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# Images of women in eighteenth century English chapbooks, from banal bickering to fragile females

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**Images of women in eighteenth century English chapbooks,  
from banal bickering to fragile females**

**by**

**Katherine Barber Fromm**

**A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Major: Agricultural History and Rural Studies**

**Major Professor: Dr. Andrejs Plakans**

**Iowa State University**

**Ames, Iowa**

**2000**

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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on one genre of English popular literature--chapbooks. An examination of chapbooks, as emblematic of the popular culture, offers us another vehicle from which to determine attitudes toward women. The images of women from the pages of chapbooks allows us to make inferences about the reading material of ordinary people. A study of this popular literature probes one dimension of popular culture. Since the eighteenth century was the century of chapbooks, a concentration on the 'long eighteenth century'--from about 1680 to 1815 will allow the broader trends to emerge.

Chapbooks are an undervalued and seldom investigated genre that can provide historians one window into past popular culture. Their cheap, disposable, ephemeral nature leaves us with few examples, but we must use those that have been saved and collected. This study relied upon collections at many libraries, but most notably the Boswell Collection at the Houghton Library, Harvard, and the Harding Collection at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

In addition to the chapbook as a viable topic, there is a new historical domain--books and their readers or the texts and the contexts. This concern has resulted from post-modern emphases on the contextual milieu in which the text circulated. It requires us to probe below the surface or between the lines. A focus on the reading audience is not the primary focus of this research nor would it be very productive, given the paucity of evidence. The focus here is the texts themselves. We can recreate portions of the context--the social environment; this experience can help us understand why chapbooks with certain topics appear in certain decades. Only conjecture, however, about the reading audience can be attempted.

Chapbooks were the reading material of the poor. Chapbooks and other literature such as horn books and ABC catechisms allowed poor people to practice

their reading skills. They were the 'precursor' of nineteenth century mass-produced and cheap reading material. The chapbook allowed its reader a momentary escape from toil and misery. "Chapbooks are crude, unsubtle, earthy, uncompassionate, but full of movement and violence, sex, vivid imagery and better or worse jokes."<sup>1</sup>

The word 'chap' was derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'ceap' or could be a corrupted form of the word cheap. The chapbook was an expanded broadside, a paper-covered book folded in pamphlet form and measuring four by six inches. The format at the beginning of the century was twenty-four pages, although many were eight. By the end of the century, their length varied enormously; often they were more than one hundred pages. Early chapbooks betray a lack of sophistication, polish, and pride in workmanship. Printers used cheap and coarse paper. Especially on the title page, printers tried out various print types. Wood-cut illustrations adorned the title page, but were featured in the text as well. Wood-cuts were repeatedly used, and eventually the illustrations of some chapbooks suffered, although the profits of the printer did not. Despite their coarse image, the elements of production—illustrations and printing—give chapbooks an image of originality when compared to standardized, mass-produced literature. But their content was rarely original. Anonymous authors liberally borrowed content from one another. Copyright was virtually unenforceable.<sup>2</sup> Anonymous authorship, the frequent absence of publication dates, and coarse printing dissuade even the most devoted antiquarian from assessing their significance. Chapbooks were written by the people for the people. 'Local geniuses' liked to tell stories. Their embellished accounts enhance our understanding of social life and social history. Frequently authors and hawkers were one and the same person.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of the century, chapmen carried these small books in their packs along with other miscellaneous items as they traveled from village to village or peddled their wares in city streets. In a society without shops, the chapman linked the village with the outside world from the end of the Middle Ages to the end of the eighteenth century. Chapbooks offered a secular alternative to religious books.

They replaced limitedly-circulating Elizabethan jestbooks. Their secular and entertaining content resonated with a population that had endured the heated political and religious atmosphere of the Commonwealth. Ballads, broadsides, medieval stories and romances, history, geography, travel and adventure stories, jest, humorous accounts, dreams, fortune telling, the lives of criminals and their execution--these were the contents of chapbooks.<sup>4</sup>

Books were too time-consuming and expensive for literate if ordinary people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ballads still met their needs. They circulated longer in country districts where they kept the oral tradition and folk memory alive.<sup>5</sup> They preserved the old stories and brought new themes to a largely illiterate population.

By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, chapbooks 'offered an easy compromise between the folktale and the more sophisticated and expensive novel.' They provided a semi-literate population with popular literature. Their distribution network and low price meant that they had a readership that was beyond newspapers. Chapbooks provided a 'model' for what mass-produced printed literature and reading matter there was in the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

This study spans the long eighteenth century, roughly 1700 to 1815. We can group chapbooks into three time periods and several times. At 1700 and earlier, chapbooks represented the legend and lore of England, since they were the product of the proverbial 'simpler time.' Early chapbooks repeated the stories and legends of English history. Robin Hood, Guy of Warwick, Fair Rosamond, Jane Shore, the Sleeping Beauty, Witch of the Woodlands, Valentine and Orson, Tom Tram, Thomas Hickathrift, Tom the Taylor--a very abbreviated sample from a long list of chapbook subjects. Lennard Davis described the output of this period as an 'undifferentiated matrix,' and his dichotomy of a news/novel discourse is an important aid to interpreting the many chapbooks of this study.<sup>7</sup>

By about 1750, chapbooks changed, although this date only is only shorthand for a longer shift. The simpler versions continued, and indeed may even

have been popular with antiquarians or collectors, but now chapbooks became part of the commercializing world. That change moved this humble literature from versions of England's past enlivened by the Oral Tradition to longer chapbooks that imitated novels. Authors/printers issued stories that were written for publication. The independent if raucous women who were remembered in ballads, chap-ballads, and chapbooks did not entirely disappear over the course of the eighteenth century, but the number of chapbooks that displayed their blatant disregard of polite deference or conventional roles diminished as the century progressed. After 1750, we have an exhausting supply of chapbooks that depicted women as fragile, wilting violets who had to be gallantly rescued by princes charming, even if that prince had neglected or forsaken them earlier. If they were not rescued, many died of the proverbial broken heart or barely lived out their miserable lives. Such chapbooks assumed that women had little if any control over their own lives, in contrast to the earlier tales of less than wedded bliss. Women or wives in those accounts--often in ballads-- enjoyed battle in the war between the sexes and won their share of victories.

Another change ensued with the 1790s. England at that time was struggling with many 'revolutions.' Changes in agriculture and in the socio-economic landscape impacted this humble literature. By the 1790s, more pronounced change associated with events across the Channel in France produced reaction at home. Some of that reaction can be discerned in chapbooks. An entire chapter of this dissertation, "Fulminations and Polemics," discusses 1790s chapbooks displaying misogynistic sentiments or concern that women have overstepped the prescribed boundaries. But how connected these chapbooks are to the atmosphere of the 1790s remains problematic. In an Afterword to a posthumously-appearing book by E. P. Thompson, his widow, Dorothy Thompson, related that her husband in lectures frequently intimated that the tumultuous nature of the 790s produced tensions that would be best investigated through an examination of the work of Mary

Wollstonecroft.<sup>8</sup> The exact nature of that tension would be the subject of his future research.

Chapbooks also provided an alternative form of literature to contemporary pious prose and religious verse. Hannah More and her associates issued the Cheap Repository Tracts in 1795 to inculcate proper religious and moral attitudes into a raucous and fractious lot. It was not an easy task, and even the undaunted Mrs. More gave up in 1798, due to the dissipating zeal of others for her project. These chapbooks are not analyzed in the present study.

Although dated at various times in the century, chapbooks on crime carried a distinct message. While they support the supposition that women were vulnerable, subject to passions, and experienced the violence of the men in their lives, they present different stories that are not easily categorizable. Some are humorous or satirical treatments of upper class condescension towards servants. They seem based on journalistic reports, the murder pamphlets of previous centuries that describe the behavior to be avoided at all costs.

Several chapbooks appearing at the end of the long eighteenth century deserve the special treatment given them in this study. Their position at the end of this dissertation does not imply a progression toward more complicated or lengthier chapbooks. One in particular, the story of Mary Jane Meadows, is a lengthy account that imitates Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. As marketable items, chapbooks were as variable as the authors who wrote them and appeared in rich variety throughout the century. These stories feature 'women of uncommon talents,' a phrase conveniently but aptly borrowed from the description of Mary Jane Meadows' sojourn into a new and uncharted world.

Boadicea was an ancient Celtic Queen whose exploits are still heralded in English school textbooks. Her battles against the Romans are legendary, and the chapbook that appeared with an expanded cut-out cover attempted to do her honor. Hannah Snell was the subject of two chapbooks in 1750 and then a later version in

1801. The authors celebrated her exploits and lauded her military valor, but hints about her sexuality surfaced more prominently in the later version.

Finally, the extended discussion of Mary Jane Meadows provided this author with virtually limitless possibilities. Meadows endured an exile that appeared to be quite similar to the earlier fictionalized account of Robinson Crusoe. An expanded discussion of the influence of race, religion/government, the state of nature, and last but not least, gender, allow us to understand how an eighteenth-century author, probably a woman, described the experiences of a woman who found herself on a remote island. The author because of her own socialization or her sense of what the public would find credible depicted Mary Jane as a domesticated creature who avoided the perils of imperialistic ambition. She was a fully domesticated creature. A woman's voice is apparent in the prose, and the possibility that Charlotte Smith, a not insignificant late eighteenth-century female novelist, wrote this chapbook, published anonymously by Ann Lemoine, can be examined with reference to Smith's own life. Only circumstantial evidence supports the argument that Smith wrote this chapbook, but the coincidences make this a strong possibility. The use of poetry from England's well-known poets--William Cowper and Thomas Gray suggests a link between popular and elite culture in ways that require further exploration.

Conclusions about change from one period to another should not be interpreted as an endorsement of linear progressive steps. The current investigations of histories of reading and histories of the book should not be construed to mean that print meant enlightened progress. Indeed, one of the conclusions of this study is that the loss of the Oral Tradition meant the loss of spontaneity and extemporaneous participation by ordinary people. That is 'the world we have lost'

At the same time that this study offers conclusions about change over the long eighteenth century, it also provides cultural studies of chapbooks in and of themselves. The focus on the three chapbooks featuring the life of Hannah Snell and the comparison of the 72 page 'memoir' of Mary Jane Meadows with the earlier,



well-known Robinson Crusoe, allows a complete investigation of the themes within and the topics raised by the authors. The earlier chapter featuring the banal banter and bickering of both ballads and chapbooks displays popular literature from an earlier time. But these themes continued. The chapbooks that are featured in the last three chapters differ substantively from that earlier tradition. This, again, does not imply that chapbooks progressed toward the later forms. A more nuanced interpretation would be that chapbooks changed. The eras in which they were written permitted varying themes, and authors and those who commissioned chapbooks had their own agendas.

The thematic highlights include the constant lament over the loss of simple rural virtues amidst the vice of city life, the fragile heroines whose virtue was always subject to predatory male behavior, and the heroic behavior of Boadicea, Moll Flanders, Hannah Snell, and Mary Jane Meadows, who survives the vicissitudes of the human condition and the perils of being female. Their treatment at the end of this dissertation does not imply that the chapbook soared to new levels.

These many chapters should be seen as individual studies of the popular culture that lead to some thematic analysis and periodization. They illustrate one form of popular literature. Elite and popular culture coalesced in the offerings of authors throughout the century. While the erudite authorship of some later chapbooks lead to this supposition, it is not possible to document exactly when and where such a fusion took place. Many chapbooks were proudly penned by well-read authors whose comments on civilization were blatantly stated as well as implied through these small books. A primary motive for their appearance in print was the use of print and enhanced competition, often by London authors and printers eager to make a quick sum. Whereas, chapbooks of the early eighteenth century offered stories from the oral tradition that gave the readers or listeners accounts of stories they might even know by rote, but they were the legend and lore of England's past. By the closing decades, authors and printers kept their eye on the market.

## Notes

1. Leslie Shepard, John Pitts: Ballad Printers of Seven Dials, London, 1765-1844, (London: Private Libraries Association, 1969), p. 13, 14, 16. Deborah Valenze, "Prophecy and Popular Literature in Eighteenth Century England," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 29 (1978), pp. 75-92. Victor E. Neuberg, p. 227, 228. Margaret Spufford, Small Books and Pleasant Histories. Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England, (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd, 1981), p. 249.
  
2. Neuberg, The Penny Histories. A study of chapbooks for young readers over the centuries, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 6. 7. Valenze, "Prophecy and Popular Literature," p. 76; R. H. Cunningham, ed., Amusing Prose Chap-Books, Chiefly of Last Century, (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co; Glasgow: Thomas D. Morison, 1889), note on page 5.
  
3. Cunningham, *Ibid.*, p. 5, 6; Valenze, "Prophecy and Popular Literature," p. 75. Many details about the Boswells' Collection of chapbooks appear in an article by Ralph Bergengren, "Boswell's Chapbooks and Others," in The Lamp, A Review and Record of Current Literature, 28, Third Series (February-July, 1904), p. 43.
  
4. Neuberg, Chapbooks: A Guide to reference material on English, Scottish, and American chapbook literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, (London: The Woburn Press, 1964, second edition in 1972), p. 1; J. F. C. Harrison, The Common People: A History from the Norman Conquest to the Present, (Totowan, New Jersey, Barnes and Noble books, 1984), p. 170; Neuberg, The Penny Histories, p. 4, 5, 6; Cunningham, *Ibid.*, p. 8.
  
5. Shepard, John Pitts, pp. 22, 25, 28, 29.
  
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17; Valenze, 75, 76; Neuberg, The Penny Histories, p. 5.
  
7. Lennard Davis, Factual Fictions, The Origins of the English Novel, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
  
8. E. P. Thompson, The Romantics, England in a Revolutionary Age, (New York: The New Press, 1997), Afterword by Dorothy Thompson, pp. 223-225.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PORTRAIT**  
**OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES**

**Chapbooks in Context**

This chapter emphasizes socio-economic conditions in the eighteenth century which affected ordinary people, the popular culture and women. How did women face the challenges which routinely confronted them? Did the image of women conveyed in chapbooks reflect that reality? Or, did printers and authors offer up the usual patriarchal fulminations about what they should and should not be? Readers of chapbooks in eighteenth-century England included many from the middling sort and above. But the growth of literacy meant that more people could read the greater variety of available reading material. Chapter 3 on Literacy summarizes these developments. What does this mean for chapbooks and the images of women within them? Historians of popular culture and social historians broaden the perspective. Literary historians, hoping to recapture some of the past lives of women, have greater license to use fiction to enhance that perspective. A general discussion of the eighteenth century and its images of women in chapbooks must encompass these varying approaches.

Seventeenth-century political philosophy and religious teachings enforced the notion of patriarchy or the authority of the father within the household. Through the Ten Commandments, the catechism and other books, and sermons, etcetera., religious indoctrination served as a force for socialization. The authority and duty of the parent over the child was paralleled in the relationships between master and servant, sovereign and subject, clergyman and layperson, and husband and wife. Only such properly-hierarchical arrangements could maintain a stable society.<sup>1</sup> Increasingly, however, the fundamental premises of this order came to be challenged. Contract theory held that free and equal individuals would find it

preferable to forego a natural state and be bound to each other. But this sense of political participation by equals did not include women, it was for men only. It is a rather imposing irony that contractual agreement was increasingly the basis of political society when productive roles for women diminished. The work of Alice Clark which emphasized the loss of those productive roles is accepted by most historians of women's history. Unfortunately, the erosion of partnership and responsibility within the family negated what possibilities there might have been for women to negotiate greater political and social status. The second irony is that while the idea of freedom and the status of the individual became critical to the political order for men, women were increasingly ensconced in a privatized, domesticated sphere or within what some have called the sentimentalized family.<sup>2</sup>

Susan Moller Okun sees the functioning of the 'sentimental family' as central to a re-juvenated patriarchal system—a situation that was threatened by a temporary period of flexibility in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Roles within the family in the seventeenth century were subject to negotiation, but by the end of the eighteenth century, women were confined to the privatized sphere and 'greater definitional rigor was imposed upon gender roles.'<sup>3</sup>

Much chapbook fiction—a term used advisedly here and explained in detail later—in the eighteenth century appears to fall into two larger categories. The traditional form was the outgrowth of the oral tradition and ballads, short accounts of an on-going dialogue between a man and a woman, or a husband and wife. The women in this traditional genre displayed more independence, and could dominate the marital relationship. It is a fresh and stark look at the realities of married life and the bickering or brawling within it. This genre of chapbooks continued throughout the eighteenth century. The second and large group, after about 1750, conformed to the expectations of the privatized and domesticated sphere. It emphasized notions of vulnerability, dependence and the fragile nature of women who are ever so dependent on men, their power and their decisions.

## The Idea of Patriarchy

Michael McKeon's article, "Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760," provided valuable insights into the interrelated variables: class or sex and gender. 'Patriarchalism,' an 'unexamined article of belief,' flourished until the end of the seventeenth century when a 'more general, early modern disenchantment with aristocratic ideology' occurred. The nexus of family and state authority, personified by the monarch within the state and the father/husband within the family, gave way to a modern system to be described below. The disclaimer should be added that such a development was certainly uneven and sporadic, one that McKeon charts as taking place between 1660-1760.<sup>4</sup>

The previous system expected the family, socio-economic system and the cosmos to remain inseparably intertwined in some mysterious way united by religious faith. But the shift that began in the later seventeenth century announced a pronounced change. The traditional, interlocking and vertical system of interests of the seventeenth century gave way. Beginning with the eighteenth century, however, this system increasingly was not identified with the power of the state or the interests of the monarchy/aristocracy.<sup>5</sup>

The idea of 'discrete interests' meant that there were distinctions made not only among family of a family but also among political and social interests. In the eighteenth century, the language of class and beliefs about class identity increasingly dominated political and social thought, but remnants of the 'old order' persisted. The eventual dominance of the language of class displaced assumptions about birth and natural position.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, the assumptions governing sex or gender moved from a system of patriarchalism to modern patriarchy. This shift occurred during the same years that class identity emerged. Instead of patriarchalism, a system of gender difference developed due in no small measure to new assumptions about human

sexuality. Prior to the eighteenth century, the female body was assumed to be simply an aberrant part of the male body, but biological research now saw women as separate and distinct from men.<sup>7</sup>

Both the new social constructs of class and gender rejected the previously-existing essentialism. To those who criticized hierarchies based on blood and birth, the 'naturalness' of the blood line, and the mysterious concept of aristocratic honor were increasingly seen as socially created. In addition, modern sexuality rejected a form of essentialism that conferred biological naturalness, but it used such a construct to define personality.<sup>8</sup>

'Class identity' and 'sexual identity' overlapped. But in this scenario, sexual identity was increasingly separated and denoted as biological and separated from a social construct such as class. While class as a social construct was a more fluid concept that allowed mobility by members of its defined group, the demarcation of sexual identity required fixed images. McKeon and others quickly acknowledge that class as a social identity owed much of its dynamism to the middle class which saw itself advantaged by a 'process of self-naturalization.' The press releases of the middle class stressed the advantages of mobility possible for all who were allied with larger humanistic goals.<sup>9</sup>

The 'old order' was not so easily displaced or rejected. The lower orders asserted customary rights in the face of legal obstacles, dogmas promising improvement on the land and others that counseled the benefits of capitalistic organization and innovation. Their sense of tradition, their rights as free-born Englishmen were increasingly transformed into what would become working class identity and, occasionally, solidarity.<sup>10</sup>

The challenge presently hurled defiantly forward by second-time-around feminists has resulted in an complicated analysis of sexual identity. For in addition to a shift from patriarchalism to modern patriarchy, one has a shift in the division of labor that this chapter describes. The transformation of the English countryside threw families off the land and sent them to burgeoning and growing cities. That

phenomenon also impacted their female members. It changed the sexual division of labor. As will be seen below and as observed by Alice Clark, the productive capacities of women in agricultural work were increasingly denied to them.<sup>11</sup> As more women became middle class, they moved into a private and domesticated sphere. For McKeon, crucial changes took place between 1660 and 1760. The emerging system of modern patriarchy and the acknowledgment of differences in gender cannot be separated from other developments of that same period--the shifts in the division of labor and the construction of classes.

### **The Staying Power of the Old Order**

The convulsive social and economic changes associated with the decline of an agrarian way of life and the growth of an industrial society begin to take shape in eighteenth-century England. Described within this chapter are the conditions of agriculture and village life, enclosure, the poor laws, popular culture, religion, marriage and family life, the condition of women and crime--themes that are vital to any comprehensive understanding of the eighteenth-century people.

The 'old order' continued despite the irreversible changes of eighteenth-century England--the transformation of economic relationships in the English countryside. Such changes dictated a convoluted and lengthy sorting-out process that ultimately affected every village and vale. The results were lamented by the villagers and by England's poets.

The transformation in English chapbooks is yet another vantage point from which to view this change. Chapbooks that circulated during the 'old order' confirmed the scrappy lives of men and women frequently tangling within marriage and without. They depicted marriage as a continually-negotiated partnership in the daily struggle for subsistence. Other chapbooks also celebrated England's heroes and some heroines whose exploits had long been part of legend and lore. But after 1750, many chapbooks conformed to the rules which now governed what was

a private and domesticated sphere which increasingly limited what women could and could not do. Probably written by people, both men and women, who identified with the values we typically associate with middle class values and status, they were intended for readers of the midling sort. But they portrayed women as vulnerable and dependent on the choices and decisions of men. Although depictions similar to those of Henry Fielding of the war between the plebeian Amazons in the churchyard remained, many chapbooks now observed the conventions of novels and depicted women as pathetically dependent creatures.

### A Society of Orders

The power of the English state rested on title and the claim to privilege of the great and wealthy families--the 'great oaks' whose boughs should have been extended to the poor according to J. L. and Barbara Hammond.<sup>12</sup> Pitted against the strength of that state and a hierarchical and inegalitarian society were the sporadic outbursts and exclamations from below. Did chapbooks and the work of printers and their firms preserve the 'old order' or are they bona fide representations of the teeming and brawling countryside which sporadically erupted?

The work of E. P. Thompson focused on the 'making' of the working class. The lower orders had oscillated between a show of deference, an acceptance of reciprocity between unequal social groups and outright defiance of the superficial social peace. He read eighteenth-century history as a struggle between patricians and plebeians.<sup>13</sup> Historians had thought that by the eighteenth century, customary usages and a faith in magic and the supernatural had declined. 'The Enlightenment had trickled down. Increased literacy then diminished the strength of the oral tradition. But Thompson and others emphasize a fierce and spirited defense of customary usage and customary consciousness.

From a different vantage point, Peter Burke observed the widening gap between patrician and plebeian culture as the latter was defined by Thompson.



According to Thompson, a 'great tradition' and 'little tradition' developed in all of Europe after 1500.<sup>14</sup> The dichotomy between these two relatively self-sufficient but clearly co-dependent cultural modes will be pursued in the examination of ballads and chapbooks and in the chapter on popular culture.

Writing in the early 1700s, Daniel Defoe organized English society into seven groups, and his categorization fits here. They are: 'The Great, who live profusely; The Rich, who live very plentifully; the middle Sort, who live well; The working Trades who labour hard, but feel no want; the Country People, Farmers etc., who fare indifferently; The Poor that fare hard; The Miserable who really pi<sup>n</sup>ch and suffer Want.' But the common people who existed beneath the first three groups were inferior, because they did menial labor in order to survive. Gentlemen, masters, and merchants could confer spirituality upon the poor and see their struggles as edifying and necessary. After all, since they had few amenities and material property to defend, they were as free to find happiness as rich people and earn eternal life.<sup>15</sup>

Defoe's well-known novel, Moll Flanders, displaying the bawdy and spirited side of the eighteenth century, still tells us much about eighteenth-century London and the place of women within it. Moll was cautious and frugal, but was also bent on the acquisition of property--other people's property. "Her drive is in part the inevitable quest for security, the island of property that will keep one above the waters of an individualistic, cruelly commercial society." Moll didn't see herself as a criminal, but her reputation preceded her arrival at Newgate. Chastity little concerned her, for sex was a part of life. "Moll can resist everything but temptation." Moll was a survivor. Her vitality epitomized the strength and stamina of common people. Moll married and buried many husbands, but frequent marriage and widowhood may be typical. Eighteenth-century conditions fell especially hard on women. There were many widows, many wives deserted by their husbands and mothers who bore illegitimate children. Occupations available for women gave them only sporadic and poorly-paid work.<sup>16</sup>

In the eighteenth century, the defense of freedom was not only found in commentaries on the law, it was alive and well in the streets. Despite deprivation and want, the common people were fierce traditionalists. They saw themselves as free-born Englishmen with a guaranteed birthright. The revolutions of the seventeenth century and the Settlement of 1688 gave them their sense of superiority--particularly to those on the other side of the English Channel. The crowd vehemently defended its rights and mocked ostentation and pretension. At the same time, they tried to stay off poor relief and to define the terms of their labor. Although most people were poor, they valued their right to the commons and their small holding. Material hardship they accepted; they did not accept or appreciate infringements on their personal liberties.<sup>17</sup>

Edmund Burke believed that the local magnates championed the causes of the crowd against the government residing in London. This earlier eighteenth-century sense of liberty did not endure as riots and rebellion took their toll. Men of privilege had to preserve order and maintain the social peace. Parliament and its committees devoted time and effort to the poor law, apprenticeship, public health, and the condition of work.<sup>18</sup>

### The Commercialization of Agriculture

The changes that commercialized agriculture took generations to complete. For the first seventy-five years of the eighteenth century, about three-fourths of the population resided in the countryside. They lived in village cottages or on scattered farmsteads or hamlets and maintained themselves through their access to the commons, meadows, forests, and wastes. But access to land was severely limited. The lack of agricultural work prompted men and women to seek industrial work; the putting-out or cottage industry system increasingly provided a margin of subsistence. Landowners might object to their tenants and laborers earning extra income, but the labor of women and children in industrial work kept families off poor

relief. By 1800, a few villages were more industrial than agricultural. Farming in these locales was relegated to secondary importance.<sup>19</sup>

Studies of agriculture emphasize varying and local customs and usages. "Common right is a subtle and sometimes complex vocabulary of usages, of claims to property, of hierarchy and of preferential access to resources, of the adjustment of needs." Agrarian customs involved *ambiance* and what the French historical sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called a habitus or lived environment. Certain claims of customary rights by the poor might be resisted by those in positions of authority and power. Religion no longer protected the distribution of resources, and the social climate favored men of business. The men whose proud faces remain on the walls of galleries and inns could not prevail. Evidence from Northamptonshire and the Midlands from 1700 to 1800 challenged the notion that common right was in an unalterable decline. Cottagers, those who occupied common-field land, and those who used the resources of forests and fens survived until parliamentary enclosure. They fought vigorously against enclosure; but small holders declined once enclosure fenced off common lands.<sup>20</sup>

The lower orders valiantly varied their approaches. Gleaning, gardening, dairying, as well as some cottage industry sustained them. Women and children normally exploited the wastes and the commons. Custom as well as legal right allowed rural people the use of the commons. In the Midlands, perhaps a majority of unenclosed villages enjoyed access to the commons until Parliamentary enclosure. The loss of common right denied them independence and made them more dependent on wages and wage labor. A poor family with some access to the commons and wastes were not as easily subordinated to the larger farmer of their parish or village.<sup>21</sup>

Thomas Gray's poem, 'Elegy written in a Country Church Yard' appealed to a public which lamented changes in the rural landscape. Gray began the poem in the 1740s and finished it in June of 1750. Gray's biographer, Edmund Gosse, termed it 'our poem of poems. . .with a higher reputation in literature than any other English

poem.' Its 'chapter of simple things,' and its static rural world appealed to people weary of the urban place. Yeomen and their families went about their simple daily duties:

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
 Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,  
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,  
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
 Awaits alike the inevitable hour,  
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

In the village, all were equal in death. Like J. L. and Barbara Hammond, Oliver Goldsmith assumed that the classics provided set the standard. The simplicity and sturdy independence of the Roman Republic was preferable to the decadence of the later empire. In his introduction to his poem, "The Deserted Village," Goldsmith " bemoaned the plight of depopulated villages. The poet wrote:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey  
 where wealth accumulates, and men decay;  
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;  
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made;  
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
 When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

Ye friend to truth, ye statesmen, who survey  
 The rich man's joy encrease, the poor' decay,  
 Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand  
 Between a splendid and a happy land.<sup>22</sup>

Goldsmith lamented the increasing gap between the rich and poor symbolized by the abandoned village. With a poet's voice, he spoke of the village preacher, the broken soldier, the school master, the village statesmen who presided at the alehouse, the mournful peasant, and the good ole sire and his lovely daughter--her father's faithful companion. Led by the sire and his daughter who left first, the villagers departed.

But a few lived among the ruins. The widow who was left behind remained as the 'sad historian of the pensive plain' who wept every night and bewailed her solitary condition. Also the homeless female who had earlier left her spinning wheel and her brown country dress when she plied her wares in town. Her modest frock might have once adorned a cottage, but she lived to regret her youthful indiscretions. For Goldsmith, the village, like a maiden whose youthful charms faded with the years, had beauty and strength in maturity. Like the maiden who became a woman, the village survived, despite famine and adversity.<sup>23</sup> Goldsmith's poetic outburst against enclosure resulted from his careful observations of its effects.

### Interpretations of the Transition

The known critics of English economic life, J. L. and Barbara Hammond wrote many books describing the catastrophic changes that came to England during the Industrial Revolution. Their histories cannot easily be separated from their politics.<sup>24</sup> The boughs of the 'great oaks,' the great families, did not provide shade for those who needed it. They found the landed and privileged classes as wanting and lacking. Aristocratic families insulated themselves in finely-appointed drawing rooms which defined elegance and order. Only the events of the French Revolution shattered their sedate demeanor. The aristocracy became 'insular,' putting aside cosmopolitan urges, and determinedly defended order, life style, possessions, and property.<sup>25</sup> This task reduced them to the series of frozen portraits which one still finds in many English country houses, mansions, and palaces. Their portraits are as lacking in life as is the fixed, composite image of the lower orders depicted by the Hammonds.

Using terms such as 'lack of decency or morality,' 'heartlessness,' and callousness,' Dorothy Marshall castigated the harsh environment of early modern England. The parish was inadequately to the task expected of it and assigned to it,

given corruption and a lack of resources. A. W. Coats traced humanitarian impulses for reform between the Workhouse Test Act of 1722 and the 1782 Gilbert Act. But historians have been skeptical of humanitarian motives, seeing some reformers as inclined to keep the poor in their place.<sup>26</sup>

Historians interpret the effects of the Poor Laws variously. Parish officials could be expedient and certainly callused in their application of relief principles. Speenhamland rearrangements in 1795 can be seen as a mixture of humanitarian and utilitarian motives. Thompson maintained that long wars of attrition from 1815 to 1834 pitted the upper classes against dispirited and dispossessed laboring classes. Poor laws constituted the 'laborers' last inheritance.<sup>27</sup> However grudgingly applied, the laws remained the last remnant of the medieval compact.

To shore up their conviction that enclosure was 'fatal' to small farmers, cottagers, and squatters, the Hammonds cited evidence from Oxfordshire of small holders who were eventually forced onto relief. This is the direct link between enclosure and the Poor Law. When cottagers and squatters were denied their medieval right to the commons, the civilization of the old village was lost.<sup>28</sup> J. D. Chambers and G. E. Mingay led a school of historians who disputed this verdict. Enclosure provided more not less employment; it reduced the pauper classes; and finally, small holder and tenants were unaffected by procedures which reorganized the distribution of land, fields, and strips. Eric Hobsbawm and George Rude acknowledged that recent histories vindicate the Hammonds, but added that poor harvests and declining rural industries exacerbated the plight of marginal and vulnerable producers.<sup>29</sup>

By the 1790s, following the American and French Revolution, the power of a working class was barely discernible. The lower orders that had earlier masked their resentments with superficial and outward displays of deference were more openly insubordinate. The eighteenth century also ended with England wealthier than it was in 1700. However, a worsening substructure of poverty threatened that wealth, and the gap between rich and poor continued to grow.<sup>30</sup> After the French

Revolution, the governing elite offered the Poor Laws to secure the loyalty of the poor after the French Revolution. The ruling classes offered farmers cheap labor; the laborers received a supplement to their wages. These acts supposedly secured the acceptance of the lifestyle of the landowning class by village society.

K. D. M. Snell's Annals of the Labouring Poor examined parishes in southern England. He revealed more acute seasonal, regular, sporadic employment for males across regions after enclosure. Winter employment was more insecure and poor relief increased. With fewer women and men securing a yearly contract as farm servants, with less agricultural labor available to women after enclosure, with fewer incentives to save given minimal prospects for any independence, with less savings minimizing the possibility of an apprenticeship, early marriage appealed to both sexes. Technological change made the scythe become more popular. The result was better wages for men and a demand for male harvesters. Technological improvement contributed to a change in the sexual division of agricultural labor.<sup>31</sup>

Did the aftermath of enclosure contribute to a growing sexual division of labor? The trend for women is similar to that for men--seasonal work instead of yearly contracts. Employment in dairying, calving, and haymaking during late spring was more regular than in the summer, particularly in the east. Fewer women worked as farm servants after enclosure. In the open field system, they worked part-time or enjoyed some independence as the wives or relatives of squatters, cottagers, and small holders. Even quasi-independence was denied them once enclosure cut its swath across southern counties.<sup>32</sup>

### Women and Work in the Eighteenth Century

The work of four female historians will provide a framework for a discussion of women's work. The interpretations of the first two, Alice Clark and Ivy Pinchbeck, have achieved the status of historical classics. Alice Clark's 1919 volume, Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century, reissued in 1968 and 1982, focused on

the sixteenth, seventeenth, and only the early years of the eighteenth century. Ivy Pinchbeck's Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850, published in 1930, set the tone for what would later be the brief of the optimists, William Goode, Edward Shorter, and Lawrence Stone, who argue that women's lives prior to capitalism were long and hard.<sup>33</sup>

Alice Clark and other feminist historians persuasively argue the negative position. The pessimists argue(d) that women in a pre-capitalistic economy performed productive roles alongside their husbands. They were partners and shared duties. But increasingly, women were denied productive roles.<sup>34</sup> They became consumers.

Clark periodized the shift in women's work into three stages: domestic industry described household subsistence; family industry described a situation where domestic chores continued alongside wage work within the home-- this stage included piece work or the putting-out system; and third, capitalistic industry described the miserable partnership of husband and wife for inadequate wages. Clark's pioneering tour-de-force becomes the model by which subsequent and later interpretations can be judged.<sup>35</sup>

Pinchbeck's classic, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, still resonates with its powerful interpretation of the effects of large-scale change in the late eighteenth century. Enclosure forced wives of agricultural laborers to find new resources. The cultivation of garden plots by poorer women contributed as much to the family as their husband's incomes and gave them leverage in their families. In addition, widows and unmarried women might be set up in dairying. The garden plot and dairying provided women with some independence. After enclosure, increasing unemployment meant that men saw women as competition for the fewer available jobs. Single women were thrown onto the mercy of parish overseers who disliked their "welfare" status. Mistresses might employ them as domestic servants at cheaper wages.<sup>36</sup> Some women accepted their replacements on larger farms. Affluence dictated this embourgeoisment of dairywomen. Some now took up



needlework and engaged in polite conversations. Some wives gladly traded in heavy work for leisure.

The second pair of women historians who worked on women and agriculture are Deborah Valenze who recently wrote The First Industrial Woman and Bridget Hill, the author of Women's Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth Century England.<sup>37</sup> While Pinchbeck analyzed the effects of industrialization on women's agricultural labor, Hill summarized women's essential contribution to the family economy. Unlike Clark's comprehensive and structural indictment, Hill concentrated on individual voices and the experiences of women in occupations and in family roles.

Valenze echoes Clark's earlier sentiments: agricultural changes contributed to unemployment of women. What was achieved for the world's first industrial nation should not be minimized. But the ascendancy of 'industrial capitalism at the same time disguised its less attractive features.' What could and should women do: 'they 'should adapt to the demands of the moment.'<sup>38</sup>

Tudor and Stuart England bequeathed ideological notions to the eighteenth century state and society--a patriarchal ideology with 'one common interest,' the collective good of the English society and nation. Common law subsumed women's identity to that of her husband, other male relatives, or family.<sup>39</sup> Laboring women struggled valiantly to work and live, but little remains of their travail. They constituted the bulk of the poor population--a situation not unlike the present. The constant concerns of poor law overseers with settlement issues reflected their preoccupation with a population that wasn't able to achieve self-sufficiency.

Changing technology and a market economy undermined their traditional roles. Valenze offers three elaborated examples: first, the decline of labor-intensive agriculture and the introduction of a mode variously defined as capitalistic, scientific, improving and rational. Second and third were the displacement from both productive and independent roles in dairy operations and in spinning. Changes in agriculture undermined those productive roles associated with the old

order. Gradually the partnership between husband and wife in a search for subsistence eroded. The negatives associated with the images of rural laborers extended to rural domestic servants--many of whom were women. The decline of customary roles for women, who valiantly adapted to whatever marginal activity would sustain their families, hurt the images of women which were connected to productive rural work.<sup>40</sup>

From medieval records we learn that gleaning was such an entrenched common right in the 'old order' that the legal authority Blackstone noted its origin in Leviticus. Women combed rows and fields because the results of their labor kept their desperately-makeshift family budget intact. But agrarian capitalism re-enforced the sense of private property. The advocates of a new agriculture were not above using misogynistic attitudes against the people who usually invaded the fields--women. Critics castigated the idle poor as lacking industriousness, and their aspersions targeting the poor were code words for women and their children. Gleaning increasingly was described as a privilege, not a right. Only charity by land-owners allowed it to continue.<sup>41</sup>

A quest for improvement and efficiency called into question women's customary authority in dairying. Allegedly, they were unable and unwilling to use new techniques and meet market demand. Whether in larger operations where dairymaids made the difference between good and bad cheese or in smaller enterprises involving only a cow, women's essential work brought income to their families.<sup>42</sup> The profit motive, a growing market for cheese and butter, higher rents, and new methods changed the industry by 1750. Leased dairying in an expanded economy required 'male' management. William Marshall, an expert on English agriculture, viewed farming and the cultivation of land as 'public employment.' Cheese-making was 'private,' maybe even mysterious, and too often required community cooperation. The female industry necessary to produce cheese elevated the role of women in providing food and symbolized their contribution to sustenance and to life. Marshall and Josiah Twamley railed against the inadequacy

of women's work in dairying. Neighborliness and community were increasingly castigated in an age which stressed the scientific spirit. Twamley even cited the 'stupidity' in a 'great number of inferior dairys.' But some women remained in dairying and did the hard work well into the nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup>

No longer in productive partnership, many women withdrew from contact with laborers. Servants and the family once ate together in the kitchen, now they ate separately; the family was proudly ensconced in their parlor and dining rooms. Mistress and maid no longer divided up the household chores. Wives could no longer claim that they were partners in the farm operation. Although the women were not the equal of their men when they worked literally side-by-side, they certainly were less than equal when they removed themselves from the scene of productive work.<sup>44</sup>

Spinner were poor and female. Poor relief subsidized their very low wages. Spinning could be combined with household duties, and women could then watch their children. But their simple industriousness and hard work did not suffice once capitalism and technology altered work and life.<sup>45</sup>

Change in agriculture and textiles forced women to find other employment. By the 1780s, women went into household production. Although they were paid low wages, the women themselves seemed to accept their exploited situation. They combined their work with household duties and got help from other family members. The ranks of the poor who garnered some pittance from cottage industry grew drastically in the eighteenth century.<sup>46</sup>

Amy Louise Erickson untangled the legal web which obfuscated our understanding of 'women and property.' Despite geographical variation, shifting authority, and legal changes, women confronted a legal system that had not changed. In the early modern period, the status of women declined. The manorial and ecclesiastical courts had provided a 'principal resort,' but their influence and structure was declining. Equity courts also declined. There was always less access to Chancery Courts, since they remained a preserve for the wealthy. Legal changes

undermined women's position even before the sixteenth century, particularly in church courts.<sup>47</sup>

The 'rationalized' common law courts after the seventeenth century were not friendly places for most people, including the ordinary women who needed protection for what they thought was theirs. In addition, an Act passed by Parliament in 1670, gave men wider discretion over the disposal of their property and eroded the protection of 'reasonable parts' which secured for women 1/3 of their husband's estate. These changes in the legal structure gave men more control over the destiny of their families.<sup>48</sup>

Previously, families made efforts to provide equitably for sons as well as daughters. If sons got land then daughters got an equitable portion in moveable property. This balancing act continued even in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but proved impossible in the course of the eighteenth century. Increasingly, the type of materials which were used for household goods, the woods used for furniture, china, and material for both personal clothing as well as household needs--could not match the inflated value of land.<sup>49</sup>

### Women as Consumers

Women were part of the growth of consumerism. By 1700, the English standard of living was higher than any other European society except Holland. Home demand was critical to the growth of capitalism. A rise in real income, and a growth of population and mobility between classes accelerated home demand. The leisured and better-off class set the trend through 'indulging' in 'an orgy of spending,' but their propensities could 'trickle down' only if there was sufficient economic stimulus and surplus. A limited commerce in luxury goods was present in the Middle Ages, but by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, normal and ordinary people could consider purchasing more goods. Such demand encouraged the development of a factory system organized in the textile industry.<sup>50</sup>

The 'consumer revolution' reached 'revolutionary proportions' by 1750. More purchasing power aided the 'democratization of consumption.' For a variety of reasons, wages improved in the eighteenth century, most notably in the years 1760-1780. All members of a family--husband, wife, and children--worked long hours for wages. In addition, declining prices for food facilitated the purchase of consumer goods.<sup>51</sup>

London set the pace and pattern for fashions and trends which were copied throughout the kingdom. Although mobility for some seemed unlikely, people rushed to emulate the life style of their social superiors. People yearned for status. Class lines were not as ossified in England as elsewhere. The social structure facilitated social emulation.<sup>52</sup>

Margaret Spufford realized that the pursuit of luxury goods in the seventeenth century stimulated the purchase of additional goods which can be considered marginal--pictures, ballads, and chapbooks. Mackendrick argued that the factory system employed women, adolescents, and even children. These workers contributed to family income and to a higher standard of living for their families. That margin of their wages which did not purchase necessities could be used for consumer purchases.<sup>53</sup>

Alice Clark emphasized the shift away from productive work for women in the seventeenth century. Carole Shammas noted that women moved from being producers to consumers. Eighteenth-century women focused their energies on the home. They kept house. The importance of comfort within its walls, meals with the proper prayers, and the ritual of cleaning--all these ritualistic requirements kept women busy.<sup>54</sup>

The spiritualized household of Puritan derivation furthered literacy and education. All family members benefited, including women. Langford, stressing the growth of a 'polite and commercial society,' noted the impressive amount of reading material in the eighteenth century.<sup>55</sup> Middle class women now controlled the domestic environment and made the home the center of consumption. Middle class

readers and novels which some contemporaries would classify as indulgent are pursued later. But the code of gentility, also known as a 'culture of sensibility' found a secure and domesticated niche in midling circles. Its program reflected the virtues of propriety and purity. It enforced a stringent moral code for novels written for an enlarged but consuming public--mostly made up of women.<sup>56</sup> Such a literature would not appeal to a more raucous population from the lower orders.

This description of socio-economic indicators sets the stage for the pages that follow. The variables of gender and a newly-emergent sense of class did not appear abruptly with new and unadulterated meanings in the eighteenth century. Rather, they evolved in a complicated way from older categories. The acknowledgment of the gradual and sporadic development of a modern system of gender difference is clearly incomplete. What is complete in various places and times is a shift from the productive capacities which women were able to sustain, however minimally, to a economic system which expected them to be consumers. The complexity of McKeon's model of change outlined at the beginning of this chapter 'frustrates easy assertion or generalization.' McKeon, in claiming that his model is systematic, also concedes that it is far from complete, 'absolute and irresistible.' It does describe 'the outer limits of our experience.'<sup>57</sup> In claiming that it sets a wider but eventually limiting parameter even for our own experience, McKeon is acknowledging its continued impact in our own time.

## Notes

1. Gordon J. Schochet, "Patriarchalism, Politics, and Mass Attitudes in Stuart England," The Historical Journal, XII, 3 (1969): 413-441.
2. Susan Moller Okun, "Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family," Philosophy and Public Affairs, 11 (1981): 72; Michael McKeon, "Historizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 28, #3 (1995): 297. Alice Clark, Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century, originally issued in 1919, reissued in 1968 and 1982, new edition with an introduction by Amy Louise Erickson, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1992).
3. Tim Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex in Eighteenth-Century England," History Workshop Journal, #41 (1996): 77; Okun, "Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family," p. 74.
4. McKeon, "Historicizing Patriarchy," pp. 296, 297.
5. Ibid., find source
6. Ibid., pp. 300-303.
7. Ibid., pp. 300-302.
8. Ibid., p. 303.
9. Ibid., p. 306.
10. Ibid., p. 304.
11. Alice Clark, Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century.
12. J. L. and Barbara Hammond, 'great oaks' quotation appeared in their indictment of enclosure and changes in agricultural life, The Village Labourer. Their massive indictment of capitalism and the irresponsibility of the upper classes as depicted in The Village Labourer was designed to provoke outrage. The extent to which an earlier reading public absorbed and accepted their arguments suggests not only their gullibility and need to believe that the rural classes were unfairly dispossessed, but the credibility of many of the Hammonds' positions.
13. E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class.

14. E. P. Thompson, Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture, (New York: The New Press, 1991), p. xxi; Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, (London: Temple Smith, 1978).
15. Robert W. Malcolmson, Life and Labour in England, 1700-1780, (London: Hutchinson, 1981), pp. 11-13, 16, 17.
16. Peter Linebaugh, The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 437. The attribution about Moll Flanders from Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom: Studies in Order and Energy From Dryden to Blake, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964), p. 265; the second quotation about Moll: John Valdimir Price, "Patterns of Sexual Behavior in Some Eighteenth-Century Novels," appearing in Paul-Gabriel Bouce, Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain, (Totowa, New Jersey: Manchester University Press through Barnes and Noble Books, 1982), pp. 162-165, quote, 165; Katherine Rogers, "Richardson's Empathy With Women," appearing in The Authority of Experience: Essays in Feminist Criticism, (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), p. 115. M. Dorothy George, London Life in the Eighteenth Century, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 174.
17. Derek Jarrett, England in the Age of Hogarth (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 14-16; Malcolmson, Life and Labour, p. 133.
18. Jarrett, England in the Age of Hogarth, p. 30.
19. Malcolmson, Life and Labour, pp. 35, 173, 38, 42, 44.
20. Thompson, Customs, pp. 149, 102, 107. J. L. and Barbara Hammond, The Village Labourer: 1760-1832. A Study in the Government of England Before the Reform Bill, (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1911). The book was reissued in 1913, 1920, 1927, 1948 and again in a paperback edition in 1970, introduced by E. J. Hobsbawm. References here are to the 1913 edition. R. H. Tawney, The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century, (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912). Lord Ernle, English Farming, Past and Present, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1912). G. E. Fussell and O. R. McGregor introduced the 1962, 6th edition. Malcolmson, Life and Labour, p. 137. Jeannette M. Neeson, Commoners: common right, enclosure, and social change in England, 1700-1820, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Malcolmson, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-25.
21. Jane Humphries, "Enclosures, Common Rights, and Women: The Proletarianization of Families in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," The Journal of Economic History, 50 (March, 1990), pp. 20, 41. Two books, The Peasant Land Market in Medieval England, edited by P. D. A. Harvey, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), and Land Kinship and Life-Cycle, edited by Richard M. Smith, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) collate local and regional studies. Such studies suggest the enlargement or engrossment of holdings by a significant number of small holders, a group one reviewer calls a 'peasant aristocracy.' This indicates the volatility of land tenure at a seemingly early date. Another cited effect was polarization between rich and poor villagers. Earlier studies, such as W. G. Hoskins' much touted study of Wigston Magna (1957)



documented the impact of the land on free tenants. M. M. Postan's discovery of the Carte Nativorum register from the Peterborough Abbey convinced him that the 'habit' of selling land was present as early as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Historians tended to see the land market as fragile, whereas Harvey and more recent scholars see the market as viable and fluid from medieval times to the modern period.

22. Stuart Laing, "Images of the Rural in Popular Culture," in The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis, Brian Short, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 105-132. Oliver Goldsmith, The Deserted Village, (New York: The Modern Library, 1955) edited with an introduction by Frederick W. Hilles, pp. 480, 485.

23. Goldsmith, The Deserted Village, p. 486.

24. Their other books, The Skilled Labourer, The Bleak Age, The Rise of Modern Industry, The Age of the Chartist, Lord Shaftsbury appealed to an impressionable audience. See the Bibliography for complete information about these books.

25. Hammonds, The Village Labourer, p. 327.

26. Dorothy Marshall, The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century, (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1962), pp. 246, 249, 251, 257; A. W. Coats, "Economic Thought and Poor Law Policy in the Eighteenth Century," Economic History Review, Second Edition, 13 (1960), pp. 42, 43, 45, 46, 48.

27. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), p. 213, 215, 216; J. L. Hammond, "The Industrial Revolution and Discontent," Economic History Review, 2 (1929-1930), p. 222, 223. The Village Labourer, pp. 25, 123-132, 168-170, 187, 327.

28. Hammonds, The Village Labourer, p. ix-xxi, 97-99; Ernle, English Farming, pp. 292-294; Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, p. 220.

29. Jonathan Chambers and G. E. Mingay, The Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1880 (New York: Schochen Books, 1966, p. 92. Eric Hobsbawm and George Rude, Captain Swing: A Social History of the Great English Agricultural Uprising of 1830, (New York: (W. W. Norton and Company, 1975, pp. 52, 104, 216, 217.

30. Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century, (London: Penguin Books, 1982, 1990), pp. 350-351, 358-60.

31. K. D. M. Snell was convinced that the Mingay's method for assessing the effects of enclosure was flawed. K. D. M. Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 131, 50, 207; Snell cites books and articles by Chambers and Mingay in support of their position. E. M. Hampson, The Treatment of Poverty in Cambridgeshire, 1597-1834, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934). Snell examined poor rates before and after enclosure by studying five Cambridgeshire parishes. His book ended with a focus on Thomas Hardy's novels

and long quotations from contemporaries, all reiterating the human costs of enclosure.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 147-166.

33. Alice Clark, Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century; Ivy Pinchbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution: 1750-1850, (London: Virago, 1930).

34. Janet Thomas traced the arguments of the optimists and the pessimists. She doesn't see any resolution of the issues in this debate, because there will be no consensus about what constitutes improvement for women and what is deleterious. Thomas, "Women and under Capitalism, A Review Article," Comparative Studies in Society and History, (1988): 537-543. Ester Boserup's studies of the impact of development have convinced her that the village economy was and is disrupted by industrialization. The source for the details from Boserup is Eric Richards, "Women in the British Economy Since About 1700: An Interpretation," History, 59 (1974): pp. 337-357.

35. In an introduction to Clark's magnum opus, Amy Louise Erickson described the book's impact: it was "the leading exposition of the pessimistic view that capitalist industry seriously eroded women's status." Economy history texts seem to slight the more recent feminist historians. Histories of family life such as those by Shorter, 1975, Stone, Mitterauer and Sieder, Houlbrooke, Macfarlane, Case seem to avoid the subject of women's work. Female and feminist historians are more likely to think that family life and work are not so easily separated, dichotomized, and categorized. Introduction, pp. viii, ix.

36. Ivy Pinchbeck, Women Workers, pp. 21, 24, 45, 57, 80; Jane Rendall, Women in an Industrializing Society: England, 1750-1880, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 13.

37. Deborah Valenze, The First Industrial Woman, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Bridget Hill, Women's Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 6-7, 9.

38. Valenze, First Industrial Woman, pp. 7, 18.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 35-39; Peter King, "Customary rights and women's earnings: the importance of gleaning to the rural labouring poor, 1750-1850," Economic History Review, 3 (1991).

42. Valenze, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 51.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 54, 58, 59, 62, 64, 67.

44. See Clark and Pinchbeck for complete coverage of these topics.

45. Valenze, The First Industrial Woman, pp. 69, 71. Pamela Sharpe, "Literally Spinsters: a new interpretation of local economy and demography in Colyton in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," Economic History Review, 44 (1991): 60.

46. Valenze, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-115, 118.

47. Four different legal frameworks coexisted until the modern period: manorial and borough customs, ecclesiastical law, common law and equity law. They operated uniquely by location and region. Erickson's sources are admittedly skewed: the documents were written by men. Frequently overlapping, the four different legal codes managed in their entanglement to continue women's subordinate position. Succinctly stated, the greatest difference existed between the northern and southern parts of England. Erickson uses legal documents: probate records such as wills, inventories, and probate accounts as well as records of civil suits from chancery courts from four counties: Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, the southern sections of Northamptonshire, and West Sussex. She also used similar but less material from Hampshire, Dorset, and Somerset. Amy Louise Erickson, Women and Property in Early Modern England, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 16-18, 23, 230 .

48. *Ibid.* This was the Act for the Better Settling of Intestates Estates.

49. *Ibid.*, p., 231.

50. Neal Mackendrick in Mackendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 10.

51. Mackendrick, Birth of a Consumer Society, pp. 9, 23.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 23.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 161, 167, 188.

54. Carole Shammas, The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

55. Langford, Paul, A Polite and Commercial People. England, 1727-1783, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 91.

56. G. J. Barker-Benfield, The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 154-161, xvii, xix-xxi, xv, 294, 295.

57. Michael McKeon, "Historicizing Patriarchy," pp. 315, 316.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE NATURE OF POPULAR CULTURE

The 'heavy weight of customary definitions and expectations' prevailed in a rural and traditional society. We perceive apprenticeship to be a formal process, but it also refers to the informal but necessary training for becoming an adult. That training also included social experiences and understanding which transmitted the 'common wisdom' of the community. The norms defended within this conservative if often rebellious culture were defined by cherished values. Travelers to England commented on the level of wealth, and English writers wrote proudly of the prosperity in the countryside.

The picture we get is of an open-handed, turbulent large-eating deep-drinking people, much given to hospitality and to merriment both coarse and refined; according to modern standards very ignorant, yet capable of swift enthusiasm, litigious, great sticklers for their rights, quick to use force in defence of them, proud of their independence, and free from the grosser forms of poverty which crush the spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Such a description for the sixteenth century can be easily extended to the eighteenth. For this 'free-born people' were robust, but traditional and conservative in defense of their rights. Whether it be rough music, the sale of wives or skimmingtons, control came from within. Gentry hegemony only prescribed the outer limits of that culture. The people defended long-understood customs.<sup>2</sup>

Popular culture became more commercialized with the eighteenth century. Technological changes accelerated that development. Yet even in the earlier years of that century, printing contributed to a wider dissemination of information. Distinct from its continental counterparts, English society was markedly hierarchical and even deferential, but it prized individualism, respected achievement, and featured an acquisitive ethic. Social mobility in England was substantially greater than that of its continental neighbors. But even so, England was still a society in which most daily routine was tied to the agricultural year. It was still a society with significant

regional variation. Although one can attach the label of traditional to this culture, when it is compared to other European agricultural societies or peasant cultures, it was far more 'commercial. . .less corporate and less secular.' Its people, however, were resilient. Rituals were not symbolic defense mechanisms. Their symbolism represented life itself.<sup>3</sup>

Personal identity was shaped and lived through the village or parish. A sense of place and landscape was contained in memory and embellished by folklore. Life was lived according to community norms and by reference to what had always been. Within this context, an oral tradition featured narratives, including stories from the past, proverbs, and anecdotes. But despite the compelling power of the oral tradition, it can be a 'weak tool.' Many areas remained deprived of information. The complexities of an advancing world were not communicated easily and were lost in the thicket of oral communication. The oral tradition also have hampered the 'development of a common plebeian consciousness.'<sup>4</sup>

By the eighteenth century, the oral tradition coexisted with the printed word. What emerged in print, whether it be broadsides, almanacs, or chapbooks, were bound to reflect what the older oral culture had sanctioned. The printed word and the oral tradition coexisted. The printed word did not confront the oral culture with clearly different content, making a categorical distinction between the 'literate' and 'nonliterate' unsustainable. The 'forms' of this culture were conservative. Its customs, its oral tradition, and its newer form, the printed word, disseminated traditional messages. But that culture could also be rebellious if traditional in its defense of its routine yet understood way of life. Innovation was not prized or admired among villagers. The eighteenth century social history was a 'succession of confrontations between an innovative market economy and the customary moral economy of the plebeians.' Gentry hegemony posed outer limits, but the culture belonged to the people themselves. Its customs served the interests of its people. Its 'taverns are their own, the fairs are their own, rough music is among their own means of self-regulation.' They

understood the rhetoric of free labor,' and challenged the gentry with their understanding of their rights as 'free-born Englishmen.' They faithfully defined their rights as they interpreted them from the Settlement of 1688.<sup>5</sup>

Keith Thomas did not find the same coherence and therefore confidence in popular forms, superstitions, rituals, and symbolism that E. P. Thompson does for the eighteenth century. Thomas emphasized accumulation, an amalgamation, or build-up of 'cultural debris' from past centuries and many different ways of thinking. Thompson saw elements of the older culture integrated into the eighteenth century through the medium of class.<sup>6</sup>

The individualism of English society, especially as elaborated by Alan Macfarlane, colored the sense of community. Models of traditional community feature kinship prominently, but this is not as relevant for the English experience. Neighbors and neighborliness is vital, but this association markedly differs from that of kinship. Families needed to support themselves, for much agricultural work involved common rights. Proverbs and sayings further instilled community. '(t)he warp of preservation had to be interwoven with the weft of neighborliness.'<sup>7</sup>

Despite the reality of agrarian capitalism and the diminished significance of communal rights, the customs of the culture--its holidays, festivals, and rituals--remained rooted in the agrarian cycle. The vital markers of life were ceremoniously observed. Maintained tenaciously and defiantly by the oral tradition, 'the solemn conspicuous and symbolic reiteration of rights of way, boundaries, terms of work and mutual rights and responsibilities was paramount.'<sup>8</sup>

Symbolic authority was especially significant in the eighteenth century, particularly as others forms of social control weakened. Church authority was clearly in decline, and schools and a mass media had not yet filled the vacuum. The gentry held substantial hegemonic powers, but avoided losing face whenever possible. The symbolic contest was about real power and a delicate equilibrium or continuous tug-of-war between patricians and plebeians. The

balance or paternalism-deference equilibrium seemed to be losing force by the time of the French Revolution.<sup>9</sup>

The poor were not just 'losers.' "They enjoyed liberties of pushing about the streets and jostling, gaping, and huzzaing. . .and a generally riotous and unpoliced disposition which astonished foreign visitors and which almost misled themselves into believing that they were free.' The Poor Laws were labourer's last "inheritance." The poor incoherently and sporadically maintained this inheritance, while the authorities chipped away at this last guarantee of a village community. This produced a war of nerves or attrition at the parish level.<sup>10</sup>

An interpretation of class relationships should enhance the vitality of human experiences. Discussion of class relationships involves more than elite values pitted against the resilience of plebeian life. Paternalism purportedly explains the demeanor of the upper classes. The upper-classes, although determined to mold and discipline social inferiors, underestimated their resistance and resilience in defending their independence, dignity, and culture.<sup>11</sup> The critical interpretations by J. L. and Barbara Hammond become static reiteration of abuse heaped upon a hapless population who can also be remembered by their frozen portraits. Constructing dramatic divides and dichotomies of class behavior do not do justice to the depicted groups. Few groups wish to be displayed in life or death as the sum total of their disabilities, indignities, or negatives. The work of Thompson and others breathes life into the village cast of characters.<sup>12</sup> Popular literature through chapbooks and ballads depict the vitality of human relationships and much determination.

### **Magic**

The following two sections, the first on magic, and the second on almanacs and astrology provide a base for an understanding of the many early chapbooks highlighting the phenomenon of witchcraft and explaining horrendous criminal behavior.

From our understanding of the history of the medieval world and into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we know that life was 'nasty, brutish, and short'—very short; natural disaster, a precarious food supply, the wrath of the Plague, poverty and illness—all instilled fear into the population. The oral culture, composed of custom and tradition, looked to the authority of supernatural powers. The supernatural impacted the 'material reality' routinely. Catastrophic events impacted people adversely, without warning and plausible explanations. The established church faced the results of at least five centuries of neglect and 'low standards of religious practice.' The message of Catholic Christianity and the Protestant variation after the Reformation did not reach its intended recipients and convert them into true believers.<sup>13</sup>

Although magic and belief in the supernatural hardly offered a comprehensive explanation, they did provide techniques and practices which could be used to overcome and transcend certain specific situations. The lack of adherence to orthodox Christianity and the continued adherence to notions of magic power and the power of women as witches circulated within the complex and multi-faceted realm of popular culture. Magical healing, the activities of cunning men, and the practice of predictions and telling the future—divination—all these continued to be present in the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

The church accepted and assimilated pagan rites into church practice. The medieval church encouraged the practice of magic and superstition. Old Catholic prayers, ritually recited, were assumed to have magical powers. The faithful depended on the supernatural power of the saints. Through the sacraments, the church dispensed divine grace. The power of the mass and the use of holy water and relics promoted the belief in magic and superstition.<sup>15</sup>

The Protestant Reformation distinguished between magic and religion. Reformers denied the power of the mass and distinguished between a spell and a prayer. Prayers implying supernatural powers and relics were eliminated. Puritans saw certain customs as heathen. Old calendar rituals were not so



easily discarded, since they had long marked dates and seasons of the agricultural year. Moreover, Anglicans seemed unwilling to discard the churching of women—a semi-magical ceremony that accorded the woman status as a new mother and allowed her to resume conjugal relations. The basis for oaths shifted from fear of external punishment to an individual sense of responsibility. Protestants thought that spells and charms masqueraded as religion. Ritual and play juxtaposed were hard to separate. Hence many rites continued well into the nineteenth century. With time the Church of England created a belief system based on creeds rather than a practice based on patterns of behavior.<sup>16</sup>

Puritans saw God at work in all things. One might endure the hardships of this world if one could enjoy the blessings of the next. Protestants taught that misfortune could be the work of God. People could tell themselves that God was on their side by selecting the most favorable interpretation. Trouble and adversity directed men and women toward religion and helped them to understand the ways of Providence. Sickness was seen as God's visitation. Whether an event was deliverance or disaster depended on who and what was involved.

Eighteenth century fires, epidemics, and earthquakes were interpreted as acts of God. God's power and his omnipotence worked on a population which had long endured and internalized such explanations. After the mid-seventeenth century, providence was a less convincing explanation. Those with opportunities to better themselves combined faith/providence with a working idea of self-help. The well-to-do thought that the poor did not help themselves.

Prayer and prophecy increased. New Protestant sects formed during the Stuart and Restoration periods resulted from the fragmenting tendencies of an unchecked Protestant conscience. They also represented the social and political goals of the poorer members of society. Men used vision and revelation to persuade themselves and others that God was on their side. Dissenters preached about shared community life and a spiritualized household.

They permitted women a broader role in meetings and church circles. Religion now had a multi-dimensional structure that magic and rites could hardly rival.<sup>17</sup>

But heretics and the heathen still threatened the social fabric. Ignorance and indifference of the many coexisted with godly and chosen people. The poorer sort were never avid church-goers, and laboring people of the seventeenth century displayed irreligious attitudes. Indifference to Christianity grew in the eighteenth century. Clergymen responded to their genteel parishioners and socialized with them--not with the poor and weak of their parish. The established church was only sporadically situated among ordinary people--seldom if ever located in forested areas, not placed in accessible locations in the large northern and upland areas, and not available to meet the needs of parishioners in large metropolitan areas such as London.<sup>18</sup> The changes associated with the Civil War weakened the authority of the church. By 1653, civil marriage was possible. Between 1650 and 1657 there was no law mandating compulsory attendance. The tithe and parish system continued after the Civil War, but the changes and attempts at improvement would not necessarily result in a stronger and more accessible church.<sup>19</sup>

Ordinary people had long maintained their own beliefs and explanations of confusing and explicable situations that impacted their daily lives. The inadequate state of medical practice left most of the population of Tudor and Stuart England dependent on folk medicine. Charms, healing by means of the royal touch, the use of cunning men and their popular magic--all these folkways presided in an age when illness and death preoccupied the population. Daniel Defoe fictionalized the cunning man in his 1727 book, A System of Magic.<sup>20</sup>

Writing in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, John Clare, a villager from Northamptonshire, the peasant poet, identified with the people of his village. He praised the skills of the wise woman who practiced popular medicine in his poem, "The Village Doctress:" Totally identified with the life of the village, she received her strength and powers from nature. Unlike the doctor,

who came to the village to dispense medicines, the doctress dispensed wisdom with her cures.<sup>21</sup>

The use of magic provided hope and confidence when no other sources were available. Its continued presence 'ritualize(d) man's optimism. . .enhance(d) his faith in the victory of hope over fear.'<sup>22</sup> The laboring person struggling daily to survive, co-mingled magic and established Christianity. For the church also offered rites and ceremonies. Selective associations and perceptions in the minds of ordinary people allowed them to believe what they wanted to believe and to rationalize what they did and what they thought.

### **Astrology and Almanacs**

Medieval Christianity maintained a whole host of ideas about magic. Protestants could not compete with that repertoire. Sorcerers flourished both before and after the Reformation. Although the Reformation had charted a new course by extolling virtue and hard work, it could not root out the hold of popular magic.

Astrology was probably the most ambitious attempt ever made to reduce the baffling diversity of human affairs to some sort of intelligible order. . .(The astrologer's) efforts to sharpen his conceptual tools only meant that he came nearer to reproducing on paper the chaotic diversity which he saw in the world around him.<sup>23</sup>

Medieval astrologers served the court by predicting political disturbances. A climate of censorship prevailed in the sixteenth century, and political prophecies did not appear again in almanacs until 1642 and the years of the Civil War. Interest in astrology was not confined to the court, as it was in the Middle Ages, because printing disseminated its precepts and predictions to a wider audience. Almanacs and prognostications were some of the first items printed after Guttenberg's invention. Almanacs guided daily activities through an interpretation of the moon's phases, offered personal and medical advice, and information on farming.<sup>24</sup>

## Providence

Protestant thinkers did not want their ordinary faithful to consider life as the result of arbitrary action or random choices. They wanted people to accept the power of God to order all natural and human events. It was the duty of the clergy to explain to their parishioners how God's purpose manifested itself in everyday life. '(t)he belief in providence was thus extraordinarily elastic,' a self-fulfilling prophecy. If disaster struck, it could be said that God displayed his wrath against the sinful. Evidence tells us that an earthquake in 1580, the flooding of 30 towns in 1706, and a storm in 1703 were all explained as signs of God's displeasure. Even sickness could be construed as God's will, at least until the closing years of the century. If coincidental situations or changes produced an inexplicable dilemma, then the providential explanation was especially appealing.<sup>25</sup>

Although this concept was terribly fatalistic, there was an implied promise to those who faithfully followed God's will. Keith Thomas, an influential historian and authority on this subject, warned against stretching this explanation. But the laity and clergy at the end of the seventeenth century observed a connection between prosperity and obedience to the will of God. Although the clergy might include a disclaimer that they were only discussing spiritual prosperity in their sermons, members of the congregation might internalize and apply these lessons to their own material prosperity. The clergy itself was not immune from accepting this belief.<sup>26</sup>

At least until 1700, writing and abundant pamphlet literature repeated 'cautionary tales.' Accounts stressed God's message in natural events such as earthquakes, thunder, lightening, etc. Pamphlets reported apparitions in the sky. In addition, the destiny of nations could be explained by God's approval. Particularly after the Reformation, English success in the Armada and other events could be interpreted as God's design--England was scheduled to play a special role in his unfolding plan. Because this concept was so subjective or 'extraordinarily elastic,'

writers or the clergy could chose events that demonstrated their beliefs.<sup>27</sup> After about 1650, however, historical writing and dissenting groups put less emphasis upon God's involvement in human affairs.<sup>28</sup>

Midling people--tradesmen, artisans, shopkeepers--could see themselves as marginally prosperous and envision their lives as proof of God's plan. What about the poor? The wealthy and economists condemned them for their lack of industry and their idle hands. The design of God in all things--Providence--was not comforting to those who had mouths to feed. It only promised rewards in the next life. It was a 'gloomy philosophy, teaching men how to suffer and stressing the impenetrability of God's will.'<sup>29</sup>

The following best demonstrates the meaning of Providence within the genre of criminal biography:

Providence is the armature around which the most serious criminal biography is wound. Giving shape and order to dispirits and awful events, making the seemingly random and accidental appear organized and coherent, it powerfully supports the notion that even the worst and most egregious human behavior is order and comprehensible because--at some level--God wills it to conform to conventional moral values.

Providence provided a 'sign of human insufficiency,' but ordinary mortals knew that by invoking this concept and listening to the power of God from within them that they could make sense of their lives. In the seventeenth century, ghosts, killers, and witches offered ample testimony to the force of evil. The eighteenth century was a more 'sceptical Age,' and the reports of ghosts that haunted murderers or dead bodies that showed new blood were fewer.<sup>30</sup> Authors of chapbooks wrote for an audience conditioned to believe that they could not order their world or control their destiny.

### Marriage

Marriage was a vital connective tissue that was predominantly portrayed in English ballads and chapbooks through the centuries. Joy Wiltenberg in her

comparison of English and German ballads concluded that English ballads focused on relationships between men and women whereas German ballads provided lyrics and verses encompassing the whole family. English ballads and early chapbooks or chap-ballads frequently featured a dialogue between a courting pair or a married couple and many complained of love lost and a maiden's behavior. The later chapbooks, particularly those that after 1750 observed the dictates of sensibility, focused on the marginalization and vulnerability of women who did not stay the course or those who obtained a state of happiness after much suffering.<sup>31</sup>

The resilience of the double standard traceable through English law held that women should observe a higher standard of sexual propriety than men. The double standard means many things to many people, but during the Restoration, it was an 'extreme wenching attitude,' according to Keith Thomas. Women of some status designed schemes to trap eligible men and then pretended to ignore their adulterous behavior. For the sexual appetites of men to be satisfied, prostitutes would have to be available. Prostitution, divorce, and laws concerning the transmission of property worked to the detriment of women. Such a moralizing edict as the double standard did not exist only in England. This meant that the place of a woman depended on her relationship to a man--be he her husband, father, brother, or son, but its relevance diminished as one descended the social ladder. Women were defined by their marital status and their ability to tend to the needs of men. The social codes which regulated what men and women could do were separate and distinct. But those who expounded on the virtues of these codes and defended their legal manifestations relied on a 'highly exaggerated view of the innate differences between the two sexes.'<sup>32</sup>

### **Marriage among the Gentry/Aristocracy**

This focus on marriage relies on literary evidence as well as the historical record. The theme of marriage pursued here includes the midling and better sort--

the gentry and upper classes as well as the common folk. Marriage could not be contemplated until the couple had the wherewithal to start a family. Although English society was markedly individualistic, members of the community, whether they be friends or relatives, still had much to say about what individuals did. Parents from the lower orders especially expected obedience from their children.<sup>33</sup>

Lawrence Stone documented the existence of a 'closed domesticated nuclear family' from 1640 to 1800 in which affective individualism--warmth between family members--wasn't possible before 1800. Stone and Randolph Trumbach champion the idea that companionate and egalitarian marriage resulted from socio-economic change and from an ideology that promoted personal choice. Alan Macfarlane sought to refute Stone's version of love and marriage. Much of Europe functioned under modifications of Roman law which enforced the power of the father over family members. In England, the common law, based on old Germanic tradition, held that marriage was a contract between two individuals. Clandestine marriages lined the pockets of unscrupulous clergymen. Elopements among aristocratic offspring brought misery and anxiety to aristocratic parents. But concerned about the preservation of their estates, the aristocracy and gentry maintained control. Boys and older offspring enjoyed greater freedom than girls or younger children. Evidence from autobiographies and diaries support the theory of greater choice as one descended the social ladder. The potential for conflict existed, but children of the poor usually made their own decisions.<sup>34</sup>

Beyond its function as connective tissue in medieval society, in later 'polite and commercial' society, marriage was key to the distribution and rearrangement of property and power. Eighteenth-century society was competitive, and parents sought as much control as possible in a socio-economic climate which was at best unpredictable. Arranged marriages were expected for daughters of the aristocracy. For daughters were more captive than sons.<sup>35</sup> The novel, Clarissa, illustrated an extreme example.

Lawrence and Jeanne Stone and Randolph Trumbach assume that ideological change led to improvements in the treatment of women within marriage. Edward Shorter also proposes a historical model of a less patriarchal and more modern family. Both Susan Staves and Susan Moller Okun dispute the contention that changes in the maintenance and dispersal of property as well as an ideology that favored personal choice and freedom in marriage favored the female sex in the eighteenth century. Legal changes did not empower married women. Those who codified the new rules were not interested in bestowing independence on married and widowed women. Rather they were concerned with the maintenance of estates, the transmission of property between males, and with the protection of younger children and women. Women of the aristocracy brought money to their arranged marriages. But no clear and compelling evidence exists for daughters of the gentry and professional classes.<sup>36</sup>

Christopher Hill, observed that Clarissa was the 'greatest of the unread novels.' Samuel Richardson depicted moral problems in a social context.<sup>37</sup> Are Clarissa's and Pamela's behavior a reflection of Christian teaching and more recent Puritan admonitions which fall more heavily on women than on men? What does Clarissa tell us about marriage settlements and family expectations? The battle between Clarissa and the male protagonist, Lovelace, is a conflict of wills. For Clarissa, the assertion of will is not fortuitous; it ultimately contributed to her early death.

Hill stressed the power of the head of household, the family patriarch. For Puritan values flourished a spiritualized household where the head admonished and disciplined members, but led them to God. Seventeenth-century family values deplored sexual promiscuity and libertine behavior, especially as enacted on the Restoration stage.<sup>38</sup>

Ties of love and affection, warmth, and family devotions were clearly absent from the Harlowe household in Richardson's novel. Sibling rivalry was omnipresent in every conversation and behavior. Clarissa's self-effacing mother could not



maintain family harmony and abandoned Clarissa due to stronger family pressure. Clarissa's immediate and extended family determined upon an arranged marriage to consolidate their wealth and power. They even proposed capturing her for the ceremony.<sup>39</sup>

Richardson described a state of psychological warfare between a willful Clarissa and her entire family. Clarissa's merchant family, now domiciled in the country, had an insatiable appetite for wealth. Writing in the late 1730s from his life-long observations, Richardson projected strong wills into his two noted female characters, Pamela and Clarissa. Clarissa had ideals and aspirations which she would not compromise. She even offered to give up property from her grandfather if her family would just leave her alone. But stronger social forces engulfed her. Her family resolutely demanded that she yield to their choice of a mate. Hence she formed a brief alliance with Lovelace and escaped.

The bourgeois family did not become a citadel where emotional feelings and ties took precedence. Richardson's Clarissa certainly testifies to this. In addition, religious authorities admonished women to obey their husbands. If there was a dearth of advice to women on business, there was certainly a plethora of secular conduct books preaching subordination. An unending stream of advice also told them how to behave in the aftermath of their husband's adultery—a not uncommon occurrence.<sup>40</sup>

Did Richardson employ a theme which we comfortably recognize as modern—the autonomy and even the alienation of the individual? Hill's individual is cut from the fabric of Puritan society. But that individual was let loose from the earlier feudal structure that provided a secure anchor. Richardson used Clarissa as the vehicle to criticize the world's petty amoral behavior, caused by sweeping economic and social change.<sup>41</sup>

Can Richardson's literary flourishes be accepted as bona fide historical evidence? Lawrence Stone contended that Richardson's novel provided evidence of public and private debate over the issue of parental authority versus the will or

choice of the child. The passage of Hardwicke's Marriage Act suggests apprehension about marital decisions and entanglements such as clandestine marriage and elopements.<sup>42</sup> Does Richardson detail a time of transition, a time when parents demanded filial piety, but head-strong children resisted? Paternalism is allegedly in full retreat from the end of the seventeenth century. Yet in this novel, paternal authority is alive and well.

Did women have power? Could they control their own money and property? The provisions of Common Law on property, the power vested in the husband as trustee of his wife's property, the limited 'pin money' allowed to the woman, and her lack of rights when separated from her husband all testify to the relative impotence of a married woman with property.<sup>43</sup>

#### **Marriage among the Lower Orders**

Marriage was too important to be left to the whims of the couple. Since medieval times, the church considered engagements followed by consummation of the relationship as binding pre-contracts. Canon law held that engagement and physical union were 'essential elements in marriage.' Vows should be voluntarily made in public ceremonies. By the twelfth century the priests found ways to assert themselves into the marriage rite. First they served as narrators and later allowed villagers to use the church porch and yard. Vows were said outside the church and only those who could afford it went inside for a nuptial mass. The charms and magic in the service permitted by the priest improved his position within the community.<sup>44</sup>

Betrothal included symbols and gifts. Big weddings emphasized and symbolized community and were political events. They could involve the distribution of land and status. The couple might prevent spells and curses from being put upon their marriage by inviting the entire community to the festivities. Increasingly, the big weddings were functions only for small holders. The aristocracy and the gentry gradually withdrew from community events. Their

weddings became private, small affairs. Much of the preliminary discussion concerned property and superseded personal concerns. The poor could not afford expensive ceremonies. Some chose common-law unions and clandestine marriages. By the early 1700s, about 1/4 to 1/3 of all marriages were irregular unions which functioned without the sanction of the church. By the 1650s, parishes attempted to keep the poor from marrying and adding to the rates. In addition, some clergy would perform weddings without banns or licenses. People would go long distances to find ordained clergy who did not have a salaried position. But clandestine marriage was not as binding as the big event.<sup>45</sup>

Peasant and artisan marriage accommodated the patriarchal structure yet encouraged companionship and an appropriate balance between conjugal love and household duties. This form of compromise can be traced to medieval times. This delicate balance might have endured if sufficient small-holdings had survived.<sup>46</sup>

The woman could be the 'better man of the two.' Competition for brides and a woman's earnings gave women some leverage. The independence of women in the late eighteenth century disturbed men. Evidence from early modern Europe points toward the power of women over the reputation of their peers--neighbors and fellow villagers. In particular locales, the supernatural power of women and a woman's power as a witch continued well into the nineteenth century and in northern and western areas. The 'extraordinary powers' of new mothers although regionally-based, when juxtaposed to other sources, allows a picture of female assertiveness appears.<sup>47</sup>

As was previously mentioned, change in the countryside adversely impacted families. From the 1770s on, farmers hired fewer live-in servants. Courting began earlier; age-at-marriage dropped for women, but not for men. There was an increase in illegitimacy during the hard years and poor harvests of the 1790s. The extended family structure suffered; rural laboring families increasingly had only nuclear ties. Parents put their daughters into domestic service at even earlier ages, wanted their sons to migrate to places where they could find work--or they wanted

them to marry. Parents might favor courting practices which facilitated earlier marriage. Night visiting and bundling were used. Bundling was borrowed from Irish migrants. The rural proletariat used the old scheme--the betrothal allowed cohabitation before marriage. But the result was increased premarital pregnancy.<sup>48</sup>

Whereas John Gillis carefully connected changes in the institution of marriage to socio-economic shifts from 1600 and after, Alan Macfarlane's approach in Marriage and Love in England stressed continuity and individual decisions. Ostensibly existing since the fourteenth century, the Malthusian marriage system, as reconstructed by Macfarlane, featured an accumulative or acquisitive ethic, a hierarchical social order which held out the possibility of upward movement, the protection of private property, and a higher standard of living.<sup>49</sup> Macfarlane ignored differences between yeomen, artisans, and others as well as the factors of region or locale and time. The dimension of personal choice cannot be discounted or ignored. Given declining religious authority, the element of personal choice looms large in any reconstruction of the eighteenth century.

#### Popular Culture and Personal Relationships: Husbands and Wives

Festive occasions or holiday activities prominently featured inversions that displayed a woman's insubordination but questioned her position and encouraged resistance. These mockeries of family life turned patriarchal ideology on its head. From 1500-1800, city people were concerned about husbands who were being beaten. Skimmingtons in the Midlands put the husband on a horse and pranced him backwards through the community. In Wales, Scotland, and northern England, 'riding the stang' paraded the victim.<sup>50</sup>

What would these 'amazons' do. Unruly women had more room to maneuver and to act, especially since women were not responsible for their actions--their husbands were responsible for them. The societies of pre-industrial Europe allowed such symbolism to flourish as long as two conditions were met: first, sexual

symbols had to connect to considerations of order and disorder and cast the female part as disorderly and lustful; second, inversions had to have a double feature--they must display the traditional hierarchy and 'disputed changes in the distribution of power in families and political life.'<sup>51</sup>

Martin Ingram questioned whether the division between elite and popular culture by 1700 was as pronounced as others have supposed after recognizing the ambiguities involved in depictions of sex roles. Charivaris were penal and festive occasions. Rough music--a cacophony of loud noises, a march of armed men, rhymes and songs of a mocking character as well as proclamations of religious ritual frequently added to the event. Communities frequently staged charivaris as punishment for domestic problems--cuckoldry, the female domination of a husband, adultery, and other sexual peccadilloes. Unruly, defiant women inverted the social and sexual order experienced community rituals designed to shame them into submission. The folkloric tradition sanctioned this 'supplement' to the legal system.<sup>55</sup> The symbolism of these events displayed the world-turned-upside-down even though Ingram detected the subtleties of ambiguity and insecurity. For the domineering behavior of a wife inverted the 'natural' hierarchy. Political charivaris allowed people to display their own authority and reminded magistrates and those in authority that their rule was only temporary. Although Ingram is wary of Davis' conclusions about the encouragement of 'female insurrection,' he admitted that these acts did imply that patriarchy remained ideology and not reality.<sup>52</sup>

Criticism by Puritans against such improprieties was sporadic and muted. By 1700, charivaris could be prosecuted as illegal acts, but they rarely were. Their legal status is more attributable to their threat to public order than the moral questions raised by their performance. Authorities in eighteenth-century London as well as those out in the provinces tolerated these ridings. For the most part, complacency greeted the continuation of charivaris, although this conclusion rests upon supposition and incomplete evidence. Elite involvement and complacency suggest that the two cultures were not frozen into opposing positions. The two

groups shared an appreciation of patriarchy. Cultural commonalities should not be undervalued.<sup>53</sup>

Wife sales took place in a patriarchal society where women were the property of men. They have been interpreted as a form of divorce. Although desperation, anger, or resentment cannot be denied, some women could turn a marginal situation to their own advantage. Some first-hand observations reported their independence and sexual vitality. The wife appeared with a halter around her neck and was sold like chattel. The practice of hiring servants might have led some men to conclude that their wives could be offered up in a similar manner. This ritual was not an old tradition; it was an accommodation to reality: it was a form of divorce.<sup>54</sup>

Wife sale was not a peasant custom, but symbolized an older plebeian culture. Such sales quickly declined in larger cities. But the neighborhood or smaller communities demanded a ritual that signified separation or divorce. An easy change of partners was scandalous. Although the new couple did not earn immediate approval, the community accepted this ritual of divorce.<sup>55</sup>

Occurring in a time of declining religious authority, such sales did not arouse ecclesiastical comment. Prosecution now took place in criminal court whereas earlier it would have occurred in church courts. In the eighteenth century, neither lay authorities nor the clergy brought down their wrath upon the parties, but they did find this necessary by the nineteenth century. By the mid 1800s, most knowledgeable people insisted that such sales were lower class events occurring in the countryside. Adultery by the wife figured prominently as a motive, but barrenness and cruelty by either party could be a motive for the sale. Women acquiesced, but a lack of contrary evidence does not mean that they accepted this negotiation of their very lives. They may have buried their resentments. The earliest incident of crowd protest is 1756. But crowd behavior changed gradually from being positive to conveying quite negative and hostile feelings. Some women were quite vocal in venting their outrage.<sup>56</sup>

Stronger punishment of scolds, more rough music, and the labeling of women as witches occurred during a time of gender insecurity from 1500-1600. Beyond fear and ostracism of scolds and witches, there was apprehension about rebellious or domineering wives. Insecurity erupted when women became more independent, interrupted 'living in quiet, and/or were not good, accommodating neighbors.'<sup>57</sup>

### Challenges to Patriarchal Authority

The opening quotation for this chapter made reference to the English as a litigious people, 'sticklers for their rights, and quick to use force in defense of them.' Defense of name and reputation also resulted in court cases. Defamation suits filed in early modern England in ecclesiastical courts and the expectation of damage awards became 'almost embarrassingly popular' as evidenced by both common law and ecclesiastical court records. The defense of a good name declined after 1642, but picked up during the Restoration. Between 1665 and 1720, the filings doubled and then tripled, but after that the filings in church courts declined. The defense of one's standing or reputation was a primary motive from 1550 to 1750. In the village environment, gossip determined a woman's reputation. The women involved in these suits were usually accused of being a whore.<sup>58</sup>

During the Tudor and Stuart period, a better sort of poor people sought to distinguish themselves from an undeserving poor. At the same time, increased social stratification or the widening of a gap between the rich and the poor meant that some people were poorer than others. Many tried to uphold their reputation and honor by seeking legal redress for slanderous and demeaning words. An analysis of the suits and the language that provoked legal action reveals two significant facts: first, those who filed suits were probably rural and midling people; second, the parties involved were social equals and might have worked together.<sup>59</sup>

The defense of reputation was as vital after marriage as before, thus contradicting Stone's finding about that good name was important only among

unmarried persons. Although English women had more mobility than women in Mediterranean or Southern Europe who were kept indoors, concerns about female honor were common to both areas.<sup>60</sup> But the notion that the prevailing patriarchy made women dependent and vulnerable is an exaggeration of the evidence. Women had their own special powers and roles. Their gossip affected reputations, and they could be involved in ecclesiastical court proceedings.

The crisis in gender relations ensued in early modern England involved the spectacle of unruly women who disturbed the patriarchal peace and prompted a protracted round of witchcraft accusations and trials. In 'The Taming of the Scold,' Underdown commented on the social conditions which prompted William Shakespeare to write 'The Taming of the Shrew.' During the late Elizabethan and Jacobean period, writers revealed their obsession with unruly, ill-behaved and insubordinate women. While male political theorists and religious authorities might anxiously dictate the blessings of a patriarchal order, male domination was being challenged. The increase of scolding cases after 1560 is a currently debated topic. The terms of punishment, however, became harsher. Court proceedings and the use of the cucking stool disciplined mouthy, unruly, and even violent women. But it is more likely that women were disciplined for behavior that hurt or slandered neighbors, for disturbing neighborhoods, and for excessive behavior. Harassment implies repeated offensive behavior. The women who came into court had somehow provoked their neighbors. The accused women had their own grievances, and some had mental problems. But finally and for a variety of reasons, their neighbors had had enough.<sup>61</sup>

Local court records for 1560-1640 suggest that in various ways, women challenged patriarchal authority. They fought with their neighbors, refused to become domestic servants--if they were single, and physically abused their husbands. Scolding resulted in a time of socio-economic change, when the advent of capitalism meant acrimony within communities and a decline of neighborly cooperation. Anxiety about scolds reached epidemic proportions at the same time



that the phenomenon of witchcraft resulted in trials and hangings in England and Europe. Those scolds who ended up in English courts were usually poor, could be widows or social misfits, and sometimes were new residents. Although the historical record tells us that scolding was an urban phenomenon, fewer records remain that could tell us about this problem in rural areas.<sup>62</sup>

The prosecution of scolds and witches and the evidence of skimmingtons tells us that there was much anxiety about female behavior in early modern England. Villages used skimmingtons for other offenses, but here we are concerned with those of a sexual or sex-linked nature. Skimmingtons were directed at wives who were unfaithful or at those who physically abused their husbands. Such rituals existed in wood-pasture regions with featured a hearty sense of individualism and strict distinctions between male and female roles. Women may have cherished the independence which came with selling their cheese at market or working in garment manufacturing or textiles. But men manifested anxiety about what women did. Underdown concluded that the 'crisis of order' felt in Jacobean and/or early modern England resulted from tension between men and women.<sup>63</sup>

The increasing subjection of wife beaters to rough music tells us about attempted 'reform' of behavior or manners, but it is unlikely to suggest a shift in the relationship between husband and wife. Easily-accessible male kin might not have been available. In a mobile society, the scrutiny of neighbors and kin might be more absent than present. Hence the community may have used the old form of rough music for new purposes. How involved women were in instigating rough music for wife beating remains a suitable subject for investigation--should the sources be available. How, when, where, and why such sanctions were applied was subject to a host of conditions, circumstances, personalities, and the 'wit or stupidity of natural leaders.'<sup>64</sup>

### Village Life and the Moral Economy

The novels of Henry Fielding provide excellent examples of social hierarchy and class fixity in the eighteenth century. His satire of class structure and the behavior of the gentry testify to its resilience. He did this without moral comment, despite his reputation as a moralist. Responsibility and reciprocity as the duty of all the classes if the social fabric was to hold. Fielding offered a comic-satiric version of eighteenth century life which is a comprehensive view or snapshot of village life. Tom Jones is a 'comic epic in prose.'<sup>65</sup>

Fielding's villagers did not passively await their fate or surrender when chaos erupted--especially the women. No one could compel order in the churchyard where the Somersetshire mob held forth in a riot--the kind explored in Thompson's recital of patrician/plebeian relationships. The women were insulted by Molly Segrim's casual yet determined flaunting of her beauty and pregnant condition.

As a vast herd of cows in a rich farmer's yard if, while they are milked, they hear their calves at a distance, lamenting the robbing which is then committing, roar and bellow: so roared forth the Somersetshire mob an hallaloo, made up of almost as many squawls, screams, and other different sounds, as there were persons, or indeed passions, among them: some were inspired by rage, others alarmed by fear, and others had nothing in their head but the love of fun.<sup>66</sup>

Fielding's 'Amazons,' the female combatants who furiously went into battle, clearly were not candidates for social control.<sup>67</sup> Country people did not passively anticipate the decision of their betters. They were not strangers to tumult or a good brawl in a culture that Thompson labeled 'rebellious' but 'traditional.' Country men and women could give as good as they got.

The work of Amartya Sen provides another interpretation of the 'moral economy'--a theme of E. P. Thompson. Sen's notion of 'entitlement' theory encompasses all the ways by which people customarily get their daily bread. A famine does not mean only the absence of grain stores; it connotes a breakdown of

entitlement. Some people starve while others do not. Supply is never just an abstracted decision of market forces but subject to human decisions.<sup>68</sup>

One of the more common forms of crowd action in the eighteenth century was the food riot. The theme of 'moral economy' supposed an operating perception of what was legitimate and what was not. The Tudor policies of 'provision' operated from a sense of obligation and duty in times of dearth. The paternalist tone of society still legitimized crowd activity in the eighteenth century. But market forces and procedures increasingly interfered. Crowds should be remembered for their restraint, the consensus which preceded their actions, and purposeful organization. Common people did not simply lashed out at authority. Laboring people exhibited a keen sense of justice.<sup>69</sup>

Hunger, unfair practices by dealers, soaring prices--or all of the above--precipitated the food riot. Community norms and expectations could enforce a 'moral economy' of the poor. People expected to buy their provisions at a 'farmer's market.' Magistrates, farmers, millers, and bakers were a part of the community that deserved fair but not excessive profits. Regulations should enforce community norms. Despite the growth of free market forces, such a model of community did continue to exist into the nineteenth century. Especially in times of emergency, common people employed the old model of community and saw themselves as legitimately exercising their rights. Increasingly during the seventeenth century, rates set by local magistrates did not vindicate popular notions of a market regulated for the benefit of consumers.<sup>70</sup> Provisions of the Book of Orders, that allowed authorities to bring grain to market, were reissued in 1758, thus giving people a new look at older laws that enforced community norms.<sup>71</sup>

In early modern times women were associated with a propensity to riot and lustful activity. While some historians have assumed that women played prominent roles in food riots, others believe that their conspicuous presence in these events gave them historical visibility. Women and men rioted over the food supply, since they were partners in keeping the household together. Riots over the bread supply

were still effective in small and medium-sized communities. Women rioted frequently from 1700-1750 when wheat was available on the open market. Their protests emanated from their 'right' to challenge authority in order to preserve home and hearth. They seldom displayed the timidity and submissiveness which historians have projected upon them. Women proved to be resolute and unrestrained defenders of their rights and insistent upon results.<sup>71</sup>

As the Industrial Revolution begat urbanization, new urban places and boom towns, the home was increasingly separated from the workplace, but women remained productive partners in the struggle to survive. Although the evidence varies depending on the size of locales, a few conclusions are possible. Women enjoyed power in traditional and stable communities. But increasingly, the partnership women enjoyed in smaller communities dwindled from 1790 to 1810. During this period, women exerted their rights as proto-citizens to protect the family economy through their participation in food riots or demonstrations. But eventually trade unions groups and reform organizations that vigorously defended the family wage and household were not open to women. Women who attempted to protect their families did so sporadically and with diminished political strength. Their 'desperate' defense of traditional rights through food riots 'became increasingly obsolescent politically.' When finally food riots were a completely-female activity, what they showed was weakness, not power.<sup>72</sup>

The equilibrium between the crowd and paternalist authority largely prevailed. But by the end of the century and after the French Revolution, a new and Jacobin undercurrent can be detected in the activities of 1795 and 1800-1. (A later chapter discusses the 1790s in some detail.) The gentry feared demonstrations. Their active imaginations conjured up images of invasion from across the channel. The crowd was to be repressed, not accommodated or appeased. The fact of 'riot' may tell us that the ancien regime was coming to an end. The safety net provided by the Poor Law made use of provisions of the Book of Orders less imperative and critical than before. To maintain property and power, the propertied elite had to use

the Poor Laws and charities to exhibit responsibility and reciprocity. The poor played their part through superficial acts of deference. The bread riots of 1795 were the last stand for the old 'moral economy.'<sup>73</sup>

The notion of the 'moral economy' involves ideology, customary market practices, a 'bundle' of beliefs about how food should be allocated in times of want, but fear of starvation and the collective memory of dearth should not be minimized in any recollection of food riots. The laboring population resented state authority which they saw as employed against them. The state did not defend the liberties of 'free-born Englishmen.' Instead it protected property and capital accumulation.<sup>74</sup>

Gray's poem, 'Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard' eloquently eulogized the passing of an older order and the introduction of the new. New values coalesced with those of an older era. This examination of chapbooks must consider what the eighteenth century retained from that older order and what new values can be found in the popular literature of chapbooks.

## Notes

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6. Ibid., p. 156. Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp. 626-8.
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9. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society," pp. 154-158, 162.
10. Ibid. pp. 158, 161, 164.
11. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society," p. 136; "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture," Journal of Social History, 7 (Summer, 1975): 397. See previous chapter for a full discussion of the work of the Hammonds.
12. The shifts and oscillations of 'property, ideology, and popular culture' along the patrician-plebeian fault line are revealed in a study of Westonbirt, Gloucestershire, in which the 'Great Tradition' represented patrician society while the 'Little Tradition' symbolized plebeian culture. See David Rollinson, "Property Ideology and Popular Culture in a Gloucestershire Village 1660-1740," appearing in Paul Slack, ed., Rebellion, Popular Protest, and the Social Order in Early Modern England, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Correspondence displayed his expectation of deference and gratitude for any generosity on his part. Ibid., pp. 38, 301, 302, 308-311, 315, 316.
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30. Lincoln Faller, Turned to Account: The forms and functions of criminal biography in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 113.
31. Joy Wiltenberg, Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany, (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992).

32. Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," pp. 199,200, 201. Germanic law operating during the Anglo-Saxon period sanctioned the rights of husbands but not wives. If the wife engaged in adultery, the husband could reject her. Only residence at a monastery would be permitted to a wife who claimed that her husband violated the marriage contract. After the Normans arrived, divorce was not allowed for remarriage, but separation was possible. But the need for support disadvantaged a wife who wanted to leave her husband. She might be separated but the husband could control her legal existence. The ecclesiastical courts governed the institution of marriage until 1807, pp. 202, 205, 206, 211, 213, 214.

33. Porter, English Society, pp. 143, 147, 149.

34. Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England: 1500-1800, Abridged Edition, (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1977); Randolph Trumbach, The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England (New York: Academic Press, 1978); Susan Staves, Married Women's Separate Property in England, 1660-1833, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990) p. 222. Alan Macfarlane, Marriage and Love in England, Modes of Reproduction, 1300-1800, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 122, 126, 127, 132, 136, 140; Thomas, "Double Standard," p. 206, noting that the double standard was not seriously applied by the lower classes.

35. Langford, op. cit., pp. 113, 114; G. J. Barker-Benfield, The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 190. Staves, Married Women's Property, p. 221; Susan Moller Okun, "Patriarchy and Married Women's Property," Eighteenth Century Studies 17 (Fall, 1983): 121 and ff, 127; Trumbach, The Rise of the Egalitarian Family, p. 81.

36. See immediately preceding footnote.

37. Christopher Hill, "Clarissa Harlowe and Her Times," Essays in Criticism, 5 (1955), p. 315; J. M. Golby and A. W. Purdue, The Civilization of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England, 1750-1900 (London: Batsford Academic and Educational, 1984), p. 34. Clarissa was published in eight installments. Novels of this type increasingly circulated in cheap editions and installments.

38. Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, (New York: Schocken Books, 1964); Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," Journal of the History of Ideas, (April, 1959): 204.

39. Hill, "Clarissa Harlowe," p. 316; Paul Langford, A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 112, attesting the importance of arranged marriages.

40. Staves, Married Women's Property, pp. 222, 224.

41. Hill, "Clarissa Harlowe," p. 321.



42. Hardwicke's Marriage Act was repealed in the early nineteenth century.
43. Susan Moller Okun, "Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family," Philosophy and Public Affairs, 11 (1981).
44. John Gills, For Better For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 16, 18-20; Christopher Lasch, "The Suppression of Clandestine Marriage in England: The Marriage Act of 1753," Salmagundi (Spring, 1974): 90.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-7, 76, 71. The separation of the bride from her family was a symbolic moment. The couple's peers came to the bride's home and accompanied them to the church. Women were not to look back as they left. The couple provided the festivities. In some communities, they gave alms to the poor, while in others the groom was supposed to provide food and drink. The crowded church ceremony seemed anti-climactic. But everyone crowded around to see the blessing of the ring—a magical event. pp. 58, 60, 61, 62, 68, 82.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 84, 123-127.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 93, 97, 96, 105.
48. In areas of early industrialization in the north and west, there was an increase in the number of illegitimate births. A study of three Warwickshire communities indicated that illegitimacy and pregnancy increased from 1750 to 1775 and then proceeded to decline slightly. In arable regions of the south and east, marriages were quickly arranged when girls became pregnant. *Ibid.*, p. 112; J. M. Martin, "Marriage and Economic Stress in the Felden of Warwickshire During the Eighteenth Century," Population Studies 31 (1977), p. 530. Gillis, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
49. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 53, Gillis, *op. cit.*, pp. 113, 116.
50. Alan Macfarlane, Marriage and Love, entire concluding chapter, "The Malthusian Marriage System in Perspective," pp. 321-344. Macfarlane's holistic perspective ignored differences between yeomen, artisans, and others as well as the factors of region, locale and time.
51. Natalie Zemon Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1965), p. 140, 151; Thompson, Customs in Common p. 499.
52. Davis, Society and Culture, pp. 144, 146, 150; Martin Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music and the 'Reform of Popular Culture,' in Early Modern England," Past and Present, 105 (1985): 81, 86, 90, 93. D. E. Underdown, p. 127.
53. Ingram, *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 96, 97, 100, 109, 113.
54. Early English examples come from urban or semi-urban areas ;in the south-east, central and north areas about 1750-8\1800 at markets and fairs, and, occasionally inns. At markets, the banns or proclamations surrounding marriage

might be read. The earliest record of a wife sale appears in 1553. Such sales usually took place in July, September, and November to March—related to the agricultural year or operation of fairs. Information about the motives of men who put their wives up for auction is scarce. But there are some statistics: the women were in their late teens or early 20s; the wives who were sold almost never ended up with a husband who was inferior to her. E. P. Thompson lectured on this subject to shocked American audiences. Thompson, Customs in Common, pp. 458-9, 461, 442; Samuel Menefee, Wives For Sale: An Ethnographic Study of British Popular Divorce, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 41.

55. Menefee, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 34, 46, 47.

56. *Ibid.*, 52, 55, 59, 63, 79, 114, 124, 128, 132; Thompson, Customs in Common, (New York: The New Press, 1991), pp. 400, 410, 413, 418, 442, 446.

57. Thompson, Customs in Common, p. 504; David Underdown, Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660, Oxford, 1985), see especially pp. 102-3; "The Taming of the Scold, the Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England," in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (eds.), Order and Disorder in Early Modern England, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 116-136.

58. J. A. Sharpe, "Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: The Church Courts at York," *Borthwick Papers* No. 58 (1980): 3, 4, 9, 15.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 25.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 27, 18.

61. Martin Ingram, pp. 50, 53, 57, 68, 69, 72; D. E. Underdown, "Taming of the Scold," p. . Ingram does not accept Underdown's argument that scolding cases increased after 1560.

62. Underdown, "Taming," pp. 119, 123, 124, 126. Distinctions between types of rural areas tell us more about epidemics of scolding. Smaller arable parishes with a strong manorial presence and open field agriculture manifested more cooperation than dairying and pasture areas. Pasture parishes and scattered settlements rather than village centers and individualistic farming. Some pasture areas such as the Wiltshire 'cheese country' had textile operations as well as dairying, people moved there for work. Hard times hit them severely. Conflict among neighbors was not as easily discussed in scattered settlements. In addition, more people in these areas were Puritans, and therefore they had a more rigorous concept of order than their counterparts in sheep-corn regions. Underdown, p. 126.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 136.

64. *Ibid.*, P. 121, 116.

65. Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 239, 251;

Watt, "Tom Jones and Clarissa," appearing in Fielding: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 106. 123. George Sherburn, "Fielding's Social Outlook," Philological Quarterly, 35 (January, 1956), pp. 1,2; John Richetti, "Representing an Under Class: Servants and Proletarians in Fielding and Smollett," in Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown, The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature, (New York and London: 1987), pp. 86, 90.

66. Fielding, Tom Jones, (London: Penguin Classics, 1966 and 1985), p 731.

67. Richetti, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

68. Thompson, Customs in Common, p. 298; Amartya Sen, Poverty and Famines, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); for two other discussions of the crowd see Dale Edward Williams, "Morals, Markets, and the English Crowd in 1766," Past and Present, 104 (1984): 56-73; Andrew Charlesworth and Adrian J., Randall, "Comment: Morals, Markets and the English Crowd in 1766," Past and Present, 114 (1987): 200-213.

69. Thompson, Customs in Common, pp. 269, 229; Malcolmson, Life and Labour, pp. 121, 122.

70. Customs in Common, pp. 188, 194, 199, 205; Life and Labour, pp. 115-6. The poor continued to depend upon a subsistence economy that was local and regional. Thompson credited the crowd for their restraint in times of dearth—1740, 11756, 1766, 1795, and 1800-1.

71. Customs in Common, pp. 212, 231, 224-5, 226-8, 229, 233. Life and Labour, p. 115.

72. Customs in Common, pp. 233, 312, 323, 332, 325-6. Thompson remarked that "these women seemed to have belonged to some pre-history of their sex before its Fall, and to have been unaware that they should have waited for some two hundred years for their Liberation," p. 234. Bohstedt, pp. 89, 90.

73. John Bohstedt, Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 122.

74. *Ibid.*, pp. 240, 250, 264, 294, 299, 301, 337. 338. Life and Labour, pp. 129, 130.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LITERACY, PRINT, AND READING

In order to identify the development and significance of chapbooks in eighteenth-century England, one must begin with oral culture at an earlier moment. For England, as well as other parts of Europe, moved fitfully from an oral culture to one which valued the written word. To trace this major shift from an oral to print culture, one must examine all the relevant facets of oral culture. From an overview of oral culture, this study turns to a survey of examples that were prevalent in the sixteenth and seventeenth century setting--proverbs, libelous verse or ballads, almanacs, the news, provincial press, the lady's magazine, and individual readers. This organizational scheme highlights very significant developments including the the Golden Age of almanacs that predated chapbooks.

Margaret Spufford's Small Books and Pleasant Histories traces the development of chapbooks to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From about 1500 to 1700, England shifted from being a 'late medieval peasant society' where reading and writing were the province of a very privileged few to a society where people, including the laboring poor, could enjoy the pleasures of reading and writing. Increasingly, the oral tradition--orally communicated ballads--lost acceptance. People might remember the words or they still memorized the lines of a ballad. But the imagination and the facility to recreate ballads and traditional stories was lost.<sup>1</sup>

Walter S. Ong studies the 'orality' of culture. Briefly put, Ong believes that writing is a technology that reorders the way people think--'writing restructures thought.' Literacy in advanced cultures 'tends to arrogate to itself supreme power for taking itself as normative for human expression and thought.' Writing becomes the norm, and the illiterate are viewed as deviant. The standards of high-

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technology culture obfuscate the earlier human dimension--how people thought before writing fundamentally altered thought. At the same time, these standards limit our understanding of the contribution of writing to human advancement.<sup>2</sup>

### The Oral Tradition

Assessing the significance of the oral tradition in the lives of ordinary people requires some speculative effort. Earlier historians pursued oral sources. Medieval chroniclers guardedly pursued and passed on eyewitness reports. Medieval topographers included in their material reports and legends about the places they visited. Antiquarians spent much time searching the countryside for the discoverable past. The humanist, John Leland, toured England in the 1530s and 1540s, taking down oral testimony from those he met. The 'common voice' that he established was the agreed-upon past as told to him in a specific locale. Although antiquarians or scholars had combed the countryside in search of a suitable lore, by the later seventeenth century, they generally disregarded rural memories and local stories. There was also a greater contempt for what could be culled from the popular culture. Daniel Defoe criss-crossed the countryside, but he did not do so to unearth the past and pass it on as scholarly truth. Although not a scholar, Defoe, like Leland before him, was suspicious of tradition but not contemptuous of it. The result, his Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain, described its people and places. Disdain for the oral tradition by the mid-seventeenth century also suggests that antiquarians preferred the more reliable written or printed word.<sup>3</sup>

Folk tales and the wisdom of experience passed from one generation to another. The oral tradition could not be censored in the same way as the printed word. Although no official censors resided in the parish in Elizabethan and Stuart times, ballads singers could be persecuted as vagrants because authorities considered their music to be irresponsible.<sup>4</sup>

We envision oral culture as fixed and unchanging, but much was exchanged between written and memorized forms. The material exchanged through speech and listening varied, although inertia may have been a significant feature of oral culture. Ballads, the representative of the oral tradition, have been preserved because they were written down and later printed. The ballad moved between countries and thereby creatively adapted to local and national requirements. Thus ballads had distinctive local and national flavors. Some observers suggest that women were the source of the ballads and that men wrote them down after listening to women. John Aubry remembered that when he was a child his nurse would sing to him the whole history of England from the Norman Conquest to the time of Charles I. Women would recite their tales within the home. Men would sing in public and had quasi-professional status. The father of John Clare, the peasant poet from Northamptonshire, was a ballad-singer.<sup>5</sup>

The folk tales of early modern England and those of Africa have one similarity: they both lack a sense of time. Chronology is clearly present in a story that is 'telescoped' for those who are prepared to hear it. Outsiders/observers focused on dates and found the stories hard to follow. Heroes of legends as well as those in later chapbooks usually have 'toponyms'--a name designating a place or region--attached to them.<sup>6</sup> The legendary figures, Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Southampton, who were the later heroes of so many printed and reprinted chapbooks, are good examples. Chapbooks repeated this feature from the oral tradition.

The 'early modern' time frame--from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, a period of transition from an oral culture to one of sporadic and incomplete literacy, demonstrates the evolution of English society from the oral tradition to a society increasingly dependent on the written word and the ability of people to read. His focus on the oral tradition--verse, rhymes, and proverbs, reaching to the ranks of the illiterate and to plebeian tastes--is critical to an understanding of chapbooks and reading.<sup>7</sup>

Communication remained fluid in the small world of neighborhoods and villages. Verse was critical to communication because of widespread illiteracy. Illiterate villagers could use their creative powers to compose verses to transmit essential information. Events and issues could generate many responses that became texts while remaining fluid. Rhymes, proverbs and verse could be shared. Written forms could be recited again as songs or speeches. Texts traveled circuitously from the oral to written realm and back again to the oral tradition and maintained a dialogue between author and reader. In neighborhoods and villages, ballads, verses, and proverbs described local events and situations. Messages were not 'etched-in-stone' depictions, but were a part of a fluid situation.<sup>8</sup>

Distortion and error certainly effected the circulation of news by word-of-mouth, but the depth of interest in political matters was not minimized by sporadic and crude methods of communication. Itinerant people, chapmen, pedlars and others, were 'brokers of news,' and those who routinely frequented London brought back information to the countryside. The written sources of news and information in the later Elizabethan and early Stuart years increasingly supplemented the usual exchange of news. Royal authorities discouraged rumor mongering and attempted to limit such seditious behavior to no avail.<sup>9</sup>

An agricultural society valued labor. Books and learning were despised as non-productive activities. Jokes abounded about the ignorant schoolmaster who tried to handle a flock of equally ignorant school children. Laborers and servants enjoyed a practical knowledge of customs and wisdom drawn from their experiences. They devised their own systems for record-keeping by committing their acquired knowledge and wisdom to memory.<sup>10</sup>

Age conferred on older people the mantle of authority. The minds of some elderly people shelved long-existing customs, village milestones, as well as legends and lore. 'They were brokers of those ancient legends, romances and tales' which gave them a way to 'reclaim the past, make sense of the present and interpret the future.' Old women were 'old chronicles,' with memories conditioned by gender and

age. Reportedly, old women stored the family history, old wives' tales, fairy tales, and nursery rhymes. Women would recite their tales within the home; men would sing the ballads in public.<sup>11</sup>

Historians repeat the time-honored cliché that old women preserved superstitious lore and secrets, but like most clichés, truth resides somewhere within or in-between. Old women told a six-year-old Samuel Bamford about ghosts and goblins, while the old men who resided at the same Manchester workhouse knew about battles and shipwrecks. Women told stories of magic and mischief, dispensed folk medicine in their earlier days, and combined charms and spells into their cures, household chores, and recipes. Fantastic tales of witches and fairies appealed to the young. The power of their stories and their accepted role in repeating them combined with ignorance may have conditioned older women to believe their homespun tales and tenaciously cling to their veracity.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the power of memory and the vitality of customs, there were songs and singing, signs, paintings, and illustrations. Singing was an integral part of work and entertainment. Ballads marked the moments of life—birth, marriage and death and expressed the collective experience and communal effort. Coarse woodcuts and prints featured in ballads and chapbooks were an anticipated part of the imagery that accompanied the written word.<sup>13</sup>

### **Early Modern England—'Soaked in Proverbs'**

Early modern England featured a varied and multi-faceted oral culture. For instance, the England of Elizabeth was said to be 'soaked in proverbs.'<sup>14</sup> A study of proverbs provides some insight into oral culture, for they were a critical part of spoken language. These 'wise saws and old sayings' old, well-used, pithy phrases summed up popular beliefs. As 'strategies for situation,' their timelessness gave them moral authority. The use of a proverb expressed an opinion or even disapproval in an indirect and less critical or threatening fashion. For people who



lived in a pre-literate world or those who could not rely on the skills and advantages of literacy, proverbs served as a 'mental handbook,' a store of phrases and hard-won experiences.<sup>15</sup>

The penchant for proverbs appeared during the energetic time of development of the English language. Their golden age was from about 1550 to the early seventeenth century. Many new proverbs were probably formed during the early modern period. Tilley's Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries lists 12,000 proverbs or proverbial sayings. After 1550, when cheap broadsides, broadsheets, and chapbooks were available, proverbs were offered in print. By the late seventeenth century, they lost favor with learned culture. Proverbs were now used only by the 'vulgar,' while the better sort considered both proverbs and metaphors to be unoriginal 'oral residue.'<sup>16</sup>

Trusted sayings or maxims that encapsulated most of life's trials and tribulations were learned from mothers and fathers and from old men and women. Preachers sprinkled proverbs into their sermons. They were painted on the sides of buildings and put into wall hangings, as they still are today. Adages adorned the walls of the elite as well as those of simpler country folk.<sup>17</sup>

Proverbs were not always adages of the popular culture, since many came from ancient authorities. Renaissance humanism and the educational offerings of grammar schools circulated literary notions into popular use. Many pithy phrases and wise sayings came from Old Testament sources: Proverbs, Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastics. But they were not pure folk wisdom arising simply from the struggles and souls of ordinary people, since they reflected a learned culture controlled by a small group of learned men. Does that account for their bias, if not outright hostility toward women? European proverbs rake women over the coals for their sharp tongues and nagging behavior, but at the same time they depicted women as weak and deceitful--a rather contradictory view.<sup>18</sup>

A full appreciation of proverbs, coupled with other historical sources, reveal much about plebeian thought and world view.

**"What appears to be 'the debris of many different systems of thought' when divorced from cultural context and viewed in isolation, takes on an internal logic when restored to its 'proper pasture and dwelling place' and related to the life experience of its users." <sup>19</sup>**

### **The Growth of Literacy**

**The elite of England always used writing for ecclesiastical, governmental or economic purposes. Even from the time of the Romans, literature depended on writing. In medieval times, the reading of Scripture was monopolized by a priesthood who read the Bible to the people frequently but in a non-vernacular language--Latin. From the late fifteenth century, there was pressure by the laity for Bible reading and devotional books. The printing industry grew rapidly in Europe because of the demand for devotional books, missals, psalters, Bibles. Customary law was synonymous with the Oral Tradition, but courts relied on written law since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The relevance of written documents and reports in an increasingly commercialized society also facilitated the growth of literacy.<sup>20</sup>**

**The impact of printing should not be over-estimated. First, books and manuscripts had circulated since medieval times; and second, government and the church attempted to censor and control the printed word long after technology had made it available. State controls lasted until the end of the seventeenth century. In addition, those with political clout controlled the presses. Almanacs featured political themes and ideas, but ballads had little political impact.<sup>21</sup>**

**The co-mingling of the oral tradition and the printed word can be dated to the Middle Ages. The strength of the printed word made an 'independent' folk tradition unlikely. Its standards made spelling uniform; vulgar expressions and regional dialects were 'outlawed.' The printed word increasingly reflected the values of educated people. The social elite read books that reinforced its superior social**

position. The literature served up for popular consumption reinforced an inferior position.<sup>22</sup>

The Protestant Reformation and its emphasis upon the Bible--the written word--produced a seminal change. Protestants, eager to spread the word made the written word accessible to a growing number of laity as well as the word spoken from the pulpit. Protestant ministers insisted that the instruction of parish children be grounded in the written word. In towns and villages, 'good' women were inspired to teach poor children to read. The effect of the Protestant Reformation also obliterated ceremonies and rituals that it associated with a superstitious medieval Catholicism.<sup>23</sup>

Early Modern England was a 'partially-literate society.' Those who were illiterate relied on those who were literate. Second, they used expressive devices such as proverbs and rhymes. Third, memory and rote learning allowed a largely illiterate person to teach someone else. Also, there was a wide range of intellectual activity within the same family. Shakespeare's father and daughter and Isaac Newton's father could not sign their names. In addition, nonliterate males could run businesses and be active in local politics.<sup>24</sup>

Movement toward literacy was sporadic and uneven or volatile, not a smooth path with unhalting steps. Literacy reached a high level in Tudor and Stuart England. R. D. Altick observed:

"it seems likely that in the Tudor and Stuart eras the ability to read was more democratically distributed among the English people than it would again be until at least the end of the eighteenth century."<sup>25</sup>

Lawrence Stone and Altick both alleged that the wide base of literacy in seventeenth-century England included the poor. David Cressy, a historian who has addressed the subject of literacy, noted that the 'surge in literacy' in Elizabethan England did not continue in the next century. Despite socio-economic change, improvement in the eighteenth century was ragged and subject to regional and

occupational variation. From 1750 on, the growth of literacy resulted from efforts of elders or parents to teach the next and younger generation--a time-honored method. Skills were not mastered in a set time frame or as part of a defined and observable activity. Learning was a life-long activity, interspersed with other tasks. Old men and old women ran informal schools, and paid school masters ran charity schools.<sup>26</sup>

The restoration of literacy was contemplated before the political Restoration, since clerical and governmental authorities hoped that literacy would encourage obedience. An uneven distribution of literacy continued an uneven distribution of wealth and power. Levelers hoped that literacy would make self help and education possible for the poor. But by the end of the seventeenth century, little improvement was made, due to the malaise about the founding and endowing of schools. England did not have a compulsory public school system until 1876. Some 'ragged' improvement can be measured for women, possibly due to Sunday schools, but the male rate for literacy remained steady. Those parishes experienced declining illiteracy had the following characteristics: first, day schools but not Sunday Schools; second, a high percentage of residents in nonagricultural work; third, a broader dispersion of land ownership and less money expended for poor relief. Parishes where illiteracy increased had higher poor relief bills, a larger agricultural work force and less available education.<sup>27</sup>

Illiteracy was related to gender and occupation. But by itself, economic necessity is not a compelling explanation. Overwhelming numbers of tradesmen and workers could carry on their tasks without learning to read. Those in commercialized agriculture improved their reading skills. Yeomen and those with specialized agricultural and craft skills could read whereas husbandmen could not. Differences also existed within the working class. Artisan could read, laborers and servants usually could not. A commercializing society promoted a higher level of literacy in towns, especially among tradesmen and among men. Statistics on literacy agree with seventeenth-century status rankings. Men of certain orders or

occupations can be grouped into 'three clusters:' first, the gentry and above plus the clergy; second, tradesmen and yeomen; and third, husbandmen and laborers, plus women. Clerics and professional men attained a level of literacy that ranked far and above the next and middle level. Husbandmen and even women ranked above laborers who were clearly ranked at the bottom of the ladder. The correlation between wealth and literacy is weaker, but is nevertheless present.<sup>28</sup> All studies of marriage registers since 1753-4 overwhelmingly indicate that the relationship of literacy and occupation was the single overriding factor. The 'coincidence' of economic growth and education can be measured between 1750 and 1850. There was a detectable improvement for both men and women after 1750.<sup>29</sup>

Education conferred social status. Compelling evidence confirms the expansion of education in the years from 1560 to 1640. Early seventeenth-century growth, whether it be from industry, trades, or better agricultural prices, meant growth in national income. A buoyant land market and an upsurge in rents and profits allowed many middle income families to give their male children a formal education.<sup>30</sup>

Ideology must be added to any complete evaluation of sixteenth and seventeenth century education. Puritan piety, zealotry, and belief cannot be easily exaggerated. Puritans waged war against ignorance and idleness; they were not idle in their pursuit of schools and foundations to support their cause. Earlier economic expansion was coupled with Puritan or Protestant zealotry. An educational decline set in after the Restoration. Education became the suspect. Because of a swing toward conservatism, formal education was preserved for the ranks of gentlemen. The gentry kept their children at home with tutors or at very few elite schools. The hostility of the gentry to free schools came from the competition which lower class children would bring to a tight job market. The gentry used education to maintain their vested interests and monopoly.<sup>31</sup>

In Small Books and Pleasant Histories, Spufford countered Roger Schofield's 'gloomy' interpretation. The surviving 1642 Protestation Returns that

required adult males to sign their name or put down their mark provide us with solid cross-sectional evidence for the seventeenth century, but Spufford insists that historians cast the evidence in negative terms. Her argument is similar to that postulated for the Industrial Revolution: Is the cup half empty or half full? The 30% of all men who could write and those who could read and the less-substantiated numbers of women readers encouraged printers and publishers in the 1660s. The 'proliferation of ephemera,' ballads, chapbooks, and almanacs whose sales increased dramatically in the 1600s could be attributed to the consuming events of that era.<sup>32</sup>

Motivation to learn to read required a 'structure of meaning' within the popular culture. One must understand the power of communication and its importance to ordinary people. Reading skills were more diffuse in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than has been previously supposed. There is no single and defining reason why England down to the village level became a literate society. Lacqueur offers a holistic perspective:

For all its maypoles and rough music. . .its ancient feasts and more ancient folkways, the popular culture of seventeenth and eighteenth century England was fundamentally literate and thus inexorably bound to the processes and culture of a society beyond the village community.<sup>33</sup>

Many villagers remained illiterate while their city cousins learned to read. Although John Clare was born in the closing years of the eighteenth century, 1793, he went to school about two to three months of the year because school was time taken away from farm work. His mother wanted her children to be spared the indignity of ignorance. His father, Parker Clare, a ballad singer, could read a little. The eighteenth-century 'poet from the barn,' Stephen Duck, taught himself from a textbook he purchased with his day laborer's wages.<sup>34</sup>

Even in Elizabethan London many women could sign their name. By 1590, 52% of London women displayed some ability to read. Women in the later Stuart London displayed a 'precocious' level of literacy. The nuances of this finding awaits

further research, but it appears that women born in London had higher levels of literacy than immigrants to the city and those who were born after 1660. In addition shopkeepers and women in needle work exhibited higher levels than servant women, laundry women or hawkers. In the seventeenth century, women allied to social and cultural elites were involved in a literate or high culture. Collectively, records indicate that women had the same high level of illiteracy as husbandmen and laborers. Their domestic roles did not require the ability to write. Even some women of genteel background could not sign their name. Although religious tracts made an appeal to all God's people, they cast women in a subordinate role. Ministers believed that their sensitive souls would have trouble with a heavier religious burden. Puritans extolled understanding the word. By 1650, women who led prayer sessions frightened ministers with the 'extremes' of their behavior. Zealous and enthusiastic, these women exceeded expectations and soon encountered the wrath of their ministers. Distrust of literate women can be seen in sermons.<sup>35</sup>

Women who cared for children and those who taught the alphabet were instrumental in the creation of a reading public. Some wives of day laborers and small craftsmen could be classified as school teachers or writing masters. Female school dames or teachers were not recorded in Episcopal records. Spufford's autobiographies also suggest that mothers taught their children to read.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the Protestant Reformation and the zeal of English Puritans, the power of the printing press so impacted popular culture that it contributed to the demise of regional and occupational dialects. Instead of learning ballads and songs from their elders, children learned from small books and broadsides. As memory became less important, the expressions and traditions that relied on retention were 'pauperized' or diminished. The elders of the village whose powerful memories kept customs and values alive in each generation lost their pre-eminent position. Women spoke in proverbs, nurtured the dialect of their birth in the young and

repeated fairy tales, spells and recipes. But the notion of 'old wives tales' soon denoted the behavior of superstitious old women who were best avoided.<sup>37</sup>

At best, literacy inexactly measures cultural levels. David Cressy 's view of literacy measurement sums it up:

**For even if literacy proves an ambivalent indicator of cultural attainment, statistics based on the ability to write none the less provide a subtle and sensitive marker of social differentiation.<sup>38</sup>**

### **Almanacs**

The popularity of almanacs predated chapbooks. Their millennial expectations and forecasts of gloom and doom continued in some chapbooks, particularly accounts of crimes or polemics outlining behavior associated with witchcraft. Although they are a significant genre in popular culture, they cannot be described as precursors of chapbooks, but their occasionally misogynistic content makes them a part of this story.

Bernard Capp, an authority on astrology and almanacs, spoke of their appeal as 'universal,' since a wide swath of the population took astrology seriously from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Most almanacs of Elizabethan and Stuart England counseled deference and obedience, thus making them useful to royal authorities. Both in England and on the continent, almanacs mixed the prognostications of astrologers with the millennial predictions of Protestants. The English almanac circulated longer than its French counterpart. The most frequent explanation for their decline is the impact of the Scientific Revolution. Their golden age was the period from 1640 to 1700, but they remained popular in England for about 350 years. The almanac and the Bible were found together in cottages. During the Civil War, the amount of speculation and argument reached 'unprecedented' levels, and the government gradually introduced some controls. But almanacs continued to speak of England as an 'elect' nation. They publicized



political issues when after 1660 censorship thwarted the political role of newspapers.<sup>39</sup>

Almanacs predicted disasters and impending doom. They endorsed England's social hierarchy. Despite their admonitions to the poor that hierarchy was divinely-established, they lamented the conditions of Tudor and Stuart England, criticizing landlords and 'covetous corn merchants.' They discouraged rebellion by servants and laborers and warned that women would seek to overturn the patriarchal family.<sup>40</sup>

The insults hurled at women 'belonged to an old tradition of crude jest-books, and other chapbooks.' A Jacobean almanac asked whether a man might be better off hanged than wed to a shrew. Women were 'naturally inferior' and woefully sinful creatures. Arcandum listed the fate of women predicated on the sign of the Zodiac: 'under Taurus they would be thieves, under Gemini liars, under Scorpio harlots, and Sagittarius witches.' Every year the almanac would forecast rebellions by women who would not 'observe the principle of reason.' Some women chose weak men for mates, since they could dominate them. The instability of the English Civil War produced fear and trepidation about family dissension. Poor Robin in 1665 referred to skimmingtons—a parade of shrews or adulterous women often with their husbands. Burlesque almanacs supported domestic abuse—of women against their women. They advocated the use of the cucking stool and the hanging of scolds. They featured 'misogynist extremes,' but serious writers proposed solutions for women who could be reformed. If love did not change her, then silencing her was an 'alternative remedy for silence cuts a shrew, worse than a sword.' In the first almanac written by women for women, Sarah Inner defended her sex boldly. For some women wrote poetry. In their ranks were Amazons and Queen Elizabeth. Despite her spirited defense of women, she still counseled against attempting to 'usurp the breeches.'<sup>41</sup>

Astrology explained the vagaries of life. It rationalized personal misfortune and relieved personal guilt. By the eighteenth-century, however, almanacs turned

to new topics and displayed only cursory references to astrology. Amusement and instruction aimed at middle-class women who had the leisure time to read.<sup>42</sup>

The English almanac represented the 'greatest triumph of journalism until modern times.' By the seventeenth century, scientists ignored its astrology. Educated people lost interest in astrology and almanacs, but among the lower classes faith in its platitudes and pronouncements persisted. The calendar, data about farming, and changing seasons as well as other miscellany available at a cheap price fulfilled some needs of rural people.<sup>43</sup>

### Popular History

The career of one 'midling' late seventeenth-century man, Nathaniel Crouch, illustrates the slow transformation within the previously 'undifferentiated matrix' of faction and fiction and the shifting expectations of the reading public. An author and a bookseller, Crouch appealed to readers like himself. His books sold for twelve pennies whereas chapbooks and almanacs usually sold for only six pence. His success in moving his readers away from chapbooks to books and from romance to history indicates that readers were ready to absorb serious and longer works. He believed that a knowledge of history was empowering. Crouch's books made history popular, and he managed to straddle the gap between two cultures. Were his popular histories the product of elite-sponsored hegemony? Perhaps it is not that simple. First, Crouch himself came from humble origins. Second, the popularity of his many books, including his many histories, can be attributed of the newly-acquired preferences of the midling group.<sup>44</sup>

### News

News traveled via the grapevine. Word of mouth was riddled with innuendo and rumor, but passing news via word of mouth avoided controversy and discussion

from written versions of events. Printed news was unevenly distributed in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. A series of censorship laws still interfered with loose exchange of information and tried to suppress the spreading of news, particularly opinions that earned the disapproval of monarchs. Cases of seditious behavior usually involved outbursts of temper, boastful remarks, exaggerated claims and dissenting opinions--sometimes made after a good round of drinking at the alehouse or tavern. By the seventeenth century, news circulated through a network of political clubs and coffee-houses that authorities saw as havens for seditious material. The networks of newsletters and private correspondence provided news for those who had contacts or could afford it. Although these networks largely excluded ordinary people, they were able to get some news from their personal contact with the more fortunate or privileged, pick up smatterings of events and reports of people through proclamations and announcements. They were good at eavesdropping, listening to snatches of conversations, and frequently heard what they were not supposed to hear.<sup>45</sup>

The printed word in the form of books, ballads, and newsletters was available in limited form in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What was verbally repeated often relied on the authority of the printed word. Despite the fixed nature of print, the oral transmission of news entered a grapevine circuit that gave it the proverbial 'life of its own.'<sup>46</sup> Proclamations, performances by civic musicians, and the posting of information in markets, public places and inns circulated official news. News circulated in an even cheaper format by the 1550s where it was put into song or ballad form on one side of a piece of paper known as a 'broadside,' or if on both sides of the paper known as a 'broadsheet.' During the Civil War, when censorship could not be enforced, a variety of newsbooks and pamphlets divulged the news. After 1660, a Licensing Act again imposed censorship, but a proliferation of pamphlets, manuscript newsletters and political newsbooks from both the Whig and Tory parties made censorship more difficult to enforce. Parliament did not

renew the Licensing Act when it expired in 1795.<sup>47</sup> A less restricted atmosphere permitted a broader circulation of news and opinion.

After the Civil War, a broader expression of opinion and exchange of ideas created a base for a national culture. Participation moved beyond and below the elite who had always managed to rule. The 'common voice' reflected communities that Leland visited shifted toward 'common sense' and 'common opinion.' One can justifiably speak of a 'public opinion' in eighteenth-century accommodated by the shift from the oral mode of communication to the printed word and printed news.<sup>48</sup>

### News and Libels

Fox's study retrieved ballads and rhymes that ended up in court. In the seventeenth century, Star Chamber proceedings, a royal prerogative court, frequently brought masters of ballads and rhymes into court. Indictments reveal songs, rhymes and letters by people who could not read; but they found someone who could write down their verses.<sup>49</sup>

'Everybody's business is everybody's else's business in a small town.' This contemporary, popular lyric describes the social climate of early modern England. Many villages resembled gossipy neighborhoods where it was 'continual and regular sport' to castigate one's neighbors by serving up rumors. Fox quoted one example of a couple talking in bed whose conversation was repeated afterwards by others. Spenser's Faerie Queene, reports that libel and slander were quite common. Plays were created around libelous lines.<sup>50</sup> People considered it their duty to be involved in other people's lives. The Puritan emphasis on morality did not weaken this resolve to be obsessed with jealousy, envy, greed, and intrigue.

The symbiotic coalescence of the oral culture and the printed word makes compartmentalization difficult. Some writers found performers, musicians, and ballad-singers to put their verses into music. Some used or copied existing sources. Libelers could take existing ballads and change the names. Libels

circulated locally, but they could end up in print and circulate as a broadside well beyond the originally-intended audience. They were loaded with sexual images.<sup>51</sup>

Libels from Jacobean Star Chamber records seem to be composed by people of humble birth but aimed at persons of higher station. The 'weak' had their own 'weapons.' Their darts and arrows were thrown from the alternative alehouse milieu--'(a) sanctuary for relative freedom of speech.' Some of the defamations subjected their victims to ridicule. Stress permeated the paternalism-deference equilibrium in early modern England and beyond. Not all relationships were reciprocal or obsequiously acquiescent. The existence of libels directed at betters by inferiors suggests that not everyone accepted the 'gulf of inequality.'<sup>52</sup>

### The Provincial Press

The eighteenth century provincial press catered to a small set of readers eager for news. People read papers voraciously in coffee houses and taverns. The weekly provincial paper was printed on market day when country people came to town. The local paper was a 'parasite' dependent upon London sources. There was little local news initially, since the grapevine still told people what they needed and wanted to know. Breaking news determined content. War, diplomacy, and crime--usually involving sexual acts--were popular topics. War so mesmerized readers that printers could publish a news summary in wartime. Controversial reports about local personalities could prompt demands for retraction and apologies. "Domestic occurrences reported stories of blood, sex, and sentimentality." Essays offered moral advice for female readers. Editors articulate their disdain for fashion and extravagance. Despite attempts to maintain a high moral tone, popular humorous treatments and bawdy accounts found their way into the paper.<sup>53</sup>

The country publisher appealed to readers who could not afford the London paper. Country printers appealed to 'all Persons of all Orders and either Sex,' and for 'all Degrees and Capacities.' Their goal was 'to do Justice to all Persons of all conditions and of either Sex.' The enthusiasm of the poorer classes meant that by

1701 the country newspaper was recognized as a 'poor man's diversion.' Advertisements grew with increased competition. Accounts of runaway apprentices and wives, highwaymen, horse races and cock-fights appeared alongside stern pronouncements of authority and moral advice columns. Increasingly more selective, newspapers no longer arbitrarily filled up columns. Printers who had earlier copied the style of newsletters now began to invent their own style.<sup>54</sup>

Later newspapers would seriously shape public opinion on events considered national in scope. But provincial papers encouraged reading among the poorer classes. With the increase in literacy and quest for knowledge among the general population, newspapers educated their readers.<sup>55</sup>

#### **Hawkers, Bawlers, and Mercuries--Women and the Printing Business**

Further evidence of the eroded position of women comes from a case study of women in London involved in an already capitalized business--printing in the 1720s. Women solidified their position in printing and newspapers in late seventeenth century London. Women who dominated the hawking of newspapers in late seventeenth-century London engaged in an exhaustive, dangerous, and often semi-legal activity. 'Mercury' was a gendered-term that identified women who either hawked pamphlets--sometimes forbidden works--or bought newspapers and then sold them from a shop or a network of hawkers. Between 1701 and 1740, women also dominated the underdeveloped trade in newspapers. They were involved in printing and bookselling as well as being part of cooperative groups of congers who together protected copyrights and engaged in projects that were not feasible for one printer.<sup>56</sup>

Engaged in some rather dangerous activity, women hawkers could easily find themselves accused either of vagrancy or prostitution. Their disreputable business did not earn them much money. Most mercuries did prison time, faced frequent police interrogations, and understood how to post bail. They circulated politically-

heretical material opposing organized religion, tracts supporting the freer circulation of information, and accounts of heretical republican persuasion. These political views were closer to a democratizing impulse and to the teachings of the Enlightenment.<sup>57</sup>

These women supported their families with whatever newspaper work or pamphleteering was available. The eclectic views of these urban radicals allowed them to move from one camp to another. Hawkers and mercuries disappeared by 1750, enjoying only temporary success. Their access to these trades came to them as wives, widows, or daughters. Only a few bought their way into the trade. Their shaky positions and tenure could not be strengthened or consolidated, and only a few women remained beyond 1750.<sup>58</sup>

### The Female Reader

Lawrence Stone depicted women as less productive and more taken with social pursuits and the reading of novels. The ephemeral notion of a consuming public has at its base the ideal of a woman who had time to read, given that she was increasingly freed of encumbering household chores. That image may not correspond with reality, since many women managed households and directed servants. In addition, ordinary women without servants may have aspired to read, but they had very little free and personal time. The image of the idle and impressionable young woman comes to us from those, like Samuel Johnson and others, who feared the influence of novels upon malleable younger women.<sup>59</sup> In addition, Alice Clark's treatise on the shift from a productive life to one centered on consumption and the cultivation of social graces provides a contrasting view that influences assessment of eighteenth-century women.

The developmental stages of periodicals that appealed to women readers provides a parallel focus on female images that can then be contrasted to those appearing in chapbooks. The overwhelming stress on domesticity in the periodicals

corresponds to the ideal of the domesticated woman in chapbooks in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. The expanding number of women's magazines indicated an increasing interest in women readers. Some of the magazines functioned only briefly, but from about 1690 to 1780 many individuals tried to create a 'woman's magazine.'<sup>60</sup>

In her study of the 'construction of femininity in the early periodical'—the subtitle of her book, Kathryn Shevelov distinguished three developments in eighteenth-century periodicals that appealed to women readers. Her periodization for periodicals can be later compared to chapbooks. The first stage in the 1690s ushered in the 'gender-specialized periodical.' In the second stage at about mid-century, the enhanced involvement of women in the culture of print brought forth women as editors—including Eliza Haywood. Finally, in the third stage, the magazine pre-empted the essay-periodical, continued to stress the biological differences between the sexes, and added the ideological component emphasizing women's innate interest in the home.<sup>61</sup>

Without adequate circulation statistics, we infer that women readers had the time and money to purchase the magazine. Some magazines were the brainchild of women who financed them and wrote their stories. Improvements in transportation and communication made it possible for a circulating magazine to reach a wider subscribing public. The Ladies Diary started by Robert Tipper in 1704 included a calendar, mathematical teasers, and questions, as well as comments on cooking and medicine, beauty ideas, plus moral tales. In 1711, Tipper added a new monthly substitute for the diary with enigmas, anagrams, mathematical problems, songs, and pieces of prose or verse. These short subjects along with pieces of short fiction would be included in ladies magazines for the remainder of the century.<sup>62</sup>

footnote order changed

Between 1690 and 1713, Richard Steele established the Tatler and Joseph Addison the Spectator, both of which challenged female readers. Their solicitations of women and their correspondence created both a reflective and responsive



dialogue. Their 'learning' mode included the inculcation of appropriate behavior that was normally the province of conduct books. These strategies allowed the periodicals to create a foundation of trust that later provided a platform for some of the arguments for feminism. Such a participatory mode did not continue. By the mid-eighteenth century and beyond, these periodicals abandoned their receptiveness to women's letters. Some were printed, but they were used within an essay format, subject to the purposes of the essayist.<sup>63</sup>

Richard Steele's use of the term 'tattler' for the title of his magazine redefined that term in a less pejorative way. The ideal of idle chatter or 'tattle' by women around the tea table was derided in the early eighteenth century by a misogynistic chorus. A chapbook analyzed in a later chapter, *Fulminations and Polemics*, continued that sentiment at the end of the century.<sup>64</sup>

The major difference between early eighteenth century chapbooks and periodicals was the involvement of women readers in the pages of the periodicals, producing a dialogue through essays and the voluminous letters of women readers. Chapbooks were cheap, ephemeral literature designed to titillate the reader, offer the latest report of a crime, display a dialogue of discord, and later the themes of sensibility. In the earlier years, chapbooks continued some of the interactive discourse between husband and wife found in ballads, a form of marital or conjugal communication, but they did not promote an interaction between the reader and the writer or printer.

The 'fluidity of exchange' between the women as consumers and the editors as producers in a reciprocal flow of discourse resulted in a discourse of shared values. Such an exchange created the perception that the women as readers/participants shared equal roles with men. This sense of equality dissolved during the course of the eighteenth century.<sup>65</sup>

Earlier periodical editors saw themselves as progressive and enlightened reformers expressing concerns about the condition of women. In their somewhat contradictory campaign for the female education, they championed a suitable

education for a wife and mother. Despite contradictory notions of what was best for women, solicitation of women's writings and use of their complaining letters created a receptive format. Having created a separate space by and for women, the magazines provided an education within and about the home.<sup>65</sup>

Increasingly, some magazines imitating the Tatler and Spectator emphasized domestic responsibilities. The editors envisioned women as having 'softer mental capacities' and a lack of critical attentiveness to serious subjects. All material was couched in terms of managing a household and a family. The earlier format of reciprocity through solicited material and letters was no longer critical. The Female Spectator, (1744-1746), edited by Eliza Haywood, featured journalistic persona or 'fictional' writers. It advocated equality and education for women and provided a moral guide as well as entertainment. It reinforced the notion of difference between men and women by including moral essays as well as fiction and a section for reader's letters. It printed readers' letters, many of which were fiction and essays, thus encouraging the direct participation of readers in the life of the magazine. Readers offered their own view of stories and the editor often responded. The 'mental training' provided by the Spectator reinforced the separate spheres and the life of domesticity and duty.<sup>67</sup>

Beyond even the 'ameliorated course of instruction in quasi-scientific subjects' available at mid-century, the later emphasis on femininity was overwhelming. Even the earlier mode of light instruction on serious topics was abandoned. The domesticated content of magazines focused on a 'world of women' now included recipes, needlework patterns, and fashions.<sup>68</sup>

The Lady's Magazine, launched in 1770, benefited from previous attempts to provide women with reading material. Totally devoted to edification and education, it offered variety with beauty hints, recipes, free embroidery patterns and music, serialized stories, and verse. Fiction, published in installments, was a major feature. Although it did not solicit contributions, the Lady's Magazine was immediately deluged with unsolicited offerings. Despite the cavalier treatment of

the readers' contributions, the strength of the magazine was its 'unabashed amateurism.' Its publication scheme guaranteed a publication run of eighty years. Others copied its format and ran the risk of accusations of plagiarism. With nearly identical content, The New Lady's Magazine competed with its rival for about nine years.<sup>69</sup>

The magazine allowed a woman to delve into the feminine sphere that historians or students of literature classify as a privatized, domesticated space. Women in these scenarios were defined only by their relationship to their men. Gender and class were mixed. Women were 'perceived as the ornaments of a class, a class defined by its patterns of consumption rather than production.' Literary forms served the hegemonic triumph of the middle classes. Many feminist literary critics consider the novel to be the instrument through which this class described and celebrated its political and social hegemony.<sup>70</sup> Women and Print Culture emphasized the narrowing themes of femininity that dominated the periodicals by the later years of the eighteenth century. Despite the increased numbers of women who visibly participated in a culture of print, that culture increasingly represented women as enclosed or confined to the home. The plethora of chapbooks devoted to similar themes that surfaced in the second half and especially in the later decades of the eighteenth century provide a corresponding confirmation of the argument that women readers were subjected to narrowing and confining themes of femininity.

### Individual Readers--the Reading Public

Since we have precious few direct sources that provide us with details about the reading public in the eighteenth century, we must use available indirect sources. The records of the Clay, firm, booksellers in Daventry, Rugby, Lutterworth and Warwick indicate that fifty servants made seventy purchases between 1746 and 1784. There is no record of their purchase of chapbooks, since they involved small cash sums, not an extension of credit. About 30% of purchases were for self-

improvement guides such as "The Complete Letter Writer," "Polite English Secretary," "The Complete Servant Maid," and "Madame Johnson's Present: or, Every Young Woman's Companion, in useful and universal knowledge (with) some plain and necessary directions to maid-servants in general, and several useful tables." The second most popular purchase was religious material: the Bible, Book of Common Prayer, and dissenting works. After about 1770, servants purchased entertaining material, the third category of purchases. There was also some interest in the stage and in dramas.<sup>71</sup>

Some illustrative evidence about individual readers comes the diary of Thomas Turner, a mercer, reveals his reading choices and those of his wife, Peggy. The seventy books mentioned would have been acquired about mid-century and beyond. Inspired by religious discipline, reading was apparently a daily activity in the Turner household, undertaken after a grueling day of work. Reading aloud was a frequent practice. Visiting friends and acquaintances shared in the reading of sermons and other religious activities and borrowed their books. The diary also reveals the practice of 'intermittent reading'--reading in spurts, reading a text over the course of several months. Apparently the Turners read Clarissa--Richardson's novel, published in installments. Over a span of about six months, Peggy Turner read parts of the novel to her husband while he worked at other chores.<sup>72</sup>

Evidence from the household of Samuel Richardson, the author of Clarissa and other well-known novels, indicates that the Turner and Richardson households shared some reading habits. Both families emphasized religious discipline in their reading selections, both enjoyed social or communal reading, and both households had individuals perusing books intermittently.<sup>73</sup>

A 'library revolution' occurred beginning in the 1740s with the increase in the number of circulating libraries that predominantly lent fiction. Technological advancement did not foster this development. Instead changing tastes, the growth of income of the propertied classes, the decline of restrictive legislation, and the end of monopolies encouraged the expansion of books and the books trades.

Publishers and printers and even retailers became more specialized and enhanced their product and their facilities.<sup>74</sup> The expansion of the chapbook trade, particularly in London during the final decades of the eighteenth century, can be seen as a corollary of this development.

### Conclusion

Three basic reasons have been advanced to explain why an individual might be motivated to read: first, because membership in a social group demanded it; second, because it was a skill required for a particular occupation; and third, because reading conferred upward mobility. Sheer curiosity is absent from the list. A working-class woman, a comfortable middle to upper class woman might be curious about the world beyond her family and community or because of sheer boredom. There were other, less materialistic reasons to pursue reading. Commercial development accelerated the push to literacy, but the middle class consumed and devoured printed material and prized education. Sharp class divisions meant that the working class did not thrive and consume at the same rate as the middle class. In Europe generally and England particularly, literacy increased in the eighteenth century.<sup>75</sup>

The oral tradition and the printed word coexisted. The growing working class used narratives and an accumulated list of anecdotes from the oral tradition as well as a wider circulation of chapbooks, almanacs, and broadsides. A sizable number of workers learned to read and write in less formal settings. Charity schools in urban areas for workers and the poor were designed to control the poor and prepare them to accept their fate. Societies such as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge were agents of social control.<sup>76</sup>

A 'cultural revolution' promoted a mass culture. Improvements for the middle class gave them more material things and more leisure. Reading became a private a leisured activity. The working class had less access to the printed word, certainly

less time to read, and less time to keep records and write letters. Recreation was active, collective and public. The material they read also differed. The growth of literacy paralleled but was dependent upon the emerging changes in the social structure.<sup>77</sup>

For women born in the eighteenth century, wealth became an important determinant of literacy. The fathers of literate daughters were clearly wealthier than illiterate fathers. There is reason to believe that paternal illiteracy was an obstacle to formal schooling, whereas maternal literacy was positively correlated to schooling.<sup>78</sup>

A chapter that has congealed so many details about literacy requires perspective. Hence this summation of facts and the arguments set forth. A caveat should be added. A scholar of reading, Richard Altick cautioned that mere ability to read did not constitute a reading habit. Cressy noted the uneven distribution of literacy, clearly sporadic and fitful improvement, and the existence of 'pockets' of literacy.<sup>79</sup> Nor should we imply our own intellectual habits backwards to a past that was not saturated with print and media images.

First, the higher levels of literacy Elizabethan and Stuart England that were not regained until after 1800 are a startling fact. What does this fact mean for chapbooks. Did they serve as primers?

The second significant element is Protestant or Puritan zealotry. The Protestant obsession with the Word required reading by members of the faith. Puritans hoped that education and reading could religiously channel life experiences. Education, however, broadens horizons rather than narrowing them. The proverbial genie was out of the bottle. The decline in literacy rates after the Restoration occurred in a more conservative political climate, and there was schooling available only for the children of the gentry and a few other families. Third, Socio-economic circumstances were correlated with literacy. But how true and transferable is this to the eighteenth century and what does this imply for the literacy level of women?

Social and familial expectations--the roles expected of parents, neighbors, relatives, and friends--meant that some children learned to read. The Puritan emphasis on the Word, the requirement that Protestants be familiar with the Bible, and a sense of parental, familial and neighborly responsibility--these ideological-tinged conditions speak well for some sense of community. Without state involvement in education--a later comer in England, and with only an informal structure for schooling, the English level of literacy might instead be seen as surprising high.

Fourth, is the eighteenth century a clearly transitional period? Chapbooks, newspapers, ballads, and political- and religiously-oriented pamphlets were the reading material for the middle and lower classes--for the poor.

Fifth, the strength of the oral tradition cannot be discounted. In 1957 Richard Hoggart questioned the validity of historical treatments of working class life or popular culture. His observations of his twentieth-century relatives should make historians cautious about extrapolations for earlier centuries. Historians and others borrow his themes from The Uses of Literacy. Building on his own childhood experiences, Hoggart emphasized the 'resilience of older cultural forms and of the oral tradition.' Writing about his grandparents, he emphasized the give and take among family members, friends and the community-at-large that molded mental acuity. In the many towns and villages of England during Hoggart's youth, 'children grew up in the company of grandparents and elderly neighbors whose mental resources were still largely dependent on the spoken word.'<sup>80</sup> Messages aimed at the popular classes could be met with a mixture of distraction, defiance, and defensiveness. As Roger Chartier has so aptly stated: "Hoggart's work reminds us of the reader's creative autonomy in the face of the machineries that try to control him." His concerns and caveats caution us about the exclamations and suppositions for the eighteenth century.

And finally, the early periodical ideologized a growing conception of women as happily restricted to the home, maintaining a 'separate but equal' role. Despite

the emergence of women as editors of journals, like Eliza Haywood, the work of women in print culture did not alter the ideological construction and perception of females as different in degree from men and as possessing a specialized biological role.<sup>81</sup> This finding by Shevelov for periodicals significantly corroborates the analysis in this study of chapbooks, especially for the later decades of the eighteenth century. Two caveats must be added. Chapbooks that printed ballads or were derived from the ballad tradition featuring bickering, give and take or dialogue between a man and woman continued throughout the eighteenth century. Two later chapters confirm a significant departure from these earlier chapbooks derived from the oral and ballad tradition. The chapter discussing the 'culture of sensibility' or code of delicacy surveys the many chapbooks following the theme of fragile and dependent females, particularly after about 1750. In addition, another chapter on Fulminations and Polemics surveys chapbooks whose themes expounded at about 1790 significantly depart from the pervasive, omniscient ideal of domestic happiness.



## Notes

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3. D. R. Woolf, "The 'Common Voice,' History, Folklore, and Oral Tradition in Early Modern England," Past and Present, #120 (1988): 28-30, 51, 52.
4. David Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order, Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 227. Woolf, "The 'Common Voice,'" p. 37.
5. Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order, pp. 221-223.
6. Woolf, "The 'Common Voice,'" p. 31.
7. Adam Peter Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture and its Development in Early Modern England, University of Cambridge dissertation, 1992. Fox, "Popular verses and their readership in the early seventeenth century," in Raven, James, and Helen Small, Naomi Tadmor, The Practice and Representation of Reading, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Fox used legal records in his survey of the extent of news, rumor, and gossip involved in sedition.
8. Fox, "Popular Verses and their Readership," pp. 127-131; Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture, pp. 338, 339.
9. Fox, "Rumor, News, and Popular Public Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England," The Historical Journal, 40 #3 (1997): 602, 603, 620.
10. Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture, pp. 9, 10, 11.
11. Fox, Ibid., pp. 23-25, 28; Thomas, "Age and Authority in Early Modern England," Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. LXII, pp. 205-248.

12. is this Aspects of Oral Culture

13. Protestants had a good case of iconophobia. They destroyed much which adorned medieval churches. In this way they removed much imagery which sustained the past oral culture while at the same time they insisted on the integrity and centrality of the written word in the Bible. Fox, *Aspects*, pp. 15, 17, 19.

14. James Obelkevich, "Proverbs and Social History," appearing in Peter Burke and Roy Porter, eds., The Social History of Language. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968). p. 55.

15. Fox, *Aspects of Oral Culture*, pp. 44, 127.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 55-57, 52, 152, 128. The number of presently-active proverbs is about 1,000.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 143, 144, 146, 149.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 133-135.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

20. Fox, *Aspects of Oral Culture*, pp.335, 336; Thomas, "Meaning of Literacy," 111; Lawrence Stone, "Literacy and Education in England, 1640-1900," Past and Present, 42 (1969): 76-79. David Cressy, "Literacy in Context," p. 306.

21. Bernard Capp, Astrology and the Popular Press, English Almanacs, 1500-1800, (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1979), p 67; Keith Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England," in Baumann, The Written Word, pp. 119, 120.

22. Thomas, "Meaning of Literacy," p. 121; Porter article in Baumann book (comment in notes about citing Burke)

23. Fox, *Aspects*, pp. 331-334; Stone, p. 77.

24. Thomas, "Meaning of Literacy," pp. 102-104. Cressy, "Literacy in Context," p. 306.

25. Richard D. Altick, The English Common Reader, A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 18, 79. Cressy, p. "Literacy in Context," p. 314.

26. Stone, "Literacy and Education," p. 79; Vincent, Literacy and Popular Culture, pp. 53, 54. David Cressy does not dispute findings of an earlier 'educational revolution,' but he believes that the implications of this development are overstated. Cressy, "Literacy in Context," p. 314. 44. Thomas Lacqueur, "The Cultural Origins of Popular Literacy in England, 1500-1800," Oxford Review of Education, 2,3 (1976), pp. 255.

27 Harvey J. Graff, The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987). p. 221, 235-237. Charity schools did not make a difference. There had been a drop in the number of rural teachers. Existing educational facilities were inadequate for a growing population, particularly from 1750 to 1775. More schools did open in the last three decades of the century.

28. Thomas, "Meaning of Literacy," pp. 117-111; Cressy, pp. 1223-1124 David Vincent, Literacy and Popular Culture, England, 1750-1850, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 53. Cressy, pp. 118, 119, 122, 124, 125, 127, 141.

29. Thomas Lacqueur, "The Cultural Origins of Popular Literacy in England, 1500-1800," Oxford Review of Education, 2, 3 (1976), pp. 255, 256.

30 Stone, "The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640," Past and Present, 23 (July, 1964): 69-71.

31. Ibid., 71-75. Stone described these institutions as a 'prolonged male puberty rite with almost all the characteristics associated with such rites among primitive people.'

32. Spufford, Small Books and Pleasant Histories, pp. 22-23, 32. Vincent, Literacy and Popular Culture, p. 10; Spufford, "First Steps in literacy: the reading and writing experiences of the humblest seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographers," Social History, 4 (October, 1979): 414, 428-432.

33. Lacqueur, "Cultural Origins," p. 255.

34. Ibid., p. 260.

35. Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order, pp. 128, 147; Spufford, Small Books, pp. 35, 46, 48. Cressy, "Literacy in Context," p. 306.

36. Spufford, Small Books, 16; Spufford, "Spiritual Autobiographies," Graff source, p. 149.

37. Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture, pp. 34, 337-339, 344.
38. Cressy, "Literacy in Context," p. 306.
39. Bernard Capp, Astrology and the Popular Press, English Almanacs, 1500-1800, (London and Boston, Faber and Faber, 1979), pp. 31, 67, 71, 77-8, 82, 100-101; Harrison, The Common People, pp. 168, 177-9.
40. Capp, Astrology and the Popular Press, pp. 102, 104, 105, 112.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-126.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 238, 240, 245-248.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 274, 278, 281, 292.
44. Robert Mayer, "Nathaniel Crouch, Bookseller and Author: Historiography and Cultural Power in late Seventeenth-Century England," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 27 (1993-1994); Mayer, History and the Early English Novel: Matters of Fact from Bacon to Defoe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 132-136; J. Paul Hunter, Before Novels: The Cultural Context of Eighteenth Century English Fiction, (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1990), p. 214. Crouch wanted books to move young people away from songs and romances. His books lauded human uniqueness and experience. Crouch's Wonder Series promoted strange and unusual events—a phenomenon which was part of the age's fascination with the fabulous or marvelous.
45. Richard Cust, "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-England," Past and Present, 112 (August, 1986): 65; Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture, p. 255. Fox, *Ibid.*, p. 261-262, 298. G. A. Cranfield, The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700-1760, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962. p. 234; Cranfield, *Ibid.*, p. 4; Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture, p. 273, 294.
46. Fox, *ibid.*, p. 278.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 269-270; 276;
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 328-329.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 54, 55, 58.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 211-213.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 66, 67, 68, 71, 83.

52. Fox, "Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England," Past and Present, 145 (November, 1994): 72, 77, 83. Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture, p. 298. Footnote includes the above quotation.

53. Cranfield, Provincial Press, pp. 12, 155, 25, 33, 177; Content and appearance of the provincial papers differed by 1760 from their earlier days about 1700. Printers who came from London to make a living passed on their businesses within their families. Few printers had professional experience, although some were booksellers. A perusal of their papers doesn't indicate much difference between those with and without professional qualifications. Most papers first emerged in the south and southwest where the bulk of the population lived. Only as the Industrial Revolution proceeded and the population concentrated in the north and Midlands would newspapers flourish there. pp. 48-50. Although provincial papers which attempted to mold readers' opinions through the dissemination of the latest London opinion invited prosecution, the authorities focused on the London press and left the provincial press to the scrutiny of local government. Subsequent attempts at repression failed, but country publishers remained wry of prosecution. The papers also featured reports on trade, available foodstuffs, causes of death in London, essays, correspondence, and entertainment. pp. 29-31, 71, 75, 83, 85 101, 108, 142, 145, 151, 166.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 184-185, 189, 204-206; 210, 213, 223, 260, 261. Advertisements solicited buyers for available property, mentioned lost cattle and runaway apprentices, and announced the skills and services of craftsmen, provincial lending libraries, booksellers, and other educational offerings.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 260, 273.

56. Margaret Hunt, "Hawkers, Bawlers, and Mercuries, Women and the London Press in the Early Enlightenment," Women and History (1984): 41-47. Women were printers and booksellers, part of cooperative groups of congers who protected copyrights and engaged in projects which were not feasible for one printer.

57. Hunt, *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47, 62.

58. Hunt, *Ibid.*, pp. 44-5, 56, 63. We can only speculate as to why they disappeared. Perhaps the competitive struggle in printing and the newspaper business reached beyond their resources. But their position in the London printing business in the 170s and beyond testifies to their willingness to be involved in questionable activities in order to support themselves and their families.

59. Naomi Tadmor, "In the even my wife read to me', women, reading and household life in the eighteenth century," appearing in Raven, James, Helen Small

and Tadmor, eds., The Practice and Representation of Reading in the Eighteenth Century, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 162-165.

60. Hunter, p. 75.

61. Kathryn Shevelow, Women and Print Culture: The construction of femininity in the early periodical, (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 167.

62. Ros Ballaster, Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 46, 51, 52, 63.

63. Shevelow, Women and Print Culture, pp. 3, 4, 24, 92.

64. "The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping," printed and sold by J. Evans, London. J. Evans functioned as a printer in London according to Maxted.

65. Shevelow, Women and Print Culture, p. 115.

66. Ibid., pp. 52, 53, 147, 148.

67. Ballaster, Seductive Forms, pp. 54-59; Shevelow, Women and Print Culture, pp. 167-174. Early issues discussed unhappy marriages. One pounded the moral lesson of a young fourteen-year-old female who was left pregnant by a young man. Her parents, however, had compounded her problem by neglecting to provide her with the proper instruction in life.

68. Ibid., p. 186-190.

69. Alison Adburgham, Women and Print Culture, Women and Women's Magazines from the Restoration to the Accession of Victoria, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1972), pp. 150, 128, 142, 148. Others copied the format and rank the risk of accusations of plagiarism. With nearly-identical content, The New Lady's Magazine competed with its rival for about nine years. The Lady's Magazine featured royal, in a sense prefacing or beginning the later and continuing obsession with the lives of the English royal family which is still typical for English and American women's magazines. There was some tension between the tendency to identify and portray royal women as classical if remote objects of beauty and femininity and a contradictory need to display them and their families as extensions of every family. Ballaster, Seductive Forms, p. 72.

70. Ballaster, Ibid., p. 74.

71. Jan Fergus, "Provincial Servants' reading in the late eighteenth century," appearing in Raven, James, and Helen Small, Naomi Tadmor, eds. The Practice

and Representation of Reading in England, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 202, 215, 216.

72. Tadmor, "In the even my wife read to me," pp. 165-170.

73. Ibid., p. 173, 174.

74. James Raven, "From promotion to proscription: arrangements for reading and eighteenth century libraries," appearing in Raven, et. al., The Practice and Representation of Reading, p. 176., 178. Commercial lending libraries grew from about 20 in London in 1760 to 200 by 1800, and 1,500 by 1821, with 100,000 individuals using their services regularly and perhaps another 100,000 patrons being intermittently served. Fees secured entrance to private rooms, where one could browse, skim or read in solitary fashion. But at the same time, they sponsored readings and provided a climate which encouraged stimulating conversations.

75. Roger S. Schofield, "The Dimensions of illiteracy in England, 1750-1850," appearing in Harvey J. Graff, Literacy and Social Development in the West: A Reader, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): 201, 202, 203, 206, 212. Harvey J. Graff, The Legacies of Literacy, (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 230.

76. Ibid., pp. 237-241.

77. Ibid., pp. 240, 245, 246. The 'cultural revolution' thesis was proposed by J. H. Plumb.

78. Ibid., p. 250.

79. Altick, The English Common Reader, p. 18, Cressy, "Literacy in Context," p. 306.

80 Vincent, Literacy and Popular Culture, pp. 270, 271; Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy, Aspects of working class life, with special references to publications and entertainments, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1976). Chartier, Roger, "Texts, Printing, Readings," appearing in The New Cultural History, Lynn Hunt, (ed), (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 172, 173.

81. Shevelov, Women and Print Culture, pp. 2, 4.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CHAPBOOKS

Building upon material from the introductory chapter, this chapter outlines descriptive material that frames this discussion and presents disparate but essential elements in any comprehensive treatment of chapbooks.

The religious dimension permeated early chapbooks and were certainly a significant part of the Pepys collection. In 1795, the bluestocking-turned-philanthropist, Hannah More, and her circle of zealous reformers began writing and printing the Cheap Repository Tracts, a set of chapbooks based on Biblical themes and containing heavy moral lessons. They offered an antidote, deliberately intending to dull the passions unleashed by the events of the 1790s and return humble readers to an acquiescent and pious demeanor.

The section on French chapbooks reviews the research on the bibliothèque bleue, the chapbooks with identical and easily-recognizable blue covers. Two important points seem to dominate the discussions. First, the research has emphasized the veillée--the gathering of the village community, especially in the winter. Well-known stories were read while those present pursued their necessary, routine tasks. Second, the Catholic Counter-Reformation reinducted the role of the church in determining what was proper literature--even for the menu peuple, the little people, or ordinary people.

The varied themes of English chapbooks can be interpreted as responding to market demand. Chapbooks built on old themes, but also pursued new ones. Medieval romances and prophecies based on supernatural themes led the list. The appeal of medieval romances cannot be denied, since they endure even in the present.



Stories which captivated medieval readers became 'romantic' fiction for eighteenth century common people and even for children. Shortened prose accounts replaced the rhyming couplets which were fashionable during the medieval period. Most studies of chapbooks cite the popularity of Guy of Warwick . Its origin may have been a thirteenth or fourteenth-century legend which was later transformed into a ballad and then a chapbook. Tales which flourished on the continent were liberally borrowed by chapbook printers and authors. Faust was borrowed from the Germans. Valentine and Orson came from the French. <sup>1</sup>

Neuberg suggests that eighteenth-century chapbooks preserved the tradition of fairy tales. A collection issued under the Dicey imprint was one of the earliest eighteenth century publications of these fairy tales. Educated people enjoyed both medieval romances and fairy tales until the middle of the seventeenth century. But after that time such stories became the province of children. <sup>2</sup>

### Secular Prophecy and 'Practical' Religion

Prophecy and magic were appealing themes in a superstitious and fatalistic society. Roughly 1/3 of all chapbooks featured stories that emphasized supernatural and religious themes. Printers altered and adapted religious themes to satisfy their readers. They changed the text and used ambiguous language and titles to capture the broadest readership. The message had to be pruned to available space—8 to 24 pages. Given spatial limitations, 'only the bones of religious doctrine remained.' and the statements included carried an 'air of finality.'<sup>3</sup>

The recounting of dreams and fortune-telling were routine. Antiquity could be harnessed to current and local predictions in legitimate ways. The stories of Mother Bunch, Mother Shipton, the Cheshire prophet, Robert Nixon, and others came from

traditional folklore. Their appeal tells us about popular religious beliefs, but also about the coexistence of the sacred and the secular in popular culture.<sup>4</sup>

Nixon and Mother Shipton were secular prophets whose grievances concerned ordinary people; their diatribe excoriated those who oppressed the poor. The code in these chapbooks resembles that of seventeenth-century Levellers. The circulation of this moral code might have constituted a 'collective morality,' that reinforced the notion of community, particularly in the Elizabethan period. In addition, the judgment of chapbooks could come down on those who did not conform with the force of a 'literary charivari.'<sup>5</sup>

Chapbooks promoted a 'practical' religion that served ordinary people. Religious chapbooks or those of prophecy asserted that all were equal before God. This was their sole political message.<sup>6</sup> They promised equality in the hereafter. But in order to obtain eternal life, one must first endure life's vicissitudes. That required some willingness to conform as well as forbearance. Prophetic chapbooks, like almanacs before them, preached a conservative message and acceptance of one's lot. The ordinary mortal did not categorically divide the sacred from the secular. Lists produced by those who published chapbooks did not always make such a distinction. Valenze noted that when a 'second Age of Prophecy' occurred at the end of the eighteenth century, the wide circulation of chapbooks and their messages might have made the 'peculiar religious practices' of ordinary people possible. The idea of the elect and the damned that was disseminated in an earlier century by Puritans and later by Methodists did not find a receptive audience.<sup>7</sup>

## The Historic Past

Chapbooks that detailed a 'historical' past appealed to male egos and fantasies with themes of toughness, resilience, violence, and adventure. Kings conversed with their subjects and kept mistresses who hailed from the common folk.<sup>8</sup> Advertisements promised that chapbooks were for the reader's enjoyment. The obvious exceptions to this premise were religious chapbooks and the detailed polemics on witchcraft. Spufford reminds us that 'chapbooks are crude, unsubtle, earthy, uncompassionate, but full of movement and violence, sex, vivid imagery and better or worse jokes.'<sup>9</sup>

In addition to rags-to-riches stories, chapbooks could include an element of carnival or role reversal--the commoner takes the place of the king. Southern European countries as well as France used carnival much more extensively than England. English Protestants did not appreciate its subtleties. Through their dicta and sober pronouncements, they made their disapproval clear and refused to countenance the 'world turned upside down.'

Chapbook versions of the Robin Hood story allow Robin--a larger-than-life legend--to be subdued. When Thomas Hickathrift became a rich man, he became a friend of the man who had victimized him. But the pent-up pressures in a rigidly-hierarchical society made role reversal attractive. It appeared in English popular literature.<sup>10</sup>

## The Trade

English authorities censored books. Ecclesiastical authorities maintained control by licensing books. There was also a long-standing monopoly practiced by the Stationers' Company which controlled what its members wrote. The Star

Chamber, established by Henry VII in 1586 regulated the number of master printers until 1641. Censorship, however, could not be efficiently enforced. Many illegal presses functioned in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Broadsides and pamphlets aided the cause of the Restoration through printing partnerships; the circulation of heretical political views occurred on the English stage. In 1640, 65% of all book escaped the eyes of the censors. Although Cromwell's Commonwealth suppressed information, printing fulfilled a need and a thriving street literature was born.<sup>11</sup>

The itinerant life of the elusive peddler is not easy to trace. The fate of these hawkers and peddlers wasn't enviable. Many peddlers and chapmen sold over-priced goods. They were good drinkers and some took advantage of innocent and young women. The peddler endured the hazards of his disoriented life. Roads were almost nonexistent. Robbers on the road and the underworld in urban places were constant threats. Fewer English peddlers had ties to the rural village of their birth than those who strayed far from home on the continent. In poor mountainous regions of France, peddlers left their impoverished homes and ventured forth to peddle their goods, but they returned to the areas of their birth.<sup>12</sup>

From approximately 1550, chapmen circulated ballads in the countryside. Little books were later added to their stock of ballads. Prior to 1640, no publishers advertised their stock to country chapmen. But chapbook expansion began to match the sale of almanacs and ballads by the mid-seventeenth century. The growth of literacy enhanced the potential market. By the eighteenth-century, chapbooks were preferred. Did an increasing supply of paper and the growth of that industry encourage the chapbook phenomenon?<sup>13</sup> Although earlier chapbooks were short, those of the later years of the eighteenth century some were longer than 100 pages.

At the end of the seventeenth century, there were about 10,000 chapmen on the road. Chapbooks constituted an important item in the chapman's inventory--in his pack. <sup>14</sup> Increasingly, Parliament discussed these wanderers, since objections to their activities inspired fund-raising and lobbying for legislation targeting their activities. The Printing Act expired in 1695. Until that time, London men, the Ballad Partners, controlled the publication of chapbooks and ballads. Printers did not market their wares in the better London districts. They set up shop in areas which were compatible with the routes of chapmen. In 1676-7 and 1685, hawkers, petty chapmen and peddlers petitioned authorities for a licensing act which would give them some protection. In 1691-2, craftsmen such as cutlers, drapers, glass-sellers, haberdashers, and hosiers complained that the increase of petty chapmen cut into their trade. Those who argued against limiting the trading rading of hawkers and peddlers to markets and fairs stressed first their intimidating physical size and, second, the fact that wholesalers could well be hurt by the proposed restrictions. An act of 1693 sanctioned the expansion of the chapbook market beyond the city limits of London. <sup>15</sup>

By 1696-7, an Act of Parliament licensed hawkers, petty chapmen and peddlers whether they were traveling on foot or with beasts of burden. Increasingly during the seventeenth century, printing came to provincial towns. This eased the burden of the chapmen; it allowed local residents to pick up these little books from a local printers rather than wait for an itinerant chapman. The licensing procedure mandated by the 1696-7 law gives us evidence of regional networks. Numerous chapmen resided in the Home Counties, but peddlers brought their wares to distant and hard-to-reach places. Stalls available in market towns also attracted them.

They travelled in the surrounding countryside during the other days of the week. <sup>16</sup>

But 'what we cannot do. . . is to close the argument convincingly by showing the humble reader actually in possession of ballads and chapbooks.' Since probate appraisers did not think that such cheap items deserved to be recorded, our evidence is sparse. We have instructive evidence that Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan influenced the 'humble reader.' In the seventeenth century, chapbooks circulated among squatters or cotters, or beneath the levels of the yeomanry. Before 1765, convenanting cotters had books and pamphlets which they had acquired from chapmen. Although they used such books for religious purposes, the small books also facilitated reading. <sup>17</sup>

The biographer of John Pitts, a nineteenth-century printer, asserted that chapbooks became more popular than ballads. Chapbooks offered alternatives. Humble people did not have to get their reading material from religious organizations who wanted to feed them a steady diet of pious verse and prose. Chivalric romances and bawdy stories had earlier reached different audiences. Bawdy stories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries promoted 'heroes' of the urban and rural poor. Chivalric romances of medieval origin had earlier circulated among the gentry. But Peter Burke cautions that by 1650 chivalric romances lost their appeal for the gentry. Hence such stories as *Guy of Warwick* and *Bevis of Southampton* now were printed only as chapbooks. Spufford believes that such stories reached a wider audience at a much earlier date--about 1570. <sup>18</sup>

Females enjoyed ribald stories and the merry books. Women from rural environments and laboring families enjoyed such stories in centuries 'long before the great Victorian watershed of propriety.' Evidence obtainable from ecclesiastical court records provides more than adequate evidence of female use and enjoyment of this type of humor. <sup>19</sup>

Increasing numbers of these cheaply-printed and -designed books were printed in the 1600s or 1650s, or, depending on whom you are quoting, the 1680s. Their publishers listed them as 'small godlies, small merries, and pleasant histories.' The chapbooks for sale before 1640 featured jests and chivalric romances. The popular romances included Guy and Bevis, as quote above, plus the History of Valentine and Orson.<sup>20</sup>

Given the acknowledged disappearance of the small books, researchers must draw conclusions from a small and limited sample. Teresa Watt did not uncover many 'penny-sized books' for the Elizabethan period. Very few chapbooks dated before the 1640s survive. Country people had access to very little paper. What came into their possession was quickly used up, pasted on walls, or used in privies. Paper could also light pipes and line pastry dishes.<sup>21</sup>

### The Eighteenth Century and Consumer Demand

The growth of consumer demand in the eighteenth century compelled printers and publishers to diversify their output and specializing as the century wore on. In addition to reading material such as ballads and chapbooks, they printed trading cards, stationary, and commercial directories. Political magazines and joke books abounded, since the printers sought to capitalize on the politics of the moment. The validity of what was said does not seem to have troubled them.<sup>22</sup> This finding is especially relevant to a study of other printed material such as chapbooks. Did those accounts purporting to be true descriptions of real people bear any resemblance to the truth? The growth of printing as an industry was vital to what J. H. Plumb called 'the commercialization of leisure.' Chapbooks and pamphlets, etc. were not the only offspring of the marriage of printing and consumer

demand. Newspapers were succinct digests of information and their advertisements promoted all types of leisure.<sup>23</sup>

Printing partnerships also increased chapbook circulation. The Dacey family started the warehouses of Bow Church Yard and Aldermary Church Yard in London and provided much of this reading material. The marriage of John Cluer to Elizabeth Dacey in about 1703 established what would become a printing dynasty. The Dacey imprint dominated the eighteenth-century chapbook trade. Cluer set up shop in Cheapside, London, at the low lower part of the Bow Church Yard at Maiden-head. Exactly when the Daceys set up shop in London is not easily determined. He specialized in ballads, music, maps, primers, and possibly some art work. His brother-in-law, William Dacey, printed a variety of items at his shop at St. Ives, Huntingdonshire but later moved to Northampton. At both locations, he printed newspapers. He hired chapmen to deliver newspapers, solicit advertisements and sell their usual fare--chapbooks, ballads, maps, and music sheets. John Cluer continued to operate at Bow Lane until his death in 1728, although the imprint became Bow-Churchyard. In 1736, William Dacey took charge of this print shop and began a partnership with his son, Cluer Dacey. Although they published no original work, They printed stories with a variety of themes. In 1762, Cluer Dacey moved to Aldermary Church Yard and, in 1764, he began a partnership with Richard Marshall. The Bow-Lane, Bow-Churchyard and Aldermary Churchyard imprint constituted a 'principal factory' for eighteenth century chapbooks. 'The Daceys were in no sense pioneers, neither were they without competitors.' Their success has not been fully recognized. They appealed to a mass-market which they satiated with cheap publications. They set the pace and the tone for the printing business. By 1800, the Dacey family varied their business activities away from a reliance on chapbooks. During the period from about 1775-1800, many other printers challenged and



mented the Dicey near-monopoly. Titles from the Sabine family firm appear prominently in John Boswell's Collection housed at the Houghton Library at Harvard University. The Sabines published chapbooks and broadsides and they, together with the Diceys and the Sympson family, appear to have monopolized the chapbook business.<sup>24</sup>

During the course of the eighteenth century, more chapbooks were published in the provinces. This made life easier for the chapman and his clients. John White established the first firm in Newcastle in 1711. He wanted a variety of 'cheap literature' which could be sold by 'peripatetic vendors.' White and two other printers, Thomas Saint and Thomas Angus, made Newcastle a significant center for the production and distribution of chapbooks. The work of Thomas Gent in York also made that city a thriving center for the trade. John Cheney and the Rusher family put the town of Banbury in Oxfordshire on the chapbook map. These printing firms as well as others also printed books for children. The following lists ranks towns by the time that chapbooks were first printed: London, Newcastle, York, Birmingham, Northampton, Sheffield, Worcester, Twekesbury, Leicester, Banbury, Nottingham, Carlisle, Coventry, Manchester, Durham, Whitehaven, Bath, and Stockton.<sup>25</sup>

John Marshall ingeniously kept the chapbook and ballad market alive by getting into juvenile books. From a new Cheapside location, Marshall put out educational books for children which were written by Mrs. Sarah Trimmer, the acknowledged founder of Sunday Schools. But chapbooks would soon become the staple used by religious proselytizers such as Hannah More. By 1780, 'religious organizations virtually took over the whole chapbook and ballad market like an unofficial Ministry of Propaganda, in order to avert the prospect of revolution in Britain.'<sup>26</sup>

### **'Penny Merriments:' The Pepys Collection**

More chapbooks in the Pepys collection from the seventeenth century were tied to historical themes than the *bibliothèque bleue*. Uniquely-English myths and stories in the Pepys collection probably circulated in oral form before being printed in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Seventeenth century chapbooks, most of which were written anonymously, did not offer accurate renditions of the historical past. The editor of the three-volume edition of the Pepys collection observed that the term, 'history,' carried a 'looser' connotation in the seventeenth century. A fuller elaboration on the term, 'history,' follows in a later chapter. In addition to coverage of actual events and authentic persons, histories covered legend and myth. Many stories featured a rags-to-riches theme. Humble people rose in wealth, rank, and power through circumstances, physical exertion, and forbearance. Priests and friars appeared frequently, and the tone and text denoted anti-clerical messages. Although political topics were routinely covered in almanacs, chapbooks did not ordinarily feature such volatile material. There were references to the Reformation, Charles I, the Civil War, and the Restoration in the Pepys collection. Also included were Henry II, Henry VII, Guy of Warwick, Robin Hood, and the royal mistresses, Jane Shore and Fair Rosamond--both of whom met an unhappy and untimely end. Although Queen Elizabeth wasn't an eminent figure in any of the Pepys chapbooks, later ones featured her much-discussed relationship with the Earl of Essex.<sup>27</sup>

A small specialist trade in the 'penny books' or 'penny chapbooks' did not exist until the late Jacobean or early Carolinian period. Publishers of ballads produced 'penny merriments' in the late 1620s and 1630s. 'Penny merriments' were abridged but illustrated versions of chivalric tales cherished by prosperous people since the early sixteenth century. They were designed to reach the same audience served by the broadside ballad. During the Commonwealth, 1640-1660, jest books and ballads were suppressed. Ballad publishers were so 'distracted' that they did not offer a new line of chapbooks. By the Restoration, the public was tired of dogmatic pronouncements and yearned for the type of literature available in chapbooks. Then a specialist trade of these small books developed alongside the distribution of ballads. The size of the potential market increased with the growth of literacy.<sup>28</sup>

Realizing their identical format, he combined them into groups of 'penny merriments' and 'penny godlinesses.' The term 'penny chapbooks' or 'penny books' describes their small size, despite the fact that they cost about twopence.<sup>29</sup>

Courtship chapbooks in the Pepys' collection show young girls meeting their friends in public places. But most young girls, even those with a very rigid upbringing, made some decisions for themselves. Chapbooks reflect the range of behaviors which could be observed in seventeenth-century society. A correlation between eighteenth-century courtship patterns and the behavior of chapbook characters or polemical statements within them must be deduced from available evidence.<sup>30</sup>

An examination of the content of the few pre-1640 books reveals the strategies employed by seventeenth-century London stationers. They put three types of books up for sale. 'Penny merriments' were old favorites which had been around in ballad form since the advent of printing. 'Penny miscellanies' represented

an unapologetic and unorthodox assortment of the sacred and profane—aphorisms, street humor, common sense, and anti-female humor. They offered 'tidy thought packages.' Their special power came from their use of numbers which still fascinated and awed the seventeenth-century mind. Mixed with these features was practical advice and admonitions about living a Christian life. Most of the English reading public had moderate religious tendencies and preferred religious advice coupled with lighter sayings and jesting remarks.<sup>31</sup>

The 'penny godlinesses' projected Christian advice, usually in the form of a monologue of father to son. They targeted the moderately-religious and counseled a religious, not an irreligious life. They did not reflect a given religious dogma or one interpretation over another. Two examples illustrate their features: first, 'Keep within compasse: or the worthy legacy of a wise father to his beloved sonne,' 1619; and second, 'The mothers counsell, or live within compasse. Being the last will and testament to her dearest daughter,' 1623, 1630. A woodcut on the title page of a 'male' account includes a compass and hours of the clock which are set out in verse. The 'female' account included the same woodcut of a compass, but also featured the feminine virtues—chastity, humility, temperance, and beauty.<sup>32</sup> These examples illustrate gender orientation.

Spufford compared the bibliothèque bleue studied by Robert Mandrou with the Pepys' collection, although she cautioned that small religious books and practical guides were not well represented in the Pepys' collection. Both collections included religious themes, burlesques, parodies, secular song-books and themes reflecting the 'popular culture.' More historical themes, historical novels, medieval chivalric romances, and stories with a hero are found in the English group. More French chapbooks focused on crime, the theater, and card games. 'The English chapbooks, however, unreal they were, made a much greater

attempt to adjust to social reality than the French.' Fewer English chapbooks displayed a belief in fairies. Both French and English publishers sold chapbooks with themes that contradicted Christian teachings.<sup>33</sup>

Religious chapbooks in the Pepys collection emphasized sin and repentance. Death was a prominent theme in 20% of the godly books. Death was a constant in seventeenth-century life. Fire and plague took their toll in the 1600s. The chapbooks displayed 'chronic religious anxiety' and an unabashed use of fear as a 'lever.' About 20% of the godlies tried to diminish fear and doubt by offering comforting messages. Some of the godly books were religious manuals or catechisms. But most godly books projected a dismal message.<sup>34</sup>

Elizabethan ballads emphasized religious themes: sin, repentance, and the benefits of conversion--with a decidedly antipapal and Protestant bias. By the seventeenth century, the Protestant cause was secure enough that Protestant content and therefore meaning could be taken for granted. The themes of individual salvation and behavior now assumed greater importance. The oral tradition and the ballads could be used on occasions such as a bridesale. Books featured a literal form and one without accompanying music which had been a part of the oral tradition.<sup>35</sup> Could this be an indication of increased literacy in the countryside?

Chapbooks were ephemeral. The world of the seventeenth century reader and popular fiction still remains elusive. Spufford's dilemma was that she could not determine with any precision who the humble readers of chapbooks were. Her research indicated that chapbooks provided entertainment; but had no political or educational function, beyond their utility in promoting literacy.<sup>36</sup>

### The Boswells' Collection

This study of chapbooks makes ample use of the 'Boswell Collection' at the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The Houghton collection was the result of the combined efforts of John Boswell, the noted biographer and friend of Dr. Johnson, and his son. They may themselves have attempted to put together a group of chapbooks that was representative as well as 'curious.' Most of the chapbooks were probably collected in 1763 at the Bow Churchyard, the address of the Dicey firm that printed extensive numbers of stories into chapbook form. The Boswells' collection probably contains its share of 'pirated' stories. Printers routinely and with haste borrowed the offerings of their rivals and printed them as quickly as their presses could run.<sup>37</sup>

These chapbooks are of a varied lot. "They attempted much the same task of meeting of all degrees of the popular taste that now devolves upon the Sunday editor." The period's humor and the remnants of the oral repertoire made them popular with their readers, and therefore profitable for the printers. Elements of human nature gave them their distinctive yet human flavor:

There still remains the love of things heroic and marvelous, the delight in matters odd, supernatural or exciting curiosity, the morbid interest in the lives and doings of the criminal classes; all of course, more or less altered to fit a different human environment.<sup>38</sup>

### French Chapbooks

The French bibliothèque bleue presented humble readers with a version of history. "It was literature produced in conformity with the tastes, dreams, fears and aspirations of the plebs (*italicized*), and it made up the inner universe of

(our) ancestors." The religious and moral content of the books was as important as the task of making them palatable for intended readers. For they could offend the mood of moral and religious piety which resulted from the Catholic Counter Reformation.<sup>39</sup> French editors and English printers had similar readers in mind and similar ideas about how to reach them.

These cheap booklets had identical blue covers, but their length varied. They were repeatedly redone and reprinted and featured coarse wood-cuts and mismatched type. The editors took material from learned sources, edited it, and printed it a mode which made it palatable to the targeted reading public. Printers produced the bibliothèque bleue in volume; peddlers hawked them at cheap prices. The chapman's network and routes were well fixed by the eighteenth century. The types of stories published in this format appealed throughout all parts of France—south as well as north. The Troyes printers established the format in the early seventeenth century, but this publishing scheme reached its zenith from the beginning of Louis XIV's majority to the French Revolution. The books were eventually printed in Rouen, Caen, Limoges and Avignon.<sup>40</sup>

The editors liberally borrowed diverse texts from others nations, other genres and periods, for more privileged readers. The works emphasizing religious piety, devotions, and practice came from texts of the Catholic Counter Reformation. The stories chosen for publication had a long life as classics before they became part of this series. They consciously adopted a strategy to adapt them to fit the reading skills and cultural requirements of the buying public. They cut out parts of texts, took out entire chapters while adding new ones, added summaries and titles, and simplified the word order of the sentences.<sup>41</sup>

The editors set up the narratives in ways which suggest that they expected the stories to be read aloud. Each chapter began with a brief summation of

previous action. There was much repetition, which much like that used in church, lulled the listeners and helped to create mental images in their minds. The legends which became staples in the bibliothèque bleue series resembled the old tales which had previously been memorized and recited when it was appropriate.<sup>42</sup>

One French historian, Robert Mandrou asserts that fairy tales and religious stories offered in the series kept the peasant from focusing on real problems. The series depicted humankind as a 'slave of passion, driven by astrological forces and weird mixtures of the four humor and four elements.' Villagers may have accepted the stories which came their way. This distinct literature let the minds of the masses wonder, but also served as an alternative form of class consciousness. Despite the efforts of Mandrou, Genevieve Bolleme, and others to define popular culture in eighteenth-century France, Darnton believes that they have largely failed in this task. They did define the limits of the Enlightenment which functioned at a different level than the stories circulated in this series. Natalie Zemon Davis, while acknowledging Mandrou's skepticism and sense of limitations, seems convinced that the real story is the reaction of the reader to what is read.<sup>43</sup>

The booklets were read aloud around the fireside as well as in some of the more progressive schools of the late eighteenth century. These public readings featured books or texts that readers already understood. The veillée was an evening shared by villagers in a barn where all huddled for warmth; it was usually held in the winter months beginning with All Saints' Day and concluding in springtime at Ash Wednesday. "Women sewed and men repaired tools." The text read at these occasions was familiar. The audience needed visible landmarks such as titles, summaries, and woodcuts. 'Rudimentary readers' accepted rough wood-cuts and old jumbled print. Some had memorized the words while others recognized what was being read. The repetition of words,



themes, and images of the text made memorization and recall easier. This form of popular reading differed from that of more literate audiences. The material did not challenge readers, instead it maintained a 'closed' circuit.' <sup>44</sup>

But what other settings were there for reading in early modern France? Artisans and workers, some of whom traveled and others who lived in cities, did not gather together at an evening reading. They may have read at family occasions or feast days. Artisans and workers may have read instructions in shops. Reading was also likely among workers and family helpers in print shops. Sources for both England and France indicate that taverns were suitable places for reading. Natalie Zemon Davis supposes that women read amongst themselves. <sup>45</sup>

This evidence emphasizes the little people and their routine life in French villages. It creates the image of a restricted environment with communal readings of material sanctioned by the clergy for that purpose. The evidence for England likewise indicates a limited repertoire of themes and certainly religious convictions in many chapbooks. But even before the increasingly commercial climate of the eighteenth century, the freedom of printers and their hunger for profit prevailed. Authors/printers could offer salacious reading material or themes devoid of religious import, but nonetheless desired by readers. The absence of effective controls created a climate in which diverse works could be circulated. But one of the themes of this study is that post-1750 chapbooks featured images of women that corresponded to a stereotypical ideal--the fragile, dependent, marginalized female.

### The Cheap Repository Tracts

The Cheap Repository Tracts, printed from 1795 to 1798 are a subject to themselves and are not systematically analyzed here. The Bluestocking turned

philanthropist, Mrs. Hannah More, and her circle of reformers sponsored and wrote them. Reformers and philanthropists saw the poor as an irreverent lot whose conceptions and perceptions were shaped ill-advisedly and even immorally by existing popular literature. To bridge this obvious gap between the elite and the popular culture, More proposed a single set of norms—Christian values which would transgress this cultural divide. “They were the result of a bold attempt to bridge the gulf which separated the pious and improving books which the uneducated poor were expected to read from the loose ballads which they not only read, but sang aloud in the alehouses.” The stories featured ordinary trades and occupations: craftsmen, farmers, laborers, servants, the deviant—including beggars, vagrants, and finally the only occupation solely identified with women—prostitutes. This solo representation of women as sinful creatures is an inescapable and glaring comment on eighteenth-century values and must be incorporated into any analysis of gender roles.<sup>46</sup>

Hannah More kept with company the literary icon, Dr. Johnson, but also knew the Diceys, and therefore knew about chapbooks. She designed her chapbooks after studying the form and content of secular chapbooks. When Marshall became the heir to the Dickey warehouse, More persuaded him to print the Cheap Repository Tracts in London; they were also printed in Bath by Samuel Hazard.<sup>47</sup> The authors, notably Hannah More who wrote more than fifty herself, intended for the books to compete with the secular chapbooks which she considered to be repulsive. Religiously-oriented themes appealed to the poor. Some were Biblical parables, while others depicted daily routines. The Tracts were intended as an antidote to the outpouring of revolutionary sentiments which came in the wake of the French Revolution. A biographer of John Pitts, a ballad printer who revived the ballad trade in the nineteenth century, described the authors as 'sincere' and 'genuinely

motivated.' A biographer of Miss More described efforts associated with the Tracts as an 'antidote to Tom Paine.' Her power coupled with her writing ability assured a successful run for the Tracts. Their popularity outdid the expectations of those who sponsored and promoted them. In early 1795, during the first year of their printing, over 300,000 were sold; by July of that year, 700,000, and by March of 1796, over two million were in circulation. But despite much effort and prayerful expectations, the Cheap Repository Tracts did not compete with the appeal of chapbooks. <sup>48</sup>

More spared no effort to make her project a success. Her tracts resembled chapbooks and were available at the same cheap prices. She enlisted her relatives--including her sisters and other friends, in her efforts to prevent the poor from getting the wrong ideas. When she asked hawkers and sellers to attend an event in Bath where she pitched her ideas, they, being market-driven sales people, accommodated her by wearing suitable attire. She enlisted the support of the Bath printer, Hazard, an evangelical like herself, but a printer without the acumen of the Dicey family and firm. More's dealings with John Marshall did not end pleasantly. Once their association ended, Marshall printed tracts which did not measure up to her standards. <sup>49</sup>

But despite her unending enthusiasm, no new Cheap Repository Tracts were printed after 1798. Only five new titles appeared that year. After an auspicious beginning in 1795, the enthusiasm of contributors waned. Perhaps the most significant reason why new stories and publications did not appear after 1798 was the condition of Hannah More herself. She was a woman of advanced years who had to parcel out her energy and time. She wrote books, continued to run the Mendip Schools which she founded, and supervised the publication of these cheap but available books. This proved to be difficult, even for a person of her reputed stamina and unassailable conviction. <sup>50</sup>

The Cheap Repository Tracts served as an antidote to the revolutionary currents of the 1790s. Although the upper classes previously manifested an insularity and pervasive lack of concern for the fate of the poor among them, they were awakened from a seeming slumber by the tone, events, and rhetoric of the French Revolution. Hence they were initially prepared to support More's endeavors. The stories also appealed to the middle classes and the gentry. William Cobbett, upon returning to England, beat a path to Hannah More's door and reported the success of the Tracts in North America. More's biographer, G. Jones, reported that contemporaries assumed that the Tracts became a staple item in the libraries of cottagers.<sup>51</sup> Such reports are not verifiable. But once these tracts were no longer printed on a monthly schedule, others took up the cause—for example, the Religious Tract Society.

Leslie Shepard, an authority on ballad and street literature, first suggested that these assembled philanthropists constituted an unofficial propaganda apparatus. But these writers could not be so cavalierly dismissed as sanctimonious upholders of order. They did want poor people to learn to read at the same time. Others, reacting to the French Revolution and its aftermath, wanted to crush their aspirations.<sup>52</sup> People who appear to be well-intentioned and altruistically-oriented can harbor conflicting motivations and goals or have their hard work serve other purposes.

Shepard assumed that the expanded scope of reading material available to the middle classes did increase chapbook circulation to poor people. They could not hold their finger in the dike and resist the tide of social and economic change.

'Naturally one cannot deny the tedium of endless moralizing, particularly in some of the derivative nineteenth-century tracts, which staled by repetition. Religious faith was fighting a losing battle against the progressive impoverishment of working people during the great urban and industrial

developments of the nineteenth century.'<sup>53</sup>

The revolutions of the eighteenth century signaled the end of the dominant motif and way of life for English people--the pastoral and bucolic countryside.

Ballad and chapbooks were staples of the popular culture for two centuries. During the closing years of the eighteenth century, the Cheap Repository Tracts, propelled by religious evangelism, competed with the customary melodies of ballads and assorted chapbooks. Neuberg credited Hannah More with the prediction that chapbooks predated the radical pamphlets which were later written by members of the English working class. Facility with reading made possible by the wider range of literature available in the eighteenth century allowed working people to be more discriminate in sorting political messages in the nineteenth century. But changing circumstances in the nineteenth century, particularly the growth of literacy, rekindled an interest in ballads. Printers such as John Pitts and James Catnach happily and profitably reintroduced this older genre. Wider and faster distribution networks coupled with reduced printing costs made this development possible. But others attribute the decline of chapbooks to the growth of cheap periodicals. Daniel Defoe observed the decline of the network of peddlers in 1745. Peddlers rather than foraging into the countryside set up shops in market towns or sold their wares in village markets.<sup>54</sup>

## Notes

1. Victor Neuberg, The Penny Histories, A study of chapbooks for young readers, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 7-10, 12, 13; R. H. Cunningham, Amusing Prose Chap-Books, Chiefly of Last Century, (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Company, 1889), p. 7. G. J. Barker-Benfield, The Culture of Sensibility, Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago), p. 219.
2. Neuberg, The Penny Histories, pp. 15, 16, 17.
3. Deborah Valenze, "Prophecy and Popular Literature in Eighteenth Century England," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 28 (1978), pp. 79, 82.
4. Neuberg, The Penny Histories, p. 15.
5. Valenze, "Prophecy and Popular Literature," pp. 76, 77-85.
6. Ibid, p. 80.
7. Ibid., p. 81.
8. Bernard Capp, Astrology and the Popular Press, English Almanacs, 1500-1800, (London and Boston, Faber and Faber, 1979), pp. 208, 209; Spufford, p. 249.
9. Spufford, p. 249.
- 10 Capp, Astrology, p. 210.
11. Shepard, The History of Street Literature, The Story of Broadside Ballads, Chapbooks, Proclamations, News-Sheets, Election Bills, Tracts, Pamphlets, Cocks, Catchpennies, and other Ephemera, (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), p. 58; Shepard, John Pitts, p.p. 19, 20; Christopher Hill, "Censorship and English Literature," The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill, (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, Ltd, 1985), pp. 33, 34.
12. Shepard, History of Street Literature, p. 88; Laurence Fontaine, History of Pedlars in Europe, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 118, 119.
13. Watt, Cheap Print, pp. 272, 287; Capp, "Popular Literature," p. 199; Spufford, pp. 99, 100.

14. Spufford, The Great Reclotting of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century, (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), p. 6; Shepard, History of Street Literature, p. 92; Neuberg, Popular Literature: A History and Guide, From the beginning of printing to the year 1897, (London: The Woburn Press, 1977), p. 126; Capp, "Popular Literature," Barry Reay, ed., Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England, (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 201.
15. Spufford, Small Books, pp. 83, 111, 115, Spufford, Great Reclotting, pp., 9, 13; Neuberg, Chapbooks, p. 2.
16. Spufford, Great Reclotting, p. 14; Small Books, pp. 118-120; Neuberg, The Penny Histories, p. 33.
17. Spufford, Small Books, pp. 45, 46, 47, 48.
18. Shepard, John Pitts, p. 22; Spufford, Small Books, p. 50, 51; Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, (London, Temple Smith, 1978), p. 278. Keith Thomas agrees with Spufford and Neuberg that the test of literacy usually employed--the ability to sign one's name--underestimates the number of people who could read in early modern England. Evidence for Sweden, Scotland, and England indicates that people could read and that reading was taught to children by their mothers and fathers and neighbors--many of whom were women. p. 62. Spufford's study of spiritual autobiographies of the seventeenth century, written by men of yeoman parentage, focused on the religious experiences of who who may have been gifted. The economic status of their parents and the existence of local schools made a difference. Also, those from smaller families had a clear advantage over those from larger families. Boys who came from prosperous yeoman or trading families or those who did not suffering declining economic and social mobility because their father died got a grammar school education. Seldom did they go on to university training, since they ran the farm and became leaders in their village or county. pp. 160-163.
19. Ibid.
20. Burke, "Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century London ," in Reay, Popular Culture, p. 50; Spufford, Great Reclotting, pp. 5,6; Watt, Cheap Print, pp. 267, 268; Harrison, The Common People, p. 170.
21. Spufford, Small Books, p. 50.
22. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, The Birth of a Consumer Society, The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England, (Bloomington, Indiana, University of Indiana Press, 1982), pp. 32, 81, 253, 256, 258.

23. Ibid., p. 271.

24. Robert Collison, The Story of Street Literature: Forerunner of the Popular Press, (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1973), pp. 9, 10; Patricia Anderson, The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture, 1790-1860, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 22. Frances M. Thomson, Chapbooks in Newcastle upon Tyne University Library, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Oriol Press, 1969), pp. 26, 83, 92 95, 103; Neuberger, The Penny Histories, pp. 26-29; Shepard, John Pitts, pp. 23, 25. Ashton, p. 9. Dianne Dugaw, "The Popular Marketing of 'Old Ballads': The Ballad Revival and Eighteenth-Century Antiquarianism Reconsidered, Eighteenth-Century Studies, 21 (1988), pp. 71-90.

25. Neuberger, The Penny Histories, pp. 34-37, 38, 40.

26. Shepard, John Pitts, pp. 29, 30, 31.

27. Spufford, Margaret, Small Books and Pleasant Histories, Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England, (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1981), pp. 219-222; Roger Thompson, Penny Merriments, pp. 14-16.

28. Watt, Cheap Print, pp. 267, 272, 274, 278, 287, 317; Neuberger, Chapbooks, p. 2.

29. Watt, Cheap Print, pp. 272, 273. In the Pepys Collection housed at Cambridge, the 114 examples can be divided as follows; 44 are humorous; 36 are practical; fiction--26; social commentary--5; In a catalogue put together in the 1680s, William Thackeray separated the 145 titles into four groups: 'small godly books,' 'small merry books,' 'double books,' and 'histories.' Burke thought it would be more useful to divide them into secular and religious categories. While 95 of the books were secular in nature, 10 gave practical advice and the 85 left were fiction, usually reflecting on the exploits of medieval men such as Guy of Warwick, St. George, King Arthur, and Robin Hood. Burke, 'Popular Culture,' in Reay, p. 50. Thackeray's catalogue was listed in Spufford's Small Books.

30. Spufford, Small Books, find citation from pages 50, 51

31. Watt, Cheap Print, pp. 300, 302, 303.

32. Ibid., p. 303, 304.

33. Spufford, Small Books, p. 135-145.

34. Ibid., pp. 207, 208, 209, 213.



35. Watt, Cheap Print, pp. 319, 320.
36. Barry Reay,
37. Ralph Bergengren, "Boswell's Chapbooks and Others," The Lamp, A Review and Record of Literature, Third Series, (February-July), 1904, pp. 39-44.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 42.
39. Henri Martin, "The Bibliotheque Bleue," (Review Article), Publishing History, #3 (1977): 82; Roger Chartier, "Texts, Printings, Readings," appearing in Lynn Hunt, ed., The New Cultural History, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 164.
40. Chartier, "Texts," p. 163; Martin, "Bibliotheque Bleue," p. 83. Chartier, The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 13, 14, 39, 40; Chartier, The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 137-139, 140; Chartier, The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France, (Princeton Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 240, 241.
41. Chartier, Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 159, 30; Teresa Watt, Cheap Print and Popular Piety: 1550-1640, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 296.
42. Martin, "Bibliotheque Bleue," p. 88.
43. Robert Darnton, "In Search of the Enlightenment: Recent Attempts, to Create a Social History of Ideas," Journal of Modern History, 43 (1971): 125, 127; Natalie Zemon Davis, p. 191, 192.
44. Davis, p. 201; Chartier, "Texts," p. 1; Robert Darnton, The Kiss of Lamourette, Reflections in Cultural History, (New York: Norton, 1990), pp. 185, 239.
45. Davis, pp. 213, 214.
46. Spinney, "Cheap Repository Tracts," p. 295; Jones, p. 145; Susan Pedersen, "Hannah More Meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century England," Journal of British Studies, 25 (January, 1986), p. 108.
47. Shepard, John Pitts.

48. John Pitts, p. 33; G. H. Spinney, "Cheap Repository Tracts: Hazard and Marshall Edition," Library, Series 4, 20 (1939): 295, 296, 301, 302; Neuberg, p. 229, M. G. Jones, Hannah More, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968, p. 133.
49. Spinney, *ibid.*, pp. 298, 299; Neuberg, p. 229; Hannah More, pp. 138, 141-143.
50. Jones, *ibid.*, p. 144.
51. *ibid.*, pp. 144, 145. Once these tracts were no longer printed on a monthly schedule, others took up the cause, for example the Religious Tract Society.
52. Watt, Cheap Print, p. 31.
53. Shepard, John Pitts, p. 22; Watt, Cheap Print, p. 31.
54. Neuberg, p. 229; Shepard, John Pitts, p. 33; Fontaine, History of Pedlars in Europe, pp 150, 137. Neuberg credited Hannah More with the prediction that these tracts predated the radical pamphlets that were later written by members of the working class.

## CHAPTER SIX

## BALLADS

## The Genre

For clarity's sake, this discussion of ballads is divided into two separate chapters. The first chapter covers the purpose of the ballad and treats 'godly ballads' and those whose stories describe the lives of historic persons. The later chapter compares the themes of ballads with entertaining chapbooks that describe relationships between men and women, and the marital status of women. The sheer size of the eight volumes of the authoritative Roxburghe Ballads, offers a substantial collection from which over 150 were selected and reviewed.<sup>1</sup> The voices of ordinary people come to life in their direct statements. Adam Fox's apt description of the ballad as a mode of expression fittingly introduces this chapter:

Ballads were composed for birth, deaths, and marriages; they coagulated the collective experience at moments of common effort from seeding to harvest home, at national holidays from May Day to Christmastide, and at moveable feasts from Shrovetide to Saint Swithin's. They endured and in hand with the rituals and customs which had expressed communal identity time out of mind.<sup>2</sup>

The strength of street literature was its appeal to a wide audience, its presentation of a consensus of shared values, and its diversity. Leslie Shepard described the broadside ballad as the 'universal cheap literature of the poor between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.' Ballads were printed on a single sheet of paper and often featured a coarse and cheaply-produced wood-cut.<sup>3</sup> Street ballads flourished from 1550 to 1650. Speaking directly and simply to their audiences, they offered a spontaneous accommodation of the oral tradition and the written word. They demonstrated a shift from religious dogma and piety to a more worldly time which sanctioned individualism. The message was faithful to prevailing opinion but at the same time molded opinion. Ballads functioned locally and

conveyed news. Any debacle, crime, or unusual event such as a robbery or murder could be sensationalized in a ballad. They also provided a chronicle of history. They offered entertainment while they summed up human experience. Their appeal was due in no small measure to music. Because they were 'close' to the people, hawkers and vendors pushed them at street fairs and markets. Printed versions often were hung up on the walls of ale-houses. <sup>4</sup>

From 1350-1750, oral forms predominated. In the second stage, 1750-1830, there were 'oral-' and 'chap-transitional' texts. Circumstances dictated how and why ballads were composed. Oral ballads were interesting but frequently-reworked narratives. Chap ballads were modified by commercial entrepreneurs. They could be found in reproductions of the original ballad. <sup>5</sup>

The traditional ballad developed out of popular folk poetry near the end of the Middle Ages. The romantic strains rejuvenated an 'anemic' poetry and literature. The broadside ballad focusing on everyday topics such as love and war, moral advice, and prophecy, never veered away from an impulse to convey the meaning of life. Some ballads resonated with traditional themes, while others spoke of criminal behavior and domestic affairs, plus current events. The magic of the ballad moved the heart. Their simple message and low price guaranteed sales. ('b)allads were handed round like fruits and vegetables.' They were especially popular after performances. <sup>6</sup>

Street ballads were first written by anonymous authors, some being of 'modest social background.' Most Elizabethan ballad writers were poor, unless they had another source of income. Since they did not have patrons, they were independent and free from obligation. Although printing was a low-budget affair, printers profited, not writers. Classical content and use of the courtly tradition indicates that the authors had some education. Eventually there was a class of professional balladists. Ample profits encouraged printers to start their own businesses, despite censorship and punishment during Cromwell's Commonwealth. They received no subsidies and did not enjoy any monopolistic privileges. Ballad

publishing was a quick, low-budget affair. Any available piece of paper, even previously-printed paper, would do. Coarsely-produced wood-cuts were repeatedly used. In 1580, a ballad about an earthquake was printed only two days after the event. Some sixteenth and seventeenth century broadsides were printed in old Gothic type, known as black letter.<sup>7</sup>

Censorship and libel remained serious issues. The number of cases brought before the Tudor court, the Star Chamber, involving libel and slander tell us much about tensions under the Tudors and their fear of 'disorder.' These ballads expressed neighbors' feelings. They were probably 'cruder' and less 'literary' than broadside ballads. Villagers first gossiped about objectionable behavior but then found someone to compose written verse. Such verses usually came from the 'alternative society of the alehouse.'<sup>8</sup>

Libelous rhyming verses were first repeated orally, but then written down, indicates that the oral tradition and written word coexisted. Since written verses could still be sung, the oral format was preserved. Ballads, whether libelous, apolitical, or romantic, emanated from a 'parochial environment' where people of all social levels still lived and worked side by side. Because rhymes usually offered more than a hint of scandal or news and because there was a clear shortage of public pronouncements, people gathered around wherever they were posted: on the walls of the alehouse, on the door of the church, at someone's gate or fence post, on the market cross on market day, and even scattered about on highways. Villagers used the weapons at their command. Oral verse could be sung to those who could not read, but 'published' verses broaden the circulation of their story. Usually allegations were aired in the immediate vicinity, but grievances could be disseminated beyond the immediate area. What was locally a 'rabblement of words' could end up being disseminated by London printers.<sup>9</sup>

From the relative sanctuary of the 'alternative' alehouse, pot poets wrote libelous and subversive verses which questioned authority. Brief biographical remarks about one of the better-known ballad mongers connect ballads to the ale-

house. As the 'prince of ballad writers,' Martin Parker's proprietorship of an ale-house gave him extensive contacts with the public that he reached with his ballads. A 'temporizing poet,' Parker wrote ballads, chapbooks, and even some pieces for one of the early newspapers which was printed after 1638. He aimed his prolific verses at the lower orders of village society who frequented the ale-house. The fifty compositions which appeared in ballad collections were written before 1640. He, like other talented writers of ephemeral literature, was a renowned 'quaffer of ale' who kept alive 'the tradition of the ale-blown-pot-poet.' He later worked at the center of a ballad syndicate of twenty-four ballad poets who composed for unlicensed printers. <sup>10</sup>

In addition to ballads that administered a public shaming were those which challenged power and money. The interaction of people of unequal social status meant that there could be a swing or oscillation of the deference-defiance pendulum. If obligations went unfulfilled or if the paternalism of the local lord was found wanting, the defiant lower orders might give vent to their frustrations through libelous lines. <sup>11</sup>

The audience was probably not 'homogeneous.' Differing literacy levels, the oral tradition and performance, and the competition of publishers created 'overlapping' audiences. The desires of urban merchants, craftsmen, some yeomen and even peasants with disposable income influenced authors and printers. The nonpaying audience included the poor, workers, and women. These disparities presented a challenge for the ballad writer and printer, but they cast a broad net. Most writers and printers were male, but audiences of women shaped the ballad through their reaction to it. <sup>12</sup>

The balladmonger related himself and his personality to the text and established a rapport with his audience through humor or serious comments, gestures, or mime. He persuaded his audience particularly if he was telling a 'true' story. He acted like a market crier and proposed that he had witnessed the very events he described. He invited audience involvement, usually with a line such as

'all ye young maydens, by me be warned,' or 'faire maydens come and see.'--lines that indicate a female audience. The balladmonger made frequent religious appeals, invoked religious figures to influence his audience, and smoothly invited his audience to buy the ballad. He addressed them as though they were affected by the ballad or part of the story that he had just related. He used admonitions and advice to suggest how his hearers should behave. Through colloquial language, proverbs, and idioms, the speaker put himself at a distance from his audience and dispensed wisdom. Although some printed ballads did not include refrains, the audience was asked to join in the singing. The ballad fit the needs of those who were practical, if uncultivated, and in need of cheap entertainment. A ballad was easier to read than a book.<sup>13</sup>

We know little about censorship of ballads, although enforcing decrees existed. Few ballads were recorded in the official Register. From about 1550-1700, about 3,000 black-letter ballads were licensed, but another 10,000 to 150,000 circulated without official approval. Many ballad titles disguised the printing of a book. Ballads were printed surreptitiously until the Commonwealth/Interregnum.<sup>14</sup>

The moralistic tone of Tudor and Stuart ballads lamented the decline of earlier and better times. Early Tudor ballads reflected an assigned hierarchical order, accepted roles, responsibility, and reciprocity that were projected as necessary to the social fabric. But an unraveling social fabric be discerned in Tudor ballads attributing this disintegration to a growing sense of individual self-interest. The decline of reciprocity occurred because those with money no longer believed that they had a responsibility to the poor. Population increase, widespread poverty, the omnipresent fear of dearth or famine, an inflated currency, and an insufficient supply of land--all these factors combined to produce anxiety and a 'crisis of order.' The culture of poverty reduced the laborers or workers, small farmers, craftsmen, and shopkeepers to 'genteel destitution.'<sup>15</sup>

While Tudor ballads do not define who the poor were, the poor do come to life in ballads from 1600-1640. The beggar in the ballad lived in all of England and

could not be reduced to existing only within specified property lines. Ballads also depicted the poor as diligent workers who did not mind hard work and did their part willingly. There was no discernible class conflict, instead there were willing workers. Beggars were 'confident and unrepentant' males with less responsibility than those with middle class values. Ballads addressing the causes of poverty mentioned the increase of prices and the decline of charity because of inflation. Although attitudes conveyed in ballads was hardly consistent, ballads expected the poor to shoulder their responsibilities. The rural laborer should be competent and capable in a variety of tasks, should accept his station, and not covet his employer's property. The poor must live simple, humble lives, and save their money. <sup>16</sup>

Almost all accounts document the demise of the broadside ballad at about 1700, due in no small measure to the expansion of chapbook publishing. Quick London ballad sellers might be promoted to petty chapmen by their masters. The written word now reinforced the oral tradition, but there was now more reading and less singing. <sup>17</sup>

### The English Context

Useful comparisons are available through Joy Wiltenburg's study of street literature of early modern England and Germany. Her themes are central or pivotal to this analysis--disorderly women, marriage, violence, crime, and sexuality. Relying on broadside ballads, she demonstrates the fear of misbehaving women. The broader range of options reflected in English street literature may reflect the declining power of women. Women were no longer seen as threatening. A display of aggressive women with sexual power may have been possible, in no small measure, because their economic viability had been sufficiently curtailed. <sup>18</sup>

There is no dearth of violence against women in either culture. Women could be brawling and raucous. Women in English ballads had to be tamed, and it was the duty of men to facilitate the subordination of women within marriage. The



words of the ballads indicate that this was not an easy task. The over-riding theme of English ballads—their stress on the individual—supports the position of Alan Macfarlane who believed that a strong streak of individualism permeated English life since the Middle Ages. <sup>19</sup>

Adventuresome or heroic women, autonomous women and those who defied parental authority occasionally cropped up in English ballads. English authors pursued individual motives. German writers expected German women to be dutiful and pious wives and mothers. 'External forces' determined what men and women could do. Mutual love within marriage was stressed in English ballads. Sexual potency was a double-edged sword. Women could display sexual power, but it could be trivialized as a private and domestic game. Women could be tamed within happy and companionate marriages. <sup>20</sup>

There is a correlation in the seventeenth-century decline of violence against women in English verses and in society. The ballads, however, did speak of wives who beat their hapless husbands. The later discussion of the Roxburghe Ballads confirms this conclusion. Although German women tolerated stress and bad behavior in their men meekly, women in English ballads might tolerate abuse, but not without loud complaints. <sup>21</sup>

Catholic and Protestant piety inspired German women to sainthood. The pursuit of self-denial did give them a sphere separate and removed from men. Pictures of the extended family, respect for motherhood, communal ties, blood, and the absolute patriarchal power of the father and husband within the family appeared over and over again:

'in the German view of a precarious human order hedged about with supernatural forces, women represented both familial stability and mysterious reproductive processes, both the preservation of social purity and a sexuality which neither sex could fully control.'

Rape was seldom discussed in English street literature, but was displayed in German ballads. Women survived rape, but had to recognize their embodiment of a 'dangerous sexuality.'<sup>22</sup>

The 'woman-on-top' phenomenon which has been documented by Natalie Zemon Davis existed in both countries, but appeared significantly in English ballads. English women physically assaulted their husbands in an all-out contest. They fought in good causes. Order had to prevail in the German scheme of things.

<sup>23</sup>

Dianne Dugaw's collection of 120 ballads of warrior women in the Anglo-American oral tradition described the Anglo-American female warrior as a transvestite but valiant heroine who ventures forth to war in masquerade, despite her parents' entreaties. Simultaneously she represented the female ideals of love and fidelity while symbolizing male glory in war and battle. The ballads encouraged women to 'step out' of the female role. Exploits in manly dress were rewarded. She got her mate, and looked back on her previous life glowingly. London printers circulated such stories by 1600. By the time of the Restoration, the female warrior was a conventional staple of street songs. Until the nineteenth century, penny song sheets and chapbooks heralded her exploits.<sup>24</sup> The chapbook about one such heroine, Long Meg of Westminster appeared both as a ballad and later in chapbook form. It will be reviewed in a later chapter, 'women of uncommon talents.'

The ballad's progression tell us about the difficulties that women faced. The incremental steps included courtship and separation, discussion of what to do, the act of disguise, trials in which she established not only her love but also her valor, the test of her man's love, and the resolution--the happily-ever-after motif. Three elements of the early modern period are significant to an understanding of these depictions: Physical strength and constant warfare were a part of life. The third element, the phenomenon of women masquerading as men exemplified an age of cross-dressing and disguise. Women also accompanied armies in varying formations and clearly-unofficial ways--prostitutes being only one of them. The

rough and tumble early modern world and the eighteenth century demanded 'resilience, vigor and initiative. . . routinely.' <sup>25</sup>

Did a crisis in gender relations in early modern England precipitate an outpouring of invective against women? The current consensus among historians is that such a crisis occurred, but it is more accurate to picture it as part of a larger 'crisis of order.' The growth of population, poverty and its consequence--vagrancy, inflation, and insufficient land for an agriculturally-based society--all these factors produced this crisis in the sixty years before the Civil War. <sup>26</sup>

Patriarchal theorists and religious authorities considered the family to a private entity with the father empowered to act for the entire family. The legal doctrine of coverture allowed the husband to control his wife's entire being. The husband, however, was expected to provide adequately for the wife and family. Partnership in marriage was not discouraged, and the women was even an associate in family matters. But despite patriarchal utterances and legal opinion, the notion of patriarchy, whether it appeared in political form or religious doctrine, described an ideal, but not necessarily the reality. <sup>27</sup>

Concern about the behavior of unruly women and the common scold affected more than the ranks of ballad writers. Polemics and literature from Tudor and Stuart England remind us that misogyny was alive and well. Male dramatists, particularly those from the later Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, obsessively focused on women's independence. Court records, searched for 1560-1640, disclose an intense preoccupation with women who threaten the patriarchal system. These same social observers cast women in domestic roles and did not expect them to function in any public arena. While women were denied a public voice, they still managed to have 'some degree of quasi-public power' within communities, sometimes influencing ecclesiastical court proceedings. Gossip and innuendo could determine a person's social status--whether they kept their good name within the community. Men were not always supportive of this 'quasi-public' role because

gossip and the exchange of news and views kept them from doing from tending to their domestic duties.<sup>28</sup>

A widening divide developed between the literate of the middle class and those of the semi-literate lower classes. Literate and semi-literate street people in the early seventeenth century were tradespeople. Broadside ballads that were similar to our own commercialized popular music and chapbooks appealed to apprentices, servants, laborers, farm workers, and charwomen. The vast majority of street people who wrote popular literature did not inhabit the world of manor houses, and their work comes to us only in bits and pieces.<sup>29</sup> Many vendors were also creators in the street world. Since women always did some of the printing and singing, some of the female warrior themes and other ballads could be the work of women. This is difficult, if not impossible, to substantiate, since almost 90% of all the Songs Dugaw found were by anonymous authors. About 1700, the first female warrior ballads were printed; by 1800 they were well-known. Ballad-mongers presented the heroic female warrior as a popular figure. Eighteenth and nineteenth century balladmongers used the old ballad text to create new ones.<sup>30</sup>

Dugaw's research into marketing of ballads uncovered the lifting of ballads from A Collection of Old Ballads by the venerable Dicey firm. Their successful printing of old ballads assured the Dicey monopoly in street literature. They busied themselves with old ballads, reissuing them as broadsides and in chapbook form. Dugaw's historical rebuke of the firm's careless use of material without attribution and for profit included the following:

Revisions of the headnotes to individual ballads in A Collection of Old Ballads further show how the broadside publishers, taking a purposefully antiquarian approach, turned jocular comments into genuine introductions. . .As with their adaptation of the remarks on reading, they supplant the original editor's facetiousness with a tone of sentimental and unequivocal appreciation. . .Headnotes to the Ballad "Mauldlin". . .illustrate the way the collection's individual introductions were transformed in their broadside and chapbook revisions.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, the Diceys exploited the old quality of ballads by the use of paper that promoted an older image and used antique woodcuts that projected an antiquarian image.<sup>32</sup> The base of their success, however, was the interest of ordinary people in the street literature that they printed.

### 'Godly Ballads' and Historic Stories

Tessa Watt's focus on Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640, emphasized popular beliefs in the century following the Protestant Reformation. Cheaply-produced London ballads provide evidence of the interaction of the oral tradition and the written word. The religion of ordinary people wasn't compartmentalized. It wasn't a Sunday activity limited only to attendance at the parish church. It was an integral part of their everyday experience. 'Godly ballads' modified traditional religion and created a religious environment which was compatible with Protestant thought. Protestant values interacted with and were at the same time imposed upon traditional culture. From their study of Terling, Keith Wrightson and David Levine concluded that Protestantism 'inserted a cultural wedge' into village society. Watt characterized the change from Catholic to Protestant thought as a 'gradual modification of traditional piety.' 'Godly ballads' modified traditional religion and created a compatible religious environment for Protestant thought. Protestant values interacted with and were at the same time imposed upon traditional culture.<sup>33</sup> The reality of civil war in England does not augur well for theories and amassed evidence of consensus in village society. But she chose to interpret the 'godly ballads' from the longue duree. Two of her conclusions are critical: first, the gradual decline of the 'godly ballads' which was completed in the seventeenth century, and second, the slow evolution of the ballad into the chapbook. Since Watt emphasized the slow shift from ballads to chapbooks, her conclusions are vital to this study.

Protestants tried to mold the popular culture to fit their reform agenda. In the 1550s and 1560s, ballads were acceptable songs, but by the 1570s and 1580s, the psalms became the preferred religious music. Ballads were the mere work of humans, the psalms imparted scriptural authority. In addition, ballads connoted less than the proper behavior expected by Protestant reformers, since they were performed in public places and used as music for dancing. Religious ballad writing declined. Watt interprets this decline as proof that Protestant reformers did not think that traditional ballads served their reforming mission.<sup>34</sup>

For Watt, current historical interpretations overstate the dichotomy between the elite and popular culture. The elite of Terling, the better-off yeomen, husbandmen, and tradesmen, used religion to set themselves off from their less fortunate neighbors. Fletcher and Stevenson focused on a polarized society and distance between the elite and popular culture in the seventeenth century. Margaret Spufford, Martin Ingram and Watt all take exception to this emphasis on social differentiation.<sup>35</sup>

Later seventeenth-century ballads had a decidedly secular quality. Themes of love, marital in-fighting, relationships between husband and wife—with little mention of children, predominate. There are a few 'godly ballads' in the Roxburghe collection which concentrate on women.

Anne Askew and the Countess of Suffolk were Protestant martyrs who worked to make the cause triumphant. The Duchess of Suffolk was exiled from England during the reign of Elizabeth's Catholic half-sister Mary. Elizabethan ballads immortalized their martyrdom.<sup>36</sup> Anne Askew died in 1546 when she was only 25 years old. The ballad writer needed to make Protestant martyrs, particularly women, appear vulnerable to fiendish Popish plots. Their undaunting courage in face of such schemes made them examples for the Protestant cause.<sup>37</sup>

Another exemplary Protestant woman was a 'vertuous maid in Paris.' She refused the entreaties of her mother to attend mass:

But, where they thought to fear her,  
she did most strong endure;

**Altho' her years were tender,  
 her faith was firm and sure;  
 She weigh'd not their allurements,  
 She fear'd not firey flame,  
 She hop'd through Christ her Savior,  
 to have immortal fame.**

She was condemned to death but implored the assembled throng of women to repent:

**'You Ladies of this City,  
 Mark well my words (quoth she)  
 "Although I shall be burned,  
 Yet do not pitty me;  
 Yourselves I rather pitty,  
 and weep for your decay,  
 Amend your (lives) fair Ladies,  
 and do not time delay.'**

She admonished 'Ladies of the city' to repent of their debauched ways. She who faced being burned pitied these victims of dissipated life-styles. She begged her mother and friends to give up their superstitious beliefs and turn to the true Protestant faith. She put her faith in Christ.<sup>38</sup>

The Biblical story of Susanna became an Elizabethan ballad. Lecherous elders challenged the chaste and virtuous Susanna, but she would not fall for their lust-filled scheme. In seeking revenge, the elders sought to give false witness against her and see her punished. She was sentenced to death. Susanna's friends bemoaned her fate. The young Daniel questioned each of the old men separately and found discrepancies in their story. They were put to death according to the law of Moses and Susanna survived. The appeal of the ballad may have been the sensual image of Susanna, clad scantily if not naked, bathing in the forest.<sup>39</sup> A number of ballads popularized the Biblical story of David and Berseba. King David's eyes feasted upon the beautiful Berseba. The King commanded that she be brought to him and she became his mistress. Eventually she was with child. King David arranged for Uriah, her husband, to be murdered. God punished David for

adultery and for murder. This is an old Biblical tale which the audience would recognize. The elements of sin and punishment served the Protestant purpose.<sup>40</sup>

“Patient Grissell” is a medieval story which was included in Boccaccio's Decameron and in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. It was later published in chapbook form. Patient Grissell proved her perseverance in the face of her husband's hatred and cruelty. He took away her child. Finally, he considered her to be worthy and put riches at her feet. The ballad emphasized the Marquis' torture of her, further versions in either the Decameron or Canterbury Tales.<sup>41</sup>

In another ballad, a mother on her deathbed advised the lessons of the ten commandments. They should visit the sick, help widows, shun the company of lewd women, speak truthfully and not slanderously. The mother recommended that they follow the path of God.

By this, dear Children, you may learn  
 how to direct your ways  
 To God, to Prince, to Common-wealth,  
 whereon your welfare stays.  
 Print well in your Remembrance  
 the Lessons I have shown,  
 Then shall you live in happy state  
 when I am dead and gone.<sup>42</sup>

Ballads reenforced the perception of a dog-eat-dog scramble where people hoarded their crumbs and guarded their few possessions. In 'The Kentish Miracle,' a widow with seven children worked night and day to keep them from starving. She reminded God of Biblical stories where he reversed pestilence and fed the hungry. When she went to the market with some money to get corn. A man cut her purse and took her meager sum of money. Her husband's brother denied her some corn, protesting that she spent her money foolishly. Fortuitously, a baker gave her some burnt bread. The 'churlish brother' of her husband lost his cherished corn in a flood. The man who cut her purse broke his neck. 'God's servants are not forsaken quite, God's mercie is to set them free.' This last stanza summed up the ballad's message.<sup>43</sup>



In "A Looking Glass for a Christian Family; or A Warning for all people to serve God," mothers were admonished to raise their children to be God-fearing people for the sake of England. They should not curse, lie, steal, drink, 'grind the poor,' or pursue pleasure or gluttony. To avoid raising such problem-children, a mother should discipline her children:

But all you that are Mothers meek and mild,  
Do not you spare the rod and spoil the child;  
Apply the twigs before they stubborn stand,  
Lest at (the) last you can't bend them with your hand. <sup>44</sup>

Protestant theology that denounced Catholic superstition and doctrinal errors also called upon sinners to repent of their ways in order to escape Hell and damnation. "The Godly Maid of Leicester" allegedly described the life of Elizabeth Stretton. The Triune God raised Elizabeth Stretton from the dead and restored her to life. One verse referred to the 'elect' suggesting the theme of predestination. 'Our life and death shall happy be, Though in a wicked world we've been.' <sup>45</sup> Piety and penitence involved all God's children, but ballads and other religious writings deliberately instilled meekness and humility into that being, woman, who could tempted man.

Although 'Godly ballads' proselytized or shored up the Protestant cause, many secular ballads had a religious component. Particularly after a crime or dastardly deed, the end of a relationship lamented or a death, religious exhortations followed. This research supports the conclusion that there was a decline in the circulation and popularity of 'godly ballads.' The overwhelmingly secular tone of the eight volumes in the Roxburghe collection testifies to that conclusion.

### Historic Persons

Ballads about historic persons provide another perspective on images of women. Many ballads described actual events, such as kings, battles, political

plots, and England's glory. Only a few celebrate the attributes of women—either the mistresses of the mighty, pious women, or notorious women who committed crimes.

"The King of France's Daughter," written by one of the most prolific ballad-writers, Thomas Deloney, may have been printed as early as 1596. This story dates from Anglo-Saxon times and may have been printed as early as 1596. Deloney added his imaginative touches to its historical base about a ninth-century King of England who married the twelve-year-old daughter of Charles the Bald. When he died, she returned to France. In the ballad, the forester remained ignorant of her royal background until after the birth of their 7th child. Reunited with his daughter, the King made her husband the Earl of Flanders. This part of the story also squared with historical fact. <sup>46</sup>

Like earlier mistresses Rosamond Clifford and Jane Shore, the Duchess of Portsmouth and Nell Gwin, both paramours to Charles II, suffered once their consort died. Four ballads in the Roxburghe collection described the activities of the Duchess. In the ballads the Duchess and Nell Gwin(n) shot pierced arrows at each other, designed not just to sting but to wound one another. Nell Gwin accused the Duchess of living an opulent life, while she took pains to 'pay my debts' and 'distribute to the poor.' Nell Gwin's generosity nearly put her in the poorhouse. In the Farewell ballad, the Duchess worried that might suffer the same end as Jane Shore. The intriguing Duchess of Portsmouth lost a high stakes game. She hoped to persuade Charles II to divorce his wife and make an honest woman of her by others involved in court intrigue. Several ballads satirized her behavior. <sup>47</sup>

Palace underlings quite routinely submitted ballads which extolled the virtues of the monarch. Queen Mary was the wife of William of the House of Orange. Mary was the Protestant daughter of the Catholic King, James II, later exiled from England while William and Mary enjoyed a triumphant procession into London. In one ballad she made the generous decision to care for an orphaned child. Two ballads mourned her death. Historians and ballad writers picture her as a reasonable monarch married to the obdurate and unfaithful William of Orange.

Although Mary was an English princess and daughter of a King, her position was secondary to that of her husband. The ballad celebrated her virtues and testified to the loyalty of her loving subjects. <sup>48</sup>

Two ballads lamented the death of a shepherd's daughter, the vulnerable Isabel Dunsmore. She inspired a burning lust in Lord Wigamore. Having become pregnant, she could not withstand the criticism and ostracism of her disgraced condition:

"For now this deed that I have wrought through this country  
  well is knowne,  
And to my woeful parents brought, who now for me do make  
  great moan.  
How shall I look them in the face, when they my shamelesse  
  selfe shall see?  
Then sed (she): "Eve! I feele thy case, when thou had'st  
  tasted of the tree.

-----  
Let God regard it not at all! Let not the sunne upon it  
  shine!  
Let misty darknesse on it fall, for to make knowne this  
  sinne of mine!  
The night wherein I was conceiv'd, let be accurst with  
  mournfull eyes!  
Let twinkling starres from skyes be reav'd, and clouds of  
  darkness thereon rise!

The aggrieved Isabel stabbed herself and died. Lord Wigamore repented of his actions and resolved never to deflower a maiden again. <sup>49</sup>

Ballads about aristocratic women and mistresses of well-heeled men emphasize that circumstances were well beyond their control. In love with a lesser lord, Lady Arabella Stuart thought that she had enough money for both of them. Indeed she wished that she had been born a simple milk-maid or child of a yeoman because love and liberty were denied to such an aristocratic lady. She finally agreed to obey the King's wishes and avoid seeing Lord Seymour. Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Charles I, met an untimely death. She lacked liberty and

friends. Facing a solitary exile in a remote castle following the death of her father, she died peaceably and bravely after five weeks. <sup>50</sup>

Ballads about ordinary women emphasized their unscrupulous behavior or criminal acts. "The German Princess" was a beautiful stage actress whose many tribulations ended with the final act—the theft of some plate. This earned her a death sentence in 1672. <sup>51</sup>

Three ballads by Deloney, written in 1591, celebrated a famous murder. Ballads had long circulated the story of Mistress Page's murder of her husband. They appealed to the young because they counseled parents against forced marriages. In her dying lament, she noted that she had pleaded with her father that he not make her to marry an older but wealthy man. Her speeches fell on deaf ears, and she became a discontented and vengeful wife. Before her death, she implored 'greedy-minded' parents to be mindful of their children's wishes. <sup>52</sup>

Archives in the city of Canterbury report the murder of Thomas Arden by his wife's accomplices. Arden was well-regarded in the ballad and in legend. His wife was much younger than he, but he hoped to use the activities of her friends to his advantage. The ballad laid out a number of instances when villains failed to get the job done. Eight people eventually went to their death for murdering Arden. His widow was burned at the stake. <sup>53</sup>

Although Susan Higges, of Risborrow in Buckinghamshire, was well regarded, she robbed people for more than twenty years. Usually dressed as a man, she boasted to her servants that she was as gallant as any man. Finally, she robbed someone she knew, killed that woman, and admitted the crime to her servants. Her last words would qualify this ballad in the 'godly' category:

So farewell, earthly pleasure!  
 my quaintance all, adue!  
 With whom I spent the treasure  
 which causeth me to rue.  
 Leave off your wanton pastimes,  
 lascivious and ill,  
 Which, without God's great mercy,  
 doth soule and body kill.

Be warned by this story,  
 you ruffling roysters all!  
 The higher that you climbe in sinne,  
 the greater is your fall:  
 And since your world so wicked is,  
 let all desire grace:  
 Grant Lord, that I the last may be,  
 that runnest such a race! <sup>54</sup>

John True of Coventry proclaimed his love for Susan Mease of a nearby town. Once John's forthright declaration of love was accepted by Susan, he became indifferent and she died of a broken heart. When John True arrived at the cemetery, he heard her call him from the grave. He regretted his neglect and abandonment of her and died overwhelmed by grief. <sup>55</sup>

Still other ballads recorded well-known murders of women; sometimes by their suitors. The tragic death of Miss Martha Reay came after the infatuated and obsessive James Hackman pursued her, despite his clear knowledge of her kept status as the mistress of the Secretary of State and first Lord of the Admiralty, John Montague, with whom she had at least five children. None of this dented Hackman's resolve. He entered the ministry and took a position where he could be near her. But she could not bring herself to leave Montague. Hackman killed her near Covent Garden in 1779. The ballad noted that five children were left without a mother. Although a Wittam Miller had compromised the integrity of a young woman, he refused to marry her, and resolved instead to murder her. Like other condemned killers, he begged for mercy before he was hanged. <sup>56</sup>

Piety and prayerful devotion to God were expected of all God's children, but certainly such expected of women. Only a few ballads focused on the family, unlike the overwhelming number of German ballads. But such ballads expected exemplary mothers who sustained the faithful and prayed for others.

Ballads about historic persons circulated scandalous stories. Ballads and chapbooks repeatedly circulated the stories of Rosamond Clifford, the mistress of

Henry II and Jane Shore, the mistress of Edward IV--women from the common people who never forgot their humble origins. Generosity also characterized Nell Gwin(n) the mistress of Charles II. Yet such laudatory behavior did not shield them from harm and an ignominious end. Aristocratic women featured here had only marginal prospects for independence. Scandalous stories about ordinary women frequently featured plots and decisions about murder, usually involving their immediate family. Others were the victims. But routine and banal stories did not sell.

## Notes

1. The significant number of Roxburghe Ballads which spoke of love were deliberately avoided as well as the extensive collection of 'antipapal ballads,' those on politics and those celebrating military victories. The abbreviation, RB, will hereinafter designate the Roxburghe Ballads.
2. Adam Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture, pp. 14-15.
3. Joy Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany, (Charlottesville and London: University Press, of Virginia, 1992) , pp. 29, 41. Leslie Shepard, The Broadside Ballad: A Study in Origins and Meaning, (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1962), p. 26.
4. Robert Graves, The English Ballad: A Short Critical Survey, (London: The Folcroft Press, 1970, reprinted from the Ernest Benn Ltd edition, 1927), p. 19; Richard D. Altick, The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 28, 29; Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women, pp. 29, 31-33; See also Natascha Wurzbach, The Rise of the English Street Ballad, 1550-1650, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
5. David Buchan, The Ballad and the Folk, (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972). David Buchan's categorization of ballad transmission applied to the Northeast of Britain and/or Scotland. (Buchan, 272, 273) His third stage, from 1830 on, is beyond the bounds of this study.
6. Shepard, Broadside Ballad, p. 34, 48, 49; Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women, p. 29. Richard Harvey, "English Pre-Industrial Ballads on Poverty, 1600-1700," The Historian, 46 (August, 1984): 541; Wurzbach, English Street Ballad, p. 21. Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women, p. 42.
7. Bernard Capp, "Popular Literature," appearing in Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England, ed. Barry Reay, (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985): 199. In his study of astrology and almanacs, Capp surmised that almanac authors came from a better background. They were poets, priests, courtiers, and churchmen. Many came from the provinces. Shepard, Broadside Ballad, p. 56; Harvey, "Pre-Industrial Ballads," p. 541; Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women, p. 32.
8. Wurzbach, English Street Ballad, pp. 20, 21. In 1580, a ballad about an earthquake was printed only two days after the event. Capp, "Popular Literature," p. 199; Shepard, Broadside Ballad, pp. 67, 57, 58; Wiltenberg, Disorderly Women, pp.. 39, 40.
8. Adam Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture, pp. 213-5, 218-220, 235.

9. Ibid., pp. 220-1, 225-6, 243, 249-50, 235.
10. Ibid. p. 236. Find M. Parker source and put in footnote
11. Ibid., p. 242-243.
12. Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women, pp. 39, 40.
13. Wurzbach, English Street Ballad, pp. 26, 41-43, 49; 54, 55, 59, 51, 63, 74-75.
14. Ibid., pp. 24, 25.
15. Harvey, "Pre-Industrial Ballads," p. 543; D. E. Underdown, "The Taming of the Scold," appearing in Order and Disorder in Early Modern England, Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 116.
16. Harvey, "Pre-Industrial Ballads," pp. 544, 546, 548, 550-1; 554-558, 560-1.
17. Capp, "Popular Literature," p. 199; Shepard, Broadside Ballad, pp. 69, 70, 77.
18. Wiltenberg, Disorderly Women.
19. See Alan Macfarlane's many discussions of these themes: The Origins of English Individualism is his magnum opus. Also, Love and Marriage in England, Modes of Reproduction, 1300-1840, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).
20. Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women, p. 69.
21. Ibid., pp. 73, 93, 107. In a calculation of marital discord, wives in English ballads prevailed over husbands by a ratio of three to one, a result occurring mainly in the seventeenth century. The opposite was true for Germany. Men prevailed there over women by two to one with the bulk of their 'victories' coming in the sixteenth century.
22. Ibid., pp. 206, 207.
23. Ibid., p. 207, 258, 259. The three most frequently-cited sources for English ballads are the Roxburghe Ballads, the Bagford Ballads, and the Euing Ballads. The Roxburghe collection included a section on 'Valiant Female Soldiers.' Many a 'faithful damosel' followed her man to war. War in Flanders in the 1670s may have inspired men to become warriors. The ballads described their women as 'gallant,' 'valiant,' and 'honest.' Some of the women disguised themselves and followed their lovers across the sea. The Roxburghe Ballads editor, J. Woodfall Ebworth, suggested that a perceived emergency prompted drastic measures. J. Woodfall Ebworth, ed., Roxburghe Ballads, Vol. 7, p. 727; Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women, p. 190.



24. Dianne Dugaw, Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, 1650-1850, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 1, 2, 15.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 93, 122, 123, 124. Recent accounts of the American Revolutionary War discuss the rag-tag, motley assortment of women who followed behind their menfolk in Washington's army. When General Washington proposed to march into town, he insisted that this beleaguered lot of women and children not follow too closely behind. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

26. Underdown, "The Taming of the Scold," p. 116.

27. Keith Wrightson, English Society, 1580-1680, (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p. 91; S. D. Amussen, "Gender, Family, and the Social Order," in Order and Disorder, Fletcher and Stevenson, eds., pp. 196-197; Martin Ingram, "'Scolding women cucked or washed': a crisis in gender relations in early modern England?" appearing in Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England, Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker, eds., (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 49.

28. Underdown, "The Taming of the Scold," pp. 117, 119; Ingram, "'Scolding Women,'" p. 49.

29. Dugaw, Warrior Women, pp. 20, 21, 22.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24, 43, 44, 45, 56, 62, 85, 86, 89. By about 1850, some of the stories had vanished. Heroines were now frail and pathetic, but the female warrior remained in the nooks and crannies of the Anglo-American folk tradition. She still survives in certain regions and localities.

31. Dianne Dugaw, "The Popular Marketing of 'Old Ballads': The Ballad Revival and Eighteenth-Century Antiquarianism Reconsidered," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 21 (1988), p. 78.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 79, 80.

33. Keith Wrightson and David Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village, Terling, 1525-1700 (1979), pp. 162, 171; Tessa Watt, Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 324, 327.

34. Watt, Cheap Print, pp. 54, 55, 57, 66, 70.

35. See the work of Margaret Spufford, and Martin Ingram.

36. "The Most rare and excellent History of the Dutchesse of Suffolke's Calamity," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 287-294; Watt, Cheap Print, pp. 90-94. Thomas Deloney, a well-known balladmonger wrote about the Duchess of Suffolk's calamity by 1602, but the ballad sold until 1754.

37. "An Askew, I am a Woman Poor and Blind," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 29, 30-34; Watt, Cheap Print, pp. 94, 95.
38. "A Rare Example of a Vertuous Maid," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 35-37. This is an Elizabethan ballad reprinted in the time of Charles II.
39. "An excellent Ballad Entitled: The Constancy of Susanna," RB, pp. 190-196; Watt. Susanna and the elders appear in many paintings in European galleries.
40. "The Story of David and Berseba," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 270-276.
41. "Patient Grissell," ???
42. "An Hundred Godly Lessons, That a Mother on her Death-Bed gave to her Children," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 427-434.
43. "The Kentish Miracle," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 39-41; "The Kentish Wonder," displayed a similar theme, RB, Vol. 8, pp. 36-38. Four versions of this ballad can be traced to the seventeenth century.
44. "A Looking-Glass for a Christian Family, or, A Warning for all people to serve God," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 110-112.
45. "The Godly Maid of Leicester," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 86-89.
46. "The King of France's Daughter," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 306-317.
47. "A Dialogue Between the Duchess of Portsmouth and Madam Gwin at parting," RB, Vol. 4, pp. 276-281; "The Duchess of Portsmouth's Farewell," RB, Vol. 4, pp. 283-286; "A Satyr upon the Mistresses," RB, Vol. 5, pp. 130-133; "Animadversions on the Lady Marquess; or Properties Display'd," RB, Vol. 5, p. 67. In the text the terms 'common whore' and 'maiden-head' are printed upside down.
48. "The Distressed Mother," RB, Vol. 4, pp. 390-392. Mary was an English Princess and the daughter of a Stuart King, but her position was still secondary to her husband, William of Orange. She ran state affairs well while he was in Holland or away on military campaigns. Despite his attention to Dutch affairs and her ability to run state affairs, he was still in charge. "The Court and Kingdom in Tears," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 766, 767; "Britain's Sorrowful Lamentation," RB, Vol. 7, p. 768.
49. "The Fair Maid of Dunsmore's Lamentation," RB, Vol. 6, pp. 766-770; "The Lamentable Song of the Lord Wigmore," the second part being "The Complaint of Fair Isabell for the Losse of her Honour," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 771-772.
50. "The True Lover's Knot Untied: The renowned Princess, the Lady Arabella," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 601-603; "The Lamenting Lady's Last Farewell," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 629-632; "Lady Ogle's History," RB, Vol. 5, pp. 96-101; "The Duchess of Monmouth's Lamentation," RB, Vol. 5, p. 637.

51. "The German Princess," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 65, 66; 1672-1673.
52. "The Lamentation of Master Page's Wife," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 555-558; "The Lamentation of George Strangwidge," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 559, 560; "The Sorrowfull Complaint of Mistress Page," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 561-563.
53. "The complaint and lamentation of Mistress Arden of Faversham in Kent," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 46-53. The Faversham Wardmote Book reported that this incident occurred in 1550.
54. "A true Relation of one Susan Higges," Vol. 2, pp. 633-638.
55. "Two unfortunate Lovers; or, A true Relation of the lamentable end of John True and Susan Mease," Vol. 2, pp. 643-650.
56. "A Serious Copy of Verses on the late Miss Wray," Vol. 8, p. 327-329; "The Berkshire Tragedy; or, The Wittam Miller," pp. 629-631; 1718.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### LEGENDS AND LORE: A GENRE OF CHAPBOOKS

Many of the chapbooks in this review of traditional stories feature the legends and lore of England. Robin Hood, Wat Tyler, Tom Tram, Thomas Hickathrift—all infamous and well-known characters, whether they ever actually existed or not. Stories from the Oral Tradition expressed the ideas and values of the culture, hence they deserve consideration in a discussion of written material from eighteenth-century popular culture. The oral culture disseminated the legend or lore of England in nursery rhymes, proverbs, and stories that circulated far and wide since the medieval period. Most were printed repeatedly during the eighteenth century. Since they played a role in the spread of literacy, an assessment of their content and impact seems overdue. The footnotes contain references to the copies available in the Houghton Library, Harvard University and the appendix contains a list of the most popular chapbooks in the eighteenth century according to Victor E. Neuburg.

These entertaining stories and vignettes offer no startling surprises about gender. Women do not depart from time-honored and customary roles. The exuberance of Long Meg and her defense of rights flies in the face of the more conventional roles expected of the other women depicted here.

According to E. P. Thompson, the 'picaresque hedonism' of the earlier popular culture gave way to the forces of industrialization and working class identity.<sup>1</sup> Picaresque is defined as pertaining to rogues or rascals. The use of the adjective 'picaresque' to describe an element of the popular culture should not be taken too literally. Many of the picaresque and substantial characters of a culture go against the grain or distinguish themselves by heroic behavior. Stories, ballads, and chapbooks celebrate their exploits and keep their valor and service before the people. Does the term 'picaresque' adequately describes the activities and images of women? The impact of the process of print is the subject of the last chapter. But

here, the 'picaresque' elements of the popular culture can be given their due. The following pages include themes of joking or illustrative behavior, those discussing historic figures, and popular chapbooks delineating the lives of courtesans such as Rosemond Clifford and Jane Shore. Such a scheme maintains a meager chronological order and minimal organizational structure. The chapbooks that follow are hardly an exhaustive list or summary, but they appeared often in chapbooks collections and provide a useful summary of earlier accounts against which to measure those that appeared in the eighteenth century.

'The History of the Seven Wise Mistresses of Rome' imitated 'The Seven Masters.' An introduction advised the reader 'who will find the historical part interspersed with curious lessons to please the fancy, delight the mind, sharpen the wit, and illuminate the understanding.' Lucretia, a Roman Empress, put her daughter into a tower when her husband died. After seven years, she asked the seven wise mistresses who attended her to bring the girl to court. The mistresses consulted the planets and learned that Radamentus, an adviser to Lucretia, plotted against the young girl. He gave Lucretia example after example as to why her young daughter should be put to death. Lucretia exhibited impartiality in a matter involving the life of her own daughter. On each occasion of Radamentus' accusation, the seven mistresses outmaneuvered him and refuted his story. Sabrina was later married to the King of Germany. Subdued by the Macedonians, the royal family retired to a remote island with all their attendants. Having shared in a period of unbridled prosperity with the royal couple, the mistresses continued to serve in adversity and defeat. The moral: wisdom and loyalty should be demonstrated through thick and thin.<sup>2</sup>

'The History of the Noble Salus and Patient Grisel,' also known as 'Patient Grisel' reputedly comes from the Decameron, and was first written in French before being passed into English. Chaucer repeated this tale. This story appeared as a ballad before 1557 and as a chapbook in 1703. The appended discussion of abuse of women suggested that such abuse was normal and routine. Grisel was the

daughter of a poor peasant in France. The Marquesse of Salus married her, but then abandoned her and their child and subjected her to an endless stream of vilification. She silently and patiently endured it as well as the estrangement of her children and his adultery. Her diligence and duty eventually won the affection of her estranged husband. Even her aged if poor father was awarded a place of honor at his palace.<sup>3</sup>

In 'Bateman's Tragedy of the Perjured Bride, Bateman fell in love with a rich farmer's daughter named Isabella. She married him, although she had to leave her father's house. Tragically, she returned to her father's house and Bateman committed suicide because a German who tried to kill Bateman persuaded her to marry him. After bearing a child, Isabella was carried away by a spirit.<sup>4</sup>

In a familiar 'entertaining tale' of the 'Sleeping Beauty of the Wood,' the princess and others slept for one hundred years, surrounded by protecting bramble and bushes, but a young prince fought through the thicket and found them. Everyone woke up and the prince later married the princess. His mother, the Dowager Queen who was descended from a race of Ogres, conspired to do away with the young Queen. The Dowager ogress threw herself into a huge tub of toads, vipers, snakes, and serpents. While the King understandably lamented the passing of his mother, he was comforted by his wife and two children.<sup>5</sup>

The Aldermay Church Yard version of the Canterbury Tales was by J. Canterbury, Junior, and composed for the 'Entertainment of all ingenious young Men and Maids.' These bawdy stories related sexual encounters and schemes to get other people's money. These jestful, 'proper,' but 'pleasant' stories were especially necessary during long winter evenings.<sup>6</sup>

In these stories women were alluring creatures for whom sexual activity and banter about sex came rather easily. The ale-wife entertained other men while her husband was occupied with the care of the waggoner's horses. Female comments about the royal physique are blunt and candid. A young and beautiful woman of Canterbury married an older man to obtain his money, but she soon wanted more

than just old and tired flesh. She coveted a relationship with her serving man. Tricked into climbing a tree, the old husband to his consternation saw his servant at work upon his wife. Thinking the tree bewitched, he ordered it cut down so it did not ruin the other trees. Unlike some unfortunate creatures in ballads, this old man did not accept his cuckolded status.

Upon seeing the coach of the king drive by, 'a plain country woman' remarked that her husband was a handsomer man. The King heard her remark and asked that she not disturb his preferment. Another woman 'of the same cut and cunning' thought that the King was small and remarked: 'what great things God brings about by small means.'

Money remains a motive for unscrupulous and cunning action. The will of an uncle from Canterbury provided a young niece with the money his brother wanted for himself. His scheme to get money came to naught, and she enjoyed the use of that money during her marriage to the man who rescued her.

These tales of ordinary people, all reportedly from the area of Canterbury reveal their simple lives and plain-speaking habits. The purpose was entertainment and light-hearted enjoyment.

In a story reportedly derived from Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, an old mother stubbornly and diabolically fixed herself on her daughter's marriage to Demogaras and tried to thwart the love of her daughter, Parthenia, for Argalus.<sup>7</sup> Her plot backfired. The Queen's physician later cured Parthenia of the leper's curse put upon her face by her rejected suitor, Demogaras. The two were soon happily and lavishly wed. The invocation by the priest at their wedding referred to marriage as 'pleasant war, yet shall no bloodshed stain the field, no hurt is done when both sides yield.' This following verse was the priest's benediction:

Now the sacred knot is ty'd,  
Between the bridegroom and the bride,  
Who are no longer two but one,  
So to remain till life is done.  
Still blest be they in all affairs,  
Living in love, void of cares;

**Their chilres children for to see,  
Spring up like branches prosperously.**

Argalus died on a military mission, and Parthenia committed suicide by donning military armor and going into battle herself. This love story ends with an epitaph recording their complete love in life and death.

### **Mother Bunch, Mother Shipton, Robert Nixon**

Chapbooks also reflected the faith in the supernatural, a faith that some have construed to be Providence—a term often used in chapbooks and other printed material. Prophecy and prediction existed in the religion of the people since the Middle Ages. No discussion here would be complete without reference to the popular, legendary figures who specialized in prophecy—Mother Bunch, Mother Shipton, and Robert Nixon, the Cheshire prophet.

Many chapbooks focused on the interpretation of dreams and moles, fortune telling, and an unfolding display of mysteries contained and then revealed from 'Mother Bunch's Closet.' Mother Bunch, an old woman of the west country who outlasted three husbands by the age of thirty, often encountered distraught young women wandering in meadows who were grateful for her practical advice and predictions ranging from hair color to civil behavior. She mentioned that a civil woman wore a shift and petticoat, but a woman who wore just a shift was a ranter who was 'better lost than found.'<sup>8</sup> Young maids should avoid being married on certain 'dangerous' days—thirty-one such unlucky days during the calendar year. A young woman should offer a young man 'civil entertainment,' but should kept her legs together. Young men should choose a 'civil handsome maid,' not one given to pride or one with money who would make of him a cuckold. She tried to assuage the anxious about their marriage prospects.

Mother Bunch, realizing that 'she must fall, like the leaves, to the earth,' sent invitations to 'young men and maids' for the last comments from 'Golden Closet of



Curiosities.<sup>9</sup> If a malster maid, Margery Loveman, to spread the word that she had been robbed of all her earthly possessions, then she would see whether her intended loved her or her money. Mother Bunch told Susan, the seamstress, to leave her angry young lover alone for a season and he would forget his anger. She told young men to avoid marrying women with money who would become cuckolds. Honest and industrious women were preferable. A final stanza about her funeral reminded the reader that Mother Bunch worked long and hard to see her young charges happily married; she hoped that they would follow her maxims.

The woman commonly known as Mother Shipton reportedly answered to such unflattering terms as hag face and devil's bastard, even within her parish. Janet Ursula Sontibles was born during a terrible thunderstorm in Knaresborough near Yorkshire in 1488.<sup>10</sup>

Many thought her father was a necromancer and her mother was known to be of poor parents. '(h)er entrance into the world was announced by various wonderful presages.' Strange and remarkable events took place in her childhood. Once a holy friar came and exorcised their home to find the missing child, Ursula. When her mother gossiped with other women over a 'cup of sack,' a large black bear terrorized the women. The head of one was thrust into a pot of boiling water and was only removed by the exorcizing holy friar, who, once again, was called upon to 'dissolve the spell.' The young child promised revenge to those who had deformed her. Gaining a reputation for prophecy, she provided intelligence about stolen goods to people who wanted to recover their property. When one woman was busy gossiping and one of her smocks was pilfered, she appealed to Mother Shipton who made the offending female return the smock before a gathered crowd, thus further humiliating her.

She married an old but wealthy carpenter. Sometimes she busied herself spinning yarn. Her daughter Peggy had a reputation as a wanton because she was such a beautiful woman. Since her husband was often away, she entertained military men and resident monks. After Mother Shipton moved to the northern and

border area of Melrose, the monks and nuns respected her skills. She was an unconventional matchmaker. A poor nun was seduced and made pregnant by the devil masquerading as a handsome young man after none of the monks of the monastery had been successful. After Edward the First consulted her, disguised as a messenger, she acknowledged him as her liege lord and secured his promise that sorcery or witchcraft would not be punished during his reign.

The story now turned to ancient events and noted that people of this older time 'though ruder than the present, were more simple, and manners approached nearer to nature in proportion as refinement was removed.' The English King, Edward, encamped in this area wanted to sleep in Peggy's house. She refused and offered him and his prince the barn where he could sleep with the gypsies. They watched through a small hole in the wood as Peggy began to entertain a monk, interrupted by her mother, Mother Shipton, and her husband, the miller. According to her enraged husband, the two royal friends were interested in his milling, and her behavior as a 'base-born harlot' ruined his chances. When she ran to find him a candle to look for his two friends, she found her mother adjusting the monk's large cowl over his body at a certain spot which is was not necessary to mention. This was the end of the first story.

Frank comments about were preferable to refined dialogue, and this is the tone of this story. Although people of this ancient time are simpler, their natural ways were preferable to those of refinement. Unlike Holywellmount conjurors, Mother Shipton did not 'beat about the bush.' She predicted the future in straight and unflattering terms. Her reputation reached far and wide, although some of the prophecies considered to be hers were probably the work of others. Local sources verified her exploits. She died in 1561; the chapbook concluded: 'Amen, amen, so let it be. So rest her body and her soul go free.'

The activities of Mother Shipton were disseminated during the Interregnum, whereas the prophecies of Robert Nixon, termed by some the Cheshire idiot or Cheshire prophet, were not published until the Restoration, whereas those of

Mother Shipton were published during the Interregnum. Whereas she predicted the fate of friends and neighbors, Nixon described potential political events. Both were taken seriously. For a time, Nixon's work was better known than that of Mother Shipton. Some speculate whether the man known as Robert or William Nixon, an idiot ploughman who worked for others, ever lived at all.

The phenomenon of popular prophecy resulted from the combination of folklore with propaganda during the Middle Ages and beyond. Vagueness in the language of Nixon's predictions meant that each epoch took what it wanted to find. By the time of the Restoration, most of these stories lost their credibility. But Nixon's predictions, allegedly communicated before King James I, were used against Jacobite sentiment by two Hanoverian hacks and pamphleteers, John Oldmixon and W.E. Oldmixon's 1714 pamphlet, *Nixon's Cheshire Prophecy* and the work of W.E. in 1719, *The Life of Robert Nixon* were not coarse reproductions of the prophet's work. Rather they were smooth and carefully-crafted, betraying the efforts of the pamphleteers to be "cool and even flippant in tone, and distinctly patronizing. . ." His statements were being used to buttress rebellious behavior, hence the urgent need for the conservatives to use his teachings to support the existing social and political order. His ambiguous and vague predictions of dire consequences could be profitably applied to past events. Although ancient prophets preached a sense of collective responsibility, Nixon focused on the individual and confined himself to the crises and catastrophes of the secular world.<sup>11</sup>

These chapbooks were reprinted in successive editions in the eighteenth century. Ten editions were available by 1740 and by 1745, there were twenty-one editions of the combined work of Oldmixon and W. E. This interest coincided with the concern about rejuvenated Jacobite agitation. From 1746 to 1789 and the time of the French Revolution, only three re-editions of his work appeared.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the official use of his work to pour calm over troubled waters, popular interest in prophecy cannot be discounted. The prophet's work and his reputation reached a wider geographical area. The oral tradition had deep roots in the popular

realm, and these stories were considered to be an authentic part of oral testimony.<sup>13</sup>

These pamphlets were never as popular as the earlier work, but became part of a fascination with 'millennial fantasies' by 1793 and 1794. The government's goal was the manipulation of popular opinion away from a preoccupation with Catholicism and the republican beast across the Channel. These developments made Nixon's prophecies a likely candidate for the government's campaign. Despite such a wave of popularity, Nixon lacked the endurance demonstrated by such millennial figures as Nostradamus and Mother Shipton. Their prophecies were remembered during the Great War and the Second World War, while only a few old people in Cheshire remembered the work of their prophet.<sup>14</sup>

The exploits of Long Meg of Westminster, a cross-dresser, will be reviewed in a later chapter. Allegedly her exploits made her famous in London and Westminster and the Lancashire of her birth. 'Meg is portrayed as a dashing but essentially good-hearted person, able to exchange blows or repartee with equal zest. Her sins are passed over and she shines as a model of generosity.' Weiss categorized this chapbook as one of 'jest, humorous fiction, and riddles.'<sup>15</sup> We have the daring exploits of Robin Hood, Wat Tyler and others. Yet they do not retire to peaceable, domestic environments. Long Meg did. What does this tell us about cultural and sexual roles and norms.

One could conclude that wisdom accrued to women in old age. Moll Flanders, a character of fictional renown, later repented of her wicked ways amid some comfort. Patient Grisel earned the love of her husband and children through forbearance. The seven mistresses accompanied their princess-queen in times of plenty and of want. Long Meg displayed pugnacity and fighting spirit at a young age. After years of waging war against injustice, she was married and kept house, but her principles still guided her. The reference to mothers in some of the titles indicated a revered and earned position within the community.

### Active Heroes

Against this recital of familiar stories with tragic and happy endings, one can look at those chapbooks that appealed to male readers. This list is also familiar; and the story line indicates active roles rather than the passive behavior usually expected of women.

'The History of Guy Earl of Warwick' came to England from France. The British Museum preserves a copy of this chapbook illustrated with Guy's exploits, dated from 1560. Warwick Castle houses artifacts which are 'mute witnesses to Guy's wonderful deeds.'<sup>16</sup> This medieval romance featured Guy's love for Phillis. He needed her father's approval and won it with daring exploits. He returned to the continent and slaughtered 16 or more rogues. When Northumberland was visited by a peril, Guy slayed the dragon and presented its head to the King. After finally winning Phillis in marriage and becoming the Earl of Warwick once his father-in-law died, Guy made a penitential pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In his absence, Phillis lived a pious life, giving effort and money to charitable causes. When Guy returned and found England imperiled by a Danish invader, he went into action. Later he refused honors from the king and retreated to a cave. He revealed himself to his wife just before he died. They enjoyed complete happiness in life and in death.

The story of 'Jack and the Giants' displays similar superhuman exploits. This medieval romance has a 'northern' origin in the time of King Arthur. Jack fought with giants physically, but also outwitted them. King Arthur recognized Jack's meritorious exploits by giving him his daughter. Together they lived a happy life. (Ashton)

Of French origin and dated back to 1489, 'Valentine and Orson' is still published as a children's book. The Aldermay Church Yard edition advised readers that they will experience pain but also delight from this little story.<sup>17</sup> The verse on the frontispiece, printed by J. Evans, in the later decades of the eighteenth

century, sums up its purpose:

**Reader, you'll find this little Book contains  
Enough to answer thy Expencc and Pains,  
And if with Caution you will read it through,  
T'will both instruct thee and delight thee too.**

The sister of Pepin, the French King, was given in marriage to the King of Greece. She had to find her way back to France and gave birth to Valentine and Orson in the Orleans' woods. One of the babies was carried away by a female bear. Meanwhile, King Pepin, hearing accusations against his sister, declared that she should be put to death. She and her servant hopped a ship to Portugal. Orson, nursed by a bear, became a 'wild hairy man' who subdued any knight in the forest. When news of Orson's domination reached the castle, Valentine prevailed upon the King to let him search for this man of great physical prowess. Unaware of their relationship but roughed up in his encounter with Orson, Valentine managed to make his peace with him. He brought him back to Paris. After Valentine and Orson subdued the enraged heathen Portuguese King, they paid a heavy price for their feats in battle. Valentine had killed their father by mistake, since he wore enemy armor. He dressed as a beggar and prepared to die when he came back from a trip to the Holy Sepulchre. His poor wife lived alone for the remainder of her life. Orson continued to rule, but eventually the Christian Green Knight was installed as emperor. Orson returned to the forests and woods, lived to a ripe old age.

Both Guy of Warwick and Valentine and Orson needed peace and serenity. Both turned inward after valiant struggles in a competitive, rapacious world, seeking solace in the simpler, pious life. Women were property and pawns that could be negotiated and distributed as trophies among men. The men treated their wives as companions, once they loved them and needed them as they approached death. For their part the women accepted their roles and turned to a solitary life once their spouses died.

The chapbook, 'Fortunatus,' also featured daring exploits. Fortunatus chose

between three daughters, each of whom desperately wanted to be chosen. Fortunatus also left his wife--after twelve years of marriage--and made his way to Alexandria. He returned to enjoy life.<sup>17</sup>

'The History of Doctor John Faustus' was repeatedly published because it was such an appealing story. A collector of chapbooks, John Ashton draw parallels between the 'vulgar' chapbook and the story elegantly penned by Goethe. He noted that it was an English story printed as early as 1592.<sup>18</sup> Refusing to study divinity, Faustus allowed himself to be empowered by the Devil and fly throughout the world. Faustus' bargain with the Devil required a twenty-four year term. He denied his Christianity. Mephistopholes was his sole companion. He told him about physicians who poisoned their patients, witches who fought amongst themselves, and miller and bakers who did the same. He commanded a young woman who lived near him to return the love of a man who she hated. With his conjuring ways, he lifted the butter and eggs from seven market women who came inquiring to his house. He then had them take off their clothes and dance naked before the people of the town.

At the end of his term of twenty-four years, Faustus lamented his pact with the Devil. Before an assembled gathering of 'Doctors, Masters, and Bachelors,' which he had called together, Faustus came to a violent and bloody end. All were shaken by the experience. His life had been so full of wicked practices and behavior that there was no redemption possible. There is no mention of the act of contrition that would possibly have given him forgiveness and entrance into the Christian kingdom of heaven.

In 'The Story of Blue Beard of the Effects of Female Curiosity,' the rich and elegant Blue Beard repulsed women with his blue beard. Marrying a young woman and then leaving her alone, Blue Beard admonished her not to open a closet. Her curiosity got the best of her and she was horrified when she found the bodies of his murdered wives. When he returned and she could not disguise her terror, he quickly intended that she join his wives' club. Her brothers quickly killed him.

Although she possessed great wealth, established a dowry for her sister and procured commissions for her two brothers, when she married a worthy gentleman, she gave him her money. The young wife who prevailed over the terrorizing Blue Beard could not hold money in her own right.<sup>20</sup>

'Lawrence Lazy' reigned at Lubberland Castle in the County of Sloth. He came into the world as a heavy lump. His notorious deeds resulted in a trial in the townhall of Neverwork where he was found not guilty. Simple Simon's misfortunes were due to the cruelty of his wife, Margery, a shrew and scold. Margery wanted him to understand the meaning of their wedding vows. Simple Simon could survive life's simplest demands. He lost the corn that he carried to market. When he once saw two butter women fighting and tried to get them apart, he broke the eggs which he was carrying to market. After each incident, Margery subjected him to the customary punishment—a beating. Finally, after repeated scoldings, he took poison. This frightened Margery. His punishments then ended and he led the proverbial happily-ever-after life.<sup>21</sup>

In 'The Famous History of the Valiant London Apprentice,' Aurelius loved his master's daughter but was rebuffed. Wandering until he got to Turkey, he proved his prowess in tournaments and vanquished the lions who were set upon him to test his strength and courage. The Emperor then offered him his daughter as well as great riches. Although she was the daughter of an emperor and he was only an ordinary apprentice, her conversion symbolized the power of husbands over wives and also the dominance of Christianity over Islam.<sup>22</sup>

In another popular story, 'The Fryar and Boy,' Jack tended to the family's cows. He met an old hermit who gave him a bow and pipe that produced a 'cunning spell.' Wanting to keep his stepmother from being cross with him, he put a bell through every woman's snout. He cast spells far and wide, made people dance until they dropped. In another version, he found nuns and friars intertwined outside the nunnery. His subjects capered about, until their feet were sore. They even brought down the images of saints. Jack broke the spells and then laughed all the way



home.<sup>23</sup> Irreverence marked popular literature. Here saints are easily dislodged from their elevated positions, thus making clear how tenuous their status really was. He projected his hostility toward his stepmother onto other women by putting a bell through their noses.

Wanton Tom frolicked with women promiscuously and escaped when their husbands caught onto his schemes. Tom also tricked men when he posed as a conjurer. But in the end he was rewarded with money. Tom Thumb's marvelous and 'wonderful' manhood brought him to the king's court in the belly of a fish. Tom died but eventually returned to earth from fairy land. After the king pardoned him, he took his hunting. Tom rode on the back of a mouse. Later Tom came back from fairy land, lusting after the queen. This proved to be his undoing. Held in prison, he slept in a mousetrap, for he had no bed. When he tried to escape, he was caught in a spider's web.<sup>24</sup>

Thomas Hickathrift showed mettle, courage as well as generosity during the age of William the Conqueror. He provided for poor widows for the sake of his own mother. He kept an old woman from being hanged, although he had a hole put through her nose and had her led through the streets. She had been accused of taking a tea cup. As Governor of East Anglia, Tom continued to subdue his opponents. This was a popular 'pleasant history,' a rags-to-riches story. Printers offered a longer version of the later abbreviated chapbook as early as the sixteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

The chapbook tale of Wat Tyler sometimes included Jack Straw in the title. Due to wars with France and recovery after the Norman invasion made government costly. Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and a company of men formented the Peasant Rising of 1381 to protest the despotic behavior of government officials. Richard II agreed to meet with Wat Tyler, but had already decided that Tyler was to be killed in that encounter. The charters that had been granted to other people were revoked. Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, Piers the Plowman and others thought that riches were contemptible, since you could get a sounder sleep on a plowman's simple bed than

on a rich couch. Their 'rising' protested protracted obedience to the king and the payment of taxes. They demanded to know whether they had to lie at the tyrant's feet like spaniels. The King murdered the unsuspecting. Severe punishment meted out to some--being hanged, drawn, and quartered, was meant to cower the others.

### Aristocratic Women

Chapbooks recounting the lives of historical figures have the same sensationalized appeal as similar publications do today. Authors/printers realized that the reading public yearned for scandalous and salacious accounts. All chapbook collections contain numerous copies of different chapbooks focused on the lives of Rosamond Clifford and Jane Shore. Both were mistresses to kings with considerable influence at court. The continued popularity of chapbook 'biographies' testified to their virtues while they minimized or eliminated their shortcomings from public view.<sup>27</sup>

'The Life and Death of Fair Rosamond' and 'The History of Jane Shore' were occasionally printed together. The similarities of their life at court and their later retirement or banishment illustrated the vulnerability and marginalization of women. Both were subject to continuous advances from a lord and king; they could not resist, although allegedly they did not seek this persistent attention. Rosamond was the concubine to King Henry II, and Jane Shore was the paramour of Edward IV. Henry's consort was the venerable Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine--a royal figure in her own right, treated in a later chapter. Rosamond Clifford's father was a lord living on the border of Wales. Jane Shore's father, a tradesman, allegedly tried to protect his daughter from the attention that came so easily to such a beautiful and striking creature. Both kings scrambled to meet these women. King Henry schemed against her parents to bring Rosamond to court. King Edward deviously plotted his introduction to the beautiful but married Jane Shore.

The lengthy 'Unfortunate Concubines' has a Preface with a proverb: 'that

many people talk of Robin Hood, that never shot in his bow.' Many English people knew little about these two women except that they were the mistresses of kings. What they knew came to them from chapbooks--the tabloids of their time. Although both women lived at court splendidly and seemed naive and remote from the scheming of those around them, nevertheless they were subjected to moral opprobrium. Readers should learn that 'lust is a pleasure bought with pain;' a delight hatched with disquiet; a content possessed with fear, and a sin finished with sorrow.'<sup>28</sup>

The King bought the allegiance of Rosamond's tutoress with an ample bribe of gold. Rosamond's parents admonished her, saying that she was the King's strumpet. A suitable match with a noble was not forthcoming, since that lord would not want to earn the wrath of his sovereign. When the King promised happiness and marriage, Rosamond protested that he already had a wife. Rosamond finally gave her consent, when further resistance appeared to be futile. The King promoted her family and friends and tried to enclose her in a bower and labyrinth at Woodstock in Oxfordshire. Meanwhile, the enraged Eleanor encouraged her son to fight against his father in Normandy. When the king left for battle, Eleanor called a council to discuss Rosamond's fate. When the Queen confronted Rosamond, she offered to 'cloister herself in a nunnery,' but that was not enough to satisfy Eleanor. She forced her to take poison. When Henry returned, he was consumed with grief, but vowed revenge. He imprisoned Eleanor, and commanded that when she died, she be left to rot. The account neglected to mention that she survived him and lived the last years of her long life in France. Henry gave Rosamond a regal funeral at Godstow, but historians tell us that Rosamond lived out her remaining years there protected by the cloister and its nuns.

The final lesson: if Henry wasn't married, he might have married Rosamond. Or, she might have become the wife of a peer of the realm, although that appeared improbable, given the king's desire for her. Beauty, also, could be a hindrance to happiness.

The second part of 'Unfortunate Concubines,' focused on Jane Shore and emphasized that women were commodities that could be exchanged among men. Jane's wealthy father took great pride in her beauty. There was only one brief reference to her mother. Realizing that she was a great catch, her father shielded her, but later gave her in marriage to a older, pock-marked man, Matthew Shore. This aptly describes one man giving his daughter to another man. When the King came disguised to Shore's shop to see her for himself, he kissed her on the lips. Either he was taking unusual liberties with another man's wife, which was a royal prerogative, or he flattered Shore that his wife was such a stunning object. Jane immediately sensed that the man was a disguised lord who wanted her services. She told her husband to tell the man that she was sick, should he call again. Mrs. Blague conspired with the King to deliver Jane for his pleasure. In letters Jane pleaded with him to enjoy other women, but he would not relent. When Jane left for the palace secretly, her mother, father, and husband feared that she was the victim of violence. Once he learned that she had become the king's mistress, the disheartened Shore left England.

Meanwhile, Jane lived splendidly at court, but used her power for good ends. She generously gave to the poor and displayed a merry disposition and good heart. The King's other mistress was very religious and lacked a sense of humor. When the King died, Lord Hastings could not adequately protect her against the Protector of the young king who accused her of witchcraft. Knowing that a storm was gathering around her, Jane solicited the assistance of the duplicitous Mrs. Blague who, sensing her vulnerability, treated her badly. After an ecclesiastical court ordered her to do penance for adultery, she was made an example and was paraded in the streets. The accusation of witchcraft continued to follow her. Despite threats of punishment, some people bravely tried to throw her bones with meat.

Quoting the poet, Virgil, the author concluded with a few lines about fate and luck, noting that life is fickle and that what one has can easily be taken away. The

moral: in a cruel and heartless world, people turn on you, and you are one step away from being homeless and friendless. But the message goes beyond listing the temptations that should be avoided. Women were tradable commodities.

Noting that truth was a 'perishable commodity' in medieval times, D. D. R. Owen focused on the life, the legend, and the literature surrounding Eleanor of Aquitaine. Medieval chroniclers, often church figures, took liberties with the truth. Alleged facts could not be easily verified, given distances and sparse details.<sup>28</sup> Embellished accounts created a good story.

The French and often absent Eleanor of Aquitaine was a good subject for such accounts. Eleanor committed adultery, since she divorced her first husband before marrying the English Henry. Eleanor, like other female consorts, made the best of her bargain. But she had her own kingdom and property, while Rosamond had only her beauty. Rosamond was a 'masterpiece of nature.'<sup>30</sup>

Chapbook accounts emphasized Eleanor's quick murderous revenge. Medieval chroniclers, Gerald of Wales, Benedict of Peterborough, Ranulf Higden in the early fourteenth century, and others, wrote about the king's great passion for Rosamond and Eleanor's vengeful reaction. Higden portrayed her as a vicious and betrayed woman, the king as a love-sick man, and Rosamond as praise-worthy. The "French Chronicle of London" or Croniques of London, written anonymously by a clerk in the fourteenth century, implicated Eleanor in Rosamond's death, although the writer did not identify her or the King correctly. Eleanor of Aquitaine became Eleanor of Provence and Henry II became Henry III.<sup>31</sup> All accounts agreed that Henry protected Rosamond and their relationship in a private and wooded park and palace at Woodstock, Oxfordshire.

Chapbook printers and authors simplified this story to its bare essentials. Blind rage by a jealous older woman, the king's lust for the young 'masterpiece,' her subsequent retirement to a nunnery, the final act of a desperate and violent woman--these were juicy marketable details.

Allegedly Eleanor went to Rosamond's retreat and gave her the choice of poison or the sword. In fact, Rosamond retired to a nunnery and died there in 1177. The loyal nuns placed her remains in the middle of their choir, an shocking act for the visiting Bishop of London who had her tomb removed to the nun's chapter house. 'Virtuous' women should not think that sins earned rewards rather than infamy. The Bishop's harsh rebuke is also the subject of legend. Legend also has it that Rosamond herself predicted what would happen. In the chapbook, once she completed her penance and passed from purgatory to heaven, a tree which had previously yielded fruit would then drop 'hollow shells.'<sup>32</sup> The change in the tree proved that Rosamond had entered the kingdom of Heaven. This lesson was not included in chapbooks.

The History of Jane Shore" proved that throne and pomp could not suffice to spare her from grief. Details from the British Museum and state papers tells us of the fate of Jane Winstead Shore. Thomas Heywood made her a character in his Elizabethan play, 'Edward IV.' Middle class women wanted to learn more about her fate.<sup>33</sup>

Although chapbooks made her into a popular icon, they reliably summarized her life. A charming but learned woman, she displayed sensibility and talent, was good at dancing, and knew Norman French. In one account Jane's husband and father faced prison unless she consented to be the king's mistress. In another, Matthew Shore searched high and low for his wife, believing that some other man had taken her away. Not being able to find her, he left England. With an enviable position at court, Jane interceded for the poor and used her influence wisely. After King Edward IV died, she became the mistress of her earlier suitor, Lord Hastings. Mrs. Blague did misuse Jane's trust. King Richard ruthlessly punished those around him--including Jane Shore. A royal proclamation made her anathema. She was publically declared a vagabond and adulteress. Her penance through the streets of Cheapside moved many to pity her, but only a few dared to help her. A

baker who had benefitted from her earlier kindness tried to supply her with bread, but a neighbor informed on him and he was hanged. The text mentioned the word 'homeless.' Feeling guilty about the calamities that befell her husband, she wandered all over England looking for him, her face scorched by the sun. The spot where she died in 1523 became known as Shoreditch. 'She tasted an extreme enjoyment and sorrow,' but was forgiven because of her suffering, humility, benevolence, and generosity.<sup>34</sup> She repented in her Dying Lamentation, claiming that she was happier living in a dunghill than she was in the pomp and splendor of the King's residence.

Biographers of Edward IV noted the presence of Jane Shore in his entourage. These same accounts called her husband William Shore and her father Thomas Wainstead or John Lambert. One source credited her father with wealth. Since, allegedly, she did not care for her husband, being married off by one ambitious tradesman to another, she was easily persuaded to become the King's mistress. One of her contemporaries, Sir Thomas More, admired her and believed that the King loved her deeply and relied upon her. She smoothed over difficulties at court, got some men pardons and helped others. More wrote an eloquent tribute to her on the day she did penance in a white shift, barefoot, holding a candle, and leading a procession.<sup>35</sup>

Despite her mediating skills, those who benefitted from her earlier largesse or good-natured support of their cause did not step forward to defend her. Sources do not agree about the rest of her life. One reported that she was thrown into Ludgate prison to languish for the rest of her days; another noted that she married again, although her situation was miserable, given her earlier luxurious life. More was comforted by learning in 1513 that she was still alive, although in misery and lacking the beauty and comfort of her earlier years.<sup>35</sup>

Falls from grace were the order of the day or century. The description of her life as a mistress, her departure from court circles, her penance and miserable life continue the theme of marginalization of women. Her punishment bore the

overtones of her being a harlot, being punished for sexual transgressions. Jane Shore used power purportedly for good purposes, but had no independent power. The genre of whore biographies do not include her life as part of that collection.

A similar theme emerges from 'The True Life of Eleanor Gwinn,' one of King Charles II's many mistresses.<sup>37</sup> Again there was brief mention of her mother, but, like Jane Shore's father, her father, a tradesman, tried to protect her. He sent her to the country to learn 'country economy' and avoid the city's immorality. Eventually she became a courtesan who impressed the King with her beauty and wit. Like Jane Shore, she intervened on behalf of friends and causes, never was boastful or pretentious, and maintained both dignity and equilibrium. She survived through her wit. She knew that men could not be held to their lofty promises, since they were given to momentary passions. Young men who called her a whore deprecated her to no avail. In the chapbook, one of her suitors was 'decoying a mistress.' While Nell was trying to persuade the Duke of Villers to support a destitute poet, he abruptly left their meeting after glimpsing a 'Brace of Females' that he had procured for the King. Although she was reduced in influence once the king's eyes feasted on other women, she kept her position. The chapbook inferred her calculating ways were not offensive. She used friendship to her advantage. The King's affection for her continued even after he had turned to other women. His Consort, Queen Catherine, provided a yearly allowance for her son.

A biography, published in 1924, provided only scant evidence, much of it borrowed from an 1852 biography, but it did refer to papers in the British Museum. The details matched those of the earlier chapbook. Mentioning her her charity and generosity, her biographer likened her virtuous behavior to that of Jane Shore. For example, Nell saw someone being put into prison while she was out driving, so she paid his debt. Her will stipulated that 100 pounds be dispensed for warm clothing and the relief of prisoners at St. James and St. Martin's Prison. These were popular chapbooks because they revealed the dignity of ordinary women who were elevated



to court. Magnanimity in a woman who went the proverbial route from rags to riches, was much admired.<sup>36</sup>

Chapbook biographies of these women touched a raw nerve. They described women of good breeding who retained their goodness and kept their head. They maintained the common touch while exhibiting graciousness and taste. Jane Shore met an undeserved end, an innocent and guileless victim of cruel and envious people. Eleanor Gwinn managed to survive despite her reduced circumstances and loss of favor with the king.

The earlier chapbooks describe the 'picaresque' active heroes who defy the odds. These men of valor subdued their opponents, although not always without pain. Women such as Mother Bunch or Mother Shipton came from legend. Mother Bunch comforted distraught young women. Both were wise old women advised those who came before them. Such a role was traditionally given to old women in the village, and its circulation in legend and print did not defy convention. No later chapbooks accord women this role. Older men, who became wise and philosophical, functioned significantly in later eighteenth century stories written with both ideology and the market in mind. No wise old women appeared.

## Notes

Neuburg List--reference to being included in the most popular chapbooks of the eighteenth century. See Appendix One.

1. Thomas Lacqueur, "Sex and Desire in the Industrial Revolution," appearing in O'Brien, Patrick and Roland Quinault, Eds., The Industrial Revolution and British Society, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
2. "History of the Seven Wise Mistresses of Rome, containing many ingenious and interesting stories,' Printed for the purchasers, 1811. This story had a long run in English history; Neuburg list. This was the version available.
3. "The History of Patient Grisel," (Part of the Decameron), 1619, Edited with an Introduction by Henry B. Wheataley, London: Village Society, 1885. The Harvard Catalogue lists two copies printed at Aldermay Church Yard, one by L. How, and broadside ballads by the Dicey firm, plus one from Birmingham by S. and T. Martin. Neuburg list. Weiss, p. 63.
4. "Bateman's Tragedy or the Perjured Bride Justly Rewarded,' The Folger Library lists this chapbook's appearance at about 1700. The collection at Harvard's Houghton Library includes one from Nottingham by S. Creswell and two broadside ballads, one by Bow Church Yard. Neuburg list.
5. "The Sleeping Beauty of the Wood, An Entertaining Tale," printed by J. Marshall, Newcastle about 1800; The Harvard collection includes nine versions from the following sources: Bow Church Yard, Wotton-under-Edge, C. Sympson of London, two from London and Glasgow and one from Edinburgh. Neuburg list.
6. "Canterbury Tales; Composed for the Entertainment of all Ingenious young men and Maids, and their Merry Meetings at Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, or any other Time, especially on the long Winter Evening, to keep his Wits employed. Intermixed with pleasant Stories, witty Jestes, and delightful Songs, very proper from either City, Town or Country." By. J. Chaucer, Junior. Printed and Sold in Aldermay Church-Yard, Bow-Lane, London. The Harvard Catalogue also included a version by J. Evans of London. Neuburg List.
7. "The History of Argalus and Parthenia; being a choice flower gathered out of Sir Philip Sidney's rare garden. London, Aldermay Church Yard. Neuburg list.
8. "Mother Bunch's Closet, Newly-Broken Into, A History of Mother Bunch, Signification of Moles." Another version: Mother Bunch's Closet Newly Broken Open; Containing Rare Secrets of Art and Nature, Tried and Experienced by

Learned Philosophers, Are recommended to all ingenious Young Men and Maids, Teaching them, in a natural Way, how to get good Wives and Husbands. By our loving Friend Poor Tom, for the King, a lover of Mirth, but a hater of Treason." J. Evans. Long Lane, West Smithfield, London. Neuburg list. Mother's Bunch's story was classified as part of the fortune-telling or dream section of the Harvard Catalogue and collection.

9. "The History of Mother Bunch of the West; Containing Many Rarities out of her Golden Closet of Curiosities." J., Evans, Long Lane, West Smithfield, London.

10. "History of Mother Shipton, The Strange and Wonderful History of Prophecies of Mother Shipton." This account was printed by M. Randall, Stirling. One cited in the Harvard Catalogue refers to a version published by Aldermay Church Yard. Neuburg list. The 1797 account used for this study commented on the manners of that era.

11. Jacqueline Simpson, "Nixon's Prophecies in Their Historical Setting," Folklore 86 (Autumn/Winter, 1975): 202, 203; Ian Sellers, "Nixon, the Cheshire Prophet and his Interpreters," Folklore 92 (1981): 30, 31. "Nixon's Cheshire Prophecy at Large. Published from the Lady Cowper's Correct Copy, In the Reign of Queen Anne. With Historical and Political Remarks: and Several Instances wherein it is Fulfilled. Also His Life." By John Oldmixon, Esq. London: Printed for H. Turpin, Bookseller, No. 104, St. John-Street, West Smithfield, and sold by all the Booksellers in Town and Country. Neuburg list.

12. Sellers, "Nixon, the Cheshire Prophet," p. 33.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 37 quoting E. P. Thompson also 37-39; Simpson, "Nixon's Prophecies in Their Historical Setting," p. 206. In 1774, Nixon's work again appeared in a volume of "Original Prediction and a Life" authored by a person identified only as C, both were published by R. Snagg.

15. "The Life and Death of Long Meg of Westminster," Aldermay Church Yard. Also Louis B. Wright, Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935), pp. 10, 11. Weiss, 87. Neuburg list. Pauline Greenhill, "Neither a Man nor a Maid: Sexualities and Gendered Meanings in Crossdressing Ballads," Journal of American Folklore, 108 (1995): 170, 171.

16. "Guy, Earl of Warwick," John Ashton, Chap-books of the Eighteenth Century, Notes and Introduction by Ashton, (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1882, reissued in 1966), p. 139. Neuburg list. The Aldermay Church Yard circulated a version of this chapbook. The copy in the British Museum was dated 1560. All versions of

Guy of Warwick were modeled after a "Famous History of Guy Earle of Warwick" by the author, Samuel Rowlands. This biography was printed approximately nine times between 1600 and 1700. Weiss, p. 65. (Weiss was 20)

17. "The History of Valentine and Orson," Printed and sold by J. Evans and Co. The Harvard Catalogue also lists copies by T. Sabine and Son, Aldermay Church Yard, and one from Glasgow. Neuburg list. The verse on the frontispiece was printed by J. Evans in the later decades of the eighteenth century.

18. "Fortunatus," John Ashton, Chap-books of the Eighteenth Century, (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1882), p. 124.

19. "History of Dr. John Faustus," Ashton, Chap-Books, p. 38. Ashton noted that this was an English story printed as early as 1592.

20. Blue Beard.

21 "The History of Lawrence Lazy," Aldermay Church Yard; "Simple Simon's Misfortunes and his Wife's Cruelty," copies by both Aldermay Church Yard and J. Evans. Neuburg list.

22. "The Famous History of the Valiant London 'Prentice," Aldermay Church Yard. Versions were printed by Bow and Aldermay Church Yard and J. Evans.

23. "The Merry Piper or The Friar and Boy, An Entertaining Tale," Part the Second, A. Swindells, Manchester. Copies from London without mention of the printer's imprint; also from Aldermay Church Yard and J. Evans. Neuburg list.

24. "Wanton Tom or the Merry History of Tom Stitch the Taylor," in two parts, Aldermay Church Yard; "Tom Thumb," in three parts, Aldermay Church Yard. Other versions in the Harvard Catalogue list L. How, Petticoat-lane and a copy from Banbury by J. G. Rusher. Neuburg list.

25. "History of Thomas Hickathrift." This story was printed by Aldermay Church Yard, J. M. for W. Thackeray and T. Passinger, and A. Swindells of Manchester. Neuburg list.

26. "Wat Tyler," A Dramatic poem in three acts by Robert Southey, printed and sold by William Fordyce of Newcastle. Victor E. Neuberg's list of eighteenth-century chapbooks refers to "Wat Tyler and Jack Straw."

27. The story of these two women, mistresses to English kings has long fascinated the English reading and listening public. There are many printings and versions of their plight, of which the following is but a sample. "Unfortunate Concubines, or

The History of Fair Rosamond, Mistress to Henry II, and Jane Shore, Mistress to Edward IV. Kings of England, Shewing how they came to be seduced. With their Unhappy Ends." Printed and sold by T. Sabine and Son, London, 90 pages. The same chapbook was also printed by J. Bew, London, 1789. The story of Rosamond was also featured by Bow Church Yard, John White of York, and printers in two Scottish cities: Penrith and Glasgow. The version of Jane Shore for this chapter is "The Life and Death of Mrs. Jane Shore, Concubine to Edward IV," Printed and sold at the London and Middlesex Printing Office, (Sabine firm), 24 pages. The stories of Rosamond Clifford and Jane Shore are some of the most popular and re-printed chapbooks in the entire collection based on my perusal of the sources.

28. 'Unfortunate Concubines,' Preface, p. 7.

29. D. D. R. Owen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen and Legend, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 103.

30. Ibid., p. 111. Amy Kelly, Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 151.

31. D. D. R. Owen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, pp. 114-124; Marion Meade, Eleanor of Aquitaine, A Biography, (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1977), p. 235.

32. Kelly, Ibid., p. 152; Owen, Ibid., p. 115; Meade, Ibid., p. 236. .

33. "History of Jane Shore," D. Bowman and Publishers, Newcastle. Louis B. Wright, Middle Class Culture, pp. 617, 639.

34. "History of Jane Shore," p. 35.

35. Gila Falkus, The Life and Times of Edward IV, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), p. 201. Peter Ackroyd, The Life of Thomas More, (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1998), p. 163.

36. Eric N. Simons, The Reign of Edward IV, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), pp. 304, 305; Mary Clive, This Sun of York, A Biography of Edward IV, (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 287.

37. "The True Life of Eleanor Gwinn, A Celebrated Courtesan, in the Reign of King Charles II, and Mistress to that Monarch. Who from the low degree of an Orange Girl, after being Debauch'd by Mr. Deviel an Eminent Counsellor at Law; and keeping Company with several Noblemen and Gentlemen, was taken in Favour of his aforesaid Majesty." Also included at the end of this story of the 1753th Chapter of the Jews. Does this refer to the year? London, Printed and Sold by T. Bailey, Printer and Printsellers in Leadenhall Street, where Business in the Printing way is

done at the very lowest prices, in 40 pages.

38. Arthur Dasent, Nell Gwynne, 1650-1689. Her Life's Story From St. Giles's to St. James's with some Account of Whitehall and Windsor in the Reign of Charles the Second. (New York and London: Benjamin Books, 1924), pp. 153, 215, 277. Much of Dasent's biography was borrowed from an 1852 version, although it did refer to papers in the British Museum.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

## BALLADS AND CHAPBOOKS: BANAL BICKERING AND BANTER

The chapbooks in this chapter are amusing and entertaining stories. They are less time-bound or a product of a particular era, since their dates of publication range over the whole of the eighteenth century. These chapbooks poke fun at gender roles and marital relationships established in the oral tradition by ballads and balladmongers. A regional pattern cannot be firmly identified despite some significant regional examples, for instance, however, the Tewkesbury chapbooks, printed in the 1770s, with a different style from those that were printed in London.

The proverb, 'Laughter is the best medicine,' reminds us of the purposes of ballads and chapbooks. In a study of marital discord in seventeenth-century ballads, Elizabeth Foyster detected a difference between laughter at a charivari and the response to a ballad. Amusement at a charivari was a byproduct of an activity whose real purpose was to punish those who violated the social code. Ballads were written for amusement and entertainment. Those who laughed at their sentiments poked fun at those who did not or could not abide by the understood rules of behavior. The ballad advised listeners to accept gender roles and social rules.<sup>1</sup>

The humor of the ballad had an instructive purpose. In the seventeenth century, patriarchal ideology assumed that men would preside in the home, both as head of household and as the head of the family's spiritual life. Women would be domesticated and submissive. But that is not what these chapbooks and ballads suggest. In Foyster's scenario, ballads modified behavior or instructed younger women on how they should behave.<sup>2</sup> Some ballads may have idealized marital life for young and impressionable female listeners, but the realities of marriage could be quite different. It seems unlikely that women who ruled the roost or those that felt they had to step in and run the household--those who wore the pants for whatever reason, would be deterred by the admonitions of ballads.

Judith M. Bennett's discussion of medieval Brigstock provides clues about the emphasis on conjugal relationships in these ballads and chapbooks. The status of women and disabilities incumbent upon them derived from their status as wives, not their condition as women. Neither the government nor socio-economic conditions compelled their subordination. Hard times and death, however, required women to assert themselves beyond prescribed boundaries.<sup>3</sup>

Marriage was the connective tissue in medieval life. Ballads of the early modern period continued to emphasize the viability of the conjugal household and the agonies and ecstasies of married life. Because the ballads offer such rich and evocative descriptions of human relationships, their comparison allow us with to analyze the impact of these chapbooks and their connection to the rich oral tradition of ballads. The Roxburghe Ballads in eight volumes provide a rich source for comparison with chapbooks. The mere number of ballads from the Roxburghe and other collections are intimidating, but the historian must cautiously compare the purposes of the ballads and that of chapbooks.

Certain themes blatantly announced themselves. The emphasis upon life experiences allowed ballads and chapbooks commented on the vagaries of everyday life. Ballads concentrated on the relationship between men and women and offer few if any comments on family life and children.

The pursuit of consumer goods and material things is another predominating theme. Whether as the member of the family charged with purchasing necessities or as a single young worker, women pursued consumer goods. The 'birth of a consumer society' preceded the eighteenth-century starting point usually assumed by historians. Margaret Spufford supposes that the pursuit of luxury goods in the seventeenth century stimulated the purchase of additional goods--pictures, ballads, and chapbooks. Alice Clark emphasized the shift from production to consumption in the seventeenth century, and Carole Shammas echoed her conclusions. Neil Mackendrick emphasized social status and emulation as an eighteenth-century phenomenon, but we see hints and glimmerings of the importance of consumption in



the ballads in the previous century. Evidence from a study of inventories reveals that all groups in English society had improved the quality of their bedding, linens, and pewter by 1700.<sup>4</sup>

A meaningful assessment must consider the socio-economic variables of English life and the standing of women in neighborhoods, villages, and communities. Early modern England was a contentious society with harsh and barbed exchanges among neighbors, relatives, friends, or acquaintances. Libelous and railing rhymes remind us that inarticulate people imaginatively expressed their sentiments. Defamation was a noticeable phenomenon. Recent research on London York and Norfolk confirms the extent of suits filed alleging defamation.<sup>5</sup>

Family reconstitution and village studies tell us that English society differed markedly from the rest of Europe. The work of Alan Macfarlane contradicts earlier assumptions. Historians since the time of R. H. Tawney have celebrated a medieval past of communal holdings and cooperative peasants. More recently, Lawrence Stone offered a version of family life which has since been vigorously challenged, notably by Macfarlane. Stone's version of family history supposed that marriage was a largely affectionless arrangement determined largely by considerations of property. He later admitted that his sources did not permit him to make generalizations about plebeian marriage. Macfarlane offered anthropological evidence from other cultures to refute Stone's assertions. His longer perspective, a longue duree version of marriage stressed consistency since the Middle Ages. But Macfarlane also maintains that a pronounced streak of individualism permeated English life. Kinship ties were 'flexible' and 'permissive,' especially if compared to those of continental Europe. Extended kin ties were weak and even less significant for the lower orders. The nuclear family, near-by kin, neighbors, and even personal friends provided a support system. The social as well as geographic mobility of English society attenuated a need for a reliable set of kin, neighbors, and a stable hierarchical order.<sup>6</sup> Does this acknowledged fluidity demand more defined gender roles?

A patriarchal system may well arouse a streak of rebellion in women. Customs derided female dominance, but popular literature documents female aggressiveness and displays patriarchal sensitivity to female power or insubordination. The forms which display humor--whether they be proverbs, ballads or chapbooks in the seventeenth or eighteenth century--were part of a misogynistic tradition in Western culture. J. A. Sharpe, in his discussion of plebeian marriage, cites Thomas' caveats about putting such humorous accounts into a relevant context.<sup>7</sup>

The limited circle of a village of its 'settled' inhabitants, the neighborhood, required reciprocity, shared values, economic aid, and cooperation. Although amicable relations among neighbors were vital to village welfare and harmony, conflicts were inevitable. At the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, more interpersonal conflicts ended up in court in Terling. Reflecting their religious zeal, Terling's leaders preached social discipline and targeted the offending behavior of the poor. In addition to prosecuting sexual offenses, they assaulted the ale-house and tried to monitor immigration.<sup>8</sup>

Preliminary research by Bernard Capp indicates that networks among women provided them with power within their neighborhoods, church, and communities. Their existence within a subculture gave them some space removed from patriarchal authority. Their men may have tacitly approved of their action against enclosure and participated in food riots; their involvement negates assumptions of docile and submissive behavior.<sup>9</sup>

Below the upper levels, the fluidity and everyday realities of English society made the confinement of women impossible. A working conception of what constituted permissible behavior enforced by the need for honor determined what a young girl or grown woman should do. Gossip either condemned her or kept her reputation intact. Hence women who found themselves subjected to gossip may have retaliated by filing a complaint. Harsh words on other matters frequently preceded such filings. Such suits did not take place in a 'social or cultural vacuum.'

The 'deserving' poor of Tudor or Stuart England tried to mark themselves off from those poor who were unruly, irreligious, or both. Ballad writers denounced the behavior of women during the Restoration. Increased social stratification due to economic changes had many ramifications.<sup>10</sup>

Defamation was not a serious problem in the later Middle Ages, but in the social climate of Tudor and Stuart England, insults flowed freely. An exchange of barbed words could end up with the parties in court, as suggested by the conflicts in Terling. Community leaders there sought to create order by imposing social standards or discipline that conformed to their expectations. At the local or neighborhood level, earlier economic decline engendered bitterness and a decline of 'good neighborhood.'--a primary factor in witchcraft accusations.<sup>11</sup>

In early modern London, female honor involved sexual reputation, and honesty was a primary component of that reputation. Neighborhood women had a stake in monitoring what other women did. Despite restrictions on their ability to use language and lawsuits effectively, plus the encumbrance of gender and their position within the household and community, women had a powerful weapon: words. They availed themselves of opportunities to hurl insulting words at others and take legal action. Their claim of 'verbal and legal' authority was simultaneously precarious yet powerful. Its use involved risks. For such language defined other women, their character, and their honesty. The penchant for filing cases alleging defamation meant that the London ecclesiastical courts became courts for women. Most women who filed such suits were married women or widows. Many were the wives of tradesmen or craftsmen. They worked in shops, took in washing, or work as domestic servants. Many ran businesses in front of their houses.<sup>12</sup>

Significant records of defamation cannot be found for the later Middle Ages in York church records, but from 1560 on, there was an increase of cases petitioning for ecclesiastical review. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these accusations frequently involved sexual slander. For the period, 1590-1640, defamation litigation doubled; from 1705-1720, it tripled. Increased filings indicate

the importance of the defense of one's honor and that of one's kin. For two decades, 1590 and 1690, an overwhelming number of cases involved a woman's defense of her good name against accusations of fornication or adultery. The female plaintiffs were usually married. Sexual honor was critical to a married woman and its defense was more important to the lower orders than historians have previously surmised.<sup>13</sup>

The pace of change and the turbulent politics between 1600 to 1650 in Norfolk required families to maintain order. Unruly men and disorderly women can be detected in church court records for 1560 to 1640. Witches were persecuted. Much learned discussion about the nature and condition of women displays the prevailing anxiety about what women wanted. Norwich Consistory Court records between 1650 and 1725 document the filing of defamation suits by women against other women; fewer suits were filed by men against women. Increasingly, suits of one woman against another took place in a limited social world corresponding to the narrow judgments on which their reputation and honor depended.<sup>14</sup>

The hurling of the base charge of 'whore' could easily damage a London woman's reputation. There was however, plenty of contradictory, inconsistent behavior as revealed by a study of sexual honor in London for the years 1770-1825. Some women defended friends or neighbors who others would reject. The requirements for virtue differed for plebeian women. They valued more than just sexual reputation. They put a premium on decency. Plebeian women would help other women because they knew that they might be in similar circumstances. Pregnant women or women with children who might otherwise have to sell their bodies were often helped by female relatives. Records from the London Consistory Court for 1770-1810, however, reveal the anxiety of plaintiffs who were the wives of tradesmen, artisans as well as women shopkeepers. Since about 1/4 of Clark's sample were independent business women or those who were partners with their spouses, they had public reputations to defend. The study of Somerset by Polly Morris indicated that defense of sexual honor was mainly by married women. In

London, half of the women who defended themselves were widowed, divorced, or single, indicating that the defense of honor was vital for a single woman.<sup>15</sup>

Researchers have found similar English customs to the woman-on-top phenomenon in early modern France. These rituals shamed those whose transgressions were not adequately recognized by the law. The 'feminine monarch'--the wife who abused a husband, the termagant or scold, or the insubordinate wife--were not easily accommodated in early modern England. 'Riding the stang' or the skimmington made the activities of domineering women public. Such customs also ostracized a cuckold. Rough music could also denounce immoral sexual activity. Charivaris were a popular tradition that gave people the right to 'supplement the legal system.' They revealed another less-discernible motive--celebration of female defiance of the norms. Towns tried to penalize women who were suspected of illicit sexual behavior by parading them as whores. These popular activities had festive touches that could be incorporated into the observance of holidays. Patriarchal ideology boasted of male dominance and female submission. Yet as is often the case, reality did not fit patriarchal utterances. Husbands valued wives who pulled their weight in marriage. Partnership was prized in a society where the stark individual and collective memory of unexpected economic and natural calamities were still on the minds of every man and woman. The idea of virtue in women was applauded, but, nevertheless, there was still work to be done for a marriage to succeed and a family to survive. Provoking displays such as a riding or rough music defined the boundaries. Women who went beyond the limits and imprudently tested the extremes could be publicly humiliated. Moreover, the festive elements of ridings and rough music provided a much-needed catharsis. Tension between society's maxim that the husband be the boss and the reality of a wife who held her own required the release of pent-up emotions.<sup>16</sup> Such a release can be seen in the sentiments of ballads and chapbooks, and the words bantered about at the ale-house. The ale-house was a haven for men, particularly for married men who

needed to escape their turbulent households. The ale-house provided easy company and a boastful climate without competing claims or statements by the spouse. The wrongs done to men by women could be exaggerated.

### Chap-Ballads

Leslie Shepherd identified differing categories of street literature, including chap-ballads, although he does not define chap-ballads adequately. One can assume that ballads later published in chapbooks qualified. The Harvard collection of chapbooks available at the Houghton Library included printed ballads that were noted as part of the Roxburghe collection. Bow Church Yard and Aldermary Church Yard (the Dicey family) later printed many of these seventeenth century ballads in the eighteenth century. Several examples of chap-ballads follow, while others are noted in the footnotes.<sup>17</sup>

One of the editors of the Roxburghe Ballads, J. Woodfall Ebsworth, castigated 'Female Ramblers' in a poem before introducing a section describing their activities. Female Ramblers were expensive, manipulative, 'unfeminine, intolerant, and vain.'<sup>18</sup> In past times it was easier to escape their clutches. A number of Roxburghe ballads lamented their intriguing ways.

Before one ballad later printed by Sympson, Ebsworth questioned whether the 'unhappy lady of Hackney' deserved the aspersion cast upon her by being included in the company of 'female ramblers.' She, however, had 'no welcome or admittance elsewhere.' She accepted the advances of her sister's husband and hid with him from her family. Her parents persisted in their efforts to find her. Finding herself pregnant and believing that she would die, she wrote to her parents and confessed to 'incest' with her 'brother.' Fearing later that she had been murdered, her parents asked a surgeon to examine her body. The results of this sad situation ruined an entire family.<sup>19</sup>

In a ballad by Laurence Price, one young fair woman dared to take matters into her own hands. 'The Famous Flower of Serving Men' had put on men's clothing and changed her name from 'fair Elise to Sweet William.' She persuaded the King to make 'her' his personal chamberlain and was only discovered when his servants heard her sing and play the lute one day while the king and his men were hunting. The King immediately made her his wife.<sup>20</sup>

Also included were the machinations of men who destroyed young women. In 'The Broken Contract,' a young fourteen-year-old girl, herself still only a child, accepted the pleading of a young man that he would run himself on his sword if she did not submit. Later informed by her that she was pregnant, he banished her and called her 'twenty whores.' With her two infants, she wandered aimlessly until she resolved to confront him. He responded with a violent blow that knocked her down and set the whole town where he lived against her and her children. She was driven out of town and the infants soon died. He suffered pangs of conscience and endeavored to seek her pardon. She was bleeding to death and he soon ran his sword through his body after making the following declaration:

You perjur'd lovers all take notice, pray!  
 See you a conscience make,  
 and don't betray  
 Any poor harmless love, least you (he)r ruin prove, for there's a God  
 above will find you out.<sup>21</sup>

A popular account by Humfrey Crouch of a young man's madness due to love, "Mad Man's Morris," warned young men against the entanglements of love. Later chained and locked in Bedlam, this young man ran naked through the streets, frantically seeking the woman that he loved. He was then reduced to picking out straws:

I have no more to say to you,  
 My keeper now doth chide me;  
 Now must I bid you all adew,  
 God knows what will betide me!  
 To picking straws now must I go,  
 My time in Bedlam spending.

**Good folks, you your beginning know,  
But do not know your ending.<sup>22</sup>**

The editor of this volume, William Chappell, noted that perhaps this ballad appealed to young women because they enjoyed hearing about a woman who so completely unnerved a man.<sup>23</sup>

In another account, a merchant's son was totally outwitted by the 'beggar-wench of Hull.' Although only a woman of 'mean degree,' she pleaded her case of homelessness and used her feminine wiles against him. Taking his fine clothes and his money, she left him with her rags. He was reduced to leaving the inn in her dirty dress and petticoat and rode home determined never to consort with a beggar-woman again.<sup>24</sup>

The ballad, 'George Barnwell,' appeared as early as 1624 and was first performed as a play in 1721. (in Sabine catalog) The play was regularly staged for London apprentices on Boxing night. This play preceded the regular Christmas pantomime. The untimely end of Barnwell and his strumpet-mistress, Sara Millwood, was unlikely to evoke sympathy from the audience, given the 'nasty, brutish, and short' nature of English life.

In the opening stanza, Barnwell warned all London apprentices to 'take heed of Harlots then and their enticing trains.' Having pilfered corn for Sara, he counted on her support. She demurred only after discovering that he had some additional money. Having promised Sara that he would rob his uncle once he helped him take his cattle to market, he severely 'crakt his crown.' After George and Sara quarreled, she reported him to the Constable and he escaped across the sea. His vengeful letter to the Mayor of London implicated her, resulted in her swinging from the gallows. After his arrest in Polonia for murder, he could not cheat death:

**Lo, here's the end of wilful youth, that after Harlots haunt,  
Who, in the spoyl of other men, about the streets do flaunt.<sup>25</sup>**

In another chap ballad, 'The History of Tommy Potts or, The Lovers Quarrell,' included a declaration about the applicable tune. This study emphasizes narratives,



choosing them consciously in order to steer away from ballads and look at stories. This example, however, suggests that a fine line exists between ballads and chapbooks in the early eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

Tommy Potts was but a serving man who had no resources to gain the hand of the Scottish Lord Arundel's daughter, Rosamond. Lord Phenix requested her hand in marriage, but was rebuffed by the lady. He put Tommy Potts down, calling him a serving man of low degree. The lady and his master steeled him for his duel with Lord Phenix. His master gave him money and men to face a superior adversary and promised to make him heir to his lands. Tommy Potts was ultimately successful and gained the title and acquisitions befitting a man ennobled as Lord Arundel. At the conclusion of the first part, the verse noted that the reader would be pleased 'more or less' by the success of Potts, thus making it clear that these stories appealed to those who wished to read of the ultimate triumph of a man of low birth.

#### Themes in the Roxburghe Ballads Compared to Chapbooks

Wiltenburg's comparison of English and German street ballads displayed the English penchant for depicting husband-wife relationships and the German concern for the emotional tie between parents and children.<sup>27</sup> Alan Macfarlane's broad anthropological perspective sheds some light on the absence of children in ballads and chapbooks. He emphasized continuity in a 'Malthusian marriage system' between 1300 and 1840. Love and the conjugal tie between a man and woman were critical, and children were secondary. They provided emotional satisfaction but were not necessary to the well-being of the marriage. Procreation was central to the marital bond in most societies, but Macfarlane believes that this was minimized in England. Companionate marriages and friendship within marriage was stronger in England than elsewhere. This pattern was not confined to the middle class. Individuals allowed some personal choice in marital decisions calculated the

qualities of prospective mates. Likewise, they calculated the costs and benefits of raising children.<sup>28</sup>

Seldom are children mentioned in the Roxburghe Ballads. Passing comments mentioned the washing of children's clothes or the difficulty of the daily routine involving children, but children were not critical to the marital relationship.

The extensive Roxburghe collection is only one source of the rich tradition of ballads. Estimates of the depth and breadth of this oral form suggest the considerable number of extant ballads, as well as those that did not survive. Since estimates do not accurately assess the circulation of either form, we are left with our best guess-estimates. The comparison minimizes but realistically places impact of chapbooks when compared to the extensive number of ballads in the Roxburghe collection alone.

Many relevant subjects that are lacking in chapbook collections appear in ballad collections. There are a prolific number of ballads that cover the vagaries of being a maiden, maintaining oneself and one's virtue, while searching for the right mate. Some maids were sanguine about their status as single women, while they tried to maximize their few options. 'The Wooing Maid who was past 20 years wondered aloud whether her time had come and gone. She had tried all her tricks, considered herself the equal of any man, but still had to get married, and by this time she was desperate:

I hold my selfe equall with most in the parish  
 For feature, for parts and what chiefly doth cherish  
 The fire of affection, which is store of money;  
 And yet there is no man will set love upon me.  
 Come gentle, come simple, come foolish, come witty,  
 Oh! if you lack a maid take me for pittie.

Let none be offended, nor say I'm uncivill,  
 For I needs must have one, be he good or evil:  
 Nay, rather then faile, Ile have a tinker or broomman,  
 A pedler, an inkman, a matman, or some man.<sup>29</sup>

Women with illegitimate children boasted of their earnings in the world's oldest profession. The pregnant 'witty western lasse' took her large belly to London, resolved to abandon her child, and talk a tradesman into marrying her. She would be true and good, but would give a 'crabbed' and 'cross' man a run for his money. The 'merry conceited lasse' would give as good as she got. If he roamed, kept her in 'thred-bare cloathes,' abused her, drank too much, she would respond in-kind.<sup>30</sup> 'The Loving Chambermaid' was 'unblushing in her confirmed depravity.' She boldly talked about lying with her master, although her mistress remained ignorant of this. She put her child out to nurse, gamely unashamedly admitted that she had only a 'marke a yeere' from her mother, but nevertheless she lived opulently because men provided her with material goods in return for her services.<sup>31</sup>

'Crafty Kate of Colchester' once gave in to the demands of a clothier who left her, but when she heard that he made a match with a lawyer's daughter, she resolved to frighten him out of its wits. Borrowing an old cow-hide with horns from a Tanner, she dressed up like Lucifer. He was so terrified that he agreed to marry her. Kate told no one what she had done, until a year later when she 'told it at her gossiping.' She told her husband and he professed enjoyment.<sup>32</sup> This is evidence of the network of women neighbors and their approval of such assertive behavior. 'Crafty' maids calculatedly their chances cleverly and resolved not to be deceived or outwitted. An old miller who expected to bed a comely young damsel was fooled when this 'crafty maid of the west' arranged horsehairs in his bed that blistered him.<sup>33</sup> Ballads often offered 'advice' to ladies to avoid deceitful men such as officers with a sword who could not be trusted for a sword was a 'thing transitory;' a lawyer--the 'lungs of the law,' should also be avoided as well as the town bully.<sup>34</sup> Terms such as 'advice,' 'lamentation,' 'complaint' frequently appeared in the titles of ballads that focused on the tenuous status of young women who needed husbands.

'Courageous Betty of Chick-Lane' was someone whom you would not want to mess with. She had a vicious battle with two taylors whom she sent running for their

lives, thumping them until they begged for mercy. Fearing what she might do, they bowed at her feet:

How the poor rogues did caper amain;  
Likewise they ty'd themselves by an oath  
That they would never offend her again.  
Like they gave her a costly colation,  
Seeing she thus had banish'd their fears;  
They were not unwilling to spend twenty shilling,  
Although she had lugg'd them both by the ears.<sup>36</sup>

Few chapbooks focused strictly on the problems faced by single women. In one chapbook called "The Cabinet of Fancy," in which there was an assortment of poems, epigrams, and stories, one epigram spoke of an old maid. This 'antiquated' woman talked so much that she never rested, and would make heaven an unpleasant place.<sup>36</sup>

As popular literature, ballads and chapbooks praised the virtues of rural life when contrasted to the urban vice and corruption. One reiterated theme of later eighteenth-century chapbooks was urban corruption and the appeal of simple pastoral ways. These chapbooks are reviewed in a later chapter. Innocence in women in naturalistic poses comes complete with the depiction of farm animals and chores. Not all ballads and chapbooks with rural images were mere expositions of rural virtues, since rural scenes were frequently the backdrop or props for a story focused on the conjugal or marital relationship.

Since milkmaids were often both ballad-singers and buyers, they probably influenced the content of the ballads that praised their spirited conduct and independence. They also danced and sang at May festivities. Their 'free and cheerful life,' in spite of its poverty, and their 'honest and independent character' earned them much praise in ballads. These 'rural goddesses' cheerfully, diligently, and bravely faced the elements and carried milk in their pail. The prolific ballad writer, Martin Parker, praised their 'innocence and providence.'<sup>37</sup>

Rural goodness appears frequently. Ballads extolling the virtues of milkmaids also praised country girls. A countryman rejected marrying a girl 'bred' at court, a citizen's daughter one who made buttons or lace, the daughter of an alewife, a wench or proud woman, one courted by too many young men, or a cookmaid. He wanted a 'rich farmer's daughter.' City folk, particularly Londoners, might live to regret their arbitrary dismissal of witless country folk.<sup>38</sup>

Verses of a ballad discussing venereal disease make a stark comparison of city and country life and city and country women:

Their blood is corrupted, their bodies are foul,  
They sweat loud enough to --- body and soul;  
They --- all their Cullies, and their pockets pick,  
And send the young Fop home for a while to be sick.

With a dose of rare Pills, and some other fine slops,  
They keep 'emselves under the notion of ---;  
Which else would arrive to the bridge of the nose,  
But that they prevent by a turpentine dose,

My Nanny and I are free from disease,  
We ne'r are in danger, let's do what we please:  
We hug and we kiss, we sport and we play,  
And for pleasure we study to find a new way.<sup>39</sup>

Nanny is 'doubtless full of fine girls and fine boys' and despite her innocence, she was capable of judgment. Such a contrast between country and city women reflected some perception of the differences between county and city life that marks both ballads and chapbooks.

### Entertaining Stories in Chapbooks

A chapbook from Aldermay Church Yard (Dicey) is a 'pleasant and delightful history' but had a moral. The butter woman revealed her covetousness when she sold her butter to a courtier before she reached the market. Once he bought her

butter, he put it in a tree and laid in wait to see what would happen. She came along and took the butter. He put the butter on her thighs and buttocks and had his hounds lick it off, despite her protests. This situation purportedly promoted the saying that 'When a Woman scratches her Breech, Butter will be cheap.'<sup>40</sup>

The Darlington chapbooks featured two humorous stories that were written in long verse. The 'Wandering Young Gentlewoman or Cat-skin' was well dressed by her mother but hated by her father. She made her way into the world and succeeded. Once her mother and sister died, her father dressed like a beggar, although he had enough money. He begged to live with her; she consented but got his 10,000 pounds. In another story, a merchant wanted to seduce his mother's servant, but this 'crafty chambermaid' outwitted him by putting an old bunter in his bed. He was so startled that he alarmed the whole family. The young man's mother, the mistress of the 'crafty' maid, laughed until her side hurt. The moral:

Young virgines by this you plainly may see  
 Virtue's a jewel recommended to be  
 And Strive like this maiden your honor to keep  
 It is better than riches or jewels so great.<sup>41</sup>

Penny Histories from John White and T. Saint of Newcastle also offered humorous stories. In a rambling but passionate account that was 'digested in prose and verse,' the author, Thomas Whittle, related the story of a friend who failed in his pursuit of a North Country beauty. Hints within the text, however, suggested that he might be talking about himself. His grandmother '(who) had more whole proverbs and Canterbury Tales in her mouth than she had teeth in her head.' She counseled that a hasty marriage meant hasty vengeance. Also, the best way to deal with a scornful maid was to show disdain for her. Mindful of his grandmother's sayings, he wanted to avoid being trapped by her 'incomparable perfection.' Despite his knowledge of the proverb that 'there is no labyrinth like a woman,' he hoped to catch her like one caught salmon. When he met her at a tavern, he bowed until his nose touched her. The author called this mindless lover a 'pygmy,' and noted in verse

that 'he has neither Wit nor Fancy enough to make an anagram.' Later the rejected suitor vowed to 'leave the follies of love to others.'<sup>42</sup> The proverbs that the author attributed to his grandmother suggest the oral tradition here being put into written record.

'The Complete Art of Courtship or the School of Venus' properly 'beautified' with songs featured a series of small digressions on the subject of love. Included were a conversation on the subject of women between Ned and Will, the 'amorous dialogue' between Thomas and Sarah and Amintas and Priscilla, 'complimental expressions,' a love letter in verse that presumably could be copied or modified, 'witty questions and answers improvement of conversation,' and finally, 'a never-failing Method for Women to Get Good Husbands.'<sup>43</sup>

With substantial wit, it offered methods and advice on how women could get husbands. Narcissistic men strutted about and left women with the consolation of female friendship. Rattlers, 'noisy nothings(s),' 'flatterers,' and hypochondriacs should be avoided. The wise wife would 'weave a web that Monsieur Shatter never unravels.' The 'Grand Signior' who tyrannically nodded his head at the dinner table and communicated only with winks was likely to be a 'self-opinionated grave documenting thing' whose 'grave reprimands' resembled those of a school mistress. One should also avoid the miser who worshipped Mammon. 'If you are of a Spaniel-like Disposition, you may then hug your Shackles and kiss your Chains.' The recommended man was certainly an ideal type: a 'man of principle,' one who loved his country, did not display hypocrisy or partiality, had a good education, a 'calm temper,' and, surprisingly, was 'religious without being superstitious.' The moral is clear: women should drive a hard bargain. Indentured servitude for seven years--was preferable because after that, one had freedom and not the shackles of a tyrannical husband.

Three short chapbooks with long titles displayed platitudes on the title page in order to entice the reader to buy the small book: First, 'The Delightful Academy of Compliments. . .'<sup>44</sup> Second, 'The Accomplished Courtier or A new School of

Love. . .'<sup>45</sup> In the third example, "The Whole Pleasures of Matrimony Interwoven with sundry Delightful and Comical Stories, together with the Charming Delights and ravishing Sweets of Wooing and Wedlock. . .," advice abounded at a wedding dinner.<sup>46</sup> Barrenness was a scourge, and children should be expected. The joys of the marriage bed, however, remained the same with or without children. The chapbook rhetorically asked whose fault it was that the marriage was barren. Does understanding within the community promote the feeling that barrenness is the fault of the woman? Or does the author refrain from pointing the finger of blame? The Midwife commented that maids were ripe at 14 but men at 17. When the dinner was over, she advised the bridegroom about taking his wife's maidenhead. Both mothers visited the next morning, asking how many attacks he made on the young bride. The wedding created a week's festivities as well as business at the tavern.

The task of setting up housekeeping brought 'pleasure' to the young woman, her family, and female friends. Mention was made of Venetian and Persian carpets, China, a silver server, silver sconces, and a coffee or tea-pot. Expenses for entertaining lady friends--wine, pickles, and sweet-meats--also required a sufficient outlay of money. This extravagance would force some husbands into bankruptcy. This list of fine household necessities indicates the penchant for consumption.

A series put out by Aldermay Church Yard focused on male-female relationships. In 'The Art of Courtship of Amorous Dialogue between Thomas and Sarah or, the Ready Way of Wooing '<sup>47</sup> Sarah's mother had warned her not to believe what men said, because not one man in forty miles could be trusted. Because she did not trust him, she reserved judgment. Eventually they married. Other dialogues and letters commented on the love of men for cross mistresses. In addition, witty and ingenious sentences introduced the readers to the art of well-speaking, including such proverbs as "women are like Venice Glasses, one Crack spoils them," 'you are fortune's darling and sleep in her bosom;' 'you are the glory



of your Sex and bear the Palm of beauty from them all;' and 'the un-blown Rose, the Crystal, or Diamond are not more pure than you.'

These short chapbooks gave advice on the marital chase. Men kept asking the question that seems (sic) to vex them: what do women want. Women would be well advised to avoid certain types and chart their course carefully. Resignation and submissiveness do not appear in these accounts.

Ballads displayed the advice of mothers to their younger daughters, including the prospect of marrying an older man. She should grin and bear it:

My parents unkind, and with wealth too much blind,  
 Made me marry, and miscarry, against my own mind.  
 I lov'd one before, but they thought him too poor;  
 They forc'd me, and divorc'd me from seeing him more.

Let each pritty maid, who hath heard what I said,  
 Take care and beware, lest by force she betraid.  
 Let parents provide (a true groom) for each Bride  
 That nothing of loathing their loves may divide.

Her older husband replied with the acknowledgment that he was horned by her behavior, but denied her allegations and announced that he could have a new mistress. She could go. Other young women also determined that they did not want to tie the knot with a 'gouty fornicator' or 'jealous old dotar.'<sup>48</sup>

Conundrums were witty questions 'fit for the use of the gay and polite.' The answers to these puzzling questions are surprising and to some probably shocking. For instance: 'why is a lewd woman like a Frosty Morning? Because it is whory.' Or, 'Why is a contented Cuckold like an affronted Coward? because they pocket their Shame.' And, finally, 'Why is a Conundrum like a Parrot? because far fetch'd, and full of Nonsense.' These are funny asides that are not meant to be taken seriously. The conundrums described in the "Old Lady and her Niece, the Fair Incognita," which are reviewed in the chapter on sensibility, pose interesting questions that go beyond their entertainment value.<sup>49</sup>

A batchelor had long enjoyed 'the pleasures of a single life.' He could retreat into his '(P)aper (W)orld' of maps, the battles of the ancients, and his most precious companions, books.<sup>50</sup> His solitary consolation contrasted with the turbulence he would later experience when he married.

Books, my Companions were, wherein I found,  
 Needful advice, without a noisy sound,  
 But was with friendly pleasing silence taught,  
 Wisdom's best rules to fructify my Thought;  
 Rais'd up their sage Fore-fathers from the dead,  
 And when I pleas'd invok'd them to my aid,  
 Who at my study bar without a fee would plead,  
 Whilst I chief justice sat, heard all their faults.  
 And gave my judgment on their learn'd dispute,  
 Then to my Paper World I'd have recourse,  
 And by my Maps run o'er the Universe.

He enjoyed afternoons full of peace and tranquillity.

Thus would I range the world, inform my Sense  
 With ease and safety at a small Expençe,  
 No Storms to Plough, no Passengers Sums to pay,  
 No horses to hire or guide to show the way,  
 No Alps to Climb, no deserts here to pass,  
 No Ambuscades, No Thieves to give me chace,  
 No Bear or dread, or rav'nous Wolf to fight,  
 No Flies to sting, or Rattle Snakes to bite,  
 No floods to ford, no Hurricanes to fear,  
 No dreadful Thunder, to surprize the Ear.  
 No Winds to freeze, no Sun to scorch or fry,  
 No thirst, or hunger, and Relief not nigh,  
 All these fatigues and Mischiefs should I shun,  
 Rest when I please, and when I please jog on,  
 And travel through both Indies in an Afternoon.

The 'curs'd Fiends of Hell' threw a fair, well-proportioned, and poised woman in his path:

Who could the Power of such Temptation shun,  
 What frozen Cynick from her Charms could run.

This batchelor wed in haste and repented quickly. The marriage bed was 'that Paradiçe for fools, a sport for Boys, Tiresome its Chains and brutal are its Joys.'

Immediately, jealous and suspicious about her behavior, he and his new wife endeavored to endure together.

My former Love I every Day renew'd,  
 And all the signals of Oblivion shew'd,  
 Wink'd at some Faults wou'd no such trifles mind,  
 As accidental Failing, not design'd.  
 I all things to her Temper easy made,  
 Scorn'd to reflect and hated to upraid,  
 She chose and rich it was, her own attire,  
 Nay, had what a proud Woman could desire.

—  
 When once they're thoroughly conquer'd will obey,  
 'Tis Whip and Spur commanding Rein and Bit,  
 That makes the unruly head strong Horse submit,  
 So stubborn, faithless Woman must be us'd,  
 Or Man by Woman basely be abus'd.

She became a crossed 'libertine and shrew,' continued to display her lustful behavior, 'base ingratitude,' and assaulted his purse with her vainglorious habits. The appointments of marriage and the finery of his wife disturbed the tranquillity to which he was long accustomed as a bachelor.

Finally granted a divorce, he sought a small estate where he would live a modestly-genteel and prudent life. In this retreat he would be a suitable neighbor and friend. He would chose to live near a woman who was a 'witty nymph(s) in Conversation' and full of virtue. He would not marry, however, expecting instead that some relatives would help him in his final days. He would make a 'propitious' exit from this earth, having discharged his duties well. The author rejected the duties of conjugal and married life and its demands. The English have long been country animals, who retreated to the country away from the demands of civilization. The cares and complexities are not just city dwelling, but the trials of marriage and the expectations of a woman.

### Tewkesbury Chapbooks

The Tewkesbury chapbooks, printed by Samuel Harward from about 1760-1770, are relatively straight-forward, simple, and devoid of histrionics or dramatic language and conversation. These unique chapbooks are short—usually eight pages, were usually written in verse, and may be the product of a printer-author collaboration facilitated by the fairly short distances between Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. Harward, the first printer in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, printed many chapbooks, some of which were sold by S. Gamidge in Worcester. He reportedly maintained five shops and died owning much property and a large collection of books.<sup>51</sup> The Tewkesbury collection varies. Comical dialogues appear as well as plots of murder and revenge. Those chapbooks focused on crime will be included in a later chapter.

'The Beautiful Shepherdess of Arcadia' got her way with a knight who was forced to marry her after she reported their dalliance to the king who was surprised by the boldness of someone of her lowly station. The 'Merchant Daughter of Bristol' disguised herself herself as a ship hand and went to sea as a surgeon's mate. The wounded man vowed to become the companion of the surgeon's mate who saved his life if his true love was dead. He and the unmasked ship-mate were soon married. Disguised women serving as sailors or soldiers is a recurrent theme in English ballads. Some are valiant female warriors, while others are love-struck maidens following their menfolk.<sup>52</sup>

Other Tewkesbury stories provide a humorous commentary on human events and romantic episodes. The 'Crafty Miller, or Mistaken Batchelor' became impoverished. Over a bottle of wine, he and his landlord signed a written contract that gave the landlord the use of the miller's wife. The landlord agreed to support any children that came from that assignation. An ass was conducted into the miller's house and outfitted in clothing by the servants. The landlord pleaded with the ass, but later, realizing that he had been duped, complained to the miller that

they had signed a contract--written and witnessed by the parson. The miller said that a contract was a contract.<sup>53</sup>

In 'Love in a Barn,' the farmer's buxom daughter was courted by a Lord who promised her much, believing that she could be easily fooled. She wanted to get a goodly portion of gold from him before she would agree to marry him. She informed Gypsies of her scheme and enlisted their help. They had much Rhenish wine in the barn and he relaxed, while she did not drink. He was outwitted and was later the talk of the women in the town, but he resolved to wed this 'virtuous country maid.' Men who appeared foolish after their plots against female honor failed earned the castigation that village women enjoyed heaping upon them.<sup>54</sup>

The 'Virtuous Wife of Bristol' realized that her husband was using his fortune to bed down with a wanton harlot, the 'phenix of the world.' She disguised herself as a young merchant and went to the harlot. The merchant realized that he should return to his wife. His wife managed to have the strumpet convicted for taking her possessions. She was sent to Bridewell where she remained, while the husband returned to his wife.<sup>55</sup>

The Tewkesbury chapbooks offered variety to their provincial readers. These entertaining stories cast women in roles that trumpeted their ingenuity, determination, and ability to outsmart men. The theme of a woman disguised as a sailor to join her departed appeared often in ballads and chapbooks. The 'crafty' miller and others--his wife, his servants and even the parson--conspired to foil the plot of the landlord to use his advantage over the miller to gain a desirable and pleasurable end--the use of his wife.

### 'Diverting Dialogues'

In the 'comical dialogue' between John and Jane, the 'country lovers,' John used all his wiles--good verse plus elegant manners and behavior to get what he wanted: Jane in bed. Their conversations and exchanges resemble the new

adage that 'men are from Mars and women from Venus.' He offered love; she wanted security noting that married women were wed to a 'multitude of sorrows,' She consented to further discussions, but persisted and maintained her position through some hard bargaining.<sup>56</sup>

In a 'diverting dialogue' that claimed to be both serious and comical, a shoemaker and his wife hurled insults at each other. Calling him Mr. Spend-all, Mr. Mend-all, and Mr. Good-for-Nothing, she claimed that he was bad in bed and worse up. She told him that his children laughed at him and that he was easily taken in by their landlord and land lady. She asked whether he kept a whore, but he said that he saw her with the Taylor. He vowed to strap her, but she retorted that he would not dare to do that. He wanted her to obey him, but she retorted that husbands were supposed to cherish their wives, admonishing him that there should be 'no more chopping of divinity and logic.' Despite their barbed exchanges and continuing differences, both resolved to live together in virtue, peace, and love.<sup>57</sup>

'A Dialogue Between Honest John and Loving Kate with their Contrivance for Marriage, and Way to get a Livelihood' was printed by Aldermay Church Yard. In contrast to the sharp and bitter remarks about marriages that had clearly gone awry-as illustrated by above examples, John and Kate romantically discussed marriage with mutual promises of tender love and care. She did not want him to 'haunt' the ale-house, and she and his master squelched his plans to brew ale. His master offered him a small adjacent farm. Kate impressed John with the notion that marriage required sacrifice and she begged for 'some words to bind the bargain.' John sealed their union with his oath of love. He consoled Kate about the known inconstancy of men, observing that the familiar story of an abandoned woman ended on a happy note. John wrote a song in order to pass the time until their joyous marriage thrilled the entire village. Kate's friends determinedly led them to the marriage bed from whence they 'were left to do as their parents had done before them.' The stanza on the frontispiece summed up the chapbook's sentiments:

The Wooing was in the first part;  
 But now they're joined Hand and Heart.  
 In Wedlock's, Bands to the great Joy,  
 Of all their Friends; tho Kate was coy  
 At first, at length she granted Love,  
 And does a constant Woman prove.

The Roxburghe Ballad, 'The New Way of Marriage: A Pleasant Contract Between John and Kate,' emphasized their decision to make their own binding contract; they did not need formal vows. The chapbook used the ballad's sentiments. There is no mention of children in the ballad or chapbook.<sup>58</sup>

A 'merry dialogue' recounted a squabble between the husband who employed apprentices who he wants to be well fed and his wife who locked the cupboard door because they were eating them out of house and home. He insisted that he would have 'no Smith's Embargo on my food.' After all, well-fed servants worked better than those who were not well fed. He would not have them run to their relatives with complaints about such stingy servings. The wife thought that they were gluttons. She called one a 'slouching rogue' who laughed at her husband and would eat ten times a day. Two statements from the wife and two from the husband demonstrate the fresh quality of their exchange:

Wife: Lord! Love, you cannot think what they devour,  
 I vow and swear the're cramming every hour,  
 Saw you how oft they to the Cup-board run  
 You'd think they'd eat you out of house and home  
 One gobbles down two pounds of bread and cheese  
 When almost burst, to the Vault he runs for ease,  
 From thence unbutton'd in a trice,  
 And stuffs his empty guts with t'other Slice,  
 No sooner is that wide mouth glutton gone.  
 But t'other thin jaw'd cormorant comes down,  
 And he, forsooth no Cheshire cheese can eat,  
 His dainty chops must break his lust with meat;  
 Then out he pulls his knife, and off he curts,  
 A pound of beef for his insatiate guts,  
 Which his strait gullet swallows down so fast,  
 As if he meant each bit should prove hiss last;

For in that moment fairly he'd devour.  
 More than would last a hungry dog a hour,  
 Straining with mouthfuls so profusely great,  
 You'd think him choak'd with ev'ry bit he eat;  
 Thus all day long like buckets in a well  
 They take their turns to empty and to fill;  
 And is it fit, ye think, such gluttons as these,  
 Should search and range the cup-board when they please,

Husband: Yes, yes, much good may down them with their meat;  
 Never care how fast my servants eat.  
 Speedy at Victuals, quick at work an old  
 Proverbial saying, we have oft been told,  
 I've found it true, and therefore do not grudge,  
 Their eating nimble tho' tis e'er so much  
 I'll warrant you'd have them loyter at meals,  
 Piddle like mice and crawl about like snails,  
 Feed like sick patients dieted by Quacks.  
 And look like hide bound Tits that carry packs  
 Work too, like those that raise the wooden walls,  
 Of the King Ship, or lazy Rogues in Pauls.  
 No, no, my mater's method I'll pursue,  
 That feeds them well, and make 'em work so took,  
 For he that stints his servants in their food,  
 Makes the bad worse and irritates the good;  
 That what he think he saves, they cast away,  
 And make their pinch-gut money pay.

Wife: Do as you please, my dear, but I'm sure,  
 Such wasteful ways will always keep us poor;  
 Apprentices I have seen in other trades,  
 Have their meat carved by the mistress or the maid  
 Nor did they dare to grumble or complain,  
 That this was cut too fat or too lean,  
 But eat whate'er the Mistress thought fit,  
 And fear'd to frown, or ask for t'other bit.  
 But your bold boys regarding not your Wife,  
 When call'd to dinner each out draws his knife  
 And both, forsooth, set down before the maid:  
 Upon the ground-deal whet their Sheffield blade;  
 Fall to like plow-man at a country feast,  
 And with unhollow'd tongues pick the best,  
 One cries out, Hannah, draw me some beer,  
 The other, Hussy, bring the mustard here.



Indeed, my dear, it is a shame to see,  
 Apprentices so bold and free,  
 Or that at meals such boys should first set down,  
 And crow above a maid that's woman grown.

Husband: My Boys are good Men's Sons well born and bred,  
 They've paid me pounds for learning them their trade,  
 Besides, they earn me every day they Dine,  
 Not only their own Bread, but yours and mine,  
 Yet, I suppose you would have them made,  
 Mere slaves and footboys to your nasty jade,  
 To run to the chandlers for mops and brooms,  
 Band fetch her water when she scrubs her room,  
 Be her Coal-heaver to preserve her hands,  
 And stoop to all her prodigal commands,  
 If that's your drift, my parsimonious Dame,  
 I shall take care to disappoint your aim.  
 No saucy Baggage fondled by a fool  
 Shall awe my servants, or my boys controle;  
 I'd have you to know, I keep such sluts, as she,  
 To wait on them at meals, as well as me,  
 I give her yearly wages and you ought,  
 To know their work enables them to do  
 By them I live, and thrive, eat drink and pay  
 My golden boys earns money every Day,  
 Therefore yourself and servile puss shall find,  
 No lads of mine your female Pride shall mind:  
 That master sure must be a pen peck'd fool  
 Who lets the woman o'er the men bare rule;  
 Tis hard that good Men's Sons bound out to trades.  
 Should be made Lacquey's to our wives and maids;  
 But in those tradesman's houses twill be so,  
 Where Men are silent and the Women crow.

For her part, the wife protested against the husband's generosity to apprentices that she characterized individually as a 'sneaking whelp,' a 'rawbone skelleton,' and ill-got Lout.' She made no references to them as sexual beings, instead she saw them as gluttons. His reference to the maid servant as a 'nasty jade,' 'slut,' and 'puss' evokes a language of sexual identity who some would see as misogynistic. Part of the training of apprentices was to be able to order women around, lest they become

hen-pecked. Part of the wife's duty was to provide adequately for the sons of good men. The wife found it shameful that men were so insulting to grown women.<sup>59</sup>

### Later Eighteenth-Century Dialogues

Both J. Davenport and J. Evans, printers in London at the end of the eighteenth century, offered stories featuring dialogue between husband and wife. These chapbooks presented a dialogue between a man and a woman or fostered an exchange of opinion or sentiment through the recital of a ballad and then an answering ballad. They followed the format of ballads. Two of their titles announced a 'new and diverting dialogue' and a 'curious and diverting dialogue.' Another addressed the theme of cuckoldry and jealous husbands. Were these stories printed as diversions to the anxieties and travail of everyday life, or was this the recognized way of announcing a comical theme?

Wives called their husbands dogs and the husbands answered with their own barbs. The question is which came first: the proverbial chicken versus egg question. The wives berated their husbands for their drunken behavior and their habit of going to the ale-house to drink up the family income. Hughson the cobbler and his wife Margery heatedly exchanged words after he returned home from the ale-house at about midnight.<sup>60</sup> Margery believed that her neighbors would support her as a reasonable woman who 'speak(s) in season; and without malice.' Allegedly, Hughson frequently called her a whore. He then told her that the scold always provokes the husband and finds a way to blame him. Margery reminded him that even the most virtuous wife—including herself—would be tempted to find others, having been provoked to revenge. She grabbed his hair and tried to prove that she was the stronger of the two and reminded him that he had abused her in the past. The last verse, a comment by Margery, deserves this lengthy quotation:

I'm glad the dog has crept to kennel,  
I'll make him humble as a spaniel,  
I'll not be friends till he shall court me,  
I know the rogue believes that he's hurt me;

When as I live I do not know,  
 In all the scuffle I'd a blow;  
 However I must cry tomorrow,  
 All tell the neighbors all my sorrow,  
 Complain how sadly he abus'd me;  
 How barbarously and ill he us'd me;  
 Tell them what pains I took to please him,  
 But could not on my life appease him,  
 Charge all the blame on him, the while  
 My tears shall flow like a crocodile;  
 I vow and swear it joys my heart  
 To think how I shall act my part  
 How the old buck will be outwitted,  
 And his poor wife bemoan'd and pitied,  
 Women are fools that let their spouses,  
 Usurp dominion in their houses;  
 The cunning dames may find a way,  
 To make them easily obey,  
 Her point, she's only to complain;  
 For though her husband is bely'd,  
 The world will be o' the woman's side.

Margery planned the outburst and emotional dialogue that she intended to deliver to anyone who would listen. Once she uttered her complainats, all the neighbors would side with her. At the same time she intended to rule in her home.

'A New and Diverting Dialogue Between a Shoemaker and his Wife' detailed similar problems, although not with as much raw anger as Margery and Hughson heaped upon each other. The wife made bitter complains about the ale-house, but by the end of the story, the shoemaker and his wife resolve to mend their ways and make the best of their situation.<sup>61</sup>

The 'jealous man convinced that he is no cuckold' was a 'true satire on the times.' It commented on the relationship between a jealous husband and his 'crafty wife' in a 'comical dialogue.' The wife said that before her husband could accuse her of mischief, he should give a reason for such a 'treacherous charge.' She wanted nice trinkets that he could not afford. She replied that she had borne him children and did not play the role of the whore. She wanted him to quit drinking and

gaming. He charged that she laid in bed until noon and spent the afternoon in fruitless vices and gossip. She replied that by staying in bed until noon, she did not eat breakfast. If she went to bed early, she saved on the use of candles. She thought he could be master abroad or out of their house, but she would be mistress within it. She was the 'yoke fellow,' but not the slave, the equal but not the vassal, a bedfellow and the mother of his children. She wanted him to love their bed.<sup>62</sup>

In a ballad by Martin Parker, 'John and Joan' have a contest in marriage, trying to outdo each other in drinking, feasting, or beating their animals. When their money ran out, they sobered up and worked at farming.<sup>63</sup> In "The Woman to the Plow, and the Man to the Hen-Roost; or a fine way to cure a Cot-Queen,' husband and wife switched roles after he criticized her housekeeping. He failed miserably when he baked bread and burned it. The wife could not do the farm chores. 'At the harrow, she could not rule the mare.' The advice:

Take heed of this, you Husband-men,  
Let Wives alone to grope the hen,  
And meddle you with the horse and ox,  
And keep your lambs safe from the fox,  
So shall you live Contented lives,  
And take sweet pleasure in your Wives.<sup>64</sup>

The platitudes about the blessings and joys of marriage abound in ballads and chapbooks. But marriage also required sacrifice and give and take. This dilemma created problems for John and Joan and the husband and wife who tried to switch roles.

Ballads provide evidence of acrimonious marriages; their inclusion here allows for some thematic comparisons. Cuckolds and wanton women were frequent themes in ballads. The number of ballads that blatantly bemoaned the antics of uncontrollable women suggests that English women were not so easily tamed after marriage. A comment attached to a ballad about 'halfe a dozen good wives' indicated that it was 'one of the numberless songs and ballads' against women. The editor thought that the ratio ran at about 100 to one.<sup>65</sup>

Men enjoyed 'libelling' women. A 'general summons' indicated the extent of cuckoldry in seventeenth-century English society: 'A General Summons for those belonging to the Hen-peck'd Frigate to appear at Cuckold's Point on the 18th of this instant October.' 'The loving Society of Confessing Brethren of the Forked Order' met together and each of the ten tradesmen poured out their sorrows. A good glass of wine convinced them that they could endure infidelity, since some benefited financially.<sup>66</sup> Some frequently complained that their wives conducted affairs right under their noses. In one case, when a wife drank any 'keys will fit her trunk.'<sup>67</sup> Neighbors told one husband when he returned home from sea duty that he must wear horns because while he was away, his wife became pregnant. He bemoaned his fate saying that the plow man and shepherd did not have such worries.<sup>68</sup> One 'merry cuckold' enjoyed the fruits of his wife's extra-marital activities and cheerfully roamed about 'consuming her treasure.'<sup>69</sup> Some husbands complained that they took care of their wives when they came home drunk and did all the household chores.<sup>70</sup> One 'hen-peck't cuckold' got only a word and a blow for all his efforts to serve his wife. Still another wondered aloud why his wife insisted on wrangling, since he did all the work. One wife paraded like a 'gaudy peacock,' got up at noon, and managed to be 'trimm'd and rigg'd' by five. Brought home after drinking by a male companion, she resorted to violence, if he dared to complain.<sup>71</sup> Still another complained that his 'wanton wench' roamed about with 'two gallants of great worth.' The last line of each stanza bemoaned the fact that his wife 'could not keep her lips together'—referring to the lips of her lower body parts. A man who was taken with his wife's beauty might let her wear the pants, do her bidding, do the housework, and let men into her bed. A henpeckt husband might throw a pillow at his wife, but would soon learn that this was a mistake. Her bark was as bad as her bite.<sup>72</sup>

Women complained of 'insufficient husbands' in ballads. In 'Tom Farthing or The Married Woman's Complaint' the wife complained that her husband did not make her merry and join her in the marriage bed. She wanted someone who could satisfy her, and advised women to try out a husband first.<sup>73</sup>

Women in ballads did not suffer fools gladly, did not suffer abuse silently, and could display their share of aggressiveness. One could try to tame them through marriage, but submissiveness and meek demeanor was not a likely prospect. Wanton women and 'beggar wenches' should be avoided. Wanton women were walking advertisements for conspicuous consumption and could range far and wide. 'Beggar-wenches' got the best of men. Although they appeared ragged and forlorn, they managed to manipulate the men they met on the road.<sup>74</sup>

Without a date, the London chapbook, the 'Happy Bride,' can only be tentatively added. Although short, it is a more carefully printed and well-written small book, suggesting that it was printed during the eighteenth century. The young woman who is its protagonist experienced the usual trials before she can be happily married to a well-established man. An orphan, Ann Forbes, fell in with the wrong crowd when she arrived in London. She was rescued by a distinguished lady, Mrs. Walton, and eventually married the woman's only son.<sup>75</sup>

'The Lover's Stratagem' was an entertaining story, not a moralizing tale.<sup>76</sup> Another and quite different story inserted midway in the narrative featured an old bawd of a woman who persuaded a young carpenter's wife to emulate her behavior. This insertion gave the reader a bargain--two for the price of one. The 'petticoat plotter' persuaded a reluctant young, wealthy woman to marry him. Having been refused by Miss G\*ri\*g, Mr. A\*ch\*r plotted to become her chambermaid by disguising himself in female clothing. The names were deliberately omitted except for a few letters until later. Some artificial initials were included to throw the reader off track, but later in the narrative, the real names appeared. This story followed the happily-ever-after line, but it offered delight, not morality. The closing stanza reiterated the purpose of the story:

Tis truly laughable if you but note  
This comic Plotter in a Petticoat:

The Petticoat we find can all things do,  
 Humble the greatest, and the wisest too;  
 Our chiefest joy beneath it is confined,  
 For without woman, what is mankind.

Is the author suggesting some form of androgyny or just applauding the use of female disguise to achieve one's purpose? Is casting comical aspersions another form of entertainment? Comedy and comical aspersion mask substance. The use of laughter allowed the author to address delicate subjects and poke fun at sensitive gender roles. The author treading lightly about a delicate subject--the power and strength of women.

'A Good husband for Five Shillings: or, a Lottery for Ladies' acknowledged that good men were hard to find.<sup>77</sup> This appeal to those who wanted husbands admitted that the Revolutionary War demanded that a 'vast number of brave fellows, as well as beaux, blockheads, libertines, and scoundrels' to fight for the glory of England. Since many did not come home, women had to marry unsuitable men, because the usual supply of Clodpates and Blackakers were permanently unavailable. The available types, a 'mechanic Whipper-snapper,' or 'cut finger'd clerk' would use all a woman's money to advance their own position.

In order to improve the situation for these decent and deserving women, a 'society of honest gentlemen' would create a lottery and for five shillings each, these women could take their chances. Not everyone would get their wishes fulfilled, but at least the women had a 'fair chance.' Since this lottery was more like a raffle--there were only fifty-five winners, the women who put forth five shillings had to try their luck. In descending order, these are the possible prizes in this lottery: A modern whig of a thousand pounds per annum who increased his net worth through his sagacity at a small post; second, a devout atheist with an honestly-obtained estate and a 'precise occasional conformist,' both of whom had shaky situations; third, three courtiers--'Tom Doubles'--who could charm the female sex; fourth, four devout citizens who were also coffee-house politicians; fifth, five Paintile-guides who frequented the bed chambers of many women, were good at forcing destiny for

old women and didn't need food because they were feasted by women when their husbands were away; sixth, land surveyors whose adequate incomes were easily augmented by custom house duties and their access to prohibited goods such as good French wines; seventh, seven trading Quakers who revealed their 'humdrum sanctity;' they had well-appointed country homes with fine wines and good furnishings, but refused to boast about their actual worth since boasting was unbecoming of one of their religious persuasion; eighth, 'young spruce Beauish non-fighting Officers' who enjoyed talking about war but did not want to fight, soil their fine clothes or 'venture their carcasses;' ninth were nine curators, attorneys, and chancery clerks of some fortune and 'singular probity' distinguished by their ability to handle the 'quirks and quidities both of law and equity;' tenth were 'ten strapping Town Bullies, alias non-Commission captains, all of the true Hibernian breed, huge bodies, with little souls, mere bull-dogs at a petty-coat.' These descriptions dripped with sarcastic invective that intentionally demeaned the cast of men who were available for honorable women.

Stories could be repeatedly circulated. The 'Whimsical Lady: A Dialogue,' was printed by Bow Church Yard in the early seventeenth century, but was also printed at least twice by John Evans, a London printer in the 1790s. It was one of the few chapbooks that could claim an author, Timothy Donovan, Gent (Gentleman).<sup>78</sup>

A tradesman approached a single woman and offered his hand in marriage. Cautiously, she asked the old question: what do you do for a living? Every time she objected to the trade he mentioned, he cited another. Finally, they had exhausted almost all of the trades. He said he was a dyer and she called him a 'lyar.' She finally declared that she was hungry and took leave of him, suggesting that she would see him again, possibly for another round.

The lady was not whimsical, but instead was firm in her resolve to test a man's character before marriage. She had no compunction about calling him a liar, flatterer, or chameleon. She was not shy or retiring. She directly probed his



intentions. This dialogue resembles the banter of ballads, since in this chapbook and in many of the ballads, the dialogue never ends.

The promise of numerous answers to perplexing questions was intended to entice would-be readers to purchase 'The Norwood Gipsej or Mother Bridget's Last Legacy.'<sup>79</sup> The introduction promised the satisfactory resolution of problems such as 'any Understanding in Life,' 'contracting a marriage,' getting into business, health questions, and the 'return of absent Friends.' The frontispiece announced that 'the manuscript was found by the Editor and the Root of a hollow Tree, in Norwood.; The Preface explained that the editor found this manuscript when he was out walking. He happened upon Mother Bridget's cave where he kicked some rags. At first he thought that he should not look at the bundle, but 'not being given to superstition,' he decided to look at the manuscript, written in the hand of a 'crabbed' woman. Because many soothsayers and conjurers, including the Old Bailey and Fleet Lane Conjurers, had been prosecuted, he could not profitably print it as the original work of Mother Bridget. He asked that those who learned from these pages recommend the sale of this work to their friends. Such purchases would benefit himself and the printer. Acknowledging that fortunetelling was not taken seriously, except by 'ladies' who discover 'truth' from it, he noted that the Egyptians and the Heathen philosophers valued it. Are his 'heathen philosophers' the Greeks?

Questions for both sexes as well as a separate list for men and women emphasized marital relationships. Typically, children were only mentioned once. The questions used a generic form except for the occasional reference to 'he.' The Editor proposed a game of cards in which the reader looked at short rhyming stanzas focused on men and women and their attributes or detractions. Despite the pleasing little couplets of an imaginative author, there is no cohesion or story line from one verse to another. The following examples illustrate the author's intent and content:

**ACE OF HEARTS.**

He who gets this Ace of Hearts,  
Will appear a man of parts;  
She who gets it I profess  
Has the gift of idleness.

**The Duce of Hearts**

He who gets the Duce will be,  
Full of generosity;  
But when women get this card,  
It doth shew them very hard.

**ACE OF SPADES.**

Thou who gets this ace of spades,  
Shall be flouted by the maids;  
When it is a damsels lot,  
Love and honor go to pot.

**Duce of Spades.**

Now this duce betokens strife.  
and a foolish whoring wife;  
If a woman's lot it be,  
Honour, love and dignity.

**Six of Spades.**

This fix foretels, when you do wed,  
You'll have a crack'd maidenhead,  
But the girl this number draws  
She'll wed one with great applause.

**Knave of Spades.**

This is a knave, then have a care,  
That thou dost not make a pair;  
women who the same to chuse,  
Will prove sluts, but that's no news.

This organized card game included references to whores, harlots, and materialistic women as well as the deficiencies of men and cuckolds. These pithy sayings appealed to a readership that was accustomed to proverbs and adages with a wealth of knowledge and opinion. Many learned nursery rhymes and heard ballads with rhyming devices. Hence rhyming verses were palatable, although to us they lack consistency and any internal logic or pattern.

Questions 'calculated' for men included 'what kind of a Wife you shall get,' the number of wives a man would have, and whether a man should marry his

'intended' woman. The worse kind would 'drink dry thy purse.' Proud and wealthier women would 'wear the breech,' be a 'prattling gossip,' an 'errand slut' or dirty and unkempt housekeeper; At least two references remind some women that they were one or more 'grains too light.' Although there were references to honest and 'well spoken' women, for this author women were trouble.

Five sets of answers 'calculated' for the 'fair sex' included the following: first, does a man who appears to show you constant love sincerely love you; second, will a woman have the man that she loves; third, 'whether it is best to wed the man whom you at present think upon; fourth, will the woman's husband be rich and handsome? fifth, how many husbands will the woman have? The following verses are a sampler of the author's sentiments:

Tho' truth it is he loveth thee,  
 And dogs and cats use to agree,  
 But if he bites, be sure thou scratch,  
 There's no love losts in such a match.

This is a sanguine comment. The author describes marriage as a dog and cat fight or a biting match in which the woman could scatch back.

If you in marriage doth proceed,  
 A brave and lusty man indeed,  
 Unto thy husband thou shall get.  
 But look well that he's not in debt.

-----  
 Think not of change, sweetheart, for you,  
 Shall have but one, I tell you true,  
 But such a husband he shall prove,  
 That you shall live and die in love.  
 Fear not sweetheart, it shall go well,  
 You never shall lead apes in hell,  
 For you of husbands shall have store,  
 Three at least, it may be more.

-----  
 One husband you are like to have,  
 Who will content you I perceive,  
 He will so well for you provide,  
 That you'll with him be satisfied.

Women should be certain that their prospective spouse was not in debt. Other historical evidence tells us that young women followed their loved ones into battle. The author expected a young lass who fell in love with a soldier to realize that she might have to carry his knapsack. A 'sweetheart' need not fear leading apes in Hell, meaning that she will not be condemned.

The hints of malevolence toward women in these adages could be interpreted as misogynistic, but the author also heaped invective on men and commented on their deficiencies. References to harlots, wanton women, and sluts--to include a few of his 'generous' and 'kind hearted' comments--displayed a harsher attitude toward women than toward men. Perhaps the author communicated what he saw within the culture and what he believed would be successful in the marketplace. The publication date, 1793, comes at a time when other chapbooks displayed openly-misogynistic statements. The "Norwood Gipsej" falls short of the level of invective displayed in many chapbooks published in the 1790s.

A poem appearing in an chapbook containing an assortment of epigrams, stories, and poems entitled "Lady L\*\*\*\*s Whim. Or, T he Naughty Boy in the Dumps" offered a different slant on the idea of wantonness in women. This wanton aunt was fond of beating her nephew. A contrary person, she enjoyed taking a birch rod to him and making his bottom red because he was a naughty child. This poem discussed an aunt and her nephew, in contrast to the overwhelming number of ballads and chapbooks focused solely on the conjugal relationship and outright bickering between husband and wife. Seldom if ever were children mentioned.<sup>80</sup>

### Older Women

In the chapbook called the "Lincolnshire Dialogue,' a woman of seventy wanted to marry a young man of twenty, stating that she had a 'young tooth in her head,' and would accommodate what he wanted, including keeping a younger and 'buxome maid.'<sup>81</sup> She would agree to a verbal prenuptial contract. She reminded

him of the Biblical example of Jacob that sanctioned his relationship with another woman. She begged to be given the chance to prove that women were not odious creatures. He wanted to try her before marriage, as one would try a horse. She rejected this demand, arguing that she did not believe in apprenticeship. To his use of Sir Thomas More's admonition that a woman should be tried before marriage, she replied that he was a sound lawyer, but a 'bad divine.' He then cited the comment of Solomon's wife that at heart a woman was a deceitful and dishonest creature. She agreed not to become a scold or jealous woman, agreed to let him drink at the ale-house and tenderly raise a child that he fathered, should that be necessary. Should she change after marriage, he could kill or leave her. He could avail himself of her money while she agreed to function as a servant.

This 'comical dialogue,' poking fun, put the burden was put on the woman to prove that she was not a vile and duplicitous creature. No comments attested to the deficiencies of males. Frequenting an ale-house or entertaining younger women was considered normal. The young man had his share of opinions about the deficiencies and vile nature of many a woman's action, even quoting Sir Thomas Moore. The old woman voiced her opinion freely. She was so intent on securing this prospective husband that she agreed to almost all of his conditions—except his request that he try her before marriage.

A Roxburghe Ballad dated one old bride dated back to Adam. Married seven times, she would certainly be faithful, because with her haggard features, few would be tempted. Old but castigated and unwanted women frequently appeared in ballads. Married seven times, her womb would not bear children and she had miserable, haggard features. The ballad writer, Robert Guy, advised men who married a widow or older woman to speak seriously, be loving and faithful, and be of good humor. Men of all occupations would do well to consider marriage to an older, but wise and less devious woman.<sup>82</sup>

The attributes depicted in 'The Privy counsell of the heavens and planets' created an unattractive description of a woman: sudden wrath, sullenness,

sovereignty, and unappeasing hate, jealousy, vengefulness, petty anger, desire, and a wandering eye. The list of pleasant features was none too flattering—a cruel coyness, false pride, and deceitful gestures. 'Thus qualified, into the world was brought this strong and uncouth piece of earth call'd woman. . . .' With tongue in cheek, the author advised men to treat her well. For if a woman was well-loved, she would 'blesse you for the remainder of your days.'<sup>83</sup>

In another ballad, the beauty and chastity of the 'peerless paragon' compared favorably to the classical beauties, Hecuba, Helen, Vesta, Venus, and Lucretia.<sup>84</sup> Having set up his 'paragon' as the rival of any of the ancient beauties, the writer proceeded to take her apart, feature by feature. His tongue cannot resist the temptation to sing her praises as he does in the following highly provocative lines:

Her squinting, sharing, gogle eyes  
Poore children do affright; . . .

Her oven-mouth wide opens stands,  
Her teeth like rotten pease;  
Her blabber-lips my heart command ds,  
Her neck all bit with fleas;  
Her tawnie duggs, like two great hills,  
Hang sow-like to her waist;  
Her bodie's round as a wind mill,  
And yet I hold her chast.

-----  
Thus have you heard my love set forth,  
And yet no flatterie us'd;  
Your judgment--is she not of worth?  
Let her not be abus'd.  
If any other have a mind,  
He wrongs mee many waies;  
For as shee's beautious, so shee's kind  
And her conclude(s) my praise.<sup>85</sup>

Was this misogynism manifested by a man who wanted to get even with some woman or women who had wronged him.

The derogatory verse of an anonymous author derided the lack of cleanliness in house-wives. The best of his three aunts was dirty and unkempt, but

'provident' in her handling of money. She sold accumulate dust that she swept from her halls--only four times a year. She washed dishes once a month, and if they needed washing at other times, the dog licked them clean and wiped them with his 'tayle.' She was not a scolding woman, but her whispers could occasionally be heard half a mile.<sup>86</sup> His complaint about her lack of cleanliness suggests role expectations, but the author gave his aunt credit for maintaining herself, even selling dust to do so.

The Aldermay Church Yard printed a version of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Chaucer's irreverent Wife of Bath, here the 'wanton wife of Bath,' appeared in many ballads and chapbooks. She lived an unregretted life of sheer pleasure.<sup>87</sup> Older women could not depend on their heartless children, even if they had nurtured them tenderly. Widows might valiantly keep hearth and home together, only to have prodigal male children disinherit them and leave them homeless. Older women were harder to deceive. Although old Beelzebub could sell perpetual leases guaranteeing life to gallant men, the gentry, dames, courtesans, shoemakers, usurers, farmers, and brokers, old women fish-mongers could not be deceived. Their fierceness would tear him apart and he would have to make a quick exit.<sup>88</sup> In the closing days of life, women, even those whose earlier demeanor was fierce and regrettable, deserved respect. For they, like the Wife of Bath, prepared for their death with some penitence.

#### Good Fellows and the Ale-House

Although many ballads lamented the frequent presence of husbands at the ale-house, few chapbooks bemoaned this habit. Few also commented on women who drank. One chapbook focused on gossiping women who, neglecting their housework, met by nine in the morning and indulged themselves in gossip and drink. (in a future chapter) The 1791 poem, 'The Collier's Wedding' by Edward Chicken, published in chapbook form, expressed sentiments about indulging

women.<sup>80</sup> Colliers could afford time and effort in both work and play in 'merry days,' but their wives could indulge themselves with gossip and drink:

Their wives cou'd drink, as people say,  
 And hold as much, or more, than they;  
 Wou'd have their menseful penny spent,  
 With gossips, at a merriment:  
 Those homely females drank no tea,  
 Nor chocolate, nor ratisea;  
 They made no visits, saw no play,  
 But spun their vacant hours away.  
 And thus the COLLIERS and their WIVES  
 Lived drunken, honest, working lives;  
 Were very fond of one another,  
 And always marry'd one thro' other.

These wives worked spinning, but took a few nips and combined work with gossip. The use of the term honest might implies honesty in their work or honesty in the conjugal bond.

A host of ballads depicted men as addicted to drink and the vices of the alehouse. 'Good Fellow' ballads extolled temperance, conviviality, or the company of men at the ale-house. Good fellows were 'jovial' young men with 'superb ideas of themselves,' once under the influence of alcohol. In villages and city taverns, men could pour out their troubles. 'Good Fellows' paid for other people's drinks in the interest of sociability.<sup>80</sup>

From the time of the Middle Ages, popular literature depicted the ale-wife as a strong woman. Ballads complained that ale-wives deprived families by tempting their husbands with drink and women. Wives tried to keep hearth and home together while their husband spent money foolishly at the ale-house. Tobias Bowne in three ballads urged young men not to live a dissolute life, but to marry.<sup>91</sup> Men became enamored of the easy and brave talk of the ale-house. A 'carefull' wife who saved from the little that was given to her 'for a rainy day' pleaded with her husband--describing herself as 'in thy yoke,' acknowledging her limited influence. She meekly and submissively implored him to think of their family.<sup>92</sup> Another wife



advised that ale-wives and drinking companions would have no use for him after he dissipated their money. When his wife was dying, and he needed money, the ale-wife bluntly refused him any assistance. The "Dainty new Dialogue between Henry and Elizabeth" spoke of the 'bad Husbands Vindication and the good Wives Reformation.' Bess bitterly tongue-lashed Harry for wasting time at the ale-house and pawning their clothes for drink. Another ballad invited 'good fellows' to swear off the ale-house and save for hard times and old age. In a 'libellous' reply, a ballad writer suggested that country hostesses used all their wiles and tricks to entice men to spend money, even offering up their own daughters. Country hostesses defended their decisions. They wore the breeches.<sup>93</sup> Hostesses encountered men who were determined to cheat them. They offered temptation, and men would in turn refuse to pay their debts.<sup>94</sup>

The ale-house gave its female proprietor an income when there were few other prospects. Not a proper place of polite manners, it often served as an economic clearinghouse where vagrants and the poor searched for what work. Before the Civil War, the plight of vagrants, the Puritan need for control, and prostitution made the ale-house a center for sexual activity. Brawls and assaults were not uncommon; women could be assaulted on the premises. It was a male haven, and wives who went there searching for their husbands might have done so at their own peril. Few women darkened the door, given the moral climate of the early years of the seventeenth century.<sup>95</sup>

More respectable by the late seventeenth century, the ale-house was no longer seen only as a place for illicit sex and raucous behavior. Respectable women might frequent the premises with their husbands. An improved socio-economic climate meant better living standards. Fewer tramps were on the road, and the contentious itinerant poor were not as troublesome. This development can also be attributed to the enforcement of the Settlement Act of 1662. Previously impoverished peddlers and chapmen now had some money, and there were more skilled workers.<sup>96</sup>

Acknowledging the dislike of all tavernkeepers, Judith Bennett believes that misogyny was the root-cause of the hatred of the ale-house keeper. Images of the ale-wife as dishonest and luring can be dated from the medieval period. Handling money, they visibly challenged the patriarchal order.<sup>97</sup> Toleration of their economic activities shifts, given the prevailing socio-economic circumstances and ideological mood. Bennett expected misogyny to be linked directly to the marginalization of women's work, but there is only a 'tenuous' link between the misogyny of the popular culture and working lives of women.<sup>98</sup> At the same time ballad images with sentiment against the ale-wives re-enforced already-existing biases. Despite their steadily declining share of the market, women victualers and brewers faced a drum-beat of criticism not encountered by men in the trade. Ale-wives faced attack because the trade was not popular and drinking was sinful. They were not expected to attenuate the decline of morals or foster sinful behavior. Hatred of women, however, remains the most convincing explanation of the abuse heaped upon ale-wives. Compounding the array of forces that sporadically if continually marginalized women was a patriarchal ideology with misogynistic overtones.

### Conclusion

Ballads and chapbooks commented upon the vagaries of everyday life. Ballads concentrated on the relationship between man and woman and offer few if any comments on family life and children. Some maidens lamented that their time may have come and gone. The milkmaids, were honored for their sobriety and frugality. One chap-ballad bemoaned the agony of a young woman who was left pregnant by a man who then abandoned her and castigated her as a whore. While many ballads allowed maidens their laments or sorrows, few chapbooks displayed their sentiments.

The chapbook discussing the many pleasures of marriage suggested that marriage offered 'charming delights' and 'ravishing sweets,' but warned about the expenses of setting up a household as well as the sums necessary for a lady's proper entertainment. Often it was implied, if not stated outright, that the family could ill afford this. The candidates offered in the 'lottery for ladies' could purchase what the consuming female would want to buy. Quakers had fine country homes; land surveyors availed themselves of fine if confiscated French wines. References to material goods were sprinkled through the many verses of the 'Norwood Gipsy.' In an addendum to the 'Spanish Tale,' an old country bachelor affirmed his good disposition towards the female sex and his delight in looking at female fashions. Coming into town, he observed the carriage of young women as they adjusted themselves to their headdresses or wigs. This old gentleman could accept them on young women, but not on one old and 'long visaged' women whose frizzled curls only reminded others of their insignificance. Such a comment testified to the interest in conspicuous consumption of young and old alike.

Women were consuming creatures. Merchants liked milk-maids, not because of their independence, but because they earned money and were determined to spend it. The wife of a London tradesman used her husband's money for the latest hair style. One wife wanted an appropriate New Year's gift from her husband, despite his plea that they family could not afford it. Advice by mothers to daughters plus the concerted attempt of families to marry their daughters to old men--dotars--reveal a calculated attempt to improve the family's position or the life chances of a daughter. Men may have spent the money on drink at the ale-house, but young girls and wives wanted to spend money on a new ribbon, a new dress, powder, wigs or other consumables. Security was precarious, and fortunes that were quickly made could be quickly lost. The drive of family members to avail themselves of someone else's wealth must be put into that perspective.

The sentiments echoed at a wedding dinner illustrated the desire for material things that the women saw as necessities. Their expectations included fine china,

Venetian carpets, silver, a tea pot and expensive food that would impress guests. The pursuit of pleasure involved material goods and luxuries that husbands often saw as unnecessary. Ostentation and a desire to impress other women was evident in a chapbook, "The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping," that is reviewed in a later chapter. Women literally tore at each other in an inebriated contest of wits.

Some ballads and chapbooks display disgust, malevolence or outright misogynistic statements, but many chapbooks allowed women to give voice to their frustrations. In addition, it is difficult to gauge the invective and implications that some readers culled from the pages.

The war between the sexes or a contest in marriage was clearly a major theme. The dialogue between John and Kate illustrated the marital negotiations for a sufficient division of duties that would create a happy partnership. In a comical exchange, Jane stood her ground in order get the security she craved. Mothers advised their daughters to marry older men with money or to get a firm agreement from a man who was counseling the goodness of love. The majority of sentiments, however, illustrate bickering and complaints. John and Joan had a contest to see who could do the lesser amount of work and still survive. They soon learned that they had to sober up and farm like everybody else.

A 'diverting dialogue' provided comic relief that allowed a couple to air their suspicions that each was sleeping with another. A 'merry dialogue' allowed husband and wife to display grievances involving the treatment of apprentices. She replied with loving assurances, while he castigated the female help with derogatory remarks. Margery decided to humble her husband like a spaniel and aired her complaints when the neighbors could hear them. One husband accused his 'crafty' wife of laying in bed til noon, while she replied that this habit saved money on candles. She insisted that she was his equal and that he should love the marriage bed. '(c)rafty' is a term which appeared frequently in ballads, but only occasionally in chapbooks.

Only one chapbook displayed the wiles of an old woman who clearly wanted the services of a young man and was willing to take her chances. The *Canterbury Tales* emphasized the sins of the Wife of Bath and her nervy appearance before the pearly gates. The Roxburghe Ballads that discussed older women emphasized their vulnerability, the fact that their children abandoned them, and that they were haggard and poor.

Insults flowed free in a contentious society. Ballads and chapbooks were part of that ongoing dialogue. Some ballads responded to earlier ballads. Are these ballads and chapbooks another mechanism to enforce the social code and encourage sexual honor and chaste behavior? Ballads originated in localities and their story line was related to real or imagined occurrences. Chapbooks titles noted that this was a 'true' story or that the account was 'founded on facts.' The use of such a disclaimer indicates that some persons might dispute the story, hence the need for language that asserts the veracity of what follows. Many of these simple but enduring stories reached beyond the village where they originated.

Words such as 'advice,' 'lament,' 'complaint,' and 'counsel' crop up frequently in the titles and subtitles of ballads, and less frequently in chapbooks. These evocative terms tell us that men were exclaiming about how women should behave as opposed to how they were behaving. The depictions of women in seventeenth-century ballads resulted from the imaginations of male writers. Margaret J. M. Ezell's focus on patriarchy in English intellectual life produced the observation that ballad writers took pointed aim at domineering women.<sup>99</sup> Their misogyny cannot be underestimated.

The reference to good fellows in individual ballads and the section of the Roxburghe Ballads devoted to 'good fellows' tell us that these are men given to idle talk at the ale-house. Their need for one-upmanship led them to demean their wives. The ballad writers may have understood this display of male bravado and reinforced it with their attacks upon obstreperous females. Many ballads and some chapbooks disparaged the activities of the ale-wife. Women complained about their

husband frequenting the ale-house, but it is clear from ballads and chapbooks that some men complained about their wife's drunkenness as well as pursuit of other men.

The Roxburghe Ballads provide a prolific display of the panoply of charges and casual remarks that question a woman's character and behavior. One ballad illustrated concern about venereal diseases that could be caught from pock-marked city women who lacked the purity of country girls. Young chambermaids and others in ballads knew that the mating game was a perpetual war until the knot was tied. Some did not play this game well, and some were sacrificed by their families' greed. The 'crafty' among them used their wit to maximize their position. No ballad explicitly advised them to 'look out for number one,' but they appeared to do that. Encounters with 'crafty' maids or 'courageous Betty' could be a sobering experience. Maidens who looked out for themselves earned more approval than did independent married women. Historical research emphasizes the calculated use of daughters as pawns in the marriage game and quest for money pursued by the gentry/aristocracy, but the ballads tell us that eligible young women were also sacrificed by their lower status families. Mothers gave advice and seemed to make the arrangements. Among the propertied classes, men conducted such negotiations, often in the solicitor's office.

Ballads displayed the pervasiveness of marital in-fighting. Seventeenth-century ballads in the Pepys' collection revealed 'less than devoted spouses and demands for sexual liberation by frustrated females.' The demands of insatiable and unfaithful wives plus cuckolded and impotent men were frequent. The 'scruffy ephemera' of the Pepys' and Roxburghe collection tell us much about the daily lives of ordinary people.

Wiltenburg's study comparing English and German ballads reached similar conclusions. Some English women did not suffer fools gladly, did not suffer abuse easily or silently and could display their own aggressiveness. One could try to tame them through marriage, but submissiveness and meek demeanor were not likely.

Hence one reached some accord with them through a sorting out of roles and a negotiation of issues within the relationship. An emphasis on cowering or cuckolded men may distort the image if there is no reference to partnership or equals in marriage. John Tomson was kept in lines by his fears of his wife, Jakaman. John and Joan had to work together at farming to survive, hence they ended their campaign at one-upmanship. John and Kate did not need formal vows. Their pleasant contract and loving relationship kept them together. Common-law marriage was much discussed and certainly discouraged and disparaged. Still another couple tried to exchange roles only to find that they could not perform each other's chores. Dialogue in marriage, even referred to by the good-fellows of the ale-house, tells us more about what marriage was than household manuals and other patriarchally-tinged advice. Men made their share of complaints about unfaithful wives and gossiping gad-about women. Some took care of their alcoholic wives. Others endured their need for finery and conspicuous display.

This exposition on ballads and chapbooks compares empirically established facts for early modern England with depictions in ballads and chapbooks. Defamation, the decline of 'good neighborhood,' and a penchant for litigation are characteristics of the early modern period. Although suits for defamation decline after about 1725, and witchcraft no longer cuts its horrendous swath across village society, abundant ingredients for dissension and conflict remained, and a recipe for redress of grievances was well known. To avoid a simple presentist-oriented reductionism, one must do justice to the layers of life and vestiges of the 'old culture' that remain. Clearly the poetry of John Clare and the works of others illustrates how vital this 'old culture' and village society was well beyond the eighteenth century. The plethora of ballads, of which the Roxburghe collection is only one source, tells us that dissension was alive and well. These chapbooks appear to follow the pattern established by the ballads. They provided humorous accounts of real life, while at the same time they warned of what happened when the normal and expected sexual hierarchy was turned upside down.

Some women did not need instruction on how to become assertive. The comment of Keith Thomas that women had time for religion, since 'they were less used to saving themselves by their own exertions' is instructive for the conclusion of this chapter.<sup>100</sup> This comment in context referred to women being saved in the strictly religious sense and the 'disproportionate' role played by women in the Civil War sects. The drive for equality by separatists as well as the work of women in the seventeenth century--albeit declining according to Clark--was reflected in ballad and chapbooks. These women were responsible for their own lives and vigorously defended their end of the bargain. Chapbooks depicting passive, self-effacing and perhaps more middle class women who waited for men to save their person and their honor awaited the second half of the eighteenth century.

J. A. Sharpe refuted feminists who saw marriage in early modern England as a loveless, economically-driven union. He insisted that plebeian marriages were far more complicated than previous historians cared to admit. Ballads did offer a 'pessimistic' and even misogynistic perspective on marriage. Such evidence must be weighed carefully. Misogynistic notions focussed on the necessity to maintain order, but at the core of such beliefs was the lingering fear that women indeed were stronger than men. Some diatribes were couched in humor. Thomas and Elizabeth Foyster both recognized that humorous material must be cautiously assessed.<sup>101</sup>

But there is another possible interpretation. The court of community opinion judged sexual prowess. Strong women challenged the virility of their husbands or other partners. Bravado masked fears of sexual inadequacy especially if their power and performance were measured against the strength which ballad writers attributed to English women. English men may have drowned their sorrows in collective misery while they commiserated about the real or imagined power of their wives.<sup>102</sup>

The defense of female honor assumed a high priority and the fierce struggle for survival began at an early age. Some women retained that fierceness, knowing that power within marriage depended on their mettle in holding their own as well as



running the household. Once again, society seems to bear out Hobbes' maxim--the war of all against all. His observation was itself born of seventeenth-century conditions. The battle in the churchyard by plebeian amazons in Henry Fielding's Tom Jones well illustrated their fierceness, if put to the test. 'Verbal assertiveness,' contentious relationships among villagers and spouses, routine raucous and brawling behavior within the ale-house and in the village all seemed to be routine experiences, not the exception to the rule.

## Notes

Roxburghe Ballads abbreviated within the footnotes as RB.

1. Elizabeth Foyster, "A Laughing Matter? Marital Discord and Gender Control in Seventeenth Century England," Rural History, Vol. 4, #1, pp. 6, 7.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
3. Judith M. Bennett, Women in the Medieval English Countryside, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
4. Alice Clark, Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century, (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1992). Reissued in a 1919 volume put out by Routledge. The later reissue was introduced by Amy Louise Erickson. Carole Shammas, The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Another perspective on consumer demand is offered by Neil McKendrick, "Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New Perspective on the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution," appearing in Historical Studies in English Thought and Society (in Honour of J. H. Plumb), (London: Europa Publications, 1974).
5. Laura Gowings, "Language, power and the law: women's slander litigation in early modern London," appearing in Jennifer Kermode and Garthine Walker, eds., Women, crime and the courts in early Modern England, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 28, 29, 30, 36. J. A. Sharpe, Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: the church courts at York, Borthwick Papers, No. 58, York, 1980, pp. 22, 23. Gowings, *ibid.*, Susan Dwyer Amussen, An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
6. R. H. Tawney, Alan Macfarlane, Marriage and Love in England, Modes of Reproduction, 1300-1800, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), Review essay of Stone's book, History and Theory, Vol., 18, (1979): 103-126; Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800, (New York: Harper Colophon Books, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977); Abridged edition appeared in 1979.
7. J. A. Sharpe, "Plebeian Marriage in Stuart England: Some Evidence From Popular Literature," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series, Vol. 36, (1986).
8. Wrightson and Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700, (1979) pp. 119, 139, 177.

9. **Ibid.;** Bernard Capp, "Separate Domains: Women and Authority in Early Modern England," in The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England, Paul Griffiths and Steve Hindle, eds., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 125.
10. Wrightson, English Society, p. 57:
11. Wrightson and Levine, Poverty and Piety, pp. 119, 139 177.
12. Gowings, "Language, power and the Law;" see especially Gowing's Domestic Dangers, Women Words, and Sex in Early Modern London (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), chapter 2.
13. Sharpe, Defamation and Sexual Slander, pp., 8,9,15, 17, 18, 29.
14. Amussen, An Ordered Society.
15. Anna Clark, "Humanity or Justice? Wifebeating and the law in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," in Regulating Womanhood: Historical Essays on Marriage, Motherhood, and Sexuality, (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1992), pp. 231-7, 239-40. A study of Somerset indicates that defense of sexual honor was mainly by married women. Polly Morris, Defamation and Sexual Reputation in Somerset, 1733-1850. Center for the Study of Social History, University of Warwick, 1985.
16. Martin Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music, and Mocking Rhymes in Early Modern England, appearing in Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England, ed, Barry Reay, (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 176
17. Other chap-ballads include: "Lord Henry and Fair Katherine; Or, The Secret Discovered too Late," RB, Vol. 8, p. 158; "A Lamentable Ballad of the Ladie's Fall. Declaring how a Gentlewoman through her too much trust came to her end, and how her Lover slew himself," RB, Vol. 6, pp. 764-765; "True Love rewarded with Loyalty; Or, Mirth and Joy after Sorrow and Sadness," RB, Vol. 6, pp. 259-263; "Coridon and Parthenia, The Languishing Shepherd made Happy; or Faithful Love rewarded," RB, Vol. 6, pp. 568-571; Information available about ballads and a Roman matron, RB, Vol. 8, pp. 2-6; "The Famous Flower of Serving-Men; Or, the Lady turned Serving-Man," RB, Vol. 6, pp. 567-570; "The Spanish Lady's Love," RB, Vol. 6, pp. 653-656; "The Noble Lord's Cruelty; Or, A Pattern of True Love," RB, Vol. 6, pp. 682-683; "Complaint and Death of a Forsaken Lover," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 421-423; "Cupid's Courtesie; Or, The Young Gallant foil'd at his own Weapon," RB, Vol. 3, p. 529-532; "The Forlorn Lover; Declaring how a Lass gave her Lover three slips for a Tester, and married another a Week before EASTER," RB, Vol. 6, pp. 233-234; "Cupid's Revenge on King Cophetua," RB, Vol. 6, pp. 658-662.
18. J. Woodfall Ebsworth, "The Female Rambler Up to Date," RB, Vol. 8, p. 642.
19. "The Unhappy Lady of Hackney," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 658-660.

20. "The Famous Flower of Serving Men, RB, Vol. 6, pp. 567-70.
21. "The Broken Contract; or, The Betray'd Virgin's Complaint," and "The Mournful Answer to the Betray'd Virgin's Complaint," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 807-810.
22. "The Mad Man's Morrice: wherein you shall finde His trouble and grief, and discontent of his minde; A warning to young men to have a care, How they in love intangled are," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 153, 154.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
24. "The Merchant's Son and the Beggar-Wench of Hull," RB, Vol. 7, p. 379.
25. "An Excellent Ballad of George Barnwell, An Apprentice of London, who was undone by a Strumpet; who having thrice robbed his Mater, and murdered his Uncle in Ludlow, was hanged in chains in Polonia, and by the means of a Letter sent by his own hand to the Mayor of London, she was hang'd at Ludlow," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 59-66.
26. "The History of Tommy Potts, or, The Lovers Quarrell," Printed and Sold in London. There are several copies in the Harding Collection. One printed for S. Bates, London was possibly circulated in 1719 or 1720. Its title: "The Lover's Quarrel: or, Cupid's Triumph: That pleasant history of Fair Rosamond of Scotland; daughter to the Lord Arundel, whose love was obtained by the valour of Tommy Pots, who conquered Lord Phoenix. A very similar title can be found for one printed in Newcastle by J. White and T. Saint, possibly in 1760 to 1780. The same printers published 'the second book: "The Lovers loyalty: or The happy fair. : Giving an account of the happy lives of Tommy Potts (now Lord Arundel) and Fair Rosamond his charming bride, who loved and lived in peace and unity all their days."
27. Joy Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany, (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992); p. 255.
28. Alan Macfarlane, Marriage and Love in England, Modes of Reproduction, 1300-1840, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).
29. "The Wooing Maid," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 52-56. A similar connotation is found in "The Country Maid's Lawyer," RB, Vol. 3, p. 585.
30. "The New-Made Gentlewoman, or, The Dishonest Lady," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 562-574, 1671; "The Knight and the Begger-Wench of Hull," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 376-378, about 1660; "The Merchant's Son and the Begger-Wench of Hull," RB, Vol. 7, p. 379; "A Tryall of Skill," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 556-557; Robert Guy, "The Witty Western Lasse," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 47-51; Wiltenberg, Disorderly Women, p. 104; Lawrence Price, "The merry-conceited Lasse, whose heart's desire was set on fire, a husband for to have; in hope that he would certainly, maintaine her fine and brave," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 111-114; "The West-Country Lawyer, or, The Witty Maid's Good Fortune," RB, Vol. 7, p. 428; before 1693.

31. "The Loving Chamber-Maid, or Vindication of a departed Maidenhead," RB, after 1688, Vol. 7, pp. 446-447; The Editor, J. Woodfall Eborh, complained in print that vice was not as brazenly flouted in public until about 1688 or the English Revolution. Martin Parker, "A Fayre Portion for a Fayre Maid," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 365-369; Wiltenberg, Disorderly Women, p. 172. "Will the (merry) Weaver and (Charity) the Chambermaid," RB, Vol. 7, 167-168, pp. 536-537. A Pepysian ballad, "The Witty Chamber-Maid," RB, Vol. 7, p. 469, also referred to a woman who could get her hands on money. citation wrong.

32. "Crafty Kate of Colchester," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 430-432.

33. "The Crafty Maid," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 562-655; "The Crafty Maid's Approbation," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 565-659; "The Crafty Maid of the West," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 626-628, 1686.

34. "Advice to the Ladies of London," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 369-372.

35. "Courageous Betty of Chick-Lane," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 641-644; Wiltenberg, Disorderly Women, p. 188.

36. THE CABINET OF FANCY, OR BON TON of the DAY; A Whimsical, Comical, Friendly, Agreeable Composition; Intended to please ALL, and offend NONE; SUIT ABLE TO AMUSE MORNING, NOON AND NIGHT, WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY TYMOTHY TICKLEPITCHER. With songs, and strange extravagancies. He tries to tickle all your fancies. London; Printed by J. McLaen, Ship-Alley, Wellclose Square; Mr. Sudbury, No. 16, Tooley-Street, Borough and sold by all the Booksellers in Town and Country. 1790.

37. Martin Parker, "The Milk Maid's Life," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 114-120; Similar sentiments appear in "The Innocent Milk-Maid's Delight," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 24-26; "The Milk Maid's Resolution," RB, Vol. 6, p. 529.

38. "The Ploughman's Praise," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 681-683, 1682; "The Country Man's Care in Choosing a Wife," RB, Vol. 3, p. 597; The virtues of country people appear in "The Innocent Country Maid's Delight," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 27-28 and "The Plow-Man's Reply to the Merry Milk Maid's Delight," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 238-239; "The Country Girl's Policy, or the Cockney Outwitted," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 286, 287; See also "The Politick Countryman," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 697-698, 1682; "The Downright Country-Man, or the Faithful Dairy Maid," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 276, 277; "The Merry Plowman and Loving Milk Maid," RB, Vol. 7, p. 284; "Plow-Man's Praise in answer to the Bonny Milk-Maid," RB, Vol. 7, p. 288.

39. "The Country Miss new came in Fashion or a Farewell to the Pockified Town Miss," RB, Vol. 4, pp. 402-403.
40. "The Pleasant and Delightful History of the Frolicksome Courtier and Jovial Tinker," Aldermary Church Yard.
41. "The Wandering young gentlewoman; or Catskin: In five parts." This chapbook was printed by S. Harward at his shops in Gloucester, Cheltenham, and Tewkesbury, about 1760-1770, John Pyt at the Brittainia Printing Office, 1771-1798, and by J. Turner, Ludlow, about 1777-1794? A copy in the Harding Collection at the Bodeleian Library is from the Darlington chapbooks, about 1770-1820. The Harvard catalogue of chapbooks in the Houghton Library indicated that there were 43 copies in the Roxburghe Collection. p. 42.
42. "The Whimsical Love of Thomas Whittle with the Comical Reception he found from that Imperious Beauty, Ann Dobison, Digested in Prose and Verse." Newcastle, Printed in the Present Year, about 1760-1780, according to the Harding Collection electronic catalogue.
43. "The Complete Art of Courtship, or, the School of Venus beautified with several choice songs," Newcastle upon Tyne. The Neuburg list of the most popular chapbooks in the eighteenth century lists this title.
44. "The Delightful Academy of Compliments, Being the rarest and most exact art of wooing a maid or widow by a way of Dialogue or complimentary Expressions. With passionate Love Letters, courtly Sentences to express the elegance of love and posies which loves and rings. A Choice collection of the newest songs sung at Court and City." Newcastle. In a similar vein, "The Accomplished Courtier or a new School of Love." The Neuburg list includes the "Academy of Compliments."
45. "The Accomplished Courtier, or, A new School of Love, Being the rarest and most exact Art of wooing a Maid or Widow by way of Dialogue and Complimental expression with possible love letters and courtly sentences to express the Elegance of Love."
46. "The Whole Pleasures of Matrimony; interwoven with sundry comical and delightful stories; with the charming delights and ravishing sweets of wooing and wedlock, in all its diverting enjoyments," Printed by S. Tupman, Nottingham, 1780-1880? (Bodeleian designation)
47. "The Art of Courtship, or Amorous Dialogue between Thomas and Sarah or, The Ready Way of Wooing," Aldermary Church Yard.
48. "The Forc'd Marriage, or Unfortunate Celia," RB, Vol. 8, 1677, pp. 190, 191; "The Old Man's Complaint," RB, 1685, Vol. 8, p. 197; "The Complaining Maid," RB, Vol. 8, p. 199; "The Old Miser Slighted," RB, before 1664, Vol. 8, pp. 194-195; "The Jealous Old Dotar, or The Discovery of Cuckoldry," RB, Vol. 8, p. 199.
49. Whetstone

50. "The Pleasures of a Single Life: Or The Misery of Matrimony, Together with the Sweet Entertainment of the most charming Pleasures of a Country Life. Dedicated to all young Batchelors, Widows and Maids," Printed at Sympson's Printing-Office in Stonecutter-Street, Fleet-Market. This bookseller and publisher was in business in 1765 according to an authoritative source on printers and booksellers: H., R. Plomer (England), G. H. Bushnell (Scotland), and E. R. McC. Dix (Ireland), A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland, From 1726 to 1775, (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The Bibliographical Society, 1968). The first volume covers the year 1668 to 1725; the second, 1725 to 1775. For the years beyond 1775: Ian Maxted, The London Book Trades, 1775-1800, A Preliminary Checklist of Members, (London: Dawson, 1977).

51. The series of chapbooks, here called the Tewkesbury chapbooks had the following information listed for the publisher on each chapbook in the Harding Collection of the Bodleian Library: "Sold by S. Gamidge, in Worcester; W. Lloyd in Mortimer-Cleobury; Mr. Taylor, in Kiddermaster; and S. Harward in Tewkesbury Others indicate that S. Harward sold chapbooks at his shops in Gloucester and Cheltenham. The dates for items printed in Worcester are are 1760-1777. The earliest dated imprint for S. Gamidge in 1758 and he died in 1777. S. Harward was in business about 1760. Each of the following Tewkesbury chapbooks had the imprint listed above.

52. "Beautiful Shepherdess of Arcadia," a Tewkesbury Chapbook; "Merchant Daughter of Bristol."

53. "The Crafty Miller, or, Mistaken Batchelor."

54. "Love in a Barn, or Right Country Courtship."

55. "The Virtuous Wife of Bristol."

56. "A Comical Dialogue between two country lovers containing love letters and songs agreeable to their proceedings," Newcastle: Printed in the Present Year.

57. "A Diverting dialogue both serious and comical that passed the other day between a shoemaker and his wife living in this neighborhood," Entered according to Order. Harding Collection noted that this was an English chapbook.

58. "A Dialogue Between Honest John and Loving Kate with their Contrivance for Marriage and Way to get a Livelihood." Part the Second, Printed and Sold in Aldermay Church Yard. "The New Way of Marriage: A Pleasant Contract Between John and Kate," RB, Vol. 7, 1672-1694, pp. 157-159; J. Woodfall Eborworth, the editor of the Roxburghe Ballads, called this 'free love heresy.' RB, Vol. 7, p. 133.

59. "The Cupboard Door open'd Or, Joyful NEWS for Apprentices and Servant Maids. Being a Merry Dialogue that passed between a Master and Mistress concerning locking the Cup-board Door. "Without dates, this chapbook from the Harding Collection must be estimated as from the earlier eighteenth century, since it was only eight pages, and included rough wood-cuts that resemble those of the earlier years, and large, coarse print with a few letters occasionally missing.

60. "A Curious and Diverting Dialogue Between Hughson the Cobler and Margery his Wife, Which happened at about Twelve o'Clock, on his Arrival Home from the Alehouse." Printed and sold by J. Davenport, 6 George's Court, St. John's Lane, West Smithfield, London.
61. "A New and Diverting Dialogue, Both Serious and Comical, that passed the other day between a noted Shoemaker and his Wife, Living in this Neighbour-hood," This account was 'taken down in Short-Hand by a nimble Penman, One of his boon Companions.' Printed by Sold by J. Evans, No. 4, Long Lane, West Smithfield, London.
62. "Jealous man convinced that he is no cuckold or the way the world was represented by a true satire on the times in comical dialogue between a jealous husband and his crafty wife shewing the true derivation of the word cuckold." There are two versions of this short chapbook. One is by J. Evans, Long Lane. The other coarser printing was from S. Haward in Tewkesbury, but also in Cloucester and Cheltenham.
63. Martin Parker, "John and Joan: or, a mad couple well met," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 504-508; "The Two-Penny (Sc)ore, In a Dialogue betwixt a Spend-thrift and a W(anton)," RB, 1655, Vol. 8, pp. 718-720.
64. "The Woman to the Plow, and the Man to the Hen-Roost," RB, 1629, 1675, 1680s, Vol. 7, pp. 185-187.
65. "Halfe a dozen of good Wives," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 451-453.
66. "A General Summons those belonging to the Hen-peck'd Frigate to appear at Cuckold's Point on the 18th of this instant October," 1685, Vol. 8, p. 667; "The Catalogue of Contented Cuckolds," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 481-483.
67. "Hey for Horn Fair," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 665-666, 1756; "Cuckold's Haven," RB, 1638, Vol. 1, p. 148; "Wanton Women and their Costly Attire," 1597, RB, Vol. 8, pp. 14-15; "The Wanton Wenches of Wiltshire," 1685-1688, RB, Vol. 8, pp. 651-652; "The Westminster Frolick, or, A Cuckold is a Good Man's Fellow," RB, Vol. 89, pp. 702-703, 1672.
68. "A Father a Child that's none of my own," RB, Vol. 8, p. 440, 441, recast date 1672
69. "The Merry Cuckold," RB, Vol. 2, Supplement, pp. 5,6; "Merry Cuckold," RB, Vol. 8, pp. cxxxii-iii, 1642-1675; "The Rich and Flourishing Cuckold well Satisfied," RB, Vol. 8, pp. clxiv-clxv.
70. "She is Bound, but won't Obey," about 1670s-1680s, RB, Vol. 8, p. clxxix; "The Old Man's Complaint; or, The Unequal-Matcht Couple," RB, 1659, Vol. 8, p. 197.
71. "The Cuckold's Complaint; or, The Turbulent Wife's Severe Cruelty," RB, Vol. 7, p. 431; "The Cuckold's Lamentation of a Bad Wife," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 635-637;



"The Scolding Wife's Vindication" answers "The Cuckold's Complaint," RB, 1689, Vol. 7, p. 197; Probably Martin Parker, "My Wife will be my Master," RB, dated 1640 but also 1681, Vol. 7, pp. 188-9; Wiltenburg, Disorderly Women, p. 153; "The Invincible Pride of Women," RB, 1686-1688, Vol. 7, p. 20. See also "The Discontented Married Man," RB, Vol. 1, pp. 295-298. 31. Martin Parker, "Keep a good tongue in your head," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 237-242; "Advice to Batchelors," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 373-379.

72. "The Cuckold's Complaint," RB, Vol. 7, p. 431, 1689-1691; "The Invincible Pride of Women, RB, Vol. 7, 1686-1688, pp. 20-21. Answer to "The Cuckold's Complaint," is "The Scolding Wife's Vindication," RB, Vol. 7, p. 197.

73. "Tom Farthing, or, The Married Woman's Complaint," RB, Vol. 8, 1675, pp. 670-671. See also "She is Bound, but won't Obey," RB, Vol. 8, 1670s to 1680s, p. clxxix; "The Old Man's Complaint; or, The Unequal-Matcht Couple," RB, Vol. 8, 1659, p. 197.

74. "The discontented Married Man; or, A merry new Song that was pen'd in foule weather, of a Scold that could not keep her lips together," printed during the reign of Charles II, RB, Vol. 1, pp. 295-297; "Wanton Women and their Costly Attire," RB, Vol. 8, 1674, p. 14; "The Wanton Wenches of Wiltshire," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 6516-652; "The Woman Outwitted; or, the Weaver's Wife cunningly catch'd in a Trap, by her Husband, who sold her for Ten Pounds, and sent her to Virginny," RB, Vol. 7, 1685, p. 190; See also "The Wanton Wife of Castle-Gate," RB, Vol. 7, p. 369; "The Lady of Pleasure,": RB, Vol. 8, p. 710; before 1686; "The London Ladies' Vindication of Top-Knots," RB, Vol. 8, 1689, pp. 16, 17.

75. "The Happy Bride, Or Virtuous Country Maid Rewarded," Printed and Sold in London.

76. "The Lover's Stratagem, or The Petticoat Plotter, Being a new Way to get a Wife," Printed and Sold at the London and Middlesex Printing Office, No. 81, Shoe Lane, Holborn.

77. "A Good Husband for Five Shillings: Or, A Lottery for Ladies," Printed in this Present Year.

78. *The Whimsical Lady, A Dialogue,* Written by Timothy Donovan, Gent, Bow Church Yard; one copy in the Houghton Library Collection at Harvard was printed twice by J. Evans, a late eighteenth-century London printer.

79. "The Norwood Gipsej, or Mother Bridget's Last Legacy Being a Universal Fortune Book, Discovering Six Hundred and Forty six Answers to Different

Questions," London, 50 Bishopsgate Street, 1793. The 1793 date was noted in the Harvard Catalogue. .

80. "The Cabinet of Fancy, Or, Bon Ton of the Day; A Whimsical, Comical, Friendly, Agreeable Composition; Intended to please All, and offend NONE; Suitable to Amuse MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT," Written and Compiled By Tymothy Ticklepitcher, London; Printed for J. McLaen, Ship-Alley, Wellclose Square, Mr. Sudbury, No. 16, Tooley-Street, Borough; and sold by all the Booksellers in Town and Country, 1790; pp. 9-12.

81. "The Lincolnshire Wonder: Or, A Comical Dialogue Which Lately happened in this Neighborhood, between an Old Woman of threescore and Ten, and a Youth about Twenty, with whom she lately married," London, Printed and Sold by J. Evans, No. 41, Long Lane, West Smithfield.

82. "The Old Pudding Pye-Woman," RB, Vol. 7, p. 77; "Olde Bride," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 358-361; "The Old Man, His Wife, and their heartless Children," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 347-352, no dated was given but this is part of the Pepys Collection; Robert Guy, "The Merry Old Woman," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 164, 169.

83. "A Woman's Birth; or a perfect relation more witty than common, set forth to declare the descent of a woman," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 94-97. This ballad, originally called "The Production of the Female Kind" was published in 1661, 1670, and 1694 as related by the editor on page 679. Quotes from pages 96 and 97.

84. "A Peerlesse Paragon," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 300-304.

85. Ibid., pp. 302-304.

86. "Seldome Cleanely," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 514-519, no date given.

87. "The Wanton Wife of Bath," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 212-218.

88. "Women, the best Warriors," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 164-169; Henry Gossen, the printer of this ballad, worked from 1607-1631; "The Bedfordshire Widow,; or, The Poor in Distress Reliev'd," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 4434-445; "The Widow of Watling Street," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 7-13; "The Kentish Wonder,," RB, Vol. 8, pp. 36-38; "The Kentish Miracle," RB, Vol. 8, p. 39.

89. "The Collier's Wedding," 1791.

90. need to find

91. "Tobias' Advice, RB, Vol. 7, pp. 151, 152; "Tobias's Experience Explain'd," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 153-154; "Tobias' Observation," RB, pp. 155-156. These ballads by Tobias Bowne were probably written between 1672-1683; see also "Caveat for a Spendthrift," RB, Vol. 8, p. 802-803, 1670-1677.

92. "The Carefull Wife's Good Counsel," RB, late seventeenth century, Vol. 3, p. 478-480; "The Bad-Husband's Experience of Ill-Husbandry; or a New Lesson for Ale-Wives," RB, Vol. 7, pp. 820-821.

93. "The Bad-Husband's Reformation; or The Ale-Wives daily Deceit," late seventeenth century, RB, Vol. 8, pp. 796-797; "A Dainty new Dialogue between Henry and Elizabeth," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 663-666; "The Country Hostess's Vindication," RB, Vol. 3, pp. 380-382.

94. "The Kind beleeving Hostesse," RB, Vol. 2, pp. 515-520.

95. Peter Clark, The English Alehouse: a social history, 1200-1830. (London and New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 82, 138, 235-236, 131-142, 148.

96. After the Civil War, more women, most likely the widows of ale-house keepers may have managed these small businesses. Late seventeenth-century broadside ballads condemned the heartless collection of debts. Restoration ballads enforced the notion of ale-house proprietors getting rich at the expense of poorer customers. *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 203-205, 225, 287-288.

97. Judith Bennett, "Misogyny, Popular Culture, and Women's Work," History Workshop Journal, #31, 1991, pp. 168-188; specific reference to pages 167-177, 179-181, 183. Fletcher, Gender, Sex and Subordination, p. 243.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 167, 168.

99. Margaret J. M. Ezell, The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family, (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), p. 54.

100. Keith Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," appearing in Crisis in Europe, 1560-1660, Trevor Aston, ed, with an introduction by Christopher Hill, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1965), p. 321.

101. J. A. Sharpe, "Plebian Marriage in Stuart England: Some Evidence from Popular Literature," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series, Vol. 36, (1986): 69, 83-85; Keith Thomas, "The place of laughter in Tudor and Stuart England," Times Literary Supplement, (January, 1977): 77-81. Foyster, "A Laughing Matter, Marital Discord and Gender Control in Seventeenth-Century England."

102. Foyster, "A Laughing Matter."

**CHAPTER NINE**  
**DIFFERENTIATION WITHIN THE GENRE**  
**CONTRIVED AND ARTIFICIALLY PROTRACTED AGONIES: POST-1750**

This chapter explores the themes of sensibility and the emotional histrionics that surfaced in chapbook fiction beyond the 1750s. Extensive material permits a thorough examination of themes and novelistic devices in chapbooks printed beyond mid-century. There are more than thirty chapbooks printed by various firms. The London-based firm of T. Sabine, and chapbooks commissioned by Ann Lemoine, printed in the 1780s and 1790s and early years of the next century, provide a treasure-trove of material. The Sabine series closely followed the code of sensibility, while Lemoine's offerings varied from assertive women like Mary Jane Meadows to the pathetic heroines of Sarah Wilkinson. Two of Lemoine's more significant stories appear in a later chapter. This chapter also includes an abridgment of Amelia by Henry Fielding.

These chapbooks demonstrate vulnerability and dependency in women and the expectation that they sacrifice themselves for family and friends. Unlike the women in ballads and early chapbooks who cuckolded their husbands—even sometimes battering them, went out conspicuously dressed, frequently came home inebriated, and enjoyed battle in the war between the sexes, the women of later eighteenth-century chapbooks were acted upon, not women who appeared to be in control of their own lives.

Historians and literary scholars describe a culture of sensibility that novelists since the eighteenth century employed to define the lives of their characters. Since some chapbooks used the term sensibility directly as a code word for readers, while still others revealed their adherence to its dictates, a definition seems appropriate. The connotations introduced by G. J. Barker-Benfield pertain to novels, but they can be extended to chapbooks.

Sensibility connoted spiritual and moral values that suffused the domain of

feelings. Feelings were associated with the nervous system in the quite rudimentary state of psychology. Seventeenth-century investigations of mental development coupled with the desires of women for a better education prompted intellectual posturing about human capacities. This investigation of human potential asserted that human beings were made, not born. By the eighteenth century, however, the notion of innate differences between the sexes minimized and then obfuscated the concept of equalized mental development. A gendered perspective now indicated that the female nervous system was more fragile than the male system.<sup>1</sup>

Historians of culture such as Barker-Benfield and historians focused on the novel such as Nancy Armstrong differ in their emphases, but they unite on one central tenet: the novel was the vehicle that served the cultural assumptions of the age. Within the realm of popular literature, chapbooks also bowed obsequiously to cultural assumptions. Within the expanding commercialized market of the eighteenth century, sentimental literature in the form of novels, plays, and poems increasingly moved with a 'culture of sensibility.' It was a 'culture of feeling, a culture of melancholy, a culture of distress, and culture of refined emotionalism.'<sup>2</sup>

The 'sentimental' invaded popular literature. It is the contention of this author that chapbooks followed the trend of novels in invoking this emotional content for a female reading audience. Cultural constraints were especially determining after 1740-1750. It will also be established here that the relegation of women to a secondary marginalized and distressed position derived from strong pre-existing and patriarchal assumptions about the position of women within that culture. Why such assumptions dominated the themes of novels and chapbooks must be studied elsewhere. In this situation, however, popular followed the lead of the dominant culture.

Critics and historians of culture such as G. J. Barker-Benfield and other students of the novel differ in their emphases, but they unite on one central tenet: the novel was the vehicle which served the cultural assumptions of the age in which

it was written. A 'culture of propriety and domesticity' began its extended run in the 1760s and 1770s. Sensibility had religious implications. Christian virtues and values of self-effacing behavior, self-sacrifice, humility, and modesty were prized and celebrated the poor and less able-bodied. Themes of redemption whereby the woman who led a sordid disreputable life sought to cleanse herself built upon the Christian message of repentance and forgiveness.<sup>3</sup>

This set of cultural norms resembled the life of middle class women and those allied with the gentry/aristocracy. But whether such a culture of refined manners and gestures, a penchant for reform or consumption and proper behavior can be applied to plebeian women is debatable. Whether the authors of chapbooks conformed to this code of gentility remains to be seen. The success of serialized novels may have convinced some authors that this was the road to success.

Many literary historians and critics of the novel comment on the truth versus fiction pendulum in the eighteenth-century novel and the veracity of the author. Because the novel and its themes after about 1750 shaped chapbook themes and its style, the issues concerning the novel must also be included here: is the novel truth or is it fiction, or, is it a convenient amalgamation of both truth and fiction, as fashioned by the author. The chapbooks printed in the closing years of the eighteenth century by the printing firm of T Sabine featured pathetic tales about women and often were entitled 'the History of Miss . . .' What this word denoted in the seventeenth-century context is indeed another theme addressed within this chapter and in others as well. The co-mingling of fact and fiction must be also addressed, although without exacting definitive conclusions. Finally, a discussion about novelistic devices concludes this lengthy chapter.

After an exacting survey of the evidence for England and all of Europe, Keith Thomas concluded that the principal cause of a persistent, unrelenting double standard was and is the belief that women are the property of men. Sexual impropriety damages their investment.<sup>4</sup> The double standard existed in medieval times and continued into the modern period. English feudal law protected the

hereditary expectations of men. A feudal lord could fine girls on his manor who gave birth to illegitimate children. Their activity devalued his investment. A sexually-active female could lose her inheritance because she was of less value to her lord and her father. Before and after the Reformation, ecclesiastical courts determined the status of marriage. Acts of Parliament that coexisted with long-standing cultural norms permitted men more flexibility in their private, sexual lives, but maintained rigid and unforgiving restrictions upon what women could and should do. Arranged marriages among the aristocracy vindicated the presumption that women were commodities to be exchanged between men.<sup>5</sup> Arranged marriages were a means of social and economic mobility and the chastity of the bride was part of the bargain.

Christian doctrine held that men and women were equal in the sight of God. Puritan admonitions in the seventeenth century and beyond condemned libertine behavior in both sexes. Attacks on the Restoration stage deplored values that diminished the sanctity and security of the family. Propriety and prudery are historically identified with middle class values and Victorian respectability. The double standard was not observed by all classes equally, since it was noticeably lacking in the lower orders.<sup>6</sup> Some of the lower classes, however, accepted it. Adulterous activity by the wife could produce offspring fathered by someone other than her husband. This played havoc with the inheritance of whatever property the family had. This concern is a corollary of the assumption that women are the property of men.

A summary of trends in literature will provide a way to assess the changes in chapbooks over the course of the long eighteenth century. Many women writers of Jacobean England established their own voices in a culture with antifeminist and misogynistic tendencies.<sup>7</sup> Studies of the novel emphasize the more permissive environment of the Restoration that fostered a climate that permitted women to write openly and for money. Women novelists such as Aphra Behn, Delaviere Manley,

and Eliza Haywood, the 'fair triumvirate of wits' had to work, but they distinguished themselves by their prolific and serious works.

England's transformation from a subsistence-oriented and impoverished society to one of relative wealth and freedom made this refined, sentimentalized view of life possible. Preachers, moralists, parents, children, tradesmen, and merchants were all part of a developing consumer society. By 1700, the English standard of living was higher than that of any other society except Holland. Women were part of the growth of consumerism. Home demand was critical to the growth of capitalism. Middle class women controlled the domestic environment and made the home the center of consumption. The Protestant Reformation and Puritan Revolution inspired religious teachings within the home. The spiritualized household further literacy and education which benefited all family members, including women. Enhanced literacy, an increase in the number of booksellers, and the start of circulating libraries contributed to a climate in which more people were reading and some were writing. Middle class women controlled the domestic environment and made the home the center of consumption.<sup>8</sup>

In a consumer-oriented society, consumer pleasures including reading and novels permitted 'a degree of unsupervised choice.' The growth of individualism noted by R. H. Tawney for Tawney's century, the long sixteenth-century, involved individual gratification and 'self-fashioning.' "The 'infinite enrichment of personality' contrasts to the 'imaginative poverty' of the precapitalist, peasant life described in Burke's discussion of European traditions. Alehouses became more respectable and coffee-houses became popular. Societies and clubs grew in number, but few existed for women. 'Self-fashioning' also encouraged a growth in literacy. While public space was still closed to women, some women read privately. Some were even teaching their children to read. The growth of print since 1500 made many books available to those who could afford to buy them. Commercialized printing also encouraged women's literacy. Serialized novels, subscription borrowings, remaindered and second-hand books as well as chapbooks and chapbook versions



of novels contributed to the growth of literacy. Available sources tell us about the history of the elite and middle classes, and we can conclude that history was available and widely read by those classes since 1660. By 1700, even more women purchased histories. Although the popular masquerade and the novel allowed women to indulge their fantasies, the novel was considered to be a safer form of 'creative freedom.' Earlier women writers such as Mary Astell advised women to resist consumer pleasures. Richardson bemoaned vainglorious pursuit of pleasure.<sup>9</sup>

Ian Watt's study of the reading public and formal realism in The Rise of the Novel emphasized the juxtaposition of the novel with the rise of individualism. Weakened communal and traditional relationships allowed a private and egocentric mental life to emerge. This was reflected in the work of the aforementioned 'fair triumvirate.' Watt contrasted the printing press with the stage. The press introduced a literary medium that was less subject to censorship than the stage and one that was uniquely and intrinsically compatible with expressions of feeling and fantasies. The impact of urbanization and the growth of suburbs provided a more secluded life style. Both created a 'literary form which was less concerned with the public and more with the private side of life than any previous one.' This environment sheltered women but may have narrowed their perspective.<sup>10</sup>

Rudimentary findings from psychology supposed that human beings were blank slates with innate potential. If one subscribed to John Locke's teachings, one assumed the importance of mind over matter. What was possible for women and their potential was, however, abruptly curtailed. Women were assumed to be delicate and fragile creatures--weaker vessels. Although middle-class women indulged themselves with the pleasures of reading, what they read and what they thought were appropriately circumscribed. Their delicate condition had to be protected.<sup>11</sup>

England at mid-century played an expanded role in world events. Literary historians see the novel as serving the cultural hegemony of the age and of the

modern state. It enshrined the authority of the domestic woman--'a major event in political history.' Its common sense and sentimentality enthroned the power of the middle class by the early nineteenth century. Rather than families and aristocratic blood lines being depicted in novels, the female with complex motives confronted moral choices. Sensibility stressed emotional responses and family/community. 'Virtue from good feelings was more important than rationally-inspired and calculated goodness.' Such cultural assumptions have had a long run in Anglo-American culture.<sup>12</sup>

Within society, the aristocracy easily dominated the processes of government, although there were murmurs of dissent and a creeping sense of class identification. The years after the Restoration allowed the social hierarchy to stabilize, and it seemed more entrenched. The advance of capitalism may have been derided by moralists, but the trend toward commercialization and leisure continued despite the polemics against it. This period of propriety contrasted vividly with the 'aristocratic raciness' of the Restoration.<sup>13</sup>

The perception of what women should be resulted from a conglomeration of religion, myths from the culture, scientific beliefs and attitudes as well as medical opinion. Todd distinguished two types of sentimental fiction. Novels of 'generalized moral reflection' were written during the 1740s and 1750s. They emphasized 'sensitive response(s) and the fluctuating moods of the susceptible body' during the 1760s and 1770s.<sup>14</sup>

Within this 'sentimental revolution,' a 'triumph of feeling' resulted from the rise of the middle classes who wished to separate themselves from notions of the aristocracy about 'ideas and fashions.' The use of sentiment stretched the operation of this genteel code beyond its middle class moorings to the aristocracy. The result was a cultural climate with an enlarged but common gentility. The triumph of sentiment was overwhelming.<sup>15</sup>

The language of sentimental fiction could not offend. Deferential gestures, courtly demeanor, an understanding of female frailty, religious values, and a moral

standard enforced for the enlarged and consuming public produced a literature which sheltered families. Male patriarchal control was critical to the maintenance and perpetuation of this 'code of delicacy.' Deferential gestures and expressions disguised male control of female sexuality. Was this control perpetuated for the exchange of women to the highest bidder or best prospect for family alliances? Were women social currency? Richardson's *Clarissa* proved to be a 'guidebook for this code.'<sup>16</sup>

Sentimental fiction also promised romance. Fanny Burney, in her preface to *Evelina*, issued the disclaimer that her heroine was a reasoning and sober creature, albeit she was the 'offspring of nature.' *Pamela* and *Evelina* were quick-thinking young women who treaded in treacherous, rogue-infested waters. These and other cinderellas ended up with princes charming, thus fulfilling their readers' insatiable appetite for romance and an appropriate ending.<sup>17</sup>

The reforming penchant of the 'culture of sensibility' was also displayed in other venues. Whereas country values minimized material things, women were vulnerable in a hostile and corrupt urban environment. Humanitarian motives, even abolitionism, and a campaign against cruelty to animals exhibited the reforming penchant associated with sensibility.<sup>18</sup>

While this phenomenon extolled the delicacy of women, reformers set about altering the debauched and rakish behavior of men. The ale-house allowed men to separate themselves from family life. The sentimental journey of the eighteenth-century would force men to become closer to women, but at the same time, this culture displayed a pronounced ambivalence about men, questioning their commitment to family and posing questions about their sexuality. Men resisted attempts to curb their libertine behavior and freedom from domestic entanglements.

Although the law made patriarchal dominance clear, financial affairs and property settlements were complicated. Some parents settled land upon their daughter before marriage. In addition, women who were without husbands--whether widowed or single--could maintain their own property. Women from wage-earning

classes possessed money of their own, but obviously married women had to use their income for family needs. By the later eighteenth century, radicals who advocated the vote for all men disturbed those who wondered whether women themselves would eventually want to vote. Hence anxiety by men in the second half of the eighteenth century further exacerbated a need to see women as possessions or objects, without political and social impact.<sup>19</sup>

A 'cult of prolific maternity' operated to provide Britain with an adequate supply of young men to fight her wars in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Writing on the subject of motherhood and breast-feeding, Ruth Perry asserts that this domesticated environment valorized motherhood. Companionate marriage gave women a stronger role within the marriage and in society. Companionate marriage for those who could afford it may have equipped women to be more attractive companions for their husbands and more able to fulfill their needs.<sup>20</sup>

The need to identify women with domestic virtue and assign them a separate, private sphere derived from long-existing cultural assumptions, but was also immediately enhanced by a series of developments in the 1770s and beyond. The American and French Revolutions shattered English complacency. The ideologies of both revolutions promised an enlarged framework for political participation. In the face of these threatening prospects, those who wished to keep women in their place highlighted their weakness, their real limitations, and the differences between the sexes. Urbanization also attenuated apprehension about the public visibility of women. But enhanced domestic virtue would give women a public role. In the fifty years following the American Revolution, British women played an enhanced public role and were part of nationalistic displays and royal events. By the 1790s, however, the culmination of fears and hysteria produced a full-fledged 'sex panic.' The 1790s are a watershed in the history of sexuality. Increasing concern about the nature of female sexuality predated Victorian prudery. Panic literature stressed

moral decay, the increase of prostitution, and a concern about the use of male midwives.<sup>21</sup>

For the British, the French Revolution symbolized the results of an illicitly-debauched, effeminate nation corrupted by sexual women such as Marie Antoinette. The British saw themselves as a masculinized nation.<sup>22</sup> The foundation was 'female chastity.' Restrictions on a woman's sexuality were vital to the health of the nation. Seductive women, Amazons and royal figures symbolized by Marie Antoinette's outrageous behavior, undermined virtue and honor.<sup>23</sup> The chapbook vilification of the deposed French Queen can be read as an English smear upon their adversary. In addition to the French Revolution, the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft threatened the political power and rights which men so rightly felt that they and they alone could exercise.

Although dissenting voices in England lost again in their bid for public office in 1789, the drama of the French Revolution still encouraged their efforts. A tradition of dissent nurtured by Puritan thought stimulated the thinking of radical women such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Inchbald, Charlotte Smith, and Mary Evans, among others. Britain and France were at war by 1793, and the reality of war demanded a 'new conservatism.' The capacity of a government at war to accept dissent was put to a very strenuous test. A climate of war hysteria and repression stifled any unpatriotic and deviant thought.<sup>24</sup> Identifying women with deviant voices within the city would summon forth a level of social opprobrium against their very voices and their influence.

Given anxiety about events across the channel and ocean, women's sexuality had to be restrained. Women as the desexualized bearers of children were vital to the nation. If women were as passive, passionless and disinterested in sex as eighteenth-century political theorists hoped, then why was so much control of their sexuality necessary? If they were victims or exchangeable property, was their confinement that necessary?<sup>25</sup> A bill by Lord Auckland in 1800 resulted from apprehension about allegedly high rates of adultery. A wife's adultery was

traditionally seen as a violation of community honor. Adultery by a husband only violated the marriage contract. Other cultures make similar distinctions.

These findings are critical to this study of chapbooks. Nancy Armstrong and Barker-Benfield and others consider eighteenth century novels as vehicles for social control by the middle class. But control was more critical to some periods than others.<sup>26</sup> Anxiety about urbanization, one of the larger social shifts in English society, must be kept front and center in any consideration of causes.

Chapbooks printed after 1760 may have followed the pattern of novels in encouraging roles for women which solidified the social cement. Passivity, self-denial, withdrawal from the urban, competitive and vicious world was expected. Social norms which expect women to adhere self-effacingly to community and family become rekindled and emphasized in certain eras, given changing socio-economic conditions.

### The Impact of Eighteenth-Century Novels

The early eighteenth-century novels of Daniel Defoe, Moll Flanders and Roxanna , and the mid eighteenth-century works of Samuel Richardson, Pamela and Clarissa , inspired by and inspiring of the culture of sensibility, provide an appropriate contrast of historical developments. A cultural divide separated the work of Behn, Manley, Haywood, Defoe, and others from the heroines of Richardson, Burney, Charlotte Smith, and other writers. Moll Flanders and Roxana typify the improper fictional figures on one side of this divide, while Pamela, Clarissa, and Evelina represent the sexually repressed. Adventurous, seductive or promiscuous women are not major figures in novels after 1740. The pages might include seduced women, but the heroine in these novels remained chaste and pure.<sup>27</sup>

Moll Flanders was a survivor who valiantly maximized her scant opportunities. She was an attractive and seductive woman who did not compromise

herself easily with men. She tried to exact promises from them. She married often. Men offered help and set her up in house-keeping. She bore children and abandoned them without much hesitation, but later lamented leaving them. The struggle to survive required all her waking hours.<sup>28</sup>

Women of the lower orders displayed camaraderie. The women incarcerated in Newgate waited for the inevitable arrival of Moll, having heard much of her reputation. A woman who ran a lying-in home for unwed mothers helped her and others. Her 'governess' intervened and protected her, and even arranged for her departure for Virginia. In return, Moll brought back the fruits of her labor--stolen plate or silver. Every page of Roxana resonates with the main character's lust for the good life. Both women craved martial possessions. Social historians now consider consumption to be a defining theme of eighteenth-century England. Theft of plate or silver by Moll indicates that such tempting consumables were sitting around. The women were scrappy. The streets were tough. People were not forgiving.

Both women were quick-thinking survivors who knew that society considered them to be whores. They struck hard bargains in their personal relationships. Family ties were minimal but present. Moll eventually met up with more of her relatives than she ever wanted to find. Roxana's daughter becomes the subject of a plot by her loyal friend. They were hardened women who showed remorse only at the end.

Samuel Richardson was over fifty when he published Pamela in 1740. If an excursion into character and personality apt describes the novelist's function, Richardson can be considered the first serious novelist. His characters were multi-faceted, well-developed and seem to live on their own. He creatively situated them within the eighteenth century. Critics note that his male characters are not as well developed as his female protagonists.<sup>29</sup> Both Pamela and Clarissa are extraordinary heroines whose behavior moved those who cherish the pure in heart.

They poured out their emotions and thoughts in countless letters. Their epistolary confessions are what we are still conditioned to expect of women.

In Pamela, Virtue Rewarded, a servant girl eventually married the lord. Pamela displayed almost superhuman resilience in resisting her master's base and lustful interest. She was rarely tripped up or bested in conversation. Held prisoner against her will by her master's retainers, she did not relent and negotiated diverse difficulties serenely. She prevailed, married her master, and lived happily-ever-after.<sup>30</sup>

Clarissa, published in 1748, was an immediate sensation in England and on the continent. Printed in serialized form, frustrated readers had to await the fate of Clarissa in installments. Rumors indicate that Goethe and Rousseau read it. The fate of Clarissa left even such a stalwart woman as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu with mixed emotions.<sup>31</sup> Richardson's novels were masterly-crafted morality exercises which engaged the complete attention of the reader.

Clarissa Harlowe's introspective tendencies raised her above the petty scheming of her family. Her high standards for this world resembled other-worldly behavior, but led to her isolation. Stronger social forces engulfed and swallowed Clarissa. She had turned over property that she inherited from her grandfather to her father in the interests of family harmony. She therefore had no identity separate from her family. Did Richardson employ a theme that we recognize as modern--the separateness, the autonomy and even the alienation of the individual?

Richardson and Fanny Burney wrote for an expanding audience of eighteenth-century middle class and literate women. Both wrote for popular consumption and conformed to what their reading audience wanted. They operated within the culture of sensibility. They made women the central focus of their discussions of human behavior. Their heroines must be seen as saints. They endured difficult moments with unflagging patience and reserve and negotiated treacherous social situations as though they were walking through mine fields. Burney's *Evelina* and Richardson's *Pamela* were quick-thinking young women who



eventually triumphed. Pamela tamed Mr. B's baser instincts. These cinderellas ended up with prince charmings, thus satisfying their readers' need for romance.<sup>32</sup> Such a fate was not scripted for the intelligent, virtuous, beautiful, but willful Clarissa.

Any fair assessment of popular literature must reckon with its intended audience--readers. By 1750 and beyond, more women were able to read. Increased purchasing power permitted the expense of chapbooks. Almost all of these small books were written after 1740. The choice of words and the complexity of the sentence structure suggest that the authors were educated. Plot development and the buildup toward emotional climaxes and/or dramatic scenes between lovers and between protagonists, often involving a woman, indicate that the authors had mastered the style of sensibility. The terms, sensibility and sentiment, were interspersed in some of the conversations, thus reminding the reader that the authors knew that they were conforming to the required code.

Some of these accounts built up the story line toward an inevitable climax and stated moral maxim. Still others allowed the reader to indulge 'herself' vicariously by identifying with wealth and beauty. Other chapbooks consumed the reader in fantasy. The power of money and conspicuous consumption, however demonized or deplored, appealed to those who needed an escape. Almost all of the themes are set in England, but there are a few exceptions, including the legend and lore from ancient or translated sources. This survey necessarily uses available sources. Hence themes and stories that departed from the code of sensibility are also included here in order to preserve some sense of chronology and come to some conclusions about late eighteenth century and very early nineteenth century chapbooks, and popular culture.

### Post-1750 Chapbooks

An atypical chapbook of 1752, a satire on polite society, introduces this recital of stories and suggests that the promotion of sensibility can be traced in chapbooks to about 1750. In addition, its content --its allusion to ancients such as Aristotle, Horace, or Quintilian and the level of its prose tells us that it was written by a person familiar with the classics and was intended for a social set that understood and appreciated such erudition. A hand-written note, perhaps attributable to the person collating the extensive Boswell collection, preceded the chapbook and noted that it was a 'curious' tract.<sup>33</sup>

In "The Old Lady and her Niece, the Fair Incognita," the anonymous author lamented that refined people, particularly women, disguised their sentiments and their selves through the use of conundrums. Satirically noting that the ancients did not display this 'strain of wit,' due no doubt to their 'inferior genius,' through his discussion of novelty, the author dripped invective on those who employed conundrums.

"(N)ew,' 'concise,' 'witty', and 'surprising,' conundrums were even shorter than epigrams that were indeed the 'highest effort of human genius.' They were mind-bedeaving puzzles whose words and syllables denoted 'sublimity and mysteriousness.' Each chapter had a title and a list of perplexing words had to be deciphered, thereby provoking young men or ladies to prove that their wit suited human propensities. A quote from John Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," suggests that pleasant ideas and agreeable pictures and images satisfy the mind. Locke's endorsement of mind-stimulating exercises answered all those banal critics of their use.<sup>34</sup>

The author saw this entertaining diversion as suitable for young gentlemen and the gentry, but realized that pursuit of these puzzles would interfere with their pursuit of knowledge. Second, powerful men who proffered laurels on those who achieved in math and science might be tempted to divert their awards to those who

wrote conundrums. Hence the pursuit of mind puzzles was best left to literati and particularly to 'fair country women, the young Ladies of Great Britain.' Young women had the mettle to pursue and master this science and thus be on a par 'with the generality of admirers, the fine young gentlemen.'

This satire on the advances of polite civilization suggested that parlor games could be left to young gentlewomen and their shallow suitors. Since the arts and sciences were productive, witty mind games were best left to those suited for them. Young men of the gentry who were distracted from their studies by their pursuit of conundrums might not be able to concentrate on law; their country; their concern would be the principles of gaming, not the principles of government.

At the most superficial level, the listing of attributes of the old lady and her niece were hardly flattering, but that described the old lady's were damaging, to say the least. Her pretentious appearance revealed elements of her personality. Her person was 'sallow,' 'rotten,' and 'hobbling;' her temper and disposition cast here in a less flattering light--'high spirit,' 'termagant,' 'scold,' 'lyar,' and 'tale-bearer.'<sup>35</sup> She purchased all of the right books for her library. The 'things' that adorned her rooms and herself were necessary for the proper life.

Descriptions of the aunt paled by comparison to the 'imperfect sketch' of her niece, the 'fair Incognita.' The following list of adjectives described her:

'blushes, black and curled, eloquent and languishing, pouting and red, fine Neck all, soft Bubbies, Anglice Boobies, Well shap'd, hand some (two words), tapered and round, well turn'd, all over neat, reserv'd, gentle, sincere, grateful, silent, humble, patient, affable, and chaste.'

The last term, 'her maidenhead,' tells us that she was still a virgin.<sup>36</sup> This conundrum implies that young women grow up and become wretched. The pursuit of wit, the consumption of material things, the best authors, and the proper appointments in one's rooms prove to be destructive. It put a burden on women--the kind of burden that leads to useless feelings and ennui.

A '(V)ariety of (F)acetious and (E)nagging (S)Tories' provides another apt

introduction to the themes which predominant in the second half of the eighteenth century. "The Merry Droll or Pleasing Companion" included letters, poetry, tales, fables, and 'pleasing pastorals,' but its subject was '(A)adventure' and '(D)ivers Instances of (L)ove and (G)allantry, (E)legantly (D)isplayed.'<sup>37</sup> The final line of a long title and subtitle suggested that these stories were 'moral, instructive, and entertaining.' These very short stories were far shorter than those in a contemporary magazine. Although well written and following the themes of sensibility, the editor or printer must have reasoned that readers had only a limited interest or time to read or a short attention span. Perhaps they concluded that a varied format sold better with short features. A list of some of the titles will indicate how morally instructive these features were as well as the theme of romance which would be central to late eighteenth century chapbooks:

The LOVER'S ALCHEMY; or, a Wife out of the Fire  
 The Ungenerous Benefactor; an affecting Story; related by a Lady  
 The Folly of Parents in thwarting the Inclinations of their Children  
 in Marriage: A Sad Instance of it, as related by a Father'  
 A Narrative of the unhappy Situation of a young Gentleman, who was  
 hindered from marrying the Object of his Desires, by the  
 unnatural Behavior of his Uncle  
 The Female Husband; or a circumstantial Account of the Extraordinary  
 Affair which lately happened at POPLAR, with many  
 interesting Particulars, relating thereto.  
 WITH and GLUTTONY: An humorous Story <sup>38</sup>

In 'The Lover's Alchemy' a determined young couple circumvented her father's objections. His nephew, Dulman--an obvious play upon words--was an 'ill-natur'd young coxcomb.' Her aunt agreed that she should not waste her life on a 'miserly country dolt.' Knowing that her philosophically-minded father would be pleased by an erudite suitor, the young man, the 'Alchemist,' disguised himself, moved to her family seat near York, and proceeded to ingratiate himself with her father by feigning the extraction of gold from coal. He got his wife 'out of a fire.'<sup>39</sup>

In a story of covert domesticity, two young women lived together for the remainder of their lives, once they had been crossed in love. One disguised herself

in male clothing, reminding the reader that two women living together invited destructive gossip. These two, however, cohabited for thirty-four years, earning the esteem of those who knew them. No one observed how they 'dressed a joint of meat;' likewise, no one realized that they never had servants or held a meeting at their home. Once one had died, her partner retired and enjoyed the money acquired by 'fair and honest means, and with an unblemished character.'<sup>40</sup> The theme of cohabitation by two unmarried women was a risky choice for a printer or editor. Only the story of Hannah Snell (reviewed in a later chapter) blatantly described this life-style. The covert domesticity established by these partners is a familiar and recognizable story. "The Merry Droll, or Pleasing Companion" was published in 1769.

"The Shepherdess of the Alps" concerns a young but mourning widow from a distinguished family in the south of France.<sup>41</sup> '(a)n Interesting, Pathetic, and Moral Tale, Founded on Facts' related the story of the selfless and virtuous Adelaide. Fate dictated that she reside with a old sheep-tending family and become a shepherdess. She refused to accompany a wealthy Turinese couple who wanted her to return with them to the city. Later their melancholy son, who they had given up for dead, tended sheep near her encampment. Their blissful relationship persuaded both of them to trust each other. He also revealed his past. She had the old shepherd go to Turin to inform his parents. Adelaide resolved to join their family, despite her devotion and loyalty to her dead husband. Impelled 'to receive the impression of a new inclination,' she put aside her own desires and attempt to please him and his family. This simple pastoral life helped a widow afflicted with pain. Her innocent companions were rewarded with a country home that replaced their simple rustic cabin. Herself without fault, she reminded readers that fidelity in relationships would be rewarded with a better life. And time heals all wounds.

A 'melancholy love tale' printed between 1770 and 1785 bemoaned the fate of Narcissa--'the unfortunate wife.'<sup>42</sup> Narcissa's fortune was cautiously guarded by her uncle, but he could not protect her from the predatory wiles of Mr. Vulpine, a

poor, but egotistical man, who immediately ingratiated himself with her and extracted a promise of marriage. Determined to protect his niece from this 'fierce inquisitor,' her uncle literally showed him the door.<sup>43</sup> He vowed revenge. The uncle sent Narcissa to relatives in the countryside in the company of a liveried servant. They tied the knot circumspectly. When they notified her Uncle, somehow, like the Devil himself, Mr. Vulpine embarked on a quick course of revenge that undermined Narcissa's health and cost her life. Totally beside himself, John quickly followed her into the grave. Vulpine brought the full wrath of the law down upon the survivors. Employing lawyers and getting full satisfaction from the courts, declared the marriage illegitimate and gained her estate. With money, the 'black brotherhood of the law' could get what it wanted.<sup>44</sup> But in the final court order, Vulpine did not enjoy the money. Quoting a proverb, the author observed that a beggar put upon a horse would ride it to the Devil. This was his fate and his quick demise.

Those who chose liberty and tried to change inalterable social arrangements quickly came to grief. Subtle references to the countryside and the gentleman farmer plus the disparaging references to the law make the author's biases apparent. Once again, the city was identified with evil purposes, while the repose of the countryside offered solace and a better life.

With ponderously-evocative prose and well-written sentences, the story of a 'providential meeting' was offered by two printers.<sup>45</sup> Mr. Stanton avoided libertine activities, but enjoyed the pastimes of the countryside. He happened upon a cottage where an old and distressed couple had been visited by two bailiffs because of debts. Being a man of generosity, Mr. Stanton paid the necessary sums. Mr. Williams then poured out his problems. The son of a London tradesman, he studied for the clergy as his parents wanted, but soon after entered the commercial world where 'jackals' mercilessly stalked their victims. Being altruistic by nature, he returned to the countryside. While he was pouring out his soul, Isabella, appeared. The author aptly described her:

In a dress not in the least superior to the station of a servant, and yet defended from any indelicacy or air of

meanness. . . , she displayed at once a beauty that would stand the severest examination, and that charm of the natural graces, so superior even to beauty itself. . .

Every motion she made, even accent she uttered were impressed with such a stamp of sweet simplicity, unpoisoned with that affectation which is too often the result of a more cultivated education, that she could not but strike, as it were, in unison, a heart so open to all the virtuous tender sensations of nature as was that of Stanton.<sup>46</sup>

Isabella Fairfield was the daughter of a wealthy young woman and the steward who had saved her life. The mother died; the father left for parts unknown, entrusting the child to the Williams' care. Mr. Grubling, a villainous young libertine, being refused, harassed Williams and had instigated his arrest for debt. Mr. Stanton realized the folly of falling for a 'Pamela' but continued his pursuit. Fortuitously, Isabella's grandfather appeared and made amends for his neglect of her. She and her 'venerable' couple who raised her were overwhelmed. This 'farmer's cottage was now become as temple of joy.' Sir John's son took to drink once he learned that he was not the sole heir. He and his unfaithful wife schemed to get his father to disinherit his granddaughter and avoid meeting her.

'Providence' arranged Isabella's upbringing, but also made her a fit candidate for an improved and blessed life. Sensibility extolled the nobility of simple country people. The virtues of rural life contrast starkly to the avarice of the city and its mercantile schemes. Mr. Williams' impoverished if peaceful subsistence brought him rewards, not the least of which was the solicitous care of Isabella and her husband. She is consistently referred to as a single woman by her first name, but Mr. Stanton was always Mr. Stanton. This social convention repeatedly appears in this and other literature. The chapbook use of fortuitous meetings finally arranges a felicitous conclusion.

Chapbook printers and authors occasionally 'borrowed' one another's work. In addition, authors might rewrite their earlier stories or simply alter the names and

places. Two chapbooks illustrating this phenomenon featured love between a lord and farmer's daughter. Both stories featured the officer-turned-aged philosopher named Windham. Each was sold by a different printer, illustrating how stories were lifted and marketed.<sup>47</sup>

The obsessive behavior of Lord Whately prompted the father of Fanny Adams to forbid her to be in contact with him. Her father did not want the Lord to think that he was prostituting his daughter for money. Whately married Fanny in a clandestine ceremony, but insisted that he would make the marriage public after his Uncle died. A wicked companion, the villainous Ward, and the debauchery of London, however, were too tempting. 'He thought of Fanny with less sensibility.' Learning that Whateley was married, Fanny's father refused to have his family and daughter's honor so cavalierly sacrificed. He expected God to punish those who had hurt his daughter, but his servants reminded him that the great 'always trample upon the rights of the poor with impunity.'<sup>48</sup> Fanny remained with her family and took whatever 'humble employments' came her way at a place removed from Whatley's influence.

Whatley's dissipated life resulted in the 'death of reason and honest sensibility.' His wife, reputed to be one of the 'greatest and most brilliant matches in England,' was profligate, deceitful, manipulative, cruel, and intriguing--all the characteristics of a woman from the city.<sup>49</sup> After her death, he and Ward continued their libertine ways until Ward died after an argument and duel. A retired officer/philosopher played a role in the unlikely meeting reuniting Whatley and Fanny. He meets a ragged child on the road who turned out to be his and Fanny's child. Farmer Adams soon recovered from chronic sickness when he received care at Whatley's seat. The meeting between a sick Adams and Lord Whatley summoned forth evocative if didactic prose:

Situations like these admit of no adequate description;  
 But the heart may feel, and the mind may conceive what  
 the pen can never paint. If there is a scene in this world that  
 can attract the eye of the Supreme Being, it is, undoubtedly



that of a sincere repentance, of pure and honest love, the triumph of sentiment and reason.<sup>50</sup>

In London, Fanny 'shewed by her beauty and deportment that the virtues and the graces are the natives of villages rather than of cities.'<sup>51</sup> To maintain her own resolve and simplicity, she yearly returned to the countryside. Adams lived to a ripe old age and Fanny's children were the delight of the family and of the country.

Only the names and places were changed in "The Maid of the Farm; or, Memoirs of Susanna James," with the author is identified as Theophilus James Bacon, Esquire.<sup>52</sup> In both accounts, after a private, clandestine marriage, dissipation and debauchery awaited in London. Although this story, like others, does not offer much dialogue, it, nevertheless, has interrupting discourse, thus emulating the novel. At this point the author offers the following:

Let scholars and philosophers exclaim against forebodings of the mind and treat them as chimeras and absurdities; but there is no man, if he faithfully interrogates himself, but must confess, that in the critical circumstances of his life, he has been, . . . warned of approaching misfortunes by an interior and hollow voice, which is called the prediction of calamities. This voice was raised in a mournful accent in the soul of Susanna and even haunted her in the hours of slumber.<sup>53</sup>

Fanciful prose replaced dialogue that expressed similar sentiments.

Honesty and acceptance of their station gave simple country folk their best defense against deception. The nobility suffered. Thaley and Whateley were tormented, weak men. Thaley's uncle, a courtier, had no real purpose. Proud and vain women proved to be shallow wives. Thaley's wife, another 'woman of quality,' displayed 'coldness,' seduced men, and was constantly involved in intrigues.<sup>54</sup> Both chapbooks featured the wise, older man, with the same name who stumbled onto the truth about the deplorable conditions in which both women lived.

Margaret Saunders or "Pretty Peggy of Derby" experienced the trials of love before she was married to George Watson.<sup>55</sup> But another obvious moral was the

importance of security. Businesses could boom and bust, almost overnight. Both Peggy and George had to prove themselves. George served an apprenticeship away from his family and Peggy fended for herself once her mother died and her father's business languished in debt. Peggy survived the many temptations that came her way because of her beauty. The frontispiece verse lauded her tenacity in the face of temptation:

The God of Love its wanton Pow'r displays  
And often torments us in a thousand ways  
On Peggy none can lay the heap of blame  
For not complying with the Captain Flame  
Another had before engaged her heart  
A constant youth, devout of guilt or Art.<sup>56</sup>

Once her father refused to allow George to marry her, she went into service, but she refused to support her father. 'This was a hard resolution for a young girl in the prime of her youth and beauty.' But fate fortuitously intervened. Providence arranged the arrival of Peggy's aunt, a wealthy and venerable woman, in search of her long-lost brother, Peggy's father. The aunt received George with great civility, blessed their union, and left George her possessions. The chapbook recommended 'patience and virtue' to those 'crossed in love.'

All did not end so well in "Innocence Betrayed, or, The Perjured Lover," printed by Mary Bowley as a 'true and melancholy account.'<sup>57</sup> W----- M-----, Esq. decoyed both sisters of the Mortons, a wealthy farming family. Through mind games, he undermined Sarah and she eventually committed suicide. He employed 'every allurements' to consummate his wicked scheme and 'every delusive project that could offer gratification to the juvenile mind' on the second sister, Jenny, once he destroyed Sarah. Jenny resisted. Even in Sarah's most anguished moments before taking her own life, she remained genteel and forgiving.

This short but exceptionally well-written account left no doubt about the baseness and cruelty of a seducer of innocent young women. Words such as 'unprincipled,' 'diabolical,' 'depraved,' and 'insidious' left no doubt about the author's

feelings. He was also labeled a 'monster of iniquity' and a person of 'tortured mind.' But he was not identified, probably because the author, although serious about exposing such perfidious and villainous acts, feared a libel suit.

"The Matrimonial Deceiver" cautioned gullible women about smooth-talking but duplicitous men. George Miller married at least thirty times in order to defraud unsuspecting females. He brazenly told a young woman that because she was young and beautiful, she could still do well in the marriage game. He promised some of the women that he would share his money. Miller was later punished for his crime. The chapbook warned young women against 'fair speeches.' Time and rational thinking should precede a plunge into marriage.<sup>58</sup>

"Fatal Credulity" did not applaud prudery, but 'The Memoirs of Miss Clermont, 'founded on facts and containing curious traits in real life' cautioned readers about the 'dreary regions of destruction.' The prefatory homily noted that there were thousands of women like Miss Clermont. Born to a Curate and a wife who frugally managed their small sums, Miss Clermont's home displayed all the right appointments. A few good books and drawings aided her education. But both her parents died young.<sup>59</sup>

Again, this history emphasized the rustic virtues in contrast with the vices of the city. '(h)onset rustics' courted her, with 'their stammering timid professions' of sincerity.' A gentleman from a nearby estate, Volponio, escorted her to the city, arranged a sham marriage, and then left her at a house of ill repute. A 'minister of Satan in the assumed form of a plump jolly dame' informed this 'injured drooping lily' that she owed an incredibly huge sum of money for her convalescence. (A) 'blushing maiden of a country village,' became an audacious and brazenly-attired courtesan.<sup>60</sup> She shared lodgings with another young woman who quickly succumbed to disease. Women in the world's oldest profession were termed 'sisters' and the term, sisterhood, was introduced. Both terms appear in John Cleland's novel, Fanny Hill. Although Miss Clermont's displayed tender concern for her dying 'sister,' she victimized her sexual partners when she robbed them. Finally

destitute, a farmer's son from her native village conveyed her home where she recanted her misspent life before she died. This innocent man was 'unused to any but the tranquil scenes of rural felicity, where conscious innocence ever decked the bed of death with smiles.'<sup>61</sup> A gentleman who customarily visited the church graveyard quickly penciled an epitaph to be put upon her tomb:

-----  
 Weep o'er the fair one, view the humble tomb,  
 Where lies the victim of the false and great;  
 Ah! say did the vernal youth's enchanting bloom,  
 Presage the prospect of so sad a fate.

. . . . .  
 Then shalt thou view the ruin thou hast made,  
 Whilst no soft slatter lulls thy tortur'd breast,  
 Then shall the fleeting form of her betray'd,  
 Nor yield thee respite, nor afford thee rest.

Tho' trophy'd banners wave around thy bust,  
 No pearl tears shall gentle shed;  
 While with mild mercy o'er her hapless dust,  
 Light lie, she cries, the turf upon thy head.<sup>62</sup>

In contrast, "The Entertaining History of that amiable and loving Couple William Rattling, and Sweet Poll of Plymouth" is an account of 'love, prudence, and honor'--the trials and tribulations endured by couples when the male is dispatched to sea duty.<sup>63</sup> Like others, this author could not resist introductory didactic remarks:

Among the writers of histories of amusement, novel, the subject is too generally confined to characters in genteel life. . . The tender, the pathetic, and even mirth provoking scenes, are only to be found among people of the above description, at least with the writers of the present day, forgetting a particular order of beings, whose lives are the admiration of the world; and whose noble behaviour in dangers and fatigues, entitles them to the warmest applause: I mean our British Tars!<sup>64</sup>

Devious motives were seldom mentioned, although one mother happily she know longer raced competition from her deceased daughter. Genuine friendship between

women whose lovers and later spouses have gone to sea provides one of the few examples of friendship among women. The story ends in tragedy. A young woman drowned when she fell off a ship in port and Polly later died from pain after hearing of William's death. Actually, William Rattling, 'the most faithful lover that ever stepped between stem and stern,' died along with several hundred others when his ship went down. Simple love was augmented by the friendship of sweethearts and wives. Printed in 1789, the simplicity of the story circulated at a time when sea-going vessels frequently left English ports.

Primal innocence, unspoiled by the artifices of civilization, was the theme of "The Croydon Forresters, or The History of Collin Meager and Jenny Wood"--a story from ancient times set in fourteenth-century England.<sup>65</sup> Collin and Jenny were first cousins whose families died. In this satire on civilized life, Collin and Jenny, left to be shepherds, knew that ambition and envy punctuated every move in civilized society.

Close kinship made a conjugal relationship and impossible to the townspeople who judged this young couple, being mortified when they learned that Jenny was pregnant. Chastized by the the Constable and Parson, Jenny was ashamed and despondent, but Collin defiantly refused to allow others to spoil their innocent and loving life. The blessings of the Archbishop gave them the respect of their neighbors. Collin's successful sheeptending brought his family wealth and status that lasted for three to four hundred years. The archbishop left this manuscript in a house near Croydon. Real wealth originated with simple folk. Unspoiled and undeterred by the pretenses of civilization, their honest and simple approach to life provided for themselves and their posterity. The quotation from Alexander Pope that adorned the Frontispiece suggests that the author and printer were either obsessed with nymphs and seductive young women or that they used this picture to sell their chapbook. The 'good'--the noble savages behaved in an exemplary way and earned for future generations the results of their good example.

Improbable coincidences would be a more appropriate title for the chapbook, "Belinda, The Rewards of Constancy." The title pages promised the story of a woman as 'wise and virtuous as the Men are courageous?' (sic) It further promised a 'Series of the most interesting and Surprizing Events even yet made publick.' (sic) The Preface painted a vibrant canvas of rural life while adding comments about the vile nature of cities like London. Young women should 'confide in Providence.'<sup>66</sup> By the unlikely conclusion of this lengthy story, Belinda's faith improved, Providence defended her and provided for her.

This story from Normandy held exotic appeal but also displayed nationalistic invective--English dislike of things French, including Roman Catholicism. Belinda's refusal to join the Catholic faith of her husband's family earned her their wrath. Her rejection of Catholicism made the English reader even more attentive. She and her mother lived in a cave in rural England, strangely with furniture, until they resolved the uncertainties over their birth and status. They moved around Europe but were helped by strangers who turned out to be relatives or the progeny of family servants. Since Belinda's father had lost his wife over religious conflict, he left with the Swedish King for Russia. Captured and almost left for dead, he was taken in by a kind soldier who offered him his beautiful fourteen-year-old daughter. Eventually the Marquis was joyfully reunited with his first wife, Belinda's mother. The Preface noted that this 'History' should be recounted 'in these sad times' in order to reverse the sad lack of constancy and virtue.<sup>67</sup> Refined prose ended this account:

Thus Providence, with unexpected Accidents, trys Men's Faith, frustrates their Designs, and leads them through a Series of Misfortunes, to manifest its Power in their Deliverance; confounding the Atheist, and convincing the Libertine, that there is a just God. . . : So wonderful are the ways of God, so boundless is his Power, that none can despair. . . You see he can give Food upon the barren Mountain, and prevent the bold Ravisher from accomplishing his wicked Design: But Virtue was Belinda's armour, Providence her Defender. These trials did improve her Virtues and encrease her Faith.<sup>68</sup>

Two chapbooks that compared the virtues of the English with other countries

and regions allowed women to sing the praises of their newly-adopted countries. The first focused on the catastrophe of the Lisbon earthquake. In the second, there is a cultural comparison between English and native values.

In "The Preservation of Charles and Isabella, " by John Correy, Isabella was not given to prejudice and regarded the English as valiant defenders of her own people.<sup>69</sup> Augustino, a male with an exquisite mind, shared similar sentiments of gratitude toward the English. Augustino's digression—an accepted device in novels—expostulated on the catastrophe of the earthquake. English relief demonstrated their 'munificence' and furthered the gratitude of individuals like Augustino and Isabella. Isabella was most happy to marry Charles and sail to England where she was splendidly welcomed. Once she beheld the 'highest state of perfection' of the English, she happily allied herself with her new country.<sup>70</sup>

A chapbook set in exotic foreign lands appealed to an appetite for adventure while at the same applauding English customs. The *Courageous and Compassionate Zoa*, a seductive Indian woman, was probably seen by the English readers as primitive. This 'as told by' account, a love story, came from the man who raised the East Indies merchant, Rodomond. Sensational accounts deserved publication, but they shielded the identity of real people.<sup>71</sup>

Rodomond's promotion earned him the wrath of native factory employees. The daughter of the Banyan who had detained him disguised herself as a disheveled Negro and together they boarded a ship for England. His English patron cautioned him, observing that despite her valiant behavior, she still came from a 'people famous for their treachery.'<sup>72</sup> He endorsed Rodomond's decision to marry her, provided that she became a Christian and comported herself well in polite society. A final summary enticed the reader to purchase a forthcoming account of Zoa's mother. Servants of a Banyan rescued Henrietta de Bellgrave after her parents were lost in a shipwreck off Bombay. There she was 'used with great tenderness,' but her husband could not forgive her for baptizing their child.<sup>73</sup> The

rest of the story detailed her unhappiness. Although the half-breed, alluring Zoa fascinated readers, her zeal for England and Christianity reassured readers.

"Jacquelina," like many other late-eighteenth century chapbooks with a decidedly-familiar plot, reached beyond England and took place in Germany.<sup>74</sup> The Count de Cronstadt could not honor his commitment to Jacquelina because he was powerless to oppose his uncle's negotiations for an advantageous marriage and was impressed with privilege and an estate. He was troubled by thoughts of Jacquelina and their newly-born child. Tormented by his absence, her health declined precipitously. His former servant proposed to marry her and blackmailed Cronstadt about the secret marriage, but was killed in a duel with Cronstadt. His will acknowledged the son of his marriage to Jacquelina and their infant child.

A full discussion of captivity narratives awaits an analysis of Penelope Aubin's novel, The Life, Adventures, and Distresses of Charlotte Dupont.<sup>75</sup> Exotic places such as the Barbary coast, the western coast of Africa, and India appealed to the imagination of the ordinary Englishman. Capture of Christian people by alien groups gave them the opportunity to witness for their Christian faith. They did not submissively endure captivity, since they consciously deceived their captors. The half-breed Zoa knew how to manipulate individuals in an Indian household, and her mother secretly baptized Zoa. Hence she defied the terms of her captivity.

"The Convent Spectre or Unfortunate Daughter,' written in 1808, also followed the theme of passivity of women who were pursued by passionate and determined men.<sup>76</sup> Women entered convents to hide from their pursuers. The story was not set in England, and many chapbooks by this time were set in other parts of Europe. This long, stifling narrative included extensive third-person narration and a digression with a first-person voice, but featured no dialogue. Men, consumed by love for women whom they cannot have, left the towns and villages of those women, but did not find consolation elsewhere. The appearance of bodies and furtive characters such as the hermit created a sense of intrigue. Unsolved



murders perplexed the major participants; family members disappeared. The women hid out from lovers or men who would harm them.

### The Sabine Publications

The printer, T(homas) Sabine, and later T. Sabine and Son firm seized upon a successful scheme--the trials and tribulations of young women. These longer chapbooks included a summary of each of the chapters on the title page. Each promised to be a 'history' of a particular female whose path, however circuitous or even crooked, set her right--eventually. Help from others often straightened out a life headed on a fatal course. Events built up to a climactic scene. Frequently the resolution of conflict--usually involving love and romance allowed the protagonist, a young and sometimes tortured or poor young woman, to be safely and happily married. The Sabine firm did reproduce 'The Fair Jilt' by Aphra Behn, but usually they followed the themes outlined above.

Two catalogues give us some insight into the output of the T. Sabine and T. Sabine and Son firm.<sup>77</sup> Their offerings included stories from the 'legend and lore' of England, advice on letter-writing, advice on fate or fortune, and the 'choicest receipts' for the 'prudent housewife.' T. Sabine's second list included how-to books intended for women readers and a few offerings for men as well. (See Appendix)

Sally Johnson's father succumbed early, weakened by the death of her mother, but left her with money supervised by a neighbor. Quoting from Shakespeare, the author noted that men must attend to their affairs or face the dire consequences of neglect. Sally's guardian, another Mr. Gripe, conspired to obtain her money. The 'destruction of many an honest tradesman's daughter' was quite common. Additionally, men who had some success in business had the 'strange passion' to want for more. Starved for love and attention, with a 'gay turn of mind, yet of a mild disposition,' Sally tried to please anyone who showed her attention--behavior typical of an orphaned or emotionally-deprived child.<sup>78</sup> A merchant kept

her while his family enjoyed the simple country life. Identified only as Mr. S——., he feigned an interest in her ruffles. Flattered by his proposal of lodgings and servants, Sally found these new circumstances much more desirable than her apprenticeship. Mr. S——. gave her diamonds. Learning of this affair and returning from the countryside, his wife threatened him with divorce and ruin. The anonymity of Mr. S——. tempted the reader.

Sally maintained a genteel room and unhappily turned to casual prostitution. A kind gentleman, sensing her despair and noting her mild disposition, offered to acquaint her with life as a Magdalen, if she renounced her previous life. Now devoid of all 'her flags and streamers, the ensigns of her late profession,' she happily embraced the penitent life.<sup>79</sup> She accepted her past. An admiring widower and her employer, Mr. Friendly, threatened Gripe with a lawsuit; he settled out of court. The widower, Mr. Fleming wanted a wife who knew something of the ways of the world to raise and educate his daughter to avoid life's pitfalls. The frontispiece displayed a picture of Sally Johnson dressed in the garb of a Magdalen. The poem below revealed the intent of the story:

Behold the Prostitute in wretched state,  
 Forsworn, lamenting her unhappy fate,  
 Nest view her in her Magdalen attire,  
 All meek and modest, which we must admire,  
 Such from this Noble Charity proceeds,  
 From True Repentance happiness succeeds.  
 Tho' sinful, yet ne'er yield to sad despair,  
 Quit but your Vice, you'll find shelter here.<sup>80</sup>

Another stanza from the Table of Contents noted that 'noble charity' and 'true repentance' would provide shelter for one who shed the life of vice.

Harriot Wilding maintained her virtue despite being deposited at a mansion of ill repute by her avaricious brother where the mistress decoyed young women and convinced Harriot that she resided at a mansion of honorable people instead of a 'seminary of wickedness.'<sup>81</sup> Miss Wilding's relationship with Mr. Thompson remained proper, but after hearing that he was lost at sea, Harriot married an older

and genteel man, but was soon his widow. Meanwhile, her brother dissipated their family fortune and lived on relief. She later married Thompson and charitably paid her brother's debts. Providence sustained Mr. Thompson after he was pressed into service slavery. Her daughter by marriage later married her brother. All's well that ends well.

Familiar themes of courtship and marriage were followed in "The History of Miss Harriot Fairfax."<sup>82</sup> But there were new elements: first, the life-long friendship between two women--featured in few ballads and chapbooks. The second theme was the scorned and sour Miss Blackbourn who conveyed an 'attitude' and rejected her only proposal. Eventually she married.

A series of letters from Louise Wharton to Fidelia Friendly told a story allegedly purportedly 'founded on facts.'<sup>83</sup> Louisa suffered from downward mobility when her father died in America. She peddled needlework to keep herself and her mother from starving. Scenes of felicity among family members and devoted family retainers frequently marked the conclusion of these stories. The tale of Louisa Wharton was no exception.

"The Young Beauty of Kent, "Lucy Banks, was pursued by a Gentleman who rescued her community once a hailstorm destroyed the hops and the harvest.<sup>84</sup> Obsessed with Lucy, Colonel Stevens took her to London, much to the distress of her poor father. Her distressed father thought that an urban fling would destroy her innocence and she would no longer dutifully accept her lot in life. The subtitle indicated 'the many vicissitudes in life this young couple went through.' Although Mr. Banks stubbornly chose not to leave his cottage, he spent his last days at the Stevens estate at Canterbury.

"The True and Interesting History of Fanny Freeman emphasized sibling rivalry.<sup>85</sup> Fanny's beauty angered her envious sister. But once Fanny was with child, she went to London as a maid-servant. Once her sister died, she inherited the family estate and lived happily with her first lover and the child's father.

Large claims were also made in the "History of Maria Farrell, or the Beautiful

Foundling."<sup>86</sup> Both her father and mother were murdered in France and she came to England and supported herself. She married an old gentleman who left her 10,000 pounds when he died. Later she met her long-lost relatives and learned who she truly was. The conclusion returned to the theme of providence and its wondrous ways to happiness.

The impoverished were too easily swayed by money. A forced marriage inflicted calamity and misery on Miss Betsey Ward.<sup>87</sup> She should have been satisfied with a mate from her own station. The concluding homily extolled the virtue of poverty for the '(S)eeds of ambition' destroyed virtue and future happiness. The reader must be content with what Providence provided.

The "Virtuous Daughter of Savona," Miss Fermia, married a Genoese master broker.<sup>88</sup> Their first years were happy until the alcoholic Lorenzo murdered her. Although children should be dutiful to their parents, they should not to abandon children with whom they have had major disagreements. This chapbook did not end with the usual, expected unbounded felicity.

The introduction to "The History of Mary Ann Edwards" noted that 'prudent management' helped women avoid grief.<sup>89</sup> Mary Ann's parents educated her at home, away from destructive boarding schools, and she became an accomplished young woman and a scholar. But flattery ruined many a good young woman. A train of events came close to costing one of her suitors his life. Mary Ann later regretted that her arbitrary behavior caused so much grief. Pride and vanity in a woman were costly and destructive.

The story of Miss Betsey Warwick opened with these lines underneath the picture of a deserted man:

Men some to Business, some to Pleasure take,  
But every Woman is at Heart a Rake.<sup>90</sup>

The daughter of a well-heeled Yorkshire gentleman, Betsey Warwick's mother and mother's suitor put her into a convent in Paris. Eventually competition for her hand resulted in her abduction. Betsey had informed the abbess that she did not want to

take holy vows and hoped that 'providence' would intervene. She left the convent twice in male disguise. Despite her willfulness, her heart belonged to Blanford, whom she assumed was dead by the hand of Richmore. Blanford claimed her at the end of the story. Betsey and two of her female friends arranged suitable marriages, she was even reconciled with her mother, now that her mother's second husband and Betsey's nemesis had died. The closing comments of this story are very revealing:

They were all compleatly happy, and gave birth to a numerous and beautiful offspring. What pity it would have been, if three such fine women had been lost to the world, and never tasted the pleasures of conjugalities, which in time produced a race of men distinguished for their honor and courage in the field and in the cabinet.<sup>91</sup>

Young women served in this domesticated environment that valorized motherhood. But husbands needed suitable potential mothers. Marriage required attractive and able companions for husbands.<sup>92</sup>

"A Complete Guide for a Servant Maid," by Ann Walker and printed by T. Sabine in 1787 offered a compendium of dos and don'ts for female servants.<sup>93</sup> Its appearance in this section corroborates the themes in the Sabine repertoire.

No more useful task for the 'commonwealth' could be performed than to instruct young female servants. Walker counseled total resignation. Station and position in life were permanent; women should fatalistically accept their situation according to the teachings of 'Providence.' Life was precarious and insecure.

Walker detailed how to avoid certain noxious behaviors that subjected one to gossip or dismissal. Servants should put the best construction on household events, put their best foot forward at all times, behave obsequiously, and tolerate the indispositions of the master or mistress—excepting the master's request for sexual favors. They must not emulate their social superiors through dress or even the quality of food that they purchased on their own free time. Any misstep would be costly. Expensive 'public shews' should be avoided. Young and naive country

girls should beware of elegant furnishings and a mistress of false modesty. One false step could ensnare a young girl into a brothel.<sup>94</sup>

Female servants should treat fellow male servants who lived better than they with civility. Apprentices especially deserved respect, since many of them came from a station elevated above that of the household where they served. Advances should be rejected until some agreement was forthcoming, since they could not marry during their term of service. The maidservant must reject the advances of the master and those of his son. Seldom have successful matches between household servants and the son of the master been forthcoming. Usually there was devastating disappointment.<sup>95</sup>

Free time should be carefully used, but church attendance even during free Sunday afternoons was a must. But employers should give their charges some extra free time for 'innocent merriment.' Circumspect observance of the rules should hold the servant in good stead. For 'a close mouth makes a wise head.'<sup>96</sup>

The origins of such guide and 'providence' books can be traced to religion and to the Puritan need for regenerated piety. The depraved moral climate in the late seventeenth-century generated this literature. By the next century guides, practical literature, inundated young people with inspired teachings.<sup>97</sup> The Sabine series recommended passivity and self-denial; their chapbooks plainly announced what happened to women who did not pursue this path.

#### **Chapbooks by Sarah Wilkinson--Commissioned by Ann Lemoine and J. Rowe at the end of the 'Long Eighteenth Century'**

Ann Lemoine did not run a printing business, but chapbooks printed by others were indicated as 'printed by' and 'for Ann Lemoine;' and sometimes by J. Rowe. We can only speculate about Lemoine's motives. One of her chapbooks included a side insertion that the printer was H. Lemoine of Type-Street, London, confirming her relationship to Henry Lemoine, a London printer from 1777 to 1795

and again in 1807. After his first stint at printing, he became an itinerant London bookseller.<sup>98</sup> Ann Lemoine's chapbooks were of interest to women. Sarah Wilkinson's continued the connection to sensibility but offered more exotic scenery, since the plots were set in other countries such as France, Germany and Italy. Several claimed to be legends from the mythical past—one being a tale from the twelfth century. Several carried the disclaimer that they were 'founded on facts;' others included the words 'true' and 'history. Such terms implied authenticity. This common practice sold chapbooks.

In "The Marriage Promise, or The History of Emma Woodley," a gentleman recuperated on the farm of a venerable man and his daughter, Emma.<sup>99</sup> Employment took her to London. Anxious that she was being rushed by a suitor, she went to Ireland, but her employer died. Emma disappeared, hiding with her old dairy maid and her family. Because she was being 'decoyed' by Mr. Dodier, the parents of a prospective suitor rejected her as a choice for their son. Such a predicament ruined a woman's chances for marriage. Dodier later was reconciled to a woman whom he had earlier rejected. Given a substantial sum by his father, Emma remained in the service of Lady Morland.

The story, "Lisette of Savoy, or the Fair Maid of the Mountains," ended tragically. Lisette's father wanted her to be married to a good man, but fate intervened. A young bandit from the hills arranged to marry the beautiful Lisette. He took her to Rome where his family protected her while he remained in the hills. After delivering a dead child, she returned to the mountains of her youth. Village people understood her grief and accommodated her need to ramble in the mountains. They honored her as the 'fair maid of the mountains.'<sup>100</sup>

A 'historical romance of the twelfth century' followed a theme similar to the one introduced by Wilkinson in the history of Emma Woodley. Fortuitous coincidences abounded, this one is no exception. Lord Gowen became enamored of Elfrida when she and her father cared for him after an exhaustive family struggle. Lord Gowen spent much time instructing this 'fair incognita' in the 'liberal

accomplishments' of the age. So great was her appeal and 'progress' that she had few competitors.<sup>101</sup> What are 'liberal accomplishments' and 'progress' in a twelfth-century context?

The King, enamored of Elfrida, agreed to pardon her husband if she would accede to his terms. She refused. Cross-dressing, she served her husband's prison term until the King died and she could be freed. The treacherous Edward and his ally Gloucester died and the Earl of Richmond became King Henry VIII. This is not a twelfth century event. Again we have an example of a woman who, having absorbed the simple virtues of pastoral surroundings, managed to turn the hearts and minds of men, but insisted on her terms and her principles.

In "The Village Maid, or the Interesting Adventures of Montiserant," two French men looked for a country house in Rennes, but one instead feasted his eyes on a beautiful female peasant.<sup>102</sup> Her father was the 'oracle of (our) village and was universally esteemed for wisdom and integrity.' He hastily arranged to purchase the house and soon married Silvia. Her father acknowledged that, 'despite her rustic education,' she had too much 'good sense' to oppose his will and refuse this proposal. Melville's friend, the 'philosopher' Lucifer, was 'mortified' by his decision, but was soon charmed by Silvia. Later Silvia, now Madame Melville, was quite startled when the Marquis Montsirant, appeared at her door. Once his banishment was lifted, he returned to France and looked for his family. Silvia was his daughter. Sebaste, the wise old man, had acted as her father. The Marquis brought his riches to Rennes for the use of his family. The philosopher, Lucifer, upon 'reflecting on these events, could not be tired of admiring the wonderful springs of Providence.' Virtue triumphed, not just for the simple but beautiful female peasant, but for her adopted father, the venerable 'oracle' of the village. The 'springs' of Providence provided.

In an incomplete story, allegedly 'founded on facts,' the daughter of an enterprising and wealthy father wandered aimlessly after her father rejected the suit of a worthy man. Her father, Mr. Colville, did not think that she could give up the



comforts of her life style. Although Mr. Colville lost his assets in a bank closing, he later acquired some money which he bestowed upon his estranged daughter. The story ended with their reconciliation.<sup>103</sup>

Wilkinson's stories departed from the usual exchange of views and polite conversations in genteel parlors, even in thatched cottages and on city streets. Her stories shifted the scenery shifted to mountainous parts of Europe, but still stressed the theme of Providence and its rewards. The simple and virtuous life style was rewarded with the good life and sufficient sums of money to maintain it. Her stories do not necessarily end in the happily-ever-after mode, and one woman was even a cross-dresser. The 'fair maid of mountains' wandered aimlessly after her life was ruined. Emma Woodley remained in service.

#### Other chapbooks commissioned by Lemoine

Charlotte Smith's story of "The Deserted Daughter," like some of Lemoine's chapbooks, was set in France.<sup>104</sup> A suspicious husband forced his wife to abandon her illegitimate child, although she surreptitiously visited the child. Only reluctantly did the old and ill guardian put that child into a hospital. There her 'gentleness and propriety of manners' made her much loved. A settlement eventually installed Mary as a servant in the home of her birth mother as a servant, but she spent time with her. Once her husband died, Mary's mother made a compromise between her greed and maternal feelings, but still did not tell Mary that she was her mother. Once her mother decided to remarry, Mary sued in court for her share of the Cognat fortune and succeeded. The concluding paragraph drove home the moral lesson:

She appears to have merited her good fortune, and to have been an instance that the force of natural good sense, and a virtuous disposition, can alone counteract all the disadvantages of birth, and all the influence of mean or neglected education. While the story may serve to guard the mother, who respects the peace of her children, from being guilty of indiscretions which may raise, in jealous and suspicious minds, opinions

and prejudices so fatal to innocent objects on which the punishment of guilt, or of imprudence too frequently fails.<sup>105</sup>

Whether the recently-acclaimed women novelist and poet, Charlotte Smith, wrote this chapbook cannot be definitively addressed. One could interject that Lemoine took advantage of Smith's name or even that the author was another Charlotte Smith. Given Lemoine's concern for the subject of women, as evidenced by her chapbooks, that seems unlikely. The printing and lay-out of the title page is less polished than Lemoine's other chapbooks. There is no attribution that identified her printer, although was her normal practice. Given her tragic familiarity with the court system, we can assume that Smith could have sued Lemoine for usurping her name and therefore reputation. A later chapter will argue that Smith indeed wrote a lengthy chapbook about a female Robinson Crusoe.

Charlotte Smith's work appears in anthologies devoted to a reexamination of the role of women novelists. Responsibility for her thirteen children, many of whom were intermittently dependent upon her and an unending stream of litigation over her father-in-law's will required her to write. She spent years of her life and considerable money in court trying to settle the estate of her father-in-law. He cautiously established terms to care for her children, but wrangling by trustees and her husband followed her constantly. Her friendship with several literary giants helped her to launch a successful career.<sup>106</sup> Her reputation soared in the 1790s; she died in 1806.

Smith shrouded her heroines in the cloaks of sensibility but her use of that social code lacked the force and conviction that is detectable in her other writings. A political radical in the 1790s, Smith sprinkled her political convictions liberally into her novels. Desmond, published in 1792, was one of the earliest and most successful efforts at interjecting a political agenda into the prose of a novel.<sup>107</sup>

Traces of the Smith's disastrous personal situation must have filtered into her writings. The statement from the chapbook certainly mirrors Smith's struggles to secure money from her in-laws' estate through court proceedings:

**Wearied at length with their ineffectual efforts and despairing to move the implacable heart of her mother, she determined, in vindication of her own and her children's rights, to have recourse to the law; though it was with extreme reluctance she was driven to take such a resolution.<sup>108</sup>**

In another of a series of English Night Entertainments, three stories commissioned by Lemoine appeared in 1800. The second one, "The Pathetic History of Leonora," like many of Lemoine's chapbooks, was set in France and Algiers. The shortest story, "The Death of Love," was set in England. The opening and longer story, "The Misfortunes of Love, Or the Adventures of Henry and Julia," is a tale of marital intrigue and arranged marriages.<sup>109</sup>

Henry Metland made excruciating sacrifices to marry Julia Burt, against the will of both fathers. Because marriages without the consent of parents was common 'on our island,' Scotland, Henry secreted Julia away to Edinburgh to marry her. They left for Santo Domingo. The gentleman who expected to marry her and use her money contrived many plots in order to separate this pair. The island's governor welcomed them, but he abducted Julia and held her for his convenience. After Metland's rebuke of the governor's wife, she then conspired with Oliver, Julia's original intended.

Nationalistic sentiments crept into this story. Stereotypes of the Spanish were not favorable—no surprise. Donna Clara, the governor's wife, 'was a Spaniard; and there are no extremities of which a Spanish woman is not capable when she finds herself disdained.'<sup>110</sup> All these plots were eventually foiled, and reunited, the couple left, returned to England, and spent several peaceable years with their families. Julia died, and the despondent Henry vowed that he would never marry again. The opening lines of this story by Metland, the supposed author of this first-person narrative, noted that adversity was a great teacher:

**How soft sighted are the views of mortals, and how weak is the dark shade of futurity, to open a prospect necessarily bounded by wisdom, as well as the mercy of the Great Disposer of Events! Misfortune is the best school to form the mind."<sup>111</sup>**

Because he came from one of the England's better families and had an Oxford education, he was allegedly a judge of education. Although this chapbook was printed in 1800, the force of Providence still played a pre-eminent role in depictions of popular literature. Hence the concluding homily:

This is my history to the present time. The ways of Providence are frequently mysterious, and her paths difficult and obscure; but those who tread them in humble confidence, nor deviate into the less painful roads of vice and folly, will at length be surely conducted to the regions of happiness; and though they may not always reach them in the shortest journey of an earthly pilgrimage, will have a prospect beyond the grave of more perfect and permanent felicity. The reader will no doubt be surprized at so many serious trials I have passed. After such heavy misfortunes, hope itself being extinguished, since nothing can recall her I loved beyond myself, I have determined to spend the remainder of my life in the innocent amusement of solitude.<sup>112</sup>

Typical sentiments in eighteenth-century chapbooks.

"The Death of Love" began with the homily that interesting people were not the world's heroes; those accolades went to individuals who uplifted others. The love of two young people was thwarted by the machinations of the young man's mother. Eventually, both of the parents relented, but the ill Augusta soon died. In the final paragraph, the author spared the emotions or the 'sensibility' of the reader. But the two 'wretched' parents had to endure the remainder of their lives knowing that their pursuit of greed shortened the life of their son.<sup>113</sup>

A story of 'gothic times, relating the union of Edmund and Albina was set in the reign of Henry III.<sup>114</sup> Albina's father, Reginald, was a faithful knight in a Crusade. She remained the virtuous epitome of her departed mother in her father's eyes. She was the subject of a jousting, much competition, and intrigue. The Lord, Ardulph, did not easily give up his pursuit of her, although, by the end of the story, he lost and virtue triumphed. Ardulph used women and held them captive for his

own pleasure, then cast them off. One of his favorite women, Alicia, fearing Ardulph's obsession for Alicia helped Edmund. Women in this story are the chattel of men.

The use of the term 'gothic' in the title deserves some explanation. Dreams, nightmares, and apparitions repeatedly appeared. The term 'gothic' was associated with nightmares in novels of the 1790s. Women writers first wrote gothic novels, among them, Charlotte Smith, Clara Reeve, and Sophia Lee, and Anne Radcliffe. Physical phenomena such as wind, mountains, turbulent water, mountains, deserts, and sudden changes adversely impacted fictional women and produced frightening experiences. The word 'gothic' also pertains to the medieval period, but Ann Lemoine and others may have deliberately capitalized on the more current literary trend of gothic novels. This is the only story in this series with such an appellation.<sup>115</sup>

"Roxalana, Or, The Step-Mother: An Historic Tale" began with a 'maxim' about a woman's beauty and its sway over powerful men:

**"Beauty of all empires, is the most absolute and arbitrary; and that woman who prudently manages those charms she is mistress of may well be termed truly powerful. The greatest conquerors and even the masters of the universe, have sometimes been governed by those who had been their slaves; and the world has been witness of several of these sorts of prodigies, under Princes, who, by the glory of their actions, had a just title to immortality.**

Because the Sultan, Solymon, was blind to Roxalana's faults, all within the seraglio had to obey her every dictate. The Sultan was her slave, and she was 'raised to a copartnership in the empire.' She conspired against his children and used her own carelessly to achieve her ends. She was branded as:

**inhuman, ambitious, haughty, treacherous. . .this prodigy of vice and barbarity, after having spent two years longer in persecuting innocence and virtue, and carried her credit and power beyond any instance which past and future ages can produce of absolute authority over a husband.<sup>116</sup>**

Roxalana ruled through sexual control of her husband, not through any inherent power of her own. She was not an English princess, but an intriguing woman of a foreign culture. Her sexual charms and appetite for power could not cast aspersions on English culture. She did not achieve her goals, and the son for whom she had sacrificed so much was strangled on the orders of his father, her husband.

"Tales Worth Telling: or Charming Curiosities' serialized 'lives, adventures, romances, both pleasant and profitable.' The story of Fanny Felton began with her father's first person admission of his misdeeds, including the fact that, given his promiscuity, he almost slept with his own daughter.<sup>117</sup> A mark put upon her body by her mother at birth alerted him to his daughter's identity. The shock of this totally changed both of their lives. He tried to make up for his wretchedness. Father and daughter printed her story after they retired to a more suitable life in the countryside.

Life was nasty, brutish and short. An 'interesting history' provided a painful account of Fanny's descent into prostitution. A 'good matron took care of her, but other women exploited her ruthlessly. People of abject circumstances preyed upon each other. Fanny eventually ended up Bridewell, and Mrs. Wellwood, one of the women who tried to profit from her toil and her body, would only take her back when a threatened inquiry into her own activities frightened her. Her account of her slavery does not mention her incongruous rescue by her own father. She welcomed the deliverance of Providence. This shocking story of a father who nearly seduced his own daughter permitted the author to condemn the debauchery of a man who did not maintain ties with his own issue. Moll Flanders pursued a similar theme, since she married her own brother.

"Louisa"--a story attached to the history of Fanny Felton--described the plight of a young couple who eloped against the wishes of her father. He spared no effort or money to keep her in the manner to which she was accustomed. After he was released from prison for bankruptcy, her took a job, but her lack of 'domestic

economy' kept them in poverty. In addition, he enjoyed his friends and invited them to observe his wife's beauty. They quarreled often. Once, completely beside herself, she attempted suicide off a bridge, only to be rescued by the night watchman. She was reunited with her father and recovered. Herbert learned of her affliction and lamented his role in her misery. Eventually they were reunited with her father whose lofty speech concluded the story:

You see my children. . .how many calamities are produced in the conjugal state, for want of a little mutual forbearance. Providence has . . .made our failings productive of every happiness; let us not tempt our fate a second time, but act with discretion in prosperity; and in adversity, bear our misfortunes with the patience becoming Christians: in future we will be as one family, loving and forgiving the failings of each other. What I have shall be yours with my best blessing.<sup>118</sup>

Lemoine, a Huguenot descendant, may have advocated her own brand of feminism through chapbooks. Some of Wilkinson's heroines seem to be passive and pathetic victims of men's duplicitous and obsessive behavior, but other chapbooks provided an active image of women who tried to control their own destiny. One even cross-dressed to protect her husband and family. These women waited out adversity. A later chapter featuring two captivity narratives--for want of a better term--emphasizes the strength of Charlotte Dupont and Mary Jane Meadows. Eighteenth-century female focus groups would have told Lemoine that they would be a marketing success.

### Amelia--A Popular Abridgment

Amelia was Fielding's last novel before his untimely death in 1754. Its serious tone surprised those who were accustomed to his comic-satire and earlier stories such as Tom Jones, Shamela, and Joseph Andrews. With this novel, Fielding moved closer to the study of manners and domestic scenes. The content of Amelia and the agonies and ecstasies of its major female character have more in

common with the struggles of Pamela and Clarissa. Fielding defended Amelia in The Covent Garden Journal against those who thought it was dull. His 'ambitious project' was undertaken with moral purpose and energy. He considered his earlier novels to be history or biography. This social document detailed marital agony in a society infested with corruption.<sup>119</sup>

In Amelia, Fielding illustrated his concern about public corruption and deceptive behavior in private life through the adulterous activities of Amelia's husband Mr. Booth. Amelia endured his behavior with forbearance and a steady love for him. The editor's or publisher's introductory remarks noted problems in the Booth marriage. Mr. Booth struggled under a heavy load. Amelia, endowed with 'piety and benevolence,' accepted the 'evils' bestowed on her by 'Providence.' Despite serious circumstances, she did not look with contempt on any human being.

The introduction noted that this second abridgment of about eighty pages faithfully followed the novel, although the first edition contained some unfortunate insertions that were omitted in this edition. Younger readers in particular would find the novel useful and be led to embrace the virtuous life. Reading the abridgment would be more valuable than perusing the longer book. The first page noted that Fielding's ingenuity produced a story of a "variety of occurrences, and upon each of them the author has made the most judicious reflections."<sup>120</sup>

Amelia's situation was compounded by family intrigue as well as the weakness of her husband. She had very little control over her destiny and that of her children. Fielding's exaltation of matrimony's redeeming benefits was part of an eighteenth-century social movement that upheld marriage. The union of the Booths was not consummated for property, instead theirs was a love match. The virtuous Amelia seemed dependent and constantly struggling, but moral rectitude in the face of adversity inspired even the melancholy Booth to bear up against the vicissitudes of life. Amelia taught her children religion and morality in order to give them proper habits. She persevered despite the base actions of those around her.

Fielding's theme was the pervasiveness and enveloping nature of personal



and social corruption, although this theme was not emphasized by the printer of the chapbook. Another theme was the difficulties of marriage—even one founded on love. The marriage of Booth and Amelia seemed preferable, if not ideal, especially when compared to the decayed unions of others.

In contrasting the behavior of John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* with *Amelia*, Patricia Meyer Spacks noted that behind the depictions of female passivity and compliance were concerns about unruly women who could not be subdued. "Amelia's moral energy corresponds to *Fanny Hill*'s splendid vitality." *Amelia* remained changeless. She never initiated, but only responded to the actions and behavior of others. Fielding depicted *Amelia* as he conceptualized desirable behavior by women. In addition, English society 'enforced female passivity.' We do not know if the chapbook printer chose it because it conformed to his own images of how women should be. For despite philosophical and religious conceptions of the role of women, many could be aggressive, volatile, and high unpredictable.<sup>121</sup>

Eighteenth-century authors had a vested personal interest in displaying women as changeless. Male characters could be self-indulgent, deviate from the norm, and flagrantly misspend their youth. Authors had to depict women, however, as changeless and stable. A plot that suggest a capacity to initiate change ultimately showed scenes of destruction. Reading their own ideological position on women into their characters, male authors see stability in women as 'comprehensible,' but the 'imagined volatility of women makes them hardly worth trying to understand.' The woman who develops as a person, like *Clarissa*, is threatening. She 'takes on a form of being generally reserved for men,' and in so doing she is in danger and men around her are as well.<sup>122</sup>

### Concluding Comments on Chapbooks

Providence--the notion that God's grace came to those who followed the word or performed good works derived from the medieval church, but was not a part

of later Protestant thought. Despite the denial of God's compensation for a life well-lived, the overwhelming and omnipotent power of God to affect daily life reminded believers of God's omniscience. An understanding of theology hardly concerned ordinary people, consumed as they were with the vagaries of daily life. But many laymen and the clergy wrote and spoke as though there was a direct link between the life well lived and the rewards bestowed in heaven. Some may have cautioned that they were only promising a form of 'spiritual prosperity,' but the layperson who wanted to believe in rewards for good works or the moral life quickly jumped to this conclusion.<sup>123</sup>

'Providence books' or 'sea providences' often detailed the way in which shipwrecks were avoided. Such accounts seem close to Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. They either reenforced the beliefs of the faithful or scared those who were not yet converted. 'Providence books' were most significantly produced during the challenge of deism in the last years of the seventeenth century.<sup>124</sup>

Knowing that ordinary people were exceedingly fatalistic, authors and printers appealed to an existing strain within the popular culture. Religious readers might be inclined to purchase a chapbook, if they knew that it contained the usual religious evocations. This sense of providence to the 'habitual patterns of the Puritan mind.'<sup>125</sup> The penchant of Christians and especially Puritans to remind the faithful of God's will lived on in eighteenth-century chapbooks.

Chapbooks warned about unscrupulous men. The subject of courtship and marriage as conveyed by chapbooks is studded with examples of false promises and phony clandestine ceremonies. Titles such as "Sham Marriage,' Matrimonial Deceiver' or 'Innocence Betray'd' indicate the relevance of this subject. They cautioned young women about nefarious behavior, while at the same time offering a source of entertainment or jest.

But there are other themes. Male vultures preyed upon pathetic and helpless young women or women with money. Women who walked the path of goodness could avoid such encounters. Another theme was 'virtue rewarded.' Those who

stayed the course attracted wealthy men who made them good and faithful husbands. They then resided in rural villages with the proper English home. Still others became accustomed to the 'seminaries of wickedness.' Those like Sally Johnson who repented and stripped themselves of their streamers and flags found positions and husbands who valued their worldly experiences. Education did not steer women onto the right path. Religiously-inspired education was far more suitable than the world of books.

Some chapbooks featured aged philosophers who sought the solace of the countryside, but their equally-elderly wives were absent or seldom if ever mentioned. Women such as the wicked witch or one like Mother Midnight--a figure of Defoe's Moll Flanders--did not appear in any of these later chapbooks. These women were omniscious creatures. Since later chapbooks, particularly in the Sabine series, emphasized vulnerable behavior and pathetically-limited choices, it comes as no surprise that there was not some powerful mother-figure who rescued women from their wayward ways. Amazons were not encouraged.

The older father of Isabella Fairfield had once considered a career in commerce but retired to the countryside and a peaceable but useful life. He looked after the orphaned Isabella with his briefly-mentioned wife. The plot centered around his experiences. In the story of Fanny Adams/Susanna James, the philosopher/former military officer was instrumental to the fortuitous reunion of the Fanny/Susanna and her aristocratic lover. The philosopher commented on life's arrangements. The father of an abandoned, clandestinely-married young girl pursued her honor, but was cruelly ridiculed by young and debauched men. Finally, this couple provided for every need of her the aged father. The mother was never mentioned.

In some stories, some women lived to contented old age, knowing that their earlier sacrifices were instrumental to the happiness and well-being of their children. They enjoyed wealth, comfort, community approval and even contentment, but they were not oracles or wise individuals accorded community acclaim. Such

distinctively-different roles for old men and women conformed to an understood division of gender roles.

#### Connections: The Chapbook and the Novel

This following discussion connects elite and popular culture, assuming that authors of chapbooks were familiar with the more the elevated styles and techniques of novels and other genres.<sup>126</sup>

Chapbooks asserted veracity by words and phrases. The title page or frontispiece frequently contained phrases such as 'founded on facts' or the words, 'true,' or 'history.' Popular culture imitated broader literary trends. Particularly after 1750, chapbooks imitated the content and style of novels, so it is prudent to consider the skein intertwining history and fiction.

The term 'history- was frequently featured in the title of many chapbooks printed by T. Sabine--'The History of Sally Johnson,' or 'The History of Mary Ann Edwards'--for example. Two chapbooks included the phrase, 'founded on facts,' in their titles, while another featured the word 'true.'

The Rise of the Modern Novel, appearing in 1957, emphasized changes that produced a form of formal realism. What distinguished the history with the novel from past forms was time. Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance literature described action either abstractly or within a very short time frame. Previous novels used time ahistorically, although this perhaps reflected European attitudes towards time. The modern novel consumed the life-time of its characters.<sup>127</sup> In the very few pages of chapbooks, particularly those written after 1750, stories were told that consumed a major portion of the characters' lives.

The desires of the reading audience changed in the early modern period. In the later seventeenth century, fiction and fact blended. Historical undertakings accepted a 'belief in the utility of history, tolerance of the fictive, and devotion to the factual.' Readers expected personal involvement by the author and judged what they wrote more by the character of the author and less by the words of the text.

Authors so tinctured their narratives that they could be dismissed due to the author's prejudice. Chapbooks with prefatory didactic statements and insertions of lofty philosophical utterances reminded the reader of the author's presence and judgments. The lack of dialogue and therefore the agency of the characters diminished the characters and accentuated the role of the author disproportionately.

### Novelistic Features

J., Paul Hunter's work on the novel examines novelistic features. The novel has become subjective, individualistic, realistic--an account of contemporary life and its people. '(N)ovelistic features' cannot be seen in the early novels of the eighteenth century, but they do appear over the course of that century. With the treatment of forbidden subjects or taboo subjects, the novel navigated into uncharted terrain. Examples included looking at subjects that were only pursued behind drawn shades--subjects like sexuality and even pornography. Such novels displayed a 'racy' tone. The novel delved into private space and tended to be confessional and exhibitionistic. Characters such as Clarissa and Pamela revealed their innermost thoughts to trusted friends or confided in them through letters.<sup>128</sup>

But who were the readers? Because the novel entered the domain of what was previously private space, it promoted reading as a solitary act. By the eighteenth-century, the circle of readers no longer came only from the middle and educated classes. An emphasis upon literacy since the seventeenth century guaranteed an expanded reading public by the eighteenth century. They were country people, 'servant wenches,' yeomen, merchants, and other family servants. The women who moralists distrusted as intellectually or morally inept were also among the growing sphere of novel devotees. The novel gradually attracted a whole new set of younger readers.<sup>129</sup>

The novel explored the individual's deepest thoughts through an extensive development of character. Solitary activity allowed the reader to identify with the

individual, and not always with the society that the novel depicted. This contradicted or diluted the original goal of portraying the society as it was. The societal motive was lost upon the reader, and, instead, a genre that included a societal dimension really functioned as a 'haven of subjectivity' and a 'major repository of individualism.' It bore a 'record of solitariness' and displayed 'anti-social' tendencies. For some it depicted alienation and emphasized solitary activity and communicated inner thoughts and a struggle with isolation.<sup>130</sup> Early fiction assumed that it promoted a community response, but novelists and writers realized that they had to project their fiction to a varied audience. Hunter described the range of probable readership as 'extraordinary.'<sup>131</sup>

We have no evidence that English villagers gathered by the fire while the most literate among them read from chapbooks. Such community scenarios have been documented for France. We do have evidence of reading in the ale-house or pub and later in coffee houses. The raucous ale-houses of early modern England and beyond and the political conversations and newspaper reading in coffee houses made them almost exclusively male domains. Women would darken the doors of more respectable ale-houses, but their infrequent presence was probably not associated with communal readings. Ballads were sung at community events, but eighteenth-century novels did not promote togetherness.

Novels also promoted knowledge. One expected answers to questions, including romantic questions such as how one knew when one was loved or in love? Novels could not answer that question for the reader, but they could suggest the varied situations in which love occurred.<sup>132</sup>

Two structural elements that were presented in later chapbooks were also characteristic of novels: first, a digression or a story within the novel and, second, the insertion of discourse. Finally, Hunter assumes that a didacticism invaded the novel, and this study of chapbooks bears out that supposition. Defoe, Henry and Sarah Fielding, Eliza Haywood, and Tobias Smollett incorporated stories within their larger novel that did not relate to the larger and central story. Clearly digressions

interrupted the flow of the story. The critics called them 'interpolations' when they were straining to be positive.<sup>133</sup>

The chapbook that offered a much-abbreviated version of Fielding's *Amelia* included introductory discourse that explained the author's purpose and the virtues he attempted to inculcate:

This novel was one of the last productions of the late ingenious Mr. Fielding, and is written on a plain very different from the rest of his compositions. . . The reader is entertained with a vast variety of occurrences. . . A worthy family is here represented as suffering the utmost hardships, in consequence of the unnatural conduct of a sister, and the villainy of an attorney. Such scenes of distress are laid open to which too many of our fellow creatures are no strangers, and characters are introduced entirely consistent with nature.<sup>134</sup>

The individual who penned this introduction wanted the chapbook to address themes of corruption that Fielding himself addressed. He noted the natural tendencies of people to tempting courses of action that ultimately cause distress.

In addition to the opening discursive homily, description of country scenes and finally the felicity of rural life, brief perusals of the actions of characters and their inner thoughts and motives usually appeared. Authors did not put flesh on their characters; they illustrated their own values. After 1750 chapbook writers borrowed this technique. Many chapbooks used digressions that were totally unrelated to the previously-outlined plot. Two examples from chapbooks in a later chapter illustrate the technique. The digression in the "Mary Jane Meadows" allowed a soliloquy by one sea-mate-settler came at the end of the story and provided some extra pages. In "Charlotte Dupont," Aubin inserted three digressions.<sup>135</sup> The digression in "Hannah Snell" included a poured more calumny on her already-disgraced and wayward husband.

Previous quotations from chapbooks illustrate the phenomenon of interrupting discourse that appeared in novels either as whole pieces or as fragments. Inspired by their own political views and emboldened by the fact that they were writing, authors stated lofty philosophical positions about the meaning of

life, the course of civilization, and loyalty to country and people. Prefatory announcements stressed the precipitous decline or crisis engendered by human depravity or the absence of moral rectitude. Hence as preparatory discourse, they set the tone for what was to follow.<sup>136</sup>

Only three of the many Sabine chapbooks contain such prefatory discourse. In "The History of Miss Harriot Fairfax," the reader was warned that the 'ensuing adventures' written by a woman could exhibit inadequacies in style, for the simple truth to be found there was more relevant than 'the flowers of rhetoric.' In "Mary Ann Edwards," dangers befell the 'fair sex' due to capricious behavior and a lack of concern for the careful control of their destiny. In "The History of Betsey Warwick, The Female Rambler," love was the reigning monarch. Even Herod and Mark Anthony were caught in its clutches. The absolute power of love surpassed even the heady determination of Betsey's mother to put her in a convent in order to pursue her own life.<sup>137</sup>

The didactic statement which that prefaced "Fatal Credulity" targeted female readers. Tragedy awaited young and innocent women who fell into the precipice and entered 'the dreary regions of destructions.' Destruction and despair came 'nine times out of ten' to those born with beauty. Usurping the words from "The Deserted Village," readers were reminded that the woman who took off her simple brown dress and left the village of her birth was doomed to destruction.<sup>138</sup>

The opening statements in "The History of Sweet Poll of Plymouth" acknowledged that pastoral scenes motivated writers. The anonymous writer extolled the selfless pursuit of honor by the British Tars. But behind the mask of patriotism lurked many a Tar who wanted to get even with women, having been the victim of a capricious Moll. But the author reminded the reader that the story would outline a display of exemplary conduct.<sup>139</sup>

In a Preface written for the reader of "Belinda, the Rewards of Constancy," the author celebrated Belinda's education in 'Parts remote from some of our great Cities'. . .under the Tuition of those who are truly noble and good.' Foreigners



brought their corrupting vices to London. 'Lawless love' brought fatal consequences--'Disgrace on themselves, and eternal Infamy on the fairest of the Creation.'<sup>140</sup>

Novels were preaching, not just to the converted choir but to the unregenerate multitude. Religion was the central motivating force in life, and its precepts could not be ignored. As a creature 'dyed in Restoration, Puritan and London wool,' Defoe wanted to bring out the good in people. His 'design' upon the reader reveals his desire to have an impact on society. The near-pornographic Fanny Hill, by John Cleland, displayed a didactic tone.<sup>141</sup> Prominent novelists of the eighteenth century--Aubin, Richardson, both Henry and Sarah Fieldings, Sterne, Lennox, Burney--used the didactic tone. Critics would rather ignore this feature, but these writers were much involved with social questions and a curt dismissal of their techniques does not do them justice, nor does it discover and examine motive and intent.

Warnings to young female readers were frequently interspersed. Servants, even females, were known to read, and this was one of the major reading groups targeted by such verbiage. Fortuitous circumstances in which a surprising turn of events or meeting of the major characters produced a pleasing conclusion for all the parties. Happy endings conformed to the requirement that novels reveal some element of the miraculous or marvelous. A few women poured out their emotions in letters.

"The Shepherdess of the Alps," Fanny Adams/ Susan James, Isabella Fairfield, "Pretty Peggy of Derby," the compassionate Zoa, and Belinda--all these women earned 'the rewards of constancy.' The heroines of the later Sabine series--Harriot Wilding, Harriot Fairfax, Louisa Wharton and Fidelia Friendly, Lucy Banks, Fanny Freeman, Maria Farrell, Betsey Ward, Mary Ann Edwards and Betsey Warwick enjoyed the rewards that only Providence can bestow--a suitable motherhood, faithful and loving husbands, and affluence.

How was the swing of the pendulum between patricians and plebeians

represented and how would that oscillation affect gender links? Were such relationships even depicted in chapbook fiction? Only a few exemplary women married a person whose social status eclipsed theirs. Only three chapbooks demonstrate the ultimate success of women in marrying above their social station: First, although Isabella Fairfield lived with simple country folk, having been abandoned by her father, later her wealthy grandfather bestowed money upon her. Thus this story provides only a qualified example. Second, Fanny Adams/Susanna James advanced beyond a humble birth, but only after virtuous years of poverty and dire circumstances. Third, and the only example from the large Sabine collection, Lucy Banks did marry Colonel Stevens despite the anger of her father over the proposed match and her desertion of their simple country home and values.

Other chapbook women returned to their original elevated social station only after some very hard years. Virtue gave them that opportunity after fate conspired against them. A neighbor trusted as the guardian of her money devastated Sally Johnson. Only after her calamitous descent into prostitution did she return to the life for which she was intended. Margaret Saunders or 'Pretty Peggy of Derby' endured much to marry a man of a similar background. Originally from a family of noble birth, Belinda's misfortunes resulted from religious schisms. Fanny Freeman's father was a wealthy farmer from the county of Norfolk. Sibling rivalry made her life difficult, but she eventually married her first love and inherited the family money. Betsey Ward's life was nearly destroyed by her ambitious desire to marry a man of a different social station. We therefore have very few stories of social mobility and more that counseled resignation.

Finally by the end of the long eighteenth century, chapbooks stories move beyond England. Sarah Wilkinson's characters ventured further into exotic scenery. Zoa, the beautiful Indian temptress, willingly accepted English customs and religion, but was predisposed to such an accommodation because her mother was English. Through Henry Metland, an author introduced Spanish passion turned to invective; Spanish women were overwrought if they were crossed in love. Two

longer stories reviewed in the final chapter commented on nationalistic sentiments: In the story of Charlotte Dupont, Penelope Aubin deprecated the Spanish. The adventures of Mary Jane Meadows, commissioned by Ann Lemoine, made humanitarian if patronizing comments about African natives, but poured English outrage all over the Dutch for treating the natives unfairly. English contacts with the larger and wider world, fueled by merchants' zeal for new markets, new forms of exploration, and a quest for colonies provided a ready market of ordinary readers who understood that there were other places and people beyond the English isles.

## Notes

1. G. J. Barker-Benfield, The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. xvii.
2. Ibid., p. xix.
3. Ibid., and Nancy Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction, A Political History of the Novel, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987),
4. Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," Journal of the History of Ideas, (April, 1959), pp. 195-217.
5. Ibid, p. 211.
6. Ibid, pp. 204, 206.
7. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, Writing Women in Jacobean England, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 7-11.
8. Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 238-241; Barker-Benfield, Culture of Sensibility, pp. 154-161.
9. Culture of Sensibility, pp. 64, 83, 86, 89, 90, 92, 102.
10. Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel, Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, published in Great Britain by Chatto and Windus, 1957), pp. 177, 196, 206.
11. Kathryn Shevelow, Women and Print Culture, The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 1-3.
12. Culture of Sensibility, pp. xxvii, xix, xxi, xv, 154-161.
13. check Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction, p. 35, Todd, 121, 122
14. Todd, 120, 130, 140
15. Paul Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, England, 1727-1783, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 461-465.
16. Culture of Sensibility, pp. 294, 295, 299, 300.

17. Fanny Burney, *Evelina*.
18. Culture of Sensibility, pp. 219, 226, 227; Armstrong, pp. 3, 5. Todd, pp. 121, 122.
19. The literature on this topic is extensive. See Colley, *Britons*, and Katherine Binhammer, "The Sex Panic of the 1790s," Journal of the History of Sexuality, 6, #3 (1996): 409-434.
20. Colley, Britons, p. 240; Ruth Perry, "Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England," Journal of the History of Sexuality, 2 (1991), pp. 215, 216.
21. Katherine Binhammer, "The Sex Panic of the 1790s:" pp. 413, 414.
22. Colley, Britons, p. 252; John Brewer, The Pleasures of the Imagination, p. 82; Binhammer, "Sex Panic," pp. 417, 418.
23. "The History of the Trial and Execution of Marie Antoinette, Late Queen of France Who was Beheaded at Paris on Wednesday the 16th of October, 1793." See complete discussion of this chapbook in chapter 12.
24. Binhammer, "Sex Panic," pp. 421-430; Todd, Sign of Angellica, pp. 196, 197, 198.
25. Binhammer, "Sex Panic," pp. 432, 433.
26. Culture of Sensibility, and Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction.
27. Perry, "Colonizing the Breast," p. 211.
28. Daniel Defoe, The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders, first published in 1722. References to the chapbook are lengthily footnoted in a future chapter.
29. John Angus Burrell, Introduction to Samuel Richardson, Clarissa, or the history of a young lady, (New York: Random House, The Modern Library, 1950), p. xii.
30. Samuel Richardson, Pamela, or Virtue rewarded, reprinted by Century, New York, 1950.
31. Burrell, Introduction, Clarissa, vii, ix, xii.

32. Barker-Benfield, Culture of Sensibility, pp. 318, 319; Langford, Polite and Commercial People, p. 76.

33. "The Old Lady and her Niece the Fair Incognita, Detected and brought to Justice In which are laid open The many strange Expedients, sly Artifices, and various uncommon and ridiculous Disguises they made use to conceal themselves. To which is prefix'd, A serious Attempt to Vindicate their Innocence and apologize for their odd Humours." London, Printed for M. Cooper, At the Globe in Paternoster Row, 1752, 31 pages. A hand-written note possibly by the person collating the extensive Boswell Collection preceded the chapbook and noted that it was a 'curious' tract. The Boswell chapbooks were read at the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 7, 8, 10, 11.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31.

37. "The Merry Droll or Pleasing Companion. Consisting of a Variety of Facetious and Engaging Stories; and Familiar Letters. In which Several Entertaining Adventures are truly (sic) related; And Divers Instances of Love and Gallantry, Elegantly displayed. Including Also, Some Poetical Recreations; Being a Collection of Merry Tales, Diverting Fables, Pleasing Pastorals, and Other Select Pieces. The Whole Moral, Instructive and Entertaining. London: Printed for C. Parker, 1759. Pages 64-96 featured letters and pages 110-134 included poems.

38. *Ibid.*, The following list substantiates the theme of romance intertwined with moral didacticism. Letters: (caption): The Original of the following Letter of Queen Elizabeth to King Edward VI is preserved in the Cotton Library: A genuine and pathetic Letter from a young Lady to a Gentleman Abroad; LOVE IN DEATH; IN TWO LETTERS; the first from a dying Wife, to a wicked, dissolute, and barbarous Husband; the other from a young unmarried Lady in her last moments to her Lover; From an AUNT to her NIECE, Occasioned by a Duel between two Friends on her Account; The ROYAL LOVER, or Virtue put to the Proof; IMPERTINENT JEALOUSY; Copy of an original Letter from a Scots Gentleman lately arrived in London to his Friend in Scotland; An ODD REASON for LOVE; AVARICE, the Bane of LOVE; a Shocking Instance of it; To a Lady in the Country who was going to be married; To a MASQU'D LADY; A Letter from an ATTORNEY on the Circuit to his Mistress in Town. Poems included: An Epistle from TOM to NELL; ALAMODE; WOMEN, the best Politicians; WOMAN'S Resolution; A RECIPE to make a Man of CONSEQUENCE; A Modern Pastoral Courtship; The FEMALE MICROCOSM. To a

**Lady who Said, Man is a little World; The Lady's ANSWER; Mrs. PRITCHARD'S Farewell Epilogue (modeled on Macbeth).**

39. **Ibid., 'The Lover's Alchemy,' pp. 13, 15, 21.**

40. **Ibid., p. 41.**

41. **"The Shepherdess of the Alps, A Moral Tale." Both copies in the Harvard Collection were printed by Aldermary Church Yard, 32 pages.**

42. **"The Sham Marriage, Or Unfortunate Wife, A Melancholy Love Tale, By the Editor of the Dutiful Daughter," Bailey, Printer, No. 41, Leadenhall Street, 28 pages.**

43. **Ibid., quote from page 5.**

44. **Ibid., quote from page 24.**

45. **"The Fortunate Orphan or Providential Meeting of Miss Fairfield and Mr. Stanton: Containing the History of their Lives," London, Printed for Robert Barker in January, 1792, 40 pages.**

46. **Ibid., p. 15.**

47. **"The Love, Joy, and Distress of the Beautiful and Virtuous Miss Fanny Adams That was strapan'd in a false Marriage, to Lord Whateley. his base and ungenerous treatment of her in Marrying another Lady who afterwards died, he repents, and becomes a loving Husband, as she was the Pattern of her sex." London, Printed and Sold by T. Bailey, 32 pages. The stories were also published by A. Swindells of Manchester. The other London firms printing the story was A. Miller.**

48. **Ibid., pp. 14, 20.**

49. **Ibid., pp. 22, 15.**

50. **Ibid., p. 31.**

51. **Ibid., p. 32.**

52. **"The Maid of the Farm, or Memoirs of Susanna James," by Theophilus James Bacon, Esq. London, Printed and Sold by T. Sabine, 59 pages.**

53 **Ibid., p. 26.**

54. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

55. "Pretty Peggy of Derby," London: Printed for W. Clements and J. Sadler in the year 1790.

56. *Ibid.*, Frontispiece.

57. "Innocence Betray'd; Or, the Perjured Lover," Printed by M. Bowley, No. 96, Aldergate Street, London. Mary Bowley is listed in the Maxted volume on London Printers as being in business in 1799.

58. "A Warning to the Fair Sex; Or The Matrimonial Deceiver, Being the History of the Noted George Miller, Who was married to upwards of thirty different women, on purpose to plunder them." London, T. Sabine at the London and Middlesex Printing Office, in 29 pages; p. 7.

59. "Fatal Credulity; or, Memoirs of Miss Clermont. Founded on Facts. Containing Curious Traits in Real Life." London: Printed for J. Roach, 1787, in 64 pages; p. 2.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 34.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 65- 66.

63. "The Entertaining History of William Rating and Sweet Poll of Plymouth, With the Humours of his Friend Jack Oakum, Containing among other Particulars,---(long summation of contents) To which are added A Variety of Sea Songs." London: Printed for W. Clements, and J. Sadler, In The Year 1789; in 37 pages; p. 4. The Harding Collection at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the Houghton Library, Harvard University have several copies of this chapbook.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

65. "The Croydon Foresters, or The History of Collin Meager, and Jenny Wood: A Tale of Ancient Times." Printed by T. Harding at the Licensed Printing-Office, High Street, Croydon, Surrey. And sold by James Wilmott. No. 50, Borough, London, 22 pages.

66. "Belinda, Or, Happiness the Reward of Constancy. Manifested in a Series of the most Interesting and Surprizing Events ever yet made publick." London: 1750-1800, in 92 pages. Preface. The printing date is uncertain because the imprint is lacking.



67. *Ibid.*, Preface.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

69. John Corry, "The Preservation of Charles and Isabella, or the Force of Friendship." Printed for B. Crosby, Stationers' Court; Champante and Co., Jewry Street, Aldgate; R. Ogle, Great Turnstile, Holborn; T. Hughes, and M. Jones, Paternoster-row; J. Stuart, and J. Murray, Prince's Street, Leicester Square., A. H. Nairne, Chandos Street; and C. Chapple, Pall-Mall, 36 pages. John Correy was listed as the author of "A Satirical View of London: Original Tales." He was also named as a member of the Philological Society of Manchester.

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 34.

71. "The Sincere Love of the Courageous and Compassionate Zoa, The Beautiful Indian." London, Printed and Sold At Bailey's Printing Office, 32 pages.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

74. "Jacquelina, of the Memoirs of a Beautiful Exile, with the Story of Elvira," By a Clergyman. London: Printed and Published by John Arliss, about 1809, 29 pages.

75. Penelope Aubin, "The Life, Adventures and Distresses of Charlotte Dupont, and her lover Belanger; who . . . underwent a greater variety of real misfortune than any couple that ever existed;" London, A. Lemoine, 1800. Originally printed in 1723, in 48 pages.

76. "The Convent Spectre, or Unfortunate Daughter," London, Printed for T. and R. Hughes, Ludgate Street, 1808, 36 pages.

77. T. Sabine, A Catalogue of Books, Printed and Sold by T. Sabine and Son, No. 81, Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, London; A Catalogue of New and Entertaining Histories, Novels, Etc. T. Sabine also sold bound books and plays which were advertised in the first catalogue. There are no books discussing fate and prophecy in the second catalogue. The letter writing manual is included: "The New London Letter-Writer". It included advice on the 'complete art of corresponding' for personal as well as trade or business letters, while "The complete British Valentine Writer" 'offered a complete set of Letters, Valentines, etc. which were proper for almost every trade in town or country, with their answers.' The Polite Lover's Best Instructor; contained examples of thoughtful letters for both sexes. "The complete Family Guide: included directions for the 'management of children,' 'recipes' for

health problems, and directions for cleaning. "The British Jewel or Housewife's best Companion," and "The Prudent Housewife" cookbooks with recipes, advice on the selection of food and ways to set an elegant table. The Boswell family included "The complete guide for female servants" in its collection of chapbooks. An appendix provides a complete list of the Sabine offerings.

78. "The History of Miss Sally Johnson, Or, The Unfortunate Magdalen," Printed and sold by T. Sabine, London, in 28 pages; p. 7.

79. Ibid., p. 18.

80. Ibid., Frontispiece.

81. The Unfortunate Happy Lady or Virtue and Innocence Rewarded: Being the History of Harriot Wilding," London, T. Sabine, 55 pages. Quote from page 23.

82. "The History of Miss Harriot Fairfax," Written by a Lady, Printed by T. Sabine and Son, London, 63 pages.

83. "Louisa Wharton. A Story, Founded on Facts; Written by Herself in a Series of Letters to a Friend. Wherein is Displayed Some particular Circumstances which happened during the bloody Contest in America." London, T. Sabine, 64 pages.

84. "The Young Beauty of Kent; or, The true history of Lucy Banks, daughter of a hop-planter, near Canterbury; and Colonel Stevens, of London. : Shewing the many vicissitudes in life this young couple went through. . ." Printed by T. Sabine at the London and Middlesex Printing Office, dated in the Harding-Bodleian Catalog at about 1780-1800. T. Sabine's signature included here at 1780.

85. "The True and entertaining history of Fanny Freeman, a wealthy farmer's daughter of the County of Norfolk. : Containing many wonderful and entertaining events never before published. . ." Printed by T. Sabine, London, dated by the Bodleian at about 1785-1804.

86. "The History of Maria Farrell; or, The beautiful foundling; containing a variety of wonderful adventures, scarcely (sic) equall'd in any other history." Printed by T. Sabine, estimated date: 1785-1804.

87. "The Forc'd marriage: or The miseries and afflicting calamities of the unhappy Miss Betsey Ward. . ." Printed by T. Sabine at the London and Middlesex Printing Office, estimated date: 1785-1804.

88. "The History of the beautiful Miss Fermia, a vintner's daughter of Savona. . ." Printed by T. Sabine, London, estimated date: 1785-1800.

89. "The History of Miss Mary Ann Edwards, or the Capricious Beauty," London, Printed by T. Sabine and Son, 56 pages.
90. "The History of Miss Betsey Warwick, The Female Rambler." London: Printed by Sabine and Son, No. 81, Shoe Lane, Fleet Street; Frontispiece, 60 pages.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
92. Colley, Britons, p. 240; Perry, "Colonizing the Breast," pp. 215, 216. Writing in Women of the Republic, Linda Kerber noted that the new American nation expected women to fulfill their duties as citizens through the role of 'republican mother.'
93. Ann Walker, "A Complete Guide For a Servant Maid; Or The Sure Means of Gaining Love and Esteem," London, Printed by T. Sabine, 60 pages.
94. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22, 6-7.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 39-41.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35, 36, 38.
97. J. Paul Hunter, Chapter 2, "The 'Guide' Tradition," The Reluctant Pilgrim, pp. 23-51.
98. Ian Maxted, The London Book Trades, 1775-1800, A Preliminary Checklist of Members, (Kent, England: Wm. Dawson and Sons, 1977). A note on the bottom of the page facing the title page for "The Deserted Daughter" indicated that H. Lemoine was the printer and type-setter.
99. Sarah Wilkinson, "The Marriage Promise, or, the History of Emma Woodley," London: For Ann Lemoine, White Rose Court and J. Roe, Houndsditch, 1803. Spelling of Ann Lemoine's name varies: Ann or Anne Lemoine.
100. Wilkinson, "Lisette of Savoy, or The Fair Maid of the Mountains," Ann Lemoine, 1804.
101. Wilkinson, "Lord Gowen, or The Forester's Daughter, An Historical Romance of the Twelfth Century, To which is added the Barons of Old," Ann Lemoine.
102. Wilkinson, "The Village Maid, or The Interesting Adventures of Montsirant," Ann Lemoine, 1804.

103. Wilkinson, "The Mountain Cottager, or The Deserted Bride," Ann Lemoine, 1805.

104. Charlotte Smith, "The Deserted Daughter." London: Printed for J. Roe and Ann Lemoine. A notation in the Harding Catalogue indicated the date of publication at about 1809-1812.

105. Ibid., p. 13. Chris Jones, Radical Sensibility, Literature and ideas in the 1790s, London and New York, Routledge, 1993, pp. 160-163.

106. Katherine M. Rogers, The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny, in Literature, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1966). Joseph F. Bartholomeo, "Subversion of Romance in The Old Manor House," Studies in English Literature, (1993), p. 647.

107. Rogers, op. cit.; Bartholomeo, "Subversion of Romance," pp. 645, 647.

108. quote from "The Deserted Daughter."

109. "The Misfortunes of Love; Or, The Adventures of Henry and Julia. To which is added, The Pathetic History of Leonora." London: Printed by T. Maiden, Sherburne-Lane, for Ann Lemoine, White Rose Court, Coleman-Street, and sold by T. Hurst, Paternoster-Row. 1800. Engraving on frontispiece indicates that it was also published for I. Roe, in the same year. (possibly is J. Roe) Another in a series called English Night Entertainments. Quote from p. 9.

110. Ibid., p. 29.

111. Ibid., p. 3.

112. Ibid., p. 28.

113. "The Death of Love," p. 47.

114. "Edmund and Albina; or, Gothic Times. A Romance." Printed as part of a series of English Night Entertainments, London: Printed by T. Maiden for Ann Lemoine, and sold by T. Hurst, 1801, 48 pages.

115. Margaret Anne Doody, "Deserts, Ruins and Troubled Waters: Female Dreams in Fiction and the Development of the Gothic Novel," Genre, 10 (Winter, 1977), pp. 529, 552, 553. Women writers first wrote gothic novels; among the first were Charlotte Smith, Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee, and Anne Radcliffe whose writings were most often associated with this appellation.

116. "Roxalana: Or, The Step-Mother: An Historic Tale," London: Printed by T. Maiden, for Ann Lemoine, White Rose Court, Coleman-Street; and J. Roe, No. 90, Houndsditch, Sold by all the Booksellers in The United Kingdom, 36 pages.

117. "Fanny Felton, Or the Interesting History of a Charity Girl," in *Tales Worth Telling; or Charming Curiosities, Consisting of Lives, Adventures, Romances, both Pleasant and Profitable.* J. Roe, 38 Chiswell Street and Ann Lemoine, White Rose Court, Coleman Street. The story of Fanny Felton and Louisa consisted of 36 pages.

118. "Louisa," p. 36. Publications details in the previous footnote.

119. "The History of Amelia or a Description of a Young Lady, Who from a great Fortune was reduced almost to Poverty by an Attorney, with an Account of her recovering it, for which he was hanged. The Second Edition, London, Printed for R. Snagg, No. 29, Pater-noster Row, 1774-1775. The frontispiece does not refer to Fielding as the author, but the first page made immediate mention to him with the comment: "This novel was one of the last productions of the late and ingenious Mr. Fielding, and is written on a pane very different from the rest of his compositions. In it the reader is entertained with a vast variety of occurrences, and upon each of them the author has made the most judicious reflections." Fielding defended Amelia in the Convent Garden Journal against those who considered it to be dull; in 84 pages.

120. Amelia, p. 3.

121. Patricia Mayer Spacks, "Female Changelessness; Or, What do Women Want," Studies in the Novel, 19 (1987): 273, 278-81.

122. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

123. Keith Thomas, Chapter 4, "Providence," Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp. 78-113.

124. Hunter, The Reluctant Pilgrim, pp 61, 75.

125. *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, "The 'Providence' Tradition," pp. 51-76.

126. Robert Mayer, History and the early English novel, Matters of fact from Bacon to Defoe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 115; Lennard Davis, Factual Fictions. The Origins of the English Novel, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 47-49, 67, 70.

127. Watt, The Rise of the Novel, pp. 21, 24.

128. Hunter, Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction, (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1990), p. 30.
129. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-38.
130. Hunter, "Loneliness of the Long-Distance Reader," Genre, 10 (Winter, 1977): 458, 459.
131. *Ibid.*, p. 455.
132. Before Novels, pp. 39-44.
133. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-52. The digression of Lady Vane in *Peregrine Pickle* is frequently cited.
134. *The History of Amelia*.
135. The entire and illustrative description of the story of Mary Jane Meadows can be found in the notes of Chapter 13; "Charlotte Dupont," *op. cit.*
136. Before Novels, pp. 53, 54.
137. "The History of Miss Harriot Fairfax," p. 2.' "The History of Mary Ann Edwards," p. 2; "The History of Miss Betsey Warwick, *The Female Rambler*."
138. "Fatal Credulity," pp. ii, 7,8.
139. "The History of Sweet Poll of Plymouth," pp. 3,4.
140. "Belinda, *The Rewards of Constancy*," Preface.
141. Before Novels, pp. 55, 56.

## CHAPTER TEN

### WITCHCRAFT AND CRIME

Earlier chapbooks celebrated the heroes and heroines of English legend and lore—Robin Hood, Tom Trum, Jack and the Giant Beanstalk, the Sleeping Beauty, etc—all from the Oral Tradition. But other themes in a long-existing popular literature included Godly little books, chapbooks detailing witchcraft accusations and those focused on crime. This discussion on crime and witchcraft in the long eighteenth century serves as an antidote to an otherwise heavy emphasis on conjugal relationships. Without it, the reader would be left with the sense that earlier chapbooks focused only on the war between the sexes.

Chapbooks focused on witchcraft were published in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The last significant trial for witchcraft, that of Jane Wenham, in 1712, signaled the end of a long run of reports, gossip, and community dissension associated with the activities of witches. Crime was a central concern eighteenth-century social observers. While most of these chapbooks indicate the vulnerabilities of the female sex; there are, however, a few that demonstrate quick-wit and survival. The larger categories included horrific crimes, often with women as perpetrators, the crimes of men that victimized women, the mockery of class pretensions, and the quick-witted survivors.

The consuming distrust and friction in conjugal relationships were a central focus. Women were subjected to deception and manipulation by significant others. Religious and civil authorities registered their concern with crime and their anxiety about friction within the community. These chapbooks were not intended as entertainment; they were a polemic—an account of the life to be avoided.

The recoverable chapbooks provide examples of varying genres and traditions. Murder pamphlets and criminal biographies stigmatized the convicted. The salacious material and the appropriate and often severe sentence was meant as a deterrent. Chapbooks that reported crimes served two goals: they reported

the facts while at the same moralizing about the human condition. Included here are examples of horrific crimes by women as well as those in which women were the victims of crimes by the men in their lives.

Three chapbooks in this survey blatantly mocked the pretensions of social superiors who arbitrarily accused their servants of criminal acts. These fictionalized accounts depicted the foolish or naive master or mistress as insulting and demeaning to servants. Either they were incapable of managing their own affairs or intent upon employing servants on terms that put servants at a complete disadvantage and made accusations against them tenable. In the first story, a misplaced piece of cutlery precipitated an immediate confrontation and accusation. In the second, the master's total humiliation of his servants even prompted his wife to refuse to be a party to his rude behavior. Servants and others who read these chapbooks would identify with the accused.

And finally there are the survivors. Hints of approval surreptitiously colored the accounts of women who took risks and/or cavalierly manipulated others for their own good. The quintessential example is Moll Flanders, Defoe's well-known unflappable creature. Fanny Davies, a later-eighteenth century figure who cross-dressed when it suited her purposes, operated in much the same way as the notorious Moll. One survivor, Sophia, engaged in activities that some could construe as criminal, yet community tradition sanctioned her acts of gleaning.

### Witchcraft

Since the subject of witchcraft continues to fascinate historians, sociologists and anthropologists and others, any claim of adequate coverage of the subject would be fatuous. A general outline of the history of witchcraft will allow some tentative assessment of chapbooks. Chapbooks from the 1600s to the early 1700s contained polemical statements about this phenomenon. Learned men tried to quiet the controversies, hysteria and suspicions aroused by the events and trials of



individuals for witchcraft. They used the power of their reputation to quell rumor and dissension and restore community harmony. Allegedly they engaged in objective examinations of the circumstances that motivated so much community discord. The broader question is whether this form of popular literature served the culture or society through accounts printed for distribution to the larger popular or plebeian culture?

Contemporary interest in witchcraft matches that of past centuries. Since the Middle Ages, tales of witches and their malevolent powers threatened to unravel the social fabric; the intervention of witches in human events was a part of everyday life. The discussion that follows attempts to preserve some sense of chronological order while establishing the role of women in English witchcraft.

Keith Thomas's magnum opus, Religion and the Decline of Magic, enhances our understanding of this contentious and perplexing subject. Both Thomas and Alan Macfarlane in Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England, focus on the relationships between those making the accusations, those who were incriminated, the conflicts between neighbors, and the economic nature of conflict. Some neighbors ended up with more and some with less.<sup>1</sup>

A few researchers see witchcraft as an organized pagan ritual or an 'old religion.' in Western Europe. Historiographical debate about the practice of witchcraft suggests that those who invoked stereotypes displayed their power. The stereotypical prosecution of vulnerable and older women resulted in the execution of about 1,000 witches in England from about 1542 to 1736. Most of these executions came during the period, 1563-1685 and were especially virulent in Essex and other eastern counties. Economic shifts produced disruptions and some disintegration of communal values in English life.<sup>2</sup>

In a 'good faith economy,' one in which rituals and a commitment to social relationships was expected and neighborliness was and is highly valued. Agonies and ecstasies were shared experiences. Small communities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could be intolerant and judgmental. Social harmony required

that nonconformity be stifled. Cases at court leet, quarter sessions, and in ecclesiastical courts provided a powerful method for social and community control. Evidence from Rye, a community bordering Kent and Sussex, suggests that solidarity against outsiders and stifling internal dissension were critically important in a community experiencing economic decline. Witchcraft was used in Rye to suppress conflict.<sup>3</sup>

Tension and gossip generated suspicions that evolved to the level of community consensus and then indictment. These proceedings affected the victim, the accused, as well as neighbors and friends. So many villages were the scenes of rumors, accusations and then indictments that the rumor mill may have worked overtime. Action against the alleged perpetrator provided relief to the village. Cunning folk of both sexes who were faith healers won community acceptance despite the disapproval of the Anglican Church. They were instrumental in guiding the accusations.

The network of events and ideology surrounding the outbreak of Civil War attenuated pre-existing beliefs about witchcraft. The growth of population strained available resources, but a good correlation between these circumstances and witchcraft cannot be verified. These does not appear to be a connection between the poverty of older women and the accusations. Enclosure made land scarcer and inheritance practices stimulated tension, and there does appear to be a correlation between partible inheritance and resulting accusations. But no over-riding economic explanation suffices.<sup>4</sup>

The witch who faced her peers was usually an old woman--a termagant or scold. Usually impoverished, she faced community ostracism and could be physically attacked. What was her revenge? Arson allowed her to retaliate against neighbors and lash out at the hostile world. Poor and despairing people can hardly be expected to comprehend rationally the hostile but impersonal social forces that brought them so much grief.<sup>5</sup>

One neighbor accused another. The stronger evidence suggests that quarrels about food, money, and gifts culminated in a rupture of a relationship. Accusations occurred in a society where people thought that actual physical harm could come from spells, charms, and bewitching. An accusation against one's neighbor allowed an individual to discount that neighbor's difficulties and ignore community norms that had long required mutuality and reciprocity. Guilt was reversed. Economic and social change cannot be entirely eliminated in a search for causes. The involvement of more prosperous villagers with their less fortunate and older neighbors lessened. Those institutions that served the poor, the sick, and elderly had increasingly found support wanting.

Accusations against women were a constant of the culture. Authorities could cite Biblical evidence of women's inferiority. Legal authorities and the clergy had their own vested interests in contributing to a climate of misogyny. In addition, villagers feared powerful women who subverted the natural order. Beyond accusations designed to put troublesome women in their place, the powers attributed to those women could be tied to kinship and matrilineal descent. Blood was thicker than water. Some women lived in fear that the powers of their female relatives would be visited upon them. In addition, a witch's special powers with animals was an integral part of traditional perceptions and preoccupations about witchcraft.<sup>6</sup>

The preoccupation of the elite with witchcraft meant that popular beliefs and the interests of ministers and lawyers were co-mingled by the seventeenth century.. The propaganda of divines and writers of ballads and broadsides reinforced the notion of the satanic contract. Satan and his agent, the witch, were frequent features at court presentations, the theater of the gallows, and at public displays of exorcism and diabolical possessions. Charges against white or beneficent witchcraft was anathema. People knew their good witches as healers, blessers, and cunningfolk. Some were persuaded that their powers were satanic, but others were

unconvinced. Even members of the elite remained unaffected by the charges against cunningfolk and used them.<sup>7</sup>

A simultaneous 'flourishing and declining' connection between inversion and demonic behavior existed. Court entertainments liberally borrowed from Sabbath ritual. Festive occasions such as urban carnivals, folk rites, and entertainments at court used ritual inversion in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. The term 'misrule' has often described these practices. Included were the ideas of folly versus wisdom, the inversion of sex roles, and the exchange of the sacred and the profane.<sup>8</sup>

Historians and anthropologists who study misrule see certain benefits to the community from its mockery of established social practices and fun openly poked at authorities. It provided an outlet for long-held grudges and freedom to explore forbidden social relationships. Societies were 'institutions modeled on the divine paradigm, harmonizing contrarities of status, interest, and fortune by patriarchal and princely power.' Inversion/disorder is thus a political act. Court spectacle and masquerades displayed loaded meanings. Staged scenes of misrule and disorder usually culminated with homage to royalty.<sup>9</sup>

To understand demonological literature, individual demonic acts had to be seen as an 'actual or symbolic inversion of a traditional form of life.' Ritual inversion signified the work of the Devil as opposed to the good. The Devil tyrannically attacked well-governed societies; an attack by women witches on the family inverted the patriarchal order. Serious dislocations disturbed the social peace of Tudor and Stuart England--inflation, warfare, and sectarian violence following the Protestant Reformation.<sup>10</sup> In such instability, there is a need to find scapegoats. It is no accident that Arthur Miller, well-versed in the antics of the McCarthy period of American history, wrote a play in the 1950s about Salem witchcraft.

Some feminists and/or women historians see witchcraft as principally gender-related. Christina Lerner's work on Scotland emphasized the 'sex-related' but not 'sex-specific' element. The legal system and ideology determined the direction of

witch-hunts. Despite her claim that gender was not the critical factor, her evidence reinforces the relationship between witch-hunting and women-hunting. Anne Llewellyn Barstow observed that male historians denied the validity of misogyny and patriarchy as valid categories for historical analysis.<sup>11</sup>

The studies reviewed here range from a theory that witchcraft is a residual activity based on old pagan religion to conflicts among women and dissension between neighbors. A pervasive operating system of demonology in the seventeenth century is not shocking to the sanguine twentieth-century observer, since discussion of the work of the Evil, Devil or Satan enjoy a resurgence. Most studies acknowledge that witches were older, unattractive, and vulnerable women. Some cite the crass manipulation by the elite--both judicial and divine--for their own misogynistic purposes. Some also acknowledge the polarization of land holding and economic resources, the failure of the 'good faith economy,' and the decline of 'good neighborhood.'

The length of these accounts allowed those in authority to lay out their cases. The authors of these narratives served their cause by substantiating accounts of errant and devious behavior. No chapbook speaks with the voice of the accused.

### Chapbooks on Witchcraft

A 1682 account began with a disclaimer by an individual who 'found it a very remarkable thing and fit to be published.' The facts in this 'perfect narrative' could not be discounted. The intelligence and integrity of the judge and learned men could not be disputed. Their efforts rivaled those of 'any age, either before or since could parallel.' These were conscious attempts to instill social peace with a careful treatise covering the evidence. Such obvious disclaimers about the impartiality of the law protested much and suggest that all were not so easily persuaded.<sup>12</sup>

Anti-Catholic sentiment propelled some witchcraft accusations. Suffering strange distempers, Jesuits influenced the Boy of Bilson. Possibly under the

influence of a form of exorcism, he accused Susannah Fowles, an older woman. Despite many misgivings that his accusations were 'counterfeit,' Roman Catholics were suspected of encouraging Susannah's wayward ways. One allegedly cajoled her into a 'pretended apparition,' while another, Mary Freeman, encouraged her to think devious thoughts.<sup>13</sup>

In many meetings, dissenting ministers offered prayers for her recovery. But despite threats, she stood her ground. Her 'policy was not quite exhausted.' She later was brought to London and sent to Bridewell because she was a 'notorious imposter.' Dissenting ministers watched her every move, and her confession was signed by eleven divines. This situation was 'imposed upon the sagacity of a good many very learned and judicious men.' who were exasperated by the time and effort required.

Did the contenders and those who eventually judged Susannah Fowles interpret her melancholy and personal difficulties in order to justify or rationalize their religious position and/or beliefs? Despite being threatened with a 'red hot iron,' she stood her ground. She wore a charm about her neck with a Catholic prayer. Was this an innocent act or did she realize that choosing sides would cause unintended consequences?

The 'diabolical practices' of about twenty people and their subsequent 'tryals,' examinations, and executions for witchcraft were reported in a 1697 chapbook. This motley crew involved young and old and men and women. The events published in this London chapbook took place in Renfrew, Scotland in 1697. Eleven commissioners reviewed the assembled evidence.<sup>14</sup>

The Devil in the form of a Black man repeatedly appeared before several of the accused at meetings where aberrant behavior clearly took place. Children were tormented. One woman observed the 'putting down of a child,' while another child was strangled with a cord. Some had a 'merry fit' and danced. After another meeting, some flew off.

The sequel detailing the suffering of Mrs. Christian Shaw offered 'reflexions upon witchcraft in general.'--a phenomenon of 'the nations and the ages.'<sup>15</sup> Although natural causes and ignorance were clearly present, the design of events and occasions revealed the hand of Providence. The 'wisest and best of all men in all ages and nations' offered ample testimony to the work of the omnipotent Devil. The temptress, Jezebel, the work of Popish doctors, the work of the Devil upon monks and nuns, and night rituals were mentioned in the introduction. The charges alleged that the maid of Mrs. Christian Shaw stold milk from their family--not an unusual allegation. At the trial female relatives were called--her mother, grandmother, and others. Male members of the family were not mentioned. Most of those on trial were middle aged or older, but not all were women. One defendant, Tom Lindsay, was only ten years old. Margaret Lang, 'a great imposter,' and a 'masterpiece of the Devil' was a midwife.' Several of the defendants were 'sharp' and 'sagacious,' and their answers to questions put before them were 'subtle and cautious.'

The account asserted the following acts: first, testimony had the ring of truth and could not have been falsified; second, the witnesses' testimony must be accepted as credible; third, those who confessed were employed by the Devil so their statements under oath could not be considered credible. Fourth, the ignorant accused who confessed had been enlightened before they fell away. These statements attempted to assuage public opinion and misgivings about the path of justice. By laying out the case and then affirming that the confessed were in the service of the Devil, the authors tried to assure readers that the justice prevailed. The accused stood their ground, since they did not think that they had committed a crime. Comments about their behavior illustrates as much about the mindset of their accusers as it does about their supposed behavior:

When they speak of any concern, their eyes stood squint and fixed as if they were turning their ears and attending to some invisible dictator.

The author's conclusion sheds some light on the thinking of those in authority:

Upon the whole I do believe that there is scarcely a more remarkable Providence of this nature to be found in any true history nor was there more exact caution in any inquiry of this kind.

There were no hangings for the crime of witchcraft after 1684, but the case of Jane Wenham in 1712 aroused much attention. Francis Bragge insisted that 'truth was strictly pursued.' The case against Wenham illustrated social complexities. Church authorities as well as the 'cynics of the legal establishment' trumpeted their own values and goals. After 1563, the judicial elite had new legal devices 'in the armoury against witchcraft.' Sermons and accounts of confessions existed alongside ballads, chapbooks, and broadsides. The confessions of those who were hanged and theatrical accounts reinforced existing beliefs. Certain academics discounted the occurrence of witchcraft, but some tried to wed an intellectual concept to what was popularly justified.<sup>16</sup>

Jane Wenham was a crusty and independent old woman. After Matthew Gilston and Ann Thorn encountered her, they both went on strange errands. Ann Thorn accused Wenham of ruining her. Although admitting that she had been a witch for sixteen years, Wenham maintained her innocence and refused to confess, although she acknowledged that she had a pact with the Devil. The writer refused to 'foul the paper' with accounts of her depraved character, but then added that she was both a thief and a whore. Her own relatives refused to support her.

Mother Jane Wenham believed that she experienced ill-will because she frequented dissenting circles. When Wenham was caught stealing turnips from a field, she said that she had not eaten that day. Her behavior, however, did not inspire Christian charity. The attached case of Florence Newton of County Cork, Ireland, in 1661, provided a basis for comparison. Both women insisted that they wanted amiable relations with the women that they were accused of hurting. Both women named neighbors as 'confederates,' and both could not be bled easily.

Francis Bragge's experience with witchcraft justified his interpretation of events. He acknowledged the importance of evidence, but insisted on the credibility



of testimony from the 'senses.' Bragge disposed of objections made in Wenham's case. For some good reason, the 'Providence of God' allowed women to continue hurtful behavior. There was always an 'unequal distribution of good and evil' in the world. Disposing of the possibility that the Devil would become a 'silly old woman,' Bragge noted that witches may be the 'recreation' of some old deceased men. Despite the power of the Gospel, witches and sorcerers existed and were mentioned in Scripture. By Objection #6, Bragge noted that salvation and the miracles of Jesus 'have all the marks of the God of mercy whereas those of witches and sorcerers are of a diabolical menace.'

The confession of Wenham was not freely given or sufficient to convict her, although Bragge considered her confession plus the suspicions of others to be enough. '(v)iolent presumptions' worked against her. She was conflicted in a wrathful court of public opinion.

The village of Walkern, in Hertfordshire, a shire with divided loyalties during the Civil War, still harbored strong dissenting sentiment, strong support for the Anglican Church as well as changing economic activity, and a less than charitable attitude toward the poor. Close to Essex, the growth of population and an understandable preoccupation with shrinking resources compounded the situation. Macfarlane's study of Essex suggested that traditional forms of charity declined within communities effected by witchcraft. This was the most singular fact that preceded accusations.<sup>17</sup> The impoverished ragged element of the community threatened others because they were a visible reminder of the older communal ethic that they now preferred to ignore. Mindful of the old ethic, the poor could be demanding. But the older notion of reciprocity frequently found to be lacking.

These tediously-detailed accounts were intended to reach a wider audience, quell the skeptics and quiet the many voices that disputed both the accusations and the evidence. Given the careful elaboration of evidence, it seems unlikely that a crude marketing strategy aimed at a wider audience of plebeian readers. Since they were polemics interlaced with the author's opinion, it seems more likely that

they were designed to circulate replies to critics and comment upon the charges and the phenomenon of witchcraft. Two other Dicey chapbooks were popular stories, borrowed from the legend and lore of England. Indeed, they were marketed to reach the widest possible audience. The Dicey strategy of reaching all audiences has been noted elsewhere in this study.

If Cheshire had its mad prophet in Richard Nixon, then Lancashire was famous for its witches. The title of this amusing story included such words 'Enchantments, Spells, Revels, Merry Pranks, Railing of Storms and Tempests, Riding on Winds, etc. and the Entertainments and Frolics which happened amongst them.' These witches enjoyed their effects on others.<sup>18</sup>

An old woman's daughter became a witch to get her revenge on her sweetheart. Another witch rescued a man going to prison causing his bailiffs to dance. Still another witch in love with a gentleman emerged as a hare and haunted him. Another enchanted thieves and recovered their stolen money. The old witch who took it returned it to the poor people who had lost it. Several others who encountered thieves put them on the top of trees and caused thunderstorms to bedevil them. The Lancashire Witches feasted, had general meetings, and tree meetings in the woods where they danced freely.

When the daughter of one determined witch, Margery, was rejected by Roger Clodpate in favor of Dorothy, a dairymaid, she created a storm. As Roger and Dorothy were ready to consummate their marriage, Dorothy blew in before them, became a black mare and threw them into the mud. Their hasty departure amused many people.

Cicely, the other daughter, loved a gentleman's son. First she made herself into a mare to give him some sport. She then impersonated his bride after she was sure that his intended wife was lost in the woods. She enjoyed the bridegroom but later returned the bride to him, knowing that the spell was lost. This was a world turned upside down. Although playful and mischievous, witches had unusual power to right wrongs. In their own personal situations, they tried to wreck havoc on those

who did them wrong. The witches enjoyed flying, swimming, and dancing, and getting their revenge. The concluding admonition against witches observed that the Lancashire crew could raise storms and tempests, but the 'best way to get away from their power is to believe in God.' This account 'comically' presented the activities of those 'possessed with evil and familiar spirits.' But these were still poor and ignorant people who died of 'distempers somewhat strange to the unskillful.'

Another popular account, 'The Witch of the Woodlands,' described a 'wanton Tom' from the weald of Kent, known as Robin the Cobbler who got into trouble with women.<sup>19</sup> Someone suggested that he steal away, so he found entertainment on the road. When he came to the house of an old woman, she offered him her bed. Seeing that she was beer-eyed, crooked in the neck, wry-mouthed, and bow-legged, he professed to being a bachelor who had never slept with a woman. She brought three witches to entertained him. The old woman talked freely about what they might do to a man who took the money of a woman he promised to marry. They devoured two whores who were headed to a house of debauchery, transformed Robin, and left him in a pitiful state. They had demonstrated to him what they were capable of doing and subjected him to their spells. Their powers extended to 'cursors, swearers, thieves, dissemblers, hypocrites, whores, bawds. etc.' He left the woods, wandered about, and eventually met up with an old beggar who had enough money to help him. The beggar promised him his money when he died. Robin took what money the beggar could spare, went back to his village, and provided for his children. He even gave the wenches he encountered in the woods ten pounds.

#### Concluding comments

Although these chapbooks devolved from a different tradition than later chapbooks reporting crimes, they possess certain common elements. Clearly, those who outlined their case against witches did so to quell community dissent. Later chapbooks that detailed horrific crimes-- usually by men against women

likewise attempted to keep the social hierarchy visibly intact. Those that focused on crimes by women did so in order to admonish other women to walk the straight and narrow path. Witches who defied social mores and disturbed the social peace posed a threat that authorities could not allow to go unchecked. Underlying socio-economic tension can be detected in the cases of witchcraft, and many historians have focused on these social fissures. But the inspiration for these hastily-disseminated accounts was social ideology and the maintenance of order. The message remained much the same.

### Crime

Sources on the eighteenth-century reading material deal with crime in a generic sense based on male behavior. The presence of the law hung heavily over villages, families, and individuals--both male and female. Hence we must rely on evidence about law and order in the eighteenth century in order to assess chapbooks focused on criminal events.

Our images of the eighteenth century include jostling and voracious crowds of free-born Englishmen. The raucous and spirited behavior of individuals accustomed to their own definition of freedom can scarcely be recaptured. Free-born people saw the law as theirs and used it to vindicate their own notion of justice and to gain its protection. The gentry saw common people as 'very rough and savage in their Dispositions, being of leveling Principles, and refractory to Government, insolent, and tumultuous.' The word 'crime' conjures up perceptions of behavior that flaunted the law or violated a sense of right. Some plebeians who skirted the law assumed that long-established customs and customary law supported their defiance of newly written statutes buttressed by common law. E. J. Hobsbawm coined the term 'social crime,' but Innes and Styles see this concept as little more than a sense that in the eighteenth century, much of the population did not agree that some legally-defined criminal behavior were indeed criminal.<sup>20</sup>

Customary rights included gleaning. Gleaning of the fields by women and their families supplemented the daily supply of food. Gleaning and food riots illustrate Thompson's 'moral economy' and the common perception of entitlement. A famine involves more than the absence of grain and grain stores, it also denotes a breakdown in entitlement. Some people starve while others do not. Supply is never an abstracted decision of market forces; it is subject to human decisions. The denial or curtailment of this practice in the eighteenth century has been the subject of historical debate. The eulogy of J. L. and Barbara Hammond on the loss of village life and labor undervalued the resilience of the 'obnoxious and saucy' gleaners. The 'moral economy' rested upon the Tudor notion of provision that required a sense of obligation and duty in times of dearth. Customary law encouraged the gleaners and discouraged farmers from kicking these motley crews off their land, but enclosure decrees curtailed use rights, including gleaning. However, the resistance of gleaners who ran into fields was often vindicated by judges and juries.<sup>21</sup> The paternalist tone of society that lingered into the eighteenth century lent legitimacy to crowd behavior, but market forces increasingly interfered. Crowds should be remembered for their restraint, the consensus among them, and purposeful organization. Common or laboring people did not simply lash out at authority; they exhibited a keen sense of justice. In times of emergency especially, people employed the old model of community. Increasingly in the seventeenth century, rates set by local magistrates did not vindicate popular expectations of a market regulated for consumers.<sup>22</sup>

Since early modern times, men, and more notably misogynists, saw women as lustful and entertaining a propensity to riot. Some historians have assumed that women played prominent roles in food riots, but others sense that their conspicuous involvement gave them historical visibility. The 'crowd' was particularly effective in small and medium-sized communities. Women and men as partners in the household rioted together. The Industrial Revolution separated home from the

workplace, but women remained productive partners in the struggle to survive. Women had long enjoyed power in stable communities, but those smaller networks became less effective. More often trade unions and reform organizations defended the family.<sup>23</sup>

The delicate balancing act struggled to convince people of the lower orders that justice somewhere somehow prevailed--that 'Augustan' courts symbolized civilization. The authority of the courts accrued from their image as well as their verdicts. The legal system had to be above mere class dispositions. Its decorum through ritual and panoply made the courts and the law appear to be a neutral arbiter of society's dictates.<sup>24</sup>

The English system of justice rested on the foundation of rural society--small villages, farming communities, and close personal ties. People knew each other--sometimes too well. Courts focused on the person in the docket and the threat posed by that individual. They issued judgments based on what was known of a criminal's behavior. Such a system could not be easily adjusted to an increasingly impersonal urban and commercial society. In London particularly, crimes against property expanded suddenly and dramatically about 1750. People throughout England found the extent of crime and criminal behavior alarming, and concern about crime dominated public debate during the last third of the eighteenth.<sup>25</sup> Crime perplexed authorities and citizens, but especially in the 1720s and about 1750, and in the closing years of the century. Oliver Goldsmith observed:

*'penal laws which are in the hands of the rich are laid upon the poor. . .and as if our possessions were become dearer in proportion as they increased, as if the more enormous our wealth, the more extensive our fears, our possessions are paled up with more edicts every day, and hung around with gibbets to scare every invader.'*<sup>26</sup>

As a magistrate, novelist, and 'perhaps our best known criminologist,' Henry Fielding's concern with the downtrodden prompted his belief that the Poor Law

contributed to an increase in the number of robbers. The conditions prompting the growth of a mobile proletariat stemmed from bad management of the poor. Lawlessness seemed popular. Respect for the law did not run deep in much of eighteenth-century London. The growth of consumer goods and services coupled with the emerging values of individualism and self-interest were the underlying causes of crime.<sup>27</sup>

Plebeian vitality, independence and certain occupations were notoriously associated with defiance of the law. Locales varied, but there were areas where authority could not overpower lawless elements. In the struggle for power between social groups, the ruling class easily dominated their inferiors, although the ruling class 'entered the eighteenth century with their traditional ideological arsenal in considerable disarray.' Their concessions and regrouping allowed plebeians to use their own weapons. Their hegemony defined the limits; behavior beyond certain boundaries would inspire action by the ruling class. As petty jurors or as prosecutors, they displayed their independence. Local authorities had considerable discretion in their enforcement of the poor law. The gentry who wished to enforce the game law often had to resort to other methods or provisions.<sup>28</sup>

Life was secondary to considerations of property and power. If crimes multiplied, then statutes drafted by an equally-resolute ruling class did as well. "In a mood of unrivaled assurance and complacency, Parliament over the century created one of the bloodiest criminal codes in Europe." If clearly insubordinate people took for themselves, they met the determined resistance of a 'property-conscious oligarchy.' "The rulers of eighteenth century England cherished the death sentence." Between 1688 and 1820--the long eighteenth century, the number of offenses that carried the death penalty went from 50 to 200. Yet despite the increase in the number of capital offenses and despite a real increase in the number of convictions, the use of the death penalty for property crimes stabilized after 1750. Statistical averages do mask substance. For London, there were fewer executions, but about the same number in the home counties.<sup>29</sup>

Two ideas of justice warred against each other. Considerable ambiguity existed between the old medieval concept that sanctioned natural rights given even to the poorest and the vindication of private property sanctioned by the Settlement of 1688. Officers of the law faced the challenge of resolving tenacious customary rights with the concept of property. Judges in their wisdom wrestled with difficult questions when reconciling ideological abstractions in the resolution of cases, claims, and people. The occasional victory by the poorer or midling person allowed the champions of English justice to claim that the law was fair. For the defenders of the English system, the law provided a strong buttress of the conservative cause in the wake of the French Revolution.<sup>30</sup>

As the older Christian notion of natural rights came in conflict with laws that protected property, the ruling class occasionally showed a penchant for leniency. For patronage had long bound the dependent villagers and the lord of the manor together. But coercion and the brutal code lurked just beyond the mask of gentility and deference. Justice was not always easily disposed of in cases involving the poor. Further, those with power and privilege relentlessly championed English justice after the French Revolution. After all, a poor man could be heard. Pardons were selectively applied, but the death penalty could be invoked. Discretion and mercy allowed the ruling class to show their better selves and manipulate the social peace.<sup>31</sup>

V. A. C. Gattrell in The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868 explores the fascination of the English public with the 'bizarre' and 'violent' and the throes of death. Digging into the psyche of those ordinary people who witnessed much crime and violence, Gattrell senses that bravado masked the trauma, deep feelings and fears of those who were present--some of whom were relatives of those about to be executed. Ordinary people went to the gallows. They did not perform feats of legend. They were guilty of petty crimes--thieves, forgers, and the ordinary and obscure among the population. Observers of the scaffold



drama brought with them the sum total of their experiences and perceptions of the law.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the primacy of print culture by the late eighteenth century, "oral tradition continued to be symbiotically entwined with literacy rather than defeated by it." Many flash ballads and gutter songs have vanished, but we have street ballads and chapbooks with messages about crime and the ultimate penalty--the gallows. After 1740, popularity of Hogarth's depiction of the gallows emblem across class lines suggests the ubiquity of interest in criminal acts.<sup>33</sup>

The Ordinary of Newgate and others who circulated last dying confessions capitalized on the obsession with crime. Popular newspapers in the eighteenth century sold because they featured accounts of criminal behavior or scandalous news. But as popular literature, chapbooks, pamphlets and criminal biographies provided the ruling class and authorities with a neat way to enforce their power and maintain social control.<sup>34</sup>

Newly-arrived urban residents presented a significant market for chapbook printers and hawkers. Facing an uncertain future with none of the comforts and detractions of accustomed surroundings, the urban resident superficially exuded self-confidence that masked deeper anxiety. Tragic lives and violent situations permeated everyday life. Ordinary people had relatives, friends, or acquaintances who fell in with the wrong crowd or took the wrong turn of the road. Such familiar events had to be presented in a form that the street person could assimilate. A simplified form, some resolution or end to the story, and detail, 'little facts,' imparted 'the extremes of emotion and fortune.'<sup>35</sup>

Using the model of the murder pamphlet, chapbook printers and ballad singers capitalized on violence and tragedy. Hence sensational stories, the tale of lives gone wrong, of women who have defied the rules, capitalized on an existing current in English life.

Critics of popular culture who detested libertine and bawdy behavior sought retrospective refuge in the Golden Age of the Puritan Commonwealth that legislated morality. In the 1690s, an unofficial moral police that used informers, the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, tried to reform behavior by prosecuting those they considered guilty. Evangelical groups took up the cause at the end of the eighteenth century. The Cheap Repository Tracts, printed from 1795 to 1798, represented the zeal of Hannah More and her circle of Evangelical Christians to reform human behavior.<sup>36</sup>

About 1750, Henry and James Fielding advocated censorship of the ribald theater, the regulation of alcohol and public events, and licenses for brothels and for gaming. The Fieldings and their allies, including Patrick Colquhoun, promoted a parliamentary debate on laws to punish adultery. The legislation barely failed in 1711, 1779, and 1800. Legislation in 1752 set up the control of brothels but could not check their extremes.<sup>37</sup>

Prostitution has been called the 'world's oldest profession.' Most practice of this 'profession' stems from the need of women to support themselves and their children. The stark poverty and deprivation of eighteenth-century England drove women to this 'work.' Samuel Johnson took up the cause of fallen women. He also wanted laws against fornication, but rejected the contention that such laws would require supervision and unnecessary scrutiny of both respectable and expendable women. He rejected Bernard Mandeville's argument that prostitution resulted from human needs and that bordellos should be licensed. Mandeville argued in 1724 that the regulations in Amsterdam offered better protections. Women who worked out of houses of ill-repute--whether they were called 'academies,' 'nunneries,' or 'nanny houses,'--gained some protection, whereas those out on the streets had to be quick-witted. The conditions of these women were synonymous with the plight of the urban poor and the disintegration of extremely-impooverished families.<sup>38</sup>

The numbers were staggering. One of three or one of four women was a prostitute. Other critics and observers worried that prostitution led to other crimes, usually robbery of the man on the premises.<sup>39</sup> We categorize women as vulnerable and potential victims, and any sober and fair reading of history confirms this

generalization. But there were women who were more active than passive. Some attempted to control their own lives and determine their destiny.

Women were responsible for fewer crimes. We continue to entertain stereotypical assumptions about female criminals, picturing them as the reluctant companions of men, never out on their own, and lacking the nerve and boldness associated with criminal behavior. Property-related and petty crimes involving women are frequently not traceable in historical documents, but women were more involved in property-related crimes than in violent crimes against persons. Urban life was not as anonymous as we would like to believe, and even in cities like London, community surveillance operated. Both sexes committed more crime in urban areas than in the countryside. Wives in rural areas moved in a restricted network. Work and social outlets--including the alehouse--allowed men to be out and about. Such restrictive socialization was designed to keep young women from becoming pregnant.<sup>40</sup>

When we position women within the neighborhood and village, we can explore their daily networks and the variety of their activities. Formal charges in indictments in Surrey and Sussex between 1663 and 1802 reveal that most women who killed another person did so directly, without recourse to deceptive behavior. They usually killed someone close to them and were seldom involved in ale-house brawls that culminated in charges of murder or manslaughter. Fewer women were highway robbers. Often they were decoys for groups of men or served as their accomplices. Women could be easily involved in the fencing of stolen goods. Their involvement in pickpocketing and shoplifting was underreported. Theft by domestic servants or women laundresses was common. A statute of 1706 made theft by

domestic servants the first crime that was punishable by death, although it was very difficult to prevent this form of household theft. Accused servants, however, constantly claimed the 'benefit of clergy' and thereby escaped hanging. The statute was clarified in 1713.<sup>41</sup>

Evidence from Cheshire city and county courts for the early modern period tells us that women burglars preferred to work with other women or by themselves. Fewer worked with men than we would suppose. Since women discussed theft by other women easily, they must not have seen this activity as unusual. The theft of household goods by women was done 'piecemeal,' but they took what they wanted or needed. Pawnbrokers and those who fenced stolen goods often passed on those goods to other women. Some who answered in court claimed that the property was theirs or that they had a right to it. Some saw themselves as operating in a network of women.<sup>42</sup>

It would be a mistake, however, to assume, that, when aroused, women were not capable of ferocious and passionate crimes. The typical female murderer killed her husband or lover. When women's jealous, sexual, or familial feelings were excited, their 'homicidal instincts. . . could be tigerish in their ferocity.' Although the law subjected them to the same standards in indictments, courts saw women as less harmful to the community. Spinsters or single women appear in every crime column. Wives were usually prosecuted for murder, larceny, and burglary. Widows who were infrequently in court usually stood accused of grand larceny. There were, however, two crimes for which the punishment was harsh and brutal: the murder of a husband or counterfeiting coin. Since both crimes counted as treason, women could be burned alive. Blackstone's legal commentary made it clear that this was the lesser of the punishments for women in these unusual but heinous circumstances. After all, the women could be hung, drawn, or quartered, as men accused of treason were. Men who murdered their wives might be severely punished, but their act of violence was not treasonous. A woman's crime of passion against her husband was treason because she violated family and community

mores. Her legal status was irrevocably harnessed to family and community. Women who sought court action against a man who raped them were subject to interrogation of their person and character. Between 1749 and 1771, only two executions out of 678 in London and Middlesex involved rape. The law tended toward a policy of noninterference in sexual matters, pleading the privacy of such situations; a hostile climate or attitude toward women persisted. Women who fought off their accusers and remained chaste were above suspicion and maintained their virtue. Ordinary women, knowledgeable in the workings of the legal system were probably reluctant to bring charges, given the tendency of the courts to blame the victim. Rape was probably vastly underreported.<sup>43</sup>

These chapbooks focused on women as perpetrators of criminal acts and on women as victims. The double standard refers to the acceptance of different expectations for sexual behavior. A previous chapter detailed the history of the double standard and its pervasiveness in law and culture. But there were other double binds that penalized women. The law was not humanistically-oriented, hence one could argue that both men and women suffered under its dictates. But the double bind to which it subjected women was repressive. Any initiative by a woman, whether by the political writings or assertiveness within marriage, could be immediately squelched. A married woman was mere chattel or an attachment to her husband's property. Paternalistic provisions of the law reinforced female vulnerability and their disenfranchised status before the law. Their rights would be protected in order to maintain the family lineage. A woman, especially those who brought property to a marriage, could be indispensable to the security of her husband's family, but their contribution did not, however, ensure her any protection or affection.<sup>44</sup>

Domestic violence in early modern England was severely under-reported. Tolerance of violence within the family, including that inflicted on children, puts the topic off-limits. But murder was not acceptable. The existence of a cold body-- makes the concealing of such a crime difficult. In a time when life was lived through

villages and neighborhoods, the disappearance of a family member would be noticed.<sup>45</sup> Domestic homicide reported for in Essex from 1560-1709 was less significant statistically than figures for the modern period. Findings for homicide from the medieval period to the seventeenth century tell us that few women killed persons outside of the family circle, but they represented just half of those accused of murdering another member of the family, servants, or apprentices. Women were the likely victims of domestic homicide and that the rate for this crime remained stable from 1560-1709.<sup>46</sup>

Although reports of domestic murder in popular literature could have been sensationalized, authors expressly intended to dispel rumors or exaggerations. Although statistics tell us that family murder often involved the death of children, ballad and murder pamphlets focused on the murder of spouses--husband or wife. This finding complements studies that emphasize that marital discord--a popular theme in ballads. The usual reason for marital murder was infidelity, not money or sexual compatibility. Another motive was an uninterrupted deterioration of the marriage, in which one or both of the partners felt increasingly trapped.<sup>47</sup>

A 'social contract' allegedly offered individual rights and legal protection, but enforcement of its provisions was a different story. The 'struggle for the breeches' depicted in ballads seemed plebeian to Blackstone and other contemporaries who believed that polite society was moving away from violence. The law limited a husband's violence a husband, but enforcement of the law and change within the family were not easily accomplished.<sup>48</sup>

Late eighteenth-century London plebeian females whose work and daily lives made them independent believed that the law would protect them, and they were more likely to come to court than women from rural areas. Yet, like their modern sisters, many worked at a trade with their husband and feared a loss of income if their partner deserted them and their family. Plebeian women took men who were not related to them to court more often than they did their husbands. Those women who finally charged their husbands did so only after being victimized in excessive

beatings. Family life among the lower orders was not lacking in emotion or intensity.<sup>49</sup>

Statistics about infanticide may always be underreported, but if proven, infanticide meant a hanging. Conclusions about infanticide remain tentative because our only reports come from provincial newspapers or court records. The 1624 statute governing infanticide made the accused 'guilty until proven innocent.' Courts did adopt more lenient attitudes after 1720. Proximity in close quarters or work meant sexual encounters. Some young women had attention forced upon them by sexually-aroused young men. The obvious result: unwanted pregnancies. Mothers who killed their offspring were usually not married or were widows, often domestic servants from farming or artisan families. Servants and prostitutes were expected to be single and without children. Often they could not afford to raise a child, and if they did, neglect was rampant. One observer noted that drowning was preferable to years of neglect. Like the circumstances of domestic homicide, the abandonment of the child was not easy. Women often had reputations and secure jobs that they did not wish to jeopardize. Their private anguish is disquieting—even at this distance from their misery. Few of them could have found a way to relieve their guilt and assuage their pain.<sup>50</sup> Women like Moll Flanders would have understood how and why one could let a negligent nurse care for one's child.

### Murder Pamphlets and Criminal Biographies

The popular literature on crime reminded readers, many of whom were partially literate, of the outer limits, beyond which actions and behavior would not be tolerated. England had the largest corpus of criminal biography in the eighteenth century.<sup>51</sup> Although sensational, criminal biographies served society's broader interests. The pageant of public executions, the public arrest of those accused, and public trials made the ordinary person well aware of prescribed boundaries. They were a 'social resource:'

Like chickens come home to roost, they are close at hand. Hauled in carts to the gallows, or even just marched in chains to the docks for transportation, criminals in eighteenth-century England were made to play the central role in rituals of sacrifice and renewal.<sup>52</sup>

Foucault claimed that the power of the French state came down upon the criminal through the display of remains after death, the use of torture, and public executions. By this time torture was unusual in England and punishment for crime was less extreme than in France. But English popular literature 'use(d)' crime and criminals in a rather distinct and perhaps innovative way:

Their necks safely wrung, processed and packaged in ways that declared them fit for public consumption, criminals lived their lives over in readers' imaginations, committed their crimes again and again.<sup>53</sup>

As a widely-read staple of English popular culture in the mid-seventeenth century, the criminal biography fed a growing urge for news and allowed ordinary people to live vicariously when they read about criminals who escaped social control. Broadsides and chapbooks in the later sixteenth century publicized executions and murders. They first appeared as broadsides with only minimal details, a skeletal view of the crime and criminal, and the Ordinary's Accounts but grew to a length of fifty pages and were printed in volumes.<sup>54</sup>

There were two types of criminal biography: spiritual biography and biography that accentuated the unlikely or marvelous event. It traced its origin to the picaresque novel.<sup>54</sup> English accounts, in contrast to those of France, focused almost entirely on the criminal, not the victim. The leading actor in the execution drama was the dying person who often spoke before his death. The New England criminal biography emphasized the faith the accused found before death, while the French version highlighted the confessor to the dying. French accounts emphasized gullibility and the credibility willingly extended to deviant persons. English criminal biographies focused on a decidedly moral, not religious dimension.



Without complex plots or commentaries on the human condition, they projected a straight-forward assemblage of facts without comments on motivation. Much of the criminal activity involved the taking of property, often through violence.<sup>55</sup>

Criminal biographies courted the salacious interests of the reading public. The exotic underworld defied the reality of everyday life but was still an everyday activity. The spectacle of arrests, trials, and frightening public executions compelled the curious who wanted to defy tedium of everyday life—even if they only purchased and read criminal biographies. The criminal, usually referred to as 'he,' played upon fears within the population, but also reflected some hopes. Earlier criminal biographies resembles 'jest books and picaresque literature.' The large number which resembled jest books were fictional stories with very little factual content.<sup>56</sup>

In the seventeenth century, broadsides and ballads announced sensational cases. By the time of the Interregnum, pamphlets and publications documented the lives of the accused. By 1680, session papers and the accounts of the Ordinaries of Newgate responded to public interest in the sensational. Demand was so extensive by 1730 that the Newgate Ordinary hurriedly penned 2,000 words about very insignificant criminals. Not until 1700-1720 did newspapers begin to circulate current events.<sup>57</sup>

Because Session papers were not published until the 1670s, from about 1580 to 1640, the murder pamphlet provided details for the news-hungry public. Cases involving murder touched a raw nerve. Earlier accounts emphasized the work of Satan or the Devil. Some accounts were 'relatively unvarnished' and attenuated themes from the theater of the gallows. Some pamphlets featured strange and brutal murders, but many concentrated on sex and violence. Some detailed the every move of London rakes and rogues, while others emphasized the household and ordinary people. Sensationalized narratives revealed the blundering and foolish efforts of society's cast-offs. Tension existed between the religious purposes which motivated men of the cloth and the Puritan appropriation of a

popular genre. Usually a lengthy conversion narrative expounded the theme of conversion of the soul of the damned. Eventually the pamphlets were not just 'cheap print,' but became lengthy diatribes. Unmasked depravity provided yet another way for the elite and godly to comment on the human condition. For human nature run amok threatened the social fabric.<sup>58</sup>

The behavior of women was closely monitored, and their peccadillos were only part of the story. Women who defied the rules were quickly branded as whores, even when they did not indulge in extramarital sexual activity. The overriding concern was social station and the fragile social peace.<sup>59</sup> The focus was on the criminal, not the sensational criminal act. The reporting of the facts built toward the conclusion--penitence for the crime, the last-dying confessions, or catharsis for the permanently imprisoned. The criminal narrative built upon a medieval mixture of the powers of Providence aided by the spirits, witches and the devil, proving that the power of the spiritual and supernatural remained strong in eighteenth-century life. Those assembled at the gallows or the readers of pamphlets or chapbooks were prepared to see the wages of sin completed with death. Eternity lasted a long time. Those punished would do well to confess their sins and avoid the wrath of God. The criminal defied society's laws and in doing so risked earning society's condemnation. In the final days, the life of the damned illustrated the extremes of behavior, although there was always the hope of repentance.<sup>60</sup>

Criminal biographies also illustrated the 'literature of roguery' that contributed to the development of the novel and appealed to newly-literate masses. Murder pamphlets were declining in popularity by 1730 when longer accounts or confessions became popular. The use of journalistic techniques that were borrowed from criminal biographies were critical to the origins and development of the novel. Defoe used these techniques in Moll Flanders and Colonel Singleton. Picaresque elements that were borrowed from continental sources were combined with a journalistic instinct for the notorious and sensational.<sup>61</sup>

Eighteenth-century criminal biographies or those of earlier centuries do not resemble our murder mysteries or detective stories that focused on the guilty. The narrative presented a 'pageant' of crime--trial and punishment. Often the title page summary of contents referred explicitly to the dastardly deed perpetrated by the accused individual.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, who were the readers of this popular literature? The anonymous author of Remarkable Criminals (1735) suggested that writers wanted their works be read by a better sort of people. Although the author of The History of John Sheppard acknowledged that broadsides and ballads were reserved for 'common' or 'vulgar' people, he intended that his history be read by 'citizens' or those who owned up to a 'tolerable fashion.' Because remarks about the potential reading audience were only infrequently made, we are left with hints about the reading audience. Attempts to determine readership by reference to cost are largely unavailing. A 'popular literature of crime' was printed by London by and for literate 'middling' people.<sup>63</sup>

### Defoe and Criminal Biography

The work of Defoe and the prolific work on Defoe is a good guide to criminal biography. Those written during his time resulted from anxiety about the increase of crime. Serious misgivings about the authenticity of criminal biography may have prompted Defoe to turn to fiction. Defoe courted his readers by inviting them to be part of his stories, instead of being merely consumers of content.<sup>64</sup>

Glimmerings of criminal biography can be detected in the chapbooks analyzed here. A chapbook condensation of the novel, Moll Flanders, is just one more indication of Defoe's relevance and impact in his own time and in ours. Writings in The Review from 1704 to 1732 express Defoe's misgivings about the growth of a new criminal class in England. The History of the Remarkable Life of John Sheppard, a companion volume--Narratives of all Robberies, and The True

and Genuine Account of the Life of Jonathan Wild--all testify to his concern about crime before his major works of 1719 and after. Defoe's criminal biographies were longer and ended with the punishment that fit the crime.<sup>65</sup>

Defoe was increasingly alarmed that the older mercantilist economy was giving way to a new and worrisome development--capitalism. His preoccupation from 1718 to 1721 with the increase in crime has been attributed first to the movement of people from the countryside to the cities, and second, the return of military men who fought in England's wars and who understood violence all too well, and third, the precarious state of the economy.<sup>66</sup>

John Richetti, a literary scholar whose focus is the eighteenth century and the novel, distinguished three types of popular criminal narrative: whore biographies, picaro-prankster stories, and the genre of criminal biography. Whore biographies, emphasizing the comic element in aggressive and deviant women, provided mock heroic accounts which exaggerated the bravado of fallen women and compared them to women of ancient times. Whores and highwaymen earned sympathy because they took on greedy landlords, malicious aristocrats, and religious and political figures. Only the criminal biography, Moll Flanders, contained elements of whore biography.<sup>67</sup> The fact that few if any chapbooks were whore biographies is a statement about the reading public who bought the chapbooks.

Female criminal biographies rely on convention. Their female protagonists used their wit, their beauty, and occasionally their passivity to get what they wanted. They used men for capital gains. They disturbed the operating patriarchal mores by their violation of the social order. Rietz's explanation of the 'clash' between femininity and criminal behavior assumes some standards of femininity which clearly did not apply to scrambling plebeian women like Moll Flanders. She cared not at wit for refinement and social status, but craved security. Therein lies the book's appeal as a novel and chapbook to readers long accustomed to a life which was 'nasty, brutish, and short.'<sup>68</sup>

Criminal biographers might choose one of three ways to manage contradiction within a single character. First, one might focus on one trait. Second, the female character might disguise herself by cross-dressing. Although cross-dressing was popular for both heroines and heroes, Lincoln Faller and John Rietz assume that cross-dressing carried more air of unreality when it was practiced by a woman than when projected by a man. The third and perhaps most important technique involved the raw portrayal of a flawed female criminal--like Moll.<sup>69</sup> Biographers might employ all three techniques in order to put flesh on the bones of their characters.

Beyond the celebration of infamous women like Moll Flanders or Fanny Davies, other chapbooks displayed the contrite behavior of women who had run afoul of the law, and reported the confession of the criminal, their humility before Almighty God, and need for forgiveness of sins. Many of the accused and convicted begged for mercy and repented. Such a resolution vindicated Christian principles. Because many crimes involved male indifference and violence against women, such a resolution also appealed to women readers who wanted men to get their just deserts. Chapbooks claimed to be authentic narratives. Like the chapbooks on witchcraft, the narrative unfolded events and frequently included testimony by witnesses and others, plus letters. The frontispiece could include a summary of the life of the accused or unfortunate victim. Women were frequently the victims of crime or of the machinations of men, some of whom were determined to enjoy them. Often they were the daughter of a farmer of some reputation. Some were described as 'elegant' or 'beautiful,' but often they were vulnerable and infatuated with the wrong man. Once ready for bigger and better things, men often gladly dumped them.

The genre of criminal biography mostly notably used by Defoe in his novel, Moll Flanders, informed others, including chapbook authors. Fanny Davies, a woman from a less-than-privileged background, was touted as a female Robin Hood by the author. Fanny Davies resembled Moll Flanders, although Moll repented in

her old age, cultivated family ties, and treated those around her generously. Living well in the new world, she could now afford to be generous. Fanny Davies tried one trick too many and was finally apprehended. But once again, like Moll Flanders, her sentence was communicated to transportation. The Misses Robertson and Sharp were self-educated women whose astute observations of the circumstances and people around them yielded them substantial gains in their many robberies, but they too finally paid the price. The final section of this chapter, *The Survivors*, describes their exploits.

### **Assorted Chapbooks on Crime**

Four chapbooks included an unrelenting religious message. They made examples out of people whose behavior deviated from the righteous path. As such they seem perhaps misplaced within this section. Their placement here, however, illustrates the variety of messages that chapbooks delivered.

A 1790s era chapbook lamented the behavior of a wanton daughter who promised dying mother that she would change. In a trance, she experienced a conversion that she preached to all her wicked companions. An only child indulged by her parents, she did not give her parents the pleasure they craved, especially in their old age. Her drinking, swearing, and whoring completely destroyed her parents, particularly her mother. She allowed the four angels to explain God's message of mercy and forgiveness, and then this child of wrath became a messenger for God.<sup>70</sup>

Despite his harmonious relationship with his wife in the early years of their marriage, Sir William Watts became jealous of her beauty and later believed that his children were bastards. The Devil furthered his malevolent state sufficiently to send him home to murder his family. He gave a confession upon his execution. The text noted that '(A)fter he desiring the prayers of all good christians and

forewarning others by his example, he was turned off.' The chapbook concluded with 'the (S)ubstance of a sermon preached upon that occasion'<sup>71</sup>

Four years of debauched behavior with wicked companions drove Mr. John Fox of Lynn to despair, despite his wife's beauty and her considerable fortune. Her friends disapproved of her marriage. He immediately spent all her money and left her and their three children without bread. Eventually his family 'was turned out of doors.' Realizing his wretchedness and the ruination of his family, he got rope from a neighbor and hanged himself. Before his death, however, he wrote a message to his companions to give up their lewd life before it is too late. The Coroner's Inquest resolved to bury him but with a stake through him. His apparition appeared and furious noises disturbed village residents for several nights.<sup>72</sup>

One chapbook reported a petty crime--stealing furniture while being overwrought. Louisa Harwood was transported for theft of her landlord's furniture.<sup>73</sup> In a letter to her parents she described her 'pathetic 'sufferings after her lover left with his shipmates from Portsmouth. Not able to be without him, she had journeyed to Portsmouth and was disconsolate when his ship sailed. She capriciously sold the furniture in her lodgings and was immediately arrested. She wrote a penitent letter to her parents and sister, describing how she was undone by her passion for Lieutenant Harris. She described him as her undoer, but he had not abandoned her, and his love for her was not in question. Feeling very alone, she felt powerless to defend herself in court and deny the false accusations that were leveled against her. Only the arrival of her sister kept her composed enough to accept her sentence of transportation. The letter ended with her hope that the consolations of heaven would help her parents and that her fate would warn others against such errant behavior.

The Tewkesbury chapbooks featured stories from shires where the stories might have sold. The 'unnatural mother' in the Somersetshire tragedy murdered her daughter. Doted upon by her father, left an heiress by his money, but hated and abused by her mother, the girl made a solemn religious statement when she was

dying and her mother was pulling the dagger out of her body. During the mother's wedding feast, the blood began to flow, and she was brought before the Taunton Assizes. The 'wandering shepherdess,' a 'fair daughter' of an Oxfordshire merchant, wandered aimlessly once a young villain left her and went to London. Once this nefarious squire returned, her parents could not tell him where she had gone. But he found her in a valley and resolved to ravish her. Both of them died soon after. In another Oxfordshire tragedy, young women were advised to maintain their virtue. A dreadful fate befell a young woman in the 'Northamptonshire Tragedy' because her parents did not allow her to marry the man with whom she had a child. John True and Susan Mead of Coventry both died after their unfortunate affair. The chapbook concluded with the question: why did death come so early to both of them? The vulnerability of

young women subject both to fickle lovers and the intransigence of their parents was a frequent theme in these sensationalized accounts.<sup>74</sup>

### Horrific Crimes

Short chapbooks, some only eight pages, detailed recently-committed horrendous crimes. In addition, several of the chapbooks focused on the heinous poisoning of loved ones or immediate relatives.

The 'wicked wife' was an 'accomplished' woman who, motivated by her relationship with another man, conspired with her brother to poison her husband, a man of some means. Love 'turned to hatred and malice' when a jealous man cruelly murdered his lover and two small children, convinced that the children were not his. The children begged for mercy and prayed that they might be spared. But inspired by the Devil, he killed them. His confession described his wife as beautiful but 'inferior in birth and fortune.' He was ruined by her beauty. Chapbooks were likely to reiterate that the convicted individual had to meet the judgment of the Almighty.



“God’s Judgment Against Jealous Persons’ and an account describing the trial of Miss Mary Laws for poisoning her relatives both included substantial portions of funeral sermons.<sup>75</sup>

The murders perpetrated by Mary Blandy and Elizabeth Jeffries created sensational news and stories. Henry Fielding commented on Blandy’s crime in the Covent Garden Journal in 1752, lamenting the fact that a child poisoned her own father. In the same year, Jeffries conspired with her lover to murder an abusive uncle. After reading about these two women, Fielding and others desperately wanted to believe that God or Providence worked in mysteriously ways to keep the crimes from going undetected and the guilty from escaping justice.<sup>76</sup>

In first-person voice Mary Blandy told her side of the story. Original letters provided a further insight into her character and her need for forgiveness from a merciful God. The chapbook also included a declaration she signed before her death in front of two clergymen from the University Oxford.

Miss Mary Blandy, a woman from a good home in Oxfordshire, entered into a relationship with a gentleman from Scotland of whom her father disapproved. Himself the retired town-clerk of Henley-upon-Thames, he wanted her to marry someone with money, since he was unwilling to give her any money for her marriage. Mr. Cranston had a child, and this act blemished his ability to secure a decent marriage. But the couple believed that obstacles to their happiness could be eliminated. After returning to Scotland where they were married, Cranston sent her some powder, instructing her to put this white substance into her father’s tea, liquor or food.

Fielding in his Examples of Providence reported that Miss Blandy tried to flee the crime scene, but became confused and returned home. She was soon arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to death for the murder of her father. According to Fielding and others, supernatural powers kept her from saving herself.<sup>77</sup>

The early pages included her upbringing. Although a ‘liberal education’ for women should encourage the proper goals in life, Miss Blandy’s parents were too

indulgent. Quoting only a 'too good authority,' the author observed that she was given to 'coquetry and intrigue' at an early age. Her conduct with men of the military as well as 'smarts of the place' ruined her. Since her proper education warned her against such actions, she shared some responsibility for her conduct. In addition, her father could be faulted for failing to let her make a suitable match. Poisoning was a heinous crime, and the evidence given at the trial confirmed that something was indeed very amiss in the Blandy household. Parricide was an especially heinous offense as well. The barrister in charge of her trial solemnly declared that poisoning was such a severe and 'most dangerous' crime because it happened secretly and it sometimes was impossible to find out what really happened.<sup>78</sup>

A woman of Miss Blandy's background could afford a suitable defense. Witnesses testified to the fact that Miss Blandy suggested to them that Mr. Cranston had met up with a woman in Scotland who told him that people in this family would die soon. Both counsels referred to 'musik' and apparitions. They also mentioned Miss Blandy's suggestion that people within that family would come to an eminent death.<sup>79</sup>

Mary Blandy was hanged in front of 5,000 persons assembled at Oxford in 1752. Evidence from an Assize sermon and the Gentleman's Magazine tell us that Blandy blamed her lover, although he had by now escaped the clutches of the law by going abroad. She forgave the jury who convicted her. Her own words declared that she was willing to be an example 'against the sallies of any irregular passions.' Although many of the crowd wept, including university dons, these aroused emotions resulted from the tragedy of the situation and the collective experience of witnessing such a final blow to the life of a woman.<sup>80</sup>

Egregious and repeated spelling errors, indicate a rush to book stalls by profit-minded printers. Some of the testimony from witnesses was quoted verbatim, but by the end of the chapbook, descriptions of the court proceedings sufficed. Two chapbooks were printed. The first circulated information about the case and the

second reported the trial. The description of the body, likened to a typical poison case, also whetted the reader's appetite.

Printings in Oxford and in London suggests that the printers sensed the public interest in both cases. Public empathy for Miss Blandy was more forthcoming after she was safely executed, but people did write her letters of support. Mary Blandy herself cooperated with the letter writers but did not realize that some of her missives would invite even more damnation. She quoted lines from Shakespeare, since she was well educated, seemed to relish life instead of displaying humility, and seemed detached at the time of her sentencing. Such behavior and clear lack of penitence did not earn her sustained friendships, only more wrath and disbelief and dislike than she herself anticipated.<sup>81</sup>

The case of Elizabeth Jeffries and John Swan likewise involved the murder of a family member. Her story and that of Mary Blandy are the only two accounts that described the cross-examination of witnesses by the defense and character witnesses for the defense. The spinster Elizabeth Jeffries plotted continually to be rid of her Uncle, Mr. Joseph Jeffries. Her family had sent her to live with her uncle at age 15. The sexual abuse she suffered at his hands was mentioned in later pages. She was named as his heir, but she feared that she would change this provision after he met another woman and he was disillusioned with Elizabeth's behavior. Her pregnancy with his child made her an angry and vengeful woman. A number of people were forced to testify against them. The opening pages included a copy of the will. Also included were excerpted dialogue between the prosecutor and witness as well as description of testimony and the scene in the courtroom. The trial was held at the Chelmsford Assizes in 1752. The chapbook closed with an account of the parricide involving Blandy, thus taking advantage of another sensational case.<sup>82</sup>

The second account, 'authentick memoirs,' documented the 'wicked' life led by Elizabeth Jeffries and her anger at being so rapaciously used, -even referring to the assassinations as 'criminal commerce.'<sup>83</sup> The author prudently constructed an

account of their behavior and the particulars related during their confinement before execution. This account painted Swan as a more innocent and reluctant actor. Like Clarissa, the noted character of Richardson's novel, Elizabeth ordered her coffin, put on her dying clothes, and lay down in it to see how she fit into it. Although this chapbook was sold as memoirs of the deceased, its third person voice did not promote the notion that these were the very thoughts of Elizabeth Jeffries. Her lies and missteps in promoting alternative theories of the murder commented effectively on her active vendetta against her uncle. Executed in a remote forested area thronged with the largest number of spectators ever, the couple showed some remorse, but also seemed inclined to blame others and cast about for excuses. Yet they confessed, exhorting God to allow them to enter paradise.

Women from good homes often fell in with the wrong people--usually with men to whom they had attached themselves. A 1796 chapbook provided 'true' but 'shocking' stories of three wronged women.<sup>84</sup> Susannah Morton, the daughter of a reputable farmer murdered her illegitimate child. Not cautious enough to avoid temptation, Hannah Ward, the daughter of a reputable tradesman from Derby, was given arsenic by Job Ward to induce an abortion. In a crime described as 'remarkable,' the third woman, Ann Hoon, drowned her child so that they might be reunited in heaven. She had previously knocked down a rail on the fence of two of her neighbors who told her that she would be transported for that offense. After she put the child in a tub of water, she left, gave the key to the neighbors, and walked the eight or nine miles to the magistrate to turned herself in and await execution. In another chapbook, Mary Benton, alias Mrs. Philpoe, was tried at Old Bailey for knifing a Mrs. Cox as she reached for some china. She testified that the devil and passion made her commit such a 'barbarous and inhumane' crime.

A short chapbook entitled 'The Fatal Effects of Inconstancy' described the life and trial of Miss Ann Broderick in 1795 for the murder of her lover after he abandoned her and married another woman.<sup>85</sup> Publication of this 'dismal recital' of facts should teach others a lesson. Mr. Errington deserted this woman of 'great

sensibility.' Newspapers stated that she and Mr. Errington had children together, a fact reputed to be in error. Witnesses described her errant behavior. The author sympathized with Miss Broderick, stating that she saw herself well settled with the deceased and could not accept rejection. This elegant young woman, attended by servants, remained composed throughout her trial and her confinement. The jury found her not guilty by reasons of insanity. Their verdict was greeted with applause in the courtroom. A similar chapbook which detailed the 'love and madness' of Miss Ann Broderic in the Harding Collection followed the same story line, but also mentioned the accounts of this trial in the Gents Magazine and Newgate Calendar.

In a similar act of revenge, Mary Jones murdered her lover--kicking him on the floor and then knifing him. Both had been drinking. She retaliated after he had taken 'innocent liberties' with another woman. They lived together, he married another woman who died, and they resumed their relationship. Appearing before the court, she told the authorities that she would hang herself if they didn't do it for her. She was sentenced to Newgate. The closing stanza reveals the attempt of chapbooks to preach the message of salvation:

Vile is her heart, deep plung'd in sin  
 A Dismal den of thieves within  
 Where every lust presumes to dwell  
 The hateful progeny of hell.  
 A deep apostate from her God  
 She trampled in her Savior's blood  
 and scorned his mercy, mock'd in pain  
 And crucify'd her Lord again.<sup>86</sup>

The 'true and particular account' of the stabbing of George III by Margaret Nicholson contained her life story and her subsequent examination before the Privy Council. The chapbook related the proceedings on the successive days following the attempted assassination. Those who committed 'great crimes' did so with fortitude. Powerful and ambitious people perform heroic deeds, but one inspired to criminal activity must know that such deeds would be punished.<sup>87</sup> Margaret

Nicolson suffered delusions of grandeur. A high-strung person she could terrorize other servants with her 'imperious conduct.' Although given her 'naughtiness,' she did not carry tales farm house to house, as most servants did. Indeed she was a very private person. Friends assisted her, and she supported herself by doing needlework. A perfectionist, her latent pride eventually got the best of her. People grew weary of hearing her talk of wanting to be presented to their majesties or to offer them a petition on her behalf. For if the King was apprised of her condition and capabilities, he would no doubt send for her and reward her. She sent many petitions and threatened regicide if the court did not respond. She finally took matters into her own hands. She stabbed the King as he alighted from his carriage on August 2, 1786. She answered all the questions put to her forthrightly, but insisted that the King understood. Her relatives and landlord described her as a harmless person. She was eventually declared insane and taken to Bedlam. Following this attempt upon his life, the King was greeted with large and thundering crowds. 'God Save the King' was played with more enthusiasm. Jews composed anthems to be played and prayers to read in their synagogues celebrating his survival. The chapbook ended with praise for the demonstrated and 'unrivaled' loyalty of this 'ancient people.'

### Women as Victims

A 'circumstantial account,' (sic) detailed a 'series of very extraordinary facts' surrounding the death of Miss Bell, a young lady from 'tolerable good circumstances.'<sup>68</sup> The introductory pages stated the worth of her family. Her association with a gentleman from the army who did not marry her proved to be her undoing. A once ebullient young woman was now melancholy. Her friends managed to get her a position at a milliner's shop in London. Is this a code word for announcing that they found her a situation in a brothel? She herself was given to intrigue and soon took up with a watchmaker.

Captain Thomas Holland, a man acquainted with her family, narrated the story of her demise. Miss Bell suffered two stab wounds and eventually died. The remaining pages related the effort of Mr. Holland and her father to make Mr. Sutton, the man who she fingered as responsible for cutting her, legally responsible for his crime. The details made the lesson clear: women must carefully avoid assignations and people who would bring them down.

Robert Hallam, a decent man from a good family, beat his wife brutally while she was pregnant and threw her out of a window.<sup>89</sup> His trial at the Hampshire Assizes included testimony from neighbors who witnessed the barbarous beating and heard his wife's screams. The neighbors implored him to stop, but he carried her back into the house and shut the door, thereby shutting out the possibility of help for her. Then he threw her out of the window. A shipmate with time at sea, he returned to shore and became a weatherman while his wife ran a public house. The ale-house created much trouble between them. He was insanely jealous of her, despite the fact that he himself had consorted with other women. He did not own up to the brutality of his actions, although he did admit hitting her. He took the Sacrament, comported himself well on the scaffold, and died a penitent man. The author offered this account with the 'hope' that 'his fate will operate as a caution to others.' This chapbook from the Boswell collection included the well-known 'lasting dying confession.'

The beautiful Sarah Morton was driven to desperation and ruin by a man who 'decoyed' her from her parents.<sup>90</sup> The use of the term 'decoy' frequently appears in eighteenth-century documents and histories, and occasionally in chapbooks to describe men who seduced or captured women for their own lustful purposes. 'Innocence Betrayed' or, the Perjured Lover 'included two letters written by Sarah, one to her wealthy farming family and another to her lover before she took poison and died. (u)nprincipled men' who drove women to unhappy ends. The 'monster of iniquity' who persuaded Sarah to come to London with him abandoned her once he caught sight of her appealing younger sister. He managed to be live with both

sisters. Her sister, Jenny, wisely went home to her family, while Sarah turned to prostitution. This was her ultimate undoing. It pushed her over the edge and she committed suicide.

Another 'true' and 'faithful' narrative reported the history of Richard Sutton and Sally Miles.<sup>91</sup> After clandestine efforts to outwit both sets of parents, Richard and Sally finally escaped and set up housekeeping, not believing that they needed the benefits of clergy. Richard soon tired of Sally, although they had learned that she was with child. Lonely when Richard was gone, Sally befriended a old woman, thinking that no harm could come from their friendship. Meanwhile, Richard met a group of vagabonds who took up residence on the moors. A caravan of free spirits, this group of young women, exasperated with their laggard boyfriends, set out to become independent, living in caves and huts by themselves. Their young men soon followed them. The text referred to this group as 'gypsies', 'the most reprobate among the race of mankind,' plundered and robbed at will and lived free lives without law or church teachings. Richard soon abandoned Sally.

This 'detestable villain,' determined to do away with Sally, persuaded her that they needed to escape because he was being followed. They traveled in the dead of night, although Sally had a hard time keeping up. Even Richard could not murder their child in front of her, so he took the child away on the pretense of taking it to a nurse who agreed to keep it. Meanwhile, Sally wandered disconsolately in the woods. After a spaniel later found the child's head and carried it into town, townspeople followed the dog to the child's body. Hearing of these events, the old woman was suspicious that the child was the one that she had helped to deliver. Sally was wandering disconsolately in the woods, hoping to die. When captured, Richard confessed, was brought to trial, and was hanged. He did not beg for mercy, realizing the full gravity of his crime, but died a penitent man. The text noted that his body was 'delivered to the surgeon for dissection.' Only time could heal the minds of the terrorized Sally. Richard was no choir boy, but surely he was



influenced by the female-led vagabonds that assembled in the woods. The lesson: deviation from social rules was fatal, and outlaws pay for their crimes.

"The True and Interesting History of Mr. and Mrs. Hartley" illustrated the culture of sensibility, but, like a previous discussion of the 'fatal effects of inconstancy,' this chapbook highlighted the 'fatal effects of jealousy.' A notation on the title page persuaded the reader: "Here is displayed such Scenes of deep distress, As Scarcely any worthy Heart could guess."<sup>91</sup>

Violent and destructive jealousy compelled Mr. Hartley to arrange for the murder of Mr. Friendly, and he wanted put a dagger through his wife. Both escaped, but Mrs. Hartley left to live with her aunt. She was still a loving wife, and the aunt decided to find out whether Hartley had any remaining 'tenderness.' '(p)rovidence' allowed him to see his child before he died. Wearing widow's weeds, she professed her undying love for her husband.

The code required strength in a woman who faced a passionless future and maternal sacrifice for her only child of a violent marriage. Eventually her daughter and the Friendlys' son married and had five children. Rewarded with beautiful grandchildren in her old age, Mrs. Hartley lived to a ripe old age and died serenely. The small world theme comforted women and men readers who wanted to believe that providence intervened fortuitously.

Louisa Harwood was a victim of her own fears. After following her lover to Portsmouth, she could not do without when he left on board ship. Not of sound mind, she sold the furniture of her lodgings and was immediately arrested. She wrote a penitent letter to her parents and sister, describing how she was undone by her passions for Lt. Harris--her undoer. But he had not abandoned her, and his love for her was not in question. She felt powerless to defend herself in court. Only the arrival of her sister fortified her to accept her sentence of transportation. The letter ended with the hope that the consolations of heaven would help her parents and that this enunciation of her fate would warn others.<sup>93</sup>

A tragedy involving a servant maid served as a 'dreadful Warning to all wild and thoughtless Young Women.'<sup>94</sup> William Gilton deserted Elizabeth Parker when she was with child. Miss Parker, from a laboring family, was taught to read and write at a charity school. Gilton deceitfully conspired to ruin her and 'repeated meetings of criminality' resulted in her becoming pregnant. Gilton's emotions turned from love to hate. She tried to hold him to his many promises, but his response was to lure her into a field and then cut her throat. But there was another and compelling reason why he was so intent on disposing of Elizabeth Parker. He was now enamored of a farmer's daughter who had a small but sufficient inheritance. Gilton confessed and was held over for trial.

### Mockeries of Class Pretensions

Finally, we have three chapbooks which mocked the pretensions of the better sort as they accused servants of rather unlikely crimes.

A "Narrative of the Astonishing Transactions at Stockwell" reported the date of a most disturbing series of events that transpired 'upwards of twenty hours and at different places.' The participants' witnessed signatures verified strange and bizarre if 'authentic, candid, and circumstantial' series of events, but this account satirizes the penchant for attacking servants for simple missteps or inexplicable deviations from the household routine.<sup>95</sup>

The author attached statements about the impeccable credentials of those involved. Mrs. Golding was an elderly lady of some wealth, and the Fowlers were a 'sober and industrious' couple. Mrs. Golding's servant, Ann Robinson, became the target of the investigation, because she had only been in Mrs. Golding's employ for a short time. Violent noises within the houses, broken china, a fallen clock and glassware oddly disturbed the peace. The carpenter thought that the foundation of the house was shaky and moving. Blood strangely formed in a basin. Items removed to the adjacent house also shook and broke. Thrashing about for a

plausible explanation, Mrs. Golding soon concluded that these strange events followed everywhere that she and her maidservant went. These events were very unsettling to other gentry families. But few of these genteel people wanted to 'unravel this most intricate affair.'

Although servants were usually superstitious and timid, Miss Robinson, the twenty-year old maidservant, advised calm amidst this chaos. Noises and calamitous activities continued at the home of the Fowlers, where Mrs. Golding and others had taken refuge. Mr. Fowler wondered aloud to Miss Robinson whether indeed 'the all seeing eye of providence' might be working through her. Such accusations were most disturbing to a young maidservant.

Continuing strange noises, broken cutlery and dishes made all the parties extremely wary. Hence they signed a statement attesting to this strange chain of events. This was a satire on the suspicions that fine people projected onto their servants. If there was noise, if the china broke, or there was missed cutlery, the servant was the culprit or there had to be some conspiracy by the servants. By repeatedly stressing the veracity and reputation of the people involved, the author mocked life in the household, satirized class antagonisms, and commented on the obsession with crime.

Two chapbooks by the Dicey firm ridiculed the assumptions and pretensions of the ruling class toward their servants. Both were entertaining, while at the same time, they pointed out that the life well lived would reap proper rewards.

"The Unjust Man Rewarded; Being a Dreadful Warning to all Perjured and forsworn People" could be considered as a source of entertainment, despite the fact that it detailed a crime. Its review here reminds us that chapbooks can be both instructional and entertaining. Printed in the earlier years of the eighteenth century, its tale of debauchery against a servant maid by her master was conveyed in rhyming verse.<sup>96</sup>

Because the servant maid rebuked Mr. Green's advances, he decided to even with her. He planted evidence of a theft of plate and silver in her trunk, and

she was incarcerated and sentenced to death. The following stanzas aptly summed up her predicament:

The fatal assizes drawing nigh,  
 She at the bar held up her hand,  
 Her wicked master being nigh,  
 Who falsely swore to each command.  
 That she was guilty of the charge  
 And on the same did much enlarge.  
 The court of course did sentence pass,  
 Tho' most men thought her innocent,  
 And when he found that she was cast,  
 His cruel heart was then content,  
 Her blood, cry'd he, shall quench my rage,  
 Since she would not my lust assuage.  
 Now she imprison sore laments  
 With weeping eyes and heavy groans,  
 While all that sees her much laments  
 To hear her cries, her signs and moans  
 Until the dismal day drew nigh,  
 On which, poor maid, she was to die.

Being driven to her death, she confronted the man who had so wronged her. He immediately declared that the Devil himself would tear him to pieces if he was guilty of false accusations and perjury. But in fact Satan did descend upon the scene, seize the 'perjured wretch' and crash him into little pieces. The sounds of thunder accompanied his demise, and his stench told all those present that he was guilty. She was briefly kept in 'goal,' but then freed by the King and presented with Mr. Green's estate. The final stanza summarized the purposes of this chapbook:

And pretty maids examples take,  
 By this sweet virgin, chaste and pure  
 The Lord will never you forsake,  
 If for his laws you pain endure;  
 Be virtuous in your lives, and he  
 Will bless you to eternity.

Virtue was rewarded, although the title of the chapbook conveyed a different message, possibly to attract readers interested in a sensational story. Using

themes familiar to the reading audience, this chapbook rewarded virtue and religious devotion.

'The Trial of Betty the Cook-maid before the Worshipful Justice Feeler' ridiculed the pretensions and exactions of the ruling class.<sup>97</sup> Its inviting subtitle said that Betty was fired for getting up late. The master accused Betty of being an 'atrocious termagant.' She refused to scour the brass and pewter as ordered to do by her master because she was hired by the Mistress as a cook. The judge called her a 'hussey' and accused her of insolence in daring to defend herself in his courtroom. She implored the magistrate to listen to her tale of abuse by her master. She had the temerity to demand her warnings wages. Her settlement did not equal the wages owed to her, but she gratefully accepted it, knowing that she would escape the 'claws of the law' and not be taken to Bridewell. Her master displayed the trial manuscript decorously in the kitchen in order to intimidate the servants. But his wife refused to hire any more servants, leaving that task to him. Few would work for him for any length of time. This chapbook was hurriedly assembled; its coarse wood-cuts would date it at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

### The Survivors

#### Moll Flanders

Despite being condensed into a few pages, the many chapbooks with the escapades of Moll Flanders were enormously popular. In addition, there were abridgments of the novel. Although many editions appeared after the publication of the novel in 1721, the chapbook account provided the flavor of the novel, but presented only a skeletal view of her life. It detailed her marital and criminal activities, but put only a little flesh on the bones. In her review of popular literature, Pat Rogers suggested that the chapbooks did not do justice to the novel. The first part described Moll's marital escapades while the second part concentrated on her criminal activities. The chapbook had 'merely a rush of anecdotes, a moralizing

conclusion, and a trite epitaph.' Although the ending of the original work was ambiguous, later abridgments attempted to complete what Defoe left open to interpretation.<sup>98</sup>

Living a life of constant variety, Moll was in turn a whore, five times a wife, an unrepentant thief for more than a decade, and was at the end of her life again transported to Virginia. There she finally became wealthy, found her long-lost brother, treated her English female servant lavishly, and left legacies when she died a penitent. Moll bore many children and outlived her husbands. She was a survivor in the fullest sense of that term.<sup>99</sup>

Moll Flanders was a subtle blend of fact and fiction. Defoe may have convinced himself and others that Moll was the biography of a real person. The plot resembled an authentic biography, not a 'semi-fictional rogue biography.'<sup>100</sup> The title page of both the chapbook and novel summarized the details of her life and announced that the text was taken from Moll's OWN MEMORANDUM. The narrator immediately suggested that Moll was a pseudonym for a notorious woman who was disguised because of a pending criminal case. By 1723, pamphlets asserted that Moll was really Elizabeth Atkins, a woman who had died in 1722 at Galway prison. An authority on Defoe, G. A. Starr suggested that the creation of Moll was due to Defoe's reading of newspapers, trial proceedings and even discussions with other people. Others believe that she was the notorious Moll King who, along with Sally Salisbury and Betsey Careless, received much attention from the London public as well as from the authorities. Information divulged about the infamous Moll King came from sources about the nefarious life of another of Defoe's subjects, Jonathan Wild. Not unlike other thieves, Moll King used many aliases. Wild's escapades of smuggling and robbery included many accomplices, not the least of which was Moll King. She was his accomplice, but on some occasions was used by him for his own ends. Twice given sentences of transportation, Moll King managed to return from America. Defoe wondered aloud--in print--about criminals who returned and went right back to their previous haunts. He apparently visited Newgate prison to see his

editor while Moll King was incarcerated there. The home for unwed mothers described in Moll Flanders resembled the one headed by an well-known abortionist.<sup>101</sup>

Defoe and others were shocked by the increase and extent of crime between 1718 and 1721. Although rural courts especially saw women criminals as less threatening, some women in urban areas were less tied to families, more on their own, and therefore posed a problem. Defoe and others were well aware of the difficulties posed by women like the two Molls. His novels were an 'instrument of persuasion.' He used Moll Flanders to debate the merits and demerits of the policy of transportation.<sup>102</sup>

Through chapbooks, ordinary readers who could not afford novels could purchase the 'skeletal edition' of Moll's life. One can only speculate here whether the purchasers of chapbooks understood the legend of Moll Flanders from the rumor-mill or conversations/discussions about the longer novel. They may have known women like her, especially since Defoe's characters 'are more teasing, provoking, and capacious' and have the advantage (too) of seeming more authentic.' His novels reveal his 'indirect' or 'oblique' authority over his readers. He gave them the freedom to consider the foibles of human nature for themselves.<sup>103</sup>

But for many readers the chapbook was entertainment and Defoe's intent or his conceptualization of Moll was irrelevant. Men and certainly women who were used to the hard scramble of life could identify with Moll. Her ability to survive life's vicissitudes commanded attention and respect. In addition, Defoe illustrated the effect of gossip. When Moll entered Newgate, the incarcerated women expressed their wonder that the Moll of legend finally was apprehended and imprisoned.

Defoe identified with his characters because he experienced serious financial reversals, endured imprisonment, and was frequently accused of lying. His most recent biographer, Paula Backscheider, believed that he championed the full development of human potential and the quest for security:

He vibrated to the injustices all around him, published them so that others would be ashamed, and demanded

this birthright for the insignificant, the poor, the criminal, the old, the unfortunate.<sup>104</sup>

Small wonder that Moll the novel and Moll the chapbook resonated so well with ordinary people.

The energetic Moll had no time for sentimental or emotional relationships. She was only gradually given to better judgments, and not deterred by her own failures and those of others. The novel illustrated the phenomenon of economic individualism. Only legal sanctions separated some criminal and noncriminal behavior as people pursued their own self-interest.<sup>105</sup> Moll the chapbook and novel and Moll the person exemplified looking out for number one.

In his discussion of family, sex and marriage, Lawrence Stone used Moll as an example. Moll quickly surmised that marriages were 'politic schemes, for forming interests, for carrying on business.' Moll's upbringing, such as it was, and all her life experiences helped her see through 'false institutional objectivity.' Moll's 'sophistication' resulted from her 'grasp of the private or selfish reality of social arrangements, and her marginal status as a female companion and her anomalous class position.'<sup>106</sup>

Novels reveal their major character's personality by actions or by analysis of their mental state. Character development facilitates further and deeper understanding. But Defoe included almost no descriptive explanations, he exhibited Moll's character through her acts. Although the novel and chapbook mention her many lovers, Defoe conveyed few if any details. She didn't choose between them.<sup>107</sup>

Despite a lack of internal coherence and many contradictions, the appeal was overwhelming. Many ordinary people must have identified with Moll's energy or admired her tenaciousness, since they realized how one could be forced literally overnight from security to poverty. People frequently criss-crossed the line between criminal and noncriminal behavior.



### Other Chapbooks

Women were not always the victims. The 'noted' and notorious Misses Robertson and Sharp pretended to be heiresses of considerable wealth, and their audacious appearances gave them access to proper circles. Miss Robertson passed herself off as a plain and pious Presbyterian woman who attended meetings where she 'worked upon the Christian bowels of the passionate and liberal.' At the end, a 'new song,' presented in the conclusion of this chapter, lauded the activities of these 'famous and noted swindlers' and mentioned new exploits.<sup>108</sup>

The Story of Sophia illustrates survival skills and the bliss and simplicity of rural life and its freedom. Although this 'tale' professed to be 'pathetic,' Sophia was in charge of her life.<sup>109</sup> The young Sophia inadvertently tipped over a candle that set her family's cottage on fire. Sophia could not find her family in the immediate aftermath and wandered in fields and barnyards looking for shelter. '(m)istress of her own thoughts to project as she walked along, some scheme for procedure,' she quickly hid in a stagecoach, jumped in a ditch and hid, was considered a 'clean maiden;' she became a farm servant bleaching hemp. Finally allowed some melancholy moments, she realized that Providence no longer sheltered her. She met the son of her master who was inclined to beat her for deserting her job, but an 'unexpected gentleness' seized him. He did seize upon his advantage and deprive her of a week's wages. Soon she met a young woman digging into a dunghill for useable rubbish. She was nonplused when the woman's thick accent revealed her simple background. She took Sophia home with her and helped her learned a trade with an assorted group of pedlars, basket-makers, and cabbage netters. She and her cohorts engaged in criminal activity. Sophia procured apples from an orchard under the right of pecksell—the orchard version of gleaning. Once she was caught, her kind and sweet face persuaded the farmer that she was not one of the motley crew that often robbed him. Her life in London had not prepared her for agricultural work, but the farmer took pity on her. Her honesty earned her a servant position in

his household, and he promised never to beat her again. Her cheerful and sweet demeanor disarmed the master's son and she became his wife. Together they pursued a happy life, but she was stung by melancholy because she never tried to find her family and could not bury her mother properly.

### Fanny Davies

English criminal biography focused on the criminal. It also fed a voracious appetite for news and the vicarious urges of ordinary people. In a female criminal biography, females made clever use of wit and beauty and used men for their purposes. Biographers exploring the careers of female criminals portrayed them with all their flaws. The man who allegedly shared prison accommodations with Fanny Davies, a Mr. Thompson, had the perfect subject for such a biography in the person Fanny Davies.

While two authorities on criminal biography remarked that cross-dressing by a woman was somehow unreal, Cressy cautioned that cross-dressing played for laughs; cross-dressing by women seldom meant that a full-blown crisis of gender identity was on the horizon. Fanny Davies was just such a cross-dresser, using her outfits for effect and for her criminal purposes.<sup>110</sup> The playful comment on the frontispiece supports that contention:

"Interspersed with interest, moral reflections and entertaining anecdotes, delineating her amorous parlays and kind keepers."

The 'remarkable adventures and curious intrigues' of Miss Fanny Davies, 'the celebrated modern Amazon,' described a life similar to that of Moll Flanders. Two chapbooks, in 1786 and 1787, told of her remarkable career. The author lauded Fanny as both the 'amazon' and 'the fair one.' He admired a woman who lived by her wits and made fools of those around her. Frequently cross-dressing, Fanny was a late eighteenth-century female Robin Hood who appeared in male clothing. Once she dressed her lover in female disguise to spring him from prison.<sup>111</sup>

The contradiction between the two categorizations--the 'amazon' and the 'fair one' illustrates Rietz' point about incongruity or a 'clash' between femininity and criminal behavior. But did the boldness or daring of females like Fanny Davies and Moll Flanders transcend the limits of femininity so completely that such a description is meaningless?

Fanny was cunningly alluring when she used her female charms. After living a life of crime on the run around London and adjacent parts, Fanny was given a death sentence in 1786 for theft. Like other young women who had to make their way in the world, Fanny began life with all the disadvantages. Her father had died, and her mother was 'obligated to take the tour of America soon after,' meaning that she was being transported. Among her many advantages were stamina and beauty, yet she exhibited a 'modest deportment,' while disguising her real designs. She often simply dressed like a Quaker.

Like many a young and attractive woman out on her own, Fanny seduced men whose appearance and life style suited her. A passionate lord provided her with a suitable life style one summer. But Fanny's background and past was known to many around his country home. She could not ride out with him without being caustically greeted. The lord remained obsessed with her, despite her decision to put on buckskin attire and ride a spirited horse. He even forgave her for her likely involvement in a robbery of his home, but informed her that it was time for her to leave.

During the Gordon Riots, Fanny led a charge against a bridge toll gate. Many of her followers died, once the military engaged them with its superior force, but Fanny escaped to the countryside where she hid out while taking part in highway robberies and forgeries.

Being exceedingly willful, her easy success led her think that she was invincible. In male costume, she persuaded a married woman to be a willing accomplice and take money from her aged husband--all because she was enamored of the male Fanny. She later danced freely with a farmer she had just

met, but was intent on robbing him of the money she was sure that he had concealed on his person. Fanny enjoyed using this large sum, but it was gone within a month. The text noted that money so ill-obtained brought with it a curse. This is the one mention of fate in an account that otherwise emphasized willful behavior.

Fanny made sure that her partners in crime plundered every house where she was employed as a servant. Finally, an old bachelor who had secured money dishonestly was intent on seducing her, but during their countryside tryst, his home was plundered. Most criminals finally meet up with someone who outsmarts them, and this old man proved to be her undoing. Her mother, returned after her sentence of transportation, was drunk when she appeared at court. Almost no one in attendance at the trial believed that Fanny would escape the gallows, 'the jaws of death.' But later Fanny's sentence was commuted to transportation.

### Conclusion

Fanny Davies, the Misses Robertson and Sharp, Miss Ann Broderick, and Margaret Nicolson were not shy and retiring. Mrs. Nicholson suffered some form of mental derangement, but the others consciously pursued a deviant and independent course. Miss Broderick desperately avenged her loss by killing her lover. The title of the chapbook revealed its mission: to prevent others from such a tragic and melancholy end. No remorse surfaced in the story of Fanny Davies and that of the Misses Robertson and Sharp were cunning characters. Three stanzas song summed up the author's attitude toward the latter duo:

**Their beauteous plumes they did display  
In city, town and country:  
With other's substance well they may,  
These noted knowing swindlers O.**

**These two females cut a gallant show,  
In a coach and four they trips so gaily O,  
O now they frisk'd and roll'd along,**

And did it quite completely O.

At length their career was quickly flop'd,  
 Their witty schemes and fancies O,  
 In limbo they were quickly pop'd,  
 These knowing noted swindlers O.<sup>112</sup>

The bold exploits and obstreperous behavior of the Amazon, Fanny Davies, and the tricks of the Misses Robertson and Sharp must be seen as exceptional, given other chapbooks with women depicted as brutally victimized by the men in their lives. The stab wounds inflicted on Miss Bell cost her life. Jealous rage and a vow of revenge ruined the life of Mr. and Mrs. Hartley. Louisa Harwood's desperation prompted her to steal furniture. Abusive mates murdered Elizabeth Parker and Mrs. Hallam, but they were punished. Although Richard Sutton murdered only the child of his union with Sally Miles, he came close to taking her life. Almost sane, only 'time and repentance' would provide Sally with balm and healing. The stanza that ended this chapbook trumpeted the cause of justice:

May this sad tale be strong on every mind,  
 Who are to such inhuman acts inclin'd;  
 Let them reflect, that wheresoe'er they fly,  
 That justice ever has a watchful eye:

Disgrace and shame, an ignominious fate,  
 Will surely overtake them soon or late.<sup>113</sup>

Repentance was only part of the tale. Barbarous behavior would be punished sooner or later. Even a criminal like Fanny Davies who captivated many lovers had to face the harsh reality that she would be caught and punished. The glorification of her exploits serves as another reminder that those who crossed the line were often seen as heroes or heroines.

What can we say about those chapbooks that mocked pretentious behavior? With 'paternalist good feeling,' novels upheld the values of the ruling class in the eighteenth century. Particularly for the London set of special people, the insolence and insubordination of household servants glaringly confronted their newly acquired

status and habits. Few, if any, writers would dare to insult them by picturing servants positively.<sup>114</sup> It fell to popular literature to satirize the antics of the ruling class. The three chapbooks that mock the behavior of outrageous employers and confused mistresses provide ample evidence that dismissive attitudes, pervasive suspicions and accusations, and outright condemnation of servants did not go unnoticed. They are an important antidote; most chapbooks in this survey described horrific crimes or women as victims. Authors who frightened already-apprehensive readers about the consequences of improper assignments and behavior. Such amusing stories tell us that chapbooks continued to circulate amusing and entertaining stories.

Peter Lake's analysis of the earlier murder pamphlet is instructive. The chasm between the Protestants as an elite and ordinary people, as established by earlier historians created an earlier elite versus popular dichotomy, that Lake believes at best, was an overstatement. His examination of the murder pamphlet laid out his objections to this ordering of society. Murder pamphlets circulated from 1570 through the Commonwealth and beyond. While some were written by clergymen, still others were the product of 'grub street.' Wanting to make money, their authors appealed to popular appetites for the sensational and titillating.

The murder pamphlets were 'grafted' onto elements of the seventeenth-century milieu of Protestant 'providentialism.' They usually focused on shocking and sensational events. They had more than their share of combined sex and violence. Their combination of moral imperatives with salacious details had a more instructive purpose. The social order would be disastrously at sea if there was any disruption of control from above. Patriarchal control and the subordination of women maintained the social peace.<sup>115</sup>

Did popular literature in the form of chapbooks absorb and circulate this Protestant message? Chapbooks frequently included the term, 'providence,' a code word for a commonly-understood sense of life and fate. This literature inculcated admonitions. Dire straits, if not fatal blows, came to those, especially women, who

challenged social rules. Did these chapbooks reinforce a sense of aloneness before God for those who took their content seriously? We cannot answer this question. We can only suggest that ominous content could inspire apprehension among women and men. These reinforced social teachings counseled resignation to one's social station and acceptance even of abusive and destructive family situations.

The caravan of female free spirits who lived on the margin were used as props in a story about Richard Miles' determined attempt to rid himself of a significant other and their child. Whether this is based on a true story cannot be determined. But it is clear that the author cast the female vagabonds as the villainous source of Miles' determination upon a destructive course.

Ann Hoon, was totally unraveled by a confrontation with her neighbors. One doesn't have to read between the lines to conclude that a single mother was driven to the destruction of herself and her child by the onerous burden of caring for both of them under trying circumstances. Louisa Harwood was so shaken by her lover's sea duty that she absent-mindedly stold furniture. Sally Miles was destroyed by her lover's callused and criminal disregard of her well-being and that of her child. These messages could put fear into the hearts and minds of apprehensive women readers.

Historical studies of crime report the tension resulting from the decline of customary rights that people had long believed to be inherently theirs. The chapbook about Sophia provides glimmerings of the old order of customary rights. Struggling to survive, Sophia and her friends saw their use of pecksell--a version of gleaning--as an accustomed use right. Farmers saw their activity as criminal. An understood, customary activity had been outlawed by the force of law. Few, if any eighteenth-century chapbooks addressed the issues involved in the customary rights even though the reading audience included persons who were affected by such denials. The legendary Mother Shipton and Robert Nixon addressed the grievances of ordinary people. Their stories recalled for readers and listeners alike

a long-understood moral code that was popular among seventeenth-century Levellers. It reinforced the 'collective morality,' the notion of community of the Elizabethan period. Many readers understood that morality and the stories of these secular prophets. No new secular prophets emerged from the pages of eighteenth-century chapbooks.

The 'picaresque hedonism' of the legendary stories was hard to duplicate. The hard edge to tales about crime certainly replayed the gruesome details to inculcate moral virtue. The Robin Hood style outlaw received less attention in a discourse dominated by cold, hard facts. But there were exceptions. The author who recorded the deeds of Fanny Davies saw her as a 'female Robin Hood.' Knowing her in prison and admiring her daring, the author put her case before the reading public.

Increased crime dominated public debate. Perceptions of what would sell may have influenced authors to write pithy accounts without excessive moralizing. Although these chapbooks may have originated in an older tradition, the murder pamphlet or criminal biography, writers of popular literature and their printers may have borrowed whatever they needed to sell their chapbooks.



## Notes

1. Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p. 523; Alan Macfarlane, Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England, a regional and comparative study, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970; Annabel Gregory "Witchcraft, Politics, and 'Good Neighborhood' in Early Seventeenth Century Rye," Past and Present, #133, (1991). Macfarlane's study focused on Essex for 150 years. The population during that time, about 100,000, and the time frame persuaded him that he had a significant base. Assize accounts and Quarter Session records among among the earliest recorded. Witchcraft was no minor matter. Between 1560 and 1680, 314 accused people were brought before court from 229 Essex villages. Witchcraft accounted for 5% of all criminal indictments between 1560 and 1680 and 13% between 1580 and 1589. Comparison of Essex indictments with other counties suggests that witchcraft there was exceptional, but this finding may be skewed by the excellent conditions of the records. Ecclesiastical court records and literary evidence both indicate that the practice of witchcraft and its prosecution was pervasive in England. Macfarlane, Witchcraft, pp. 23, 30, 74, 91.

2. J. F. C. Harrison, The Common People, A History from the Norman Conquest To The Present, (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 181. Robert Scribner, "Is a History of Popular Culture Possible," History of European Ideas, 10, 2 (1989), pp. 183, 184. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp. 514, 515, 525; Margaret Murray was one of the first to suggest that witchcraft continued pre-Christian cults and fertility rites. After Murray was commissioned to write an article for the Encyclopedia Britannica, she then wrote The Witchcult in Western Europe. By the 1950s, her findings propelled the founding in Wicca, a well-known contemporary movement of neo-pagans. Murray's critics charge that her distorted picture rested on highly-selected and manipulated sources. Most of the scholarship of the last twenty-five years rejects her approach. Jacqueline Simpson, "Margaret Murray: Who Believed Her and Why?" Folklore, 105 (1995): 89-96. Two contemporary historians, Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie and Carlo Ginzburg, assert the merit of Murray's work while acknowledging its excesses and errors. See Carlo Ginzburg, Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), p. xix. Ginzburg's Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches; Sabbath, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1991) puts him directly at odds with English historians and more in league with Murray. Ginzburg thought that there was possibly a common Slavic origin to the Sabbath rituals or that the myths were of Celtic origin. In reference to the witches' Sabbath, Ginzburg finally claims that he uncovered 'not one narrative among many, but the matrix of all possible narratives.' He had earlier documented 'processions of the dead and battles for fertility' in Night Battles. Ecstasies emphasized two historical phenomena of differing origin. First, there were themes of conspiracy by people

living on the margin. Second, a shamanistic culture erupted from diverse locations, involving dead, animals linked to witches or fairies, and myths, circulating far and wide—antecedents of the witches' sabbath.

3. Annabel Gregory, "Witchcraft, Politics, and 'Good Neighborhood' in early Seventeenth-Century Rye," pp. 34, 47, 50, 58, 63-66.

4. Witchcraft to cause harm ranks as a major crime during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp. 428, 442, 443 447; Marianne Hester, Lewd women and wicked witches. A study of the dynamics of male domination, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 125, 128. Macfarlane, Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England.

5. Ibid., p. 533; Hildred Geertz, "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 6, #1, (Summer, 1975): 71-89.

6. Clive Holmes, "Popular Culture? Witches, Magistrates, and Divines in Early Modern England," in Steven L. Kaplan, ed., Understanding Popular Culture, Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century, (Berlin, New York, and Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers, 1984), pp. 94-96, 98.

7. Ibid., pp. 101-103. Holmes, "Women as Witches," Past and Present, #140, (1994): 45, 49, 51, 52, 57.

8. Stuart Clark, "Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft," Past and Present, #87, (May, 1980): 101, 103.

9. Ibid., pp. 111, 114.

10. Ibid., pp. 118, 125, 127.

11. Those who emphasize misogyny and patriarchy as critical factors were 'disappointed' that Larner did not connect her understanding of the 'sex-related' nature of persecution with the general antagonism against women. Christina Larner, Enemies of God: The Witch Hunt in Scotland, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1981). Hester, Lewd women and wicked witches, pp. 11, 112, 115; Anne Llewellyn Barstow, "On Studying Witchcraft as Women's History: A Historiography of the European Witch Persecutions," Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion, (Fall, 1988): 13, 17 See also Barstow, Witchcraze: A New History of European Witch Hunts, (New York: Pandora, 1994).

12. "A Tryal of Witches, at the Assizes held at Bury St. Edmunds, for the county of Suffolk; on the 10th day of March, 1664, before Sir Matthew Hale, Kt, then Lord Chief Baron of His Majesties Court of Exchequer. Taken by a person then attending

Chief Baron of His Majesties Court of Exchequer. Taken by a person then attending the court." London, William Shrewsbury, at the Bible in Duck-Lane, 1682.

13. "The second part of *The boy of Bilson; or A true and particular relation of the imposter Susanna Fowles, wife of John Fowles of Hammersmith, in the county of Middlesex, who pretended her self possess'd with the devil. . .The whole being writ and attested by Robert Howson, clerk, Captain John Bonsey and Mr. Nicholas Wade.*" London, E. Whitlock, 1698.

14. "A relation of the diabolical practices of above twenty wizards and witches of the sheriffdom of Renfrew in the kingdom of Scotland, contain'd in their tryalls, examinations, and confessions, and for which several of them have been executed this present year." London, printed for Hugh Newman, 1697.

15. "Sadducismus debellatus; or, A true narrative of the sorceries and witchcrafts exercis'd by the devil and his instruments upon Mrs. Christian Shaw, daughter of Mr. John Shaw, of Bargarran, in the county of Renfrew in the West of Scotland, from Aug. 1696 to Apr. 1697. . .Together with reflexions upon witchcraft in general, and the learned arguments of the lawyers. . .at the trial of seven of those witches who were condemned. . .London, printed for H. Newman and A. Bell, 1698,

16. Three chapbooks illustrated the career of Jane Wenham. "A full and impartial account of the discovery of sorcery and witchcraft practis'd by Jane Wenham of Walkerne in Hertfordshire upon the bodies of Anne Thorn, Ann Street, etc.; the proceedings against her. . .Also her tryal at the assizes at Hertford before Mr. Justice Powell, where she was found guilty of felony and witchcraft, and received sentence of death for the same, March 4, 1711-12." By Francis Bragge. 5th edition, London, printed for E. Curll, 1712. "Witchcraft farther display'd: containing i. An account of the witchcraft practis'd by Jane Wenham of Walkerne in Hertfordshire, since her condemnation, upon the bodies of Anne Thorn and Anne Street; . . .ii. An answer to the most general objections against the being and power of witches, with some remarks upon the case of Jane Wenham in particular. . .To which are added The tryals of Florence Newton. . .1661; as also of two witches. . .in Suffolk, anno. 1664, before Sir Matthew Hale. . ." By Francis Bragge. London, printed for E. Curll. 1712. "The impossibility of witchcraft; plain proving from Scripture and reason that there never was a witch, and that it is both irrational and impious to believe there ever was. In which the depositions against Jane Wenham, lately try'd and condemn'd for a witch, at Hertford, are confuted and expos'd." London, J. Baker, 1712. Phyllis J. Guskin, "The Context of Witchcraft: The Case of Jane Wenham (1712)," *Eighteenth Century Studies*, (1981):

17. Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, pp. 60-61.

18. "The History of the Lancashire Witches, Containing the Manner of their

becoming such, their Enchantments, Spells, Revels, Merry Pranks, Railing of Storms and Tempests, Riding on Winds, etc. and the Entertainments and Frolics which happened amongst them. With the Loves and Humours of Roger and Dorothy. Also, Treatise of Witches in general, conducive to mirth and Recreation." The Dacey firm reproduced this popular story, also by J. Bence in Wotton-Underedge at about 1725, and in Derby about 1790-1800.

20. Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh, John G. Rule, E. P. Thompson, and Cal Winslow, Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth Century England, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975); all references here are to the chapter by Douglas Hay, "Property, Authority and the Criminal Law," pp. 17-63; specific references here to pages 24 and 25. David Underdown, A Free-Born People: Politics and the Nation in Seventeenth-Century England, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 213-218. Joanna Innes and John Styles, "The Crime Wave: Recent Writing on Crime and Criminal Justice in Eighteenth Century England," Journal of British Studies, 25, (October, 1986), pp. 380-435.

21. The work of Amartya Sen on famine and entitlement has just recently won him the Nobel Prize. Amartya Sen, Poverty and Famines, (Oxford Clarendon Press, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1981. Peter King, "Gleaners, Farmers and the Failure of Legal Sanctions in England, 1750-1850," Past and Present, 125 (1989): 116-150.

22. Thompson, Customs in Common. Studies in Traditional Popular Culture, (New York: The New Press, 1991), p. 298; For other treatments of the crowd see Dale Edward Williams, "Morals, Markets and the English Crowd in 1766," Past and Present, 104 (1984): 56-73; Andrew Charlesworth and Adrian J. Randall, "Comment: Morals Markets and the English Crowd in 1766," Past and Present, 114 (1987): 200-213. Robert W. Malcolmson, Life and Labour in England, 1700-1780, (London: Hutchinson, 1981), pp. 115-116.

23. John Bohstedt, "Gender Household and Community Politics: Women in English Riots, 1790-1810," Past and Present, 120 (1988): 89, 90. Thompson, Customs in Common, pp. 233, 312, 323, 332, 335-336. Thompson remarked that 'these women appear to have belonged to some pre-history of their sex before its Fall, and to have been unaware that they should have waited for some two hundred years for their Liberation,' p. 234. Bohstedt, Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 12.

24. Ian Bell, Literature and Crime in Augustan England, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 65.

25. ??

26. J. M. Beattie, "Crime and the Courts in Surrey, 1736-1753," appearing in J. S. Cockburn, Crime in England: 1550-1800, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 185, 186; John Rule, Albion's People: English Society, 1714-1815, (London and New York: Longman, 1992, p. 226.
27. Peter Linebaugh, The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 91-92; 101-102; Rule, Albion's People, pp. 226, 228, 230, 231.
28. Robert W. Malcolmson, "A set of ungovernable people': the Kingswood colliers in the eighteenth century," in John Brewer and John Styles, An Ungovernable People. The English and their law in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, (London, etc: Hutchinson: 1980), pp. 85, 89. In fen communities, in many industrial towns and villages, in forest and waste areas as well as areas of eastern London, authorities had a hard time enforcing order. Colliers or coal miners rebelled against authority and demonstrated solidarity. Peter King, "Decision-Makers and Decision-Making in the English Criminal Law, 1750-1800," The Historical Journal, 27 (1984): 51-55, quote on page 52.
29. Hay, "Property, Authority, and the Criminal Law," Albion's Fatal Tree, pp., 17, 18.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37.
31. Hay, "Property, Authority, and the Criminal Law," pp. 35, 36, 39, 42. 43.
32. Gattrell discounts Thomas Lacqueur's theory of a carnival atmosphere at executions. V. A. C. Gattrell, The Hanging Tree, Execution and the English People, 1770-1868, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 40, 205. David Vincent, Literacy and Popular Culture, England, 1750-1914, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 208.
33. Gattrell, The Hanging Tree, pp. 119, 124, 168 and ff., 183. If, according to the journalist Henry Maydew, trades people in nineteenth-century London bought execution ballads, it is not a rash assumption stretch such purchases back to the eighteenth century.
34. Lennard J. Davis, Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 130, 134.
35. Vincent, Literacy and Popular Culture, pp. 205-207.
36. Frank McLynn, Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, 1992), p. 96. Linebaugh, The

London Hanged, pp. 58-59; Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century, (London: Penguin Books, revised edition, 1990), p. 252. About 200 to 900 prostitutes were prosecuted yearly.

37. McLynn, Crime and Punishment, pp. 97, 101.

38. Ibid., pp. 98, 99, 102; Linebaugh, The London Hanged, p. 146.

39. McLynn, Crime and Punishment, Chapter 6 on Women is useful and helpful.

40. J. M. Beattie, "The Criminality of Women in Eighteenth Century England," Journal of Social History, 8 (1975): 96, 98, 99.

41. Ibid., pp. 83-84; 90, 92, 93.

42. Garthine Walker, "Women, theft and the world of stone goods," appearing in Jennifer Kermode and Garthine Walker, Women, crime and the courts in early modern England, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 82-86; 94, 95, 98, 99.

43. McLynn, Crime and Punishment, pp. 117, 118, 128, 131, 132. Bell, Literature and Crime in Augustan England, pp. 98, 99, 100, 191. Between 1749 and 1771, only two executions out of 678 in London and Middlesex involved rape. Evidence suggests that men who attempted rape suffered a greater chance of being convicted than actually guilty men. Cynthia Herrup, The Common Peace, Participation and the criminal law in seventeenth-century England, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 150.

44. Ibid., pp. 98, 99, 100, 191.

45. J. A. Sharpe, "Domestic Homicide in Early Modern England," The Historical Journal, 24, #1 (1981): 31-33.

46. Ibid., pp. 34-38.

47. Ibid., pp. 41-45. See also Elizabeth, Foyster, "A Laughing Matter? Marital Discord and Gender Control in Seventeenth Century England," Rural History.

48. Anna Clark, Women's Silence, Men's violence: Sexual Assault in England, 1770-1845, (London and New York: Pandora, 1987), pp. 188-191.

49. Ibid., pp. 193, 194. Sharpe, "Domestic Homicide," p. 46.

50. McLynn, Crime and Punishment, p. 111-113; Malcolmson, "Infanticide in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 191, 172, 205-7; Linebaugh, The London Hanged, pp. 147, 148.
51. Lincoln Faller, "Criminal Opportunities in the Eighteenth Century: The 'Ready-Made' Contexts of the Popular Literature on Crime," in Critical Essays on Daniel Defoe, Roger D. Lund, ed., (London: G. K. Hall, 1997), p. 35.
52. Faller, Turned to account, The forms and functions of criminal biography in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. xi. The comment on criminals as a useable social resource was gleaned from the anthropologist Emile Durkheim.
53. Ibid., p. xi.
54. Ibid., pp. 4-6.
55. Ibid., p. 12. Faller, "Criminal Opportunities," p. 37.
56. Peter Lake, "Deeds against Nature: Cheap Print, Protestantism and Murder in Early Seventeenth Century England," appearing in Peter Lake and Kevin Sharpe, Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England, (London: Macmillan, 1994). Faller, Turned to account, p. x; Richetti, Popular Fiction Before Richardson: Narrative Patterns, 1700-1739 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 27-34. Robert R. Singleton, "English Criminal Biography, 1651-1722," Harvard Library Bulletin, 18, (1970), p. 64; Robert Mayer, History and the early English novel, Matters of fact from Bacon to Defoe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 201-205.
57. Faller, Turned to account, p. x.
58. Peter Lake, "Deeds against Nature," pp. 263, 267. Faller, Turned to account, p. x; Richetti, Popular Fiction, p. 24.
59. Lake, "Deeds against Nature."
60. Richetti, Popular Fiction, pp. 27-34; Bell, Crime and Literature, p. 66.
61. Richetti, Ibid., p. 23. F. W. Chandler, The Literature of Roguery, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1907).
62. Bell, Crime and Literature, p. 66.
63. Lincoln Faller, Turned to account, pp. 203, 204, 207-8.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 27; Mayer, History and the early English novel, pp. 201-205.
65. Paul J. DeGategno, "Daniel Defoe's Newgate Biographies: An Economic Crisis," Clio, 13, #2 (1984): 157, Faller, Turned to account, p. 201.
66. DeGategno, p. 159; Paula Backscheider, Daniel Defoe: Ambition and Innovation, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1987), pp. 476, 477.
67. Richetti, Popular Fiction, p. 36-39.
68. John Rietz, "Criminal Ms-representation: Moll Flanders and Female Criminal Biography," Studies in the Novel, 23 (1991), p. 184 and entire article.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 193.
70. "The Weeping Mother." In Four Parts. Printed and Sold by J. Evans, No. 41, Long Lane, West Smithfield, London, 1792-1800, 8 pages. The Blasphemers Punishments or the Cries of the Son of God to the Whole World, Being a true and faithful Account of one Elizabeth Dover, a Knight and Baronet's Daughter, Twenty-One Years of Age, who never would believe that there was either God or Devil, Heaven or Hell, or any future State after this Life was ended; till last Sunday was three Weeks, as she was walking in the Fields with some of her wicked Companions swearing, if there is a Devil let me see him, that I may know him another time," 8 pages.
71. "Dreadful News from Taunton-Dean: God's Judgment against Jealous Persons, Being the whole Account of the most Horrid Murder Committed by Sir William Watts, Who most cruelly murdered his Lady, and two small Children. For which he was tried and cast at the last Assizes and Executed for the same. With the Solemn Declaration he made at the Place of Execution. And the Substance of a Sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Butler," 8 pages. Another version: "God's Judgment Against Jealous Persons being a whole account of the most horrid murder committed by Sir. William Watts who most cruelly murdered his lady and two small children and the substance of a sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Butler."
72. "A Dreadful Example for Wicked Husbands, Or, the Virtuous Wife in Distress. Being a true Relation of Mr. John Fox, living in the town of Lynn, in Norfolk," in 8 pages.
73. "The Pathetic Sufferings of Louisa Harwood, Who was seduced by Lieutenant Harris, and Persuaded to leave her Parents, who kept a Farm in Northamptonshire and come to London. Her Adventures there.--The Distresses she experienced on



being left by her Lover who was ordered to join his Ship--She followed him to Portsmouth where she was necessitated to pawn some of the furniture from her Lodging, for which she was taken before at Magistrate, committed to Goal, tried, convicted and order for Transportation, etc. etc. To which is Added A Song, composed and sung by herself while in Prison. In a Letter written to her disconsolate parents." London, Printed and Sold by J. Davenport, West Smithfield, 6 pages.

74. Tewkesbury chapbooks, in addition to their entertaining fare, published the following chapbooks that focused on crime: 'The Oxfordshire Tragedy,' 'The Northamptonshire Tragedy;' "The Somersetshire Tragedy: or, The unnatural mother; "The unfortunate lovers: or, John True and Susan Mead."

75. "The Wicked Wife! Being a true and particular account of a barbarous murder, committed a few days ago, at Swanley, in Gloucestershire, by James Watkins, and one Mrs. Reed upon the body of her husband, a gentleman of fortune," Sold at No. 42, Long Lane, London, 1780-1800? Date notation from the Harding Catalog. "The Remarkable trial of Miss Mary Laws, near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. Who poisoned her father Sir. W. Laws, two brothers and a sister, . . . Together with an account of a sermon which was preached on the occasion. Likewise an excellent prayer." London, 1740-1780?

76. Faller, Turned to account, pp. 28, 72, 74. "Miss Mary Blandy's Own Account, Of the Affaird between Her and Mr. Cranstoun, from the Commencement of their Acquaintance, in the Year 1746, to the Death of her Father, in August 1751, with all the Circumstances leading to that unhappy Event. To which is added some original Letters: Together with an exact Relation of her Behaviour whilst under Sentence of Death, and a Copy of the Declaration signed by herself, in the Presence of two Clergymen, two Days before her Execution. Published at her dying Request, with a Letter from a Clergyman to Miss Blandy and her Answer." Oxford Printed, London re-printed in the year 1752, 48 pages.

77. Faller, Turned to account, pp. 75, 77.

78. "Miss Mary Blandy's Own Account," p. 3.

79. "The Genuine Tryal at Large of Mary Blandy, Spinster, for Poisoning her own Father, Francis Blandy, Gent. Town--Clerk of Henley upon Thames, Oxfordshire, at the Assizes held at Oxford for the County of Oxford, on Tuesday the Third of March, 1752, Before the Hon. Mr. Baron Legge, and The Hon. Mr. Baron Smythe." Oxford Printed, London re-printed, 1752, 31 pages.

80. Faller, Turned to Account, p. 111.

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-115.

82. "The Genuine Histories, of the Life and Transactions, of John Swann and Eliz. jeffries, for the Murder of her Uncle, at Walthamstow in Essex. And Miss Mary Blandy, for the Most horrid Parricide committed upon the Body of her own Father, at Henley-upon-Thames, Oxfordshire. Containing the following material Particulars. Published at her dying Request." London: Printed and Sold by T. Bailey, 40 pages.

83. "Authentick Memoirs of the Wicked Life and Transactions of Elizabeth Jeffryes, Spinster. Who was Executed on Saturday, March 28, 1752, on Epping-Forest, near Walthamstow. For being concern'd in the Murder of her late Uncle, Mr. Joseph Jeffryes: with The Particulars of her Behaviour, during the Time of her Confinement, before her Tryal; her Confession after her Conviction, to the two Divines, Mr. Tindall and Mr. Griffiths; and of every Circumstance that Occured from the Time of her being acquainted that the Dead Warrant was come down to the Time of her Execution. Also A Full Account of the Life, Behaviour, and Confession of John Swan, who was Executed with her, for committing the said Murder." London, Printed and Sold by T. Bailey, 28 pages.

p. 12.

84. "A true and particular account of the cruel and inhuman murder, that was committed by one Susanna Morton, on her bastard child, Likewise the most remarkable and shocking account of Ann Hoon. . .for the murder of her infant child." Derby or London, 1796

85. "The Fatal Effects of Inconstancy Verified in the Life and Uncommon Proceedings of Miss Broderick, who was tried, on July 17, 1795, at Chelmsford Assizes for the Murder of Mr. Errington, Her Lover, by shooting him with a Pistol, and proved insane to the Satisfaction of a crowded Audience, as appeared by the Clapping of Hands on hearing the Verdict given." London, Printed for Robert Turner in January, 1796.

86. "An Account of two barbarous Murders. A full and particular Account of the Murder of Mr. Winter. Painter and Glazier near Nightengale Lane who was murdered by Mary Jones, a woman with whom he cohabitated at different times for fourteen years. She first knocked him down, and afterwards stabbed him with a Knife at the Royal Oak in Whitechapel on Saturday night as they were returning from Bow Fair." another account is also listed although not printed, dated at 1798.

87. "A True and Particular Account of Margaret Nicholson's Attempt to Stab his most gracious Majesty, George III, as he alighted from his Carriage, at St. James's, on the 2d of August, 1786. In which is Given An Authentic Account of all the remarkable Transactions through Life, particularly her being apprehended and her

Examination before the Privy Council, and by Dr. Monro, concerning the Motives which induced her to attempt so horrid a Crime." London: Printed and sold by T. Sabine. This was hurried into print to take advantage of the notoriety and scandal caused by the event, 32 pages.

88. "A Circumstantial Account of that unfortunate Young Lady Miss Bell, otherwise Sharpe, Who died at Marybone on Saturday October 4, Containing A Series of very extraordinary Facts, which have never yet transpired; especially her remarkable relation to Captain Thomas Holland, of the manner she came by her Wounds, to whom (and to whom only) she related all the Particulars of that horrid Transaction." London: Printed for T. Trueman. 1761.

89. The Life, Trial, etc. of Robert Hallam, Convicted at the last Hampshire Assizes, for the Wilful Murder of his Wife, who was big with Child, by inhumanely, barbarously and cruelly Beating her, and Throwing her out of a One Pair of Stairs Window. Including His Dying Confessions; and the Particulars of his Behaviour at the Place of Execution, etc., etc., as related by a Person who visited him while in Goal, and was Present at his Execution." Printed and sold by J. Davenport, West-Smithfield, about 1800-1802.

90. "Innocence Betrayed; or The Perjured Lover. Being a true and melancholy Account of Miss Sarah Morton, a rich Farmer's Daughter, near Cambridge; famous for her Beauty and other accomplishments: who was decoyed from her parents by W-----M-----Esq; who was debauched, and then left her to Poverty and Ruin: when being driven to the greatest distress, she on Friday last swallowed some Poison, and expired on the greatest agonies, at Three o'Clock on Saturday. Printed by M. Bowley, No. 96, Aldersgate St, London.

91. "Murder Found Out, and Cruelty Rewarded: Being a true and faithful Narrative, Containing the History of Richard Sutton and Sally Miles, Near Dartmouth, in Devonshire." London: Printed by T. Sabine, No. 81, Shoe-Lane.

92. "The True and Interesting History of Mr. and Mrs. Hartley, or Innocence Preserved Shewing the Fatal Effects of Jealousy and its Baneful Effects on the Human Mind," S. Bailey, No. 50, Bishopsgate, London, 26 pages.

93. "The Pathetic Sufferings of Louisa Harwood, Who was seduced by Lieutenant Harris, and Persuaded to leave her Parents, who kept a Farm in Northamptonshire and come to London. Her Adventures--there--The Distresses she experienced on being left by her Lover who was ordered to join his Ship--She followed him to Portsmouth where she was necessitated to pawn some of the furniture from her Lodging, for which she was taken before a Magistrate, committed to Gaol, tried, convicted and order for Transportation, etc., etc. To which is Added A Song, composed and sung by herself while in Prison. In a Letter written to her

disconsolate parents." London, Printed and Sold by J. Davenport, West Smithfield, 6 pages.

94. "The Servant Maid's Tragedy, Or, a dreadful Warning to all wild and thoughtless Young Women," Sold at No. 42, Long-Lane, 8 pages. .

95. "An Authentic, Candid and Circumstantial Narrative of the Astonishing Transactions at Stockwell In the County of Surry, on Monday and Tuesday, the 6th and 7th Days of January 1772, Containing a Series of the most surprising and unaccountable Events that ever happened, which continued from first to last, upwards of Twenty Hours, and at different Places." Published with the Content and Approbation of the Family and other Parties concerned, to Authenticate which, the original Copy is signed by them. London: Printed for W. Bailey, 1772, 23 pages.

96. "The Unjust Man Rewarded; Being a Dreadful Warning To all Perjured and forsworn People." Printed and sold in Aldermay Church Yard, Bow Lane, London.

97. "The Trial of Betty the Cook-maid, Before the Worshipful Justice Feeler, for Laying a Bed in the Morning." Printed and sold in London. Without a listed printer, we can only speculate about its origin; 8 pages.

98. Lincoln B. Faller, Crime and Defoe, A New Kind of Writing, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 52, 106. Pat Rogers, "Classics and Chapbooks," in Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England, Isabel Rivers, Ed., (Leicester: Leicester University Press, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), pp. 40, 41. Many chapbooks circulated the exploits of the infamous Moll and the following list does not claim to be exhaustive. "The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders," printed in Edinburgh, J. Morren; "The Fortunes and Misfortunes. . .who was born in Newgate, and during a life of continued variety for sixty years, was 17 times a whore, 5 times a wife, whereof once to her own brother, 12 years a thief, 11 times in Bridewell, 9 times in New-Prison, 11 times in Woodstreet Compter, 5 times in the Poultry Compter, 14 times in the Gate-House, 25 times in Newgate. . .8 years a transport to Virginia., At last grew rich, lived honest and died penitent," London, Aldermay Church Yard. Faller suggests the following: "The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders," 1750, "The Life and Actions of Moll Flanders Containing her Settlement in Ireland," 1723; "Fortune's Fickle Distribution." Another version of the novel tried to make the infamous Moll into a more 'presentable' creature: "The History of Laetitia Atkins, vulgarly known as Moll Flanders," 1776. The Dicey firm put out several versions of Defoe's novel in Manchester, Stirling, and Newcastle.

99. This version by J. Morren of Edinburgh, a copy of which was also printed by Aldermay Church yard.

100. Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel, Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), p. 107.

101. Mayer, History and the early English novel, p. 204; Backscheider, Defoe, A Life, p. 482; Gerald Howson, The Thief-Taker General: The Rise and Fall of Jonathan Wild, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970), pp. 167, 170.

102. Backscheider, Defoe, A Life, pp. 485, 487, 533. Roxana can be seen as a discussion of gambling, while Colonel Jack emphasized the need for young boys to be educated.

103. Faller, Turned to account, p. 201; Crime and Defoe, pp. 72, 73.

104. Backscheider, Defoe, A Life, pp. 537, 538, 540.

105. Watt, The Rise of the Novel, pp. 95, 96, 132.

106. Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800, (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1979), p. 197. Richetti, Popular Fiction Before Richardson, pp. 25, 26.

107. Watt, The Rise of the Novel, pp. 108-109.

108. "Particulars of the Noted Transactions of the Notoriously Celebrated Miss Robertson and Miss Sharp who Pretended to be Heiress to large Estates in Scotland and Lived in the highest Style; and, under various Pretences, had the address to obtain Cash and A property from several Tradesmen, to the amount of upwards of 20,000l. To which is added, A New Song on the above Subject." Printed and sold by J. Davenport, West Smithfield, 8 pages.

109. "Sophia, or The History of Miss Martin: Being, An Account of the Various Vicissitudes and Misfortunes From the time of her Absenting herself from her parents, till her Death. A Pathetic Tale." London: Printed for M. Basson, Bethnal-Green, 1808, 24 pages.

110. David Cressy, "Gender Trouble and Crossdressing in Early Modern England," Journal of British Studies, 345 (October, 1996), pp. 453, 461, 464.

111. "An Authentic narrative of the Most Remarkable Adventures, and Curious Intrigues, Exhibited in the Life of Miss Fanny Davies, The celebrated modern Amazon: Who received Sentence of Death, on the 6th of March, 1786, at Chelmsford Assizes by Mr. Justice Ashurst for stealing above 1250l. in money and

Notes, from Mr. Wrigglesworth, Grasier, at the Three Rabbits, a lone Public House, on the Rumford Road, near London, after having spent an agreeable Evening with him, under the Character of a Horse-Dealer, in Man's Apparel." London, Printed and Sold by W. Bailey, No. 42 Bishopsgate Street. Harvard Catalog dated this at about 1787. Another copy printed by T. Read of London in 1786 had the following information in the title: "Embellished with a beautiful frontispiece. Interspersed with interesting moral reflections and entertaining anecdotes, delineating her amorous parleys with her kind keepers." in 32 pages. Another title: "The female Amazon, or a genuine account of the most remarkable adventures, and complicated intrigues, displayed in the life of the celebrated and notorious Miss Fanny Davies, Who received sentence of death at the last Chelmsford assizes by Mr. Justice Wrigglesworth, a county grazier. Embellished. . . frontispiece. Interspersed. . . her kind keepers. . ." By Mr. Thompson, who was with her in prison, Printed for T. Read, London, 1786.

112. "Particulars of the noted Transactions of the Notoriously Celebrated Miss Robertson and Miss Sharp," pp. 7, 8.

113. Ibid., p. 8.

114. Linebaugh, The London Hanged, p. 98.

115. Lake, "Deeds Against Nature. . .," appearing in Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England, Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, eds., (London: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 257-259, 266, 267.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### FULMINATIONS AND POLEMICS

A cacophony of voices railed against the behavior of women in the 1790s and early years of the nineteenth century. The diversity of these outbursts present an organizational challenge: how to present this material. Sorted into this chapter are chapbooks that displayed a hardened attitude toward women and others that display clear misogynistic sentiments. There exists a thin line or porous area between outright misogynistic statements and depictions of women as mean-spirited, vengeful, given to rage and jealousy, and conspiratorial in their views. Subtle edges in some stories reveal a less than admirable attitude toward women, while still others testify to the vicissitudes of life that women were expected to endure with fortitude, piety and Christian meekness. These polemics were studded with examples of the route to be avoided and the road to be taken.

Although only two examples display the chapbook format used to push the reform agenda, their existence is a significant reminder of a secular reform effort that reached to the level of the popular culture. The second group, Traditional Laments and Paeans to Lost Virtue and the Countryside, include those stories with women whose chose the wrong path in life--usually walking the streets. In some of these depictions, women are indeed mean-spirited and vengeful. The third group, Venomous Polemics and Vile Complaints, include four chapbooks with diatribes against the female sex. These may have been the work of rejected men or those who saw women as out of control. Nevertheless, their splenetic outbursts coupled with secondary sources about the 1790s tell us that a climactic change occurred. Finally there are two popular abridgments included, Arabella by Charlotte Lennox and "The Fair Jilt" by Aphra Behn. Although the condensed version of Arabella was published in 1774 or 1775, its inclusion here testifies to the changed atmospherics that occurred in the later decades of the eighteenth century. And finally, there is the story of a survivor, Betty Bolaine, a woman who gave the word frugality new

meaning. What emerges is a negative picture of a self-centered woman who knew that no one else looked out for number one.

Misogynism is a touchy topic. Feminists assert its historical tentacles and long run in Western European culture, while others would minimize its grasp. For historians, particularly those who are sensitive to the operation of a patriarchal culture that restricted what women could do, this presents a dilemma: how to assess this phenomenon without overreaching. This paper summarizes research on the image of women in popular literature--eighteenth century chapbooks with misogynistic sentiments are only one part of the mix.<sup>1</sup> These chapbooks were published at the end of the eighteenth century. Some are from the early years of the next.

The introductory pages of Chapter Nine reviewed the double standard. In a 1979 article, Keith Thomas surveyed the forces, institutions, and events that shaped the relationship of men and women, not just in England but in all of Europe and in many patriarchal societies. The double standard existed since medieval times buttressed by feudal law and protected what men wanted. Ecclesiastical courts supported a definition of marriage that allowed women to be exchanged much like commodities with their value determined by their property and dowry.<sup>2</sup>

Christian doctrine held that men and women were equal in the sight of God. Although fully consistent about the treatment of all God's children, Puritans nevertheless did not intend that women subdue the natural rulers--men. Images of a woman ruler revealed in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, were enough to persuade Puritans to bestow on future generations of believers an 'over-anxious masculine authoritarianism.'<sup>3</sup>

The work of Joseph Swetnam, 'Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, forward and unconstant women,' may have been intended for a sophisticated London audience, but its popularity demanded ten reprints up to 1637. It condemned woman's weak and immoral behavior, particularly focusing on the masculine attire that some women chose to wear. Pamphleteers railed against such fashion and against the



moral failings of the court of James I, its splendid immorality, its effeminacy, and the lack of vigor in men. In addition, the question of gender inversion, symbolized by dress, and social inversion became linked in the minds of critics to the early Stuarts. Despite attacks upon any change from sanctioned behavior, many women writers of Jacobean England established their own voices within that culture. <sup>4</sup>

Puritan anxieties about libertine behavior were put to the test during the Restoration. Its permissive society encouraged openness in literature and the theater and fostered a climate in which women could write openly and for money. Women writers of Jacobean England wrote for money in a culture with antifemist and misogynist tendencies. <sup>5</sup> Women novelists such as Aphra Behn, Delariviere Manley, and Eliza Haywood, the 'fair triumvirate of wits' had to work, but they distinguished themselves by their prolific and serious works.

In addition, the English displayed anxiety about 'petticoat government.' The English people saw in Stuart absolutism the work of power-driven if frivolous women. The eighteenth-century Hanovarian courts saw their share of power-hungry royal women, and that was the subject of much gossip in royal circles and well beyond the court. Although the actual amount of power that could be wielded by any of the royal ladies or mistresses was small, the English disliked the improper use of female power and were easily convinced that such abuses occurred. <sup>6</sup>

Insinuations as well as outright hostility against women remained embedded within the culture. One of Oliver Goldsmith's stock characters, a Chinese philosopher, suggested a Russian custom that made prospective wives understand their place in a marriage. Before the wedding the bride's father took a cudgel to her and then gave that cudgel and his daughter to the prospective groom. As a gesture of submission, the bride was expected to genuflect to the groom. <sup>7</sup> Comments or jokes usually convey intent, even if indirectly. Seldom are they unconnected to the culture. This comparison may have relayed, even sarcastically or with a certain relish, the belief that English women should genuflect.

English men felt that they indulged women in a paradise for women. What did the English prize in women? How did they expect them to behave ideally? A 1752 want-ad that advertised for a wife listed attributes that called forth the type of behavior expected by advocates of the culture of sensibility. Refinement, elegance, intelligence, grace, charm, as well as a simple love of country life were the chosen prerequisites. Urban living was associated with fashion and entertainments that were incompatible with country living. Cities that encouraged lust for material possessions and other pleasures should be avoided. Simple country life evoked happiness in wives, not a commercialized culture; later sentimental fiction would celebrate simple country virtues. <sup>8</sup>

The 'culture of propriety and domesticity' began its extended run in the 1760s and 1770s. This set of cultural norms dictated life for middle class women and those allied with the gentry/aristocracy. Modesty, honesty, and sincerity were the main ingredients of this late eighteenth-century 'moral revolution.' <sup>9</sup> Thus it comes as no surprise that chapbooks, penned by more educated people, endorsed such a code. The previous chapters examined post-1750 chapbooks that conformed to the dictates of the culture of sensibility.

The shift to a society in which individuals craved consumer choices involved a longer time span than historians have conceded. Puritans discouraged the desire and consumption of material goods. The growth of home demand and the pursuit of consumer goods coincided uneasily in the seventeenth century and the Puritan Commonwealth. The growth of individualism during 'Tawney's century' hastened the quest for self-gratification that we retrospectively recognize as characteristic of many individuals in eighteenth-century England. <sup>10</sup>

The spiritualized household prized by Puritans encouraged reading. Eventually many middle class women controlled the domestic scene and made their homes the centers of consumption that Puritans initially discouraged. In the course of the eighteenth century, debates about the role of women revolved around the notion of women's proper place. The majority of women were propertyless, poor,

and lacking in political rights. In addition, the pace of urbanization lured young women and men to large cities where scrutiny of their routines was not possible.<sup>11</sup>

Given the anxiety about the decline of the population of Great Britain, a 'cult of prolific maternity' promised that Britain would have an adequate supply of young men to fight in her wars. Lying-in hospitals and schemes to promote breast-feeding were advanced by those who saw population as the basis for the nation's strength. Writing on the subject of motherhood and breast-feeding, Ruth Perry alleges that this domesticated environment elevated motherhood and ideologies promoting companionate marriage. Companionate marriage for those who could afford it may have equipped women to be more attractive companions for their husbands and more able to fulfill their needs.<sup>12</sup>

Although the need to identify women with domestic virtue and assign them a separate, private sphere derived from long-existing cultural assumptions, a series of developments in the 1770s and 1780s exacerbated this tendency. The American and French Revolutions shattered English complacency. Reform elements within the artisan and commercial classes had been relatively quiescent and given to idle talk. Tom Paine's Rights of Man response to Edmund Burke's conservative defense of order challenged readers. If the skill of literacy was a previously 'unused talent,' then the sudden surge of interest in Paine's political tract put literacy to some use. Jacobin societies, local printers and booksellers circulated Paine's work. The government prosecution of Paine for sedition only advertised his work to greater numbers of potential readers.<sup>13</sup>

The ideologies of both revolutions promised an enlarged framework for political participation. In the face of these threatening prospects, those who wished to keep women in their place highlighted their weaknesses, their limitations, and the differences between the sexes. Urbanization also attenuated apprehension about the public visibility of women. In the fifty years following the American Revolution, British women played a magnified public role and became part of nationalistic displays and royal events.

Change is alarming. Historians such as Roy Porter see Georgian England as 'pockmarked' by disorder. Some historians suggest that the English were an 'ungovernable people.' Disturbances erupted quickly over local grievances. The rioters were not criminals but ordinary people taking justice into their own hands. The Jacobite Rebellions, Gordon Riots and other conflagrations were localized events that did not approach a national threat. Jacobite sympathies and later Jacobin agitations demonstrated that the English were a well-informed, raucous people who defended what they thought was theirs and what they thought was right. Their sudden surge of interest dissipated almost as quickly as it was aroused. <sup>14</sup>

The ruling class did not take kindly to defiance by obstreperous, free-born Englishmen. All too quickly England was at war with France, and the ruling class reacted against subversive threats to their prized sense of order. Reading could result in sedition and even atheism. Hence The Rights of Man was suppressed, radical booksellers were often hounded and put in jail, and three individuals-- Thomas Hardy, the politician not the author, Horne Tooke, and John Thelwell, were put on trial for disseminating Jacobin-inspired literature. <sup>15</sup>

Evangelicals who had sponsored Sunday Schools underestimated their pupils. Altick implied that the ruling class did not view the long-circulating chapbooks and ballads as threatening. Hannah More, however, described such books as 'vulgar and indecent penny books.' Local printers provided chapmen with Paine's Rights of Man to sell along with chapbooks and ballads. <sup>16</sup>

England in the late eighteenth century indulged in new forms of education. The credo of 'improvement' noted by historians as the ethos of the century sanctioned the growth of education for both men and women in addition to innovations in agricultural technology and advances in medical knowledge. The extension of education to females of either 'middling' or inferior status disturbed those who did not think that these women deserved such efforts. On the contrary through her tracts, Hannah More and others counseled resignation and acceptance of one's lot in life; any attempt to rise above one's prescribed station invited

harrowing consequences. Mrs. Sarah Trimmer, a founder of Sunday Schools, wanted girls to be enrolled in available schools entirely according to the status of their family or the occupation of their father. Trimmer, More and others expected the poor to endure life's agonies, fortified by the prescribed doses of virtue, while the rich enjoyed their deserved elegance. Hannah More personifies the type of individual who could not accept the dynamic mobility of a rapidly-industrializing society. More identified the 'temptation to rise in the world' with expanded opportunities that the lower orders dared not pursue.<sup>17</sup>

Since women are often expected to defend cultural values or serve as the adhering social cement, it is not surprising that in the turbulent later eighteenth century, traditional and conservative voices limited education for young women strictly according to hierarchies of class and status. Time-honored notions of place and status were not abandoned in the wake of overwhelming changes that broadened the base of opportunity and altered the social landscape.

Concern about the nature of female sexuality predated Victorian prudery, but in the 1790s, a full-fledged 'sex panic' developed. Panic literature stressed that the culmination of moral decay resulted in increased prostitution. Concerns about obstreperous women were hardly new. The image of a woman who wore the pants in the family terrorized the private moments of many a male. Popular literature beginning well before the eighteenth century made the cuckolded husband the object of fun.<sup>18</sup> An earlier chapter provides primary evidence of continuing dialogue or bickering, conjugal conflict and a less than happy home where the husband somewhat involuntarily acquiesced to a domineering wife. The castigation of ballads made the husband the object of ridicule and jokes. Ballads and chapbooks publicized the interruptions and eruptions that came with conjugal relationships and married life.

Reacting to the calamitous prospect of change, Hannah More and her associates published a series of Cheap Repository Tracts from 1795-1798 in order to disperse the conservative Christian message of virtue and humility. These

chapbooks, distributed by wealthy landowners, members of the clergy, and employers, advocated the restraint of women's sexuality. Women as the desexualized bearers of children were vital to the nation's future. If women were as passive, passionless, and disinterested in sex as moralists and political theorists hoped, then why was so much control of their sexuality necessary? <sup>19</sup>

It was painfully apparent that the French Revolution occurred in a nation corrupted by women such as Marie Antoinette. The foundation of English order as a masculinized nation was 'female chastity.' Only restrictions on a woman's sexuality provided the vital social cement. The reign of Amazons such as Marie Antoinette undermined a society. The chapbook vilification of the deposed French Queen can be seen as an English smear upon their adversary, but reflected real anxiety about gender roles. The chapbook included the accusation that she committed incest with her young son, the Dauphin. <sup>20</sup>

Even the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft included a nationalistic comment about the French. She felt compelled to add as a disclaimer some dedicatory words that identified French women as lacking in 'cleanliness and delicacy.' Her impassioned political statement should not necessarily be read as the fulminations of a feminist, but as the patriotic sentiments of an English woman. <sup>21</sup> Citizenship and civic virtue were not goals for men and men alone. Her very act serves as a powerful reminder of multiple identities and allegiances.

Additional evidence about a crisis in sexual harmony in the 1790s comes from court trials. Criminal conversation was another term for adultery. The wife was assumed to be the passive participant, usually tempted by her male lover. One man could sue another for alienation of his property--his wife. Public interest in such trials increased in the 1790s. Although such suits could be initiated until the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act, the high tide of filings and proceedings was the 1790s. <sup>22</sup>

The Afterword to The Romantics, written by Dorothy Thompson, his wife, mentioned E. P. Thompson's planned investigation of the 1790s. He intended to study the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft and her ideas for social change. This

focus, in addition to his study of the English working class suggests that the events of the 1790s percolated on many levels. <sup>23</sup> Thompson contended that a Jacobin tradition of equality, self-help and education, and a philosophy of republicanism were imported into England. <sup>24</sup> In addition to radical thought, the development of working-class consciousness and a tradition of religious dissent, women like Mary Wollstonecroft started writing. Despite the fact that women writers came into their own, the dangerous currents of sensibility threatened the ruling class and more conservative English people in the tumultuous 1790s. Sensibility had the potential for ruinous fantasy as well as a condition governed by reason. Wollstonecroft attempted a reasoned approach to this dilemma, but articulated a strong defense of women's faculties and insisted that women be subjected to the same experiences as men. She realized that nurturant instincts domesticated the family, but she still saw women as defenders of public virtue and warriors in the field. But a volume tolerated in 1792, however, was no longer acceptable in 1798. The British were confronting events across the Channel and mortified by fears of an invasion. <sup>25</sup>

Nancy Johnson's nuanced approach to the anti-Jacobin novel of the 1790s provides yet another interpretation of that tumultuous decade. The vain ambition associated with France spilled into novels, but Johnson argues persuasively that the fear of French values seeping into English culture disguised a threat closer to home. The reform movement and Dissenters advocated a changed social contract that emphasized the individual at the expense of the economic system. Allowing men and especially women to fulfill their desires posed grave consequences. The 'French Threat' implied sexual behavior that clearly licensed choices. The figure that often symbolized that threat was a French rogue who preyed upon and seduced a young English woman or wife. Such strains may well have been exacerbated by the climate of the 1790s, but they can be traced to an earlier time. The pursuit of self-aggrandizement and the associated vices of greed, pride, and debauchery also

diminished the strength of the family. Women were central to its vitality, but men undermined it as well.<sup>26</sup>

Novels of the 1790s especially revealed this theme, but English chapbooks reveal this strain prior to this period--as evidence by "The French Bite." In this chapbook, printed in 1749, a Marquis with adequate equipage including a chariot but no funds preyed upon English women. Many Sabine chapbooks, many printed in the 1780s and beyond, as well as others in this study celebrated family values. Men who left the innocent young girls of their youth and their better nature went from the countryside to the city. They led a rakish existence and misspent a better part of their lives, complete with extravagant wives. Many returned to the woman they had earlier and easily forsaken.

Kathryn Shevelow's discussion of Women and Print Culture emphasized the narrowing themes of femininity that dominated periodicals by the later eighteenth century. Early periodicals solicited women's contributions and carried on a dialogue with female readers. Later editors began to control that dialogue for their own purposes. Feminists would like to believe that access to print or involvement of women in an enfranchising culture contributes to liberation. But despite the increased numbers of women who visibly participated in a print culture, that culture increasingly represented women as confined within the home. Writing was an outlet. Shevelow's research on women's periodicals establishes a difference between the male and female reading public.<sup>27</sup> The authors or printers of chapbooks cited in this survey clearly intended them for female readers. Fortuitous endings of domestic harmony clearly came to those who stayed the course. Shevelow's conclusions about periodicals serve as a significant reminder that the liberation of women from men's definitions of their identity is not so easily achieved.

The invention of printing changed chapbooks. Drawing upon the Oral Tradition, early chapbooks celebrated the English past and the stories that ordinary English people knew. They enjoyed hearing those legends repeated. Later



chapbooks were written for immediate sale. Printers increasingly operated in an expanded, commercialized world--another way of saying that they were determined to make money.

Gender difference was acutely sensed in the 1790s. The sentimental model still existed, but there were other possibilities. These divergent paths presented a conflict within women and between men and women.<sup>28</sup> Other developments of a longer duration existed--a pervasive double standard and a continuing concern about 'petticoat government,' But the reverberations of the 1790s--the effort of reformers to provide sanitized reading material with women in their proper place, a full-fledged 'sex panic' over female sexuality, and nationalistic worries produced a climate of concern about the role of women which was fertile ground for blatantly misogynistic sentiments.

### The Chapbooks

A review of chapbooks from the 1790s strongly suggests that anxiety percolated to the level of the popular culture. The definition of 'misogynist' in the Oxford English Dictionary indicates hatred of women. Yet use of the term from 1620 on is not widespread. Richardson's employed in his 1748 version of Clarissa. The crude misogyny of earlier ballads was recognized by those who were sensitive to the nuances of popular culture and literature.

The goal here is to let the misogynistic sentiments 'hang out,'--to use a more popular term, but not to lean toward exaggerated statements or unwarranted assumptions. Popular culture and literature is not easily researched, given the paucity of the sources. Chapbooks were the reading material of the poor and lower classes, so an examination of their treatment of gender adds to the historical record. As mentioned earlier, chapbooks had their heyday in the eighteenth century. Their ephemeral nature forces the historian to rely on surviving copies. In addition, the shortage of paper in early modern England up to and including the eighteenth

century means that we have only a few examples left of this popular literature. Given an incomplete sample, we can only suggest that the surviving accounts indicate the tendencies and intent of popular literature and popular culture.<sup>29</sup>

The analyzed chapbooks follow in chronological order. As mentioned previously, the date of the first analyzed chapbook, 1749, suggests that use and exploitation of women was a theme pursued in print long before the 1790s.<sup>30</sup> Cavalier sentiments came from the mouth of a French man, posing as an aristocrat. Such a tactic does not let English men off the hook, but it was easier to tarnish the French with the brush of chauvinism. It created a more appealing story. A previously-analyzed chapbook describing the activities of one of the royal mistresses included a reference to the reaction of a lord to a 'brace of females' he had secured for the king. A disposition to use women for sexual purposes, to create a seraglio or harem, was clearly not confined to foreign and exotic places.

The main character, Marquis Dul-Bruce, a former Paris barber, stayed in England but six weeks, presented himself as a Frenchman of noble birth, and impressed others with his gaudy chariot and entourage of servants. Contriving to get himself introduced at court and into the circles of the French ambassador, his main concern was seducing women, whom he easily discarded after a brief assignation. One woman knew that asking for redress in court was useless. For a jury of husbands and an old judge would have no compassion for her situation. She decided to elicit compassion from this French imposter, but he casually dismissed her. Knowing that 'Ladies of Pleasure' could abscond with his money, he carefully watched his purse. He had a secretary procure 'fresh game' for him and had a footman 'reconnoiter the Fortress and take a View of the Strength.' He persuaded an old Bawd to do his bidding, and she quickly supplied him with suitable young women. He thanked the old Bawd profusely and promised compensation to one young and very attractive woman, but he took her with him as far as Dover and then abandoned her to shift for herself. He absconded from Dover, left England and left several people with substantial debts.<sup>31</sup>

While the English enjoyed a story that deprecated a Frenchman, the sentiments involving women struck a responsive chord. Women of the street were well-known at the time of publication, 1749. Indeed Henry Fielding, Bernard Mandeville, and others campaigned for changes in the law that would stop the victimization of prostitutes.<sup>32</sup> "The French Bite" offered readers a racy story that was also in tune with sentiments that marginalized women, suggested that they were the property of men, and therefore were liable to the types of sexual advances that this Frenchman casually but bluntly made. Such sentiments ran deep in English society, not unlike other Western societies.

### The Cloak of Reform

Two chapbooks provide examples of the reform impulse contained in a chapbook. In a moral polemic against drink, the family of Isaac Jenkins suffered because of his compulsion for alcohol. This chapbook departed from the usual English pattern that stressed only the marital or conjugal relationship.

Second, the misery endured by a gardener's daughter allowed the author, John Correy, a learned man and member of the Philological Society of Manchester, to promote a scheme for the improvement of women through education.

'The History of Isaac Jenkins, and Sarah his Wife, and Their Three Children' was written by Josiah Langford, introduced by Thomas Beddoe, and printed in the sixth edition by 1794. Unlike most chapbooks, this account focused on the family. Until the last decade of the century, drinking was considered manly by many. The father's destructive drinking threatened the entire family. The prefacing 'Advertisement' reeked of condescension for the immoral and besotted lives led by all too many English men. The author's attitude, however, was offset by the author's belief in a capacity for improvement. This account did not invoke the authority of a higher power, Providence, or the Christian God but was intended to reach those people who 'have never had a single moral attitude put properly into

their heads.' About 8000 copies were sold immediately after the first printing. One clergyman took 2000 copies to distribute to his parishioners. Beddoe mentioned the lower classes several times in his remarks.<sup>33</sup>

Reformers pursued topics that differentiated them from their inferiors and gave them a sense of their own worth. Reform won out in this success story, albeit one that reiterated the depravity associated with liquor. It provided an example to the class of readers that Beddoe and Langford intended to reach. The social fabric was only as strong as the strength of all of its people. Hence this parable expounded on the human condition, even though it involved the lowest of mortals. Why this diatribe then against drinking? Were the reformers who wrote this story concerned about its ill effects on the family, the wife, and their children? Or, were they concerned that besotted lower-class men ended up with families on the public dole?

In 1793, hard times affected all of rural England, including the Jenkins family. Patty, the Horse-Shoe maid, visited the family and passed on to others what she saw there. Mrs. Pritchard, the brusque ale-wife and proprietor of the Horse-Shoe, finally agreed to help the family because she did not want her neighbors to exclaim that she 'ever wanted the bowels of condescension toward her poor neighbors.'<sup>34</sup> The greedy behavior of the ale-wife was a constant subject of aggravation in ballads, and this chapbook played upon that long-existing theme.

Langford quickly learned how Sarah had valiantly persevered. Isaac's response was typical: what he did was his business. While Isaac could not condone another farmer starving his cattle, he was starving his own children. The chapbook reminded readers that children were not inherently wicked, but were conditioned by their life experiences. In addition, Isaac admitted that Sarah did not agree to marry an alcoholic. In another country laws punished those who 'trample(d) upon the peace of a whole family.'<sup>35</sup> During the early and heady days of the French Revolution, the conditions for divorce were loosened; a multitude of

pent-up cases were filed by women against their husbands. Perhaps this is the author's reference.

Laboring men must accept their position and allow their wives and children to be put upon the parish and raise the rates for people who could not afford to pay them. Those persons who had 'industriously' discharged their obligations were penalized by the behavior of others. Beddoe and Langford wanted their disguised polemic in story form to instruct inferior mortals about a better and moral way of life. Civilization was not uplifted by acts of the Almighty; humans here on earth had to make a difference in their own lives.

John Corry, a member of the Philological Society of Manchester and the 'author of a satirical view of London' and other chapbooks in this study, wrote 'The Gardener's Daughter of Worcester; or the Miseries of Seduction.' His chapbook announced a scheme for the improvement of women and solicited contributions. The author's plan for the education of female children of the laboring classes follows this short story and its predictable ending. The frontispiece included the following lines:

"Were you, ye fair, but cautious whom ye trust,  
Did you but think how seldom fools are just,  
So many of your sex would not in vain  
Of broken vows, and faithless men complain."<sup>36</sup>

Young and laboring women departed from the primrose path. Again the virtues of the countryside were contrasted starkly to a certain and untimely end if one left well-worn rustic paths and gardens for the city of London.

Lucy Staunton was properly raised by her parents, but became too entranced by the prospect of novelty and the pull of city life. Lucy's suitor also epitomized all that was true and good--the country squire who tended to simple pleasures. She soon tired of the tasks expected of her at the mansion of Lady V----, abandoned her charge, and eloped with Captain Flash to Richmond. He and other men left her. Thrown upon her own resources, she engaged in prostitution. At the same time, her

father and her suitor tried to find her in London. Realizing that she was being pursued, she swallowed laudanum. She had only enough strength left to recognize them and ask for their forgiveness. Finally, Corry contrasted Lucy's death with what her life would have been like if she followed the path of righteousness and accepted her rightful role as a faithful wife and dutiful mother.

Acknowledging the influence of women upon the social order, Corry concluded that a woman's impact was the 'sun in our system,' for it 'beautifies the face of nature and is productive of the most invaluable benefits.' Most of these ignorant young women were pregnant and alone at a very early age. "Seductive pleasures' and amusements such as the theater, dancing, and their vain concentration on fashion led to their ruin."<sup>37</sup>

Corry proposed reform: a system of education financed by those of both sexes who extolled virtue. A committee should provide for clothing, instruction and the maintenance of these females at a young age. Young girls should be taught to read. They should be taught to 'work with their needle, manufacture gloves, fans, chip hats or any other ornamental or useful art.'<sup>38</sup> Proceeds from the sale of these goods would be added to the fund for their education. Once a year female children should be called together and become apprentices to people of proper character. Once they married, they should receive ten pounds.

Ladies should contribute but be contented with their 'arts of persuasion.' Men should govern this society, given their 'superior wisdom.' Should the ladies take up this task, 'they will make but a slow and ineffectual progress.'<sup>39</sup> One hundred thousand women could contribute five million pounds—to be matched by gentlemen. Money expended in this fashion was worth more than that wasted on wars.

This was a nationalistic appeal, which, given the potential dates of publication, 1785-1816, is not surprising. Like 'republican mothers,' the women whose virtue constituted the 'sun in our system' should inculcate and distribute their virtue. The 'virtues and graces of the lovely daughters of Britain (have) been

celebrated by the barn and recorded by the historian.' <sup>40</sup> Their example, their money, and their charity to those who needed the 'blessing of Divine Providence' would reward them. For it would 'open the gates of Paradise to thousands of lovely beings who might otherwise have sunk in the abyss of misery.'

Corry's call for reform was coupled with his professed interest in the female condition. Few if any chapbooks did not profess such optimism or offer a scheme for improvement. Particularly during the 1790s and later, they preached a thinly-disguised and religiously-inspired message: sin and vice awaited women who departed ever so slightly from the path of righteousness and right behavior. Corry's plan for female education and the treatise about the effects of alcohol suggest that some reformers took new approaches in the 1790s. They appealed to the reading public to endorse their solutions for distressing problems. Buttressed by their conviction that the human condition could be improved, they provided alternatives in a manner consistent with Enlightenment thought.

Following this story, a poem, "The Prostitute, An Elegy," lamented fallen women:

In London when the lamps' terrestrial light  
 Dispels the earth-investing gloom of night,  
 Forth walks the prostitute with aching heart,  
 Her faded charms renew'd by daily art;  
 A borrow'd bloom o'erspreads that hapless face,  
 Which once was fair--that form where youthful grace  
 Once active charm'd the fight, is now so frail  
 It almost sinks with eery passing gale.

Now faint emaciated and distress'd,  
 The pang of sorrow fills her beauteous breast.  
 Yet the fair wanton still affects to smile,  
 Man--tyrant man, she rushes to beguile.  
 'Tis to his wiles her present grief she owes,  
 She claims his power to mitigate her woes,  
 Poor wretch--no succour can her smiles obtain,  
 Unfriended beauty supplicates in vain:  
 Down--down she sinks, in the embrace of death,  
 In a deep groan expires her parting breath.

Yet this fair victim of illicit love  
 Was once what taste and virtue must approve,  
 Her infant bloom, simplicity, and bliss,  
 Oft claim'd her parents' prayers and shared their kiss;  
 But ignorant themselves, and artless too  
 The knowledge of the world they never knew,  
 In rural peace they lived content and poor,  
 Nor dreamt that vice should mark the cottage door.

Soft, fair, and frant as the vernal rose,  
 Their lovely Emma's charms their bloom disclose.  
 Her native beauties rais'd impure desire  
 In the false bosom of a neighb'ring 'squire,  
 By promises and presents the poor maid  
*Untaught by virtue was by vice betray'd.*  
 To London the vain coxcomb bears his prize,  
 But in a frantic duel soon he dies.  
 Deprav'd by luxury poor Emma signs  
 for spendor and becomes the slave of vice,  
 Through vile gradations of pollution pass'd  
 And in the public street expir'd at last.

O ye whose beauties and whose virtues shine,  
 With lustre scarce inferior to divine,  
 Save, save from wretchedness like this the poor,  
 In virtue's sanctity the maid secure,  
 On her fair bosom virtue's form impress,  
 Then shall her happy mind your beauty bless.  
 Seduction infamy, disease and death  
 No more shall blast her bloom, or taint her breath.  
 But the enchanting smile of virtuous love  
 Shall the soft beauties of her form improve  
 With dignity her actions harmonize.  
 And train her blameless spirit for the skies.

#### Traditional Laments and Paeans to Lost Virtue and the Countryside

The appeal of confession and expurgation of one's sins appealed to a reader conditioned to expect rewards for good behavior and dire consequences for bad behavior. Resonating religious themes inspired the author of 'The History of



Caroline Dormer.’<sup>41</sup> Allegedly written by Caroline Dormer, it included the soul-searching life stories of Henry Dobson, the account of the pathetic Lucy of Leinster, and two other wronged women. The first-person narrative, its length, completeness, and cathartic confessions suggests that the author was a woman. The reader was also specifically identified twice as ‘her:’ In all the chapbooks surveyed, this is the one of the few references that identified women as the reading audience. Constant testimony in the story begins with the pronoun ‘I’--an imploring interjection of a woman. The confessions begin with the birth and family situation of each person:

‘let my reader drop the tear of sympathy whilst I record my shame. Let her consider my age, inexperience, situation, and circumstances, and then let her mingle pity with her censures. I wish not to palliate my conduct. It is from the first breach of filial duty incapable of defence. write my own condemnation. I freely confess my shame, and I believe tis with tears of the most unaffected repentance.’<sup>42</sup>

Caroline Dormer pursued many romantic adventures after leaving her family home. She pursued a life of prostitution after the men who made promises to her deserted her. A letter from Henry Dobson when he was incarcerated at Newgate in 1787 plus curiosity compelled her to visit him. Once she heard a complete account of his crimes, she wondered how she had survived her association with him. She and another young woman stuck together while they walked the streets. This woman also offered her confession at the end of the story. Finally, Caroline met up with her younger brother and found ‘asylum’ or sanctuary in the home of her sister in the north of England.

Interjected into this account was the poem ‘Lucy of Leinster’ and an engraving complete with a suitable caption from the poem. The author’s mother gave her daughter this poem and commended to her its message. A few lines illustrate the quality of its prose and its message:

Of Leinster, fam’d for maidens fair,  
Bright Lucy was the grace;  
Nor e’er did Lissy’s limpid stream  
Reflect a fairer face;  
Till luckless love, and pining care,

**Impaire'd her rosy hue,  
 Her coral lips and damask cheeks,  
 And eyes of glossy blue.  
 Oh! have you seen a lily pale,  
 When beating rains descend?  
 So droop'd the slow consuming maid,  
 Her life now near its end.<sup>43</sup>**

Consumed with heartbreak, Lucy heard voices that called her to the grave. Her intended planned to marry a woman with three times the money that she had. While she would be borne to the church in her 'winding sheet,' he would come to the church in his 'wedding trim.'<sup>44</sup> He died on the spot at the church and was carried by 'trembling swains'--to be buried with Lucy--'in the same mould, beneath one son.' The conglomeration of several testimonials to the tragedy of fallen women reiterated the author's message. Its printer, J. Roe cooperated with Ann Lemoine on the series of stories by Sarah Wilkinson.

"Sebastian and Zeila, Or, the Captive Liberated by Female Generosity, another chapbook by John Corry, was set in Algeria. The Advertisement of the story observed the following:

"While the youthful reader is amused by the strange events which led to the liberation of a captive; and while sympathy for the sufferings of thousands of our Christian brethren now enslaved, excites imagination against their cruel oppressors, let it be remembered with gratitude to Divine Providence, that we live in a country blest with freedom and security.<sup>45</sup>

Inhabitants of an Italian island off the coast of Sardinia, were captured by Moorish pirates who took them captive to Algiers. Osman, the Dey of Algiers, held one hundred beautiful female slaves in his harem. The chapbook noted that women were put to death for adultery, but the men were allowed to keep many wives and concubines.

About four thousand shackled slaves languished under the weight of their oppression. The Italian, Sebastian, an experienced farmer, became Osman's chief

gardener. While busy with his tasks, he spied the beautiful Circassian, Zeila, a young woman who had been kidnapped from the Caucasus by Tartars and sold in Constantinople. She adroitly disguised Sebastian in some of her own clothing, evaded the eunuch's spying eyes, and hid her lover in the harem. A 'narrative,' a digression poured forth her story to Sebastian and recorded her unhappiness, although Osman indulged her and even walked with her in the streets on trips to Constantinople--a rare act for a woman in a harem.

After hiding in her apartment, Sebastian was captured and put in prison. Zeila's 'female ingenuity' helped her survive rigorous questioning by Osman and rescued Sebastian. They eluded the guards in a small space in a cavern and managed to escape. Another Italian couple, also Christian slaves, and other-escaped minded people sailed with Sebastian and Zeila to Malaga, in Granada, where they were lauded for defying the Moors. Another digression allowed the other couple, to tell how they also were put up for auction but were fortunate to be bought by a Jew who treated them well.

Zeila's conversion fortified her against the seductive attention of a Italian land owner. They left for England. Italians and Spaniards told them of English virtues. They sailed up the Thames and marveled at the level of civilization. They retired to a pleasant and enjoyable life in Hampstead and benefited from the virtues of English climate and civilization. They were the fictional vehicles for Corry's contrast of the demeaning experience of captivity with the salubrious freedom of England.

Matilda Markham received a superior education, although her father was only a government official.<sup>46</sup> She was taught needlework and learned French and Italian at an early age. Her account, allegedly printed from a manuscript found after her death, acknowledged that such an education created pride and a lack of necessary humility. Her father arranged for a suitable marriage. Although she was vain, cold, and indifferent to the needs of her spouse and instead wished to enjoy 'fashionable amusement,' she was not so indifferent when she learned of his

infidelity with her servant. Her vengeful assaults on his reputation eventually led to her exile at her father's house without her children. She chose resentment rather than reconciliation and paid a heavy price. Her husband was later involved in a duel. She was left contrite with a few hundred pounds a year. She learned the hard way that a proper and fine education could not supply a woman with the proper training to be a wife and mother.

'Amelia Neville' or, the Disappointment of Envy, and the Reward of Benevolence' purported to be a true story written by a Mr. Hayley.<sup>47</sup> The author's choice of words expressed his disdain for women such as Mrs.

Wormwood—a cleverly-chosen surname for a woman consumed by greed and jealousy. Although her father accumulated substantial sums through the 'happy union of many lucrative trades,' he was only interested in opulence and not in adequate parenting. Two of the daughters who inherited their mother's good traits died; the third, Winifred, later identified as Mrs. Wormwood manipulated her aging father, and was a perfect example of pretense and hypocrisy. Despite the fact that she did not indulge herself in books and had no suitable education, her 'ready wit' allowed her to be a good conversationalist—one who attracted a sufficient number of men.

Mr. Hayley satirized those who cynically acted out of charitable motives. Mrs. Wormwood wanted to perform 'ostentatious acts of apparent beneficence that are falsely called charity.'<sup>48</sup> Not interested in matrimony, Mrs. Wormwood managed to disguise her malevolence and feigned an interest in young and eligible women. She enticed vulnerable women as Amelia Neville and others into believing in their future joyous wedding, but she secretly set them up for failure and disappointments. Without dialogue, many pages of prose described Mrs. Wormwood's devices to keep Amelia away from Mr. Nelson, a man who was intent upon marrying her. Ultimately her malicious artifice failed, and Mrs. Wormwood desperately tried to prevent the marriage. She expired soon after this felicitous event.

'The Jealous Mother' was vainly deceptive and duplicitous.<sup>49</sup> Before his death, a husband understood his wife's detachment and lack of maternal traits. The husband adored Leonora, and seeing that his wife neglected their daughter, supervised her education. When her father died, the virtuous Leonora was subjected to the jealous wrath of her manipulative mother. When Leonora revealed the intentions of Mr. Williams to her mother, she realized that her mother claimed Mr. Williams for herself. She installed Leonora in a Paris convent, trusting the abbess to persuade Leonora to take holy vows. Mr. Williams made his determination to pursue Leonora clear—even suffering a six-month imprisonment in a dungeon as arranged by this treacherous woman. She instructed her remaining 'official man'—the others having left because of her temper—to marry her daughter once she returned to England, but her servant disregarded her orders. Leonora and Williams married quickly. The mother, realizing her own ill-guided passion, quickly forgave the couple and approved of their marriage.

This is an incongruous conclusion, given the mother's treacherous behavior, including the imprisonment of Williams. Leonora even termed her mother a 'monster.' Even if they regarded the mother as the victim of her own poor judgment or emotions, it seems unlikely that they could forgive and forget. This ending was calculated to meet readers' demands for an appropriate conclusion.

### Venomous Polemics and Vile Complaints

The four lengthy diatribes of the 1790s that make up this collection carried rantings against women to a new level. Vituperation was poured upon women by rejected men or those who resented the liberties that the female sex now exercised. They reflected the anxieties of the period.

The outlines of a 'panic' over what women should and should not do are clearly apparent in "A Letter From a Scotch Nun to a Bachelor," printed in 1791, and intended for a periodical. Someone advised the anonymous author to publish this

lengthy account as a 'fix penny pamphlet,' but the author desired that it be 'universally useful.' The author and his cohorts aimed at wide circulation for this misanthropic missive. It was sent to a number of book sellers: two in London, one each in Edinburgh, Perth, and Glasgow, and others. The letter reeked of the author's frustration, while its preface suggested that the author wanted to disguise his real purpose.<sup>50</sup>

In a letter addressed 'to the printer,' the nun's comments allegedly derived from a strict interpretation of nature and morality. Acknowledging that Scotland had no secluded nunneries, the author asserted that the many nuns in Britain suffered more than the voluntary nuns abroad. Taking solace from their religion and houses in fine residences with gardens and walks, they enjoyed a privileged if voluntary withdrawal. No such pleasures were possible or could be contemplated by the Scotch Nun.<sup>51</sup>

Many 'involuntary nuns' did not marry because so many women dressed and lived beyond their means, when they should be saving money. The clothes on their backs belonged to the merchant or chapman. Any man disposed to marry one of them had to pay off their many debts. A man of 'generous disposition' who could not support a woman in the manner to which she was accustomed would not want to diminish her status.<sup>52</sup> The author spewed his venom forth on the gentle class of 'involuntary nuns.' They were to be pitied because they had been bred for marriage. Their idle and luxurious state made men of moderate but sufficient means avoid them. These women should courageously ally themselves with truly worthy men. After all, Paul, the Apostle, said that it was better to marry than to burn. It is clear from the vituperation he poured upon genteel women that the author was spurned by one of their ranks.

Such a woman would benefit from having a husband who was a 'regular, healthy faithful husband, instead of a sickly incontinent and worn-out rake.' The woman of a gentle but not well-endowed family brought to marriage a 'triple fortune in her heart, in her head, and in her hands.' She also possessed virtue in the sight

of God. One should pursue such women 'for the glory of God, the good of society, and her own happiness.' The male identity of the author was blatantly revealed when the text stated that 'her breasts would not only satisfy him at all times, but he must be ravished always, with her love, and with her whole deportment.'<sup>53</sup> This descriptive language did not come from the pen of a woman.

The author's opinion of the marital arrangements of the aristocracy were briefly stated, whereas many pages of invective poured out his feelings about genteel families. Old and noble families gave the 'blessing' of their daughter to another family. Protracted financial negotiations made the author's description of a blessing look banefully simple. Many countesses and duchesses behaved badly because they spent vast sums, although he cited two exemplary exceptions.

Finally, there were some words about the 'class' of 'batchelors.' Many remained unmarried because they could not support a wife, while others married social butterflies. If men could choose women who would dutifully create a good home, society would benefit. The children of such a union would be healthy, and not be 'the very dregs of a debauched life.'<sup>54</sup> But alas, some men frequented whores who were costly to maintain. Both partners needed to approach marriage with some humility.

Frequent use of the term 'providence' appears. Protestants exhorted believers to keep the faith and survive the rigors of life on earth. Heaven would be a better place. 'Providence' explained the good years as well as bad ones, fortunate lives as well as those that were not so blessed. It was an 'extraordinarily elastic' belief. The author of the 'Scotch Nun,' like some clergymen and laypeople, directly connected moral rectitude and earthly attainment. Providence moved in history. It determined the fate of Biblical figures such as Moses and Esther. Writers and clergy used this term to buttress their arguments and convince readers in their congregations that God was on their side. Hence the writer of this missive saw himself as promoting the good of society. Women of the business class, although subjected to austerity, could contribute to their future marriage with savings. The

author's concentration on women from the gentle or business class confirms Thomas' theory that pleas about the intervention of Providence appealed to those who actually could change their situation.<sup>55</sup> There is no mention of the poor in this letter.

'The Tricks of London Laid Open' provided cautions to both sexes in towns or in the countryside. Wicked people lurked in London preyed upon innocent country folk. This chapbook, in its seventh edition 'with considerable improvements,' did not single out either sex for especial condemnation. Rogues, cockers, cock matches, cheats in horse races, gamsters, beaus, sots, bullies, setters, and spungers--all come in for their deserved share of opprobrium. The females--bawds, whores, procurers, or jilts--all are trafficking in sex. The following adjectives described the many tricks employed by these women: 'wicked, scandalous, viperous, vicious, lewd, dissolute, dangerous, brutish, and cruel. Nouns such as 'race whore,' 'strumpet,' 'sorceress,' 'wretch,' 'vermin,' and 'harlot' showed the author's absolute contempt for their activities.<sup>57</sup>

'Vituperous creature(s)' bawds or procurers sometimes consorted with the better sort of people, although they were given to deceit and destruction. Procurers resided at the playhouses where they could peddle their damaged commodities--women. Merchandise assembled around the procurer decoyed her real business. She did not want competition from chapmen. Bawds served their term of indenture in the very company of the Devil. They kept their own seraglios. They enticed their customers into 'the very gate of Hell, an inlet to disgrace, ruin, and contempt.'<sup>58</sup>

The private and designing schemes of jilts went way beyond the mere offering of sex for money. These women specialized in obtaining better accommodations, plate, china, and other material and suitable items for a 'whore of rank.' They could shed crocodile tears and once one of them talked to her 'stallion,' their plot would take you for everything you were worth. They would try to incorporate a useful 'big-bellied whore into their confederacy'<sup>59</sup> Having deceitfully



acquired some of a man's papers, they would accuse him of fathering the child, suggesting either restitution or ruinous exposure. The author displayed even more invective for the jilt: a woman who 'compounded' the vices of the whore, bawd, and procurer. He described her as:

a 'vermin so ravenous and amlicious, and withal so subtle and designing, not chaste, and hypocritically, virtuous, and yet so scandalously wicked and impudently lewd, and above all so insolently ill-natured, that in the title of a jilt are comprehended all the vicers, follies and impertinencies of her whole sex.' <sup>60</sup>

Contagious outrage against women was the intent of the author of 'Female Policy Detected,' written in 1795. With highly-repetitious diatribe and selective examples, separate chapters expounded on the allurements, inconstancy, malice, revenge, pride, and ingratitude of women. The second book came to the rescue of married men who endured 'peevish, fretful and scolding wives.' Quoting Solomon, the final book focused on God's gift of a good wife. Ward mentioned history's charming, deceitful, and vile females: Helen of Troy, Jezebel, and Cleopatra, among others. Proverbs from Solomon and teachings from St. Paul suggested that good women were hard to find. They were gifts from God. <sup>61</sup>

The preface, 'The Epistle Dedicatory to the Apprentices of London,' revealed the attitudes of Ed. Ward, the author. This 'small (P)ocket (P)iece' provided the reader with a suitable defense against the intrigues of women. "Wanton' and 'designing' women corrupted young men and made them poor husbands and fathers. 'The attracting sorcery of these bewitching loadstones' ruined many a young man in London. (vii) Young men should stay away from these 'Vultures,' dressed in 'Peacock Plumes.' The alluring but superficial ornaments of women hid character flaws and defects.

Ward rattled off a series of complaints coupled with his advice. Those who kept women were likely to be deceived. A man who kept a woman wanted to be her master, while she struggled to be mistress over him. A man should 'credit nothing a woman says' and be on guard. Apprentices should not cavort with married women.

Cheating wives turned their spouses into cuckolds. By page 68 of his 75 pages, Ward did manage to suggest that a good wife should be accommodated.

A passion for revenge usually erupted from 'envenomed seeds of corrupted love.'<sup>62</sup> Pride in an imperial woman produced volatility and was the 'most intolerable' of all. Calculating and mercenary, such women displayed no gratitude or acts of kindness. Despite Ward's distaste for experienced women, virgins should be avoided. Women expected love once their virginity was lost. A woman could love a man and happily accept what he gave her, but such women were rare creatures.

Only the divine bestowed goodness. All the woes of the world and the sinister and criminal behavior of men could be traced to women. Ward doesn't attribute this state to mothers and fathers who neglected, abandoned, abused, or failed their offspring. Instead, designing and vile women compelled men to crime. The last words of men put to death were adequate testimony to their treachery.

Married life produced even more miseries. Examples from ancient civilization and medieval Europe proved that extravagant women made poor wives. Men who married widows lived to regret their decisions, although Ward conceded that many a man married a widow for her money. The widow's advantage disturbed Ward. 'They are the sums of the seven deadly sins, the friends of Satan, and the gates of Hell.' Single wanton women were dogs 'fit to be swept into the kennels.' Like the descriptions in seventeenth-century ballads, women were depicted as preening themselves before noon and watching mirrors like apes.<sup>63</sup>

Ward prescriptions for proper behavior cited the Apostle Paul and mother of King Solomon. A good wife must act for the good of society, assist her mate and have his children, provide comfort and consolation, avoid illicit sex or fornication, and behave discretely. The catalog of sins easily overwhelmed the description of good behavior. If women were behind every evil act, could they simultaneously be seen as virtuous?

More contemporary themes included the the tea-table, the female and privatized counterpart of the coffeehouse. Although men relegated women to these pursuits, they also thought that women engaged in gossip and trivial pursuits. Such gatherings allowed them to all to easily 'fall into discourse.' Although the tea table personifies a class- and gender-bound rite, men had an investment in its ritual. Pouring tea in certain drawing rooms gave a woman reflective status. The satire, 'The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping,' questioned the character of women. All women's clubs, whether they be in the city of London or its suburbs, Bristol, or Bath gossiped about their neighbors. To substantiate his opinion, he visited the 'civil society of taylors wives.' They welcomed him because he brought money to the table. <sup>64</sup>

The title page announced them in 'the manner of their Club Order:' the Weaver's Wives Club, the Milliners, the Butchers Wives, The Fish Women's Club, the Quilters, Mantua Makers, the Basket Women, Bunters, Shoemakers Wives, then Taylors Wives, Penny Barber's Wife's 'Cub' (sic). The last to be included was the Whores and Bawds Club. Clubs included wives of tradesmen as well as those of women with their own occupation. <sup>65</sup>

Mrs. Chitchat, Mrs. All-talk, Ruth Keep-council, and Prittle-Prattle greeted neighbor after neighbor with a 'false look and a treacherous heart.' Secrets were to go no further. The tongues wagged, and the women were raucous and brawling. Their base instincts prevailed. They quickly branded each other as whores in the heat of verbal battle. Their sharp exchanges led to blows:

"With that she flew at her, teeth and nails, and seizes on her pinnars; There was helter skelter from one to another. The battle last for many hours: rare work for the bailiffs, lawyers, and proctors! At last the story ends thus; every one sat down at their own cost and charge. <sup>66</sup>

In an attached ballad, 'The Gossips Delight: Or, The Tea Table Chat,' gossiping wives met by nine every morning after their husbands left for work. Either they were very efficient, had servants to do their work, or the author exaggerated the time they spent on tea-time prattle. They arrived ready for the daily combat:

Being seated in form, and their equipage spread,  
 Next comes what the d----l puts into their heads  
 Their tongues like perpetual clock-work run,  
 till their budget of lies is exhausted and gone. <sup>67</sup>

They enjoyed consuming the best sugar and tea and their spouses' income, while they criticized their behavior. One woman boasted that she was both master and dame in her house. Another reported that she would be alone since her 'simple simon's seldom at home.' Two others, however, feared their husbands' violent tempers. One husband broke the crockery. Another said that she had to go out secretly because her husband believed that she 'ruin(ed) both pocket and health.' After they had their fill of tea and lying, a good drink 'stifle(d) the vapours and thoughts of their wants.' <sup>68</sup> Several concluding lines clearly revealed the author's sentiments, for he too feared their wrath:

And if this be the pleasure of their lives,  
 Fate defend us from tea-drinking wives. <sup>69</sup>

Just think of what they would do if subjected to pain! Gin 'poisoned' old women in London 'corrupted' younger women with their boastful talk and intriguing conduct.

A consuming society permitted women of all social classes some sense of adornment and decoration. Despite the fact that a 1777 print displayed women of the lower classes with more muscle and coarser features, all women could aspire to fashionable attire, an attractive hat with colorful ribbons, and buckles and bows on their shoes. <sup>70</sup> Women could also meet and greet one another with the proper tea table. BUT, their penchant for alcohol and coarse talk revealed their competitive urges and lower-class origins.

Perhaps this blatant description of female hostility was a parody. Tea drinking was a female and domestic activity, although it was not exclusively confined to women. Women visited, exchanged pleasantries and drank tea. Perhaps the author believed that once too many drams of liquor were poured into the tea pot, lower class, plebeian instincts emerged from behind the facade of finery and feathers. Or perhaps these instincts were common to all women. Authors of sentimental novels disapproved of female interest in consumer pleasures, and chapbook authors may have recorded their own disapproval.<sup>71</sup>

'The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping' resembles the ballads of the late seventeenth century with their pointed comments about relationships between the sexes. The Roxburghe Ballads displayed direct comments about sex, conspicuous consumption, and women who could not be controlled.<sup>72</sup> There were crude, misogynistic comments about women, but there was also the candid admission that a good woman was vital to a man's happiness.

### **Frivolous Females--Arabella and Miranda**

The first abridgement reviewed here appeared earlier than the 1790s focus of this chapter. Yet it does display the sentiments that percolated in English society toward the end of the century. There were changes, obviously, when the novel was reduced to a smaller format. In addition, reader approval of Miranda's activities during the more permissive years of the Restoration would have evaporated by the late eighteenth century.

R. Snagg's abridged version of Amelia by Fielding condensed the longer version of Arabella into a short ninety pages, published in 1774 or 1775. According to a compilation about London printers, Snagg's premises were known as the 'little book warehouse.' He capitalized on the popularity of known pieces of literature. But the subtleties in the longer work and the author's motivations cannot be easily

discerned in the abridgments. There is no hint that something is missing from Charlotte Lennox's longer novel, *Arabella*. Indeed the many polite, stilted exchanges and scenes between Mr. Glanville and Arabella allow the reader to feel relieved that the tedium of an even longer book can be avoided. However, much of the original novel, The Female Quixote, written in 1751, was not included in the condensed version. The structure of the plot was not unlike others that followed the code of gentility. Two code words, sensibility and reason were interjected, often at the end of a paragraph.<sup>73</sup>

Arabella was the willful child of a gentleman who, raising her in rural but splendid isolation, approached parenting casually and neglected her. She grew up in a fanciful world of books--the classics and romances that fueled her fertile imagination. Her acquaintances muttered to themselves that she was a bit mad, but bit their tongue and endured her fantastic moments. She saw suitors as knights who would win her heart and hand with the darling exploits that she knew only from books. Her suitor, Mr. Glanville, endured her tirades perhaps because staid upper class life bored him. Expressing exasperation with her fantasies, he cursed those foul books that allowed 'ignorant' young women to pursue 'witchcraft' and 'magic' in the vain hope that somehow the order of the real world could be reversed. Such terms reminded the reader of their viability in the later eighteenth-century.

Arabella naively expressed the notion that women should have better relationships. Her idealistic sense of female camaraderie, her willful behavior, and her refined reading made it hard, if not impossible, for Glanville's innocent sister to have a fair exchange with her. Living in her own little world, Arabella thought that she could expound on classical themes that other women and men would appreciate. Arabella's reading project, a form of self-education, gave her no practical way of communicating effectively with others.

Is eighteenth century education for privileged women entirely useless. without any formal structure, and intended to make these women innocent vessels who could only convey impractical information and useless fulminations about the classics? Does a woman with a fine mind, like Arabella, have to prepare herself for boring if polite parlor conversations and nothing more?

The tone and content of the longer novel differs from the abridgment. Behind the facade of conformity, the novel is a polemic about the power of women. The Amazons in the pages of The Female Quixote enjoyed power. Men must find them far-fetched, precisely because they are so threatening. Women enjoyed a fantasy of powerful, not powerless, women.<sup>74</sup> There is no mention of Amazons and little of the Countess in the condensation.

In the novel, Arabella developed an urge for power mingled with desire. Cervantes' Don Quixote also idealized and visualized a nobler world. The Female Quixote featured amazons--active and commanding warriors. Arabella rescued Sappho and Cleopatra from their relegated position.<sup>75</sup> In the novel, both the Countess and Arabella spoke a language that should establish community among women. In the novel, both were generous and compassionate to other women, but one cannot detect generosity or community in the abridgment.

Despite Arabella's need for freedom, the Countess admonished her that such an adventure was not possible. Duty, piety, chastity, and Christianity made true romance unlikely. Arabella married Glanville.

The novel's message is that the fantasy of adventure that was possible for a man was impossible for a woman. Lennox and Fanny Burney wanted realism to be mixed with desire and possibility for women. They opened the Pandora's box, making women desirous of things or a life that they could not have. But fantasies of power are not vivid in the shortened account. Arabella is a spoiled and wilful child. Glanville's unrelenting pursuit received greater emphasis in this abridgment. The Countess' advice to accept duty and propriety is also lacking, and the Countess

herself only briefly appeared. The word 'amazon' never appeared. Hence the person who condensed the Female Quixote either deliberately omitted fantasies of power, missed them, and then offered still another lesson about proper behavior.

A clergyman persuaded Arabella to accept Glanville's proposal. Her final acquiescence to emotional attachment allowed sentimentalism its role as a vehicle to resolve conflict between Arabella and the other characters. Sentimentalism functioned her as a political mediator. It cemented the relationship between Glanville and Arabella. Stories had to resolve conflict to conform to society's cravings for harmony.

Feminist literary critics revived interest in The Female Quixote. But for one recent literary critic, Wendy Motooka, the novel doesn't ring true at the end. Arabella's quixotic tendencies are seen as a quest for autonomy. But the conclusion doesn't satisfactorily resolve the dilemma in the novel or provide past and present women readers with a model from which they could assert their own voice or political power.<sup>76</sup>

Until the unlikely end of the novel, Arabella's fantasies and will to power remained intact. Lennox may have set up a character with absurd requirements and demands. Deborah Ross concludes that women novelists of that time and beyond adopted an attitude of 'enlightened resignation.'<sup>77</sup> Lennox provided hints and bolder descriptions of her own fantasies and will to power. But the world of confusing and contradictory signals direct at women is also a part of Lennox's legacy.

The Firm of T. Sabine introduced abridgments of two works by Aphra Behn: "Ooronoko" and "The Fair Jilt," Both appeared in the 1780s. Only the second is reviewed here. Aphra Behn, one of the 'fair triumvirate of wits,' had to support herself. Her carefully-nuanced fiction bathed her characters in ambiguity. One cannot easily categorize her heroines. "The Fair Jilt" was faithful to the original and earlier version, but two additional stories were attached to this publication of one of Mrs. Behn's most popular works.<sup>78</sup>



Her work is enjoying a revival, given renewed feminist interest, but also because of her witty and imaginative characters. The climate of the Restoration allowed literature and the theater to present controversial themes. The apparent permissiveness of the Restoration fostered a climate in which women could write for money. They earned more as dramatists than as novelists. They wrote almanacs, pamphlets, prophecies, and devotional poems--using their own names.<sup>79</sup>

Behn wrote thirteen novels thirty years before the publication of Robinson Crusoe in 1719. She reminded her critics that women could write bawdy plays as well as men. Behn's women measured men by their standards. Although Restoration society allowed greater openness, men still believed, despite years of Puritan admonitions to the contrary, that women existed purely for their convenience. She exhibited detachment, even from her own misfortunes. Previously, authorities on literature such as Ian Watt or Frederick Link minimized her contribution to the novel and claimed that her work was uninspiringly unoriginal. But the current meetings of Aphra Behn societies indicate that many have not accepted their verdict on her work.<sup>80</sup>

Narration and the role and gender of the narrator currently command attention from literary critics. In much of Behn's fiction, the vices of female narrators call their reader's attention to restrictive social conventions. Behn mocked male voices that dominated historical stories and shaded the gender of her characters. But in "The Fair Jilt," the narrator's voice is more ambiguous and not necessarily female. The narrator's statements implied that that voice shared Behn's experiences. The remarks introducing the story extol the power of love whether it was 'soft' and 'gentle,' or 'rages more like a fury from hell.' Behn alleged that this was not a feigned story. . . pieced together with romantick accidents,' but indeed was true.<sup>81</sup> Behn's Preface noted that a true incident reported in the London Gazette of May 28-31, 1666, formed the base for this story. Behn's habit of conveying dialogue and details from witnesses also contributed to the story's authenticity.

Fine points added to the allusion of truth. This technique was frequently used by Behn and later by Daniel Defoe.<sup>82</sup>

“The Fair Jilt” prominently featured role reversal. Behn lost no opportunity for wicked social commentary. Her unorthodox opinions and imagination allowed her to produce a female character who preyed upon men. Her tentative moral judgments and unsettling questions provided a depiction of a more complicated society. The editors and firm of T. Sabine put out an abridged version that culled the original story, emphasized moral points, and minimized the creative and witty aspects of the original story.<sup>83</sup>

A ‘jilt’ is a woman who capriciously casts of a man previously accepted as a lover.’ The Oxford English Dictionary reports that it defined both men and women, but it usually denoted behavior by a woman. Seventeenth and eighteenth century playwrights used the word to describe female falsehood. In his 1690 Essay on Human Understanding, John Locke described the obsessive delusions of a man about a woman.<sup>84</sup>

Miranda was a true jilt. She craved quality in men, conquered them easily, and just as easily discarded them. She avoided marriage. She joined the order of Beguines, referred to as ‘cannonesses,’ Swart Sisters, and Jesuitesses.’ These women lived splendidly for a set term and then were released from their vows. A steward-confessor attended to their every want. Soon Miranda desired the amorous services of a prince who had taken vows as a friar. She pursued him relentlessly, and his refusal cost him dearly. She accused him of raping her in the confessional. He languished in prison.

Prince Tarquin, obsessed with Miranda, finally married her and gave her everything she wanted. But she wanted more. She persuaded a young page to poison her sister so that she could have the family inheritance. The plot backfired and the young page was hanged. Miranda was sentenced to stand with a rope around her neck on the scaffold, attended by her husband and confessor, but such

public humiliation did not deter her. She next persuaded Tarquin to murder her sister. He received a death sentence, but since the hangman could not dismember the head, indicating its royal resilience, he was saved. Miranda survived. Eventually she and Tarquin retired to Holland. Both the original story and chapbook version ended with the following comment:

Miranda has been very penitent for her life past, and gives heaven the glory for having given her these afflictions that have reclaimed her, and brought her to as perfect a state of happiness, as this world can afford.<sup>86</sup>

Duplicitous, manipulative, and intriguing, a 'bundle of desires,' Miranda displayed her sexual desires openly. Behn's stories do not offer neat generic moralizations.' The perceptions and inclinations of the individual reader mattered. A more fluid social situation permitted stories with a complex relationship between the narrator and the female protagonist.<sup>86</sup> The perceptions of the Restoration and early eighteenth century readers differed from those at the end of the eighteenth century. Could the nuances shaded into the original story be appreciated about one hundred years later? An abridgment shortens and condenses and therefore changes the story.

Miranda's outrageous behavior was not punished, and virtue was definitely not rewarded. Behn mocked society's veneration of knights and lords whose incomprehensible deeds won them the devotion of ladies and society's honor. Her heroine pulled off some unlikely deeds. But Behn's one concessions was Miranda's penitence in old age.

T. Sabine probably did not make any philosophical calculations when they printed "The Fair Jilt." A positive comment by someone associated with the firm may have prompted their publication of this story. The Sabines were in business to make money, not to vindicate a search for truth. Seasoned or adept readers who had access to her original work may have compared this'd abridged account with the original. But the ordinary reader learned to read in the eighteenth century for

pleasure, not to analyze the plot or score intellectual brownie points in a cultivated social circle.

The intentional subtleties in Behn's fiction masked other purposes, including the ambiguity of roles during the Restoration and Behn's endorsement of that very ambiguity. The question is not whether the Sabine firm reprinted this work because its depiction of women would sell. The more appropriate question is whether the social climate was conducive to deprecation of women, that many, including women, accepted and enjoyed reading about frivolous and manipulative behavior? Or, did the reading audience read their own misogynistic proclivities into the work? Misogynistic tendencies are clearly identified with male anxieties, but many females may have directed aggressions at themselves and their kind. This very dilemma reminds us that market decisions were not mere responses but were calculations colored by gendered perceptions.

#### Betty Bolaine--A Survivor

The 'History of Betty Bolaine, the Canterbury Miser' is spiced with invective about a wealthy woman who posed as a decrepit old lady who was as poor as a church mouse.<sup>87</sup> Betty's father was a well-known apothecary in Canterbury. Her upbringing cannot account for her consuming avarice. Once her father died, she denied food to her own mother that was sent by her brother. She conspired to deny her brother any of the family money. He would have let such hideous behavior remain a secret, if his sister had not set upon him so violently. She engaged the passions of her many suitors and used their interest for her own benefit. She could stage-manage a crisis. She cut herself with a knife in order to convince a man who was intent upon marrying her that she was passionately in love with him, but she left him in the lurch at the church. She finally found a companion who matched her parsimonious ways. Together they lived a life of total frugality while amassing as

much money as possible. They were 'constantly snarling lest one should eat or drink more than the other, or spend their own money wastefully.'<sup>68</sup> Once her husband died, Betty wandered around by herself, seldom enjoying human companionship.

Her ragged and unkempt appearance was disturbing. She ate spoiled food because cooking required her to expend fuel. A fire in the fireplace was also too costly. She left only a few pounds to a hospital upon her death, left instructions for a grand funeral and splendid monument. Many turned out to watch her funeral procession, more motivated by a desire to see a spectacle than by any interest in her passing.

### Conclusion

After the French beheaded their king and queen, English chapbooks, not unlike French sentiments, engaged in a whole denunciation of the behavior of both Marie Antoinette and Louis XIV. The Queen was especially criticized and subjected to the accusation that she committed incest with her son. Although English denunciations of anti-Jacobin sentiment masked other anxieties in English society in these tumultuous years, it is especially important to remember that nationalistic sentiments exacerbated existing prejudices that allowed them to go to war against the French enemy.

At the same time and as mentioned previously, the anti-Jacobin novel railed against a new social theory and contract that would undermine the system of lineage and privilege. Should the family structure be even slightly disturbed, then the cherished way of life so dear to some English persons would vanish. Chapbooks such as the "Letter from a Scotch Nun" bemoaned the individualistic tendencies of some women who, after all, would benefit from a convenient marriage to a upwardly mobile man. Instead, many women were still weighing their options.

We can read chapbooks such as these as personal diatribes, but they also reflect long-standing cultural strains. Chapbooks may be the popular manifestation of these sentiments.

In The Making of English Reading Audiences, John P. Klancher argues that the 1790s and its political and social crises constituted a watershed for reading audiences. What was a fairly uniform reading public changed, and writers anxiously tried to ascertain what readers wanted. Klancher's suggestion could account for the subject matter of this chapter's chapbooks and those of the two that conclude this study. For in addition to their own feelings about women, misogynistic writers magnified cultural clues into prose. After 1790 writers ventured forth to create reading audiences; four discernible reading publics existed: a distinctly middle class audience, a group of radical readers, a mass reading public-- probably lower middle class and composed of tradesmen and artisans, and finally an institutional audience.<sup>89</sup> Obviously there were differences. The implications of reading publics whose needs and interests had to be discerned by writers poses an interesting hypothesis. In the late eighteenth century, the profusion of variegated sentiments even on the subject of women produced the fulminations and polemics analyzed in this chapter and the interesting chapbooks of the following two chapters.

The misogynistic sentiments of the chapbooks lack imagination. Such blatant and splenetic remarks may have caused the ridicule of weak men who could not handle women than the authors may have intended. Earlier chapbooks from the Oral Tradition such as Robin Hood, Dr. Faustus, Tom Tram, Thomas Hickathrift, Long Meg of Westminster, etc. offered entertaining and amusing stories from the English past.<sup>90</sup> They were sometimes only veiled political statements about a woman's place, but they poked fun at all types of people. They mercilessly condemned out-of-bounds behavior, just as the ridings and skimmingtons ridiculed those that transgressed the rules. They displayed the plebeian sense of justice and demands for fair play.

These diatribes, however, are thinly-disguised polemics of blatant outrage against women who dared to defy society's dictums and the longings of individual men. The behavior of Betty Bolaine conjured up images of miserliness. "Female Policy Detected" and the "Letter to a Scotch Nun" crossed the thin line between invective hurled in the direction of unsuspecting females and outright misogyny. These sentiments built upon deeply-embedded cultural assumptions. They found a larger audience in this decade.

The double standard was a thriving feature of Western and English culture. The assumptions about woman's intrinsic nature plus the heavy hand of the law made women available targets for misogynistic rantings. The more reactionary climate of the 1790s simmered due to the ideology promulgated with blood in the French Revolution. In such a climate, a 'sex panic' could flourish.

Long-existing cultural expectations allowed charges against deviating women to appear to be credible. But patriarchal premises that allowed the male head of household to correct his wife were curtailed by legal limits and community norms. Concern about unruly women was a staple of popular culture. Pre-1640 ballads and chapbooks concentrated on domestic crime and featured women who had killed their husband. Such a crime, given patriarchy, was more than just murder. Such petty treason required burning at the stake. Increasingly, pamphlets printed after 1660 included violence by husbands against their wives, but the emphasis on violent wives remained. The extent of community intervention and control suggested that there were clear limits on patriarchal authority.<sup>91</sup> Wealthier wives of farmers, craftsmen, the gentry, and the aristocracy increasingly led private and isolated lives. Eighteenth-century popular culture was no longer as concerned about violent wives, since skimmingtons now focused on violent husbands and ostracized them instead of violent wives.<sup>92</sup>

In the eighteenth century, both the elite and popular culture trumpeted a libertine ideology that allowed men to think that their 'natural urge' for women could be satisfied through the violent act of rape. Popular culture in the form of ballads

and songs encouraged the belief that if a woman said no she meant yes. Some men assaulted women who rejected them. Some casually molested women in the streets. Courts carefully weighed the evidence because the penalty for rape was death. Brutal rapes upon unknown victims were severely punished. Generally, women who went to court were successful if they gained the protection of the law because they were the sexual property of their husbands or fathers.<sup>93</sup> However, as the eighteenth century drew to a close, the numbers of those convicted was low while the rate for those acquitted or given lenient treatment was noteworthy. Many reasons have been advanced for this climate of leniency. The stricter community controls in villages were absent in the more anonymous city environment. Some may have thought that rape was a 'fact of life' in that milieu. Women did not agree. The increased numbers who attempted to prosecute their assailants met resistance sanctioned by a different and perhaps indifferent community ethos. The conviction rate declined. Some Enlightenment thinkers even theorized that rape would disappear and be replaced by seduction.<sup>94</sup> How would the ordinary London working woman feel about such a theory?

Ideological division generated by the events and example of the French and American Revolutions certainly contributed to the 'sex panic' of the 1790s. Birnhammer correctly identified this era of change, but a broader perspective should incorporate other discernible shifts beginning in the 1750s. There were long-standing traditions that had historically separated men and women. Family labor was vital for a sufficient income in many trades, although many artisans and some specific trades excluded women. The ideas expounded by a working class and radical movement permeated well before the 1790s. Anna Clark identified the new radical politics as building on a 'classical republicanism' that emphasized independence but excluded women from its ranks.<sup>95</sup> No direct link between the misogynistic rantings in the chapbooks and 'classical republicanism' can be substantiated. Instead we have circumstantial evidence.



At the same time that we have a political movement broadened at the base by expanded political participation for men, the 'sentimental revolution--' the separate spheres mentality that encouraged domesticity and counseled submissiveness--continued. The code of sentimentality rewarded the women code of sentimentality. Women within those pages who played the proper role--carried off by a suitable male and cherished for the rest of their days.

The Boswell collection of eighteenth-century chapbooks yielded many examples. Chapbooks reflecting these themes were marketable. The women excoriated by the authors of these misogynistic missives defied society's dictums.<sup>96</sup> Earlier chapters explored the code of gentility or sensibility set out the main features of Hunter's scheme for analyzing novels. "The History of Caroline Dormer included several digressions. The account of "Lucy of Leinster" appeared because it was prompted by the author's mother. Its first-person voice accentuated its confessional quality. Its emphasis on virtue and vice underscored its didactic purpose.

Because the story of Isaac Jenkins was a comprehensive indictment of the effects of alcohol on the family, its didactic quality needs little reiteration here. The author, at first condemned the wife believing that she was the source of Isaac's problems, but finally understood the fowl effects of drink upon family life. Jenkins' escape from its curse revealed the theme of self-improvement. Its author and John Corry, the author of "The Gardener's Daughter," put their zeal for reform into story form. Corry offered a complete proposal for the education of women. Knowing their weaknesses and deficiencies, he believed that his practical proposal would best prepare them for any future.

How can we account for the appearance of these two chapbooks and the "Croydon Foresters" described in an earlier chapter? Sympathy for the human condition and attempts to ameliorate the lives of individuals is certainly a spin-off of Enlightenment thought. Reformers now advocated a more benign approach to human problems rather than a punitive one. Moreover, the well-understood dilemma of reformers was that they encountered deeper problems.

Hence, the individuals who saw Isaac Jenkins family in misery blamed his wife, but soon learned that alcoholism was indeed the cause of family disintegration.

"The Scotch Nun," "Proverbs on the Pride of Women," and "Female Policy Detected" made strenuous protests and moral pronouncements in every paragraph. "The Art and Mystery of Gossiping" clearly resembles the banter of ballads. The Miser from Canterbury, Betty Bolaine redefined parsimony. She also stage-managed crises for her own devious purposes. Such women were discussed in ballads of an earlier era. Hence we might conclude that anti-female sentiments remained within the core of the society, but did not always erupt into the oral tradition or print.

The sentiments of these chapbooks reinforce our understanding of the tensions of the 1790s. The aftermath of the French Revolution and the earlier American rebellion, the Industrial Revolution, the growing demands of a working class, increased and organized religious and political dissent, and the writings of women caused tension in the war between the sexes. The earlier dialogue in ballads from the Oral Tradition and appearance of dialogue in chapbooks reminds us that arguments, negotiations, and complaints are a constant feature of marital life. The banter and bickering comes to life and seems real. Two of the chapbooks did, however, reveal a strain of thought from the Enlightenment and the goal of human improvement. But the many vile and splenetic complaints were beyond the daily bickering recorded in earlier ballads. They reveal hatred or misogyny. The writers did not blend their sentiments with parody or irony. These were not subtle statements.

## Notes

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10. Barker-Benfield, The Culture of Sensibility, pp. 154-161; and other sources.
11. Linda Colley, Britons, pp. 238-241.
12. Ibid., p. 240; Ruth Perry, "Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England," Journal of the History of Sexuality, Vol. 2, #2, (1991), pp. 215, 216.
13. Richard D. Altick, The English Common Reader, A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 69, 71.
14. Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 101-104; J. Brewer and J. Styles, An Ungovernable People, The English and their Law in the

Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, (London: Hutchinson, 1980). Altick, The English Common Reader, p. 72.

15. Altick, *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

17. P. J. Miller, "Women's Education, 'Self-Improvement and Social Mobility--A Late Eighteenth-Century Debate,'" British Journal of Educational Studies, 20 (1972), 308, 309.

18. Katherine Binhammer, "The Sex Panic in the 1790s," Journal of the History of Sexuality, 6, #3 (1996): 413-414; Jarrett, England in the Age of Hogarth, p. 106,

19 Colley, Britons, p. 274. Binhammer, "The Sex Panic," pp. 432, 433. "Proverbs on the Pride of Women," printed in 1797, probably in Scotland, further confirms the possibility of a full-fledged 'sex panic.' Its fulminations resembled the previous catalogs of vituperation. Prideful women who held their heads high and adorned them with 'rigging and furniture' should be avoided. A man would be better off to take his halter and go home rather than cavort with one of them. Widows would remind their second husband of their dead mate's virtues, if they came to the second marriage with money from the first. One should marry a widow only if she had an unfaithful and abusive first husband. Physical features such as a large stomach, 'a bosom full of paps,' and height were also anathema. John Slothe and Maggy Idle, man and wife, were dirty and destitute. '(p)erfect poverty' eventually made the man into a cuckold, since the woman would try to persevere in her desperation.

20. Colley, Britons, p. 252; Binhammer, "Sex Panic," pp. 417, 418; "The History of the Trial and Execution of Marie Antoinette, Late Queen of France," Sold at No. 42, Long Lane, London.

21. Jarrett, England in the Age of Hogarth, pp. 116, 117.

22. Binhammer, "Sex Panic," pp. 421-430.

23. E. P. Thompson, The Romantics, England in a Revolutionary Age, (New York: New Press, 1997). Afterword by Dorothy Thompson. 223-225.

24. \_\_\_\_\_, The Making of the English Working Class, (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1966). Originally published in 1963.

25. Barker-Benfield, Culture of Sensibility, pp. 360-362, 368.

26. Nancy Johnson, "The French Threat in Anti-Jacobin Novels of the 1790s," appearing in Illicit Sex, Identity Politics in Early Modern Culture, (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1997), pp. 181, 183, 186, 187.
27. Kathryn Shevelov, Women And Print Culture, The Construction of Femininity in the early periodical, (New York: Routledge, 1989), concluding chapter.
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29. Leslie Shepard, John Pitts: Ballad Printers of Seven Dials, London, 1765-1844, (London: Private Libraries Association, 1969), pp. 13-16. Deborah Valenze, "Prophecy and Popular Literature in Eighteenth-Century England," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 29, #1, (January, 1978): 76.
30. "The French Bite: Or, a True and Genuine Narrative of the Exploits and Transactions of the Marquis Dul-Bruce, During his Six-weeks in England. In which is shewn, by what Means he rais'd himself from the most despicable Condition to Flash in his Chariot, Shine in Equipage, and be attended with a gay and numerous Retinue. Also the Steps he took to introduce himself at Court, his Attempts to claim Kindred with his M---y; and his Endeavours to recommend himself to the French Ambassador. Likewise his several Intrigues and Amours with the Ladies of the Town. And, lastly, his sudden Fall from the Pinnacle of his Glory into his primitive Obscurity and Contempt. The Whole taken from the Mouth of one of his French Domesticks, whom he left in the Lurch, when he made his precipitate retreat." London: Printed and Sold by W. Weed, in Paternoster Row, H. Cooke at the Royal-Exchange, R. Munden at the Post-House, Parson's Yard, J. Dowse in Marigold Court, in the Strand, B. Dickinson on Ludgate Hill, and the rest of the Booksellers of London and Westminster. 1749, in 31 pages; quote is from page 24.
31. Ibid.
32. Peter Linebaugh, The London Hanged, Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century, (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 145-147.
33. "The History of Isaac Jenkins and Sarah his Wife, and Their Three Children." The Sixth Edition. Printed for H. Murray, 32 Fleet Street; and J. Johnson, 72, St. Paul's Church Yard, 1794, 36 pages. Roy Porter observed that public drinking was tolerated and only discouraged at the end of the century. Indeed, that particular century was notorious for the extent of inebriation and the celebration of it by those who considered it manly. Porter, "Material Pleasure in a Consumer Society," in Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century, Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts, (eds), (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 33, 34.
34. "History of Isaac Jenkins," p. 14.

35. Ibid.

36. John Corry, "The Gardener's Daughter of Worcester; or the Miseries of Seduction. A Moral Tale," 36 pages. Corry was listed as the 'Author of a satirical view of London and Member of the Philological Society' in Manchester. London: Sold by Champante and Whitrow, Jewry Street, Aldgate; C. Woodward, Liverpool, M. Swindells, Manchester; J. Turner, Coventry; and T. Newling, Printer, Salop. The first line of poetry appears on the Frontispiece.

37. Ibid., p. 22, 24.

38. Ibid., p. 28.

39. Ibid, p. 12.

40. Ibid., p. 31.

41. "History of Caroline Dormer," J. Roe, 1803, 29 pages.

42. Ibid., p. 27.

43. Ibid., p. 21.

44.

45. "Sebastian and Zeila, Or, The Captive Liberated by Female Generosity," By John Corry; London: Printed for Crosby and Co., Stationer's Court; T. Hurst, Paternoster Row; Champante and Whitrow, Jewry Street, Aldgate; Wilmot and Hill, High Street, Borough; T. Hughes, Queen's Head Passage, Paternoster Row; R. Thurgood, Newgate Street; J. Stuart, Prince's Street, Leicester Square; and r. ogle, Great Turnstile, Holborn, in 60 pages. Ian Maxted in The London Book Trades, 1775-1800. A Preliminary Checklist of Members, lists Crosby and Company as operating from 1803 to 1812; T. Hurst from 1799 to 1805; Champante and Whitrow from 1785 to 1816. Wilmot and Hill were possibly in business from 1793 to 1799, although it is difficult to determine, since the spelling is not the same. The others cannot be authenticated. The date for this chapbook would appear to be in the very early years of the nineteenth century.

46. "The Fatal Indifference, Or, The Interesting History of Mrs. Matilda Markham, A Lady of Fortune. (Printed from her own Manuscript after her Death.) To which is added, The History of Celestia, (Translated from the French), London. Printed for M. Bassan, #6, Punderson's Place, Bethnal Green, 24 pages.

47. Mr. Hayley, "The Interesting Story of Amelia Neville, or The Disappointment of Envy, and the Reward of Benevolence," Embellished with an elegant Engraving. Including a list of stories added. Newcastle on Tyne, Printed and sold by J. Mitchell; 27 pages. Several copies of this story exist in the Harding Collection, Bodeleian Library, Oxford.
48. Ibid., p. 11.
49. "The Jealous Mother, Or The Singular Adventures and Miraculous Escapes of a Young Lady of Fortune; Who, Though Immured in a Convent, and Most Barbarously Treated, Had the Fortitude to Preserve Inviolable Her vows of Constancy and Fidelity to the Object of her Affections," London: Printed and Published by Arloiss and Huntsman, 87, Bartholomew Close, 1808, 36 pages.
50. A Letter from a Scotch Nun to a Bachelor," London, sold at C. Dilly, MCDDXCI (1791), 32 pages.
51. Ibid., p. 9.
42. Ibid., p. 10.
53. Ibid., quotes are from pages 22 and 24.
54. Ibid., p. 30.
55. Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 82, quotation; and pages 89, 91, 112.
56. "The Fair Jilt, or the Amours of Prince Tarquin and Miranda." London, Printed by T. Sabine, the Author, Aphra Behn was not identified.
57. "The Tricks of London Laid Open: Being a true Caution to Both Sexes in Town and Country," London: Printed by T. Sabine, 33 pages.
58. Ibid., pp. 29, 30.
59. Ibid., p. 31, 33.
60. Ibid., quotation on page 32.
61. Edward Ward, "Female Policy Detected; or, The Arts of a Designing Woman Laid Open," London, Printed for the Booksellers in Town and Country, 1791, 100 pages.

62. Quotations are from p. 22; pp. 69 and following.
63. Quotations from pages 48, 49, 50.
64. "The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping," printed and sold by J. Evans, London. J. Evans functioned as a printer in London from 1791 to 1795; 7 pages.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 5. Included is the quoted comment from the previous paragraph.
67. All quotations from this paragraph appear on page 7.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
70. Barker-Benfield, Culture of Sensibility, p. 294.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 199.
72. This comment comes from the author's dissertation research using the Second Edition of the Roxburghe Ballads in eight volumes.
73. The chapbook that succinctly presented Lennox's novel had the following title: "An Entertaining History of the Female Quixote, or the Adventures of Arabella. Containing A remarkable Account of her reading Romances, which had such an Effect on her, that every Man she saw on Horseback she imagined was a Knight and every Farm-House a Castle; with many diverting Stories." The Second Edition, London. Printed for R. Snagg, 1774-1775, 93 pages. There is no reference to Charlotte Lennox as the author in the chapbook. Details on the book trades and printers is available in Ian Maxted, The London Book Trades, 1775-1800, A Preliminary Checklist of Members, (Kent, England, Wm. Dawson and Sons, 1977). In addition there is H. R. Plomer, A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland From 1725 to 1775, (Oxford: The Bibliographical Society, Oxford University Press, 1968). Plomer was responsible for the compilation for England. In 1753, Lennox published one of the first critical or scholarly studies of Shakespeare. She was an editor, translator, playwright, poet, essayist, and biographer. Many theorize that she and her friend, Dr. Johnson, wrote the last chapter of Arabella. Johnson thought that fiction disturbed the well-being of women because they desired things that they could not have. An alternative and reasoned urge to power would threaten the prevailing social order. Both the Female Quixote and Clarissa united truth and desire in ways that might



engender unpredictable and unwanted results. See James Gray, "Dr Johnson, Charlotte Lennox, and the Englishing of Father Brumoy," Modern Philology, 83 (November, 1985): 143; Margaret Anne Doody, "Shakespeare's Novels: Charlotte Lennox Illustrated," Studies in the Novel, 19 (1987): 296, 307. Dr. Johnson reviewed it favorably in the Gentleman's Magazine. Fielding praised it in the Convent Garden Journal. Patricia Meyer Spacks, "The Subtle Sophistry of Desire: Dr. Johnson and The Female Quixote," Modern Philology, 86 (1988): 532, 541-2.

74. Ibid. Catherine A. Craft, "Reworking Male Models: Aphra Behn's Fair Vow-Breaker, Eliza Haywood's Fantomina, and Charlotte Lennox's Female Quixote," Modern Language Review, 86 (October, 1991): 821, 822.

75. Ibid.; Sparks, "The Subtle Sophistry," pp. 531, 533; Craft, "Reworking Male Models," pp. 833, 836, 837.

76. Wendy Motooka, "Coming to a Bad End: Sentimentalism, Hermeneutics, and 'The Female Quixote,'" Eighteenth-Century Fiction, 8, #2, (January, 1996): 264-267.

77. Deborah Ross, "Mirror, Mirror: The Didactic Dilemma of The Female Quixote," Studies in English Literature, 27, (1987).

78. Born in 1640 and living until 1689, Aphra Behn was a literary professional in the best sense of the term but also a woman of dubious reputation even given the standards of the Restoration. She wrote thirteen novels thirty years before Defoe's Robinson Crusoe in 1719. Aphra Behn, "The Fair Jilt, Or, the Amours of Prince Tarquin and Miranda." London: Printed and Sold by T. Sabine, 52 pages. Aphra Behn was not identified as the author.

79. Jane Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), p. 47; Susan J. Owen, Restoration Theater and Crisis, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 5.

80. Dale Spender, Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers Before Jane Austen, (London and New York: Pandora Press, 1968), pp. 48, 20; Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist, pp. 42, 52, 53; Janet Todd, The Sign of Angelica, pp. 86, 88; Jacqueline Pearson, "Gender and Narrative in the Fiction of Aphra Behn," Review of English Studies, New Series, 42 (1991), p. 40; "The Fair Jilt," p. 3.

81. Pearson, "Gender and Narrative," pp. 40-44; "The Fair Jilt," p. 3.

82. S. J. Wiseman, Aphra Behn, (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996), p. 66. George Woodcock, Aphra Behn: The English Sappho, (Montreal: Black Rose

Books, 1989), p. 199; Frederick M. Link, Aphra Behn, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1968), p. 198.

83. Pearson, "Gender and Narrative," pp. 52, 53.

84. Spender, Mothers of the Novel, p. 28. Use of Oxford English Dictionary.

85. "The Fair Jilt," p. 52.

86. Wiseman, Aphra Behn, pp. 70, 71.

87. "History of Betty Bolaine, the Canterbury Miser, Containing an Account of Her Avarice, Whimsical Amours, and Wonderful Escapes from Matrimony," Rochester: Printed and Sold by S. Caddel; and may be had at all the booksellers in town and country. Those of 1805 to 1815 vintage were noted in catalog of Harding Collection.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

89. Jon P. Klancher, The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

90. There are many chapbook versions for stories from the oral culture which pass intermittently into written form. Few of the many possible examples were reviewed in chapter 7.

91. Susan Dwyer Amussen, "Being Stirred to Much Unquietness: Violence and Domestic Violence in Early Modern England," Journal of Women's History, 6, #2 (Summer, ), pp. 75-76.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

93. Anna Clark, Women's Silence, Men's Violence, Sexual Assault in England, 1770-1845, (London and New York: Pandora, 1987), pp. 37-39, 58; Frank McLynn, Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 106, 108-110.

94. McLynn, Crime and Punishment, p. 110.

95. Clark, Women's Silence, Men's Violence.

96. These chapbooks came from the Bodleian Library, Oxford, The Houghton Library, Harvard University, the Library of Congress, and the University of California at Los Angeles Library.

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**UMI**

**CHAPTER TWELVE**  
**'WOMEN OF UNCOMMON TALENTS'**

Although in sheer numbers, the chapbooks that celebrate a sense of adventure and quick-witted behavior are few, their repeated recurrence in popular literature and culture serves as an antidote to a depiction of chapbooks as slavishly conforming to the dictates of obeisance and gentility. Women whose activities earned them notoriety or those who found themselves on the wrong side of the law also displayed survival skills. A very fine line exists between behavior considered to be boldly assertive in the quest for self-preservation and that which passed beyond the acceptable or legal limits.

Brave exploits found their way into chapbooks. The Celtic Queen of the Iceni, Boadicea, the legendary Long Meg of Westminster and the military Amazon of the eighteenth century, Hannah Snell defied stereotypical assumptions about female passivity and deference to men. The celebration of Boadicea's legend in chapbook form and the extended commentary about the real and recent female warrior, Hannah Snell, appeared at the end of the long eighteenth century. The social climate permitted such daring and certainly unconventional exploits by a woman to become a part of popular literature.

Chapbooks about Queen Elizabeth I and Marie Antoinette reduced both women to human dimensions, but served the purposes of the authors. Elizabeth became a love-stricken woman. Marie Antoinette, the villainous French Amazon queen, committed incest with her son, the Dauphin and in complete corrupt and debauched self-interest manipulated her weak husband, the King of France. Such an account served English purposes, since it cast French royalty in salacious and debauched terms that could be readily extended to the whole of the French people.

## Queens--women in power

### Eleanor of Aquitaine

Repeatedly, chapbooks which function as what we would recognize as popular romances described the tragic life of Rosamond Clifford as well as that of Jane Shore. Their tragic lives were summarized in a previous chapter. Rosamond, as a mistress to Henry II allegedly encountered the ire of Henry's wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. The chapbooks painted Eleanor as a vengeful creature bent on every possible avenue for revenge. Hence the account of her life by her determined biographers counters the image of Eleanor put forth in the chapbook. She is a legend herself as the Queen of Aquitaine and as a military leader.

Chapbooks perpetuated the legend that Eleanor made her way to the idyllic retreat at Woodstock and gave Rosamond a choice--poison or the dagger. But in fact, at the time of Rosamond's death, the queen was far away from the Oxfordshire convent where Rosamond lived. Legends that were 'suppressed' during the time of Henry were paraded in order to savage the Queen. Balladeers used these stories to 'season broadsides and chapbooks' until the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> Chapbooks even beyond that time continued to fan the flames. Rosamond emerged from the chapbook as the victim of Eleanor's consuming jealousy.

One of Eleanor's contemporary biographers, Amy Kelly complained that Eleanor's unblemished record was tainted by false accounts of her behavior. Another biographer, Marian Meade, felt that Eleanor's dissatisfaction with Henry stemmed from the waning of her power and influence with him. Eleanor was a royal woman and enjoyed wielding power in her own right. Henry saw her only as a potential bearer of children who could be dismissed to some remote place when he no longer needed her.<sup>2</sup>

Eleanor's biographers question accounts of Eleanor's blind rage, insisting upon a contrasting portrait of the queen from Aquitaine. D. D. R. Owen suggested

that Eleanor was an Amazon or a 'man eater.' She and other women joined a Crusade and ventured forth in male and warrior attire. Amy Kelly alluded to transvestite behavior that was visible when Eleanor and the ladies in her company performed exercises. In resplendent attire, Eleanor and her ladies marched before the crowds in Amazon attire—plumes adorning their hair and buskins on their feet. Their gift of white feathers to people in the crowd was designed to inspire the faithful to join the Crusade. King Louis, Eleanor's first and French husband, and his armies were no match for these powerful women and the disposition of Eleanor to make decisions.<sup>3</sup>

The chapbook account glorifies the amorous behavior of Rosamond Clifford and displayed its own form of vengeance against Eleanor of Aquitaine, a French princess. Popular romances appealed to sentimental moments, even before the well-documented culture of sentimentality demanded an even greater appreciation of its dictates.

#### Queen Elizabeth I

The "History of Queen Elizabeth I and her Great Favourite, The Earl of Essex," concentrated on female passion. The Countess of Nottingham, with the encouragement of the Queen's Secretary, the venerable Lord Cecil, persuaded the Queen to divulge her feelings. What followed read like royal true confessions. The Queen professed understanding of Essex' romantic dilemma and helped him despite her own attachment to him, behaving both with the discretion and diplomatic bearing expected of a Queen. Both the Countess of Nottingham and Cecil, an ambitious, intriguing but capable advisor, resented Essex' influence. They plotted his destruction. When Elizabeth learned that Essex and the Countess of Rutland were secretly married, she turned against him with all the vengeance of a woman scorned. She later stayed the death sentence pronounced on both of them. Essex pleaded with the Countess of Nottingham for a good word with the Queen. But her treachery combined with that of Cecil instead took him to the scaffold and an early

death. The chapbook even claimed that the Queen's mourning for Essex shortened her own life. The Countess later lamented her involvement in his death. His ghost haunted her.<sup>4</sup>

Lost in a chapbook highlighting feelings and passions is Elizabeth's firm resolution as the Virgin Queen, her legendary skills—leadership, motivation of others, and the ability to maneuver underlings and retainers—even at cross purposes. The chapbook asserts that a Queen notorious for keeping her own counsel and for surviving intrigues as a young princess would confess her innermost feelings. Elizabeth had earlier protected herself even when those around her went to the Tower.

Biographers of Elizabeth painted a more complex portrait of a clearly-complex figure. An impressive and effusive biography in 1928 by Lytton Strachey detailed the case against Gloriana. The chapbook informed its readers that the case against Essex and Elizabeth's final judgment was based solely on emotion, and that she was incapable of rendering an impartial decision. In addition, the passionate struggle between the older queen and a younger, attractive man was well-known. Spies and eavesdroppers were everywhere, anxious for each morsel of royal gossip. That invited the intrigue that gradually but surely encircled Essex and defeated him. His earlier popularity with London crowds--the Tudor public opinion poll--declined when he staged a rebellion against the Queen and her court. Then the crowds demanded his head.<sup>5</sup>

The chapbook told readers what they wanted to read, almost absurdly. But its slice of life reduced the picture of a very complex personality. In addition, both Marie Antoinette and Elizabeth, in the true tradition of royalty, considered themselves to be special. The chapbooks trivialized these traits because the monarchs were reduced to the personal level that resonated with the reading and buying public.

### **Marie Antoinette**

The story of Marie Antoinette and a sequel about her husband were printed after their execution in October of 1793. The first part of the chapbook consisted of an interrogation of the Austrian-born French Queen by a President--not identified within the text but referred to in the title as the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal. It read like the dossier of a war criminal who intrigued against the well-being of the French nation. Along with the political activities and schemes that she allegedly concocted, including bringing famine to France in 1789, she was accused of incest--'shocking indecencies with her own son.' Such debauched behavior would make him a 'debilitated tyrant like the Medicis.' Marie Antoinette finally broke her silence and answered her accusers. She 'appealed to all mothers who are present in this auditory; is such a thing possible?' She faced death serenely.<sup>6</sup>

The English were predisposed to think ill of French monarchs. The chapbook concluded with an excoriation of her haughty behavior, her domination of her husband, and her repeated raids on the French treasury for her own pleasure. The narrative inferred that the King was responsible for his own behavior. In addition, no evidence supported the allegation of improper behavior with her son. Although a clearly defined minority identified with the revolutionary fervor and activities in France, enmity against France could color a chapbook that would be disseminated amongst ordinary people. Fabrication was not impossible. Finally, the chapbook noted that 'her sacrifice was necessary to any Cause, disgraceful to any People.'

The chapbook describing the trial and execution of her husband, Louis, also used the account of his interrogation. The second part focused on murder. During the time of his trial, a great silence allegedly pervaded the city of Paris and people heard voices that they could not identify or locate. Were these voices warning people against deposing and killing the French monarch? Was this the voice an English royalist? This statement tells us more about English superstition than about



the events in France. The details of Louis' departure from this world focused on his political failure, his attempts at counter-revolution, and alliances with his country's enemies, but included no accusations about his personal behavior. The King accepted his fate and tried to comfort those around him. Both accounts ended sympathetically. The once omnipotent King and Queen of France were reduced to personal niceties and concern for those around them. They assumed human dimensions.

The debauchery of Marie Antoinette sold chapbooks. Her behavior could be interpreted as that of an Amazon who threatened the social fabric, even from across the channel. Most likely, English printers embellished this account because of their perception of English animosities toward the French.

### Later Warrior Women

The content and form of ballads influenced the later development of chapbooks that follow them. Our understanding of the resilience of martial women comes from a body of songs with a coherent message and structure. The mapping of these ballads and an analysis of their content indicates the existence of a coherent and reappearing theme. The female warrior ballad follows a predictable pattern even as it outlines sexual inversion and the proverbial 'world turned upside down.' Although some of the ballads appear to deviate from the pattern, a careful examination of their 'ridges' permit the underlying structure to appear.<sup>7</sup> Chapbooks in this study adhere to the pattern outlined, although they may differ somewhat from the themes established with ballads of warrior women.

These ballads features courtship and then a threatened separation. Daughters rejected the advice of family and friends and followed their loved ones into battle or to sea duty in male disguise. The masking of female identity liberated the disguised women. They reaped rewards for valor and service, eventually were

reunited with their family and chosen mate, married, and settled down to a peaceable domesticated life.

Ballad themes and chapbook stories that featured role reversal and disguise built on a long-established European tradition. Inversion or the reversal of gender roles, and the existence of masquerade or carnival was an integral part of eighteenth-century life and is reflected in ballads and fiction. Masquerades were not just well orchestrated events in palaces and manor houses. Such amusements could even be commercially organized for the lower classes. This threat was so compelling that the Cheap Repository Tracts authored by Hannah More and company sought to displace these images. Specifically they depicted women as frail, innocent creatures attired in proper feminine clothing, not in mannish outfits.<sup>8</sup>

We do not know how many women in early modern England and in the eighteenth century assumed a masculine persona by adopting a male occupation and wearing male clothing. Cross-dressing privileges had long been extended to the upper classes, now they simply reached to the lower classes. Stories about Amazons come to us in literature from the time of the ancients. They begin with the tribe of Syrian women who were determined to defend themselves after their husbands were killed and they were forced to abandon their homes. Both the disciplines of anthropology and history have documented the role of sexual inversion through the centuries. Documented biographies reveal to us the actual existence of Deborah Sampson, Maria Knowles, Mary Anne Talbot, Ann Bonny, and Mrs. Christian Davies, and the subject of several chapbooks, Hannah Snell.<sup>9</sup> The escapades of these women contrasted dramatically with the submissive behavior of fragile women who populated novels from 1750 on.

Female warriors in early modern England exhibited toughness, resiliency, and independence. Lower class women were expected to be hardy defenders of themselves and their territory. Dugaw described the woman warrior as 'physically capable,' 'valiant, self-possessed, and determined.' Second, because England was much at war, and particularly in the eighteenth century, women in uniform were not

seen as strange. In addition, in this age obsessed with disguise, women masqueraded as men. About 1,000 ballads of the eighteenth century mention about 100 women warriors. Worsening crime and violence demanded an assertive defense of oneself and constant presence of mind. Eighteenth-century conditions might prompt many a woman to leave the only home that she knew, take to the road alone, join the army or navy, carry a gun, or pilfer to make ends meet. This rough-and-tumble age required survival skills in lower class women, not female delicacy. Women in the ballads and the fictional Moll Flanders survived by their quick wit.<sup>10</sup>

In Jacobean England all social groups debated vexing issues in terms of the 'mannish woman' and 'womanish man'--an obsession with gender, dress, and viraginous females. In the seventeenth century, about 1/4 of London plays included roles for women in male clothing. This was a time of serious and even extreme economic and social dislocation. Female warriors in the theater displayed female aggressions, contributing to the image of a 'world turned upside down.'<sup>11</sup>

In the eighteenth-century, women served because this was an age of war. Camp followers are usually cast as prostitutes, but women performed in other roles as well. Many were nurses board ship; they cooked, laundered, looked for food, and peddled consumables such as wine and meat. Some were ballad-mongers. Some wives followed husbands. Reports from the American Revolutionary War indicate that General Washington would not enter a town unless the rag-tag regiment of women and children with their pots and pans followed at a distance. Although even at the time it was unconventional, some women served as women. They enlisted because men who were paid to get men and boys into service wanted to fill their quota. Others donned a male costume and served as men. Some continued to serve as men even after they took off their uniform. Only when they died was it discovered that they were women. Evidence suggests that female sailors could do jobs on ships as good as men and even be the envy of those who watched them. Female warriors could be daring and bold, and their image in literature confronts stereotypical definitions of what women could do. Some women

would have difficulty masking their identity, but younger women could pass themselves off as boys.<sup>12</sup> Eighteenth century military service could be described as 'makeshift' or 'decentralized.' Such conditions allowed young women more latitude.

Beyond the necessary defense of honor and sexual reputation, existence was precarious. Lower class women understood the rules of the game. They were assertive, even combative and uninhibited. The Amazons in the churchyard in Fielding's Tom Jones displayed a vigorous pursuit of battle and primal spirit when put to the test. Women fought in duels and boxing. Such endeavors was not considered unusual or a violation of gender rules. Adjectives describing women's experience as 'broad and exuberant' seem fitting and proportionate to the period and people.<sup>13</sup>

These ballads portrayed disguised women as more natural. The woman's masking of her true identity was not exaggerated. The public did not find the content of such ballads as revolting or surprising. They usually understated or matter-of-factly stated the intentions of the cross-dresser. Some describe the manner in which the disguise was achieved or the cosmetics necessary for the task. A dangerous age necessitated the 'age of disguise;' clothing and cosmetics accomplished what the age expected. Foreign travelers commented on cross-dressing in England, although it was not just an English phenomenon. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, women sometimes wore breeches; one observer commented on 'hermaphroditical' riding clothes. Such attire led some to think of them as men and to input Amazonian qualities to them.<sup>14</sup>

We cannot assume that these women were making a socio-political statement about their sexuality or attempting to claim male privileges. Their goal was not over-arching social change. Moreover, we should not arbitrarily cast them as actors who identified as lesbians. For various reasons they did not accept what life offered them and rebelled. Some simply rejected the advice of their parents. Some saw military life as their best opportunity. Male authors imposed fantasy

upon them. Chapbooks promoted the fantasy as well as the hope that a different life devoid of the doldrums was possible.

#### Cross-dressing

Research on cross-dressing concentrates on ballads. Only recently have feminists in various academic disciplines successfully challenged the notion that cross-dressing ballads were sung about men only. Folklorists now assume that ballads about transvestites, female warriors, or crossdressers describe the antics or activities of both sexes and heterosexual behavior.

Cross-dressing ballads describe women in male attire and women who performed male roles. Women like Long Meg of Westminster performed daring exploits and subdued men. They were clearly a threat. Not only does Meg wear male clothing, but she is a heroine. For Pauline Greenhill, cross-dressing is 'not only a mode of exploration of the meaning of gender and of sexuality. . . The cross-dresser is clearly the locus of desire and eroticism.' Meg was on stage, challenging sexual stereotypes but also eliciting responses from both men and women.<sup>15</sup>

David Cressy has recently suggested that the phenomenon of cross-dressing compels literary scholars to engender sexual crisis, deliberate upsets or refractory patriarchal admonitions when none were intended. "Most commonly the cross-dressing played for laughs, without suggestion of a gender system in trouble." A full-blown transvestite order was seldom intended. Early modern England did not experience a pronounced, gender-related crisis. Concerns about identity always existed but were seldom determining.<sup>16</sup>

Because 'Long Meg' appeared in a 'jest biography,' one can safely assume that, whatever its factual basis, it offered relief from patriarchal presumptions and got a few laughs. Long Meg protected people with bravado. The challenge presented by Long Meg ended with her peaceful retirement to civilian life and marriage--a conforming life. What does this mean? Since this chapbook enjoyed an extended run, it is difficult to know whether print and the conforming mode of

chapbooks dictated a conventional ending. The marketing requirement meant some printers issued what stayed within the bounds of sanctioned behavior.

### Long Meg of Westminster

'Long Meg of Westminster' was destined to be one of the most popular chapbooks, matching the popularity of the ballad, 'Mary Ambree.' Long Meg emerged from the ranks of the people and was only a woman warrior on a part-time basis. Ballads of the 1590's first circulated the details of her life, but they have not survived. The story was first registered with the Stationers' Register in 1590, although the most commonly cited edition is dated 1620. The Dicey firm published her story about 1750.<sup>17</sup>

Jest books provided entertainment. A 'jest biography' repeated a series of incidents that people found disconcerting but somehow appealing. A jest biography may contain 'only a remote simulacrum of a genuine bio-graphical account,' but the authenticity of her life was much debated by nineteenth-century antiquarians. Charles Misch, the author of a collection of short fiction, observed that if she was not an authentic person, the description points to someone like her. Details available in the longer version would suggest that a 'Meg' lived in the 1500s. The eighteen chapters in the life of Meg arranged a tableaux, a life history of a 'boisterous' woman.<sup>18</sup>

Long Meg could qualify as a cross-dresser, but that alone is insufficient to describe her antics and career. The introduction in the 1635 edition dedicated to 'gentleman readers' described her as a woman whose jests rank her with Robin Hood and Bevis of Southampton, and 'others who serve to procure mirth and drive away melancholy.' Her faults could be understood if one considered her gender. Allegedly her exploits made her famous in London, Westminster, and the Lancashire of her birth. "Meg is portrayed as a dashing but essentially good-hearted person able to exchange blows or repartee with equal zest. Her sins are passed over and she shines as a model of generosity." Born during the age of

Henry VIII, according to Harry B. Weiss, an authority on chapbooks, Meg came to London at age 18. The carrier who brought her and others demanded money that some could not afford. Meg forced him to beg for mercy. She proved her strength to the Vicar of the Abbey. She prevented arrests at the house where she served and 'banged' the thieves who operated at St. James Corner. They begged for mercy and agreed to her conditions: never to hurt women, children, the lame, or impotent men, and not to rob the poor. Her gallantry against France earned her a reward from the King. Few women either in legend or fact fought against a foreign foe. After she was uneventfully married, she boldly posted her seven principles of decorum at her boardinghouse. Early in life, Long Meg internalized these principles and they had served her well. Her exploits frequently appeared in print and a play was performed about her adventures, starting in 1595.<sup>19</sup>

'(b)oisterous times' called for grit and nerve. Meg was not a typical, or full-time soldier, but she defended and rescued people from those who preyed upon them. She served admirably in domestic situations and with the army in Flanders. In typical fashion, her career as a soldier ended when she married and lived a domesticated life. She, however, was faithful to her calling. The story, whatever its origin and veracity, resonated with the public.

#### Hannah Snell

Like Long Meg of Westminster, Hannah Snell was one of the few women in men's clothes whose existence is verified by historical records. Military exploits and loyalty to country are the hallmarks of the well-known 'Female Soldier; or, the surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell'--the subject of two versions, printed in 1750. Robert Walker printed the longer and shorter versions by an anonymous author. After she and other crew members were finally paid at Gravesend, Snell revealed her double life. Yet this life was not remarkable for its uniqueness, since female sailors and soldiers frequently appeared in history and fiction. A rendition of

her exploits was 'commonplace,' precisely because it followed a long line of ballads and street literature that extolled the gallantry of female warriors. Grandiloquent passages allowed the narrator to court the reader. The author intended that it be widely read, for 'it merits the Countenance and Approbation of every Inhabitant of this great Isle, especially the Fair Sex, for whom this Treatise is chiefly intended.' The description was similar to that of a novel, and Snell was compared to Samuel Richardson's Pamela.<sup>20</sup>

Three versions of this story are compared here. Walker's shorter version condensed her story to 47 pages and focused on her military service. Repeated use of the term 'intrepidity' or the adjective 'intrepid,' the frequent reference to resolution and the valor of a woman disguised as a soldier, digressions toward the end of the narrative which remind the reader of her valiant exploits and the blatant courting of the readers--these features mark the 187 page edition also published in 1750. In 1801, H. Symonds sponsored an edition printed by T. Plummer. 'The Female Warrior,' advertised her exploits on the frontispiece, but concentrated on her amours with women. The climate of the 1790s emboldened the author and printer to issue a chapbook that blatantly suggested her sexual orientation.<sup>21</sup>

The printers took risks. Walker exhibited tenacity and was considered notorious by some. About 1734, he issued an opposing version of Shakespeare's play. He worked in London at many addresses and was one of the first printers who resided in Cambridge without an official university appointment. Symonds paid a fine for sponsoring The Jockey Club and spent a year in Newgate for issuing The Rights of Man by Tom Paine. Because he publicized Paine's mailing address he was further fined and put into prison. Such biographical details tell us that Symonds took risks. The climate of the 1790s may have emboldened both the anonymous author, Walker, and Symonds to issue a chapbook with details about her sexual orientation.<sup>22</sup>

Since balladmongers catered to the tastes of the lower classes, accounts of female soldiers and drummers recruited from plebeian ranks appealed to those



audiences. Dugaw considered this story to be a 'fascinating middlebrow formulation of a lower-class heroine and her ballad-like story.' There are other similarities. A practical woman, Snell enlisted as James Gray, put on men's clothes, showed up for duty, and did as she was told. Some disguised women warriors celebrated in ballads pursued the affections of women. Hannah Snell pursued women acquaintances.<sup>23</sup>

All three versions acknowledged the stress of posing as a male soldier and Snell's resolve to protect her true identity. Even after her courageous actions, she was compelled to protect her identity in order to receive her military pay. Walker's 1750 accounts capitalized on the interest in her life--particularly from those in the lower classes who heard ballads and other tales of her exploits. These accounts did not deny the current obsession with cross-dressing and female soldiering. Other venues seized upon her exploits. The editor of the Gentleman's Magazine included it as 'eccentric news.' Although Walker tried to protect this popular story with a 1750 affidavit signed by Snell and her sister, other printers capitalized on its appeal. This story of daring and bravado became extended to the 'picks and pockets' of an audience below Walker's station and his original intentions. The Diceys published their usual twenty-four page version in the 1750s. Printers as far away as York and Northampton, Massachusetts ran copies. For chapbook readers of the lower classes, Snell's exploits were routine. The image of the Female Warrior was so popular that the Sadler Wells Theater recruited the real life Hannah Snell for a masqueraded stage appearance.<sup>24</sup>

Two themes appear in Walker's shorter version. There was the voice from the street ballad hawking the exploits of an adventuresome lower-class woman. But a 'middlebrow and ambivalent narrator, the other voice of 'fair sex,' reiterated her attempts to maintain her virtue. This voice intruded. Using novelistic literary devices (to be catalogued in later pages), the voice encouraged a sentimentalized reading and/or middle-class comprehension of a lower-class woman and spoke to the public that purchased and read novels. Such sentimentalizing dialogue and

introspective moments, however, were not possible for someone frequently in harm's way. The narrator was constantly 'editorializing' in order to make Snell's experiences palatable.<sup>25</sup>

There are three credible reasons for the 'incredulous' interference of the narrator. First, the narrator wrote for a 'publick' that might bristle and be unnerved by the account of a disguised or transvestite female soldier, albeit one whose exploits deserved acclaim. Second, her lower-class identity was not concealed. Hence literary flourishes begged the reader's indulgence and challenged him or her--especially her--to read on. Third, another and plausible interpretation of this story would be its condemnation of the toll taken upon society by 'effeminacy and debauchery that have taken the Place of the Love or Glory' that motivated England's ancestors. The sentences that heaped honor and glory all over Snell made clear the author's contempt for men (and women) who do not measure up. Seen from this perspective, the literary devices were pallatives to the reader who found this account overbearing.<sup>26</sup>

Although Walker's longer version conceded that Hannah Snell was no saint, she deserved her position on the same level as 'ancient heroines' and should be 'entered onto the same list with the late famous Pamela.' Her service to her country on numerous difficult occasions earned her the 'Right and Title to as high a character for her Honour and Virtue as the famed Pamela.' For Hannah Snell was 'true flesh and blood,' not the production of an author's imagination. Courage and intrepidity were not usually expected of someone of her sex. The comparison with Pamela served another purpose: the exploits of Hannah Snell were juxtaposed to those of a contemporaneous and currently popular fictional creature.<sup>27</sup> The story remained within the ballad and chapbook tradition of the lower classes:

Walker brings before his novel-buying public a heroine straight from the lower class, a representative of both its experience and its discourse. Like the heroine of many a ballad, Hannah Snell lived out a lower-class history that had been told again and again in the century before her.<sup>28</sup>

The longer version contained a journal of the siege at Pondicherry in 1748 as well as a long list of ports of call. The first of many long digressions contrasted the valiant behavior of Hannah Snell with that of her abusive husband. Hannah met a man whose digression recounted James Summs' tale of his life, his regrets about abandoning her, and his perfidious behavior. She was 'obliged to make such an Amazonian Elopement' despite being pregnant and homeless. After losing her baby, she determined to go to war. The exploits of a woman of such 'mean' or 'low' birth and 'want of literature' deserved to be handed down to future generations. Like unnamed 'Amazonian ladies of old,' she served her country well. These passages left the reader with few doubts about the contributions of those of lowly birth.<sup>29</sup>

In familiar but with obviously didactic approaches both versions feature an introductory homily dedicating this 'treatise' to the 'fair sex,' although both titles dedicated it 'to the publick.'<sup>30</sup> The longer version has a shorter introduction:

Notwithstanding the surprising Adventures of this our British Heroine, of whom the following Pages fully and impartially treat; yet the Oddity of her Conduct for preserving her Sex from being discovered, by which she preserv'd her Virtue, was such, that it demands not only Respect, but Admiration; and as there is nothing to be found in the following Sheets but what is Matter of Fact, it merits the Countenance and Approbation of every Inhabitant of this great isle, especially the FAIR SEX, for whom this Treatise is chiefly intended; and the Truth or which being confirmed by our Heroine's Affidavit, made before the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor of London, the said Affidavit is hereunto annexed, in order to prevent the Publick from being imposed upon by fictitious Accounts.<sup>31</sup>

Clearly, the author wanted the 'fair sex' to identify with the exploits of his heroine and for that purpose he affixed an affidavit attesting to the legitimacy of her claim.

All three versions begin with an extensive diatribe about the 'dastardly' state of the world into which Hannah Snell was born. This set the stage for a complete review of her exploits and an equally complete comprehension of them by the

reader. The lengthy introduction of the shorter version is partially quoted here because it so revealingly demonstrates the didacticism of this chapbook:

**In this dastardly Age of the World, when Effeminacy and Debauchery have taken Place of the Love of Glory. . .genuine Heroism, or rather an extraordinary Degree of Courage, are Prodigies among Men. What Age, for Instance produces a CHARLES of SWEDEN, a MARLBOROUGH or a PRINCE EUGENE? There are Rare Aves in Terris, and when they appear, they seem to be particularly designed by Heaven, for protecting the Rights of injured Nations. . .The amazing Benefit arising to Mankind from such illustrious and exalted Characters, is perhaps, the principal Reason why they attract the Eyes, and command the Attention of all who hear of them. . . Why they are the Subjects of the Poets Song, the Founders of the Historian Narration, and the Objects of the Painters Pencil. . . Perhaps their Rarity may also contribute, in a great Measure, to that Esteem and Veneration, which the World thinks fit to pay them. But sure if Heroism, Fortitude, and a Soul equal to all the glorious Acts of War and Conquest, are Things so rare, and so much admired among Men; how much rarer, and consequently how much more are they to be admired among Women? In short, we may. . .without any Hyperbole, use the words of Solomon, and say, One Man among a thousand have I found, among Women not. However, tho Courage and warlike Expeditions, are not the Provinces by the World allotted to Women since the Days of the Amazons, yet the female sex is far from being destitute of Heroism.**

The author goes on to mention Cleopatra's offensive against the great Mark Anthony, Semiramis, and the Arcadian Sheperdesses.<sup>32</sup>

The bombast of this introduction sets the tone for an exposition of Snell's exploits that indirectly criticized this 'dastardly age' and its excesses. In addition, the longer version stated that few if any women were equipped with the capacity to be heroines since the 'Days of the Amazons.' The author noted that persons of low birth 'hardly ever rais'd themselves to the Summit of Glory and Renown.' The genealogy of Hannah Snell and her family also contributed to her martial abilities, because the 'seeds of heroism' were within her family. Although her five sisters were genteel women, the service of her father and grandfather gave young Snell

her martial spirit at an early age. At the young age of ten, she organized a group of her 'Play-fellows,' served as the commander of 'young Amazon's Snell's company,' and headed the regiment as it paraded in the streets of Worcester.<sup>33</sup>

The shorter version left little doubt that her exploits should be admired. A series of strong exclamatory statements beginning with the interjection 'behold' announced the 'Ocean of Troubles' faced by this heroine:

Behold her inwardly looking back on the past Vicissitudes of her Life, on a inhumane, ungrateful and faithless Husband. . . Behold her tempted by a vicious man. . .she proved the Instrument of extracting Good out of Evil. . .Behold the Friendship that this virtuous Discovery produced. . .Behold her tender Flesh cut and mangled by these Scourgings and the Pains and Agonies she suffered; Behold in this her Distress, the friendly Sympathy and eager Assistance of her female Friend who administered relief. . .Behold the Commotions she felt upon perceiving one in the Regiment whom she knew, and by whom she was afraid of being discovered.<sup>34</sup>

The longer version used the term 'imagine,' a somewhat softer term, to interject the same thoughts.

But one must still behold a controversial woman. The shorter version admitted that the soldier Snell pursued a young woman and even agreed that once her wages were paid, a remittance would be sent and Snell would return to her-- after visiting with friends, 'according to Agreement, and consummate their matrimonial Ceremonies with a Solemnity suitable to her Abilities.' But Snell was capable of doublecrossing even those to whom she was attracted. Finally all these carefully-reconstructed events would certainly 'touch the Hearts of our Readers in some Measure. . .'<sup>35</sup>

Details were not chronologically presented, but appeared somewhat arbitrarily as the author recalled them: her journey to Worcester in the company of her sister, brother-in-law, and young woman lodger with whom she shared her bed at her sister's house, how she was brutally whipped for neglect of duty, how she

was wounded and the cautions she took to keep the Black woman who treated her from discovering her sex, and how she finally received her pay and revealed her true identity to her fellow soldiers. The abridgement focused on her military exploits to avoid scrutiny of her controversial personal life. A list of situations provided additional insight: Snell's willingness to endure 'those rude, indiscreet, and unwomanly Actions, which she silently disfavoured and contemned;' the 'thousand Inquietudes' which must have 'rolled in upon her, like so many Billows' when she was alone in her quarters; the 'new Matter of Contemplation,' her insight into the Tars—men who left their families and homes behind in order to serve the cause of liberty; the five hundred lashes she endured after she warned a young woman about the 'criminal' intentions of the sergeant who was her superior; her response when her landlady was abused by her own husband. She 'took up a cudgel' and punished him.<sup>36</sup>

By 'informing the Publick' that Hannah Snell would continue to wear her uniform, the author clearly indicated that he or she was uncertain as to how she 'intends to dispose of herself.' The ending disclaimer begged for the reader's approval by proclaiming the truth of Snell's story:

As this Treatise was done in a Hurry from Hannah Snell's own Mouth, and directly committed to the Press, occasioned by the Impatience of the Town to have it published, it is not doubted but that such part of it as appears somewhat incorrect, will be candidly overlook'd, that, being made up in the Veracity and Fulness of her surprising Adventures; the like not to be met with in the Records of Time.<sup>37</sup>

Both the 1801 revision and the 1750 longer version included the following poem, 'The Female Soldier:'

Hannah in Briggs behav'd so well,  
That none her softer sex could tell:  
Nor was her policy confounded,  
When near the mark of nature wounded,  
Which proves what Men will scarce admit,  
That women are for secrets fit.  
That healthful blood cou'd keep so long,

Amidst young fellows hale and strong,  
 Demonstrates, tho' a seeming wonder,  
 That love to courage truckles under.  
 O how her bed-mate bit his lips,  
 And mark'd the spreading of her hips'  
 And curs'd the blindness of his youth,  
 When she confess'd the naked truth!  
 Her fortitude, to no mans second,  
 To Woman's honour must be reckon'd.  
 Twelve wounds! 'Twas half great Caesar's number.  
 That made his corpse the ground encumber.  
 How many Men, for Heroes nurst,  
 Had left their colours at the first.  
 'Twas thought Achilles' greatest glory,  
 That Homer rose to sing his story;  
 And Alexander nourn'd his lot,  
 That no such bard cou'd then be got.--  
 But Hannah's praise no Homer needs;  
 She lives to sing her proper deeds.<sup>38</sup>

The identity of the author was immaterial to the reader's need to understand her true valor. The author teased the reader by stating that the poet was a man 'of no indifferent Taste, and one who wrote it purely to gratify his own Humour, without any Favour or Affection to the Subject of it.'<sup>39</sup>

Finally, the author revealed Snell's future plans. She would 'assume a new character' and be the proprietor of a public(k) house, somewhere within the city or in a tolerant place, one within the 'Bills of Morality.' Hopefully those men and women who were 'spectators' to her military exploits would patronize her and be 'Partakers of her culinary Operations.' For officers taught her the 'Art of Cookery.' In order to attract customers, a sign depicted her in full regimental dress on one half of her body and in her jacket and pants on the other. Large capital letters would announce this to be the establishment of 'The Widow in Masquerade.'<sup>40</sup> The main text concluded with another patriotic outburst designed to pour more glory over Hannah Snell.

A legend in her own time, Hannah needed no bard to publicize her story. The 1801 revision hinted that the author was an editor of one of the daily papers-- someone who had read the earlier narratives. By the end of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth century, authors made pleas such as that which followed the poetry of the 1801 account: 'The author has succeeded, we believe, in his wish of setting forth the leading features of Hannah's exploits in a pleasing manner.'--again begging for exclamations from the audience. '(h)is' hints within the text also tells us that the author of all three accounts may well have been a man.<sup>41</sup>

Beyond these entertaining and amusing memoirs, there is an omnipresent moral: bravery and fortitude in the face of adversity. Because the text substantially demonstrates the author's commitment to didactic admonitions to readers, a longer quotation demonstrated with full integrity the author's intents:

. . .we think we may very well recommend her to all our Readers. . .From her prudent Deportment, and Presence of Mind, we may learn to bear our Misfortunes, whenever they befall us, with a good Grace; to be always diligent. . . in using the natural Means to extricate ourselves out of the unavoidable Distresses which we labour under, and never to murmur or repine at our hard Lot; but leave the Event to Providence, who is always ready and willing to assist those who put their whole Trust and Confidence in him.<sup>42</sup>

Although the name of the poet whose verse concluded this narrative could not be mentioned, these sentiments provided a very agreeable conclusion:

Tho' plung'd in Isles, and exercis'd in Care;  
Yet never let the noble Mind despair,  
When press'd by Dangers, and beset with Foes,  
The Gods their timely Succour interpose;  
And when our Virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with Grief,  
By unforeseen Expedients, bring Relief.<sup>43</sup>

Grief and despair should never win. Eventually the healing balm of the Gods sustained individuals with the relief that they need and deserve.



Although *'The Female Warrior'* of 1801 did not disregard her military adventures, its chapter-by-chapter segmentation accentuated certain controversial episodes and experiences of her civilian life. Dialogic interaction with relatives and acquaintances brings Hannah Snell alive, especially when compared to the excess of description and lack of dialogue in the previous two editions. Three chapters describe her amours with the ladies, the lodger at her sister's home, a mantua-maker at Chester, and the widow at Winchester. Readers expected the interaction of dialogue and were spared the tedium produced by constant reiteration of the word *intrepidity*—a popular term in other contemporary chapbooks. They also avoided the tedium of the repetition of her valor. The language of the earlier versions protested against a rude dismissal of her service because she was a cross-dresser and a person of questionable sexual identity.

The 1801 text admitted that she was immediately attracted to the women she encountered. It mentioned passions and pursuit of women. Obviously, she stifled sexual urges when accompanying soldiers and sailors or was simply not attracted to them. Once she returned to her sister's house, she revealed her identity to the young woman with whom she shared a bed. Snell maintained her disguise as she encountered and pursued women, first at the home of her own sister and brother-in-law, and then when she lodged with others in various cities. Despite her amorous interests, money and mere survival remained a predominant priority. Referred to as *'our female rover,'* her passion with a mantua-maker from Chester resulted in this naive woman trusting her with some of her money.<sup>44</sup> She immediately fled the scene. Only the widow at Winchester outsmarted Snell and left in the dead of night with her money. Relationships and her attempts to separate people from their money were not emphasized in the earlier editions.

These accounts inferred a lesbian relationship, and certainly the 1801 story left fewer details to be culled from between the lines or left to the imagination. Snell pursued a relationship with a woman while disguised and on military duty. She dressed in men's clothing even after her sexual identity was revealed. She entered

her sister and brother-in-law's house and was introduced to their lodger as a potential bed-partner. The young Fanny seemed to accept that improvised arrangement and the text made it seem acceptable. Lodgers rented bed space, and the cost could be minimized by sharing a bed.

Emma Donoghue in British Lesbian Culture, 1688-1801, relied on the 1750 versions to cast Snell within a lesbian tradition. Amazons and Military Maids downplayed a lesbian orientation by disguised female warriors, suggesting instead that such behavior evinced a need to display male bravado. Snell's family and bed-partner, Fanny, deliberately allowed Snell to continue her masquerade with Fanny acting as wife. '(t)his great Untruth was reported for Fact throughout the whole neighborhood.'<sup>45</sup> The author blatantly suggested that readers would admire the extent of Snell's deception. Women readers especially should take pride in her service and remind their menfolk of her accomplishments:

The Adventures of this Female Soldier, as the like is not to be paralleled in History, should never be forgot by our *British Ladies*, but whenever satirized by any of the Masculine Gentry, they should always have this Repartee ready, *Remember Hannah Snell.*<sup>46</sup>

The italicized emphasis upon British conveyed nationalistic pride.

### Literary Devices

Didactic and moralistic statements with a lack of subtlety and a disposition for overstatement in any 'Lesson of Instruction' cannot be overestimated.<sup>47</sup> Both the 1750 editions encouraged patriotism while reminding readers that valorous behavior was unusual in a woman. This was accomplished with Interjections that were as bold as Hannah's behavior and blatant reminders to the reader as to how he or she should react.

The veracity of all Hannah's experiences should not be discounted by any errors made in the rush to print. The author's mission—to publicize quickly and completely the exploits of this unusual woman—compelled him to produce a rough,

unedited draft. After all it was hurriedly submitted because the town impatiently demanded it.

Rather than hints to the reader or stimulating subtleties, the author of the shorter version indulged his own zest for the subject with very deliberate statements, some of which serve as awkward transitions:

**We shall leave the candid Reader at liberty to judge the Disorders, Terrors and Distractions that so many various Scenes must have plunged her into . . .**

**But that I may not suffer any of my inquisitive Readers to remain in suspense concerning some particular Adventures that befell her. . .**

**This the Reader may plainly perceive throughout this whole Narration; and I am convinced. . .**

**I know the Reader will be desirous to know. . .**

**The Reader will here observe. . .**

**Now having satisfied the Reader's Doubts in Regard to the Methods she used to conceal her Sex from the Knowledge of any about her. . .<sup>48</sup>**

Authors also did not forego involving their own egos in the narrative. The 1750 shorter account featured statements such as the following:

**Having gone so far with the Author of this Subject, I cannot refrain from making a little Digressions, and making a few Reflections upon the melancholy prospect. . .**

**Having finished this Digression, I shall begin where I left off. .**

**I cannot help reflecting a little upon the Hardships, Fatigues, and Dangers she encountered. .**

**I shall now proceed to their March to Pondicherry. . .**

**I shall depart a little from the Subject, and give the Reader an Account of that basest of Men, our Heroine's Husband. . .**

**Now I have brought my female Adventurer home again to her native Country. . .**

**I would have my candid Readers survey in Imagination, the many various Scenes that here display themselves with a most surprizing Lustre. . .**

**But that I may not suffer any of my inquisitive Readers to remain in suspense. . .**

**I had forgotten to mention a Circumstance worthy of Notice. .**

**I shall conclude this Subject, with observing, that notwithstanding the many Reflections thrown upon the Fair Sex on Account of their Weakness in Point of Secret, the Conduct of our Heroine in this Particular is a plain and demonstrative Point of this Truth. . .**

**And—**

**I shall now conclude with informing the Publick. . .<sup>49</sup>**

The personal element of this prose reveals the author's total identification with the subject. Similar literary gestures surfaced in the 1750 longer edition. In the shorter version, warnings which flagged the reader's attention and the use of the pronoun 'I' make plain the author's involvement and serve as reminders or wake-up calls to the reader. There were fewer 'I' statements in the longer version. The author of the longer 'The Female Soldier' was more subtle in approach as the following passages make clear:

**. . .and worthy of the Reader's Attention; but we shall reserve them for his Amusement in some more proper Place.**

**The Reader will observe, the invincible Courage and Resolution of this woman. . .**

**Having here given the Reader a transient Idea of the Humanity and compassionate Disposition of our Heroine towards her Fellow Sufferers, I cannot, I think, introduce in a more proper**

**Place, a short Detail of the Inhumanity and brutal Deportment of her Husband towards her, by Way of Contrast.**

**The following comes at the end of a paragraph:**

**Notwithstanding in the Course of her Adventures there were many humorous Incidents occur'd; that would have afforded us Room enough to expatiate, and make very large Digressions; but we rather chose to entertain our Readers with real Facts, than to amuse them with any Fictions of our own, lest we should do our Heroine Injustice, and render her real History to be suspected for nothing better than a Romance.**

**As then we dare assure our Readers that we have in no Respect deviated from the Truth; we would have them now take a Survey in Imagination of the various Scenes that display themselves here in the strongest Light, and in the most agreeable manner imaginable.**

**Though in one of the preceding Pages, we have inform'd the Reader, that nothing worthy his Notice occurred. . .**

**Having thus, by this long Digression, in all Respects, fulfilled the Promise, which we were bound, as it were, to perform, and sufficiently, as we hope, gratified the Reader's Curiosity in regard to some secret Amours, which required no small Dexterity and Address to get clear of; we shall now resume the Threat of our Discourse, and return again to our Female Adventurer's Brother's House, where she paid her first Visit, and where we last left her.**

**We shall therefore remind our Reader of the artful Measure she took to prevent her being blown. . .**

**Throughout the Whole of this Narrative, the dexterity and Address of our Female Adventurer must appear very conspicuous to every Reader, and I am fully persuaded that our Heroine has not her Equal in any habitable part of the World. . .**

**Having thus attoned for our Omission of so particular a Circumstance in its proper Place; I shall now endeavour to reconcile the third Fact, which may possibly stagger the Faith of some of our Readers. . .**

Upon this recapitulation, the Reader cannot, we think, but stand astonished at the Courage and Intrepidity of our Heroine, and at that Presence of Mind that which she was remarkably endowed, that by Virtue thereof she always overcame the greatest Dangers and Distresses, in which she happen'd to be involved. . .

Having thus us'd our utmost Endeavours to satisfy (as far as in us lies) the Objections which some of our most incredulous Readers might possibly start to those Parts of this our Narrative which may any Ways seem to border upon the MARVELLOUS, I mean, in regard to those particular Articles of her artful Devices to conceal her Sex from the Knowledge of her most intimate Comrades, at all such Times in particular when she seem'd most apparently in Danger of being publicly expose. . .

I hope the Reader will excuse this little Excursion, by way of Encomium. .

Such of our Readers then as never indulged themselves so far as to the Eyewitness of the various Operations of that House. . .

As our Readers may be desirous of being informed in what Dress she now appears. . .<sup>50</sup>

Finally the closing paragraph:

. . .As this, doubtless, is the best and most natural Application that possibly can be made of the preceding Memoirs, we shall take the Liberty to close this important Lesson of Instruction, with the following Extract from one of our brightest Poets (though at present we are not able to recollect his Name) which, we hope, the Generality of our Readers will allow to be very pertinent to the present occasion, and an agreeable Conclusion of this our little Undertaking.<sup>51</sup>

There were also more sophisticated and smoother transitional devices as the following passages make clear:

Let us once more cast our Eye back on the numerous Sorrows and Afflictions which she labour'd under after her second inlisting and becoming a Marine. .

But to quit this long Digression, and pursue the Thread of

our Narrative. . .

But now to proceed. . .

But to return to our subject.

Having thus finished the Account of the Execution of our Adventurer's Husband. . .

I have now brought my Female Adventurer safe Home Again, not only to her native Country, but to her nearest and dearest Relations in Health and Safety, without the least Discovery of her Sex. . .

Before we proceed any farther in this little Narrative of our Female Adventurer, we think it a Duty incumbent on us to fulfill a kind of Promise which we made our Readers in one of our proceeding pages. . .

Now to satisfy the scrupulous. . .

As we have now brought our heroine on the publick stage. . .

But before we enter on that Detail, give us leave to make a few cursory Reflections on her extraordinary Merit. . .

To what I have here said, I shall only add one sanguine Wish. . .

But before we conclude. . .<sup>52</sup>

These embellishments cajoled the reader into accepting this unconventional heroine and in so doing to call attention to the lack of courageous behavior in the current crop of men.

The longer 1750 account offered subtle hints about her sexuality. The shorter version concentrated so completely on her military exploits that only a few hints can be detected about her sexual behavior. After all, she had been married and had looked for her missing husband. The complete title of the 1801 version was similar to many chapbooks and books that began with the theme 'the life and surprising adventures.' Were such typical titles conveniently borrowed from Defoe's

earlier title for Robinson Crusoe? Did such a title lull purchasers into thinking that they were buying a standard adventure story. What followed was Hannah's interest in women.

What were the late eighteenth-century conditions that allowed the printer/publisher to issue such a provocative account. True grit, daring and nerve, routinely, not female delicacy, was a constant requirement of lower class men and women. Hence, the theme of defiant women in battle mode must have appealed to the reading audience. Decades of British victories and imperialistic ambitions whetted the appetite for military stories. The 'middlebrow' narrator who intruded with his sentimentalized dialogue appealed to an audience beyond the lower classes. Popular and elite culture endured an uneasy coalescence. This combined with the need to satiate the interests of female readers produced the chapbooks that rekindled interest in ancient legends and recent exploits.

The campaign beyond the 1750s to remember the exploits of Hannah Snell and the much earlier passage of Boadicea into legend illustrates another purpose of chapbooks. They celebrated the glorious English past. Normally ballads and chapbooks extolled the battle-tested experiences of men who led England in war and victory. Yet these examples prove that someone, somewhere believed that women of valor and uncommon talents deserve recognition. 'Jest biographies' such as that of 'Long Meg' played with the idea of bravery in women, but readers, particularly female readers of the lower classes, may have visualized such women from their own experiences and knowledge of their neighbors, relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

The borrowed stylistic devices elevated the subject, but betrayed the author's education and experience. Earlier ballads focused on conjugal relationships and bickering, lacked elevated use of language. They did, however, convey a fresh and down-to-earth approach to the subject. The prose in Boadicea and the three versions presented the narrator thinking out loud or taking pains to guide the reader. The writers of earlier ballads and chapbooks did not indulge in transitional



phrases, whole sentences or paragraphs to flatter the reader, remind him or her to pay attention and maintain the proper obeisance to the subject. Such literary devices were expected in the post-novel or post-Richardson era that commenced about 1750. Again, the use of those devices remind us of the uneasy coexistence of the popular purpose with the needs of more educated or refined people

#### Concluding remarks

The longer versions departed from the usual scheme of conventional happiness. One version vaguely hinted at her sexual orientation, while the other made her sexual preference more apparent. Did earlier ballads and stories comply with the happy ending that the society scripted. Long Meg married and ran a strict lodging establishment. But is this the real story?

Was the story of Hannah Snell the remnant of an older tradition? Did the 1750 version try to achieve the best of both worlds, while in 1801 the author, emboldened by the events of the 1790s, portrayed the real Hannah Snell? Our answers to these questions may remain conjectures, but their exploration reveals much about change over the course of the century.

#### Boadicea

Continuing in a business probably started by her husband, between 1804 and 1810 Ann Kemmish printed a chapbook detailing the life of the ancient heroine, Boadicea, The Queen of Icen. The chapbook began with a quotation from Shakespeare:

Oh, 'tis excellent  
To have a Gant's strength; but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant.<sup>53</sup>

It covered events of the first century during the Roman occupation of Britain. Understanding the nature of the on-going conflict between Icen and Rome, a

Roman ruler granted Boadicea asylum. She, however, reacted vehemently when her two daughters reported that they had been raped by Roman soldiers. The daughters escaped from the barbary of the Romans and reported the news of their ravishment directly to their mother. With the courage that was her hallmark, Boadicea went directly to the Roman authorities and lectured them without regard for her own safety. She branded them the 'destroyer of our liberty--the polluter of our graves--the ravisher of our princesses--the scourge of Britain--and the creature of Nero.'<sup>54</sup> Use of such terms as liberty and tyranny would be welcome in the early 1800s.

Boadicea then secured a large supply of troops from the region of Trinobantes. Next she requested the services of Venutius, a person known among the Brigantes, whose spouse committed adultery with a Roman general. Because the text mentioned that his spouse lost her 'strong holds,' one can assume that women other than Boadicea enjoyed power and wealth in their own right under Celtic tradition. Because of her liaison with this known Roman general, she lost reputation with her 'allies,' and was forced to go with him to Rome. There her 'paramour' poisoned her. Thus her treasonable and adulterous behavior was not rewarded.<sup>55</sup>

Boadicea raised an army of less than 230,000 men who supposedly received their inspiration from the "Miracle of a White Hare." With astonishing success, she 'retaliate(d) with insatiate revenge,' destroyed the temple at Camelodunum, and burned 'noble Edifices' in London. She killed London residents with the 'spear, cross, fire, and every kind of torment.' Calling a council of war, she knew that the White Hare held the secret to their future successes.<sup>56</sup> The soldiers betrothed to Boadicea's two daughters were captured by Roman troops. One escaped but the other was executed.

In a speech designed to 'harangue' the soldiers assembled in front of her, Boadicea spoke from her war-chariot:

. . .They, my Countrymen, are your Oppressors; they would extinguish you from your native land; they have trampled on your

laws, they have disdained your gods; oppressed your most holy druids and bards, and sacrificed them to their unraised wrath. Britons, . . . Fight this day with these injuries fresh on your mind; think in every Roman you see an Oppressor, and as one falls, consider the next his heir in infamy. . . Grant, O ye Gods, your protection; go before us in battle, and make their limbs motionless by their sides.' <sup>57</sup>

She let the hare lose for her arms. Her troops saw its flight from the folds of her dress as a miracle sign to them.

Despite her immediate and complete victories, Boadicea knew that her successes could be short-lived and her troops would be vanquished by the superior Roman legions. Yet her forces fought valiantly. Moving quickly 'into the thicket of the fight,' her daughter, Gelina, seeking to avenge the murder of her spouse, died after cursing the Roman soldier whose weapon mortally wounded her. Her death dissipated all of Boadicea's considerable strength. Her army swore their undying allegiance, but she alternated between rage and grief. Hence she was determined to take sips from the bowl of poison.<sup>58</sup>

Knowing that 'death's icy arm' was upon her and before taking the poison to prevent capture, Boadicea confessed to Misticus, the man betrothed to her daughter, Perestina, how she had wronged him. She had postponed their marriage in order to enjoy sexual liaisons with him. The chapbook had earlier alluded to her apartment and things that were possible once the 'sable of night' drew a curtain over the earth. <sup>59</sup>

After their allies had deserted them and because of the harsh activities of the Iceni in battle, they were decimated by the Romans. Boadicea's troops had savaged and defiled their enemies brutally with actions unbecoming of a queen. The Romans did not spare the wives of British soldiers. In their zeal, the Britons did not secure their own grain stores and ran the risk of starving their forces. Misticus and Perestina journeyed to Cambria where they were captured and branded as traitors. A pardon, however, eventually allowed them to retire to Gaul in tranquillity.

The chapbook extolled Boadicea's heroic qualities while still recognizing the unforgivable--her use of a man destined to be her son-in-law:

Thus fell Boadicea, perhaps the most heroic woman that ever graced the annals of any age. The cruelties that had been practised on her. . . fully justified her revolt, although nought can ever extenuate the enormities she afterwards committed. As a woman and as a soldier she may be esteemed the wonder of the world. . . "She was of a masculine deportment, commanding severity in her countenance, a loud shrill voice, having a large quantity of yellow hair extending to her waist; she wore about her neck a massy gold chain, and a robe of various colors, over which she spread a mantie of coarser stuff; and in her hand she bore a spear."<sup>60</sup>

There is no attribution for this summary of her qualities. In addition, the author inferred that Boadicea died leading her troops. In descriptions by the citizen of Rome, Dio Cassius, she emerges as a tall, fierce if not 'terrifying' woman, with red hair and a harsh voice. Perhaps Dio Cassius depicted her with the reputed fierceness of the Celts.<sup>61</sup> The 'enormities' that she and her troops afflicted upon the Romans were not detailed in the chapbook. Other sources describe the barbarous, fierce, and unrelenting warfare under her leadership.

According to the chapbook, Stonehenge was built as a memorial to this valiant British queen because there are identifying bones that have been dug up from there. Also allegedly, a plate was found there whose meaning could not be discerned by the most learned of men, although some attributed it to a distinguished person, probably Boadicea.<sup>62</sup> These comments can be classified as a novelistic device emanating from some realm of the marvelous or fabulous. To perpetuate the unlikely notion that Stonehenge may have been erected as a memorial to her valor in battle invited disbelief from more sanguine readers and a sense of wonder from more gullible readers.

Finally, peace returned to the realm. Chapbooks usually concluded with a restoration of harmony and this account is no exception to that general rule:

The country now seemed once more to feel the blessings of peace, the fields again smiled with the yellow harvest, courting

the sickle of the industrious husbandman, the desolated cottages again claimed owners, and all parts smiled content and happiness.<sup>63</sup>

Once again, the chapbook courted its readers, despite some passages of very unlikely descriptions. Idyllic country cottages do not exist in the first century, but they certainly did in this chapbook. Does a first century farmer use the sickle industriously? How content and happy are people who are occupied by a foreign foe, especially after a bitter and hard-fought defeat?

In 1782, William Cowper's 'Boadicea, An Ode' extolled her martial qualities and the perfidy of the Romans:

When the British warrior Queen,  
Bleeding from the Roman rods;  
Sought with an indignant mien,  
Counsel from her country's gods.

Sage beneath the spreading oak,  
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;  
Ever burning word he spoke,  
Full of rage and full of grief.

-----  
She, with all a Monarch's pride,  
Felt them in her bosom's glow;  
Rush'd to battle, fought and died:  
Dying hurl'd them at the foe.

Ruffians, pityless as proud,  
Heav'n awards the vengeance due;  
Empire is on us' bestow'd,  
Shame and ruin wait for you!<sup>64</sup>

This poem was exceedingly well-received and popular. As a British patriot, Cowper extolled the Empire against the obstreperous American rebellion, and this may well account for its overwhelming reception. A tale of indigenous valor was used against a people who themselves invoked those very well-springs against the tyranny of kings. In a leap of faith or logic, Cowper visualized the Americans as Romans. Some lines of the poem appear on the Statue to Boadicea commissioned by the

royal family and chiseled by Thomas Thornycroft. It was installed by the London County Council belatedly in 1902. Responding to Cowper's depiction of the forces of Boadicea as 'ruffians,' Antonia Fraser denied that the activities of Boadicea could be dismissed as that of a mere 'ruffian.' School children learned the myth of her stunning attack against the Romans. The Iceni occupied an area of East Anglia including the counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and some parts of Lincolnshire and Essex--as was detailed by the chapbook.<sup>65</sup>

Unlike the Romans who never bestowed power in a woman unless it was as a co-ruler and was unavoidable, queens from Celtic tribes drew their strength and authority to rule from the knowledge that ancient Amazons actually ruled in an area of Anatolia. Boadicea must have drawn her strength from that legend.<sup>66</sup>

Although there are very few good written sources about the legend of Boadicea, we have three primary and written sources. Two of the three come from the Roman historian, Tacitus, who wrote his Annals sixty years after Boadicea's revolt using sources from the Imperial archives. The Greek historian of Nicea, Dio Cassius, arranged his material in order to make it dramatically suitable for public readings.<sup>67</sup>

Controversy continues over the exact date of the rebellion of Boadicea and her army of tribes--either 60 or 61 AD. The debates over her exact name appeared in Ben Jonson's The Masque of Queenes. Was she Boadicea, Boodicia, Bunduica, Bunduca, Bonduica? Tacitus named her Boudicca. Graham Webster, a scholar who described the revolt in a 1978 monograph, believed that the copyist of a medieval manuscript transposed letters and named the Iceni queen, Boadicea.<sup>68</sup>

A Florentine scholar of the sixteenth century, Petruccio Ubaldini, wished to gain favor with Queen Elizabeth. In his two volumes, he reviewed the various spellings and attributed the cruel behavior of the queen to two women. He drew two similar conclusions: "Cruelty destroys any praise for honorable courage. . ." and 'Tyranny often brings intolerable wickedness which provokes in its victims a thirst

for revenge. . .'<sup>69</sup> The chapbook asserted her cruel behavior, but did not provide a sufficient historical context against which to view her actions.

There are two possible interpretations of her military foray against the Romans: she led an oppressed people who challenged occupying forces or, she savaged a superior civilization with primitive if atrocious behavior. A voracious sexual appetite has also been attributed to Boadicea, a attribute assigned to her by her contemporaries as well as by historians.<sup>70</sup>

Fame came to this warrior queen only 90 years after the death of Cleopatra in the remote Mediterranean world. The Druids or priestly class included women. Boadicea would use this power as a priestess or goddess to her advantage. Tacitus observed that tribes in Britain used female leaders, but such power would be unthinkable in a Roman woman.<sup>71</sup>

Caesar commented about the religious superstition of a people who he, as an invading general, saw as inferior. Boadicea was powerfully 'animated' by her religion. The Romans were disgusted by the importance of the heads of the enemies that the Iceni decapitated in battle and hung from their horses' breasts. Tacitus described the Iceni as brave fighters who faced danger bravely but often without grand strategies. The Iceni, allied with other Celtic tribes, had already revolted against Roman rule in about 49-50 AD.<sup>72</sup>

Prasutagus, the head of the client-kingdom of the Iceni, incorrectly thought that the Romans would accept the leadership of his wife, Boadicea, since they accepted other native rulers. He sought to mollify the Romans with the terms of his will: half of his land and possessions for the emperor, Nero, and half for his wife and family. Roman officials were clearly displeased, and perhaps the officials who resided in Britain wanted more for themselves. The chapbook also emphasized his desire for 'maintaining a good understanding.' The Druid priest, invoking holy rites, advised Prasutagus that such a peace would be possible and 'contention shall cease.'<sup>73</sup>

The public flogging of Boadicea, not mentioned in the chapbook, and the rape of her daughters was calculated to assure pacification of the Iceni in the wake of Prasutagus' death. She personified oppression in the hearts and minds of her people. The Iceni implored their gods. Popular culture clearly sanctions and allows a popular revolt by an oppressed and occupied people, and religion sanctions and supports that effort.<sup>74</sup>

In the chapbook and in other histories, the army marched under the sign of the white hare. In mythology, religions accorded the hare significant status, and depictions of the hare as a mythic, animistic figure still exist. Caesar himself noted that the animals retained status in the eyes of Britons. Dio Cassius' account of Boadicea's speech to her assembled army noted that a hare escaped from the folds of her dress. When she concluded her speech, she let the hare go and thereby summoned her troops to battle.<sup>75</sup>

The humiliation of occupation produced a fierce to the Romans, but Boadicea gave other reasons in her speech before her assembled forces. She wished to avenge the rape of her daughters and the physical abuse done to her. She also claimed to be resisting servitium and willingly pursuing the concept of libertas-- words attributed to her by Tacitus in assessing and assigning her motives.<sup>76</sup> She lauded the sturdy character of the Iceni and other Celtic tribes and described the harsh treatment by the Romans. Her soldiers were farmers who left their fields, were without suits of armor and were unprepared for the challenges that she hurled upon them. They brought only their swords. The rather unfolding frontispiece displayed their lack of suitable military uniforms or armor.<sup>77</sup> The assembled throng looked loyally and admiringly at their leader, perched on a chariot driven by her daughter with knives coming out of the wheels. This was also another of the legends associated with Boadicea's atrocious behavior.

The Romans were caught unprepared, and the governor of Britain, Suetonius, later abandoned the Roman central city of Londinium after Boadicea and her troops besieged it and laid waste to many areas. The chapbook noted that



Boadicea and her troops ravaged 'noble Edifices.' The gathered tribes under her leadership sacked three cities: Londinium, Camulodunum, and Verulamium. For the Romans, the greatest humiliation was that they had suffered such viciousness in battle and such overwhelming defeats at the hand of a woman.<sup>78</sup>

The forces of the Iceni and their indigenous allies were no match for the might and discipline of Rome. Relying on emotion and the sense of anguish and humiliation that comes easily to an occupied people, the Iceni charged the steely forces of Rome with war hoops, torches and long spears, but without strategy or tactics. They even brought out their wives to the battlefield to watch. The Romans were the 'model of brutal military efficiency' and did not break ranks; the Iceni charged in all directions and were vanquished with their own torches and fires.<sup>79</sup>

The 'patriotic flash flood,' which challenged Roman rule was personified by Boadicea, its partisan Queen. The massacres and the cruelties of her troops have not been successfully connected to her by historians and others. The myth associated with her may be due to gender: she and her two daughters were vanquished by the Romans and that brutality called forth extreme measures in revenge of their honor. This fact saved them from being 'tarnished' by the charges made subsequently in the history written by Dio Cassius.<sup>80</sup>

The chapbook outlined the ordeal endured by the two sisters at the hands of the Romans--'the sons of rapine and murder.' Both sisters were confined to beautifully-appointed bedrooms, one with an 'elegant state bed.' The author decided to 'draw a veil of obscurity over the daring outrage that followed.'<sup>81</sup> Unlike our current media depictions, the author chose to let the reader use his or her imagination.

Sensational tidbits and scandal sold chapbooks. The chapbook, therefore, painted a quite different picture of the behavior of the sisters and their mother. Boadicea was a lustful woman. Perhaps the anonymous author and Ann Kemmish stretched rumors about her passions to sell chapbooks. Their depiction was inspired by the activities of other noble women and monarchs—including Catherine

the Great of Russia. Before taking poison, Boadicea confessed to her would-be son-in-law that she had duplicitously enjoyed him at the expense of his relationship with her own daughter. Such a charge seems similar to that leveled in an English chapbook about Marie Antoinette. In the chapbook, her daughter died after charging the enemy ruthlessly and uttering profanity at every turn. Only ten names were definitely connected to the ill-fated revolt and these do not include the names of Boadicea's daughters.<sup>82</sup> Hence we must assume that the chapbook author arbitrarily named them because their identification was more critical to the plot and to the sales than unwavering honesty.

Archaeologists and those digging into the past have persisted in searching for the remains of Boadicea and viewing those they uncover as the remains of the ancient and defiant queen.<sup>83</sup> In 1624, an investigating antiquarian, Edmund Bolton, described Stonehenge as the site where she was buried. The chapbook observed that Stonehenge served as a monument to this warrior queen. In comments published after his death in 1655, Indigo Jones observed that burial at Stonehenge was exceedingly unlikely, since the Romans simply would not have permitted it. The Greek writer serving the Romans, Dio Cassius, remarked that she was probably given an expensive burial, while Tacitus made no comment.<sup>84</sup> In English legend, she also was buried at many other sites--including a spot under platform 8 of the Kings Cross railway station. There were some minor efforts to name Kings Cross for her. All accounts emphasize her leadership and status as a monarch or queen and her example for warrior queens in future years.

#### Concluding remarks

'Remember Hannah Snell' and homage to the ancient Celtic queen, Boadicea, served the nationalistic goals of the British. Given the number of brush-fire skirmishes and all-out wars of the eighteenth century, it is not surprising that such themes continued an earlier tradition within popular culture. The chapbooks in

the following chapter likewise inculcated superior English virtues when compared to other European countries and even other relatively-unknown and certainly alien cultures.

Finally, were these chapbooks written by a man or woman? Literary devices in the 1750 editions were intended to flatter the reader and magnify Snell's valorous deeds. Historians of street literature assure us that such experiences had long appealed to plebeian audiences. The writer aimed at enhanced circulation, tried to ensnare readers who held biases against an unconventional plebeian woman, courted that reader and included him or her in the unfolding narrative. The effusion of rhetoric also may reflect the insecurities of a male writer. The author, treading in uncharted waters, indirectly admitted his hesitation while inviting the reader along on this new journey. He may have felt anxious about the female subject, her sexual preference as well as her plebeian origins.

## Notes

1. Amy Kelly, Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 152, 384.
2. Ibid., pp. 150, 151, 384; Marian Meade, Eleanor of Aquitaine, A Biography, (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1977), p. 238.
3. D. D. R. Owen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen and Legend, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 111, 151; Kelly, Eleanor of Aquitaine, p. 11-15, 34, 35, 38.
4. "The History of Queen Elizabeth and Her Great Favourite, The Earl of Essex." Part the First and Part the Second, Printed and Sold in London. Each part consists of 24 pages. Also available from the Houghton Library is "The Secret History of the Most Renown'd Queen Elizabeth and Earl of Essex, By a Person of Quality." Printed in Cologne. Neuberg list.
5. Biographies.
6. "The History of the Trial and Execution of Marie Antoinette, Late Queen of France Who was Beheaded at Paris, on Wednesday, the 16th of October, 1793. Containing her Examination before the Revolutionary Tribunal and her dignified Answers to the Questions put to her. Her Behavior when Sentence of Death was passed upon her. And her intrepid Conduct when led to the fatal Guillotine. Together with Interesting Particulars of her Life." Sold at No. 1, 42 Long Lane. Another chapbook illustrating the events surrounding the death of the French King and Queen is: "The Cruel massacre of the King and Queen of France. . . : With the decree of the National Convention, in January, by which Louis was ordered to be beheaded, by the la guillotine [sic] or beheading machine, on which the queen also suffered. . . The remainder of the title: "Also, the last will and testament of Louis XVI. To which is added, the trial and charges laid to the Queen by the Convention." Printed for and sold by A. Hambleton, London, probably between 1793 and 1799. Each part consists of 24 pages.
7. Diane Dugaw, Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, p. 91, 92, 109. Dugaw, Introduction to the shorter version of "The Female Soldier," p. v. Complete description follows at footnote 20.
8. Ibid., p. 138, 142.
9. Julie Wheelwright, Amazons and Military Maids: Women who dressed as men in the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness, (London and Boston: Pandora, 1989), p. 7;

Wheelwright, "Tars, tarts, and swashbucklers," appearing in **Bold in Her Breeches, Women Pirates Across the Ages**, Jo Stanley, ed., London and San Francisco, 1995, p. 197.

10. Dugaw, **Warrior Women**, pp. 122-124.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 44; Wheelwright, **Amazons and Military Maids**, p. 7.

12. Dugaw, **Warrior Women**, pp. 127-131; Wheelwright, **Amazons and Military Maids**, pp. 11, 13, 17, 19.

13. Dugaw, **Warrior Women**, pp. 124, 126, 128.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 131-134; Wheelwright, **Amazons and Military Maids**, p. 6.

15. Pauline Greenhill, "Neither a Man nor a Maid: Sexualities and Gendered Meanings in Cross-Dressing Ballads," **Journal of American Folklore**, 108 (1995), pp. \_\_\_\_\_.

16. David Cressy, "Gender Trouble and Cross Dressing in Early Modern England," **Journal of British Studies**, 35 (October, 1996), pp. 453, 461, 464.

17. Wheelwright, **Amazons and Military Maids**, pp. 11, 12, 49. .

18. "The famous history of Long Meg of Westminster, containing all her comical pranks at home with her valiant actions abroad in the wars; being full of pleasing delight, wonder and admiration." The Dicey firm came out with the following title: "The whole life and death of Long Meg of Westminster," London, Aldermay Churchyard. Other versions include: "The Whole life and death of Long Meg of Westminster," Printed by and for T. Norris, at the Locking-glass on London-Bridge, London, 1711-1730, and one by J. Smart, about 1780-1810. Dugaw, **Warrior Women**, pp. 33, 183, 183.

19. Charles Misch, **Short fiction of the Seventeenth Century**, (selected and edited), (New York: New York University Press, 1963) p. 81; Harry B. Weiss, p. 87.

20. Dianne Dugaw, Introduction, "The Female Soldier; Or, The Surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell," 1750, pp. v, vi, vii. Reprinted by the William Andrews Clark Memory Library, University of California at Los Angeles, 1989. The longer version of 1750 also had a long title: "The Female Soldier; Or, the Surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell," London: Printed for, and Sold by R. Walker, 1750. The complete title is as follows: "The Female Soldier; Or, The Surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell, Born in the City of Worcester, Who took upon herself the Name of James Gray; and being deserted by her Husband,

put on Mens Apparel, and travelled to Coventry in quest of him, where she enlisted in Col. Guise's Regiment of Foot, and marched with that Regiment to Carlisle, in the Time of the Rebellion in Scotland; shewing what happened to her in that City, and her Desertion from that Regiment. Also a Full and True Account of her enlisting afterwards into Fraser's Regiment of Marines, then at Portsmouth; and her being draughted out of that Regiment, and sent on board the Swallow Sloop of War, one of Admiral Boscawen's Squadron, then bound for the East-Indies. With the many Vicissitudes of Fortune she met with during that Expedition, particularly at the Siege of Pondicherry, where she received Twelve Wounds. Likewise the surprising Accident by which she came to hear of the Death of her faithless Husband, whom she went in quest of. The Whole Containing The most surprising Incidents that have happened in any preceding Age; wherein is laid open to all her Adventures, in Mens Cloaths, for near five years, without her Sex being ever discovered. Also, the comparison on page 168 to Pamela. Referred to in the text as the longer version. Quote is from the longer version, p. 32.

21. "The Female Warrior, Or Surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell; Containing (Among a Variety of Entertaining Adventures) A complete History of her Life; of her Husband's leaving her; of her assuming the Name and Character of a Man, and pursuing him to Coventry, where she enlists as a Soldier, by the Name of James Gray--several Memoirs attendant on her march from thence to Carlisle, during the Rebellion; and the critical Circumstances of her Desertion. Likewise, of her enlisting into Fraser's Regiment of Marines, Then Lying at Portsmouth, Her sailing with Admiral Boscawen to the East Indies; Of the Vicissitudes of Fortune that befel her during the Expedition, Particularly at the Siege of Pondicherry, Where she Received Twelve Wounds, Also An Account of the singular Manner that she became acquainted with the Death of her faithless husband. The whole abounding with a Series of the most surprising Incidents that ever happened to any one Person, in any Age or Country, and exhibiting a proof that Women, when Love intervenes, can keep a Secret, even that of their own Sex, during the greatest Trials." London: Printed for H. D. Symonds, Paternoster Row. T. Plummer, Printer. 1801.

22. Information about Robert Walker available in H. R. Plomer, A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland, (London, The Biographical Society, 1968), pp. 252-253. (Plomer was responsible for the details about English printers and two other authors likewise contributed details for Scottish and Irish authors. Ian Maxted, The London Book Trades, 1775-1800, (London, Dawson, 1977), p. 220. Katherine Binhammer, "The Sex Panic of the 1790s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 6, #3 (1996), pp 409-434.

23. See footnote 56.

24. Dugaw, Introduction, The shorter 'Female Soldier,' pp. vi, vii. Walker's leather-bound, expensive books and the magazine articles were not sold to the lower classes. His decision to extend the audience required the anonymous author to tailor the details for the intended readers. Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, p. 52.
25. Ibid., p. vii.
26. Lynne Friedli, "Passing Women"--A Study of Gender Boundaries in the Eighteenth Century," appearing in G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, eds., Sexual Underworlds of the Eighteenth Century, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p. 242.
27. The longer 'Female Soldier,' p. 168. Dugaw, Introduction, The shorter 'Female Soldier,' viii, ix.
28. Dugaw, Introduction, p. ix.
29. The longer 'Female Soldier,' pp. 17, 84-97, 165, 117.
30. The shorter 'Female Soldier,' Ibid., p. iii.
31. The longer 'Female Soldier,' pp. 31-32.
32. The longer 'Female Soldier,' pp. 9-11.
33. Ibid., p. 3. The longer 'Female Soldier, p. 17.
34. The shorter version, p. 9-10.
35. The shorter 'Female Soldier, pp. 28, 29, 41-43.
36. Ibid., pp. 17, 20, 22.
37. Ibid., p. 43.
38. The longer 'Female Soldier,' pp. 169-170; 'The Female Warrior,' p. 65.
39. Ibid., p. 168.
40. The longer 'Female Soldier,' p. 180, 181.
41. 'The Female Warrior,' p. 65.
42. The longer 'Female Soldier,' p. 186.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

44. The 1801 'Female Warrior,' p. 50.

45. Emma Donoghue, Passions Between Women, British Lesbian Culture, 1688-1801, (London: Scarlet Press, 1993), pp. 91-94. Julie Wainwright, Amazons and Military Maids: Women Who Dressed as Men in the Pursuit of Life, Liberty, and Happiness, (London: Pandora, 1989), pp. 12, 60. The shorter 'Female Soldier,' p. 33.

46. The shorter 'Female Soldier,' p. 42.

47. The longer 'Female Soldier,' p. 187.

48. In order of appearance: The shorter 'Female Soldier,' pp. 20, 33, 34, 35; the longer 'Female Soldier,' p. 58; The shorter 'Female Soldier,' p. 37.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 10, 14, 15, 23, 29, 30, 33, 35, 41, 42.

50. The longer 'Female Soldier,' pp. 29, 60, 81, 114-115, 121, 135, 141, 143, 146, 150, 151, 152, 168, 171, 176.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 44, 61, 99, 100, 111, 120, 147, 166, 168, 185.

53. "The Heroic Females; Or, an authentic HISTORY of the surprising ACHIEVEMENTS, and intrepid DONCUT of Boadicea, Queen of Iceni, and her Two Daughters," London: Printed and published by A. Kemmish, King Street, Borough. p. 3.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

58. *Ibid.*, 'into the thicket of the fight.'

59. *Ibid.*, 'sable of night' reference, p. 17.



60. Ibid., p. 17
61. Antonia Fraser, Boudicea's Chariot: The Warrior Queens, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), p. 59, 60.
62. Ibid., p. 18.
63. Ibid., p. 19.
64. Ibid., pp. 21, 22.
65. Graham Webster, Boudica: the British Revolt against Rome, AD 60, (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1978, pp. 13, 14; Fraser, Boudica's Chariot, p. 235, Picture between pages 64, 65, and 44; Chapbook, p. 2.
66. Fraser, Boudica's Chariot, pp. 16, 19, 27, 43, 51.
67. Webster, Boudica, p. 14, 15.
68. Ibid., p. 13; Fraser, Boudica's Chariot, pp. 55-56.
69. Fraser, Boudica's Chariot, p. 5.
70. Ibid., pp. 5, 11.
71. Ibid., pp. 51, 52, 55.
72. Ibid, pp. 44, 45, 52.
73. Ibid., p. 61; Chapbook, Frontispiece and p. 3.
74. Fraser , Boudica's Chariot, p. 69.
75. Ibid., p. 71, 72.
76. Michael Roberts, "The Revolt of Boudicca (Tacitus, Annals 14.29-39) and the Assertion of Libertas in Neronian Rome," American Journal of Philology, 109 (1988): 126.
77. Fraser, Boudica's Chariot, p. 72; Fraser also mentioned the legend that Boudica's chariot had knives inserted within its wheels.
78. Chapbook Frontispiece; Fraser, Boudica's Chariot, pp. 76, 90.

79. Roberts, "The Revolt of Boudicca," p. 120.
80. Fraser, Boudica's Chariot, pp. 89, 105.
81. Chapbook, p. 5.
82. Fraser, Boudica's Chariot, p. 61; There is no reference to the names of Boudica's daughters in the article by Roberts and the Boudica by Webster.
83. Webster, Boudica, p. 120.
84. Fraser, Boudica's Chariot, pp. 100, 231, 303.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### SHIPWRECK AND CAPTIVITY

Boadicea and Hannah Snell were certainly women of 'uncommon talents.' Some chapbooks of the 1790s and beyond featured women with the mettle and courage necessary to survive adversity. Other chapbooks, including the Sabine series, continued the theme of fragile females rescued after the appropriate display of virtuous demeanor. The social climate of the later decades emboldened authors, printers, and sponsors of chapbooks to depart from previously sanctioned themes. This chapter will explore the coalescence of elite and popular culture in one particular chapbook.

To the examples of Boadicea and Hannah Snell, we can add Mary Jane Meadows. The 'surprising' adventure story of Mary Jane Meadows, the 'memoir' of a 'woman of uncommon talents,' by an anonymous author, was printed in 1802 about 80 years after Defoe's novel. This 'shipwreck narrative,' ostensibly about events in the 1780s, displays a resemblance to Robinson Crusoe.<sup>1</sup> Two chapbooks of the later eighteenth century condensed Robinson Crusoe into about 150 pages each--a longer than usual chapbook. In order to facilitate a comprehensive comparison of Meadows to Crusoe, two shorter chapters take the place of one long one.

The first chapter compares Crusoe with the Meadows saga, while the second look at the cultural forces at work in the 1790s or immediately preceding publication of this unusual chapbook, the gender of the author, and the circumstantial evidence that suggests the author's identity. Daniel Defoe's adventure story from the early years of the eighteenth century can be compared with the saga of a woman exploring unknown terrain. This story is available in the recently-curated Harding Collection of the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The second chapter looks at the Puritan elements of this work: spiritual autobiography, the use of a diary. It examines captivity narratives. Finally, it also explores authorship, establishing that

this was a female author. And who is the famous female author of this recently-uncovered fictional account of a 'female Robinson Crusoe?'

Robinson Crusoe's and Defoe's work looms large in this chapter, because the author of Meadows deliberately modeled her character as the female Robinson Crusoe and endowed her with qualities that she expected of a woman in a similar situation. A complete analysis of the elements of race/imperialism, religion/government, and the state of nature reveals rather starkly the salience of gender. The importance of family to a female suffuses this analysis. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, relationships between family and government and religion were synergistically interwoven. Added to these three was the rudimentary state of science. Defoe's characters encountered persons of other races and nationalities. As will be seen, so did Mary Jane Meadows. Race and the state of nature are also appropriate themes here, given the dates of publication, the subject matter, and defined concerns about the state of nature. And, last but certainly not least, gender, the condition of woman, determined the differences between two solitary wanderers.

An examination of Mary Jane's adventures best proceeds on two levels: first the story itself and second, what the story tells us about English society and about English chapbooks. The social and cultural context, the seventeenth-century religious climate from which the genre of autobiography/biography devolved, some discussion of nature versus culture and how the author depicted a women who landed in the state of nature are relevant topics.

Defoe's prolific output and assorted commentaries has made him all things to all people, more recently for the many academics who probe his rich panorama of life, his omniscious, multi-faceted plots, his expositions of eighteenth-century life. His made-of-whole cloth characters, Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders, Roxana, and Captain Singleton provide us with a unique glimpse into eighteenth-century life. Crusoe was perhaps the most widely circulated of English romances, about 600 or more editions of Defoe's epic are housed in the British Museum.

Ann Lemoine issued the imitation of Crusoe and an adventure story by Penelope Aubin, first printed in 1723. Aubin's tale of Charlotte Dupont is also included. From sparse information about London printers, we know that Ann Lemoine was related to a Huguenot printing family and an printer and bookseller named Henry Lemoine. He was a French master at a boarding school, met with literary figures, started the Conjuror's Magazine in 1792, contributed to Gentleman's Magazine, among others, and translated French and German for booksellers who needed his services.<sup>2</sup> His contacts gave her access to literary circles and people who could help with her chapbooks.

We can advance two hypotheses about Lemoine's motives for comissioning these chapbooks, both of which are credible. We could conclude that she tested the winds and thought that these chapbooks were marketable. Or, we could assume that the social and political currents of the 1790s, examined in this chapter and elsewhere, motivated her. In other words, ideology was the driving force.

Defoe and his prolific writings are an academic cottage industry. Scholars shape Crusoe's identity through their own philosophical and historical orientation. Christopher Hill considers Robinson Crusoe to be a 'citizen of the world,' a man with the quintessential 'protestant and bourgeois virtues.' Ian Watt displays Crusoe as a capitalist, G. A. Starr and J. Paul Hunter see Crusoe as playing the leading role in a 'pilgrimage narrative,' while J. A. Downie sees Crusoe as the star of a travel epic.<sup>3</sup> Kevin Cope sees the novel as part of the 'Defoe problem, the problem of an author who is simply too big and diverse for any literary approach. . .' The interpretation and study of Defoe is an academic cottage industry that accords him his place as one of the fathers of the novel or at least as one of the most significant literary figures of the eighteenth century.

Defoe was not a heralded literary figure during the eighteenth century, instead he was considered a political writer. Although collections of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett were available, no collections of Defoe appeared. No biography or study appeared, much of his work was issued without his name, and

some was lost. Indeed scholarly figures deigned to refer to him as though their memory failed and they could not remember his name. His stature as a English patriot and historian was enhanced in the nineteenth century, but not his reputation as a novelist. Despite much academic debate over the rise over the novel, Defoe's role in establishing that genre cannot be sustained by linear connections. Current debate over attribution and discussion of the connections between fact and fiction continue the fascination with his work.<sup>4</sup>

What can we surmise about the author of Meadows? Paula Backscheider's 'chains of identification' were designed in order to detect women writers. Eighteenth century female characters as depicted by female authors displayed resourcefulness, resilience, and creativity--routinely.<sup>5</sup> (see section below for more complete examination) Several clues indicate that this was a female author. First, Mary Jane Meadows clearly demonstrated the qualities mentioned above. Second, the author was familiar with Defoe's story, since she borrowed from the title. Third, the author's interjection of poetry by major poets marks her as an educated female. (see section below on female authorship and discussion of prose and poetry) Fourth, she wrote an uplifting account extolling female virtue, and by implication excoriated male values in Crusoe--detachment, independence, and the superior, condescending air that women lacked. Finally, as an educated female, she must have wanted women to have their own heroine. Like Defoe, however, she satirized objectionable features of English society. Clues within the text and a comparison of Mary Jane's experience with several bigographies allow the speculation that the author may have been none other than the reknown Charlotte Smith.

This rudimentary study must acknowledge Defoe's stellar achievements even while comparing Crusoe with a shipwrecked heroine. Did Mary Jane measure up to Defoe's designed standards? The motives of this anonymous author need to be fully explored. But this can only be done through inferences from the text and our knowledge of the eighteenth century and the last decade, the 1790s.

Ann Lemoine also arranged for an abbreviated chapbook of Defoe's Captain Singleton (1720)--a pirate story with embellishments of travel and adventure. Even in the century preceding Defoe's work, English readers yearned for stories of English pirates and seamen who endured brutal sea life and bested their adversaries. Defoe's comprehension of African geography and life may have been 'patchy,' but when he offered Singleton to the reading public, no journey into the African interior had been attempted by Europeans. It has been suggested that Defoe was interested in promoting excursions into Africa.<sup>6</sup> Comparisons between Singleton and Crusoe continue, but what follows here are the elements of Singleton that may have influenced the author of Meadows.

Singleton's birth and early years resembled those of Crusoe, but his later life was violent, perhaps caused by conflict with other perfidious mates. One Portuguese sailor rescued him, but later promised to make him the target of the Inquisition. After a mutiny, he and four other men arrived at a state of nature--the island of Madagascar. Reflecting a Lockean penchant for a natural, uncorrupted state, Singleton so enjoyed himself that he was reluctant to leave. He eventually agreed to a 'contract' with his mates that bound them all together in a 'politick society.' Sensing that their very survival was at stake, he and others decided to capture African natives as slaves in order to create a larger traveling party.<sup>7</sup> The conditions of the state of nature and the selection of a party fit to travel into the interior invites comparison with the journey of Mary Jane Meadows and her stranded, ship-wrecked acquaintances who went into the interior from the west coast of Africa.

Like the deliverance of Meadows from her solitary island habitat, Singleton was delivered from the violent and harsh world of pirating. His redemption came through his permanent homoerotic association with William, the Quaker. This relationship and Singleton's disavowal of property and material wealth, unlike the acquisitive habits and disposition of Crusoe, has incited much comment. Mary Jane displayed few if any acquisitive tendencies, but her self-effacing behavior accords

with other interpretations of female behavior. The trek through the African interior could have been inspired by Singleton, but this is the only stark comparison. The violence of Singleton's world contrasts dramatically with the peaceable intentions of Mary Jane and the harmony she valiantly pursued.

By the end of the eighteenth century, female authors had garnered some space for authorship. The powerful legacy of the 'fair triumvirate of wits' came from the Restoration, a time of permissiveness and openness; few could match the boldness of Aphra Behn, Delaviere Manley, and Eliza Haywood. Within the privacy of marriage, women negotiated space and voice, but any confrontational display outside of the household was not countenanced. Hence the 'fair triumvirate' and others worked against the grain of social mores that dictated subordination. Their work must be seen in that context; it appears even more remarkable, given the stifling social restraints. Relegated to secondary status when measured against the alleged giants of the eighteenth century, the fathers of the novel, Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, and Tobias Smollett, their work has enjoyed a revival.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the flexibility of Restoration society, and a social milieu that was more receptive to bawdy fiction, misogyny remained and seemed magnified in the work of Alexander Pope and others. An expanded atmosphere of freedom did not prevail. The deep tap roots of a culture that trumpeted morality and the appeal to a higher power--Providence--quickly enjoyed a renaissance. Religious symbolism and metaphor appear on every page of Crusoe. Crusoe himself acknowledged the instruction mission of this 'allusive allegorick history.' The religious and introspective phenomenon of Puritanism was critical to the development of the modern novel. An earlier chapter on the code of gentility illustrates the penchant for post-1750 chapbooks or small books to magnify this introspective mode in women.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to Puritan introspection, Baconian historiography molded historical thought in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Fiction and fact blended, and fiction legitimately did the work of history. The elements of Baconian historiography included: 'a taste for the marvelous, a polemical cast, a



utilitarian faith, a dependence upon personal memory and gossip, and a willingness to tolerate dubious material for practical purposes.' In the eighteenth century, those who wrote history frowned upon employing the 'taste for the marvelous,' but the appetite for the unreal increasingly moved into the popular realm. Fantastic coincidences appeared in later chapbooks.<sup>10</sup> After reviewing the story of Mary Jane Meadows, this chapter must review novelistic devices and elements of the Baconian mode that appeared in both Crusoe and Meadows.

The novel emerged after an abrupt discursive 'redistribution' or realignment in the first decades of the eighteenth century separated the novel from history. Defoe's novels were critical to this development. Fabulous or marvelous embellishments could no longer be considered history. The new fictional form, the novel, allowed Defoe and others to describe 'surprising adventures.'<sup>11</sup> And, probably not coincidentally, this is part of the title of the Meadows saga. Changes in the tastes of reading audience influenced writers. Early modern readers placed less credence in the words of the text and put more emphasis on the tone and demeanor of the writer. They preferred a history that was written by a participant.<sup>12</sup> Both Crusoe and Meadows narrated their own stories.

In assessing past versions of history and fiction, one must not categorize the factual realm as authentic while dismissing fiction as 'corrupt' and 'illegitimate.' Narratives, including those of Defoe, were not a purely factual realm 'into which the fictive leaked from time to time in ways not authorized by more rigorous historiographical practice.' Rather than being the 'poor relation of history,' fiction provided historical writers with another way to illustrate history. Baconian historiography sanctioned Defoe's use of fiction 'as a means of historical representation.' Readers learned to accommodate fiction within historical discourse. Defoe sent contradictory messages, since he claimed that Crusoe should be seen as fiction and as a work of history. He meandered unevenly between fact and fiction. Many saw him as captive of his own tales, or 'trapped by his own fabrications,' but he maintained that he acted honorably even when others

questioned his motives. Defoe straddled a middle ground. He drew his work from the discourse of history, but at the same time, he advanced the fictional form, the novel.<sup>13</sup>

Teaching through writing was one of Defoe's goals. He saw 'hystory' as 'fruitful of examples,' and his texts should be read for their historical context. If one appreciates the historical merit of his texts, then one can understand that 'commerce between the mind of man and the nature of things' provides a base for an understanding of life itself.<sup>14</sup>

The 'discursive realignment' in the two decades following the publication of Robinson Crusoe involved two developments: first, history could no longer be represented through the medium of fiction, and second, for the next hundred years, fiction was written from 'matters of fact' or 'founded on fact.'<sup>15</sup> Authors intended their chapbooks to be instructive and teach by example. Chapbook frontispieces announce that the stories within were based on fact, 'history,' or 'truth.'

Thomas Nashe, Thomas Deloney, Aphra Behn, and Delaviere Manley claimed that they wrote history, although their works were read as fiction and are still recognized as such. In addition, others following Defoe, including Haywood, Richardson, Fielding, and Fanny Burney wrote works that "invoked 'fictional contracts.'" Defoe claimed that he presented history. The fictional interpretation of his work resulted from the reader's own act of imaginative reading.<sup>16</sup>

Both Defoe and the author of Meadows used the exotic props of travel literature to deliver a message about English society. More than any other European, Defoe created the image of a bountiful, tropical paradise, based on the real-life experiences of Alexander Selkirk as described by Woode Rogers, thus serving as props for his commentary on human nature. The author of Meadows focused on the experiences of a woman searching for her son and husband. The scenery for this fable, the African interior and an island's lush habitat, should not be underestimated.<sup>17</sup>

Early travel literature appealed to leisure-oriented aristocrats. But beyond early modern England, the expansion of a commercial society meant that readers, the ship captains and the crews as well as others brought their experiences back to England. Travel beyond England fascinated midling people because it presented commercial opportunities.<sup>18</sup> Defoe's many novels and journals appealed to such people, and the author of Meadows followed his path about eighty years later.

Travel narratives were involved in a 'larger project of national self-definition.' Their explicit comparisons usually painted foreigners in a less than kind light. But some writers such as Aubin and the author of Meadows used the innocence of foreign people, including American Indians and South Seas islanders to create a contrast with modern and debased values. Some writers usually depicted naked Africans as 'cannibalistic,' 'oversexed,' and inferior.<sup>19</sup> The author of Meadows, perhaps making a bid for tolerance while criticizing her own society, projected a very favorable and compassionate view of African women, particularly for the time.

### Robinson Crusoe

Christopher Hill's revised opinion of Robinson Crusoe and Defoe provides a cogent departure point. First, Defoe is a man of his times. His understanding of theology came from his 'lifetime's immersion in a cultural environment of disintegrating Puritanism.' Despite what we naively consider to be a heavy dose of Puritan dogma, Defoe, not unlike others, was a jumble of contradictions, and not entirely consistent.<sup>20</sup> These caveats are germane to any prudent perspective of Meadows. The comparative perspective presented in this study, will suggest more about history and images of women but also review literary devices and dogma.

Defoe's writings have been dissected under the historical microscope in order to determine whether he wrote the many political tracts, pamphlets, and novels attributed to him. While some studies suggest that Defoe declared political dogma with Crusoe, still others emphasize the seventeenth-century world of

Christian symbolism and Puritan thought. An earlier interpretation by William Haller called it a 'Puritan epic.' Still others chose to see it as the story of the battle against temptation and the experiences of a Christian wayfarer. Finally, Crusoe provides fodder for economic interpretations. Karl Marx used Crusoe and his island environment in order to describe use value and exchange value through examples of primitive accumulation, the division of labor and individualism.<sup>21</sup>

The 'progressive dominion' of man over nature thematically dominates Robinson Crusoe. The uneasy coexistence of spiritual and moral values combined with a zest for knowledge and the mastery of the natural environment was an 'inherited maxim' of Defoe's culture. Crusoe carefully kept records, assiduously observed the island habitat, and experimented with crops. He survived on a desert island because he learned new skills, used the tools available from a shipwreck off the coast, and adopted an efficient division of labor. He was a problem-solver. In turn he was a 'baker, cheese-monger, saddler, stone-cutter, potter, carpenter, shipwright, tailor, basket-weaver, farmer, and hunter' according to the novel. Thus Crusoe is also a paean, a 'glorification of west European technology.'<sup>22</sup>

Crusoe was an improver. But his aptitude to improve 'things' was not contradictory to Christian doctrine that countenanced the use of knowledge for the improvement of human conditions. Defoe's religious training coupled with his understanding of the larger secular world compelled him to create a character whose beliefs reflected a 'natural theology.' The world was given by God for human purposes, but God's design must be continually venerated. One can see in Providence and in science the design and work of God. Such a concept reconciled secular and observable beliefs with the traditional God and Creator. Crusoe's ability to 'acquiesce in the Dispositions of Providence' allowed him to accept God's plan, realizing that any governance of the 'things' of this world mandated accepted of the fact that one governed only temporarily. Men (sic) did not own the earth, but served as 'tenants to the great Proprietor, who is lord of the manor, or Landlord of the soil.'<sup>23</sup> The coalescence of religious/spiritual values with the novel's

worldliness displayed the contradictions that were part and parcel of the world in which Defoe lived and breathed.

The dawning of a commercial and capitalistic age influenced writers such as Defoe. Changes associated with the Glorious Revolution unleashed the power of industrial and commercial classes. In Hill's scenario, Robinson Crusoe vindicated Western imperialistic ambitions. Still others see Defoe's story as a glorification of burgeoning individualism. Crusoe abandoned the old order of village and community ties that was his birthright. Acquisitive goals and individual exertion dominated his every waking moment. He brought with him bourgeois baggage, the 'capital equipment and more of the mental furniture of the eighteenth century bourgeois.' His hero's main goal was money. Not bound by ties of family, Crusoe ventured away from the village of his birth to find his fortune on a deserted island. Family was not important. A wife appeared fleetingly at the end of the first installment, but died by the next sentence. Indeed, 'emotional ties. . .play a very minor part. . ., except when they are focused on economic matters.' Crusoe saw all relationships 'in terms of their commodity value.' Women were valuable to him only as a source of labor.<sup>24</sup>

The relevant context for Defoe's work is the previous century of political absolutism and monarchical control that ended with the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Defoe's work asserted the hegemony of the men of property who prevailed in that settlement. In the discursive context of the novel, the son's creation of his own economic realm replaced the authority of the father. Thus Defoe created a fable about this political revolution. Even his name was different from that of his father.<sup>25</sup>

The pursuit of economic self-interest motivated the characters that Defoe made into household words with his novels--Crusoe, Moll Flanders, and Roxana. Did these individuals need any kind of learning in the vocation or art of survival? Watt asserted that 'they had it in their blood.' Socialization in the formative years taught them to pursue money as the best and only form of security.<sup>26</sup>

**“The Life, Adventures, and Distresses Of Charlotte Dupont”**

Ann Lemoine reissued the story of Charlotte Dupont in 1800 and the Meadows saga in 1802. Lemoine's abbreviated chapbook was based on Aubin's 1723 novel.<sup>27</sup> A comparison of the work of Penelope Aubin with Mary Jane Meadows will determine whether they remotely lived up to Defoe's criteria. Were they pale imitations, OR, did they serve other didactic purposes?

Penelope Aubin knew that the 'fair triumvirate' had influenced her work and prepared a forum for her, but she used her Preface to proclaim her distance from Behn, Manley, and Haywood. Her story appeared at the very time that Haywood was enjoying acclaim. Mrs. Aubin was one of the early female writers whose work remained on the public stage throughout the eighteenth century. Women increasingly played a public role as moral censors, yet they wrote popular fiction.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps Lemoine's looked for stories that previously held public interest. Lemoine may also have decided to capitalize on the appeal of exotic content. The reprinting and abridgment of novels into chapbooks was not an unknown practice.

John J. Richetti, a student of eighteenth-century novels, described Aubin's novels 'as an undisguised attempt to seduce readers into virtuous behavior.' Mrs. Aubin anticipated her reading audience. Despite confusion in their lives, readers could detect between the lines a regrouping of their characters' lives. Providence rewarded those who stayed the course.<sup>29</sup>

Some advised Aubin to write 'modishly,' or less like a Christian woman, but she and others offered 'fictional correlatives' to work that was earlier popularized by Mary Astell. Astell, a pathbreaker in her own right, was hardly a feminist—even in the late seventeenth-century sense of that term. She advised submission and devotion to an Anglican spirituality that gave women a higher power. Aubin and other women used conduct books and copied Astell's didacticism.<sup>30</sup>

Janet Todd described Aubin as a lay minister and novelist, but a 'preacher in both roles.' She personified the 'moral mode' present in the fiction of the 1720s and

1730s. Moral sermons were suddenly interjected into her narratives. Digressions allowed the novelist to pursue themes and ideas that interrupted but did not alter the story and its flow. Aubin was a commercial success. Her didactic approach and novelizing resonated well with the reading public. Contemporaries thought her approach observed the rules of novel writing.<sup>31</sup>

Aubin's travel narratives extolled virtue and innocence in exotic if distance places with exciting new characters--pirates, wild animals, and 'lustful Oriental potentates.' Her innocent young women survived the tribulations of an evil and troubled world. All but her last novel of 1728 concluded with a laudatory parade: that readers would approve and applaud: 'We exult as Christian heroes and heroines march in triumph to their country seats to live safely and virtuously for ever.'<sup>32</sup>

Aubin's stage symbolized the clash of hostile forces. Her complicated plots presented an 'emotional response to diversity,' but maintained a 'hysterically defensive tone.' Providence guided the every waking moment of her female characters, but the usual reliance on the force of a higher power competed uneasily with her multi-faceted plots and the transparently-superficial path of her heroines to martyrdom.<sup>33</sup> Her female characters struggled with temptation and vice, but possessed the moral verve to survive life's vicissitudes. Her presentation of their every thought preceded the exploration of interior lives and space that Samuel Richardson so brilliantly used in novels. The exotic appeal of the new world did not mask the harsh conditions. The goodness of the women remained intact. Sexual intimidation, the intrigue of foreigners--the Spanish, and the settlement of the Virgin New World. These were the themes of Aubin's fiction.<sup>34</sup>

The subtitle indicated that Charlotte and her intended, Belanger, 'underwent a greater Variety of real Misfortune, and miraculous Adventures, than any Couple that ever existed.' Charlotte stayed the course. She encountered people of other races and met them with the requisite Christian charity. The couple endured separation, and each married another, but they were fortuitously reunited by the

conclusion. Fortuitous coincidences with happy endings to tragic events abound in eighteenth-century novels.

Fascination with the world beyond England allowed Lemoine to sell a new version of Aubin's older story. In the absence of information about Lemoine, we can only suppose that these stories may have coincided with her political views. In addition to themes of interiority, domesticity, and the impact of class on the formation of the English novel, the broader theme of empire and a 'colonial' world surfaced early in English fiction. Its impact on the novel has not yet been fully explored.<sup>35</sup>

Narratives of captivity detailing enslavement appeared after 1550 and continued up to the end of the eighteenth century. Their themes encompassed the idea of virtuous women in distress and influenced the later Gothic novel. Aubin was not interested in promoting the glory of colonial conquest, but instead used her female captives, weak noblemen, and priests to pound home her own moral message.<sup>36</sup> Some of Aubin's work featured life on the Barbary Coast or in seraglios where Oriental men preferred Western women to their own. Aubin's characters survived. The shortened 'Charlotte Dupont' omitted Angelina's digression. Angelina successfully evaded her Moorish captors, and her husband adjusted to his status as a castaway. The women wore native dress.<sup>37</sup>

Reflecting a continuing theme, the heroine was forced to defend her honor, particularly against the Spanish:

It is the nature of the Spaniards to be close and very subtle in their designs, very amorous, and very revengeful.<sup>38</sup>

After appealing to their common Christian religion, Charlotte implored Mendentia to take her to Virginia, but she finally accepted his persistent marriage proposals. After he died, she languished miserably without news of Belanger and suffered indignities under her wealthy Spanish father-in-law. Still pursuing her, Belanger encountered savages who spoke a strange tongue and lived barbarous lives. After their reunion, long digressions allowed a ship's captain and monk to



narrate their true confessions. The monk's remarks about the spirit and compassion of the 'meaner' people reveal Aubin's faith in ordinary folk. The efforts of the ship's captain to get the party to Virginia represented a triumph of Christianity. The final homily comforted eighteenth-century readers.<sup>39</sup>

The final digression allowed Charlotte's half-sister to tell her own sad story about her treatment by her mother, Charlotte's step-mother. Aubin's concluding paragraph extolled Providence and the rewards for those who stayed the course:

Thus Divine Providence having, by various trials and strange vicissitudes of fortune, proved the faith and patience of these heroic Christians, whom neither slavery nor the fear of death could prevail with to forsake their faith, or distrust their God, they were all happily preserved, and delivered out of their troubles, and at last brought home to their native lands. . . These examples should convince us how possible it is for us to behave ourselves as we ought. . . since ladies, whose sex and tender manner of breeding, render them much less able than men to support such hardships, bravely endured shipwreck, want, cold, and slavery, and every ill that human nature could be tried with; yet we, who never feel the inclemency of foreign climates, that never saw the face of barbarous pirates or savages, are impatient at a fit of sickness, or at a disappointment, shake at a storm and are brave in nothing but in daring Heaven's judgment. Let us blush when we read such histories. . . , and imitating these great examples, render ourselves worthy to have our names, like theirs, entered to posterity.<sup>40</sup>

Aubin wanted her women to meet situations bravely. This story stimulated thoughts of that brave if frightening new world overseas, but her characters carried their Christianity and rules for women with them. Forced servitude and experience in an alien world proved that individuals could emerge from difficulties relatively unscathed. Aubin's fiction gave women the same status accorded to Crusoe. Women could master adversities--a theme that resonated well in an era of continued exploration.

Why did Lemoine leave out the digression that allowed Angelina to tell about her captivity in a seraglio? One can only speculate about Lemoine's motives, given a complete lack of evidence. Angelina came to an ignominious end, but Charlotte's

father languished in prison once his wife's wily ways with money put him in a debtor's prison. Charlotte paid his creditors and had five of his jailhouse companions released. Christian magnanimity prevailed.

**The Life, Voyages and Surprising Adventures  
of  
Mary Jane Meadows  
'Written by her own Hand'**

'Mary Jane Meadows,' printed in 1802, is also a 'shipwreck narrative,' a story of 'spirit and resolution.'<sup>41</sup> The title lifted phrasing from Defoe's emblematic work. '(woman) of uncommon talents' is a subtitle to the story of Mary Jane Meadows, ostensibly 'written by her own hand,' as a first-person narrative. A perusal of the many American editions of Crusoe suggest similar titles. The author of Meadows borrowed Defoe's words, since one of the originally circulated titles included the words 'life and surprising adventures,' The longer subtitle of Meadows is typical of chapbooks. (see footnotes) The seventy-two page narrative, conveyed a wealth of information about a tropical climate, leading to the speculation that it was written by someone who had traveled extensively, visited libraries, or read about exotic places. Both were shipwrecked twice, both kept journals, and both were monarchs of domains that they could survey with the naked eye. Indeed, Mary Jane exclaimed through poetry lifted from William Cowper that she was 'monarch of all I survey.' This will be fully addressed later.

The obligatory opening homily announced that her disastrous situation, if related candidly and objectively, would provide for the 'instruction and improvement' of others, thus preparing the reader for these moralistic 'memoirs.' A major theme was the pervasiveness of insecurity. Easily and hurriedly accumulated fortunes could disappear overnight, leaving individuals and families bankrupt and hounded by merciless creditors. In addition, scheming lawyers and dishonest bondsmen and others continually searched for their family. These 'memoirs' emphasized the

constant attempts of creditors to hound the Meadows' family in rural and remote parts of England. Such emphases served the author's purpose. Mary Jane survived one crisis after another, but each prepared her for the struggle that was central to the narrative—her island exile.

### The Story

Quick wit allowed Mary Jane to survive a life plagued with adversity, but all her courage and stamina would be needed for the tests that were to come. Her ingenuity in perceiving and designing the latest fashionable goods was the base of her family's success. Because she was so successful at devising consumables, her husband gave in to her every wish. They eventually owned a small country home until their investment in a fraudulent tin mine led to their ruin and his imprisonment. When traveling as itinerant peddlers or knife sharpeners with their very young children, creditors hounded them. She and her husband were separated by his incarceration. Prior to his imprisonment, his hostile behavior frightened her. A neighbor, an older woman, reminded her that men were jealous creatures whose tempers and whims had to be endured. Eventually she set sail for India, since her brother lived there, having secured a position for her son and for herself.

While pursuing her husband half way around the world, a storm shipwrecked her vessel off the coast of Africa. The survivors trekked through some very difficult terrain off the Cape of Good Hope. This motley group of passengers were now divided into groups, with frail and weak women and children struggling along from behind. Somehow communicating their peaceable intentions to the natives who surrounded them, they managed to make camp with them. In a lofty digression, the loyal English subject commented on the brutal treatment the natives received at the hands of the Dutch and the unity among the women—Negro women. She felt comforted by their concern for the women of her company:

We met with some Negro-women who shewed some degree of compassion to our situation, and from their signs we understood they lied a days journey off, and that if we would go with them we should have something to eat; as they pointed the same way our route lay, we agreed; they gave us a little dried fish and some sweet liquor out of calabashes. We all reposed together that night, and if the reader will believe me, it was no small solace to us to have the company of our own sex in these dreadful wilds.<sup>42</sup>

After having endured every human indignity, including drinking their own water, the party was set upon by a group of marauders who carried her away. She adeptly bargained for her own safety--the 'robust kept a head.' But she lamented the sad state of the women she left behind who, having started life with many more expectations, faced grave disappointments, if they were even alive. The women and children were disadvantaged by a lack of unity.<sup>43</sup> Repeated interjections about the grace of Providence reminded Mary Jane and the reader that one must maintain the faith, even in the most distressing of circumstances.

She expressed misgivings after boarding a ship off the African coast with 'strange men on a pathless ocean.' An accident caused by a huge shark wrecked their ship. After rescuing one shipmate who died, she found herself alone on an island in the South Sea. She observed here that she 'must let the humanity of the reader form to himself the picture of my calamitous situation.' Like Crusoe, Mary Jane was shipwrecked--twice, once off the coast of Africa, near the Cape of Good Hope; and the second time, she was shipwrecked off an island.<sup>44</sup>

Mary Jane felt prepared by previous hardships. Invoking Biblical symbolism, on the 4th day Mary Jane found a plantain tree with fruit that was as critical to her as manna was to the Israelites. She immediately found the surrounding habitat as 'fruitful as the celebrated vale of Evesham.'<sup>45</sup> For three months she had no respite from the daily struggle for shelter and food. Her long list of projects kept her busy and she would only bemoan her fate once the sun went down.

She was not the mistress of her destiny. She left her home and pursued her husband who she thought was in India. She had to be discovered and rescued by the men in her life including her husband. Her husband walked up the beach to her cabin. She returned to England and a life of sufficient wealth.

Fortuitous circumstances and coincidences abounded in this and in other stories, but gullible readers probably overlooked the incongruities. Madame Longchamp, whom she buried at sea, was the aunt of the small girl they had saved in Paris from a run-away coach. Her own brother had earlier come near with a ship and crew, but did not hear her signals. The lioness who was Leo's mother was being sent by the Bien Venue of India as a present for the Queen of France. Her husband and brother recounted their adventures and nerve-racking experiences. Not unlike other long chapbooks, a concluding digression allowed one of the ship's mates, Wilson, to tell a long and involved tale about his love for an Iroquois daughter. At the end, Wilson noted that anyone could experience such travails, and that was a good enough reason for telling the story.

The story had to be credible. Women could survive the most solitary experiences with mettle and courage. Her island exile and eventual deliverance must have fascinated readers more than her all-too-common devastating family life. Mary Jane Meadows made these comments in concluding her memoir:

When I think upon my adventures and fortunes, I must confess I think myself born for an example and benefit to others; so much so that I must here declare, that in the world I have found friendship to be but a name; fame a mere bubble; honor a jest; merit a bat for envy to shot at; beauty the prey of impudence; and virtue of slander; and I can say, that from the moment of my birth to the present, I never found, except in my husband, brother, and son, and those who now retire with me, a single disinterested friend.<sup>46</sup>

This comment boldly speaks for itself. With the exception of her family, she found little friendship on her many journeys through life.

### Comparison of "Charlotte Dupont" and "Mary Jane Meadows"

In Aubin's moral fables, females wrestled with temptation. Charlotte faced sexual intimidation and appeared to acquiesce, but outlasted her opponents. Mary Jane did not depend on the opinion of others. Charlotte deferred to men, while a seemingly-desexualized Mary Jane led by supporting her family. She manipulated her captors in southern Africa and the lions and other animals. Her goal was England, home, and the benefits of civilization, whereas Charlotte's prime interest was a reunion with Belanger. Charlotte lived with other people, whereas Mary Jane lived in a solitude she tolerated but never accepted. Several digressions filled Aubin's story, whereas only one concluded Meadows. Both women dislike foreigners. Charlotte resisted the Spaniards, and Mary Jane distrusted the Dutch--especially their attitudes toward native people. Finally, both constantly implored Providence to guide their every waking thought.

### Comparison of Robinson Crusoe and 'Mary Jane Meadows'

The first and most striking similarity involves their appeal to the ordinary reader. Surrounded by exotic props, ordinary English individuals venture into extraordinary worlds. The 'colonial' context in Crusoe was not present in Meadows. As strong and capable as she was, Mary Jane was not looking for new worlds to conquer. Through her experiences, the author enlightened others about a new and virgin world beyond England. Meadows was a scant 72 pages.

Contrary to our suppositions about the ethos of community and a sense of neighborhood in early modern England, there must have been weak ties of friendship and community among acquaintances of the author. The term 'disinterested friend' tells us that the author saw other people as self-centered. Crusoe displayed no interest in community or bonding. Friday proved his loyalty repeatedly and even preferred death rather than separation and the loss of their

friendship, but Crusoe could let go with few regrets. For Mary Jane, however, family and home were her overriding concerns. Her loyalty and self-effacing behavior contrasted with Crusoe's rapacious pursuit of self-interest.

The story has a nationalistic tinge. The Dutch were pictured as villainous and mean-spirited toward the African natives. Could indigenous women be generous and communally-oriented toward a group of foreign women who were invading their physical space? Another tribe herded its cattle away from the Europeans, and they would not even barter for food. Is such a sense of camaraderie among the same sex possible when other factors menacingly interposed? Is the author implying that in a natural state women would bond with other women or that women were more naturally cooperative? The natives provided Crusoe and Zury 'with the best provisions that the nature of their country and circumstances would allow,' and Crusoe expressed his gratitude for their help.<sup>47</sup> The author of Meadows confined accounts of noble acts to African women. Although imitating Crusoe, Meadows glorified women's instinctive ability to survive adversity with benign motives and harmonious acts.

Defoe's novels explored the interaction of self and external forces. Much literary comment focused on the themes of acquisitive mentality and rugged individualism. Robinson Crusoe and his other novels can be read as a fable of acquisition. Individuals went out into the world without the sustaining ties of family and community. In Moll Flanders, Roxana, and Colonel Jack, the minimal references to family life marginalized domestic relations. Only in a future volume did Crusoe pursue creature comforts that rekindled notions of domesticity and kinship. By the time Defoe wrote the sequel, The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, he realized that he had marginalized family life. Although Crusoe became more paternal and considered settlers as part of his family, he still maintained detachment and distance toward his wife and the island's newcomers. Defoe's gestures toward family and domesticity were concessions to the force of family, since he preferred adventure.<sup>48</sup>

Contradictions and ambiguities in novels frequently reveal the temper and spirit of the times. Crusoe is no exception. Defoe's characters were a product of a regulated but increasingly commercial society and economy. Along with Puritan rigor, Crusoe brought to the island the commercial and mercantile spirit of late seventeenth-century England. He confronted ambitious rivals who coveted his property. The arriving Spanish and Portuguese, representing the tentacles of Europe's imperialistic ambitions, challenged his authority, and threatened his dreams of unbridled supremacy. He demanded an oath of allegiance by those who came to the island to maintain his grip on power. He only reluctantly admitted that he was part of the European world. <sup>49</sup>

The conflict between father and son opens the novel, Robinson Crusoe. An allegorical interpretation holds that Crusoe's 'original sin' was leaving his father's house. The son leaves, pursues property independently, and becomes the master of his own kingdom. Crusoe has been cast as Adam and his father as God in many accounts. This political statement created its own myth about the exercise of political will by propertied people. <sup>50</sup> The novel suggested resistance to the patriarchal power of Stuart absolutism. Those who secured property independently were entitled to life liberty, and property. No such parallel symbolism can be detected in the account of Mary Jane's journeys.

Crusoe left home and explored the world. Controlling their own destiny, men are destined to become leaders. But Mary Jane followed her husband and pursued his well-being and that of her family. She was not a manipulative or loose woman who offered her body as a commodity for cash. She had mastered the lessons that Defoe and others had earlier introduced. But autonomy was unthinkable for a woman whose entire life was tied to family. She endured the peccadilloes of those around her without complaint. Her industry sustained her husband and family. Her husband enjoyed her success, but his failures in business bankrupted their family. She followed him to India, but he had already returned to England. Once she left



the island wilderness, she returned to England and the authority of her husband. The author may be suggesting that men were the weaker of the species.

### Gender

An analysis of gender convincingly demonstrates how gender shaped these exile experiences. Both accounts use the first-person voice to describe their innermost thoughts. Both emphasized practical matters necessary for survival. Crusoe, however, is a much longer novel, a spiritual autobiography reminiscent of the early eighteenth-century. It recorded Crusoe's waking and introspective moments as well as his fears. A comparison of their daily routines indicated a totally gendered socialization process.

Crusoe's training equipped him to survive and prosper, with time and careful planning his island outpost became a kingdom. Rather than daily hunting for food, he domesticated a herd of goats. Mary Jane's island solitude was a static experience. She used milk from the buffalo calf, but showed no interest in domesticating creatures to provide for her food supply. She was not a collector of new species of plant life. Her primary goal was to make herself comfortable while she awaited deliverance.

Defoe's account of the germination of barley was typical for his age. Once Crusoe realized that a spot where he had dropped chicken feed had turned green, he saw this event as a sign of God's work. Later he realized what he had done, but still interpreted this as the work of Providence. This manner of constructing the story allowed Crusoe to retell the ancient story of God's work. Circumstances required him to husband the island, thus being symbolically unified with nature. He was not so enamored of Providential explanations that he deferred to God and the bounty of nature to sustain him. He intervened dramatically, eventually creating a profitable estate out of a wilderness.<sup>51</sup> Mary Jane barely disturbed what God had

created. When compared to Crusoe's careful plan for profit, Mary Jane more closely observed the dictates of Providence. God would provide.

Crusoe grew crops, taking great pride in the barley, rice, and corn that he was able to produce. He learned when to plant and built small fences around his arable land in order to keep hares and other animals from eating the crop. He grew grapes. He regarded his home and land as his castle, his county seat or bower. He jealously guarded his territory from others who he was sure existed on other parts of the island. Mary Jane did not grow crops, but improvisationally and temporarily lived off the lush vegetation. Crusoe settled in and worked to make his personal colony a success.<sup>52</sup>

Mary Jane cooked. Crusoe made earthenware pots and baked his own bread. He existed on goats, pigeons, and turtles or tortoises. He used goat skins for his attire. He made candles from goats' tallow. His long-term survival depended on the construction of good and sturdy enclosures. The "keeping up a breed of tame creatures thus at my hand would be a living magazine of flesh, milk, butter, and cheese for me as long as I lived in the place." Even if he lived there forty years.<sup>53</sup> Mary Jane made herself comfortable, but did not construct permanent enclosures and domesticate animals.

Both lived among animals. Mary Jane brought cats with her from the shipwreck. She used the 'cloud of birds' who descended upon her for food. A 'troop of monkeys' were frightening and mischievous, but the major challenge came from the baboons. One she could not stave off with her stick, but her voice frightened him. He later returned with others, but they quickly surveyed the situation and left. She adopted the lion cub after his mother had lunged at her and went over the cliff. Leo died after he tried to protect her against another baboon who had grabbed her. She fended off other large and menacing animals who stalked her camp by night, but she never encountered them face to face.<sup>54</sup> By alluding to the death of her young lion friend, Leo, when he defended her from the baboon, the author implied that women must defend themselves against predators.

The animals who attacked her were symbolic substitutes for men who decoyed females. Crusoe, by contrast, cunningly tended his goat herd. He penned them up in various suitable, yet sheltered locations in remote parts of the island.

In both stories, tools represent the superiority of civilization and allowed them an 'advantage over nature.' The shipwrecked Crusoe immediately formed a raft of wood from the ship and carried the ship's contents onto shore. He took seamans' chests, food provisions, ammunition, arms, and the carpenter's chest. He made eleven trips back to the ship in his first thirteen days on the island.<sup>55</sup>

Mary Jane landed with a shipmate and helped him make it to shore, although she knew that he would not survive. She gave no thought to the items remaining on board, although after a later shipwreck, she collected useful items, including a 'magazine' of tools--some European coins, cutlery, razors, and a large pair of scissors. After finding hard stone, Mary Jane created a pair of scissors and with a sufficient cutting edge. Knowing the story of Crusoe and its reception from readers, the author's innovative creature who, being synonymous with nature as a female, survived because she was creative and in harmony with God's creation. Gender, how a female would behave suffused this intertwined motif of survival in a state of nature.

Sex-specific behavior can be discerned in the manner in which each responded to their need for shelter. Immediately and hastily constructing an improvised shelter among the rocks, Mary Jane scouted a more suitable home. Making curtains, a couch and a bedstead out of completely raw materials in such natural conditions seems implausible. Where did she get the cotton used for furniture and for her clothing? The domesticated shelter appealed to female readers who were conditioned to find fortuitous coincidences and marvelous and unlikely events in stories. Chapbook writers borrowed the marvelous element from novels. Female readers enjoyed a female adventure story.

Crusoe's improvements took precedence over creature comforts. He did not create a comfortable cabin, but he spent time 'camping,' enduring the wilds of the

island, and creating a herd of animals to support him. Mary Jane understood female vulnerability, specifically that of her acquaintances whose life experiences had not prepared them for the difficulties they endured off the coast of Africa. Well-disposed native people did not appear in Crusoe. He cultivated his fears and reconnoitered his territory and his supposed enemies. He knew that the best offense was a sure defense. He planned a strategy to meet newcomers on only the most self-enhanced terms. Mary Jane quickly and fearlessly went to the shipwreck when she heard noises because she was concerned about the survival of those on board. Solitude and a relatively peaceable coexistence with the animals projected an image of harmony with God and his creation. She encountered no other humans. She would have helped those on board a wrecked ship but they died before she could reach them. She does not, therefore, typify the uppity European from a superior culture or civilization.

The females who narrated Defoe's stories were usually entrepreneurs who sold themselves--qualities that did not endear Defoe to critics. Moll Flanders and Roxana mastered the lessons of economic individualism, deserting children and kin for survival or self-fulfillment.<sup>56</sup> But Mary Jane exhibited true fidelity. Is the author telling readers that women cling to their man and family life, only to be rejected or cast aside if other and more promising opportunities arise? Is the author also suggesting that husbands easily believe and accept gossip and slander about their wives? Were men the 'weaker vessel?'

### Race/Imperialism

Both Defoe and the author of Meadows were subtle polemicists, although their interests differed. Defoe was a fairly practical schemer, and he transferred his zeal for colonial expansion into writings that publicized those opportunities. His didacticism can be construed as propaganda, but his nuanced approach allowed him to convey the social and cultural milieu.<sup>57</sup> Meadows is not a celebration of

colonial glory. Her peaceable coexistence suggests the opposite—that women would live harmoniously in a strange and virgin land.

Defoe's writings served as propaganda for European hegemony. He favored trade networks that would lift Britain out of its stagnation and seemed more inclined to promote the cause of the midling colonist than that of the capitalist. Crusoe's island home off the coast of South America is one example of a lush, virgin environment that could produce goods to be shipped to England. The natives would buy English products and adopt the redeeming virtues of European civilization and life.<sup>58</sup> His long sojourn permitted him to establish such a suitable kingdom. Mary Jane did not build a society that could be an outpost for European expansion.

Racists build up a set of beliefs associated with their sense of superiority. The exploring English confronted other cultures and alien people whose divergent culture and religion needed explanation. Travel literature provided the comparative mode, although racist thought hardly originated from that genre. But comparisons with other cultures did perpetuate racism.<sup>59</sup>

The concept of race must be gingerly examined. Race remains an emotional topic that we do not discuss without projecting our own emotional feelings and biases. Defoe wrote extensively on this topic. His many novels, pamphlets and other writings reveal much about his attitudes. He identified with the entrepreneurial class, since he worked for people involved in the slave trade. He himself bought stock in companies involved in the trade. The slave trade and slavery 'hovers like a curse over the narrative.' His much-touted ambivalence remained limited to the crueler practices of slave masters and sellers. Although Defoe acknowledged that cruelty was not a good business practice, Crusoe's 'grand intention' was to kill the savages, but keep one alive to be his servant. His interactions with Friday left much to be desired. Friday was a means to an end. He was immediately deferential and subservient. Although Crusoe acknowledged Friday's human characteristics, even at the end he saw him

only as the perfect servant. Friday personified the noble savage as Defoe conceptualized that ideal type.<sup>60</sup>

Subordination or destruction of human beings was unthinkable for Mary Jane. She thought well of the 'Negro' women that she met in the African interior. She helped the badly injured man to go to shore with her, although she knew that his survival was doubtful. Perhaps the author intended that well-informed readers compare her heroine's beneficent motives and acts with the crueler tactics of Crusoe and find him lacking.

### The State of Nature

The seventeenth and eighteenth century political philosophers, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and later Jean Jacques Rousseau, made the concept of the state of nature a household phrase within educated circles. But the phrase has another connotation. The primitive lands discovered by Crusoe and Mary Jane were well beyond the wildest dreams of those who thought about such a virgin and untouched domain. Rousseau once commented that those who wrote about the state of nature had not perused human history sufficiently to talk about it. Locke and Hobbes understood that savages like the American Indian existed, and Defoe mentioned them in his pamphlets and poems.<sup>61</sup>

For Defoe, the state of nature could be appropriated for men's purposes. Its elements could be used to feed, clothe, and shelter men. The wealth of the unexplored world could make men wealthy, very wealthy, not with mere gold or silver that was discovered there—as the Spanish had done, but with raw resources that could be refined into finished products and then marketed. Captain Singleton and Robinson Crusoe even included maps which further whetted the appetite for adventure.<sup>62</sup>

The account of a woman doing what only men had done before fascinated readers who knew that a larger, faraway virgin paradise awaited outside of England.

Although ingenious and quick, she was not the reigning mistress of her environment, since she impatiently but peaceably awaited her deliverance from its beauty and bounty. This theme provided credibility for the story. Readers--especially female readers--did not expect even the female Robinson Crusoe to be the mistress of all she surveyed.

### Religion/Government

As the narrative outlined the establishment of an island kingdom where Crusoe reigned as governor, his mental notes revealed his desire to create a kingdom with the requisite political hierarchy. He 'call'd a Council, that is to say, in my Thoughts,' by the end of his second day on the island. He used such terms as 'possession' and 'independence' by the end of his first year. In his sixth year he decided to survey 'the circumference of my little kingdom.' He repeatedly used such terms as 'castle,' and also referred to his 'country seat.' Those who arrive on the island--Friday, the Spaniard, and the English sea captain--become his subjects. Their very lives were his to command. Crusoe was not a gentleman simply tending to improvements on his estate. He did not accept the newer Whig and Lockean notions of contract that political philosophers circulated during Defoe's life.<sup>63</sup> The power of the monarch remains central to any understanding of Crusoe and Defoe himself. He supported the Glorious Revolution, but he remained wary of the growing power of Parliament. In his view of the proper distribution of power, the King centered and stabilized the political structure. The men of property prevailed in the 1688 Settlement. In Defoe's fable, the son replaced the father's authority by creating his own independent but successful kingdom, thus symbolizing the political change that came to England.<sup>64</sup>

Both professed to be believing Christians, and both realized that the Lord helped those who helped themselves. But Crusoe was the more calculating and careful planner. He left his home to seek his fortune. When he returned to

England, he demanded a full accounting of his earlier-established plantation in Brasil. He was determined to make the land yield. His words speak well for Defoe's understanding of government:

In the first place, I was removed from all the wickedness of the world here. I had neither the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye or the pride of life. I had nothing to covet; for I had all that I was now capable of enjoying; I was lord of the whole manor; or if I pleased, I might call my self king or emperor over the whole country which I had possession of. There were no rivals; I had no competitor, none to dispute sovereignty or command with me. I might have raised ship loadings of corn; but I had no use for it. So I let as little grow as I thought enough for my occasion. I had tortoise or turtles enough; but now and then one was as much as I could put to any use. I had timber enough to have built a fleet of ships. I had grapes enough to have made wine, or to have cured into raising, to have loaded that fleet when they had been built.<sup>65</sup>

With his acquisitive mentality, he organized his domain to provide for his wants and with the passing years had more than enough. Mary Jane Meadows had no such acquisitive instinct.

### Poetry and Prose

A solitary soliloquy acknowledged that she was the 'lord of the fowl and the brute.' Yet, despite being a 'monarch,' she did not experience joy in dominating her territory:

I am monarch of all I survey,  
     My right there is none to dispute,  
 From the centre all round to the sea,  
     I am lord of the fowl and the brute.  
 O Solitude! where are thy charms  
     That sages have seen in thy face!  
 Better dwell in the midst of alarms,  
     Than reign in this horrible place.  
 I am out of humanity's reach,  
     I may finish my journey alone,  
 Never hear the sweet music of speech,  
     For I start at the sound of my own.  
 The beasts that roam over the plain,



**My form with indifference see,  
They are so unacquainted with man,  
Their tameness is shocking to me.<sup>66</sup>**

The author lifted this stanza and a half from William Cowper's poem, "Verses, Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk, During his Solitary Abode in the Island of Juan Fernandez," written in 1782. It is widely believed that Defoe took the experiences of Selkirk, an 'undisciplined Scot,' and built upon them.<sup>67</sup> With unfettered imagination, he expropriated other experiences in order to create a forceful tale. Using a traditional approach for popular culture and chapbooks, the author of Meadows borrowed from Cowper and others, offered this account anonymously, and reaped whatever rewards accrued. An author who lifted known poetry could model her story on an earlier and popular tale.

This stanza leaves little doubt that she would prefer the noise of civilization to the peaceful silence of her kingdom, but she coexisted peaceably with plants and animals. Her friend, the lion cub who became a faithful companion, could not be worse than the 'human vultures' she had encountered. She avoided despair and worked diligently in order to survive her primitive habitat, but her sights were always set on her real home--England. Her encounter with one ferocious animal led her to question the authority of Providence. Why indeed did she experience such a hard life? Yet by the end of the stanza that follows she accepted her situation:

**Ah! why to man and social converse dead,  
Do I alone the ruggid mountains tread,  
Where nature, coy and stubborn, seems to fly,  
The human race, and all approach defy;  
Where, fear'd by terrors, which e'en brutes appal,  
Serpents and reptiles hardly dare to crawl;  
Where vegetations kinder stores unknown,  
Rank weeds and poison bearing shrubs alone;  
Their heads erect; why do I linger here?  
Nor share at home the pleasures of the year;  
Has heaven for my crimes that bliss denied,  
With which my country-folks are yet supplied;  
Or does my shrinking mind averse to toil,  
From labour's duties lazily recall?**

No!--to my soul the bounteous hand of heav'n,  
 Of strength a more than common share has giv'n.  
 Nor where these pow'rs, by indolence or pride,  
 To the severest claims of toil denied;  
 Yes, I can say it, from my birth till now,  
 I've held of life the weary trackless plough.<sup>68</sup>

She had been a dutiful servant of God but still was frustrated and agitated that she was consigned to such a miserable place.

Commentary from the hand of Mary Jane, the writer, testifies to her sense of herself, her own self-importance. Her articulate defense of herself as 'but a woman' further reveals her disgust with others:

I shall not, like a noted writer, depreciate the ingenuity of others to exalt my own, all the while adopting their methods without any acknowledgment of the loan: ingratitude was never the canker of my mind, and I repeat it here, if my processes and operations were tedious and occupied much time, they were the result of my own thoughts unassisted by example; my resources were from myself unassisted by the examples of others in similar circumstances. If I was better than three months before I found myself in the comfortable situation just now described, it must be recollected, I was but a woman, and how much I had to impede my exertions, and then the wonder will be, how I was able to finish all I had in that time.<sup>69</sup>

She did not stoop to the condescending pretension that she so disliked in other writers. Pleading that she just a woman, Mary Jane's writings and definition of herself were worthy of posterity and would eventually find its way to the British Museum. This passage provides substantial evidence of her abilities.

Usurping a few lines from Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard," she noted reasons for writing her history:

For who to dull forgetfulness a prey,  
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,  
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful clay,  
 Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?<sup>70</sup>

She needed the 'exercise of that reason' which the species used to 'distinguish' itself from other species. In addition, she could:

'form for myself a retrospective almanack of extraordinary events, that might remind me afterwards of the signal mercies I had experienced, and dangers passed, filling up my time by employments. . . .'<sup>71</sup>

The writer communicated her abilities and mental notes. Ego does appear.

Novels emphasized the individual's isolated vigil, an approach, that Christopher Hill and others suggested originated in Puritan thought, although it had appeared earlier in Shakespeare, Marlowe, and other Elizabethan and Jacobean writers. The hero or heroine pursued his or her lonely fate. But the lack of dialogue and the solitary life in Meadows resembled the emergence of individualism in Crusoe.<sup>72</sup> Although the text extolled the Mary Jane's virtues, its long descriptive paragraphs with very little dialogue were not unusual in late eighteenth-century chapbooks.

Gender dictated a different approach. While both accounts emphasize the precariousness of life, Mary Jane's priority was the security of her marriage, not her dominion or plantation. Her life was a response to the needs and will of others, what we have expected of women.

A shipwreck landed Mary Jane in the state of nature. Autobiography/biography is deeply rooted in seventeenth-century thought, although the novel is an eighteenth-century development. Religious expectations consistent with the seventeenth-century motivated both exiles. The Enlightenment and a fascination with the unexplored world at first blush appear to be a eighteenth-century phenomenon, but the roots can be traced back to early modern England. This is a discussion of nature versus culture and the role of a solitary woman, but it is also an exploration of the author's motives, insights, and beliefs.

## Notes

1. The frontispiece supplied this information about the story which was to follow: "The Life, Voyages and Surprising Adventures of Mary Jane Meadows, A Woman of Uncommon Talents, Spirit and Resolution, Who, After experiencing a series of extraordinary changes in Life, from the highest Splendour and Affluence, to the most abject Distress and Poverty; at last shipped herself for India, in the unfortunate Grosvenor, and was Cast away on the dreary Coast of Africa; where, after traveling through vast Deserts and the kingdom of Caffraria in the most imminent danger, arrived on the borders of the South Sea, where she was again Cast away upon an uninhabited Island, and lived intirely by herself for several Years. Written by her own hand." London: Printed by J. Bonsor; for Ann Lemoine, and sold by T. Hurst. Clarence S. Brigham, Bibliography of American Editions of Robinson Crusoe to 1830, (Worcester, Massachusetts: Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, 1958), p. 144. The chapbook, "The Wonderful Life and Most Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner," printed and sold by W. Durell, noted that it was 'faithfully epitomized from the three volumes and adorned with CUTS suitable to the most remarkable Stories.' Preface, Page 2. This 'epitome' was 'contracted into as narrow a compass as possible.' The reader needed to bring to this account 'consideration and sedateness.' p. 2. Penguin edition of novel by Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe. Edited with an Introduction by Angus Ross, (London: Penguin Classics, 1985); first published by Defoe in 1719. The other chapbooks which summarized Crusoe were printed in New York but were a rendition of an English chapbook. "The Wonderful Life and Surprising Adventures of that Renowned Hero, Robinson Crusoe, Who lived Twenty-eight Years on an Uninhabited Island Which he afterwards Colonised." New York: Printed by Hurtin and Commandinger, for E. Duyckinck and Company, 1795. Homer Brown, "The Institution of the Novel: Defoe's Contribution," Novel, 29 (Spring, 1996): 300, 308.
2. Henry Lemoine's experiences as a itinerant book-seller and printers have been noted elsewhere. One of the chapbooks by Ann Lemoine had a notation on the back of the front page: 'H. Lemoine, Printer.' Ian Maxted, The London Book Trades, 1775-1800, A Preliminary Checklist of Members, Old Woking, Surrey: Dawson, Unwin Brothers Limited, 1977), p. 137.
3. Christopher Hill, "Robinson Crusoe," History Workshop Journal, 310 (1980): 9. Kevin L. Cope, "All Aboard the Ark of Possibility; or, Robinson Crusoe Returns from Mars as a Small-Footprint, Multi-Channel Indeterminacy Machine," Studies in the Novel, 30 (1998): 153.
4. Homer Brown, "The Institution of the Novel: Defoe's Contribution," Novel, 29 (Spring, 1996): 300, 308. Currently, discussion in the literature debates attribution: whether Defoe wrote the 600 works attributed to him.

5. Paula Backscheider, "Women Writers and the Chains of Identification," Studies in the Novel, 19 (1987).
6. Gary J. Scrimgeour, "The Problem of Realism in Defoe's Captain Singleton," Huntington Library Quarterly, 27 (19173): 21, 23.
7. Manuel Schonhorn, Defoe's Captain Singleton: A Reassessment with Observations," Papers on Language and Literature, 7 (1971): 43. Timothy C. Blackbourn, "The Coherence of Defoe's Captain Singleton," Huntington Library Quarterly, 41 (1978):
8. Sara Heller Mendelsohn, The Mental World of Stuart Women, Three Studies, (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1987), pp. 186-188. Mayer, History and the early English novel, Matters of fact from Bacon to Defoe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). p. 154.
9. Robert W. Ayers, "Robinson Crusoe: "Allusive Allegorick History," Proceedings of the Modern Language Association, (1967), pp. 399-407.
10. Mayer, Robert, History and the early English Novel, Matters of fact from Bacon to Defoe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, )
11. Ibid., pp. 4, 115, 137-139. The term 'sudden redistribution,' appeared in Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Knowledge.
12. Ibid., p. 89. The career of Nathaniel Crouch illustrates the transformation within the previously 'undifferentiated matrix' of faction and fiction identified by Lennard Davis as well as the shifts of the reading public. Crouch's career and impact upon midling readers was mentioned in the chapter on literacy. Mayer, "Nathaniel Crouch, Bookseller and Historian: Popular History and Cultural Power in Late Seventeenth-Century England," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 27 (1993-1994): 319-414.
13. Mayer, History and the early English Novel, pp. 136, 157, 196, 225. J. Paul Hunter, Before Novels, The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth Century English Fiction, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990). Lennard Davis, Factual Fictions, The Origins of the English Novel, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 166, 170.
14. Mayer, History and the early English Novel, pp. 156, 172, 190, 227.
15. Ibid., p. 229.
16. Ibid., pp. 154-156.

17. quote from MJ Meadows

18. Dennis Porter, Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 104, 105. Quoted phrase from John McVeagh, "Defoe and Far Travel," appears in McVeagh, All Before Them, 1660-1780, (London-Atlantic Highlands, NJ: 1990), pp. 117, 121. See also Hunt, Margaret, "Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveler's Gaze in Eighteenth-Century England," Journal of British Studies, 32 (October, 1993): 337, 348.

19. Hunt, The Midling Sort, Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996, p. 189.

20. Christopher Hill, "Robinson Crusoe," History Workshop Journal, Issue 10, (1980), p. 8. Hill's philosophical orientation as a Marxist historian did not blind him or bind him to a vacuous but faithful rendering of a dialectical scheme of history, minus other salient and meritorious factors. He emphasized the moral purpose and power of Robinson Crusoe. This novel revealed Crusoe's 'modified Puritanism, modified in the direction of secularism.' But it also indelibly vindicated Puritanism's successes. Although Hill claimed that Crusoe was not a bigot, his attitude about slavery vacillated. pp. 10, 17.

21. Robert W. Ayers, "Robinson Crusoe: 'Allusive Allegorick History,'" Publications of the Modern Language Association, (1967), p 400; Hill, "Robinson Crusoe," p. 8. Many studies examine the question of attribution.

22. Ilse Vickers, Defoe and the New Sciences, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 105, 111. The author is grateful for the entire and cogently-presented chapter, "Robinson Crusoe: Man's Progressive Dominion Over Nature." Hill, "Robinson Crusoe," p. 12.

23. Vickers, Defoe and the New Sciences, pp. 112, 114, 118, 119. Quote is from p. 114.

24. Hill, "Robinson Crusoe," p. 12; Ian Watt, "Individualism and the Novel," in Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, edited with an introduction by Harold Bloom, (New York, New Haven, and Philadelphia, Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), pp. 18, 19, 20. Quotations from Watt pages 19, 20; Hill, "Robinson Crusoe," p. 20.

25. Richard Braverman, "Crusoe's Legacy," Studies in the Novel, 27 (1986), pp. 4, 5.

26. Watt, The Rise of the Novel, p. 63.

27. Penelope Aubin, "The Life, Adventures and Distresses of Charlotte Dupont and her lover Belanger, who . . . underwent a greater variety of real misfortunes than any couple that ever existed." London, Ann Lemoine, 1800, originally published in 1723.
28. Aubin, "Charlotte Dupont."
29. John J. Richetti, Popular Fiction Before Richardson: Narrative Patterns, 1700-1739, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 228, and 216-230; Paula Bachsneider, Ambition and Innovation, (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1986), pp. 225-228.
30. Richetti, *Ibid.*, pp. 216, 228.
31. Janet Todd, The Sign of Angellica, p. 87. Cheryl Turner, Living by the Pen. Women writers in the eighteenth century, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 113; Ros Ballaster, Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 32, 33.
32. Richetti, Popular Fiction Before Richardson, pp. 216-218, 229.
33. footnote with Todd source to be found
34. April London, "Placing the Female: The Metonymic Garden in Amatory and Pious Narrative, 1700-1740," appearing in Schofield, Mary Anne and Cecelia Macheski, Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670-1815 (Athens: Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1986), pp. 112, 113.
35. Todd, The Sign of Angellica, p. 142; Jerry C. Beasley, "Politics and Moral Idealism: The Achievement of Some Early Women Novelists," in Schofield and Macheski, Fetter'd or Free, p., 230; Turner, Living by the Pen, p. 112.
36. Joe Snader, "The Original Captivity Narrative in Early English Fiction," Eighteenth-Century Fiction, (April, 1997), p. 267.
37. Snader, "Original Captivity Narrative," pp. 267-270, 288, 292, 293, 295.
38. Aubin, "Charlotte Dupont," p. 11. When this group ventured inland they met a Black man, and a white woman and their 'mulatto' child. The Black man was a former slave for the father of the white woman and carried her off. Aubin, however, quickly dismissed this trio from the narrative by noting that they lived happily with their many children.

39. Ibid., p. 37-38. Once the monk concluded his long biographical statement, Aubin interjected a typically didactic comment: "Here he ended his relation with a deep sign, all the company being much pleased with the manner of his relating it, and the strangeness of his adventures; admiring the wisdom of God which had preserved him amongst savages, and placed him where he was the means of their salvation." "Charlotte Dupont," p. 42.

40. Ibid., p. 48.

41. The entire description on the frontispiece tells us this information about the story which was to follow: "The Life, Voyages and Surprising Adventures of Mary Jane Meadows, A Woman of Uncommon Talents, Spirit and Resolution, Who, After experiencing a series of extraordinary changes in Life, from the highest Splendour and Affluence, to the most abject Distress and Poverty; at last shipped herself for India, in the unfortunate Grosvenor, and was Cast away on the dreary Coast of Africa; where, after traveling through vast Deserts and the kingdom of Caffraria in the most imminent danger, arrived on the borders of the South Sea, where she was again Cast away upon an uninhabited Island, and lived intirely by herself for several Years. Written by her own hand." London: Printed by J. Bonsor; for Ann Lemoine, and sold by T. Hurst. Clarence S. Brigham, Bibliography of American Editions of Robinson Crusoe to 1830, (Worcester, Massachusetts: Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, 1958), p. 144. The chapbook, "The Wonderful Life and Most Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner," printed and sold by W. Durell, noted that it was 'faithfully epitomized from the three volumes and adorned with CUTS suitable to the most remarkable Stories.'

42. "Mary Jane Meadows," Ibid., p. 22

43. Ibid., p. 21.

44. Ibid., p. 28.

45. Ibid., p. 30..

46. Ibid. p. 72.

47. Longer chapbook, p. 22.

48. Christopher Flint, "Orphaning the Family: The Role of Kinship in Robinson Crusoe," English Literary History, 55 (Summer, 1988), pp. 382, 383, 387, 389, 395, 396, 310, 411.

49. Frank Donoghue, "Inevitable Politics: Rulership and Identity in Robinson Crusoe," Studies in the Novel, 27 (Spring, 1995), pp. 2-7.



50. Ayers, "Robinson Crusoe: 'Allusive Allegorick History,'" p. 402; Richard Braverman, "Crusoe's Legacy." Studies in the Novel, 18 (Spring, 1986), pp. 4, 5.
51. Simon Schaeffer, "The Earth's Fertility as a social fact in Early Modern England," appearing in Nature and Society in Historical Context, Mikulas Teich, Roy Porter, and Bo Gustafsson, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 136; Richard Braverman, "Crusoe's Legacy," Studies in the Novel, 27 (1986), pp. 10, 11.
52. Daniel Defoe, Crusoe, pp. 128, 173.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 133, 153, 158, 184; quote from page 161.
54. "Mary Jane Meadows," pp. 35, 36.
55. Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, pp. 68, 69. Braverman, "Crusoe's Legacy," p. 9.
56. Armstrong and Tennenhouse, "The Imaginary Puritan," p. 201. Novak, Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe, chapters two and three.
57. J. A. Downie, "Defoe, Imperialism, and the Travel Books Reconsidered," Yearbook of English Studies, Vol. 13, (1983): 73-75. Also appearing in Roger D. Lund, ed., Critical Essays on Daniel Defoe, (New York: G. K. Hall and Company, 1997). Downie expanded on a theme from Maximilian Novak, Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California English Studies, 1962), pp. 147, 143.
58. Downie, p. 75.
59. Hunt, "Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveler's Gaze," pp. 346, 353
60. Michael Seidel, Robinson Crusoe: Island Myths and the Novel, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), p. 106; Chapbook, p. 76; Patrick J. Keane, "Slavery and Slave Trade: Crusoe as Defoe's Representative," appearing in Critical Essays on Daniel Defoe, Roger D. Lund, ed., (New York: G. K. Hall and Company, 1997), pp. 102, 103; Maximilian E. Novak, Economics and the Fiction of Daniel DeFoe, p. 38; chapters 2 and 3.
61. Maximilian E. Novak, Defoe and the Nature of Man, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, '963), pp. 36, 37.
62. Paula R. Backscheider, Daniel Defoe, His Life, (Baltimore and London: The

Johns Hopkins Press, 1989), pp. 436, 441.

63. Chapbook or *Crusoe*, p. 76; Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, pp. 147, 154.

64. Braverman, "Crusoe's Legacy," pp. 9, 10.

65. Defoe, *Crusoe*, *ibid.*, p. 140.

66. "Mary Jane Meadows," pp. 34-35. monarch

67. Appendix to *Robinson Crusoe*; William Cowper, "Verses, Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk, During His Solitary Abode in the Island of Juan Fernandez," *The Poems of William Cowper*, Vol. I: 1748-1782, John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 403-404. The entire poem reads as follows:

I am monarch of all I survey,  
 My right there is none to dispute,  
 From the center all round to the sea,  
 I am lord of the fowl and the brute.  
 Oh solitude! where as thy charms  
 That sages have seen in thy face?  
 Better dwell in the midst of alarms,  
 Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,  
 I must finish my journey alone,  
 Never hear the sweet music of speech,  
 I start at the sound of my own.  
 The beasts that roam over the plain,  
 My form with indifference see,  
 They are so unacquainted with man,  
 their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,  
 Divinely bestow'd upon man,  
 Oh had I the wings of a dove,  
 How soon wou'd I taste you again!  
 My sorrows I then might assuage  
 In the ways of religion and truth,  
 Might learn from the wisdom of age,  
 And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold  
 Resides in that heavy'nly word!

More precious than silver and gold,  
 and all that this earth can afford.  
 But the sound of the church going bell  
 These vallies and rocks never heard,  
 Ne'er sigh'd at the sound of a knell,  
 Or smil'd when a sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds that have made me your sport,  
 Conveys to this desolate shore,  
 Some cordial endearing report  
 Of a Land I shall visit no more.  
 My friends do they now and then send  
 A wish or a thought after me?  
 O tell me I yet have a friend,  
 Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!  
 Compar'd with the speed of its flight,  
 The tempest itself lags behind,  
 And the swift winged arrows of light.  
 When I think of my own native land,  
 In a moment I seem to be there;  
 But alas! recollection at hand  
 Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea fowl is gone to her nest,  
 The beast is laid down to his lair,  
 Ev'n here is a season of rest,  
 And I to my cabin repair.  
 There is mercy in ev'ry place,  
 And mercy, encouraging thought!  
 Gives even affliction a grace,  
 And reconciles man to his lot.

68. "Mary Jane Meadows," *Ibid.*, p. 41.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

71. *Ibid.*

72. Hill, "Robinson Crusoe," p. 19.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN  
CONTINUED ANALYSIS

Spiritual Self-Examination in Crusoe and 'Meadows'

Puritan discipline inculcated a daily accounting of one's spiritual life. Associations between spiritual discipline and the pursuit of economic gain have been long debated, and Crusoe provided much food for thought. The self-discipline attainable through spiritual self-examination made individuals stronger. Mary Jane survived for two reasons: first she was clever and innovative, and second, she had internalized discipline long before she left England. Without her constant pursuit of work her family would not eat. A captive guest in her father-in-law's household, Charlotte Dupont left exhausting physical work to others.

Modern sociologists have commented on the sense of alienation or isolation that has engulfed modern life. The noted sociologist, Max Weber, reported a sense of 'inner isolation' experienced by the descendants of Calvin. The individual was alone. This unique phenomenon was present in Robinson Crusoe, and in this chapbook. Through meticulous detail and a sense of time, the modern novel described a daily routine and inner thoughts. The reader perceived a solitary life.<sup>1</sup> Mary Jane Meadows experienced the same feeling of isolation on the streets of London as she did on this remote island. The following stanza of poetry interspersed into the narrative summarized her solitary life:

Solitude! what treasure untold,  
Resides in that heav'nly name!  
More precious than silver or gold,  
Or all that the great ever claim.  
But the sound of the church-going bell  
These vallies and rocks never heard,  
Ne'er sigh'd at the sound of a knell,  
Or smil'd when a Sunday appear'd.  
But the sea fowl is gone to her nest,  
The beast is laid down in his lair;  
Ev'n here is a season of rest,

And I to my cabin repair.  
 There is mercy in every place,  
 And mercy, encouraging thought,  
 Gives even affliction a grace,  
 And reconciles me to my lot.<sup>2</sup>

Despite being alone for over three years, Mary Jane gained some sense of inner peace through her careful routine and daily self-examination. She feared becoming deranged. She knew that the human being was a rational creature, and her mental exercises, including her writing, kept her mentally alert.

As a true capitalist, Crusoe gradually built his kingdom. He began with a hovel, gradually created a home, then an estate based on freehold and finally a kingdom. He became a monarch and master of all he surveyed, including his slave servant, Friday. He had to be recivilized to revert to the type of individual who lived in England.<sup>3</sup> Mary Jane Meadows needed no such phased reentry.

### Spiritual Autobiographies and Diaries

Critics have argued that Puritan dogma and a need for a 'process of self-mastery' in the novel influenced the writings of Defoe and Crusoe. Like the guides to good behavior and 'providence' books, autobiography's deeper roots germinated in religion. The early eighteenth-century form had certain acquired characteristics: the narrative, the totality of personal experience, organized to conform to spiritual doctrine within a secular plot, and the appearance of an orderly life.<sup>4</sup>

The spiritual autobiography or biography was a seventeenth-century form of witness to God's plan complete with polemical outbursts and didacticism. Puritans extensively adapted the long tradition of hagiography, the lives of saints to their own purposes--spiritual autobiography/biography. By the later decades, the spiritual biography became another form of 'popular religious literature.' With the finality of deathbed confessions, the criminal autobiography detailed the life that should be avoided, while the spiritual autobiography provided the model to be emulated. The

demons that haunted the individual were purged by the end of the work with repentance. The Puritan or committed Christian reader knew that, finally, salvation provided 'final security.'<sup>5</sup>

The 'vestigial remnants' of Puritan self-examination was transferred to the novel through the letters or daily thoughts of fictional individuals. Spiritual biographies provided examples of good and bad behavior. Hopefully, given a variety of appropriate life experiences, readers could choose those that they could emulate. Conversion and true repentance were always possible.<sup>6</sup>

Daily use of a diary allowed one to gather material for a memoir. Diaries, properly used, evoked gratitude for the gifts of God and promoted the prudent management of time--a critical resource for Puritans. The use of diaries fostered contemplation. After entering one's daily and routine experiences, the diarist could reflect on his or her past behavior and react accordingly.<sup>7</sup> Mary Jane recorded her activities on plantain leaves before she acquired a book from a ship wrecked near her humble abode. Her conscious decision to donate her memoirs to the British Museum revealed her sense of self-worth and history.

Defoe permitted Crusoe to explore his own creative self-expressions while he imposed his own didactic goals. In addition, his skillful use of metaphor, imagery, and pithy phrases and comments continue to be admired. Many of his phrases are like proverbs that succinctly summarized and conveyed the meaning of life. His playful lifting and adaptation of a phrase from Robert Boyle, 'necessity is the mother of invention,' reminds us that he was well read.<sup>8</sup>

Defoe was the master of an old form. Robinson Crusoe was Defoe's 'first and last effort' to combine a traditional form with autobiography. The older form required the author to shape a character who denied his (sic) own individuality and accepted religious truth. Identity was found within the self, and Crusoe drew strength from his own character. He was a man with energy and drive, but with all his created and acquired strengths and weaknesses, he was still a child of his Creator.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Defoe's real achievement is to create a multi-faceted character

who pursues different roles: 'prodigal son, penitent sinner, pirate, slaver, castaway, economicus, governor, king, family man, shipping magnate.' This is no mean achievement. It set the stage for eighteenth-century autobiography and the agenda for eighteenth-century literature.<sup>10</sup>

Does the anonymous author of Meadows even remotely live up to Defoe's criteria. Is her work a pale imitation? OR, does it serve other didactic purposes? This chapbook presented a serious self-examination by a woman forced by circumstances well beyond her control to survive financial crises in England and the state of nature in a new world.

### A Female Author?

By the end of the eighteenth century, women writers earned the right to be writers, but they circumspectly observed literary conventions and projected perseverance and strength into their characters. Their heroines were 'paragons' of domestic virtue. Their conclusions required the re-established virtue of the female character. Evil did not prevail. Because women circumspectly observed literary conventions, they offered deferential introductions to works of drama and apologies for fiction. 'Mothers' offered a 'female form of knowledge' that served as an alternative to a man's education. 'Narrative mothers,' however, seldom indulged in 'pedantic' or 'irreverent' discourse. Instead, they persuaded with kind language, using 'tones of affection, concern, and even mild pathos.' Mary Jane's adventures observed these conventions. This ingenious woman fashioned marketable items that consumers, presumably women, wanted. A woman writer was probably more inclined to depict a woman as creative in her support of her family. This unlikely heroine could be contrasted to Defoe's male characters. Women writers and their female characters shared certain traits: creativity, resourcefulness, and resilience.<sup>11</sup>

But what did society expect of them? Although the culture of sensibility acknowledged women's assertive capacities in pursuit of their own gratification, it

sought to diminish those traits. Periodicals such as the Spectator that had earlier encouraged women's contributions now edited them carefully and discouraged vain-glorious consumer appetites such as shopping. Literacy would ruin women if they entertained fanciful notions of the 'male world' that they dare not enter. Reading encouraged them to pursue their own happiness instead of the happiness of others, particularly their husbands. Authors such as Fanny Burney, Mary Hays and later Jane Austen might proclaim independence, but they did so in ways that allow us visualize their opposition. Epistolary novels by the sentimentalists, including many women, announced their dilemma to readers. They conveyed family difficulties and secrets in implicit ways that the readers understood.<sup>12</sup>

This work can be dissected from several perspectives. First, it is a 'memoir' of a 'woman of uncommon talents.' A 'memoir' is a biographical or autobiographical statement. It would appear that the author chose the Defoe-inspired 'shipwreck narrative' in order to write a record or account of the incidents of her life. She concealed her identity but cleverly projected darts and arrows from her quiver of complaints.

Second, it can be considered a travel narrative. People of the midling sort traveled and wrote travel narratives in the eighteenth century. Travel literature was not the product of polished and skilled writers, since many recorded their thoughts in diaries and letters and wrote their account after they returned home. In addition, travel narratives were a 'cottage genre' that appealed to many writers.<sup>13</sup>

The female author of this shipwreck/captivity narrative set out to prove that a woman's nurturing instincts created different responses during an imposed exile. During the difficult trek through the African interior, Mary Jane noted the cooperation of the 'Negro' women who pitied bedraggled white women in their midst. By depicting native women as friendly and cooperative, the author commented on the lack of community and the absence of camaraderie among women. Not acquisitive or greedy, Mary Jane lived in harmony with nature. She did not collect plant species, although she carefully observed her surroundings. She



was not a violent individual like Singleton or Crusoe. She lived peaceably with animals whom she adopted as pets and created the suitable, domesticated furnishings. She waited to go home. A nearby shipwreck prompted her curiosity, but before she took any items from the ship, she buried the dead. Her peaceable existence contrasted with Crusoe's imperial/colonial ambitions. He saw Friday as his slave/servant. Meadows did not include an individual who strangely or fortuitously arrived to challenge Mary Jane's hegemony.

### Captivity Narratives

Chapbooks casually borrowed fragments of other people's work and passed on diluted versions of events or people. They appropriated elements of a genre or style. The author of Meadows used the captivity narrative to focus on English identity in a new and uncharted world. Discipline and mental training gave Mary Jane the requisite equipment. The captivity narrative allowed 'the midling sort' to comprehend reports from the new world. Without colonial exploration, such mental connections would not be possible.<sup>14</sup>

These narratives ordinarily involved the kidnapping of females and their bodies who were depicted as markedly superior in mental acuity to their abductors. By the year 1720, five editions of the enormously popular story of Mary Rowlandson had appeared. By 1800, this story had circulated through more than 30 editions, many of them in the last thirty years of the century. Both the Meadows and Rowlandson stories created the indelible impression that the 'ordinary ("true") English person,' Mary and Mary Jane, were superior. Rowlandson displayed her superiority to Indians in New England and 'old English aristocrats.' Mary Jane bested the tribes in southern Africa and the men who abducted her. To the reader, what is important is not the mere act of abduction or even the enforced solitude required of each, but transcendence or the ability to overcome these obstacles.<sup>15</sup>

The real value of these female experiences rested upon transcendence. One of the heroines of Samuel Richardson's fiction, Pamela, could survive the machinations of her master and eventually become the mistress of his household. Although Rowlandson lived among other people, albeit savages, she could return home from that New World and tell of her experiences. The author of 'Meadows' constructed a similar scenario. But Mary Jane endured a Crusoe-style isolation and lived only with her acquired pets.

In a captivity narrative, the actor (in this case, actress) had to take on native identity to survive. In the story of Charlotte Dupont, reprinted by Ann Lemoine, the beleaguered heroine appeared to be integrated into the family of her husband and even gave lip-service to their religion, but she was only awaiting her deliverance. Mary Jane did not adopt native garb in order to deceive her captors when she was shipwrecked off the African coast. There are similarities. Both women used every waking moment to plot their deliverance.<sup>16</sup>

Referring to Mary Rowlandson as a female Crusoe, not unlike the characterization in this analysis, Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse remind us that Rowlandson returned to England with her identity intact after her horrendous experiences. Only notoriety changed her status following the publication of her story. Both women could 'return without overturning the status quo.' Rowlandson consoled herself with her religion--like Mary Jane. But her ability to find solitude there among the natives simply reimposed her own sense of superiority.<sup>17</sup> Mary Jane survived her captors and the animals, but the story's expressions of humility avoided strident tones of superiority. Given the mood of English culture and the European penchant for exploration and the colonial adventures, we can assume that readers themselves derived some sense of superiority from her mental conquest of new terrain.

Rowlandson's account was a first-person experience that coupled modern authorship with the reliable older tradition of hagiography. Her writings also assumed that a community bound by literacy existed. She used her intellectual

powers and memory to memorialize her life.<sup>18</sup> In captivity narratives, the abducted person, usually female, fended off the attacks of another culture through writing. This form of narrative required that the person be reassimilated into the home culture. Mary Rowlandson and Mary Jane Meadows returned to England and to their families and communities. Charlotte Dupont and Belanger went on to the New World.

Another facet of the captivity narrative deserves emphasis. Spanish explorers and colonists and the family with which Charlotte was forcibly allied required her to observe their Roman Catholic religion. Even the 'temptations' of changing one's religious identity along with treason severed any ties of that individual with their home and community of origin.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, the captivity narrative summoned up the English sense of superiority. In reviewing the impact of Mary Rowlandson's account, Armstrong and Tennenhouse believe that New World finally changed the culture of origin—England. Printed works circulated stories about a life beyond English shores allowed people to see themselves as part of a larger world. Both Rowlandson and the fictional Meadows maintained cultural ties through writing. They could return to their families and communities. With the story of her ordeal, Rowlandson moved beyond her original community and contributed to the broader culture.<sup>20</sup> Could the Crusoe-imitation change English perspectives, assuming that it had a sufficient circulation?

### Why This Work in 1802?

We can entertain two hypotheses about Ann Lemoine's motives in sponsoring chapbooks with varying themes about women in the 1790s and early nineteenth century. The first plausible explanation would be profit. Could events of the 1790s and the changes that came to England over the century have emboldened a woman like Lemoine to speculate that such a chapbook would be popular, particularly in London? The second possibility is that she was

ideologically-driven to sponsor and promote stories that publicized the condition of women. We can only speculate. We can assume that Lemoine met the writer and they agreed on a joint venture.

Writers must work with their audience in mind. Although cut from whole cloth, Moll Flanders and Roxana were flawed fictional individuals whose sexual peccadilloes did not earn Defoe praise in his own time. Crusoe's training, habits and acquisitive nature made him an admirable and suitable character for English reading audiences, including children. Mary Jane endured the peccadilloes of those around her with few complaints, lamented her isolation, and waited for deliverance. But her practical orientation, her lack of self-pity and acquisitive disposition should have earned respect from the reading audience. Particularly when compared to Crusoe, Mary Jane resourcefully created a home for herself. Despite her husband's foolishness, Mary Jane pursued family security and harmony even in precarious and disastrous circumstances.<sup>21</sup>

The anonymous author of Mary Jane's travels and travail was acquainted with literature. She conveniently borrowed from Cowper's poem to illustrate Mary Jane's predicament and used parts of Thomas Gray's noted "Elegy" for a similar effect. Noting that she preferred the 'sweet idea of society,' Mary Jane recited rearranged parts of Cowper's previously cited poem:

Ye winds that have made me your sport,  
 Convey to this desolate shore,  
 Some cordial endearing report,  
 Of a husband beloved I adore--  
 Ah, heaven! does he now and then send,  
 A wish or a thought after me?  
 Oh, tell him he yet has a friend,  
 And a wife he may never more see.  
 Society, friendship, and love,  
 Divinely bestows upon man,  
 Oh, had I the wings of a dove,  
 How soon should I taste them again!  
 My sorrows I then might assuage  
 In the ways of the world and with truth,

**Might learn from the wisdom of age,  
And be chear'd by the salles of youth.<sup>22</sup>**

The title of the work revealed the author's knowledge of Crusoe. The comparisons illustrated above show gender as a key distinguishing element in dichotomizing difference: what a man and a woman would do in exile and in an alien world.

Crusoe's admission that he should not have disobeyed paternal dictates granted him peace and respectability despite past mistakes. Neither Roxana or Clarissa enjoyed a contented old age. Patricia Meyer Spacks suggested that women who do not adhere to the constant, changeless mode courted danger and certain death. But such plot lines did not surface in all novels and not in this extraordinary chapbook. Mary Jane was not a static creature who was confined to polite drawing rooms. She did, however, exhibit fortitude and constancy in all relationships. She finally returned to England and the paternalistic security of her family; her resilience and resourcefulness could be conveniently put into storage.<sup>23</sup>

The growth of literacy and readers changed English identity. Certainly the exploration of new worlds contributed to this development. But the works of Defoe with his characters, Moll Flanders, Roxana, and Crusoe, Richardson's fictional Pamela, the non-fictional Mary Rowlandson, Mary Jane Meadows—were from England's midling sort, not its aristocracy. This is a critical theme. Domestic fiction enunciated themes of sensibility or gentility in aristocratic persons, but also included the lives of ordinary mortals. Racy but aristocratic men left many pious women of 'noble' character who came from the ranks of ordinary people. The very vitality of England became identified with the lives of its ordinary people.<sup>24</sup>

Finally how does language fit into this analysis? Literacy created communal ties that were not severed in the case of Mary Rowlandson, Charlotte Dupont, or Mary Jane Meadows. Rowlandson and Meadows routinely relied on their Christian faith to sustain them. In the final analysis, their existence, their personhood assumed relevance because their unique experiences could be communicated in an

understood and common language, making it possible for their accounts to be comprehended on this side of the Atlantic and through decades or centuries.<sup>25</sup>

The appearance of this 1802 chapbook is best explained from an understanding of the charged atmosphere of the 1790s--a decade of challenging political ferment and anxiety. G. J. Barker-Benfield, a scholar whose work delineated eighteenth-century sensibility, suggested that the political and economic changes as well as the religious turmoil that had transpired for over a century finally came together in a 'struggle over definitions of gender.'<sup>26</sup>

Other cultural forces of a longer duration still operated--a pervasive double standard and a continuing anxiety about 'petticoat government,' But the reverberations of the 1790s--the effort of reformers to provide sanitized reading material with women in their proper place, a full-fledged 'sex panic' over female sexuality, and nationalistic worries produced a climate of concern about the role of women that provided fertile fodder for the misogynists. These forces were covered in chapter eleven.<sup>27</sup>

Female authorship and education posed distinct threats to the English male. The idealistic and utopian notion of independent communities of women was a threat to English males. The 'closeted and inbred nature of feminine virtue' was stronger than authors such as Mary Wollstonecroft could contemplate. The terms of the Marriage Act of 1753 and social customs suggest that women accepted the both the trappings and traps of marriage:

. . . married women had been so successfully caged for so long that they now had the illusion of escape when in fact they were only bolting themselves into a prison within a prison, a stuffy citadel of self-conscious modesty which was farther than ever from the fresh air.<sup>28</sup>

The disposition of anti-Jacobin novels of the 1790s to criticize English vices by attacking allegedly French values has been addressed earlier. The Anti-Jacobin forces thought family values were undermined by the philosophy of reformers and

dissidents, as well as by the ideals promulgated by the French Revolution. Anti-Jacobin sentiments aimed at undercutting these threatening sentiments. Enabling individual rights would undermine property arrangements by leading individuals, especially women, to pursue their desires or interests in ways that were inimical to established inheritance procedures. Chapbooks, however, revealed an anti-French bias well before the 1790s. In "The French Bite," printed in 1749, debauchery marked every move of a Marquis who obtained money and sexual favors from unsuspecting English people. In a brief six weeks, he managed to raise himself to glorious heights with his amours, but he quickly left England and left behind substantial debts.<sup>29</sup>

As noted in a previous chapter, E. P. Thompson intended to turn his focus to Mary Wollstonecraft and examine her impact on a wider movement for social change. What did ideas about equality mean for the counter-revolution that came after the Terror? Thompson realized that the much-discussed and analyzed Wollstonecraft was central to broader shifts in sensibility in the 1790s. In addition, the tradition of dissent advanced by Quakers and Unitarians gave to women some space for intellectual development and enlightened thought. This small ripple was almost immediately drowned out by the 'far deeper wave of counterrevolution.'<sup>30</sup>

The Making of the English Working Class contended that an event of monumental importance, an 'English Revolution' occurred in the 1790s. Although the nascent revolutionary tendencies of a working class turned to despair, to Methodism, and to other millenarian impulses as symbolized by Joanna Southcott, the gulf between the ruling class and workers and laborers widened significantly. A Jacobin tradition emphasizing equality, self-help and education and a philosophy of republicanism was imported into England.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to radical thought, burgeoning working-class consciousness and a tradition of religious dissent, the sheer growth in the number of women writers like Mary Wollstonecraft was viewed ominously by many an English male. Her writings threatened the political power and rights that men felt they and they alone should

exercise. Even the formidable Wollstonecraft felt compelled to add as a dedicatory disclaimer some words that identified French women as lacking in 'cleanliness and delicacy.' Wollstonecraft's impassioned political statement should not necessarily be read as the fulminations of a feminist, but as the patriotic sentiments of an English woman.<sup>32</sup>

The dangerous dichotomy presented by sensibility threatened the ruling class and conservative English people. For sensibility had the potential for ruinous fantasy as well as a condition governed by reason. Wollstonecraft articulately defended women's faculties and insisted that women be subjected to the same experiences as men. Nurturant instincts domesticated the family, but Wollstonecraft saw women as defenders of public virtue and as warriors in the field. But a volume that was tolerated in 1792 was no longer acceptable in 1798. Observing events across the Channel, the British were mortified by fears of invasion.<sup>33</sup> A review of chapbooks from the 1790s suggest that these many recent as well as continuing anxieties percolated into popular literature. A female author with some education and personal pedigree knew that she was trading in the proverbial shark-infested waters.

There is a defiant tone to these 'memoirs.' Through Mary Jane, the author castigated her fair-weather friends, saw herself as unlike other erudite individuals of her acquaintance who indulged in self-promotion, and allowed the nurturant qualities of the shipwrecked Mary Jane to emerge, despite her disastrous plight. Mary Jane triumphed over all adversity, and the author must have saw herself as a person and female who had weathered many a storm.

#### Conclusion: And Who is the Female Author of These 'Surprising Adventures?'

The narrowed themes of femininity that later periodicals projected, as established in Women and Print Culture need to be reiterated. Women saw writing as an outlet and eagerly contributed to periodicals either through letters or stories.



Earlier periodicals had accepted contributions and endeavored to establish a dialogue with those readers. But later editors balked at continuing this practice and decided to control that dialogue. Again, although feminists want to see technology and political involvement as liberating, the evidence does not establish a comforting linear or smooth connection.<sup>34</sup>

Difference, the distinctions between men and women were acutely sensed in the 1790s. This debate over gender and identity came from efforts that were a century old. The sentimental model encouraged a 'fashionable sensibility' that strongly emerged in nineteenth century fiction. But the 1790s also sparked a penchant for reform that culminated in a series of reform-minded organizations whose substantial power and battles would be noticed in the nineteenth century. Such efforts were predicted from Hannah More's zeal in creating the Cheap Repository Tracts.<sup>35</sup>

A chapbook illustrating Boadicea's bravery appeared in 1810. The Celtic Queen of the Icenia, Boadicea unrelentingly defied the Romans occupiers and brutally drove her troops into battle. Statues and accounts in schoolbooks still applaud her devotion to the island and its people. Two chapbooks appearing in 1750 celebrated the bravery of Hannah Snell, a cross-dressing soldier, but minimized discussion of her sexual preference. An 1801 chapbook expanded coverage of her relationships with women. All three accounts stressed her bravery and patriotism, but the climate of the early 1790s somehow emboldened an author and printer to provide more details about Snell's sexual orientation.<sup>36</sup> Normally, divergent paths presented a conflict for women within themselves, but also conflict between women and between men and women, since traditional authority chose the submissive female.<sup>37</sup>

Crusoe was always a man of action and never easily satisfied with what he had accomplished. He exhibited the proverbial wanderlust. His life displayed an endless pursuit of possibility, given his many roles and dispositions. He was always in danger and always on the brink.<sup>38</sup> By contrast, Mary Jane's life seems flat, even

dull. If the author's goal was to project perseverance or forbearance, she succeeded. This exposition displayed how a woman should behave and projected women's limitations, although there is ample demonstration of survival skills. This reaction to male values determined what the story would be. She was the perfect female adventurer, not the larger-than-life, constantly adapting character that was Robinson Crusoe--the man and the novel.

Meadows lends itself to multiple meanings. Simultaneously the author boldly displayed a character with resilience and self-reliance but then returned her to patriarchal society. In addition, a woman's journey into the state of nature differed from a man's acquisitive, rapacious schemes. The typical ending of the story--the return to England and normal society--was what readers expected. Printers/and those who commissioned chapbooks such as Lemoine were interested in profit.

Through Mary Jane, the author uttered loud complaints--laments similar to those of women who support their families, yet remain constrained by cultural whims and expectations. Mary Jane bemoaned her solitary condition, one that she found whether she was on the streets of London or on her island. The author projected mental solitude into an account of a woman's journey to remote locations. Did the author enunciate an attitude which we would consider as modern--the lament over isolation and even alienation. Or is her appraisal of life good for all seasons and centuries?

The complaint about the lack of 'disinterested friends' no doubt articulated the author's experiences. Suggesting that she had 'found. . . fame to be a mere bubble; honor a jest, merit a bat for envy to shot at,' the author hinted at her own fame. Those of 'virtue' were subjected to 'slander.' And only one's family can be of comfort in retirement. Charlotte Smith did retire with her large family of children and grandchildren as her literary and other fortunes declined precipitously. Did she publish her complaint anonymously to disguise her experiences because she feared retribution?

Her speeches make very apparent that this writer felt that her exemplary life was not recognized. Repeating parts of the passage cited on page 31, the author would not 'deprecate the ingenuity of others to exalt my own. . Ingratitude was never the canker of my mind.' Yet the author lifted poetry from other well-known poets. Given her articulate use of language, she did not inadvertently plagiarize work. She was indeed 'adopting their methods without any acknowledgment of the loan.' Was this deliberate revenge because of her own ill-treatment and neglect by literary figures? Is this her parting shot?

Lemoine issued a chapbook by Charlotte Smith. Her adult life was a constant chronic complaint against the indignities incumbent upon a single mother with too many children. She was no stranger to lawsuits. She was in and about London often enough and had sufficient literary and printing contacts to know whether someone was exploiting her name. Lemoine sponsored women writers and chapbooks about women. Given her chapbooks by Sarah Wilkinson and the abbreviated version of Aubin's 1723 Charlotte Dupont, among others, it seems unlikely that she would have used Smith's name and risked her wrath.

The supposition that Smith is the author cannot be easily, if ever, proven, given the ephemeral nature of chapbooks. One could also suggest that someone familiar with Smith's life penned Meadows. Evidence from two biographies, one appearing in 1741, and another recently published provide corroborative details that would support the assumption that indeed Smith is the author.

Florence Hilbish's authoritative biography of Charlotte Smith and the just-published critical biography by Loraine Fletcher provide details that can be compared to Mary Jane's experiences. Life after marriage was one continuous pursuit of sufficient funds to support her large family, given the complete abdication of responsibility by her husband and even his interference. Meadows' lament mirrored Smith's wearisome quest. Both women exhibited fortitude in the face of real adversity, not polite slights in parlors and drawing rooms. Their weak husbands shared a consuming passion for ill-begotten schemes to make money and

live well. Smith's in-laws owned property in the East Indies and her children served in the British Army in various locations; she was aware of the larger world beyond England. Smith entered prison to be with her incarcerated husband; Mary Jane's husband was also imprisoned for their debts. Hilbish reported that Mr. Smith enjoyed 'new ventures;' likewise, Mary Jane's talents--her ability to fashion market consumables--pleased her husband. Mr. Smith's financial schemes plagued the family, eventually forcing him into debtor's prison and forcing Charlotte to leave him and support her children. Creditors and a constant stream of lawsuits hounded the Smith family, even before the death of her husband's father. The Meadows family, including the children, peddled consumer items in rural England, but could not escape hounding creditors. Charlotte's father-in-law understood his son's ineptitude but liked and trusted Charlotte; his will carefully provided for their many children. Wrangling by the trustees kept Smith in court throughout her life. Smith saw a shipwreck off Weymouth and later wrote a journalistic account of it. Mary Jane endured two shipwrecks. Smith traveled with her husband to Normandy and resided at a chateau where one of her sons was born. Mary Jane's family journeyed to Paris to avoid creditors. In 1801, one of Smith's sons died in Barbados and a daughter and her children came to live with her.<sup>39</sup>

Mary Jane's husband was certainly a fickle creature who forced her to pursue him half way around the world. His ruinous schemes destroyed their family. But he was hardly the rogue that Charlotte Smith's husband was. He would sleep with their servants, disappear into Scotland to escape prosecution, but then return to England to claim her money, as he was entitled to do.<sup>40</sup> The message in Meadows that women must survive life's vicissitudes almost completely alone is certainly compatible with Smith's disastrous marital life.

The eighteenth century required virtuous and honorable heroines. Thus writers--women as well as men--conformed to the mode set by Samuel Richardson at midcentury. Heroines displayed correct conduct, and authors took pains to point out the mistakes their heroines avoided. Usually they were young and innocent;

Charlotte Smith's *Monomia* from The Old Manor House was only 14. These requirements meant that they could be flat and dull. Their boring innocence required authors to produce excitement or interest by placing their heroines in extremely precarious situations. The heroine also could not be implicated in the circumstances that led to her undoing. Courtship, the usual and 'all-pervasive subject,' was the usual theme, but marital problems were only rarely introduced. Unlike most women authors, Smith's plots included marital difficulties, but her heroines were always the totally innocent and aggrieved party. Sincere and totally devoted, they never gave their husbands causes for concern or grief. The husbands in Smith's stories, reflecting her own experiences, were devoid of consideration for their wives, and did not measure up. This description holds true for Mary Jane Meadows and her husband. Elements of the captivity narrative combined with the lush virgin environment created an apt setting for a resilient if desexualized heroine like Meadows. She made few comments about returning home to her children. Instead, she focused on returning to home and husband.<sup>41</sup>

Smith's fiction often did not disguise her own life within her work. She pictured women such as herself as victims often of chicancery or corruption. Her earlier heroines observed the social graces although they knew their own minds and could hold their own. But Smith's struggles took their toll, and by the 1790s, her heroines cannot continue to display the 'expected sweetness.'<sup>42</sup> In Celestina, published in 1791, her homeless heroine must find her way alone. But Fletcher's assessment of her is reminiscent of Mary Jane's qualities:

But she is also sharp and charming, with a frank self-approval which must have been a pleasure to the young contemporary reader used to more traditional Christian models of self-analysis and self-blame.<sup>43</sup>

The novel, Desmond, reflected Smith's distaste for the rampant consumption that she equated with corruption. Mary Jane's was clever at fashioning consumer items that were marketable, but with continuing success, they could enjoy an upscale life until her husband misspent their money.

In the 1790s, Smith lived in what we now would call a writers' colony at the country home of William Hayley with Hayley, George Romney and William Cowper. Cowper and Hayley, her 'close poetical friends,' were among those 'generous' notables who subscribed to her Elegaic Sonnets. Accusations of plagiarism were and are a part of the literary scene. Meadows included poetry from Cowper and Thomas Gray, lifted by the author. Perhaps one could easily borrow from Cowper's poetry because he had gone mad. Hilbish noted Mrs. Smith's tendency to borrow from other authors. In her annotated edition of Elegaic Sonnets, Smith admitted that she lifted work and ideas. The writer of a review of Emmeline chastized her for liberally borrowing some of the content of Fanny Burney's Evelina. In 1798, she told readers of The Young Philosopher, her last novel, that they should not be tempted to read into her work thoughts that were not there. Claiming that she was not guilty of plagiarism, she said that she used material recalled from memory as well as quotes from common-place books. Her constant concern about caring for her large family drove her to write frenetically. Concern for appropriate attribution was secondary.<sup>44</sup> Reviewers severely criticized her work, and her popularity waned in the late 1790s and early years of the next century. After 1801, she reissued some of her work, and brought out volumes of "Letters from a Solitary Wanderer," but she did not publish another novel or issue serious prose until her series of children's books in 1804. Those books included instruction in natural history, one of her favorite topics. She also wrote a history of England and a book of poems, Beachy Head, both of which appeared in 1806.<sup>45</sup>

Smith apparently saw herself as a poet, but such a noble calling was not possible for a woman with her responsibilities. William Wordsworth, a Romantic poet who was unlikely to proffer accolades toward those he did not consider his equal, offered a tribute to Smith:

'a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligation than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered.'<sup>46</sup>

Wordsworth realized that her poetry reflected a keen interest in nature before the Romantics took up the cause.<sup>47</sup> Having been denied her true vocation, perhaps Smith felt justified in cavalierly borrowing from other poets.

Previously this study indicated that the author of Meadows borrowed from Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." Smith saw herself as a link between the poetic past and the Romantics of future days. Her own poetry was influenced by Gray's "Elegy." Her own distressed circumstances were certainly reflected in Gray's lines:

"Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul."<sup>48</sup>

Being completely identified with the poetry and the poets, Smith could rationalize her use of their work for her own ends.

Smith apparently did not engage in hard bargaining with booksellers and printers to secure the best terms for publication. Either she relied upon others or humbly took the terms offered to her to support her family. Her letters betray her resentments. She was a genteel woman who did not easily accept her changed circumstances. A schedule of Smith's writings and earnings indicated that 1800 and 1801 were relatively dry years. Given her chronic need for income, she could have penned this Crusoe-imitation in her usual and frenetic manner.<sup>49</sup> She usually asked for an advance, and one wonders whether Lemoine was sympathetic or could put adequate funds at Smith's disposal. Smith agonized over criticism of her work and considered many friends to be malicious. She lamented the loss of friends.<sup>50</sup> She could easily have shared sentiments mouthed by Mary Jane that she never had a 'disinterested friend.'

Smith employed digressions and was given to didactic interpolations. One long digression appeared at the end of the Meadows' account. The exposition of Mary Jane's agonies included didactic outbursts. Smith placed her faith in women and the 'fortitude' that they summoned in order to endure life's burdens. In one novel, Marchimont, she expressed the following sentiment:

I believe that women, whom we have proudly called but children of a larger growth, have, when they possess good understanding have more fortitude than men.<sup>51</sup>

Mary Jane faced each new crisis with strength gathered from past experiences, as she carefully harbored her resources and determined to find her son and husband. The men in Smith's novels easily went to 'pieces at every little disappointment.' Meadows' unnamed husband did not possess strength of mind or character. Her neighbor, an older woman, advised that men were 'strange things.' Smith's heroines suffered but endured because of their formidable intellectual powers.<sup>52</sup> Mary Jane survived her imposed exile because she kept her superior wits about her. Smith's radical tendencies have been discussed elsewhere, but there is also an obvious strain of humanitarianism in her novels. She opposed slavery. Meadows' encounter with 'Negro' women implies undefined, unqualified, but perhaps instinctively-felt equality and empathy that accords with Smith's views on slavery and race. (footnote about oppos. to slavery)

Earlier than most English novelists and with a style and flare that Hilbish labelled 'artistic,' Smith inserted her understanding of natural history into her texts. Anne Radcliffe has been credited with a keen sense of the environment, but Hilbish considered her use of nature to be 'utilitarian.' Hilbish thought that Smith deserved credit for this novelistic innovation. Using her knowledge of nature and its diversity, Smith stressed the natural environment, whereas other novelists provided only background scenery for their plots. She could accurately describe flowers, rocks, soil, sea life, and animals. Nature was not a 'superficial ornament;' the power of nature interacted with the experiences of her characters.<sup>53</sup> Mary Jane understood natural history and used flora and fauna for survival; she did not disrupt the environment and the animals that she encountered. Finally, one of Smith's Elegaic Sonnets bemoaned the stormy life:

On some rude fragment of the rocky shore,  
Where on the fractured cliff the billows break,  
Musing my solitary seat I take,  
And listen to the deep and solemn roar.



O'er the dark waves the winds tempestuous howl;  
 The screaming sea-bird quits the troubled sea:  
 But the wild gloomy scene has charms for me,  
 And suits the mournful temper of my soul.  
 Already shipwreck'd by the storms of Fate,  
 Like the poor mariner methinks I stand,  
 Cast on a rock; who sees the distant land  
 From whence no succour comes--or comes too late.  
 Faint and more faint are heard his feeble cries,  
 Till in the rising tide the exhausted sufferer dies.<sup>54</sup>

This stanza well duplicates the fictional experiences of Mary Jane and easily have been part of Mary Jane's soliloquy. If Smith as author lifted the poetry of others, she may have maintained her disguise by not including her own.

Lemoine issued this story at a time when Smith experienced a decline in her reputation, but would she risk that reputation and her legacy by lifting verse from well-known poets? At this point in her life, did she care? An anonymous account perhaps would not damage her and garner some quick cash. Because her reputation faltered, perhaps she threw caution to the wind. Lemoine, herself of Huguenot extraction, perhaps sympathized with the sentiments of the French Revolution and sponsored women writers who empathized with the events and ideas of the 1790s. Although Lemoine's stories by Sarah Wilkinson featured women whose lack of control resulted in tragedy or marginalization, she also issued chapbooks about women who charted their own course. She also reprinted Defoe's Singleton.

If Charlotte Smith wrote this story toward the end of her life because she needed money and because she had less concern for her vaunted literary reputation, then this is a significant finding for literary history. If she is not the author, then the composer of these pages is a person of literary skills and merit. This is another piece of evidence that suggests the coalescence of popular and elite culture. Especially within the confines of a more impersonal and large city such as London, chapbooks commonly featured anonymous authorship and the casual

lifting of another's work. The brazen use of material from well-regarded poets was an affront, of course, but it was perhaps the type of affront that Charlotte Smith, at this point in her life, was ready to deliver.

## Notes

1. Watt, The Rise of the Novel, p 89.
2. "Mary Jane Meadows," pp. 37, 38.
3. Manuel Schonhorn, Defoe's Politics, Parliament, Power, Kingship and Robinson Crusoe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Michael Seidel, "Crusoe in Exile," Publications of the Modern Language Association (PMLA), 96 (1981), pp. 363, 370, 371.
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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## ASSESSING THE CHAPBOOK: TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

A study that relies upon recoverable examples of ephemeral literature cannot offer conclusive generalizations. Rather it must beg the reader's indulgence that these studies, if they do not form a cohesive whole, exemplify the direction and course of popular literature in the eighteenth century. A focus on the interplay of oral sources and the printed word facilitates a review of the historical contexts that determined the texts. A major part of this analysis is a periodization scheme that gives the content of the many analyzed chapbooks greater meaning. From the period 1790 on, the images of women in chapbooks were diverse and varied. Women of 'uncommon talents' appeared in the many chapbooks commissioned by Ann Lemoine. But other chapbooks suggest tension between men and women at the end of the long eighteenth century.

## The Oral Tradition and the Printed Word

Students of past culture eagerly slice into that layer of historical life, well realizing the limitations of ephemeral sources. The study of libels, proverbs, verse, rhymes, ballads, and here chapbooks tries to penetrate that impenetrable world of ordinary people. But it is an undertaking fraught with complications and relying upon speculation. We have perhaps 'imagined our humble audience.' Our speculative imagination allows us to imagine that circle of readers, but our historical training reminds us that we have 'texts but not the contexts.'<sup>1</sup>

Villagers in France gathered together before the fireside to listen to readings of French chapbooks, the bibliothèque bleue. It is possible that French historians, zealously seeking to uncover a simpler, community-oriented past, emphasized the veillee beyond its authentic existence. But their construction of it allows for a comparison with English evidence. Public gatherings at the ale house or pub, a



long-standing center of English life, did not include women. Women influenced the content of the ballads by their reaction to them, so we can infer a community event that registered their opinions. The sense of empowerment from being involved in the composition of a ballad or story does dissipate in English village life, although we have no exact and satisfying time-table for the decline of this 'world.' The evidence in this study, however, endorses the position that the process of print and then of reading was a solitary act. The spontaneity and involvement of villagers is 'the world we have lost.'

Adam Fox's seminal study probed below the level of print to libels, proverbs, verse, songs and ballads.<sup>2</sup> With an interest in the mental world of ordinary people, this author pursued chapbook images of women for the eighteenth century--the quintessential century of chapbooks. The seminal question is to what extent the images of women in those pages correspond to the self-identity of the readers. The merriment of the past marked the earlier entertaining, jestful chapbooks with their banter and bickering. Chapbooks were the reading material of the poor, but we cannot establish when and where they began to appeal to a new category of readers, the midling type. A comparison of the chapbooks that bore a post-1750 date with the earlier stories follows.

The earlier Oral Tradition relied upon the elders of the village, including older women who circulated collected and/or inherited wisdom. The Oral Tradition offered chivalric romances and heroic tales that eventually found their way into ballads circulated at the fireside or in nurseries. But women were also 'brokers of more strictly historical narratives.' Their 'oral repertoire' included the tales of ghosts and goblins, fairies, wizards and witches.<sup>2</sup> Earlier chapbook printings of these older tales increased their circulation and perhaps standardized their message. Collections of antiquarians give us some hints about their appeal and circulation.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the celebration by historians of the vitality of the Oral Tradition, many stories flowed from oral sources to the printed text and blended accounts from the

learned as well as popular culture. Some then returned to the oral mode. For example, the stories of Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwick, Clymme of the Clough, among other popular romances, were available to ordinary folk for recreation at Christmas, in alehouses and taverns, and at brideales. By the sixteenth century, they appeared as broadsides.<sup>4</sup>

Oral transmission allowed accounts of heroic deeds to assume the veracity of fact. Daniel Defoe on one of his tours of the countryside encountered people who quite willingly told him the history of the area and showed him the exact locations. Old women in the border area took him to the place of a battle in 1388.<sup>5</sup>

Ballads and small books depended on the Oral Tradition for their material. In 1595, Nicholas Bownde, a Suffolk preacher, noted that the traditional sources of the Middle Ages could well have vanished without the intervening medium of print. Print in the sixteenth century improved oral culture by 'broadening its range, widening its ambit and giving fixity to its details.' Although the co-mingling of oral and written sources enhanced but did not change the mental world of ordinary people or their 'cultural repertoire,' it did provide them with new channels through which older stories and sources could be funneled and then disseminated.<sup>6</sup>

By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century—a period we label as early modern, one can speak of progress in communication and in the forms of cultural consumption. The enhanced production of broadsides, small books, and chapbooks, and their improved distribution might conceivably have affected the 'mental landscape' of even the poorest. But progress came with a price. The rich improvisational character of orality, its vitality and the empowerment it provided, the local traditions and lore, and rustic sayings diminished its cultural relevance as standardized, printed sources produced a common cultural lexicon. The Northamptonshire peasant poet, John Clare, lamented the lost spontaneity and extemporaneous banter. What sufficed now was the practice of memorizing from a book by a professional writer.<sup>7</sup>

What can we extrapolate from this loss about the change in chapbooks? The role of women, and especially elderly women, as disseminators of historical and mythical stories was clearly undermined by the use of printed sources. Fox's conclusion that the decline of the 'oral repertoire' devalued the role of women certainly parallels the conclusions of this study:

The dialect picked up from birth, the proverbs 'sucked in with mother's milk,' the recipes and potions, charms and spells of the kitchen table, the fairy tales and romantic stories of the nursery and fireside, all were gradually disparaged, ridiculed and abandoned by larger numbers of the population. The new role of women as readers in the home was never sufficient to compensate for the loss of prestige consequent upon the running down of the old traditions. 'Old wives' tales became a synonym for the foolish, the superstitious and the erroneous; the term of abuse, 'old woman', came to be levelled at inadequacy in any context.<sup>8</sup>

Early chapbooks, spasmodically or even fitfully reprinted the stories from the Oral Tradition. But even before the estimated midcentury mark and in an increasingly commercialized world, chapbooks rushed into print relied upon the professional writer—a situation also recognized by Fox's research. This fact dovetails with the loss of spontaneity that John Clare recognized from the preserved rural village, Helpstone in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

Earlier chapbooks reflected banter and bickering. The fresh exchanges, usually between man and wife, reaches across the centuries. Did ordinary women, see themselves in the marital bickering? Probably. Did they see themselves in the later chapbooks? This study can only offer a supposition. Many wanted the material goods enjoyed by some women, but most would not see themselves or their daily routine and struggle reflected in those pages.

### Literacy and Print

Roy Porter and Peter Burke both hold that the eighteenth century social elite provided literature to the popular culture that reinforced their inferior social

standing. Erudite individuals who wrote many chapbooks indeed stooped to the level of popular culture. Did chapbook authors believe that their social commentary would enhance the lives of their female readers? Certainly the author who described a 'female Robinson Crusoe' believed that there were lessons to be learned.

The advances of women in Elizabethan London and the 'precocious' literacy of women in Stuart London display the earlier signs of London's preeminence in the advance of literacy and print. More tolerant forms of expression also emerged England's largest city and capital. The provincial press took its cues and most of its material from London newspapers until their own papers were better established. Although London was also the home of the periodical press whose editors solicited material from eager female readers, the early enthusiasm for contributions from female readers waned. They later focused on the domesticated woman and emphasized biological differences. In addition, the work of women as hawkers and mercuries, independent jobbers in the printing industry, was short-lived and sporadic.

The invention of printing created the vast improvements in cultural communications. Drawing upon the Oral Tradition, chapbooks had long celebrated the English past. Later chapbooks were written and printed for immediate sale. The chapbook trade expanded. Hence printers, many of whom were based in London, operated in a commercialized and specialized world. Either they themselves accepted the stereotypical depictions of women that appeared in many of the pages or printed what was a sure sell.

A 'library revolution' dictated by a growth in income and parallel changes in taste, the decline of censorship, and the growth of printing occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century. One must carefully approach the use of such generalizations as a 'cultural revolution' that dictated a mass culture. But in the aggregate, we are describing changes in cultural expectations.

### The 'Undifferentiated Matrix'

Work on the development of the modern novel by Ian Watt, Lennard Davis and Robert Mayer, among others, describes the connection between history and the novel. Each of these scholars situated this phenomenon within the larger historical context.<sup>9</sup>

We relate the truth of an account to actor(s), events, and circumstances. But the subjective nature of perception and interpretation also operated in the eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Chapbooks asserted veracity by words and phrases. Authors used facts and embellished upon them, thus intertwining history and fiction. The title page frequently contained phrases such as 'founded on facts,' or the words, 'true' or 'history.' Popular literature imitated broader literary trends.

The term 'hystory' was frequently featured in the title of the many Sabine chapbooks--'The History of Sally Johnson,' or 'The History of Mary Ann Edwards,' etc. This practice hinted that the story was true. Two Sabine chapbooks included the phrase, 'founded on facts,' in their titles, while another just featured the word 'true.'

Fiction legitimately did the work of history. employing the fictional mode, authors could offer the life, the history of a particular woman or a composite of women through a blend of fact and fiction. Since increasingly those who wrote history frowned upon the use of the 'taste for the marvelous,' the use of the unreal moved into the popular realm.<sup>11</sup> Hastily written and hurriedly assembled, chapbooks frequently resorted to fortuitous circumstances to explain the endings. They remained faithful to the earlier Baconian historical mode.

The abrupt discursive 'redistribution' in the first part of the eighteenth century separated the novel from history and influenced the writing of *Robinson Crusoe*.<sup>12</sup> In an analysis of 'factual fiction,' Lennard Davis described novels as the result of the dichotomy that developed in discourse. Prior to the modern period, ballads rapidly circulated news. But readers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not expect truth and clarity in narratives. The news/novel discourse reported recent

factual events; it minimized the distance between the work and the reader; and it imparted information to the lower classes. News and novels, initially bound together in an 'undifferentiated matrix,' were affected by technological improvements and the developing news/novel discourse could lay greater claims to fact, although the veracity of those facts was still debatable. With developing networks, a closing of gaps in time and distance, and the advent of a news/hungry public, accuracy assumed greater importance. This discourse could sustain a greater grip on reality, buttressed by ideological convictions. Some ideas were repressible, but other appealed to shared values and politics. The growth of the press contributed to this bifurcation.<sup>13</sup>

J Paul Hunter's 'novelistic features' can be used to evaluate individual chapbooks as well as chapbooks as a genre. Two structural elements in novels were apparent in chapbooks: first the digressions within the story, and second, the insertion of didactic discourse. Clearly, digressions interrupted the flow of the story. The critics called them 'interpolations' when they were straining to be positive.<sup>14</sup>

No chapbooks in this survey featured lengthy digressions before 1750. Those that do appear after that date were often unrelated to the plot. In a lengthy chapbook, a soliloquy by one sea-mate detailed his journey to America, his marriage to an Indian woman, and privation as a settler in the New World. In the story of Charlotte Dupont, an earlier eighteenth-century author, Penelope Aubin inserted three such 'interpolations'—one from a monk, one from the ship's captain, and one from Charlotte's half-sister.<sup>15</sup>

Preparatory didactic essays were set apart from the flow of the story and/or interrupted the narrative. Inspired by their own political views and emboldened by their own writing, authors made profound or perhaps pompous political and philosophical statements about the meaning of life, the disastrous course of civilization, and loyalty to country and people, emphasizing the precipitous decline or crisis engendered by the absence of moral rectitude. As preparatory discourse, they tried to set the tone, but did not convey meaning.<sup>16</sup>

Only three of the Sabine chapbooks contained such statements. In "The History of Betsey Warwick," love was the monarch that reigned throughout the ages catching such omnipotent rulers as Herod and Mark Anthony in its clutches. The admittedly didactic statement that prefaced "Fatal Credulity" was dedicated especially to female readers. Tragedy awaited those young and innocent women who fell into the precipice and entered 'the dreary regions of destructions.'<sup>17</sup>

How do chapbooks represent the oscillation of the pendulum between social classes/groups? How would that movement affect gender links? There are only a few fortunate women whose exemplary behavior eventually earned them marriage to a lord or person whose social status eclipsed theirs. Only three chapbooks demonstrate the success of women marrying above their social station. Although Isabella Fairfield lived with simple country folk, finally her wealthy grandfather discovered her. Thus this is only a qualified example. Second, Fanny/Susanna, succeeded in advancing beyond a humbler birth, but only after virtuous years of poverty. In the third and only example from the large Sabine collection, Lucy Banks married Colonel Stevens despite the anger of her father and her desertion of their simply country home and values.<sup>18</sup>

A few women returned to their original social station after very hard years. Fate often conspired against them, but their pursuit of virtue gave them that opportunity. A neighbor trusted as her guardian devastated Sally Johnson. "Pretty Peggy of Derby" endured much to marry a man whose background was similar to hers. From a family of noble birth, Belinda's misfortunes resulted from religious schisms. Fanny Freeman's father was a wealthy father, but sibling rivalry made her life difficult; she eventually married her first love and inherited the family money. Betsey Ward's life was nearly destroyed by her ambitious desire for status through marriage. Only a few stories illustrate mobility; most counseled resignation.

Later eighteenth-century periodicals reduced the options available to their many women readers and those female authors who contributed their work, thus narrowing opportunities. Writing was an outlet. Early periodicals solicited women's

contributions and carried on a dialogue with female readers, but editors later controlled that dialogue for their own purposes. Feminists hope that access to print or involvement of women in an emancipating culture contributes to liberation. But despite the increased participation of women in print culture, women were increasingly represented as confined within the home.<sup>19</sup>

The gradual 'transformation' in chapbooks overstates, but still encapsulates the theme and the phenomenon of change. We have two separate if linked sets of chapbooks. The chapbooks with dialogue and a fresh exchanges between couples devolved from the Oral Tradition and ballads. The later chapbooks were not a 'grass roots' variety, but rather a garden variety that found their way into print. The conventional images of women drew upon long-existing ideals about how women should be, not how they were.

#### **The Changing Reading Audience--The 'Interpretive Community?'**

James Raven's understanding of the relationship of readers to texts and the many discussions of texts and contexts provide an important departure point. The term, 'interpretive community' or 'communities' reminds us that readers interpret the work, irrespective of the author's intentions and motivation. Interpretations change, and certainly works that appeared in an earlier time and then were reissued confronted a different audience and therefore a different interpretation.<sup>20</sup>

The concept of community assumes some association of readers. From his study of German society, Rolf Engelsing has provided some valuable insight. With the advent of print, he suggest, reading becomes more eclectic and extensive and less intensive.<sup>21</sup> Engelsing's emphasis on an eclectic mode describes the casual reading of popular literature available to an increasingly-literate public. How does this mesh with Raven's sense of an 'interpretive community?' It means that one cannot assume retrospectively that villagers armed with their latest chapbook purchase read aloud to assembled friends and acquaintances. Reading becomes a



more solitary activity, as students of the novel have established. Ephemeral chapbooks appealed to a humble audience with a casual approach to reading material and precious little time for reading. We cannot assume that all readers practice their reading skills rigorously. Would these casually-purchased and read little books be the subject of discussions? We assume that literate servants, perhaps those who moved to London from rural areas, read on their own time. Would they discuss the themes of their purchases with others? Some worked in big houses with a retinue of servants and hence they might have more opportunity for casual discussions, if they were bold enough to venture their opinion. Some worked alone. The 'Guide' for servants examined in an earlier chapter counseled caution and circumspect behavior.

We know little about the reading audience, and this study can only propose ideas about the susceptibility of readers. Our limited evidence implies that the late eighteenth century reading audience stretched beyond the popular culture to the elite. Chartier warns against creating false dichotomies between popular and elite culture—a domineering/dominated mode. He preferred 'multiple divisions,' instead of a 'massive partition.' The varied intersections of gender, religion, and geography deserved consideration. A theory endorsing the 'plurality of cultural practices' is preferable to an overarching belief in the ubiquity of popular culture or the hegemonic practices of the elite.<sup>22</sup> Previous references here to popular culture and literature seem appropriate in a study of chapbooks that aimed at the little people. But the origin and circulation of chapbooks raise questions that require some deference to Chartier's objections. Themes were co-mingled. The line between the two cultures was porous.

In addition, there are the challenges to the assumption of elite cultural hegemony raised by Hoggart's life experiences. The popular classes maintained a ready defiance of ideas that were beyond their own hard-won experiences. They did not readily accept notions from their own milieu. This caveat reminds us that one does not funnel ideas, even if stereotypical or culturally viable, into the minds of

passive subjects. But how can we extrapolate from Hoggart's very solid objections to the life experiences of ordinary women? Did the solitary act of reading increasingly isolate the reader and thereby intensify the impact of the printed page. Were women on their own, away from their family in London or another city, working as a domestic servant, easily impressed by the message of chapbooks? Did they fortify strains of the culture that women already internalized? The didactic dimension transmitted an intentional and heavy moral message. Many of the post-1750 chapbooks featured servant women, and many employed women were servants. They were the targeted audience, but we cannot really know whether they absorbed and internalized the message. We can only entertain certain assumptions, partly conditioned by our own experiences.

Abridgements of popular novels appeared after 1750. Ann Lemoine resurrected the Penelope Aubin's story of "Charlotte Dupont" and reissued it at the end of the century. Finally the story of "Mary Jane Meadows" provides a monumental example of the coexistence of the literary world with the popular culture. Defoe himself was always part of a larger world.

Our limited evidence does not permit suppositions about the impact of the images. But did plebeian and ordinary women certainly did not see images that they recognized. OR, did they see evidence of material possessions and the good life that they would like to have for themselves?

### Periodizing Eighteenth-Century Chapbooks

Periodization schemes run the risk of collapsing after the first shots across the bow. Immediately qualifications and disclaimers dilute the proposed argument; the proposal offered here is no exception. As explained above, two major types of chapbooks can be documented. Murder pamphlets and short pieces on crime predated chapbooks devoted to crime and the life of criminals--thus exemplifying another and completely separate category. Anxious authorities issued 'factual'

reports of witchcraft in the early years, but those describing heinous offenses appeared throughout the century. These chapbooks reported the facts; they filled a need of the public to know. In addition were chapbooks ridiculing upper class haughtiness and willingness to accuse servants of crimes at the slightest shift of the wind. English popular culture celebrated the exploits of Robin Hoods who criss-crossed England taking from their betters. The story of Fanny Davies at the end of the century provides another example of that tradition.

Finally, at about 1790 and building upon years of ferment and change, another set of chapbooks appeared. One type clearly built on a misogynistic cultural strain, while the other allowed women to make claims of their own. They celebrated the exploits of military heroines such as Boadicea and Hannah Snell and the woman who lived on the run, Fanny Davies. The closing decades of the century featured greater diversity or variety.

The preceding summation does not make an absolutist claim; but it is the culmination of investigations into the sources in collections and libraries. In addition to the periodization based upon types of chapbooks or function, another theme emerged that is detailed below. Chapbooks in the early years built upon the Oral Tradition and rekindled interest in the legend and lore of England. Those appearing at about midcentury--a date certainly not fixed, were written for printers who prized commercial possibilities.

The following section of this concluding chapter describes these two major types. This periodization scheme does not depend entirely upon numbers, rather it relies upon the cluster of chapbooks available for this study. The first type began prior to 1700. Chapbooks that reflected the legends and lore of England from the Oral Tradition predated the eighteenth century and continued throughout it. The second type can be sighted at about 1750 when the novel becomes a major player on the English literary landscape. The third begins at about 1790. The chapbooks that reflect the legends and lore of England from the Oral Tradition predated the eighteenth century and continued throughout it.

### The Two Major Types of Chapbooks

In chapter five, Margaret Spufford's depiction of chapbooks read as follows:

**Chapbooks are crude, unsubtle, earthy, uncompassionate, but full of movement and violence, sex, vivid imagery, and and better or worse jokes.<sup>23</sup>**

That summation of seventeenth century chapbooks does not describe the set that appear in numbers after 1750. Chapbooks of the earlier time provided entertainment. Females enjoyed the ribald and bawdy humor of chapbooks, jestbooks, and other sources. Earlier chapbooks featured role reversal. But most significantly, the earlier rags-to-riches themes that allowed humble people to rise in rank and reputation were largely absent in the eighteenth century.

The changes in the depictions of women in this ephemeral but humble literature can be sorted into two definitive categories. Earlier chapbooks reflected the oral tradition and ballads, remaining in what Lennard Davis termed the 'undifferentiated matrix.' The fresh commentary on the realities of married life, the independence of many a woman, and the cuckolding of a man by a domineering wife continued throughout the eighteenth century. After 1750, a new group conforms to the dictates of the privatized, domesticated sphere that was frequently the theme of novels beyond 1750. Imitating the content of novels, they displayed the themes of sensibility--vulnerability, dependence and fragility in women who are ever so dependent on the men in their lives.

Ballads announced news in a local, small, and familiar setting. They 'coagulated' the experiences of everyday life. Transmitted orally, ballads reported news that was delayed in transmission. They fulfilled the function of later newspapers. They laid claim to veracity and a recent circulation of facts. '(n)ewes,' 'new,' 'novel'--these terms frequently appeared in ballads. The continued reprinting of a ballad meant that its news eventually became a genuine folk tale. The

'undifferentiated matrix' evolved in two distinct directions: fiction and journalistic or historical accounts. But despite this separation, no recognizable consensus endorsed a narrative genre that bore the distinctive or sure marks of fact or truth. Hence it was up to the reader to make these determinations.<sup>24</sup>

The eighteenth century was the century of chapbook printing, and that fact accentuates the results of this study. With rarely original and often borrowed content, anonymous authors and printers hurriedly issued a rough, coarse product. The reader indulged in a momentary escape from toil and misery. The reprinting of ballads and folk tales appealed to antiquarians, and the Diceys capitalized on this interest.<sup>25</sup>

The shift from banal bickering and banter to fragile females can be juxtaposed to socio-economic changes. Massive economic change coincided with the emerging strength of separate spheres. The changes in the agricultural sector--the introduction of capitalism in the countryside, the introduction of technology and the changes in the division of labor produced a burgeoning economic system and a modern system of patriarchy in which women were increasingly relegated to domesticated roles. Revisionists again laud the work of Alice Clark as the most relevant depiction of the shift in women's roles from production to consumption. Moreover, the work of Kenneth Snell, Deborah Valenze, and others, as outlined in an earlier chapter demonstrate this transformation.<sup>26</sup> We can assume that there is some connection between the decline of productive roles for women and their depiction in chapbooks after about 1750 as passive, fragile females whose every waking moment depended on the men in their lives. But the nature of that juxtaposition remains inexact, since chapbooks as ephemeral if humble literature leave few traces of their authors and the inspiration of their stories.

These dislocations ended a rural life that was recalled as a bucolic ideal, even though it was fraught with poverty and unhappiness. A major theme of chapbooks is the viability of preferable rural values. Authors longed for the good old days. People retired to the countryside. Women who abandoned the villages of

their birth and the virtues and values sponsored there paid a high price for such neglect. This was another lost world.

The eventual dominance of the language of class displaced assumptions about birth and natural position. At the same time, assumptions governing gender moved from a system of patriarchalism to modern patriarchy. A system of gender difference emerged from new assumptions about human sexuality. Prior to the eighteenth century, the female body was assumed to be simply an aberrant part of the male body. Biological research now viewed women as separate and distinct from men.<sup>27</sup>

But remnants of the 'old order' persisted. Eighteenth-century chapbooks included the 'golden oldies' or traditional favorites that were purchased by ordinary people who indulged their own preservation projects. The Dacey firm in London that dominated the chapbook trade in the first half of the century adequately accommodated this interest. Aesop's Fables, Sleeping Beauty, Witch of the Woodlands, Robin Hood, Guy of Warwick, The Fryar and Boy, Tom Tram, Thomas Hickathrift, Four Kings, Patient Grisel, Jack and the Giant, Mother Shipton, Mother Bunch, Nixon's Prophecy, Sir John Barleycorn—These were the traditional stories.<sup>28</sup>

Stories that depicted bickering or marital dialogue also reflected this 'old order.' But in a commercializing society, printers sought stories for publication. Later chapbooks departed from the earlier recipe. Some examples illustrate this contention.

### 'Diverting Dialogues'

A bachelor had enjoyed 'the pleasures of a single life.' He could retreat into his (P)aper (W)orld of solitary consolation.

Books, my companions were, wherein I found,  
Needful advice, without a noisy sound. . .

The 'curs'd Fiends of Hell' threw a fair, well-proportioned, and poised woman in his path. He wed in haste and repented quickly. The marriage bed was 'that Paradise for fools, a sport for Boys, Tiresome its Chains and brutal are its Joys.' His wife disturbed his tranquillity, so he sought a divorce. In a modestly-genteel retreat he would live near a woman who was a 'witty nymph in Conversation' and dull of virtue. He rejected conjugal life and its demands.<sup>29</sup>

In a 'diverting dialogue' that claimed to be both serious and comical, a shoemaker and his wife hurled mutual insults. Calling him Mr. Spend-all, Mr. Mend-all, and Mr. Good-for-Nothing, she claimed that he was bad in bed and worse up. He vowed to strap her. He wanted her to obey, but she admonished him that there should be 'no more chopping of divinity and logic.' Despite these barbed exchanges, they resolved to live together in peace and love.<sup>30</sup>

Two chapbooks lamented gossip and drinking by wives. First, the concluding verse from the 1791 Poem, 'The Collier's Wedding:'

Their wives cou'd drink, as people say,  
 And hold as much or more, than they;  
 Wou'd have their menseful penny spent,  
 With gossips at a merriment:  
 These homely females drank no tea,  
 Nor chocolate, nor ratisea;  
 They made no visits, saw no play,  
 But spun their vacant hours away.  
 And thus the COLLIERS and their WIVES  
 Lived drunken, honest, working lives. . .<sup>31</sup>

In "The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping," Mrs. Chit-chat, Mrs. All-talk, Ruth Keep-council, and Prittle-Prattle greeted neighbor after neighbor with a 'false look and a treacherous heart.' Secrets were to go no further, but the tongues wagged. The culmination of their sharp exchanges led to blows. The "Lincolnshire Dialogue" humorously treated the prospect of marriage between a woman of seventy and a young man of twenty. The old woman agreed to a contract, but she rejected a trial marriage. She was not moved by his claim that the erudite Sir Thomas More sanctioned such trials.<sup>32</sup>

A variety of life experiences emerge from these fresh commentaries. These chapbooks frequently counseled patience and perseverance in marriage. Often the couples resolve to bury the hatchet. Seldom if ever were children mentioned. Even the continuation of marriage for the sake of children was scarcely if ever mentioned in English ballads and chapbooks. The focus on the conjugal relationship perhaps signified its central role in family life, but it also indicated that love and marriage were popular themes in the popular culture.

#### **Mid-Eighteenth Century Chapbooks--Virtue Rewarded**

By the second half of the eighteenth century, chapbooks followed the theme of true romances or confessions. Many carried the assertion that they were 'founded on facts' or provided a 'history.' Vulnerable and dependent women sacrificed for their families and for their honor. Unlike the women in ballads who cuckolded their husbands, dressed conspicuously, frequently returned home inebriated, and enjoyed battle in the war between the sexes, these women were not able to make their own decisions.

The unraveling social fabric, desire for unwarranted social mobility and unnecessary social diversions caused anxiety for many who saw the young and women as potential trouble. False ideas about romance and one's mate could challenge the hierarchical social order and parental authority. Those who feared the impact of the stage and novels wondered about the disposition of readers to separate fact from fiction. The concern about false expectation of socio-economic success was usually directed at young men, whereas anxiety about misleading romantic inclinations was aimed at young women.<sup>33</sup> Conduct books focused on female servants. Chapbooks warned against any bold behavior in females. "The Shepherdess of the Alps," Fanny Adams/Susanna James, Isabella Fairfield, Pretty Peggy, Zoa and Belinda all earned the 'rewards of constancy.'



An atypical chapbook of 1752 lamented that refined people, particularly women, disguised their sentiments and their selves through conundrums. Using the wisdom of the ancients, the author dripped invective on clever people. Mind-bedeaving puzzles offered words and syllables that denotes 'sublimity and mysteriousness.' But exercises with perplexing words were too diversionary for young men who need to concentrate on education and their careers, hence the author recommended them to young women.<sup>34</sup>

All did not necessarily end well, however. Miss Clermont, a rural young woman who plied her bodily wares in the city, made victims of her sexual partners, but died because of her misspent years. ". . . Sweet Poll of Plymouth" was faithful to her British Tar, but died after hearing that his ship was lost. Printed in 1789, the story came at a time when sea-going vessels frequently left English ports. Many young women died after being seduced by deceitful young men.<sup>35</sup>

Nationalistic themes invaded these popular stories. Belinda refused the Catholic faith of her French in-laws and endured much hardship with her mother. Charles and Isabella eventually lived in England after they survived the Lisbon earthquake. Once Isabella observed the 'highest state of perfection' of the English who aided them, she happily allied herself with her new country. The alluring Zoa, half Indian and half English, willingly became a Christian, accepted all things English, and comported herself well in polite society.<sup>36</sup>

The firm of T(homas) Sabine, and later T. Sabine and Son seized upon a scheme that must have sold well. Each chapbook promised a 'history' of a particular female whose path, however circuitous or even crooked, led her in the right direction, albeit with help from others. With much emotion and histrionics, the climactic resolution allowed the young and sometimes tortured or poor woman to marry and frequently pursue a mundane but secure and happy life. Eleven chapbooks chronicled the lives of such young women.<sup>37</sup>

Ann Lemoine's focus on women included Sarah Wilkinson's appetite for adventure Her stories were set in remote places--France, Italy, and Germany, and

several claimed lineage with the mythical past. Several chapbooks followed the theme of a young woman who resided with a father who qualified as the village oracle. Only later was it revealed that the old man acted as her father and gave her a proper 'rustic education,' devoid of the corrupting flags and streamers of city life.<sup>38</sup> Mothers made only a passing appearance in these chapbook pages.

Other images served as an antidote to the larger number of depictions of wilting violets and damsels in distress. Long Meg of Westminster was a traditional story about a boisterous irrepressible female. Stories about Boadicea and Hannah Snell, written in the eighteenth century, represented women as warriors, and by the 1790s, an era of revolution and notions of enlightenment encouraged women writers and printers to defy the previous dictums of sensibility and deference.<sup>39</sup>

### Diversity and Variety

The researcher who desires themes and continuity faces a challenge. There are certain recurring themes--the appeal of the countryside devoid of the detractions of city life, the marginalization of women and their vulnerability. Chapbooks were staples of popular culture, they were not manuals of self-improvement or enlightened thought, although a very few encouraged self-help routines or education. Prevailing or stereotypical images usually prevailed. Street ballads were a diverse lot whose appeal rested on their depiction of real life experiences. Early chapbooks printed these simple stories. They codified stories from the Oral Tradition and the legendary past. The well-known tales of Rosamond Clifford and Jane Shore are part of this genre.

Stories that imitated the content of novels also rendered a conservative judgment on women's capacities. More of these stories appeared at mid-century and beyond. By the end of the century, however, chapbooks included valiant women whose behavior transgressed the established boundaries. The story of

Hannah Snell, printed in 1750, left her sexual orientation ambiguous, but the 1802 version frankly stated her attraction to women.

The final chapters of this dissertation present the chapbook images of Boadicea, Long Meg, Hannah Snell, and Mary Jane Meadows. The social currents of the 1790s prodded writers to offer these stories of legendary women. The tensions of that decade and the changes in English life, particularly in London, created a market for such stories. The chapbooks sponsored by Ann Lemoine commented on the variety of conditions faced by the second sex. Independent women were a marketable commodity, particularly in London. Although chapbooks continued to be printed in the first decades of the next century, their appeal diminished precipitously. Thus these may be some of the final images of women in chapbooks for the long eighteenth century. Chapbooks about Hannah Snell or the female Crusoe, Mary Jane Meadows, may have circulated in London, although we have no evidence of their dissemination.

The many chapters devoted to sorting out chapbooks illustrates the available variety. Chapbooks focused on crime evolved from a tradition that certainly differed from those that celebrated English legends and lore. Given this variety, it is prudent to evaluate them separately. This study becomes a series of cultural studies. This an approach permits the stories to live on their own. Linear and complete connections are indeed tenuous.

Although sufficient variety exists in the chapbooks focused on crime, this set creates a challenge for this research. Reports of crimes were not normally offered as entertainment. Rather they were intended to provide evidence of the wages of sin or satisfy a public craving for information. In the early eighteenth century, reports intended to quell community tension about witchcraft outlined the behavior that brought the accused into the docket. Such accounts built on the alleged facts. Many chapbooks reported the facts, but others, the one on Fanny Davies and the much-abbreviated version of Moll Flanders celebrated those that crossed the line.

The story of Sophia suggest the struggle of people to maintain customary rights--a seldom-pursued theme in chapbooks.

The shades of gray--that area of permissible behavior--allowed Fanny Davies to ravage wealthier folks. Sophia learned to glean with a band of people who lived on the margin and engaged in behavior that could readily be construed as criminal. Misses Robertson and Sharp were skilled criminals, but they were eventually apprehended. The parodies of criminal behavior, the stories of servants who can be blamed for the slightest noise or unseemly event, these accounts satirized upper or upper-middle class pretensions. Servants were employed or dismissed at whim.

Most chapbooks demonstrated the pathetic state of wronged women. The notorious cases of Miss Broderic, Miss Mary Blandy and Miss Elizabeth Jeffries, came to the courts and aroused anguished public opinion. Chapbooks that described the crimes by or against women were journalistic reports that were forthcoming without being overly prejudicial. The Davies' author clearly admired her daring exploits and ability to outwit her superiors and authorities. But alas, criminal behavior was and is usually punished before the law.

The examples of the irrepressible and notorious Fanny Davies, the gallant Hannah Snell--both of whom were real people, and the resourceful if fictional Mary Jane Meadows serve as an antidote to earlier accounts of wilting violets or distressed damsels awaiting rescue by princes charming. Although these stories remind us that women could be independent and live by their wits, nevertheless, by far the majority of the stories depicted dependency.

The more overt misogynism of later eighteenth-century chapbooks and those of the turbulent 1790s appears in the chapter, Fulminations and Polemics. The polemics included two chapbooks devoted to themes of reform of self-improvement. Together Colin Meager and Jenny Wood defied social conventions and built a wealthy lineage for their descendants. The destructive behavior of Isaac Jenkins affected his family. "The Gardener's Daughter" offered a plan for female

education, given the very limited life choices available for young women. But despite the reform agenda, women were expected to maintain family integrity.

Frugal women were the subject of earlier ballads, but the antics of Betty Bolaine, the miser of Canterbury, provided an enhanced definition of parsimony. The "Letter from a Scotch Nun" still rings with the indignation and the disgust of a male jilted by a woman of consequence. "Female Policy Detected" repetitiously condemned the wrongs perpetrated by the female sex against unsuspecting and undeserving males. The author included examples from ancient and medieval civilization to make his point that wanton women were the downfall of men throughout history. The 'discourse' that women venomously spilt out of their mouths at the tea table was full of rage. Finally, when they came to blows, they revealed their lower-class, plebeian origins. Gossip was the intent, but liquor fueled stronger passions. Jealousy and envy ruled.

### Cultural Wars of the 1790s

The chapter, *Fulminations and Polemics*, illustrated a variety of chapbooks with polemical and misogynistic rantings. In particular, two authors vented their spleen against women, gossiping females threw poisoned darts and arrows at each other, and the Miser of Canterbury, Betty Bolaine deviously pursued her self interest. The sentiments that produced these chapbooks can be traced to earlier cultural antagonisms.

The turbulence of the 1790s intensified and attenuated existing cultural assumptions. Despite Christian admonitions and Puritan zealousness, the double standard exhibited its tenacity. Puritans voiced anxieties about libertine behavior, and the permissiveness of the Restoration seemed to make their fears a reality. But its relative openness did not continue, and the gains made for women by the 'fair triumvirate'--Aphra Behn, Delaviere Manley, and Eliza Haywood--were modest. In addition, there were English fears about 'petticoat government,' the legacy of

allegedly powerful, usurpacious women. in the Stuart period. While Puritans had discouraged a culture of consumption, nevertheless, there was a growth in demand for consumer goods.

The American and French Revolutions shattered the complacency of England's aristocracy and gentry. Challenges to the ruling order came in a variety of forms, but all were perceived as threats. The underlying anxieties of a 1790s' 'sex panic' concerned the position and status of women, and their potential power. In addition, radical thought, the dim outlines of what would be a working class, and organized religious dissent were part of the mix in a very tumultuous decade.

French developments inspired many and frightened others. The reform agenda of both Jacobins and Anti-Jacobins represented the aspirations of the expanding professional and middle classes, but as they imposed their goals, they differentiated themselves from their inferiors. While Jacobins highlighted the inherent rights and attacked power and privilege, Anti-Jacobins defended duty to home and country, the sanctity of social institutions such as the family and society, and, of course, property. An unharnessed individual aimlessly pursued self-gratification. Unbridled women especially would undermine if not destroy the social structure and family wealth. Such threats could be superficially identified with the events in France, but at their center was a heightened concern with the possibility that English society would collapse.<sup>40</sup>

### **Ann Lemoine's Chapbooks**

A review of Ann Lemoine's chapbooks could be a separate but significant study. Very sparse but salient evidence connects her to the itinerant Huguenot printer and bookseller, Henry Lemoine. We can assume that this dissenting background and the environment of London influenced Lemoine. She appreciated literature. Her reprinting of Penelope Aubin's 1723 adventure story and the Crusoe-imitation in the Meadows saga indicates that she pursued marketable stories.

Reprinting Charlotte Dupont was a relatively easy task, but her sponsorship of a work like Meadows involved more risks. Its seventy-two pages made it one of the longest chapbooks in this study. It included poetry lifted anonymously from some of England's better poets.

Her series of stories by Sarah Wilkinson used the themes embraced by novelists but shifted the scenery to more exotic if distant parts of Europe. In an anonymously-written story, Fanny Felton and her father narrowly escaped a sexual encounter. In "The Deserted Daughter," a French mother abandoned her child, yet later employed her as a servant and tried in her way to make amends. These were the usual themes, and Lemoine, not unlike others, used conventional stories that would sell.

The comparison of Crusoe's imperialistic triumph over nature with the survival mode of Meadows is not positioned to suggest a progressive dimension. As previously mentioned, this analysis offers a series of cultural studies that are linked by the implied conservative message for women. In a century of momentous change, the themes relating to women stayed much the same. Mary Jane Meadows' instincts even in very primitive surroundings were for a domesticated abode and a quick return to home and family.

Is Meadows multi-dimensional? How does it compare to the earlier, popular and now classic Robinson Crusoe? Obviously a much shorter work, Meadows built upon Defoe's monumental framework and meshed together in many fewer pages the elements that made Crusoe a best-seller. Social conventions restricted the author--here identified as Charlotte Smith. Her female adventurer did not conquer new kingdoms. The author deplored materialism, acquisitive schemes or colonial ventures. Mary Jane's desire to wait out her island exile and return to a settled life has the ring of truth, but her self-reliance challenge conventional thinking about female capacities. She reigned in her very small natural kingdom but did so peaceably and harmoniously. Demonstrated assertiveness and resourcefulness

uplifted the female reading audience. But after finishing the story, they would rest contentedly because their heroine returned to hearth and home--England.

### Chapbooks--The Identity of Authors

Women novelists deprecated themselves intentionally by referring to their work as 'this Trifle,' 'this Woman's Toy.' Most chapbooks rarely begin with such self-effacing notes. Instead, many announced dire if not fatal consequences for civilization if moral precepts continually fell by the wayside.<sup>41</sup> Men probably assumed that civilization's maintenance depended on the natural and normal subjugation of women. Women used didactic language, but would they have predicted such fatal portents? Meadows matter-of-factly presented her predicament. Absent was the usual homily devoted to social cataclysm.

Eighteenth-century novels and chapbooks as well were not mere vehicles for entertainment or leisure time. They served a didactic purpose or imposed some higher truth. Verses about society and civilization were frequent. Disruptive technological change attenuated fears of economic insufficiencies and future disasters. Novels and chapbooks preached a conservative message to women directly. The teachings of the culture undeniably assumed that self-effacing sacrifice by women was vital to the future of the family and civilization. The introductions of many chapbooks featured quaint metaphors that we are first inclined to dismiss as products of an age of ostentatious prose. The reiteration of city vice contrasted to the virtues of bucolic rural life is another imposing theme that encapsulated disenchantment with urban life or mere longing for the simpler past. Could women have been so easily controlled in that simpler bucolic past? The homilies and nostalgic paeans to rural values convey the message that the authors themselves imbibed and wanted to pass on to readers. They set a serious tone for what followed. And what followed usually required sacrifice and perseverance in the wake of male deficiencies, while the heroines, 'paragons of virtue,' exhibited



deference, fragility, and acceptance of things as they were. Women writers used didactic statements, but would their predictions of impending disaster have been as dramatic as those of men?

How does one finally conclude this expositions on chapbooks that runs the gamut from banal bickering to fragile females and then to 'women of uncommon talents?' Are these chapbooks versions of reality faithful reflections of popular culture? In earlier chapbooks the dialogue pungently recorded the invective of male and female. In imitating the content of novels after 1750, chapbooks frequently represented relationships in which the submissive female received her rewards. But the material gains reported from such behavior did reflect what many wanted. A comfortable life achieved after hard work or years of struggle also appealed to a penchant for consumption.

One must resist the urge to offer momentous conclusions. This sampling of chapbooks provide us with a mirror upon popular culture. The dramatic difference between the 'diverting dialogues' that chronicled marital bickering and the pathetic behavior of fragile females illustrates change. By the later decades, ideological considerations must have forced those who wrote and printed popular literature to circulate stories of valiant women warriors and females of 'uncommon talents.' These were then a different set of contexts and the texts available to readers.

Chronological separations permit the ordering of three types of chapbooks that adhered in some fashion to societal notions about how women should be and perhaps were. Was the reading audience of female readers served in each of these periods?

## Notes

1. Adam Fox, "Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England," Past and Present, #145, (November, 1994), pp. 47, 48.
2. Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture and its Development in Early Modern England, University of Cambridge (Gonville and Gaius College), 1992.
3. Dianne Dugaw, "The Marketing of 'Old Ballads': The Ballad Revival and Eighteenth-Century Antiquarianism Reconsidered," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 21 (1998), pp. 71-90.
4. Fox, Aspects of Oral Culture, pp. 36, 39.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 42, 44.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 338-340.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 344.
9. Robert Mayer, History and the early English novel, Matters of fact from Bacon to Defoe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 115.
10. Spacks, Desire, p. 4.
11. Mayer, History and the early English novel, pp. 4, 154.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 115, 137-9. The term 'sudden redistribution' appeared in Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Knowledge.
13. Davis, Factual Fictions, pp. 47, 48, 67, 70, 82, 93, 95; Davis' theories about the dichotomy between fact and fiction will be particularly useful reviewing chapbooks that reported crimes and detailed criminal behavior.
14. Hunter, Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction, (New York and London: W. W . Norton and Co., 1990), p. 39-44.
15. The abbreviated title: "The Life, Voyages, and Surprising Adventures of Mary Jane Meadows, A Woman of Uncommon Talents, Spirit and Resolution. . .Written by her own hand." London: Printed by J. Bonsor; for Ann Lemoine and sold by T. Hurst, 1802.

16. Hunter, Before Novels, pp. 53, 54.
17. "The History of Miss Harriot Fairfax," p. 2; "The History of Mary Ann Edwards," p. 2; "The History of Miss Betsey Warwick, The Female Rambler;" "Fatal Credulity," pp. ii, 7,8.
18. Michael McKeon, "Historicizing Patriarchy, The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 28, #3 (1995): 300-302.
19. Kathryn Shevelov, Women and Print Culture, The construction of femininity in the early periodical, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), conclusion.
20. James Raven, "New reading histories, print culture and the identification of change: the case of eighteenth-century England," Social History, 23 (October, 1998),
21. Raven describes Engelsing's theories which have appeared in his two German language books. p. 274.
22. Roger Chartier, "Texts, Printings, Readings," appearing in The New Cultural History, Lynn Hunt, ed., (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 169, 170.
23. Margaret Spufford, Small Books and Pleasant Histories, Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England, (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd, 1981), p. 249.
24. Lennard Davis, Factual Fictions, The Origins of the English Novel, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 47-49, 67, 70. The term, 'coagulated' came from the Ph.d. dissertation of Adam Fox. "Aspects of Oral Culture and its Development in Early Modern England," University of Cambridge, December, 1982.
25. Leslie Shepard, John Pitts: Ballad Printers of Seven Dials, London, 1765-1844, (London: Private Libraries Association, 1969), pp. 13, 14, 16. Deborah Valenze, "Prophecy and Popular Literature in Eighteenth Century England," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 29 (1978), pp. 75-92, especially p. 76. Neuberg, The Penny Histories, A Study of chapbooks for young readers over the centuries, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 6,7. R. H. Cunningham, ed., Amusing Prose Chap-Books, Chiefly of Last Century, (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co.; Glasgow: Thomas D. Morison, 1889), note on page 5.
26. Two early studies by female historians have withstood the tests of time:

Alice Clark, Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century, originally issued in 1919 reissued in 1968 and 1982, with an introduction by Amy Louise Erickson, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1992); Ivy Pinckbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution: 1750-1850, (London: Virago, 1930). K. D. M. Snell was convinced that the historically-accepted method for analyzing enclosure and the conclusions of Chambers and Mingay were incorrect. Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Deborah Valenze, The First Industrial Woman, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

27. McKeon, "Historicizing Patriarchy," pp. 300-302.

28. Dianne Dugaw, "The Popular Marketing of 'Old Ballads' as previously cited.

29. "The Pleasures of a Single: Or, the Misery of Matrimony,. . . Dedicated to all young Batchelors, Widows and Maids." Printed at Sympson's Printing-Office in Stonecutter-Street, Fleet-Market. This bookseller and publisher was in business in 1765 according to the authoritative dictionary of printers and booksellers: H. R. Plomer (England), G. H. Bushnell (Scotland), and E. R. McC. Dix (Ireland), A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland, and Ireland, From 1726- to 1775, (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The Bibliographical Society, 1968. The first volume covers 1668- to 1725.

30. "A diverting dialogue both serious and comical,. . ." Entered according to Order. The Harding Collection noted that this was an English chapbook.

31. "The Collier's Wedding," 1791.

32. "The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping," Printed and Sold by J. Evans, London. The Plomer dictionary indicates that J. Evans functioned as a printer from 1791-1795. "The Lincolnshire Wonder: Or, A Comical Dialogue. . .," London, Printed and Sold by J. Evans, no. 41, Long Lane, West Smithfield.

33. J. Paul Hunter, "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner," Genre, 10 (Winter, 1977), pp. 461, 462, 464, 466.

34. "The Old Lady and her Niece the Fair Incognita. . ." London, Printed for M. Cooper, at the Globe in Paternoster Row, 1752. See footnote in earlier chapter for complete description. A hand-affixed comment to this chapbook in the Boswell Collection noted that it was a 'curious' tract. This comment could be attributed to Boswell, his son or someone collating his extensive collection.

35. "Fatal Credulity: or, Memoirs of Miss Clermont," London: Printed for J. Roach, 1787. "The Entertaining History of William Ratling and Sweet Poll of Plymouth. . ."

London: Printed for W. Clements, and J. Sadler, In the Year 1789. The Harding Collection, Oxford and the Harvard Houghton Library have several copies.

36. "Belinda, Or, Happiness The Reward of Constancy," London, 1750-1800, Preface. The Harding Collection noted the date, although it is uncertain, since there is not a visible imprint. John Corry, "The Preservation of Charles and Isabella,." T. Crosbie, printer. "The Sincere Love of the Courageous and Compassionate Zoa, the Beautiful Indian." London, Printed and sold at Bailey's Printing Office.

37. The eleven Sabine stories reviewed here are : "The History of Miss Sally Johnson," "The Unfortunate Happy Lady. . .Being the History of Harriet Wilding," "The History of Miss Harriot Fairfax," "Louisa Wharton, "The Young Beauty of Kent: or, The true history of Lucy Banks," "The True and entertaining history of Fanny Freeman," "The History of Maria Farrell,." "The Forc'd marriage: or The miseries. . .of the unhappy Miss Betsey Ward. . ." "The History of the beautiful Miss Fermia, a vitner's daughter of Savona. . ." "The History of Miss Mary Ann Edwards," "The History of Miss Betsey Warwick."

38. Sarah Wilkinson, "The Marriage Promise, or the History of Emma Woodley," "Lisette of Savoy, or The Fair Maid of the Mountains," "Lord Gowen, or The Forester's Daughter, An Historical Romance of the Twelfth Century. . .," "The Village Maid," 1804; "The Mountain Cottager, or The Deserted Bride," 1805.

39. "The Heroic Female; Or, An Authentic HISTORY of the Surprising ACHIEVEMENTS and Intrepid DONCUT of Boadicea, Queen of Icenia, and her two Daughters;" See chapter 12 for the three stories about Hannah Snell: "The Female Soldier;" 1750; "The Female Soldier; Or, the Surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell," "The Female Warrior, Or Surprising Life and Adventures of Hannah Snell: Containing (Among a Variety of Entertaining Adventures), A Complete History of her Life."

40. Nancy Johnson, "The French Threat in Anti-Jacobin Novels of the 1790s," appearing in Illicit Sex, Identity Politics in Early Modern Culture, (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1997); Gary Kelly, "Jane Austen and the English Novel of the 1790s," appearing in Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670-1815, Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski, eds., (Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press).

41. Paula R. Backscheider, "Women Writers and the Chains of Identification," Studies in the Novel, 19 (1987), p. 253.

## APPENDIX ONE

## POPULAR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CHAPBOOKS FROM THE DICEY AND MARSHALL FIRMS

This list of chapbooks taken from Victor Neuburg's book, Chapbooks, A guide to reference material on English, Scottish and American chapbook literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, provides a list of Dickey and Marshall imprints which were among the most popular titles in the eighteenth century.

Art of Courtship  
 Academy of Compliments  
 Argalus and Parthenia  
 A B C, or Assembly's Catechism  
  
 Black Book of Conscience  
 Bateman's Tragedy  
 Bevis of Southampton  
 Blind Man and Death  
 Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green  
  
 Canterbury Tales  
 Chevy Chase  
 Capt. James Hind  
 Cambridge Jest  
 Christ's First Sermon  
 Christ's Last Sermon  
 Christ's Crucifixion  
 Christ in the Clouds  
 Christian Glass for Christian Women  
 Children in the Wood  
 Courtier and Tinker  
 Card fortune Book  
 Charles XII. King of Sweden  
 Christian Pattern  
 Christian Peace-maker  
 Cupid's Decoy  
 Call from Heaven to the Unconverted  
  
 Dorastus and Fawnia  
 Disswasive from Drunkenness  
 Doubting Believer in Christ  
 Delights for Young men and Maids

**Don Bellianis of Greece**  
**Doctor Merry-Man**  
**Doctor Faustus**  
**Divine Songs for Children**  
**Delights of the Groves**  
**Dreams and Moles**  
**Description of the World**  
**Directions for Reading**  
**Description of Holland, two parts**

**Aesop's Fables**  
**Egyptian Fortune-Teller**  
**Erra Pater**  
**Edward the Black Prince**

**Fair Rosamund**  
**Fryar Bacon**  
**Fortunatus**  
**Four Kings**  
**Fairy Stories**  
**Fryar and Boy. In two parts**  
**First Sett of Catechism**

**Guy of Warwick**  
**Groats-Worth of Wit**  
**Golden Cabinet**  
**Golden Chain of Four Links**  
**God's Call to the Unconverted**  
**Good Man's Jewel**  
**Good Company**  
**Grounds and Principles of Religion**  
**Grace Abounding, etc.**  
**Great Britain's Spelling Book**  
**Good Man's Comfortable Companion**  
**George Barnwell**

**Hercules of Greece**  
**Hocus Pocus**  
**History of the Bible**  
**High German Fortune-Book**  
**Hector Prince of Troy**  
**Hive, a Book of Songs**  
**Human Nature**  
**Hero and Leander**

Jane Shore  
 Judas Iscariot  
 Jack of Newbury  
 John Franks  
 Jack Horner  
 Johnny Armstrong  
 Joaks upon Joaks  
 John and Kate two parts  
 Joseph and his Brethren  
 Jack and the Giants

King and Cobler

Mother Bunch two parts  
 Moles and Dreams  
 Mad Men of Gotham

Mother Shipton  
 Moll Flanders  
 Montellion  
 Massacre of Protestants

Nixon's Prophecy  
 Nightengale

Old Woman of Radcliff-Highway two parts  
 Ordinary Day Well Spent  
 One Day Well Spent

Parents' Best Gift  
 Poets' Jests  
 Partridge and Flamsted  
 Patient Grissil  
 Pleasures of Matrimony  
 Points and Proofs in Doctrine  
 Parsimus of Bohemia  
 Passion of Our Savior

Queen Elizabeth two parts

Robinson Crusoe  
 Reynard the Fox  
 Robin Hood's Tale



Rydock's Life  
Rule of Life

Songs in the Beggars' Opera  
Shoe-Maker's Glory  
Swalpo the Pickpocket  
Simple Simon  
Saint George  
Siege of Troy  
Sir John Barleycorn  
Select Tales and Fables  
Sir John Mandeville's Travels  
Sin Killed in the Bud  
Sin against the Holy Ghost  
Sleeping Beauty  
Seven Champions two parts  
Seven Wise Masters  
Seven Wise Mistresses  
Sufferings of Christ  
Sermon on the Day of Judgment

Tom Long the Carrier  
Thomas of Reading  
Thomas Hickathrift, in two parts

Titus Andronicus  
Tommy Potts, or Lovers' Quartet  
Tom Stitch the Taylor t two parts  
Token for Learners  
Tom Thumb, three parts  
Tom Tram three parts

Unfortunate Son

Valentine and Orson

Sir Richard Whittington  
Welch Traveller  
Witch of the Woodlands  
Wat Tyler and Jack Straw  
Wicked Reproved  
Whetstone for Dull Wits  
World Turned Upside Down  
Weeks' Preparation

## APPENDIX TWO

## A LIST OF THE SABINE CHAPBOOKS

A Catalogue of Books printed and sold by T. Sabine and Son, No. 81, Shoe Lane,  
Fleet Street, London

The Prudent Housewife, containing 600 of the choicest Receipts in Cooking,  
Pickling, Preserving, etc.  
The New Universal Letter Writer  
The Fountain of Knowledge, or Complete Family Guide, by Mrs. Saunders  
The Adventures of John Cockburn, or Unfortunate Englishman  
The New Universal Jester, or Wit's Companion  
The True Book of Fate, or Universal Fortune Teller  
The Tricks of London laid open  
The Perjured Lover  
The Compleat Valentine Writer  
Robin Hood's Garland  
The Interpretation of Dreams by Artimedorus  
The Unfortunate Happy Lady  
The Distressed Orphan or Love in a Madhouse  
The True History and Adventures of Betsey Warwick, the Female Rambler  
The Fair Jilt, or the Amours of Prince Tarquin and Miranda  
The History of Charlotte Lorrain  
The History of the Unfortunate Lovers, Miss Polly Hawkins and William Jones  
The Life and Adventures of Ambrose Gwinet  
The Whole Art of Legerdemain, with proper Cuts  
The History of Guy, Earl of Warwick, with Cuts  
Aesop's Fables, with Cuts  
The History of the Seven Champions of Christendom with proper Cuts  
The Lives of the Pirates, with Cuts  
The English Hermit  
Fair Rosamond, with Cuts  
Valentine and Orson  
Mother Goose's Tales, with Cuts  
The History of the Seven Wise Mistresses of Rome  
The Heavenly Footman  
The Thistory of the Giants, with Cuts  
The History of Fortunatus and his two Sons  
The History of Fryar Bacon  
The Children in the Wood  
A Token for Children

**The Maid of the Farm, or Memoirs of Susannah James**  
**Female Constancy displayed, or Love Triumphant, containing the History of**  
**Annetta Le Brun and Chevalier Du Pree**  
**The Nightingale, being a Collection of new Songs**  
**The unfortunate Twin Sisters, or surprizing History of Lucy and Fanny**  
**Bently of Lincoln**  
**The unguarded Fair-one, or Virtue in Distress, containing the History**  
**of Miss Adams and Lord Whatley**  
**The Prophetic Mirror, being a Collection of Prophecies**  
**The Beauty of Kent, or the History of Lucy Banks and Colonel Stevens**  
**The Unfortunate Happy West Country Couple or the entertaining**  
**History of Thomas and Sally**  
**The Village Beauty, or Injured Innocence**  
**Murder found out**  
**A Conference between Christ and a doubtful Christian**  
**Werter and Charlotte**  
**The Shepherdess of the Alps, or Virtue's sure Reward, a Moral Tale**

#### **Bound Books**

**Dilworth's Spelling Book**  
**Dyche's Ditto**  
**Fenning's Ditto**  
**The Death of Abel**  
**Dr. Watts's Divine Songs for Children**  
**The Oeconomy of Human Life, of Christian's Companion**  
**The Good Child's Primer, or Reading made perfectly easy**

#### **Plays**

**George Barnwell**  
**Bold Stroke for a Wife**  
**The Beggars Opera**  
**Roman Father**  
**Hob in the Well**  
**Love in a Village**  
**Maid of the Mill**  
**Hamlet**  
**Merchant of Venice**

**A Catalogue of new and entertaining Histories, Novels, etc.  
Printed by T. Sabine**

**The Death of Abel--an entire new work  
Cain's Lamentations over Abel--never before published  
The Prudent Housewife, Written by Mrs. Lydia Fisher  
The New London Letter-Writer By Samuel Johnson, M. A.  
The complete Family Guide  
The Unfortunate Englishman  
The complete Horse Doctor  
The British Jewel, or Housewife's best Companion  
The History of Mary Ann Edwards  
The History of Miss Harriot Fairfax  
The Stolen Marriage or a Trip to Scotland  
The Unfortunate Happy Lady  
The Nightengale, or Songster's Delight  
Life after Death or Wonderful Relations  
The Polite Lover's best Instructor, or The Complete Art of Letter-Writing  
to which is added The Unhappy Marriage  
The complete British Valentine Writer**

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