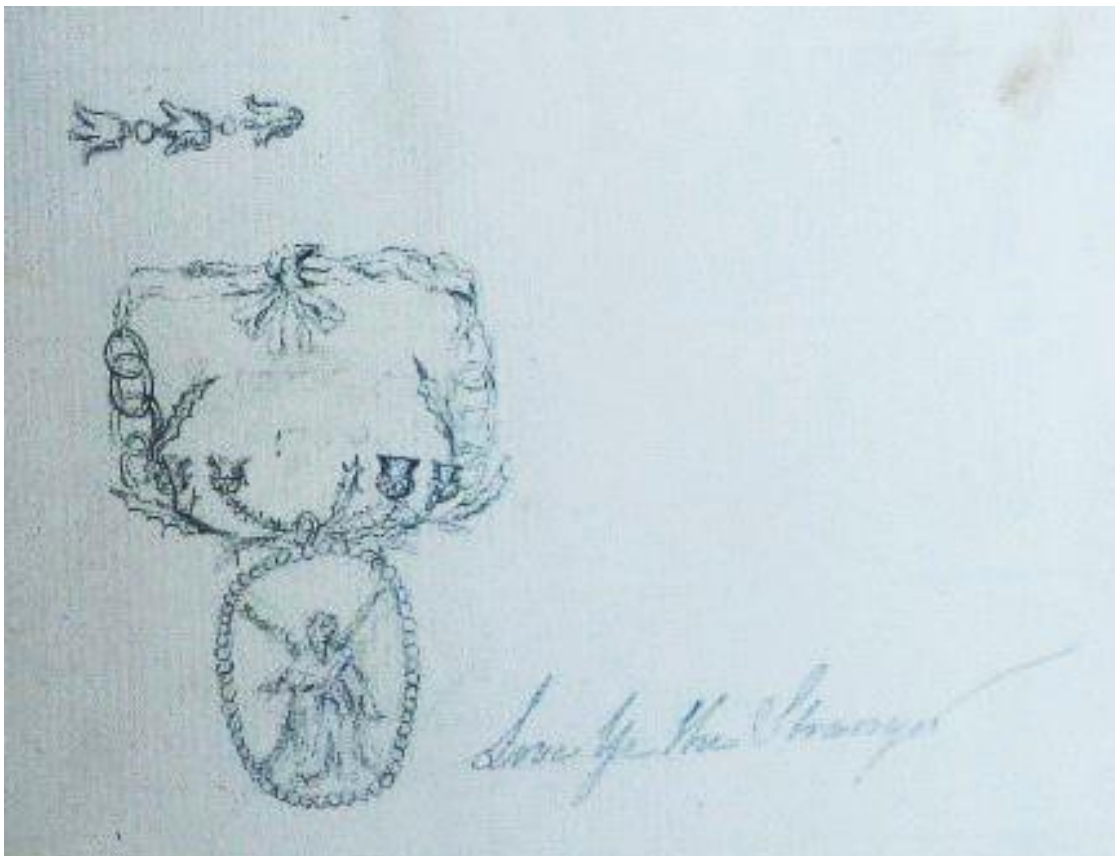


Fig. 77. A sketch of a female nude bust wearing a medallion from Sarah Ponsonby's *Commonplace Book MS 22969A* titled "Serve Ye the Stranger" (43). Reprinted with permission from The National Library of Wales ("Sarah Ponsonby" 1785).

The aesthetics of Ponsonby's sketch are primarily Classical, as many of the other sketches in her commonplace book allude to both Greek or Roman mythology and culture. Her sketch suggests a conflation of Venus de Milo and the Winged Victory of Samothrace, presenting a fitting classical symbol of romantic love and triumph that Ponsonby and Butler and others associated with their idyllic relationship and pastoral lifestyle. Linda McDowell notes that "one of the ironies of these female representations or allegories—whether statues, friezes, faces of figures on flags or banknotes—is that the symbolic images of women often bear little or no relation to the position of women in those societies at particular times" (199). I would add to McDowell's list of allegorical female representations the commemoration of women in poetry. Ponsonby and Butler's love for each other and the picturesque beauty of Llangollen and Plas Newydd inspired Anna Seward and William Wordsworth to write poetry dedicated to these two women. Sarah Ponsonby's allegorical image of femininity in her commonplace book suggests that other symbolic representations of women and formations of identity are imaginable and achievable.

Sarah Ponsonby, Eleanor Butler, and Lady Morgan commonplacing lacks similarity in modes of political engagement comparable to the relative likenesses of modes in commonplacing poetics and valuations often found in women's commonplace books. Their unique methods of political expression may be problematic for asserting generalizations about women's commonplace books, but they expressed poignantly their opinions in the public sphere. Making generalizations about women's commonplacing is

often applicable in some subject areas, but the expression of social and political conviction is essentially personal and distinctively unique.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: COMMONPLACE BOOKS AND DIGITAL COTERIES

In conclusion, I have argued in this dissertation that the generic conventions of commonplace books accrued and shifted in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries toward personal and vernacular modes of commonplacing. Notable generic changes in women's commonplacing, especially, accrued over time with the advent of the printing press and early nineteenth-century print culture. The emphasis on classical texts and the *trivium* disciplines or the content of religious and conduct literature in commonplace books was becoming passé during the Romantic period. A shift in the generic conventions of commonplacing was fostered by relatively cheap and available printed books, periodicals, lithographs, advertisements, and other printed sources. Women compiled entries and excerpts of texts, images, and ephemera into commonplace books from these type of printed sources in addition to including scribal extracts. Both print and scribal manuscript culture provided practical and creative content that reflected and served women's interests, needs, and activities.

My case studies of women's commonplace books, primarily from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, show that women focused on a new *trivium* of topics. As I have demonstrated in this dissertation, commonplace books as compositional workspaces were conducive to editing, revising, and embellishing other-authored and self-authored literary works--especially poetry. Women's compositions and compilations exhibit various levels of edit and interpretive techniques using pigments, household

items, and paper scraps, such as watercolor paint, needles, straight pins, thread, sealing wax, and gummed tape. Dorothy Wordsworth particularly used household items to attach paper overlays for emendations. Editing and embellishing literary works textually, graphically, and tactilely added meaning-making to Elizabeth Rose's, Angela Reyner's, and D. Wordsworth's commonplace books, exemplifying a variety of poetic expression. D. Wordsworth, in particular, made use of her commonplace book as a place to vary poetic expression in a conflation of composition and revision, intentionally creating variant versions of her poems, which I term "versioning." D. Wordsworth's involved role in the circulation of her poetry, which likely rivaled some low print runs, underscores the significance of her place and the role of commonplacing in the canon of Romantic poetry.

My case studies of women's commonplace books have shown that women compiled shopping memoranda, financial registers, and inventory lists of assets in addition to poetry. They recorded their ownership or management of real property, often exhibiting a type of cartographic accountancy that combines sketching, surveying, and mapping with accounting. Commonplace books were relatively safe, reliable places where women could keep valuatory records and keep track of the material objects and intangible assets that they valued. Eleanor Butler, Sarah Ponsonby, Rose, and D. Wordsworth reveal how women purposefully managed monetary and material assets, giving some sense of control over their financial well-being. Women assigned different valuations associated with their possessions and their work, illuminating what they valued in both pecuniary and non-pecuniary measures. The cost of goods and services

tended to be entered and tallied in registers, whereas inherently valuable or expensive objects were rarely given monetary valuations. Paradoxically, the more that objects or rights of ownership were intrinsically valuable or were relatively long-term investments, as compared to most non-luxury consumables, the less likely these things were assigned numerical, monetary value in women's commonplace books. Women intentionally tracked what they owned and managed, such as linens, books, and landscaping plants; however, they also tracked their physical labor and professional, intellectual work in private and public domains.

Women valued sociability and their place in both private and public spheres. They wrote, clipped, affixed, annotated, and sketched their opinions of cultural, socio-economic, and political controversies into their commonplace books. The textual, visual, and ephemeral content in women's commonplace books embody the modern axiom that the personal is political, and I would add that the sociable was political as well. Women commonplaced their involvement in communities relatable to Benedict Anderson's theorized "imagined communities." Women engaged and identified with various delineations of community with a resourcefulness and creative vision as unique as their own individuality. This resourceful individuality had a corresponding correlation with Anglo-Celtic new nationalism in which women, such as Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson), examined and asserted positive interconnections between Anglo-Celtic cultures. Ponsonby and Butler, like Morgan, resisted English hegemony and the presumptuousness of British-Englishness, commonplacing a troubled but assured Celtic identity in Gothic forms. Gothic tropes constituted the images, artifacts, and physical

structures that were ubiquitously present in Ponsonby's and Butler's commonplace and a part of their home and gardens at Plas Newdd.

A new *trivium* of literary, valuatory, and political commonplace formed the scope of my analysis of how and why women utilized commonplace primarily as writers rather than as readers. I have argued that women were active rather than passive commonplacers. They were readerly writers who compiled, annotated, composed, edited, evaluated, circulated, and actively engaged with the content of their commonplace books. Book-making techniques in commonplace books may at times seem deceptively simple or off-hand--even messy, perhaps. However, women produced thoughtfully-crafted manuscripts that served the purpose of aiding them in their everyday lives. Women spent a significant degree of time and effort invested in the handcrafted materiality and artful customization of their manuscripts. These manuscripts were enhanced with print clippings and other tactile ephemera that transformed their commonplace books into a public sphere of shared ideas.

The social, aesthetic, physical, and intellectual work women performed at home and in their communities often became enmeshed in the workspaces of their commonplace books. The art of performing and visually displaying work in women's commonplace books employed the handcrafted techniques of book-making. Handcrafted book-making enlivened women's textual engagement with their commonplace books as manuscripts with distinctive materiality. In addition to including a substantial amount of copied or composed extracts, annotations or marginalia, journaling, sketches, paintings, and ephemera written or rendered by hand, commonplace books display a *mélange* of

print media. Due to the advent of print culture and changes in the cost and availability of print, women during the Romantic period were engaged inventively with this medium in their commonplace books to a greater degree in the early nineteenth-century. A greater variety and abundance of printed materials gave women more discretion in how they chose to shape the process of commonplacing. The relatively plentiful and affordable availability of print during the Romantic period allowed women the luxury to “rethink” what they needed and wanted from the genre of commonplace books.

In this dissertation, I have analyzed the associative relationships that existed between book-making methods and the content of women’s commonplace books. When women artfully crafted and customized practical book-making methods that layered or mixed together print, handwritten text, images, or ephemera, they proportionally demonstrated a greater degree, variety, and combination of poetic innovation, financial management, and socio-political engagement. I argue that personalized commonplacing with customized book-making encouraged and engendered self-authored works and textual representations of a varied life of doing and writing. I have observed that when women’s commonplacing comparatively lacked personalized book-making techniques with handcrafted content, then more traditional and formal content tended to be commonplaced. In such cases, conduct literature, texts of general knowledge (ostensibly for the sake of improving moral character), and other-authored literary works were more prominently featured. Excerpted didactic works in women’s commonplace books have become dated as cultural and socio-political landscapes have changed over time. Conversely, the authenticity of women’s experience and experimentation in their

commonplace books, evident in D. Wordsworth's, Morgan's, Ponsonby's, and Butler's commonplacing, remains a fascinating record of who women were and what they thought, felt, and accomplished.

This dissertation theorized about women's commonplacing and placed an emphasis on the compiler's efforts to compose literary works and employ other discourse practices. My research on commonplace books broadens the scope of commonplacing to include women from Scotland, Wales, and Ireland in addition to England. A lack of critical discussion of women's commonplace books from the Romantic period has driven the research in this project. Building upon the foundational works of David Allan and Earle Havens, I believe that this area of genre studies, women's commonplace books, warrants much more critical work by scholars.

The work activities that Ponsonby, Butler, D. Wordsworth, Morgan, Rose, and Thrale Piozzi performed often involved the routine of managing their households or estates. The women mentioned in my case studies were all fairly well educated. They came from or married into the genteel class; although, their actual pecuniary wealth fluctuated. Particularly for D. Wordsworth and Morgan, writing held special significance as work. Composing and editing literary works, inventorying possessions, managing households and estates, and overseeing the construction of landscape gardens all required paperwork. This fact meant that for these and other women their managerial work had a place in the much needed workspaces of their commonplace books. The work-life of Butler, Morgan, Ponsonby, Rose, Thrale Piozzi, and D. Wordsworth included maintaining a connection to a sociable public sphere, engaging in controversies

and opinions. Their commonplace books were especially suited to hold and develop their opinions and textually explore their political voice, coding a variety of activities of observable work-life and intellectual labor onto pages of workspace.

I propose that Marshall McLuhan's axiom that the "medium is the message" (7), from *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), aptly characterizes women's commonplace books during the Romantic period and their continued and evolving relevance today. The message that the medium of commonplace books had conveyed in the past was occasionally ambivalent. The highly varied and fragmentary nature of commonplacing seemed to evoke apologetic commentary from editors when commonplace books were published in print. For example, Murry Middleton's 1939 preface to Katherine Mansfield's commonplace book, *Scrapbook of Katherine Mansfield, 1888-1923* and, oddly, Morgan's own preface to *The Book of the Boudoir* seem unsure that audiences will understand the genre of commonplacing. Interestingly, commonplacers living in a digital world appear to be comfortable with sharing and circulating a variety of excerpted content, which generically defines commonplace books. Tom Standage in *Writing on the Wall: Social Media—The First 2,000 Years* (2013) remind us, "commonplace books and miscellanies preserve traces of the sharing and copying system that linked their users together as they traded texts" (76). Standage also notes the following observations about the genre of commonplace books and contemporary social media on the Internet in the present:

A minority of the texts that people circulated were original compositions; most material was quoted from other sources. The same is true of modern social-media systems: posting links and snippets found elsewhere is standard practice on blogs, Facebook, and Twitter: and on platforms, such as Pinterest and Tumblr,

more than 80 percent of items shared are “repins” or “reblogs” of items previously posted by other users. Then as now, people enjoy being able to articulate their interests and define themselves by selectively compiling and resharing content created by others. (74, 75)

According to Standage, posting online is the new commonplace book. He indicates that modern people appreciate the generic utility and significance of commonplacing in their lives. Our contemporaries are not baffled by the fragmentary nature of “resharing”; rather, as he notes, we often find it enjoyable and useful. Women had “defined themselves” using commonplace books for compiling literary, valuatory, and political content; modern audiences define themselves with digital “postings, links, and snippets” and find them useful as well.

Commonplace books have relevance in a modern, digital era where the artifact of manuscripts and books are digitized, and we seem to increasingly lose the materiality and physicality of their presence in our lives. I contend that commonplacing with the manipulation of the computer restores some of the physicality of commonplace books. In a digital workspace, the physicality of commonplacing is experienced tactilely through the touch of a keypad, key board, “mouse,” or by touch directly applied onto the computer screen. I contend that commonplacing does not lose its relevance in a modern, digital world. Indeed, the personal customization of virtual commonplace books works well with modern lifestyles. I posit that, in fact, commonplacing democratizes literature, all genres and media: poetry, narratives, journaling, and other discourse practices. Instead of the circulation of one’s work to a restricted readership, digital commonplacing broadens readership to potentially millions of people. Digital commonplacing, I propose, addresses new concerns, new interests, and other topics or *topoi* in addition to the new

trivium found in many women's commonplace books from the Romantic period.

Generically, commonplacing continues to evolve. Digital commonplace books perhaps cognitively process content differently. However, regardless of cognitive, aesthetic, and technological differences, examining women's commonplace books from the Romantic period equips us to understand some of the more subtle nuances of digital commonplacing. In fact, understanding women's commonplace books becomes all the more needed as exemplars for understanding digital commonplacing. Finally, Standage's assessment of digital commonplacers suggests why Baxter, Butler, Morgan, Thrale Piozzi, Ponsonby, Reyner, Rose, and D. Wordsworth kept commonplace books in addition to all the reasons stated or contextually implied throughout this dissertation; they simply enjoyed commonplace books.

WORKS CITED

- A Poetry Scrapbook*. ca. 1814-1841. MS 8092. Chawton House Library, Chawton.
- “Album.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. 1989. Web. 14 June 2014.
- Alexander, John R. “History of Accounting.” *Association of Chartered Accountants*, United States. *ClubExpress*. 2002. Web. Jan 2012.
- Allan, David. *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.
- . *Making British Culture: English Readers and the Scottish Enlightenment, 1740-1830*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006. Print.
- Attfield, Judy. *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg, 2000. Print.
- Baker, Alan H. and Mark Billinge. “Material and Imagined Geographies of England.” *Geographies of England: The North-South Divide, Material and Imagined*. Ed. Alan H. Baker and Mark Billinge. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 1-14. Print.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: UT Press, 1981. Print.
- . *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984. Print.

- Barrell, John. *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980. Print.
- Bashor, Will. *Marie Antoinette's Head: The Royal Hairdresser, the Queen, and the Revolution*. Guilford: Lyons P, 2015. Print.
- Baxter, Anne. *A Sister's Gift*. ca. 1824-1834. MS WLMS 35/1, 1988:36. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- Benjamin, Walter. "One-Way Street." (1928). *Selected Writings, Vol. 1: 1913-1926*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. Eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996. Print.
- Berg, Maxine. *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.
- Bermingham, Ann. *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860*. Oakland: UC Press, 1989. Print.
- Berry, Mary. *Extracts of the Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry, from the Year 1783 to 1852*. 3 vols. Ed. Theresa Lewis. Robert L. Dawson French Collection. London: Longmans and Green, 1865. Print.
- Blair, Ann. "Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (1992): 547-48. Print.
- Blake, Erin C. "Zograscopes, Virtual Reality, and the Mapping of Polite Society in Eighteenth Century England." *New Media 1740-1915*. Eds. Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree. Cambridge: U MIT P, 2003. 1-30. Print.

- Boden, Helen ed. Introduction. *Her Write His Name: The Continental Journals, 1798-1820*. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1995. Print.
- Burke, Victoria E. "Manuscript Miscellanies." *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*. Ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. Print.
- Bury, Richard Cromleholme. *Of Common Places, or Memorial Books*. 1681. Ed. Earle Havens. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001. Print.
- Butler, Eleanor. *Diary: The Ladies New and Elegant Pocket Book for the Year 1784*. 1784. MS 2968A. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
- . *Journal, 1788-1791*. MS 22971C. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
- . *Journal, 1821*. MS 22976B. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- Cain, Cashion. Personal Interview. Texas A&M University, School of Architecture. 1 Feb 2016.
- Calder, Camilla. Personal Interview. Aberaeron, Wales. 19 May 2015.
- . *Scrapbook*. ca. 1850-1890. MS. Aberaeron.
- Campbell, Mary. *Lady Morgan: The Life & Times of Sydney Morgan*. London: Pandora, 1988. Print.
- Chernock, Arianne. *Men and the Making of Modern British Feminism*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2010. Print.

- Classical Manual; or A Mythological, Historical, and Geographical Commentary on Pope's Homer, and Dryden's Æneid of Virgil; With a Copious Index.* London: Longman, 1827. Print.
- Cochrane, Margaret and Robert Cochrane. *Housekeeping with Dorothy Wordsworth at Dove Cottage* Highgate: Redcliff, 2001. Print.
- "Commonplace Book." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. 1989. Web. 14 June 2014.
- Connor, Rebecca Elizabeth. *Women, Accounting and Narrative: Keeping Books in Eighteenth-Century England*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Constantine, Mary-Ann. "Writing the Revolution in Wales." *"Footsteps of Liberty and Revolt": Essays on Wales and the French Revolution*. Eds. Mary-Ann Constantine and Dafydd Johnston. Cardiff: U Wales P, 2013. Print.
- Copeland, Edward. "Money." *Jane Austen in Context*. Ed. Janet Todd. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. Print.
- Davies, Douglas. "The Evocative Symbolism of Trees." *The Iconography of Landscape*. Eds. Denis Cosgrove and Stephan Daniels. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988. Print.
- Denbighshire County Council. *Plas Newydd: A Brief History*. n. p.: DCC, 2003. Print.
- De Selincourt, Ernest. *Dorothy Wordsworth: A Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1933. Print.
- Domosh, Mona and Joni Seager. *Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers Make Sense of the World*. New York: Guilford, 2001. Print.

- Donovan, Julie. *Sydney Morgan, Lady Morgan and the Politics of Style*. Palo Alto: Maunsel, 2009. Print.
- Duff, David and Catherine Jones. Introduction. *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP. 2007. Print.
- Dunhill, Priscilla, Cynthia Hart and John Grossman. *A Victorian Scrapbook*. New York: Workman, 1989. Print.
- Durães, Margarida, et al. "Historicizing Well-Being from a Gender Perspective." *The Transmission of Well-Being: Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe, 17th-20th Centuries*. Eds. Margarida Durães, et al. Bern: Lang, 2009. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1983. Print.
- Eckhardt, Joshua and Daniel Starza Smith, eds. "Introduction: The Emergence of the English Miscellany." *Manuscript Miscellanies in Early Modern England*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2014. Print.
- Edwards, Jess. *Writing, Geometry and Space in Seventeenth-Century England and America: Circles in the Sand*. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Egenolf, Susan B. *The Art of Political Fiction in Hamilton, Edgeworth, and Morgan*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2009. Print.
- . "'Have you Irish?': Heroism in Morgan's The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys." *The Art of Political Fiction in Hamilton, Edgeworth, and Morgan*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2009.157-184. Print.

- . "Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson) and the Politics of Romanticism." *Ireland and Romanticism: Publics, Nations and Scenes of Cultural Production*. Ed. Jim Kelly. Basingstroke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 109-121. Print.
- Ezell, Margaret J. M. "Domestic Papers: Manuscript Culture and Early Modern Women's Life Writing." *Genre and Women's Life Writing in Early Modern England*. Eds. Michelle M. Dowd and Julie A Eckerle. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. 33-48. Print.
- . *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1999. Print.
- . *Writing Women's Literary History*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1993. Print.
- Fauve-Chamoux, Antoinette. "To Remarry or Not: Well-Being, Female Property and Widowhood in Early Modern France." *The Transmission of Well-Being: Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe (17th-20th Centuries)*. Eds. Margarida Durães et al. Bern: Lang, 2009. Print.
- Federico, Giovanni. *An Economic History of the Silk Industry, 1830-1930*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. Print.
- Fennetaux, Ariane. "Female Crafts: Women and *Bricolage* in Late Georgian Britain, 1750- 1820." *Women and Things, 1750-1950*. Eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin. Burlington: Ashgate, 2009. Print.
- Ferris, Ina. *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Print.
- Fisher, D. R. *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons*. "Villiers Stuart, Henry (1803-1874)." Cambridge U, 2009. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

Franklin, Caroline “Wales as Nowhere: The Tabula Rasa of the ‘Jacobin’ Imagination.”

“Footsteps of Liberty and Revolt”: Essays on Wales and the French Revolution.

Eds. Mary-Ann Constantine and Dafydd Johnston. Cardiff: U Wales P, 2013.

Print.

Garvey, Ellen Gruber. “Scissoring and Scrapbooks: Nineteenth-Century Reading,

Remaking, and Recirculating.” *New Media, 1740-1915*. Eds. Lisa Gitelman and

Geoffrey B. Pingree. Cambridge: MIT P, 2003. 207-28. Print.

Gernes, Todd S. “Recasting the Culture of Ephemera.” *Popular Literacy: Studies in*

Cultural Practices and Poetics. Eds. John Trimbur, David Bartholomae, and Jean

Ferguson Carr. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburg P, 2001. 107-27. Print.

Goggin, Maureen Daly. Introduction. “Threading Women.” *Women and the Material*

Culture of Needlework and Textiles. Eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth

Fowkes Tobin. Burlington: Ashgate, 2009. Print.

---. Maureen Daly, and Beth Fowkes Tobin, eds. *Women and the Material Culture of*

Needlework and Textiles. Burlington: Ashgate, 2009. Print.

Gordon, William. *The Universal Accountant, and Complete Merchant in Two Volumes.*

Vol 2. Donaldson: Edinburgh, 1770. Print.

Green, David R., et al. *Men, Women, and Money: Perspectives on Gender, Wealth, and*

Investment, 1850-1930. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. Print.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into*

a Category of Bourgeois Society. Trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick

Lawrence. Cambridge: MIT P, 1991. Print.

- Harley, J. B. "Maps, Knowledge, and Power." *The New Nature of Maps*. Ed. Paul Laxton. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2001. Print.
- Havens, Earle. *Commonplace Books: A History of Manuscripts and Printed Books from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: UP of New England, 2001. Print.
- . Introduction. *Of Common Places, or Memorial Books*. 1681. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001. Print.
- Hemans, Felicia. *Young Woman's Companion, or Female Instructor: Being a summary of useful knowledge; calculated to form the intellectual, the moral, and the domestic character; interspersed with interesting tales, biographical sketches of illustrious women & c, to which are subjoined Medicinal Receipts, and other useful directions requisite for every female to whom domestic economy is a desirable object*. 1835. London: Virtue, 1840. Print.
- Hicklin, John. *The "Ladies of Llangollen," As Sketched by Many Hands; With Notices of Other Objects of Interest in "That Sweetest of Vales."* London: Whittaker, 1847. Print.
- Hughs, Stephen R. *Collieries of Wales: Engineering and Architecture*. Aberystwyth: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. 1994. Print.
- Jackson, H. J. *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2005. Print.

- Johnson, Samuel. *The Works of Samuel Johnson, Ll. D.: Containing Life and Poems.*
Vol 1. Ed. Arthur Murphy. London: Haddou, 1820. Print.
- Journal of the Workhouse Visiting Society: Workhouses and Their Inmates.* London:
Longman, 1859. Print.
- Keane, Angela. *Women Writers and the British Nation in the 1790s: Romantic
Belongings.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.
- Kelly, Gary. *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790-1827.* Oxford: Clarendon P, 1993.
Print.
- Kinney, Phyllis. *Welsh Traditional Music* Cardiff: U Wales P, 2011. Print.
- Knoppers, Laura Lunger, ed. "Introduction: Critical Framework and Issues." *The
Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing.* Cambridge:
Cambridge UP, 2009. Print.
- Lamont, Claire, "Domestic Architecture." *Jane Austen in Context.* Ed. Janet Todd.
Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. Print.
- Levin, Susan M. *Dorothy Wordsworth & Romanticism.* New Brunswick: Rutgers,
1987. Print.
- Levy, Michelle. Levy, Michelle. *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture.*
Houndmills: Palgrave, 2008. Print.
- Littau, Karin. *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies, and Bibliomania.* Cambridge: Polity,
2006. Print.
- Liu, Alan. "On the Autobiographical Present: Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere
Journals.*" *Criticism* 26.2 (1984): 115-137. Print.

- Löffler, Marion “The ‘Marseillaise’ in Wales.” “*Footsteps of Liberty and Revolt*”:
Essays on Wales and the French Revolution. Eds. Mary-Ann Constantine and
Dafydd Johnston. Cardiff: U Wales P, 2013. Print.
- Mahoney, Kathleen. *Gothic Style: Architecture and Interiors from the Eighteenth
Century to the Present*. Eds. Beverly Fazio Herter and Elisa Urbanelli. New
York: Abrams, 1995. Print.
- Marotti, Arthur F. *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*. Ithaca: Cornell
UP, 1995. Print.
- Martin, Maureen M. *The Might Scot: Nation, Gender, and the Nineteenth-Century
Mystique of Scottish Masculinity*. Albany: SUNY P, 2009. Print.
- Mavor, Elizabeth. *The Ladies of Llangollen*. London: Michael Joseph, 1971. Print.
- McDowell, Linda. *Gender, Identity & Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*.
Minneapolis, U Minn. P, 1999. Print.
- McDowell, Paula. “Women and the Business of Print.” *Women and Literature in Britain
1700-1800*. Ed. Vivien Jones. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.
- McFarland, E. W. *Ireland and Scotland in the Age of Revolution: Planting the Green
Bough*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1994. Print.
- McGann, Jerome J. *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Charlottesville: UP
Virginia, 1992. Print.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. 1964. Cambridge:
MIT, 1994. Print.

Medley, Thomas. *Hotch Potch Containing A Conclamation of Original Pieces, A Higglely-Piggledy of Controversies and Opinions on various interesting Subjects; Detections and Confutations of Vulgar Errors, And Errors not Vulgar; Extraordinary Incidents And A Salmagunda of Lucubrations....* London: Nicoll, Haweis, Collins, & Stears. 1779. Print.

“Mentra Gwen.” *Contemplator.com*. Web. 1 Dec. 2015.

Moore, Lisa L. *Sister Arts: The Erotics of Lesbian Landscapes*. Minneapolis: U Minneapolis P, 2011. Print.

Moore, Thomas. *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore Collected by Himself in Ten Volumes*. (1840). Vol 8. London: Longman, 1860. Print.

Moorman, Mary. “Wordsworth’s Commonplace Book.” *Notes and Queries*. Sept. 1957. 400-405. Print.

Morgan, Sydney. *The Book of the Boudoir*. New York: Harper, 1829. Print.

---. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1825-1828. MS 878. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

---. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1828-1831. MS 879. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

---. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1829-1836. MS 880. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

---. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1837-1850. MS 881. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

---. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1850-1857. MS 882. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

---. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1857-1859. MS 883, National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

---. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1857-1859. MS 884, National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Moss, Ann. *Printed Common-Place Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. Print.

- North, Marcy L. "Women, the Material Book and Early Printing." *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*. Ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. Print.
- Nussbaum, Felicity A. *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1989. Print.
- . "Sociability and Life Writing: Hester Lynch Thrale Piozzi." *Women's Life Writing, 1700-1850: Gender, Genre and Authorship*. Eds. Daniel Cook and Amy Culley. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 55-70. Print.
- Okin, Susan Moller. "Patriarchy and Married Women's Property in England: Questions on Some Current Views." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17.2 (1983-84): 121-138. Print.
- Parker, Rozsika. *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* New York: Palgrave, 1989. Print.
- Pearch, G., ed. *A Collection of Poems in Two Volumes by Several Hands*. London: N.p. 1768. Print.
- Pittock, Murray. *Scottish & Irish Romanticism*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- . "What is a national Gothic?" "Footsteps of Liberty and Revolt": *Essays on Wales and the French Revolution*. Eds. Mary-Ann Constantine and Dafydd Johnston. Cardiff: U Wales P, 2013. Print.
- Ponsonby, Sarah. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1781-1789. MS 22969A. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

- . *Executor's Accounts*. ca. 1832-1833/ 1870. MS 22990D. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
- . *Plas Newydd Library Catalogue*. ca. 1792. MS 22980C. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
- Prescott, Sarah. *Eighteenth-Century Writing from Wales: Bards and Britons*. Cardiff: U Wales P, 2008. Print.
- Price, Leah. *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. Print.
- Rabelais, François. *The Complete Works of François Rabelais*. (ca. 1532-1552). Trans. Donald M. Frame. Berkeley: U California P, 1991. Print.
- Reyner, Angela. *Scrapbook*. ca. 1822-28. MS WLMS 35/2, 1988:35. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- Ross, Stephanie. *What Gardens Mean*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1998. Print.
- Russell, Gillian and Clara Tuite, eds. *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Print.
- "Salmagundi." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. 1989. Web. 22 July 2015.
- Scheuermann, Mona. *Her Bread to Earn: Women, Money, and Society from Defoe to Austen*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1993. Print.
- Schindler, Kurt. *Two Old Welsh Songs: Song of Welcome and Men of Harlech*. n. p. 1917. Print.
- Scott, Sarah. *A Description of Millenium Hall*. Ed. Walter M. Crittenden. New York: Bookman, 1955. Print.

- “Scrapbook.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. 1989. Web. 14 June 2014.
- “Shandy.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. 1989. Web. 22 July 2015
- Shteir, Ann B. *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science: Flora’s Daughters and Botany in England 1760 to 1860*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1996. Print.
- Siskin, Clifford. *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1998. Print.
- Skinner, Gillian. “Women’s Status as Legal and Civil Subjects: ‘A worse condition than slavery itself,’” *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800*. Ed. Vivien Jones. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.
- Standage, Tom. *Writing on the Wall: Social Media—The First 2,000 Years*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.
- St Claire, William. *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- Stringham, Edward. “The Emergence of the London Stock Exchange as a Self-Policing Club.” *The Journal of Private Enterprise* 17.2 (2002): 1-19. Print.
- Sugarman, David. “Who Colonized Whom? Historical Reflections on the Intersection between Law, Lawyers and Accountants in England.” *Professional Competition and Profession Power*. Yves Dezalay and David Sugarman. Eds. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Tadmor, Naomi. “‘In the even my wife read to me’: Women, Reading and Household Life in the Eighteenth Century.” *The Practice and Representation of Reading in*

- England*. Eds. James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.
- “Thistle.” Windsorscottish.com. 12 Dec. 2015.
- Thrale-Piozzi, Hester. *Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (Later Mrs. Piozzi), 1776-1809*. 2 vols. Ed. Katherine C. Balderston. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1951. Print.
- Trumpener, Katie. *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997. Print.
- Wahrman, Dror. *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth Century England*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2004. Print.
- Wall, Wendy. “Women in the Household.” *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women’s Writing*. Ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. Print.
- Wilkinson, Thomas. *Tours to the British Mountains with the Descriptive Poems of Lowther, and Emont Vale*. London: Taylor and Hessey, 1824. Print.
- Wilson, Mrs, and Charles Vyse. *The Lady’s Accomptant and Best Accomplisher*. London: Robinson & Roberts, 1771. Print.
- Wolfson, Susan J. *Borderlines: The Shiftings of Gender in British Romanticism*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006. Print.
- Woof, Pamela. *Dorothy Wordsworth: Wonders of the Everyday*. Grasmere: Wordsworth Trust Library, 2013. Print.

Wordsworth, Dorothy. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1826-49. MS DCMS 120. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.

---. *Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals*. 1798-1803. Ed. Pamela Woof. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. Print.

---. *Letters of Dorothy Wordsworth: A Selection*. 1787-1838. Ed. Alan G. Hill. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981. Print.

---. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*. (1787-1805). Vol. 1. 2nd ed. Eds. Chester L. Shaver and Ernest de Selincourt. Oxford: Clarendon, 1967. Print.

---. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years 1812-1820*. Eds. Ernest De Selincourt, Mary Moorman, and Alan G. Hill. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1970. Print.

---. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years. 1821-1828*. Eds. Ernest De Selincourt and Alan G. Hill. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.

---. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*. (1835-1839). Vol. 5. 2nd ed. Eds. Alan G. Hill and Ernest de Selincourt. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982. Print.

---. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*. (1840-1853). Vol. 7. 2nd ed. Eds. Alan G. Hill and Ernest de Selincourt. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988. Print.

---. *Rydal Journal 10 February-22 June 1826*. MS DCMS 104.2. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.

---. *Rydal Journal 25 September-1 November 1826*. MS DCMS 104.4. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.

- . *Rydal Journal 11 November 1827-4 June 1828*. MS DCMS 104.7. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- . *Rydal Journal, 17 November 1828-28 December 1829*. MS DCMS 104.10. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- . *Rydal Journal 21 January-9 August 1830*. MS DCMS 118.1. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- . *Rydal Journal 9 August 1830-12 February 1831*. MS DCMS 118.2. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- . *Rydal Journal 3 February 1831-7 September 1833*. MS DCMS 118.3. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- . *Rydal Notebook*. ca. 1805-1818. MS DCMS 51. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- . "The Worship of this Sabbath Morn." n. d. MS RP7580. British Library. London.
- Wordsworth, Dorothy and William Wordsworth. *Book of Verse*. ca. 1820-1850. MS DCMS 89. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- . *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1800-1808. MS DCMS 26. Wordsworth Trust Library, Grasmere.
- Yorke, Trevor. *Victorian Gothic House Styles*. Newbury: Countryside, 2012. Print.

WORKS CONSULTED

Adam Matthew Digital. *Romanticism Life, Literature, and Landscape*. SAGE, Web. 1 Feb. 2015.

Rose, Elizabeth. *Commonplace Book*. ca. 1806. MS GD1/726/6. National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.

---. *Commonplace Book*. 1806-1808. MS GD1/726/9. National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.

---. *Extracts Made by Elizabeth Rose from What She Read: Poems*. ca. 1783-1815. MS GD1 726/7. National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Thrale-Piozzi, Hester. *Minced Meat for Pyes, Commonplace Book*. N.d. MS Eng 231. Houghton Lib., Cambridge. Web. 1 May 2014.