Portrait of Catherine Macaulay by Catherine Read, 1764. *Courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.*

Mary Wollstonecraft by John Opie, 1797. *Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.*

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The literature in this volume was written in Britain between 1578 and 1799 by women who were conscious of the inferior status ascribed to women, not only by the men and women they lived and worked with but by the whole fabric of culture and society around them. That cultural fabric had begun to change long before mid-Elizabethan England, but during the two hundred years under consideration, the nation's economic and political power moved out of the hands of land-owning aristocrats into those of rising merchant-manufacturing capitalists.[1] Thus, the period covered by the literature in this volume marks the period of transition in England from feudal-agricultural to bourgeois-industrial society.

In seventeenth-century emerging capitalist society, the enclosure of land and the needs of society based on new socio-economic relations meant that the ancient social phenomenon of shared home livelihoods and industries was being eroded and replaced by the separation of private from public labor.[2] Women working at home and men working outside the home became a standard arrangement. Cities grew and jobs became more specialized, often at the expense of such traditional women's work as midwifery, baking, and home-spinning. During the eighteenth century, men replaced women in such well-known female occupations as millinery, hairdressing, and mantua-making.[3] As the population exploded in the second half of the eighteenth century, and so long as jobs could not keep pace with the changing demography, the pressure increased to provide work, especially in agriculture and crafts, for surplus male laborers.[4] Cast out of large sectors of the labor market, many women sought marriage as one of the remaining viable legal options. It is not surprising, therefore, that this period of dramatic economic and political shifts should also contain the earliest signs of a rising feminist consciousness in Britain. The process had been a slow one. Negative views of women dated back to the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman Ancient World and to early Christian antifeminist attitudes expressed most forcibly in patristic literature. The first feminist response to misogynous literature, by Christine de Pisan, surfaced in the late Middle Ages in France and the ensuing debate was labelled the *Querelle des Femmes*.[5] The earliest polemics in English appeared in mid-

Elizabethan England in 1578 and 1589 in response to cultural restrictions and traditional womanhating assaults.

Before the 1640s and the outbreak of the Civil War in England, several polemical responses written by women in response to antifeminist diatribes by men were published. These diatribes expressed male fury at increasingly independent public displays by primarily aristocratic and wealthy women. Part of the literary debate in the early 1620s centered on tracts about the allegedly masculine woman, "Hic Mulier," and the feminized man, "Haec Vir."[6] James I, the misogynous son of Mary, Queen of Scots, put legislation in motion to curb these gestures of female defiance.[7]

This rise in women's aggressive self-expression in English received further support from ideas of religious equality propagated by nonconformist sects during and after the Civil War (1642–49). Many sectaries (members of nonconformist sects)—radical religious women—agitated for freedom of speech and action and the right to challenge royal, church, and, by extension, patriarchal authority.[8] Their collective forthrightness and creativity inaugurated the right of women to public assertion and action. Women writers had arrived in numbers and in earnest. Reaction to the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the callous attitudes of a dissolute court toward women further engendered female resistance. These protests about the treatment of women were connected in tone, spirit, and ideas to the feminist writings of women from Margaret Tyler and Jane Anger in 1578 and 1589 to the tracts that responded to Joseph Swetnam around 1617.

During the seventeenth century, midwives had agitated to keep men out of their profession. At the same time, the occupation of business accounting became somewhat available to women and allowed for the training of female apprentices. Women had also become almanac writers and in some guilds and trades (printing, for example), women's participation continued into the eighteenth century.[9] The profession of writing attracted only the most audacious of women, for being paid to write fell into the same category as writing at all: society frowned upon it and only those who were both bold and desperate dared, or those whose privileged status allowed them to dispense with society's sanction of their activities.[10]

Though not the first British woman to write to earn a livelihood, Aphra Behn (1640–1689) was probably the first to do so exclusively; certainly she was the first major female dramatist. Mary Griffith Pix (1666–1720) followed Behn in this practice. Delarivière Manley (1663–1724), Catherine Cockburn Trotter (1679–1749), possibly Jane Barker, (fl. 1688 and 1723), and Eliza Fowler Haywood (1693?–1756), who began as an actor, attempted the same with differing degrees of success. In the next generation Susanna Centlivre (1667?–1723) also acted to begin with but soon switched to writing plays. The Anglo-Saxon scholar Elizabeth Elstob (1683–1756) was aided by her brother, but after he died she disappeared

(for fear of debts) and was "found" by chance over twenty years later. She never worked again on scholarly projects. At the turn of the eighteenth century, such aristocrats as Lady Chudleigh (1656–1710) probably published without expectation of payment. Several others later in the century—Sarah Robinson Scott (1723–1795) and Elizabeth Carter (1717–1760) among them—tried to earn a subsistence by writing or translating, but they had other means, either a family or helpful friends, to supplement their incomes. By the late eighteenth century several female polemicists (Catherine Sawbridge Macaulay Graham, 1731–1791, Mary Wollstonecraft, 1759–1797, and Mary Hays, 1759/60–1843, among them) had committed themselves to writing as a major profession. When Ann Cromartie Yearsley (1756–1806), originally a Bristol milkwoman, attempted to do so, class and circumstances defeated her.

As a profession, education also began to attract women. Bathsua Pell Makin (1608–1675?) wrote to advertise her school as well as to argue for female education. Hannah Woolley (1627–1670) began teaching school at fifteen and wrote a form of training manual for women in the domestic arts at a time when jobs were disappearing. After the Civil War, women still agitated to be preachers.

In general, women were losing ground in their efforts to retain space and their traditional functions in the workforce. The enclosure of cultivable and common land also affected working women although it was a gradual process. Some of the dispossessed stayed in the countryside and eked out a living while others moved to the cities and found themselves frequently excluded from the skilled jobs that urban reconstruction and capital investment were opening up. During this time, the old family structure based on kin gave way more and more to a family unit based on the married couple. Changing work patterns made many women look to marriage for economic survival, in part because a woman's wages tended to be two-thirds those of a man. Nonetheless, protests (such as one in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1739) about male usurpation of female jobs were relatively rare until the late eighteenth century, when tough-minded feminists attacked the issue of occupations directly.[11]

In the same general time frame, Lord Chancellor Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 came into being. It acknowledged the right of the state to interfere in the right of citizens to marry or not, and it condoned interference in private morals and cultural traditions, especially those of the poor. While it helped, somewhat, to curb the kind of abuse endured by Pamela Andrews and Clarissa Harlowe at the hands of employers, parents, and suitors, it also made more overt the generally unspoken equation of women with private property.

The legal status of married women matched their social status, since they had no legal identity apart from men. Legally, women were classified with "wards, lunatics, idiots, and outlaws." In common law, married women possessed no civil rights: they could not own property, make wills, testify in courts, serve on juries, or obtain divorces. So great was

their dependent status that even if they acquired large debts women could not be imprisoned. Their children, like their bodies and personal property, belonged to their husbands. Single women, however, could own property and a widow could usually regain one-third of the goods that had automatically been acquired by her husband upon marriage.[12]

Middle-Class Occupations

For eighteenth-century middle-class women who remained single and who were not independently wealthy, occupations were severely limited to those considered lady-like. By and large, business and trade were regarded as the province of male workers. Mary Wollstonecraft's career as an independent petty-bourgeois worker ran the gamut of acceptable options. She began as a chaperone to a widow, then, while living with the family of her friend, Fanny Blood, she helped to supplement their income by sewing (which brought her face-to-face with the realities of laboring-class existence), and after that, with borrowed capital, she administered and taught in a day school, which also solicited a few pupils as lodgers. She wrote a courtesy manual in 1786, and while she worked as a governess to a aristocratic Irish family, she wrote her first novel. After her dismissal from that work, Joseph Johnson, the radical publisher, hired her as an editorial assistant, translator (self-taught), and reviewer for his journal. She then branched out as a full-fledged author, writing a moral handbook for young people, polemics, history, a travel-book, more educational pieces, and fiction. These occupations (aside from sewing, which was considered déclassé) were the basic socially acceptable ones for middle-class women. Most of the jobs depended on a certain educational level.

During the eighteenth century, as men worked for the new economy in an environment divorced from their private lives, there was a new focus on marriage. Its appropriateness as a social arrangement was preached from the pulpit and publicized in tracts and courtesy literature, its economic advantages for parents and society often glossed over. The majority of middle-class women began (or rather learned) to view being a mother as a paramount priority. (Women who sought work and economic self-sufficiency were a definite minority and nunneries as an option had substantially disappeared with the dissolution of the monasteries, 1536–1539.) Marriage was one of the few fashionable entrées as well as the only profitable one into adult society, "recommended as an alliance of sense."[13] Consequently, many women's lives took on a more isolated and private character. In turn, motherhood was accorded a new respect that helped to counterbalance the lack of respect and sense of social unproductiveness engendered by women's exclusion from the marketplace. Wives of merchant-traders and of up-and-coming "businessmen" gradually became, in their finery and through their leisure, indicators of their husbands' wealth rather than wage earners in their own right. People from abroad frequently commented on middle-class women's (voluntary and involuntary) idleness. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the idea of choice in partner gained greater currency; daughters of the professional and landed classes attained more freedom than they had formerly possessed in their selection of spouse.

The cult of motherhood guaranteed the married middle-class woman a unique identity and status, which compensated for her absence from the waged work force. The doctrine of separate spheres had become a living reality in eighteenth-century gender reconstruction. Chastity and modesty became essential female characteristics, being without waged work was an acceptable and eventually, for some, a desirable status. The centuries-old misogynous characterization of women as inconstant, power-hungry, immodest, wanton, and sexually fierce had appeared in an updated variation in Restoration drama. These images were gradually replaced by the increasingly popular images of the angel in the house, the virtuous maiden in distress, the prostitute in the street, and the all-but-swashbuckling proletarian adventurer represented by Daniel Defoe's Moll Flanders (1722). As gentility reigned, even fiction was pronounced too risqué for what were now regarded as delicate feminine constitutions. Pure in body and spirit, submissive damsels of delicacy heard no aspersions cast about their foul sexual natures. From a bourgeois male standpoint, it was no longer socially or economically expedient to label women as Eve-like tempters.

Aristocratic Occupations

The four duties of a "lady in polite society," as Roy Porter describes them, were to obey her husband, bear heirs and discharge her duty to her children, run a household (itself a complex, multi-faceted task), and be "an ambassadress of grace."[14] That position, however, was changing. The aristocratic woman was no longer the domestic *chargée d'affaires* of the large manor. Consumer goods had begun to reduce the need for heavy domestic production and huge household staffs. Also, in mid-eighteenth century, when maternal breastfeeding became more favored (often for health reasons) and as household duties became increasingly delegated by aristocratic and upper middle-class women, so too did the cult of appearance come more into vogue. Decreased participation in domestic work also fostered benevolence toward society's poor in the aristocrats' search (and the leisured middle-class woman's search) for useful activity. Country aristocrats spent fashionable seasons in London.

Laboring-Class Occupations

On the other hand, the lives of laboring (working-class) women remained a matter of survival. Earning considerably lower wages, women still worked with men in the fields and in some industries. Mary Collier's experiences as a washerwoman and her description of women field-workers were probably accurate for England in the late 1730s. The dou-

ble and triple shift was not uncommon in the provinces and elsewhere. In the course of the century, women lost jobs they had long held; in the city, the high rate of prostitution spoke tellingly about the availability of jobs, especially for deracinated country women, and it was not unusual for women to starve to death; in agriculture, women in some regions were specifically relegated to weeding.[15] The visible liminality of working women made marriage a more attractive proposition, although total withdrawal into domesticity was scarcely financially feasible for laboring people who frequently viewed marriage as a joint economic venture, if not a necessity. Domestic service, often of a thoroughly exploitative nature, was always available. Probably the major economic blow for women was the development of textile production late in the eighteenth century (following a series of technological inventions beginning with the spinning jenny), which gradually rendered domestic spinning an outmoded system. Nonetheless, Eric Richards finds cause to praise the shift in women's roles at this time:

> The accelerated growth of the British economy in the last decades of the Eighteenth Century generated employment in both old and new sectors—for instance in handloom weaving and in cotton spinning factories . . . Moreover, in the most spectacular growth sector, cotton, there was a disproportionate expansion in jobs which were to become almost specific to women.[16]

Women had been extensively pressed out of agricultural production; then late eighteenth-century textile factories became the workplaces for large numbers of laboring women.

Laboring-Class Education

Just as the occupational options available to a woman varied according to her socio-economic status, so did the kind of education a woman received.[17] For the laboring poor, endowed charitable institutions administered by share-holders on joint stock principles—the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1699) was one—offered two areas of concentration: religious instruction, which taught acceptance of social place as part of God's plan; and skills for domestic service or, at best, a trade. Job training was especially favored since the Society's backers reaped profits from that scheme. By the end of the eighteenth century, earlier educational ideas, fostered in part by the Evangelical movement, had blossomed into a Sunday School movement—1,086 schools with 69,000 pupils by 1797—and some short-lived "schools of industry," which were primarily workshops to train the unemployed poor.[18] (Lack of profits caused their closure.) All systems of educating the poor stressed the rigid maintenance of "keeping one's place," an ideology calculated to preempt any form of resistance to social standing by the

disadvantaged. Literacy was doubly distrusted for it both increased understanding and fomented rebellion.[19] As eighteenth-century crime increased and stories of the French revolutionary overthrow of tyrannical power crossed the channel, suppression of the poor became a particular concern. Since many "philanthropic educators" held High Church and Tory beliefs, their conservative attitudes made them fearful that even Sunday Schools would prove subversive. In the end, though, teaching humility, a sense of duty, and obedience to God's will seemed more profitable in an age of rapidly growing productivity. Stephen Duck, the thresher-turned-poet, in his poem "On Poverty" (ca. 1730), expressed in a terse couplet the ideology that middle-class philanthropists strove to instill:

> Let poverty or want be what it will,
> It does proceed from God; therefore's no ill.

Aristocratic Education

At the other end of the social scale, aristocratic families occasionally engaged governesses, and perhaps dancing, drawing, or singing masters for their daughters, while some received instruction from their brother's tutors. Frequently these well-connected daughters had access to a richly stocked library, if their fathers and mothers considered female education important. Also available were a few highly selective and expensive boarding schools. According to prescriptive literature, the education of an aristocratic female had to equip her "to devote her time, her talents, and her fortune, to the improvement of public morals, and the increase of public happiness."[20] Queen Mary, for example, pursued a difficult course of self-education, while the impecunious Saxonist scholar, Elizabeth Elstob, was hired to tutor the Duchess of Portland's children. She taught them religion, the practice of virtue, reading, speaking, and understanding English, a program not unlike that recommended in middle-class readers by middle-class educators. In contrast, Jonathan Swift commented contemptuously on "the daughters of great and rich families [who are] left entirely to their mothers, or they are sent to boarding-schools, or put into the hands of English or French governesses, and generally the worst that can be gotten for money."[21] An unapologetic Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) explained "the forlorn state of matrimony" by saying that "we have nothing to excuse ourselves but that it was done a great while ago and we were very young when we did it."[22] With marriage and social position the most crucial factors in the lives of females "born to estates," their education was often grievously neglected or was merely superficial, a schooling in fashion and manners. At best, the education of upper-class females seemed to have been an erratic affair.

Middle-Class Education and the Rise of Philanthropy

Between aristocratic and laboring-class daughters were the middle-class females, many of whom attended boarding and day schools that offered a curriculum designed to equip pupils with "accomplishments" for a highly competitive marriage market. These included embroidery, lace-making, drawing and painting, music, deportment, and light ("snippet") learning. Anxious parents viewed this fashionable, genteel preparation as a model of the education favored by the upper class, whose customs and practices they sought to emulate. Competent day schools, which varied in quality throughout the country, presented another avenue to education.[23]

Parental attitudes toward the female education of middle-class and aristocratic daughters alike largely determined its quality. Extant records indicate that some clerical fathers took a special interest in educating their daughters, even in intellectual fields generally deemed inappropriate for women. Several mid- to late eighteenth-century women known as Bluestockings, who gained reputations as cultural intellectuals, were encouraged by such fathers. Moreover, recent evidence suggests that the tenets of prescriptive literature were rarely practiced, or at least not universally followed, and that many middle-class females received a more rigorous and classical education than has been previously thought.[24]

In the salons organized and frequented by Bluestockings between 1740 and 1790, female intellect and wit helped to demolish old ideas about the inferior social place and mental capacities of women and opened the door to public acceptance of women as serious thinkers.[25] Several wrote about female education, and one acknowledged Bluestocking leader, Elizabeth Robinson Montagu (1720–1800), discussed its advantages with a dissenting friend. All women who wrote about education, however—Bluestockings (who were generally conservative), Dissenters, Quakers, and Evangelicals alike—held that education should be appropriate to socio-economic status. In 1797, the year that Wollstonecraft died, for example, she was drafting an essay about the role of educated middle-class females in functioning as leaders for poorer or economically disadvantaged females. Even for the enlightened middle-class, education was not part of the agenda for disadvantaged women.

The fact that daughters received less complete education and had considerably fewer occupations available than their brothers left time weighing heavily on the hands of women who were neither devotees of fashion nor fulltime childbearers and childrearers. Many—often as a result of their religious affiliations and beliefs—chose philanthropy as a rewarding and useful avocation to compensate for their perceived lack of productivity and as a means of acceptable self-fulfillment. Several aristocratic women, such as Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon, were also well-known philanthropists.

Tending the sick, helping the homeless and downtrodden, and simultaneously making women feel useful also obscured the social and educational privations of females in general. Philanthropy held ambiguous implications for women. While women's public activities contradicted the idea that feminine delicacy necessarily anchored women at home and separated them from the world of thought and action, philanthropy also reinforced the insidious doctrine of separate spheres (in male and female occupations as well as between the privileged and the underprivileged of society), and implicitly strengthened old biological determinist distortions and fantasies.[26]

Most importantly, however, the public acceptance of women as social reformers led to female resistance to prostitution and slavery. Radical and dissenting writers were similarly concerned. Shortly after the Abolition movement was formed in 1787, for instance, several women wrote antislavery poems, tracts, and fictional episodes.[27] Waged and unwaged, women were entering the public sphere in earnest.

Women Writers and the Growth of Feminism

Having suggested some key areas of discrimination against women in this rapidly altering society from the late 1600s to 1800, I want to sketch in chronological sequence the development of feminist ideas and perspectives that this unwarranted discrimination provoked, and at the same time connect the ideas to the writers who thought creatively about this discrimination.

The Early Seventeenth Century

Of the writers who ushered in feminist demands and attacks in mid-Elizabethan England, Margaret Tyler (fl. 1578), a Roman Catholic member—possibly a servant—in the aristocratic Howard household, and Jane Anger (fl. 1589) (probably a pseudonym), head the list. Despite differences in style and focus, they possessed a similar sense of women's rights, fostered in part by the presence of a woman ruler and Renaissance humanist ideas about learning.

Margaret Tyler, who translated the popular works of a Roman Catholic Spaniard, Diego Ortuñez de Calahorra, used that opportunity to protest the view that women were intellectually unfit for anything but translation. Tyler contended that women could write on or translate any subject customarily commandeered by men, such as war. She foreshadowed Aphra Behn, who was the first female professional writer, and Mary Wollstonecraft, whose second *Vindication* challenged Jean-

Jacques Rousseau's misogyny and the patriarchal condescension of male courtesy writers. Tyler stressed that women should be free to exercise their intellectual faculties.[28]

In the first sustained reactive feminist polemic by a woman in English, Jane Anger vociferously demanded rights for women and registered serious opposition to the behavior of men (and apparently one in particular) toward women.[29] Like Tyler she revealed an awareness about women as a group and wrote consciously on their behalf. Vehement and vitriolic in her tirade in marked contrast to Tyler's calm exposition, Anger resolutely responded to a particular detractor (and any others) who dared call women sexually inappeasable. Contemptuously scorning men who toyed with women, Anger forged a path that led to Behn, who was first to maintain that women were legitimate heirs to their own sexuality.

Twenty years after Anger, during the reign of the misogynous James I, Joseph Swetnam tipped his cap to a popular tradition and deliberately insulted women in a work entitled *The araignment [sic] of lewd, idle, froward, and unconstant women* (1617).[30] Three women responded. One of them, a pseudonymous Ester Sowernam (fl. 1617), indicted Swetnam for "scurrilous effrontery" and lack of responsibility.[31] Her rebuttal was consonant with the irate feelings of women who had to contend with James I's attempts to repress their social behavior and dress.[32] As sweet in her refutation as he was sour in his accusation (Swetnam vs. Sowernam, and probably an intended pun), she suggested that he be tried and jailed unless he repented. Sowernam's counterpolemic refused to countenance male abuse; she accused male detractors of becoming obsessive if not downright irrational, as they felt increasingly threatened by the developing resilience and resistance of women, whom they customarily disrespected and abused.

At the prelude to the Civil War, in 1640, two pseudonymous spinsters, Mary Tattle-Well and Joane Hit-Him-Home, explain how they were goaded into answering a woman-hating diatribe by John Taylor. (Internal evidence in Taylor's pamphlet, *The Juniper Lecture* (1639), makes it possible that Taylor wrote the *Woman's Sharp Revenge.*) Certainly both pamphlets illustrate the presence of attack and counterattack in this era and a sustained continuance of the *Querelle.*[33] A particularly outspoken woman, Katherine Chidley, the Amazonian Brownist-Congregationalist, proclaimed in 1641 that women should be their own moral agents; that even though tradition dictated female obedience in marriage, men should not expect automatic control of women's consciences.[34] Her actions and the actions of other radical women sectaries evinced a growing sense of female independence, bred by unconventional and changing times. Ecstatic women prophets, world travellers spreading God's word, itinerant preachers in the 1640s and 50s, and a plethora of writers on unorthodox religious beliefs bespoke a personal and collective style of public female independence. One critic estimates conservatively that between 300 and 400 women wrote in the period from 1640 to 1700, that over one-half wrote religio-political tracts, and that these writings constituted about one percent of texts published.[35] The attempt by male writers to reduce certain women to laughingstocks in Restoration comedy partly stemmed from fear of female autonomy and the need to staunch it. Women had to know their place, the patriarchy intoned, but from this era on, despite intermittent and even long lulls, the taste of freedom and its recognition were never lost. This grouping of religious women protesters could be said to be the first feminist wave in British history if we allow "feminists in action" (in Joan Kelly's phrase) as part of our definition.

By the time the Stuart line resumed power in 1660, the idea of religious egalitarianism had taken root. The tract of Margaret Askew Fell Fox (1614–1702) in 1667, which promulgated a woman's right to preach and denied the inferiority of women by citing scripture, was philosophically allied to the new notions about equality before God and salvation for all.[36]

Prior to Fell's campaign for women preachers, Katherine Philips (1631–1664), a merchant's daughter from the Protestant middle class, organized a circle of friends whom she endowed with classical names (her own was Orinda). She wrote poems to celebrate friendship and love between women.[37] By founding this active yet informal literary group of women (many of whom never met), Philips offered female love, affection, and friendship a concrete and expressive literary shape, but only in semi-private, until a 1664 pirated edition of Philips's poems apparently provoked her into reluctant publication. Until that time, Philips's poetry circulated at court and in Irish circles. The positive public reception of Philips's work—even while it did not secure acceptance for the less conventional women writers who followed her—at least ensured a lasting respectability for seventeenth-century romantic friendship and gained visibility for women writers and for the literature of love between women.

Before Philips's coterie sprang up and for some time afterwards, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1623–1673), on her return from continental exile where she had been exposed to advanced ideas about women, wrote on behalf of women.[38] The shoddy reception she encountered adumbrated that of Behn, but her social status and wealth rendered her less vulnerable. Her husband shrewdly evaluated the public response; "Here's the crime," he stated in the epistle to her *Philosophical and Physical Opinions* (1665) (the subjects cited in the Duchess's title were already exceptional choices for a woman writer), "a lady writes them." A versatile author, she articulated feminist statements in various forms, but most extensively through the many independent-minded heroines in her dramas. In a formal address, she explained to the faculty of

Oxford and Cambridge the need to empower women politically and expatiated metaphorically on their exclusion from public life. On another occasion, in the popular orations form, she chose female equality as the subject for debate. In her play, *The Convent of Pleasure,* which resembled Katherine Philips's love poems in its philosophy of women's unity and community, the Duchess proposed that women effect an idyllic withdrawal to a convent—in the tradition of celebrating pastoral retirement—and described the affectional and sexual relationships that might ensue.

Specifically, the Duchess dramatized a lesbian relationship between Lady Happy and the "Princess," in which Lady Happy tried to resolve the love she felt for a woman. Even the fact that the "Princess" turned out to be a man did not detract from the joy in loving that was expressed by Lady Happy before her discovery of male chicanery. Despite the stagey machinations of the plot, the Duchess's sympathetic, tender, and natural portrayal of lesbian love was probably the first in English literature. This idea of voluntary withdrawal from society, which Mary Astell (1668–1731) was to become renowned for proposing in the two volumes of *A Serious Proposal for the Ladies* (1694, 1697), had earlier been voiced by religious women, and was precisely the point objected to by Bishop Burnet in Astell's project: Too much like a Roman Catholic idea, he was rumored to have said.

One striking feature of the Duchess's writings which differentiated the pre- from the post-Civil War writings by women was her exploration of new scientific language and discoveries. In attempting to understand natural phenomena rationally, the Duchess introduced the principles of the new science and Cartesian philosophy into women's literature.[39] Before long, Aphra Behn, Mary Astell, and Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham, to name only three celebrated exponents, would be writing in a similar manner.[40]

These Commonwealth and early Restoration writers, then, explored the love of one woman for another, wrote on women's friendships and their private lives. They stressed the right to preach, the need for education and the expression of female intellect, as far as the new science. As feminist writers, their contribution was to recognize female capacity and the importance that unity among women might provide as a buffer against entrenched patriarchal values. Furthermore, women writing to other women portrayed alternative ways of living—even women like the Duchess, who was happily married—in contrast to traditional marriage and the focus on husband and children. Such literature written by women for women also encouraged the possibility of female communities and affectional and sexual life-long relationships with other women. The literature signified that women could and did make choices of their own. Alienated individual women, moreover, might be inspired to seek out women friends.

The Later Seventeenth Century

In the 1670s, the learned Bathsua Makin, who had tutored the daughter of the soon-to-be-beheaded Charles I, argued for the right of gentlewomen to an education. (Contemporary Eurocentric attitudes are also evident in her text.) She proposed a rigorous education that consisted of a thorough grounding in languages, arts, and the sciences.[41] As Makin indicates, her essay doubled as an advertisement for the school she had opened in Tottenham High Road. The working gentlewoman who promoted her wares in the marketplace had arrived. In the same decade, Hannah Woolley also earned a living by writing popular encyclopaedic handbooks in the domestic arts for a female readership, but unlike Makin she was catering to women in service jobs as well as middle-class women who wanted to improve their repertoire in household cuisine and medicine.[42] Other women who tried to survive at least partially by writing were the midwives Jane Sharpe (fl. 1671) and Elizabeth Cellier (fl. 1680), both of whom feared professional extinction.[43] All of them prepared the public for secular didactic writings by women and trailblazed for Aphra Behn, who earned her living solely through her writing.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the *Querelle des Femmes,* the controversy about women's talents and worth, whose most notable exponent was Christine de Pisan, had waged intermittently on the continent and in Britain.[44] By 1659, Anna Maria van Schurman's translated Latin tract, *The Learned Maid; or, Whether a Maid may be a Scholar?* had inspired Bathsua Makin, a one-time correspondent with Schurman, to write an essay intended "to revive the Antient Education of gentlewomen."[45] The disruption of national life by the Civil War, the return of exiles, antipathy to a bawdy, woman-baiting, male-dominated court, and economic survival played their part in Makin's contention that gentlewomen deserved an education. Makin contrasted the neglect of intellectual and moral training in Britain with the situation in France where intelligent women were highly respected and had created their own salon society.[46] However, Makin's desire for female education extended only to those who could afford substantial school fees. Not until the advent of charity schools toward the end of the seventeenth century, largely motivated by high numbers of illiterate and unemployed country and town poor, did the question of a more widely based education arise. Furthermore, the growing popularity of Cartesian philosophy, which encouraged analysis rather than unexamined acceptance of the world, complemented the idea that female education was desirable and appropriate, just as the emergence of rationalist ideas also encouraged a growth in feminist consciousness.[47] Yet few or no practical changes in women's conditions resulted.

By the time Aphra Behn was writing for a living in the theatre throughout the 1670s and 80s, one way to economic independence for women had been sketchily mapped out. In her first play, *The Forced Marriage*

(1671), as the title proclaimed, she evinced a shrewd sense about women's economic survival, while rape and impotence were featured in some poems.[48] In later prose fiction, she continued to explore marital tribulations. She also advocated a woman's right to her own sexuality, particularly in one or perhaps two late lesbian poems written in the last decade of her life.[49]

In *Oroonoko: or, the Royal Slave,* a long prose fiction about a noble black West African man and woman who are enslaved in Surinam, South America (at the time a British colony, today Guyana), Behn outspokenly castigated the barbarous practices of European slave-owners.[50] Although Oroonoko himself looks European, is educated by Europeans, and is a prince (factors which probably satisfied Behn's Royalist sympathies and admirers), Behn presented an abolitionist stance in at least one major episode despite internal political contraditions in the narrative. In so doing, she inaugurated a concern (along with a few earlier Quaker women who had noted colonial prejudice) that punctuated feminist literature up to Wollstonecraft and beyond: namely, the battle against slavery and the slave trade. Based on personal experiences in South America, *Oroonoko* was an amazing exception to the near absence of protest against slavery in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Britain. Behn envisioned how future feminists might ally with other dominated peoples.

Behn also popularized the spread of rationalist philosophy and scientific ideas by translating Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's *La Pluralité des Deux Mondes* (commonly translated as *A Discovery of New Worlds)* (1688), especially tailored to offer women the "new science" in palatable form.[51] In her preface, Behn specifically contended that women disparaged themselves intellectually and emotionally and urged a more finely-honed sharpening of their mental faculties. Specifically, Fontenelle's tract opened discoveries in astronomy and physics to women, through a set of dialogues between a "Lady" and a male philosopher who instructs her in the Copernican system. Behn also presented the Marchioness (the "Lady") as an intellectual woman, although the Cartesian framework was scaled down to accommodate the "inferior female mind."

That same decade, Sarah Fyge (later Field Egerton, 1669/1672–1722/1723), a fourteen-year-old girl incensed by Robert Gould's misogynous tract entitled . . . *The Pride, Lust, and Inconstancy, etc. of Woman* . . . , penned the only major polemic of the 1680s, probably the work of the youngest feminist on record.[52] For this she was banished from her parents' home. In *The Female Advocate* (1686), Fyge took issue point-by-point with the three qualities Gould attributed to women, and concluded by accusing men of insecurity based on jealousy, incompetence, and a selfish love of power.[53] Her response at such an early age and in her own name indicated that Behn's public stand and the general uncompromising attitudes of some women were influencing the literary

climate. Gould's tract and Fyge's reactive or counterpolemic may also reflect England's unstable political situation with its violent controversies over the Stuart succession. Further, limited knowledge about the lives of early polemicists makes it difficult to estimate other political influences on their work.

Contemporaneously in 1688, Jane Barker introduced two feminist themes into her first volume of poetry—the desirability of the single life and close female friendship.[54] The poems also relate to the tradition of celebrating pastoral retirement. In fact Barker was rumored to have initiated a coterie in the North of England similar to that of Katherine Philips. Her inclusion of related themes in *A Patch-Work Screen* . . . in the 1720s indicated a thirty-year interest in if not commitment to these ideas and possibly the existence of social support which strengthened her choice not to marry.[55] As a political Roman Catholic exiled for some time on the continent, she might have felt more freedom to experiment. Both Fyge and Barker expanded the range of polemic and posited new alternatives for women.

From about the mid-1680s until 1713 or thereabouts, unprecedented numbers of women wrote on women's condition, of whom Mary Astell was the best known. It was the first sizable wave of British secular feminist protest in history. Many were inspired by the general philosophical shift toward a rational and empirical analysis of life that rejected tradition and encouraged self-confidence and independent thought.

Mary Astell had risen to the occasion by arguing in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694, 1697) for female education and eschewing scriptural justifications for inequitable conditions. She put explicit feminist demands on a firm footing and with rational common sense helped dissolve preposterously unscientific notions about women.[56]

Between the first part of Astell's *Serious Proposal* and her other major feminist work, *Some Reflections upon Marriage* (1700),[57] Judith Drake (fl. 1696) inscribed *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex,* which borrowed its format from the Greek writer Theophrastus (who had composed witty character sketches, often of political opponents), and at the same time added to an incisive feminist literature that had begun to root its arguments in rationalist thought. These tracts sought philosophically to change the course of education and marriage for women. Women should ponder important decisions and never act on impulse or surrender to pressure, Astell insistently exhorted. Although some women had made public statements before hers, Astell's was the most open and intellectual; in her time she was unrivalled as an irreproachable guardian of feminist ideas. The growth of the new science, the application of rationalist approaches to problems, and an emphasis on empirical data, along with a political situation that encouraged individual efforts, empowered the feminist argument, or rather changed its shape for good.

Unfortunately, the same set of beliefs which caused Astell to speak out also produced a society divided into gender-based public and private

spheres. As newly domesticated women accommodated the emerging capital-based economy, the individualist stance and ethic tended to become a male prerogative. Defoe's exceptional Moll Flanders testified, by virtue of her rarity as an autonomous woman, to the increased subjugation and enforced protection of the majority of women who were discouraged from unilateral actions.

The Early Eighteenth Century

In 1701, another reactive polemic in verse-debate form appeared, this time a response by the Anglican Lady Chudleigh to a sermon preached at Sherbourn in Dorsetshire in 1699 by a nonconformist minister, the Reverend John Sprint.[58] Lady Chudleigh used the reasoned debate of Astell's logical argumentation in an unusual combination with the dialogue form of the Duchess of Newcastle's orations. Astell's advocacy of improved treatment of and self-education for women greatly influenced Lady Chudleigh who rejected out of hand Sprint's argument about women's mental inferiority. A previous respondent, the indignant Eugenia, had penned a more traditional, scripturally-studded attack. (Astell may also have referred to Sprint in *Some Reflections.*)[59]

The respondents to Sprint are important to consider because they reveal two different approaches, one old, one up-and-coming: a rational versus a Scripture-based opposition. Moreover, Sprint himself, instead of using an age-old, irrational argument about women as unworthly, Eve-tainted strumpets, stressed the need for absolute female obedience toward husbands, a much favored eighteenth-century form of subtle misogyny.[60] Equally negatively, and unlike Swetnam, Taylor, and Gould, Sprint advocated marriage as the sole or highly desirable option for women, another indication of changing times. He encouraged women to view monogamy as a social and political goal; rhetorically he enshrined it as a sacrosanct institution. Whereas men had been busy ridiculing women for "Eve-like" tendencies in the past, now such men of the cloth as Sprint (and a host of contemporary marriage manuals) promoted a more submissive, madonna-like image of women. Thus, by 1700, women were beginning to be viewed as dependent and weaker beings, scarcely competent to fend or think much for themselves. This new condescension appropriately served a society in which men employed out of the home needed a wife to care for house and children and to establish guaranteed heirs to hard-earned fortunes. Underpinned by science and rational-empirical beliefs, the new order was burying, at least ostensibly and without ceremony, unscientific myths about sexually insatiable, wanton, fickle, impudent women, and substituting a new view of women as property-in-need-of-protection.

Nonetheless, women's independent thinking was not to be denied and the feminist counterattacks on Sprint were a case in point. Lady Chudleigh's two early eighteenth-century volumes of moral-philosophical essays and poems on female friendship, inequalities within marriage, and

the need for women to be educated, asserted in the most respectable tones the same kind of creative autonomy that had been initiated in mid- to late Restoration feminist writings.[61]

Sarah Fyge, who in 1686 resembled Lady Chudleigh in writing a major feminist polemic to launch herself publicly as a writer, published a volume of poems two decades or so later, after her polemic against Gould, in which she addressed women friends lovingly, attacked marriage and male power, applauded liberty, and advocated female education.[62] Fyge paid a great deal more attention to unconventional love affairs than almost any other woman poet except Aphra Behn (and the Ephelia of 1679 who wrote love poems to a slave trader, J. G.). Fyge's father (whom she loved dearly according to poems in the 1703 volume), was associated with circles that studied necromancy, alchemy, Rosicrucian philosophy, the significance of numbers, and other unscientific, even fanciful matters. Although her father objected to the spirited riposte to Gould—Fyge is the second *known* female reactive polemicist after Rachel Speght in 1617—possibly her upbringing contributed to her unorthodox behavior, subject matter, and images.

A third poet, the High Church Tory Royalist Anne Finch, later Lady Winchilsea (1661–1720), wrote poems that addressed the rights of women to their own creativity and autonomous thought.[63] In her volume of poems she especially stressed those ideas in "The Introduction," the first poem, and reiterated them throughout. During her life at Eastwell, which afforded her the kind of rural, solitary retreat so relished in the eighteenth century, and despite personal melancholy, Lady Winchilsea also composed tender poems to several women friends in the classical style employed by Philips. She chose the name of Ardelia for herself, and Arminda for her close friend, Catherine Cavendish. Analyzing sexual politics in a detached manner appropriate to one in a happy marriage, in other poems Lady Winchilsea scrutinized uneven power relationships in contemporary marriages.

During this productive period for women's poetry, Elizabeth Elstob contributed rigorous scholarly translation to women's literary output. As a sophisticated scholar, she knew at first hand the twin difficulties (if not the impossibilities) of becoming and earning a living as a female scholar. Her preface to *An English-Saxon Homily* exhorted her readership to learn their history.[64] Women's exclusion from the universities made Elstob's accomplishments even more remarkable. She was encouraged, as were several other intellectual women then and later by sympathetic males, in her case a brother and a divine. (Her pursuit of scholarship might have owed something to the fostering of female intellect by such women as her friend Mary Astell.)

As women slowly but firmly began to incorporate feminist themes into their poetry during what Christopher Hill has called the "century of revolution"—a period that witnessed some relaxation in the licensing laws—several writers also wrote on personal melancholy. (The licensing

law of 1662 that lapsed for six years in 1679 and expired in 1694 made government regulation of the press more difficult.[65] Taxes on printed matter did not effectively begin until 1710.) Lady Winchilsea, Lady Chudleigh, and the Duchess of Newcastle, the earlier Royalist and aristocratic recluse who had found little outlet for her rich, probing intelligence, intermittently despaired. The suffering of this trio of titled women was matched by the high incidence of melancholy that characterized the writings of substantial numbers of women (and men) throughout the century. Elizabeth Carter's headaches are said to have intellectually incapacitated her from time to time, while Mary Wollstonecraft's life was punctuated by states of melancholy and agonizing "nerves."

The fact that these writers were able to transcend personally difficult circumstances illuminated the reality of their independent spirits, perseverance, and self-confidence. Whether they lauded liberty, female friendship, and the right to write, or criticized male privilege and the injustice of a woman's lot, they were fashioning a public self that advertized female resistance to anything short of equality and full humanity. As a political Royalist who assumed her title in 1712 when her husband succeeded somewhat unexpectedly to the earldom, Lady Winchilsea stressed a woman's right to her talents as much out of psychological and personal needs as political persuasion.

While poetry had long been considered a dignified avocation among noblewomen, English political events encouraged women of other social classes to freer expression. Queen Elizabeth herself, along with Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, Queen Mary Stuart, Anne Boleyn, and Lady Elizabeth Cooke Russell, had been prominent as poets in the sixteenth century; in the seventeenth century, the aristocrats Lady Mary Wroth, Princess Elizabeth, and Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle were joined by such middle-class poets as Anna Hume, Katherine Philips, and Anne Killigrew. John Dryden wrote an elegy on the death of the admired and creative Killigrew who had suffered at the hands of plagiarists, a fate not uncommon among women writers. And women poets from the middle class as well as the aristocracy elegized Dryden.[66] Not surprisingly then, both middle-class and aristocratic women—Jane Barker, Elizabeth Singer Rowe (1674–1737), Sarah Fyge Field Egerton, Lady Mary Chudleigh, and Lady Winchilsea—wrote and published during the less severely regulated decades on either side of 1700. Changing times also fostered new approaches in women's poetry and prose: the rationalism that informed Lady Chudleigh's verse debate with the Reverend John Sprint and Mary Astell's complex essays were among several fine examples. The female dramatists who followed Aphra Behn also reaffirmed that women were entitled to use forms generally viewed as exclusively male. But they suffered for their courage. Such female wits as Delarivière Manley, Catherine Cockburn Trotter, and Mary Griffith Pix endured particularly cruel treatment as they launched their plays during the 1694–96 season.[67] Fear of this literary triumvirate

loomed so large (it seems) that an "unknown" cruelly parodied them in a play entitled *The Female Wits* (1696).

Poetry also afforded an escape from endless "leisure" for many aristocratic and middle-class women, for whom self-expression was tacitly vetoed. From the vantage point of her country retreat, Lady Winchilsea explored the state of mind and level of awareness of women and her personal anguish about the treatment accorded women poets. In many poems and essays, these writers testified to earnest wrestlings with the fatigue of that very leisure. Nearly all of them praised female friendship as a haven of security, born of common bondage and resistance, as well as choice.

After this efflorescence in the first decade or so of the eighteenth century, reaction set in. Some, like Eliza Haywood, who were considered exceptional were also considered marginal (and ridiculous), and as a result few women writers mounted opposition or proposed solutions to women's degraded status. In the 1720s, Mary Davys was one of the few who sounded the feminist void.[68] Besides, even such female intellectuals as Astell had been mocked in print.[69] Certainly Manley concocted scandal chronicles that involved a daringly explicit sexuality and love relationships between women, but her main intention was to vilify the Whig opposition.[70] Jane Barker's tale about the two women who sloughed off the husband of one of them and lived harmoniously also joined this growing literature of female friendship. Eliza Haywood narrated love tales with vigorous and occasionally feminocentric heroines and Susanna Centlivre offered bold prefaces and comic plays to the public that featured similarly strong women.[71] Elizabeth Elstob's plea for a rigorous female education including Anglo-Saxon scholarship, made an equally forceful impact of a different sort.

What caused this comparative dearth of full-length feminist works after the early years of the eighteenth century, following the Astell cluster, until 1739? Some contributing factors included the consolidation of Whig power and capitalist enterprise, the domestication of women, the cultural preference for very moral or very salacious literature that tended to preclude genuinely reformist literature, and an earnest effort to stabilize the nation in its post-revolutionary phase. Aristocratic and well-placed middle-class women who drove around Hyde Park after mandatory hours of dalliance at their toilette and women at the other end of the social scale who scrabbled for a living lacked either inclination or time for realistic appraisals of the status of women, let alone for feminist reforms. With education mostly denied them and marriage elevated to a principle, how could they consider the implementation of reforms, let alone the idea?

The Later Eighteenth Century

From the late 1730s until the continental and transatlantic political explosions in the 1770s and 1780s, a handful of women hesitantly and

cautiously tendered a few feminist ideas. This new, somewhat understated feminist period began after bourgeois relationships had somewhat entrenched themselves. Both Sarah Fielding (1710–1768) and Eliza Haywood in roughly mid-century called in different ways for a reconsideration of female education. But even before their appearance, Sophia (fl. 1739–1741) and Mary Collier (1689/90– after 1759) urged unique feminist statements on the public.

Sophia used the "Goddess of Wisdom" as a pen name when she translated (or refurbished) "A.L." 's translation of François Poulain de la Barre's French tract, *De l'Egalité des deux Sexes, Discours Physique et Moral, Où l'on voit l'importance de se défaire des Préjuges, (The Woman as Good as the Man)* (1673).[72] Poulain de la Barre, Cartesian and cleric, argued rationally for an end to prejudice against women on the grounds that the belief in female inferiority amounted to no more than an opinion.[73] Perceiving women to be mentally underdeveloped as a result of differential, biased treatment, Sophia assertively proclaimed her fundamental message: women are superior to men.[74] Gone was the polite, biblical argument of Makin, citing worthy, intelligent women of the past, and gone were Astell's reasoned requests for a retirement where well-bred women could pursue the pious, intellectual life. Adding contemporary touches to her paraphrase, Sophia petitioned loudly for education on the basis of women's obvious equality. Her non-scriptural argument and refusal to accept predetermined sex roles prefigured the stance of such writers of the revolutionary era as Catherine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft. Sophia also sought female autonomy in society that would include access to professions in medicine, law, and even the military. Education, in a word, was key; withholding it was a self-perpetuating malicious practice that caused mental distinctions between women and men.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and an anonymous reviewer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* also remonstrated on women's behalf around 1739. Throughout her correspondence Lady Mary espoused feminist ideas and in her life executed independent actions, not least her elopement, while in her periodical, *The Nonsense of Commonsense,* she contributed substantially to the contemporary feminist debate. Her voluntary exile announced to the public that a woman with intellectual and economic resources could lead an independent, unconventional life if she so desired. The 1739 reviewer challenged the usurpation of female occupations by men, and predicted that the continuing lack of occupations for women would become even more of a pressing issue.[75]

These voices were contrapuntally accompanied in the same year by that of Mary Collier, the washerwoman. Stephen Duck's paean of praise to working men in *The Thresher's Labor,* which failed to mention female workers, provoked an outraged Collier to defend her sex and class, an extraordinary combination and literary coup in an age that had only recently begun an elementary charity program to educate the "poor."[76]

Her argument that the work and lives of laboring women deserved respect was unprecedented in feminist literature and displayed remarkable vision and compassion. Certainly those who seemed to have been from the laboring class—possibly Margaret Tyler before 1700, and Mary Leapor (1722–1746) and Ann Yearsley in the eighteenth century—wrote on feminist issues, but no one else had defended laboring women as laboring women.

After her public drubbing in Alexander Pope's first version of *The Dunciad* (1729), Eliza Haywood reappeared in the 1740s to call for female education.[77] In her volume entitled *The Governess,* Sarah Fielding did the same, and in *The Adventures of David Simple* Fielding introduced an independently minded woman.[78] Fielding also complained about the politics of female economic survival.[79] Aside from a handful of minor poets, little else of feminist interest appeared until Charlotte Charke's (?–1760) autobiography in 1755.[80] Her racy, transvestite, risk-taking life, as well as her father's disowning of her, meant that few wanted or would have dared to emulate her. Yet she compiled her adventures as dramatically as an actress could, sold them, and tried to survive. Like Behn and Manley, she exemplified the bold, autonomous self. Around this time, Bluestocking assemblies became à la mode and, in new and different ways, offered the following messages to women: be assertive, take the lead, wait for no man, write, create, be vocal, do not flinch from flouting custom.

Primarily from professional and upper middle-class families, the Bluestockings held gatherings that tended to include "kindred spirits"—certain desirable male and female friends and conversationalists. They opposed card-playing (as *Rambler* 10 by Hester Mulso Chapone (1727–1801) made plain), the social "round," education in frivolous accomplishments, and the cult of *bon ton:* Elizabeth Robinson Montagu's "Dialogues" specifically addressed such issues.[81] Elegantly, they substituted moral, intellectual, and philanthropic activities. Several tried to help women, such as Elizabeth Elstob, down on their luck. They spoke contemptuously of forced marriage. Elizabeth Carter and Hester Chapone praised the single life.[82] Wearing the virtuous mantle of social acceptance, unlike the daredevil Charke, they presented various models of independent womanhood—male-identified or not—that mattered more in the long run than their salons and conversations combined.

Elizabeth Carter stood out as the foremost intellectual in the circle. Self-taught and educated by her rector-father and a Huguenot minister in nine languages including Arabic, Carter studied mathematics and astronomy and published poems in *The Gentleman's Magazine* as early as 1735. Her father was a friend of the editor, Edward Cave.[83] By the mid-eighteenth century some male supporters, among them George Ballard and John Duncombe, had begun to pay written tribute to learned women.[84] Carter's intellectual triumphs also included a translation of Epictetus in 1758 which earned her a modest living. To mid-eighteenth-

century society she offered concrete evidence that popular ideas about female inferiority were and always had been false and prejudicial. Nor was marriage for her. Rather she preferred the kind of life favored by Lady Eleanor Butler (1737–1829) and Sarah Ponsonby (1755–1831) after their elopement: a healthy daily regimen with good exercise and diet, an impressive, steady program of learning, and a respectful attention to religion and the moral code.[85] Like Mary Astell, one suspects, Carter cherished the classical way of life—*mens sana in corpore sano*—and would have taken it to include speaking out for one's beliefs. She conceded the need for insurrection against tyranny and subscribed to a humanitarian ideal that included an active opposition to slavery. Furthermore, Carter's contribution to the feminist cause extended to the personal, passionate, and frequent correspondence with her young friend, Catherine Talbot, earning her a prominent place in the literature of romantic friendships.[86] For three decades, she and Talbot maintained an intimate correspondence and relationship, united in their devotion to aging parents and a healthy mental and physical life. Elizabeth Robinson Montagu, later labelled Queen of the Blues, eagerly pursued a close relationship with Carter, whose capacities she deeply admired. Occasionally Carter and Montagu sojourned together (and often with men like Lord Bath), and Montagu saw to it that Carter received a small annuity upon her husband Edward Montagu's death to cover Carter's admittedly ascetic needs. Paradoxically the Bluestocking challenge to patriarchal values was neither recognized as a conscious threat (perhaps because of their generally conservative political views) nor did it serve to precipitate female revolt.

Elizabeth Montagu's sister, Sarah Robinson Scott, after a short-lived marriage, set up house just outside Bath with her life-long companion, Lady Barbara Montagu, and together they conducted one of the most successful, practical implementations of Astell's educational proposal yet effected. Scott (with Lady Barbara's assistance, according to Horace Walpole), fictionalized their experiences in establishing a primarily female community in a novel entitled *Millenium Hall* (1762).[87] In this work five affluent young women, of whom two pairs were romantic friends, retire to the country and pool their money to help the less advantaged. They hire physically impaired servants, train gentlewomen who had fallen on hard times for appropriate occupations, and launch a local carpet and rug factory to aid local employment. The novel indirectly illustrated what ill-educated, alienated, and abandoned lives many women led. Sarah Scott's carefully woven confessional narrative veiled a concerned social commentary. Elizabeth Montagu wrote admiringly about her sister's daily activities, possibly to quell any rumors that Sarah was dissolute because she left her husband:

> My sister rises early, and as soon as she has read prayers to their small family, she sets down to cut and prepare work for 12 poor girls, whose schooling they pay for; to those whom she finds more than ordinarily capable, she teaches writing and mathematics herself. The work these children are usually employed in is making child-bed linen and clothes for poor people in the neighborhood, which Lady Bab and she bestow as they see occasion. Very early on Sunday morning these girls, with 12 little boys whom they also send to school, come to my sister and repeat their catechism, read some chapters, have the principal articles of their religion explained to them, and then are sent to the parish church. These good works are often performed by the Methodist ladies in the heat of enthusiasm, but thank God, my sister's is a calm and rational piety. . . . Lady Bab Montagu concurs with her in all these things, and their convent, for by its regularity it resembles one, is really a cheerful place.[88]

Sarah Scott and Lady Barbara lived on the edges not only of the London Bluestocking circles, but also of the Batheaston assemblies, modeled by a Lady Miller along Bluestocking lines. Anna Seward (1747–1809), whose writings to Honora Sneyd revealed the same deep attachment displayed by Carter in her letters to Talbot, was often a guest of honor at these affairs.[89] So once was Fanny Burney, the author of *Evelina.* Women's social and cultural circles had also taken temporary root outside London. As more evidence is discovered about women's lives at this time, we may find connections between the women with whom Katherine Philips and Jane Barker were respectively acquainted and the female circles with which Mary Astell, Lady Mary Chudleigh, Elizabeth Rowe, Sarah Fyge Field Egerton, Delarivière Manley, and other early eighteenth-century writers associated. There may even have been links between the early informal groupings and the Bluestocking and Batheaston circles. Their lives exemplify and affirm, in Adrienne Rich's phrase, a lesbian continuum, "a range—through each woman's life and throughout history—of women—identified experience. . . ."[90]

After establishing a home at Plas Newydd in the wake of their acclaimed elopement, which caused much familial consternation, Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby lived a studious, contented, lesbian existence, celebrities in their lifetimes who attracted national and international visitors eager to see two eighteenth-century *beaux idéals* in practice: nonthreatening (as it was then perceived) female friendship and rustic retirement. Lady Eleanor recorded their industrious happy life in such daily detail that to read it seems almost an invasion of intimacy. Unostentatiously they lived a couple-centered version of the pious educational retirement recommended by Astell. Sarah Scott and Lady Barbara Montagu did the same. Since Sarah Scott ordered her letters burned, and her sister's letters about why Scott left her husband so hurriedly are missing, there are gaps in our knowledge of their history. Nonetheless, the day-books and diaries of Lady Eleanor record a comfortable "roman-

tic friendship," tender personal revelations and socio-political commentary that epitomize the best in that informal genre.

Perhaps most strikingly significant in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall* and the Butler diaries was the living *and* fictional articulation of the fundamental desirability (and necessity) of female unity. Its political message to the world in the case of Lady Eleanor and Sarah Ponsonby was that intimate female friends could publicly cohabit; in the case of Sarah Scott and Lady Barbara Montagu, their philanthropic activities exemplified public-political involvement.

As the Bluestockings raised the tone of polite society, a provincial Southwest England woman, Mary Scott (Taylor) (1752–1793), inspired by John Duncombe's celebration of women in *The Feminiad,* wrote her own celebratory version in 1774, entitled *The Female Advocate.*[91] Digging into women's history, she exalted many women, Phillis Wheatley, the African-born poet sold in 1761 to a Boston family, who had just then visited Britain the year before, being an especially notable example. (Wheatley wrote her first poem at age fourteen.)[92] Assuredly a committed abolitionist, Mary Scott set herself apart from the earlier feminists who had used historical models, and nothing more, to prove the worth of women. She narrated the contributions of women through history, but additionally, in copious footnotes filled with biographical and historical information, she supplied an historical "parallel" narrative or extra-text. Unlike Makin, Scott did not simply recite lists of illustrious women whose existence, valor, social class, and intellect could counteract some argument from male authority with one of female authority; rather she attempted a commendatory historical overview.

In impressive contrast on the feminist spectrum, Mary Collier's class counterpart in the latter half of the century, Anne Yearsley, the Bristol milkwoman-poet, wrote an autobiographical preface to the fourth edition of her first volume of poems to dispute the right of Hannah More (1745–1833) to expropriate Yearsley's poetic earnings.[93] The fact that her second volume of poems published without More's patronage sold only moderately well, and that after other literary experiments, including a novel and a historical play, she dropped out of literary sight, proved that access to successful publication depended on economics as much as talent. This was especially true for laboring people. Nonetheless, Yearsley and Collier, along with Margaret Tyler (probably a domestic servant), and Mary Leapor (a gardener's daughter), proved that laboring women significantly contributed to the emerging feminist canon.

Yearsley's poems ranged from touching tributes to her mother and her children to a long, poignant poem against the slave trade.[94] Automatically excluded from Bluestocking circles after the rift with More, she self-avowedly identified with the physical and economic exploitation of enslaved people. A proud woman, she spoke out forthrightly in her preface against Hannah More's conduct. In economic terms, Yearsley had gambled and lost, for More's withdrawal of patronage eventually

made Yearsley's attempted career as a writer a much more difficult task. Eventually she opened a circulating library. Her quarrel, rather than her poems, entered feminist annals. Nonetheless historical hindsight credits Yearsley and Collier as models of the kind of resistance that workers in the next century (in a quite different context) would muster against those whom they identified as "oppressor-bosses."

Unlike Yearsley, Catherine Macaulay, a spokeswoman for the radical, Whig-republican cause in Britain between 1760 and 1775, was admired on three continents.[95] Like the Bluestockings, she held a salon, but one where conversation was dominated by national and international politics rather than cultural affairs. As an ardent controversialist as well as an intellectually vigorous, well-travelled, self-supporting woman, her example might well have counted for more than her feminist writings. In *Letters on Education* (1790), Macaulay deplored the differential education of the sexes based on the theory of "sexual character," and argued that environmental circumstances and conditioning, as well as impoverished education bred of backward thinking, kept women deprived and by and large intellectually undistinguished. Macaulay posited that men have traditionally used their preeminent physical strength to subjugate women. Men and women needed to mix at every level, she entreated, and to eschew the untenable claim of male superiority. She derided the notion that the sexes differed in reason and moral virtues. Since no difference beyond the physical existed, (a position held over a century earlier by Poulain de la Barre) education should be accessible to all. Eventually, if boys and girls were to grow up, share, and play together, their friendships would surely be devoid of coquetry and shallow thinking. Macaulay also proposed women's direct rather than indirect participation in politics.

Strongly influenced by Macaulay before her own untimely death in 1797, Mary Wollstonecraft synthesized many of the earlier feminist themes.[96] In her first tract, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787), she deplored the fact that male (and some female) writers on education pictured women as weak and unsuitable for disciplined study; instead she advocated a Lockean-based education and "thinking," not an activity then generally associated with women. She castigated the treatment of women like herself who worked in subservient jobs as governesses, chaperones, and in allied service-based occupations. Her love-elegy in fiction to her friend and erstwhile mentor Fanny Blood, publicly fictionalized their complex emotional relationship. *Mary, a Fiction* (1788) ranks with distinction among the literature of female friendship.

By the time Wollstonecraft wrote her second *Vindication* in 1792, she was openly polemicizing on behalf of all women. Invoking the theory of natural rights in alignment with Enlightenment tenets and nonconformist beliefs, she rallied against slavery, particularly in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men,* and the divisions between the haves and

have-nots; she called for jobs, open access to employment, the vote, national public education for children up to nine years of age, co-education for women, and even-handed treatment for Native American Indians.[97] Women needed independence, she insisted, but middle-class women would (must) lead the way: Her adherence to a bourgeois liberal politic, which bestowed political primacy on the middle class, snagged her in contradictions from which she was never philosophically able to extricate herself. She still saw wife/mother as the primary role for women, but not for herself. The draft of her last novel, *The Wrongs of Women,* revealed a tension between her avowed philosophy which favored middle-class eminence and her depiction in fiction of a potential laboring class victory. The washerwoman Jemima is a psychologically and physically battered laboring woman who refuses surrender on any terms, whose level-headedness will see the bourgeois heroine Maria and her new-born daughter through and out of their difficulties.

Another outspoken feminist and dissenter, Mary Hays, echoed the concerns of Macaulay and Wollstonecraft in the *Monthly Magazine* columns where she denied the theory of "sexual character," from a rationalist perspective.[98] In her *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women* (1798), Hays called for job opportunities, training, and better treatment if not equality for women, demands that became more popular as the industrial revolution advanced. This emphasis on jobs and economic independence persisted as a theme in the literature of the period, accelerating as the bourgeois revolution became entrenched and women saw themselves as wives and mothers, and little more. Hays further argued that women should have access to power, for their capacities warranted an improved position in society.

By the end of the eighteenth century not only was Charlotte Turner Smith (1769–1806) writing radical novels that attacked colonialism, slavery, and women's subjugation, but Mary Anne Radcliffe (1746?– after 1810) cautioned that both laboring and petty-bourgeois women without decent occupations would be economically forced into prostitution, that in fact they were already on the streets in ever-growing numbers.[99] Radcliffe's tract denounced male usurpation of female trades and occupations. She passionately declared that usurpation had caused destitution and prostitution among the country's females. She cited many examples of impoverished gentlewomen who were unable to sell their labor legally for a living wage, after which they could either be admitted to asylums or sell their bodies. Radcliffe's work sketched the consequences of a patriarchal protection system that omitted any professional training for women and allowed men to co-opt female professions for their own benefit. She challenged the state to care for its poor. Women need jobs, she continually insisted, and they have an equal right to the marketplace. Most importantly, Radcliffe's *The Female Advocate* disclosed that women like herself had begun to discern the close relationship between economic exploitation and patriarchal oppression; the problems of her life had seen to that.

Writers who supported the French Revolution, some from dissenting backgrounds and frequently in search of economic independence, fused feminist ideas with enlightenment and with radical tenets about human rights. Overt agitators for women's rights in tracts, novels, and poems, most of them led lives of sexual unorthodoxy. They remained single, proclaimed the right to and practised sexual autonomy, lived with female friends; or separated from husbands, cohabited with married men, and bore children "out of wedlock." The correlation between unorthodox socio-sexual behavior, economic independence, and progressive ideas was at its most cogent and illustrative in the post-1788 revolutionary decade.

Feminist Polemic: A New Political Form

Contrary to received wisdom, therefore, and as my survey indicates, a large number of women had launched written protests in public against their subjective and collective situation long before Wollstonecraft's second *Vindication.* Formally they wrote in a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional categories: poetry, prose, and drama, as well as journal entries, prefaces, and tracts. I am naming this rich body of writings "feminist polemic." Let me explain what I mean by feminist polemic by setting down the traditional definition of polemic as a controversy or argument, especially one that is a refutation of or an attack upon a specified opinion or doctrine. The feminist polemicist writes to urge or to defend a pro-woman point of view which includes resistance to patriarchal values, convention, and domination, or a challenge to misogynous ideas. As I have argued, I consider writings by women opposed to slavery and the slave trade as feminist polemic since opposition to the physical and psychological enslavement of people of color—whether the struggle is particularly waged on behalf of females or not—is a necessary condition for the liberation of women of color and, by extension, all women. One useful way to codify and survey the extent and diversity of these early British feminist writers is to place their writings in four categories or subsets of feminist polemic: one, reactive polemic; two, sustained polemic; three, intermittent polemic; and four, personal polemic or polemic of the heart. (Both sustained and intermittent polemic also tend to fall within a larger category of reasoned or rational polemic.) Although chronology is important, several of the categories defy time and leap across the centuries to make connections and to help form a feminist tradition hitherto invisible.

Reactive Polemic

I use the term reactive polemic to describe poems or tracts written to refute unsolicited misogynous attacks. (Most often, reactive polemics are part of the *Querelle des Femmes.*) Such works include Jane Anger's against an oppressively satiated lover; Ester Sowernam's against Joseph Swetnam; Sarah Fyge's against Robert Gould; Lady Mary Chudleigh's against John Sprint; and Mary Collier's against Stephen Duck. With the notable exception of Margaret Tyler's writing in 1578, reactive polemics were, not surprisingly, the earliest feminist writings to appear, since reaction presupposes abuse as justification for the writer's response. Injustice calls forth a response, despite the subordinate status which tends to keep the subjugated silent. These responses appeared when males either felt threatened or secure enough to vilify women in public, hoping thus to daunt "upstart" women, or to thwart any potential displays of assertion. The literary misogyny of the early sixteenth century tended to be determinedly insulting toward women sexually, or thoroughly condescending about women's place. In both cases, Scripture provided a quasi-theoretical base. Usually fierce in tone and intensity, feminist responses returned blow for blow, rebuffed arguments, and structured into their responses the need for rebuttal. The feminist writers adopted independent, no-nonsense stances and challenged not only the offending male writer but the behavior of men in general.

Since they also confronted detractors, the works of later writers—Anne Yearsley, Mary Hays, and Mary Wollstonecraft—may also be seen as reactive polemic. In the autobiographical preface to her poems, Ann Yearsley neither responded point by point nor even in spirit to anything Hannah More wrote. Instead, the milkwoman mounted a brief polemical attack against More's expropriation of profits that accrued from the sale of Yearsley's poems. In letters to her wealthy Bluestocking friend Elizabeth Montagu, More contended that since Yearsley was a milkwoman, she should show gratitude for charity.[100] More had decided to secure the money in a trust fund to prevent Yearsley's having access to it; More would permit personal loans to Yearsley, nothing else. Apparently More's distrust of people socially beneath her fostered this negative or suspicious attitude toward her protégée.[101]

In the *Monthly Magazine,* Mary Hays upbraided antifeminists for their strictures on female education, while Mary Wollstonecraft, in the fifth chapter of her second *Vindication* and elsewhere, expounded on the patriarchal biases in the writings on female education of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, James Fordyce, and John Gregory. But her polemic was by no means limited to the matter of response and reaction to traditional misogyny.

Sustained Polemic

Sustained polemic offers full-scale feminist polemic, which customarily calls for a change in women's condition. These began to appear

when women had gained more self-confidence, greater access to printing and publishers, and more refined philosophical tools with which to analyse their situation. In this category, I include the writings of Margaret Fell on women's preaching; Bathsua Makin on education for "gentlewomen"; Mary Astell on education and marriage; Judith Drake, who sought more just treatment and a better education for females; Elizabeth Elstob on female scholarship and learning; Sophia, who argued the superiority of and demanded justice for women; Mary Scott, who celebrated the accomplishments of women throughout history; Mary Wollstonecraft, who abhorred the denial of rights to women and suggested reasons for and solutions to this state of affairs; and Mary Hays, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Mary Anne Radcliffe, who deplored the lack of occupations open to women. Radcliffe particularly worried about the increased incidence of female prostitutes as a result of their economic deprivation.

Charlotte Charke's autobiography, which recounts the difficulties she experienced in forging a self-sufficient existence, is a sustained feminist defense of a different, more subtle sort. (At the level of intimacy and informality, it overlaps with much of polemic of the heart.) Charke described with flair the dire consequences of nontraditional living in an entrenched patriarchal society. Although Charke ended up destitute, her example mattered, for the act of "I" brandishing, of "I" prioritizing, of writing about the self in a society that treated women as decorative or sexual objects asserted that very autonomy of self that society denied.

The same call of self-assertion could describe Mary Astell's *Some Reflections upon Marriage,* which aimed to defend the Duchess of Mazarin against her husband-detractor, and Sophia's *Woman's Superior Excellence . . .* , which spoke to a misogynous response to her *Woman not Inferior . . .* . (in this sense, both these works were also reactive.) (Sophia probably also penned the misogynous section, just as François Poulain de la Barre penned the middle misogynous section of his three-part work from which Sophia's work derived.) Mary Scott's advocacy of female accomplishments in response to the *Feminiad* and her attempt to evaluate historically these contributions in *The Female Advocate* made her poem in a positive sense reactive as well as sustained.

Several works on slavery belong in this category. In *Oroonoko,* for example, Aphra Behn focused on enslaved West Africans who were transported to Guyana (then called Surinam). Her personal experiences accounted for the fact that she was first to write a sustained work on slavery and the slave trade. In the same time period, Judith Drake, in discussing the bondage of women, contemptuously referred to plantation slavery.[102] As Enlightenment and evangelical ideas spread, abolition received more public attention. The abolitionist William Wilberforce frequented Bluestocking circles.[103] Hannah More wrote a long anti-slavery poem to support Wilberforce's introduction of the bill to abolish

the slave trade.[104] Ann Yearsley's poem, "On the Inhumanity of the Slave-Trade," appeared shortly thereafter.

Intermittent Polemic

Intermittent polemic describes the work of writers who took issue with the condition of women's lives more briefly, in passages within tracts, prefaces to works, or simply in a few poems in a volume. The topics of such works ranged widely, suggesting the breadth of women's concerns throughout the period. The earliest example of intermittent polemic may be found in Margaret Tyler's preface to her Spanish translation of Diego Ortuñez de Calahorra, in which she argued for the right of women to write what they please. The Duchess of Newcastle, in a preface addressed to the Oxford-Cambridge faculty, stressed her displeasure about the powerlessness of women; in an early poem, Jane Barker praised the single life in preference to perilous marriage; in their poems, Sarah Fyge Field Egerton, Lady Chudleigh, and Lady Winchilsea denounced marriage, called for recognition of women's creativity, demanded the liberty denied women, and collectively asserted the right of women to autonomous existences.

On a different, more pragmatic note, Aphra Behn argued for the right of women to earn a living by *writing*. (Of course Bathsua Makin, when she declared at the end of her educational tract in 1673 that she desired pupils for her school, was only one of many women who were trying to earn an independent living; Behn's example was unprecedented only because it applied to writing.) In her plays Behn also attacked forced marriage and sought to make the "new learning" accessible to women by translating Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle's *La Pluralité des Deux Mondes (A Discovery of New Worlds)*. Anne Yearsley's forceful autobiographical prefaces in which she defended herself as a milkwoman-turned-poet considered incompetent to handle her own financial affairs; Catherine Macaulay's letters on behalf of female education; and Mary Hays's spirited defenses of women in the pages of the *Monthly Magazine* likewise belong in this section. In 1799 Hays also orchestrated a full-length appeal on behalf of women, to British men. Her writings, therefore, qualify in more than one category—the case with several writers, notably the Duchess of Newcastle, Behn, and Wollstonecraft—perhaps the most diverse of all the writers because they were the most prolific. (Delarivière Manley and Eliza Haywood also displayed a rich versatility, but for reasons of length are not excerpted here.)

I would also categorize several works by feminist writers that address slavery, often one-of-a-kind poems or episodes in novels, as intermittent polemic. Lady Eleanor Butler and several members of the Bluestocking community condemned slavery in private writings. In her celebration of women, Mary Scott included Phillis Wheatley. After the revolutions of 1776 and 1789, feminist writers frequently raised the issues of race and slavery, and among the novelists who did so were Mary Hays and Charlotte Smith. Mary Wollstonecraft attacked the practice of slavery and the slave trade, especially in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men,* and asserted the equality of Native American Indians.

Personal Polemic, or Polemic of the Heart

The fourth category of feminist polemic I see present includes works about relationships and daily living that celebrate love and friendship between women. Hitherto called "romantic friendships," these relationships between women have recently been the subject of a compelling study by Lillian Faderman.

Unlike the other polemical categories, personal polemic has several unique characteristics. Reactive, sustained, and intermittent polemic all attack misogyny, educational deprivation, marital tyranny (and allied matters), and clearly target an audience that opposes maltreatment of women. Such polemic is overtly propagandistic and didactic and either implicitly or explicitly agitates for an end to disadvantage or abuse. It is frequently couched in recognizably persuasive rhetorical strategies. In personal polemic, writings about love and friendship attack or subvert patriarchal domination quite differently, through affirming women in their support and love for one another. Although some were intended for publication, the forms of secret polemic tend to be of a more personal nature—letters, diaries, memoirs, closet drama, and private love poems.

This category includes the poems of Katherine Philips; the Duchess of Newcastle's *The Convent of Pleasure,* which depicts with sensitivity and warmth a lesbian relationship; a short tale by Jane Barker about a triangle, the resolution of which is the living together of the wife and her maid, and two poems by Barker, one a celebration of female community, and the other a moving love-elegy to a friend; poems by Aphra Behn, Sarah Fyge Field Egerton, Lady Chudleigh, and Lady Winchilsea to women friends; the letters of Bluestocking Elizabeth Carter to her friend Catherine Talbot, and from Anna Seward to Honora Sneyd; the novel, *Millenium Hall,* by Sarah Robinson Scott, which extolls women's friendships and a cooperative female community among women of different classes; Lady Eleanor Butler's personal writings about her beloved Sarah Ponsonby; and Mary Wollstonecraft's first novel, *Mary, a Fiction,* which fictionally elaborated on her passion for her friend Fanny Blood.

Classifying these writings as feminist polemic not only names a new category of women's literature, but gives visibility to a very large body of writings hitherto regarded as unconnected or sub-literary. Viewed as an integrated literary category with common characteristics, feminist polemic reveals rich interconnections beneath the surface, and allows readers more reason for following the political development of feminist ideas in women's literature. This category can also offer another perspective on seemingly titillating and politically ambiguous writings (vis-à-vis the situation of women) as Delarivière Manley's *New Atalantis,* or Hannah More's conservative *Strictures,* which relegates many women to

an inferior education based on their class. We can more easily probe beneath the surface of fiction's "harmless cover stories," expose political "subtexts," and identify the dual purposes of literary polemic that speaks softly, indistinctly, or disarmingly. Nor are the subsets of feminist polemic rigid, but open-ended, revealing what was previously hidden: two hundred years of complex and recorded protofeminist and feminist underground networks of resistance.

Conclusion

This survey reveals the long honorable history of battles over fundamental political issues that engage women today. Struggles in Britain against discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, class, sex, and sexual preference originated in early efforts by some seventy heroic women. The process of protest was a continuously interrupted one but continuous nonetheless. Over the two centuries a certain loose pattern emerged. Response to detractors was one essential element and concern with religious, then secular, egalitarianism was another. The first step on the road toward observable social reform was taken by Elizabeth Tanfield, Lady Cary in her play *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1605).[105] The presumed villain of the drama, Salome, advocates divorce and an end to subjugated womanhood. Although the play's text offers divorce as an undesirable goal, the unhappy circumstances of Lady Elizabeth's life permits another interpretation.

A half century later during the early Restoration, poems by Katherine Philips on female friendship were reluctantly published. At the same time, a host of requests crowded the pages of feminist works—for education, retention of midwifery as a specifically female occupation, and for greater expertise in traditional female arts, crafts, and skills; some works also extolled the pleasures of economic independence and the single life. By 1686, male detractors continued to wage war as Sarah Fyge defiantly responded to Robert Gould's savage barbs against women's alleged pride, lust, and inconstancy. After another hundred years had elapsed, this kind of melodramatic male attack on women had substantially been reformulated. Where Gould's diatribe was an acceptable phenomenon in 1686, the vitriolic Richard Polwhele with his *The Unsex'd Females* (1798) seemed more of an anomaly, although anti-Jacobin readers adulated him.[106] The polarities in Polwhele's poem of "good and bad" women pinpointed an attitudinal shift. He condemned such perverted women as the Wollstonecraftians—Mary Wollstonecraft herself, Mary Hays, Charlotte Smith, Helen Maria Williams, Ann Yearsley, Mary Darby Robinson, and even the Unitarian abolitionist, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, who disagreed with advanced ideas about female education. Against them (among others) he pitted Hannah More, Elizabeth Carter, Elizabeth Robinson Montagu, Hester Mulso Chapone, Anna Seward, Hester Thrale Piozzi, and Fanny Burney—all of them involved either in the more traditional (and often conservative) circles of the Bluestockings, Lady Miller at Batheaston, Samuel Richardson, or Samuel Johnson. Polwhele's favorites all had impeccable reputations (Thrale only until she remarried), as well as talent and intellect. We could also look at his ossified polarities another way: outright misogyny in the form of irrational attacks on sexually rampaging unnatural women had been subtly converted to protective advice about maintaining proprieties and staying in a subordinate place. The popularity of conduct manuals, from the seventeenth-century Lord Halifax's *Advice to a Daughter,* to *A Father's Legacy* by Dr. John Gregory a century later, stands as the testimony. The ire that John Wilkes incurred for the lewd *Essay on Women* (1763) that he allegedly wrote also indicated that unscientific, pornographic misogyny was held in increasing ill-favor, at least overtly.[107] Misogyny never ceased, but it acquired a more protean shape, becoming, in its protective guise, less frontal and more deceptive. Because so few pierced the masks of patriarchal protectiveness before Wollstonecraft, misogyny's form had become insidious and consequently more dangerous and difficult to combat. Dr. Gregory's solicitude beguiled female readers as much as the Reverend John Sprint had incensed his readership three quarters of a century earlier. Now women were children or angels rather than whores, innocent rather than lewd, patronized rather than exploited, a more easily manageable commodity for men whose absolute control was not to be gainsaid.

Throughout the late Restoration, Aphra Behn gave public lie to the ideology that women were weak, economically and psychologically dependent, non-political, asexual, and unintellectual creatures. For personal as well as political reasons, she added slavery to her feminist agenda. Before 1800, however, slavery was not perceived as a feminist issue by writers who addressed discrimination against women. Only those women who had various ideological objections to slavery or to tyranny in general, as well as objections to the subjugation of women, wrote on both subjects. The treatment of *female* slaves was rarely addressed, and no writings on slavery or on any other issue by women of color in Britain in that time period has, as far as I am aware, yet been found.

After 1688, the influence of Cartesian, Lockean, and spiritual egalitarian views of the world fostered several sturdy defenses of women. Mary Astell and Judith Drake, despite traditional apologist stances about writing at all, launched forthright feminist essays on a surprised public, in which they vociferously scorned the treatment accorded women, and recommended as solutions withdrawal and education (and a tactful amount of confrontational scorn).

Simultaneously, an unprecedented number of women poets with feminist concerns appeared, among them Elizabeth Rowe, Sarah Fyge, Lady Mary Chudleigh, and the Countess of Winchilsea. With the example of Behn and Philips before them (according to antifeminists, the Eve and Mary models of women's literature) *choices* were finally possible. Women wrote to and about their women friends, concerned themselves with women's social lot, deplored the bondage of marriage, the denial of creativity, and a wholesale loss of liberty. They came as close as any British woman writer ever had to denouncing, in Adrienne Rich's phrase, compulsory heterosexuality. Not surprisingly, slavery was a favorite metaphor in their descriptions of women's lives. Protesting poets flourished, many of whom knew one another and certainly of one another, for the country was still very small. Loosely linked feminist communities sprang up. The Countess of Winchilsea argued that a woman's natural right to exercise her own talents had been illegitimately denied, a position already fought for and obtained, for economic reasons, by Aphra Behn.

The right to scholarship, an extension of the educational demands of women such as Makin and Astell, was voiced by the linguist-antiquarian, Elizabeth Elstob, who had been obliged to abandon a brilliant career as a scholar and drop out of sight probably around 1718 because of financial difficulties after her brother died. Furthermore, since formal scholarship was taught and nurtured in universities which excluded all women, and since scholarship was not profitable then or later, her chances of continuing as a scholar, either financially or intellectually, were slim. Elstob ended up decades later in an aristocratic household, economically dependent and socially protected, a situation far from ideal but preferable to her post-1718 situation when she had taught in a dame school. Elstob's life contrasts with the intrepid lives of Aphra Behn, Delarivière Manley, and Catherine Trotter, the latter two labelled female wits along with Mary Pix. This trio followed Behn as defiant public dramatists. Elstob aside, no precedent for women scholars challenging the public existed, and she had probably been anxious about the possibility of debtor's prison.

After about 1710 or so, the trail of feminist writers becomes harder to follow. What flowed from the presses? Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote revealing letters and a periodical that bedevilled societal norms; Manley outraged the public with her scandalous *romans à clef;* Centlivre wrote plays with independent women figures; Haywood churned out copious popular prose fictions on the theme of love, until Pope's caustic lines in *The Dunciad* silenced her (it seems) for over a decade; Jane Barker and Mary Davys published several volumes each in the 1720s and 30s. But not until the mid-1730s did feminist resistance resume. Then the aristocratic Anne Howard, Viscountess Irwin, counterattacked Pope's attack on her friend, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; the washerwoman Mary Collier rebutted Stephen Duck's assessment of laboring women; and "Sophia,"

adding points of her own, reshaped François Poulain de la Barre's arguments for and against female superiority.[108]

By the mid-1740s, Haywood and Sarah Fielding were arguing for women's education, albeit obliquely and with a consummate gentleness, with Haywood also assessing the question of prejudice. Elizabeth Carter celebrated her friendship with Catherine Talbot in letters that began in 1741 and spanned three decades. Mary Jones and Mary Leapor also published poems and essays on a host of subjects, some of them specifically related to women.[109] By 1755 Charlotte Charke had mustered enough courage to publish what for that time was an exceedingly bold, even risqué (and possibly embellished) autobiography. In the 1760s Sarah Robinson Scott wrote a novel that fictionally depicted the project she and her friend Lady Barbara Montagu had coordinated for women who had fallen on hard times. Together they implemented Astell's proposal for female education, but broadened its scope to reach women of all classes. Scott also wrote a novel that included a hard-hitting attack on the treatment of slaves.

At this point also the Bluestockings inaugurated salon entertainment and facilitated female intellectual visibility, a social and literary phenomenon in their own right. Women and their lives were finally worthy of consideration; the Bluestockings vindicated and perpetuated the lineage of female worthies. To anyone historically informed, it was evident that a cluster of very learned women stretched from Bathsua Makin, Mary Astell, Catherine Trotter, Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham, and Elizabeth Elstob to Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Macaulay. Men such as George Ballard in *Memoirs* (1752) and John Duncombe in *The Feminead* (1754) enhanced and confirmed this image of learned women, which the Bluestockings in their inimitable fashion carried aloft into society. (There were, of course, many learned women prior to Makin who did not write on Women's issues.) These writers collectively wrote, translated, gave charitably to and in all senses patronized the poor, encouraged ingénues, and attacked forced marriage and slavery. Several of them enjoyed a wholesome independence from men. Despite their political conservatism, the Bluestockings proved that women had publicly arrived. Undoubtedly, their presence indirectly aided the acceptance of the first fiction of resounding intellectual success by a woman: Fanny Burney's *Evelina* (1778).

Close female friendships became more openly visible in the eighteenth century—among them, those of Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot, Sarah Robinson Scott and Lady Barbara Montagu, Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier, Anna Seward and Honora Sneyd until Sneyd's marriage, Hannah More and Eva Maria Violetti Garrick, Mary Wollstonecraft and Fanny Blood. These friendships reflected a growing self-assurance among women and resistance to patriarchal values, physical isolation, and emotional alienation, and most importantly, the exercising of personal choice in friendship. Fur-

thermore, the expanding recognition of women's writings, talents, intellect, and charitable public works—controversy notwithstanding—enhanced mutual respect and self-respect, and ensured continuity. In her poem *The Female Advocate,* Mary Scott was among the first to acknowledge that a literary and political tradition was under way.

By the time of the French Revolution, women had established firm precedents for taking up the pen on their own behalf. Influenced by the outspokenness of the revolutionary time and its philosophical probing, the women of that era responded in kind. First Macaulay, then Wollstonecraft, and afterward Hays, Wakefield, Radcliffe, and others of their generation spoke out vigorously on behalf of women, arguing a multitude of cases logically and commonsensically, but almost always tinged with a sense of righteous indignation. They matched their writing to their sense of a just social reality. Moreover, Ann Yearsley, Hannah More, Helen Maria Williams, Charlotte Smith, and like-minded women confronted slavery head-on. However, the political bankruptcy of female-rights-denied was a complex affair and since women wielded no political or legal power by definition, they were in no position to ameliorate, let alone fundamentally transform, the overall condition of women. The story of that struggle belongs to another epoch.

Throughout the period from the Renaissance to the French Revolution, feminists wrote about deprivations and demands. Resistance to their inequitable condition took a variety of forms: first, they counterattacked; then at a more advanced stage of development, they mounted a variety of assaults, that included for some the fight against slavery, to demand certain denied rights; third, they tried to shun the whole situation (while being consciously or unconsciously aware of it), and sought instead to create a better life in their own image. This took the form of love poems, love letters, informal female communities, and a conscious intellectual unity. Fourth, they rejected traditional roles of submission, willfully and voluntarily empowered themselves by engaging in professional, educational, and intellectual activities, and made self-confident claims about their right to the self-shaped, autonomous life of writing, to greater and lesser degrees, autobiographically. Finally after the Bastille fell and people thought the millennium was at hand, with a knowledge of women's historical awareness and a lucid grasp of injustice such women as Yearsley and Wollstonecraft began to synthesize the approaches to the liberation of women. Wollstonecraft countered the anti-feminist ideas of Rousseau and the half-stepping, genteel writers of courtesy books. She drew up in several works a ground plan for women that included education and jobs; she agitated both for an end to slavery and inhuman tyrannies, recognizing differential oppression on the basis of class; she wrote about love for women friends and relatives; and she

argued in public for a woman's right to personal and economic independence. Standing in the shoes of Margaret Tyler as she advocated a woman's right to write, in Jane Anger's as she resisted the false claims of detractors, and in Aphra Behn's as she addressed deeply ingrained institutionalized domination and economic exploitation *and* wrote lovingly to women, Wollstonecraft, Yearsley, and the women of their epoch raised feminist development to its most advanced historical stage. Perhaps more significantly for later generations, they collectively pointed the way out of political abyss and impasse by insisting on the importance of writing and action as paths to freedom.

NOTES

1. Many good accounts of the Civil War and the bourgeois revolution exist including Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968); "Base Impudent Kisses," in *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), pp. 247–60; and "The Spiritualization of the Household," in *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), pp. 100–150. For further information consult Lawrence Stone, "The Rise of the Nuclear Family," in *The Family in History,* ed. Charles E. Rosenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), pp. 13–57; J. H. Plumb, *England Between 1675 and 1725: The Origins of Political Stability* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967); and *England in the Eighteenth Century, 1716–1815* (London: Pelican, 1950). Among historians who record this period with sensitivity to women are F. W. Tickner, *Women in English Economic History* (London and Toronto: J. D. Dent & Sons, 1923) and Walter L. Blease, *The Emancipation of English Women* (London: Constable & Co., 1910). A. L. Morton, *A People's History of England* (New York: International Publishers, 1938) and Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848* (New York: Mentor, 1962) also provide detailed historical backgrounds to the period. See also Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1974) and W. A. Speck, *Stability and Strife in England, 1714–1762* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

2. For a concise account of what the enclosure of land meant particularly for women, see Ida O'Malley, *Women in Subjection: A Study of the Lives of English Women Before 1832* (London: Duckworth, 1933), pp. 15–53; Ruth Perry, "The Economic Status of Women," in *Women, Letters, and the Novel* (New York: AMS Press, 1980), pp. 27–62. For diverse views of women from feudal to pre-industrial capitalist society, see collected essays in Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, eds., *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1977).

3. In *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1919; reprint ed., New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1968), Alice Clark portrays the place of women in the economic organization of society. The

chapter headings read: "Capitalists," "Agriculture," "Textiles," "Crafts and Trades," and "Professions." Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) and Christopher Hill, *From Reformation to Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1962) record the changing nature of trade and workers' conditions throughout seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. In "From Good Wife to Mistress: The Transformation of the Female in Bourgeois Culture," *Science & Society,* May 1973, pp. 152–77, Margaret George offers a politically informed account of these changes, while Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750–1850* (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1930) continues to some extent where Clark leaves off. For a brief discussion of the economic factors that affected women consider also the introduction (and bibliography) to the new edition of Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), introduction by Miranda Chaytor and Jane Lewis. The introduction sketches out a revised view of the analyses of Alice Clark, Georgianna Hill, Ivy Pinchbeck, and others on women's economic status in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Note also that in "Women's History in Transition: The European Case," *Feminist Studies* 3 (1975–76):84–103, Natalie Zemon Davis traces the history of women from Plutarch and the gradual inclusion of women in the work of social historians. She delineates the shift in "vantage-point" on women's history and suggests how the work of Alice Clark (and Léon Abensour) might be approached by contemporary historians. She further discusses the new importance attached to demographic factors; to the issues of dowry, inheritance patterns, kinship, family affection, and cross-generative relationships; and to available statistics and issues of sexuality.

4. Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Pelican, 1982), p. 47.

5. See Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes,* 1400–1789," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 8, 1 (1982):4–28. A longer version of the *Querelle* essay is forthcoming in Joan Kelly's collected essays by the University of Chicago Press. See also Susan Groag Bell, "Christine de Pizan (1364–1430): Humanism and the Problem of the Studious Woman," *Feminist Studies* 3, 3–4 (Spring– Summer 1976):173–84.

6. Susan C. Shapiro, "Feminists in Elizabethan England," *History Today* 27, 11 (November 1977): 703–11.

7. For attempts by James I to curtail the activities of women, see Elizabeth McClure Thompson, ed., *The Chamberlain Letters: A Selection of the Letters of John Chamberlain Concerning Life in England from 1597–1626* (London: Capricorn Books, 1966), p. 271.

8. See K. V. Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," *Past and Present,* no. 13 (1958), pp. 42–63; Ellen McArthur, "Women Petitioners and the Long Parliament," *English Historical Review* 24 (1909): 698–709; and E. M. Williams, "Women Preachers in the Civil War," *Journal of Modern History* 1 (1929): 561–69. Katherine Chidley is mentioned with other women preachers in Thomas, pp. 49–52 and Williams, pp. 564–69. See also Elaine Hobby, "Breaking the Silence: English Women in Print, 1640–1700" (unpublished paper read at the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, Smith College, Mass., 1984).

9. For an account of the seventeenth-century situation of midwives, see J. H. Aveling, *The Chamberlens and the Midwifery Forceps* (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1882); Thomas R. Forbes, "The Regulation of English Midwives in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Medical History* 8 (1964): 235–43; Hilda L. Smith, "Gynecology and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Liberating Women's History,* ed. Berenice A. Carroll (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1976), 97–114. See also Elaine Hobby, "Women Writers 1642–1688," (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, forthcoming.) Elaine Hobby drew my attention to *Advice to the Women and Maidens of London,* 1653, "which seeks to make accountancy understandable to women—even if only privately to make them useful to husbands and fathers in male businesses," and to Sarah Jinner, an almanac writer in 1658–1664 who describes herself as a "student of astrology." Schoolkeepers and teachers such as Hannah Woolley and Bathsua Makin also count as seventeenth-century professionals. Sarah Jinner is mentioned in Bernard S. Capp, *English Almanacs: 1500–1800: Astrology and the Popular Press* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1979).

10. A checklist of women writers throughout the period may be found in Joyce Horner, *The English Novelists and Their Connection with the Feminist Movement, 1688–1797,* Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, vol. 2, nos. 1–3 (Northampton, Mass.: The Collegiate Press, 1929–1930), pp. 124–27; in Bridget G. McCarthy, *Women Writers: Their Contribution to the English Novel, 1621–1744* (Oxford: Cork University Press, 1944); and in Alison Adburgham, *Women in Print: Writing Women and Women's Magazines from the Restoration to the Accession of Victoria* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1972). For women and drama, consult Nancy Cotton, *Women Playwrights in England, c. 1363–1750* (Lewisberg, Penn.: Bucknell University Press, 1980), and Jean Gagen, *The New Woman: Her Emergence in English Drama, 1600–1730* (New York: Twayne, 1954). Myra Reynolds, *The Learned Lady in England, 1650–1760* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), also indicates the extent of circulating library growth, pp. 414–15. More generally, Reynold's book offers a good biographical, socio-cultural, and intellectual history of learned women. See also J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England, 1770–1800* (London, 1932; reprint ed., London: Methuen, 1961); Hilda L. Smith, *Reason's Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982); and Katharine M. Rogers, *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982). One excellent bibliography that covers the entire period (in separate sections) is Barbara Kanner, ed., *The Women of England, From Anglo-Saxon Times to the Present* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1979), especially pp. 138–258.

11. Among the protest writings are Priscilla Wakefield, *Reflections on the Present Conditions of the Female Sex; with suggestions for its improvement* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1798; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1974); Mary Anne Radcliffe, *The Female Advocate: Or, An Attempt to Recover the Rights of Women from Male Usurpation* (Edinburgh: Manners and Miller, 1810; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1974); and Mary Hays, *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1798; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1974).

12. For accounts of the legal status of women, see Leo Kanowitz, *Women and the Law* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), especially chaps. 1 and 2; L. P. Brockett, *Women: Her Rights, Wrongs, Privileges, and Responsibilities* (Freeport, N. Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1869), chap. 4; Mary R. Beard, *Women as Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities* (New York: Collier MacMillan, 1946), pp. 87–115 (includes a good discussion of William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*); Janelle Greenberg, "The

Legal Status of English Women in Early Eighteenth Century Law and Equity," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 4 (1975): 171–81; and T. E., *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights: or The Lawes Provision for Women* (London: by the Assignees of John More, and sold by John Grove, 1632; Huntington Library #59134). According to the preface, T. E. seems an incorrect attribution. I. L., who wrote the first address, or someone else entirely is more likely.

13. Porter, *English Society,* p. 40. There is much debate about the role of marriage and how it affected women. See Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800,* for an encyclopaedic account of these institutions that tends to gloss over the lives of laboring women and men. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). See also the following responses to Stone's work for other perspectives on the issue. Joseph Kett, "Review of the Family, Sex and Marriage," *Chronicle of Higher Education,* February 6, 1978; Christopher Hill, "Sex, Marriage and the Family in England," *Economic History Review* 31 (1978):4; Hobby, "Women Writers 1642–1688"; Alan Macfarland, "Lawrence Stone: *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England,*" book review, *History & Theory* 17, 1, (1979): 103–25; Joan Thirsk, "The Family," *Past & Present* 27 (1964); J. H. Plumb, "Review of *The Family, Sex and Marriage," New York Review of Books,* November 24, 1977; Keith Thomas, "Review of Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage," Times Literary Supplement,* October 21, 1977; E. P. Thompson, "Happy Families," *New Society* 8 (September 1977).

14. Porter, *English Society,* p. 42.

15. George, *London Life,* p. 172 and *passim;* Porter, *English Society,* p. 46.

16. Eric Richards, "Women in the British Economy Since About 1700: An Interpretation," *The American Historical Review* 78, 3 (June 1973): 345.

17. General discussions and advocacy of class-tiered female education in the period occur in Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education with a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune,* 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell, 1799; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1976) and Wakefield, *Reflections.* I have benefited greatly from discussions with Ann B. Schteir about Priscilla Wakefield.

18. For a short account of Methodism and the Evangelical Movement see Gilbert Thomas, *William Cowper and the Eighteenth Century* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955), chap. 7, pp. 132–62; Robert F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Epworth Press, 1945); and Elie Halévy, *The Birth of Methodism in England,* trans. and ed. Bernard Semmel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

19. For the state of literacy and attitudes toward it, see David Cressy, *Literary and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: University Press, 1980) and Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

20. Wakefield, *Reflections,* p. 97.

21. Temple Scott, ed., "Of the Education of Ladies," *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D. D.,* vol. 11 (London: George Bell and Sons, 1907), p. 64.

22. Quoted in Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School: A Study of Women's Education Through Twelve Centuries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 394.

23. Some of the most useful works on female education include: Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg, "Education for Women in Eighteenth Century England: An Annotated Bibliography," *Women and Literature* 4 (1976): 49–55, a review of the major educational manuals, which generally concentrated on manners, morals, and fashion rather than an intellectually based curriculum; Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956); Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School;* Doris M. Stenton, *The English Woman in History* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1957); Josephine Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girls' Education in English History* (London: Methuen, 1965); and Phyllis Stock, *Better than Rubies: A History of Women's Education* (New York: Capricorn, 1978), a recent overview of female education. See also Kanner, *The Women of England,* O'Malley, *Women in Subjection,* Reynolds, *Learned Lady,* and Smith, *Reason's Disciples.*

24. These views were presented in a paper by Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg entitled "Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: The Education of British Girls ca. 1750–1850" (Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, Athens, Georgia, February 1982, to be published in the proceedings).

25. The salonières across the channel also helped to make intellectual women acceptable. See Caroline Lougée, *Le Paradis des Femmes: Women, Salons, and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Ian Maclean, *Women Triumphant: Feminism in French Literature, 1610–1652* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); Evelyn Gordon Bodek, "Salonières and Bluestockings: Educated Obsolescence and Germinating Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 3 (1976): 185–99; R. Brimley Johnson, ed., *Bluestocking Letters* (London and New York: John Lane, 1926); W. S. Scott, *The Bluestocking Ladies* (London: John Greene & Co., 1947); R. Huchon, *Mrs. Montagu and Her Friends* (London: John Murray, 1907); and Chauncey Brewster Tinker, *The Salon and English Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1915).

26. For a discussion of philanthropy, see Betsy Rodgers, *Cloak of Charity: Studies in Eighteenth-Century Philanthropy* (London: Methuen, 1949) and F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

27. Many of Joseph Johnson's authors and frequenters of his social circle wrote about slavery, the slave trade, and abolition, including William Cowper, John Aikin, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Joseph Priestley, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Hays, and Erasmus Darwin. John Newton, an ex-slaveship captain who was instrumental in William Wilberforce's conversion, authored and published the influential *Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade* (London, 1788). See Gerald Tyson, *Joseph Johnson: A Liberal Publisher* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1979), pp. 90–91. Other abolitionists include Priscilla Wakefield, Charlotte Smith, Ann Yearsley, and Hannah More. Earlier, Granville Sharpe, Thomas Clarkson, James Ramsey, and Olaudah Equiano had campaigned against the slave trade and in 1787 the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was founded. Events that led up to the anti-slavery debate in the House are described in Rodgers, *Cloak of Charity,* "The Abolition of the Slave Trade: Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce," pp. 158–80. Even earlier, Granville Sharp's memorandum to the chief lawyers at the Inns of Courts was published in the 1760s as *The Injustice of Tolerating Slavery in England.* The Quakers, however, were first on both sides of the Atlantic to pass resolutions condemning the slave-trade; by 1761 Quakers engaged in slave trading were banned from membership. In addition to More, many of the Bluestockings supported abolition. Elizabeth Montagu drew attention to the issue of abolition by inviting

William Wilberforce to her assemblies and referring to him intimately as "The Red Cross Knight." See *A Lady of the Last Century by Dr. Doran* (London: R. Bentley, 1873), p. 351. For a discussion of Hannah More's role in the abolition movement, see Mary Alden Hopkins, *Hannah More and Her Circle* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1947), pp. 153–61.

28. Margaret Tyler, "Epistle to the Reader," in *The First Part of the Mirrour of Princely deedes and Knyghthood* (London: Thomas East, 1578). On the question of Margaret Tyler's identity, as an intimate of the Howard family (apparently) she was probably a Roman Catholic and therefore, possibly, a recusant masquerading under a pseudonymous name. This happened occasionally. (See biography of Margaret Tyler.) This hypothesis about Tyler was suggested by Robert Bellow, a student of recusant history at Cambridge University. Leslie Dunn of Cambridge University corresponded with me on the matter and I thank both of them.

29. The work mentioned is Jane Anger, *Jane Anger her protection for Women To defend them against the Scandalous Reportes Of a late Surfeiting Lover, and all other like Venerians that complaine so to bee overcloyed with women's kindness* (London: Richard Jones and Thomas Orwin, 1589).

30. Joseph Swetnam, *The araignment [sic] of lewd, idle, froward, and unconstant women: or the vanitie of them, choose you whether* (London: T. Archer, 1615).

31. Ester Sowernam, *Ester hath hang'd Haman: or an Answere to a lewd pamphlet, entituled, the Arraignment of Women* (London: Nicholas Bourne, 1617).

32. See Thompson, *The Chamberlain Letters*.

33. In the Juniper lecture in 1639 (pp. 95–97) to which Mary Tattle-Well and Joane Hit-Him-Home are allegedly responding, John Taylor mentions that certain women are going to respond to his work. The fact that he mentions his knowledge of respondents to his text while he is writing it makes the possibility that he authored the response likely. His reference to *The Woman's Sharpe Revenge* (1640) by name in 1639 makes it even more likely. However, a tradition in polemical debate of fast response and word-of-mouth pre-publicity—especially if Taylor knew the women—could similarly account for his textual references to their pamphlet. This was not an uncommon practice. The title reads as follows: Mary Tattle-Well and Joane Hit-Him-Home, *The Woman's Sharpe Revenge: Or an answer to Sir Seldome Sober that Write those railing pamphlets called the juniper and crabtree lectures, etc. Being a sound reply and a full confutation of those books: with an Apology in this case for the defense of us women* (London, J. O. [Kes] for J. Becket, 1640).

34. Katherine Chidley, *The Justification of the Independent Churches of Christ. Being an answer to Mr. Edwards his booke, which hee hath written against the government of Christs Church, and toleration of Christs publicke worship; briefly declaring that the congregations of the Saints ought not to have dependence in government upon any other, or direction in worship from any other than Christ their head and law giver* (London: William Lahrner, 1641).

35. See Hobby, "Women Writers 1642–1688," which outlines the depth and range of women writers in this period. For statistics mentioned in the text, see Hobby, "Breaking the Silence."

36. Margaret Fell, *Womens Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed of by the Scriptures* . . . (London: 1667, 2nd ed.; reprint ed., Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California at Los Angeles, 1979), no. 196.

37. Katherine Philips, *Poems by the most deservedly Admired Mrs. Katherine Philips, The Matchless Orinda. To which is added Monsieur Corneille's Pompey and Horace, tragedies. With several other translations out of French* (London: T. N. for Henry Herringman, 1678). See also Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1981) for an account of the rise of romantic friendship, especially (for the time period of this volume) pp. 65–143.

38. Margaret Cavendish's Preface to *Philosophical and Physical Opinions, written by her Excellency the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle* (London: J. Martin and J. Allestrye, 1655); Cavendish, *The Convent of Pleasure,* in *Plays, never before printed* (London: A. Maxwell, 1668).

39. A. Boyce Gibson, *The Philosophy of Descartes* (London: Methuen, 1932), presents a cogent account of Descartes' life and philosophy. Smith, *Reason's Disciples* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1981), argues and illustrates the importance of the Cartesian influence and scientific ideas in general in the development of feminism. Ruth Perry, *The Life and Times of Mary Astell (1666–1731): An Early English Feminist* (forthcoming), discusses the influence of rationalist philosophy on women in chap. 3, "The Self-Respect of a Reasoning Creature," and throughout relates it particularly to Mary Astell and her contemporaries. Dolores Palomo also addresses the connection between feminism, science, and rationalism in her unpublished manuscript on Margaret Cavendish. I have benefited greatly from discussions and correspondence with Dolores Palomo, Ruth Perry, and Hilda Smith. For a study of women and science, see Gerald D. Meyer, *The Scientific Lady in England, 1650–1760; An Account of her Rise, with Emphasis on the Major Role of the Telescope and Microscope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), and K. V. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971). In her article on feminist theory, "Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes,* 1400–1789," Joan Kelly factors in the emergence of Cartesianism to the development of feminist history.

40. Several well-known exponents of Cartesian rationalism among the feminist writers include Aphra Behn, Damaris Cudworth, Lady Masham (who, in *Occasional Thoughts in Reference to a Virtuous and Christian Life* (London, 1705), elaborates on the reasonableness of female education), and the Bluestocking Elizabeth Carter (who, in addition to Behn, translated Fontenelle's *A Discovery of New Worlds*). The most notable is Mary Astell, whose Cartesian influence is clear in the second half of *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, for the advancement of their true and greatest interest* (London, 1694, 1697; reprint ed., New York: Source Book Press, 1970). See also Marjorie Hope Nicholson, ed., *The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends, 1642–1684* . . . (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930).

41. Bathsua Makin, *An Essay to revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen, in religion, manners, arts and tongues with an Answer to the Objections against this Way of Education* (London: J. D. to be sold by Thomas Parkhurst, 1673).

42. Hannah Woolley, *The Queen-like Closet, or Rich Cabinet: Stored with all manner of Rare Receipts for Preserving, Candying and Cookery. Very pleasant*

and beneficial to all ingenious persons of the Female sex. To which is added a supplement presented to all ingenious Ladies and Gentlewomen, 4th ed. (London: for R. Chiswell and T. Sawbridge, 1681). Note that this supplement explains that Woolley did not write *The Gentlewomans Companion* (with its autobiographical beginning) commonly ascribed to her. I am indebted to Elaine Hobby for sharing her discovery with me.

43. Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book. Or the whole art of Midwifery discovered. Directing Childbearing women how to behave themselves. In their conception, breeding, bearing, and nursing of children in 6 books. . . .* (London: for Simon Miller, 1671); and Elizabeth Cellier, *A Scheme for the Foundation of a Royal Hospital, and raising revenue of five or six-thousand pounds a year, by, and for the maintenance of a corporation of skilful midwives, and such foundlings or exposed children, as shall be admitted therein, etc.* (London, 1687; reprinted in *Harleian Miscellany* 4, 1745), pp. 142–47).

44. See n. 5.

45. Anna Maria van Schurman, *The Learned Maid; or, whether a Maid may be a Scholar?* (London: John Redmayne, 1659).

46. See Lougée, *Le Paradis des Femmes.*

47. See Smith, *Reason's Disciples.*

48. Aphra Behn, *The Forc'd Marriage; or, the Jealous Bridegroom; a tragicomedy* (London: H. L. and R. B., for James Magnus, 1671).

49. Aphra Behn, *Lycidus; or, The Lover in Fashion* (London, 1688), reprinted in *The Works of Aphra Behn,* vol. 6, ed. Montague Summers (London: William Heineman, 1915), pp. 363–389. See also Angeline Goreau, *Reconstructing Aphra: A Social Biography of Aphra Behn* (New York: Dial Press, 1980), pp. 205–06.

50. Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko: or, the Royal Slave* (London, 1688; reprint ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1973).

51. Aphra Behn, the Author's Preface to her translation of Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, *Entretiens sur la Pluralité des Deux Mondes* [*The Theory or System of Several New Inhabited Worlds, lately discover'd and pleasantly describ'd, in five nights conversation with Madam the Marchioness of *****,* also known as *A Discovery of New Worlds*] (London: W. O. for Samuel Briscoe, 1700).

52. Robert Gould, *Love Given O're: or, A Satyr against the Pride, Lust, and Inconstancy, etc. of Woman* (London, 1682; reprint ed., Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California at Los Angeles, 1976), no. 180.

53. Sarah Fyge (Field Egerton), *The Female Advocate, or, an Answere to a Late Satyr against the Pride, Lust and Inconstancy, etc. of Woman* (London: John Raylor, 1686; reprint of the 1687 2d ed., Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California at Los Angeles, 1976), no. 180.

54. Jane Barker, *Poetical Recreations: consisting of Original Poems, Songs, Odes, etc. With Several New Translations* (London: printed for Benjamin Crayle, 1688).

55. Jane Barker, "The Unaccountable Wife," in *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies, or, Love and Virtue recommended: in a Collection of Instructive Novels* (London, 1723; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1973).

56. Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal* and *Some Reflections upon Marriage, occasion'd by the Duke and Duchess of Mazarine's case; which is also considered,* 4th ed. (London: William Parker, 1730; reprint ed., New York: Source Book Press, 1970). For Astell's circle, see note 87.

57. Judith Drake, *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex. In which are inserted the Characters of a Pedant, a Squire, a Beau, a Vertuoso, a Poetaster, a City-critick, etc. . . . In a letter to a lady. Written by a lady* (London: A. Roper and E. Wilkinson, 1696; reprint ed., New York: Source Book Press, 1970). Regarding Judith Drake's identity, see biography of Judith Drake.

58. Lady Mary Chudleigh, *The Ladies Defence; or, "The Bride-Womans Counsellor" Answer'd: A Poem* (London: for John Deeve, 1701). For interesting commentary on Lady Chudleigh's poem, see Anthony Coleman, " 'The Provok'd Wife' and 'The Ladies Defence,' " *Notes and Queries,* March 1970, pp. 88–91.

59. Eugenia, *The Female Advocate; or a Plea for the just Liberty of the Tender Sex, and particularly of Married Women. Being Reflections on a late Rude and Disingenous Discourse, Delivered by Mr. John Sprint, in a Sermon at a Wedding, May 11th, at Sherburn, in Dorsetshire, 1699. By a Lady of Quality* (London: for Andrew Bell, 1700). I thank Ruth Perry for bringing Eugenia to my attention. For information about the strong connections between Lady Chudleigh and Mary Astell, about Astell's possible reference to Sprint (in *Reflections,* p. 38 in the modern reprint), and for biographical clarification on Lady Chudleigh, I am indebted to Joanna Lipking. The information was first presented in "The Vehemence of Lady Chudleigh," MLA talk, December, 1978.

60. John Sprint, *The Bride-Womans Counsellor, Being a Sermon Preach'd at a Wedding, May the 11th, 1699, at Sherbourn, in Dorsetshire* (London: H. Hills, 1699). (Hill's edition was probably pirated. The edition by J. Bowyer, 1700, is probably the authentic edition.

61. Lady Mary Chudleigh, *Essays upon Several Subjects in Prose and Verse* (London: T. H. for R. Bonwicke, W. Freeman, T. Goodwin, 1710).

62. Sarah Fyge Field Egerton, *Poems on Several Occasions, together with a pastoral* (London: J. Nutt, 1706); Lady Mary Chudleigh, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: Bernard Lintott, 1703).

63. Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions. Written by a Lady* (London: printed for J. B., 1713).

64. Elizabeth Elstob, Preface to *An English-Saxon Homily, on the birth-day of St. Gregory,* (London: W. Bowyer, 1709), pp. iii–vi. Information about Elizabeth Elstob appears in Perry, *The Life and Times of Mary Astell,* especially chap. 2, entitled "The Coal of Newcastle." See also articles entitled "Elizabeth Elstob, the Saxonist," by Caroline A. White in Sharpe's *London Magazine for Entertainment and Instruction for General Reading* 50, n.s. 35 (1869): 180ff. These articles were obtained for me through the kindness of the University of Nebraska Interlibrary loan staff from the Detroit Public Library and the Boston Public Library.

65. For an account of the relationship between economics and authorship, see Geoffrey Alan Cranfield, *The Press and Society from Caxton to Northcliffe* (New York and London: Longman, 1978); Cyprian Blagden, *The Stationers' Company A History, 1403–1959* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1960). Timothy Crist "Government Control of the Press After the Expiration of the Printing Act in 1679," *Publishing History,* no. 5 (1979); Frank A. Mumby, *Publishing and Bookselling: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930, 1949); Frederick Seaton Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England, 1476–1776: The Rise and Decline of Government Control* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965); and A. S. Collins, *Authorship in the Days of Johnson, Being*

a Study of the Relation between Author, Patron, Publisher, and Public, 1726–1780 (London: Robert Holden and Co., 1927).

66. *The Nine Muses, or, Poems Written by Nine Severall Ladies Upon the Death of the late Famous John Dryden, Esq.* (London: Richard Bassett, 1700).

67. Delarivière Manley, Preface to *The Royal Mischief, A tragedy* (London: R. Bentley, 1696); Preface to *The Lost Lover; or, the Jealous Husband, A comedy* (London: R. Bentley, 1696). Catherine Cockburn Trotter, Prefatory address to *Agnes de Castro, a tragedy* (London, 1696). Mary Griffith Pix, Preface to *Ibrahim, the thirteenth Emperor of the Turks: a tragedy* (London, 1696).

68. Mary Davys, Preface to *The Works of Mrs. Davys: consisting of plays, novels, poems, and familiar letters* (London: printed for the author, 1725).

69. Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School,* p. 334.

70. Delarivière Manley, *The New Atalantis* (London, 1709), reprinted in *The Novels of Mary Delarivière Manley,* ed. Patricia Koster, 2 vols. (Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971), vol. 2. See particularly the controversial lesbian section on the cabal.

71. Eliza Fowler Haywood, *The British Recluse: or, The Secret History of Cleomira, Suppos'd Dead* (London: J. Watts, 1724); Susanna Freeman Centlivre, Preface to *The Platonick Lady. A Comedy* (London, 1707); "Preface" and Address "To the World" to *The Works of the Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre* (London: J. Knapton, etc. 1761). Note also that the "strong women" of the period could include everyone who wrote about the condition of women. However, Delarivière Manley and Eliza Haywood, in particular, had to endure substantial criticisms of their writings and their lives.

72. Sophia, *Woman not Inferior to Man: or, a short and modest vindication of the natural right of the fair sex to a perfect equality of power, dignity and esteem, with the Men* (London: John Hawkins, 1739), reprinted in *Beauty's Triumph* (London: J. Robinson, 1751). *Woman's Superior Excellence over Man: or, a reply to the author of a late treatise, entitled, Man Superior to Woman. In which, the excessive weakness of that gentleman's answer to woman not inferior to man is exposed; with a plain demonstration of woman's natural right even to superiority over the men in head and heart; proving their minds as much more beautiful than the men's as their bodies are, and that, had they the same advantages of education, they would excel them as much in sense as they do in virtue. The whole interspersed with a variety of mannish characters, which some of the most noted heroes of the present age had the goodness to fight for* (London, 1740). Reprinted in *Beauty's Triumph* (London: J. Robinson, 1751). François Poulain de la Barre, *De l'Egalité des deux Sexes* (Paris, 1673), trans. "A. L.," *The Woman as Good as the Man* (London, 1677). For an account of François Poulain de la Barre, see Jacob Bouten, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Beginning of Female Emancipation in France and England* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1922). Note also that Poulain de la Barre wrote in 1675 against the equality of women in *De l'Excellence des Hommes contre L'Egalité des Sexes,* 1675 (B. L. shelf no. 8403.bb 11).

73. See Michael A. Seidel, "Poulain de la Barre's *The Woman as Good as the Man,*" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35, 3 (1974): 499–508. (See also bibliography for Sophia.)

74. Sophia's identity has never been uncovered. Although Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's name is often suggested, Lady Mary's biographer Robert Halsband concludes that it is impossible to tender proof either way.

75. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Nonsense of Common-Sense,* Number VI, in *Essays and Poems and Simplicity, A Comedy,* ed. Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); Anon., *The Gentlemen's Magazine* 9 (1739): 525–26.

76. Stephen Duck, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: printed by Samuel Richardson, 1736). Mary Collier, *The Woman's Labour: an epistle to Mr. Stephen Duck; in answer to his late poem, called "The Thresher's Labour."* (London: printed for the author, 1739.)

77. Eliza Fowler Haywood, ed., *The Female Spectator* (London: T. Gardner, 1746), April 1744 – May 1746.

78. Sarah Fielding, *The Governess; or, the Little Female Academy: Being the History of Mrs. Teachum and Her Nine Girls* (London, 1749; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1968); and *The Adventures of David Simple in Search of a Faithful Friend,* 3 vols. (London: A. Millar, 1744; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

79. See the Preface to the first edition of *David Simple* for Fielding's forthright declaration of writing as a financial necessity for herself.

80. Charlotte Charke, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke, youngest daughter of Colley Cibber,* 2d ed. (London, 1755; reprint ed., edited by Leonard R. N. Ashley, Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1969).

81. Elizabeth Robinson Montagu, in *Dialogues of the Dead* by George Lyttelton (London: W. Sandy, 1760). See the last three dialogues, which were written by Montagu.

82. For commentary on the question of the single life, see the letters of Elizabeth Carter to Catherine Talbot, in Elizabeth Carter, *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot from the year 1741 to 1770, to which are added, letters from Mrs. Elizabeth Carter to Mrs. Vesey, between the years 1763 and 1787,* ed. Montagu Pennington, 4 vols. (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1809); Hester Mulso Chapone, *The Posthumous Works of Mrs. Chapone containing her correspondence with Mr. Richardson . . .* , 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1807). See especially first and third letters on "Filial Obedience," *1750–1751.* For a full discussion of female romantic friendship see Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men.*

83. C. Lennart Carlson, *The First Magazine: A History of The Gentleman's Magazine . . .* (Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 1938), pp. 228–29 and passim.

84. The male feminist defenses of women and collections of women poets that appeared in short succession began with George Ballard, *Memoirs of several Ladies of Great Britain, who have been celebrated for their writings or skill in learned languages, arts and sciences* (reprint ed., Oxford: W. Jackson, 1752) and John Duncombe's *The Feminiad. or, Female Genius. A Poem . . .* (London: R. & J. Dodsley, 1757). See also Frederic Rowton, ed., *The Female Poets of Great Britain* (London: Longman, et al., 1848; reprint ed. of 1851 second printing, introduction by Marilyn L. Williamson, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981); George W. Bethune, ed., *The British Female Poets* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1848; reprint ed., Freeport, N. Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972); and Reynolds, *Learned Lady.*

85. See especially Elizabeth Mavor, *The Ladies of Llangollen, A Study in Romantic Friendship* (London: Michael Joseph, 1971); *The Hamwood Papers of*

the Ladies of Llangollen and Caroline Hamilton, ed. Eva Mary Bell (London: Macmillan & Co., 1930).

86. Elizabeth Carter, *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1809) and *Letters from Mrs. Elizabeth Carter to Mrs. Montagu . . . ,* ed. Montagu Pennington, 3 vols. (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1817). See also Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men.*

87. Sarah Robinson Scott, *A Description of Millenium Hall and the Country Adjacent: together with the Characters of the Inhabitants, and such historical anecdotes and Reflections, as may excite in the reader Proper Sentiments of Humanity, and lead the Mind to the Love of Virtue. By a Gentleman on his Travels* (London: for T. Carnan, 1762; reprint edition entitled *A Description of Millenium Hall,* ed. Walter M. Crittenden, New York: Bookman Associates, 1955). Female circles existed among these early feminists; the community around Astell is described in Ruth Perry's biography of Mary Astell. See n. 39. The Thynne "set" at Longleat, Somerset receives attention in Helen Sard Hughes, *The Gentle Hertford: Her Life and Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1940) and in Henry F. Stecher, *Elizabeth Singer Rowe: The Poetess of Frome: A Study in Eighteenth-Century English Pietism* (Frankfurt: M. Peter Lang; Bern: Herbert Land, 1973). Joanna Lipking deduces that Eugenia may have been tied to the Longleat circle because of the dedication to Lady Worseley, while the textual references to dissenting circles, on the other hand, suggest connections with John Dunton and his associates. Female circles also emulated the Bluestockings in the provinces. (In the previous century, Jane Barker is said to have modelled a female group after Katherine Philips's group). An account of Lady Miller's Batheaston assembly, which Fanny Burney and Anna Seward visited, is found in Ruth Avaline Hesselgrave, *Lady Miller and the Batheaston Literary Circle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927); Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg calls attention to the fact that Catherine Macaulay's salon, essentially political in nature, is seldom mentioned in studies of the period in "The Brood Hen of Faction: Mrs. Macaulay and Radical Politics, 1765–1775," *Albion* 2, 1 (Spring 1979): 33–45. See also Tinker, *The Salon and English Letters,* and Stenton, *The English Woman in History.*

88. Elizabeth Robinson Montagu to Gilbert West, October 16, 1755; quoted in Sarah Robinson Scott, *Millenium Hall,* ed. Crittenden, p. 13.

89. Anna Seward, *The Poetical Works of Anna Seward; with Excerpts from her Literary Correspondence,* vol. 3, ed. Walter Scott (Edinburgh and London: James Ballantyne and Longman, et al., 1810).

90. See Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* 5, 4 (1980): 631–660. Other women mentioned later in the text, such as Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Robinson Scott, clearly exist on that same continuum.

91. Mary Scott, *The Female Advocate, a poem occasioned by reading Mr. Duncombe's* Feminiad (London: Joseph Johnson, 1774). John Duncombe, *The Feminiad.* see n. 84.

92. For an account of the poetry of Phillis Wheatley see Gloria Hull, "Black Women Poets from Wheatley to Walker," *Black American Literature Forum* 9 (Winter 1975): 91–96. See also *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley,* ed. Julian D. Mason, Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966).

93. Ann Yearsley, *Poems on Several Occasions,* 4th ed. (London: T. Cadell, 1786). An "Autobiographical Narrative" was added, in which Yearsley defended herself against Hannah More. *Poems on Various Subjects* (London: printed for the Author, 1787). "Autobiographical Narrative" again printed, "The Deed of Trust" added.

94. Ann Yearsley, *A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave-Trade* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1788).

95. Catherine Macaulay, *Letters on Education, with observations on religious and metaphysical subjects* (London, 1790; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1974). Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg is in the process of writing a full-scale biography of Catherine Macaulay. Note also that Natalie Zemon Davis has convincingly illustrated Macaulay's influence as an early woman historian in "Gender and Genre: Women as Historical Writers, 1400–1820," in *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past,* ed. Patricia H. Labalme (New York: New York University Press, 1980), pp. 153–82. The article by Florence Boos and William Boos, mentioned in Macaulay's bibliography herein, is particularly wide-ranging.

96. Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters with Reflections on Female Conduct, in the more important Duties of Life* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1787; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1974); *Mary, a Fiction* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1788; reprint ed., New York: Schocken, 1977); *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London, 1792; reprint ed., New York, New York: W. W. Norton, 1967, 1975 Penguin, 1975.); *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria* (London, 1798; reprint ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1975; and with *Mary, a Fiction,* London: Oxford University Press, 1976).

97. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1790; reprint ed., Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimilies and Reprints, 1960); and the Preface to her translation of Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, *Elements of Morality for the Use of Children* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1790).

98. Mary Hays, in *Monthly Magazine,* July 2, 1796 and March 2, 1797; *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women.*

99. Charlotte Turner Smith, Preface to and *Desmond, a novel,* 3 vols. (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1792; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1974). Mary Anne Radcliffe, *The Female Advocate.*

100. Hannah More, "Letters to Elizabeth Robinson Montagu," in *The Female Spectator: English Women Writers Before 1800,* ed. Mary Mahl and Helene Koon (Old Westbury, N. Y.: The Feminist Press, 1977), 277–86.

101. This point of view is very clear in Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System.*

102. See Judith Drake, *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex,* p. 39.

103. See n. 27.

104. Hannah More, *Slavery, a poem* (London: T. Cadell, 1788).

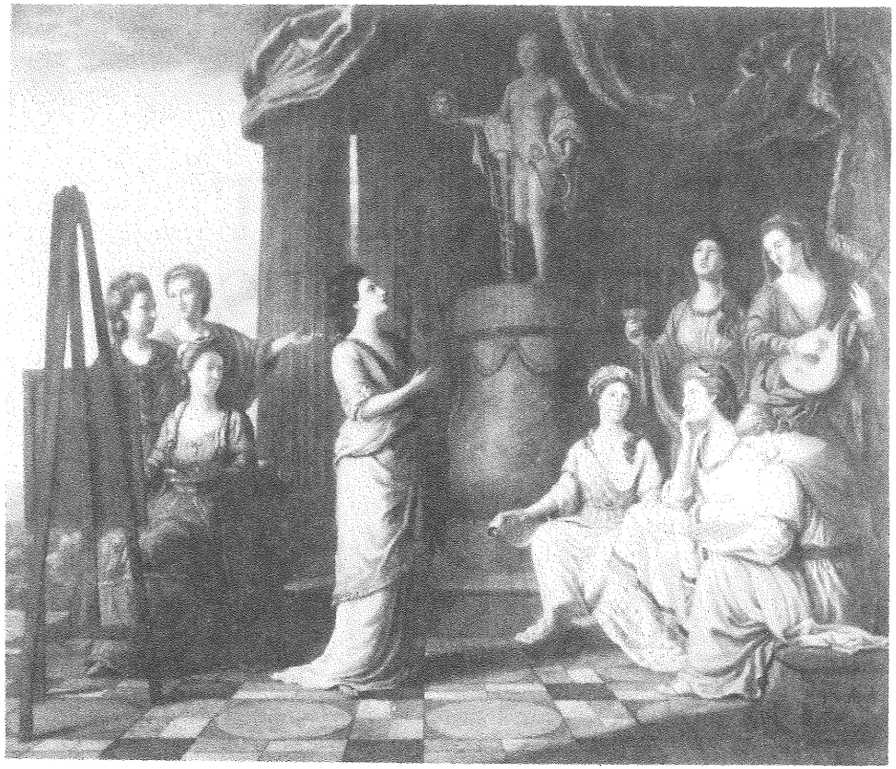
105. Elizabeth Tanfield Cary, Viscountess Falkland, *The Tragedie of Mariam, the Faire Queene of Jewry* (London: printed by Thomas Creede for Richard Hawkins, 1613).

106. Richard Polwhele, *The Unsex'd Females: A Poem* (London, 1798; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1974).

107. John Wilkes, *Essay on Women* (London: for private circulation, 1763).

108. Anne Howard, Viscountess Irwin, "Answer to Pope's 'Of the Character of Women' " (London, n.d.).

109. Mary Jones, "Letters to Lady Lovelace," *Miscellanies in prose and verse* (Oxford: R. and J. Dodsley, 1750) and "Letter to the Hon. Miss Lovelace" in *Poems by Eminent Ladies,* ed. G. Colman and B. Thornton (London, 1755); Mary Leapor, *Poems upon several occasions,* 2 vols. (London: J. Roberts, 1748, 1751).



Nine Living Muses by Richard Samuel, 1779, Catalog No. 4905. *Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery,* London.

Left-hand group: top, left to right, Hannah More and Elizabeth Montague; bottom, Elizabeth Griffith. Center figure: Catherine Macaulay. Right-hand group: top, left to right, Elizabeth Carter and Anna Letitia Barbauld; bottom, left to right, Angelica Kauffman, Elizabeth Linley, and Charlotte Lenox.

F·I·R·S·T FEMINISTS

BRITISH WOMEN WRITERS

1578 – 1799

EDITED and with an INTRODUCTION

By MOIRA FERGUSON

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS · BLOOMINGTON
THE FEMINIST PRESS · OLD WESTBURY, NEW YORK

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Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

First feminists.

Bibliography: p.

1. Feminism—Literary collections. 2. Women—Literary collections. 3. English literature—Women authors. 4. English literature—Early modern, 1500–1700. 5. English literature—18th century. I. Ferguson, Moira.

PR1111.F45F57 1985 820'.8'09287 84–42838

ISBN 0–253–32213–8

ISBN 0–253–28120–2 (pbk.)

1 2 3 4 5 89 88 87 86 85

For my beloved and indomitable mother, Elizabeth Smith Ferguson, and for my mother-in-law, Clara Goodman Fraser, with love and respect for her lifelong revolutionary struggle.