LAURA LUNGER KNOPPERS

Introduction: critical framework and issues

Esther Inglis's oval-framed portrait of herself wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a falling ruff, holding a quill pen and standing behind a table upon which is an ink pot, a small open book and a large sheet of paper, gives a striking visual image of an early modern woman writing (figure 1). The tiny pen-and-ink portrait (45 mm × 31 mm) with a stippled background and leafy frame, is pasted on to the verso of the title page of a 1601 *Octonaries upon the Vanitie and Inconstancie of the World*, one of nearly sixty calligraphic bound manuscripts produced by Inglis and given, in hopes of remuneration, to various noble and royal figures in Scotland, England and France.[1] Raised in Scotland, Inglis was the daughter of French Huguenot (Protestant) refugees who settled in Edinburgh and ran a French school. An accomplished calligrapher, Inglis wrote in often minute letters in a dazzling range of scripts: roman, italic, gothic, mirror writing, broken writing and other ornamental hands. Her texts are manuscript copies (sometimes translations) of printed texts – the Geneva Bible (most often Psalms or Proverbs) or the pious verse of French Huguenot writers – illuminated with flowers or sprays of flowers, birds, butterflies and other insects, squirrels, frogs and snails.[2]

The pen-and-ink portrait, on either side of which Inglis has written her name in roman majuscule letters, is one of nearly two dozen self-portraits with which Inglis distinctively marks her scribal copying. This example, dated 1624, updates the attire of Inglis's earliest ink self-portraits in which she is shown at her work of writing, wearing an elaborately detailed dress and a conical hat with flowing veil, within an oval frame decorated with fruit and architectural scrolls. The 1624 portrait is modelled on a self-portrait of French Protestant and emblematist Georgette de Montenay, showing how the female calligrapher linked herself to an earlier female writer and artist.[3] Like Montenay, Inglis stands behind a table with the implements of writing; but she has changed Montenay's bejewelled French court dress

Figure 1. Pen-and-ink self-portrait (1624) pasted on to title page, verso. Esther Inglis, *Octonaries upon the Vanitie and Inconstancie of the World*, 1601. Folger Shakespeare Library MS v.a.91, fol. 1v.

into traditional sixteenth-century Scottish countrywoman's attire. Four tiny colour self-portraits of Inglis are also known. In one striking example from Houghton Library, Harvard University (cover image), an elaborately decorated green oval wreath and the inscription 'ESTHER INGLIS ANNO 1607' frame a three-quarters-length portrait of Inglis on a brilliant blue background. Wearing a small, low-crowned black hat, a large white ruff and a black dress with a long, pointed bodice and full skirt, Inglis stands behind a red-coloured table; her right hand holds a quill pen and her left hand is placed upon an open book.[4]

The visual self-presentation is not the only means by which Inglis represents herself as a writing woman in her calligraphic manuscripts.[5] In contrast to the usual anonymity of scribal copying, Inglis affixes her name to the title pages of her works, such as the lavish title page of a second (1607) Folger copy of the *Octonaries* (figure 2). Here, the title, scripted to imitate print and surrounded with a naturalistic watercolour border of pansies, red roses, butterflies and a bird on a gold background, asserts (in rather uncertain spelling) that the *Octonaries* are 'WRITIN AND LIMD BE ME ESTHER INGLIS THE XXIII, DECEMB: 1607'. Inglis, of course, needed to identify herself clearly as the 'writer' of her texts if the aim of reward from the recipients to whom they were directed was to be realized.

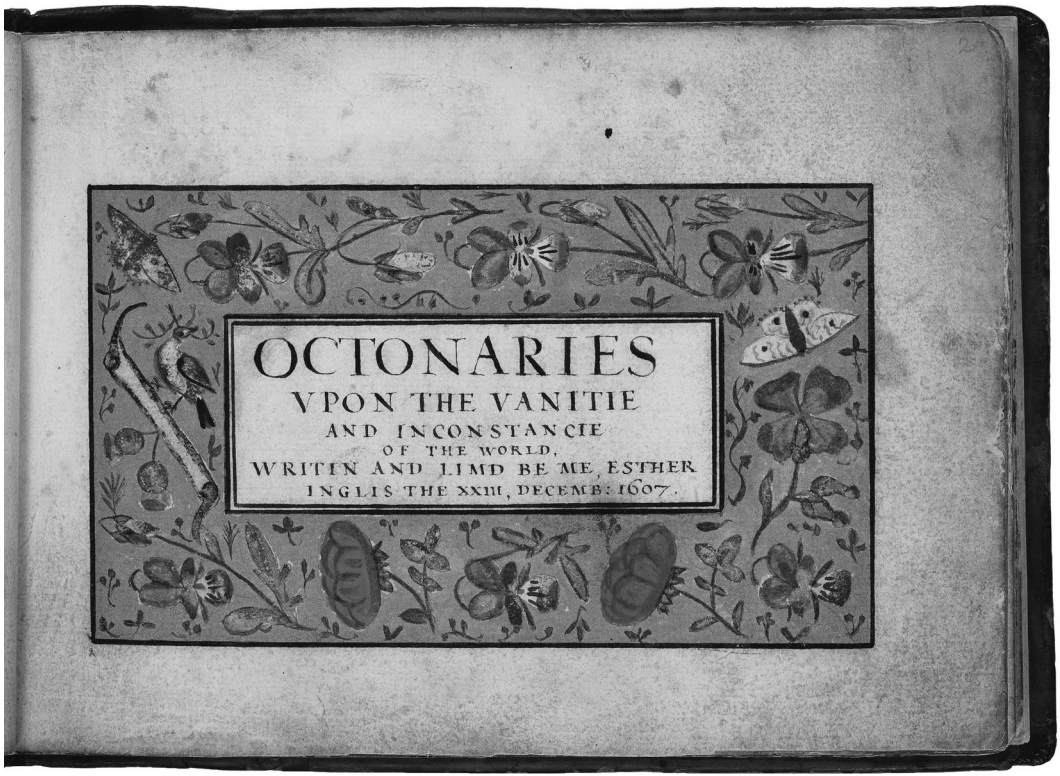

Figure 2. Title page, Esther Inglis, *Octonaries upon the Vanitie and Inconstancie of the World*, 1607. Folger Shakespeare Library MS v.a.92, fol. 1.

Enclosed commendatory verses also correlate with dedications to hoped-for patrons to sketch various figures of Inglis. The 1607 Folger *Octonaries* contains no visual portrait, but a portrait of Inglis is sketched in two commendatory verses by G.D. that follow the title page and dedication. The first, an anagram on Esther Inglis's name ('RESISTING HEL'), begins:

> RESISTING HEL, thou shalt the heav'ns obtaine
> Devils are afray'd of such as them resist
> Draw neere to God, he will draw neere againe
> And compass thee about with armyes blest (fol. 4)

The second poem, a sonnet 'TO THE ONLY PARAGON, AND matchles Mistresse of the golden Pen. ESTHER INGLIS', contrasts Inglis's work to the 'mightie Monuments' raised by men: 'But thou glore of thy sexe, and mirakill to men | Dost purches to thy self immortell prayse and fame | By draughts inimitable, of thy unmatched Pen' (fol. 5).

Similarly, Inglis uses the conventions of the dedication to shape her self-image in her texts. In a dedication to 'Lord Peter' (John, 1st Baron Petre) in a New York Public Library 1609 copy of the *Octonaries* (Spencer Collection, French MS. 14), Inglis asserts that the 'labours of my pen and pensill' have been found 'very gratious and acceptable' to some of the 'highest and nobils of this land' as well as to 'sundrie of the Peers of this Realme as to the Kings Ma:^{tie} and to the Prince his Grace' (fol. 2). Rather than de-emphasizing her gender, Inglis asks Lord Petre to give her bound manuscript 'sum secret corner in your Ho[nour's] cabinet and so much the rather because it is the handy work of a woman' (fol. 2). In another example, the lavish 1624 *Emblemes Chrestiens* (British Library, Royal MS. 17.D.XVI), copied from Georgette de Montenay and dedicated to Prince Charles, Inglis aligns herself with biblical type, desiring 'to cast my Myte into the Treasurye, as that poore widowe did, whom our Saviour commended … respecting rather y^{e} affection of the giver, then the quantitie of the gift' (fol. 4). In approaching Prince Charles, Inglis casts aside the 'shamefastnesse and feare (which commonlie accompaneis our sexe)', drawing on the prince's 'douce and sweet inclination' to recover 'the Spirit of ane Amazon Lady' (fol. 4). Her elaborately crafted manuscript is the product of 'two yeeres labours of the small cunning, that my tottering right ☞, now being in the age of fiftie three yeeres, might affoord' (fol. 4). This was, in fact, her last volume, as Inglis died later that year.

What can Inglis's self-portraits and her calligraphic self-representations tell us about women's writing in early modern Britain? For all of the demurrals in her dedications, Inglis is not only a model craftswoman but a shrewd player in patronage networks and a remarkable early instance of a woman who writes professionally, exemplifying considerable creativity and

ingenuity even while negotiating class boundaries and gender constrictions. The ongoing intersections of manuscript and print can be seen as Inglis not only imitates printed script but copies and reworks actual title pages, borders, ornaments and emblems. Inglis's trilingual work (Latin, French, and English) reminds us of the complexities of literacy (of both reading and writing) in this period, as well as of the need to look at women writers placed beyond London, or even England. Her selection and transcription of biblical and devotional texts show not only the importance of religion in this period, but the symbiosis of reading and writing. Inglis's working collaboration with her clergyman husband, Bartholomew Kello, and the multiple facets of her work – transcription and translation, visual and verbal self-portraits, a compendium of scripts, *trompe-l'oeil* floral borders and even embroidered velvet bindings – show the complexities of early modern women's authorship. Finally, Inglis's tiny, beautifully executed calligraphic manuscripts are not only fascinating cultural artefacts but stunning aesthetic objects. Esther Inglis's work is one striking example of the range and richness of the writing of early modern women, writing that rewards the interest of students and scholars alike.

The scholarly field

The study of early modern women writers has become a major, thriving field in the past twenty-five years. As recently as 1980, women had little representation on Renaissance course reading lists or in such volumes as the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*; nor were primary writings (manuscript or print) by women easily accessible. Few critical books were devoted primarily, much less exclusively, to the study of women. As is well known, this situation has been transformed, for both teaching and scholarship. A survey of university and college websites in the United States and the United Kingdom shows that courses on Renaissance women are widely taught at both the undergraduate and graduate level and that British Literature survey courses typically include attention to early women. Dissertations and first books on early women writers abound, as do edited collections of essays on particular themes or topics. Brown University Women Writers Online, and Early English Books Online have made printed texts by women accessible to a degree unimaginable even ten years ago.[6] The British Perdita project has produced an online database guide to more than five hundred manuscript compilations in collections from around the world.[7] Such book series as Oxford University Press's 'Women Writers in English, 1350–1850' and Ashgate's two series 'The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works' and 'The Early Modern Englishwoman

1500–1700: Contemporary Editions' have made editions of women's texts more broadly available. An array of good anthologies can also now be found for classroom use.

The academic field of early modern women's writing has also seen important theoretical shifts that continue to reshape and invigorate scholarship. Recent scholars have challenged or refined the essentialist assumptions of early work that took a largely biographical approach to women's writing and operated under an implicitly or explicitly evolutionary framework.[8] That is, scholars of early modern women's writing now stress the materiality of gendered writing, the importance of including manuscript as well as printed texts, collaborative as well as single 'authored' texts, and women's writings on a diverse range of non-literary, domestic and religious subjects, including those not explicitly treating female or feminist concerns.[9]

Developments within the broader field of early modern studies have also proved relevant and fruitful for consideration of early modern women's writing. A flourishing of work on manuscript culture, scribal publication and coterie verse has provided new information and new methodologies for scholars attending to a comprehensive range of women's writing.[10] Similarly, work on book history has called attention to the book as material object in shifting technologies of manuscript and print, to the role of the printing house in shaping the meaning of the text, and to the significance of such textual elements as typography and title-page format.[11] Work on the history of reading has dismantled binaries of reading/writing and of private/public and has highlighted the spectrum of literacies, the construction of subjectivity and the role that early owners and readers played in completing the publication process.[12] Studies of the British Atlantic world by historians and literary scholars have prompted scholars of early modern women's writing to move beyond London and England to consider writing in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and British America.[13]

Building upon these recent scholarly developments, this *Companion* offers nineteen original essays written by an international team of leading scholars on the rich and varied materials, sites and genres of women's writing in Britain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In offering basic historical, methodological and textual information for upper-level undergraduates, graduate students and scholars, these essays exemplify new and exciting approaches to the study of women's writing. The contributors consider but also move beyond *belles lettres* and single authors, offering diverse contexts for and new juxtapositions of texts and writers. Following the frequently tripartite structure of the *Companion* series, this volume gives attention to the materiality of writing, to the spaces and places in which women typically wrote and to the manifold genres of women's writing.

Part One, 'Material matters', considers the physical materials of women's writing. These range from writing implements (quill pen and ink) and writing manuals to women's texts in various forms: from manuscript miscellanies to tiny duodecimo pamphlets to elaborate folio print volumes. Also explored are the ways in which women participated in writing as readers, compilers and book owners and as primary and secondary authors. Part Two focuses on the places and spaces in which women wrote. These include domestic spaces such as the prayer closet, the kitchen, the sickroom and the birthing room, but also places outside the home such as the royal courts, the law courts, theatres, church buildings and educational sites. Part Three explores the diverse genres and forms of writing. These involve not fixed rules but flexible rubrics and guidelines which women appropriate, revise and transform in composing letters, translations, autobiographical accounts, political and religious prose, fiction, poetry and drama.

The tripartite structure of this *Companion* highlights the collaborative, context-generated nature of much of early modern women's writing, challenging notions of 'autonomous' authorship and a canon based on individualistic authors and biographies. This structure also allows contributors to give focused attention to manuscript compilation and circulation and to a wide, historically appropriate range of literary and non-literary genres. At the same time, the tripartite organization of the volume allows for fruitful exchange and cross-reference between chapters and should provide the maximum flexibility for teachers to correlate reading assignments on their favourite texts with the generic rubrics.

Historiography and literary history

What do we mean by 'early modern'? Why this framework in considering women's writing of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? That the humanist learning of the Renaissance was available to only a tiny minority of high-placed women, and indeed brought ideology and practices that could diminish women's status, makes the 'Renaissance' a problematic category for women, as Joan Kelly-Gadol some time ago argued.[14] 'Early modern', then, can offer a more capacious and flexible rubric. While the dates shift somewhat depending on subject (politics, economics, religion, culture) and region, 'early modern', roughly 1500–1700, indicates a period of transition in politics, religion, society and the state, usually taken to include the rise (however uneven) of religious diversity, the printing press, capitalism, the centralized and imperial nation state, science and individualism. In Britain (see Chronologies), this period saw the Tudor and Stuart monarchies, the mid-seventeenth-century civil wars, regicide and republic, the restoration of

the Stuart monarchy and the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688–9. Closely related to state politics are developments in the church: Henry VIII's break with Rome, and the ongoing impulse for further reformation in radical Protestantism, eventuating in the radical sectarianism of the civil war period and legally defined dissent after 1660. The history of the book develops in this period in England, from the introduction of the printing press by William Caxton in 1476, to considerable increase in printed books (albeit with manuscript production and circulation still continuing), and a flourishing of men's – and women's – print with the breakdown of censorship in the civil war period. Changes in medicine and science transformed the way in which many people viewed the microcosm of the human body and the macrocosm of the world. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were also an age of discovery and empire-building linked with national identity. Yet while religious identity, political participation and print moved towards recognizably 'modern forms', this period also retained distinctly 'early' modes, including constrictive gender roles for women that interacted with prescriptions of class, religion and politics.

Early modern women's writing challenges as much as it follows traditional historical and literary historical frameworks. Women's writing can be explored in relation to male-authored texts, as part of expanding the canon. At the same time, scholars of women's writing have questioned assumptions underlying the idea of the canon itself, while others have sought to define a women's literary history. Did early modern women view themselves as *women* writers? Is the category of women's writing a historical one? Traditional literary historical periods only in part attend to women's writing in such genres as narrative and lyric poetry, drama, fictional and non-fictional prose. And attending to non-literary genres moves women's writing even further outside of the traditional literary historical rubrics.

Yet tools and methods of literary analysis – examination of formalist qualities, of voice, speaker, theme, plot, character, imagery, metaphor and language – can be fruitfully deployed to analyse a wide range of women's texts. Women's drama – on or off the public stage – makes use of structural features, metrical form and coded language. Women's texts make aesthetic claims on our attention, and examining literary forms alongside other wide-ranging genres should enhance rather than detract from our sense of these women's rhetorical and formal writing skills.

Women in history: issues and debates

Who were the women writing these texts? Important early studies of women's writing – in the early modern period and elsewhere – focused

on the work of recovery, of bringing women's voices into the canon, or of challenging the whole idea of the canon itself. Such work has been critiqued as essentialist, and more theoretical studies now point to the plurality and instability of the category of 'woman'. With a focus on gender in history, we can move away from both essentializing and deconstruction of identity, grounding our work in historical particulars that include – among other factors – biography and women's life-writing. One crucial analytical tool with which we approach the writing of early modern women, then, is that of gender: the socially constructed roles, behaviour and activities that a given society considers appropriate for men and women, based on perceptions of biological sex.[15] While the normative economy of gender in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was based on hierarchy, with the male as superior, the social constructions of gender were not simply binary and static. Rather, gender roles were constructed, modified and reinforced – and sometimes challenged – in religious, scientific, medical, political, legal and literary discourses and practices: including the writing of early modern women.

The women whose writing we consider in this volume were royalist and parliamentarian; noble, aristocratic, middling class and of humble social origins; Catholic, Episcopal, Quaker and Baptist; Whig and Tory; married, single, separated and widowed; daughters, wives, mothers, sisters and grandmothers. They varied in belief and religious practice; in age and political affiliation; in degree of education and accomplishment. Some received humanist educations, while others were taught only rudimentary literacy skills. They lived in London and in Dublin, in Edinburgh and in Boston, Massachusetts, in Essex and in Oxford. 'Women', then, in this volume are understood not as monolithic but as configured in various familial, political, religious and social networks that included men and in which gender was only one important factor, along with class, religion and politics.

Gendered literacies, authorship and the materials of writing

How did these early modern women learn to write? How can variable literacies best be recovered? How can book history and aspects of the material text help us reconstruct women's reading and writing? What does authorship mean in the early modern period and particularly for women?

First, how did early modern women learn to write, given both gender and class constraints? As Caroline Bowden's chapter in this volume makes clear, lack of formal educational institutions for girls did not prevent many early modern women from acquiring – and enhancing – their literacy (reading and writing) skills. Bowden shows that informal education for girls occurred in multiple spaces and ways; in the early modern period, as today, once a basic

level of competence in writing literacy was achieved, use and incentive for use continued to enhance such literacy, even outside formal structures of education.

The materials of writing can be reconstructed from writing manuals and extant copy-books. As Heather Wolfe explains in this volume, writing women used three main handwriting scripts – italic, secretary and mixed (later called round) – deploying different scripts on different occasions, and exemplifying different degrees of reading and writing literacy. Even the methods of writing were perhaps more complex than we might expect: so that 'writing' a letter (as James Daybell shows) could involve dictation, following a set model, autographing oneself or some combination of these.

Writing was also linked with reading. As Edith Snook explores, signs of reading left by women in the margins of their books and in their letters, diaries and commonplace books indicate how reading generated creative links among readers and writers, how women made texts personally relevant as they copied them and how commonplacing, like writing in the margins of a book, provided the ground on which to become an author.

Throughout the early modern period, manuscript and printed forms co-existed and intersected. Like their male counterparts, many women preferred manuscript writing and (sometimes) circulation for their letters, diaries, journals, recipe books, religious and devotional writing, and miscellanies. Compiling manuscript miscellanies was an activity that lay between reading and writing, as Victoria Burke shows, and such miscellanies can help us understand how early modern women read as well as wrote. Miscellanies (as Burke argues) also broaden our ideas of authorship, including composite authorship and creative transcription, alteration, and response to texts in verse and prose.

Authorship in the early modern period was not only single but collective and collaborative. The statistics for women's printed writing seem bleak – only 42 first editions between 1601–40 accounting for ½ of 1 per cent of published texts, and 112 new editions by women in the publishing boom of 1641–50 or 1.2 per cent.[16] But, as Marcy North illustrates in this volume, simply counting first editions of single-authored works underestimates the presence and visibility of women's printed texts. Texts might gain attention because of the high rank or notoriety of the author; popular texts such as mother's advice books or recipe (receipt) books could be reprinted more than a dozen times; printing in folio rather than smaller formats brought additional notice; and secondary authorship or authorship of dedications or female-voiced poems also enhanced the place of women's writing in printed texts. A more historically apposite view of women's writing, then, attends

not only to the many forms of manuscript writing but to various kinds of print authorship.

Place, space and gender

Where did early modern women write? In thinking about space and women's writing, we need both to challenge and to move beyond binaries of public and private, domestic and political spheres. While early feminist studies saw women's confinement to the home (especially in and after the nineteenth century) as a sign of disempowerment and subordination, scholars now recognize that the domestic in the early modern period was not simply familial or 'private', but a place of work and business as well as of family and social networks and patronage.[17] Both experienced and imagined, material and ideological, space not only reflected but constructed gender relations in this period.[18] Architectural spaces within the household as well as such places as the royal courts, churches and law courts generated and shaped women's writing.

Educational spaces for girls, as Caroline Bowden suggests in this volume, were often found within the household, moving outside the humanist classroom (from which girls were largely excluded) into domestic education, enhanced in the everyday work of household business, receipts and financial transactions. Although woman's best place was said to be in the home, the early modern household, as Wendy Wall explores, was a space of considerable authority, anxiety and fantasy for its residents. 'Writing' in the household, as Wall argues, can be construed very broadly, including such activities as cookery, carving and needlework. Women's writing about health, healing and the body, as Mary Fissell explains, was characteristic of three domestic healing spaces: the closet, the birthing room and the sickroom. Such spaces produced writing in the forms of the recipe book, autobiography and female-authored midwifery manuals.

Devotional spaces, as Elizabeth Clarke explains in this volume, included not only the sanctuaries of the Church of England, but also the imagined spaces from which women critiqued the church in radical and unforeseen ways. Clarke shows how religious buildings for early modern women were imbued with the politics of state and of gender: many preferred the devotional spaces of their own mind to any physical place, and constructed for themselves in their own writing imaginative locations in which they could be confident in their relationships with God. As Karen Britland demonstrates, the royal courts also shaped women's writing: Elizabeth I, with her superb education, translated and wrote within the court; whilst Aemilia Lanyer and the Catholic convert Elizabeth Cary, more

precariously placed, used their writing to seek court patronage. Finally, the spaces of the law courts, as Frances Dolan explains, recorded and mediated women's voices in depositions and briefs, making assessment of women's voices as they were raised in early modern law courts particularly challenging. As Dolan suggests, the law courts afforded different opportunities and challenges to women as litigants and defendants, and their everyday struggles, as well as such better-known cases as Anne Clifford or Elizabeth Cary, add valuable new texts to be explored as 'women's writing'.

Form, genre and subject

What did early modern women write? Early modern women drew upon and engaged the traditional literary genres of lyric or narrative poetry, drama and fictional prose. They also wrote in a much wider range of texts (that circulated in print or manuscript). A full understanding of genre or form for early modern women's writing must develop a capacious sense of the literary, and recognize the value of employing literary tools to analyse a wide range of genres. Our study of genre moves, broadly, from manuscript and non-literary forms to literary and print genres and more recognizably modern forms of authorship: commercial and print.

Some of the earliest women's writing in this period took the often-neglected form of translation. Translation, as Danielle Clarke argues, placed women at the heart of textual production: raising issues of authorship, and of the relation between translation, manuscript and print culture. Whilst translation was clearly envisaged as a means by which virtue might be inculcated in women, the consequences of placing women at the heart of an activity central to rhetorical culture were, as Clarke shows, less predictable. Much of early modern women's writing occurred outside of literary genres. One important and pervasive form is the letter. As James Daybell explains, women dictated letters or wrote them themselves; they wrote to family, friends, lovers, patrons and mentors; their letters served personal, social, business, political and religious purposes. Much writing also took the form of life-writing. As Ramona Wray shows, early modern women scripted the self within the familiar structures of diary and memoir, as well as in less familiar forms such as the conversion narrative, prison account, prophecy, biography and legal deposition. Religious writing, dominant for both men and women in this period, took on, as Hilary Hinds explains, a visible and polemical (and often printed) form in the middle decades of the seventeenth century, as an extraordinary profusion of prophetic and

religious writings by English women accompanied the tumult of civil war and revolution.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Britain also show women appropriating and expanding traditional literary genres. As Helen Wilcox explores in this volume, women writing in the first-person form of lyric verse deployed inherited forms with technical virtuosity and imagination; the subjects of women's lyric encompassed not only earthly love and spiritual devotion (drawn from the sonnet tradition and the Psalms), but also social discourse, science, philosophy and even topography. Similarly, as Susanne Woods shows, early modern women's narrative poetry – from Elizabeth Melvill's dreams of a bright angel to Aemilia Lanyer's representation of Christ's passion to Lucy Hutchinson's epic rewriting of Genesis – appropriated and transformed received literary forms of tragedy, biblical and historical narrative, and epic.

We likewise find women writing in various dramatic modes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although before the 1660s, women did not write for the commercial stage in England, they nonetheless, as Marta Straznicky explains, translated or wrote dramas for household performance that also circulated in manuscript or, less often, targeted an educated public of play-readers. These ranged from inventive translations stemming from the humanist education that some girls did receive at home (e.g. Jane Lumley) to dramatic uses of the pastoral reflecting on personal, court or political matters (Lady Mary Wroth) to the lavishly printed plays of Margaret Cavendish. After the Restoration, as Derek Hughes shows, women became more active and visible in stage or public drama, in the new roles of actress, playwright and businesswoman. Women translated plays staged in Dublin and in London; and they contributed to the full generic range of Restoration public drama – not only the familiar witty and urbane sex comedies, but also tragicomedies and fully fledged tragedies. As Hughes demonstrates, the work of the most prominent female dramatist, Aphra Behn, reflected the shifting tastes and economic, political and courtly circumstances of the 1670s and 1680s.

Finally, despite cultural suspicions of fiction, especially in the feminized form of romance, early modern women, as Lori Humphrey Newcomb argues, moved deftly from reading to writing prose fiction in the years preceding the full-fledged formation of the English novel. While prefacing their work with disclaimers of topicality, women nonetheless used the seemingly escapist genre of romance to comment obliquely on personal, social or political circumstances, using romance stories of exile, separation and reunion to shadow national narratives of civil war, exile and eventual restoration.

Feminism and its discontents

From who, how, where and what, we come, finally, to the question of why women wrote. In the classroom, the answer might sometimes be assumed even before the question is asked: women wrote out of a feminist or proto-feminist discontent with gendered constraints in the family, society, church and state. Yet much writing by early modern women does not take up feminist concerns per se. Indeed, many early modern women writers voice overt support for gender and class hierarchies. Such a finding can cause a different kind of discontent: in the classroom. What are the various stated intentions and purposes of women's writing? How can we contextualize these within a historical framework, while nonetheless being attentive to questions of gender? How can we best attend to and account for the complex 'double-voicing' of early modern women's texts, as they embody dominant cultural prescripts and yet voice individual identity and dissent?[19]

Early modern women's motives for writing indeed have to do with gender, but also with politics, religion, class, ethnicity and simply practical affairs. Women wrote as part of household management: producing culinary or medical recipes, business receipts, monetary transactions and other records. They wrote letters as part of family, religious, social and political networks. They wrote to defend themselves and their reputations, whether in legal contexts or in various domestic forms of life-writing. They wrote for devotional purposes, to forge a place of worship or to track, order and construct a confessional self. They also wrote for professional gain, whether in popular print or for the stage. They wrote to become literary 'authors', in dialogue and sometimes in competition with male – and female – predecessors and literary traditions.

The question of why early modern women wrote is linked to the question of audience. These women wrote for themselves; they wrote before a divine audience; they wrote on behalf of and to their husbands, children, sisters, brothers and friends; they wrote to potential patrons and political allies; they wrote (whether explicitly or not) to a larger political or religious community, and even to the nation as a whole.

And, as such multiple purposes and audiences show, early modern women, even when not overtly addressing 'feminist' issues and the welfare of women in broad terms, nonetheless constructed gendered identities and exercised agency in ways that can relate to modern feminist concerns. Letters, commonplace books, miscellanies, autobiography, translations, religious writing, poetry, prose and drama can offer a broad lens on gender relations in this period. Early modern women found multiple ways of writing and of circulating their work. Active participants in gender politics, these women

writers gained agency within the institutional structures of family and society, church and state, law court and royal court.

The complex purposes and 'double-voicing' of early modern women's writing can be seen as, in conclusion, we return briefly to our Scottish calligrapher and miniaturist, Esther Inglis. We saw that in Inglis's manuscripts, her visual self-portraits were a kind of self-writing variously paralleled and extended by title pages, dedications and commendatory verse. In her 1624 pen-and-ink portrait (figure 1), we noticed that Inglis depicts herself with paper and book and with pen in hand. But Inglis is poised not to begin but rather to *resume* her writing, since the paper before her is already inscribed with a motto that recurs (in two basic forms) in her visual self-portraits: 'de dieu le bien, de moy le rien' (from God the good, from me nothing) and 'De l'Eternel le bien, de Moi le mal ou rien' (from the Eternal the good, from me bad or nothing). Is Inglis's apparent denial of her art in elaborately illuminated artistic manuscripts a simple contradiction? A sign of an oppressed woman gaining agency only through negating the self? We should first note that Inglis's female model, Georgette de Montenay, also inscribed a motto in her self-portraits: 'O plume en la main non vaine' (O pen in my hand not vain). Yet Inglis is not simply self-deprecatory while Montenay is self-assertive. Rather, both women draw upon the fervent Protestant view that the value of all human endeavour (including writing) comes not from the self but in relation to God. Inglis's pen is worthy not despite but because of the modesty, or rather, the piety that she shows. Gender, class, politics, religion and aesthetic concerns all inextricably intertwine in the tiny pen-and-ink self-portrait of Inglis, as throughout her exquisite calligraphic works. And these same factors inform women's writing in Britain throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To that rich and diverse body of writing, we now turn.

NOTES

1. The *Octonaries* (eight-line moralistic verses) are translated from *Octonaires sur la Vanité et Inconstance du Monde* by French Huguenot minister Antoine de la Roche Chandieu. This Folger copy, given its faded and water-damaged condition, its dual French and English verses, and its lack of a dedication, seems to have been retained by Inglis as a master copy. Inglis made at least eight additional copies of the *Octonaries*, each dedicated and given to a different hoped-for patron. On the manuscripts and on Inglis's biography see A. H. Scott-Elliott and Elspeth Yeo, 'Calligraphic Manuscripts of Esther Inglis (1571–1624): A Catalogue', *The Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America* 84 (1990), 11–86; and 'Inglis', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. On Inglis's gift-giving as motivated by Protestant impulse, see Georgianna Ziegler, ' "More than

Feminine Boldness": The Gift Books of Esther Inglis', in Mary E. Burke, *et al.* (eds.), *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), pp. 19–37.

2. On the transcription of printed books back into manuscript, see H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1580–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), on Inglis, p. 98; and Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), on Inglis, p. 14, n. 65.
3. The source portrait appears in Georgette de Montenay, *Emblèmes ou Devises Chrestiennes* (Lyons, 1571). Inglis probably used the later, 1584 Zurich edition. See Georgianna Ziegler, 'Hand-Ma[i]de Books: The Manuscripts of Esther Inglis, Early-Modern Precursors of the Artists' Book', in Peter Beal and Margaret J. M. Ezell (eds.), *English Manuscript Studies*, vol. IX (London: British Library, 2000), p. 86, n. 17; Ziegler, 'Devising a Queen: Elizabeth Stuart's Representation in the Emblematic Tradition', *Emblematica: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Emblem Studies* 14 (2005), 167–76; and Patricia Demers, *Women's Writing in English: Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 146–7.
4. The portrait, measuring 75 x 85 mm, is from *Argumenta in Librum Psalmorum Davidis* (1606), Houghton Library, Harvard MS Typ 212, fol. 9v.
5. For consideration of how Inglis appropriates the conventions of both presentation manuscripts and print culture to construct an authorial self, see Susan Frye, 'Materializing Authorship in Esther Inglis's Books', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32 (2002), 469–91.
6. See Brown Women Writers: www.wwp.brown.edu/.
7. See the Perdita project: www.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/html/.
8. See, for instance, Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (eds.), '*This Double Voice*': *Gendered Writing in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).
9. See, for example, Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); and Ezell, 'The Laughing Tortoise: Speculations on Manuscript Sources and Women's Book History', *English Literary Renaissance* 38.2 (2008), 331–55.
10. Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995). See also Victoria Burke's chapter in this volume.
11. Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). See also Marcy North's chapter in this volume.
12. Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See also Edith Snook's chapter in this volume.
13. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds.), *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002). See Kate Chedgzoy, *Women's Writing in the British Atlantic World: Memory, Place and History, 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

14. Joan Kelly-Gadol, 'Did Women Have a Renaissance?', in Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (eds.), *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp. 137–64.
15. Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review* 91.5 (1986), 1053–75; Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class, and Citizenship* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), especially chapter 1.
16. See Patricia Crawford, 'Women's Published Writings 1600–1700', in Mary Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society 1500–1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 1985), pp. 211–82 (265–6).
17. See Helen Hills, 'Theorizing the Relationship between Architecture and Gender in Early Modern Europe', in Hills (ed.), *Architecture and the Politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 3–22.
18. On social space, see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).
19. On 'double-voicing', see Elaine Showalter, 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness', in Elizabeth Abel (ed.), *Writing and Sexual Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 31–5.

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