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Cover Page Footnote

Thanks to my Professor Dr. Tamara Stasik for all of her encouragement and support.

"ENCHANTMENT DISSOLVED": A REEXAMINATION OF THE HYMN'S AUTHORSHIP AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE COMMONPLACE MS. HANNAH SWYNOCK

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Abstract

"Enchantment Dissolved" is a hymn written by John Newton and a part of the first publication of the *Olney Hymns* in 1779. However, starting around the year 1803, the hymn was misattributed in multiple publications to William Cowper, the second author of the collection. This article will analyze Cowper's literary style and consider why the hymn may have been mistaken for his creation. This particular hymn also appears in a 17-18th century commonplace, Hannah Swynock 1687, in the Parker MSS. at the Lilly Rare Book Library at Indiana University. In this hand-written manuscript, the hymn has four additional verses that are not found in print. This article also analyzes those four verses in comparison to the original five to determine whether the author of the addition was mimicking the style and themes of "Enchantment Dissolved." Commonplaces had many uses and sometimes multiple scribes or purposes, so it can be difficult to draw conclusions from one entry. However, theorizing about the source and purpose of this hymn and its addition in the context of the manuscript is important for understanding how the commonplace was used and by whom.

William Cowper and John Newton's noted close collaboration on the *Olney Hymns* during the 18th century has been previously studied, but their joint authorship calls into question the authorship of individual hymns. Of particular interest is "Enchantment Dissolved," published in the first edition of the *Olney Hymns* in 1779 under Newton's name, but under both Cowper and Newton's names in later publications (Newton 603, Cowper 331). Due to their increasing popularity, more than 37 editions of the *Olney Hymns* were

published in several countries, including England and Scotland.¹ “Enchantment Dissolved” and its authorship are of particular interest due to the hymn’s appearance in a 17th/18th century manuscript commonplace book that includes four additional verses of unknown origin. Investigating the authorship and background influences of the hymn may help embed this part of the manuscript in place and culture, suggesting the potential intentions of the scribe and compiler. This single page of the Swynock commonplace gains meaning through a stylistic comparison of the hymn and Cowper’s own work, an analysis of the four added verses, and an integration of those ideas into the context of the manuscript as a whole.

This commonplace is housed at the Lilly Rare Book Library, Indiana University, is inscribed with the name Hannah Swynock on the first page, and is dated 1687/8. The majority of the hand-written text, numbering more than one hundred pages, is followed by a large section of blank pages after which the manuscript book is flipped upside down and written from the opposite end. This smaller section is made up of approximately twenty written pages. On the fourteenth page from the back of the book, written upside down from the majority of the entries, is an extended version of “Enchantment Dissolved,” though it remains untitled in the manuscript itself. This hymn is placed in a section of twenty-six pages of handwritten texts at the back of the book, which may have been written at a later time than the rest of the commonplace because of the physical separation between these sections and difference in scribal hands.

This hand-written version of the hymn not only includes the first five stanzas that are found in the *Olney Hymns* published in 1779, but also four more stanzas of uncertain origins that appear to be a new or extended

¹ These books may have copied an earlier misprinting of the hymn under Cowper’s name or may have read the hymn as Cowper’s style. See, for example, Cowper, William. “Enchantment Dissolved.” *Poems by William Cowper of the Inner Temple Esq. In Two Volumes*. Vol. II. London: T. Johnston, 1803. 331-332. Google Books. Web. 9 May 2016.; Cowper, William. “Enchantment Dissolved.” *Poems by William Cowper of the Inner Temple Esq. to Which Is Prefixed a Memoir of the Author; and Also Critical Remarks on His Poems Written Expressly for This Work*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, High-Street, 1819. 461. Print.; Cowper, William. “Enchantment Dissolved.” *Poems by William Cowper, Esq. of the Inner Temple*. London: T. Noble, 79, Fleet Street, 1843. 395. Google Books. Web. 9 May 2016.

It may even be possible to trace the textual changes and differences of this hymn between editions of Cowper’s poems to determine which source the commonplace inscriber copied from. This is not an exhaustive list of the places where “Enchantment Dissolved” has been printed under Cowper’s name.

ending. Since these four stanzas have not been identified in any published edition, their authorship is uncertain and may be the product of the commonplace scribe. Therefore, these added verses raise several questions about the purpose and intention of the addition, their expected audience, and how they contribute to the manuscript as a collection of texts. Rather than simply copying interesting texts for later reading, the scribe may have become an author, signaling an alteration in the user's relationship with the commonplace. The intention of commonplaces varies depending on the user of the book, how they chose to organize the text, and the specific choices of entries, as well as original or personal texts. Currently, little is definitively known about the scribe or purposes of the Swynock commonplace, but this poem and its addition may shed light on the religious interests and literary background of the scribe(s).

Newton and Cowper

John Newton and William Cowper shared the Evangelical faith and came to the religion in unconventional ways, but more important were their contributions to the religious literature of their time. Newton ran a slave ship before repenting and changing paths to become the preacher at Olney Parish in Buckinghamshire. Cowper was a gentleman who strove to work in government and the law. However, he suffered from lapses in sanity that would not allow him to pursue a career, but he found faith through conversion at an asylum and moved to Olney after meeting Newton. Despite their disparate histories in Evangelicalism, they shared similarities in their personal narratives. They enjoyed nature, reported dramatic religious conversion, suffered the early loss of their mothers, and had near-death experiences (Huntley 31). Newton was a preacher whose Calvinism was “no sterile system of theology but was warm and practical and was cherished by Cowper, as was the bond that united them,” according to John Cromarty (q. in Spacks 3). Indeed, Newton's theology was more moderate, which made him very popular even with other groups, such as the Baptists who asked him to speak at gatherings. One possible difference between their poetic styles is that Newton wrote his hymns for congregational use, whereas Cowper was

not motivated by duty, but rather for personal enjoyment and later to fulfill an obligation to his friend to help finish the *Olney Hymns*.²

Newton and Cowper may have had slightly different audiences; Newton's hymns were created for direct use in his parish, while many of Cowper's creations were created out of personal interest as he worked through his religious doubts, though he later edited and wrote many for publication in the collection. In *William Cowper's Olney Hymns: A Literary Study*, Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz compares two hymns—one by each author—with very similar themes to distinguish the two authors' styles. Zapanta-Manlapaz describes Cowper's version of the hymn as having more “poetic compression,” which means that Cowper's hymn jumps to the point of the hymn faster and skips certain progressions of ideas (213). For example, the two hymns Zapanta-Manlapaz compares depict a Christian questioning his love of God. She remarks that Cowper brings up his “contrite heart” in the second line while Newton detours, talking about his “anxious thought”. They both go on to use rhetorical questions about faith, but Cowper's are much more straightforward (211). Zapanta-Manlapaz also praises Cowper's ability to skip portions of thought-process, while Newton goes through many steps of self-argument and questioning of others and even God to reach the same conclusion (211-12). Overall, Zapanta-Manlapaz finds Cowper's hymns more concise and powerful because they do not spend much time considering alternatives or progression, but go straight into the point.

According to Marylynn Rouse, director of The John Newton Project, the hymn “Enchantment Dissolved” is undoubtedly Newton's creation because it was found in his diary during a time that Cowper was known to have been sick and taking a break from work with the hymns.³ Rouse believes the hymn may be a response to the arrest of a Dr. Dodd for forgery, an account related in Newton's diary around the same time of the hymn's creation (16. Feb.

² Interestingly, there are few resources for literary analysis of Newton's hymns or poetry. The only relevant sources found in MLA International Bibliography under the subject John Newton are as follows:

Bilbro, Jeffrey. "Who are Lost and how They're found: Redemption and Theodicy in Wheatley, Newton, and Cowper." *Early American Literature* 47.3 (2012): 561-89.

Davie, Donald. *Dissentient Voice: Enlightenment and Christian Dissent. UP of Notre Dame*, 1982.

³ Newton, John. *The Diary Vol 2*. MS Eng 1317. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge Mass., 1777-79. [<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/41261600?n=110&imagesize=1200&jp2Res=.25&printThumbnails=no&oldpds>]

1777). It is possible the hymn may have been intended for use in Newton's parish to discuss the event. Despite Newton's enduring success with "Amazing Grace," Cowper became equally famous and arguably a better poet in the years following the *Olney Hymns*. In his 1999 article "Grace in Affliction," scholar John Cromarty states that Cowper is "remembered as 'the poet of the Evangelical Revival'" (qtd. in Aalders 40). Cowper was frequently read and published starting with his longer works "The Task" and "John Gilpin."⁴ Cowper's contemporary fame makes it helpful to consider the ways the hymn "Enchantment Dissolved" lines up with Cowper's style to understand how publishers and laymen might have confused it for his own. This confusion in turn invites informed speculation about whether the commonplace compiler thought they were copying a hymn by Cowper or Newton.

Cowper as Hymnist

"Enchantment Dissolved" appears in Hymnary.org, an NEH-endowed comprehensive index of Christian hymns, as "Blinded in Youth by Satan's Arts," the first line of "Enchantment Dissolved." The hymn is titled "The enchantment dissolved" in the first printed edition of the *Olney Hymns* in 1779 (Newton 301). However, Hymnary.org attributes the hymn to William Cowper and notes its appearance in three hymnals from around 1825 until 1840. Interestingly, the database does not cite the hymn's title as "Enchantment Dissolved," as it may not have been titled in those later editions, but rather uses the first line as an identifier; the entry in the Hannah Swynock manuscript itself is likewise untitled. The literary similarities between this hymn and Cowper's other works can help to determine why "Enchantment Dissolved" was mistaken for his verse. Specific dates for most of the Swynock commonplace entries are currently unavailable, but it is possible that the copied portion of the hymn comes from one of the later editions attributed to Cowper. There is no attribution of the hymn in the commonplace to either author, so the date and location of the scribe may be the best indication of what edition was copied. Currently none of the identified entries in the commonplace come from the *Olney Hymns*, Newton, or Cowper. Even though the manuscript is first dated 1687/8, the hymn found in the back of its pages was first published in 1779. These dates indicate that the commonplace was created and used over the course of a long

⁴ For a good general introduction to William Cowper see: Thomas, Gilbert. *William Cowper and the Eighteenth Century*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1948. Print.

period of time and one of the compilers may have wanted to include and mimic Cowper in their commonplace.

Cowper used specific devices and writing styles to portray personal reflections on religion and struggles of faith. According to Cindy Aalders, author of an article on William Cowper's *Olney Hymns*, a peculiar and principal characteristic of Cowper's style is "his introspective tendency to probe his own religious experience in verse" and that was "not motivated by professional duty" (43). Indeed, Cowper was practically a man of no profession because he lived at the charity of his family and Christian families such as the Unwins and Newtons who took him into their homes (Thomas). His primary motivation for writing the *Olney Hymns* was the insistence of his friend John Newton. Therefore, Newton's and Cowper's hymns came from slightly different places. Cowper experienced a number of emotional breakdowns, many of which were related to his religious struggles. This introspection and "perception directed within" makes Cowper "one of the most subjective of English poets" and his hymns touch on "religious and primitive fear," a "unique quality for poets of his time" (Spacks 165). Presence of similarly introspective or personal writing in "Enchantment Dissolved" may have confused readers about its authorship because this characteristic might normally have distinguished Cowper from Newton.

"Enchantment Dissolved," as it appears in the commonplace, exhibits evidence of self-doubt and fear, but in a less personal way than much of Cowper's poetry. The first two stanzas of the hymn describe a worldview in which people are blinded by Satan and see the world as a place of "gay delights & golden Dreams" (5).⁵ However, in the third stanza "the charm dissolves" and humans are left in the "Desarts dreary waste" (14, 7). As it turns out the charm is a sort of trick:

⁵ This text is my transcription from the photographs taken during my 2015 student-faculty summer research project "The Lord Chancellor and the Maiden: Commonplace Books and Everyday Life." The image number corresponds to the current name of the image's file, but those numbers are slated to change in the future. The images are being reorganized to match the page-order of the manuscript, and will soon be renamed to reflect that order. However, the second number, after the underscore, will remain the same after this renaming. Therefore, it will be possible to find the same images I reference here by looking at that second number.

Hannah Swynock Commonplace Photographs, Lilly Rare Book Library, Indiana University. Personal Photograph by Dr. Stasik, Hannah Bradley, Jin Kim, and Evan Zelesnik. 2015. Image 014v_0192

Thus if the Lord our Spirits touch
 The World which promis'd us so much
 A Wilderness is found. (16-18)

Here, the speaker appears to be accusing the Lord of a kind of bait-and-switch; as though a person might get caught up in religious rapture, thinking that the world is a wonderful place, only to find those effects fade and be caught in a wasteland. This kind of writing may exemplify what JR Watson calls “ironic undercurrents” in Cowper’s writing (46). This progression of ideas runs parallel to Cowper’s own struggles with a religious life that was full of joy and doubt. The world might actually seem like a much better place when “blinded by Satan” because religious understanding and the Lord’s touch dissolves the “Castles & Groves & music sweet” (1, 10). In other words, enlightenment might actually mean that everything pleasant about the world is revealed to be an illusion, meant only to ensnare.

The hymn is not entirely negative; in the middle of the fourth stanza there is a turn towards the salvation of the speaker and all people. After a period of conviction that they “never can have rest / In such a wretched place” the Lord “Reveals his own Almighty Arm / And bids us seek his face” (23-24). These lines imply the “touch” that revealed the ugliness of the world was only a small part of the Lord’s power because the Lord also has strength in his arm and power in his visage. In other words, what seemed like tragedy and a negative power turns out to be a small reality that must be seen before we can “begin to live indeed! / When from our guilt & bondage freed” (25-26). The full power of the Lord is revealed and the “guilt and bondage” that blinds us is removed. Only then does the speaker believe people can truly live even though he says nothing of beautiful “dreams” or “castles,” implying that religious revelation is much more real and simple.

Though the themes and progression of ideas are similar to Cowper’s style, there are a few deviations from his typical clarity and self-reflection. In a similar hymn by Cowper titled “The Heart Healed and Changed by Mercy,” the speaker is also blinded by sin and fear but that period of uncertainty lasts much longer and is expressed more earnestly (Cowper). In “Enchantment Dissolved,” the distress lasts three lines and is prompted by the introduction “At first” that indicates the state will not persist, whereas in “The Heart Healed” sees the speaker unmoved by preachers, fasting, or a hermitic lifestyle—and only falls at God’s feet in the last five lines. Similarly, “Enchantment Dissolved” explicitly states that from the moment we see the Lord’s face it is certain that we will “follow him from day to day/ . . . /And

Glory at the End” (28, 30). There can be no disputation about whether the speaker and everyone else will be saved: the doubt is eradicated. In Cowper’s hymn, the final statement is simply put: “thy sins are done away” (298). As a last line, these words do not imply that trials and tribulations are at an end, only that these sins, in this situation, are forgiven. The hymn “The Heart Healed and Changed by Mercy,” published under Cowper’s name, does not give the sense of absolute finality as the five stanzas of “Enchantment Dissolved” do.

Another dissimilarity between the two hymns is the use of first person pronouns versus inclusive pronouns such as “we,” “us,” and “our.” “Enchantment Dissolved” uses inclusive and second-person pronouns, distinct from Cowper’s typical use of first person pronouns for self-exploration. Cowper’s insistence on making no assumptions about others’ religious experiences in “The Heart Healed and Changed by Mercy” makes its meaning more straightforward and clearly introspective. “Enchantment Dissolved” shifts from speaking for the audience to a generalized second person “he” or a “Traveller” on the journey of life who is touched by the Lord, and then returns to using “we” and “our” (11, 12). This shift of pronouns can be confusing to the reader, especially because the poet then speaks about the Lord with second person pronouns again in the fourth and fifth stanzas. Even though the use of second person pronouns for the Traveller and the Lord may draw parallels between the two or outline their stark differences, this effect is perhaps in line with Cowper’s complicated relationship with clarity. As Zapatan-Manlapaz suggests, Cowper’s poetry can exhibit great poetic compression but also extend metaphors beyond comprehension. Therefore, it is hard to make generalizations about the clarity of his style as it varies across poems and different kinds of figurative language.⁶

Some critics accuse Cowper of being too transparent, while others find his style more confusing or ineffective than illuminating. Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz analyzes Cowper’s use of metaphors and finds that “he usually constructs [them] in such a way as to render the identification between tenor and vehicle very explicit” and “practically spells out for the reader the equation between the two terms” (169). For example, in Hymn No. 17 he draws a connection between the lord’s “mansion” and the hearts of Christians, and goes on to describe how that place is a safe “dwelling place”: he draws out the metaphors so much that they lose some of their meaning

⁶ Refer to Zapanta-Manlapaz’s dissertation for more examples of Cowper’s use of metaphor: Zapanta-Manlapaz, Edna. *William Cowper’s Olney Hymns a Literary Study*. Diss. U of Pennsylvania, 1972. Print.

(169). She also points out that he rarely uses complicated metaphors, but opts for those with one prescribed meaning and he does “not always exhibit a masterful control over the use of metaphor” (182). Some aspects of “Enchantment Dissolved” fit into this description of Cowper’s style because many images fall flat or are rendered inert by being piled onto each other. Not only is the hymn titled with “enchantment,” but the author uses words such as *magic pow’r*, *charm*, and *vision* in a way that confuses the reader who was just told he is blind (8, 22, 14). The intention is clearly to create a metaphor between the blindness created by Satan and a certain view of the world, implying that in moral blindness the world appears beautiful. However, the reader may become confused as to whether the poet is describing the actual world as a vision or whether they should be envisioning another place entirely, one that is “enchanted.”

The impact of this progression from illusion to truth should peak when the real world is found false and the Lord shows the readers his face, allowing them to “follow him from day to day.” However, that reading is complicated by the repetition of words implying that the vision might be only that and not the real world at all (28). Scholar Patricia Spacks may support this reading, having suggested that Cowper’s metaphors “frequently seem to have a sort of fatality, to call one’s attention inexorably to the “original” rather than the “secondary sense” (171). “Enchantment Dissolved” falls into this category of overwhelming its metaphors with literal meaning in a way that harkens to some of Cowper’s known poetical struggles because the author focuses on the meaning of physical blindness rather than the implied religious shortsightedness.

Cowper’s poetry most commonly deviates from analogical metaphors with synecdoche, which is present in this hymn (Zapanta-Manlapaz 181). Cowper often “uses the image of God’s hand to represent various facets of His personality” (181). Zapanta-Manlapaz offers examples demonstrating how Cowper frequently describes God’s body part, such as a “wondrous hand,” and gives it an explicit action, such as “support[ing] the weight of sea and land.” (181). But in “Enchantment Dissolved,” the use of synecdoche feels more literal than figurative because the device in lines 23-4—“reveals his Almighty Arm / And bids us seek his face”—is presented without any explanation of what those body parts mean in the context of the poem. Cowper once stated that “it is my labour, and my principle one, to be as clear as possible,” and yet many times his “meaning becomes shadowy” (Spacks 175, 169). Therefore, it is difficult to decide whether to hold the hymn up

against his stated purposes of style, or against modern judgements of its effectiveness.

If Cowper's style and religious confidence is somewhat inconsistent, the religious themes and images he uses in the Olney Hymns are much more dependable. According to Zapanta-Manlapaz, the "dominant world-view projected by the imagery in Cowper's hymns is that of life-as-warfare" with images of a struggle between God and Satan's attempts at his throne (134). This is precisely the scene that arises in "Enchantment Dissolved." However, this struggle is also a general theme of Evangelicalism and does not necessarily distinguish Cowper from Newton as they share the same religion. Neither does the hymn exhibit the images Cowper used most frequently, such as worms, thorns, tempests, and light, but it does include another common image of his, that of slavery as in line 26: "When from our guilt and bondage freed." But this is likewise general to Evangelical thought and hence not definitive (Hartley).

As seen above, there are many ways that "Enchantment Dissolved" resembles William Cowper's other hymns and aligns with his style. Though the hymn was ascribed to Cowper in several editions, perhaps through a misreading of efforts to distinguish them in the first edition of *Hymns*, it is firmly identified as John Newton's work through consultation with primary sources, such as his diary. Further work in localizing and dating the Swynock commonplace may help to place the hymn in a timeline that could help identify whether "Enchantment Dissolved" was copied from a source crediting Newton or Cowper for the hymn. Furthermore, we should recall that the Swynock commonplace does not cite the title or the author of the hymn and further disengages the hymn from its original context and authorship by adding verses. It may be that collecting certain authors and keeping track of authorship was not a primary concern of the users of this commonplace. Perhaps the compilers had an alternate purpose for the manuscript book, such as preparation for a discussion group or as an inspirational text for personal writing. Therefore, the idea of authorship needs to be reconsidered, not only as attribution but as creation. Considering the added verses at the end of "Enchantment Dissolved" are vitally important in understanding the presence of the hymn in the Swynock commonplace.

Questionable Continuity: Four Additional Stanzas

The four added verses in the Swynock commonplace cannot be found in a printed version of the hymn nor in Newton's diary. We must therefore question whether those lines are of Newton or Cowper's hand or someone else's entirely. It is possible that the manuscript compiler decided to add their own words to the end of a favorite hymn. In fact, the act of compiling the commonplace may have prepared them for the act of creation. According to Max W. Thomas in his article "Reading and Writing the Renaissance Commonplace Book: A Question of Authorship?," reading and writing are both a part of commonplace compilation, and "operate simultaneously . . . as constituents of the conditions of poetic textual production" (676). Commonplaces were meant to assist memory, but for many different purposes: simple storage, group activities, or preparation for a task such as collecting influences for personal writings. The influence of consecutive texts on each other and the compiler would depend on how the commonplace was used.

How the themes and style of the addition match or contrast the original hymn alludes to how the scribe intended for the two to mesh together or change the meaning of the original. On the page itself, the two sections of verse are combined physically. Even though the verses would not fit vertically on the page, the compiler chose to turn the book on its side to finish writing so it would appear together on one page. The new verses start right after the original verses end; there is no separation—not even between the horizontal and vertical sections. This continuity gives the hymn both a feeling of cohesiveness and separation because the verses are connected physically but diverge in subject matter and audience.⁷

Thematically, the two sections of verse fit together awkwardly because the first five stanzas end naturally. The last line of these verses feels complete with the words "And Glory at the End," which literally signals its finality (30). This hymn appears in Newton's diary on two consecutive pages and all of the text is written horizontally. His writing ends with the same printed words and his entries continue with a new hymn immediately following.⁸ The new verses announce that the listener should be grateful to God and are centered on the arrival of a new year, bringing everyone closer to

⁷ See Fig. 1 and 2 in Appendix.

⁸ Newton, John, 1725-1807. *Olney hymns* : manuscript, 1777-1779. MS Eng 1317. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

their meeting with God. These ideas are superficially similar to those in the previous verses, but they are more realistic and deal less with extended metaphors and images, such as the traveler and the false visions created by Satan. The added verses are much more joyful with none of the dark imagery or uncertainty of the original hymn, such as imagery of slavery with “guilt & bondage” and the “wretched place” (26, 21). There is no mention of blindness or religious questioning in the addition, perhaps because it builds on the change occurring in the original. The joyfulness may offer a reinterpretation of the hymn’s theme, providing a more uplifting ending corresponding with the writer’s own life.

For example, these four verses use the string of words “Faith & Hope & joy & peace” to describe time on earth as well as the expected ascent into heaven (46). Furthermore, the hymn no longer refers to humans in general, such as the first section that uses words such as we, and us, but rather directs its words to a certain individual, the unspecified “you.” Some details about this specific audience become clear when the writer describes the “you” as a “Mother & a Wife,” which may suggest that the occasion for writing may have included a birth (51). It is possible that the scribe added his or her own verses when a relative or friend became a mother or as a general celebration of motherhood and directed a favorite hymn towards the happy event. The author still uses “we” to describe the relationship between the audience and him/herself, which implies there is a personal connection. In addressing a particular audience, word “we” shifted from describing all of humankind to describing the relationship between two people.

If the writer of the four extra verses was not Cowper or Newton and was simply a commonplace book compiler, then she was at least educated enough to follow the rhyme and meter scheme set up in the first five verses. Not only do the four verses follow the same AABCCB rhyme scheme, but they follow the repeating 8-8-6 syllable pattern within each line as well. These patterns indicate the composer of the four stanzas was keyed-in to the music of the lines and perhaps desired to personalize a favorite hymn and give it a more positive conclusion. The ending of the new hymn verses describes the “endeared” position on earth of being “A Mother & a Wife” and the joys to come when “Jesus send[s] his chariot down” (50-52). This ending seems to be an expansion of the original ending of “Enchantment Dissolved,” which simply states that the reader will “Glory at the End.” The new verses expand that idea and concretely state what wonderful things will happen at the End. This addition perhaps speaks to the creator’s need to see his or her religion work through their lives or the lives of their loved ones and the desire to find

specific examples of heaven to cling to. Rather than using lofty or flowery language to describe their religious views, the writer of the new verses uses more personal and domestic images, such as calling heaven “home,” and ideas about relationships to build meaning (42). These lines revise the previous verses about enchantment and translate them into the domestic realm of motherhood and a life spent awaiting heaven. If these more personal images and language correspond with other themes and events in the commonplace, it may help draw conclusions about the purpose of the text and determine the author of the additional verses.

The Commonplace

The presence of the additional verses attached to “Enchantment Dissolved” raises the question of other additions in the commonplace and whether there are connections between the addition and the entries that surround it. The Hannah Swynock commonplace lacks a consistent organization, such as headings for each entry or an index for finding the texts. Some of the handwritten entries are headed with what seems to be a title centered at the top of the page, while other entries start at the top of the page without any heading to distinguish them from surrounding text. There are multiple hands contributing different entries and sometimes large sections of text are written in the same hand, while at other times multiple hands are used intermittently. The section of twenty six pages at the back of the book is written upside down from the rest of the manuscript and likewise does not exhibit regular organization or headings. However, most of the texts appear to be written in a similar hand, indicating that one person may have collected and entered them into the commonplace.

The scribe chose an unassuming and rarely-mentioned hymn, “Enchantment Dissolved,” to supplement with an addition, creating a unique composite of published and personal writing and general and domestic images. They are not marked by any identifying information, which indicates the scribe was not particularly concerned with recording authorship or dividing the original hymn from the addition. Since there is so little concern shown for recording this kind of information it may be theorized that the scribe(s) was familiar enough with the texts not to need markings or she was hand writing texts for a future use that did not concern authorship or titling. Commonplaces are memory-stores for excerpts of reading, related information, and personal writing; the Hannah Swynock commonplace is full of Sir Matthew Hale’s writing as well as many hymns and poems from

various sources. These entries are indicative of the scribe(s) reading content because they were chosen for saving in a personal record, but there is little context to determine the purpose for that record or collection. Fred Shurink's article on manuscript commonplace books in early modern England describes the different purposes and uses for commonplace books, which includes both "pragmatic" and "recreational" reading (453). People used commonplaces for many different purposes but they all involve the collection of readings and possible references back to them to "prepare for action in the private sphere" or simply to remember what the scribe had already read (Shurink 455).

The section of twenty six pages at the back of the Swynock commonplace has particularly cohesive themes and subjects, as if the entries are connected in some way. For example, there are many references to a new year, a birth, and the loss of a friend, all of which seem to connect with the added verses of "Enchantment Dissolved." One particular instance of these motifs is a poem headed "The New Year" in which the poet describes the idea that he will live to see more years as "blind presumptuous thought," and attributes to the passing year as having "laid up stores of Grief."⁹ The poem then announces the resolution of the speaker to change their ways in order to reach heaven, using the words, "let me now indeed begin to live" that appear to mimic "Enchantment Dissolved." Line 25 of Newton's hymn, "then we begin to live indeed," is extremely similar, differing only in pronouns ("me" versus "we") and word order. This text, which is currently unidentified in any printed source, plays on the same themes of religious blindness and resolving to achieve heaven, but also talks about the arrival of a new year, which is a main subject of the additional four verses of "Enchantment Dissolved." Looking at these two texts suggests that the scribe may be paying attention to particular themes and ideas of mortality and religious merit.

A poem with similar themes in this back-section of entries also matches the style of the original five verses of "Enchantment Dissolved" because it is dreary and somewhat fatalistic.

"While we run on, deceived and blind
Death stalks in awful pomp behind"¹⁰

These lines evoke the same emotions as Satan blinding the speaker in "Enchantment Dissolved" and cheating him out of heaven. However, this text states the idea more explicitly using "Death" instead of Satan and personifies

⁹ Image 007v_0185

¹⁰ Image 006v_0184

it using the verb “stalks.” Throughout many texts in this section, there is a sense that death is just around the corner but that the speaker or writer of the poems is not prepared for that eventuality. Many entries discuss repenting and resolving to change paths in order to attain heaven. These texts seem to admit to the hardships of life and the real struggles of faith that the scribe(s), like Cowper, may have experienced.¹¹

A unique characteristic of this section is that its entries seem to feature gender more frequently than the rest of the commonplace. There are many mentions of female figures or addresses to females that may suggest the scribe(s) possibly were female, addressing a female audience, or using female characters to make a point. One poem directs its voice toward a female audience in the second stanza: “But you, dear Maid, may well rejoice / For you have heard the Saviors voice” and tells the ‘Maid’ that she is destined for heaven and “each returning year that flies / Lessens your distance from the skies.”¹² This entry, again, deals with a new year and coming closer to heaven, but also a female audience member like the additional verses of “Enchantment Dissolved.” This example is similarly more cheerful and focuses on the joys of heaven rather than the sins of humans. The ‘Maid’ in this entry is held up as an example of the kind of person who is destined to attain heaven and the speaker in the poem addresses Christ to shine upon her in the last stanza.¹³ It is uncertain whether the maid herself is the audience or if it is meant for a general audience to learn from the example of the maid.

Entries in the commonplace relate to gender in idiosyncratic ways. One of the more exceptional examples is also one of the rare entries where the scribe turned the book on its side and wrote vertically. Text written vertically may indicate that the entry was added a later time or squeezed into empty space. This text appears unrelated to the first text on the page, which an

¹¹ Further research would help determine if these are common images and themes in Evangelical writing or doctrine.

¹² Image 163_0163

¹³ Image 015v_0193

acrostic describing Dr. Isaac Watts as a young poet.¹⁴ The addition is addressed “To Mr B.”¹⁵ Interestingly, the text that follows seems to be addressed to a woman.

“When my red-letter’d days appear
 My thoughts to living saints are led,
 Will you dear Madam now receive
 What love indites devoid of Art?
 The faint my verse as you perceive
 Strong is the language of my heart.”

This poem appears to be one meant for a female audience, but is addressed to a Mr. B in the commonplace. The speaker in these lines wants to assure the female audience that she is much beloved and there are hints that the speaker may be close to death or is thinking about someone who has passed. This gendered address is unique because it is a poem addressed to a possibly fictional woman further addressed to a possibly real man. Perhaps these lines are meant to comfort the Mr. B who finds himself in a similar situation but his relationship to the commonplace or its scribe(s) is uncertain.

Another entry announces the wonders of “Friendship! thou powerful sovereign of the Mind” and the speaker looks forward to the “distant hour / of Heav’n indulgent hear my ardent pray’r.”¹⁶ The speaker in this entry is likely addressing a female because two lines state, “There my Fidelia . . . / Our souls shall meet –& and ne’er be parted more.” This entry is full of grief and ardent lamenting for a lost friend, ideas possibly connected to the other entries concerning the nearness of death and other females who are addressed and discussed in the commonplace as virtuous and deserving of love on earth and in heaven. Many of these entries point toward feminine friendship, grief, and references to time. It is possible that this section of text was written in response to real life-events such as the loss of a friend through death or departure.

¹⁴ Watts was an extremely prolific and well-known hymnist by his own right, this entry indicates that the commonplace compiler(s) was aware of trends or popular religious texts. Isabel Rivers, ‘Watts, Isaac (1674–1748)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28888, accessed 18 May 2016]

¹⁵ Image 164r_0164

¹⁶ Image 0167r_0167

Discerning the chronological ordering of the entries in the commonplace is important for understanding whether there could be a progression or reactionary relationship between the individual texts. Because this section of text is separated from the rest of the commonplace, it might be assumed that it was written starting with the last pages of the commonplace working toward the middle of the book. When read front to back, in the same direction as the rest of the commonplace, there appears to be a chronological ordering of the entries. When read chronologically, one text, "Christmas Day XVI," although not titled as such in the commonplace, is a poem by Sir Matthew Hale¹⁷ and is written in this section eleven pages earlier than a personal record headed "money expended since Xmas."¹⁸ Reading the manuscript in this fashion places the Christmas poem before the poem titled "The New Year," suggesting some type of chronology is at play.

Depending upon the chronological structure of the entries, "Enchantment Dissolved" can be interpreted as the culmination of earlier entries or as a touchstone for later entries that concern similar themes. Chronology is important because "Enchantment Dissolved" and its addition comes toward the beginning of the section, if read from front to back, and towards the end, if read from back to front. The direction of reading matters because it indicates whether the scribe of the new verses was influenced by the previous texts or not. If the hymn comes at the end of the section, it may be seen as a culminating work that is derived from the act of reading and collecting other texts. It may be possible to find allusions to the other texts or to thematic ideas in both "Enchantment Dissolved" and the surrounding texts, such as the allusions to a new year, blindness, death, and friendship. However, trying to make connections between texts in a commonplace can involve dangerous amounts of assumptions and planting of meaning in a text that may only function marginally in the scribe's life. Given that the entries are connected by their location in a single commonplace and in proximity to each other within the manuscript, it is acceptable to theorize about what

¹⁷ 165r_0165 is the only image in the commonplace where Sir Matthew Hale's name is written out by a scribe. This seems significant because his writing features heavily in the front section of the book without any attribution. The text, 'Christmas Day XVI' was identified in the following resource using lines of text from the transcription as the page is not headed. Hale, Matthew. "Christmas Day XVI." *Contemplations Moral and Divine in Two Parts*. London: William Shrowsbury, 1699. 287-88. *Google Books*. Web. 16 May 2016.

¹⁸ Image 003v_0181

those texts meant to the scribe(s), why they were written down, and how they might have been used.

Further research on the Swynock commonplace may identify other altered entries that could indicate whether the commonplace was used as a storehouse for texts that correspond to life events, a record of religious development, or a community collection of verse and prose. This information would help locate the commonplace's origins because printed source-material for entries may point to specific regions or time frames. To date, the identities of the scribe(s) remain unknown. However, the section at the back of the commonplace and the addition to "Enchantment Dissolved" feel specific because they concentrate on themes of personal grief and gendered characters. Clues such as gendered addresses may help pinpoint an expected audience. A tragedy, such as the loss of a friend, may have prompted the scribe to write additional verses, extending the ending of a favorite hymn to encompass their own experiences, but it is difficult to draw conclusions from such a broad social and religious context. The scribe(s) of this section of the commonplace appear to be responding to their personal lives using the prescribed religious and Evangelical texts of their time. Not only do they appropriate pieces of text from their cultural surroundings for collection, as is the function of a commonplace, but they also commune with those texts through personal additions that may be the best access-point to the individual reader and writer of the 18th century.

Appendix A

Enchantment Dissolved Transcription

MS. Hannah Swynock 1687

1. 1 Blinded in youth by Satans Arts
2. The World to our inpractis'd hearts
3. A flatt'ring prospect shews;
4. Our fancy forms a thousand schemes
5. Of gay delights & golden Dreams
6. And undisturb'd repose.

7. 2 So in the Desarts dreary waste
8. By Magic pow'r produc'd in haste
9. As old Romances say,
10. Castles & Groves & music sweet
11. The senses of the Traveller cheat
12. And stop him in his Way.

13. 3 But while he gazes with surprise
14. The charm dissolves, the Uision dies
15. Twas but enchanted Ground:
16. Thus if the Lord our Spirits touch
17. The World which promis'd us so much
18. A Wilderness is found.

19. 4 At first we start and feel distrest
20. Convinc'd we never can have rest
21. In such a wretched place;
22. But he whose mercy broke the charm
23. Reveals his own Almighty Arm
24. And bids us seek his face.

25. 5 Then we begin to live indeed!
26. When from our guilt & bondage freed
27. By this beloved Friend
28. We follow him from day to day
29. Assur'd of Grace thro all the Way
30. And Glory at the End.

31. 6 What thanks are to the Saviour due
32. From me, dear Madam, & from you

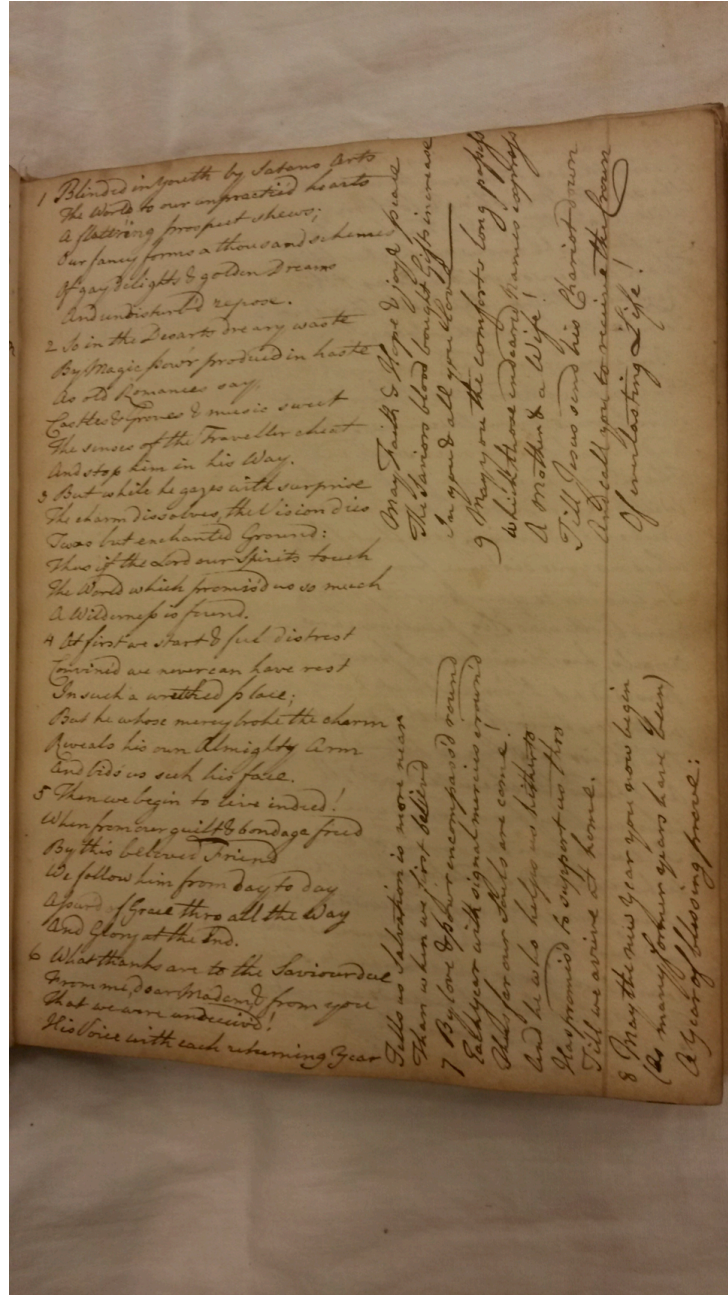
33. That we were undeceiv'd!
34. His Voice with each returning year
35. Tells us Salvation is more near
36. Than when we first believ'd

37. 7 By love & pow'r encompass'd round
38. Each year with signal mercies crown'd
39. Thus for our Souls are come!
40. And he who helps us hitherto
41. Has promis'd to support us thro
42. Till we arrive at home.

43. 8 May the new year you now begin
44. (As many former years have been)
45. A year of blessing prove:
46. May Faith & Hope & joy & peace
47. The Saviors blood bought Gifts increase
48. In you & all you love

49. 9 May you the comforts long possess
50. which those endeared names express
51. A Mother & a Wife!
52. Till Jesus send his Chariot down
53. And call you to receive the Crown
54. Of everlasting Life

Appendix B



Manuscript Image: 014v_0192

MS. Hannah Swynock

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