

The Female Spectator

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY

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THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH PROJECT: CORRECTING THE LANGUAGE

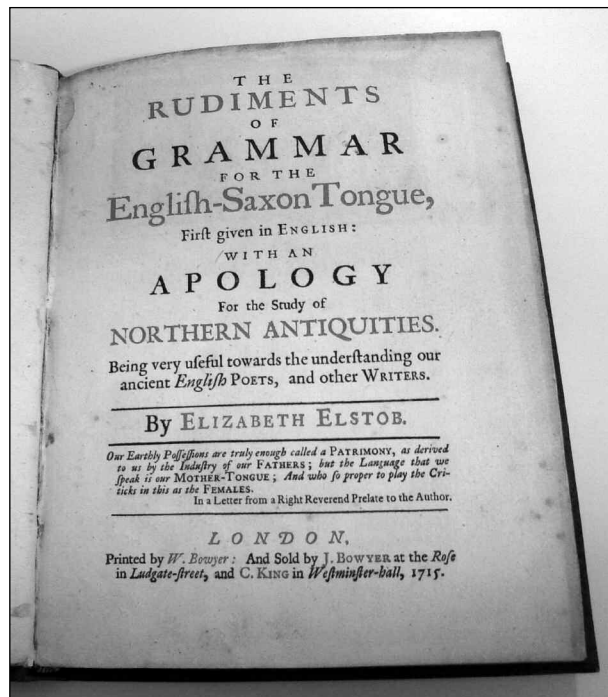
Christopher Mulvey is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Winchester. He is Chair of the English Project @ Winchester which aims to create a world-leading, innovative visitor centre that tells the global story of the English Language from its origins in the fifth century to its present-day position as the language of two billion people. The international fund-raising appeal for this development is about to commence. Please contact him if you would like to offer support: christopher.mulvey@winchester.ac.uk

Learning how to 'speak and write properly and correctly by Rule', as Anne Fisher put it, was the aim of eighteenth-century interest in grammar, and it was a subject with wide appeal. Fisher opens her *Accurate New Spelling Dictionary, and Expositor of the English Language* of 1788 with the apology that 'many books of this kind have of late been offered to the Public', and she was returning to a market in which she had already been highly successful. Her *Practical New Grammar, With Exercises of Bad English: Or, An Easy Guide to Speaking and Writing The English Language Properly and Correctly* first appeared in 1745 and then went through at least thirty-one editions by 1800, and, as María Esther Rodríguez Gil has pointed out 'eight unnumbered editions that were pirated and six more entitled *Fisher's Grammar*'. Rodríguez Gil calls Fisher the 'first female grammarian', though that might be to overlook Elizabeth Elstob who produced her *Rudiments of grammar for the English-Saxon tongue* in 1715. However, Elstob was more truly a philologist than Fisher, and *Rudiments* is a study of Old English grammar. Fisher wrote the kind of grammar book that very large numbers of people wanted to read.

The great prose stylists – John Dryden and Alexander Pope,

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele – are given the credit for fashioning Augustan English, but the real job was done by hundreds of thousands of unknown women and men who wanted an effective prose instrument for business, science, journalism, sermons, text books, government reports and a dozen other every day uses. The evidence of their success can be seen in any representative collection of eighteenth-century texts, and it is certainly evident in Chawton House Library.

Chawton House has further claims to attract the attention of anyone interested in the evolution of eighteenth-century English: an excellent set of texts that deal directly with the English language. They range from Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* of 1681 through to the Thomas Cooke's *The Universal Letter Writer* of 1849, and women have written almost as many of the Chawton language texts as men. There is a first edition of Elstob's *Rudiments of Grammar* of 1715, and on its title page, shown here, she shows why women played a major role in the eighteenth-century English project.



Elstob's Grammar

The quotation given on the title page is used to validate the writing of a grammar by a woman

It is true that Elstob is quoting a clergyman, but he makes the point that she wants emphasized: not only have women a right to talk about grammar, they have a particular authority to do so. It is the mother not the father who teaches the child to speak. A similar claim for the special role of women is made at the beginning of Susanna Rowson's *Spelling Dictionary* of 1807 – another Chawton title. Rowson tells her readers that she has produced her book because she has been teaching children 'for some past years' and has become convinced of two things. First, most children do not understand two thirds of the words they reading. Second, Dr Johnson's *Dictionary* is quite unsuitable for children in 'even the smallest' edition. What Rowson does for the dictionary, Jane Marcet does for the

The Female Spectator

This issue of *The Female Spectator* examines eighteenth-century English language and the abundance of grammar books that were published to offer guidance for the correct usage of language in speaking and writing. Chawton House Library has an excellent collection of eighteenth-century grammar books providing examples for the other concerns of this issue: the variety of factors in print culture, and different aspects of the conference held in July, 'Collectors and Collecting: Private Collections and their Roles in Libraries'.

Autumn 2007

Editors:

Academic: Gillian Dow

General: Jacqui Grainger

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grammar with *Mary's Grammar Interspersed with Stories and Intended for the Use of Children*: 'I have so often pitied children who have been studying a grammar which they did not understand, that I thought I could not do them a better service than endeavour to render so abstruse a subject easy and familiar.' A further special role for women in the teaching of English is claimed by Helen Lynch Piozzi in *British Synonymy*, also, like Marcet's, a Chawton title. Piozzi tells her readers that as a woman she will offer advice on speech but not on writing since it is a man's work to 'teach to write with propriety'. However, she says, long practice gives a woman qualifications 'to direct the choice of phrases in familiar talk'. Piozzi's apparent deference to men is belied by the breadth of classical learning that she displays and the complexity of her discussions of synonym clusters. In truth, *British Synonymy* is more about the written than the spoken language.

Eighteenth-century aids to good writing came in two basic forms: the dictionary and the grammar. Dictionaries began as spelling lists, and the first for English was Richard Mulcaster's list of 8,000 English words, printed in 1582, when he was headmaster of Merchant Taylors School in the city of London. The form evolved, and the word list that is more than a spelling list can be seen in Thomas Blount's *Glossographia*: or *A Dictionary Interpreting the Hard Words of Whatsoever Language, Now Used in Our Refined English Tongue* (1681). Blount identifies and discusses over 11,000 words, and with him the list has become a dictionary in which spelling is secondary to etymology and meaning. The form became magisterial in Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language: in which the words are deduced from their originals, and illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best writers To which are prefixed, a history of the language, and an English grammar*. It appeared in 1755 and was so completely successful – so comprehensive, so authoritative – that it was evident that Johnson had redefined the genre, reset the standard, and become the benchmark. From then onwards, both dictionary makers and grammarians look back to him.

However at nearly 3,000 pages in two folio volumes, Johnson's was not a workaday manual, and there remained a market for something easier to use: the spelling list continued to find buyers. John Newbery's *Spelling-dictionary* of 1755 came out too early to take advantage of Johnson, and with its tiny pages, narrow margins, and definitionless words, it represented the old order. Those that came after Johnson tried to offer more. William Peacock's *Dictionary of the English Language* of 1788 took Johnson as its starting point: 'All the words that have Johnson's authority will be found here'. Susanna Rowson's *Spelling Dictionary* of 1807 made a similar claim on its title page: 'Selected from Johnson's Dictionary'. These books are pocket size, but they tried to be something more than a primitive spelling list. Like Johnson's *Dictionary*, spelling dictionaries often contained a brief outline of English grammar (and some of them a brief statement about the history of the language). John Newbery

offered, as part of his introductory matter, 'A Compendious English Grammar' and Anne Fisher offered 'A Compendious New English Grammar', but she sensed that even so her *Accurate New Spelling Dictionary* needed something more to make it worth the purchase. Therefore, she promises on her title page 'An Entire New Dictionary of all the Heathen Gods and Goddesses'. Fisher claims that this a novel idea, included to help the young. Peacock followed her lead and added to his spelling dictionary 'An Alphabetical Account of the Heathen Deities'. He also threw in 'A List of the Cities, Towns, Boroughs, and remarkable Villages, in England and Wales'. Rowson did not list English and Welsh cities, perhaps because she was publishing in Boston, but she did copy both Fisher and Peacock by including a 'A Concise Account of the Heathen Deities, and Other Fabulous Persons, with the Heroes and Heroines of Antiquity.' These extras lists emphasize the essential object of these titles: aid in getting things right. It was just as important to spell the names of Greek gods correctly as it was to spell English words correctly. Furthermore, Peacock's inclusion of place names

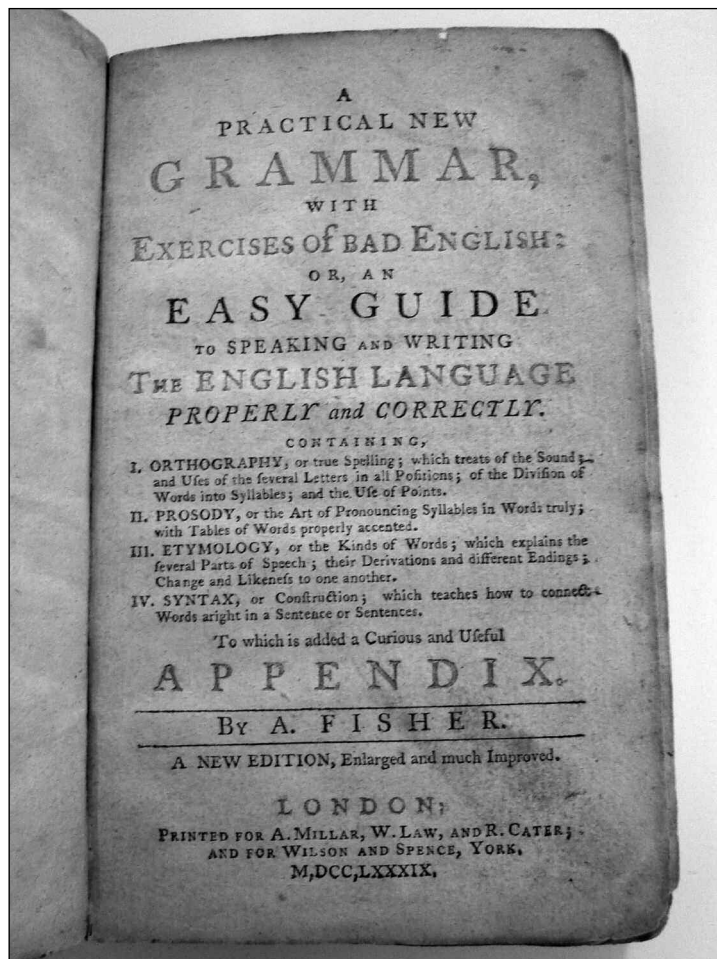
shows the extension of the notion of correctness to a whole new field. England and Wales were being regularized along with the language, and the chaotic practices of earlier centuries were giving way to the needs of improved travel, improved maps and improved sign posts. The notoriously variant spellings had to be correct, and each city, town and village had to have a single name.

As the spelling dictionaries developed a standard format through copying each other's material so did the grammars. The extraordinary success of Anne Fisher's *Practical New Grammar* provided the template. 'Grammar' she says in 1745, 'is divided into four parts, viz. 1st, Orthography; 2nd, Prosody; 3d, Etymology; 4th, Syntax.' Over a hundred years later, Thomas Cooke's *Universal Letter* divides its very brief outline of English grammar into: Orthography, Prosody, Analogy, Syntax. 'Prosody' for both Fisher and Cooke means pronunciation. 'Analogy' means what Fisher calls 'Etymology', under which heading, everybody but Cooke

discusses the parts of speech. Fisher's grammar appeared in thirty-eight editions, and that made her fourth in a running order that puts Lindley Murray first with sixty-five editions, John Ash second with fifty editions and Robert Lowth third with forty-seven editions. The running order does not tell the whole story. Lindley Murray's is the great grammar from which all subsequent grammars derive; it is still

available online, and its descendants were in regular use in the schools of the United Kingdom and the United States until the educational reforms of the 1970s, but Lindley Murray's is only technically an eighteenth-century grammar. It was first published in 1795, and its influence was in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Lowth's grammar was published in 1762 and Ash's (a derivative of Lowth's designed for children) in 1766. Fisher's grammar was first published in 1745, and it continued to be regularly republished for the remainder of the century, but she is included in neither the ritual recognitions nor denunciations of the male grammarians. Simmonite criticizes Cobbett, but he copies Cobbett's material. Cobbett copies Fisher but



Fisher's grammar prescribes correct practices in grammar with apparent confidence

he does not criticise her. Her name goes unmentioned. The reason for that may well be, as Rodriguez Gil argues, that Fisher was a woman.

Both the spelling dictionaries and grammars agree that the language needed to be corrected, but the question has to be asked: What was thought to be wrong with English? One source of complaint was the comparison with Latin. The first English grammars – they began to appear at the end of the sixteenth century – were modelled on Latin grammars. These made English appear to fall short in a number of ways. It is not possible to end a sentence with a preposition in Latin; double negatives are not used in Latin; double comparatives are impossible in Latin; infinitives cannot be split in Latin. A sense that English was inferior became inbuilt. Even though English gradually superseded Latin, it continued to be thought second best, and not only to Latin. As David Crystal has argued in *The Stories of English*, writers believed that English was 'not as "good" as French and Latin and that it

needed to be improved - a mind set which became a dominant theme of the sixteenth century.'

As a result of this bias towards foreign grammar, written English tended to go against the grain of spoken English, and at any moment a writer's guard might drop. It was an unhappy fact that not a single one of the best writers could be relied upon to write correctly. If Johnson wrote bad English, what hope was there? More crucially, if Johnson used double negatives, double comparatives, misplaced modifiers, terminal prepositions, and split infinitives, what did it matter if children did so too?

The strange answer is that the question does not appear to have been asked. Educated and self-educating men and women interpreted the music of multivocal England as the sound of looseness, slackness and laxity. Decay in speech was taken to be one with decline in morals. Piozzi gives expression to this in *British Synonymy* when she explores the differences in meaning of a potent word set: 'Zone, Girdle, Circuit, Boundary, Limit'. She does not believe that people are recognizing their limits, and one evidence of that is the way they fail to observe the proper meanings of words. She warns that 'A genius is abroad; the genius of anarchy, obscurity, and barbarism,' and she ends her balanced and polite book with an elegant scream that catches the hysterical note of those who fight for correct English.

Grammarians had to save civilization, and mothers had to save their children. *Mary's Grammar* opens with a little girl in tears. 'Miss Thompson says that now I am seven years old, I ought to begin to learn grammar: but I do not want to learn grammar; it is all nonsense; only see what a number of hard words there are that I cannot understand.' Her mother undertakes to talk her through it, and they start with the parts of speech. 'There are in the English Language nine sorts of words, or parts of speech: article, noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.' They start here because Mary has skipped over the first pages of her grammar: 'the beginning is all about the letters of the alphabet, and spelling', and she knows them. It sounds very much as if Mary is puzzling over Lowth's *Grammar*, and the mother makes a very good job of explaining English grammar by way of stories and grammar games. On page 25, they come to 'The Bee' which is not only a story about an insect; it is 'a story about nouns and pronouns too; how funny it will be to find them out.' Jane Marcet's grammar is the single one in the Chawton collection that might today reasonably be given to a child. Perhaps, the worst is T. Gillet's *Short and easy rules for attaining a knowledge of English grammar*. His definitions are opaque: 'A verb is a word that signifies to do, to suffer, or to be', and his elucidations are worse: 'Any word is a verb to which you can prefix a pronoun.' The phrase 'You idiot' comes to mind.

The correction of English was not an isolated experiment, and the English were not the first to try to shape a standard form for their written language. The Accademia della Crusca had been founded in Florence in 1583 with a mission to maintain the purity of the Italian language. The Academie

francaise had been founded in Paris in 1634 with a mission to establish a literary language based on the French of the Ile de France. The Real Academia Española had been founded in Madrid in 1715 with a mission to secure the Castilian language. Jonathan Swift's call in 1712 for the foundation of an English Academy with the task of 'Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue' might have been taken for a sign that the English were merely catching up, but neither the English nor, in their turn, the Americans took that route for correcting their language. Nonetheless, English was corrected quite as effectively as Italian, French and Spanish. It might also be said that it was corrected quite as ineffectively. Italian, French, Spanish and English continued to evolve, continued to take on new vocabularies, and continued to feel the tension between the energised varieties of spoken forms and the conservative version of a written form. English, at least, has continuing defects - an excessive vocabulary, an unreformed spelling, and a hapless punctuation - but it nonetheless has become the fast, efficient and universal medium that the reader is reading today as she reads *The Female Spectator*.

There may have been an element of the absurd in the effort to correct English, but it was successful, and that was because the writers of grammars were reflecting rather than creating the new English. Its pool of actual and potential users expanded rapidly after 1660 and has never ceased to grow. At the same time, the vigour of the spoken language would not be repressed, and it continued to serve up double negatives, double comparatives, misplaced modifiers, terminal prepositions, and split infinitives which had constantly to be written out of the written norm. It is little wonder that there is a prayer on the inside front cover of Chawton's 1796 edition of Anne Fisher's *Practical New Grammar*: its one-time owner, Robert Pearson, has written: 'O Lord God, who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity. Through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.'

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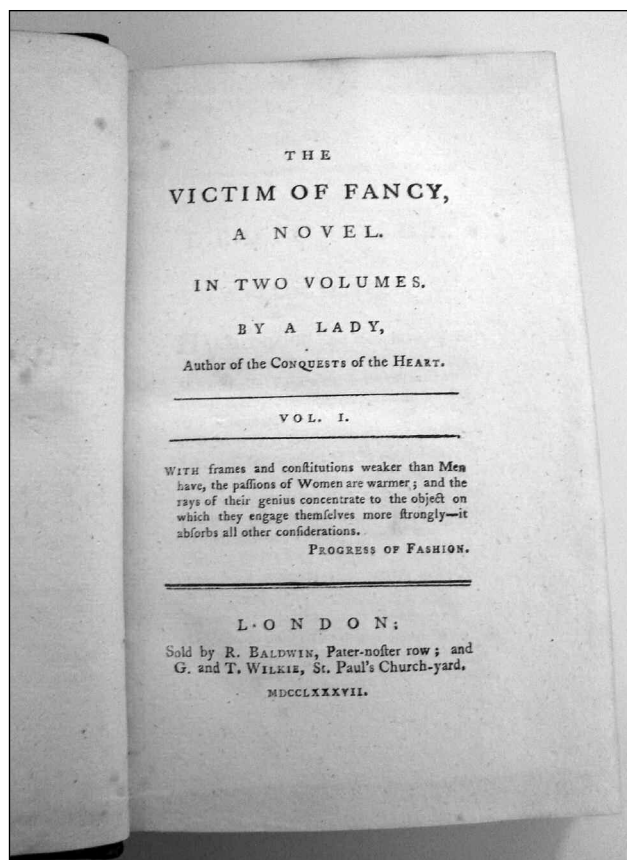


STUDENT RESEARCH ON THE CHAWTON COLLECTION: 'ADVENTURES IN THE LITERARY MARKETPLACE' 2007

For the second year, a number of final-year undergraduates have 'adopted' works from the Chawton House Library to investigate as part of a course on eighteenth-century print culture taught by Prof. Emma Clery at University of Southampton, with support from librarian Helen Scott, and postgraduate student Ana Vogrincic. This course represents an unusual opportunity for students to engage in original research on rare books, taking into account material factors such as format, binding, and printing. The complete versions of a number of these projects can be viewed on the Chawton House Library Website <http://www.chawton.org/library/info2.html>. Below are extracts from the work of the two winners of the 2007 Chawton Prizes for student research on the collection. Abigail Watts looks at Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins's unusually easy entry into the literary marketplace, drawing on evidence from the Chawton copy of her novel *The Victim of Fancy* (1787). Paul Lenihan, in his discussion of *Julia de Gramont* (1788) by Lady Cassandra Hawke, a relative of *Jane Austen*, uses contemporary reception to establish the significance of the novel.

Abigail Watts on Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins, *The Victim of Fancy* (1787)

Publishing in the eighteenth century is described by John Brewer as 'an expanding maze or labyrinth [that] offered the potential author many entrances and numerous routes to eventual publication, each full of hazards, pitfalls and dead ends.'¹ The decline of traditional patronage systems and the emergence of professional authorship meant that authors had to 'exploit the resources and opportunities of the literary system' in order to 'procure the services of a bookseller'.² Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins held a fortunate position in that her family had established links within the literary industry by the time she sought publication. Her father was a clerk of the Company of Painter-Stainers, and, as the *Gentleman's Magazine* points out, Tomlins had the opportunity to become 'acquainted with many persons of talent of that period, who, through their intercourse with her father professionally, were introduced to her society'.³ Brewer suggests that 'the best friend an aspiring author could have was someone already experienced in the ways of Grub Street'.⁴ Tomlins' father and brother could boast this experience in that they were both published writers. Thomas Tomlins produced *A Canvassing Book, for the Purpose of Elections by the Livery* in 1776, whilst Sir Thomas Edlyne Tomlins was a prolific legal writer and editor of Baldwin's *St James' Chronicle*, and the *Whitehall Evening Post*.⁵ The relationship with the Baldwin publishing family is significant. R. Baldwin, of Paternoster Row, published legal writing for Sir Thomas Edlyne Tomlins in 1785, and two years later published *The Victim of Fancy*



A *Victim of Fancy*
Published 'By a Lady' or anonymously in the first instance

along with G. and T. Wilkie of St. Paul's Churchyard.⁶ Considering her brother's established relationship with Baldwin, it is almost certain that Tomlins was able to capitalize on the connection to secure publication of her own novel.

The Victim of Fancy was advertised in *The Monthly Review* for a price of 5s sewed and in *The Critical Review* for 6s.⁷ It is published anonymously, 'By a Lady', and acknowledges authorship of *The Conquests of the Heart*, suggesting that Tomlins' first text was popular enough to advertise the merit of her second. The epigraph on the title page is anonymous but is found in a 1786 publication, *The Progress of Fashion: Exhibiting a View of its Influence in all the Departments of Life*. The text discusses the way in which women should be educated, claiming that man should let his daughter 'store her mind with those ideas which shall exalt her above the little attentions of dress and dancing'.⁸ Tomlins focuses on the claim that women 'engage themselves more strongly' in leisure pursuits which are not meant to be 'followed as employment'.⁹ The chosen passage emphasizes the weaker 'frames and constitutions' of women, which provokes

speculation about Tomlins' intent. Her excessively sentimental heroine could be a model for the 'uneducated' woman that *The Progress of Fashion* criticizes. As such it is possible the epigraph encourages her readers to consider the novel in a satiric light.

The novel also includes a dedicatory poem to William Hayley and an advertisement. In a 'long rhymed utterance', Tomlins appears to thank William Hayley for his 'noble line, / Which says to Woman, "Poesy is thine"'.¹⁰ There is no obvious instance that encourages such gratitude but Tomlins claims that though he is 'Unsung by those to whom [he] point[s] the way', she speaks for 'a thousand hearts' when paying homage to him.¹¹ Morchand Bishop reports that Hayley 'at once accepted the dedication', suggesting that he certainly welcomed a connection with Tomlins and her work. There is no conclusive evidence as to why Tomlins addressed her text to Hayley but his actions around the time of Tomlins' publication could have recommended him to her. Charlotte Smith, one of England's most prominent novelists and poets of the period, separated from her destitute husband in 1787 leaving her with a family to support and no inheritance.¹² Hayley 'acted as a liaison between Smith and their mutual publisher, Thomas Cadell' and therefore it is possible that Tomlins' dedication is a reaction to the great kindness of Hayley in securing Smith's publication.¹³ Even if this is not the matter Tomlins refers to, it is obvious that Hayley understood and supported female authors and their difficulties.

The advertisement draws attention to the novel's association with Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, which had a huge impact throughout Europe. First appearing in 1774 it was an immediate success and was followed by a second version printed in 1787, the same year as Tomlins' novel.¹⁴ By endeavoring to 'bring forward that moral' of Goethe's work, and by highlighting the link between this bestselling novel and her own, Tomlins is almost certainly hoping its popularity will increase her readership.¹⁵ Indeed, *The Victim of Fancy* was translated in to French in 1795 under the title *La Victime de l'imagination, ou l'enthousiaste de Werther*, signifying that the popularity of Tomlins' novel had benefited from the association and was predicted to have the same influence abroad.

Notes

¹ John Brewer, 'Authors, Publishers and the Making of Literary Culture' in *The Book History Reader* ed. by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (London: Routledge, 2002) p. 244.

² *ibid.* p. 246.

³ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Volume XCVIII (London, July to December 1828) p. 471.

⁴ Brewer, p. 247.

⁵ Thomas Tomlins, *A canvassing book, for the purpose of elections by the liver ... to establish and confirm the freedom of elections by them: to support their unbiassed choice already made of Benjamin Hopkins, Esq; for their chamberlain: and to re-elect him ... In two parts.* (London, 1776.)

Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>> [Accessed March 2007]; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Volume XVI (London, July to December 1841) p. 321-2.

⁶ Sir Thomas Edlyne Tomlins, *A familiar, plain, and easy explanation of the law of wills and codicils, and of the law of executors and administrators* (London, 1785.) ECCO. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>> [Accessed March 2007]; Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins, *The Victim of Fancy, A Novel, In Two Volumes* (London: R. Baldwin and G. and T. Wilkie, 1787).

⁷ Peter Garside, James Raven and Rainer Schowering (ed.) *The English Novel, 1770-1829: a Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles, Volume One*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). p. 414.

⁸ *The Progress of Fashion: exhibiting a view of its influence in all the departments of life.* (London, 1786.) ECCO. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>> [Accessed March 2007]. p. 74.

⁹ *ibid.* p. 73-4.

¹⁰ Morchand Bishop, Blake's Hayley: *The Life, Works, and Friendships of William Hayley*, (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1951). P. 319; Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins, 'DEDICATION. TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.' in *The Victim of Fancy*.

¹¹ E. S. Tomlins, 'DEDICATION. TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.'

¹² Richard C. Taylor, 'Charlotte Smith to Thomas Cadell: A New Letter', *Modern Philology*, Vol. 88, No. 2. (Nov, 1990), pp. 149-152.

Jstor Scholarly Journals <<http://links.jstor.org>> [Accessed March 2007]. p. 149.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ Martin Swales, *Goethe, The Sorrows of Young Werther*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 1.

¹⁵ E. S. Tomlins, 'ADVERTISEMENT' in *The Victim of Fancy*.

Paul Lenihan on Lady Cassandra Hawke, *Julia de Gramont* (1788)

Julia and her mother can be recognised as archetypal characters of the sentimental genre. Both represent what Janet Todd terms ‘the chaste suffering woman’, with Julia embodying the character who is ‘happily rewarded in marriage’, whilst her mother represents the woman ‘elevated into redemptive death’.¹⁶ Julia recognises that her mother displayed exemplary conduct by fulfilling her filial duty and submitting to the will of her adulterous husband. This idea is also supported by the text, where Julia’s mother is described in elevated terms as ‘a celestial wife [who] bore every wrong with patient resignation’ (I, p.102). The association with the heavens indicates that the actions displayed by Julia’s mother are considered to have been divinely good and that her behaviour reflected the will of God. Julia is inspired by her mother’s example and consequently places ‘her greatest confidence in the assisting influence of that power Supreme’ to ‘guide [her] through the intricate paths of life (I, pp.80-1). The conduct displayed by Julia’s mother also serves as an example to the reader. Indeed, the reverential language employed to depict her is intended to encourage others to admire and imitate her virtuous actions. As J.M.S Tompkins affirms, this represents a common eighteenth-century belief that ‘the novel was explicitly educational and that its main business was to inculcate morality by example’.¹⁷

The link between virtue and Christianity had been reinforced by several essays of the eighteenth century. For example, in his work *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, David Fordyce asserts that virtue emanates ‘directly from the Father of Lights, a fair genuine Stamp of his Hand, who impressed every vital and original Energy on the Mind’.¹⁸ Fordyce states that virtue is bestowed by God, and argues that to act virtuously is to carry out God’s will. He affirms, ‘That Virtue, or such a conduct of the Passions as hath been above described, is agreeable to the *Will of God*, is evident beyond Dispute’.¹⁹

These ideas would have been extremely familiar to an eighteenth-century audience. Therefore, by endowing her characters with these Christian sentiments Hawke can be seen to align herself with the period’s conventional theories

regarding virtue. However, Hawke’s novel indicates that the possession of virtue does not necessarily ensure correct social behaviour. Instead, young people are often guided in their actions by older characters, and are continually removed from situations that may test their conduct. Thus, when Augustus realises that his father is about to marry Julia, a friend immediately attempts to remove him from the room. As the text avows, ‘the separation of Augustus, from the fatal object of his love, was a step which prudence rendered absolutely necessary’ (I, p.68). The word ‘fatal’

indicates the dangerous potential of love. As Madame Tourville’s tale demonstrates, its passion can even drive people of virtuous character to commit acts of vice. Both Augustus and Julia are therefore removed from social situations which could tarnish their virtue.



The bookplate from the inside page of the Chawton House Library edition of *Julia de Gramont*.

Julia de Gramont was Lady Hawke’s only published novel. As a result, there is no body of work by which to judge the reception of this book. Nevertheless, contemporary critics praised *Julia de Gramont* when it was published in 1788. *The Monthly*

Review remarked that the ‘novel reflects particular honour on its author’, whilst *The Critical Review* stated that the author ‘deserves no little commendations’.²⁰ The reviews also suggest that *Julia de Gramont* compared favourably to other sentimental novels of the period, with *The Critical Review* stating that ‘in its own class [the work] must attain a considerable rank’.²¹ In particular, critics praised the novels ‘pleasing diversity of incident’, as well as its ‘moral’ and ‘pathetic’ subject matter.²² However, one notable exception to this reception can be observed in the article written by Mary Wollstonecraft for the *Analytical Review*. She attacked the novel’s sentimental subject matter, stating ‘the style adopted by an able pen was never so miserably caricatured’.²³

Moreover, Wollstonecraft asserts that, ‘We cannot attempt to soar to the exalted altitude of inborn sensibility, or the imaginary heights of artificial virtue’.²⁴ Samuel Johnson had stated that novels should depict ‘virtue not angelical, nor above probability, for what we cannot credit we shall never imitate, but the highest and purest that humanity can reach’.²⁵ Wollstonecraft observes that the characters in Lady Hawke’s novel possess a level of virtue far in excess of what readers of the book could hope to attain.

Wollstonecraft's use of the term 'artificial' is particularly interesting here. To understand its meaning in this context it is necessary to refer to Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, published four years after this review. In it, Wollstonecraft employs the term 'artificial grace' stating, 'I say artificial, for true grace arises from some kind of independence of mind'.²⁶ To apply this concept to the term 'artificial virtue', Wollstonecraft argues that the conduct displayed in *Julia de Gramont* is socially inscribed. This highlights one of Wollstonecraft's central tenets, that in the absence of education, women act out of a desire to please others rather than from a 'respect [for] themselves as rational creatures'.²⁷ As she later states, 'a woman, in behaving well, performs but half her function; as what is thought of her, is as important to her as what she really is'.²⁸

Wollstonecraft's arguments are supported by the text to some extent. Indeed, at the novel's conclusion Julia is able to reflect that 'she had at once the sweet consciousness of having supported a blameless conduct as a wife and daughter' (II, p.311). The word 'blameless' suggests that Julia is aware of an external social force by which her actions will be judged. This would imply that she submits to filial duty in order to fulfil a social obligation. Yet, this point is complicated since Fordyce allowed that in complying with [...]

Obligation, we feel joy and Self-approbation, - are conscious of an inviolable Harmony between our Nature and Duty, - *and think ourselves entitled to the applause of every impartial Spectator of our Conduct.*²⁹

Nevertheless, Hawke's and Wollstonecraft's diverging opinions regarding virtue can be seen to reflect two very different attitudes of the period. Whilst Hawke's perception of virtue is influenced by earlier eighteenth-century writers such as Fordyce, Wollstonecraft's writing reflects radical Enlightenment thinking, which came to prominence in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Despite being largely unknown by a modern audience, the contemporary reviews of *Julia de Gramont* suggest that the work was fairly well received upon publication. It is likely that more lasting success for Hawke's novel was denied by the spread of Enlightenment thinking, whose pursuit of 'reason' was diametrically opposed to that of 'feeling' displayed by sentimental novels. To a modern audience however, *Julia de Gramont* remains a well executed, if rather conventional, example of sentimental fiction.

Notes

- ¹⁶ Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen & Co, 1986) p.4
- ¹⁷ J.M.S Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800* (London: Methuen & Co, 1969) [first published 1932] p.70
- ¹⁸ David Fordyce, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (London: Thoemmes Antiquarian Books, 1990) [first published 1754] p.80
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.56 [Fordyce's emphasis]
- ²⁰ *The Monthly Review; Or Literary Journal*, 80 (June 1789) p.498, and *The Critical Review; Or Annals of Literature*, 66 (August 1788) p.145
- ²¹ *The Critical Review*, p.145
- ²² *The Monthly Review*, p.498
- ²³ Mary Wollstonecraft, 'Analytical Review Article XIV' in Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler ed, *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Vol. VII* (London: William Pickering, 1989) p.27
- ²⁴ Wollstonecraft, 'Analytical Review', p.27
- ²⁵ Johnson, 'Realistic Novel', p.178
- ²⁶ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: Everyman, 1995) [first published 1792] p.105
- ²⁷ *Ibid*, p.106
- ²⁸ *Ibid*, p.151
- ²⁹ Fordyce, *Moral Philosophy*, p.42 [my emphasis]



LIBRARY BULLETIN

Collectors and Collecting Conference

In this article, Alice Marie White, a doctoral student writing a dissertation on Jane Austen at the University of Southern California, gives her impressions of a conference held here on July 19 and 20 and organized by Chawton House Library, The University of Southampton and Goucher College, Baltimore: 'Collectors and Collecting: Private Collections and their role in Libraries'.

As Jane Austen wrote in *Emma*, 'it is such a happiness when good people get together – and they always do.' The 'Collectors and Collecting' conference held at Chawton House Library in July assembled librarians, archivists and scholars for a busy two days of panels, papers and discussion. Delegates travelled from North America, Prague, Helsinki, Athens and, of course, other parts of Britain. The conference theme invited investigations about the act of collecting, and the motivation of the collector.

It was an important consideration of the conference to provide a platform to discuss and debate the role collections put together by individuals play in the libraries to which they have been donated, and to the wider cultural heritage.

Four keynotes punctuated and set the tone for the conference. Robert H. Jackson, an American collector of literary manuscripts, correspondences and artefacts, opened the event with 'The conundrum of special collections and collectors: cause and effect', in which he discussed his personal experience of both collecting and donating the resulting collections. James Raven's keynote 'Bibliomania' located the term firmly in the eighteenth century. The anxiety about both the love of books and the overwhelming increase in publication was, Raven made clear, a late eighteenth-century preoccupation in the literary magazines and periodicals. A talk on the Brotherton Collection at the University of Leeds by Reg Carr, formerly Bodley's Librarian at Oxford and now a trustee of Chawton House Library, introduced delegates to this fascinating private collection that Brotherton felt was 'in trust for the nation'. Finally Bruce Whiteman, Head Librarian at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library at the University of California, discussed the career and interests of the public benefactor for whom the library is now named.

The variety of panel sessions, which ran in parallel, offered diverse approaches to the conference theme. Notable

institutions were represented by both the attendance of delegates and papers about their collections: these included the Morgan Library and Museum, the Newberry Library, Chicago, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Library and the National Library of Scotland. Delegates were also introduced to the collecting activities of figures such as Garrick, Goethe and Otto Jr., Earl of Nostitz (1608-1665), as well as the collections of nineteenth-century statesmen such as Gladstone and the Earl of Rosebery. Twentieth-century collectors were not neglected, with a talk on Bill Blackbeard 'the collector who rescued the comics' and on Roy G. Neville's historical chemical library.

Some of the talks provided information about the institution that co-organized the conference: Goucher College, home of a fascinating Austen Collection. Carol Phippen, in her paper 'Books, Bonnets and Bibelots: the Henry and Alberta Hirshheimer Burke Jane Austen collection' provided an

introduction to Goucher's rich Austen archive, emphasizing the motivation of the Burke collection in particular. Laurie Kaplan discussed the ways in which she drew from the Burke collection to introduce her students to the literature and culture of Jane Austen's time during the many years she served as a professor at Goucher. Goucher was well represented by several speakers, and conference co-organisers Nancy Magnuson and Gail McCormick.



This highly successful conference was lively and informative

The conference included a reception to celebrate the inaugural volumes of the Chawton House Library Series. Sponsored by the University of Southampton and Pickering and Chatto publishers, the reception included an address by Stephen Bygrave, general editor of the series along with Stephen Bending. The reception was accompanied by an exhibition of the original texts alongside their new editions in the main reading room.

In his paper 'The collector-bibliographer', Matthew J. Bruccoli from the University of South Carolina emphasized the importance of bibliographers making every effort to actively collect in their subject areas. I have been buying up Jane Austen criticism for years, but I recalled his words as I came across a beautifully illustrated edition of *Northanger Abbey* at the Winchester Cathedral book sale. Today, this memento sits on my bookshelf as a fitting reminder of a remarkable conference.



Highlights from Conference Exhibition

The evening before the ‘Collectors and Collecting’ conference in July, the Library hosted a champagne reception generously sponsored by Christie’s auction house, which was attended by conference delegates, as well as many others to whom the conference theme of book collecting was of interest. As well as giving an opportunity to view the house and library, the reception included an exhibition of items from the Chawton House Library collection of women’s writing in English, 1600 to 1830. The exhibition was intended to illustrate the breadth of the collection across period and genre, and also included some of its rarest treasures.

The rarity of some of the Library’s published works was illustrated by the inclusion of the novels *The Victim of Fancy*, by Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins (London: sold by R. Baldwin, Pater-noster row; and G. and T. Wilkie, St. Paul’s Church-yard, 1787) and the anonymous *Prepossession; or, Memoirs of Count Touloussin* (London: printed for J. Forbes, Covent Garden; and T. Hookham, and J. Carpenter, Old and New Bond Street, 1792), both first editions. Elizabeth Sophia Tomlins (1763-1828), the daughter of a London-based solicitor, began her writing career with *Tributes of Affection: with The Slave; and other poems*, and went on to write a number of novels, of which *The Victim of Fancy* was her second. The novel is interesting for its reflection of contemporary fiction; the heroine of the book is heavily influenced by certain novels she has read, in particular Goethe’s *The Sorrows of Werter* (first translated into English in 1779) and Sophia Lee’s *The Recess* (1783). It is a particularly rare novel; the only other copy that has been located is at Ohio State University library, and it is also one of the titles included in the Novels On-Line project on the Library’s website, and discussed by Abigail Watts on page 5 and page 6 of this issue.

Prepossession is one of about 250 novels in the Library’s collection which remain intriguingly anonymous, and this particular novel is extremely rare as it is apparently the only surviving copy; no other copy has been located at any of the major research libraries, either in the UK or elsewhere. The book is from the collection of John Charles Hardy, who was a twentieth-century collector of novels published in the long eighteenth century. His collection of over eight hundred novels included some very rare items; a substantial part of the collection is now in Chawton House Library. Although displaying mostly early published editions, the exhibition also included several manuscripts, one of which was a manuscript notebook inscribed ‘Poems HM 1811’. This is one of a set of six early nineteenth-century notebooks, which originally belonged to Lucy (maiden name Currie) and Henry Moore,

who lived in County Wicklow in Ireland. It contains copies of thirty-six poems by various authors, apparently transcribed by Henry Moore. The authors of the poems seem to be members of the Moores’ social circle, and include ‘Lord Ashtown’, the ‘Earl of Westmeaton’, ‘Lord G.’, ‘Sir W. Jones’, ‘Doctor Currie’, and a number of others. Also included are eleven poems by ‘Mrs. Henry Tighe’, who was in fact Mary Tighe (maiden name Blachford) (1772-1810), an Irish poet.

Under each of the copies of Tighe’s poems in this notebook, Henry Moore has written ‘Innistogue [*sic.*] May 1811. Copied from Mrs Tighe’s manuscript. H.M.’. The Moores were family friends of Mary Tighe and her husband. Tighe died at her cousins’ family home in Inistioge, County Kilkenny, in March 1810, and it seems that after her death, Henry Moore had access to her own manuscript of her poetry and was able to transcribe these poems from it. Three of the poems transcribed in this volume remained unpublished until 2005, when Harriet Linkin Kramer compiled and edited *The Collected Poems and Journals of Mary Tighe* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 2005). In the course of her research for this publication, Prof. Kramer contacted Chawton House Library and found out about these three unpublished poems (‘Address to the West Wind, written at Parsgate, 1805’; ‘Verses written at the Devils Bridge, Cardigansh’; ‘The Kiss - imitated from Voiture’), which she was then able to include in the book, putting them into the public domain for the first time.

MA Student Wins International Prize

Caroline Godfrey, who completed the MA in Eighteenth-Century Studies at Southampton last year and who used the resources at Chawton House Library extensively in her research, has won the inaugural Isabelle de Charrière prize, which is awarded to an MA student for a dissertation on Charrière (1740 - 1805) or her contemporaries.

Caroline was competing with students writing in Dutch and French as well as English, and the selection committee included colleagues from Utrecht, Amsterdam, Geneva, Metz and Cambridge.

She wins 500 euros and the opportunity to publish part of her dissertation in the *Cahiers Isabelle de Charrière*, which will announce the award in its next issue.

Suzan van Dijk, chair of the judges, writes: ‘While recognizing the quality of the other submissions, the jury



decided unanimously to award the prize to Caroline Godfrey for her thesis: "Readers by Authors: 'Reading for the Plot' and 'Reading for the Spaces' in Four Eighteenth-Century Novels by Women". The thesis presents an extremely rich and well-documented comparative study of four novels by English female writers: Charlotte Lennox, Susan Smythies, Elizabeth Blower, and Maria Edgeworth. Although all four are contemporaries of Isabelle de Charrière, the latter appears to have read only Charlotte Lennox.'

Readers, Writers, Salonnières: Female Networks in Europe, 1700-1900



Women readers: image from 'Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen'

Keynote speakers

Professor Isabelle Bour (Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris III)

Professor Helen Chambers (University of St Andrews)

Professor Dena Goodman (University of Michigan)

Proposals are invited for an interdisciplinary two-day conference to be held here at the library, 22 and 23 May 2008. The event is jointly organised by the University of Southampton English Discipline, the University of Warwick French Department and Swansea University German Section. The conference is one in a series being held in conjunction with the Netherlands Research Organisation (NWO) project "New Approaches to European Women's Writing" which is based at the University of Utrecht and is directed by Dr Suzan van Dijk.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw an explosion of interest in Europe in foreign languages and literatures, and recent research has begun to explore the part played by women in cross-cultural interchange. This conference seeks to examine the trans-national links between literary women in Europe in the period 1700-1900. To what extent were women writers from different countries aware of each other and each other's work? We invite papers which look at

women who read or were inspired by the work of women abroad, as well as papers exploring actual links (for example, through correspondence, visits or contact in the salons) between women writers of different nationalities. Papers should be a maximum of twenty minutes and should be given in English. Please send a 250-word abstract for the attention of the organisers Katherine Astbury, Hilary Brown and Gillian Dow to the conference administrator Sandy White: sw17@soton.ac.uk

The deadline for abstracts is 7th January 2008

Funding from the NWO and Chawton House Library will enable us to waive the conference fee for speaking delegates. Selected papers will be published in a special issue of the journal *Women's Writing*.

New Librarian at Chawton House Library

Jacqui Grainger has now been appointed to the post of Librarian at Chawton House Library while Helen Scott is on maternity leave. Jacqui has worked in libraries for six years: initially for Hampshire Libraries and then as the librarian for Scott Wilson, consultant engineers, based in Basingstoke. Prior to this she taught English for ten years at Queen Mary's College in Basingstoke.

Jacqui has a degree in English Literature and Language from the University of Reading and took the MA in Women's Studies at the University of York before qualifying as a teacher. She has a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) from the University of Oxford and was a member of Wolfson College. Most recently Jacqui gained the MA in Library and Information Science from University College London (UCL).

At UCL Jacqui looked at ways of classifying English Literature collections and developed an interest in working with rare books and special collections. She is a member of the Rare Books and Special Collections Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). She is delighted to be working at Chawton House Library and looks forward to meeting and helping the Library's readers.

Chawton House Library Members

The Library is most grateful to the following people who have generously given their support by recently becoming members: Mrs Rhiannon Amery; Mrs Hester Davenport; Ms Alison Glinn; Mrs Wendy Renton; Miss Mary Sugden

For the various ways to support the Library, please see our website.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 13 February 2008

Fellow's Lecture: 'Fornication in my owne defence': Rape in the Cavendish Family Writings

Prof. Marion Wynne-Davis, University of Surrey

Wednesday 16 April 2008

Fellow's Lecture: Women's Educational Writing and History

Prof. Gregory Kucich, University of Notre Dame

Thursday 1 May 2008

Fellow's Lecture: Gilbert White, Charlotte Smith and the Limits of Natural History

Prof. Anne K. Mellor, University of California

Thursday 15 May 2008

Fellow's Lecture: Jane Austen's Juvenilia

Prof. Juliet McMaster, University of Alberta

Thursday-Friday 22-23rd May 2008

Conference: Readers, Writers, Salonnières: Female Networks in Europe, 1790-1900

The conference is one in a series being held in conjunction with the Netherlands Research Organisation (NWO) project "New Approaches to European Women's Writing" which is based at the University of Utrecht and is directed by Dr Suzan van Dijk.

Thursday 12 June

Fellow's Lecture: Edith Wharton

Prof. Hermione Lee, New College, Oxford

Lecture tickets: £15.00 (£10.00 for Friends & Students)

6.30pm Reception with complimentary wine & canapés

7.00pm Lecture

8.15pm Literary Supper

Supper tickets: £37.50 including reception & lecture

The Female Spectator

The Female Spectator is the newsletter of Chawton House Library, a British company limited by guarantee (number 2851718) and a registered charity (number 1026921).

MISSION

The Library's mission is to promote study and research in early English women's writing; to protect and preserve Chawton House, an English manor house dating from the Elizabethan period; and to maintain a rural English working manor farm of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY

Chawton House, Chawton, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1SJ

Telephone: 01420 541010 • Fax: 01420 595900

Email: info@chawton.net • Website: www.chawtonhouse.org

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