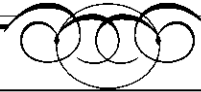


The Female Spectator

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CHARLOTTE LENNOX'S 'SPIRITED AND NATURAL' MARKETING STRATEGY

Susan Carlile is Associate Professor of English at California State University, and was a Visiting Fellow at Chawton from June to August 2008, when she worked on completing her critical biography of Charlotte Lennox.

It is a common critical assumption that women novelists writing trying to publish in the middle of the eighteenth century were constrained by a number of societal and literary expectations in the marketplace. However, in Charlotte Lennox's career, two of those limitations do not seem to be problematic. The first belief is that publishing works under a female name might lead to accusations of impropriety, resulting from female predecessors' questioned reputations due to publication. Also, women novelists have often been considered mere imitators of Richardson, rather than

innovative authors in their own right. However, a closer look at two of Lennox's works, the novel *Henrietta* (1758) and the play *The Sister* (1769), demonstrates that Lennox escaped these frequently touted obstacles. Instead, what becomes apparent is that Lennox, one of the brightest lights in fiction in the 1750s, used both the well-established genre drama, as well as the newly recognised genre the novel, to critique the nuances of male control and its effect on society at large. Her subtle marketing strategy shows a kind of resistance, through her character Henrietta, which did not sully her reputation. Nor did her novel preoccupy itself with an allegiance to Richardson or Fielding. Lennox was her own brand.

Lennox's adaptation of her popular novel *Henrietta* into a play, *The Sister*, is in fact the first time a novelist recast her

The image shows two pages from a manuscript of the play 'The Sister'. The left page is the 'Dramatis Personæ' (cast list) and the right page is the beginning of Act I, Scene I.

Dramatis Personæ.

Earl of Belmont, Father to Lord Clairville.	}	Mr. CLARKE,
Lord Clairville, under the Name of Belmour.		Mr. SMITH.
Courtney, under the Name of Freman, Governor to Lord Clairville.	}	Mr. POWELL.
Will, Servant to Courtney.		Mr. CUSHING.
Lady Autumn, a Widow.		Mrs. WARD.
Miss Autumn, Daughter of Lord Autumn by a former Wife.	}	Mrs. BULKLEY,
Miss Courtney, Sister to Courtney, under the Name of D'Arcy.		Miss MORRIS,
Simple, Woman to Lady Autumn.	}	Miss PIERCE.
Betty, Woman to Miss Autumn.		Mrs. GARDINER.

SCENE, Windsor.

THE SISTER:
A COMEDY.

ACT I.
SCENE I. Windsor Park.

Lord Clairville and Courtney meeting.

COURTENEY.
I THOUGHT I should find you here, my Lord: this new taste for solitude is a mortal symptom in your distemper. A lover seldom desires better company than his own thoughts.

CLAIRVILLE.
I should have been glad of your company, however. Why did you not join me sooner?

COURTENEY.
I come now to bring you unwelcome news—the Earl of Belmont is in town.

CLAIRVILLE.
My father in town!

COURTENEY.
Will, whom I sent to London upon some particular business, is just now returned, and tells me my Lord came from his country-seat two days ago.

B **CLAIR-**

The Female Spectator

Autumn 2009

This issue of *The Female Spectator* features three articles from recent Chawton House Library Visiting Fellows, two of whom each focused on an individual prominent writer in the collection (one looking at Charlotte Lennox and the other Delarivier Manley), while the third researcher took the opportunity to examine the Library's fascinating collection of manuscripts.

Editors:

Academic: Gillian Dow

General: Helen Scott

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own novel for the stage. This novel details the efforts of a young woman who enlists herself as a companion to wealthy women to avoid marrying. One of those women of fortune is a libidinous widow who believes young men are still falling in love with her. In the play Lennox extracts this episode and rearranges this section of narrative around Henrietta's brother Courteney. In a humorous twist, the wealthy vain woman believes he's in love with her, and farcical miscommunication ensues.

The novel and play demonstrate Lennox's interest in female agency. In the novel feminine action is highlighted through a narrative that offers a young woman an alternative to marriage. In the play, agency is specifically given to an unassuming character, the sister, who asserts herself by criticising her brother's immaturity and selfishness. A closer study of her novel and play illuminates how Lennox crafted Henrietta, the protagonist in the novel and Harriot, her counterpart in the play, and their roles in each text to market them most effectively to two different audiences – the public theatre spectator and the solitary novel reader. Clearly these audiences overlapped in the eighteenth century. Those who attended the theatre also read novels. However, Lennox understood her market and that these two genres expected different representations of a young single woman. In the play Lennox's character limits her critique to familial patriarchy. However, in the novel her critique extends outside the domestic sphere to hold a mirror up to all members of society.

The Sister

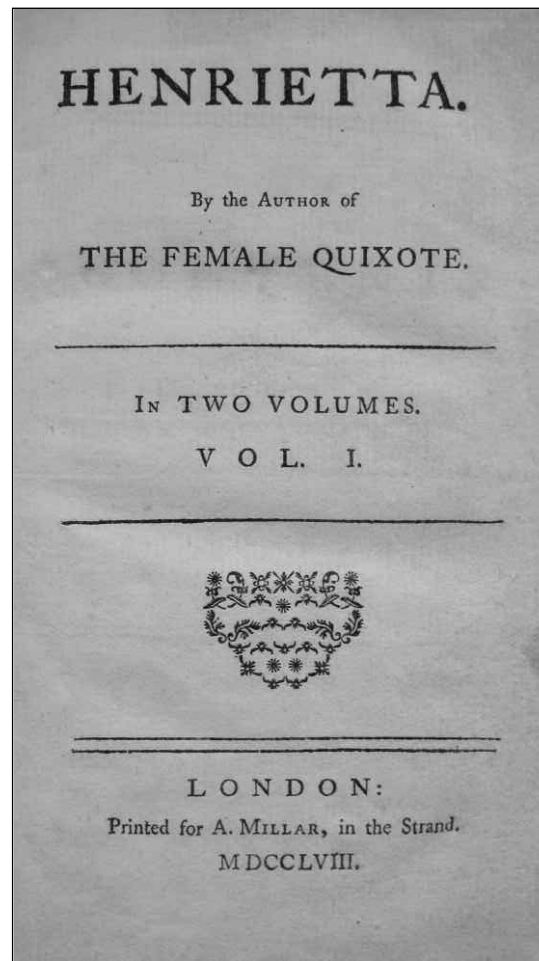
Almost immediately after the 1758 publication of *Henrietta*, Lennox must have started to adapt her novel for the stage because she sent it to David Garrick.¹ In May of 1759 he acknowledged that he was 'pleased much' with her play and that it only 'wants some little alterations to compleat it'.² This letter is important in dating Lennox's work on *The Sister*, since she was either simultaneously writing the novel and the play, or set to work radically paring it down for the stage immediately after she had completed the novel. Her comedy *The Sister* focuses around the sibling relationship, which was of minor importance in the novel. It demotes Henrietta from the position of protagonist whose refusal to marry a Catholic necessitates her search for acceptable circumstances for service, to that of 'sister' to the play's protagonist Courteney. Harriot, the diminutive of Henrietta, is clearly marked inferior to her brother, Charles Courteney, around whom the plot centers. The novel's attention to the complex obstacles associated with a forced marriage and desire for financial independence are omitted, and now Harriot's only concern is how her brother will protect her dignity. The drama offers a study of a young man who is not truly living up to his patriarchal responsibilities, performing the traditional role as a protector to his sister. However, his sister, the play's namesake, ultimately reveals Lennox's understanding of the novel as the more malleable and powerful genre.

Lennox's decision to refocus her plot around young Courteney changes the nature of the narrative. In her minor role as the sister, Harriot is more candid than she is in the novel in speaking to her brother about his own false virtue. When she

learns that he – in an attempt to be a good guardian and thinking of Harriot as just a poor girl, and not his sister – is, in fact, the one who suggests she become a mistress, she exclaims, ‘Oh! that my brother may be taught by this adventure, never more to insult distress and innocence; and to consider every virtuous, unprotected young woman as a sister’.³ Harriot hopes that her brother will learn that all women who are on their own in the world deserve to be treated as family. She is the wise, stable sibling who sees how his attempt to be honourable to his charge means compromising the honour of a young, vulnerable woman. In another scene, when Courteney realizes that he might *appear* disloyal to his charge and thus lose his respect, he panics and considers appearing disloyal his greatest crisis. Yet Harriot’s reputation is by far the more fragile. Still Courteney, worrying more about himself, declares, ‘I would rather lose my life than incur the infamy of having betrayed my pupil’ (p. 29). Clearly his job matters more to him than his own sister’s reputation. Harriot responds as the one who is in control, ‘Be calm, brother, and place some confidence in me; you will find that I deserve it’ (p. 29). Later, when the plot begins to unravel, Courteney tries to resume his control and paraphrases Harriot’s earlier entreaty, ‘Calm yourself ... and confide in my prudence’ (p. 52). She then rebukes Courteney replying, ‘Excuse me, brother; but I cannot help telling you that your prudence has hitherto produced nothing but confusion’ (p. 53). She mocks his ‘prudence’ and blames him for the numerous miscommunications that cause them to be at odds with their friends. In fact, as the play is resolving she blames her brother more directly for the confusions that have ensued: ‘Oh! brother, what affliction would you have spared me, had you permitted me to undeceive Lord Clairville?’ (p. 65). Harriot does not mince words about her brother’s concern for his own honour, rather than hers. He has simply sought to appear virtuous, rather than to be genuinely virtuous.

Harriot’s outspokenness in the play allows her to communicate clearly her disappointment not just in her brother’s actions, but in her brother’s attitudes as well. She highlights his condescending opinion of women and those of little means and names his societal prejudices, which she sarcastically calls, ‘act[ing] upon principle’ (p. 25) and a ‘general’ offence (p. 26). Harriot has the presence of mind to realise that she did nothing to invite his insulting proposition

and rather explains that her brother’s behaviour comes out of a predictable belief among men and the rich. ‘It is not surprising that persons, who hold riches to be their greatest good, should think they are more than an equivalent for virtue’ (p. 25) and ‘it belongs, indeed, to the great to be licentious with impunity’. She believes his offence ‘comes from the bad opinion you have formed of my sex’ (p. 26). And thus her only hope is that he will – as a result of her rebuke – be transformed into a thoughtful and respectful person toward those from all levels of society. In her play, Lennox thus uses Courteney to demonstrate the insidious nature of merely appearing virtuous and thus the sibling relationship to critique society.



Title page of the first edition of Henrietta by Charlotte Lennox (1758)

Henrietta

Although Harriot is quite scornful of her brother in private throughout the play, her subordinate position does not allow her to be publicly outspoken. However, it is through a consideration of this more forthright young woman on the stage that we begin to see Lennox’s willingness to challenge expectations about how femininity should be portrayed. Harriot is a wise sister, as well as a challenging and critical one. However, Lennox more powerfully lays out the deeper difficulties with the mere appearance of virtue in the genre of the novel. When we look at Lennox’s novel and play side-by-side, Harriot in the play challenges the definition of true worth, but only in private familial settings; whereas, Henrietta, in the novel, illustrates the larger societal problem of mistaking worth and wealth.

Henrietta is Lennox’s treatise not only on the difficulties of being an independent young woman at mid-century but also on the

possibilities of this status. This coming-of-age novel details the cost of merely appearing virtuous far more explicitly than the play does. The rich social milieu and constraining societal structure for women, which is highlighted in the novel, is minimised in the play. We learn in the novel that Henrietta, even before birth, is destined to a difficult life because of the class-based, patriarchal structure of society. Though her father is the son of an earl, he is disinherited when he marries her mother, who has a military father. Henrietta’s ‘very birth was a misfortune to her parents,’⁴ because the birth of a girl means the loss of significant financial support. A distant relation has promised to make their first child his heir if they have a boy.

In *Henrietta* Lennox highlights several societal problems and illuminates them through Henrietta's direct commentary and through the plot structure. One of these problems is an incongruous relationship between wealth and worth. For example Henrietta complains that 'one seldom meets with any one who has not that littleness of soul which is mistaken for prudence' (p. 75). Those who have shallow souls are not genuine. While striving to appear virtuous, they are in fact simply interested in looking virtuous. Thus Henrietta understands that an appearance of prudence is what is initially expedient in this society.

Throughout the novel, Henrietta obsesses over the way society determines the value of individuals based on their external appearance, wealth, and status. She lacks only one of these, fortune, and thus becomes a model for genuine virtue. A humorous example of a person whose obnoxious behaviour society excuses because of her fortune is Miss Cordwain, the young spoiled daughter of a merchant. Henrietta has been employed by Miss Cordwain's father, a man who 'awkward[ly] affect[s]' 'grandeur and distinction' (p. 139), to be his daughter's waiting-maid. Miss Cordwain, who 'exult[s] with the consciousness of her own worth' (p. 144), is a superb model for Henrietta's continual reflection that 'riches neither give understanding to the mind, nor elegance to the person' (p. 142). Miss Cordwain mimics those of the genteel class, dressing in an extravagantly fashionable manner (wearing a train that is three and a half yards long and taking five hours to dress in the morning), even though she herself is from the merchant class. Everything displeases her, and she is fond of assuming a haughty air. She has already put out three attendants, one for having raw hands from so much washing, another for having the audacity to show up in a linen gown, and a third for not having lived with anyone of a higher rank than a baronet's wife. Miss Cordwain's obsession with fortune extends to her expectation to wed someone whose rank exceeds that of her *friends'* husbands – even if her father must spend his last pound to make this possible. Lennox employs this character to challenge the definition of worth.

A critique of the merchant class is a common trope in eighteenth-century novels; however, Lennox's assessment is far more overarching, including the way humans are motivated first by greed and status. Early in the novel Henrietta tells her travelling companion Miss Woodby that 'the world seldom espouses the part of the oppressed because they who oppress have that on their side which is sure to exculpate them; they are rich' (p. 50). This theme continues when her mother is cheated out of her fortune, causing Henrietta to be beholden to Mrs. Manning, who is her mother's (supposed) friend. Mrs. Manning assumes that Henrietta has a great fortune and likes appearing as a benefactress to a young woman with money and is later furious that Henrietta does not want to marry the wealthy man she has found for her. Henrietta's great aunt is the second person who, because she offers the young woman shelter and food, feels that she also knows what is best for Henrietta and insists on choosing her husband. Henrietta explains that '[i]t is not strange that persons who hold money to be the greatest good, should think it more than an equivalent for virtue' (p. 188). Clearly Henrietta is far wiser than her predecessors

Clarissa and Pamela, as she sees through other people's facades.

The reviews confirm that Lennox's forthrightness in starkly distinguishing wealth from worth was considered beneficial to 'genteel life' and her novel brought her literary success. *The Critical Review* claimed that she 'forfeited no part of her reputation by this publication; which we warmly recommend as one of the best and most pleasing novels that has appeared for some years ... sinking no where below the level of genteel life, compliments which cannot be paid to one of the most celebrated novel-writers we have.' (February 1758). This last comment perhaps suggests that Lennox was favoured over Henry Fielding, author of the popular novel *Tom Jones*, which was criticised for being morally coarse. *The Monthly Review* (March 1758) agreed, calling the novel's dialogue, 'spirited and natural'. Lennox's *Henrietta* does not reveal an author who was dogged by protecting her reputation nor by the long shadow of her male predecessors. Henrietta is not an obedient young woman. Instead she is a foil to Pamela and Clarissa. Rather than fall in love with a rake, she dares to hope and argue for just treatment regardless of wealth and status. Lennox sees the novel as the more malleable and powerful genre for improving society through subtle, rather than abrasive evaluation.

A closer look at Lennox's novel and play shows that she thought that, compared to drama, the novel was a more potent genre. Contrary to assumptions that women writers at mid-century were constrained, Lennox's adaptation of her novel to a play illustrates her aim to be challenging and innovative, while also understanding how to market her literature effectively to different audiences. Although the reviewer was only describing Lennox's novelistic dialogue as 'spirited and natural', she could also be described as a spirited and natural marketer of her own words. Spirited in her critique, Lennox combined this with a natural knack for pleasing different audiences.

An expanded version of this essay will appear in *Masters of the Marketplace: British Women Novelists of the 1750s*, Susan Carlile, ed. (University Press of Kentucky, 2010).

¹ The novel was first advertised on 2 February 1758.

² Duncan Isles, 'The Lennox Collection', *Harvard Library Bulletin* 19 (1971), p. 54.

³ Charlotte Lennox, *The Sister* (London: Printed for J. Dodsley, 1769), p. 28. (Future references will be in parenthesis within the essay.)

⁴ Charlotte Lennox, *Henrietta*, Ruth Perry and Susan Carlile, eds. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), p. 24. (Future references will be in parenthesis within the essay.)

THE HISTORY OF THE NOVEL AS GLIMPSED THROUGH CHAWTON'S MANUSCRIPTS

Emily C. Friedman is an assistant professor of English at Auburn University. She was a Visiting Fellow at Chawton in February and March 2009, when she continued work on her (now completed) PhD dissertation 'New Senses of Ending in the Eighteenth-Century Novel'.

During my time at Chawton, there was one volume that stayed on my desk in the reading room for nearly the entire time. I discovered it almost as soon as I arrived, and I never tired of examining it, or showing it to the other fellows, librarians, and visitors to the Library. It remains a mystery to me in many ways. It is a novel that at first glance looks like a printed book bound beautifully in calf, but is actually entirely written by hand. It is, in fact, a manuscript novel – one of several very different sorts of manuscripts held by Chawton House Library.

Manuscripts provide a valuable source of information about the reading culture of the period 1660 to 1830. In Chawton's catalogue, as elsewhere, the term 'manuscript' covers a large variety of texts, including letters, commonplace books, and full or partial drafts of published books. The most striking manuscripts in the Chawton collection are entire creative works that were never printed. It is important to note that 'never printed' does not equal 'never published' – many of these texts were written for private audiences and circulated in handwritten copies through circles of friends and readers.

The importance of such manuscript publication has been brought to light by the work of Harold Love, Margaret Ezell and other scholars, who have shown that publication through manuscript circulation was a viable, if increasingly specialised, form of publication throughout the eighteenth century.¹ Authors, often but not exclusively women, circulated manuscripts in advance of their publication in print. Sometimes authors avoided print publication entirely, for a variety of personal, social, and political reasons. The manuscript texts in the Chawton collection, written outside the commercial print culture, can provide new insights into reader expectations in the late eighteenth century, particularly in a study of the endings of novels.

Even as these texts provide us with help towards better answers about the history of the novel, in many ways they raise still more questions. Many of these texts also provide

beginnings to new lines of inquiry into the mechanics, materials, and production of these manuscripts. Additional research is needed to give us a fuller understanding of these puzzling novels. In what follows, I discuss a few of Chawton's intriguing manuscripts, and suggest how they contribute to new ways of looking at the history of the novel.

Chawton's most famous manuscript is Jane Austen's dramatic adaptation of Samuel Richardson's final novel *Sir Charles Grandison*.² Austen's manuscript *Sir Charles Grandison, or, The Happy Man*, is not a novel itself, but the choices made in her adaptation show both her engagement with the original novel as well as her transformation of it, particularly in the play's ending.

Henry Austen's 'Biographical Notice' at the beginning of the 1817 edition of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion* notes *Grandison* was a favourite of Austen's. Beyond Austen, Richardson's final novel has had considerable influence well into the nineteenth century.³ Despite this influence, the novel has long been a difficult one for scholars to fully engage with. It is infamous for its 'boringly perfect' hero Sir Charles, its substantial seven-volume length, and its problematic ending. Sir Charles is caught for much of the novel between his love for the Englishwoman Harriet and his prior engagement to the Italian Catholic Clementina. At the novel's end, Sir Charles and Harriet have long been married, but Clementina still



Chawton House Library's most famous manuscript: Jane Austen's dramatic adaptation of Samuel Richardson's novel *Sir Charles Grandison*

struggles between the demands of her family and her desire to enter a convent. Richardson gives the character no definitive ending, much to the loud complaints of readers who had grown attached to the novel's 'other' heroine.

Like other *Grandison* abridgments,⁴ Austen's play concentrates entirely on Harriet's plot, only mentioning Clementina in a very passing reference. Richardson's incomplete, circular ending to his final novel becomes, in Austen's hands, a tightly plotted five-act play, complete with a double-wedding ending – the only alteration Austen makes to Richardson's plot. Austen chooses to alter Richardson's sequence of events in order to create an imminent double wedding to end her play. In the novel, Sir Charles's sister Charlotte Grandison marries at about the midpoint of the novel, and Sir Charles himself is married in the

penultimate volume. In Austen's play, Sir Charles announces his intent to marry Harriet, which in turn leads Charlotte to relent and agree to marry her own suitor. Not only is this a compression of time, but Austen also inverts the sequence of the two marriages, making Sir Charles's marriage a catalyst for convincing Charlotte to marry. In this way, Austen rejects Richardson's incomplete ending, and imposes closure through compression and sharp editing.

But even Austen's more definitive closure may have been only temporary. The manuscript also includes the marks of a second hand, in pencil. This 'second hand' on the Austen *Grandison* manuscript remains a somewhat grey area. Brian Southam assumes this hand is that of Austen's niece Anna, who may have been planning some sort of continuation. This second hand has written on the play's title page '6 acts' though the extant play manuscript has only five acts. This suggests that the play, like the original novel, might have continued on in some form – or at the very least, that someone in the Austen family circle imagined that a continuation was desirable. Like Richardson's first readers in the 1750s, the Austen family seems to have been caught between a desire for a tidy conclusion and a desire to see the *Grandison* story continue. Put together with other information we have about the reception of Richardson's final novel, we get a better picture of *Grandison's* reception, loved, like Emma Woodhouse, in spite of all its faults.

We know the most about Austen's adaptation, but her play is just one of the manuscripts held by Chawton useful to the scholar investigating eighteenth-century novels. Chawton holds several bound manuscript-novels written, but as far as is known, never published. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some writers composed novels in manuscript form in bound volumes. These texts, which vary widely in scale, audience, and content, are a continuing puzzle. There is much that we may never know about these authors and the circumstances of these manuscript novels' composition and circulation.

Some of these, like Charlotte Patte's *History of Ernestine*, look like diaries or commonplace books, written in a sprawling, nearly indecipherable hand. Patte's tiny novel was written in a small duodecimo volume bound in full calf leather, perfectly pocket-sized. According to Jacqui Grainger, Patte was about fourteen at the time she wrote the novel, and the work reflects the hasty, private work of a very young woman. The novel itself goes nowhere, ending with a dash on the final page, as if the author simply stopped the story when the tiny book was filled up. *Ernestine's* audience – if indeed Patte ever shared the volume with others – was probably limited in scope. The process of writing, rather than the ending, seems to have been paramount for Patte.

This is not true of all such manuscript novels, and Chawton House includes several texts that were clearly meant for circulation. In this latter category falls Queen Charlotte's copy of Mary Delany's 'Marianna', a short 'moral romance' which was originally written and illustrated with sepia-tinted

drawings in 1759 for Delany's sister.⁵ As with Delany's many other creative accomplishments, the reputation of this story must have spread through word of mouth. Delany's short piece had staying power, it would appear, as the copy created for the Queen dates to at least twenty years later. While created for the Queen, the notebook itself is not a completely custom binding specifically for Delany's work: the bound volume is dominated by blank sheets following the 75-page story. Despite this expanse of white paper, Delany's ending is emphatically final, with a large 'Finis' and a final page that draws the moral of her tale, including the final line: 'Their morals are built on the Basis of true Religion -- A Rock that never fails.'

The most striking of the manuscript novels held by Chawton House is undoubtedly the 1799 *The Life of Frederick Harley* by Lady Katherine Howard. The volume is a massive quarto that dwarfed the other novels at my reading desk, bound in calf with gilt rules on its spine. As an object the volume is very impressive indeed, but the true surprise comes when one opens the book. Inside, the novel looks nearly identical to a printed text, particularly on its title page. The author replicated in every way the conventions of a printed novel, including a pseudo-copyright and a dedication to Mrs. Richard Minchin on its title page. The tidy hand of the novel is aided by the volume's blind-ruled wove paper that allows a writer to neatly follow ruled lines that are practically invisible unless held up to strong light. As with Chawton's copy of 'Marianna', the text of *Frederick Harley* is followed by numerous blank pages that swell its size. Editing of the piece was achieved by removing pages with a penknife or other sharp implement, and the remains can be seen in some places. This editing work, and the large number of blank pages, suggests that the novel was written within an already-bound book – one of the many blank books of all shapes, sizes, and bindings increasingly available in the eighteenth century.

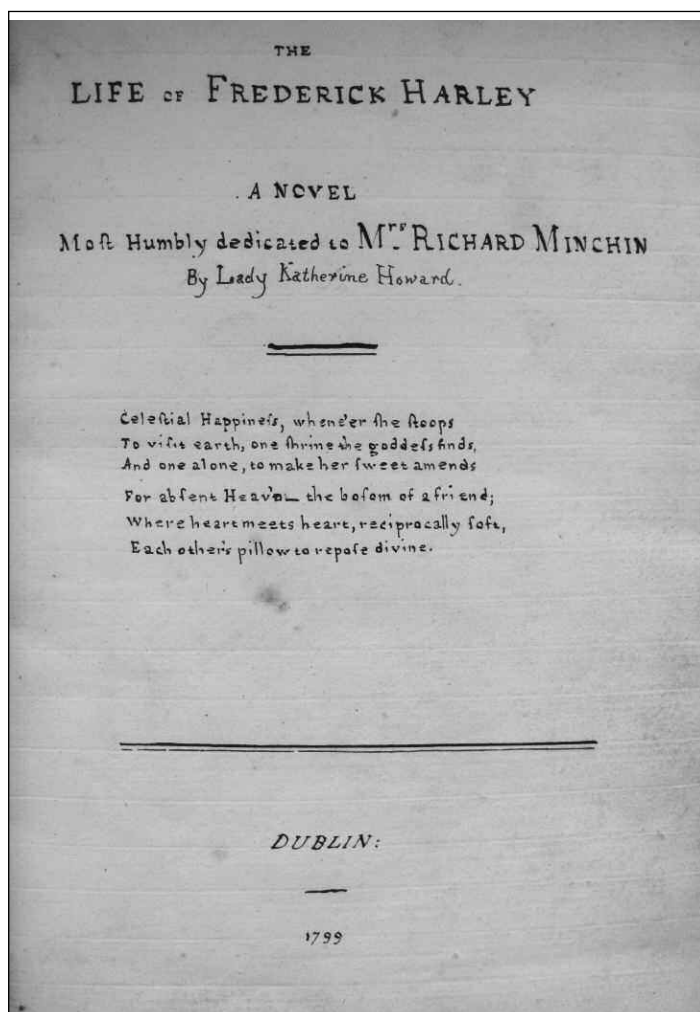
However, much remains a mystery about the novel, including its current binding. When I held it in my hands at Chawton, I was impressed by the volume's size and gilt in comparison to the other, smaller novels, but assumed the binding was merely an unusually expensive blank book. But according to Swann Auction Galleries' catalogue entry for *Frederick Harley*, the novel's current binding was done by Charles Meunier, one of the most talented Art Nouveau bookbinders of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The bookplate on the front endpaper is dated 1890, which suggests that if the book was indeed rebound by Meunier, it was done around that time – before Meunier's twenty-fifth birthday. This might explain its simplicity in comparison to Meunier's more elaborate later work.

Even with the mysteries that still remain, such an amateur author's work – written for an audience, but without the pressures of the marketplace – can tell us a great deal about the conventions at the turn of the eighteenth century. In the case of *Frederick Harley*, the novel is relentlessly straightforward, and attests to the continuing interest in character-centered fiction. Lady Katherine's novel is an

extreme of this genre, as she chooses to extend her hero's plot all the way into the death of his beloved wife and himself, including details of their successive burials to boot. Such novels were becoming unfashionable in the late eighteenth century, but as Lady Katherine's work shows, there were still pockets of potential readers who not only read 'old fashioned' novels (which we know from circulating library records) but also continued to write them.

All of this work, and the work still to come, is towards a new sense of the history of the novel, one that incorporates as wide an array of source texts as possible – not merely those worthy of canonisation or those that 'achieved' print publication. As has long been understood, incorporating marginalised texts and authors into our work begins to show us a more comprehensive understanding of the history of the novel, in all its twists and turns. The endings – and the textual bodies – of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century manuscript novels provide glimpses back into a different world of readers and writers.

In fact, it is a world that resembles our own. We now live in a time when the reader in search of stories can turn to her computer just as easily as she can head to her local bookstore. Writers now use the internet in ways that resemble those of manuscript novelists. A story can circulate via private email circle, semi-private or public blog, or be produced through print-on-demand services. For some, this is 'practice' towards 'real' publication in print. For others, it is an amusement for their own pleasure and that of their readers. Still others fall somewhere between 'professional' and 'amateur' labels. It is my hope that our increasingly sophisticated understanding of what it means to be an author in the twenty-first century filters back and leads to greater understanding of the grey areas of authorship in the early novel.



The handwritten title page of the manuscript novel *The Life of Frederick Harley* by Lady Katherine Howard

¹While Ezell and Love have provided useful insights into seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century manuscript culture, less has been written on later eighteenth-century manuscript publication. For essays that span the long eighteenth century, see *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800*, George Justice and Nathan Tinker, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²The manuscript is also the focus of a long-standing debate over its authorship. It is in Austen's hand, using her preferred method of paper-preparation (binding in palm-sized packets). However, family legend says that Austen acted as amanuensis to her young niece Anna, who dictated the play to her aunt. Most scholars believe that this family story is partially true, and that Austen wrote the play for family performance, with family input.

³Elaine Bander's "O Leave Novels": Jane Austen, Sir Charles Grandison, Sir Edward Denham, and Rob Mossgiel' (*Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal* 30: January 2008) provides a good recent overview of the work on Austen and Grandison. For more on the influence of the novel more generally, see Gerard A. Barker's *Grandison's Heirs: The Paragon's Progress in the Late Eighteenth-century English Novel* (Newark: Delaware University Press, 1985).

⁴Including *The History of Sir Charles Grandison and the Hon. Miss Byron, in which is included the Memoirs of a Noble Italian Family* (?1780) and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1789), as mentioned by Todd and Bree in their thorough discussion of Austen and Grandison in the

Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen, Vol. IX: Later Manuscripts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 556.

⁵Mary Delany, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany: With Interesting Reminiscences of King George the Third and Queen Charlotte*, Augusta Waddington Hall Llanover, ed. (London: Richard Bentley, 1861), vol. 3, p. 580. The 1759 original of 'Marianna' is held by the Lilly Library of Indiana University

MAKING OUR LITERARY MOTHERS:

THE CASE OF DELARIVIER MANLEY

Victoria Foule is Associate Lecturer at the University of Plymouth. She was a Visiting Fellow at the Library in May and June this year, researching for a full-length study into the literary life of Delarivier Manley.

How you talked! How I listened,
spellbound, humbled, daughterly,
to your tall tales, your wise words,
the joy of your accent, unenglish, dancy, humourous;
watching your ash hair flare and redden,
the loving litany of who we had been
making me place my hands in your warm hands,
younger than mine are now.
Then time only the moon. And the balm of dusk.
And you my mother.

Carol Ann Duffy
Premonitions. Dedicated with love to the memory of
U. A. Fanthorpe.¹

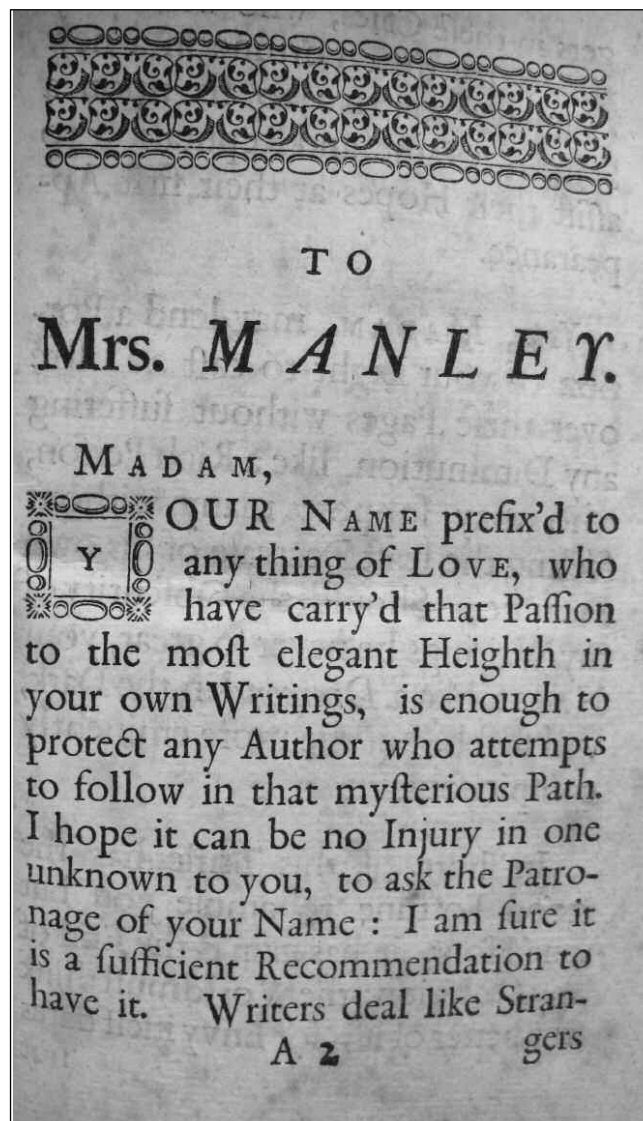
During my fellowship at Chawton House Library, our first female Poet Laureate was appointed. Carol Ann Duffy broke the chain of male poet laureates since the official creation of this public role with John Dryden in 1668. In Duffy's response to the news, she makes reference to her fellow female poets, 'sisters in poetry' saying she looks 'on this as a recognition of the great women poets we now have writing', and in her beautiful elegy for the poet U. A. Fanthorpe, her literary mothers.² Fanthorpe is constructed as a maternal figure, confirmed in the closing line 'And you my mother' and the relationship between them appears nurturing as well as mentoring. For feminist literary history, the maternal metaphor is a pervasive one. The mother-figure has been used in the assertion of women's role in the formation of literary history with, for example, Dale Spender's *Mothers of the Novel* (1986), their role in the creation of national identity with Anne K. Mellor's

Mothers of the Nation (2002) and also in the unearthing of black female history; one that was lost or unachieved as Alice Walker details in her evocative essay 'In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens' (1974). Part of the feminist endeavour to reclaim women's writing involved a kind of searching for metaphorical mothers; those women who had paved the way for the future generations.

Delarivier Manley, the late seventeenth-, early eighteenth-century poet, dramatist, novelist, Tory satirist and autobiographical writer, has been adopted by contemporary feminist literary critics as a literary mother. In the eighteenth century, Manley was not, and really could not be openly acknowledged as a literary influence. Her sexually and politically scandalous writings led her to be construed as part of the notorious trio of 'bad' women writers: Manley, Haywood and Behn, with whom subsequent women writers would disassociate. One exception is Mary Hearne; her novel *The Lover's Week* (1718), held at Chawton House Library, is

dedicated to Manley. Hearne's lavish introduction pays particular attention to the passionate elements of Manley's work and the novel is also rather scandalous in content with a tale of seduction and co-habitation as Hearne indicates in her preface to 'continue with as much Passion as one of your Sex can be'.³ The isolation of this example, as well as the problematic status of the author (Hearne is thought to be a pseudonym or cover for Curll's hack writers) emphasises the lack of public contemporary recognition and acceptance of Manley. It is today that Manley has been reclaimed by feminist scholars as an important literary figure. As Susan Staves observes, Manley has proven to be in many accounts a desirable precursor:

The modern canon has especially valued the transgressive writers like Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley, whose willingness to treat female sexuality and to attack male oppression of women made them appear to be our most usable foremothers.⁴



The dedication to Delarivier Manley in Mary Hearne's *The Lover's Week* (1718)

Manley is 'usable' today as a kind of 1970s sexual liberation figure and this formulation is common to how she is figured in contemporary feminist accounts. Staves highlights the constructed nature of feminist literary history, particularly how certain writers fare better now than they did in their own times. Much as today's feminist literary history has been both a construction and reconstruction project, it was also the same in Manley's life time; moreover, Manley was involved in its construction in the late seventeenth century.

The maternal metaphors that came into later use were not available to the first (professional) women writers of the late seventeenth century. This was bound up in existing concepts of literary heritage that were often read in patrilineal terms.⁵ Women's place in the creative process was as inspiration for men, epitomised in the female muse. This passivity was reinforced by Aristotelian concepts aligning masculine creativity with the male spirit as opposed to a female materiality where emphasis was on the body and woman was configured as a passive receptacle. Male literary traditions were already established with, for example, the poet laureate and a developing concern with literary sons. Women began to create their own tradition: a female tradition. Though, in comparison to Duffy's evocation of a maternal metaphor, the early women often used sisterhood and shared experience. The idea of the literary 'passing flame' to which Duffy refers was problematic due to women's lack of activity in the creative process. As Jane Spencer describes:

Mothers could be writers, then, and writing could be maternal, but throughout the period there was very little sense of matrilineal literary tradition. Because motherhood was not, like fatherhood, understood as generative, and because mothers were not understood as the owners of a heritage to be passed on, people did not generally think of women writers as the founders of tradition or as the metaphorical mothers of poetic heirs, especially not of sons.⁶

The maternal was not an available model, but with the currently acceptable female literary precursors of Aphra Behn and Katherine Philips, Manley had some form of lineage already in place. One of her first literary endeavours became entwined with other women's in a procession of plays with prefatory poems in the years 1695-1696. Manley initiates a female dramatist support network with her commendatory poem that prefaced Catharine Trotter's play *Agnes de Castro* (1696). Significantly, and strategically for Manley, Trotter's play was a reworking of Behn's novella *Agnes de Castro* (1688), already reinforcing the female literary interplay. Manley's poetic tribute also reworks some of the lines from the unattributed, and only female-authored elegy for Aphra Behn as she entwines further the literary works and lives of contemporary women and their female precursors. Manley's strident commendatory poem 'To the Author of *Agnes de Castro*' opens by asserting the female literary tradition with Katherine Philips (Orinda) and Aphra Behn (Astrea): 'Orinda and the fair Astrea gone, | Not one was found to fill the vacant throne:' and inserting Trotter as the next in line as she reclaims the throne for women: 'Aspiring man had quite

regained the sway, | ... Till you ... | And snatched a lawrel which they thought their prize'.⁷ Subsequently, Trotter and also Mary Pix joined the poetic tributes and answered Manley's poem with their own that prefaced Manley's play *The Royal Mischief* (1696).⁸

Manley's early literary history-making did not stop here. Arguably her most striking female literary history project was the initiation, collation and editing of the first solely female-authored poetry anthology; elegies on the death of John Dryden, *The Nine Muses or; Poems written by Nine Several Ladies* (1700). The contributors included Lady Sarah Piers, Sarah Field (later Egerton), Mary Pix, Catharine Trotter and possibly Susannah Centlivre. This collection is significant for the unprecedented bringing together of purely female poets, the important subject matter: poet laureate, John Dryden, and the decision to give voice to the muses. As a contemporary critical piece remarks, 'What a Pox have Women to do with the Muses?'.⁹ Indeed, professional female writers faced an increasingly problematic status, and Manley crosses literary boundaries here with her unique project, notably disrupting the classical order by refiguring the muses as active in the poetic process.

Manley's powerful opening poem to this collection as Melpomene, 'The Tragick Muse', reinforces her position as the lead. She dictates the mourning for Dryden and establishes the framework for the muses's laments:

COME all my Sisters now in Consort join,
Each weep her Fav'rite's loss with Tears Divine:
Fill all the Space with your immortal Signs,
The vaulted Heavens return your louder Cries.
Ye Loves and Graces hang your Heads, and weep,
And every God a decent Silence keep;¹⁰

The tone is commanding and majestic. Not only is she instructing the muses, but she also instructs the Gods to hold 'a decent Silence'. This rather striking co-ordination of a classical scene takes on a double meaning for, as Melpomene summons her muses, inherent in this is Manley's summoning of her female poets. The doubling here adds a larger significance to her words. Within the context of the Classical scene, Melpomene's control, particularly of the Gods, is transgressive. Furthermore, this could also be translated into the contemporary context; the cusp of the new century, 1700, when this was published. As women writers became more prominent in the literary space and now emergent literary market place, Manley's demands here could be seen as her vision and, with this collection, a literal manifestation of the important place women's poetic voices now assume. This also shows Manley's confidence in her poetic, literary ability. It is significant that the subsequent line includes a dominant personal presence with the resounding 'I':

And every God a decent Silence keep;
That I may now Grieve my fill, for Dryden's gone,

Manley has swept away the Gods in place of her own voice. The silence is not really for the muses as a group, but for Melpomene and by implication, Manley. In fact, the entire section here is punctuated with self-reference that becomes reinforced by its repetition and rhythmic positioning:

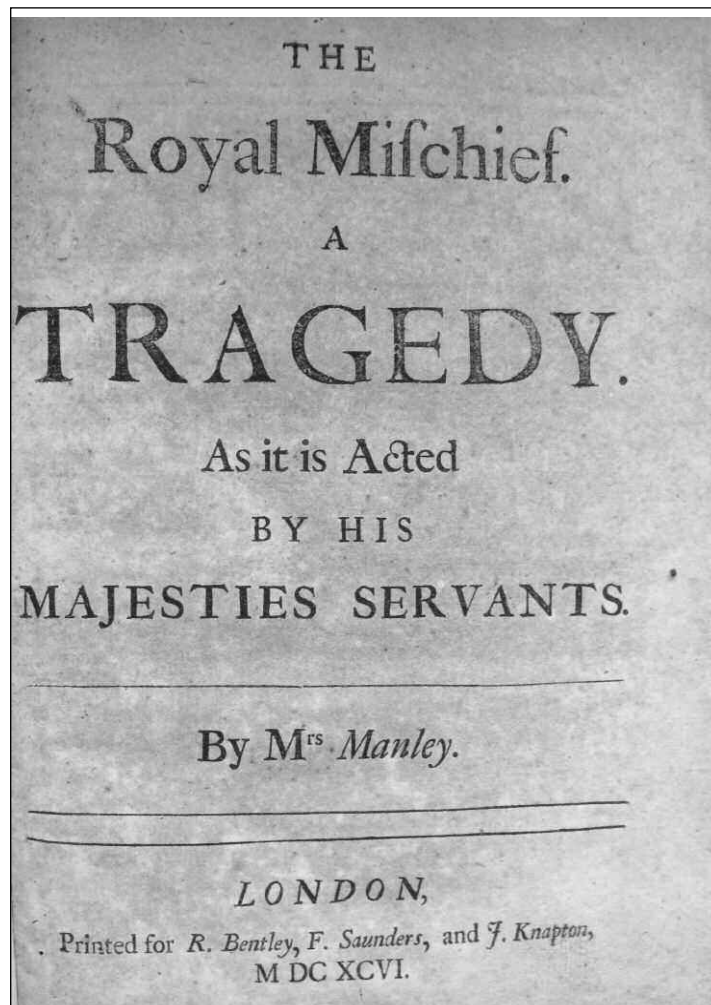
And every God a decent Silence keep;
That I may now Grieve my fill, for Dryden's gone,
Well may I now the mourning Veil put on:
Well may I now with Cypress load my Brow,
For who like him can e'er invoke me now?

The first 'I' occurs on a stressed beat: 'That *I* may'. Though the rhythm here is not as clear as the preceding iambic pentameter, the slightly awkward scanning with a disjointed 'now' gives this line a particular resonance with the attention drawn to the first few words and the personal, possessive pronouns. Now the Gods are commanded to be silent, Manley makes her presence known with the immediacy of 'now' and the authority of 'I' and 'my': it is no longer the muses's mourning, but 'my fill'. The repetition of 'Well may I now' again reiterates the prominence of this personal intervention and establishes the significance of Melpomene/Manley. And to reiterate her personal importance further still, the personal pronoun shifts to 'me', again the repetition of 'now' reinforces the immediacy of Melpomene and also Manley's appearance, both in the elegies and in the eighteenth-century literary world.

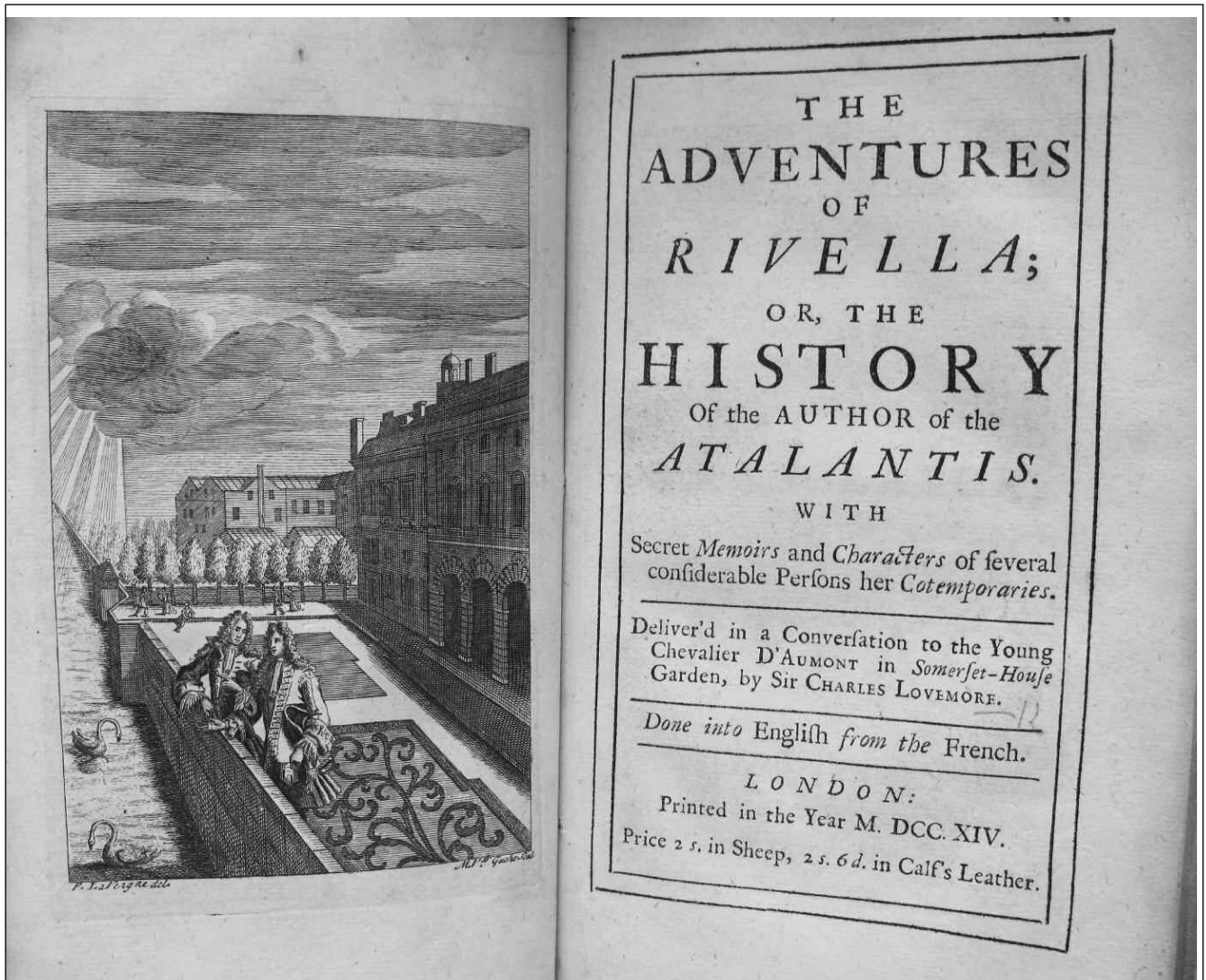
Manley's status as a feminist literary mother often relies upon her sexually and politically provocative later writings, typically *The New Atalantis* (1709) as well as the sexually provocative and strong female characters in her plays, *The Royal Mischief* (1696) and *Almyna* (1707). Examining Manley's early attempts at canon making offers another dimension to Manley as feminist mother, albeit a problematic one. For, though Manley's later, provocative works may, as Staves observed, 'attack male oppression of women', they also attack women. In particular, Manley attacks her former

fellow poets and playwrights she had joined in her literary projects, and none are more virulent than her attacks upon Catharine Trotter. Fuelled by a political incentive (Trotter was a Whig, Manley a Tory propagandist) and personal vendettas (Trotter allegedly lied to Manley about her former affair with Manley's lover, John Tilly) Trotter becomes subject to some of Manley's most severe invectives. In *The New Atalantis*, the laurels that Manley graciously bestowed upon Trotter in her poetic tribute are modified into an ironic namesake, Daphne, who in Greek mythology was turned into a laurel tree to resist Apollo's advances, whom she now inverts through Trotter as a promiscuous woman. Manley continues her slanderous attacks on Trotter's virtue in *The Adventures of Rivella* (1714) where she is cast as Calista, who gives outward pretensions to virtue, even prudery, but is secretly having an affair with a married man.

There is an interesting coincidence here: Duffy as the first female poet laureate, writing an elegy for, in her terms, the 'unofficial poet laureate', U. A. Fanthorpe, and Manley, over three hundred years before, writing elegies on the first, and male, poet laureate, John Dryden. Both poets are concerned with women and poetry in literary history, though one is perhaps more concerned with herself rather than the 'sisterhood'. I hope that the short extract above from Manley's elegy may give a taste of the authoritative and egotistical nature evident in much of Manley's writing. This, combined with her later attacks upon the women she had formerly united, complicates our notions of our female, or even 'feminist' precursors. The relationship between Duffy and Fanthorpe appears in Duffy's elegy to have been a close one: intellectually, personally and historically. Our relationship with our forbears is obviously rather different and we need to think more carefully about those we have chosen. Manley's sexually liberating and politically engaged works may appeal to our contemporary sympathies and politics, and her active engagement in early feminist literary history is undoubtedly significant, but those literary attacks lead us to



Title page of Delarivier Manley's play *The Royal Mischief* (1696), which was prefaced by poems by Catharine Trotter and Mary Pix



The Adventures of Rivella (1714), in which Manley based one of the characters on fellow writer Catharine Trotter

rethink the 'maternal' in our literary mothers.

¹ The final stanza from Duffy's elegy, 'Premonitions', printed in *The Guardian* (2 May 2009), p. 2.

² Carol Ann Duffy, *The Guardian* (2 May 2009), p. 2. Her comment on the award comes from her first interview as Poet Laureate on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* 1 May 2009.

³ Mary Hearne, *The Lover's Week: or, the Six Days Adventures of Philander and Amaryllis. Written by a Young Lady*. (London: Printed for E. Curll and R. Francklin, 1718), p. 3.

⁴ Susan Staves, *A Literary History of Women's Writing in Britain: 1660-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 7.

⁵ For an excellent study of this topic see, Jane Spencer, *Literary Relations: Kinship and the Canon 1660-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁶ Spencer, p. 76

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⁷ Catharine Trotter, *Agnes de Castro* (London: Printed for H. Rhodes, 1696).

⁸ Delarivier Manley, *The Royal Mischief. A Tragedy. As it is Acted by his Majesties Servants. By Mrs Manley*. (London: Printed for R. Bentley, F. Saunders, and J. Knapton, 1696).

⁹ *A Comparison between the two stages, with an examen of The generous conqueror; and some critical remarks on The Funeral or Grief alamode, The false friend, Temerlane and other. In dialogue* (London, 1702), p. 26.

¹⁰ *The Nine Muses, or Poems Written by Nine several Ladies Upon the Death of the late Famous John Dryden, esq;* (London: Printed for Richard Basset, 1700), p. 1. All further references to this extract are from this page.



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20 to 31 October 2009

'Rooms of Our Own' exhibition at the Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge.

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Thursday 19 November

Fellow's Lecture: 'Stumbling on Quotation': who does Eliza Haywood quote and why?

In this lecture Professor Ros Ballaster will use Haywood's prose work 'Reflections on the various Effects of Love' (1726) to identify her favourite sources, and the poets and writers she quotes – and misquotes.

Saturday 5 December

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