POETRY, DRAMA, AND FICTION IN THE LONDON MARKETPLACE, 1737-1749

A Dissertation in

English

by

Patricia Gael

© 2014 Patricia Gael

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014
The dissertation of Patricia Gael was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Robert D. Hume  
Evan Pugh Professor of English  
Dissertation Advisor  
Chair of Committee

John T. Harwood  
Associate Professor of English  
Associate Professor of Information Sciences and Technology

Philip Jenkins  
Emeritus Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of the Humanities  
Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies

Laura Lunger Knoppers  
Liberal Arts Research Professor of English

Garrett Sullivan  
Professor of English  
Director of Graduate Studies

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.
Abstract

This project addresses major gaps in our understanding of the mid-eighteenth century book trade and the imaginative literature it produced. The current scholarly view of literature in the mid-eighteenth century argues that the period saw the disappearance of topical poetry, a dearth of interest in drama, and a rise in the popularity of the novel. But we know very little about booksellers’ decisions to invest in literature; less about literary reception, as professional reviewing was in its infancy; and less still about the lives of the period’s mostly anonymous authors. My project challenges standard arguments about mid-eighteenth century imaginative literature by providing a thorough analysis of the London literary trade during the period. I examine more than 2,000 of the works of poetry, drama, and fiction published in the city between the passage of the Theatre Licensing Act in 1737 and the publication of the Monthly Review and Tom Jones in 1749. I arrive at a much more accurate picture of literary development and the publishing world. My research shows that booksellers employed sophisticated strategies to mitigate the financial risks of publishing literary genres; authors often published anonymously and were rarely associated with more than a few works; poetry continued to dominate the market; drama remained a publication mainstay; and no discernible rise in the amount or quality of fiction occurred.
Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES ..................................................................................................................................................VI

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....................................................................................................................................VIII

PREFACE .......................................................................................................................................................... IX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .......................................................................................................................................... XV

CHAPTER 1 RECONSTRUCTING THE ROLE OF POETRY, DRAMA, AND FICTION IN LONDON, 1737–1749 ...................................................................................................................................... 1

  I. THE PLACE OF POETRY, DRAMA, AND FICTION IN THE PUBLISHING MARKETPLACE .................. 3
  II. BOOK HISTORIANS’ DEPICTIONS OF THE 1740s BOOK TRADE ...................................................... 21
      The Publishing Business ................................................................................................................................. 21
      Authorship ..................................................................................................................................................... 23
      The Dissemination of Literature .................................................................................................................. 25
      Critical Assumptions .................................................................................................................................. 28

  III. MODERN CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT 1740s BRITISH LITERATURE ................................... 29
      The Anthologized 1740s .............................................................................................................................. 30
      Critical Characterizations of the Literature ................................................................................................. 33
      Critical Assumptions .................................................................................................................................. 41

  IV. ANALYZING 1740s LONDON PUBLISHED LITERATURE WITH ESTC AND ECCO ..................... 42

CHAPTER 2 BOOKSELLING PRACTICES .............................................................................................................. 52

  I. IDENTIFYING AND LOCATING 1740s BOOKSELLERS ........................................................................... 53
  II. MAKING MONEY AS A BOOKSELLER ...................................................................................................... 76
  III. EXAMPLES OF THE PLACE OF POETRY, DRAMA, AND FICTION IN BOOKSELLERS’ BUSINESSES ...... 88
      Cooperative Trade Publishers and Poetry Specialists: Robert Dodsley and Mary Cooper .......... 90
      Dominating the Drama Market: John Watts ............................................................................................. 96
      Fiction in a Diverse Book List: James Hodges ......................................................................................... 101
      A Range of Business Models .................................................................................................................... 104

CHAPTER 3 THE AUTHORS OF POETRY, DRAMA, AND FICTION ................................................................. 110

  I. ATTRIBUTION AND ANONYMITY ............................................................................................................. 111
  II. AUTHORIAL CAREERS ............................................................................................................................... 131
  III. REPRINTS ................................................................................................................................................ 148

CHAPTER 4 THE DISSEMINATION AND RECEIPTION OF POETRY .................................................................. 171

  I. PRACTICAL INFLUENCES: POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS FOR PURCHASING POETRY ........... 174
  II. CURRENT EVENTS: TOPICALITY IN PUBLISHED POETRY .............................................................. 185
  III. AESTHETIC INSPIRATION: THE AUTHORS AND STYLES MOST INVOKED AND IMPLEMENTED ..... 199

CHAPTER 5 THE DISSEMINATION AND RECEIPTION OF DRAMA AND FICTION .................................. 224

  I. 1740s DRAMA ............................................................................................................................................ 225
     Practical Influences: Possibilities and Limitations for Purchasing Drama ........................................... 227
1740s Published Drama and its Reception from Critics and Readers ........................................ 231

II. 1740s FICTION ........................................................................................................................................ 254

Practical Influences: Possibilities and Limitations for Purchasing Fiction ...................................... 255
1740s Published Fiction and its Reception from Critics and Readers .............................................. 260

CONCLUSION THE MARKET FOR LITERATURE, 1737-1749 ............................................................. 276

WORKS CITED .......................................................................................................................................... 285

PRIMARY WORKS ...................................................................................................................................... 285

Poetry ....................................................................................................................................................... 285
Drama ......................................................................................................................................................... 296
Fiction ......................................................................................................................................................... 302
Other Prose Works .................................................................................................................................. 310

SECONDARY WORKS ................................................................................................................................. 314
List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Number of Titles Published in London Per Year, 1737–1749 ................................. 9
Figure 1.2 Percentage of Works Published in London By Genre, 1737–1749 ................................. 10
Figure 1.3 Percentage of Works Published in London By Genre, 1737–1740 ................................. 13
Figure 1.4 Percentage of Works Published in London By Genre, 1741–45 ................................. 14
Figure 1.5 Percentage of Works Published in London By Genre, 1746–49 ................................. 15
Figure 1.6 Annual Percentage of Literature by Genre ................................................................. 17
Figure 1.7 Annual Number of Literature Titles by Genre ............................................................. 17
Figure 1.8 Percentage of ESTC Poetry by Format, 1737–49 ......................................................... 19
Figure 1.9 Percentage of ESTC Drama by Format, 1737–49 ......................................................... 19
Figure 1.10 Percentage of ESTC Fiction by Format, 1737–49 ....................................................... 20
Table 2.1 Number of Times Booksellers’ Surnames Appear in London Imprints, with the Percentage of all London Works Bearing Each Surname and the Years the Booksellers Were Actively Publishing ................................................................. 59
Figure 2.1 London Locations Associated with the Book Trades ..................................................... 71
Table 2.2 Press Run Sizes in William Strahan’s Print Shop ............................................................. 84
Table 2.3 Typical Title-Page Retail Prices by Genre, Format, and Length ........................................ 84
Figure 3.1 Attribution of New and Reprinted Published Poetry Originally in English, 1737–1739 .... 116
Figure 3.2 Attribution of New and Reprinted Published Drama Originally in English, 1737–1749 .... 117
Figure 3.3 Attribution of all Published Fiction Originally in English, 1737–1749 .......................... 118
Figure 3.4 Attribution of New and Reprinted Translated Poetry, 1737–1749 ............................... 120
Figure 3.5 Attribution of New and Reprinted Translated Drama, 1737–1749 .............................. 121
Figure 3.6 Attribution of New and Reprinted Translated Fiction, 1737–1749 .............................. 122
Table 3.1 Number of Works of Poetry, Drama, and Fiction Associated with Actively Publishing Authors, 1737–1749 ................................................................. 134
Figure 3.7 First Editions and Reprints of Poetry Published Between 1737 and 1749 ......................... 150
Figure 3.8 First Editions and Reprints of Drama Published Between 1737 and 1749 .................... 151
Figure 3.9 First Editions of Poetry, 1737–49; Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800 .......... 153
Figure 3.10 First Editions of Drama, 1737–49; Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800 .... 153
Figure 3.11 First Editions of Fiction, 1737–49; Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800 .... 154
Figure 3.12 Reprinted Poetry, 1737–49 (Including Works Originally Published Both Before and After 1737); Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800 .............................................. 157
Figure 3.13 Reprinted Drama, 1737–49 (Including Works Originally Published Both Before and After 1737); Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800 .............................................. 157
Figure 3.14 Reprinted Fiction, 1737–49 (Including Works Originally Published Both Before and After 1737); Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800

Table 3.2 Number of Editions of Poetry, Drama, and Fiction Associated in the ESTC with Dead or Inactive Authors, 1737–1749

Table 3.3 Members of the Book Trades Associated with More Than Five First Editions in the Genre and the Percentages First Editions in the Genre Represent of the Member’s Published Output in the Genre and Overall

Table 3.4 Members of the Book Trades Associated with More Than Five Reprinted Editions in the Genre and the Percentages Reprints in the Genre Represent of the Member’s Published Output in the Genre and Overall
### List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECCO</td>
<td>Eighteenth-Century Collections Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESTC</td>
<td>English Short Title Catalog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface

Under what influences and with what goals was literature created, published, and disseminated in London between 1737 and 1749? The period has been much characterized, but always in incomplete and sometimes misleading ways. If scholars were to base their answers to this question on the few outstanding and celebrated examples, they might cite the success of Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740) as evidence of a reading public clamoring for fiction, or they might take the publication of Edward Young’s *The Complaint: Or, Night Thoughts on Life and Death* (1742-6) as a signal of a shift from the measured, classically-inspired verse of the previous decades toward the wilder, nature-focused poetry of the later Romantics. Others see these years as a point of termination: Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift died, the supposed influence of the Scriblerians was over, and the Augustan age and its concentration on the classics were drawing to a close. For most theater historians, the years following 1737 are a wasteland. These common accounts fit neatly into the sweeping stories of changing literary tastes that are essential to a broad conceptualization of trends in English literature, but they oversimplify the realities of production and reception.

To a large extent, the lack of critical attention to these important years is a problem of periodization: What should we call the period between 1737 and 1749? As John Sitter has argued, “Much commentary on eighteenth-century English Literature and most teaching of it splits the century into an ‘Age of Pope and Swift’ and an ‘Age of Johnson,’ the first ending about 1740, the second beginning in earnest somewhere in the 1750s.”¹ Mid-eighteenth century literature occupies a gap in many chronological divisions. The Augustan age is typically considered to be fading in the later 1730s, and to end with Pope’s and Swift’s deaths in the mid-1740s. The sentimental and Pre-Romantic strains associated with the later century, however, have not yet taken strong hold. And for those who study the influence of the Grub Street hack writers on London literary production—like Pat Rogers, Bertrand

---

Goldgar, Brean Hammond, and Paula McDowell—Walpole’s diminishing influence in Parliament and his 1742 retirement offer a natural conclusion.²

Scholars of eighteenth-century literature often have also disregarded or oversimplified the significance of the bookselling market to developments in poetry, drama, and fiction. The practical economic concerns of writers and members of the book trade usually are treated separately from the content and quality of the literature itself, but in a complete picture of the literary marketplace bookselling practices are of at least equal importance to aesthetic considerations. We need to appreciate, for example, the extent of the financial gamble was Richardson taking as a printer and the artistic risk he took as a writer with the publication of a lengthy prose narrative about a pious servant girl’s developing relationship with her master. Then, as now, not every good book could be published, and not every book published was good. How were the odds of success weighed at the beginning of a project? What did a writer or publisher stand to gain when a copyright changed hands? How could the success of a published work be measured?

Publishing culture in mid-eighteenth-century London was both dynamic and diverse, and literary progress did not stop to note a transition between the Augustan and the Pre-Romantic. While the production of new plays was stagnating, the periodical trade was booming with the publication and increasing circulation of unprecedented numbers of newspapers, magazines, and literary periodicals. Printed material also gradually was becoming more accessible with the opening of the first commercial circulating libraries.³ And many changes that contributed to the development of a concept of “literature,” as distinct from other forms of writing, occurred between 1737 and 1749: Johnson published his first poems and began to plan his dictionary; the production of new plays was drastically curtailed by the Licensing Act; a combination of David Garrick’s acting talents and the dearth of new plays led to a surge


in Shakespearean interest; literary periodicals like *Gentleman’s Magazine* were circulated widely; the first long-running, original review journals were founded; and Richardson’s and Fielding’s most famous novels introduced important advances in the fictional techniques associated with the modern novel. Important political developments also contributed to the changing culture. Walpole’s influence, though dwindling by the early 1740s, was altering the operation of Parliamentary politics, Britain was at war with Spain for nine years between 1739 and 1748, and the failed 1745 rebellion marked the most final end to the hope of a Stuart restoration. London was struggling to handle the challenges of its massive population. But in spite of these significant ongoing changes and without regard for the unprecedented publishing and writing activity and the creation of some of the most enduring literature of the eighteenth century, the significance of this vibrant literary climate has not been recognized.

In spite of the dearth of continuous, comprehensive studies of the period, two major, and related, critical clichés have taken hold: studies of fiction find this period to be central to the “rise of the novel” phenomenon, and many attribute at least part of the success of that form to the “growth of the middle-class reader” and to the development of professional authorship. To large extent these ideas originated with Ian Watt, who argued that the 1740s saw an increase in the number of novels published that he believes was the result in a shift toward the middle class in reading-public demographics.\(^4\) Watt’s claim for a statistical spike in fiction has been repeated by critics like Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, though publication figures are never provided to substantiate the theory.\(^5\) Scholars after Watt also have continued to identify the decade as significant to the development of the novel, giving particular credit to Richardson and Fielding as important contributors or even founders of different branches of the novel. Jerry C. Beasley added some depth to these characterizations by examining all of the novels of the 1740s, concluding that many writers were experimenting with fiction and that the works demonstrate a retreat


from romance toward the conventions of history and biography. That these years saw the publication of some truly excellent works of fiction is undeniable. What I will show, however, is that trends and innovations in fiction and the novel were influenced by contemporary literary and publishing climates more than by any demonstrable changes in the demographics of the reading public.

The existence of a large and influential middle-class reading public is difficult definitively to prove or disprove, but seems at least to have been exaggerated. The likely sources of this claim—among them, that more books were being sold, that circulating libraries increased the number of readers who had access to books, and that fiction featured lower- or middle-class characters—are problematic. The classes of the characters in novels do not necessarily represent the class of their readers, who may have been just as likely to read to escape their own experiences as to choose works with whose characters they might easily identify. And although income distribution was changing, those shifts probably did not have a large impact on the number of people able to buy books. The cost of printed material remained high, and books would still have been considered luxury goods. Only voracious readers and the very wealthy would have been likely to join libraries, which often had prohibitively high subscription costs and exclusive membership policies. The reading public remained a smaller, more elite, and more bourgeois group than has generally been recognized.

Claims of the development of a concept of professional authorship also seem to have been exaggerated. We know little about how authors conceived of their work, but few seem to have thought of it as a calling or to have conveyed a need to express themselves. The vast majority of authors could not have made enough from the sale of their copyrights to support even themselves, much less a family in expensive London. And while the press did offer opportunities to earn steadier money, we do not know whether those who wrote for periodicals thought of that work as a serious profession, as supplemental income, or even as recreation.

My goal in this study is to investigate the cultural atmosphere of the years that produced so much of what has come to characterize eighteenth-century literature—beginning with the passage of the

---

6 Jerry C. Beasley, *Novels of the 1740s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982).
Licensing Act in 1737, which led to a drastic downturn in the number of new plays written, produced, and published each year, and end with the publication of the *Monthly Review* and *Tom Jones* in 1749. In so doing, I will analyze the aesthetic, financial, political, and sometimes personal circumstances which contributed to the creation of the works from this period that have become important to the standard narrative of literary progress in the eighteenth century—for example, *Pamela*, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), *Night Thoughts*, *Clarissa* (1748), and *Tom Jones* (1749). I do not provide new readings of major works—all of which already have benefited from critical attention—nor do I argue for the incorporation of new works into the canon. Rather, I aim to explain how the works of the 1740s came to be written and published when they were written and published. For example, how did the content, style, and form of Young’s *Night Thoughts* compare to the other poetry published in those years? Broadly, I will attempt to answer the following questions: How significant were works of literature within the published output of 1740s London? Upon what bases did booksellers determine whether to publish literature, and which works and authors to publish? What characterized the authors of literature? How “literary” was the poetry, drama, and fiction of the 1740s? How was literature received and evaluated by readers and contemporary critics? And upon what standards and common cultural influences were the poetry, drama, and fiction based?

Chapters are organized around noteworthy influences on 1740s published literature. The first three chapters discuss the place of literature and its authors in broader publishing and cultural contexts. In chapter one I examine critical assumptions about the period, quantitatively establish the significance of poetry, drama, and fiction in the book trade, and briefly and broadly characterize new contributions to those genres during these years. In chapter two I identify and survey the booksellers of poetry, drama, and fiction, establishing the locations of their businesses, the financial opportunities and challenges they faced when publishing literature, and the variety of business models they followed. And in chapter three I analyze what can be known about the authors who published in the 1740s, from anonymous writers, to popular contemporaries, to the (often deceased) authors of commonly reprinted works. Chapters four and five then examine the connections between 1740s cultural and political climates and the period’s
published literature. In chapter four, I analyze the output of published poetry and characterize its content and, broadly, trends in its contemporary reception. In chapter five I study drama and fiction side-by-side in order to investigate claims that the publication of the former was languishing while the latter expanded.

By quantitatively and qualitatively studying the breadth of literary output in the 1740s, and examining its cultural contexts, I will show that previous scholarly views of the period have been inaccurate: mid-century literature was both more elite and more rooted in its contemporary context than previously has been acknowledged.
Acknowledgements

I am thankful for the many people who have helped me see this project to completion. I am most grateful to Robert D. Hume for his judicious advice, patience, and generosity with his time and attention. No advisor could be better. John Harwood was instrumental in the choice and development of this project, and he and Laura Knoppers and Philip Jenkins supported my research throughout. I appreciate their time, effort, and guidance.

A number of organizations and institutions have contributed to my research. I presented parts of this project at meetings of the East-Central American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing, and Penn State’s Digital Humanities Interest Group. I am grateful to the members of those organizations for their questions and comments. The Research and Graduate Studies Office and the Delbert and Marie Welch Graduate Student Award provided funds that enabled me to work at the British Library. The Penn State English department has supported my work in many ways, including financing conference travel and subsidizing my tuition at the Rare Book School, where I learned the fundamentals of bibliography that are the basis of this project.

I am also grateful to the many individuals who have supported me personally and intellectually. I appreciate the helpful conversations and good advice I have received from Julian Fung, Leah Orr, and David Spielman while working on this project. Sarah Summers and Kristin Messuri provided much-needed counsel and cheer. My parents, Teresa and Dennis, are a constant source of encouragement, and their own hard work has been an inspiration for mine. Finally, I am most indebted to Peter, whose technical support enabled me to begin this project, and whose emotional support enabled me to finish it.
For Peter
Chapter 1
Reconstructing the Role of Poetry, Drama, and Fiction in London, 1737–1749

In this thesis I attempt to address one large, basic question: how can the mid-eighteenth-century London market for literature be characterized? Answering this question has required both developing an appropriate methodology (how can such a characterization be executed thoroughly?) and implementing that methodology to a successful end (what will the characterization of the marketplace tell us about the period and the literature it produced?). In the sections and chapters that follow, I examine the publishing strategies of booksellers and authors and analyze significant events and trends in the style, content, and reception of published poetry, drama, and fiction between 1737 and 1749. By quantitatively and qualitatively examining the printed output I demonstrate that our previous understanding of the publishing market and the literature sold in this period has been inadequate and inaccurate.

Literary critics typically have disregarded the complex practical realities of writing and bookselling in eighteenth-century London. The market for literature was large and diverse between 1737 and 1749—years that, for lack of a simple and more precise chronological term and to avoid forcing an over-generalized thematic description, I will refer to collectively as “the 1740s.” The passage of the Theatrical Licensing Act in June of 1737 marked the period’s first major shift in bookselling possibilities. Though designed to control the production of plays on the stage rather than in printed form, the drastic decrease in the number of new plays produced in London also deprived writers of what was previously their most likely-to-be-profitable occupation. ¹ Few new plays staged in fewer theatres decreased the financial incentive to write plays for the profits from the theatre’s author’s benefit nights (typically the

---

¹ The Licensing Act allowed only two theatres to operate in London and required all new plays to be reviewed and licensed by the Lord Chamberlain prior to their performance. For a history of regulation of drama in England and the passage of the Act, see Vincent J. Liesenfeld, The Licensing Act of 1737 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984). As Robert D. Hume points out, “The real impact of the Licensing Act results from the limitation of venues. Legally guaranteed freedom from pesky little competitors, Drury Lane and Covent Garden promptly reverted to an ultra-conservative repertory policy. Covent Garden mounted only three new mainpieces in the 1740s.” “Drama and Theatre in the Mid and Later Eighteenth Century,” in The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660–1780, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 316–39, at p. 321. Before the Act, playwrights could earn money by both selling the copyright to their plays and by collecting profits from theatre benefit nights; after 1737, opportunities to earn money as a playwright were much more limited.
third, sixth, and ninth nights of a production, if it lasted that long). And booksellers’ preference for plays in production would have made selling the copyright for an unproduced work comparatively difficult. Writers were not alone in adjusting their priorities: booksellers also had incentives to update their practices. New opportunities for disseminating published work also appeared in the 1740s. The growing presence of coffee house and circulating libraries, for example, afforded new distribution possibilities, but also meant that, while a work’s readership might increase, the number of copies sold might not reflect that change. And the stakes for publishing quality works were high, as newly published works were increasingly a matter of public conversation. Discussion of books in periodicals and the publication of a growing number of reviews in journals and magazines signaled a turn toward a more widespread and self-aware literary culture.

Even the use of the word “literature” was changing. As Sylvia Adamson notes, across the late seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries the use of the term “literature” shifts from primarily describing written work that demonstrates both knowledge and verbal style, to a distinction between “useful literature” (like scientific works) and the “polite literature” that more closely matches the use of the term as a generic category by critics and publishers today. Adamson also points to the development of a sensibility of polite literature: toward the middle of the eighteenth century, “the term poetry tends to be used as the antonym of prose (and later the novel), rather than in the broader sense of Aristotle’s Poetics or Sidney’s Apologie, where poetry is the rival science to history and philosophy.”  

Raymond Williams emphasizes the mid century even more explicitly, citing the period as the first in which the term “literary” was used specifically to refer to the work of writing and authorship, though its use to refer to the entirety of written work also remained common. Clearly the understanding of literature was in flux. For syntactic simplicity I will use the term “literature” in its modern sense, to refer collectively to poetry, drama, and

---


3 Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p.152. Williams argues that the shift in the use of the word “literary” “appears to be “closely connected with the heightened self-consciousness of the profession of authorship, in the period of transition from patronage to the bookselling market.”
fiction—although I recognize that, while sometimes linked by their common participants in the 1740s, these genres were not referred to as an exclusive category until much later.

To understand what contributed to the development of literature in the 1740s, we need to know what practical considerations shaped the production of poetry, drama, and fiction. The collaborative nature of the bookselling business contributed significantly to these changes: choices made by mid-century writers, booksellers, and critics determined the common content and style of the works published. Writers needed to be savvy about both aesthetic and financial concerns when peddling their work to booksellers and printers whose primary concerns often included the cost of production and the likelihood of future editions. And the importance of printed reception was increasing, too: with the publication of literary periodicals and journals dedicated to reviews of new works came growing attention to the quality of published artifacts and their place in an increasingly public and self-consciously literary arena.

Given the important changes occurring in the years between the passage of the Licensing Act in 1737 and the publication of *Tom Jones* and *The Monthly Review* in 1749, the fact that criticism of the period remains disjointed and is most often reduced to the study of just a few major works is surprising. In this chapter I identify, examine, and refute the current critical characterizations of the literary marketplace and published literature in the 1740s. I begin by contextualizing the significance of poetry, drama, and fiction by examining those genres within London’s large overall published output. Next, I survey first the views of book historians on the significant events and factors in publishing and writing in the 1740s, and then scholars’ current critical assessments of the content and character of 1740s literature. Finally, I explain the resources and methods that I use throughout this study to form the basis of my own depiction of the 1740s London market for literature.

I. The Place of Poetry, Drama, and Fiction in the Publishing Marketplace

In modern literary scholarship on the eighteenth-century market for books, works of poetry, drama, and fiction are of utmost concern. Obviously anyone who wishes to understand the development of a literary genre must concentrate on the works that comprise it to determine stylistic and thematic trends: to
appreciate the significance of Shakespeare’s plays one must know something of Jonson, Marlowe, and so on. But understanding the importance of literature in the marketplace and the roles it played in the output of writers, in the financial operations of booksellers, and on the bookshelves of readers requires even broader contextualization. Approximations of booksellers’ estimated values for different genres can to some extent be determined by comparing the percentage of the total number of titles devoted to works of different genres. Those most commonly published had probably been proven to be most likely to sell.

What practical, market-based influences did authors and booksellers have to consider when deciding what to write and publish? How were those influences displayed in the published output? How consistent were preferences for the number, format, genre, and other characteristics of published material over time? In later chapters I analyze the 1740s book trade to demonstrate the relative importance of various individuals, practices, genres, and titles to the market for books; I base this work on similar studies by McKenzie, Dugas, and Suarez. In this section, I begin by examining proportions of works of poetry, drama, and fiction within the larger trade.

The most complete view of London’s published output is found in the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC)—a project designed to list all known titles published in the British Isles and North America between 1473 and 1800. To classify the works listed in the ESTC as published in London between 1737 and 1749, I began with the helpful and logical categories Suarez estimated as “intelligible to the eighteenth-century ‘common reader’ (a phrase coined by Samuel Johnson) and commercially sensible to the contemporary bookseller” in his bibliometric analysis of the British book trade. Suarez’s

---


categories include: Agriculture, Almanacs and Other Practical Matters; Biography, Letters and Personal Writings; Business and Finance; Education and Children’s Books; Entertainment, Leisure and Travel; History, Geography and Military Affairs; Literature, Classics and Belles-Lettres; Medicine, Mathematics and Science; Music and the Visual Arts; Politics, Government and Law; Religion, Philosophy and Ethics. These genres are similar to those used in other statistical analyses, which suggests that they cover most foreseeable possibilities. As one of my goals is to determine whether the composition of published literary works changed in the 1740s, I added Poetry, Drama, and Fiction categories, and revised Suarez’s Literature, Classics, and the Belles Arts category to Criticism, Classics, and the Belles Arts. I also added a category for Advertisements, Sale Catalogues, and Subscription Lists, as those works seem to me separate from both strict business and financial concerns and from the literary content that booksellers’ advertisements and library sale catalogues might be taken to represent.

To the extent possible, I established principles for inclusion in each of these categories that should make my classifications reproducible. The following brief explanations of the content of each of my categories will illustrate the types of works found in each:

- Advertisements, Sale Catalogues, and Subscription Lists—The vast majority of works in this category are related to the book trade, with booksellers’ lists and library sale catalogues comprising the largest percentage of those; advertisements for small businesses and shows and curiosities also fall into this group.
- Agriculture, Almanacs, and Practical Matters—In addition to the obvious, this category also includes court calendars, cookery books, hunting and husbandry advice, and the like.
- Biography, Letters, and Personal Writing—The works in this genre focus on personal experience; the content extends to some accounts of trials, religious views, and travels, but only when their emphasis seems more on the life of the individual than on their contributions to other fields.

---

6 Suarez, “Bibliometric Analysis,” pp. 45–46. Dugas uses eight categories: almanacs; foreign language, ancient and modern; legal, including government and politics; literature, including verse, plays, operas, prologues, and epilogues; religious works, including sermons; science, including natural history and travel literature; translations into English; and “other,” in which he includes mixed-genre works, music, and so on. See “The London Book Trade in 1709,” p. 43.
• Business and Finance—These works focus on economics and trade, and though many include discussions of government trade regulation, their focus is on the concerns of merchants over the involvement of Parliament.

• Criticism, Classics, and the Belles Arts—This genre is composed of literary critical arguments, Greek and Latin classical works and their translations, and the occasional literary miscellany that does not contain a high enough percentage of a more specific genre to justify its inclusion there.

• Education and Children’s—This category includes books intended to teach basic concepts like grammar, mathematics, advice directed at the development of children, and discussions of the administration of schools and universities.

• Entertainment, Leisure, and Travel—The works in this category are intended to amuse and entertain; they include periodicals, jest books and collections of witticisms, comic allegories, strategies for card games, and descriptions of travel destinations like the spa towns.

• Fiction—One of the most difficult categories to recognize by hints from the title, the works in this category were determined based on obvious references to fictitious circumstances, notes in the ESTC genre category, and identification as fiction by modern scholars, particularly Jerry C. Beasley.7

• Drama—In addition to new and previously published plays, the drama genre includes texts derived from other stage productions, including opera (in English and Italian), short farces, masques, and oratorios, when musical pieces from a stage performance are published without

7 Jerry C. Beasley, A Check List of Prose Fiction Published in England, 1740–1749 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972). Beasley includes “reprinted native works and foreign fiction in translation” (vii), but leaves out magazine fiction, chapbooks, character sketches, jokebooks, and dialogues (ix). He also does not justify the basis of his attributions, many of which are not based on title page declarations, and some of which do not match the attributions provided in the ESTC (which also often offer no basis for their claims). For the years between 1737 and 1739 I have referred to William Harlin McBurney, A Check List of English Prose Fiction, 1700–1739 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960).
engraved music. I also checked works in this category against entries in Allardyce Nicoll’s
*History of English Drama.*

- History, Geography, Military Affairs—Accounts of historical periods, descriptions of places and the people who inhabit them, battle narratives, and discussions of military strategy (like the construction of new fortifications) comprise this genre.

- Law, Politics, and Government Documents—This category includes records of Parliamentary proceedings, the proclamations of the King, trial narratives (which may have some entertainment value but which do not constitute a small part of a longer biographical or historical work), and legal reference works.

- Medicine, Mathematics, Science—Discussions of mathematical theorems, natural philosophy, medical treatments and surgical practice, anatomy, and a few works of hospital administration were placed into this category.

- Music and the Visual Arts—Published materials in this genre focus on aesthetic theory and practice and include sheet music and collections of fine engravings.

- Poetry—Ballads, poetic miscellanies, collections of poems, verse satires, and singly published poems are all included in the poetry genre, which I then compared with D. F. Foxon’s *English Verse 1701–1750.*

- Religion and Philosophy—This large category contains practical and theoretical discussions of religious matters, sermons, and ruminations on the human condition.

As the genre descriptions show, many works could be legitimately placed in multiple categories, and in these cases I chose the option that seemed best aligned with the most specific features of the genre. Books of psalms, for example, could be Music; or Poetry; or Religion, Philosophy, and Ethics. When the work included musical notation, I categorized it as Music under the assumption that its readers would primarily

---


9 Foxon attempts to provide a chronological list of all separately printed poems published in any language in the British Isles in the first half of the eighteenth century. D. F. Foxon, *English Verse.*
purchase and consult it for that purpose; when the work did not include engraved music I placed it in the Religion, Philosophy, and Ethics, deciding that most readers would be more interested in its value as a text for reflection and worship than as a literary construct (although those purposes are not mutually exclusive). Books about contemporary concerns can be even more problematic to place. George Whitefield’s *A Brief Account of the Occasion, Process, and Issue of a Late Trial . . . Between some of the People Call’d Methodists, Plaintiffs, and Certain Persons of the Town of Minchin-Hampton . . . In a Letter to a Friend* could be assigned to at least three categories: Religion, Philosophy and Ethics; Law, Politics, and Government Documents; or Biography, Letters and Personal writing. The best fit in this case was Law, Politics, and Government Documents, as the greatest implications of the work are more likely legal than religious or personal. Ultimately the decisions are arbitrary, but by attempting to be consistent in drawing lines of demarcation between genres I have tried to make my decisions as judiciously as possible. And the categories I have used are no more arbitrary than similar labels would have been in the mid-eighteenth century, when booksellers, reviewers, and readers classified books for discussion or display.

Analyzing the data from the ESTC provides valuable basic context for an examination of the composition of the market for books. Though the figures I provide here should be treated as estimates rather than definitive statistics, the results are nonetheless valuable and suggestive.

The following chart represents the number of titles recorded in the ESTC for each year between 1737 and 1749, based on the year for which the entry is catalogued (which except in cases of false or missing imprints always matches the imprint year).

---

Aside from the statistical anomalies of 1740 and 1745 (the origins of which I discussed in final section of this chapter) the number of titles published in London remained relatively consistent, with occasional variations in the volume of the trade of around twenty percent from year to year but no discernable rise or decline from beginning to end of the period.

More significant to understanding the role of literature in the marketplace, however, is the relative importance of each genre as demonstrated by its share of the total bookselling business. What types of works contributed to the volume of published material? Did the genre percentages change from year to year? If so, were the changes temporary fluctuations due to current events and fads, or did noticeable trends develop, as for example rise-of-the-novel adherents often suggest? The following chart shows the results of the categorization of all of the titles listed in the ESTC as published in London between 1737 and 1749.
Figure 1.2 Percentage of Works Published in London By Genre, 1737–1749
As Figure 1.2 shows, the record of surviving titles indicates that by far the most popular published genres were religious and philosophical works and discussions of law, politics, and government documents: together these genres account for fully half of booksellers’ outputs. Poetry, when categorized by form rather than content, as I have done here, is the next most published genre at just ten percent of the total number of titles, followed by works of history, geography, and military at seven percent, and medicine, mathematics and science at six percent. The remaining ten genres, which range from business to music and the visual arts, each constitute less than five percent of the total. Readers had diverse materials available to them, but seem to have preferred content that was fresh and topical, as evident in the large numbers of recent sermons, accounts of Parliament, and court cases that constitute the predominant genres.

Based on the numbers alone, literary content, though perhaps not as significant as studies of literature and the marketplace have suggested, held a significant place in booksellers’ outputs. If poetry, drama, fiction, and literature, classics, and the belles arts are considered together as contributing to the literary arts, they account for eighteen percent of the published titles—a substantial proportion that comes in a strong third for the most common genres. Breaking literature into more specific subcategories, though, shows that however much one might argue for the quality of the novels published in the period, claims that the 1740s were significant to fiction are not substantiated in the numbers of titles published.

But an overview of the period can only provide an averaged snapshot of the most popular genres. To determine whether a spike in one genre might have led to its disproportionate representation, I have broken the years into early (1737–1740), middle (1741–1745), and late (1746–1749) periods. The following charts show the results of the categorization of all of the titles listed in the ESTC as published in London in each of those periods.
Figure 1.3 Percentage of Works Published in London By Genre, 1737–1740
Figure 1.4 Percentage of Works Published in London By Genre, 1741–45
Figure 1.5 Percentage of Works Published in London By Genre, 1746–49
As Figures 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 clearly demonstrate, preferences for works of different genres remained essentially constant across the 1740s. The greatest fluctuation between periods is the three percent decrease in Law, Politics, and Government Documents between the middle and late years: no other category changes by more than two percent. The results here again challenge the perception of the 1740s as the period of the rise of the novel, as neither the years of the supposed fiction craze following Pamela, nor the progression of the period overall show a significant increase of the percentage of works of fiction published.

Production of literature did not increase across this period, but neither did the percentages of works of poetry, drama, and fiction decrease with respect to the overall output or change much in comparison to one another. The continued and consistent presence of such works is a modest argument in favor of their further study: readers were consuming literature of all sorts at the end of the period just as they were at the beginning.

Separately examining the amount of poetry, drama, and fiction published shows the relationship of those genres to one another. The following charts illustrate the total number of works of poetry, drama, and fiction for each year between 1737 and 1749. The first shows the percentages of each genre with respect to the total published output of literature, while the second displays the number of works of each genre published as a fraction of the combined total number of works of literature.
Figure 1.6 Annual Percentage of Literature by Genre

Figure 1.7 Annual Number of Literature Titles by Genre
With the exception of 1740 (which likely contains a number of cataloging anomalies) the annual total number of works of literature published remained relatively constant at between around one hundred and sixty and two hundred and forty, with no discernible trend either up or down. The fluctuations in amount of literature published are consistent the fluctuations in the numbers of works published overall, confirming its stable place within the literary marketplace.

Within the broad category of literature, individual genres show slight shifts across the period. The most obvious change occurs in the drama category. The number of works of drama published annually decreased fifty percent from ninety titles in 1737 to forty-four the following year, and did not exceed fifty-nine works in a year for the rest of the 1740s. The Licensing Act obviously impacted the amount of published drama. Poetry consistently comprised more than half the annual output of literature. The amount of fiction published showed very modest annual increases between 1737 and 1749, both as a percentage of the total literary output and in terms of total number of works published, with the sharpest upturn appearing around 1740 or 1741. By the end of the decade, the number of fictional works published increased by one and a half to two times, from approximately twenty titles a year to between thirty and fifty. However, as the number of works of fiction remained small compared to the total published output, the change was negligible as a percentage of the market.

While the number of works is a reflection of a genre’s place in the overall market, their size may be a clearer indication of their place within booksellers’ and readers’ investment priorities. To some extent format is connected to length—for example, shorter works are more likely to be printed in larger folio and quarto formats because those sizes would have been comparatively affordable and large sheets would have made shorter works appear more substantial, while longer works are more often printed in smaller octavo and duodecimo to fit more text onto each sheet of paper. To compare common formats across genres, I have relied upon the physical sizes recorded in the ESTC, some of which undoubtedly are incorrect, but checking the format information for each via physical or electronic sources is not feasible. I also normalized minor differences in format when only a few outliers exist: for example, combining “long duodecimo” with duodecimo. These slight inaccuracies are unlikely to affect the overall percentages.
Figure 1.8 Percentage of ESTC Poetry by Format, 1737–49

Figure 1.9 Percentage of ESTC Drama by Format, 1737–49
The diversity of common formats for poetry suggests both its variety of lengths and its prominence in booksellers’ lists. That large percentages both of single poems and of collections of poetry were published suggests that booksellers were willing to invest in a range of verse, anticipating its appeal in relatively inexpensive short, larger formats and in upper-end longer collections. The dominance of octavo and duodecimo for drama and fiction reflects both the typically greater length of those works and booksellers’ unwillingness or inability to publish those works in more expensive larger editions. Drama’s greater percentage of quarto editions, then, might also reflect its greater cultural capital: booksellers expected readers to be more willing to pay for fancy editions of drama.

As this discussion shows, literature remained a small, but significant and steady component of booksellers’ published outputs across the 1740s. Poetry was the foremost genre throughout the period. Predictably, the amount of drama published plummeted after the Licensing Act, while the amount of fiction made minor but noticeable gains. In the following section, I will survey the explanations book historians have provided of the way the marketplace functioned.
II. Book Historians’ Depictions of the 1740s Book Trade

Scholars who study the eighteenth century often point to the mid-century as the seat of great changes to the publication of literature. Some of the period’s developments are indisputable: publication proliferated, circulating libraries were formed, and the periodical press flourished. Other critical claims are more difficult to verify, as no information exists to provide reasonable statistics for readership or even literacy rates, and as concepts like authorship are difficult to define and nearly impossible to measure. In this section, I describe what scholars have established and assumed about the 1740s literary marketplace.

The Publishing Business

Scholars of book and publishing history have noted the importance of the mid-eighteenth century to the development of bookselling practices. James Raven particularly emphasizes the importance of the 1740s in his financially-focused study of the book trade. The decade was, he writes, “momentous,” and marks the beginning of the expansion of the market for books and the publishing trade. Raven also argues that mid-eighteenth century London was an important hub of social and financial activity: the increasing number and importance of circulating libraries, the city’s emerging importance as the center of the book trade in the wider European market, and the risky business practices of booksellers all contributed to the development of a more robust literary marketplace.\(^{11}\)

Booksellers were largely in command of this marketplace, as legally there were few enforced restrictions on publication. Early copyright laws did little to empower writers. The Statute of Anne, an act of publishing legislation passed in 1709 and enacted in 1710, granted writers the right of ownership over their books. But the Act primarily was designed to restore some of the control lost by the Stationers’ Company when the Printing Act lapsed in 1694, though it also added new limitations to the Company’s power. Rights to copy were still determined by the entry of the work into the Stationers’ register, and although authors were newly authorized to enter their own works into the register and to thereby take

responsibility for their own copyright, few chose to do so. Ownership was not perpetual: the length of copyright was limited to twenty-one years for works already in print, and fourteen years for new works (with the option to extend the copyright another fourteen years if the author was still alive at the end of the period).

Although theoretically a big step towards our modern conceptions of authorship and copyright, the Statute had little practical impact in the 1740s. In The Author’s Due, his examination of the primary legal sources on authorship in the Renaissance through the history of copyright law and the development of the concept of intellectual property, Joseph Loewenstein argues that the Statute was a gamble for Parliament and that its passage suggests their acknowledgement of the power of the electorate and was an early sign of the growth of a public sphere. But, as Ian Gadd explained in his plenary on the Stationers’ Company at the 2011 SHARP conference, even when the copyrights began to expire, the members of the Company still typically retained control, as they were able to flood the market with cheap copies of any work a smaller enterprise published. With piracy common both in London and more especially abroad in cities like Dublin and Edinburgh, those who wished to enforce their right to a work needed sufficient influence within the bookselling community.

The strong influence of powerful booksellers actually increased in the 1740s through the expansion of the periodical press. As Michael Harris demonstrates in his study of early- and mid-century newspapers, the printers and managers of newspapers were also often the printers and sellers of books. Unsurprisingly, newspapers, as well as magazines and literary journals, became an important venue for

---

13 Loewenstein, The Author’s Due, p. 53.
discussions of newly published books, as well as for advertisements of those works—biased though those discussions might be.¹⁵

But most studies of the periodical press in the 1740s have focused less on newspapers’ roles in disseminating literature than on their political leanings. Scholars have argued that participation in contemporary issues helped mid-century publishing and bookselling businesses to flourish. Fielding’s 1740s political papers, True Patriot (1745–1747) and Jacobite’s Journal (1747–1748), for example, often serve as examples of the connections between the press and politics. Robert Harris argues that the 1740s press was connected to philosophical developments, with treatment of economics, politics, and foreign policy in the decade’s newspapers anticipating the country’s later concerns with patriotism and empire.¹⁶ But Jeremy Black reaches a different conclusion in his examination of newspapers across the century. By considering circulation figures, content, and political leanings, Black concludes that newspapers were not as dominated by Whig ideals as many have assumed, and that they also did not progress as much across the period as had previously been thought.¹⁷

In their role as arbiters of the books published and in their involvement with the increasingly important press, booksellers are portrayed as the savvy and powerful leaders of the publishing business.

Authorship

Who were the individuals responsible for and the creation of literature in the 1740s and what were the driving forces behind their work? Scholars who have studied eighteenth-century writing practices have not yet reached a consensus on the demographics and common attitudes of mid-century authors.

Investigations of the material conditions of writing and literary production in the 1740s have been affected by the idea of a Scriblerian culture dominated by the likes of Pope, Swift, Gay, and a slew of

---

hack writers responding to contemporary events. Scholars of the earlier eighteenth century, however, have established a useful background by examining the lives and work of groups of writers. Pat Rogers’ study of writers trying to earn a living in the early eighteenth century provides a lively description of living and working conditions in the parts of London most inhabited by the hacks, whom Rogers argues constituted a coherent subculture.\(^\text{18}\) Building on Rogers’ discussion, Brean Hammond focuses more particularly on literary impact, arguing that “It is at this time [in the early eighteenth century] that individual careers and texts, and literary genres, are most obviously striated by profound changes in the underlying geology of authorship.”\(^\text{19}\) But both Rogers’ and Hammond’s studies end before the 1740s, and thus they cannot account for changes in the literary professions associated with the political and cultural climate of those years.

Any study must begin and end somewhere, but the fact that both Rogers’ and Hammond’s studies focus solely on the first three or four decades of the eighteenth century suggests that their authors believed or at least assumed those years to be the locus of eighteenth-century hack writing activity. The factors that led to increased publishing opportunities—political pamphlet warfare, groups of desperate writers living near the booksellers, the influence of a few strong writers—might have changed in specifics after the 1730s, but they did not disappear entirely. And while members of the Scriblerian club were dying off at the end of that decade, their active investment in that project often has been overstated, and their works endured as an important influence on contemporary writers.\(^\text{20}\) The chapbooks, pamphlets, and topical verse that are the stuff of hack writers continued to be published.

Related studies of authorship by Clifford Siskin and George Justice examine the cultural and practical conditions that affect authors’ lives in the eighteenth century. Siskin argues that culture became more literary across the century as developments in print technology and increasing rates of publication boosted its influence; authors, according to Siskin, also began to think of their work as a contribution to

---


culture and as a profession. Access to this literary culture, Siskin is careful to point out, was limited to those who could read and had access to books, which meant that many groups (like women) were largely excluded. Justice builds on Hammond’s and Siskin’s work in *The Manufacturers of Literature*, arguing as Siskin does that advances in print technology influenced developments in literature—though neither Justice nor Siskin explains what those advances are supposed to have been or when they are supposed to have taken place. Justice further contends that what he calls “crucial” texts (like, for example, Addison and Steele’s *Spectator*, Pope’s *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, Dodson’s *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, Johnson’s *Life of Savage*, and Burney’s *Evelina* and *Camilla*) were particularly important to the development of culture.

Examinations of the creation and sale of printed materials in the 1740s do not yield a coherent view of publication in the period. While some scholars imply that Grub Street and its hack writing dissipated with Walpole’s influence, others point to the strong influence of the press. And though book historians claim that the period’s most significant contributions to the market for books are the result of booksellers’ efforts to refine their business practices, others argue that the changes in the market were led by its writers and readers.

*The Dissemination of Literature*

The years between 1737 and 1749 saw pioneering developments in the methods used to get literature to its readers. Enterprising booksellers formalized a method of making money from the items that were sitting on their shelves. The practice of lending books for a fee had been around since at least the 1660s, but not until the 1740s were the first circulating libraries with dedicated lending stock established in London. The man most often credited with establishing the first circulating library in London was unconnected with a bookselling business: dissenting minister Samuel Fancourt moved the stock from his

---


failed Salisbury library to the metropolis in 1742. Libraries run by booksellers were more common: J. Rowlands advertised a library containing thousands of volumes in 1742, John and Francis Noble published a catalogue of their circulating collections around 1745 or 1746, and Thomas Wright and Thomas Taylor each published broadside advertisements containing the rules and cost of membership to their libraries around that same year, though each of these libraries may have been lending books prior to the publication of those documents.

The circulation of books in libraries greatly increased access, though printed material remained something of a luxury. Subscription to Fancourt’s library cost a guinea in 1744. The Noble brothers charged subscribers half-a-guinea per year or three shillings per quarter and allowed them to check out two books at a time. Their lending rules were strict: new books were only to be borrowed for six days at a time, and books must be returned undamaged, and the penalty for breaking one of these rules was the purchase of the book. These subscription prices mean that circulating libraries likely did not make books accessible to those who could not already afford to purchase them, but they do suggest that individual readers would have had a chance to read many more books, and individual books would have had a chance to find more readers.

Readers whose habits were more social than a lending library would strictly require, or who preferred to read shorter, more topical works could have been satiated in coffee house libraries. Markman Ellis identifies the 1740s as the peak period for coffee house libraries in which, for a fee, men were granted access to a cozy room, typically located above the retail coffee floor, where they could read a wide selection of new publications. These collections held works that were more recent, and often also shorter, than those favored by circulating libraries. The surviving record also indicates that coffee house

---


patrons could have expected to find verse and satire represented in large percentages. Here reading became a social activity, as readers could find others with similar interests and could discuss current events and recently published books.

Access to books in libraries and coffee houses might be related to what cultural and economic historians have identified as an increasingly commercialized culture devoted to extravagance and indulgence. John Brewer argues that the eighteenth century saw the development of newly important cultural standards based on luxury and pleasure: “Taste became one of the attributes of a new sort of person . . . who was literate, could talk about art, literature and music and showed off his refinement through agreeable conversation in company.” Maxine Berg argues that the influx of luxury goods in the eighteenth century was tied to trends toward industrialization, as well as to Britain’s desire to produce its own versions of the manufactured goods it had previously imported from abroad. The print trade was becoming similarly industrialized: John Bidwell has shown that English dependence on European paper supplies began to decrease drastically in the 1730s when the number of paper mills was increasing.

What was the audience for these goods? Certainly the nobility and gentry could afford to invest in luxury products and spend money on cultural experiences. But based on her examinations of recorded lists of household goods and expenditures in the eighteenth century, Lorna Weatherill argues that prestigious tradesmen may have invested more heavily in luxury items than the gentry: “The greatest differences were in book and clock ownership, which reflected the higher literacy and organizational requirements of professional people and the clergy.” As Weatherill’s point makes clear, finances were not the only restriction to the purchase of books. Literacy is particularly difficult to measure, but as far as

---

can be determined, basic rates remained low in eighteenth-century England, particularly for women and the lower classes.\textsuperscript{31}

Scholars do not agree on the extent to which access to books and the ability to read increased in the eighteenth century, but most seem to believe that readership was rising and printed material was becoming available to a wider section of the public.

\textit{Critical Assumptions}

The characteristics of the book trades and authorship in the 1740s are less explicitly stated than the aesthetic descriptions of the literature discussed in the following section, but the extant studies nonetheless betray a clear set of assumptions:

- Booksellers were a dominant force in the literary marketplace. Historians argue that their jurisdiction over copyright and ability to mitigate the effects of piracy and influence the discussion of books in newspapers suggests that booksellers were able to control the books on the market.

- Grub-Street-style hack work was no longer a viable form of authorship. As the only studies of literary hack work in the eighteenth century end in the late 1730s or early 1740s, one might have the impression that the fast-paced world of pamphlet literature and periodical publication was dissipating in the 1740s.

- Changes in publishing technology drove changes in literature. Scholars argue that advancements in print shop technology led to developments in literature and an increasingly literary culture.

- Books were beginning to reach a larger audience. Discussions of circulating libraries, coffee houses, consumer culture, and literacy imply that literature was reaching a larger, more socially diverse audience.

Many of the critics and historians who discuss the 1740s literary marketplace have made abstract observations without causal evidence; others make sweeping generalizations about the eighteenth century as a whole, without pinpointing the years in which the changes take place. And these book history arguments are generally separate from discussions of the literary content booksellers and authors were producing. As the following section shows, criticism of the relevant literature is similarly over-generalized.

III. Modern Critical Assumptions about 1740s British Literature

In spite of the fertile material for investigation, few scholars have sought to determine broadly what trends in content and style were displayed in poetry, drama, and fiction between 1737 and 1749. These years often function as a termination of literary and cultural studies; much less frequently is the period a point of departure, and even less frequently than that do the years serve as an object of focus in their own right. In many instances this decision is understandable. For good reason have studies of early eighteenth-century politics ended with Walpole’s resignation as Prime Minister in 1742, for example. But as the century has been divided into discrete pieces, the years between 1737 and 1749 have commonly been split apart or not studied at all.

No tidy label has been adopted to describe the period. Although they saw the publication of the final version of Pope’s *Dunciad*, the 1740s are not associated with the “Augustan” focus on the classics, formal polish, and satirical poetry. Despite the presence of late-life Pope until his death in 1744 and an aging Swift until his death in 1745, the period typically is not considered a significant part of the “Age”s named for either of those poets. Johnson’s arrival in London and the publication of his first works does not associate the decade firmly with him for all but the most devoted of his fans. The poetry of the 1740s has been described as “Pre-Romantic,” but the traces of nature and introspection found in the works of poets like Gray and Young are not equally present in the plays and novels written in these years, and to define even part of the literary character of a period on the basis of loose themes that are only explicitly
present in much later literature seems contrived. Critics have characterized the periods both before and after these years: the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are the age of political satire, court wit, and the influence of the classics. The later eighteenth century is first the age of sentiment, and then of Romanticism. But even within these broad descriptions of literary trends the 1740s are missing. Mid-century literature tends to be divided into other periods, ending up in pieces and typically forming only the weak beginning or end of movements that reach their peaks in other years. The 1740s constitute a gap in our sense of eighteenth-century literary history.

The most significant result of this periodization problem is the lack of a nuanced characterization of the literature. In the broad scope of literary history, the mid-eighteenth century is, like all periods, reduced to a few of its most prominent writers and themes. Unlike many other periods, however, the characterizations of these years have not added up to anything coherent. As the following sections will show, the small selection of literature that students and scholars study from the 1740s, the tropes used to describe the period, and the lack of focused and extended attention on the years in examinations of writing and bookselling practices has left us with only a handful of narrow and somewhat contradictory modern critical assumptions.

The Anthologized 1740s

Which works originally published in the 1740s survive in the modern teaching canon and literary history overviews? As the following brief overview of discussions of the poetry, drama, and fiction in anthologies and literary histories shows, the years that comprise the 1740s typically are being introduced to non-specialists as disjointed and important primarily for a few works of fiction and for what often are considered minor contributions to poetic development.

The treatment of the 1740s in student anthologies of eighteenth-century literature is scattershot. The relevant volumes of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, the *Longman Anthology of English
Literature, and the *Oxford Anthology of English Literature* include largely similar selections of texts.\(^{32}\) Given the obvious space constraints, the emphasis on poetry is unsurprising: from the work published in the years between 1737 and 1749, each anthology includes Johnson’s *Vanity of Human Wishes*; a few Thomas Gray poems (*Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* and *Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat* make the cut in each collection); and a few of William Collins’ odes (“Ode to Evening” and “Ode Occasioned by the Death of Mr. Thomson” each appear more than once). Oxford and Longman each also include selections from Edward Young’s *Night Thoughts*, though Norton omits that poet but adds selections from Mary Collier’s *Woman’s Labour* and Hogarth’s *Marriage A-la-Mode* to its repertoire. These selections of poetry—particularly the ubiquity of Gray and Collins—seem designed to support pre-Romantic notions of mid-century literature.

The representation of 1740s fiction and drama is less comprehensive, though many instructors supplement the surveys with a complete novel or play or two. Two of the anthologies do include a few bits of Fielding, though their selections differ: Longman provides excerpts of *Shamela*, while *Oxford* chooses *Jonathan Wild* and the *Modern Glossary*. Longman is alone in its inclusion of Richardson, excerpting both *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*. Conspicuously missing from all of these anthologies is any reference to the drama of the period which, though suffering after the Licensing Act, still constituted a significant portion of the literature published and consumed. The view of the 1740s for modern students, then, is of a sparse and disparate period of literary production.

Longer, chronologically organized literary histories—those published by university presses and intended as the more detailed introductions typically read by graduate students and scholars looking for a quick introduction—show similar preferences and somewhat comparable selection and coverage. The *Short Oxford History of English Literature* devotes three pages to “Thomson and Akenside: The Poetry of Nature and the Pleasures of the Imagination,” seven to the major novels of Richardson and Fielding, two

to Smollett, and six to “Sensibility, Sentimentality, Tears, and Graveyards,” which focuses on the development of a concept of sentimentality later in the century, but includes a discussion of Gray and Collins.  

These are fairly standard divisions for the discussion of mid-century literature. In his volume of *A Literary History of England* (1948), George Sherburn recites the divide between the early Augustans and the later pre-Romantics, calling Gray, Young, and others “new voices,” whose focus on personal expression and landscape stands in contrast to the earlier poets of the classical tradition. His discussion of the fiction is similarly standard, focusing on Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett as the “three great novelists.”

John Butt’s mid-eighteenth-century volume of the *Oxford History of English Literature* predictably provides one of the most comprehensive views of the period. Butt’s investigation begins in 1740 and ends in 1789 and thoroughly covers the aesthetic backgrounds and work of the best remembered writers. He argues that Spenser and Milton were the major influences on mid-century poets, of whom he studies the standard Gray, Young, Collins, and Akenside, and the less typical Robert Blair and John Armstrong. To the triumvirate of “major” novelists, Butt adds a discussion of the more “minor” Sarah Fielding. And, continuing the trends of other scholars, he says virtually nothing of 1740s drama. Butt characterizes the mid-eighteenth century as “a generation elevated by original genius, enchanted by fancy, stunned by the sublime, and it was these qualities that occupied the centre of critical attention, giving a new shape to what writers thought they were trying to achieve” (495).

The more recent *Cambridge History of English Literature 1660–1780* is a somewhat different venture due to its topical, rather than chronological, organization. The chronological coverage of the chapters is inconsistent: Dustin Griffin’s examination of social authorship, for example, ends with Pope,
and no companion chapter picks up the topic for the later eighteenth century. Treatment of 1740s literature is spread throughout the volume, so characterization and explication of the period is scattered. John Sitter describes satiric poetry as diffuse and less politically-charged than late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century works, discursive and didactic poetry as subjective and expressive, and lyric poetry as irregular, brilliant, and, ultimately, the most respected poetic mode.\textsuperscript{37} In his discussion of the market for novels, William B. Warner argues that Richardson, and more specifically Pamela, is the foundation of the critique and empathy for fictional characters that has been central to novel reading ever since (103).\textsuperscript{38} Robert D. Hume offers one of the only accounts of drama past 1737, and points out that the lack of competition that resulted from the Licensing Act’s two-theatre system led to a resurgence of old plays on the stage and the creation of bad tragedies and lively, but not profound, comedies.\textsuperscript{39}

Anyone consulting anthologies and literary histories for an overview of the 1740s likely would feel secure in stating its major contributions to literary writing: Gray, Young, Akenside, and Collins were the period’s most celebrated poets; Fielding and Richardson were the driving forces behind its fiction; and drama was largely off of the cultural radar.

*Critical Characterizations of the Literature*

What distinguishes 1740s literature from that published in other decades? Few critics have studied the period as a whole, and even fewer have studied more than one genre. Basic questions remain unanswered. For example, were literary works primarily public or private in nature? How topical were the poetry, drama, and fiction? How significant was the market for literature and how much did it change or develop? Those who have studied the poetry, fiction, and/or drama between 1737 and 1749 have reached contradictory conclusions.


\textsuperscript{39} Hume, “Drama and Theatre in the Mid and Later Eighteenth Century.”
Of the three genres, the poetry of the 1740s has been most often studied comprehensively, and so has perhaps the most developed general characterization. In 1950, Josephine Miles offered the following confident summary of its perceived style and content:

We know it well, its reasonableness, its sublimity, its formal couplet, its graveyard gloom, its sharpness of antithesis, its splendor of scene and personification . . . Yet we may well be reminded that seldom else have we had so many long poems, wide views, high emotions, vast conceptions.  

Miles expanded upon this common view. Through her examination of changes in the grammatical construction of poetry and commonly used terms she argues that “The primary vocabulary is a vocabulary of nature, and power, and air, day, heaven, in all their scope. The emotions are more positive than graveyard associations would lead us to expect.” She draws these conclusions by counting the number of times particular words appear in poems by Gray, Akenside, Young, Johnson, Pope—the same poets whose work continues to populate anthologies. That the graveyard-poet, long-form elevated poetry characterization Miles outlines persists, then, is no surprise.

Mid-century poetry often is also defined by what it is not. Many critics have commented on its inability or unwillingness to follow in the direct satirical lineage of Dryden, Pope, Swift, and others. Arthur Johnson argues that “After 1740 poets want us to weep or sigh, to gasp with awe or shudder with fear, but they do not ask us to laugh.” That humorous poetry was largely replaced with meditative odes in the 1740s and 50s is a commonly held belief, rooted largely in the study of the small percentage of poets whose work followed those patterns.

The more recent, related idea that the strains of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are first found in the 1740s has helped to cement this image. Marshall Brown and others have found the beginnings of the Romantic period in mid-century poetry: sublimity, references to common and rural life,

---

41 Ibid.
exaltation of nature are amongst the themes called “pre-Romantic.”

Again, the views of these critics have been shaped by the work of the few still-read poets of the mid-century. But while naturalistic strains can certainly be found in some of the greatest works, their presence is not strong enough to characterize the period in its entirety.

Pre-Romantic claims have been somewhat balanced and questioned by examinations of the political nature of 1740s poetry. Discussions of Walpole-inspired poetic output in the early years of the period are particularly common, though they have yielded disparate conclusions. In *Walpole and the Wits*, Bertrand Goldgar points out that the works of many well-known writers contributed to the opposition against Walpole and, while individually not as powerful as the Prime Minister, the fact of their existence and their sheer numbers significantly contributed to anti-Walpolean sentiment. Christine Gerrard builds on what she takes as a standard view of literary development: “Literary critics have long been familiar with the notion that the fall of Walpole in 1742 represented some kind of literary watershed, with poets adopting a new agenda, one which rejected Pope’s ‘wit and satire’ for a romantic engagement with the explicitly British, and often very distant British past.”

Pre-1742 Patriot poetry, she argues, employed British myths and legends without reference to specific names, places, or events. Tone Sundt Urstad argues that the connection between politics and literature was not limited to the influence of the Opposition: Walpole’s supporters contributed to the creation of a codified language in which political messages could be conveyed clearly but surreptitiously through the use of stock words and phrases.

Together, Goldgar, Urstad, and Gerrard convincingly demonstrate the Great Man’s effect during his years as Prime Minister, but how those effects were felt and how much they contributed to the majority of published poetry remains unclear. And because their studies end when he left Parliament in 1742 we may

---

have the mistaken impression that Walpole himself and political concerns more generally ceased to influence published literary writing after that year.

The idea that poetry may have participated in political concerns is also taken up by those who argue that the mid-century was a time of nation building and national identity formation. Dustin Griffin writes against the standard Pre-Romantic view that mid-eighteenth century poetry was “preoccupied with meditations in lonely country churchyards, gentle twilight reveries, withdrawal to quiet rural retreats, to religious ecstasy, or imaginative flights to a medieval past” and that after Pope poets “turned inward and become self-conscious because of their sense of personal or cultural inadequacy in the face of the extraordinary accomplishments of their mighty predecessors.” Rather, Griffin argues that mid-eighteenth century poets like Thomson, Gray, and Collins were used to thinking about themselves as Britons, and conceived of their poetry as a part of a patriotic service. For those who study its political impact, then, the poetry of the 1740s was an intentionally public venture.

On this point, too, however, critics disagree. John Sitter posits that mid-century poetry was decidedly private. Sitter believes the 1740s saw a split between the aims and interests of poets and novelists. The poets, he contends, followed the philosophy of William Law and eschewed contemporary concerns in favor of visionary, mythical history. The result was that poets attempted to separate themselves from contemporary context: according to Sitter, “many of the poems that most reflect the 1740s and 1750s are not epistles—that is, not poems with an explicit audience and implicit social engagement—but soliloquies or lyrics, usually blank verse musings or odes addressed to personifications.” Obviously the poetry cannot have been both primarily engaged in political concerns and dedicated to internal reflections. But without a sense of the larger marketplace, deciding whether either of these views is probable is impossible.

---

Developments in 1740s fiction have been less commonly comprehensively studied than those of poetry, but most scholars seem to agree on one point: the novel market was booming. The basis for this view can of course be traced to Ian Watt’s *Rise of the Novel*. Watt specifically cites the 1740s as a decade in which the number of novels published began to increase, although he does not put this into the context of the greater overall number of works published. He argues that the changes in the class and financial status of readers led to a “new balance of literary power,” the results of which he believes to be a widening audience for print. According to Watt, this developing readership “probably tended to favour ease of entertainment at the expense of obedience to traditional critical standards.” Whether he believes these trends to have been ongoing in the 1740s is impossible to determine, however, as Watt is often imprecise about chronology: he discusses, for example, a climate in which Defoe and Richardson were writing, as though the more than fifteen years between the publication of Defoe’s last great novel and Richardson’s first did not exist. Loose though Watt may have been about some details, however, his vision of the growing predominance of the novel remains a part of every student and scholar’s critical background.

Those who have studied the novels of the mid-eighteenth century more particularly provide some sense of the common features and aesthetic motivations behind the fiction. Sitter believes that fiction and poetry diverged in the mid-century. Novelists, he argues, were influenced by David Hume’s historiographic philosophy. In contrast to poetry, which he believes to have been increasingly personal and contemplative, Sitter finds that novelists were grounded in reality, and featured immediate themes and issues in their work. His analysis, however, is based largely on the work of Fielding and Richardson: for a more comprehensive view of the fiction, one must consult Jerry C. Beasley.

In his examination of a few hundred novels published in the 1740s, Beasley draws somewhat similar conclusions to Sitter’s. Beasley focuses not on the novel’s relationship to poetry, however, but on its connections to earlier forms of fiction, arguing that 1740s novels display a retreat from the conventions

---

of earlier romances, favoring instead the style of contemporary histories and biographies.\textsuperscript{51} Beasley characterizes the 1740s as the decade of the novel; he argues that there was a general prejudice against fiction at the time, especially among the elite, that the decade was a time of fictional experimentation, that the works were often full of political and religious content, and that the “middle class” was increasingly the market for novels (although he does not clearly explain who constituted the middle class).\textsuperscript{52} As the compiler of a helpful bibliography of 1740s fiction and the scholar who has read more of the novels of the period than perhaps any other to date, Beasley can be trusted to know the content of these works. His conclusions about the place fiction held in the marketplace, however, are less reliable. The strength of his work is his criticism: for background, he cites few contemporary sources to substantiate many of his claims, especially with regard to the popularity and market for fiction.

William B. Warner takes up the examination of the market for novels in the mid-eighteenth century. By tracing the presence of what he calls “the novel of amorous intrigue,” Warner suggests that developments in the novel are a reflection of a progression of reading techniques and the demand of media culture. He asks, “If from a later historical vantage point it is clear that 1740 is when the novel in Britain begins to be a cultural icon worth fighting to define, why does this particular cultural struggle begin then and there?”\textsuperscript{53} The answer, according to Warner, is to be found in the “media event” surrounding Pamela’s publication, Richardson’s attempts to legitimate novel reading, and Fielding’s efforts to offer readers a new form of entertainment. The development of the novel in the 1740s, then, could be considered an ambitious project to shape the market for fiction. Whether such a mission exists beyond the work of Fielding and Richardson, however, Warner does not say.

In examinations of the 1740s market for literature, the attention previously paid to poetry and pamphlets typically is shifted to the role of fiction. Warner’s conclusion that the decade saw new attempts to conceptualize and market novel reading is consonant with prevailing arguments. Thomas Keymer and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Beasley, Novels, 23.
\item Beasley, Novels, pp. 12, 15–16.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Peter Sabor reach a similar conclusion in their investigation of the response to *Pamela* in literary works, criticism, and reception, and study the novel as an example of literary marketing practices. The authors argue that the discussion of and responses to Richardson’s first novel demonstrate the primarily financial motivations of both writers and booksellers. Their conclusions about the development of the literary marketplace are clear: they believe that the overall market for print was expanding; that *Pamela* was at the beginning of a statistical spike in the amount of fiction produced; that controversy often was used as a selling point; and that most fiction writers were primarily interested in monetary gain.  

The standard views of the poetry and fiction are based on the work of a few major writers and its connection to past and future trends. But what about drama? The Licensing Act’s influence seems to restrict that genre’s significance even today: few think much about the drama of the 1740s beyond two suppositions: first, that the importance of drama lagged following the Licensing Act, and second, that the stage was dominated by David Garrick and the Shakespearean repertoire associated with him.  

That the number of new plays produced after 1737 was drastically lower than before is certainly true, though old plays had always been staged alongside the new, and new plays did not disappear entirely. Hume finds that around eighty-five percent of all plays staged between 1730 and 1790 were old. The tone and content of the plays produced were also changed by the legislation. Matthew J. Kinservik has demonstrated that the Act censored drama by regulating its content and forcing playwrights to adjust their work to fit those regulations; society therefore played an important role in the creation of new dramatic forms. But while the number of new plays dropped, theatres continued to stage plays, including old favorites like those by Congreve, Fraquhar, Steele, and others. And while the plays written in the 1740s have not stood the test of time to become enduring critical or popular favorites, they seem to have entertained contemporary audiences satisfactorily.

---

The view of the mid century as the time of Shakespeare’s resurrection at the hands of Garrick continues to hold a strong place in the critical imagination. Arthur H. Scouton convincingly refuted this myth more than sixty years ago by demonstrating that Shakespeare’s plays had become popular on the London stage long before Garrick arrived in the city in 1737, but many seem to have found that truth to be less compelling than the story of Garrick’s influence. Though claims that Garrick was the original source of a Shakespearean vogue have been somewhat tempered, the connection between the Garrick’s theatrical career and Shakespeare’s afterlife and reputation continues to be prevalent in discussions of each. Certainly Garrick was a Shakespeare lover, but that alone cannot characterize his career or the drama of his time, as Allardyce Nicoll has shown. Nicoll’s study of Garrick’s career and London theatre provides useful context and a more balanced view of mid-century drama and Garrick’s influence. He examines, for example, the numbers and socioeconomic backgrounds of the people who might have been able to attend the theatre and their socioeconomic backgrounds, and concludes that only the elite would have been able to attend regularly. He also argues that between 1740 and 1780 the restrictions on building new theatres meant that playhouses could be characterized by “the very lack of divergence, the very absence of experimental designing.” Finally, he argues that trends in drama are indicative of larger aesthetic preferences. Nicoll writes that the “excitement [over Garrick’s stage presence] was largely generated by something else, by something, in fact, which was intimately related to the whole of the period’s culture”: Garrick represented an excitement over “natural” style.

As the above discussions demonstrate, the persisting critical views of the 1740s characterize the period as one of fragmentation and division. Poetry and the novel are diverging, or their themes are at least unrelated, these discussions suggest, and drama has disappeared nearly entirely.

---

59 Vanessa Cunningham, for example, writes that “Throughout the eighteenth century the process of establishing Shakespeare as the supreme Bard of the nation accelerated” and “As manager, Garrick seized the opportunities offered by the rising tide of bardoltry.” See *Shakespeare and Garrick* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 5.
Critical Assumptions

Discussions of the 1740s depict the decade as a time of transition. As a general characterization this might be fairly accurate, though the same could be said of any given time period. Critics’ particular conclusions about the source and nature of the changes in the content of literature and its place in the market are more suspect given the small number of works and the narrow contextualization their originators typically drawn upon. As the field stands, the following assumptions tend to characterize studies of poetry, drama, and fiction between 1737 and 1749:

• Poetry was long-form, contemplative, and pre-romantic. Studies of the work of Grey, Akenside, Collins, and Young lead to descriptions of 1740s poetry as introspective, lyrical, concerned with nature and rural life, and typically lengthy.

• New drama was insignificant, and demand for Shakespeare was strong. Critics argue that the Licensing Act killed the production and publication of interesting new drama, and in spite of evidence to the contrary many still claim these years as the time when Shakespeare’s influence began to flourish under Garrick’s influence.

• Novels were increasingly popular and important, and fiction was a driving force in literature. The publication of Richardson’s and Fielding’s major novels in the 1740s, and particularly the initial stir caused by Pamela, has led many critics to claim that the period saw increased fiction publication and growing popular and critical attention to the novel.

• Trends in poetry, drama, and fiction were largely independent from—or even antithetical to—each other. Most studies of the 1740s focus on a single genre of literature, and the few discussions of poetry and fiction argue that those forms were becoming increasingly distinct from one another in content and purpose.

• Literature became less political post-Walpole. No large-scale study has attempted to examine the connections between politics after Walpole resigned as Prime Minister. Those who
discuss connections between contemporary events and the literature argue that the period hosts a generalized nationalistic spirit, particularly in its poetry.

In the following chapters I examine these suppositions in a comprehensive examination of 1740s literature and the contexts in which it was published; ultimately I show that these characterizations are at best incomplete, and at worst dangerously misleading. My arguments and conclusions based on the resources and methods I describe in the following section.

IV. Analyzing 1740s London Published Literature with ESTC and ECCO

The first step in examining the published output of the 1740s for this study was to amass the necessary data—lists of titles and their publication dates, authors, and booksellers—in a flexible and accessible format. The ESTC provided the required information. To determine the composition of the literary marketplace I began by searching for everything listed as published in London between 1737 and 1749. To retrieve the full list of hits, I used the University of California, Riverside’s portal, as the British Library version does not allow users to print or view lists of more than 1,000 hits. I entered 1737 and 1749 as the date boundaries in the Publication Date fields and entered “London” into the Imprint field. While I believe this strategy to be as inclusive as possible, it is not without problems.

The first problem with the ESTC results for works published in London between 1737 and 1749 is that the dates of titles returned in the search results will not solely or entirely represent works published during those years. To a large extent this is a problem of inconsistent imprint practices. Fortunately, the ESTC cataloguers have accounted for some contemporary irregularities: they have, for example, provided normalized date representation so that imprint dates in Roman numerals are accompanied by the date in Arabic numerals in square brackets. Other issues are less self-evident. The most basic of these is the overlap between old and new style dating, which means that some works which by our modern standard system were written between 1 January and 25 March 1737 have a 1736 imprint, and some published
between 1 January and 25 March 1750 by our system have a 1749 imprint. Unfortunately I see no way to account for this issue when not noted by careful cataloguers.

Combing the ESTC for a particular publication location is similarly problematic. Searching for “London” in the Imprint field will not return hits for everything published in London during those years. Some works published in London were not published with imprints (true or false), others were published under false imprints to protect London printers and booksellers, and still others appeared with a London imprint as a signifier of credibility or relevance although they were actually published far away. Search results for London imprints in other languages (the Italian “Londini” or the French “Londres,” for example) are not consistently labeled with their English translation, and I had to add these manually to the extent that they could be anticipated and located. The list of works published in London should be reasonably comprehensive. The number of titles with London imprints constitutes approximately sixty five percent of the total number of ESTC entries for those years, and other major publication hubs contribute high percentages of their own: ten percent of the titles contain Edinburgh in their imprints; more than eight percent contain Dublin; and more than seven percent contain Boston. Even when the smaller percentages that contain places like Paris, Amsterdam, and Philadelphia are excluded, and even given the number of records that will contain references to more than one place (as when a cataloguer notes the real origin of a piracy), the high percentage of works with attributed places of publication suggests that the number of works attributed to no place that may have been published in London is comparatively small.

The search yielded a list of more than 18,000 entries for works published between 1737 and 1749. The next step of my data analysis process was to construct a searchable database of works that I could annotate and sort. I began by converting this list into a format that I could import into a database program. I chose to display the ESTC records in MARC format by selecting that option from the formats available in the Riverside platform. MARC, which stands for MAchine Readable Cataloguing, is a set of data format standards established by the Library of Congress and adopted by the ESTC and most library cataloguing systems for recording bibliographical data like title, author, imprint, format, and so on.
Stipulating that the output be configured in MARC codes ensured that the list of ESTC search results, when saved as a text file, was constructed in such a way that entries could be converted into XML that could be understood by my database program. This conversion was performed by a Python script created for this project by Peter Gael, to whose help and expertise I am greatly indebted. The configuration of data allowed each entry to be broken into its component parts: each MARC code number was turned into an XML tag with a title more easily discernable to the non-cataloguer (MARC code 100 became “Author,” 245 became “Title,” and so on). Fields that might appear more than once in the same record, like comments, and some with very similar content, like topical subjects and geographical subjects, were combined. Some MARC codes had the further benefit of subdivisions, which for example allowed the imprint MARC field (MARC code 260) to be broken into “Imprint Place” and “Imprint Publisher” subfields. Converting the data into an XML format allowed me to import the results into a database program for easier and more configurable categorization and analysis: I chose Filemaker for this project, but other structured database programs would have sufficed, too.

Once the ESTC records had been transformed into a Filemaker database, I could easily sort and categorize the entries. The first step in this process was to remove entries that did not reasonably certainly belong to the dataset either geographically, chronologically, or because of they are known not to represent separate editions. Finding records that obviously were not published in London was relatively straightforward: I removed hits for “New London, Connecticut” for example. I included entries with inferred places of publication, denoted with brackets. I also included works whose place of publication was presented between brackets with a question mark following the city name. Given the high percentage of works published out of London in these years and the chance that false imprints can be identified and removed based on the content and quality of the published artifact, I believe this inclusive policy to be reasonable. I did remove works the catalogues had flagged in the comments as false imprints. I also attempted to remove those that represent variants rather than editions, when such were noted or apparent. These principles of inclusion should provide as representative a sample set as could be determined, but ensuring their accurate execution is fraught with problems. Without the ability to check physical copies of
each work, many of my assumptions are based on information recorded by the cataloguers. I am grateful for and indebted to the work of these cataloguers, without whose knowledge and hard work none of my project would be possible. But while most ESTC contributors are no doubt experienced and conscientious, the realities of any large team project mean that some were less knowledgeable than others, or were overworked and rushed, or were having off days. And even an ideal cataloguer on an ideal day will most often have only one copy of a work to examine, making the determination of false imprints and reissues difficult to impossible. Nor are my own choices infallible, but the large amount of data should make errors less significant.

Apart from the inevitable challenges and inaccuracies of working with any large amounts of data compiled by many hands over many years, the nature of the ESTC project presents its own difficulties. Perhaps the most obvious of these is that the database is not finished, and realistically never will be given the certainty of continuing new discoveries. The scale of the catalogue means that the dataset is constantly growing and changing: every day new titles might be added, duplicate entries removed, editions recognized as variants (and visa versa), and adjustments and revisions made as studies of bookselling practices, attribution, and printing provide new insights into the creation of particular works. By extracting a static set of data from the ESTC I have avoided many of the problems of working with an evolving data set and a constant influx of revisions—like the need to review and re-categorize after every change to the data—but this advantage has come at the sacrifice of the most up-to-date information. On the huge scale of this list of 18,000 entries, however, I believe the cost of this decision to be minimal: in all likelihood the vast majority of ESTC updates could have little bearing on the larger picture of the 1740s literary marketplace.

Larger and ultimately unresolvable issues are the result of the nature of the data being analyzed. As all bibliographers know, a high percentage of eighteenth-century works do not include a record of all the information modern scholars use to trace the origins and history of an artifact. Books are often unattributed, and many bear no imprint that could help to identify their booksellers and printers, or the place and date of their publication. This lack of information has been variably handled. Some works
published without attribution include a name in the Author field: in many cases these records are also annotated with a comment that reads something like, “Anonymous. Attributed to Henry Fielding,” which helpfully clarifies the matter for scholars particularly interested in that work (though more consistently providing the source of that attribution would help scholars to evaluate its merits better), but which ultimately makes a quantitative analysis of attribution impossible without checking each title page. As discussed above, the publication locations for works without imprints can often be reasonably inferred. In the absence of a booksellers’ or printer’s name the source of the publication is most often left blank: exceptions are usually thanks to identifying printers’ marks or the work of bibliographers, in which case the name generally is provided in brackets in the Imprint field, and the rationale behind it included in the Comments field. As the catalogue was originally compiled, long lists of booksellers’ names in imprints were also truncated in ESTC entries, though more recently the cataloguers have begun to include those lists in their entirety.61 Missing imprint dates are yet a stickier matter. Often the date of a work can be estimated based on its content or references to it in advertisements or booksellers’ lists. But these methods often are not precise enough to confidently pinpoint the year. Thus records with no imprint date are often grouped in closest the year ending in a zero or a five—giving 1740 and 1745 artificial boosts in the number of published titles.62

Confidently answering questions of the distribution of titles between genres is difficult. The physicality of the works represented in the ESTC also leads unresolvable inconsistencies between the picture offered by the catalogue and the likely reality of the 1740s book trade. The ESTC follows a policy of only cataloguing extant books. The advantages of this strategy are obvious and great: researchers do not wish to be misled by references to works that never came to be published, and cataloguing a work

---

61 Parts of the English Short Title Catalogue were built upon the earlier Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue. Cataloguing rules for the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue dictated that imprint lists of more than five names be truncated, with the number omitted recorded as “and [#] others.” The cataloguing rules are described in R. C. Alston; M. C. Jannetta, *Bibliography, Machine Readable Cataloguing, and the ESTC. A Summary History of the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue* (London: British Library, 1978).

based on a brief reference could lead to an entry that contains little more than a title and a booksellers’ name. But the likelihood that large numbers of titles no longer exist, or, if they do, will never be recovered means that the catalogue will never be complete. And the probability that works of different genres are more or less likely to be handed down in readable condition over the generations means that any breakdown of ESTC works into genres can only be a rough approximation of contemporary conditions. As Suarez points out, almanacs, agricultural works and children’s literature are probably not well catalogued.63 Practical books were often used until they fell apart, or devalued and replaced by newer content or methods. And those that outlasted their relevancy may have been lost or misplaced because libraries did not always prioritize them in their acquisitions, or because the collections donated to research libraries were more likely from large, private libraries that functioned as status markers than from smaller collections intended for use.

Unfortunately for the modern bibliographer, the works least likely to have survived to be catalogued by the ESTC are often also those most likely to have been published in large quantities.64 Reference works would have appealed to a wide range of readers, as their readership did not need to hold an ideological bias or have any special knowledge or background to approach their content. The many consumers who could only afford one or two books, then, might well purchase almanacs, as they were practical, often affordable, and even fashionable.65 Almanacs, however, would not stand a high chance of centuries-long survival. Much of their value was time-sensitive, and diminished significantly within one year of their original publication. Many also were carried around by their owners, resulting in wear-and-tear that would be unusual for, say, a copy of Plato’s Republic. And if purchased by occasional book buyers, a family’s one or two volumes would be less likely to survive than works from a dedicated larger

collection. The impact of these no-longer-extant titles on estimates of genre distribution is likely large: Suarez estimates that ten percent of the eighteenth-century works are not catalogued by the ESTC, and we have no accurate way to approximate their presence.  

To examine which types of works were most prominent in the book trade, I next divided the entries into broad genres, as described in section I. Once I had established my categories and determined their boundaries, I applied a genre label to each entry on my list of titles published in London between 1737 and 1749. I began with broad strokes. Searching for all works with the word “sermon” in their titles, for example, resulted in a large list of works (more than 1500), the vast majority of which I knew could be quickly placed in the Religion and Philosophy genre. After reading through the list of titles I used indictors in titles, comments, and ESTC subject and form categories to weed out books that were not primarily religious, like booksellers’ advertisements for sermons and satirical poems mocking religious debates. I could then direct Filemaker to apply the genre classification to the remainder, labeling hundreds of works at a time—the result in this case was 97% Religion and Philosophy content. Relying on context clues from the titles and subject and form labels provided by the ESTC cataloguers allowed me to categorize many of the entries efficiently, but when titles and cataloguers’ supplemental provided insufficient or conflicting indications of the works’ genres I needed to adopt more rigorous methods, usually beginning with the title page. I was able to examine many potentially contested works in Thomson Gale’s Eighteenth Century Collections Online database (ECCO), and those not in ECCO were sometimes available in Google Books, or occasionally were more explicitly described in web-searchable library or auction catalogues than in the ESTC. These strategies were generally sufficient to give me a clear enough sense of the purpose of a work that I could place it into the most appropriate genre.

Defining whether an edition was a first edition, and if and how many times a title was republished was one of the most difficult data-analysis tasks. Some ESTC entries note the edition of the work, but generally only when its title page mentions the edition number. Since few title pages note editions, and since some of those that do note editions are actually older editions to which new title pages have been

---

added in order to suggest non-existent demand, references to new editions must be treated skeptically. Checking the ESTC for other entries of a work can be slightly more reliable, though of course the problem of variants and mis-labeled works still exists. Searching for titles was also tricky: between editions, titles often changed, sometimes in small ways, like variant spellings or differing uses of articles or differing translations of foreign titles, and sometimes in ways that made the editions nearly impossible to connect to one another. When the records do not list new titles, this problem is impossible to take into account for such a large number of works. For poems, which were more likely to change titles between editions, I was occasionally able to find reprints by searching ECCO for unique words from the first one or two lines, though of course those results were limited to the poems available in ECCO and restricted by the uniqueness of the words in the title and the accuracy of ECCO’s optical character recognition (OCR)-based search capabilities.

The availability of works to some extent inhibited my ability to thoroughly investigate 1740s publication. Verification of ESTC records and qualitative assessment of the literature was limited to the books available electronically, in modern editions, or in libraries to which I had access. My discussion of anonymity, for example, covers only the works I was able to view, as attribution practices can only be determined by verifying authors’ names on title pages, in prefatory materials, or as signatures at the end of works. Additionally, as attribution frequently changes between editions, each edition must be separately verified. And assertions about the quality, style, or content of the literature are also of course restricted to the available works.

The limitations of the accessible extant material mean that the claims I have made in this chapter and will make in the following chapters are therefore not perfectly accurate, but I will attempt to be as thorough as possible given the available means.

* By examining the surviving record of 1740s published works—even if one did not choose to read any of the books recorded therein—the inaccuracies of the current critical views of the period become apparent.
Understanding what genres were published and in what formats provides a basic indication of the shape of the marketplace: poetry was significant to the overall published output of London booksellers, while drama and fiction were small but steady components of the market. But knowing what did not happen—a large rise in the numbers of novels published, for example, or the obliteration of drama, or an explosion of long-form poetry—does not characterize the 1740s. For that, of course, we must determine what did happen, and why. In the chapters that follow I examine the full span of published literature, beginning with its practical, financial origins in the bookselling trade and concluding with an examination of its contents’ connections to the years in which they were published.

My investigation is intended to answer the large questions about the 1740s that have gone unanswered. Chapters two and three are therefore devoted to identifying those responsible for the creation and publication of 1740s literature. In chapter two, I analyze imprints to determine which booksellers were publishing poetry, drama, and fiction and how those genres fit into a range of bookselling business models. Who were the most prolific booksellers and printers during this period, and where were they located in London? How much did booksellers pay for the copyright of various types of works, and how much could they have expected to make from those ventures given the costs involved in printing, distributing, and advertising? How specialized were most booksellers, and what business models did they follow? Chapter three examines the identities of the authors of literature, including a discussion of the commonplace anonymous publishing and an explanation of the most frequently reprinted authors. Who were the authors of 1740s literature, what were their backgrounds, and could they have made a living through their writing? How common were anonymous works in each genre? Which authors who wrote in earlier years or in languages other than English were most published?

Understanding the processes behind the physical creation of the literature demonstrates the practical influences that shaped the amount, content, and style of the poetry, drama, and fiction published. In the second half of this study, I turn to an analysis of the literature itself. The fourth and fifth chapters concern the content and reception of the published works, with chapter four devoted to the most plentiful genre, poetry, and chapter five concerning drama and fiction side by side. What physical or financial
restrictions were placed on the sale of literature? How “literary” was the poetry, drama, and fiction of the 1740s? How was literature received and evaluated by readers and contemporary critics? And upon what standards and common cultural influences were the poetry, drama, and fiction based?

Finally, in my conclusion I apply the historical context gained from the rest of the thesis to an overview of publishing trends and practices that demonstrates the changes in the dissemination and reception of published literature between 1737 and 1749. A more complete view of the literary marketplace proves that the few items that have heretofore been used to represent the period are not typical of the works sold and read during these years and demonstrates the range of approaches to published material.
Chapter 2
Bookselling Practices

The most immediate control of the literary marketplace belonged to between one and two hundred
noteworthy London booksellers. These men (and a few women) were the purchasers of copyrights,
printers of ideas, and vendors of books; they played a large role in determining which works would reach
readers’ hands and what those works looked like when they got there. Yet in spite of their crucial
function, little is known about the business practices of any but a very few exceptional booksellers. We
know, for example, of Robert Dodsley through his connections to famous writers (Daniel Defoe,
Alexander Pope, and Edward Young were all among his acquaintance) and his own work as a poet and
playwright. The Longmans and Rivingtons are familiar because their businesses are so long-standing, and
Mary Cooper’s name comes up often thanks to her significance as a successful female trade publisher and
her work as a front for Dodsley in some of his less seemly publishing ventures. But many who would
have been well-known to their contemporaries are relatively unfamiliar to us now. Those aware of
booksellers like Charles Hitch and James Hodges are probably deeply involved in the study of book
history—especially as neither of these men have even been given entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of
National Biography*—and yet Hitch and Hodges are among the five most common names found in
imprints of the 1740s.

To understand how works were conceived both as literary artifacts and as consumer goods, we
need to know something of their copyright owners and manufacturers. Any author with a work to pitch
had to know how to identify the booksellers and printers who could put his book in published form. He
would have had to consider a bookseller’s personal preferences for content, the likelihood that the
bookseller’s customers would have been interested in the subject and form of his argument, the
implications of a particular imprint on the reception of his work, and if he aimed to receive payment for
the copyright to his work he would also have wanted to know how the bookseller’s rates compared to
those offered elsewhere. Striking the right combination of writer, subject matter, form, and bookseller was
no simple matter for most: Parson Adams’ frustration at his trek around the country with his sermons would have been a familiar feeling and perhaps a shared experience for aspiring mid-century authors.

In this chapter, I examine the London bookselling business between 1737 and 1749. In my first section, I identify the major participants: which booksellers and printers were most active during this period, and where were they located in London? In section two I examine the likely financial viability of publishing various types of books. How much did booksellers pay for the copyrights of various types of work, and how much could they have expected to make from those ventures given the costs involved in printing, distributing, and advertising? Finally I survey the models upon which their businesses were run, and demonstrate through case studies of Robert Dodsley and Mary Cooper, John Watts, James Hodges, and others that the role literature played in booksellers’ business models varied greatly. Some booksellers were highly specialized, while others preferred a well-rounded list; some were heavily influenced by their personal preferences for particular genres or flavors of argument, while others seem to have been flexible about the nature of the content they published. Only through careful decision-making could booksellers survive long enough in the business to have a lasting impact on the trade.

I. Identifying and Locating 1740s Booksellers

Bookselling was big business in the mid-eighteenth century. Hundreds of business owners and workers contributed to the publication of more than 18,000 titles between 1737 and 1749. The locations, preferences, and financial practices of those individuals are a reflection both of their individual characters and those of their intended customers. In this section I provide an overview of 1740s bookselling practices in order to provide a general sense of their scope and function.

To discuss bookselling as a trade really is to address a number of related and often overlapping occupations. In today’s terms, the word “bookseller” is closest to “publisher” rather than “retailer,” but eighteenth-century booksellers often did not perform all of the functions of a modern-day publisher, and the practice was not then as relatively standardized as it is now. 1740s booksellers might be involved in
one or all of the phases of publication: copyright acquisition; printing; and retail book selling. Those involved only in the printing phase typically will be referred to as printers, rather than booksellers, but the distinction is not always clear. Which individuals or firms performed each of these tasks is often difficult or impossible to pinpoint, and changed over time and from project to project. Related to booksellers, but distinct in their acquisition practices, were trade publishers: a small number of individuals (Treadwell identifies three in the 1740s) whose primary function was to publish and distribute works on behalf of other booksellers.¹ Booksellers themselves are distinguished by their ability and willingness to purchase the copyright to the works they helped to publish.

Once a book’s copyright was purchased, its next step into the marketplace was the printing shop. Master-printers played diverse roles in publishing. Some few were full-fledged, publishing booksellers, involved in all aspects of production and taking upon themselves the task of printing the works to which they owned the copyright. Others focused more particularly on printing. When a bookseller did not own his own press and could not print his own works—or if he were unwilling to jeopardize the reputation of his firm with potentially unsuccessful or seditious works, or if the work required specialized ornamentation, or for any number of other reasons—he would contract the printing of a work to which he owned the copyright to someone else. Conversely, some printers occasionally wished to finance a work themselves, and for the distribution of these typically short, topical works, they would often rely on the services of trade publishers.² Often, the printer also functioned as a direct middle-man between a work’s owner and the reading public. When authors were unwilling or unable to sell their copyright to a bookseller, they often could convince a bookseller to print the work “for the author.” Works published under these agreements were sometimes labeled as such and often were printed with the understanding that the author would pay the costs of production in advance.

² Treadwell, “London Trade Publishers,” p. 120.
Of course the master-printer did not run the printing press himself. Each printing shop employed a number of individuals. At the very least, a corrector and a couple of journeymen and apprentices were required to produce the printed artifacts. The correctors, whose job was to verify the mechanical exactness of the text from the proof, were educated professionals whose employment in the shop might be part-time due to their expense and their unwillingness to make themselves useful by participating in the more physical forms of press work that were the territory of the journeymen and apprentices. Compositors and pressmen were typically specialized journeymen: the compositors set the type to be printed, and the pressmen ran the set type through the hand-press. Exceptionally large operations might have also employed a manager’s deputy to oversee the presswork. As presses, type, and labor were costly, most shops would have had at most a few presses, and often only one press would have been in operation at a time.3

The expenses involved in publishing meant that of the many individuals who participated in the bookselling business, only a small percentage would have assumed direct financial responsibility by buying copyrights. The large number of names associated with printing and publishing is therefore staggering. Counting the number of surnames that appear in imprints more than twenty-five times between 1737 and 1749 yields a list of one hundred and sixty four booksellers, trade publishers, and printers, and this figure represents only a fraction of the hundreds of individuals working in the publishing businesses. Many of the names found in imprints represent families with multiple members of the trade: counting the wives, siblings, and children whose names often appeared together and separately in imprints would significantly increase the number. Counting the surnames that appeared in imprints only a few times—or only once—would add hundreds more individuals with at least a passing connection to the publication marketplace.

Accounting for the tradesmen responsible for day-to-day business operations—the compositors, pressmen, paper-makers, engravers, binders, and so on—would significantly multiply the figures. Though

3 A helpful overview of print shop operation in the hand-press era can be found in Philip Gaskell’s standard manual of bibliography, A New Introduction to Bibliography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972; paperback reprint, Oak Knoll, 1995).
less directly involved in the publication of books, other large groups of businessmen and artisans were equally essential to ensuring that an author’s words reach his or her readers. Printers and booksellers relied on the work of type casters, type founders, and stationers for the expensive materials required to operate a printing press. When frontispieces or illustrations were included, etchers and engravers also became involved in the production process—more so if the illustrations were specially commissioned. And once the book had been printed, customers often wanted to have it bound, connecting bookbinders and the leather trade to the literary marketplace.

Stationer’s Company records can provide some sense of the scale of the bookselling business. Between 1740 and 1749, the Company bound five hundred and forty three apprentices. In the same years, the Company livery (the select rank of Stationers above the freed yeomen) averaged approximately one hundred and ninety members in a given year, while the highest rank of court assistants numbered thirty-two in 1741.4 Included in these figures are members of dozens of trades, with varying degrees of connection to book publishing: stationers, booksellers, engravers, jobbing printers, and instrument makers were all members of the Company, and tracing each of their involvements in book publishing as such would be impossible. Whatever the numerical breakdown, the evidence from the Stationer’s Company records proves hundreds of individuals helped to shape the books for sale.

But locating names in imprints and Stationer’s company records only considers the more likely legitimate and documented involvement in the book trade. Untraceable publications leave many contributions undocumented. Over twenty percent of all works published in London between 1737 and 1749 and recorded in the ESTC list no name or specific bookseller location information in their imprints. Some of these works are government publications whose publishers apparently thought their provenance obvious and the details of their physical production unimportant. Others are authorized published works (their copyrights were owned by the publishing agent) whose booksellers and printers did not wish to have their content traced back to them. These works include satires, libels, and politically or religiously

---
4 For helpful breakdowns of the number of members of the Stationer’s Company across the eighteenth century, see Michael L. Turner, “Personnel Within the London Book Trades: Evidence from the Stationer’s Company,” in Cambridge History of the Book, pp. 309–34.
incendiary works that could damage a reputation or bring legal action against their originators. But a third and significant class of works with unattributed imprints is piracies: new editions of works whose copyrights were not held by their printers.\(^5\) Despite the 1710 Statute of Anne, “pirate” booksellers, or “outsiders,” as Michael Harris calls them, were common in London. Copyright was especially difficult to enforce given the reluctance of many booksellers to register works with the Stationer’s Company, and Harris argues those booksellers who operated outside the Company used the profits from their cut-price newspapers, chapbooks, and pamphlets, as well as their connections to each other, to begin to turn the book trade into a free market.\(^6\)

Even where full imprints do exist, definitively interpreting the nature and extent of the involvement of the individuals they list is impossible without external evidence. “Printed for” probably means that the bookseller contracted out the print work, but does not preclude the possibility that he did it himself, and it implies, but does not guarantee, that the bookseller or booksellers named were the primary financial stakeholders. When a work was “sold by” a bookseller one can usually safely assume that his involvement in its production was less significant than those for whom it was printed, but again that relationship cannot be guaranteed. When presented with lists of contributing booksellers and printers, one has no reliable method for discerning which among them had the largest shares in its copyright.\(^7\)

If determining the financial involvement of a single individual in the production of a single work is difficult to impossible, comparing the contributions of all of the individuals listed in imprints during the 1740s is an even more challenging and dubious task. But as imprints remain one of our best sources of information about most eighteenth-century booksellers and printers, an attempt to chronicle their

---


\(^7\) James Raven discusses the uncertain implications of imprints in *Business of Books*, pp. 126–27. See also Michael Treadwell, “On False and Misleading Imprints.”
contributors is nevertheless worthwhile. By listing the frequency with which names appear in imprints, I can provide a preliminary answer to the question, who were the major booksellers of the 1740s?

Table 2.1 lists all of the surnames that appear in more than twenty-five imprints between 1737 and 1749. Many of these surnames represent multiple members of the same family. I have indicated potential variant spellings of the same last name with asterisks. When possible, I have also included information about the name and location of the booksellers’ and printers’ shops. I have also checked this list against the information provided by Henry R. Plomer in his Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers, which, though incomplete and often inaccurate, remains the most comprehensive resource for identifying members of the trade.\(^8\)

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Imprints</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Bookseller and Shop Location</th>
<th>Percent of Total Imprints</th>
<th>Years Active, 1737–1749</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>Cooper</td>
<td>Thomas and Mary. Globe in Paternoster Row.</td>
<td>9.76%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1446</td>
<td>Baskett</td>
<td>John, Thomas, and Robert. Printers to His Majesty.</td>
<td>7.97%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>613</td>
<td>Roberts</td>
<td>James. “Oxford Arms near Warwick-Lane” and “near Temple-Bar”.</td>
<td>3.38%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>572</td>
<td>Hitch</td>
<td>Charles. “Red-Lion in Pater-Noster-Row”.</td>
<td>3.15%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>446</td>
<td>Hodges</td>
<td>James Hodges “Looking Glass over against St Magnus-Church London-Bridge”.</td>
<td>2.46%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>403</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td>Jacob and Ranew. “Golden Lion at Ludgate Street”, “next the Bedford-Tavern in Tavistock-Street, Covent-Garden”, and “next the One-Tun near Hungerford-Market, in the Strand”.</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>402</td>
<td>Knapton</td>
<td>John and Paul. “Crown in Ludgate Street”.</td>
<td>2.21%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>386</td>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Aaron and John. “King's-Arms in Little-Britain”.</td>
<td>2.13%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Also W. Ward. “Black Lyon in Salisbury-Court, Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>W., 1738–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>And Caesar Ward, with Richard Chandler. “Ship without Temple Bar; and at their shops in Coney-Street, York, and at Scarborough Spaw,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Caesar, 1738–43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>Dodsley</td>
<td>Robert. “Tully's Head, in Pall-Mall”.</td>
<td>2.07%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>349</td>
<td>Longman</td>
<td>Thomas. “Ship in Pater-Noster-Row”.</td>
<td>1.92%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>338</td>
<td>Rivington</td>
<td>Charles, John, and James. “Bible and Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard”.</td>
<td>1.86%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>335</td>
<td>Birt</td>
<td>Samuel. “Bible and Ball, in Ave-Maria-Lane, near Ludgate-Street”.</td>
<td>1.85%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>308</td>
<td>Millar</td>
<td>Andrew. “Buchanan's Head, against St. Clement's Church in the Strand” or “opposite to Catharine-Street, in the Strand”.</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>267</td>
<td>Ware</td>
<td>Richard. “Bible and Sun in Amen-Corner, near Pater-Noster-Row” or “at the Bible and Sun in Amen-Corner, Warwick-Lane” or “Bible and Sun upon Ludgate-Hill”.</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>J. “Golden-Ball in Duck-Lane near Little Britain” and “Homer's Head, the Corner of Essex-Street, in the Strand”.</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>258</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>John. “White Hart near Mercer Chapel, in Cheapside”.</td>
<td>1.42%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>256</td>
<td>Oswald</td>
<td>John. “Rose and Crown in the Poultry”.</td>
<td>1.41%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>236</td>
<td>Lintot</td>
<td>Henry. “Cross-Keys, over-against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet”.</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Imprints</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Bookseller and Shop Location</td>
<td>Percent of Total Imprints</td>
<td>Years Active, 1737–1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235</td>
<td>Webb</td>
<td>W., T., J., and A. “near St. Paul’s”.</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>Strahan</td>
<td>Printers. George and William. “Golden Ball over-against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill”.</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>Pemberton</td>
<td>John (father), John (son), and Henry. “Buck, against St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleetstreet” and “Golden Buck against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Charles. “opposite Gray's-Inn Gate, in Holborn” or “in Pater-Noster-Row”.</td>
<td>1.23%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224</td>
<td>Browne</td>
<td>Daniel. “Black Swan, without Temple Bar”.</td>
<td>1.23%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209</td>
<td>Corbett</td>
<td>Charles. “over-against St. Dunstan's Church, Fleet-Street” and “at Addison’s Head, in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>Osborn</td>
<td>John. “Golden Ball in Pater-Noster-Row.”</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189</td>
<td>Manby</td>
<td>Richard. “Ludgate-Hill, over-against the Old Bailey” and “near St Paul’s”.</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>Tonson</td>
<td>Jacob and Richard. “near Catharine-Street, in the Strand”.</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>Sayer</td>
<td>Edward. Not an active bookseller himself, the original owner of a patent to print law books. Sayer sold this patent to John Nutt, who invoked his name on legal publications.</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H. S., 1745–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175</td>
<td>Bettesworth</td>
<td>Arthur. “Red-Lyon in Pater-Noster-Row”.</td>
<td>0.96%</td>
<td>1737–49 (only 9 past 1739)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174</td>
<td>Woodfall</td>
<td>Name shared by a father and his two sons. Henry (printer), Henry junior (a printer), and George (bookseller). Henry was “without Temple-Bar”, Henry junior was “in Little Britain”, and George was “at the King's-Arms, Charing-Cross”.</td>
<td>0.96%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>Dodd*</td>
<td>Mrs. Anne. “Peacock without Temple-Bar”. Benjamin Dodd (no known relation) accounts for a handful of these imprints. “Bible and Key in Ave Mary Lane”.</td>
<td>0.92%</td>
<td>Anne, 1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B., 1740–47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Imprints</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Bookseller and Shop Location</td>
<td>Percent of Total Imprints</td>
<td>Years Active, 1737–1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>Nutt</td>
<td>Benjamin, Richard, Elizabeth (all printers, possibly all of the same family). “in the Savoy”. Some also refer to Sarah Nutt, a pamphlet seller. “at the Royal Exchange”.</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>Dod*</td>
<td>See Dodd, above. Many more imprints that include the “Dod” spelling refer to Benjamin Dod, who is under this spelling often called “bookseller to The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge”.</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>Astley</td>
<td>Thomas. “Rose, over-against the North-Door of St. Paul's”.</td>
<td>0.86%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>Austen</td>
<td>Stephen. “Angel and Bible in St. Paul's Church-Yard”.</td>
<td>0.82%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Bathurst</td>
<td>Charles. “Cross-Keys, over-against: St. Dunstan's Church, Fleetstreet” and “Middle-Temple Gate in Fleetstreet”.</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Brindley</td>
<td>James. “King's Arms in New-Bond-Street, Bookseller to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales”.</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>Gosling</td>
<td>Robert and Francis, father and son. “Crown and Mitre against Fetter-Lane,Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.74%</td>
<td>1737–45, only 4 past 1742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td>William, bookseller, “Great-Russel-Street, Covent-Garden” and, more commonly, John, printer, “Pater-Noster-Row, near Cheapside”.</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
<td>Both, 1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>Parker</td>
<td>Edmund, bookseller “Bible and Crown in Lombard-Street” and “for the Stationer’s Company”; Thomas, printer, “in Jewin-Street”; William, bookseller and publisher “King's Head in St. Paul's Church-Yard”; George “Star in Salisbury-Court”; and A. [printer?] “for the Stationer’s Company”.</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
<td>E., T., W., G., A., 1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Trye</td>
<td>Thomas. Bookseller and publisher. “near Grays-Inn Gate in Holbourn”.</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Imprints</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Bookseller and Shop Location</td>
<td>Percent of Total Imprints</td>
<td>Years Active, 1737–1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Buckland</td>
<td>James. “Buck in Paternoster-Row”.</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Thomas, printer “in Little-Britain, and at the Theatre”; J. “at the Royal Exchange”</td>
<td>0.67%</td>
<td>T., 1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>J., 1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Waugh</td>
<td>James “Turk's Head, in Gracechurch-Street”.</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>1744–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>Midwinter</td>
<td>Daniel. “St Paul's Church-Yard”.</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
<td>1737–49; only 1 title/year after 1745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Watts</td>
<td>John. “Printing-Office in Wild-Court near Lincoln's-Inn-Fields”.</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Bettenham</td>
<td>James. Printer. “St. John's Lane near Hicks's-Hall”.</td>
<td>0.61%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Hawkins</td>
<td>George. “Milton's Head, near Temple-Bar”, “Milton's-Head between the Two Temple-Gates, Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some refer to John Hawkins. “Falcon in St Paul's Church-Yard”.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Millan</td>
<td>John. “near the Admiralty Office”, “near Whitehall”, “near Charing Cross”, and “next Will's Coffee-House”.</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Brotherton</td>
<td>John. “Bible, next Tom’s Coffee-House, in Cornhill”, “opposite the New Church near the Post-Office in Lombard-Street”.</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Hutton</td>
<td>James. “Bible and Sun next the Rose Tavern without Temple-Bar”.</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Downing</td>
<td>M. “Bartholomew-Close near West-Smithfield”.</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
<td>1737–46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Shuckburgh</td>
<td>John. “Sun near the Inner-Temple-Gate in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Harris</td>
<td>Thomas. “Looking-Glass and Bible on London-Bridge”.</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
<td>Thomas, 1741–49 [only 3 after 45]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Also T. Harris. “Corner of Angle-Court in Shoe-Lane, over-against the Three Tuns, near Fleet-Street”. (Only one publication?</td>
<td></td>
<td>T., 1739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Also refers to “Mess. Harris, sen. and jun. in Gloucester”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gloucester, 1737–42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Woodward</td>
<td>T. “Half-Moon, between the Two Temple-Gates in Fleetstreet”.</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
<td>T., 1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Also a few for C. “Dove in Pater-Noster-Row” and “near St. Paul's”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>C., 1739–41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Nourse</td>
<td>John. “Lamb, opposite Katherine Street in the Strand” and “Lamb without Temple-Bar”.</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Davidson</td>
<td>Joseph. “Golden Lion in the Poultry” and “Angel in the Poultry, Cheapside”.</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Imprints</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Bookseller and Shop Location</td>
<td>Percent of Total Imprints</td>
<td>Years Active, 1737–1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Meadows</td>
<td>William. “Angel in Cornhill”.</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Draper</td>
<td>Somerset. “Strand”.</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
<td>1741–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Stagg</td>
<td>John. “Westminster-Hall”.</td>
<td>0.46%</td>
<td>1737–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Chandler</td>
<td>Richard. Typically with Caesar Ward “Ship without Temple Bar; and at their shops in Coney-Street, York, and at Scarborough Spaw”.</td>
<td>0.46%</td>
<td>1737–43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Curll</td>
<td>Edmund. “Pope's-Head, in Rose-Street, Covent-Garden”.</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
<td>1737–47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Huggonson</td>
<td>John. “Chancery-Lane” and “Sword-And-Buckler-Court, over-against the Crown-Tavern on Lud-Gate-Hill”.</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
<td>1737–43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Wicksteed</td>
<td>Edward. “Black Swan in Newgate-Street, near Newgate-Market”.</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Whiston</td>
<td>John. “Boyle's Head in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Gilliver</td>
<td>Lawton. “Oxford Arms in Warwick Lane” and “Homer's Head, opposite to St. Dunstan's Church, Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
<td>1737–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Wilde</td>
<td>Allington. Printer for the Stationer’s Company. “Aldersgate-Street”.</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Shewell</td>
<td>Thomas. Often with Thomas Longman. “Ship in Pater-Noster-Row”.</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
<td>1744–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Imprints</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Bookseller and Shop Location</td>
<td>Percent of Total Imprints</td>
<td>Years Active, 1737–1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Refers to a number of individuals, most of whom appear in imprints only a few times.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G. “Blackmoor-Street, near Clare-Market”.</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
<td>G., 1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>William. “Musick Printer at the golden Bass in Middle Row Holbourne”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>W., 1737–42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A. “next Door to the White-Horse and Crooked-Billet in Fore-Street”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A., 1741–42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T. Smith. “in Canterbury” or “at the Bible in Canon Alley, St. Paul's Church-Yard” (probably different people).</td>
<td></td>
<td>T., 1738–49; Paul, 1741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paul. “Crane-Lane”.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Waller</td>
<td>Thomas. “Crown and Mitre opposite Fetter-Lane in Fleet-Street” and “Middle-Temple Cloysters”.</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Whitridge</td>
<td>Henry. “under the Royal Exchange, Cornhill”</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Walthoe</td>
<td>John. “over-against the Royal-Exchange in Cornhill”.</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Hinton</td>
<td>John. “King's Arms in St Paul's Church-Yard”.</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
<td>1740–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Brackstone</td>
<td>James. “Globe in Cornhill”.</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
<td>1738–45; 1 title in 1747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Mount</td>
<td>William Mount and Thomas Page. “Postern on Tower-Hill”.</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Thomas Page and William Mount. “Postern on Tower-Hill”.</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Read</td>
<td>Thomas. “Dogwell Court, White-Fryers, Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>T., 1737–47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>James Printer. “White-Fryers, Fleet-Street” and “for the Company of Stationers”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>J., 1737–42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M. Printer. “for the Company of Stationers”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>M., 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Fenner</td>
<td>Mary. “Turk's Head in Grace-Church-Street”.</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>1741–44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>John. “Turk's-Head in Grace-Church-Street”.</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>John, 1737–41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>J. Wilson in Bristol.</td>
<td></td>
<td>J. (Bristol), 1737–47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Meighan</td>
<td>Thomas. “Drury Lane”.</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Imprints</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Bookseller and Shop Location</td>
<td>Percent of Total Imprints</td>
<td>Years Active, 1737–1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Mechell</td>
<td>James and M. “King's-Arms, in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Cave</td>
<td>Edward. “St John's Gate”.</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Sandby</td>
<td>William. “Ship over-against St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>1742–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>“Bible in Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand” and “the Universal Circulating Library, in Exeter Court, near Exeter Change, in the Strand” and “Mathematical Instrument-Maker to His Majesty”.</td>
<td>T., 1737–49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>J., 1737–42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>J. Printer. “near the Fleet-Market”.</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John. Printer. “St. Peter's Hill, near Doctors Commons, printer to Christ's Hospital”.</td>
<td>John, 1746–49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anthony. “near Covent-Garden”.</td>
<td>Anthony, 1749</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>Francis and John. “Otway's-Head, in St. Martin's-Court, near Leicester-Fields” and “Dryden's Head in St. Martin's Court, near Leicester Fields”.</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Noble</td>
<td>Weaver. “Temple-Exchange, near the Inner-Temple Gate, Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>1737–46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amey</td>
<td>Robert. “Court of Requests, Westminster” and “Court of Requests and at Charing-Cross”.</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>1737–47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E. “at Charing Cross”</td>
<td>E., 1747–48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M. “in the court of requests, and at Charing-Cross”.</td>
<td>M., 1747–48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 titles imprinted with “late Amey’s” in 1749</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Whitefield</td>
<td>Charles. “White-Fryers, Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>1739–46; 1 title in 1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Henry. “Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>1741–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Worrall</td>
<td>John. “Dove, in Bell-Yard, near Lincoln’s Inn”.</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas. “Judge's Head, over-against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>John, 1737–49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas, 1737–49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Bowyer</td>
<td>William. Printer.</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Wilford</td>
<td>John. “behind the Chapter-House in St. Paul's Church-Yard” and “Three Flower-de-Luces, opposite to the Sessions-House, in the Old-Bailey”.</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>1737–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Jolliffe</td>
<td>John. “St. James's-Street”.</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Imprints</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Bookseller and Shop Location</td>
<td>Percent of Total Imprints</td>
<td>Years Active, 1737–1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Wilcox</td>
<td>John. “Virgil's Head, opposite the New Church in the Strand”.</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td>1737–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Harding</td>
<td>Sam. “on the Pavement in St. Martin's Lane”.</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Oliver</td>
<td>John. “Bartholomew-Close, near West-Smithfield”.</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>1745–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Withers</td>
<td>Edward. “Seven-Stars, in Fleet-Street” and “opposite Chancery-Lane End in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>Henry. Printer and publisher. “Printing-Office in Finch-Lane, near the Royal Exchange”.</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Gyles</td>
<td>Fletcher. “against Gray's-Inn in Holbourn”.</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>1737–42; 1 title in 1743 for his executor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Applebee</td>
<td>John. “Bolt-Court, near the Leg-Tavern, Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>1737–47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Vaillant</td>
<td>Paul. “facing Southampton-Street in the Strand”.</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>1738–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Reeve</td>
<td>William. “Shakespear's-Head, near Serjeant's-Inn, in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td>1745–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Watson</td>
<td>James. “Wardrobe-Court, Great Carter-Lane”.</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td>J., 1737–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>E. “Royal-Exchange”.</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td>1737–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Brett</td>
<td>John. “Golden Ball, opposite St. Clement's Church in the Strand”.</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td>J., 1737–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>George. “at the Three Crowns on Ludgate-Hill”.</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td>G., 1738–45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Collyer</td>
<td>Joseph. “Shakespear's Head in Ludgate-Street” and “Ivy Lane, Pater-Noster-Row”.</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td>1744–46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Freeman</td>
<td>A., J. “Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>A., 1740–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>R. “Fleet-Street”, “near Ludgate”, and “near St. Paul's”.</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>R., 1740–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>John. “near St. Paul’s”.</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>J., 1743–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>F. “Fleetstreet”.</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
<td>F., 1745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Imprints</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Bookseller and Shop Location</td>
<td>Percent of Total Imprints</td>
<td>Years Active, 1737–1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Comyns</td>
<td>Edmund. “South-Entrance of the Royal-Exchange”.</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>1739–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Torbeck</td>
<td>John. “Clare-Court near Drury-Lane”.</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Hughes</td>
<td>John. Printer. “near Lincoln's-Inn-Fields”.</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Bowles</td>
<td>Thomas and John. “St. Pauls Church Yard”. John also listed as “Printseller at the Black Horse in Cornhill”.</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>T. and J., 1739–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>J. and J. “Half-Moon and Seven-Stars in Westminster-Hall”.</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>J. and J., 1737–1748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Also G. Fox.</td>
<td></td>
<td>G., 1743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel or Stephen Fox. “Darby”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stephen, 1742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Griffiths</td>
<td>Ralph. “Dunciad in Ludgate Street”.</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>1740–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>John. “Blackmoor's Head opposite in the Royal Exchange in Cornhill”.</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>J., 1739–1742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some results also refer to Great-Carter Lane.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Beecroft</td>
<td>John. “Bible and Crown in Lombard-Street”.</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>1741–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Cogan</td>
<td>Francis. “Middle-Temple-Gate in Fleetstreet”.</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>Samuel. “Angel and Crown in Russel-Street, Covent-Garden”.</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Ford</td>
<td>Richard. “Angel in the Poultry, over-against the Compter”.</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>1737–40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Buckley</td>
<td>Samuel. With Thomas Longman, “printers to the King's most Excellent Majesty, in Latin, Greek and Hebrew”.</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>1738–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Gray</td>
<td>John. “Cross-Keys in the Poultry”.</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>1737–43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Richardson</td>
<td>Samuel. “Salisbury-Court near Fleetstreet” and “Orange-Street near Leicester Fields, and at the Sign of Erasmus's Head, in the Strand”.</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
<td>S., 1737–49 H., 1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H. “Waltham Cross”.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>A. “Fore-Street”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A., 1746–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel. “opposite to Love-Lane, in Woodstreet”.</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
<td>S., 1741–43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Mary. “Mrs. Mary Mason in Bexley”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>M., 1742–46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>J. “St. James's-Street”.</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
<td>J., 1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Also a couple for A. “Clare-Court, Drury-Lane”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A., 1738–42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Imprints</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Bookseller and Shop Location</td>
<td>Percent of Total Imprints</td>
<td>Years Active, 1737–1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Chapelle</td>
<td>Henry. “Sir Isaac Newton's Head, in Grosvenor-Street”.</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
<td>1740–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Johnston</td>
<td>William. “Golden Ball in St. Paul's Church-Yard”.</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>W., 1742; 1748–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A couple refer to T. “Salisbury Court, Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>T., 1746–47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Jephson</td>
<td>Charles. Printer. “next door to the Vine and Rummer Tavern in West-Smithfield”.</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>1737–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>Robert. “Little Old Baily, near St. Sepulchre's Church” and “Fleet-Lane” and “corner of Seacoal Lane, next Fleet Lane”.</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Bonwicke</td>
<td>J. and J. “Red-Lion in St. Paul's Church-Yard”.</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ballard</td>
<td>Samuel. “Blue Ball in Little Britain”.</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Motte</td>
<td>B. Motte with C. Bathurst “at the Middle Temple-Gate in Fleet-Street”.</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
<td>B., 1739–39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One for R. Motte “Hole in the Wall at Islington”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>R. 1744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G. “Long-Acre”.</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
<td>G., 1746–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W. Jones. [as part of a false Bath imprint].</td>
<td></td>
<td>W., 1741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Symon</td>
<td>Edmund and S. “against the Royal-Exchange, in Cornhill” and “Corner of Pope's Head Alley in Cornhill”.</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
<td>1737–41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Montagu</td>
<td>Richard. “Book Ware-House, that End of Great Queen-Street, next Drury-Lane” and “Wild-Street”.</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
<td>1737–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Fuller</td>
<td>John. “Bible, and Dove, Ave-Mary-Lane”.</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
<td>John, John, 1741–49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>J., junior. “Pater-Noster-Row”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>John, junior, 1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>Henry. “at the Corner of Bow Church-Yard, and at the Foundery near Moorfields”.</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
<td>1744–46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Needham</td>
<td>F. “near Chancery-Lane End, Holborn” and “opposite Gray's-Inn, in Holborn”.</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
<td>F., 1740–45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The numbers of imprints in which surnames appear do not represent definitive publication figures for any of the individuals or families described above, but most of the imprints bearing the names safely can be ascribed to a single operation and the figures are therefore useful in generalizing the common volumes of bookselling businesses. Of the 151 family names that appeared in more than twenty-five imprints, forty-five, or roughly thirty percent, appeared in, on average, ten or more imprints per year. Of course, calculating averages across more than a decade does not yield accurate figures for individual booksellers. Some booksellers were not in business for the whole period, and others are anomalies—perhaps printing scores of books one year and then nothing for the rest of the period. As a composite view, however, the figures serve as a striking reminder that the book trade was composed of very small operations.

High-volume booksellers were a rarity. Only twelve surnames appear, on average, in the imprints of more than twenty-five books per year, or more than 325 imprints over the thirteen-year period. Of that elite group Thomas and Mary Cooper are the most obvious and significant, appearing in nearly three times more imprints than the next largest bookselling operation (excluding the Basketts, whose business as printers and whose special contract with the King inflated their publication numbers beyond a typical volume). But the Coopers were themselves an exceptional operation. As trade publishers, they were not as financially responsible or vulnerable as those who traded in copyrights, and therefore could be—and needed to be—involved in the sale of a large number and wide diversity of works. By comparison, the volume of works published by James Roberts, Charles Hitch, and the other handful of highly productive booksellers is even more astonishing.

Equally significant are the numerous works published without any indication of their publishers, booksellers, or printers. More than twenty percent or the works, or 3,741 of the 18,058, were published with no identifying imprint at all. Many of these works were government and legal publications—Parliamentary proceedings, court cases, land grants, wills, and the like. Another significant group includes advertisements and catalogues, which were likely the work of jobbing printers. Commercial corporations like the Royal African, Hudson Bay, and Mercer’s Companies commonly did not attribute their printers in
imprints. Single-sheet verse and shorter works are also common amongst the works with no imprint—possibly because their authors paid for their publication or because their content was libelous or seditious. Some of the works published with no bookseller’s or printer’s name in their imprints were certainly piracies or forgeries.

The list of imprint frequencies can also give us some sense of which were the most commonly advertised booksellers’ locations. Of course, one or two booksellers can impact considerably the streets and districts most commonly found in imprints. For example, that the word “Warwick” of Warwick Lane appears in 512 imprints is surprising until that location is connected with James Roberts, whose Oxford Arms was found there. John Noon’s shop at the White Hart near Mercer Chapel is responsible for a similarly large percentage of the catalogued works published out of Cheapside. But the connection between common imprint locations and the most prolific booksellers reinforces the prestige associated with those streets and locales.

The following map shows a few of the most significant bookselling locations in 1740s London.
Figure 2.1 London Locations Associated with the Book Trades

1. Pall Mall
2. Charing Cross
3. Whitehall
4. Savoy
5. Covent Garden
6. Drury Lane Theatre
7. Strand
8. Lincoln’s Inn
9. Temple Bar
10. Fleet Street
11. Holborn
12. Ludgate
13. Stationer’s Hall
14. Little Britain
15. Paternoster Row
16. St Paul’s
17. Cheapside
18. Lombard Street
19. Gracechurch street
20. Royal Exchange
21. Cornhill
22. London Bridge
As Figure 2.1 shows, the city of London—the square mile financial district near the center of the metropolis—was the heart of the trade, with many of the most popular locations within relatively easy walking distance. Of all places referenced in London imprints, Pater-noster Row was by far the most common: between 1737 and 1749, “Pater” appears in 1786 imprints and “Paternoster” in 172, meaning that more than ten percent of the total works published in the period were marked as published or for sale on or near that street. Fleet-street was the next most popular location, and was listed in nearly 1,200 imprints, and Temple Bar, which abuts Fleet-Street, was listed in 872. References to St. Paul’s churchyard are a bit more difficult to track given their overlap with booksellers named “Paul” and with other saintly churches and streets, but the cathedral and its surrounding area were a principal physical marketplace, as demonstrated by the 783 imprints containing “Paul’s”. Nearby Ludgate Street and Warwick Lane round out the top six most common locations with 669 and 512 imprints to their credit, respectively. 1740s readers looking for the greatest density of bookselling and printing operations would have visited these environs first.

Those who visited the St. Paul’s area would have been able to find works in any genre that suited their fancies. Slightly higher percentages of religious works than average were published under St. Paul’s and Ludgate imprints, and slightly higher medicine, mathematics, and science and law, politics, and government documents throughout the area, but for the most part the genre breakdown in these locations mirrored the overall genre percentages of the period. The large number of booksellers who published there encouraged diversity, as did the size of the businesses. All of the largest bookselling businesses were found in this area: the Cooper, Roberts, Hitch, Robinson, Knapton, Ward, Longman, and Rivington names are all found alongside these locations in imprints. The proximity to Stationer’s Hall and the large number of stationers and printers (including William Strahan) would have provided many of the necessities of day-to-day business. And the concentration of booksellers meant that the area had a reputation and prestige. As Raven points out, the area near St. Paul’s and Paternoster Row was increasingly the place to do business: Jacob Robinson moved from the Strand to Ludgate Street in 1741, Sandby bought the stock of Chandler and Ward and set up shop in Fleet-street in 1746, and Henry
Woodfall, Jr. moved to the Row in 1748 in spite of his family’s long-time presence in Little Britain. Samuel Fancourt’s decision to establish his circulating library on Fleet Street in 1740 placed him squarely in the reading and bookselling epicenter.

Locations further afield from the concentration of booksellers, while less frequently found in imprints, also had significant impact on the trade. Foremost among these is the Strand, listed in 613 imprints as a printer or bookseller location. Locations to the far west and far east followed in imprint popularity: the city of Westminster to the west of the City of London and the Royal Exchange to the east each appear in the imprints of 564 works. Scattered throughout the metropolitan area were the few locations that appeared in somewhere around two and three hundred imprints: Holborn (or Holbourn), Pall Mall, London Bridge, Charing Cross, Cornhill, and Cheapside. In more than one hundred imprints were Little Britain, Covent Gardens, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, Gracechurch Street, the Savoy, and Lombard Street. Customers might have appreciated these shops for their proximity to their homes or places of business.

Those who did not live or work near these scattered bookshops might still have patronized them rather than (or in addition to) the larger and more concentrated booksellers near St. Paul’s if they sought to satisfy more specific tastes and interests. Raven’s assertion that “Within the eighteenth-century metropolis, different districts also came to host different bookselling concerns” certainly holds true for the 1740s. However, as his estimation of the specialties of each district covers the whole of the eighteenth century, with perhaps some bias toward the latter part of that period, a closer examination of the geographic breakdown of booksellers between 1737 and 1749 is necessary to understand the 1740s market.

Those in search of information about the law and recent political discussions would have done well to travel West from the City to Westminster. The streets surrounding the Inns of Court and Whitehall bustled with barristers, attorneys, clerks, and law students. The area’s numerous coffee houses, second-

---

9 Raven explains that the importance of the area was growing: “Paramount, by at least 1740, was Paternoster Row and the traditional booktrading site of St Paul’s Churchyard.” See Business of Books, p. 157.

hand bookshops, libraries and pamphlet dealers aimed to take advantage of the opportunity promised by
the high concentration of the reading public represented by the legal trades. The booksellers’ shops here,
including John Stagg, Robert Amey, and J. and J. Fox, needed to cater to a similar clientele. Works
published with Westminster imprints therefore show a predominance of short, topical works, with an
emphasis on poetry, sermons, and law and politics.

One could also find to the West of St. Paul’s the booksellers who published the highest
percentage of literature, whose imprint locations included Pall Mall, Covent Garden, Drury Lane Theatre,
the Strand, and Lincoln’s Inn Fields. Pall Mall’s significance to the literary trade can be measured by the
contributions of its most noteworthy inhabitant, Robert Dodsley. With such a prolific and specialized
resident the fact that more than half of all works with Pall Mall imprints were poetry and nearly ten
percent were drama is unsurprising. Works published with a Lincoln’s-Inn imprint were similarly
strongly affected by John Watts (correlating with his proximity to the theatre): an unrivaled one-third of
the works marked as printed or published in that neighborhood were drama.

But for the greatest variety and concentration of literature no place could have matched the
Strand. The street, which lay between Fleet-street and the Inns of Court, had long been a prestigious
location for the London book trades. Many of the predominant, long-standing booksellers of the 1740s
could be found here, including Andrew Millar, J. Clarke, Jacob and Richard Tonson, John Nourse, Oliver
Payne, and Somerset Draper. Of the titles published in the Strand, fourteen percent were drama, thirteen
percent were poetry, and eight percent were fiction.

The districts of Holborn and Little Britain lay to the North of St. Paul’s. Booksellers in these
areas published very different works than their neighbors to the South and West. Raven characterizes the
area in the decades before the 1740s: “At least in the early eighteenth century, Little Britain hosted mixed
trades, with small shops of booksellers and printers all on a very intimate scale.” By the 1740s, however,
Little Britain’s importance to the trade was dwindling. But a few significant booksellers were still located

---

11 For a description of the coffee shops and libraries found near the legal trades, see Markman Ellis, “Coffee-
there, including Aaron and John Ward and J. Clarke, as well as printer Henry Woodfall, Jr. (before 1748). To the West in Holborn were Charles Davis, the Needhams, and Thomas Trye. Works attributed to these locations favored serious-minded pursuits: approximately half were religious works, with medical, mathematical, and scientific works as the next-most-popular genre. Very little literature was published and printed in Little Britain or Holborn, and a surprisingly small amount of the output was poetry (less than two percent).

Traveling to the South and East of St. Paul’s would lead one to Cheapside and towards the financial center in Lombard Street, Cornhill, the Royal Exchange, and London Bridge. These commercial districts provided steady business for jobbing printers and stationer’s shops, which in turn offered local booksellers access to those services. Booksellers in Cheapside (like John Noon and William Lewis) and adjacent Lombard street (like Edmund Parker, John Brotherton, T. Sowle Raylton and Luke Hinde) published very high percentages of religious works: more than seventy-five percent of the output of those districts were religious or philosophical. The area near the Exchange housed Thomas Cox, Oliver Payne, and the Strahan printers. And London Bridge, although no longer the bookselling mecca it had been in the seventeenth and earlier eighteenth centuries, still housed booksellers like James Harris and Thomas Hodges. The London Bridge businesses were more attuned to practical matters and the professional trades. The works published in these neighborhoods included an unusually high percentage of medicine and history, and small percentages of law, presumably leaving legal texts to their competition closer to Whitehall. Very little poetry, fiction, drama originated in the East end.

Of course, examining imprint locations can only provide a rough estimate of the specialties of London’s streets and districts. The neighborhoods overlapped, and streets often ran through many neighborhoods: one might be located on Fleet-street but choose to advertise books as for sale near Temple Bar or White Friars. Some booksellers were particularly savvy about associating their wares with the locations and trades of their intended customers. John Millan’s imprints, for example, show that he might have described the location of his business in ways that reflected the anticipated audience of a work. Historical and naval works often included imprints that labeled Millan’s shop as “near the Admiralty
Office,” while works of a legal or political bent were more likely to be listed for sale “near Whitehall”, “near Charing Cross,” or “next Will's Coffee-House.” Savvy marketing and clusters of similar businesses prove that booksellers were taking advantage of all opportunities to make a profit in the competitive marketplace.

II. Making Money as a Bookseller

Making money was no simple matter in the bookselling business. Publishing costs were high: printing presses and type were significant investments, paper and labor were expensive, and even a modest copyright payment to the author would leave the bookseller with a very narrow profit margin. Booksellers therefore needed to be as certain as they could that the works they invested in would not sit un-purchased on their shelves. In this section I examine the costs and earning potential of 1740s booksellers in order to answer the following vital question: how much money could booksellers make by publishing poetry, drama, and fiction, given the typical prices, lengths, and formats of those genres? Understanding the anticipated average profit margins for each type of literature can help to predict why booksellers might have preferred one genre over another, which in turn can help to characterize the business models of different firms.

The first expense in a publishing project was often the copyright payment to the author. How much would a bookseller typically pay for the right to publish a work? Unfortunately, the records necessary to answer this question satisfactorily and for a broad range of works and booksellers have not survived. On the basis of the copyright records that remain—in particular, those found in the Bernard Lintot’s copyright records (1701–1730), the Upcott collection of copyright transfer agreements (1703/4–1810), and in the Robinson copyright archives (1713–1820), as described by G. E. Bentley—some description of copyright payments is possible.\footnote{The records of Lintot’s copyright agreements are reported in John Nichols, \textit{Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century}, 9 vols. (London: for the Author, 1812–15), VIII: 293–304. The agreements include 137 copyright transfers between authors and booksellers between 1701 and 1730. The Upcott collection contains nearly 250 receipts for copyright transfer agreements between authors and publishers between 1703 and 1810, and is found...}
century and in some cases offer little or no direct evidence about copyright purchases of drama, poetry, and fiction between 1737 and 1749, the records offer suggestive evidence about the criteria some booksellers seem to have used to estimate a work’s market potential. Robert D. Hume has usefully explored the implications of the Lintot and Upcott papers in his study of the economics of culture. I refer to his conclusions alongside my own commentary below to give an overview of possible copyright prices for all genres of 1740s literature.

Even a casual glance through lists of copyright payments makes one point clear: there does not seem to have been anything like a standard or typical fee. Books with similar content, form, and length might sell for wildly different prices, even when their copyrights were purchased by the same bookseller in the same year: for example, Lintot paid Giles Jacob £26 17s 6d for Modern Justice (457 pages, octavo) and the next year paid the same author only £3 4s 6d for a longer legal work, A Review of the Statutes, Both Ancient and Modern; Especially Concerning the Practick Part of the Law (620 pages, octavo).

While such inconsistencies make accurate estimations of the amounts paid for copyrights to particular works frustratingly impossible to determine, they shed some light on the bookseller-author relationship. Booksellers evidently had meaningful power to appraise the value of works on their own terms. Because there does not seem to have been an agreed upon standard copyright price, a bookseller’s success was obviously highly dependent upon the quality of his judgment and ability to attract the best works and haggle over reasonable prices.

What prices did booksellers pay for copyrights, and what were the differences in scale or range of copyright payments made to authors of different genres of literature? Hume calculates that Lintot paid an average of £14 10s for copyrights across all but his five most highly-priced works. The average copyright price paid for original and translated works between 1701 and 1749 by the booksellers represented in the Upcott materials was £27. Hume finds that “elite-culture” works, in which category he seems to include

---


literature, earned slightly higher average copyright prices: £25 for Lintot, and £33 for those in the Upcott collection. But both the Lintot and Upcott records disproportionately favor drama; Upcott includes little poetry; Lintot’s poetry records are skewed by his relationship with Pope (whose rates were undoubtedly higher than the average for poetry); and neither collection includes records for many works of fiction. Given the nature of this evidence, any conclusions about genre-based trends in copyright prices must be taken with a grain of salt. Even with a healthy cynicism for the representative accuracy of the remaining records, however, the evidence indicates significant differences.

A moderately talented writer might get the biggest return on his efforts, as measured in wordcount, from poetry. Because the Upcott and Lintot records include just a smattering of transactions for poetry, and only then for well-known poets, we can only guess at the rates probably earned by the lesser-known or anonymous authors of the smaller works of poetry that comprised most of output in that genre. Marjorie Plant’s estimate of a £4 or £5 average copyright fee in the early eighteenth century is probably a safe upper-limit approximation of the prices paid for short poems. Lintot paid for Richard Barford £3 4s 6d for *The Assembly* in 1711/12 and John Gay £5 7s 6d for his *Letter to a Lady* in 1715, and Curll paid Thomas Foxton 1 guinea “and several Books” for *The Towers* in 1726. Well-known poets could earn considerably more for their work: Lintot paid Pope £32 5s for *Windsor Forest* in 1712/13 (though he paid only £7 for the first edition *Rape of the Lock* that same year). Collections of poetry earned significantly more, probably because their authors’ work would have needed to previously have been proven popular. Lintott paid William Broome £35 for *Poems on Several Occasions* in 1726/7, and Nourse paid £30 for half of the copyright to *Select Tales and Fables* in 1746. When booksellers were convinced a work of poetry could sell, they were very willing to pay for the rights to it.

Hume determines that, except in the case of a revered and well-connected writer who could sell a work by subscription, an author would have had the greatest potential to make the most copyright money for plays: he finds that “Between 1714 and 1737 the average received for forty-seven mainpieces was

---

£52” with a scale that ranged from 5 guineas to a fairly astonishing £105.\textsuperscript{16} Booksellers also invested in reprints of earlier drama, especially after the Licensing Act reduced the number of new works available. Terry Belanger has shown that the purchase of even a fraction of a copyright at a bookseller’s trade sale could represent an extraordinary investment: at a 1767 sale of Tonson copyrights, 2/3 of the copyright for Shakespeare cost £1,200.\textsuperscript{17} Although the Shakespeare copyright was a unique case, its unusual price is some indication of the heights drama copyrights could reach. Booksellers obviously expected to be able to sell a substantial number of copies of dramatic works to recoup such steep prices.

Of the three forms of literature under investigation here, we know least about the copyright prices paid for fiction. Bentley’s examination of the Robinson archive offers some hints. On average, Robinson paid £27 19s for the copyright to each of twelve novels. But these prices represent works published after the 1740s when more fiction was being published, and Bentley notes that Robinson was particularly generous to novelists.\textsuperscript{18} Copyright prices for fiction in the 1740s might more closely have resembled the £7 7s and £6 16s 6d payments Nourse made to Eliza Haywood in 1747 for the two parts of her translation and adaptation of \textit{Memoirs of a Man of Honour}. Smaller copyright payments for fiction do not necessarily entirely reflect a lack of demand for that genre, however. As I show in the discussion that follows, the prohibitively high cost of printing novels, which were often much longer than other forms of literature, likely caused many booksellers to cut publishing costs wherever possible—including copyright payments.

Publishing costs were heavily dependent upon the cost of printing, which in turn was heavily dependent upon the size of the work in question. The time to typeset and check a work, the amount of presswork required to print its pages, and of course the quantity of paper necessary were all determined by a book’s format and length. Additional factors like font size, print ornaments and illustrations, and the complexity of the text itself (which might be increased by heavy use of Latin or Greek, by heavy use of


\textsuperscript{18} Bentley, “Copyright Documents in the George Robinson Archive,” p. 75.
footnotes, or by specialized jargon or atypical diction) also influenced the printing cost, but as these factors are difficult to impossible to trace en masse using ESTC data, the following very rough comparative estimates of printing cost by genre will be based on size and number of sheets required of alone.

What formats and lengths were standard for each genre? A definitive answer to this question is impossible. While the formats most commonly used in each genre are consistently reported in the ESTC and therefore are easily quantifiable, the number of pages is harder to extract. The bibliographic formulas used in the catalog include information (like the number of plates or the length of the prefatory material, in roman numerals) are difficult to account for programmatically. And the numbers of pages are not consistently reported for all works: multi-volume works in particular often list only the number of volumes with no reference to the number of pages in each. But the point here is not to offer irrefutable averages. Even if a decisive averages could be determined for each genre, variations in printing house practices, paper quality, sheet size, and the previously mentioned possible textual complications ensure that any figures can only be suggestive of very general differences: individual editions of particular works in every genre could have, and often did, differ greatly from composite overviews.

As the breakdowns by format and genre in Chapter 1 show, of the forms of literature, poetry was published in the most diverse range of formats. Poetry’s most common format was folio, which accounting for thirty percent of the works in that genre. Most folio poetry was short, and included single poems like Pope’s Sixth Epistle of the First Book of Horace Imitated (15 pp.) and Robert Morris’s Enquiry After Virtue (8pp.). At a rough estimate, these works averaged ten pages per pamphlet, or approximately five sheets. Octavo was the second most common format, and constituted around a quarter of the genre’s total. Poetry published in octavo covered a range of lengths, from reasonably short (for example, Paul Whitehead’s Manners: A Satire, 22 pp.) to quite long (like The Works of Mr. Thomson, 19 Alexander Pope, The Sixth Epistle of the First Book of Horace Imitated (1738); [Robert Morris], An Enquiry After Virtue (1743).
A reasonable average length might be something like seventy-five pages, or around nine and a third sheets per book. Quarto was also popular, at twenty percent of all works of poetry including McNamara Morgan’s satires The Causidicade (29pp.) and The Triumvirade (33pp.) and the separately published “nights” of Young’s The Complaint; Or, Night-Thoughts (between 20 and 72pp.).

Predictably, the length of works in quarto fell between those in folio and octavo, at an average of approximately thirty pages or seven and a half sheets per book.

On average, the cost to print dramatic works seems to have been reasonably comparable to what would have been required to print poetry. Though drama does not admit the one or two-page short works possible in poetry, neither does it often include lengthy or multi-volume works: most of the works of drama published in the 1740s were single plays, and most single plays are less than one hundred pages. The most popular formats for drama (octavo, at nearly sixty percent, and duodecimo, at thirty-three percent) reflect the concise and standardized nature of the genre. Dramatic works published in octavo were more likely to be new plays than reprints, and were typically slightly fewer pages than those published in duodecimo, averaging approximately sixty pages (seven and a half sheets) and including main pieces like Smollett’s The Regicide (87pp.) and Lillo’s Marina (60pp.), and shorter burlesque operas like Carey’s Dragon of Wantley (24pp. in some editions, 32pp. in others). Plays in duodecimo were more likely to be reprints than new plays, and tended to be longer than those in octavo (averaging approximately eighty pages or six and two-thirds sheets), and were also more likely to be reprints, like Farquhar’s Beaux Strategem (94pp.) and Dryden’s All for Love (96pp.).

---

23 George Lillo, The Beaux Strategem (H. Lintot, 1742); John Dryden, All for Love: Or, the World Well Lost (1740).
Fiction was by far the lengthiest literary genre, with correspondingly high average printing costs in spite of booksellers’ attempts to mitigate expenses by using the smallest formats. Ninety-five percent of all fiction published in the 1740s was either printed in duodecimo or octavo, with the former holding a slight edge over the latter as the most popular format. Fiction published in duodecimo included a high percentage of multi-volume novels, like Sarah Fielding’s *Adventures of David Simple* or a translation of Madame d’Aulnoy’s *A Collection of Novels and Tales of the Fairies*.\(^{24}\) The average length of these books was stunning: two volumes and three-hundred pages a volume seems roughly representative. Such a work would require a staggering thirty-three and a third sheets to print: more than three times the estimated average for works in any other genre or format. By comparison, fictional works printed in octavo were much cheaper to print, as they were more likely to be shorter books (like *An Apology for the Life of Mr. T --- C ---, Comedian*), and averaged just a single volume and around one-hundred and fifty pages, or nearly nineteen sheets per book.\(^{25}\) Whatever the format, fiction obviously required much more paper than other forms of literature, and would have posed a similarly greater risk to the bookseller investing in it.

Differences in length and format offer one possible explanation for why some booksellers might have preferred to invest in poetry and drama over fiction, as the title count breakdown suggests they did. Significantly more paper would have gone into publishing fiction than publishing either poetry or drama, and no eighteenth-century businessman who knew his trade would have been foolish enough to consider that difference negligible. Paper came at a premium, and the more the bookseller had to spend on it, the smaller his profit margins were likely to be. The amount of paper required to print a work was a major component of the cost to publish it: Patricia Hernlund posits the general rule of thumb that the paper investment accounted for approximately half of the cost of printing.\(^{26}\) Costs per ream of paper varied, of course, with size and quality, but Strahan’s ledgers show that a ream of the lowest quality paper in the


\(^{25}\) Anon., “Theophilus Cibber,” *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, Comedian. Being a Proper Sequel to The Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian* (1740).

most popular size (demy, a medium sized paper that could fold to an octavo) might have cost between 13s and 19s, or possibly more. At 13s per ream and 500 perfect sheets per ream, the paper required to print one copy of a ten-page folio poem would have cost around one and a half pence, or about a quarter of the typical 6d price for such a work. When an author or bookseller outsourced his printing, often he was asked to provide the printer with his paper, which meant he would have to have the necessary resources up-front. The ability just to purchase the amount of paper needed to publish an edition would have been more than most could afford.

The cost to print a work was also determined by the cost of the labor. Many bibliographers break the cost of printing into thirds, estimating that approximately one-third of the expense would pay for the compositor, one-third for presswork, and one-third would be left for the “master’s fee,” or profit. Though variations certainly existed, the rule of thirds provides a reasonable working depiction of printing house practices. The labor breakdown illustrates a further financial hindrance to works of fiction. The labor cost per page tended to be higher in the smaller formats favored for fiction, in part because the type used to set the pages was typically smaller and therefore more dense and complex. Poetry and drama, however, were more likely to have required complex type-setting for line breaks and dialogue and the skills of an expert compositor for any foreign languages or artistic and grammatical complexities, which also might have increased printing labor costs.

---

27 The range of prices is taken from Hernlund’s table in “William Strahan’s Ledgers, II,” p. 190. The figures represent 1780s prices, as ledgers do not list prices for the lowest-quality demy paper in the 1740s. Based on the comparison of Strahan’s prices for medium-sized paper in 1745 (15s) and 1785 (10s and 12s), one can reasonably suppose that the price of demy paper might have been higher in the 1740s than in the 1780s. The estimates here are therefore conservative.

28 Hernlund notes that Strahan, at least, occasionally supplied the paper for a contract himself, but very rarely did so for longer, book-length works. See “Strahan’s Ledgers, II,” p. 184.


30 See Patricia Hernlund’s tables of labor prices per sheet of works set in William Strahan’s print shop, in “William Strahan’s Ledgers: Standard Charges for Printing, 1738–1785,” Studies in Bibliography 20 (1967): 89–111, at pp. 98–102. For example, labor to print a run of 1,000 copies regular octavo set in pica typeface would cost around £1, or £1 5s with notes in long primer typeface. Duodecimo would have cost a bit more, though Hernlund does not find direct comparisons for most examples.
Press run sizes had to be calculated carefully. To make a profit, booksellers needed to offset the costs of copyright, labor, and paper by selling enough copies. At the same time, they needed to ensure that they did not print more books than the market would bear. Costs also increased with larger press runs. Cast type was prone to wear over time, and when the wear began to diminish the legibility of the text the printer would need to restock his type. During lengthy press runs he might even need to restock partway through the job. Restocking not only meant an expense to the printer, but also to the task at hand. The printer, and ultimately the bookseller who had commissioned the work, would have to pay for the extra labor required to re-set the type and to begin printing a new form, and the efficiency of the process would be interrupted. That edition sizes were typically small, then, is no surprise. At Strahan’s shop, and likely throughout the trade, the most common press run were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copies</th>
<th>Instances</th>
<th>Percent Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Press runs of one thousand copies or fewer therefore accounted for more than seventy-five percent of all editions published in Strahan’s shop.

Determining the price of a book required balancing the cost of at least copyright, paper, and labor, and often other expenses like advertising costs. Yet in spite of the previously discussed variations in each of these costs, the price of books was relatively standard across a given size and genre, suggesting that booksellers had determined the limits to what their clientele was willing to pay. Table 2.3 shows the typical prices for each genre, according to format and length, as advertised on title pages.

Table 2.3 Typical Title-Page Retail Prices by Genre, Format, and Length

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>2°</td>
<td>&lt; 10 pp.</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 10 pp.</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4°</td>
<td>&lt; 20 pp.</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20–40 pp.</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40–100 pp.</td>
<td>1s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 100 pp.</td>
<td>2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8°</td>
<td>&lt; 40 pp.</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40–60 pp.</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60–100 pp.</td>
<td>1s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 100 pp. (rare)</td>
<td>≥ 2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>8°</td>
<td>&lt; 70 pp.</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 70 pp.</td>
<td>1s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12°</td>
<td>&lt; 70 pp.</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 70 pp.</td>
<td>≥ 1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>8°</td>
<td>&lt; 50 pp.</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50–100 pp.</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100–200 pp.</td>
<td>1s 6d to 2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 200 pp.</td>
<td>≈ 4s /vol. Varies.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12°</td>
<td>&lt; 100 pp.</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100–200</td>
<td>1s to 1s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 200 pp. and multi-volume works.</td>
<td>≈ 3s /vol. Varies.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multi-volume works rarely list prices on their title pages. Price estimates for these works are based on prices listed in William Bent’s *London Catalogue of Books*.

Of course, these figures represent only averages; illustrations, the quality of the paper, the desirability of the work, and other factors could affect price. And these figures represent only the advertised retail prices. Many of the books in an edition would have sold for less than this suggested maximum price. Booksellers often offered discounts to other bookshops, to business associates, and to favored clientele. But as the table indicates, the greatest factor in determining price seems to have been the cost of paper and printing rather than the genre of the work, proving again that a primary concern for booksellers was to ensure that their up-front investments could be met.

Generalizations about the costs of publishing can give us some sense of booksellers’ financial concerns and the differences between genres. But understanding how potential net profits for works were

---

33 [William Bent], *The London Catalogue of Books in All Languages, Arts and Sciences, That Have Been Printed in Great Britain, Since the Year M.DCC.* (London, 1773).
actually calculated requires a few real examples, which the previous discussion of printing costs and copyright records from Robert Dodsley can supply. Comparing Dodsley’s payments for the copyrights of one work each of poetry, drama, and fiction illustrates the profit disparities across those genres. Assuming similarly priced, inexpensive paper and a standard edition size of 500 copies for each, and assuming that all of the works printed were sold, Dodsley would have made very different amounts of money from the publication of Johnson’s *London*, Johnson’s *Irene*, and Charles Jarvis’s translation of *Don Quixote*.

In 1738 Dodsley paid a young Samuel Johnson 10 guineas, or £10 10s, for his poem *London*. Printed in folio, the poem was 19 pages long. *London* sold at 1s—the typical price for such a work. To make up the cost of purchasing the copyright, Dodsley would have needed to sell 210 works at full price; assuming a 20% discount to other booksellers and regular customers, he would have needed to sell 263 copies just to cover the copyright. Paper would have been the biggest component of the printing cost. A 19-page folio would require just under 10 sheets per copy, or around 52 copies per ream. If paper cost around 16s per ream—which seems a reasonable estimate given the range of paper prices Hernlund lists in her discussion of Strahan’s prices—the cost of paper for 500 copies would have been something like £7 14s. Using Hernlund’s estimate that paper was roughly half the cost of printing, we can double that figure to account for labor costs and arrive at an estimated printer’s bill of £15 8s. So at a very rough estimate, if Dodsley printed 500 copies of the first edition of *London*, he would have paid £25 18s—a hefty investment in an unknown poet. Even selling copies at the full retail price, Dodsley would just barely have cleared a profit of 18s. Printing 1,000 copies would have increased his profit margin, but the risk was still great. In the case of *London*, Dodsley’s investment was sound. The poem proved popular, and Dodsley published four editions between 1738 and 1739, and as he would only have needed to pay Johnson once for the poem his profit margins would have increased significantly after the first edition.

By 1749 Johnson was better known, and his work might have seemed a safer bet. In 1749 Dodsley paid £100 for *Irene*, and gave Johnson the right to one impression. The price was generous,

34 The price is not listed on the title page, but William Prideaux Courtney lists it at 1s, which would have been consistent with other poems of the same length. See *A Bibliography of Samuel Johnson*, rev. and ed. David Nichol Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915, 1925), p. 7.
though not unusual for a play. *Irene* was 92 pages in octavo and was listed to be sold for 1s 6d.\(^{35}\) Using the same estimates for paper and labor prices as I used for *London*, printing *Irene* would have cost £9 4s for paper which, doubled, would have made the total printing costs something like £18 8s and the total publication cost £118 8s. Selling 500 copies at the full price of 1s 6d would have brought in a gross £37 5s—not even one-third of Dodsley’s out-of-pocket costs to publish the work. Had the play proven popular Dodsley would have made up his costs after the second edition (the first impression going to Johnson), as the largest part of the cost was obviously the one-time payment to the author. *Irene*, however, was not a big seller, and a second edition was not published until 1754.

Dodsley did not publish much fiction, but he made an exception in 1742 and purchased the copyright to Charles Jarvis’s translation of *Don Quixote*, paying Jarvis’s wife £21 and 15 free copies. The translation was published as a high-quality quarto, printed in two volumes with a total of 967 pages. Using the same estimates of price as the relatively plain editions previously described, an edition of 500 copies would have cost £200 just for paper, and if labor were double that cost, the total cost of publication would have been a staggering £421. No record of the price of the work exists, but selling 485 copies (500 less the 15 given to Mrs. Jarvis), Dodsley would have needed to charge more than 8s per volume—an extraordinary price, and much beyond what would have been typical—to make a profit on even this conservative estimate. The numerous plates included in each volume and the high-quality of paper would have increased the costs still further.\(^{36}\) One can easily see why Dodsley would have invited the Tonsons to share this investment with him, as the imprint (“Printed for J. and R. Tonson in the Strand, and R. Dodsley in Pall-Mall”) seems to suggest.

Other costs incurred in selling a work were less regular and are more difficult to estimate, but would nevertheless have also affected profit margins: advertising might have been one of the most expected and greatest of these expenses. R. B. Walker’s examination of eighteenth-century newspaper

---


\(^{36}\) Advertisements list the work as printed “on Royal Paper” and “with sixty-nine Copper plates, engrav’d by the best Masters,” though the booksellers may have saved some money by using “the same which were made use of in the late Spanish Edition.” c.f. *Daily Post* 9 April 1742.
advertising practices shows just how ubiquitous ads for books were: in 1749 they were the most commonly advertised items in both the *London Evening Post* and the *General Advertiser*, and the second most common in the *Penny London Post* (after medical treatments).\(^{37}\) Customers would have expected to learn of new books in periodicals, and booksellers would have needed to oblige them. As Michael Harris points out, advertisements for works not published by those who owned the newspaper were always paid for, though the fees were variable and negotiated.\(^{38}\) Based on the Walker’s figures for the average number of books advertised per issue of the *General Advertiser* and the revenue earned through book advertisements in March 1744, a typical fee might have been something like 1 or 2s. If a bookseller were to advertise across a number of periodicals and across a number of weeks or months, advertising costs would add up quickly.

Steep publishing costs and the difficulty of predicting reception and sustained interest in a work meant that to make a profit booksellers would have had to be smart and strategic to stay in business and to make a living.

### III. Examples of the Place of Poetry, Drama, and Fiction in Booksellers’ Businesses

Though all booksellers had similar concerns with respect to managing their finances and their stock of books, they employed many different methods for establishing clientele and choosing the genres and works they would publish. In this section, I address the following questions: how specialized were booksellers likely to be, and did the degree of specialization vary with the size of the business? When booksellers like Dodsley were specialized, what percentage of the output of a genre’s overall market might they account for? What strategies did booksellers use to market and advertise their books, and how much did their practices vary from work to work? Ultimately, understanding the answers to such questions will help to determine what writers and the book-buying public more broadly would have known about London booksellers. How would authors have decided which bookseller to approach with a

---


manuscript? How much did booksellers’ personal interests, religious beliefs, political leanings, relationships with writers and other members of the book trade, and so on affect the way their businesses were run? The simple answer to these questions would be to say that practices varied greatly—hardly a surprise in a trade so large and diverse. But each variation was based on different logic and priorities, the possibilities for which are worth examining.

The question of how many booksellers seem to have been interested in publishing poetry, drama, and fiction is central to understanding the place literature held in the marketplace. Examining the breakdown of genres across the lists of a number of the most productive booksellers provides some hints. Most booksellers’ names appear in imprints for poetry and fiction in percentages of their individual outputs that match the percentages of those genres in the overall publishing output. Drama, however, is a less consistent component of most booksellers’ lists. So while most booksellers’ names appear in the imprints of at least some poetry, comparatively few published much drama. And those who did publish drama were more likely to publish a lot of it than those who published poetry and fiction. Imprints of fiction indicate that booksellers who published that genre seem to have been larger operations—perhaps because it was a riskier venture than drama or poetry and therefore a more dangerous investment for less financially secure booksellers.

Examining a few bookselling operations in depth illustrates more distinctly the multiplicity of models these businesses followed and the effect those businesses might have on the trade at large. To address different publishing practices and to focus on the production of literature, I begin by examining two bookselling operations that specialized in publishing poetry and drama: the prolific trade-publishing duo of Robert Dodsley and Mary Cooper; and the comparatively small Lincoln’s-Inn Fields-based bookseller John Watts, respectively. That finding a bookseller whose practices can illuminate the fiction trade is distinctly more difficult than locating those for poetry and drama is in itself telling. No bookseller seems to have been either willing or financially able to gamble the success of his or her business as solidly on fiction as Dodsley and Watts did with poetry and drama. The productive bookseller James Hodges will therefore serve as a reasonably representative example of a bookseller who published works
of fiction as a small but noticeable and consistent part of his overall output. To contextualize these extended examples, I conclude with brief glimpses into a range of other booksellers who illustrate additional possible practices and priorities.

Cooperative Trade Publishers and Poetry Specialists: Robert Dodsley and Mary Cooper

Topping the list of surnames in imprints in the first section of this chapter are representatives of two businesses that dominated the sale of poetry in the 1740s: Thomas and Mary Cooper, and Robert Dodsley. The Coopers held shop in Paternoster Row from 1732 through 1761, during which time they are attributed in the publication and distribution of more books than any other 1740s publisher or bookseller, including a large percentage of poetry. Between 1737 and 1749 the Cooper name appears in the imprints of 1,772 works, 20% of which (358 titles) were poetry. Dodsley’s Tully’s Head would have been the next best place to find poetry during the years of its operation between 1735 and 1764. Of the 376 works whose imprints are associated with him, just over half (189) were poetry. The size and specialized nature of the Coopers and Dodsley, respectively, allowed their tastes and preferences to influence the market for that genre. Together and separately the Dodsley and Cooper names appear in the imprints of nearly twenty-five percent of all poetry published between 1737 and 1749.

Of all members of the book trades in the 1740s, none is more celebrated or more studied than Robert Dodsley. His most recent biographer, Harry M. Soloman, is certain that his view of Dodsley as “the most important publisher of his period, patron to almost every midcentury poet still read today” is standard amongst literary critics.39 Certainly Dodsley was appreciated by the literati of his day. James Boswell wrote: “I said Mr. Robert Dodsley’s life should be written, as he had been so much connected

with the wits of his time, and by his literary merit had raised himself from the station of a footman.”

Dodsley’s Cinderella story is certainly part of his appeal, as is his dual role as both bookseller and author of poetry and plays. And in addition to the appeal of his life and interests for modern literary scholars, Dodsley studies also benefit from the amount of surviving evidence: he has been the subject of two book-length biographies, and his letters and other documentary evidence have been collected and edited by James E. Tierney. Though only a small percentage of his correspondence survives, and though the years between 1739 and 1742 unfortunately are particularly scant, with only one letter surviving, Dodsley’s records are amongst the most thorough and accessible remaining for any mid-century bookseller or publisher.

The nature and the extent of Dodsley’s published output also make him of interest. The volume of his business, as measured by the number of times his name appears in imprints, places him in a league with prestigious booksellers like Roberts, Robinson, Knapton, Longman, and Rivington. Of the works with Dodsley’s name in their imprints, more than half were poetry—an astonishing percentage given the number of works Dodsley published overall and given the place poetry held in the larger marketplace (which, as discussed in Chapter one, accounted for approximately ten percent of all works published). The remaining half of Dodsley’s list contains a diverse selection of genres, with emphasis on religious works, literature and classics, and drama, and with very little fiction (less, even, than the typically low averages). His influence extended beyond books and pamphlets and into periodicals: he published the Publick Register, the Museum, and owned shares in the London Magazine and London Evening Post.

Involvement in these periodicals, which carried essays and news and advertisements, as well as some poetry (in the Museum and London Magazine) allowed Dodsley to regularly publicize his works—an

42 Tierney also remarked upon Dodsley’s lack of fiction in his discussion of the types of works Dodsley helped to publish: “Despite the mid-century’s increasing taste for fiction, Dodsley’s conservative stance is reflected in the mere twenty-three pieces he published over his 24-year career” (Correspondence, p. 27).
opportunity of which he took good advantage. No one seriously interested in 1740s literature could have failed to know Dodsley’s name.

His success at building a reputation probably can account for many of Dodsley’s achievements in the bookselling business. Tierney speculates that through his service as a footman, the young poet had access to libraries and almost certainly “met many titled persons and literary celebrities,” many of whom Tierney argues would eventually help him to publish his own work and to start his business. The likelihood of Dodsley conversing with guests while serving as a footman and of his being granted access to the estate’s library seems small, but we do know that one way or another the young man was able to build an impressive literary acquaintance. Notably, Defoe read and contributed to Dodsley’s Servitude; Pope read and enjoyed his play The Toy-shop and promised to recommend it to theatre manager John Rich; and Rich produced it in 1735. That same year, enabled, according to Tierney, by the money he earned from the production of his play, Dodsley established his bookseller’s shop in Pall-Mall out of which he soon published work by Pope (e.g. The Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace), the young Samuel Johnson (London), Richard Glover (Leonidas), Richard Savage (Of Public Spirit in Regard to Public Works), Robert Nugent (Odes and Epistles), and Paul Whitehead (Manners: A Satire), among others. More than any other publisher or bookseller in the period, Dodsley had established a renowned coterie of poets that formed his standing as the preeminent poetry publisher.

Through his merit and his connections Dodsley was able to secure the trust of many significant poets within the first few years his business was open, but breaking into the larger trade took longer and required different efforts. He was new to bookselling, and even new to London; his career did not match the patterns followed by many booksellers who often had grown up as apprentices and journeymen and who commonly bought or inherited businesses from their families or one-time masters. The young poet (only thirty-two when he opened shop) might have seemed like a pretentious upstart to his more

43 Tierney, Correspondence, p. 4.
44 Alexander Pope, The Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace (1737); [Samuel Johnson], London: A Poem, in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal (1738); Richard Glover, Leonidas: A Poem (1738); Richard Savage, Of Public Spirit in Regard to Public Works (1737); Robert Nugent, Odes and Epistles (1739); Whitehead, Manners.
established tradesmen. For good reason, then, did Dodsley combine his name with those of booksellers like Millar, Gilliver, Knapton and Clarke in 1737. He was also more careful in the early years of his business than he would be later to protect the copyrights of the works he published by registering them with the Stationer’s Company. Dodsley needed to establish himself as reliable member of the trade.

His partnership with one firm in particular helped Dodsley to build and protect his reputation. Thomas and Mary Cooper of the Globe in Paternoster Row appear alongside Dodsley in more imprints than any other bookseller or publisher. The shops’ longstanding collaboration seems to have begun in 1738 when five works (including three by Pope, one by Milton, and one by Dodsley himself) were “printed for R. Dodsley and sold by T. Cooper.” In 1739 and 1740, five more of Pope’s works were published with that imprint, in 1741 the list expanded to include ten more primarily literary works, and in 1742 their partnership was strengthened further when Dodsley and Thomas Cooper published the second and third of Young’s “Nights” in 1742. Thomas’s wife, Mary, continued the partnership when she took over the shop after her husband’s death in 1743. Between 1743 and 1749, Mary Cooper’s name appears with Dodsley’s, usually as the seller of works that were “printed for” Dodsley, in 132 imprints—more than half of the total number of imprints that bear Dodsley’s name.

In spite of their significance to the much-studied Dodsley, and perhaps even more shockingly in spite of their own massive influence on the marketplace (as previously mentioned, “Cooper” appears in three times more imprints than any other surname), there has been no full-length study of either Thomas or Mary Cooper, or of the two together. In fact, neither even boasts an entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, though they are mentioned in Tierney’s entry on Dodsley. Mary Cooper often is mentioned only in passing in studies of women in the book trade or of eighteenth-century children’s literature, in spite of the meager place that genre held in her publishing output (less than one percent, by my categorizations). Basic questions such as how often did they invest in copyrights, how much did

45 Tierney speculates that the change in Dodsley’s copyright registrations might also reflect the dwindling power of the Company as compared to large booksellers to protect copyrights. Correspondence, pp. 44 and 45.
46 Cooper is, for example, briefly mentioned in Lisa Maruca’s study of women in the literary marketplace, “Political Propriety and Feminine Property: Women in the Eighteenth-Century Text Trades,” Studies in the Literary
Mary’s practice differ from her late husband’s, and how much control did they have over the works that appeared with their names in the imprints remain unanswered. As the most prolific trade publishers of their day, the Coopers obviously warrant a more extended examination than there is space for in the present study.

Together, the Coopers and Dodsley can represent one strategy for reaching parts of the market that would have been inaccessible to either alone. As the copyright holder or a representative of the copyright holder in many of these transactions, Dodsley obviously was the driving force in the relationship. His influence is seen in the genre of the works that bear both names in their imprints: sixty percent of these were poetry—a percentage that clearly matches Dodsley’s preferences more closely than the Coopers’ (whose list of associated works contains a greater variety of genres, and which contained approximately twenty-three percent poetry; twenty-two percent legal and political works; eighteen percent religious and philosophical works; and less than eight percent of any other single genre). Because the decision to use the Coopers’ services would have been his, Dodsley did not need to concern himself with his partner’s business model. The Coopers of course could have declined to sell or publish a work with Dodsley, but we have no indication that they ever chose to do so.

Including the Coopers’ name in his imprints allowed Dodsley to make his business more accessible to a wider base of customers. Dodsley’s Tully’s Head in Pall Mall was close to a number of fashionable coffee and chocolate houses, but was distant for customers who lived or worked in the City or to those used to shopping for books in the more central book-trade neighborhoods near St. Paul’s and Temple Bar. The Coopers’ Globe in Paternoster Row was more centrally located, and would have been a natural shopping place for those who bought the pamphlets and short poems of the Dodsley-Cooper collaboration: the Row had long been a central location for trade publishers, and quickly was becoming a

site of important magazine and periodical publishing as well. As Dodsley knew, a bookseller would do well to associate himself with the long traditions and up-and-coming shops that simultaneously characterized the street.

Dodsley, who was probably especially sensitive to the dangers of prosecution for publication following his arrest for libel after publishing Whitehead’s 1739 satire, *Manners*, also used Mary Cooper as a distributor for his more seditious works. Tierney lists three works after 1749 which Dodsley chose to publish under Cooper’s imprint to protect himself—John Gilbert Cooper’s *Cursory Remarks* (1751) and Joseph Warton’s *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Mr. Pope* (1756), and Edmund Burke’s *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1757)—and speculates that William Whitehead’s *Honour* (1747) might have been published under a similar agreement. Examining the attribution practices represented in works with Dodsley’s and the Coopers’ names in imprints suggests that such arrangements may have been more common than can be proven. While fully three-quarters of the works published with the Cooper name in their imprints had no names on their title pages and no definitive interior attributions, approximately half of those that bore Dodsley’s name were attributed. The Coopers would not have been immune to the danger of prosecution for selling libelous works, but their role as trade publisher meant that they would have risked less than Dodsley. As Treadwell argues of earlier bookbinders-turned-trade publishers, a trade publisher “could legitimately claim not to have read the work he stitched and published” and so would have been more difficult to charge with the crime of a work’s publication.

To be so longstanding, the collaboration must have been beneficial to the Coopers as well. Publishing works for Dodsley meant that the Coopers were associated with a prestigious bookseller whose name increasingly was linked with the most reliably popular poets of the 1740s. The Globe would therefore have increased its customer base to include those looking for high-end poetry. Similarly, selling prestigious works to which Dodsley owned the copyrights meant that the Coopers’ business could gain prestige without having to pay for it directly in copyrights. And as Dodsley frequently included the

---

48 Tierney, *Correspondence*, p. 42.
Coopers’ names in imprints and newspaper ads, their shop would also have benefited from advertising at Dodsley’s expense.

*Dominating the Drama Market: John Watts*

Less well-known and far less prolific than Dodsley or the Coopers, but perhaps equally significant to his corner of the market for literature was the bookseller and printer John Watts. Between 1737 and 1749, Watts’ name appeared in the imprints of 111 works, sometimes as printer and sometimes as bookseller, for an average of between eight and nine books per year. Half of the works Watts published in those years were drama—an astonishing percentage given that drama accounted for just three or four percent of the total publication output. The location of his shop near Lincoln’s-Inn Fields put him in easy reach for theatre-going drama lovers. Beyond his specialty, Watts’ name appears in the imprints of works in a variety of other genres: just under twenty percent of the works with imprints that bear his name were religious, and his list of associated publications also includes small numbers of works of poetry, scientific works, and histories, but no works of law or politics. Watts’ business was so devoted to drama that in spite of the smallish size of his output, his name appears in the imprints of nine percent of all dramatic works published in London in the 1740s, and he likely was anonymously involved in the printing and publication of many more.

What little we know of Watts himself largely comes from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century accounts of his character and the reputation of his work. In his *Literary Anecdotes*, Nichols notes that “The fame of Mr. John Watts for excellently good printing will endure as long as any public library shall exist” and points to Watts’ work on a few editions of classics and to the fact that Benjamin Franklin worked as a compositor in his shop. In his *Autobiography*, Franklin describes his time working first as a pressman and then a compositor for Watts. He characterizes his fellow pressmen as “great Guzzlers of

---

Beer” and depicts Watts as a judicious and benevolent master. Later references to Watts often emphasize his respectability and highlight his connections to more famous figures. An early twentieth-century Publisher’s Circular account of Franklin’s time working for Watts, for example, introduces the printer to readers as the partner of the renowned Jacob Tonson and the proprietor of a “highly respectable establishment.” Plomer agrees, arguing that Watts’ shop was “one of the most important printing houses in London in the first half of the eighteenth century, and was the school in which many eminent printers learned the art.”

Watts’ reputation for careful, high-quality printing seems to have been well-earned. McKenzie has shown that Jacob Tonson, Sr. was so impressed with Watts’ printing that he helped to establish Watts’ printing shop to ensure that he would have a printer capable of the quality of work he expected. Even fastidious Pope trusted Watts with the printing of a number of his early works. Proof that Watts and his associates were learned and invested in both the quality and success of their works also can be found in their 1737 exchange with Edward Cave over their competing translations of Percy Du Halde’s Description de la Chine: Watts’ four-volume edition of Richard Brooke’s General History of China, and Cave’s two-volume edition of Green and Guthrie’s A Description of China (1738–41). At issue were the qualities of the translations, the logic behind Watts’ decision not to publish much of Du Halde’s

51 Benjamin Franklin, The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, ed. Leonard W. Labaree, Ralph L. Ketcham, Helen C. Boatfield, and Helene H. Fineman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964; 2nd edition, 2003), pp. 99–101, at 99. Franklin’s description of work at Watts’ printing shop suggests a rowdy atmosphere. The men paid an alehouse boy to supply them with beer, and Franklin found their habits repulsive: “My Companion at the Press drank every day a Pint before Breakfast, a Pint at Breakfast with his Bread and Cheese; a Pint between Breakfast and Dinner; a Pint at Dinner; a Pint in the Afternoon about Six o’Clock, and another when he had done his Day’s Work.” Resentful of Franklin’s temperance, and his unwillingness to contribute to their beer fund, his fellow compositors “had so many little Pieces of private Mischief done me, by mixing my Sorts, transposing my Pages, breaking my Matter, etc., etc., if I were ever so little out of the Room, and all ascrib’d to the Chapel Ghost” (100).

52 “Sketches of Booksellers of Other Days,” The Publishers’ Circular and Booksellers’ Record of British and Foreign Literature 74 (March 9, 1901): 268–9.

53 Plomer, A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers . . . 1668 to 1725, p. 304.


supporting material like maps, and Watts’ right to publish a version of the work Cave long had been advertising and soliciting subscriptions for. Much of the discussion took place in the satirical *Grub-Street Journal*, which generally sided with Cave but also published a letter from Watts.\(^{57}\) Though defensive and acerbic in his treatment of Cave (whom he calls a “Butcher of books” and “Bane of all Literature” for publishing excerpts in his *Gentleman’s Magazine*), Watts’ argument in favor of his *General History* deftly attempts to ally the printer with both his fellow booksellers and his prospective customers. Cave, Watts contends, “brings a heavy charge against the *Booksellers*, of not having sent him an account of the Subscription they had received. I may venture to say, I know all *Booksellers* in this town, most of whom assured me on my enquiry, that they never had a single person subscribed to his edition.” And Watts claims his own omissions were made for the sake of his readers: “*my translation was intended to be read, and therefore, by only lopping of the excrescences of the Original, I have reduced it to one Tenth part of the price [of the French original]” without diminishing its utility.\(^{58}\) Neither Watts’ contemporaries nor modern scholars agree with his assessment of the superiority of his *General History*, but his involvement in this public dispute nonetheless suggests that he paid rather a lot of attention to the content of the works he published.\(^{59}\)

Much of the rest of what we know about Watts is the result of his reputation as the premier publisher of plays and ballad operas, and in particular his connection with another famous contemporary—Henry Fielding. Watts published twenty-three of Fielding’s plays, six under the imprint of trade publisher James Roberts.\(^{60}\) His connection to the ballad opera form was cemented with his publication of the first edition of *The Beggar’s Opera* in 1728, after which he was responsible for the


\(^{58}\) *The Grub-street Journal* (23 December, 1736).


majority of all ballad operas published in London.\textsuperscript{61} In part, Watts’ ability to dominate this sub-genre was due to his printing capabilities. Music was expensive to print, as it required engraved wood blocks that would have represented a significant investment. As the printer of the massive \textit{Musical Miscellany} (6 volumes, 1729–31), Watts had made this investment, and both he and the playwrights who published with him needed to take advantage of it. Fielding and other writers may have used the tunes in Watts’ \textit{Miscellany} either to cover for a lack of musical ability or to convince the printer of the financial viability of printing tunes he already had engraved.\textsuperscript{62} Watts’ dominance in the publication of ballad operas continued in the 1740s, although the ballad opera form was by those years becoming less common and the number of dramatic works that were labeled as ballad operas and included engraved music was small.\textsuperscript{63}

Examining Watts’ imprints more closely shows his preference for drama in sharper relief. The preface to his name in imprints to dramatic works suggest that Watts was much more likely to purchase the copyright to plays than to works in other genres. Of the 58 dramatic works that bear Watts’ name between 1737 and 1749, only two—which are either two editions of translations of Euripides’ \textit{Hecuba} or possibly one edition and a variant—bear imprints that mark them as “printed by” Watts; all of the remaining works were either “printed for” Watts or “printed by and for” Watts. By contrast, less than half of Watts’ second most common genre (religious works) bear imprints that suggest his investment in their copyrights. Though imprints are far from definitive proof, the difference is striking.

But though he published a large amount of drama, Watts was discriminating about the works in which he invested. He often waited to purchase the copyright to plays that were appearing at one of the theatres, assuming that success on the stage would have been a good indicator of the likely success of the

published work—a practice that also gave him the upper-hand in his dealings with playwrights. Not even favorite authors were exempt from his measured assessment. One of only five of Fielding’s plays not to be published by Watts was the unpopular 1736/7 Eurydice: in his later send-up of that play’s failure, the 1737 Eurydice Hiss’d, Fielding suggests that Watts was fickle in his judgment, relying on public opinion over his own discernment:

“... And John Watts,

Who was this Morning eager for the Copy,

Slunk hasty from the Pit, and shook his Head.”64

Matthew J. Kinservik argues that “Fielding was clearly furious with Watts [over the refusal to publish his play] and he took public revenge in a manner that few (if any) of his contemporary playwrights dared to do.”65 Watts’ good opinion of a play clearly was worth securing. Even after the Licensing Act restricted the number and type of plays performed, Watts continued to show preference to works that had proven viable on the stage, perhaps believing the playhouse connection to be a stable form of marketing for his works. Of the 58 dramatic works published under his imprint, 47 were described on their title pages “as acted” or “as performed”, and those that were not described in such terms tended to be well-known and previously published, like Gay’s Beggar’s Opera and Fielding’s Pasquin, or they were translations, like his editions of the works of Molière.

On the basis of his preference for marketing and selling staged plays, one might conclude that Watts was not a risk taker. Examining his copyright purchases, however, shows that, more often than he is given credit for, Watts was willing to purchase the copyright before the play’s premiere. Milhous and Hume’s Register records a number of pre-performance copyright sales, including James Ralph’s The Cornish Squire, sold for £12 12s on 1 January 1734 (two days before its premier); Charles Coffey’s afterpiece The Merry Cobler, which sold for £5 5s on 5 May, 1735 (the day before its premier); John

---

Miller’s *The Universal Passion*, sold for £57 15s on 15 December 1736 (first performed on 28 February 1737). If Watts believed the odds were in favor of a play’s success, he did not wait to secure its copyright.

Watts was a savvy businessman, and his diverse list of dramatic and theatre-related works indicates his ability to diversify his list within his chosen niche. He therefore was the natural choice of printer for Colley Cibber’s *Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre-Royal* (printed by Watts for the author in 1740). He also was willing to spend large sums of money on what would have seems to be long-term cultural investments, like purchasing the copyright to Tonson’s much-derided printed edition of Pope’s Shakespeare from the author in 1728 for the enormous price of £100. And when the Licensing Act restricted the content of staged plays, Watts and other booksellers took advantage of the censorship, playing on reader’s desire for juicier material by publishing works with censored passages marked in inverted commas. For example, Watts or Fielding marked censored passages in the 1746 *Debauchees*, like Father Martin’s attempt to seduce Isabel: “We are only passive and the Sin lies not at our Doors. While you are only passive, I’ll answer for your Sins.”

Through careful selection and quality workmanship, John Watts made strategic use of his dual role as bookseller and publisher, his location near Lincoln’s-Inn Fields, and his knowledge of and connections to the leading playwrights to secure a significant part of the market for published drama, in spite of the comparatively modest size of his business.

---

Bookseller James Hodges published and sold a diverse range of works from his shop at the Looking Glass on London Bridge. Between 1737 and 1749 his name appears in the imprints of 446 works—nearly 2.5% of the total works published with a London imprint during these years. This quantity of published works is particularly impressive as Hodges was not a trade publisher like Cooper or Roberts, nor was he a printer like Baskett. Hodges’ was therefore one of the largest bookselling operations of the 1740s. Like his fellow Bridge-based booksellers, Hodges is remembered as a retailer of inexpensive works like penny histories and chapbooks, and these certainly were a significant part of his trade (works of entertainment comprised 7% of his output compared to 4% of the overall market, for example). But the list of works to which his name is appended is more diverse than has been acknowledged, and he also contributed to the sale and publication of many practical books (like medical and agricultural texts), a higher than usual percentage of educational texts (nearly 9% of his output as compared to 2% of the market total), and a sizeable range of fiction.

Hodges has never been discussed at length in any history or examination of bookselling in the eighteenth century, though what is known of him suggests that he was both powerful and popular. He was obviously a member in good standing of the Stationer’s Company, as he was a member of the highest ranked Court of Assistants and would have contributed to the organization’s legislative decisions. His power also extended beyond the trade: he served as a common councilman for the bridge ward. And in 1757 he was elected town clerk of the City of London. Obviously Hodges was bright and educated. He also seems to have been a Whig and an orator of some ability: in 1757 he gave what was later called a famous speech in which he argued that William Pitt should be given the freedom of the City, and, following his address to George II, Hodges was knighted in 1758.\footnote{Accounts of Hodges’ activities are all very similar. c.f. Nichols, \textit{Literary Anecdotes}, 3: 406 and C. H. Timperley, \textit{A Dictionary of Printers and Printing, with the Progress of Literature, Ancient and Modern} (London: H. Johnson, 1839), p. 733.}

Hodges had good connections, and his prestige in the book trade also was increased by the longstanding presence of his shop. He was the last in a string of proprietors of the Looking Glass, which in turn was the last shop standing on the Bridge, closing only with the beginning of the destruction of the
Bridge in 1758. Plomer calls the Looking Glass “the most important house [on the Bridge], at least during the first half of the eighteenth century,” and lists Josiah Blare and Thomas Norris as previous tenants. As Plomer points out, however, the very similarly named Looking-Glass and Bible house, which was also on the Bridge, makes tracing the proprietors of each house difficult. During the 1740s Thomas Harris published at the Looking-Glass and Bible, though he ultimately was less successful than Hodges and went bankrupt in 1745. The Looking Glass houses may have been partnered in some ways: Pat Rogers notes that Harris had been apprenticed to Hodges and speculates that the two may have collaborated on a share in the edition of Defoe’s *Tour thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain.*

Certainly Hodges knew how to collaborate with his fellow booksellers. Nearly two-thirds of the imprints in which his name appears are shared with others, most often his fellow prolific booksellers like Hitch, Ware, and Bettesworth. Joining forces would have allowed Hodges to invest in a larger number of works than would have been possible on his own. And as his most common collaborators were located in other districts (Temple-Bar, Paternoster Row, Amen-Corner), he would not have risked losing the business of too many of his regular customers by selling books that also were available elsewhere, and what might have been sacrificed would probably be more than made up by the increased diversity of his list.

Hodges’ greater than average investment in the fiction of the 1740s is likely at least in part a side-effect of his collaborative tendencies: Rivington speculates that he “was, probably, the first bookseller who published novels at the favourite sign of the Looking Glass on the bridge.” Because fiction was expensive both to publish and to purchase, a single bookseller would have been hard-put (and in many cases also unwise) to publish and sell a novel on his own. Hodges’ connections with other booksellers meant that he was able to contribute to the production and distribution of large works like *The Eight Volumes of Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy,* a four-volume illustrated edition of *The History of the

---

Renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha, and a three-volume translation of Madame d’Aulnoy’s Collection of Novels and Tales of the Fairies.\textsuperscript{74} And Hodges did also publish some, typically shorter, novels on his own, including Haywood’s The Unfortunate Princess and a reprint of Manley’s New Atalantis.\textsuperscript{75}

Customers of the Looking Glass on London Bridge would have been offered more than just the chap-books and pamphlets for which Hodges is now known: the shop held a range of entertaining and practical literature, both new and classic, and would have had something to satisfy all but the most specific desires.

\textit{A Range of Business Models}

Of course, Dodsley, Cooper, Watts, and Hodges represent only a few of the many business models of 1740s booksellers. In the remainder of this section, I will give brief glimpses of the practices of a few additional booksellers—large and small, specialized and generalized, devoted to literature and averse to it.

With the notable exception of Dodsley, most larger bookselling and publishing shops seem to have expected a diverse book list to provide reasonable security for their businesses. Hodges, Hitch, Robinson, Ward all published well-rounded lists that roughly reflected the overall genre-breakdown across the market. Even large trade publishers like the Coopers and Roberts sold a diverse selection of works. When larger booksellers did show preference for a genre, they were most likely to feature higher-than-average numbers of religious works, as did the Knaptons, Longman, and Rivington. Literature was almost always part of the output of larger booksellers, though not always: for example, in spite of his 224 imprints Charles Davis’ name appeared in only thirteen works of poetry, drama, or fiction, aside from his collaboration with Bathurst to publish the many volumes of Swift’s Miscellanies.

Smaller booksellers were more apt to be swayed by personal connections to a project or author. Perhaps the most extreme example of bookselling for personal satisfaction is Charles Whitefield, who

\textsuperscript{74} Anon., The Eight Volumes of Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy, Who Liv’d Five and Forty Years Undiscover’d at Paris 8 vols. (1748); Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, The History of the Renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha 4 vols. (1743); d’ Aulnoy, Collection of Novels and Tales of the Fairies.

\textsuperscript{75} Eliza Haywood, The Unfortunate Princess: Or the Life and Surprizing Adventures of the Princess of Ijaveo (1741); [Delarivier Manley], Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality of Both Sexes from the New Atalantis (1741).
between 1739 and 1740 published nothing other than the work of his brother, controversial Methodist George Whitefield. Which of the brothers this arrangement was more intended to benefit is difficult to determine. George’s sermons and accounts of his travels in America also were being published and sold by other booksellers, and sometimes the same work was sold in two editions in the same year, with Charles Whitefield as the implied bookseller in one imprint (i.e. “printed for C. Whitefield”) and another bookseller (often James Hutton) listed in similar fashion in the imprint of the other. Whatever their arrangement, the collaboration between the brothers was short-lived: Charles appears in no imprints for George’s works (or others) before 1739, and appears in none after 1740. Charles’s foray into bookselling may have ended in 1740, or he may be the “C. Whitefield, in White-Fryers, Fleet-Street” who appears between 1741 and 1749 in imprints of ten fictional and biographical works like *The Life of Pamela* and 1745 and 1749 editions of *Roxana*. Whether or not he continued to dabble in bookselling, Charles Whitefield’s business was founded on the basis of his brother’s work, either as an attempt to benefit from the fame of his relation or with the desire to bolster the cause.

John Noon’s publication of religious works might have been similarly personally-motivated, though too little is known of Noon himself to judge the rationale behind his bookselling specialty. More than 80% of the works published with Noon’s name in their imprints—214 out of 257 total—were religious or philosophical. His preference was reflected in (and perhaps was also a reflection of) his location, which he described as “at the White Hart near Mercer Chapel, in Cheapside.” The remainder of his output was similarly serious-minded, and included medical texts, business, biography, a bit of law, and one minor work of criticism, but no poetry, drama, or fiction. Today Noon is best remembered as the first publisher of David Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*, for which he paid the then unknown philosopher the extraordinary sum of £50 and twelve bound copies. But even if that work had been the

---

76 C.f. competing editions of George Whitefield’s *Satan’s Devices* (1739), *Directions How to Hear Sermons* (1739), and *The Marks of the New Birth* (1739).
77 Anon., *The Life of Pamela, Being a Full and Particular Relation of the Birth and Advancement of That Fortunate and Beautiful Young Damsel* (1741); [Daniel Defoe], *The Life and Adventures of Roxana* (1745).
success in its own time that it has proven in later years (rather than the poor seller it actually was), Noon almost certainly would have been known by his contemporaries primarily as a pre-eminent religious bookseller and a dominant force in the small Cheapside book market.

For smaller bookselling operations, a single popular work or a relationship with a popular author could represent a significant windfall. Fleet-Street bookseller John Shuckburgh only appeared in the imprints of 98 titles between 1737 and 1749, or fewer than eight works per year. Of those 98 titles, however, 15 were editions of the same work—Henry Carey’s *Dragon of Wantley*.79 Between 1737 and 1738 Shuckburgh published fourteen editions of the popular mock-opera. When combined with his editions of two of Carey’s other plays, *Chrononhotonthologos* and *Margery: Or, a Worse Plague than the Dragon*, the work of a single author accounted for more than twenty percent of Shuckburgh’s 1740s published output.80 And in other genres, too, the bookseller seemed to find most of his success by publishing multiple editions of a single work: for example, he published or contributed to the publication of 8 editions of Bracken’s *Farriery Improv’d*, 3 of *The Turkish Spy*, and 3 of Stanhope’s *A Paraphrase and Comment upon the Epistles and Gospels*.81 The ability to choose works likely to appear in multiple editions would have saved a bookseller like Shuckburgh a considerable amount of capital by making the most of his copyright investments.

A bookseller of Shuckburgh’s size, publishing fewer than ten titles per year, would have faced significant difficulty making enough money solely by selling works to which he owned the copyright to keep his shop open, and even more to make a profit. Likely he would have supplemented this income with other ventures, like by selling the work of other booksellers. The number of booksellers who appear in fewer imprints even than Shuckburgh is surprising: many of those who participated in the book trade must have had other sources of income than what they earned from book sales in order to be able to afford

---

80 [Henry Carey], *Chrononhotonthologos: The Most Tragical Tragedy That Ever Was Tragediz’d by Any Company of Tragedians* (1743); [Henry Carey], “Signor Carini,” *Margery: Or, a Worse Plague Than the Dragon* (1738).
81 C. f. Henry Bracken, *Farriery Improv’d* (1738); *The Eight Volumes of Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (1748); George Stanhope, *A Paraphrase and Comment upon the Epistles and Gospels* (1741).
to continue in the bookselling trade. J. and J. Bonwicke, for example, appear in imprints throughout
1740s, but only are associated with 29 titles total, or just over two titles per year. Often their names
appear without any indication of their location, but in the instances in which a location is listed the
Bonwicke’s claim to be working from the Red Lion in Paternoster Row. Their connection to that shop,
out of which Charles Hitch was publishing in the 1740s, suggests that the Bonwickes were associates of
that more prolific bookseller—perhaps either friends who occasionally used Hitch’s connections to the
trade to publish a few works, or employees trying their hands at bookselling. Treadwell has found that
booksellers also might pressure journeymen or binders to lend their names to imprints.\textsuperscript{82} Such dabbling
participation seems to have been common.

Even established booksellers had to strategize to make the most of their copyrights. The
prestigious Jacob Tonson, Sr.’s great nephews, Jacob and Richard Tonson, continued their family’s
business by selling high percentages of reprints. Their reputation for publishing quality editions of literary
works was earned in the 1740s. Dramatic works made up one-third of the firm’s total published output,
and most of those were new editions of older works, like plays by Jonson, Dryden, Addison, Centlivre,
Congreve, Rowe, and of course Shakespeare. Their poetry and fiction were similarly focused on reprints,
and included editions of \textit{Don Quixote}, Gay’s \textit{Fables}, Milton’s \textit{Paradise Lost}, Chaucer’s \textit{Canterbury Tales}, and collections of poetry by Waller, Pope, Prior, and Dyden. The up-front investment in the
copyrights of such enduringly popular authors would have been prohibitively expensive, but by
publishing large, typically expensive editions of the works, and often publishing multiple editions, the
Tonsons were able to offset some of that expense.

Of course one did not have buy or sell copyrights, or even to be involved in the production of
books to profit from their circulation. Booksellers like Richard Montagu purchased personal libraries after
their original owners’ deaths or bankruptcies and resold the works alongside their own new publications:
and, like others, Montagu printed lists of the books he was reselling and bought advertisements in
periodicals hoping to reach readers interested in the works collected by the clergymen, attorneys, and so

\textsuperscript{82} Treadwell, “False and Misleading Imprints,” pp. 35–36.
on, whose collections he had acquired. The book trade was also incorporated into its customer’s social lives. Markman Ellis has shown that many coffee houses operated their own form of a library, which offered their customers mostly short, topical books and pamphlets to peruse while in the shop. The 1740s also saw new possibilities for those who wished to earn money the book trade with the founding of the first circulating libraries. Some of these circulating libraries, like that of the Noble brothers, were run out of booksellers’ shops, while others, like Samuel Fancourt’s, were solely lending libraries. These businesses and their customers serve as an important reminder that the market for literature was larger even than the long list of printers and booksellers who appear in imprints, and larger than the affluent readers who could afford to purchase the works they sold.

* 

The complications and challenges of making money through the book trade explain the high number of bankruptcies: Ian Maxted lists a dozen London bookseller bankruptcies in this period. Examining the output of the total market and the practices of a number of very different booksellers demonstrates that any attempt to earn a profit exclusively through the publication literature would have been next to impossible. Even those who specialized in literature typically focused on only one genre (either poetry or drama or fiction), which suggests both that those genres were risky, and that publishing a selection of literature did not seem to have offered an advantage over publishing one genre. Booksellers and their customers perhaps would not have associated poetry, drama, and fiction with each other as modern bookstores do in their “literature” sections, and so may not have expected shops to specialize in all three

---


as to prove a particular specialty in the literary arts. Other genres were a necessary counterpoint to literature in booksellers’ lists of titles even for the most devoted specialists. At the same time, however, some participation in the publication of literature seems to have been expected or desirable for nearly everyone. Very few booksellers avoided poetry, drama, and fiction entirely, and then typically only when their businesses were small and their motivations to publish a particular genre were especially high. Literature held a limited but very established place within 1740s bookselling practices.
Chapter 3
The Authors of Poetry, Drama, and Fiction

Although the booksellers were largely responsible for determining the quantity of literature in the marketplace, the task of establishing the quality and content of that literature largely fell to the writers. Determining who were the most influential writers of the 1740s would seem at first a simple task. The ESTC provides attributions for 60% of the poetry, 88% of the drama, and 70% of the fiction published between 1737 and 1749, and finding the most prolific and most reprinted of those authors within those results is reasonably straightforward. Examining the records more closely, however, shows that many of the names listed in the “author” field of the ESTC are pseudonyms, and many more are later attributions that would have been unknown to contemporary audiences. We know shockingly few of the names of authors of 1740s literature. Even in the case of attributed authors we often know little about the individuals—their lives, circumstances, or ideologies are scantily documented, if at all. For example, very few biographical details survive for poet George Spiltimber, though his name appears on the title pages of three different poems in the period and he is associated with a fourth. And the meager record of letters and personal writing of 1740s authors means we know very little about how writers conceived of themselves and their work. Did they view themselves as “authors”? What did they seek to achieve through their writing? For all but a very few we have no means for answering such questions. To some extent these losses cannot be recovered. We may never know who wrote many of the poems in various collections of miscellanies, who was responsible for a novel like Pamela in High Life, or even whether some works that claim to be translations actually have a foreign source or are, in fact, original creations. However much modern critics would like answers to these puzzles, accepting them as mysteries is the only safe way to proceed. Reconstructing the outlook of authors and readers in the 1740s requires acknowledging that attribution was not always regarded as important to booksellers, authors, and readers.

In this chapter I analyze what we do know about the role of the author—or, to borrow Foucault’s term, the author-function—both in the lives of writers and in the composition of the literary marketplace in the 1740s. Legally and culturally the understanding of authors and their rights was changing in this period, and those changes influenced the books published and their printed forms. I begin by addressing the largest obstacle to a modern reader’s understanding of 1740s authorship—the predominant practice of anonymous publication. How common were anonymous works, and how did genre and writers’ and booksellers’ preferences affect attribution decisions? Next I survey what we do know about the attributed authors of 1740s literature. To the extent possible, I identify various trajectories for authorial careers. What were writers’ backgrounds? How much work, and of what types, would a writer have needed to produce to earn a living by writing literature? To what extent was the form and content of a work a writer’s own choice, and to what extent was the work dictated by outside forces, like commissioned assignments from booksellers or patrons? Finally, I discuss the role of authors from previous eras and translated from languages other than English in the published output of 1740s English literature. Reprints were a significant and consistent component of the market for literature, and the origins of those works demonstrate readers’ and booksellers’ tastes and expectations for poetry, drama, and fiction.

I. Attribution and Anonymity

How important was the identity of a book’s author to those contemplating its purchase in the 1740s? The number of works falsely attributed to the author of the wildly popular Pamela and the increased discussion of books’ merit in newspapers and review journals, for example, suggest a reading public that was concerned with the sources and quality of its published material. But, as Robert Griffin and others have pointed out, a stunning percentage of eighteenth-century fiction was published anonymously. James Raven finds that roughly eighty-seven percent of all novels published between 1750 and 1769 had no real

2 Although the Statute of Anne had little practical impact and no new copyright laws were passed in the 1740s, Mark Rose has pointed to the 1740s as important to the development of a concept of intellectual property. See “The Author in Court: Pope v. Currll (1741),” in The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature, ed. Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 211–30.

Without title-page attributions, scholars often cannot interpret works as part of a single author’s output, nor can they make accurate estimates concerning what particular groups of people, like women, or Whigs, were writing about. In many cases, definitive attributions for these works will never be determined. Even in cases where external evidence can be found for an attribution, we must acknowledge that eighteenth-century readers would often not have known the author’s name. Many of the works most often studied today, like Henry Fielding’s *Joseph Andrews* and David Hume’s *Treatise on Human Nature*, were not attributed in their first editions.

Only by examining unattributed works can we begin to understand the differing manners in which contemporary authority—as a means of establishing credibility—was determined. John Mullan’s analysis of anonymity across literary genres and periods provides many useful conclusions about scope of and the uses for anonymity in poetry and fiction, focusing particularly on the authors’ relationships with their content and their readers. But no one has yet systematically studied attribution statistics for other forms of literature. We therefore do not have a clear picture of how decisions about anonymity and attribution might have been made by authors and booksellers.

Poetry, drama, and fiction show different trends in anonymity and attribution in the 1740s. In this section I address the following questions: For what literary genres was anonymous publication most common? Were particular authors or publishers more or less likely to publish unattributed works? What purposes were attributions, pseudonyms, and anonymity designed to serve? And finally, how might attribution or anonymity have influenced the sale of books? Only by understanding the reasons authors and booksellers might have chosen to publish works anonymously can we begin to understand how individual works were constructed and received in their original context.

Before I begin my discussion of anonymity across genres, I will make an admission: determining anonymity is not easy. The primary reason for the difficulty is that most of the systems textual scholars

---


have established to catalogue and categorize works rely heavily on the identity of their authors. For many purposes, this structure is useful: well-known works may have securely established origins, and scholars often benefit from having these grouped on shelves and in collections with others from the same source. But the problem is that once an author’s name has been assigned to a work the rationale behind that attribution becomes overlooked or sometimes is lost entirely, and the work becomes dissociated from the anonymous form of its original publication and placed in an authorial context to which it may or may not belong. (Consequently, scholars recently have begun to question attributions to some of the period’s most studied authors, including Eliza Haywood, Henry Fielding, and Daniel Defoe.) The databases that catalog eighteenth-century works, specifically the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) and Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO, which draws heavily from the ESTC) tend to privilege any attribution over none.

Identifying works published anonymously based on the information in the ESTC and in literary bibliographies is difficult. Works attributed after publication typically include only that attribution and not its source. When works are published anonymously the ESTC often lists the supposed author in the author field and notes the work as anonymous in the comments field, but this practice is not standard enough to be relied upon and searching for “anonymous” in the comments field will not retrieve a complete list. The ESTC also sometimes lists pseudonyms—even obvious ones—as authors’ names. These practices prevent sorting for anonymous works by looking for titles with no name in the author field. Bibliographers who have compiled checklists of the fiction, drama, and poetry of the 1740s also are inconsistent in their policies for handling anonymity: D. F. Foxon conscientiously brackets names that do not appear within the works of poetry he lists, while Jerry C. Beasley’s checklist of the novels offers no

---

6 For example, Thomas Lockwood, argues that there is little basis for the attribution of numerous Craftsman essays to Fielding in “Did Fielding Write for The Craftsman?” The Review of English Studies 59 (2007): 86–117. Ashley Marshall has cast serious doubt on the security of Defoe attributions in “Did Defoe Write Moll Flanders and Roxana?” Philological Quarterly 89.2/3 (2010): 209–41. And Leah Orr has shown that the attribution of Eliza Haywood’s works, including The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless, should be treated skeptically in “The Basis for Attribution in the Canon of Eliza Haywood,” The Library 7th series 12.4 (2011): 335–75.
explanation for his attributions to works published anonymously.\(^7\) My intention here is not to cast blame: obviously those responsible for the enormous job of maintaining the content in those databases and checklists can hardly keep up with every contested attribution. But because the acknowledgement of anonymity has not always been a priority for scholars and cataloguers, identifying anonymous works now can only be accomplished by checking title pages and scanning the work for authorial signatures.

But even examining the title pages, prefaces, and conclusions of the works does not guarantee a secure determination of their authorship. A book that claims to be an autobiography might have been written by its subject, but it might also be entirely fictional. The common tales of the 1740s that claim to be “taken from the mouth” of their subjects are even more problematic. If the claim is true, the author could be considered to be either the subject who dictated the account or the writer who recorded them; if false, the work could be based on rumors of a real person, or it could be made up. Books that offer previously published works (in English or another language) as their sources are also problematic. Are they new editions? Abridged or expanded editions? Or are they simply borrowing the popularity of an older work to market something with little or no connection to it? Each work offers its own set of problems. Anonymity and attribution are messy.

Numerous attribution schemes were employed in the 1740s, but for simple comparison I have distilled the possibilities for the attribution of works originally published in English into five categories that I believe represent reasonable gradations: (1) the author’s name on the title page, (2) a known or reasonably obvious title-page pseudonym, (3) an author’s name within the work itself, (4) an author’s initials or pseudonym within the work itself, and (5) no attribution whatsoever. Works categorized as having an author on the title page display names I believe to be true references to real individuals, recorded in reasonably definitive form—so, I would consider H. Fielding to be a title page attribution, but not H. F. I would classify H. F. as a title-page pseudonym, in which category I place works that display either names or initials that do not definitively refer to real individuals, as well as attributions made only

on the basis of other works (for example, “by the author of *Joseph Andrews*”), under the assumption that such claims deserve greater scrutiny than clear declarations of authorship. Admittedly sometimes whether or not a name is factual or a pseudonym is a tough judgment call. Was “Thomas Verney, bell-man” a real bell man? Or a real person, for that matter? There is no way to tell. Some titles classified as title page attributions are probably realistic (to me at least) pseudonyms, and some classified as pseudonyms might be real names. In the aggregate, however, I think it likely that such mis-categorizations are negligible. I followed similar principles when examining interior attributions, which I define as claims for authorship made within the works themselves, usually within the prefatory material. When the dedication or preface of a work is signed with what I believe to be a real name I categorized it as having an interior signature, and when the signature is less definitive or less complete I categorized it as displaying interior author’s initials or a pseudonym. Interior attributions sometimes also present the additional challenge of determining whether the name refers to the author of the work or an editor: where not immediately apparent from the signed content I simply used my best judgment based on what was known about the individual identified. Finally, and most simply, works labeled as having no attribution give no indication of any source of authorship—pseudonymous or otherwise.

Attribution is of course a slightly different matter than anonymity. Some works that are nominally attributed are, for practical intents and purposes, anonymous. When I refer here to anonymous works, then, I mean those that bore no author’s name their title pages or as a signature within the works themselves—in other words, works that fall in the no attribution, title page pseudonym, and interior pseudonym categories. As the following discussion will show, a stunning percentage of 1740s literature was published anonymously, though differences in attribution practices across poetry, drama, and fiction suggest that the nature of the works contributed to the desire or willingness to append authors’ names.

Of all literary genres, poetry was the most likely to be published with no attribution—though the anonymity in fiction was nearly as common. But poetry was also the second most likely to be published with a definitive title-page attribution.
Figure 3.1 Attribution of New and Reprinted Published Poetry Originally in English, 1737–1739

As Figure 3.1 shows, more than half of all poetry was completely unattributed, and more than sixty percent had no definitive attribution—that is, no authors’ names on their title pages. Single poems were more likely to be published anonymously than collections of poetry. Anonymously published poems include Edward Young’s *The Complaint: or, Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality*, Mark Akenside’s wildly popular *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, and Thomas Gray’s *An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*. More common anonymous poems were satires or ballad poetry—works whose authors either had reason to obscure their identities, or whose authors were obscured by time and wide circulation.

Collections of poetry were more often attributed. Posthumously published collections proudly bore their well-known authors’ names (e.g. *Poems on Several Occasions* [1747] was “Written by Dr.

---

[Edward Young], *The Complaint. Or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, & Immortality* (1742); [Mark Akenside], *The Pleasures of Imagination. A Poem. In Three Books* (1744); [Thomas Gray], *An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (1747).
Thomas Parnell and published by Mr. Pope”).\(^9\) Collections by lesser-known authors were not always so definitively attributed, relying instead on their subject matter, as with *Poems Occasion’d by the Present Rebellion*, or on descriptions of their authors’ identities: Charlotte Lennox’s first work, her *Poems on Several Occasions*, was attributed just to “A Lady.”\(^10\)

Drama was the most commonly attributed literary genre.

![Figure 3. 2 Attribution of New and Reprinted Published Drama Originally in English, 1737–1749](image)

Although drama was more likely to be attributed than either poetry or fiction, a significant percentage of the plays published were anonymous: of the new plays published between 1740 and 1749, more than forty percent were published with no title-page attribution, including works like Smollett’s *The Regicide*.\(^11\) But attribution was standard for works that were written in earlier decades and would likely have been familiar to readers and published in many editions. For example, a 1741 edition of Farquhar’s *The

---

\(^9\) Thomas Parnell, *Poems on Several Occasions. Written by Dr. Thomas Parnell, Late Arch-Deacon of Clogher, and Published by Mr. Pope* (London: Printed for H. Lintot, 1737)

\(^10\) Anon., *Poems Occasion’d by the Present Rebellion* (1746); [Charlotte Lennox], “A Lady,” *Poems on Several Occasions* (1747).

Recruiting Officer was attributed, as were a 1737 edition of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, and a 1740 edition of Dryden’s *All for Love*. The dearth of new plays and the popularity of reprints accounts for much of the commonality of drama attributions.

While poetry was slightly more likely to be published with no attribution, fiction was most likely to be published anonymously and was by far the most likely to be published with a pseudonym on its title page.

![Pie chart](image)

**Figure 3. 3 Attribution of all Published Fiction Originally in English, 1737–1749**

The majority of the works of fiction first published in this decade that have proven popular with modern students and scholars were originally unattributed: Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* and *Clarissa*; Henry Fielding’s *Joseph Andrews*; Tobias Smollett’s *Roderick Random* (1748); Sarah Fielding’s *David Simple* (1744) and *The Governess* (1749)—all were published without their authors’ names either on their title page.

---

pages or in their front- or back-matter. Although Beasley offers attributions for around sixty percent of the novels he includes in his checklist of novels from the 1740s, roughly half of the novels were published with no attribution, and an additional thirty percent appeared with partial or dubious attributions (for example, *A Journey to Llandrindod Wells, in Radnorshire* [1746] is attributed to “A Countryman” and *Thelamont; or, Perfect Generosity* (1744) is said to be “by the editor of Cildanor and Cecilia”). In total, then, roughly eighty percent of the novels were anonymous. Determining true anonymity in fiction is of course problematic. The high proportion of anonymous works of fiction might, in part, be due to the nature of the genre—authors or booksellers may have assumed that the reader’s ability to approach the fiction on its own terms (as, for example, the letters of a Peruvian princess) might have been aided by the guise that the author might have been, or might have known, the narrator. The knowledge required of an author of fiction also often gains little credibility by the addition of a name, as it might for a work on medical practice, for example. Of greater importance are the author’s relationship to the subject of the work (often offered in declarations that the stories were taken by the author from the title character’s mouth) and the author’s ability to write well (as evidenced by title-page references to previous works by the same author).

Attribution possibilities for translated works are even more complicated than for works originally in English given that full attribution requires the names of both the author of the original language text and the translator of the English text, and that this multiple-originator problem brings about numerous combinations of attributions, pseudonyms, and anonymity for each of those individuals. For distinctions between attributions to real figures and pseudonyms I followed the same guidelines as for works originally published in English. Anonymity for translated works is also more complicated, as works with

---


an original language author on their title pages are neither author-less nor are they distinguished from other translator’s versions of the same text. Works that list translators but not original language authors are similarly neither fully attributed nor anonymous, and sometimes raise the additional question of whether they are actual translations at all. A final and especially significant consideration when comparing attribution across genres of translated works is the amount of works under consideration. Translated works constitute a small percentage of the published literature, particularly of poetry and drama, and the small numbers of translated works cast some doubt on how representative the resultant percentages might be. But in spite of these problems examining the differences between the attributions of translated works in different genres illustrates the different expectations booksellers, authors, and readers had for each.

As with poetry originally published in English, translated works of poetry were most commonly definitively attributed.

Figure 3.4 Attribution of New and Reprinted Translated Poetry, 1737–1749
Just over half of translated poetry was attributed both to its original language author and to its translator. Such works include most translations of classical works, like Sheridan’s translation of the satires of Persius, Pope’s *Iliad of Homer*, and John Martyn’s *Georgicks of Virgil*.\(^{15}\) The attribution of classical translations reflects both the cultural importance of those works as well as the need to distinguish new editions from previous translations of the same texts. Translated poetry with only its original language author on the title page also typically originated in classical works, including singly published *Satires of Persius*: these works tend to be shorter than the more often lengthy, sometimes multi-volume works that list their translator’s names.\(^{16}\)

Very few translated works of drama were published, but those published were typically attributed at least to their original language authors.

---


Works of drama that list only their original language authors include six plays by Francesco Vanneschi, an edition of The Works of Molière, and a few plays by each Euripedes and Paolo Rolli. As with poetry, plays translated from classical authors were particularly likely to list their translator’s names on their title pages, as with Cooke’s translations of the Terence’s Comedys and the same translator’s edition of the comedies of Plautus. Operas were less likely to be attributed, perhaps because readers may have been less familiar with their author’s names.

As a percentage of the genre’s total output, translated works of fiction were most common. Translated fiction was much less likely to be definitively attributed than either poetry or drama, and had the smallest percentage of works that listed both their original language author and their translator.

![Figure 3.6 Attribution of New and Reprinted Translated Fiction, 1737–1749](image)

Works of fiction that list their original language authors are among the most famous novels of the period, including numerous editions Don Quixote and collections of the works of novelists like Francisco de

---

Quevedo—authors whose works would have been around long enough that their works could be sold on the basis of their reputations. Unique to works of fiction is the practice of publishing works under a pseudonym intended to represent the original language author, typically intended to suggest that the work might be factual, as in the case of *The Travels and Adventures of Mademoiselle de Richelieu . . . from the Lady’s own Manuscript* and *Memoirs of a Man of Quality. Written Originally in the French Tongue by Himself.* Anonymous works of translated fiction include a number of works that purport to be translations of true stories and documents, like *The Eight Volumes of Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy, The History and Adventures of Gil Blas*, and *Letters Written by a Peruvian Princess.*

Anonymity, pseudonyms, and attribution differed across genres, but what might explain those disparities? The age and source of the works might have accounted for some of the variances. Classical works or works that had previously been published in numerous editions were more likely to have been attributed. Works like *The Odes, Satyrs, and Epistles of Horace, The Works of Shakespear,* and *Don Quixote* account for many of the attributed titles. And as the drama market included a high percentage of reprints of earlier works (as I discuss in section 3 of this chapter), the fact that it was more commonly attributed than poetry makes some sense: older works relied on reputation rather than novelty to entice readers. Perennial favorites would have been necessary additions to any collector’s assemblage and their names would have been familiar to most of the reading public. For newly published or more recent works one might assume that attribution would be determined by the ways works circulated and garnered reputations beyond their publication as books. Poetry, for example, was often circulated in periodicals and manuscript commonplace books—both forms in which attribution was not expected. The fact that single poems were often unattributed, then, might reflect readers’ expectations based on those customs. New plays, however, would have been best known on the basis of their theatre productions. But playwrights’

---

20 Anon., *The Travels and Adventures of Mademoiselle de Richelieu* (1744) and [Antoine François Prévost], *Memoirs of a Man of Quality* (1738).
21 Anon., *The Eight Volumes of Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (1748); Anon., *The History and Adventures of Don Alphonso Blas de Lirias, Son of Gil Blas of Santillane* (1741); [Gafigny, Mme de], *Letters Written by a Peruvian Princess* (1748).
names were not commonly published on playbills, which makes the common attribution of drama puzzling. Why would booksellers or playwrights have assumed attribution to be important to the sale of drama if the names were not previously associated with the plays and if theatre managers did not believe attribution necessary to encourage attendance at those plays? Understanding how booksellers and authors might have made such decisions requires examining the purposes served by attribution, anonymity, and pseudonyms.

Attribution is perhaps easiest for modern critics to understand. Twenty-first century readers assume books will be bear their author’s names and, except in unusual cases like nonfiction exposés, our books are attributed. Authors’ identities and careers are an important factor in modern evaluation of a works’ merit: reviews often consider whether a book is an author’s first or how its themes and quality compare to his or her previous works. Attribution would have served much the same purposes in the eighteenth century. Many attributed books were the work of well-known authors whose names would have helped to encourage their sale. Some attributions for lesser-known writers were intended to bolster the author’s reputation or to sell the work to a small coterie of friends, as evidenced by the fact that many works printed for the author are attributed.

Pseudonymous publication offers some of the advantages and disadvantages of both attribution and anonymity: authors’ identities are officially protected but titles can be associated with a writer’s previous works. In his investigation of anonymous publication (under which umbrella he discusses works published under pseudonyms) John Mullan identifies a number of interpretation-based reasons for giving no formal indication of authorship, including mischief, modesty, posing as a different gender, fear of prosecution, mockery, and confession. Mullan’s observations primarily are drawn from nineteenth-

---

22 For a discussion of attribution in playbills, see Robert D. Hume, “Before the Bard: ‘Shakespeare’ in Early Eighteenth-Century London,” *ELH* 64.1 (1997): 41–75. Hume notes that playwrights’ names were a rarity in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century playbills, which more typically emphasized actors, music, and staging. By the 1740s, however, the use of authors’ names on playbills was becoming more common.

23 Mullan, *Anonymity*. Mullan does not explain how he determined this list of possible purposes for anonymity, but he uses these suggested motivations to organize the chapters of his study.
century works and his analysis focuses on fiction, but 1740s pseudonyms often served similar purposes, though their nature and use varied slightly across literary genres.

Poets chose pseudonyms designed to help readers to compare the work to others in the genre. Some were intended to indicate the quality of the work: Timothy Scribble was purported to be the author of *The Progress of Physic*, *The Plaid Hunting* was written by “no puff,” and “Peter Plain-Truth, Not Lord Puff,” claimed to have written the *Litchfield Squabble*, a political satire. McNamara Morgan’s series of “panegyri-satiri-serio-comic dramatical” poems were each attributed to “Porcupinus Pelagius,” a spiny philosopher whose views informed *The Causidicade, The Triumvirade: Or, Broad-Bottomry*, and *The Piscopade.* And some pseudonyms were not designed to hide their author’s identities at all. Jonathan Swift’s *The Beasts Confession to the Priest, on Observing How Most Men Mistake Their Own Talents* (1738) was attributed to “J. S. D.S.P.,” which most readers would have recognized as a reference to the Dean of St. Patrick’s. But not all pseudonyms intended to connect works with others. Some were meant to help readers to picture their anonymous authors, often conferring respectability on their content: for example, *The Retirement* (1748) was “By a gentleman, late of Baily College, Oxford.”

Pseudonyms attached to plays served purposes similar to those of poetry. Attribution chains were common, both for lesser-known writers (Joseph Trapp’s *The Tragedy of King Saul* [1739] was described as “Written by the author of [Abra-mule]”) and for the big names (Susanna Centlivre’s *The Humours of Elections* [1737] was described as “By the Author of the Gamester”). Smollett’s *Regicide: or, James the first, of Scotland* was unique in its attribution to an author of a novel—its title page proclaims it to be “By

---

24 [Ashley Cowper], “Timothy Scribble,” *The Progress of Physic* (1743); Anon., *The Plaid Hunting* (1747); Anon., “Peter Plain-Truth”, *The Litchfield Squabble. An Humourous Poetical Narration of the Several Transactions at the Elections for the County of Stafford and City of Litchfield* (1747).
26 [Jonathan Swift], “J. S. D.S.P.”, *The Beasts Confession to the Priest, on Observing How Most Men Mistake Their Own Talents* (Dublin, printed; London: Re-printed and Sold by T. Cooper, 1738).
28 [Joseph Trapp], “Written by the author of [Abra-mule],” *The Tragedy of King Saul* ([1739]); [Susanna Centlivre], “By the Author of the Gamester,” *The Humours of Elections* ([1737]).
the author of Roderick Random.” Most connections to previous works were within the same genre. Some attributions were playful. For example, Henry Carey’s *Dragon of Wantley* was attributed to “Sig. Carini” as it claimed to have been “Moderniz’d from the old ballad after the Italian manner”; readers likely were not expected to believe this claim, but it effectively sets the tone for Carey’s burlesque. And though most plays would have earned their reputation through the stage or through their longevity, some were attributed to broad types, as William Robinson’s *The Intriguing Milliners and Attornies Clerks* was “By a gentleman.”

Pseudonyms for fiction were most frequently directly connected to the works’ content. Novels that purported to be based on real documents included pseudonyms to match: William Hatchett’s *A Chinese Tale* (1740) was “written originally by that prior of China the facetious Sou ma Quang, a celebrated Mandarine of letters”; and *The Life and Adventures of Mrs. Christian Davies*, *Commonly Call’d Mother Ross* was said to have been “Taken from her own mouth.” Politically-themed novels attempted to connect their authors to the scenes described, so *The Second Court Secret: A Moving Scene. For the Year Seventeen Hundred Forty-Three* (1744) was “Wrote by an Englishman of figure, lately return’d from the Hague,” and *An Authentic Account of the Conduct of the Young Chevalier* (1749) was presented in “a letter from a gentleman residing at Paris.” But not all fictitious lives were attributed to one of the story’s characters. Sarah Fielding’s *Adventures of David Simple* (1744) was described as “By a Lady.”

Though complete anonymity might seem undesirable to the sale of a work—a condition perhaps insisted upon by authors and only reluctantly accepted by booksellers—the fact that more than one

---

29 Smollett, *The Regicide*.
33 Anon., “Englishman of Figure,” *The Second Court Secret: A Moving Scene. For the Year Seventeen Hundred Forty-Three* (1744); Anon., “Gentleman residing at Paris,” *An Authentic Account of the Conduct of the Young Chevalier. From His First Arrival in Paris, After His Defeat at Culloden, to the Conclusion of the Peace at Aix-La-Chapelle* (1749).
quarter of all drama and approximately half of all poetry and fiction were published without a hint of authorship suggests that anonymous publication must have been widely tolerated and even preferred in some circumstances. Modern scholars typically consider anonymity undesirable for most works. But 1740s authors or booksellers (and in many cases probably both) often likely chose to leave the authors’ names off of title pages because they believed that doing so would protect the reputation of either the author (in the case of unseemly content or a delicate reputation—such as that of a woman), the bookseller (in the case of an unrespectable author), or the book itself (in the case of an unpopular or unknown author). As Benjamin Victor’s letter to Edward Young about Young’s anonymous Night Thoughts points out, authors may have wished to know the success of their works before claiming them (although, as Victor also makes apparent, such attempts would often have been fruitless given the small publishing world):

I found the thoughts quite new and Doctor Young written in large characters in every page.

I found from your bookseller, Mr Dodsley, that you have carefully concealed your name, on purpose to try the force of your poem; but you are too good a writer to be able to conceal yourself from your admirers. I hear we are to have the happiness of reading two books more. If I was your bookseller I should greatly solicit you to add your name, because it would call more attention to those readers who are led by mode, consequently increase the sale of the poem.35

Young evidently did not take Victor’s advice, as the following Nights and subsequent editions of the first continued to be published anonymously.

Anonymity was probably often as much a financial decision as an artistic or personal one. Factors like the bookseller, author, size, and cost of a work may have impacted the likelihood of its being attributed. Of course, analyzing these features separately is impossible (as, for example,

cost is often determined by size), but each almost certainly played a role in the attribution
decision. And the different styles of the 1740s might have made anonymity desirable. Satire, for
example, might have benefited from anonymity if attempts to ascertain authors’ identities created
mysteries readers could try to solve.

Practical financial considerations seem to have affected attribution decisions. Readers may have
been willing to buy an unattributed poem for a few pence, but seem to have wanted a more substantial
 guarantee of a work’s source before paying for a fancy illustrated edition. The most expensive poetry is
attributed: typically these pricey works are large collections like the astonishingly expensive 9s Poetical
Works of the Reverend Edward Young, the 5s Works of the Earls of Rochester, Roscomon, and Dorset, the
3s 6d Claudian the Poet his Elegant History of Rufinus, and the 3s Philomela: Or, Poems by Mrs.
Elizabeth Singer. 36 Drama showed similar correlation between price and attribution. Only a few plays
cost more than 1s 6d and those that did were more likely to be attributed than not, and included some
works that might today seem unexpected, like Charles Marsh’s Amasis King of Egypt and E. Dower’s The
Salopian Esquire, or Joyous Miller, each of which were 2s, and John Cutt’s Rebellion Defeated, which
cost 2s 6d.37 And though Smollet’s Regicide was attributed only to the author of Roderick Random
readers could have been expected to be familiar with its author, accounting for the fact that it could be
sold for 5s by subscription.38 Fiction followed less predictable patterns of attribution. More expensive
novels were more likely to be long and pricey (like Elizabeth Boyd’s Female Page (1737), which cost
5s), and shorter, cheaper fiction more likely to be anonymous (A True and Impartial History of the Life

---

36 Edward Young, The Poetical Works of the Reverend Edward Young, LL.D. (1741); Earl of Rochester, Earl of
Roscommon, and Earl of Dorset, Works of the Earls of Rochester, Roscomon, and Dorset (1739); Jabez Hughes,
Claudian the Poet his Elegant History of Rufinus (1741); Elizabeth Singer Rowe, Philomela: or, Poems by Mrs.
Elizabeth Singer, (Now Rowe,) of Frome in Somersetshire (1737).
37 Charles Marsh, Amasis King of Egypt (1738); E. Dower, The Salopian Esquire, or Joyous Miller (1738); John
Cutts, Rebellion Defeated: Or, the Fall of Desmond. A Tragedy (1745).
38 Smollett, The Regicide.
and Adventures of Some-body cost 1s), though a few of the most expensive novels are exceptions to this general rule: the anonymous 1740 Celenia and Adrastus sold for 6s.39

Booksellers also seem to have had preferences for the number of anonymous works they published, which likely reflects their relationships with their authors. Henry Lintot, for example, published a high percentage of attributed drama: thirty-four of the forty-four works of drama with his name in the imprint were attributed on their title pages (and of the remaining ten only four are definitely not attributed on their title pages, with the last six unavailable for verification in ECCO). Although poetry was much more likely to be anonymous than definitively attributed, a number of booksellers were much more likely to publish attributed works than anonymous: 86% of poetry published by the Tonsons was attributed, as was 87% of Lintot’s, 75% of Knapton’s, and 67% of Millar’s. Most of these booksellers published a small amount of poetry—fewer than forty works each throughout the 1740s—and their books were typically nice editions of previously published works rather than editions of new, single poems, which likely accounts for some of their preference for attribution. Other booksellers favored anonymous works. Of the 66 works of poetry that bear Webb’s name in their imprints, none was definitively attributed on its title page, and more than half were not even ascribed to a pseudonym.

Although attribution practices clearly were connected to some attempts to market works and although to some extent attribution was correlated with the size and price of a book, the number of factors that could have influenced whether or not a work was published under an author’s name makes tracing the underlying logic behind attributions difficult. Anonymity therefore was not always as reliant upon interpretive hopes as some have suggested. Some works were attributed after an edition or two had been published. In some cases of later-attributions, authors may have withheld their names until the success and acceptability of the works was proven. Unscrupulous booksellers sometimes falsely attributed less popular works—often even to writers no longer working—to boost sales.40 Attribution decisions varied

40 For example, Ashley Marshall points out the serious problems with trusting Francis Noble for attributions to Defoe. “Did Defoe Write Moll Flanders and Roxana?” p. 211–18.
even within a single author’s output. Determining how often most authors published anonymously is trickier, as the majority of anonymous works remain unattributed, making tracing authors’ publication records difficult or impossible. Of the authors who published in genres in which half or more of the works published were anonymous and whose work has been well documented, many seem to have been inconsistent in their decisions to attribute their works. Fielding provides a useful example. As a successful playwright in the 1730s, first editions of works like *The Author’s Farce* and *The Letter-Writers* were published under the pseudonym Scriblerus Secundus; others, like *Rape Upon Rape* and *The Covent Garden Tragedy*, were published without any attribution, and still others with his name (*The Temple Beau* appeared with “Mr Fielding” on its title page, and *The Modern Husband* with “Henry Fielding, Esq.”). In 1742, the first edition of *Joseph Andrews* was published anonymously; seven years later the first edition of *Tom Jones* prominently bore its author’s name on its title page. And as with many other authors, the attribution of Fielding’s works often changed after the first edition: the first edition of *Tom Thumb*, for example, was unattributed, while the second attributed the work to Scriblerus Secundus.

By examining anonymity we find that, except in cases where the content and therefore the readers of a work were highly erudite, books did not have to be attributed to be viable in the marketplace. We should consider the possibility that attributions were being circulated in other ways, and that title-page anonymity might not always have been intended to mask the author’s identity from his or her readers—and even if it were, the attempt might not have been successful. Although growing, at this time the book trade and its customer base still constituted a rather small world. Even so, the large numbers of works published without attribution suggest a significant tolerance of anonymity. The prevalence of anonymity has serious implications for the ways we approach these texts: we need to consider alternatives to our often author-centered research methods in order to approach the mid-eighteenth-century publishing world on terms closer to its own.

---

42 Mullan posits that “Sometimes the last thing that an anonymous author wants is to remain unidentified” (*Anonymity*, p. 8), arguing that authors like Swift and Pope may have had interpretive reasons to publish anonymously (like allowing the narrator of a satire to speak for himself rather than as the author), while at the same time wanting or expecting readers to infer their authorship.
II. Authorial Careers

Though anonymity and inconsistent attribution practices make complete claims about the nature of 1740s authorship impossible, examining what we know about definitively attributed writers disproves many current assumptions about the development of professional authorship in the eighteenth century. In this section I examine the extant evidence for the character and shape of 1740s authorial careers. What, if anything, did authorship signify in this decade? What sorts of people were the known authors of the 1740s? How diverse were their socioeconomic backgrounds and how varied were their social, political, and religious beliefs? How many works did writers typically publish, and how varied in genre and style were most portfolios?

Of course, authors and authorship are modern constructions: authorship was not considered a profession before the eighteenth century. Many scholars have argued, however, that the mid-eighteenth century saw significant developments in the concept of authorship, both as a profession and as an aesthetic identity. James Van Horn Melton’s description of authorship in the eighteenth century is representative of the prevailing view rehearsed by scholars and taught to students:

Only then did writers come to view their craft as a full-time profession, even if relatively few could subsist at it. Only then did a burgeoning literary market encourage large numbers of authors, including an unprecedented number of women, to seek a living from their pens independently of private patrons. And only in the eighteenth century did there emerge the idea of authorship as ownership, or what we today call copyright, with authors considered the proprietors of work that could not be published or sold without their consent.”

But in their overviews Melton and others have highlighted the most exceptional changes and focused on the most familiar writers. How common were the authors envisioned by Melton and others—these

---

enterprising men and women who identified themselves by their creative endeavors and profited from the venture? During the century these changes occurred gradually, and the writers held as illustrative were exceptional.

Changes in copyright law are often held up as a source of authorial identity. Certainly 1740s authors could have maintained possession of their own works, but while the Statute of Anne granted authors the right to enter works into the register themselves, few chose to do so. Although theoretically a big step towards our modern conceptions of authorship and copyright, the Statute had little practical impact in the 1740s. The repercussions of a 1741 legal dispute between Pope and Curll over the ownership over a letter may have had a greater effect on developing concepts of authors’ rights and intellectual property. As Mark Rose argues, Pope’s willingness to fight for his claim to the copyright of a letter he had written to Swift was even more important than the fact that the law upheld his right, as it marked the first time a writer went to court to fight for the right to his literary property. Rose argues that this ruling and the disputes that followed it led to the development of a concept of intellectual property, as first described at length in William Warburton’s Letter from an Author, to a Member of Parliament, Concerning Literary Property.

Others have similarly identified the mid-eighteenth century as the period when authors began to think of their literature as a distinguished profession. Robert Folkenflik sees the 1740s as an approximate beginning to the development of an artist-hero concept in England (which he defines as “artist, painter, composer, or artist-surrogate as central figure within the work of art” [92]). Drawing on works like Gray’s The Bard, Folkenflik argues that in the latter half of the eighteenth century poets in particular came to be seen as a force in opposition to the monarchy, as celebrities, and as independent individuals. Marlon B. Ross argues that print was used to bestow authority upon one’s writing, making published writers into “authors,” rather than “scribblers” who write only for themselves, though his interpretation of the

---

44 Mark Rose, “The Author in Court.”
45 [William Warburton], A Letter from an Author, to a Member of Parliament, Concerning Literary Property (1747).
authority of print is more grounded in a modern sensibility than an analysis of its contemporary use.\footnote{Marlon B. Ross, “Authority and Authenticity: Scribbling Authors and the Genius of Print in Eighteenth-Century England,” in \textit{The Construction of Authorship}, pp. 231–58.}

Ross situates this shift from scribal to published authority in the early to mid eighteenth century with writers like Pope, Horace Walpole, and Thomas Chatterton. But, lacking confirmation from a large and representative selection of 1740s authors, there is no way to determine how many of those who published thought of themselves as authors or conceived of their writing as central to their identities or as a form of career.

Some bibliographers argue that examining only authors’ names distorts our view of the creation of texts. Publishing required resources, and even the most self-sufficient authors were reliant upon booksellers for wide circulation. D. F. McKenzie, Jerome McGann, and others have reminded book historians that authors were aided and influenced by many others (friends, spouses, compositors, editors, etc.): textual production was social.\footnote{Jerome McGann, \textit{Critique of Modern Textual Criticism} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); D. F. McKenzie, \textit{Bibliography and the Sociology of Text} (The Panizzi lectures of 1985, published London: The British Library, 1986; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).}

Woodmansee argues that eighteenth-century authors considered themselves to be masters of a craft and contributors to the final product of a book, but not necessarily as the only or the most important participant.\footnote{Martha Woodmansee, introduction to \textit{The Construction of Authorship}, pp. 1–13.} More recently Lisa Maruca has examined collaborative textual production from the booksellers’ point of view, arguing on the basis of their own accounts of the trade that they believed themselves to be contributing to the meaning of the texts they published.\footnote{Lisa Maruca, \textit{The Work of Print: Authorship and the English Text Trades, 1660–1760} (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).} But whatever the source of their ideas or the influences on the final form of their texts, each work ultimately has an original copyright holder, and on that basic definition we can examine the work of writers.

Who, if anyone, were the “authors” of the 1740s? As I have shown in my discussion of anonymity, a conclusively comprehensive answer to that question is not possible. Examining ESTC attributions provides some sense of the social make-up of those whose works we know were published in the 1740s. Of course, ESTC attributions do not provide an accurate contemporary view of attributed
authors, as they do no represent definitive title-page attributions and include many post-facto claims of authorship. Some of the authors listed in the catalogue may not have written the works that have been assigned to them. But an alternative list of exclusively contemporary published references to authorship would be even more problematic, as many significant, securely attributed authors, like Fielding and Young, would be absent or misleadingly inconsequential given their frequent anonymous publications. The following table shows the number of new and reprinted works of each poetry, drama, and fiction recorded in the ESTC between 1737 and 1749 and written in English by authors who were alive and published at least one new work in the period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Editions</th>
<th>Poetry</th>
<th>Drama</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Alexander Pope</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Edward Young</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Henry Carey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sir Charles Hanbury Williams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>James Miller</td>
<td>Henry Fielding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>McNamara Morgan</td>
<td>Colley Cibber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel Richardson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>George Lillo</td>
<td>David Garrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Jonathan Swift</td>
<td></td>
<td>James Thomson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Thomson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Dodsley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mark Akenside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Paul Whitehead</td>
<td></td>
<td>James Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Glover</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Armstrong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Thomas Newcomb</td>
<td></td>
<td>Henry Fielding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Robert Morris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Cooke</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Barber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Stephen Duck</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eliza Haywood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Nugent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Samuel Johnson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Ogle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth Singer Rowe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Lockman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aaron Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth Boyd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Editions</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Thomas Gilbert</td>
<td>Lewis Theobald</td>
<td>Ralph Griffiths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>William King</td>
<td>William Havard</td>
<td>John Kelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Hervey</td>
<td>Henry Giffard</td>
<td>George Lyttelton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph Warton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Somerville</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soame Jenyns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Savage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edward Moore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hildebrand Jacob</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Fortescue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel Boyse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Whitehead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thomas Warton</td>
<td>Weddell</td>
<td>John Kelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Spiltimber</td>
<td>Thomas Morell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Mason</td>
<td>David Mallet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Gibbons</td>
<td>Newburgh Hamilton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Doddsley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Collins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that many of the biggest names of long eighteenth century literature were also amongst the most common names of publishing authors in the 1740s: Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, James Thomson, Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, and Samuel Johnson are all represented. Most of the playwrights and novelists are still familiar names (with a few large exceptions, like Henry Carey), but some of the most popular poets are not well known today: for example, James Miller (who might be remembered as a playwright, but whose poems, especially *Are These Things So?*, were often reprinted), McNamara Morgan, Paul Whitehead, and Thomas Cooke are far from household names. The abundance of foreign and deceased authors, however, suggests that readers and booksellers did not prioritize new works in their list of books. And many of the authors responsible for the most titles earned their place through repeated editions of the same few works rather than a number of different books. Few authors at all, and even fewer contemporary 1740s authors, were associated with a large number of books.

How many works did most authors produce? Only three people whose names are associated with an average of more than one and a half books per year (twenty over the thirteen year period) were alive and still publishing during at least part of the period: Henry Carey, Sir Charles Hanbury, and Edward

---

51 [James Miller], *Are These Things So? The Previous Question from an Englishman in His Grotto to a Great Man at Court* (1740).
Young. Even some of those whose names are associated with the most titles in Table 3.1 did not publish many different works. Henry Carey’s 32 editions represent just 3 plays, and Edward Young’s success in this period was almost entirely the result of *Night Thoughts*. Of course some of the numbers above might be increased were we able to attribute more anonymous works, and a few prolific anonymous authors may be absent from the list, but likely few published as much as or more than the authors listed above. The publication statistics that exist do not support claims of scribbling hack writers churning out cheap, popular publications.

Any kind of professional authorship would have depended on multiple publications: a struggling author of one new work—even a successful work—would have starved if that were his only income. How often did authors produce more than one commercially-successful book? Based on surviving attributions, publishing multiple successful works was very uncommon. Records of copyright sales prove that authors were able to negotiate outstanding deals once one work had proven commercially viable, but relatively few seem to have published many works. A smash hit followed by even a mediocre second book could earn an author large returns on his efforts, as spectacularly exemplified by Fielding. Fielding earned £183 10s for *Joseph Andrews*, the success of which brought him £600 plus an additional £100 for *Tom Jones*, which in turn lead to the enormous payment of £1,000 for *Amelia*, which would not prove popular.

Publishing longer works in parts, with separate copy for each part, could also earn an author a lot of money. For example, by selling *Night Thoughts* in parts, Edward Young, was able to negotiate copy prices for the later nights based on the success of the first part: Henry Petit records the copyright payment for Nights I-V as £168 (or just over £33 per Night), and the payment for Night VI as 50 guineas.  

Many of the authors studied and read today are in part remembered because of their success in different genres. How common was the practice of publishing in more than one genre (poetry, fiction, or drama)? The list of most attributed authors shows few had any crossover between genres. Only Fielding, Dodsley, Swift, and Elizabeth Singer Rowe are associated with works in two genres, and no one

---

published heavily in each poetry, fiction, and drama. Switching between genres seems to have been more difficult and less common than some critics have suggested. For example, in her examination of the work of a few famous female authors who wrote both fiction and drama Emily Hodgson Anderson argues that women like Haywood, Burney, Inchbald, Edgeworth, and (briefly) Austen were best able to express themselves through drama. She argues that female authors chose to write drama over fiction because it allowed them to express themselves freely: “it is precisely *because* the audience assumes that actors don’t speak for themselves that the stage may become a space in which to say or do something personal, something un-feigned, something that is perhaps socially unacceptable to say or do in any other way.” But her arguments do not take into account the realities of authorship (for example, that the women potentially could have earned more by writing drama), which likely had a much greater impact on their publication choices.

The common narrative of professional authorship is based on an assumption of a growing middle class increasingly able to earn a modestly comfortable living. Marilyn Butler, for example, has suggested that “Commercial changes in the marketing and financing of literature made it, surely, a middle-class activity from about 1740.” According to Butler, literature became “a popular or non-polite activity” initiated by “provincial voices,” though her evidence for those sweeping claims is slight, shaky, and based on an analysis of Oxford publishing. Authors, according to such accounts, should come from a variety of personal and socioeconomic backgrounds. What were authors’ personal circumstances? The list of attributed authors shows that writers of new works were almost all male and almost all from advantaged backgrounds, with some family money or an education that enabled a career in the law or the church. The relatively privileged circumstances of most authors make sense: writers would have needed to be well-off to have the connections necessary to get ahead in the publishing world, and a modicum of financial security would have helped to withstand the limited and inconsistent income.

---

One of the most published poets of the 1740s serves as an example of a writer who was not pursuing anything like professional authorship: Sir Charles Hanbury Williams is associated with thirty poems in this period. Born Charles Hanbury, he took on the last name Williams in anticipatory gratitude of the estate bestowed upon him by his father, John Hanbury, on behalf of family friend Charles Williams (who left much of his estate to John after fleeing the country following a duel). Sir Charles attended Eton and married Lady Francis Coningsby, who was wealthy thanks to the generous inheritance she received following her father’s death a few years before their marriage. He was an MP and held various government posts over the course of his career, making him both prosperous and well-connected.\(^55\) Williams was known for his satiric political poetry, and his poems like *Old England’s Te Deum* and *S----s and J----l. A new ballad* (most of which were published in more than one edition) responded to contemporary events.\(^56\) Though his poetry often served political purpose, Williams may not have meant for all of it to have been published: in particular, the publication of his *Ode to the Honourable H----y F--x, on the Marriage of the Du----s of M------r to H----s--y, Esq.* found him in hot water when parts of it were considered offensive to the Duchess and to the Irish.\(^57\) Not only, then, did Williams not need to sell his writing to support himself and his family, but to some degree his success as an author was probably accidental.

In contrast to Williams, playwright Henry Carey certainly wrote to earn money and possibly to secure a reputation as a writer. Though little is known for certain about Carey’s upbringing, his family was unquestionably of more modest means than Williams’. Evidence suggests that his parents may have been school-teachers and the proprietors of a boarding-school; dedications also suggest a connection to the Savile family, though claims that he was George Savile’s illegitimate son seem largely


\(^{56}\) [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], *Old England’s Te Deum* ([1743]); [-----], *S----s and J----l. A New Ballad* (1743).

\(^{57}\) [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], *An Ode to the Honourable H----y F--x, on the Marriage of the Du----s of M----r to H----s--y, Esq.* (1746).
Carey wrote poetry, collections of songs like *The Musical Century, in One Hundred English Ballads*, and ballad operas. In the 1740s he had his greatest success with *The Dragon of Wantley*, a satire on Walpole that enjoyed an astounding initial run of sixty-nine nights, and its sequel, *Margery, or, A Worse Plague than the Dragon*. But in spite of the success of his work, Carey was plagued by financial concerns, and after his suicide in 1743 his family was left destitute, though the publication of *The Dramatick Works of Henry Carey* that year may have offered some windfall.

Like Carey’s, John Kelly’s work as a dramatist was inhibited by the Licensing Act; unlike Carey, however, Kelly found success in a second career as a novelist. In 1739, Kelly published his continuation of Thomas Gueulette’s earlier work, *The Third Volume of Peruvian Tales*. Two years later he wrote *Pamela’s Conduct in High Life*, which angered Richardson and eventually inspired him to write a sequel of his own. In a letter to his brother-in-law, James Leake, Richardson refers to Kelly as his “bookseller’s hackney,” implying that Chandler commissioned the work. The success of *Pamela’s Conduct in High Life* may have been particularly galling to Richardson: Kelly’s work was published in three editions in its first year.

The quantity and quality of the work of writers are considered central to their characterization as authors. Pat Rogers, Brean Hammond, Clifford Siskin, and George Justice advocate for the importance of top-to-bottom literary culture in the eighteenth century. Pat Rogers’ *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* was a ground-breaking work in many ways. Rogers vividly illustrated the lives and working conditions (complete with poverty, disease, and crime) of a small group of “hack” writers living in a concentrated part of London in the early eighteenth century. His work serves as an important reminder that writers’

---

lives were not always glamorous, nor was writing always an artistic ideal. In *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670–1740: Hackney for Bread*, Brean Hammond examines the material conditions of writing, analyzes the uses of wit, discusses the concept of the author, and surveys writers’ earning potentials. In response to Rogers, Hammond argues that scholars have long dismissed the work of “hack” writers too much: many of them, he says, were actually doing good work. He argues that the success of these writers depended upon their willingness and ability to adapt to the changing trends in literature, which he identifies as a preference for mock epics, growing demand for prose fiction, and new hybrid forms of drama. But commonplace anonymity and the dearth of biographical detail about many writers place most of these claims about authorship in the abstract. For all that Hammond’s is a study of “hack” writers, he primarily refers to canonical writers, which, though understandable given the little we know of those less known, precludes a sense of the broader context.

Related studies of authorship by Clifford Siskin and George Justice focus on the connection between the material conditions of authors’ lives and the literature they produced. In *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830*, Siskin argues that due to advances in print technology and a proliferation of published material, literature was increasingly becoming a large part of “culture,” and writing was more and more thought of as work and a profession: “What changed,” he contends, “were that society’s ways of knowing and of working; the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Britain saw the simultaneous advent of modern disciplinarity, on the one hand, and modern professionalism, on the other.” This cultural climate, according to Siskin, was problematic for groups of people (like women) who had less formal education and less access to literature. Justice builds on Hammond’s and Siskin’s work in *The Manufacturers of Literature: Writers and the Literary Marketplace in Eighteenth-Century England*, to argue that ambiguous advances in print technology drove advances in

---


literature. He sees literature and technology as mutually influential, and claims that what he calls “crucial” texts (including the Spectator, Pope’s Epistle to Arbuthnot, Dodsley’s Collection of Poems by Several Hands, Johnson’s Life of Savage, and Burney’s Evelina and Camilla) played an active (not, he emphasizes, a passive) role in shaping culture.

The work on a wide range of authors and their connections to the production of literature that Rogers, Hammond, Siskin, and Justice have begun is important. What it largely lacks, however, is an attention to historical and textual bibliography. When Siskin and Justice argue that “advances in print technology” were driving changes in literature, for example, they are typically vague about what those advances actually were. Few technological changes had much impact on publication practices. The printing technology of the 1740s was very similar to that of the 1700s and the 1780s. And previous studies often have been limited by the difficulty of accessing a wide range of sources without ECCO, which in many cases led to a focus on canonical male writers.

Scholars interested in female authorship have argued that women’s contributions to the literary marketplace were much more significant than typically has been recognized, especially in the mid-century. Betty A. Schellenberg, for example, traces the development of female authorship across the eighteenth century in The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain. But the series of case studies in Schellenberg’s investigation proves no clear development in professionalization. In Eighteenth-Century Authorship and the Play of Fiction, Anderson argues that women wrote primarily for self expression and that they often turned to the stage because drama allowed them to distance themselves from the narrator of the work, although she ignores the possibility that they often wrote for the

---

stage because *most* writers wrote for the stage, as it was both popular and profitable, at least before the Licensing Act.\(^{70}\)

Paula McDowell and Paula R. Backscheider have written more wide-ranging and historically-grounded examinations of women writers that draw important conclusions about the place women held in literature and the book trade, and their work helps to identify the women who were most influential. In *The Women of Grub Street*, McDowell shows that in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, women were involved in every stage of literary production, from hack writing to printing and bookselling (like her most prominent example, Elinor James).\(^{71}\) Backscheider focuses on women poets in *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Drama*, and sets out to discover which poets, from her wide sample, were most important to the genre as a whole.\(^{72}\) Through work like McDowell’s and Backscheider’s eighteenth century scholars have begun to recognize the impact women had on the literary marketplace without marginalizing that work by excluding women from larger discussions of literature or using one or two token women as examples, and without watering down the canon itself for the sake of inclusion.

With limited options for professions, women certainly had great incentive to work as writers. But authorship was far from a safe profession, and throughout the century female writers were derided for their lack of modesty. No wonder, then, that tracing the influence of women on literary production is so difficult. Astonishingly few women were attributed on title pages in the 1740s. Less than six percent of works of literature with an author’s or translator’s name on their title pages were attributed to women, and most of those were attributed to the same few, usually dead, writers—most particularly Elizabeth Rowe and Susanna Centlivre. And, as Dustin Griffin has shown, arguments that women and middle class hack writers increasingly could earn a living through their work, and that the early- and mid-eighteenth century


saw the development of “professional authorship” are often overly simplistic and ignore the financial realities of authorship, which often required patronage or subsidies.73

How much money could one make by working as a writer of literature? One of the most common ways to earn money was to sell your publication rights to an interested bookseller. In Chapter 2 I showed that booksellers’ copyright fees varied greatly depending on the genre, length, and quality of the work. A generous rough estimate for an average copyright price, as calculated across the Upcott and Lintot records, might have been something like £20. What could a writer have purchased with that amount? There can be no simple comparisons of purchasing power and the cost of living expenses, but Liza Picard’s useful list of expenses in Dr. Johnson’s London provides some sense of how a writer in the city might have used the money.74 Certainly £20 was a meaningful sum, especially to those in the lower ranks of society. Housemaids, for example, earned an annual salary of just £6-£8 (though their bed and board was provided). But for one of the educated middle class £20 would not have covered most living expenses. Boswell budgeted to keep his expenditures within the £200 allowance his father gave him to live in London. Still, if one were to live thrifty £20 could cover almost a year’s lodging: Boswell paid £22 for his place in Westminster. More fashionable lodgings would have cost considerably more, like the £40 Boswell paid for a place on Downing Street. A writer’s finances would have been tight.

The problem would not have been that an author could not survive on £20 per year, but that he or she could not live a lifestyle conducive to producing the refined material that would have earned that kind of fee, especially in pricey London: such work would have required at the very least a budget for paper and ink (which were expensive), and most likely also access to books (through one’s own collection, or wealthy friends, or a library) and to contemporary events as discussed in coffee houses and periodicals. Without additional financial support, a writer would have been hard pressed to be able to afford such luxuries. In London £20 per annum would have put one at basic subsistence-level, alongside more than

one-third of the English population, according to Peter Lindert and Jeffrey G. Williamson’s updates to Joseph Massie’s 1759 rough estimates of income distribution.75 London living would have made the sum seem much more meager than nationwide averages. If a writer could command high prices for his work, published more than one work per year, or had a second source of income, he would have joined the roughly fifty percent of the population that lived on between £20 and £50 per annum—an income range that might have allowed the possibility of a more comfortable life (which, according to Paul Langford, might be denoted by the ability to purchase a few luxury goods and the requirement of paying the poor-rate to support the less fortunate).76 Earning an income of less than £50 per annum would have placed the author with the laborers, small tradesmen, and soldiers who constituted eighty percent of the English population. The top twenty percent of the income distribution were successful tradesmen, manufacturers, innkeepers, clergymen, military officers, lawyers, merchants, and gentlemen, and, at the very top, esquires and titled gentry. Writers not born to money would have been extremely unlikely to earn enough through their publications to be received by the wealthy social circles that would have been able to purchase his published work.

Any writer whose primary goals were financial would have been wise to choose a lucrative genre. Based on the discussion in Chapter 2, rough estimates of average copyright fees for literature might have been £5 for short works of poetry, £30 for poetry collections, £50 for a play, and £20 for a novel. Using Boswell’s £200 allowance as a reasonable income for a middling family (the same income used by Hume for his discussion of that income bracket) shows that to get by for one year the average author would have to publish 40 unique poems, 7 collections of poetry, 4 plays, or 10 novels.77 As far as can be determined from attribution figures no one achieved anything like these annual publication numbers.

Some literary production offered earning potential beyond copyright sales. In this regard, too, drama was most lucrative before the Licensing Act. Playwrights whose work was staged as well as

published could have earned tidy sums of money. A standard agreement between playwrights and theatre proprietors dictated that playwrights be given the net profits from the third, sixth, and, in the rare case that the show lasted that long, the ninth night of performance, bringing in an average of around £80 for each play, though the payoff for some writers could be little or nothing. For selling the copyright, the author might earn an additional £50 for a mainpiece. Even before 1737, only exceptional playwrights like Fielding and Susanna Centlivre were able to produce enough plays to achieve anything like a steady income from this system, but even as an occasional or one-time contribution to a writer’s income these sums would have been significant.\footnote{For the source of these figures and a helpful and detailed discussion of playwright remuneration, see Hume, “The Economics of Culture,” pp. 500–3.} Of course, few new plays were staged after the Licensing Act, and even fewer of those were popular enough to earn their playwrights’ much money on the stage, so most 1740s authors would not have considered benefit nights a likely or secure source of income. Novelists’ options for other production venues were limited by the length of their works. Poets might have been able to publish some of their work in periodicals, which paid as much as half a guinea for content to fill their pages.\footnote{The Westminster Journal offered half a guinea to anyone who submitted work that filled the space allotted for essays and commentary (19 December 1741).} But many magazines and journals lifted their work from other publications and avoided paying authors for their writing.

Though court patronage was falling out of fashion, earning money through the support of a patron was still a possibility for some writers—especially poets. Dustin Griffin challenges the idea that the eighteenth century saw an abrupt shift away from the patronage system, pointing to continuing examples of direct patronage and extending the definition of patronage to include the process of selling books by subscription. Patronage, he argues, was a continuing economic and political arrangement that benefited both partners.\footnote{Dustin Griffin, Literary Patronage in England 1650–1800 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).} Patrons might provide authors with protection, money, or living space, while an author could dedicate a published work to his patron, establishing a public connection to his intellect and reputation. 1740s authors with patrons include Edward Young, Richard Savage, Mary Leapor, Charlotte Lennox, and Samuel Johnson. Authors participating in the patronage system needed the political tact and...
aesthetic flexibility required to write to someone else’s satisfaction, but the sacrifices it dictated were similar to choices any writer would need to make to earn a living.

Pat Rogers’ examination of dedication practices in books across all genres supports Griffin’s claims that patronage was alive and well in the 1740s and beyond. In his survey of 933 printed dedications published between 1700 and 1799, he finds that dedications to patrons remained common throughout most of the eighteenth century.\(^81\) Rogers argues that the practice was beneficial both to authors and to those who supported them financially: “dedications were one way an author deserved, if not fame and glory comparable to his/her patron’s, at least recognition and reward” (231). These dedications, Rogers explains, are proof that literature and writing did not become a more middle class activity across the period, as most of the writers supported by the system had attended Cambridge, Oxford, or a prestigious public school, and most of the dedicatees continued to be royalty or aristocracy.

Well-known and connected authors had another tool to attract readers and build their literary reputations: the possibility of selling a book by subscription. Rogers’ examination of subscription lists to Pope’s Lintot editions of the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*, and his Tonson edition of Shakespeare shows that the author and his booksellers used numerous purposeful strategies to entice readers as Pope’s status and audience changed.\(^82\) Rogers analyzes Pope’s evolving circumstances during each of the ventures, as well as the people on the subscription lists, and how the lists compare to other subscription lists around the same time, and concludes that Pope made a great financial success in his negotiations with readers and booksellers, but that “mounting a subscription was an exceedingly tricky and uncertain business, even for a distinguished writer at the height of his fame” (30). Pope’s achievements were extremely atypical, and most authors would not even have had the option of attempting to sell a work by subscription, nor would those who did have been likely to make the process work.

Patrons were not always wealthy aristocrats seeking a boost to their public reputations: booksellers also supported authors by commissioning their work. Commissioned works were often


erudite, and commonly included legal and scientific discussions and translations from the Greek and Latin classics. Booksellers could be understandably demanding and particular about these dealings. In his investigation of John Nourse’s copyright transactions John Feather concluded: “When Nourse commissioned an author to write a book he normally specified (i) its length; (ii) the time allowed for completion; (iii) the fee; (iv) the means of payment of the fee; and (v) the assignment of the copy-right in the first and future editions.” Some authors received astonishingly favorable deals through their commissioned work. In 1746 Nourse commissioned Dr. William Lewis to write the *New English Dispensatory*, which was to be a 40-sheet manuscript delivered in eighteen months. In exchange for adequate work on this medical tract, Dr. Lewis was to receive a £42 cash advance, as well as £63 when he delivered the manuscript and 100 copies of the book upon its publication. Perhaps one of the most valuable compensations for completing the work, however, was Nourse’s agreement to supply the author with the books required to perform his research. Nourse respected Lewis’s work so much that the agreement also stated that no changes would be made to future editions of the work without its author’s consent. Nourse favored commissions for scholarly works, with projects that also included James Dodson’s *Mathematical Repository*, which was “to contain 500 numerical questions, to be completed in 14 sheets in duodecimo at £1 11s 6d for each sheet plus 25 copies.” A skilled translator could also earn a healthy commission. In 1714 Bernard Lintot agreed to pay the young Lewis Theobald £2 10s for every 450 lines of Greek verse with explanatory notes he provided from the twenty-four books of the *Odyssey* and Sophocles’s four tragedies, as well as £1 1s 6d for every 120 lines of Theobald’s Latin translations from Horace’s satires and epistles earned. The bookseller took the project’s schedule seriously, and the agreement included provisions for a £50 fine if the author failed to deliver the translation on time.

Aside from translations, literature was not commonly commissioned. Even Robert Dodsley, who was personally devoted to the sale of poetry, drama, and fiction, received those works already written

---

84 Upcott Collection, British Library Add MSS 38728–30.
rather than commissioning new ones from the authors of his acquaintance. The records of his copyright transactions show that Dodsley was not opposed to commissioning works in general, but the works he wanted were histories, practical works, and translations. For example, in 1741 Dodsley and Thomas Waller agreed to pay William Guthrie £10 16s to translate Luigi Riccoboni’s *An Historical and Critical Account of the Theatres in Europe*. By a 1749 agreement, he would pay Thomas Salmon 1½ guineas per sheet for writing the *Tradesman’s Dictionary* (1 guinea when the copy of the work is delivered, and ½ guinea per sheet once it is published), and if the work were not delivered by the following summer Salmon would forfeit ½ guinea per sheet. And in 1750 Dodsley offered Joseph Warton £200 for his translation of Virgil’s *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, with the fee divided in a fashion similar to Salmon’s, with half paid upon delivery of the manuscript and half paid once the work was corrected from the press.86 Dodsley’s terms for these commissioned works were characteristically generous, and his decision to withhold part of the translator’s payment until the works were corrected demonstrates his attention to quality.

Though writers seemingly had numerous options for earning money from literature, few actually would have had the means and good fortune to take advantage of those possibilities. If a concept of professional authorship was beginning to develop, it would only have been associated with a very few public figures who were able to demand high prices for their work—like Alexander Pope—and would not have seemed a viable option for earning a livable wage in London. Writing remained primarily an elite activity, and the list of attributed works was dominated by socially-advantaged men.

III. Reprints

An obvious measure of the success of a work is the number of times it was reprinted. As I show in Chapter 2, booksellers had to rely heavily on reprints to turn a profit on a copyright purchase. A new edition of a work is also an indication of the bookseller’s estimation of sustained interest, as he would not

have reprinted a work that, based on the sales of the first edition or on current interest in similar books, he did not expect to be able to sell out. Examining the role of reprinted books in the marketplace can therefore provide a glimpse of which types of works and authors were not just expected, but proven to be successful. In this section, I will answer the following questions: in which genres were reprints most common? What percentage of reprinted works were translations? Which authors in each genre were most frequently reprinted? Did some booksellers show greater preferences for reprints?

Tracking reprints through the ESTC with any precision is impossible. Entries might represent a new edition, but they might also represent the same edition, catalogued inconsistently from library to library, or textual variants of the same edition, or false editions marked by new title pages but sharing the same text and print run. Titles to works change, which makes searching for works in the catalogue difficult. Attributions are similarly inconsistent, even for the same title, so even in cases in which an author is known or commonly associated with a work it might not show up as part of his or her output. Poems are especially problematic, as their titles are more likely to change drastically than those of plays or novels; when I have had access to the text of the poem, I have attempted to search for new editions or reprints in ECCO by using distinct words from its first few lines. But common poetic language, repeated phrases, unreliable optical character recognition in the digitized texts, and the unavailability of many texts in searchable form in ECCO makes that strategy unreliable as well. The discussion that follows should therefore be considered just a first attempt at a general overview of the nature of 1740s literary reprints.

The following charts analyze the impact of reprints on the market for poetry, drama, and fiction in the 1740s. Works of poetry include single poems and collections; drama includes both plays and works derived from stage performances (like oratorios published without the musical notation that would classify them as music); and fiction includes primarily novels, but also collections of fictional stories and fables. The works are categorized as either first editions or as reprints of previously published works (a category that includes both reprints of works that were initially published before 1737 and reprints of works published after 1737 but counted once as a newly printed work). The group of greatest interest,
then, is that of the first editions: each work in this category represents a unique work not known to have been published before.

![Diagram showing the distribution of first editions and reprints of poetry published between 1737 and 1749.](image)

**Figure 3.6 First Editions and Reprints of Poetry Published Between 1737 and 1749**

N.B. “Undetermined” refers to works for which there was no reasonable method for checking reprint history, including works unavailable in ECCO and with titles like “A Ballad” that could not be traced in the ESTC.
Figure 3.7 First Editions and Reprints of Drama Published Between 1737 and 1749

Figure 3.8 First Editions and Reprints of Fiction Published Between 1737 and 1749
The numbers of newly published works show the diversity and range of each genre. A great number of new poems and collections of poetry were published in the period: on average, 95 new titles of poetry were published each year, many of which were small, single poems. New plays and novels were much less common, averaging 20 and 18 new titles per year, respectively, though of course the percentage of new published drama was likely strongly impacted by the dearth of new plays on the stage. Authors hoping to sell works of literature would have found poetry an easier market than the smaller worlds of new drama or fiction. Percentages of new titles also demonstrate each genre’s relative expendability by suggesting how essential reprints might have been to a bookseller’s willingness to publish a work. Poetry, for example, has the most unique titles and less than half as many reprinted works as new titles, indicating that reprints may not have been as essential to the sale of these usually short, comparatively inexpensive works. Poetry was also most likely to have been subsidized by the author or a friend of the author. Conversely, drama and fiction both have substantial percentages of works published for the first time, but booksellers who worked with those genres also appear to have worked to ensure that works of those genres would be reprinted.

If an author was able to publish a new work of literature, what were his or her chances of seeing that work reprinted? The following charts show the percentages of works first published between 1737 and 1749 that were reprinted, either in a second edition or in a collection such as an author’s collected works or an assortment of thematically related works.
Figure 3.9 First Editions of Poetry, 1737–49; Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800

1737-49 First Editions of Poetry
- Reprinted at Least Once, 277; 22.2%
- Not Reprinted, 872, 73%
- Only Reprinted in a Collection, 96; 8%

1254 Total First Editions of Poetry, 1737-49

Figure 3.10 First Editions of Drama, 1737–49; Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800

1737-49 First Editions of Drama
- Reprinted Only in a Collection, 2; 0.8%
- Reprinted at Least Once, 97; 37.2%
- Not Reprinted, 162; 62.1%

261 Total First Editions of Drama, 1737-49
The small percentages of new works that were reprinted show that the chances of a new work of literature becoming a financial success were slight. In no genre did an author have greater than 50/50 odds of publishing a work that would appear in more than one edition. To some extent, publishing practices worked in the author’s favor in this regard: selling their copyrights outright meant that their direct financial gain from a work was not dependent upon the publication of future editions. But of course any writer whose finances were strongly tied to his or her copyright payments would have needed to publish popular works in order to negotiate higher payments for future books.

The differences between genres also demonstrate booksellers’ ability to predict which works were worth investment. New works of poetry, which were most likely to be short and topical, were also least likely to be reprinted. First editions of poetry that were never reprinted include McNamara Morgan’s sequel to the *Triumvirade*—a surprising fact when compared to the success of the *Triumvirade* itself, which was reprinted four times that year. An anonymous poetry was also commonly not reprinted,

---

87 [McNamara Morgan], “Porcupinus Pelagius,” *The Sequel.*
including works like *The Whim. Being an Origin-all, Whims-i-call, Conundrumatical, Rebustical, Enigmatical, Epigrammatical, Poematical Miscellany and Thoughts in Sickness*.\(^88\) The new poetry most likely to be reprinted were longer or more complex works like John Armstrong’s *The Oeconomy of Love* and *The Art of Preserving Health*, as well as Akenside’s *Pleasures of Imagination*.\(^89\) And of course poetry written before 1737 continued to be reprinted: among the most reprinted were Pope’s *Essay on Man* and Dryden’s *Alexander’s Feast*.\(^90\)

Roughly forty percent of drama was reprinted at least once. Drama might therefore be considered the greatest risk to booksellers, as the steep copyright prices often offered to playwrights were not rewarded by guaranteed reprints. Certainly the limited possibilities for plays on the stage after the Licensing Act also limited the quality of new published drama. First editions of drama that were not reprinted included anonymous plays like *The State of Physick. A Comedy*, as well as works by now-familiar playwrights, like Dodsley’s *The Triumph of Peace, a Masque*.\(^91\) The new plays that were reprinted were most typically comedies, and included Henry Fielding’s *The Historical Register, for the Year 1736*, the pseudonymously published *The Congress of the Beasts*, and of course Henry Carey’s *Dragon of Wantley*.\(^92\) Reprints of earlier drama helped to compensate for the dearth of new works: much-reprinted earlier works included George Lilo’s *The London Merchant*, Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*, and Milton’s *Comus*.\(^93\)

The expense of publishing fiction and the small amount of fiction that was published confirms booksellers’ and authors’ conservative attitudes toward that genre. First editions of fiction that were never


\(^89\) [John Armstrong], *The Oeconomy of Love: A Poetical Essay* (1745); [——], *The Art of Preserving Health: A Poem* (1744); Akenside, *The Pleasures of Imagination*.


\(^92\) [Henry Fielding], “The author of Pasquin,” *The Historical Register, for the Year 1736* ([1737]); Anon., “Baron Huffumberghausen,” *The Congress of the Beasts, Under the Mediation of the Goat, for Negotiating a Peace Between the Fox, the Ass Wearing a Lion's skin, the Horse, the Tigress, and Other Quadrupedes at War: A Farce of Two Acts* (1748); Carey, *The Dragon of Wantley*.

\(^93\) George Lilo, *The London Merchant* (1737); John Gay, *The Beggar’s Opera* (1737); John Milton, *Comus, a Mask: (Now Adapted to the Stage) as Alter'd from Milton's Mask at Ludlow-Castle, Which was Never Represented but on Michaelmas-Day, 1634* (1738).
reprinted included both works by known authors, like Pope and Arbuthnot’s *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus*, and anonymous fiction like *The Fair Adultress: Or, The Treacherous Brother*.⁹⁴ *Pamela* was, of course, one of the most reprinted new novels, but other pseudo-autobiographical novels were also published in numerous editions, including *The Life and Adventures of Mrs. Christian Davies* and *Memoirs of the Life of Lord Lovat* (1746).⁹⁵ Most popular older reprinted fiction included perenniel favorites *The History of the Most Remarkable Life and Extraordinary Adventures, of the Truly Honourable Colonel Jaque* (attributed to Defoe and more reprinted in the 1740s than any other work now associated with that author), *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, and Elizabeth Singer Rowe’s *Friendship in Death*.⁹⁶

Once a work was past its first edition, what were the chances that it would be reprinted a second time or more? The following charts show the reprinting odds for the works published between 1737 and 1749 that had previously been published—that is, the works were now in at least their second edition. The previously published works include both those whose first editions were published between 1739 and 1749 and those whose first editions were published before this period. Because these figures represent total number of editions rather than unique titles, many reprints of the same title are counted the same as separate reprints, and works are deemed “not reprinted” when no later edition is known to exist, either before or after 1749.

---


⁹⁵ [Daniel Defoe?], “The author of Robinson Crusoe,” *The History of the Most Remarkable Life and Extraordinary Adventures, of the Truly Honourable Colonel Jaque* (1738); Anon., *Arabian Nights Entertainments: Consisting of One Thousand and One Stories Told by the Sultaness of the Indes* (1744); Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *Friendship in Death* (1738).
Figure 3.12 Reprinted Poetry, 1737–49 (Including Works Originally Published Both Before and After 1737); Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800

Figure 3.13 Reprinted Drama, 1737–49 (Including Works Originally Published Both Before and After 1737); Editions Reprinted and Not Reprinted to 1800
As the charts of reprints of non-first editions demonstrate, once a work had been published in more than one edition, the likelihood of its being published again was large—especially for works of drama and fiction. Comparing these figures to the charts that show the likelihood that a new literary work would have been reprinted presents an even more striking picture: only 19% of new poetry was ever reprinted, while 49% of all poetry that had achieved at least a second edition (second editions, third editions, and so on) was published in a subsequent edition; 37% of new drama was reprinted as compared to 81% of drama that had been published at least once; and 44% of new fiction was reprinted as compared to 74% of fiction that had been published at least once. Reputation seems to have played a significant role in a work’s success in the marketplace.

The figures demonstrating the likelihood of reprints are of course a bit inflated by works and that were published and republished throughout the 1740s (and often throughout the century). The list of authors whose names are associated with the greatest number of entries in the ESTC but who were not alive to publish new works in the 1740s or whose works were represented only in translated editions
provides some sense of the significance of reprinted authors, as well as of the literary influences of 1740s writers and readers.

Table 3.2 Number of Editions of Poetry, Drama, and Fiction Associated in the ESTC with Dead or Inactive Authors, 1737–1749

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Editions</th>
<th>Poetry</th>
<th>Drama</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Defoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>John Milton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>John Gay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Horace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Susanna Centlivre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>George Farquhar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Virgil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>John Dryden</td>
<td>Nicholas Rowe</td>
<td>Charles de Fieux, chevalier de Mouhy, Aesop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>John Gay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Matthew Prior</td>
<td>Thomas Otway, Ben Jonson, William Congreve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Edward Ward, Persius, Ovid</td>
<td>Francesco Vanneschi, John Milton, John Dryden</td>
<td>Alain René le Sage, Madame d’Aulnoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Terence, Richard Steele, Pietro Metastasio, Joseph Addison</td>
<td>Elizabeth Singer Rowe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thomas Southerne</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jonathan Swift, François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, Thomas-Simon Gueullette</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The names of the most reprinted pre-1740s authors of poetry are largely familiar: the presence of Milton, Dryden, Gay, and Prior reflects modern as well as contemporary tastes. Edward Ward is a bit of a surprise, but his humorous and sometimes disreputable poems like Little Merlin’s Cave and The Riddle: Or, a Paradoxical Character of an Hairy Monster, Often Found under Holland seem to have held
readers’ attention. Certainly classical writers like Horace, Virgil, Persius, and Ovid are unsurprising in a list of popularly read writers in the eighteenth century, and of course their cultural influence was even greater than is represented by this list, as many works were written in imitation of their styles.

Reprinted playwrights from earlier periods are similarly familiar, and include a wider chronological range from Shakespeare and Jonson through Dryden and Milton and up to Susanna Centlivre and John Gay. Although claiming a smaller percentage of the market for literature than poetry, drama contributed a greater number of popularly reprinted authors—proof that the Licensing Act affected prospects for published drama as much as for staged plays.

A glance through the fiction column shows the importance of translated works to that genre: eight of the eleven most reprinted authors of fiction did not write their works in English. Although much prose fiction had been written in English prior to the 1740s, the writers who were most enduringly popular were foreign, most often French, authors whose works had been translated into English.

The high percentage of reprints and the dominance of still-familiar names give some credence to Jonathan Brody Kramnick’s argument that “the decisive reception of the English literary past was settled during the mid-eighteenth century.” Kramnick’s definition of the canon is relatively narrow—two of his five chapters deal explicitly with Shakespeare—but the fact that the most reprinted authors of poetry, drama, and fiction all remain recognizable suggests the stability of the preferences developing in the 1740s.

Although reprints were a significant influence on developing literary tastes and influences, booksellers valued canonicity and newness differently. Some booksellers had a customer base that expected new works, while others would have sold to those looking to build collections of books with proven significance. Determining how booksellers might have made decisions about investing in reprints requires an examination of the place that new works and reprints held in their publishing outputs. The

97 [Edward Ward], Little Merlin’s Cave. As it Was Lately Discover’d, by a Gentleman’s Gardener, in Maidenhead-Thicket (1737); [——], The Riddle: Or, a Paradoxical Character of an Hairy Monster, Often Found Under Holland (1737).

following table shows the number of first editions associated with the last name of a member of the book trades that appears in the imprints of more than five works of each genre between 1737 and 1749. The number of first editions in each genre is then compared to the number of times the same name appears in the imprints of all works in the genre, and finally to the number of times the name appears in imprints of all published works (including works of religion, science, and so on). As with the list of booksellers in Chapter 2, this list is inevitably imperfect, as many imprints listed in the ESTC are incomplete and many works do not provide imprints. Names in this list represent individuals listed as involved in the work, including sole- and joint-publishers, retailers, and printers.

Table 3.3 Members of the Book Trades Associated with More Than Five First Editions in the Genre and the Percentages First Editions in the Genre Represent of the Member’s Published Output in the Genre and Overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bookseller’s Name</th>
<th>Number of First Editions in the Genre</th>
<th>Percentage Works Published in the Genre that were First Editions</th>
<th>Percentage of Overall Works that were First Editions in the Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poetry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper, Thomas and Mary</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodsley, Robert</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts, James</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webb, W., J., and A.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbett, Charles</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, Jacob and Ranew</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen, William</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodd, A.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilliver, Lawton</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brindley, James</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huggonson, John</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millar, Andrew</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborn, John</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore, A.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis, William</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodfall, Henry, Henry Jr., and George</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter, Henry</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis, Charles</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodd, Mrs.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox, H. S.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathurst, Charles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robins, Thomas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkins, George</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffiths, Ralph</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookseller’s Name</td>
<td>Number of First Editions in the Genre</td>
<td>Percentage Works Published in the Genre that were First Editions</td>
<td>Percentage of Overall Works that were First Editions in the Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickinson, B.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curl, Edmund</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor, T.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read, Thomas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knapton, John and Paul</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke, J.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapelle, Henry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckland, James</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bickerton, Weaver</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettenham, James</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonson, Jacob and Richard</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stagg, John</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswald, John</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lintot, Henry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collyer, Joseph</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birt, Samuel</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astley, Thomas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Drama**

- Cooper, Thomas and Mary: 25, 59.5% (1.4%)
- Watts, John: 20, 34.5% (18.0%)
- Woodfall, Henry, Henry Jr., and George: 18, 78.3% (10.3%)
- Roberts, James: 16, 64.0% (2.6%)
- Chrichley, J.: 15, 93.8% (65.2%)
- Millar, Andrew: 12, 54.5% (3.9%)
- Dod, Benjamin: 11, 57.9% (6.7%)
- Dodsley, Robert: 9, 45.0% (2.4%)
- Corbett, Charles: 9, 47.4% (4.3%)
- Tonson, Jacob and Richard: 8, 13.1% (4.3%)
- Webb, W., J., and A.: 5, 38.5% (2.1%)
- Shuckburgh, John: 5, 20.8% (5.1%)
- Owen, William: 5, 100.0% (2.2%)

**Fiction**

- Cooper, Thomas and Mary: 39, 68.4% (2.2%)
- Robinson, Jacob and Ranew: 10, 50.0% (2.5%)
- Gardner, Thomas: 8, 61.5% (9.0%)
- Dodd, A.: 8, 57.1% (7.5%)
- Roberts, James: 7, 77.8% (1.1%)
- Hodges, James: 6, 17.1% (1.3%)
- Webb, W., J., and A.: 5, 83.3% (2.1%)
- Millar, Andrew: 5, 25.0% (1.6%)
Unsurprisingly, given its status as both the genre of literature with the most titles overall and the genre with the most new titles, new poetry was published by the greatest number of booksellers. Booksellers who published first editions of poetry tended to favor them heavily over reprints. Thirty-seven of the forty-eight whose names appeared in imprints of new poetry made new poetry more than half of their poetry output—a fact made even more impressive by the fact that the comparison is between first editions and all other editions and so matches unique titles against the possibility of many editions of a single title. The figures suggest that booksellers who published new poetry may have been more invested in that genre than booksellers who published new drama or fiction were in those genres, as it was on average a higher percentage of their total outputs. Poetry might also have been more likely to be subsidized by the author or a patron, providing additional incentive for its publication. New poetry also seems to have been something of an equalizer among booksellers, as it was published by both large booksellers, like Cooper, and small booksellers, like Gilliver.

Those who published first editions of drama and fiction made those enterprises a small percentage of their total publishing output—probably in part because of the greater expense of publishing those genres and in part because there were simply not many new works to be published. Booksellers of new drama and fiction tended to be middling to large publishing businesses, likely due to the amount of capital necessary to take the gamble on an expensive new venture. Cooperation between booksellers was also less common for new works of drama and fiction than for reprints of older works, making the number of booksellers involved fewer still.

Reprints of literature were published by a much greater number and variety of booksellers than were first editions. The following table shows the number of times booksellers’ names appear in the imprints of more than five reprinted books in a given genre of literature. As in the table above, this list is imperfect and cannot cover all involved individuals, nor are the names listed here necessarily the only name that appears in the imprint for a counted edition.
### Table 3.4 Members of the Book Trades Associated with More Than Five Reprinted Editions in the Genre and the Percentages Reprints in the Genre Represent of the Member’s Published Output in the Genre and Overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bookseller’s Name</th>
<th>Number of Reprinted Editions</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Works Published by the Bookseller in that Genre</th>
<th>Percentage of Overall Total Works Published by the Bookseller</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poetry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper, Thomas and Mary</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodsley, Robert</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonson, Jacob and Richard</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millar, Andrew</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webb, W., J., and A.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitch, Charles</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodges, James</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts, James</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lintot, Henry</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborn, John</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knapton, John and Paul</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birt, Samuel</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen, William</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, Jacob and Ranew</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbett, Charles</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodfall, Henry, Henry Jr., and George</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ware, Richard</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkins, George</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dicey, William and Cluer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astley, Thomas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathurst, Charles</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilliver, Lawton</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curl, Edmund</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stagg, John</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble, Francis and John</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke, J.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward, A.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore, A.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huggonson, John</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandler, Richard</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown, Dan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettesworth, Arthur</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drama</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonson, Jacob and Richard</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lintot, Henry</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watts, John</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitch, Charles</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookseller’s Name</td>
<td>Number of Reprinted Editions</td>
<td>Percentage of Total Works Published by the Bookseller in that Genre</td>
<td>Percentage of Overall Total Works Published by the Bookseller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuckburgh, John</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knapton, John and Paul</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feales, W.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper, Thomas and Mary</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longman, Thomas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brindley, James</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birt, Samuel</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>107.1%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, Jacob and Ranew</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodsley, Robert</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millar, Andrew</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbett, Charles</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts, James</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webb, W., J., and A.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborn, John</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dod, Benjamin</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward, A.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janys</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke, J.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettesworth, Arthur</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wotton, T.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reeve, William</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motte, B.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knaplock, H.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodges, James</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conyers, G.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astley, Thomas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodfall, Henry, Henry Jr., and George</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strahan, William and George</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fiction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bookseller’s Name</th>
<th>Number of Reprinted Editions</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Works Published by the Bookseller in that Genre</th>
<th>Percentage of Overall Total Works Published by the Bookseller</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hodges, James</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborn, John</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ware, Richard</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitch, Charles</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper, Thomas and Mary</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivington</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millar, Andrew</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astley, Thomas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longman, Thomas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browne</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brotherton</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birt, Samuel</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadows</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathurst, Charles</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookseller’s Name</td>
<td>Number of Reprinted Editions</td>
<td>Percentage of Total Works Published by the Bookseller in that Genre</td>
<td>Percentage of Overall Total Works Published by the Bookseller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, Jacob and Ranew</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonson, Jacob and Richard</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lintot, Henry</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandler, Richard</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettesworth, Arthur</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austen</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble, Francis and John</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knapton, John and Paul</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innys, William</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke, J.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brindley, James</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applebee, John</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward, A.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward, J.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright, Thomas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilde, Allington</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strahan, William</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuckburgh, John</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shewell, Thomas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutt, Sarah</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwinter, Daniel</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardner, Thomas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Booksellers who published reprints tended to have larger publishing outputs. Charles Hitch, for example, published a significant amount of reprinted poetry, drama, and fiction, although he published very few first editions of literature. As the fourth most prolific bookseller in London (according to the number of times his name appears in imprints, as reported in Chapter 2), Hitch had the means to invest in prestigious, time-tested titles. His name appears in the imprints of reprints including a number of volumes of Shakespeare, Matthew Prior’s *Poems on Several Occasions*, and Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*.99

---

A quick comparison between the lengths of lists of booksellers who published new editions and reprints of drama and fiction will show that many more firms were willing to participate reprints than new works in those genres. And those who appear in both lists of reprints and new editions of drama and fiction tended to favor reprints heavily in their output of each genre. Some of the most frequent publishers of reprints published a varied selection of works. Hodge’s reprints of fiction, for example, included editions of *Don Quixote* and *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*, while the Tonsons’ reprinted drama ranged from Jonson’s *Alchemist* to Garrick’s *Miss in Her Teens*.\(^{100}\) Reprints of drama and fiction were also published by a greater number of booksellers than reprints of poetry—especially considering the relative size of those markets. Reprints of these works would have required the resources of a larger business, both because of the expense of printing large works of fiction and because of potentially large the expense of purchasing even a fractional share in the copyright to an established popular work.

Publishing reprints of drama was an especially niche market for booksellers, as compared to either poetry or fiction. The publication of reprinted drama is exemplified by the Tonsons, who devoted a quarter of their business to it, Lintot, who dedicated a sixth of his business to it, Watts, of whose total output drama reprints were nearly a third, and Feales, who published little overall, but of whose output reprints of drama constituted 77%. Booksellers like these were responsible for the continued publication of some of the best plays of the previous two centuries, from Shakespeare to Fielding, and likely did much to maintain the market for drama while so few new plays were being written and staged.

Examining both lists of names in imprints for new and reprinted literature also demonstrates that some booksellers had clear preferences for reprints over new works. The Tonsons, Hitch, Hodges, and Ware clearly favored reprinted poetry over new; Lintot, Hitch and the Tonsons preferred reprinted drama; and Hodges, Osborn, and Ware invested heavily in reprinted fiction. The Tonsons were obviously a specialty firm, building their business on their cultivated supply of copyrights to famous works and

---

\(^{100}\) C. f. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The History of the Renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1749); Anon., *The Eight Volumes of Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy, Who Liv’d Five and Forty Years Undiscover’d at Paris*, 8 vols. (1748); Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist. A Comedy* (1739); [David Garrick], *Miss in Her Teens: Or, the Medley of Lovers. A Farce* ([1747]).
authors. But reprints of literature were also a reasonably safe investment and were often used to round out a bookseller’s list.

Reprints must be a central component of our view of literature in the 1740s. By volume alone, reprinted material cannot justifiably be ignored: reprints constituted more than one third of all poetry for sale and more than half of all drama and fiction. For booksellers, titles that could be reprinted were the goal of nearly every copyright purchase. Reprinted works were also important to readers, as those purchasing books would often have deemed them highly desirable for their collections. And for contemporary authors with ambitions of writing a popular or influential book the books most often reprinted would have been a significant source of inspiration. Any list of the most influential authors between 1737 and 1749, then, must include both those who were actively writing and publishing and those who, though dead or no longer known to be writing, continued to be published and read.

* 

Analyzing the record of literature published in the 1740s does not answer many of the questions scholars would wish to answer about eighteenth-century authorship. The prevalence of anonymous and pseudonymous publication, as well as dubious post-facto attributions mean that the names of the writers of the majority of 1740s poetry, drama, and fiction are not known.

The practical details of most authors’ lives likewise are largely unobtainable. Even when we can be reasonably certain of a work’s author, patchy or nonexistent records dictate that at best we often can only make educated guesses about their living circumstances. Often everything from where an author lived to how much money he might have lived on to who his acquaintances were remains a mystery. Extant copyright transactions indicate that few if any would have been able to earn a living from the publication of literature, but the payment records are neither numerous enough nor consistent enough to provide anything like a “typical” amount that writers might have been paid. Assuming that writers would have needed a second income we can only speculate about other means of support. Those with little or no inherited money would have needed to earn money through other activities, but how many pursued other
writing jobs (for example, writing for periodicals) remains a mystery. Some had patrons, though there is no way to be sure how common such arrangements were, or how lucrative. Others used their writing to gain leverage for better positions: in the 1770s, for example, poet and translator Robert Patton used his work to obtain a preferment in the church.\textsuperscript{101} Presumably teachers, members of the clergy, those in legal and government positions could all have benefited from the publication of a work that proved their intellect or flattered their superiors. With such varied possibilities the best we might be able to say is that there was nothing like a 1740s typical author.

Personal accounts of writers’ thoughts on writing are often even harder to come by than the details of their socioeconomic backgrounds. We therefore know little about why authors were writing. Presumably some enjoyed the practice. Possibly some wrote to fulfill a need for self expression, though there is little to prove that 1740s authors associated their work with anything like the spontaneous overflow of emotion associated with writers later in the century. Some wrote out of political motivation, but even when their views are clear we often have no way to know what they hoped to be the outcome of their publications. Did writers hope to shape their culture? Did many wish for personal notoriety? Did they receive support from those they were championing? We do not know.

In order to begin to understand the circumstances of 1740s writers we need to discard the assumptions our own perspectives make us inclined to hold. Accounts of the period focus almost exclusively on a few exceptional new books and their authors, but the scope of authorship was much larger and more diverse than those chosen few. Anonymous works flooded the market. And many of the most influential attributed authors of the period were not alive and actively publishing. Reprints demonstrate the significance of previous English authors to 1740s readers and booksellers and their desire to read and sell works proven to be of lasting quality.

As much as modern critics might wish to believe that a concept of authorship was developing amongst writers, booksellers, and readers in the mid-eighteenth century, little definitive evidence exists to

support that theory. Most scholars seem to assume that a writer would want public credit for his or her work, as writers today almost universally do. The predominance of anonymity in books published between 1737 and 1749 suggests that if writers gained glory and pride from their work its effects were often very differently expressed in the mid-eighteenth century than they are today. Booksellers sometimes even stipulated in copyright agreements that they would have the right to use the writer’s name on the title page of the published book, as Nourse did with authors like Joseph Shaw, Theodore Barlow, and William Lewis. An author’s desire to publish anonymously or under a pseudonym did not necessarily correspond to a desire to protect themselves or to remain unknown to their fans: in a letter to Dodsley, John Gilbert Cooper gave the bookseller permission to give his name to any who inquired, though in the same letter Cooper also passes along instructions to the printer for the use and placement of his pseudonym, Pliaretus. The distinction Cooper drew between the distribution of his name in print and through Dodsley’s personal communications is just one example of the many somewhat mysterious and highly personal contemporary constructions of authorship we must accept in any study of the 1740s.

**

Analyzing the books and writers most often reprinted can provide insight into the types of works booksellers and authors seem to have preferred to sell and write, but it does not help to explain what readers encountered in those works or what they might have appreciated about them: lists of published titles cannot indicate why particular types of works might have been favored. In Chapters 4 and 5 I will investigate the style and content of the published works, beginning with the genre that accounted for the greatest percentage of literary production: poetry.

---

Chapter 4
The Dissemination and Reception of Poetry

A comprehensive characterization of 1740s poetry requires answering a few large questions: What forms and content were common in new and reprinted poems published between 1737 and 1749? How “literary” was the new poetry of the 1740s? Upon what standards and common cultural backgrounds were newly published poems based? And how much did each of these factors change across the period? In this chapter I will give a sense of the range of options available to poetry readers between 1737 and 1749.

The long-held standard view is that mid-eighteenth century poetry is a departure from satire, topicality, Opposition politics, and all things Pope. John Sitter, for example, argues that post-Walpole poets mounted large-scale, intentional campaigns to distance themselves from politics. Sitter also identifies a change in poetry and philosophy in the 1740s, arguing that Young and Akenside were departing from Pope’s model of long-form poetry in their preference for the imaginative, solitary voices, and introspection. And in his analysis of Joseph Warton’s and William Collins’s work, Ronald Paulson argues that the poets consciously attempted to break free of Pope’s didacticism by emphasizing imagination and creative description, though he finds a continuation of Pope’s syntactical and moral styles in Gray.

In addition to believing mid-century poetry to be based in fancy, critics also argue that it demonstrates the strains of nature and rural life that would be picked up by the Romantic poets. Eric Rothstein asserts that “later eighteenth-century poetry” (by which he refers to all poetry between 1720 and 1780) is characterized by what he describes as an attitude of fellow-feeling and sympathy that he finds expressed in what he identifies as the common forms of odes, elegies, comprehensive satire, and topographical poems. Rothstein’s version of mid-century poetry is intellectual and philosophical, designed to express a sense of ethics and well-meaning hopes for or reflective contemplation of man’s place in the universe. His point holds for the poets he examines—Thomson, Pope, Johnson, Gray, Collins,

1 John Sitter, Loneliness, pp. 107 and 161.
Goldsmith, and MacPherson—though he admits that changes “appear more strikingly in ambitious poems” than in everyday poetry and collections.\(^3\) Marshall Brown’s view of the period is similar: he calls the poetry of Gray, Thomson, Collins, and Young an “urbane sublime” that can be identified by soaring, artificial rhetoric and ability to treat mundane subjects with awe.\(^4\) Certainly these are fair assessments of the poetry under examination. But readers in the 1740s would not have recognized in Rothstein’s description most of the poetry available to them.

Modern critics’ views have mostly been based on just a few poets such as Pope, Young, Gray, and Collins. Few of the most published poets and poems of the 1740s remain popular in critical discussions of the eighteenth century, including many of those identified in Chapter 3 as appearing in the most imprints (like Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, James Miller, and McNamara Morgan). Ashley Marshall has shown that the highly topical poetry such poets wrote was common throughout the 1740s, and in fact across the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.\(^5\) Anonymous poetry was even more common, accounting for more than half of the published poetry, according to the analysis in Chapter 3, and remains almost entirely unstudied. Therefore, while not neglecting the works of authors considered important today (whose work was often, though not always, significant in contemporary publishing markets), I will emphasize the poems and writers that seem, on the basis of factors like the numbers of published editions and references in periodicals and other works, to have been most central to 1740s readers.

Equally important to the understanding the content and style of 1740s poetry is an analysis of the period’s critical attitudes and approaches. How was poetry received by readers and contemporary critics? How were works evaluated? What features of poetry were most esteemed by readers, which works best displayed those qualities, and how did poets incorporate such influences into their own work? Of course, we know little about how most individuals reacted to particular texts as they read them privately, and any


claims about contemporary reader reception can mostly be educated guesses and may yield gross oversimplifications. But while personal reading experiences are impossible to trace, publicly proclaimed opinions of literature abound. The quality of expression and the merit of the content found in works of poetry were discussed and sometimes hotly debated in the 1740s. Writers published discussions of literary style, critiques of new editions and translations, and analyses of the accuracy of the philosophies expressed by other poets. This chapter provides a survey and examination of reviews and notices of verse in prefaces and annotations published with works of poetry, in periodicals like Gentleman’s Magazine and History of the Works of the Learned, and in critical books and pamphlets like Henry Pemberton’s Observations on Poetry, Especially the Epic: Occasioned by the Late Poem Upon Leonidas (1738) and Jeremiah Dyson’s An Epistle to the Rev. Mr. Warburton. Occasioned by His Treatment of the Author of the Pleasures of Imagination (1744). I also study contemporary literary debates—that is, authors’ responses to each other’s work both in direct criticism and in parodies, like the poem written in response to Are These Things So? (1740). And I compare works commonly reviewed with those published in the greatest number of editions, as well as those published in different price ranges in order to determine the relationship between the “high” literature upheld by critics and reviewers and the works most sought after by the book-purchasing public.

To provide a thorough but focused view of published 1740s poetry, I examine both separate poems and collections of poetry, as well as general criticism and responses to those poems. My goal is to determine what influences were driving the style and content of published poetry. The sections that follow therefore focus on poets’ possible material and aesthetic influences. The first section examines the practical concerns dictated by the bookselling business. How did writers navigate booksellers’ preferences and publication practices, audience expectations, and the demands of the price and format of their works? Section II studies the impact of contemporary culture on 1740s poetry. How much of the published poetry was directly topical? Which events and people were most discussed in poetry, and how were they commonly presented? And the final section analyzes poets’ stated and implied sources of aesthetic inspiration. Which historical and contemporary writers are poets citing in prefaces, and how are
they responding to those writers’ works? What are the trends in diction, style, and format? How consciously “literary” is the published poetry?

I. Practical Influences: Possibilities and Limitations for Purchasing Poetry

Booksellers’ concerns about the effects of format, length, and print quality on the financial viability of their wares not only created practical limitations for poets as they conceived and attempted to sell their work, but also affected readers’ access to the genre, as their budgets would need to allow them to pay relatively steep prices for often small books and as their expectations for the genre were shaped by what was on the market. In this section I will give an overview of the selection of poetry sold in 1740s bookshops, demonstrating the connections between the content, format, and price of published poetry, as well as the different selections offered by a few of the largest purveyors of poetry in order to speculate about the considerations that would face a poetry purchaser in the 1740s.

What would a reader have needed to pay for poetry? Poetry was expensive for its typically small amount of content, and few Londoners could have afforded to purchase it with any regularity. As I showed in table 2.3 of Chapter 2, the smallest common price for a work of poetry was 6d, though one could occasionally find works for less (for example, the unusually inexpensive half-sheet political satire, *The D-v-l and His Deputies*, sold for 1d). For 6d one could have bought a small poem like the full-sheet broadside, pro-Walpole ballad, *The Funeral of Faction*; George Ogle’s 10-page quarto *The Third Epistle of the First Book of Horace Imitated*; a cynical political 8-page ballad in folio, *Plain Thoughts in Plain Language*; or the 32-page octavo satire, *Woman in Miniature*. Although 6d might seem a small price to pay, it would have been a significant purchase for, say, a London tradesman living on less than one pound

---

6 Anon., *The D-v-l and His Deputies. A New Song to an Old Tune* (1747).
7 Anon., *The Funeral of Faction* (T. Cooper: London, 1741); George Ogle, Esq., *The Third Epistle of the First Book of Horace Imitated* (1738); [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], *Plain Thoughts in Plain Language. A New Ballad* (1743); and [A Student of Oxford], *Woman in Miniature. A Satire.* (1742).
per week. The investment seems stranger still considering what one would get for one’s money: most of these short poems can be read and appreciated in just a few minutes, and most would not have held lasting appeal given its typical lack of depth (for humorous tales) or connections to current events.

The least expensive poetry would also have been a gamble in quality if one were unable to read the work before purchasing it, as most 6d poems provided few hints of their authorship. Poems at this price published anonymously or under a pseudonym were more than five times more common than attributed works at the same cost. Attributed works included responses to other published works, like Mary Collier’s *The Woman’s Labour: An Epistle to Mr. Stephen Duck; In Answer to His Late Poem, Called The Thresher’s Labour*, those extracted from elsewhere, like *Songs in Henry and Emma, Or, The Nut Brown Maid: A New Musical Drama, Taken from Prior: As Perform’d at the Theatre Royal in Covent-Garden*, as well as one-off poems that might politically benefit their authors, like Stephen Duck’s *An Ode on the Battle of Dettingen*, or Sir Charles Hanbury Williams’s tribute to the Duke of Cumberland’s mentor in *An Ode to the Right Honourable Stephen Poyntz, Esq.* But for most cheap poetry readers would have had to rely on recommendations or their own judgment rather than the author’s identity or status to determine whether the expense was justified.

As the poetry became more expensive readers would have had more frequent indications of its origins. Poetry sold for 1s included many attributed works, like the 30-page quarto of Richard Glover’s *London: or, The Progress of Commerce*, a 10-page folio of Pope’s *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight. A Dialogue Something like Horace*, and, for lucky or a smart shoppers, a 185-page octavo of Elizabeth Rowe’s *Poetical Works*—by far the longest attributed work in the price range. But even in the

---

8 By Peter Lindert and Jeffrey G. Williamson’s updates to Joseph Massie’s 1759 rough estimates, more than one-third of the English population would have lived at or below a subsistence level of £20 per annum, and another fifty percent lived on between £20 and £50 per annum. Peter H. Lindert and Jeffrey G. Williamson, “Revising England’s Social Tables,” *Explorations in Economic History* 19.4 (1982), 385–408.

9 Mary Collier, *The Woman’s Labour: An Epistle to Mr. Stephen Duck; In Answer to His Late Poem, Called The Thresher’s Labour* (1739); Matthew Prior, *Songs in Henry and Emma, Or, The Nut Brown Maid: A New Musical Drama, Taken from Prior* (1749); Stephen Duck, *An Ode on the Battle of Dettingen. Humbly Inscrib’d to the King* (1743); and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, *An Ode to the Right Honourable Stephen Poyntz, Esq.* (1746).

1s range works were still more than twice as likely to be anonymous (like the separately published nights of Young’s *Night Thoughts*, Samuel Boyse’s *Deity: A Poem*, and Smollett’s *Advice: A Satire*) or pseudonymous (like McNamara Morgan’s popular satires and the *Foundling Hospital for Wit* collections) than attributed.\(^{11}\) 1s works were typically a bit longer than those sold for 6d, and in my opinion, were usually a bit higher quality in aesthetic terms, but whether those advantages warranted doubling the price is impossible to determine (though a quick survey of admittedly shaky reprint counts indicates that 1s works of poetry were more likely to be reprinted than 6d works).

More expensive works followed similar patterns, with attribution more common but by no means standard in pricier poetry. Attributions are found on the title pages of less than half of the poetry sold for 1s 6d (the highest price typically advertised on title pages). So, for three times the amount charged for a broadside ballad one could purchase the anonymous 64-page octavo illustrated poem in praise of Coven Garden, *Tom K----g’s: or, the Paphian Grove With the Various Humours of Covent Garden*, the pseudonymous 44-page quarto *The New Dunciad: As It was Found in the Year MDCCXLI. With the Illustrations of Scriblerus, and Notes Variorum*, or an attributed, previously-published work like James Thomson’s 81-page octavo or Elizabeth Singer Rowe’s 98-page octavo *History of Joseph.*\(^{12}\) And of course those with fat pocketbooks could have spent much more, as booksellers supplied fancy, expensive editions of poetry to collectors and friends of the authors. Of the poetry that lists prices on its title pages, the most expensive of the period was a 2-volume octavo *The Poetical Works of the Reverend Edward Young* (1741) that sold even before *Night Thoughts* was published and well before that work was attributed to Young, at an advertised 9s.\(^{13}\)

Although readers would have preferred not to pay exorbitant prices for poetry, the least expensive

\(^{11}\) For anonymous works see the nights of Young’s *Night Thoughts* published by Dodsley beginning in 1742; [Samuel Boyse], *Deity: A Poem* (1740); [Tobias Smollett], *Advice: A Satire* (1746). McNamara Morgan’s satires *The Causidicade* (1743), *The Triumvirade: Or, Broad-Bottomry* ([1745]), and *The ‘Piscopade* (1748) were each attributed to “Porcupinus Pelagius,” while the annual editions of the *Foundling Hospital for Wit* were attributed to “Timothy Silence.”

\(^{12}\) [James Barber], *Tom K----g’s: Or, the Paphian Grove with the Various Humours of Covent Garden, the Theatre, L---d M----ton’s, &c.* (1738); [Alexander Pope], *The New Dunciad: As It Was Found in the Year 1741. With the Illustrations of Scriblerus, and Notes Variorum* (1742); James Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence* (1748); [Elizabeth Singer Rowe], *The History of Joseph* (1737).

\(^{13}\) Edward Young, *The Poetical Works of the Reverend Edward Young, LL.D* (1741).
formats were not the most common formats. As I demonstrated in Figure 1.8 of Chapter 1, broadsides were the least common format for printed poetry, even when full-, half-, and quarter-sheet broadsides are combined to comprise around 14% of the published works of poetry. But based on their comparatively low prices (less than 6d), the poetry purchase that might come closest to being a casual expense would have been the broadside. What content would readers have encountered in these works? Most poetry broadsides sold in the 1740s were humorous or topical songs and ballads: works like *Here’s Coming and Going; Or, Going and Coming: Or, Hey for Litchfield Races! To the Tune of The King Shall Enjoy His Own Again*, a lighthearted song encouraging Britons to unite in support of the constitution.14 Half-sheet broadsides like *Fair Margaret’s Misfortunes* and quarter-sheet broadsides like *The English Sailors Resolution to Fight the Spaniards* were more common than full-sheet, and covered similar topics.15 The vast majority of broadside poetry was unattributed. Only a small handful of broadsides published during the thirteen-year period bore their authors’ names, generally for works like *A Memorial for Britons. Verses Written by J. Duick, During the Course of the Rebellion . . .* that benefited from their authors’ connection to the topics and events covered.16 The value of broadside poetry therefore would have come almost entirely from its content, proving that 1740s poetry readers were not necessarily high-brow intellectuals or collectors of literature, and that poetry’s lighter and more immediate assets were appreciated.

Though also large, poetry printed in folio did not follow the low-brow trends of broadside publication. As the most common format, accounting for more than thirty percent of all published poetry, folio covered a wide range of works. Poems published in folio include the short tales and entertainments more typical of broadside publication, like the moralizing *Adultery A-La-Mode*, but more common were odes and personal tributes like *A Poem on the Death of the Honourable the Lady Elizabeth Hastings* and

---

14 Anon., *Here’s Coming and Going; Or, Going and Coming: Or, Hey for Litchfield Races! To the Tune of The King Shall Enjoy His Own Again* ([1743]).
15 Anon., *Fair Margaret’s Misfortunes: Or, Sweet William’s Frightful Dreams on His Wedding Night. With the Sudden Death and Burial of Those Noble Lovers* ([1740]) and Anon., *The English Sailors Resolution to Fight the Spaniards* ([1739]).
16 J. Duick, *A Memorial for Britons* ([1746]).
topical satires, including dozens of editions of satires by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and James Miller. Folio was a prestigious format, and so was often used for more literary works like Pope’s singly published Horatian imitations and Samuel Johnson’s London. Yet in spite of its elevated status, only around twenty percent of folio poetry was attributed, with anonymous works ranging from incendiary attacks to philosophical musings.

Similarly lofty, slightly longer poetry was published in quarto, comprising twenty percent of the market. Poems published in quarto were often aimed at a highly-cultured and literary-minded audience. The list of 1740s quarto poetry includes many religious and philosophical poems like the separate parts of Young’s Night Thoughts, a pseudonymously published poem on the virtues of contemplation entitled The Retirement. An Ethic Poem, or philosophical contemplations of nature like the anonymous Nature a Poem. Satires like many of McNamara Morgan’s and Thomas Newcomb’s poems were also commonly printed in quarto. Though more likely to be attributed than in folio, only around one-third of quarto poetry listed its author’s name on its title page, and nearly half appeared with no indication of authorship at all.

Next to folio, the most popular format for publishing poetry was octavo: a quarter of all printed poetic works were in that size. Unsurprisingly, octavo was preferred for longer works. Many editions of poets’ collected works, like the works of Pope and Prior, and many miscellanies, like the annual digest of topical satires, The Foundling Hospital for Wit, were printed in octavo. Also common were tales and burlesques (including an edition of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales, Tom K----g’s: Or, the Paphian Grove

---

17 Anon., Adultery A-La-Mode. An Epistle from Lady Traffick to Sir John (1746); Anon., A Poem on the Death of the Honourable the Lady Elizabeth Hastings (1740); c.f. [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], An Ode to the Honourable H----y F--x, on the Marriage of the Du----s of M------r to H----s---y, Esq. (1746) and [James Miller], Are These Things So? (1740).
18 [Samuel Johnson], London: A Poem, in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal (1738).
19 [William Major], The Retirement. An Ethic Poem. (1747); [James Fortesque], Nature a Poem: Being an Attempt Towards a Vindication of Providence, in the Seemingly Most Exceptionable Things of the Natural World (1747).
20 C.f. [McNamara Morgan], “Porcupinus Pelagius”, The ‘Piscopade (1748) and [Thomas Newcomb], A Supplement to One Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty-Eight. Not Written by Mr. Pope (J. Roberts: London, 1738).
21 Alexander Pope, The Sixth Epistle of the First Book of Horace Imitated (1738); Matthew Prior, Miscellaneous Works of His Late Excellency Matthew Prior Esq; Consisting of Poems on Several Occasions, ed. Adrian Drift (1740); c.f. “Timothy Silence,” The Foundling Hospital for Wit (1749).
with the Various Humours of Covent Garden and Gay’s Fables) and lengthy philosophical works (for example, Akenside’s *Pleasures of the Imagination* and some editions of Thomson’s *Seasons* and Young’s *Night Thoughts*). These lengthier works almost always were attributed to their authors, likely because the format included so much poetry that had previously been published and were now marketed on the basis of their reputations.

The smallest common format was also the least used: duodecimo works accounted for fourteen percent of the poetry printed. Like octavo, duodecimo was used to publish longer works, which included collections of songs like *The Syren*, miscellanies like *The Muse in Good Humour*, authors’ collected works like Prior’s *Poems on Several Occasions*, and lengthy single poems like Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Richard Glover’s *Leonidas*. Of all published formats of poetry, duodecimo is the only form in which works were more likely to be attributed than anonymous: around fifty-seven percent of all duodecimo poetry was attributed, suggesting that the more of an author’s work readers were expected to purchase, the more important the author’s identity became.

Most booksellers published at least some poetry, but readers with money to spend would have needed to know which booksellers to visit to find the works that matched their interests and budgets. As I established in chapter 2, booksellers’ lists varied greatly, and with those variations in the amount and content of poetry they sold came variations in format. For example, Thomas and Mary Cooper, who appeared in more poetry imprints than any other business, held clear preferences for larger formats. Forty-five percent of the poetry bearing the Coopers’ name was printed in folio. The preference for folio reflects the Coopers’ preference for new fiction. Around two-thirds of the poetry published with the Coopers’ name in the imprint was new, including anonymously published satires like James Miller’s *Are These*...

---

22 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, in the Original, From the Most Authentic Manuscripts; and as They are Turn’d into Modern Language by Mr. Dryden, Mr. Pope, and Other Eminent Hands* (1737); [James Barber], *Tom K----g’s: Or, the Paphian Grove*; John Gay, *Fables* (1737); [Mark Akenside], *The Pleasures of Imagination* (1744); c.f. James Thomson, *The Seasons* (1744) and [Edward Young], *The Complaint: or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, & Immortality* (1747).

Things So? and Pope’s *First Epistle of the Second Book Horace Imitated*, as well as pastorals, epistles, and odes like *An Ode to Mankind: Address’d to the Prince of Wales*. Imprints of the Coopers’ folio poetry more commonly bore the Coopers’ name alone than in other formats, which they were more likely to publish alongside other booksellers. After folio, the Coopers favored quarto, which accounted for thirty-five percent of the poetry that bore their names. In quarto the Coopers sold satires like McNamara Morgan’s *The Triumvirade: Or, Broad-Bottomry* and Pope’s *The Dunciad, in Four Books*, as well as serious poems like *Nature. A Poem*. Most of the rest of the Coopers’ poetry output (around eighteen percent) was printed in octavo, and included both poems printed for the Coopers themselves (like John Armstrong’s *Oeconomy of Love: A Poetical Essay*), and poetry printed for another bookseller and “sold by” the Coopers (like William Somervile’s *The Chace*). And although their role as trade publishers led them to publish many highly topical works and many anonymous poems, broadsides were a negligible part of their output.

Readers might have visited Robert Dodsley’s shop for poetry similar to (and sometimes the same as) that sold by his frequent associates, the Coopers. Dodsley showed a preference for larger formats similar to that of the Coopers, though his percentages of folio and quarto poetry were roughly the reverse of theirs (thirty-three percent folio and forty-five percent quarto), and octavo was, like the Coopers, around eighteen percent of his poetry output. Those looking for high-quality new poetry likely would have visited Dodsley’s shop first: his poetry list demonstrates his connections to many of the best-known and up-and-coming writers of the 1740s. In folio he published Pope’s *Universal Prayer*, William Whitehead’s *An Essay on Ridicule*, and Johnson’s *London*; in quarto his name appeared in the imprints of the separately published Nights of Young’s *Night Thoughts*, George Ogle’s Horation imitations and his

---

24 [James Miller], *Are These Things So?* (1740); Alexander Pope, *One Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Eight* (1738); [Alexander Pope], *First Epistle of the Second Book Horace Imitated* (1737); [Robert Nugent, First Earl of Nugent], *An Ode to Mankind: Address’d to the Prince of Wales* (1741).

25 [McNamara Morgan], “Porcupinus Pelagius”, *The Triumvirade* (1745); [Alexander Pope], “Scriblerus”, *The Dunciad, in Four Books. Printed According to the Complete Copy Found in the Year 1742* (1742); [James Fortesque], *Nature, a Poem* (1747).

very expensive 3s Gualtherus and Griselda: Or, The Clerk of Oxford’s Tale. From Boccace, Petrarch, and Chaucer; and in octavo Dodsley’s published poetry included the second volume of The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq. Dodsley also appears to have played with the effect of size on a work’s marketability, as he published some poetry in multiple formats. In 1744, for example, Dodsley published Mark Akenside’s Pleasures of the Imagination in both an attributed 140-page octavo and an anonymous 125-page quarto.

Like the Coopers and Dodsley, trade publisher James Roberts primarily published in folio, quarto, and octavo; the list of poetry with imprints bearing Roberts’ name was roughly fifty-one percent folio, twenty-eight percent octavo, and twenty percent quarto. Poetry was only around ten and a half percent of the total number of works associated with Roberts, and the titles represented in that category favored new titles that were mostly lighthearted and humorous poems or moral. Roberts’ folio poetry included general satires like the anonymous Diseases of Bath and Progress of Physic, and poems praising individuals like Stephen Duck’s The Vision. A Poem on the Death of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Caroline and Joseph Turner’s An Epistle to Dr. Young; quarto included literary humor (Plain Truth, or Downright Dunstable and Pamela: Or, the Fair Impostor), as well as topical and didactic poems; and octavo included a few collections of poetry as well as lengthy moral and didactic poems like Edward Baynard’s Health, a Poem and Samuel Boyse’s anonymous Diety, a Poem. Though their preferences for content varied somewhat, the shared preference for folio, quarto, and octavo between prolific publishers like

27 [Alexander Pope], “The Author of the Essay on Man”, The Universal Prayer (1738); William Whitehead, An Essay on Ridicule (1743); [Samuel Johnson], London: A Poem, in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal (1738); e.g. [Edward Young], The Complaint. Or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, & Immortality (1742); e.g. George Ogle, The Eighth Epistle of the First Book of Horace Imitated (1739); George Ogle, Gualtherus and Griselda: Or, the Clerk of Oxford’s Tale. From Boccace, Petrarch, and Chaucer (1739); Alexander Pope, The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq vol. II: Containing His Epistles (1739); Alexander Pope, The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq, vol. III pt. I: Containing the Dunciad (1743).


29 Anon., The Diseases of Bath. A Satire, Unadorn’d with a Frontispiece (1737); [Ashley Cowper], The Progress of Physic (1743); Stephen Duck, The Vision. A Poem on the Death of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Caroline (1737); Joseph Turner, An Epistle to Dr. Young (1738); Anon., Plain Truth, or Downright Dunstable. A Poem. Containing the Author’s Opinion of the Sale of Poetic and Prose Performances (1740); “J. W.”, Pamela: Or, the Fair Impostor (1744); Edward Baynard, Health, a Poem. Shewing How to Procure, Preserve, and Restore it. To which is Annex’d The Doctor’s Decade (1736 [1737]); [Samuel Boyse] Deity: a Poem (1739).
Cooper, Roberts, and Dodsley suggests that those formats would have been favored by the customers of booksellers with large and diverse outputs: these were general-purpose formats.

More specialized booksellers often had more extreme preferences for particular formats. W. Webb’s published poetry, for example, was almost entirely composed of satiric poems and topical ballads, which he published primarily in folio (nearly sixty-four percent of his output, including many of Charles Hanbury Williams’ satires and poems offering political commentary like *A New Bloody Ballad on the Bloody Battle at Dettingen*). The rest of Webb’s poetry offerings were thirty percent octavo (used to print collections like *The New Ministry* and annual editions of *The Foundling Hospital for Wit*); a scant six percent quarto, used for a few humorous tales and satires; and a single poem, *The Patriots Motion*, in broadside.

Broadside poetry publication tended to be the result of such specialized interests. William and Cleur Dicey, whose small bookselling operation resulted in their names being in only twenty-one imprints between 1737 and 1748, published an even more specialized selection of poetry. Of the twelve works of poetry the Diceys published, nine were either full-sheet or half-sheet broadsides, representing tales and ballads like *Pretty Kate of Windsor: or, the Miller’s Daughter*. The remaining three were octavo and duodecimo collections of similar tales, including *Robin Hood’s Garland*. T. Davis appeared in the imprints of only nine works between 1742 and 1745, which included five works of poetry, four of which were broadside ballads like *Beef and Butt Beer, Against Mum and Pumpernicle. H—n—r Scrubs, or, a Bumper to Old England Huzza*. Broad trends in broadside publication are impossible to trace, as only around seventeen percent of broadsides listings in the ESTC bear any bookseller’s name, but these

---

30 C. f. [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], *S——s and J——l. A New Ballad* (1743); Anon., *A New Bloody Ballad on the Bloody Battle at Dettingen: Printed in Bloody Characters* (1743).
31 C. f. Anon., *The New Ministry: Containing a Collection of all the Satyrical Poems, Songs, &c.; Since the Beginning of 1742* (1742); “Timothy Silence,” *The Foundling Hospital, for Wit. Intended for the Reception and Preservation of such Brats of Wit and Humour, Whose Parents Chuse to Drop Them* (1749); Anon., *The Patriots Motion; or, the Wise Men of Gotham* (1741).
32 Anon., *Pretty Kate of Windsor: or, the Miller’s Daughter* (1747).
33 Anon., *Robin Hood’s Garland. Being a Compleat History of All the Notable and Merry Exploits Perform’d by Him and His Men on Divers Occasions* ([1740]).
34 Anon., *Beef and Butt Beer, Against Mum and Pumpernicle. H—n—r Scrubs, Or, a Bumper to Old England Huzza* (1742).
examples suggest that they were a niche part of the market, favored by booksellers with no particular
devotion to poetry or other forms of literature.

The booksellers most enduringly associated with literary publication, the Tonsons, published an
unusual amount of small-format poetic works, reflecting the firms’ preference for reprinted classics.
Fifty-three percent of the poetry bearing the Tonson name in its imprint was published in duodecimo—a
format favored by few other booksellers. The Tonsons’ duodecimo works included editions of many
classic works from previous centuries, like Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Ovid’s *Art of Love*, Dryden’s *Fables,*
and Dryden’s translation of *The Works of Virgil.*35 And, though most of the poetry the Tonsons published
in duodecimo were the typical longer books, not all followed that pattern: John Philips’ *Cyder* (72 pages)
and the anonymous *The Dispensary* (84 pages) surprisingly were both published in the small format.36
The next smallest common format, octavo, was the Tonsons’ next favorite, accounting for nearly twenty-
eight percent of the works of poetry published under their imprint. The Tonsons favored octavo for
collected works like Gay’s *Fables* and the works of Young and Thomas Parnell, as well as competing
editions of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain’d* (both of which the Tonsons had previously published in
duodecimo).37 The small amount of quarto the Tonsons published (nineteen percent of their total poetry)
was reserved for single works, including multiple editions of Milton’s *L’Allegro.*38 Surprisingly, the
Tonson’s up-scale bookselling business did not publish any works in folio, despite that format’s common
use for expensive editions of significant works.

Differences in format and price were of great significance to book-buyers. Just as readers today
must decide whether to buy a favorite author’s book when it’s new and in hardcover, wait for an

(1747); John Dryden, *Fables Antient and Modern; Translated into Verse from Homer, Ovid, Boccace, and Chaucer:*
John Dryden (1748).
36 [John Philips], *Cyder. A Poem. In Two Books* (1744); [Samuel Garth], *The Dispensary. A Poem. In Six*
*Canto’s* (1741).
37 John Gay, *Fables. By the Late Mr. Gay* (1737); Edward Young, *The Poetical Works of the Reverend Edward*
Young (1741); Thomas Parnell, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1747); John Milton, *Paradise Lost. A Poem, in Twelve*
*Books* (1741); John Milton, *Paradise Regain’d. A Poem, in Four Books. To Which is Added Samson Agonistes; and*
*Poems Upon Several Occasions. With a Tractate of Education* (1742).
expensive paperback, or purchase a digital edition, 1740s booksellers’ customers were aware of the effect of physical production of poetry on its cost. A letter from William Shenstone to Richard Jago illustrates the impact format could have on the distribution of poetry: “There is a poem of this season, called, The Pleasures of Imagination, worth your reading,” Shenstone writes, “but it is an expensive quarto; if it comes out in a less size, I will bring it with me.”

Booksellers, authors, and editors had to be mindful of readers’ practical concerns. Price and value were used as incentives and justification for buying particular works. Within Laugh Upon Laugh the author humorously reminds readers of the bargain they received on his previous poem on the gout: “I lately cur’d you of the Gout; / At least I chalk’d the Method out / For you to cure your selves if willing; / And you’d all that for One poor Shilling: / Pounds it was worth; and so you’ll find it.” In his preface to The Aviary, a large collection of nearly fifteen hundred songs, the writer explains the editor’s strategy for moderating the work’s price: “by contriving his Page so as to contain two Columns, he has brought the Quantity of two ordinary Pages into one; and by placing the Songs themselves in Alphabetical Order, he has rendered an Index, which in this Collection would have swelled to some Sheets, entirely useless.”

An advertisement prefixed to Plain Truth, or Downright Dunstable, a satirical commentary on the state of poetry and publication, explains the author’s decisions regarding the poem’s format:

The Author of this Poem, having at first intended (according to the present custom) to have publish’d it in the Folio size, as herein mentioned, did nevertheless upon second Thought resolve it into the Quarto; there being a sufficiency of Matter for that Purpose, not inclining (according to Use) to spin it out too far in the printing part, lest the Purchaser might so judge it over-dear.

---

41 Anon., Preface to The Aviary: Or, Magazine of British Melody. Consisting of a Collection of One Thousand Three Hundred and Forty Four Songs, With Titles of the Principal Tunes Prefixed ([1745]).
42 Anon., Advertisement to Plain Truth, Or Downright Dunstable.
This tongue-in-cheek commentary on poetry and poet’s concerns is continued within the poem itself, where the narrator explains his distress at the lack of value offered in the poetry at booksellers’ stores: “In Pamphlet-Shop a Poem lay, / On a poor Subject as I thought, / It could not be by many bought. / Besides, so short, not forty Lines, / The poet sure on this ne’er dines. / Six Pence, said I, for two such Sheets!” He was surely not alone in his indignation at the expense of poetry. Readers would have required strong incentive to buy such expensive, short works.

The even higher prices of longer works required further justification, and their prefaces and advertisements offered similar justification, and were perhaps used to convince readers to buy the works they were skimming in booksellers’ shops, much like summaries and critical praise printed on the back covers of books today. For example, in the preface to *The Cupid. A Collection of Love Songs* the editor apologizes for publishing yet another collection of songs, but argues that his is different from the others on the market because of its focused audience and design. And in his *Poems on Several Occasions* Thomas Gilbert admits that he believes “this Book is better than any of this Kind, that has been published since Mr. Pope’s Death (the Pleasures of Imagination being printed before, if I am not mistaken).” Poetry purchasers required encouragement.

**II. Current Events: Topicality in Published Poetry**

As the demonstrated popularity and content of folio poetry in Section I proves, a large percentage of the poetry published between 1737 and 1749 was deeply rooted in its historical context. Major political and military events occupied 1740s readers’ and writers’ minds. The general election in 1741 sparked heated debates on the most appropriate priorities for the electorate. The divisions between Tories and Whigs, and the divisions within the Whig party itself, and in particular Walpole’s controversial rule and his 1742 resignation provided ample fodder for discussion and argument in verse. And, though sometimes less

---

politically charged, poems also examined and chronicled events surrounding the War of the Austrian Succession. Admiral Vernon securing the naval victory at Portobello and King George II leading his troops to a victory at the 1743 Battle of Dettingen could not pass without mention, nor could the legitimacy of the need for British involvement in the battle be universally accepted. When the war ended in 1748 the nation’s poets may have felt obligated to record and analyze the fallout of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. And battles in Britain were no less poetry-worthy. The 1745 rebellion was much derided by the nation’s poets. Topical poetry covering these and other subjects ranged from lively anonymous ballads and drinking songs to complex satires and philosophical ruminations. Many of the most published writers of new poetry—like Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, James Miller, and McNamara Morgan—primarily wrote on current events. In this section, I will provide an overview of the nature of topicality in 1740s verse, as well as the writers and styles of poetry most devoted to these contemporary discussions.

Previous discussions of topicality in mid-century poetry have focused on Walpole’s impact on the press, arguing that groups of hack writers were organized both for and against the Prime Minister in a battle over control of his image. Bertrand Goldgar, for example, has demonstrated that a select group of elite writers used literature and the periodical press to mount a large-scale campaign to sway public opinion against Walpole.46 Tone Sundt Urstad argues that Walpole’s supporters created a codified system of words and phrases they then used to support the Great Man.47 My purpose here is not to contest what has, I think, been effectively proven about the means writers used to negotiate these political debates. Rather, I am interested in impact, if any, that political poetry had on the 1740s market for literature. How much were politics a presence in pamphlet- and book-length poetry across the period, and how similar in style and tone was political poetry to the other works being sold?

First, a basic point: topical poetry was common throughout the 1740s (and, I would wager, most periods). Discussion of current events in poetry did not begin or end with Walpole, and, though a popular

---

subject, even while in office his merits were not the only matter under debate. In the literary marketplace this was far from an age of Walpole.

In the beginning of the period, discussion of topical events in poetry was largely confined to poems on Parliament and life at court. 1737 topical poetry was broad more than pointed, like The Diseases of Bath—a satire less about the diseases than the town and the people who visit there; the author complains about the inadequate healthcare, the lack of culture, and the putrid conditions and argues that we should wonder less that some come away from Bath uncured than that everyone does not die.\footnote{Anon., \textit{The Diseases of Bath}.} Even poems that addressed individuals were broad in scope: the anonymous \textit{The Olive, An Ode} gives an overview of British history and concludes with Walpole as the savior who brought peace and prosperity to the present times and whose responsibility it will be to maintain them: “WALPOLE, whose studious Thought the Nation sees / From Force and Faction guard her Safety free.”\footnote{[Samuel Boyse], \textit{The Olive, An Ode; Patriotic Love; An Ode. Occasion’d by the Auspicious Success of His Majesty’s Counsels, and His Majesty’s Most Happy Return} (1737), p. 23.} Didactic and religious poems and general satires continued to be common in 1738, as exemplified by the publication of the first edition of Samuel Johnson’s biting critique of city life, his Juvenalian imitation, \textit{London}.\footnote{[Samuel Johnson], \textit{London: A Poem}.} Classical imitations provided the framework for many of the topical poems published in the early years of the period, like the praise of Walpole in \textit{The Two First Odes of Horace Imitated} and Pope’s condemnation of that same politician in \textit{One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight}.\footnote{[Manning], \textit{The Two First Odes of Horace Imitated. With an Introductory Epistle to a Friend} (1738); Alexander Pope, \textit{One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight}.} While making obvious references to the present age, most of the topical poems in these years were restrained, and indicate intellectual frustration with current events rather than palpable rage.

The purpose of satire itself and the connections between modern and classical satirical styles were a common side-dispute in poetry that examined politics and court: poetry commonly discussed what one should do, if anything, when faced with governmental ineptitude. In a verse-dialogue response to Pope’s \textit{One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight}, Thomas Newcomb argues that satire should be used as
an important tool to rouse the public and encourage Britons to fight for the good of themselves and their country.\textsuperscript{52} The dialogue in \textit{An Excursory View of the Present State of Men and Things} similarly is devoted to a consideration of the efficacy of satire: the satirist’s friend advises him against wasting his time writing unproductive critiques and calls for action, but the satirist discovers that his attempts to write positive poetry end with lapses back into satire and invective.\textsuperscript{53} These debates demonstrate some poets’ self-perceived roles as chroniclers or counselors for the nation, though their roots in satire suggest that the connection between their poetry and its immediate context was not always comfortable.

Reliance on classical form and imitations began to become less common around 1739. At the same time, condemnations of city and court in poetry were becoming more specific: references to named individuals were becoming more common, and more poems were published that focused on particular events, rather than just general societal ills. The most reprinted topical satire in 1739 provides a useful example of this shift. In \textit{Manners: A Satire}, Paul Whitehead argues that if places are regarded on the basis of the manners expressed by those who inhabit them, court is the worst.\textsuperscript{54} Individuals are referred to explicitly, and though their names are represented only by a dash or initials, even today most can be identified easily. Walpole, for example, is called a “Harp’ring o’er the Press” (13), while those upheld as exemplary are named in full, as when “Not so with Stanhope; see by him sustain’d / Each hoary Honour which his Sires had gain’d” (9). This blatant opposition commentary did not pass unnoticed. Walpole indicted both Whitehead and his publisher, Dodsley, demanding that they appear before the House of Lords to explain and defend their libelous actions. Dodsley defended himself by explaining that the publication was under Whitehead’s management: the poet had paid for the paper and stood to reap any benefits from the work’s success, and his name appeared on the title page. Whitehead chose not to appear

\textsuperscript{52} [Thomas Newcomb], \textit{A Supplement to One Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty-Eight}.
\textsuperscript{53} Anon., \textit{An Excursory View of the Present State of Men and Things. A Satire. In a Dialogue Between the Author and His Friend} (1739).
\textsuperscript{54} Paul Whitehead, \textit{Manners: A Satire} (1739).
before the Lords at all. But many rose to Dodsley’s defense, arguing for freedom from censure, and seven editions of *Manners* were published that year. The path to publishing overt topical satire was clearing.

As tensions between England and Spain over smuggling and access to trade routes escalated, topical poetry began to cover international as well as national politics. The attempt to prevent war through the treaty signed at the Pardo Convention in 1739 caused particular poetic stir. Condemnation of the outcome of the convention took many forms. *His Catholic Majesty’s Most Christian Manifesto*, for example, was a tongue-in-cheek poem written as though by the Spanish King, detailing his reasons for not paying the money he admitted to owing to Great Britain, while *Sir *’s Speech Upon the Peace with Sp—N* is written as though delivered by Walpole, who claims “That I am the first have the Heart, *Not to Fight,*” and concludes “Tho’ the Merchants complain, and the Patriots bawl / Believe, and stand by me, or G--- d--- you all.” Of course not everyone was displeased by the convention or its orchestrator. In *A Congratulatory Poem: Humbly Inscribed to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, On the Conclusion of the Convention Between their Majesties of Great-Britain and Spain* Walpole is praised for his patience, genius, and bravery in handling the negotiations, and Patrick Guthrie condemns ill-tempered satirists and applauds the great man for leadership and prudence in *Candour: Or, an Occasional Essay on the Abuse of Wit and Eloquence*.

Once the war began, published poetry often united around a common the British cause. When Vice-Admiral Edward Vernon led a small squadron of ships to destroy Spain’s primary Panamanian naval base in the battle of Portobello, an explosion of celebratory poetry was published. Poets favorably compared Vernon’s victory with previous attempts to attack the base: in both *Admiral Hosier’s Ghost*

---


56 Anon., *His Catholic Majesty’s Most Christian Manifesto, and Reasons for Not Paying the Ninety-Five Thousand Pounds; Faithfully Rendered into English Metre* (1739); Anon., *Sir *’s Speech Upon the Peace with Sp—N.* (1739), pp. 6, 8.

(published in 5 editions) and *A New Ballad on the Taking of Porto-Bello* Vernon is celebrated for succeeding where his predecessor failed (Hosier and most of the troops on board his ships having died at sea outside Porto-bello while awaiting orders for their assault).\(^{58}\) The battle even warranted a collection of poetry entitled *Vernon’s Glory. Containing Fifteen New Songs, Occasion’d by the Taking of Porto-Bello and Fort Chagre* (published in 3 editions)\(^{59}\) No poet criticized the victory or Vernon in print, and Vernon was upheld in poetry as an example of the greatness to which the Britons could aspire and as a counterpoint for less able or more cowardly countrymen.

The conflicts abroad and struggles between political factions at home increased the amount of topical poetry published; in 1740 and 1741 nearly half of the published poetry could be described as topical—that is, rooted in the specifics of its immediate context. Discussion of current events was so *de rigueur* that attempting to publish on other subjects might have been a difficult task: the author of *The Art of Poetry* cynically comments that poets are best off writing satires on current people and events, as readers will pay to have it: “PRAISE will not buy your Pen: an empty Blast! / Laureats, without their Salary, might fast. / Dwell then on Satire. In that Tenement / Mankind will tax themselves, to pay your Rent.”\(^{60}\) Topical poetry sold.

As the 1741 election approached, poems were published on the political factions and the importance of voting to improve the country. Many poets avoided directly addressing political allegiances by arguing that politicians should unite around common causes. The anonymous poet of *A Touch of the Times* admits that all Britons have different opinions about how the country would best be ruled, but reminds readers that the nation should be focused on defeating Spain.\(^{61}\) Classical allegories also provided the opportunity to shame Parliament. *The Faction* describes an ancient divided nation that tried to cleanse its senate by putting each representative’s membership to a vote that ends with each side vetoeing the

\(^{58}\) [Richard Glover], *Admiral Hosier’s Ghost. To the Tune of, Come and Listen to My Ditty* (1740); Anon., *A New Ballad on the Taking of Porto-Bello, By Admiral Vernon* (1740).


\(^{61}\) Anon., *A Touch of the Times* (1740).
other’s choices, while *Horace’s Instructions to the Roman Senate* provides direct guidance and is addressed to the House of Commons. Of course, many poets were more forthcoming with their political views. The author of *The Down-Fall of S-n and W-r; or, the Independant Westminster Electors Triumph* rallies readers around the possibility of defeating their foes in the next election, and reminds them to stay vigilant and to attack if Walpole swindles them again. The short ballad *The Freeholder* advises voters on their priorities: they are to “Think who voted th’ Excise! On those set your Mark: / The Place-bill they damn’d, the Convention approv’d.”

The poem that caused the greatest stir around the time of the 1741 election was James Miller’s anonymously published satire, *Are These Things So?*, an invective against Walpole that blames the Prime Minister him for all the nation’s troubles and begs him to give up the reins while there is still a chance to save the country. In 1740 Miller’s short poem (fourteen to twenty pages, depending on the edition) was published in 8 editions, some in folio and some in octavo, and its popular content drew an astonishing number and variety of poetic responses. Robert Morris contributed two poems to the discussion. In *Yes They Are* he claims to have no personal stake in the present difficulties and provides a sober account of the nation’s state as “the Scorn, the Proverb of the Times,” while in *Have at You All* he criticizes the King and his senators for their complacence, as they did little to prevent the troubles with Spain and France and now are not doing enough to combat them. Thomas Newcomb similarly accuses George of not taking care of his country in *A Supplement to a Late Excellent Poem They are Not Addressed to the * * * *, but adds the unique view that “Sad Britain’s woes in weekly rhimes deplor’d / Till W-pl-le is remov’d, or

---

[62] [Ashley Cowper], “Timothy Scribble,” *The Faction, a Tale. Humbly Inscrib’d to Messrs. Craftsman and Compy* (1740); Anon., *Horace’s Instructions to the Roman Senate: And Character of Caius Asinius Pollio* (1740).
[63] Anon., *The Down-Fall of S-n and W-r; or, the Independant Westminster Electors Triumph. To the Tune of, Come Let Us Prepare, &c.* ([1741]).
[65] [James Miller], *Are These Things So?*
[66] [Robert Morris], *Yes, They Are: Being an Answer to Are These Things So? The Previous Question from an Englishman in His Grotto to a Great Man at Court* (1740), p. 3; [Robert Morris], “The Author of Yes, They Are,” *Have at You All: Being a Proper and Distinct Reply to Three Pamphlets Just Published, Intituled, What of That? The Weather-Menders, and, They Are Not. By the Author of Yes, They Are* (1740).
James restor’d”—the latter suggestion for obvious reasons not found in other published poems. But not all agreed that things were so. The author of They Are Not accuses those who complain about Walpole and the King of being jealous, short-sighted, and ungrateful: they fail to recognize all that has been done on their behalf and should be glad that other Britons are working to ensure that their nation remains strong. The Weather-Menders uses those who complain of the weather as a stand-in for those who complain about Walpole and their rulers: they are full of opinions but unable to perform their desired task any better than those they criticize. The back-and-forth debates were wearisome. What of That! argues that the poets in this exchange lack manners and sense, and their efforts do nothing to bring the unification the nation needs.

The fervor over the election and schisms in Parliament threatened Walpole’s rule. The extent of the Prime Minister’s unpopularity is evident in low-blow attacks on his personal life. In Modern Quality, An Epistle to Miss M--- W--- on Her late Acquired Honour, a society-matron narrator addresses Maria Skerritt, Walpole’s mistress turned second wife, condemning her in no uncertain terms as a woman not worthy of court and not fit to be admitted to the society of decent women: “Tho’ with the gaudiest Titles tin’sl’d o’er, / We still shall look upon you as before.” Such blunt disrespect toward a woman was rare in published poetry. Walpole could not long withstand the pressures against him.

In 1742 Walpole resigned as Prime Minister. In print, poets reacted to the resignation and its aftermath in predictably varied ways, though given his previous demonization responses were not as joyous or optimistic as one might have predicted. The doctor-narrator of The Patriots Are Come; Or, a New Doctor for a Crazy Constitution offers the king advice for dealing with the new Parliament, but warns that “From the time his S-n made him Old Robin depose, / All the Power of a --- he was well

---

67 [Thomas Newcomb], A Supplement to a Late Excellent Poem, Entitled, Are These Things So? Addressed to the * * * *(1740), p. 11.
68 Anon., They Are Not (1740).
70 Anon., What of That! Occasion’d by a Pamphlet, Intitled, Are These Things So? And Its Answer, Yes, They Are (1740).
known to lose,” concluding that “For tho’ you have made that Rogue \( W----e \) retire / You’re out of the Frying-pan into the Fire.”\(^{72}\) The unusually cynical ballad, *Esq; S---ys’s Budget Open’d; Or, Drink and Be D’d.*, offers a more specific and sweeping view of the fallout of Walpole’s resignation: with the Great Man’s departure comes greater freedom to drink, which will in turn enslave the poor as drunkards whose vice will make them complacent while simultaneously stimulating the economy.\(^{73}\) Other poems cast doubt on the permanence of Walpole’s disappearance from power. In *The Old Coachman* Walpole is cast in a positive light as the title character, still controlling the reigns of the nation and intent upon safely delivering his passengers to their destinations.\(^{74}\) Another sympathetic view of the man is found in *A Poem, Inscrib’d to the Right Honourable the Earl of Orford* (1742); here Walpole is patient and wise, and bides his time waiting for the country to realize that it needs him again.\(^{75}\)

The public’s attention was somewhat distracted from national events to international around the time of the Battle of Dettingen in mid-1743. The battle near the village of Dettingen was a decisive victory for the British and German forces in their war against the French: of particular interest was George II’s decision personally to lead his troops in the fight. Numerous published poems celebrated the King and his victory. In *A Joyful Ode* George assumes an almost God-like grandeur: “But who is he that smiles, serene / Amidst the Terrors of the Scene / . . . / Bursts thro’ the Line-encountering Line, / Through Flames, Confusion, Danger, and Dismay? / ‘Tis Heav’n’s Vicegerent, GEORGE.”\(^{76}\) John Highmore’s abstract narrative, *Dettingen*, praises the valor of the British troops and their devotion to the cause of liberty.\(^{77}\) The account of the battle in *British Bravery* finds George victorious, “The ravag’d Honours of the Fight display’d / Low at his Feet, with Rev’rence, All are laid” and working to restore peace to the

---

\(^{72}\) [Baron John Hervey], *The Patriots Are Come; Or, a New Doctor for a Crazy Constitution. A New Ballad to the Tune of Derry Down* (1742), pp. 1, 10.

\(^{73}\) [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], *Esq; S---ys’s Budget Open’d; Or, Drink and Be D’d. A New Ballad, to the Tune of, A Begging We Will Go* (1743).

\(^{74}\) [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], *The Old Coachman: A New Ballad. To Which is Added, Labour in Vain* (1742).

\(^{75}\) Anon., *A Poem, Inscrib’d to the Right Honourable the Earl of Orford* (1742).

\(^{76}\) Anon., *A Joyful Ode: Inscribed to the King, On the Late Victory at Dettingen* (1743), p. 6.

warring nations.\textsuperscript{78}

But poetic reaction to the battle of Dettingen was not universally positive: a number of poets expressed anger over Britain’s decision to enter a war waged for German benefit, and accused the Germans of failing to take care of their own concerns. A set of jointly published drinking songs, \textit{Beef and Butt Beer, Against Mum and Pumpernickle} and \textit{H--n--r Scrubs, Or; a Bumper to Old England,--Huzza. A Drinking Song} laud English food, bravery, and the victory at Dettingen, and that ridicule the Germans as cowardly and overfed: “‘Tis England’s Boys that humble France, / And always have defy’d her: / But H---r wou’d ne’er advance, / Unless to run or hide her.”\textsuperscript{79} And in the short, lively ballad \textit{The Yellow Sash or, H----r Beshit} the narrator argues that the heroes at Dettingen should realize that “We for H----- only at Dettingen bled, / Who or’ee us triumph’d most, when their yellow Tails run.”\textsuperscript{80} Perhaps significantly, both \textit{Beef and Butt Beer} and \textit{The Yellow Sash} were published under imprints that contained only bookseller initials (very likely fictitious). The sentiment may have been common, but the willingness to proclaim it in print was not.

The next event to result in a topical poetry spike provoked a far more unified reaction amongst publishing poets. The Jacobite rebellion of 1745 resulted in dozens of alternately outraged and patriotic poems. The earliest poems on the rebellion, those published in 1745 before the outcome of the uprising was clear, exposed the nation’s fear and shock. Some poets turned to God for salvation from this unexpected threat. The poet of \textit{A Religious Ode, Occasioned by the Present Rebellion} offers a prayer in which he asks God to look kindly upon Britain and “To Faith thus rais’d propitious Succor lend / And GEORGE the Guardian of this Faith defend.”\textsuperscript{81} In Thomas Gibbon’s blank-verse account of the horrors of the rebellion, \textit{Britannia’s Alarm}, the threat of Popery to the nation is laid bare: “Nor think the Shades too strong: This Storm of Woes / Must burst remediless on Britain’s Realm / Should Pop’ry snatch the Sway.

\textsuperscript{78} Anon., \textit{British Bravery. A Poem. Dedicated to the Right Honourable the Earl of Stair} (1743), p. 7.
\textsuperscript{79} Anon., \textit{Beef and Butt Beer, Against Mum and Pumpernickle. H--n--r Scrubs, Or; a Bumper to Old England,--Huzza. A Drinking Song} (Printed for B.C., 1743), p. 4.
\textsuperscript{80} Anon., \textit{The Yellow Sash or, H----r Beshit. An Excellent New Ballad. To the Old Tune, of Lillibullero ([1743])}.
Voracious Plagues / From Rome, like peeling Locusts, shall pour forth.\footnote{Thomas Gibbons, Britannia’s Alarm: A Poem, Occasioned by the Present Rebellion. To Which is Added, A Fable of the Vine and Bramble (London: Printed for R. King, J. Buckland, M. Cooper, and M. Marshal, 1745), p. 10.} The shorter Fable of the Vine and Bramble Gibbons published alongside Britannia’s Alarm offers an allegorical solution: Britons must put down deep roots in support of their king.

Poems on the ’45 that were published after the immediate threat of the rebellion showed more bravado and national pride than their predecessors. Many poets undercut the now departed threat of the uprising by mocking the Young Pretender’s French and Scottish supporters. In Scotch dialect the ghostly narrator of The Apparition of Donald Macdonald’s Ghost provides the personal history that led to his hanging as a rebel: from a young age he was raised to support the Stuarts, and only too late did he realize that he was fighting against the true king.\footnote{Anon., The Apparition of Donald Macdonald’s Ghost, to a Prisoner In the New-Goal, in Southwark. A Poem, in the Ramsonian Stile (1746).} The Young Pretender’s failed attempts to gain adequate military support from the French are ridiculed in Louis le Rampant; or, Argenson in His Altitudes.\footnote{Anon., Louis le Rampant; Or, Argenson in His Altitudes. An Heroical Epistle, to be Learnd by Heart, by All Non-Associators; and All Who are Bashful in the Day of Battle ([1746]).} The poem is written as as though by the French, who offer praise for Charles’s bravery and empty threats against the British lest they imprison him.

Yet the rebellion presented a serious threat to the nation’s understanding of itself, and some published poetry reflected a darker view of the events, constructing the rebellion as a cautionary tale directing to Britain to act to preserve the nation’s reputation and greatness. In Reformation Thomas Scott compares Britain’s troubles to earlier rebellions in other nations and warns that faction, treason, and rebellion are sins against a vengeful God’s plan and will not go unpunished.\footnote{Thomas Scott, Reformation A Poem (1746).} John Lockman’s dramatic description of the progress of the rebellion in An Ode, on the Crushing of the Rebellion celebrates the victory of freedom and liberty over the dangers posed by Charles and the threat of a Catholic nation.\footnote{John Lockman, An Ode, on the Crushing of the Rebellion. Anno MDCCXLVI. Presented to His Majesty at Kensington, and Humbly Inscrib’d to His Royal Highness the Duke (1746).} No published poetry challenged the black-and-white views of the rights of the King and the abhorrence of the rebels.
By the time the War of the Austrian Succession ended with the 1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, George was distinctly less glowingly depicted in published poetry. Of course, no poem expressed serious displeasure that the war was over. Like John Brown in *On Liberty*, some poets praised Pelham on the end of the war and the restoration of peace and devotion to liberty that it represented.\(^{87}\) The conditions under which that peace was achieved, however, were less appreciated. The anonymous poem, *The Consequence of a Late Famous Treaty Concluded at Aix la Chapelle*, is a typical example of the sentiments expressed toward the King; the poem begins by recounting the brave and noble actions of previous monarchs at war, and concludes by shaming George for not negotiating for Britain in the treaty.\(^{88}\) Others were upset that Britain had fought in the war in the first place. The pseudonymously published *An Ode for the Thanksgiving-Day. To the Tune of Derry Down. By Titus Antigallicus, Esq*, for example, offers a cynical account of the war and, like earlier poems on the battle of Dettingen, argues the English were taken advantage of by their allies; the narrator scoffs at the elaborate celebrations of what he views as no real victory for Britain.\(^{89}\)

Clearly the reading public was very receptive to poetry on current events. But topical poetry was not constituted only of a series of single-edition poems that were written and sold quickly. Many of the better topical poems were published in multiple editions and, perhaps more telling of the importance of such content, poets who primarily wrote topical works were amongst the most published writers of new poetry: Charles Hanbury Williams, James Miller, and McNamara Morgan are each associated with seventeen or more poetry titles during the 1740s (more than any poets other than Edward Young and Alexander Pope), and high percentages of each of their lists of poems were topical.

The most prolifically published 1740s topical poet, as far as can be determined given the problems posed by anonymous publication, was Sir Charles Hanbury Williams. Between 1741 and 1746 Williams is associated with 30 editions of works of poetry, which include 16 distinct poems. As Williams

---

\(^{87}\) John Brown, *On Liberty: A Poem, Inscribed to His Grace the Chancellor and to the University of Cambridge, on Occasion of the Peace* (1749).

\(^{88}\) Anon., *The Consequence of a Late Famous Treaty Concluded at Aix la Chapelle: Or, the Hostages, a Pledge; An Historico-Satirical Poem* (1749).

was a Whig member of Parliament and vocal in his views, the political nature of his poems is unsurprising. Williams was a strong advocate first for Walpole and then for Pelham, and his disapproval of Patriot Whigs and, especially of Pulteney, was equally strong. Many of Williams’ poems were written to lampoon government corruption, and they were often constructed as satirical odes and ballads, using form playfully to disguise political content. Williams’ poems were published anonymously, with only one ever attributed: his name appears on the title page of *An Ode to the Right Honourable Stephen Poyntz*, Esq, which praises Prince William’s virtues and crediting his success to his mentor (and, pointedly though not explicitly, not to the King). Many of Williams’ poems would have been known as his within a coterie audience of his friends and peers, however, as the trouble he landed in over the anonymous and unauthorized publication of his manuscript *An Ode to the Honourable H—y F—x, on the Marriage of the Du—s of M——r to H——y, Esq*; proves. But publication ensured a much wider distribution network for his poems than manuscript circulation. Williams’ poems appeared under the imprints of a great number of publishers, including most frequently W. Webb, but also T. Taylor, Dodsley, A. Moore, J. Jones, J. Jolly, T Davis, T. Carpenter, and T. Whitacre. And the popular satires were also frequently reprinted in new editions and in poetry and miscellany collections.

Like Williams’ work, the published poetry associated with Irish playwright and poet McNamara Morgan was devoted to political matters, though his work focused on the judiciary rather than parliament. Morgan’s satirical poems were published under the pseudonym, Porcupinus Pelagius. The poem’s titles followed a pattern: *The Causidicade* (1743); *The Triumvirade* (1745); *The Sequel. Containing What Was Omitted in the Triumvirade, or Broad-bottomry, at the Asterisks* (1745); *The Processionade* (1746); and *The ’Piscopade* (1748) are all labeled as hyphenated combinations of comical, dramatic, serious,

---

90 C.f. [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], *An Ode from the E— of B— to Ambition* ([1746]); [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], “The Author of the Country Maid,” *A New Ode, to a Great Number of Great Men, Newly Made* (1742); [Sir Charles Hanbury Williams], *The Heroes: A New Ballad. To the Tune of - - - Sally in Our Alley* (1745).
91 Williams, *An Ode to the Right Honourable Stephen Poyntz*.
92 [Williams], *An Ode to the Honourable H—y F—x* (1746). For a fuller discussion of this case, see Chapter 3.
panegyrical, ballad poems.93 Whether all of these works were actually by Morgan is a mystery. Certainly their use of the same pseudonym and similar titles suggests shared authorship, but scholars disagree over their origins. D. F. Foxon attributes each of these works to Morgan, but Julia Gasper lists only The Causidicade and The Processionade in her ODNB entry on Morgan and comments in an ESTC entry suggest that The ’Piscopade is sometimes attributed to William Kenrick, as, too, as Gasper points out is a later poem, The Pasquinade (1753).94 1740s readers also may have been in the dark about the identities author’s identity, and some even believed the Causidicade to be by Fielding.95 The works were obviously intended as related statements and can therefore be usefully studied together regardless of their true authorship. Most of the poems attack failures of the judiciary, including the 1742 appointment of William Murray to the post of solicitor-general, and each employs dense references to events and people that are now difficult to decipher.

Like Morgan, James Miller is better remembered as a playwright than a poet. Probably due to the restrictions put in place by the Licensing Act, both Miller and Morgan published their topical commentaries in poetry, rather than drama, during the 1740s. Miller’s poetic output was more diverse than either Williams’ or Morgan’s; between 1738 and 1744 he published two philosophical poems, Of Politeness and The Art of Life, as well as a collection of his work, Miscellaneous Works in Verse and Prose.96 But of his non-topical works only Of Politeness appeared in two editions in the period. Miller’s most reprinted poems were his political works, which supported his position as follower of the Patriot Whig opposition: Are These Things So? and The Great Man’s Answer to Are These Things So? are the

---

95 Fielding took offense at the accusation that he wrote the Causidicade, which he said would set him against some of the greatest men in his profession. For a brief discussion of Fielding’s reaction to the attribution, see W. B. Coley, Preface to Henry Fielding, The True Patriot and Other Writings, ed. W. B. Coley (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), p. xxiv.
most significant examples, but *The Year Forty-One*, a celebration of the end of a year described as one of Britain’s worst, was published in three editions.

Although Miller would have been known for his drama, his contributions to poetry were also significant. Miller’s post-1740 anonymous topical works appeared in more editions than his attributed works; perhaps significantly, after the success of his 1740 topical works, he did not publish any more single religious or philosophical poems, though he might have gone on to write more had he not died in 1744.

Although most of the topical poetry sold in the 1740s is no longer read or discussed today, its content obviously represented a significant selling point for contemporary readers. And while the appeal of some topical works is not lasting and their popularity was likely primarily based on current fads and emotions, other topical poems are stylistically advanced and worthy of continued scholarly interest. Poems like *The Causidicade* are likely not read by twentieth-century critics because their subject matter makes them inaccessible rather than because they are unworthy of attention. The prevalence of current events in poems proves that those discussions were not solely driven by the personal purposes of writers and their patrons: topicality was itself a selling point. Readers and booksellers must have been willing to invest in published topical poetry, or the works would only have been circulated in manuscript or published in political periodicals rather than as separate works.

III. Aesthetic Inspiration: The Authors and Styles Most Invoked and Implemented

Beyond their ability to illustrate and investigate important current events, 1740s poets changed and advanced the shape and quality of British verse. The years between 1737 and 1749 saw the publication of works boasting new kinds of aesthetic achievements, and even the more forgettable poems bear the influence of shifting fashions and tastes. In this final section I will examine contemporary attitudes on the purpose and nature of poetry, as evident in the style of the works published and in discussions of the

---

97 [Miller], *Are These Things So?*; [James Miller], “The Author of, Are These Things So?” *The Great Man’s Answer to Are These Things So? In a Dialogue Between His Honour and the Englishman in His Grotto* ([1740]); [James Miller], *The Year Forty-One. Carmen Seculare* (1741).
genre in prefaces, periodicals, and works of criticism.

Every published poem receives some degree of scrutiny, if only at the outset of its public life. Among the first line of critics for any work were the booksellers. Though their practical concerns, as outlined in the first section of this chapter, often trumped their aesthetic estimation of a work, booksellers were responsible for recognizing quality and successfully promoting it to their customers. One approach to critical methodology and evaluation, then, can be found in a published treatise on the evaluation of a manuscript’s potential for publication success entitled, *A Letter to the Society of Booksellers, On the Method of Forming a True Judgment of the Manuscripts of Authors.* Though its goal is to outline a practice for choosing the works most likely to sell and to remain viable commodities, rather than to argue for a means of establishing a poem’s superiority or inferiority, the *Letter to the Society of Booksellers* demonstrates the measures used to measure worth. Longevity and an enduring positive reputation were considerable merits, though difficult to predict: referring to *Paradise Lost* as an example of a work not immediately successful, the author points out that booksellers “are too rash and forward, in judging of the Value of a Book from its Sale” (30). The writer’s reputation and past successes as well as the bookseller’s own opinion of a manuscript’s quality are recommended as the most reliable means of appraisal, but “there is, even at best, very great Uncertainty, in judging of the good or bad Success of Manuscripts . . . who can tell how the Whim of Mankind will take its Course, or whether they may not be pleas’d with a Hurlo-thrombo? So that, in reality, there seems to be a good deal of Lottery in the Affair under Consideration” (14). Even the most practiced booksellers found popular success difficult to predict.

Greater levels of confidence are found in methods designed to gauge the quality of a poem as a piece of verse, rather than as a marketable product, as such arguments are more philosophical and have fewer tangible measures of victory or failure. 1740s poets, editors, and literary critics held increasingly sophisticated views about the correct critical values and practices. The proliferation of print was accompanied by an abundance of published criticism, and conscientious and interested writers aimed to

---

98 Anon., *A Letter to the Society of Booksellers, On the Method of Forming a True Judgment of the Manuscripts of Authors; And on the Leaving Them in Their Hands, or Those of Others, for the Determination of Their Merit: Also, of the Knowledge of New Books* (1738).
establish appropriate methodologies. In his preface to his *Poems on Several Occasions*, for example, William Broome outlines an author-centered approach to criticism, which he conflates with editorial technique: “the question is not what the Author might have said, but what he has actually said; it is not whether a different Word will agree with the sense, and turn of the Period, but whether it was used by the Author.” Verbal criticism “embarrasses the Reader instead of giving new light, and hinders his Proficiency by engrossing his time, and calling attention from the Author to the Editor” (xv). The critic’s task, according to Brome, is neither universally to praise nor condemn, but to remain modest (“no Man has a title to be a Dictator in Knowledge” [xix]) and to provide candid opinions.

Periodicals were filled with examples of literary criticism, and the debates published in newspapers, journals, and magazines shaped the expectations for critics. The critic’s foremost tools were considered to be sound judgment and a thorough knowledge of one’s subject (including familiarity previous editions and translations and the ability to read foreign works in their original language). A 1738 letter to the editor of the *History of the Works of the Learned*, for example, offers its anonymous author’s opinion of the recently published *Remarks on Spencer’s Poems*. The reviewer refers to the *Remarks* as “masterly,” calls the critic “modest” and “learned”, and recommends the work to the public (287). His review, however, primarily is dedicated to addressing what the reviewer identifies as the critic’s inconsistencies or errors, demonstrating the reviewer’s own superior knowledge of the subject while showing polite respect for the “very worthy Author’s judicious and learned Piece of Critic” (291). A 1741 review published in the same journal and addressing Atterbury’s reflections on the character of Japis in Virgil follows a similar pattern. The essay begins with praise for Atterbury’s “ingenious Piece” that takes a “Subject, that seems to be so barren and low, so destitute of Ornaments and Graces” and handles it “in such a masterly manner, adorned with such solid Learning, Purity of Language, and Elegancy of

---

Style” (268–9). Yet the discussion that follows focuses on the errors in the author’s good sense, as the reviewer disagrees with his interpretation of Virgil’s approach to the character. Atterbury’s critical judgment is found lacking.

While such erudite debates may be humorous to a smaller percentage of readers today than in the 1740s, their presence across the spectrum of periodicals suggests that they appealed to a wide range of 1740s readers, who tended to be, after all, a very elite and educated lot. Critical ability and refined literary taste and understanding were qualities to be admired and cultivated, and, as a 1741 essay in the Daily Gazeteer explains, many understood public criticism to play an important role in shaping culture. “a Publick Writer could not employ his Time better, than in considering the Errors into which Men are apt to fall, in judging of the Merit of Writers, and particularly of such as assume to themselves the Honour of writing in the Service of their Country.” All poets—even those now considered to be great—had to be distinguished from their contemporaries and evaluated according to the needs and preferences of the times in which they wrote. For modern readers to exercise such judgment, the critic argues, they must refine their sensibilities through extensive study of the authors whose works have stood the test of time. Readers were likewise encouraged to educate themselves as poetry critics by comparing similar works. Comparing competing editions of the same poet, says an author in the Universal Spectator, provides “two useful Lessons: the Imperfections of the greatest human Genius, which is always capable of receiving new Lights, and the Honesty and Industry which constantly unite in the Pursuit of true Excellence.” A 1748 letter to the editor of Gentleman’s Magazine requests that the magazine make a habit of publishing poems on similar topics side-by-side, as a reader’s “imagination is flattered, his judgment exercised, and a topic is furnished for conversation; nor is this all, the mind becomes attentive to excellencies and defects, which would otherwise have passed unobserved, and thus a taste is form’d, exerted and improved.” Readers were to be active, learned, and opinionated.

Critics and authors were especially attentive to questions of editorial practice, and as the number

103 Anon., “To the AUTHOR of the UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR,” The Universal Spectator (23 Mar 1745).
of published editions of authors’ works increased over time the scope for comparison and competition to become the preferred edition expanded. Thomas Morrell’s *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, in the Original, from the Most Authentic Manuscripts; and as They are Turn’d into Modern Language by Mr. Dryden, Mr. Pope, and Other Eminent Hands* is one of the most extensive and impressive examples of a project devoted to getting an edition of an author “right.” Morrell’s Preface is itself a significant investigation of editorial techniques and goals. He begins with a discussion of Chaucer’s enduring reputation and an overview of previous criticism and editions of *The Canterbury Tales*: Chaucer “has stood the Test of above 300 Years, still read, and still admired, notwithstanding he has been so wretchedly abused, *miswrote* and *mismetered* by all his Editors” (xxxii-xxxiii). Morrell discusses work on Chaucer by Dryden, Verstegen, Speght, Skinner, and others, but he reserves his most particular criticism for John Urry, whose edition was completed by Timothy and William Thomas and published in 1721 (six years after Urry’s death). He takes exception to Urry’s attempts to improve upon Chaucer by “restoring” his work to a regular meter, for “if *Chaucer* was a Cripple before Mr. *Urry restored him to his Feet*, to keep his own Expression, he was really born as such; ’twas a natural Lameness, and no more a Blemish in *Chaucer’s* Time, than Round-Shoulders were in the Days of *Alexander the Great*” (xxiv). Morrell’s solution to the Chaucer-editing puzzle is to attempt to present a version as close to Chaucer’s original as possible by taking what he believes to be the most “genuine” version of the text from a wide selection of manuscripts. He resists attempts to regularize even spelling or grammar, as he argues that variances would have been expected in Chaucer’s time. The body of Chaucer’s text is pulled from editions of Chaucer by writers like Dryden and Pope, with heavy annotations by Morrell that show variant renditions from other editors.

The close scrutiny of a work’s previous editorial history in Morrell’s Chaucer is uncommon, but discussions of competing translations of classical works were widespread in periodicals. A typical small-scale discussion of Virgil appeared in *Craftsman* in 1738. The author debates the merits of translations of the same passage from the *Aeneid* by Dryden, Denham, Pitt, and Trapp. The writer concludes that Trapp’s

---

105 Morrell, Preface to *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, in the Original.*
translation “is such a forced Construction, that I cannot think it will pass Muster” given its implications for the character of Ripheus. A 1745 essay in the *Universal Spectator* argues for the importance of comparing editions to one another offers similar comparative critiques of editions of Pope’s work, with particular attention to the recently published edition of Pope’s *Essay on Man* edited and with commentary by Warburton. The reviewer lauds Warburton for having corrected the most problematic passages from earlier editions, but complains that Warburton did not mark his emendations for readers—a gap the reviewer undertakes by publishing his own account of the differences in his article. Revisions, editorial changes, and authorial intent were all taken seriously in 1740s editions of poetry, and readers noticed differences in content and quality.

Although review journals did not devote much space to poetry, preferring history, mathematics, and philosophical works, new editions of classical works often attracted reviewers’ attention. In 1742 the *History of the Works of the Learned* devoted twenty-one pages to a review of Cooke’s translation of Virgil, and though the review does not offer an assessment of the quality of the edition (aside from noting that it is “printed on very good Letter and Paper”), the space devoted to summary and excerpts of the work indicates that they considered it to be of some importance. A review of Gilbert Wests’s 1749 *Odes of Pindar* in the *Monthly Review* follows a similar strategy, reprinting long sections of the editor’s lengthy preface. The dissertation on Pindar provides a history of previous translations and heaps praise upon Pindar himself, whom the editor defends from the prejudices of current opinion against Pindaric odes. The reviewer’s commentary on the edition is sparse, but enthusiastic both about the subject and the “ingenious” editor.

Interest in classical poetry was reflected in the number of new translations and collected works published. Horace was especially popular. Between 1737 and 1749 18 editions of Horace’s poetry were published, including both separate poems and collected works. An additional 10 works offered prose paraphrases of Horatian poetry. At least ten translators offered their own versions of Horace, though

---

106 *The Craftsman* (7 Jan 1738).
107 Anon., “To the AUTHOR of the UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR.”
Philip Francis was the most prolific, with six editions to his name. Virgil’s *Aeneid* and *Georgics* made his works the next most reprinted of the classical poets, with 12 editions in the 1740s. The poetry of Ovid and Persius appeared in 7 editions each, to which were added 2 editions of Ovid paraphrased in prose. Pope completely cornered the market on Homer: the only three published 1740s editions of that poet were Pope’s (two editions of the *Iliad* and one of the *Odyssey*). Two editions of the translation of Juvenal’s satires accounted for that poet’s place in the market. And Gilbert West was correct to note the unpopularity of Pindar’s poetry, as his was the only translation published in the period.

These classical authors were the favorite subjects of 1740s literary scholars and critics, whose aim was to encourage readers to raise their sights to these eminent writers. Edward Manwaring argues in his preface to *An Historical and Critical Account of the Most Eminent Classic Authors in Poetry and History* that readers need to deepen the shallow understanding of Homer and others provided in their school days. Modern learned men, according to Manwaring, lack sound judgment because they do not have an understanding of the principles that underlie the art and history they learned at school. Manwaring’s summary accounts of the works and styles of classical writers does not seem to address this problem effectively. But the belief in the wisdom to be gleaned from classical study was a common sentiment, and may have accounted for the popularity (as measured by the seven editions published in 1739), of Joseph Addison’s *A Discourse on Ancient and Modern Learning*. The 28-page critical discourse, posthumously published and supposedly prepared from a manuscript written and corrected by Addison, takes something of a historicist approach to classical study, asking how readers contemporary with the classical writers would have appreciated their poetry as well as what advantages and disadvantages modern readers may have due to their removal from that context. While readers in ancient times, Addison argues, had the advantage of recognizing familiar individuals and scenes in the poems, modern readers read a mellowed version of the text that can be more appreciated for its beauty because they cannot feel the shock it would have offered its first readers. This explanation of the pleasures of

---


reading the classical poets makes their work seem accessible.

Articles in periodicals offered further support for the study of classical writers, and while their authors might quibble with particular translations or interpretations of the poetry, the quality of the original works and writers themselves was virtually never disputed. Atterbury’s “A Criticism on Virgil,” published in the London Magazine in 1738, for example, is a virtual encomium on that poet and his ability to recreate reality.111 The characters in the Aeneid are so realistic, Atterbury claims, that they must have been drawn from real-life models, who he attempts to identify from historical figures. A humorous letter published in the Universal Spectator recommends Homer as a model muse for poets, both for the standard reasons (e.g. his location in a climate advantageous to poetry, his heightened senses due to his blindness), and for the advantage he held thanks to his access to some of the world’s best wine.112 Homer was so known and accepted that he could be a lighthearted in-joke.

Familiarity with classical works obviously was expected of any educated reader. Not all readers, however, would have had the education or patience necessary to wade through dense poetry. Perhaps to address this audience, as well as to diversify the list of classical editions, Joseph Davidson and J. Oswald published a series of translations of classical works into English prose that were, according to their title pages, “for the Use of Schools as well as of Private Gentlemen.” Editions included The Odes, Epodes, and Carmen Seculare of Horace, The Satires, Epistles, and Art of Poetry of Horace, The Works of Virgil, The Fables of Phaedrus, and The Epistles of Ovid, each of which was described in its subtitle as “Translated into English Prose, as Near the Original as the Different Idioms of the Latin and English Languages Would Allow.”113 Each contained the classical work in its original language alongside an English translation, with copious notes on each. Interest in the classics was steady.

112 “Vinopotes,” “[Untitled],” Universal Spectator (18 May 1745).
113 Horace, The Odes, Epodes, and Carmen Seculare of Horace, Translated into English Prose, as Near the Original as the Different Idioms of the Latin and English Languages Would Allow (1743); —, The Satires, Epistles, and Art of Poetry of Horace Translated into English Prose, as Near the Original as the Different Idioms of the Latin and English Languages Will Allow (1743); Virgil, The Works of Virgil Translated into English Prose, as Near the Original as the Different Idioms of the Latin and English Languages Will Allow (1743); Phaedrus, The Fables of Phaedrus, Translated into English Prose, as Near the Original as the Different Idioms of the Latin and English Languages Will Allow (1745); and Ovid, The Epistles of Ovid, Translated into English Prose, as Near the Original as the Different Idioms of the Latin and English Languages Will Allow (1746).
Imitations of the classics, however, were less common later in the period. Between 1737 and 1739, Pope and George Ogle published competing series of Horatian imitations that created a small vogue for the form. In 1737, 10 poems and collections of poetry labeled as Horatian imitations were published, followed by a peak of 17 in 1738, and 10 in 1739. In 1740 and beyond the numbers of imitations fell sharply to an average of around two per year; in no year were more than four imitations of Horace published, and in 1744 and 1748 no poems bore that designation. The trend was limited to imitations of Horace, however, and did not reflect the popularity of his original poetry, which continued to be published steadily in new editions and translations throughout the period.

1740s interest in literary history was not limited to the classics; poets and critics were also concerned with the development and sources of English literature and its greatest poets. In a letter to a friend published prefatory to Gualtherus and Griselda: Or, The Clerk of Oxford’s Tale, George Ogle examines the work of great writers across time and languages. The clerk of Oxford’s tale, he explains, appears in the poetry of Boccaio, Petrarch, and Chaucer, and he discusses the connections between these works and their influence on the work of later poets, including Dryden. English poetry is made part of a continuum of literature, rather than an isolated canon.

Critics reminded readers that English literature offered much of which to be proud. In a preface to his edition of Chaucer, Morrell defends English poetry against the classics: “even in our Language, that may be performed for Descriptions which the Greek and Latin Poets have done at large.” The editor of The Historical and Poetical Medley: Or Muses Library promises to provide the public with “a Sort of Poetical Chronicle: which begins with the first Dawning of polite Literature in England.” His brief outline of English literature begins with Langland and progresses to Chaucer, through a series of poets of mixed enduring popularity (including, for example, Spenser and Donne, but also Lord Brooke and Corbet and Waller). The design of the Muses Library suggests readers’ desire to understand their country’s poetic tradition.

---

114 Ogle, Gualtherus and Griselda.
115 Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, in the Original, xxxvi.
116 Anon., The Historical and Poetical Medley: Or Muses Library (1738), at p. ix.
In prefaces to new works poets aimed to connect their poetry to the great English poets of the past; Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden are amongst the most consistently referenced. Particular examples were chosen to suit the poet’s subject. An anonymously published tribute to the Duke of Somerset congratulates the man for his patronage of the arts and sciences, using examples of the heights of learning to which his modern benefactors might aspire: the Duke will be supporting the institution “Where Spenser, fruitful of Invention, sung, / Where Milton first his Lyre, and Dryden, strung,” and where Johnson, Lee, Tillotson, and Clarke received similar inspiration. In the preface to War, An Epic Satyr the anonymous author defends his combination of epic with satire ("‘tis not only a natural, but a necessary Compound"), but argues that “if I have err’d, ’tis in good Company; Gay, Pope, Dryden have err’d before me.” Moses Browne sought to “rescue the Age from its present degenerate Taste” with his Poems on Various Subjects so that readers and poets might aspire to the moral and divine subjects related by writers like Spenser, Milton, Herbert. Waller, Pope, Young, and Watts. Such connections between one’s work and the accepted greats are a natural marketing technique, but the common choice of English writers over classical poets suggests that the national writers were gaining cultural capital.

The choice of writers featured in collections of English poetry is similarly significant. A Collection of Poems By Several Hands, in Three Volumes contains a mixture of longer and shorter poems including Johnson’s “Vanity of Human Wishes,” Dyer’s “Grongar Hill,” and works by Benjamin Stillingfleet, Whitehead, and many others. The poems are attributed and arranged by author to highlight their origins, and the editor explains in his preface that he wishes to “preserve to the public those poetical performances, which seemed to merit a longer remembrance than what would probably be secured to them by the MANNER wherein they were originally published” (iii–iv), choosing only “what has been

---

118 [Stephen Barrett], War, An Epic Satyr (1747), pp. vi and v.
120 A Collection of Poems By Several Hands, in Three Volumes, ed. Robert Dodsley (1748).
approved by those of the most acknowledged taste” (v). The Warbling Muses, Or Treasure of Lyric Poetry: Containing Seven Hundred and Thirty-One Songs, on All Sorts of Subjects, and in Every Measure of Verse presents a collection of songs which the author claims he has extracted from “a Multitude of Pieces from our most celebrated Poets, from Shakespear down to Pope,” though the poems are not individually attributed.121 Such works needed to trade upon good names.

Of all English poets, the name that seems to have commanded greatest respect was Milton’s. Dissertations on Milton’s style were common fodder for literary periodicals. Essayists argued over Milton’s use of alliteration, compare his verse to that of earlier English poets, and debate the accuracy of his representations of biblical events.122 Milton’s poetry (and in particular Paradise Lost) was used as a yardstick by which to measure other verse and philosophies.

Milton’s poetry was frequently compared to that of the classical poets, especially Homer and Virgil, often in order to determine whether the English poet could match the beauty of his revered predecessors. A 1738 published collection of Addison’s essays on Milton (reprinted from the Spectator) examines Paradise Lost’s form, using the rules of epic poetry to compare it to the Iliad and Odyssey.123 Though careful to point out perceived defects in the poem, Addison praises Milton and his work highly throughout the essays: “I have now consider’d Milton’s Paradise Lost under those four great Heads of the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language; and have shewn that he excels, in general, under each of these Heads” (26). Milton comes out favorably in most such comparisons. The anonymous author of An Essay upon Milton’s Imitations of the Ancients, in His Paradise Lost compares Milton’s poetic talents with Virgil’s and Homer’s by examining Milton’s imitations of those predecessors: “from MILTON’s having refined exceedingly upon some Passages from HOMER and VIRGIL, I would not pretend to infer, that he was a greater Poet than either of them, ’tho the Consideration of the whole Poem will

---

121 Benjamin Wakefield, The Warbling Muses, Or Treasure of Lyric Poetry: Containing Seven Hundred and Thirty-One Songs, on All Sorts of Subjects, and in Every Measure of Verse (1749), p. vi.
122 C.f. Anon., “From My Chambers,” The Universal Spectator (30 May 1741); Anon., “To the Author of the Universal Spectator,” The Universal Spectator (18 Jul 1741); Anon., “From My Own Chambers,” The Universal Spectator (11 May 1745).
123 Joseph Addison, Notes Upon the Twelve Books of Paradise Lost. Collected from the Spectator (1738).
justly intitle him to that Rank; but only, that these Imitations would cost the Author more Pains, and give
the Reader greater Pleasure than an original Composition.” And in Letters Concerning Poetical
Translations, and Virgil’s and Milton’s Arts of Verse the author compares the two poets’ styles of verse
(for example, the placement of pauses and the use of rhyme and alliteration), concluding that Virgil and
Milton are each great poets, but that their projects should not be conflated, as Paradise Lost’s style is
built not on the Aeneid but on the vernacular poetry exemplified by the English bible. Though critics
determined him to be very different from the classical poets, Milton is generally cast as their equal.

Paradise Lost was considered such significant work that a knowledge and understanding of its
contents were deemed essential, and booksellers published works promising to help readers understand it.
A Verbal Index to Milton’s Paradise Lost, for example, offers a 250-page alphabetical list of the words
used in Paradise Lost and their locations in the poem. And the author of The State of Innocence: And
Fall of Man offers a prose rendition of the poem, explaining that “it has been a frequent Complaint of the
Readers of MILTON, that he has not calculated his Poem for common Eyes” and therefore his version is
intended “design’d only to make it more universally intelligible, being fully assured, that it will then
always be held in Admiration.”

Even Milton’s less-appreciated Paradise Regain’d is praised by critics, though always
defensively and with a goal of elevating its status. Reverend Meadowcourt argues in A Critical
Dissertation with Notes on Milton’s Paradise Regain’d that the poem offers unparalleled moral
instruction and insight, and that it has been unjustly neglected by readers and critics. Compared to
Paradise Lost it “is more Artless, and is less embellish’d with Flights of Imagination, and with Figures of
Speech” but “supplies a much richer Fund of intellectual Pleasure,” which Meadowcourt attempts to

---

125 [William Benson], Letters Concerning Poetical Translations, and Virgil’s and Milton’s Arts of Verse (1738).
126 [Alexander Cruden], A Verbal Index to Milton’s Paradise Lost. Adapted to Every Edition but the First, Which Was Publish’d in Ten Books Only (1741).
illustrate through summaries and lengthy excerpts from the poem. The author of An Essay upon Milton’s Imitations of the Ancients offers a similar defense, noting that, while inferior to Paradise Lost, Paradise Regain’d “yet as far beyond any other Composition since the times of VIRGIL.” Those who wrote on Milton tended to consider his supremacy indisputable.

Next to Milton, Pope was the most referenced and debated poet in the 1740s, though discussions of that more recent poet were far from the nearly universally positive critiques of Milton. When Pope’s work was considered seriously by critics, reactions were mixed. Joseph Spence sung Pope’s praises for his translation work in An Essay on Mr. Pope’s Odyssey. A 1739 article London Magazine article is similarly admiring, characterizing Pope as the age’s most ingenious writer, with all the advantages of wit, imagination, judgment, diction, and wordflow, and with unequalled goodness and good sense. Others were less positive. Acting as both poet and scholar, Bridges argues that Pope was wrong to assume that the present natural world resembles God’s original design for it: the world has been shaped by the degeneracy of man. Bridges attempts to replace part of the Essay on Man through his own poem, Divine Wisdom and Providence. And a critic in the Universal Spectator finds fault with Pope’s interpretation of man, arguing that we should favor wonder and amazement over reason and that the Essay on Man takes the wrong approach to man’s abilities (though the editor disagrees with the general sentiment to disregard reason).

Pope criticism often manifested itself in ongoing controversies. Four editions of translations of Jean-Pierre Crousaz’s critique of Pope’s system of morality were published in the 1740s (one edition of Elizabeth Carter’s translation, two of Samuel Johnson’s, and one of an abridged translation by Charles Forman, published by Curll). Though he had not actually read Essay on Man, as he could not read

130 Joseph Spence, An Essay on Mr. Pope’s Odyssey. In Five Dialogues (1737).
132 Bridges, Divine Wisdom and Providence; An Essay. Occasion’d by the Essay on Man (1737).
133 Jean-Pierre Crousaz, A Commentary Upon Mr Pope’s Four Ethic Epistles, Intituled, An Essay on Man. Wherein His System is Fully Examined (1738); ———, An Examination of Mr Pope’s Essay on Man. Translated from
English, Crousaz attacked its precepts on the basis of a problematic prose translation, attacking Pope’s grasp of theology and use of logic. Crousaz’s essay generated a reaction, and the defense of Pope was most notably displayed in a series of articles by William Warburton in *History of the Works of the Learned* and later reprinted as *A Vindication of Mr. Pope’s Essay on man, from the Misrepresentations of Mr de Crousaz*. Warburton’s articles examine the *Essay on Man* epistle by epistle, accounting for the logic of each line and accusing Crousaz of misinterpreting the work by taking Pope’s arguments out of context and oversimplifying his carefully constructed and complex reasoning.

Pope contributed actively to some literary controversies, both in satires like *The Dunciad*, and in published debates with writers like Colley Cibber and his son, Theophilus. In response to being cast as chief dunce in the four-book *Dunciad*, Cibber published *A Letter to Mr Pope*, a counter-attack that received responses both for and against Pope in periodicals like the *Universal Spectator* and *Gentleman’s Magazine*. Whichever side readers took in the debate, its widespread publication proves it to have been entertaining, and it doubtless contributed to the growth of Pope’s significance to literary discussions—a publicity strategy of which Pope was well aware.

The marketing campaign for *The Works of Mr Pope, in Prose*, which contained Pope’s correspondence and part of the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, demonstrated a similar willingness to harness controversy for sales, though not, perhaps, with Pope’s consent. An essay written by the booksellers of that work and published in the *History of the Works of the Learned* announced the work’s publication and explained the origins of the letters, which they admit were not given to them by Pope.

---


himself, as the author claimed to be so adamant that his correspondence not be printed.\(^{137}\) The discussion is a brilliant bit of marketing, asking readers to wonder what might be so scandalous in the work.\(^{137}\)

Pope’s death in 1744 was followed first by a few discussions of his impact on poetry, and then by a drastic downturn in the number of published critical discussions of his work. A number of elegies marked the poet’s death, primarily with the intent of celebrating his work. *An Elegy on Mr. Pope. Humbly Inscrib’d to H. St John, L. Bolingbroke* honors Pope’s poetic style, his judgment, and his wit, with no discussion of Pope as a person, or whether he was mean-spirited in his satire.\(^{138}\) *An Elegy on the Death of Mr. Alexander Pope* praises both the poet and his poetry, calling Pope a friend to the good and wise, the villain's scourge, and a lover of mankind.\(^{139}\) A letter to the editor of the 1744 *Universal Spectator* declares “nothing but a thorough Indignation to find so unparallel’d a Man stigmatiz’d by so unparalleled a Versifier” as he who had published an epitaph on the poet, and offers as a replacement his own Greek epitaph.\(^{140}\) But even in death Pope could not escape his critics. In *Pope’s Ghost: A Ballad* an apparition of Pope makes a nighttime visit to Cibber to berates him for writing an unkind satiric epitaph; his chastising has no effect, however, on Cibber, who returns to his work in the morning.\(^{141}\) The most serious elegy for Pope, William Mason’s *Musæus: A Monody to the Memory of Mr. Pope, in Imitation of Milton’s Lycidas*, was not published until three years after his death.\(^{142}\)

But in 1744, as a writer in the *Universal Spectator* commented, Pope’s death did not receive the public response one would expect from a writer of his literary stature.\(^{143}\) The author suggests two reasons for the silence: either the poets feel they cannot do justice to such a great poet in their own verse, or they were relieved to learn of his death and know they had escaped his satire. The *Universal Spectator’s* editor adds that poets may be either too lazy to write the work, or they may be taking their time in doing so, but


\(^{139}\) Anon., *An Elegy on the Death of Mr. Alexander Pope. Being an Imitation of the Ninth Elegy in the Third Book of Ovid* (1744).

\(^{140}\) Anon., “To the AUTHOR of the UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR,” *The Universal Spectator* (28 Jul 1744).

\(^{141}\) Anon., *Pope’s Ghost: A Ballad. To the Tune of William and Margaret* (1744).

\(^{142}\) [William Mason], *Musæus: A Monody to the Memory of Mr. Pope, in Imitation of Milton’s Lycidas* (London: Printed for R. Dodsley and Sold by M. Cooper, 1747).

\(^{143}\) Anon., “To the AUTHOR of the UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR,” *The Universal Spectator* (16 Jun 1744).
he quickly diverts his subject from Pope to point out that other good writers are still at work. Poetry critics seemed eager to distance themselves from constant debates over Pope.

Amongst the most discussed but now most forgotten poets of the 1740s was Richard Glover, whose 335-page quarto poem, *Leonidas*, received an unusual amount of attention in the press for a poet who published little and whose other works were much less discussed (with only *London; Or the Progress of Commerce* gathering any reviews). A review of *Leonidas* in *Common Sense* (and also reprinted in *Gentleman’s Magazine*) the same year the first edition was published is an example of the enthusiasm many critics expressed. The reviewer begins by admitting his initial prejudice against the poem (he complained that the author was anonymous but said to be a young merchant and that the poem “consisted of *Nine Books*, which at first Sight, was enough to startle any very lazy Fellow”). His prejudice only enhances the effusive praise of the remainder of the review. Glover’s blank verse is deemed more successful than Milton’s, as he “has found out, that Strength of Thought, and Majesty of Expression, may be reconcil’d to Purity of Diction,” and the poem’s advocacy of liberty, virtue, and public spirit is rousing and morally sound. *Leonidas* was advocated by this reviewer and others as a great English epic.

But reviewers were not universally convinced of *Leonidas’s* charms. Reactions to *Leonidas* were tempered by reviewers’ priorities: those who examined its politics typically found little to dislike, while those primarily interested in the quality of the verse had mixed estimations. The author of a letter to the editor of *Gentleman’s Magazine* complains that *Leonidas* is overvalued. The poem far too expensive; “for a young Author, in almost his first Attempt, to value his Works equal to, nay ev’n above Mr. Pope’s, is a Presumption that ought not to escape public Censure” (291). He accuses the poet’s friends of puffing the poem beyond decency, and warns that the nation will be disgraced if *Leonidas* is considered its best work over the poetry of Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Shakespeare, Otway, or Pope. Where others find simplicity of expression, he finds flawed meter. A June 1737 *Weekly Miscellany* review finds some lines

---

144 *London: or the Progress of Commerce* was, for example, reviewed in the *Universal Spectator*. The reviewer provides a balanced account of the poem, with ample summary and excerpts. Anon., “To the AUTHOR of the UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR,” *The Universal Spectator* (24 Nov 1739).
145 Anon., “To the Author of COMMON SENSE,” *Common Sense* (9 Apr 1737).
in *Leonidas* to be flat and unpoetical, but concludes that "‘tho there are Faults sufficient to justify the Opposition I have made to it, yet there are Beauties more than sufficient to repay [readers’] Trouble in reading it over."\(^{147}\) Even a few years after its original publication, discussions of *Leonidas* continued. For example, a 1740 *Daily Gazetteer* article offers the highest praise for *Leonidas* and recommends it as an important work to read in an election year.\(^{148}\)

Female poets and the possibilities poetry offered women both as readers and writers were largely ignored by critics and reviewers except for occasional comments that particular works might be morally instructive for young women. A notable exception to this rule was Elizabeth Singer Rowe, whose life and works were occasionally upheld as examples of the benefits poetry could have for the female sex.\(^ {149}\) In the editor’s preface to *Philomela: or, Poems by Mrs. Elizabeth Singer, (Now Rowe,)* argues that the quality of Rowe’s poetry proves that women can be great poets if they are fairly evaluated: her work is equal to or better than that of the most highly regarded poets.\(^ {150}\) Such praise was rare for female poets. Even a rare 12-page review of Mary Leapor’s *Poems on Several Occasions* consists only of an excerpt of the preface and a few examples of her poetry, with no commentary on the quality of the verse.\(^ {151}\)

Poetry criticism was not limited to discussion of individual writers, however; many examinations of the art of poetry and the forms it could take were published in the 1740s. Critics sought to define poetry and help readers to evaluate its quality by connecting its essential features to other fields, like music and mathematics. Poetry is described as an elevated form of expression: "The great Beauty of Poetry consists chiefly in its *Numbers* and *Images*: By its *Numbers* it is render'd harmonious and delightful to the *Ear*; by its *Images* it pleases and engages the *Imaginations.*"\(^ {152}\) Poetry has the benefits of both music and painting in its sweetness of words, it takes the best of the muses and the priesthood, and borrows from the

---


\(^{149}\) A brief biography of Rowe in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* praises her poetic abilities: “So prevalent was her Genius this Way, that her very Prose had all the Charms of Verse without the Fetters.” Anon., “…some Account of the Life of the Excellent Mrs Rowe,” *Gentleman’s Magazine* (May 1739): 261–2.

\(^{150}\) Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *Philomela: or, Poems by Mrs. Elizabeth Singer, (Now Rowe,)* of Frome in Somersetshire (1737).


sciences.\textsuperscript{153} Such definitions were standard, though critics were less unified about what made some poetry better than others.

Differing opinions on the most essential features of quality verse proliferated. Henry Pemberton argues in his \textit{Observations on Poetry} that “a happy choice of distinct and comprehensive words, that may convey the sense with brevity, evidence, and force, is doubtless the principal character, which constitutes the sublime of language” and that the most excellent writing exhibits sublimity of sentiment.\textsuperscript{154} An essay in the \textit{Museum} follows the example set by de Piles’ dissertation on balance in painting to establish a set of criteria to examine balance in poetry: the degree of perfection a poet achieves can measured by his critical ordonnance; pathetic ordonnance; dramatic expression; incidental expression; taste; coloring; versification; and moral. By the author’s estimation, Homer and Shakespeare are the most balanced, perfect poets, followed by Milton and then Virgil.\textsuperscript{155} Diction is deemed most important by a writer in the \textit{Broadbottom Journal}, who explains Akenside’s \textit{The Pleasures of the Imagination} taught him that “To constitute Poetry, the Stile should be elevated above what is vulgar, even in the most simple Descriptions of Nature, for without that Superiority of Diction, nothing is Poetry.”\textsuperscript{156} To suit a critic in the \textit{Museum} true, great poetry can only be written by one with the natural genius for creation, as creation elevates writing to something akin to the divine.\textsuperscript{157}

Full-length treatises on methods for writing poetry offered poets advice for writing verse that aspired to the style of the best poets. Edward Bysshe’s \textit{The Art of English Poetry} is perhaps the most complete and ambitious practical guide for poets.\textsuperscript{158} Bysshe aims to extract the rules for making English verse from the practice of the best poets, whose work he extracts and arranges alphabetically according to

\textsuperscript{153} See the observations on poetry in Anon., “To Henry Stonecastle, Esq; Author of the Universal Spectator,” \textit{The Universal Spectator} (21 May 1737).
\textsuperscript{156} Anon., “[Untitled],” \textit{The Broadbottom Journal} (25 April 1747).
its subject. His rules for making English verse focus on structure (or meter), rhyme, and the genre of
poetry and offer prescriptive, sometimes technical advice for constructing poetry (for example, which
syllables in a line to accent and how to construct stanzas of different lengths and types). John Constable’s
Reflections Upon Accuracy of Style is a lengthier (2-volume) and more theoretical approach to a
methodology of writing poetry. 159 Wishing readers to feel as though they are participating in the rule-
making themselves, Constable presents dialogues on topics including the use of metaphors and foreign
words and presents writers with considerations for their work rather than rules. Serious poets were
expected to be aware of the traditions and structures their work followed, and style accordingly
progressed through distinct trends.

The preference for rhyming couplets as perfected by Dryden and more recently Pope yielded
around 1743 to a growing tolerance, if not appreciation, for blank verse. Blank verse was especially
common in the longer philosophical poems published in the 1740s, and could be found both in reprints of
older works (like new editions of William Somervile’s The Chace and John Philip’s Cyder) and in new
poems (most notably Mark Akenside’s The Pleasures of Imagination, but also John Armstrong’s The Art
of Preserving Health and some shorter poems). 160 Milton’s popularity may have been responsible for
some of the blank verse—Somervile credits his example for that choice in his preface to The Chace.
Ronald Paulson has also suggested that poets (specifically Warton and Collins) may have been trying to
escape from Pope’s shadow, and his theory is supported by the decrease in criticism of that poet
following his death. 161

Blank verse is likely also an example of 1740s poetic experimentation. Poets in the period
frequently claimed to be attempting to reinvent older forms and styles. Thomas Wharton claims his
pastoral eclogues are “form’d on a plan entirely new” and “their design is essentially distinguish’d from

159 John Constable, Reflections Upon Accuracy of Style. In Five Dialogues. Containing the Chief Rules to be
160 Somervile, The Chace; Philips, Cyder; Akenside, The Pleasures of Imagination; [John Armstrong], The Art
of Preserving Health: A Poem. (1744).
161 Paulson, Don Quixote in England, p. 81.
any productions of their kind.” Edward Young claims his Night Thoughts are a unique enterprise: “For it differs from the common mode of Poetry, which is from long Narrations to draw short morals. Here, on the Contrary, the Narrative is short, and the Morality arising from it makes the Bulk of the Poem.”

Though concerned with adhering to standards of form and style, poets did not want to repeat the work of their predecessors.

The prevalence of topical poetry meant that the forms and purposes of satire were especially fiercely debated. A 1738 Craftsman essay on Juvenal and satire, for example, warns that readers have taken to interpreting all classical satires as representations of modern scoundrels, and “at this Rate, there will be no mentioning the eminent Rascals of Antiquity, but some Wise-acre will presently say that we mean a right hon. Gentleman now living.” In the preface to the anonymous The World Unmask’d Thomas Gilbert protests that coffee-house critics insist on attempting to pinpoint references to individuals in satire, denying the possibility of general satires. So common was this complaint that the Jacobite’s Journal even ran a recurring feature called the Court of Criticism in which authors and booksellers were put on fictitious trials for the subjects and quality of their published satires. Poets seemed to feel at a loss to separate their work from its context.

While domestic politics contributed to discussions of satire, a background of war and continental conflict colored descriptions of “English” poetry. Periodical essays advocated reading poetry to keep the nation focused on its values, either by reading the best works (like Horace) to improve the morals of the

---

162 [Thomas Wharton], Five Pastoral Eclogues: The Scenes of Which are Suppos’d to Lie Among the Shepherds, Oppress’d by the War in Germany (1745), p. 3.  
164 “Constans,” “Mr. D’Anvers,” The Craftsman (13 May 1738).  
165 [Thomas Gilbert], The World Unmask’d. A Satire (1738).  
166 For example, Porcupinus, author of the Causicade and associated satires, is criticized for risking his reputation in an age when the liberty of the press is in jeopardy in order to publish scandalous works of bad verse that have no truth in them. “Court of Criticism,” Jacobite’s Journal (12 Mar 1748). In a later issue, Mary Cooper taken to court for publishing Selim the Persian, which was said to be a satire on a great chanceller, but the judge rules that the poem is a satire, not on the great man, but rather on the bad poets of the age. “Court of Criticism,” Jacobite’s Journal (14 July 1748).
nation, or reading older English works as a reminder of the nation’s past and identity. Poets are advised to remember that they should be writing to inform and benefit their nation. Comparisons between English and French poetry made equally blunt points about the importance of poetry to the nation’s success. French poetry was typically characterized as “correct” and regular, while English poetry was praised for its creativity, energy, and imagery. An essay in The Museum argues that the English and French write different kinds of poetry, and their correctness should be evaluated based on the elevation of the genre in which they are writing, and wonders why the French are known as more correct than the English, as the English have older and better poets than most other countries, like Spenser and Sidney. Poetry’s purposes were large and significant.

1740s poets were very conscious of their milieu; prefaces and advertisements are filled with both anxiety over the likely reception of their work based on popular opinions and justifications for their disliked topics and motives. Religious works were defended as instructive. A preface to An Hymn to the Supreme Being explains that “was [the author] to write only to please the World and profit himself, he knows he should be much more successful in writing against Religion than for it,” but that his goal was simply to “celebrate the Greatness of the Divine Being.” James Meredith agrees, recounting how he was warned against writing An Essay on the Divine Attributes: “The main Objection that has hitherto been offer’d against its Publication, is the Sacredness of the Subject, as not being suited to the Taste, nor adapted to the Humour, of the present Age.” Seven years later Joseph Warton would claim the opposite—that “The Public has been so much accustom’d of late to didactic Poetry alone, and Essays on moral Subjects, that any work where the imagination is much indulged, will perhaps not be relished or

---

169 A typical comparison of French and English poetry can be found in Anon., “From My CHAMBERS,” The Universal Spectator (11 Jan 1746).
171 Bridges, An Hymn to the Supreme Being. With a Preface, on the General Design of It (1739), sig. A.
regarded.” Whether or not their subjects were actually so out of style, such concerns suggest the strong impact public approval could have on writers.

Seeking approval of one’s work is perhaps natural, but worry over successful publication indicates a growing tension between poets who wrote for leisure and those more concerned with the earning potential of their verse. Periodicals offered cautionary advice against making poetry a profession. In a humorous letter published in *The Museum* a father complains of his “blockheadly” son who, in spite of all good education, reads nothing but poetry and romances and wishes to live in a grotto and has no idea how he will make money from his poetry; the editors respond with a lament that little can be built upon a foundation of poetry. Poetry writing is presented as an amusement for a gentleman, innocent and beneficial only inasmuch as it occupies one’s mind as a recreation.

*  

1740s poetry and the place it held in contemporary culture are messier and more entertaining than one could possibly imagine from the very few works still read today. Booksellers, poets, and readers were as diverse then as they are now, and published poetry ranged from highly topical quick verse (often published in periodicals or as broadsheet ballads) to poems that required readers who wished to experience them to invest significant amounts of time, thought, and often also money.

The poetry used by modern critics to represent the 1740s shows only a small portion of very elite publication and includes poems that are more often anomalous than representative. Poems by Pope, Gray, Warton, Collins, Young, and Akenside may be some of the most innovative and stylistically advanced, but we can only appreciate them when we understand the backdrop of the other poetry that would have been sold next to them in booksellers’ shops. Certainly Pope and Young were popular with 1740s readers

---

175 A writer offering instruction to young poets calls poetry “the most agreeable and innocent [amusement] in the World. ”“[Humble Servant],” *The Museum: or, The Literary and Historical Register* (12 Sep 1747): 480–484, at 481.
and critics, but Gray and Collins were not much published, reprinted, or discussed in criticism or periodicals. Writers like Glover and Akenside were deemed more important in their time, and their works were likely more immediately influential. And the poetry of long-gone poets like Chaucer and Milton was even more significant to contemporary conversations about the quality of verse. Milton’s poetry especially was not only commonly referred to in critical discussions, but also, as John Butt has shown, consciously imitated and adapted by a few 1740s poets like Warton and Collins.\footnote{John Butt, \textit{The Mid-Eighteenth Century}, ed. Geoffrey Carnall. Vol. 3 of \textit{The Oxford History of English Literature}, edited by John Buxton and Norman Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 64–70.}

Imagination, introspection, and reflections on nature and the pleasures of rural life were not common themes in 1740s published poetry. The works in which these so-called poetic projects appear are few and far between, and most were not commercial successes. Warton’s \textit{The Enthusiast: Or, The Lover of Nature}, Collins’ \textit{Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects}, and Gray’s \textit{An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College} were each published in only one edition in the 1740s.\footnote{[Joseph Warton], \textit{The Enthusiast: Or, The Lover of Nature} (1744); William Collins, \textit{Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects} (1747); Thomas Gray, \textit{An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College} (1747).} As near as they can be estimated based on published commentary and the works proven to be most successful in the marketplace, readers preferred works that more closely reflected the reality of everyday English life and concerns. Topical poetry in particular sold well throughout the period. Howard Weinbrot and Dustin Griffin are among the few critics who have recognized the important role current events played in mid-century poetry. In his history of the development of the English ode, Weinbrot shows that 1740s poets commonly adapted the form to English literary conventions by incorporating their country’s mythologized ancient history and idealizations of rural life and using personal experiences to connect to national themes and relate to audiences that were beginning to prioritize their country’s own history over that of other nations.\footnote{Howard D. Weinbrot, \textit{Britannia’s Issue: The Rise of British Literature from Dyden to Ossian} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 372–89, at p. 373.} Griffin finds more explicitly patriotic projects in Akenside, Collins, Gray, and others.\footnote{Dustin Griffin, \textit{Patriotism and Poetry in Eighteenth-Century Britain} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; paperback reprint, 2005).}

Examining a wider swath of published 1740s poetry bears out the argument that the reading public was
interested in current events.

The disparity between the mid-century poetry that has survived in critical conversations and the works that have fallen by the wayside began in the 1740s: just as modern criticism does not represent the totality of the published poetry, so, too, did the interests of contemporary critics represent only a percentage of the works favored by the book-buying public. Milton and Pope’s poetry sold well, as did Akenside’s *Pleasures of Imagination* and Glover’s *Leonidas*, but only a few editions of Chaucer and Dryden were published in the decade. Though socioeconomically elite, poetry readers were not always as highbrow as the critics instructing them. Many of the poets whose works were published in the most editions—like Williams and Morgan—seem to have been dismissed in their original context just as they have been in ours. 1740s literary critics valued poetry that was innovative and imaginative, but also correct, regular, and built upon a solid foundation of its predecessors. According to the criticism published in their time, poets were to know the classical writers, but increasingly they were also expected to be concerned with the work of earlier great English poets so that they might contribute to the literary history of their nation. An English canon and sense of national poetic identity were becoming more solidified than most scholars recognize: 1740s poetry was deeply rooted in its remote and immediate English contexts.\(^\text{180}\)

An accurate picture of mid-century poetry must take into consideration both the reality of what was sold and what those acting as cultural arbiters said about the genre. Contemporary published views of poetry’s place in society suggest that critics did not consider it to be a democratized outlet for expression, nor was writing it a viable profession: poetry was elite, and its writers were expected to be gentlemen writing for higher purposes in their leisure hours. But the consumption of published poetry did not always bear out this attitude. Practical considerations had a real impact on the market. 1740s readers were concerned with the value offered by poems at different costs: defensive comments in prefaces suggest that many were reluctant to pay high prices unless the work was likely to be of lasting or unique value. The

\(^{180}\)Jonathan Brody Kramnick argues that a historicist English canon building project did not begin to crystallize until the 1750s and 60s, though he finds its roots in a few works published in the 30s and 40s. *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 91.
popularity of comparatively affordable short, often humorous or topical poems makes sense in this context. And that occasional fancy editions could be sold at extremely high prices shows that poetry was valued as both an important component of an impressive library and as a means of proving oneself well-read and worthy of learned society. Poetry in the 1740s was sometimes popular culture and other times a mark of erudition.
Drama and fiction are often viewed as following opposite trajectories in the 1740s, with the performance and publication of new plays taking a drastic downturn after the passage of the Licensing Act while the fiction’s popularity burgeoned and the market was flooded with works written and inspired by Richardson and Fielding. By these estimations, one would expect little published drama and drama criticism and a proliferation of novels and discussions of fiction. What did the published output of each of these genres actually look like between 1737 and 1749, and how much did it change from beginning to end of the period? How much attention did drama and fiction receive from literary critics and reviewers, and which works or features were most discussed? The correlation between the assumed opposite trends in drama and fiction might also lead one to wonder whether the booksellers, authors, and readers previously invested in drama shifted some of their focus to fiction. How interconnected were those who produced and consumed drama and fiction?

To investigate these questions I will address drama and fiction side-by-side in this chapter. How were these genres—one entrenched as a mainstay of highly valued literature, the other still something of an upstart—perceived in the 1740s? How were works of drama and fiction received by readers and critics? What did readers most demand from each genre, as far as can be determined by numbers of editions sold and comments in periodicals and prefaces? What options in content, price, and format were available to readers who wished to purchase works of drama or fiction? How similar were readers’ and booksellers’ interests in one genre to their interests in the other?

To give a sense of the markets for drama and fiction between 1737 and 1749 I emphasize the works and writers that seem, on the basis of factors like the numbers of published editions and references in periodicals and other works, to have been most central to readers. As Chapter 4 did for poetry, Chapter 5 surveys reviews and notices of drama and fiction in published prefaces and annotations, critical books and pamphlets like Samuel Johnson’s *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth* and the anonymous *A Companion to the Theatre: Or, a View of Our Most Celebrated Dramatic Pieces*, and
periodicals like the *Museum* and the *Monthly Review*. Works most often reviewed are compared here with those published in the greatest number of editions, as well as those published anonymously and in different price ranges in order to establish the relationship between the “high” literature upheld by critics and reviewers and the works most sought after by the book-purchasing public.

My goal is to determine whether the publication and content of drama and fiction followed the trajectories modern critics have outlined for them, and to understand more fully the role each held in the world of 1740s literature.

I. 1740s Drama

In the mid-eighteenth century staged performances were popular. In spite of the Licensing Act, post-1737 attendance at London’s patent theatres was booming. Harry William Pedicord estimates an average weekly attendance at the two patent house theatres of 8,460 between 1740 and 1742, increasing to an estimated 11,268 weekly from 1746 to 1748.¹ Those figures seem especially large when the cost of attending a play is taken into consideration: a second gallery seat cost 1s, a spot in the pit ran 2s 6d, and box seats were 4s.² Lack of competition and high public demand should have meant a commercial heyday for London’s two patent theatres, and under John Rich’s management Covent Garden flourished. But in spite of continued attendance and, from 1742, hugely successful performances by the wildly popular David Garrick, poor financial practices and poor management (which contributed to an actors’ rebellion in 1743) under Charles Fleetwood left Drury Lane struggling to stay afloat, and the theatre did not begin to recover until Garrick became with James Lacy’s partner in management in 1747.³ The drive to turn a

---


profit coupled with a jointly held monopoly on theatrical performances left little incentive to negotiate with the Lord Chamberlain for permission to stage a new play and to pay its playwright.

Even given the extreme restrictions to staging new plays in the 1740s, the extent to which the theatres privileged old plays over new is astounding. Covent Garden staged only three new mainpieces between 1740 and 1749. Instead the theatres filled their repertories with old favorites, which had the dual advantages of not needing the Lord Chamberlain’s permission and not requiring benefits for their playwrights. Plays staged many times during the 1740s at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane include, for example, Joseph Addison’s *Cato*, Susanna Centlivre’s *The Busie Body*, Colley Cibber’s *Love Makes a Man*, George Farquhar’s *The Beaux Strategem*, Nicholas Rowe’s *The Fair Penitent*, and Richard Steele’s *The Conscious Lovers*. But no playwright’s work was as influential on the 1740s stage as Shakespeare’s. In 1741 Charles Macklin and Garrick each had a breakthrough performance in a Shakespearean role (as Shylock and Richard III, respectively), and the significance of those and other plays to each theatre’s leading actor helped to establish the importance of Shakespeare’s works to the large and constantly rotating repertories of both Covent Garden and Drury Lane. In the most exceptional demonstration of Shakespeare’s post-Licensing Act influences, one quarter of all plays performed during the 1740–1 season were Shakespeare’s. Original content was evidently not deemed necessary for a successful performance.

---


The dearth of new plays did not deter flocks of consumers from shelling out a lot of cash to attend theatrical performances. In comparison to the public’s willingness to attend plays, the number of new and reprinted published dramatic works (English and foreign mainpieces, afterpieces, lyrics from staged musical entertainments like operas and oratorios, and so on) seems small at just 626 in 13 years, though of course not all audience members would have been able to read the plays. But drama remained a consistent presence in the market for literature even after the Licensing Act seriously curtailed the number of new plays produced. In this section I will examine the dramatic works 1740s readers purchased. What physical forms did published drama take? Which booksellers sold drama, and how much did they charge for it? Who were the most published playwrights? What content and styles were most valued by readers and critics, and how similar does popular taste seem to have been to critical values?

Practical Influences: Possibilities and Limitations for Purchasing Drama

Prior to 1737 booksellers had a reliable gauge for evaluating new drama, as they might have known how popular a playwright’s previous work had proven to be and, in cases where they purchased the copyright after the play was staged, they would have known how many nights the theatre production had run. Some booksellers were hesitant to purchase the copyright to plays that had not been produced, presumably under the assumption that consumers were buying plays only after audiences had vetted them. After the Licensing Act booksellers and readers had to develop new measures by which to evaluate and control the market. The drama sold in 1740s bookshops ranged from the lyrics to short oratorios to large and expensive collections of plays. Some dramatic works were intended to be sold based on short-term popularity generated by its current content a connection to a recent production; others were likely published on the basis of their estimated cultural cachet. But all published drama was expected to satisfy a steady demand from the book-buying public.

For the 1s price of a night in the second gallery at the theatre (and probably for less than one would spend on the outing, which was likely to include fees for transportation, food, and other incidental expenses), one could have purchased any one of a majority of single plays and dramatic entertainments
for sale in the 1740s. The value of drama appears to have been differently determined for performed and
published plays.

Although the average dramatic work was longer than the average poem, readers seem to have
been unwilling to pay much more for drama than they would have for poetry. More than half of the works
of drama for sale were published in octavo, including more than three quarters of newly published
dramatic works (oratorios, collections of plays, and so on) and nearly all new single plays, and most of
those sold for 1s or less. For 6d one could have purchased a copy of a new afterpiece or short work, like
one of the many copies of sold of Carey’s burlesque opera, The Dragon of Wantley, or they could have
obtained a small, previously-published afterpiece by a well-known writer, like Fielding’s anonymous
Tumble-Down Dick, Garrick’s Lethe: Or, Esop in the Shades, or Gay’s Acis and Galatea. For twice the
money readers could have gotten a slightly longer work; farces like Thomas Cooke’s The Eunuch, or, The
Darby Captain and John Kelly’s The Levee were especially common in the 1s price range. Works longer
than 70 pages typically cost 1s 6d—more than a second gallery seat, but still less than a spot in the pit.
And at that high-end of the octavo price range readers could have purchased mainpieces like James
Miller’s Mahomet the Imposter, and Aaron Hill’s Meropé.

Readers who wished to purchase reprints of works first published in earlier decades and centuries
would have found such books in duodecimo. The selection of duodecimo reprints was large and
chronologically varied. Although only a few duodecimo classical works, like a translation of Terence’s
comedies, were for sale in the 1740s, readers had their pick of sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and early
eighteenth-century plays. Works published in three or more duodecimo editions in the period—many of
which bore the imprint “printed for the booksellers in town and country” that suggests their popularity led
to pirated editions—including Shakespeare’s Hamlet; Otway’s The Orphan and Venice Preserv’d;

---

8 Henry Carey, The Dragon of Wantley. A Burlesque Opera (1737); [Henry Fielding], Tumble-Down Dick: or,
Phaeton in the Suds (1744); David Garrick, Lethe: Or, Esop in the Shades (1745); John Gay, Acis and Galatea
(1747).
9 Thomas Cooke, The Eunuch, or, The Darby Captain ([1737]); [John Kelly], The Levee. A Farce (1741).
10 James Miller, Mahomet the Imposter (1744); Aaron Hill, Meropé: A Tragedy (1749).
11 Terence, Terence’s Comedies Made English, With His Life, and Some Remarks at the End, trans. Dr. Echard,
and Sir R. L’Estrange (1741).
Southerne’s *Oronoko*; Rowe’s *The Fair Penitent*; Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux Stratagem*; Centlivre’s *The Busie Body*; Addison’s *Cato*; Steele’s *The Conscious Lovers*; Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*; and Lillo’s *The London Merchant*.\(^\text{12}\) Most duodecimo drama was published without a title page price, but the few prices listed suggest that a simple duodecimo edition of a single play would have cost around 1s. The Tonsons and Henry Lintot were responsible for publishing many of these reprints, and their selection of titles is one possible representation of the tastes of the 1740s drama collectors and enthusiasts that were likely among their customers.

A small number of dramatic works (52 works in the 13 years) was published in quarto—these were typically fewer than thirty pages long, and often had a musical origin (although to be considered “drama” rather than “music” by my classification the works must not contain musical notation). Oratorios and masques extracted from plays were common, including five published anonymously but attributed to Thomas Morrell.\(^\text{13}\) Most of these extracted pieces highlighted their musical origins by noting their composers and listing where they were presented, suggesting that they were particularly aimed at readers who wished to have a memento of a performance they had attended and who might be able to recall something of their musical nature without having the tunes before them.

The differences in content between duodecimo and octavo drama are reflected in different attribution patterns between the formats. The large number of duodecimo reprints is accompanied by a high percentage of definitively attributed works: more than seventy-five percent of duodecimo drama included an author’s name on its title page. Dramatic works in octavo were published under a greater variety of attribution practices. Because the great majority of all new drama was published in octavo and because the content of performed 1740s drama was so fiercely debated (especially at the beginning of the

---

\(^\text{12}\) Earliest 1740s editions of these works include: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: A Tragedy* (1737); Thomas Otway, *The Orphan: Or, The Unhappy Marriage* (1739); —, *Venice Preserv’d: Or, a Plot Discover’d* (1744); Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko* (1740); Nicholas Rowe, *The Fair Penitent* (1737); George Farquhar, *The Recruiting Officer* (1739); —, *The Beaux Strategem* (1739); Susanna Centlivre, *The Busie Body* (1737); Joseph Addison, *Cato* (1737); Richard Steele, *The Conscious Lovers* (1740); John Gay, *Beggar’s Opera* (1737); and George Lillo, *The London Merchant* (1737).

\(^\text{13}\) E.g. [Thomas Morell], *Solomon. An Oratorio. As it is Perform’d at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. Set to Musick by Mr. Handel* (1749).
period), a large percentage of octavo drama (around thirty-two percent) was anonymous. Pseudonymous works and those published with only initials in the signature to a preface or dedication were another sixteen percent. Still, attribution was more common in drama than either poetry or fiction, and a mixture of definitively attributed new and reprinted drama accounted for around forty percent of octavo drama. The greater significance of authors’ identities may be due in part to the small the number of published playwrights (especially compared to the number of writers who dabbled a bit in poetry) and to the fact that the number of new plays published was somewhat determined by demand driven by stage productions.

The booksellers most invested in drama publication seem to have assumed that demand for works associated with the stage would not wane in spite of limited stage productions of new plays. Foremost amongst all publishers of drama was of course John Watts. As I discussed at length in Chapter 2, Watts built his career around his reputation as the first-class printer and publisher of quality dramatic works. At his shop near Lincoln’s-Inn Fields readers would have found shelves of drama that contained around one-third first editions and two-thirds reprints of mostly relatively recent plays (Watts favored new drama from the 1730s forward, and did not publish the classic or canonical playwrights preferred by, for example, the Tonsons). Nearly two-thirds of the drama that bears Watts’ name was published in octavo, and readers could have expected to pay a shilling or more—a fair price, as most of the works were three- or five-act plays.\(^\text{14}\) And Watts’ shop would have been the only place to purchase some of the new drama; Watts published between one and three new plays a year, and some playwrights, like James Miller, published his plays only under Watts’ imprint.

Thomas and Mary Cooper’s bustling Paternoster Row trade publishing operation also offered a good selection of new and reprinted drama. Drama published with the Coopers’ name in its imprint favors new plays or reprints of plays only a few years old. The list includes a few tragedies, but comedies and farces were a much greater strength, probably because, as detailed in Chapter 2, the Coopers specialized

\(^{14}\) Based on title-page prices, Watts charged 1s or 1s 6d for all dramatic works published with his name in the imprint between 1737 and 1749, with the exceptions of octavo editions of Fielding’s *Tumble-Down Dick* and Gay’s *Acis and Galatea*, which could be had for 6d each.
in publishing works that could be considered libelous. A few of their associate Dodsley’s plays were also published out of their shop, including *The King and the Miller of Mansfield*. These dramatic works would have been mixed with the large volume of books in other genres sold in the Coopers’ shop—a small but consistent part of their stock.

Booksellers whose names appear in the imprints of significant amounts of reprinted drama were likely also to publish other literature. The Tonsons and Lintot, for example, appear in the imprints of 54 and 45 editions of reprinted drama, representing roughly 31% and 19% of the total numbers of works bearing their names, respectively. As purveyors of high culture, the Tonsons’ list of dramatic works included plays by some of England’s best and most long-standing playwrights; theirs was the shop to visit for Shakespeare, Jonson, Dryden, or Congreve. Lintot was associated with legal works more than any other genre, but also published significant amounts of drama, as well as some poetry and fiction (more reprinted than new). All but one of the dramatic works bearing Lintot’s name were reprinted. Like the works the Tonsons published, most of Lintot’s reprints were by earlier playwrights like Farquhar, Steele, and Centlivre, and even the new work was a collection of Rowe’s plays. Lintot’s drama publication was also highly collaborative, and in many imprints his name appears alongside many other booksellers’.

Reprinting drama standards required serious investment and an elite, educated clientele.

Although the number of dramatic works published took an unsurprising hit when the Licensing Act brought productions of new plays nearly to a standstill, booksellers continued to invest in drama throughout the 1740s. In some ways, published drama shows greater breadth and innovation than the drama performed (if not necessarily better quality), as booksellers sold closet dramas and works that had failed to be licensed or selected for performance by a theatre manager as well as editions of the works performed on the stage.

1740s Published Drama and its Reception from Critics and Readers

---

16 Nicholas Rowe, *Plays Written by Nicholas Rowe, Esq.* (1736 [1744]).
Drama publication in the 1740s was not the barren wasteland of new staged drama. Most histories of eighteenth-century drama have little to say about the years between 1737 and 1749, focusing on new staged drama and neglecting its published form. Matthew J. Kinservik’s examination of dramatic satire is an exception: he demonstrates that the Licensing Act censored drama by regulating its content, and forcing playwrights make their satire more guarded to fit those regulations. Considering drama beyond the works performed reveals that attention to dramatic form and interest in the history of drama and the theatre were robust. Published drama included both closet dramas and plays intended for the stage (some of which were successfully performed and many of which were published with bitter prefaces detailing their authors’ attempt to curry favor with theatre managers and the Lord Chamberlain); translators produced English editions of (mostly) Italian operas and oratorios; and discussions of stage management practices and actors’ rights and abilities proliferated. The reading nation was also very interested in the development of English drama, and booksellers obliged by publishing both less-expensive, pocket-sized duodecimos and fancier octavo reprints of great English playwrights—especially Shakespeare. 1740s production and consumption of drama drove continued developments in the art and its interpretation.

The Licensing Act’s stranglehold on London theatres meant that many of the plays written in the 1740s and intended for the stage were never performed. Playwrights who published works that were not staged in London often included alongside their plays bitter anecdotes about their troubles negotiating with theatre managers or the Lord Chamberlain. Thomas Whincop’s widow’s failure to see his Scanderbeg performed is said to be “owing to the Difficulties, attending such an Undertaking to a Woman; and the Caprice, I think it may be called, of the Managers of the Theatres; since tho’ no one would care to own singly, that they approved of the whole Piece enough to act it, just at the time when it was proposed to Them, yet separately they have given every Part of it the highest Commendation” because each approved and disapproved different parts. Smollett is much more direct and sour. His

17 Robert D. Hume, for example, glosses over the 1740s in his overview, “Drama and Theatre in the Mid and Later Eighteenth Century.”
18 Kinservik, Disciplining Satire.
preface to *The Regicide* recounts in detail the play’s unsuccessful patrons and its rejection by the managers of both Covent Garden and Drury Lane. He declares: “Had some of those who were pleased to call themselves my Friends, been at any Pains to deserve the Character, and told me ingenuously what I had to expect in the Capacity of an Author, when I first proposed myself of that venerable Fraternity, I should, in all Probability, have spared myself the incredible Labour and Chagrin I have since undergone.”

Lack of appreciation for their works from the theatre managers coupled with the loss of the possible income a staged production would have represented gave authors legitimate reason to feel injured.

Other playwrights took a more optimistic approach to publishing their unstaged plays. The literary marketplace could be used to create demand: if a play proved popular in print, playwrights argued, it would make a profitable stage production. A letter to the editors of the *Grub-street Journal* advocates this approach: “If a Manager refuses to act a new Play, on a supposition that it will not take, let the Author print it, and if the Town approve of it, let them demand its being perform’d.”

Readers were not used to seeing plays that were intended for the stage published before they were produced. In an address “To the Gentlemen of the Pit,” the author of *The City Farce* (a lampoon on the militia and city fashions) hopes that readers will grant the play with their patronage “though presented in a manner which may possibly appear as presumptuous as it is uncommon,” and argues that “the most effectual means to remove the Managers Complaints of Expense in Exhibiting Things which are not approv’d, would be, to have whatever is designed for the Stage offered to your previous Inspection.”

An advertisement prefixed to the anonymous *Rex et Pontifex* (a didactic and political pantomime that argues that divinity in priests and kings comes only from a combination of power and goodness) notes that “This Piece was intended for the Stage; but other Avocations preventing the Author from taking upon himself the Trouble of

---


21 A.B., [Letter], *The Grub-street Journal* (10 Mar 1736[/37]).

22 Anon., *The City Farce: Designed for the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane* (1737), pp. iii-iv.
bringing it on, if either of the Managers think it for their Purpose, they are welcome to it.” The author of the raucous comedy, *The Humours of Whist*, takes a more explicit approach: if the play is produced, he writes, “I humbly hope I shall not be affected by this Publication, but be entitled to the usual Right of Authors, as if there had been no such Publication. And accordingly, I do hereby reserve to myself the Profits arising from all Third-nights, as well as the Privilege of naming the Theatre where such Performance shall be exhibited.” The play was never staged, however, and publishing unproduced plays does not ever seem to have been a successful strategy for reaching a performance.

Not all published playwrights claimed to have intended their work for stage production. Although the 1740s did not see the publication of many traditional closet dramas—the dialogue heavy, often philosophical plays with little action intended for private reading or small at-home performances—a range of variously unstageable plays were printed. Some plays did not offer content suitable to public productions. The anonymous 1738 burlesque, *The Intriguing Milliners and Atornies Clerks*, for example, contained rather lewd descriptions of lovers’ trysts: Dashwell reminds Stitchinda of when he “flung off my Cloaths, with eager Haste, / To clasp thy panting Bosom close to mine / Desiring and Desired! I on thy Lips, / They roseate Lips, extatic, breathless hung.” Readers must have appreciated the bawdiness, as a second edition was published in 1740. The didacticism of the 1742 *School-Boy’s Mask* (republished in 1743) offered a very different incentive for reading the play, as its anti-fashion, pro-education message is “wholly design’d for Schools, without any View to the Stage.” Where the substance rendered some plays unsuitable, others were described as withheld from production by their authors’ modesty or fear of rejection (though why publication was considered a safer haven from criticism than the stage is a bit unclear). The author of *The Modern Receipt: Or, A Cure for Love*, a remake of Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, claims his writing to be “the Product of a few leisure Hours, designed only for my private Amusement, and never intended to be made Publick in any Shape whatever,” while the prologue teases that “Our

---

Author fears, in this malignant Age, / To risque his first Attempt upon the Stage,” and though “there are Criticks in the Closet too: / To these, he says, he’ll boldly trust his Play; / They would not damn him for the World—not they.”27 Readers evidently found drama to be a palatable form of personal entertainment.

The playwrights alive and publishing in the 1740s whose work was most successful in print, however, made their reputations as dramatists for the stage. Authors who published new drama in the period and whose names are associated with ten or more new and reprint editions include Henry Carey, Henry Fielding, Colley Cibber, George Lillo, David Garrick, James Thomson, Robert Dodsley, and James Miller. Though they produced a small-ish output of new drama compared to earlier decades, the work of the prominent 1740s dramatists ranged from farce to tragedy, and from short one- and two-act plays to five-act mainpieces.

Henry Carey’s burlesque opera, The Dragon of Wantley, was the runaway success of 1737. Appearing before the Licensing Act, the lively dual parody of Walpole’s tax laws and operatic conventions entertained audiences through an astonishing 69 performances—more than even Gay’s Beggar’s Opera achieved in its first season.28 And although the elaborate dances and theatricals that made it such fun on stage were impossible to reproduce on the page, the play was an equally impressive publishing success, appearing in six editions in 1737, nine in 1738, and one each in 1740, 1742, and 1749. The sequel, Margery, was less popular, perhaps because the novelty of Carey’s style had worn off. The satire in Margery is also less pointedly topical—the plot follows the title character, who, newly elevated to the status of Lady by her marriage at the conclusion of The Dragon of Wantley, turns into a dragon herself when her position goes to her head. Still, Margery was no publication flop; four editions were published in 1738.

The sharp, pointed satires of the earlier 1730s were replaced with farce and general satire in the 1740s. Garrick and Dodsley were amongst the playwrights who published the greatest numbers of new comedies, and their works were mostly inclined to be short and atypical. Garrick’s two-act The Lying

28 Suzanne Aspden, “Carey, Henry” in ODNB.
Valet is a fun example of a brief new comedy: the action follows Gayless and his servant, who conspire to hide Gayless’s lack of money and friends from his fiancée and her servant until they are married the next day.  

29 Lethe: Or, Esop in the Shades offers less action and more social satire, as a parade of characters travels to the river Lethe to forget their troubles by sampling its waters, only to be questioned and often mocked by Esop.  

30 Dodsley’s dramatic works were more typically moralistic. The King and the Miller of Mansfield, its sequel, Sir John Cockle at Court, and The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green each concern characters posing as men from different social classes in order to advance their own causes and test their friends’ moral fiber.  

31 Though his output as a playwright was curtailed seriously after the Licensing Act, Fielding also contributed new published comedies to the 1740s marketplace, including the short farce, Miss Lucy in Town, and the longer comedy, The Wedding-Day, which, though written earlier, was not published until 1743.

New 1740s tragedy followed established plots and conventions from earlier eras, and five-act plays were more standard than in comedy. Lillo and Thomson were two of the most prolific authors of tragedy in the period, and the majority of their new plays were produced. Thomson’s tragedies (including Agamemnon, Edward and Eleonora, Tancred and Sigismunda, and Coriolanus). were based on old stories set in far-off times and places and deliver plots in which conspirators seek to gain the throne, usually by destroying the relationship between the King and Queen.

33 Thomson was well-known and connected, and of his new tragedies, only Edward and Eleonora (in which the queen of England saves her husband from an attempted murder by sucking the poison from his bloodstream) was unproduced, and, probably not coincidentally, it was the only of Thomson’s new tragedies printed for the author rather than for bookseller Andrew Millar. Lillo’s Fatal Curiosity stands out as unusual amongst 1740s tragedies due to

---

29 David Garrick, The Lying Valet: In Two Acts (1741).
30 David Garrick, Lethe: Or, Esop in the Shades (1745).
31 Robert Dodsley, The King and the Miller of Mansfield (1737); Robert Dodsley, Sir John Cockle at Court (1738); Robert Dodsley, The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green (1741).
32 [Henry Fielding], Miss Lucy in Town. A Sequel to The Virgin Unmasqued. A Farce; With Songs (1742); Henry Fielding, The Wedding-Day. A Comedy (1743).
33 James Thomson, Agamemnon (1738); ———, Edward and Eleonora (1739); ———, Tancred and Sigismunda (1745); ———, Coriolanus (1749).
its grim representation of modern times. When the play opens, Old Wilmot and his wife have fallen on desperate times, having lost all their money as well as, they believe, their son in a shipwreck. Young Wilmot soon returns, but at his parents’ failure to recognize him he leaves a valuable casket in their care while he naps. Desperate for money, the Wilmots murder and rob their visitor and then, when his identity is revealed, they kill themselves. Readers did not seem to appreciate this bleak tale, and only one edition of The Fatal Curiosity was published in the 1740s, although Lillo’s previously published London Merchant, which tells the gritty story of a man’s downfall through his association with a prostitute, appeared in nine editions.

Not all 1740s playwrights specialized in either comedy or tragedy. The writer who produced the greatest variety of new drama in the 1740s was James Miller. Miller’s comedies included both short farces, like the fun The Coffee House, in which Colley Cibber is featured as a character and helps a young man tricks his older and wealthier rival out of marrying their mutual love interest, the daughter of the coffee house owner, and five-act mainpieces, like his hybrid of Much Ado About Nothing and Molière’s Princes of Elsinore, The Universal Passion. After Miller’s death in 1744 his wife published two of his more serious works posthumously, the mainpiece tragedy, Mahomet the Imposter and the short biblical drama, Joseph and His Brethren, both of which had been performed recently. Although most of the 1740s editions associated with Cibber were reprints of previously published works like Love Makes a Man and The Provok’d Husband, the venerable dramatist continued to write for the stage. His new dramatic works included the anti-Catholic farcical adaptation of Shakespeare, Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John and the cloying, didactic closet drama, The Lady’s Lecture, A Theatrical Dialogue, between Sir Charles Easy and His Marriagable Daughter. Miller and Cibber, as established playwrights, would

---

34 George Lillo, Fatal Curiosity: A True Tragedy of Three Acts (1737).
35 [James Miller], The Coffee House. A Dramatick Piece (1737); [James Miller], The Universal Passion. A Comedy (1737).
36 James Miller, Mahomet the Impostor; James Miller, Joseph and His Brethren. A Sacred Drama (1744).
have had an easier time than most seeing their work accepted by theatre managers and booksellers, but they offer proof that new drama did not entirely disappear after the Licensing Act.

Although pointed satire was not often to be found on the 1740s stage, published drama often contained highly topical commentary. Some published topical plays were clearly never intended for production. The comedy, *The Informers Outwitted: A Tragi-Comical Farce. As it Has Been Rehears’d at the New-Exchange in Rag-Fair*, for example, presents a group of informers who squeal to the government on gin runners, as well as the men who outwit them in court. The work’s subtitle—“Written Originally in Hebrew, and Translated by Solomon Bung-Your-Eye, Gent”—is an obvious wink at its need to conceal its origins.  

Politicke in Miniature, a dramatic tale first printed in the Westminster Journal, makes a puppet show parody of Walpole’s resignation.  

The topicality of *The Bravo Turn’d Bully; Or, the Depredators* is similarly overt, though its stance is decidedly more patriotic: when a group of English sailors is captured by the Spanish and detained in spite of the lack of the English wrongdoing, one of the sailors falls in love with a Spanish woman who helps to set him and his men free. But topical commentary in drama was often more guarded, if not less pointed. William Hatchett’s anonymously published political tragedy based on a recent translation of a very old Chinese play, *The Chinese Orphan: An Historical Tragedy*, is obviously intended as a commentary on the modern political climate. In his choice to address the dedication to the Duke of Argyle and in his suggestions there that perhaps the Chinese represent Prime Ministers as monsters to dissuade the public from being deceived by them, Hatchett draws obvious parallels to the current dissatisfaction in Parliament.

Just as the 1745 rebellion was chronicled by the poets of the age, so, too, did that momentous occasion affect the drama. In the anonymous musical pantomime *Harlequin Incendiary: Or, Colombine*

---

41 Anon., *The Bravo Turn’d Bully; Or, the Depredators. A Dramatic Entertainment. Founded on Some Late Transactions in America* (1740).
Cameron, for example, the Pope and the devil conspire to take over England until they are defeated by Britannia and her friend, concluding with the chorus declaring “With George our Defender we ever will join, / For the Voice of the People’s the true Right divine.” John Cutts’ Rebellion Defeated; Or, the Fall of Desmond. A Tragedy and Charles Macklin’s anonymously published King Henry the VII. Or the Popish Impostor. A Tragedy use historical events as stand-ins for the ’45. Rebellion Defeated tells the story of an Irish Catholic rebellion against Queen Elizabeth that ended in the rebels’ defeat, and was advertised at an extraordinary 2s 6d for its 52 quarto pages (possibly because the work was printed for the author, and possibly because the author felt that he might cash in on the fervor by publishing one of the earliest accounts in 1745). King Henry the VII tells a similar story in which Scottish Catholics attempt to overthrow Henry, who they call a usurper, and to replace him with Perkin, who they claim to be the rightful heir; unlike Cutts’ play, Macklin’s was produced at Drury Lane. Topical references to the ’45 and other current events could have been appreciated by all audiences and thus remained an important staple of the drama printed and produced in the 1740s.

The highest culture was less accessible to the masses. Italian operas and excerpts from them were published throughout the period, most typically printed in alternating pages of Italian and English. The adapter of published Italian operas most frequently credited on title pages was Francesco Vanneschi, a Florentine appointed by Lord Middlesex as the poet and assistant manager at the King’s Theatre in 1741–2. Vanneschi worked for the King’s Theatre on an off throughout the 1740s and beyond, revising librettos for operas and writing his own. His operas were printed without their accompanying music, with the text appearing in dual alternating pages of Italian and English and occasionally with descriptions of the dancing and action in the staged productions. The stories were drawn from classical history and mythology and include Mitridate (in which Persian Emperor Mithrades’ sons and new wife think him

---

44 John Cutts, Rebellion Defeated; Or, the Fall of Desmond. A Tragedy (1745); [Charles Macklin], King Henry the VII. Or the Popish Impostor. A Tragedy (1746).
dead, and when he returns he discovers his sons moving in romantically on their mother-in-law), *Fetonte* (the story of Phaeton’s near destruction of humanity when he drives his father’s sun chariot too close to the earth), and *Bellerofonte* (in which Bellerophon is accused of attempting to abuse the honor of a king’s daughter, but exonerates himself by proving his strength and cunning and is rewarded with the hand of a different daughter). The classical and historical-based content of Vanneschi’s operas is similar to that of other authors of the Italian opera published in 1740s London, including most notably Pietro Metastasio and Antonio Salvi.

Some audience members may have been frustrated by their inability to understand the action on stage while watching Italian operas, as is suggested by the English plot summary provided in *The Greatest Glory of a Prince, is the Conquest of His Own Passions*. But Italian opera was common enough in London that it began to be incorporated into English plays, often to mock its style and origin. Francis Lynch’s *The Independent Patriot: Or, Musical Folly*, for example, lampoons fashion and society and has particularly pointed criticism for the town’s preference for all things foreign—especially Italian.

Operatic conventions were also humorously incorporated into English plays, as in *The Temple of Dullness*: the central plot follows the courtship between Dullness and Merit as it was represented in Pope’s *Dunciad*, but the action is mixed with a humorous intermezzo taken from Italian opera.

Translations of foreign drama would have been more accessible to readers in published form than opera, as such works would have relied less on music and staging to convey their meaning. English editions of single foreign-language plays, especially those originally in French and Italian, were available throughout the period, including works like Voltaire’s *Alzira* and *Meropé*, Francesco Scipione, Marchese

---

46 Francesco Vanneschi, *Mitridate. Drama, per il Teatro di S.M.B* (1746); ———, *Fetonte. Drama, per il Teatro di S.M.B* (1747); ———, *Bellerofonte. Drama, per il Teatro di S.M.B* (1746).

47 Examples of classically-inspired operas by these authors include Pietro Metastasio, *Didone Abandonata. Drama. Da Rappresentarsi Nel Regio Teatro di Covent-Garden* (1737); and Antonio Salvi, *Berenice, Queen of Egypt. An Opera. As it is Perform’d at the Theatre Royal in Covent-Garden, Composed by Mr. Handel* (1737).


di Maffei’s *Merope*, and M. Saint-Foix’s *The Oracle*.  
Serious collectors also could have purchased collections of translated works by foreign-language playwrights. John Watts’ edition of the collected works of Molière in French and English proved popular enough to sustain two large 1740s editions. And Terence’s comedies were available in competing translations by Cooke and L’Estrange, as well as in editions by Patrick and Stirling that were intended for schools. Many consumers evidently wished to cultivate diverse collections of drama.

Like opera, oratorios were commonly published in the 1740s, providing the text of the musical narratives. But unlike opera, oratorios were almost always originally written in English, and they featured religious plots rather than the classical mythology and history often found in operas. Newburgh Hamilton’s *Samson*, adapted as an oratorio for the stage from Milton’s *Samson Agonistes*, was amongst the most popular published oratorios of the 1740s, and was printed in 4 editions its first year (1743), as well as an additional edition in each 1748 and 1749. Biblical oratorios included Charles Jennens’ *Saul*, and *Belshazzar*, as well as Thomas Morrell’s *Solomon*.

But in spite of continued public interest in theatre and stage productions, dramatic criticism in periodicals and pamphlets was uncommon and covered a small range of topics and writers. The detailed discussions of form and style and dissertations on aesthetic theory that could be found in periodicals and pamphlets on poetry were not repeated for drama—except for where discussions of poetry also included


55 [NewBurgh Hamilton], *Samson. An Oratorio. As it is Perform’d at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. Alter’d and Adapted to the Stage from the Samson Agonistes of John Milton. Set to Musick by George Frederick Handel* (1743).

56 [Charles Jennens], *Saul, an Oratorio; Or, Sacred Drama* (1738); [Charles Jennens], *Belshazzar, an Oratorio* (1745); [Thomas Morrell], *Solomon. An Oratorio* (1749).
discussions of playwrights (or “dramatic poets”), as when Shakespeare and Dryden were upheld alongside writers like Milton, Chaucer, and Spenser as the best English poets.57

1740s dramatic analysis was simplistic. Critics consistently championed the same concepts: that drama should be a reflection of nature and the human passions, and that English drama (especially comedy) was superior to foreign work at satisfying these demands. In their preface to their 1742 translation of Aristophanes’s *Plutus: The God of Riches*, Fielding and William Young argue that modern drama has been polluted with wit: “that pretty, dapper, brisk, smart, pert Dialogue, which hath lately flourished on our Stage. This was first introduced with infinite Wit by Wycherley, and continued with still less and less by his Successors” and that readers “whose Palates are vitiated with the theatrical Diet” can no longer appreciate the simplicity of style found in Shakespeare, Fletcher, and especially Jonson.58 A letter to the editor of the *London Magazine* echoed the importance of realism in drama: “It is a trite, yet just Observation, that the Stage is, or ought to be a Representation of human Nature” with characters drawn boldly so that they can be recognized from a distance.59 Critics valued drama that provided a version of realism.

Central to the creation of that reality was a genuine representation of human emotion, or “the passions.” In his anonymously published *A Treatise on the Passions, So Far as They Regard the Stage*, Samuel Foote bases his evaluation of the merits of Garrick, Macklin, and other actors’ representation of the same roles on their portrayal of the passions, which he defines as “the different Motions and Agitations of the Soul, according to the different Objects, that present themselves to the Senses,” admitting that their effects “are so very different in different Men, and often so complicated and mixed,

that it would be almost impossible, to trace their several Connections.”

By Foote’s estimation, the best actors are those who understand the motivations of Shakespeare’s characters and represent them consistently. An anonymous pamphlet on *The Suspicious Husband* similarly relies on Shakespeare as the greatest dramatic poet of England or any nation for his “Preservation and Consistency of Character, the working up of the Passions, their Rise, Progress, and Effects!” Other playwrights (including Jonson, Dryden, Otway, and Lee), the critic argues, fall short of Shakespeare’s example either in their poetry or in their ability to represent nature convincingly. In the 1740s critics valued realistic depictions of human emotion above wit and wordplay and expected plays to represent personal struggles above national concerns.

In general, little attention was paid to specific rhetorical and structural qualities of dramatic writing: the exception was rhymed dialogue, which, when discussed, was much maligned for its inability to reflect natural expression. A critic writing to the editor of the *London Magazine* proclaimed that “all our best Tragedies are in Blank Verse . . . for ’tis impossible to express the Passions justly, or make Nature appear in a proper Light, where Heroes rant, Lovers whine, and even Messages or the most indifferent Things are express’d in Rhime.”

In his editor’s preface to a posthumous collection of Roger Boyles’ plays, Robert Dodsley justifies the significance of the plays in the history of English drama, but apologizes for their poor quality, and especially for the fact that they were written in rhyme: “Our juster Age has flung off the Chains of Rhyme, and has despised the Follies of Romance. The Tragic Muse now wears no Fetters, but such as are put upon her by the L—d C— —n” as compared to Boyle’s time when, “Whatever the King applauded, was sure to meet with the Praise of the People: So that when the Royal

---

60 [Samuel Foote], *A Treatise on the Passions, So Far as They Regard the Stage; With a Critical Enquiry into the Theatrical Merit of Mr. G-k, Mr. Q-n, and Mr. B-y. The First Considered in the Part of Lear, the Two Last Opposed in Othello* ([1747]), pp. 10 and 13.

61 Anon., *An Examen of the New Comedy, Call’d The Suspicious Husband. With Some Observations Upon Our Dramatick Poetry and Authors; To Which is Added, A Word Advice to Mr. G--rr--ck; and a Piece of Secret History* ([1747]), p. 23.

Taste was vitiated, the Poison diffused itself through his whole Dominions, and reached even Dryden himself." 63 Playwrights and audiences were expected to recognize and value realistic, genuine dialogue.

As with poetry, drama was considered an edifying and moralizing influence, and readers and audiences were expected to improve themselves and the stage by cultivating good taste. A letter in the Universal Spectator pleads with English audiences (particularly the gentlemen in the pit) to curtail their mockery of actors and each other and instead to use their collective power to recover and advance the stage, as “Authors of Merit have their Works frequently rejected for Want of Interest to recommend them.” He also warns that current tastes are marring the best drama: “Many of the inestimable Remains of our great Father Shakespear are so injudiciously cut and mangled in the Representation, that, were he to rise from the Dead, he would hardly recollect that they ever belong’d to him.” 64 Critics demanded that drama be considered more than mere entertainment. The anonymous author of Ince and Yarico argues that “Moral Knowledge, which is the best Introduction to all Kinds of Literature, far from being depressed by the Drama, has always remarkably flourished where theatrical Exhibitions were liberally encouraged” and that drama of the sort exemplified by Shakespeare, Jonson, and Otway, should be written “To make Men acquainted with his own Frame and constitution, that he may the easier regulate both; to mitigate the rigour of Philosophic Precept, by shewing Virtue in a graceful and attractive Posture; to accustom the Mind to Serenity under Injuries and Misfortunes, by Instances of heroic Fortitude; and to stir up a Contempt of Folly, by witty or humorous Representations.” 65 1740s dramatic criticism demanded that quality drama encourage high-mindedness and virtue and, though dramatists did not always follow these principles, their prefaces indicate that they at least were aware of the importance of feigning moral purpose.

63 Roger Boyle, The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery. To Which is Added, a Comedy, Intitled, As You Find It (1739), pp. iv and vi.
64 H. Stonecastle, “To the Gentlemen in the Pit,” The Universal Spectator (3 Feb 1739).
65 [Weddell], “The Author of the City Farce, The Voyage Up the Thames, &c.,” Ince and Yarico: A Tragedy, of Three Acts. As it Was Intended to Have Been Performed at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent-Garden (1742), sigs. Ar and Av.
1740s critical attention to the best dramatic qualities is reflected in the burgeoning desire to understand and appreciate the history of English drama. Between 1737 and 1749 two major collections of the English drama deemed most important were published. The first of these was The Beauties of the English Stage, a selection of passages deemed by the editor to be the country’s best tragedies, arranged by subject in alphabetical order. The passages are attributed with abbreviated names and titles, indicating both that the playwrights’ names (which included Dryden, Shakespeare, Addison, Otway, Congreve, Lee, and other still-familiar playwrights) were significant to the estimation of the quality of the passages, and that readers would have been expected to know who these playwrights were and what they wrote. Of greater lasting significance was Dodsley’s A Select Collection of Old Plays. The 12-volume collection was sold by subscription and represents an impressive attempt to provide a history of the mostly forgotten English plays and playwrights from the very beginning of dramatic arts in England, from mummers and early passion plays to the seventeenth century. The 61 chronologically organized plays were taken from Dodsley’s personal collection of drama, as well as that of his patron, Sir Clement Cottrell Dormer. The list favors comedies over tragedies (Dodsley argues that they are better examples of the humors of their ages), and contains a mix of lesser-known playwrights and those still famous (like Jonson and Marlow, but without Shakespeare, whose works were being published separately). Dodsley’s collection had both an immediate and a lasting impact. The preface to The Astrologer, for example, cites Albumazar from A Select Collection as the source for the new play’s material, and many of the plays Dodsley resurrected have been favorites in anthologies ever since.

1740s published drama shows that readers and collectors were interested as much—or more—in historically proven texts than in novelty. As I demonstrate in Chapter 3, published drama contained a

---

69 [James Ralph], The Astrologer, A Comedy. As it Was Once Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane (1744). On the lasting impact of Dodsley’s Collection, see Solomon, The Rise of Robert Dodsley, p. 96.
smaller percentage of first editions than poetry or fiction, and once past the first edition, dramatic works were more likely to be reprinted again than either other genre. Booksellers fulfilled the demand for established texts by publishing the works of classical dramatists like Terence and Plautus. But when readers sought entertainment over education, they likely turned elsewhere: the editor of the *Universal Spectator* warns a reader who recommends Plautus’s *Captives* that the play “would not, I am afraid, be approv’d on our Stage. The English love Humour, as they are almost all Humorists themselves; and they had rather meet with fine Sentiments in their Studies than in the Theatres; I mean in Comedies” and “Besides, a Play without Love and Women would seem too strange a Thing for the Pit and Boxes to excuse.”

The London market for literature favored English dramatists. As discussed in Chapter 3, the authors from previous eras whose names are associated with 15 or more editions of drama between 1737 and 1749 were all English, and include Shakespeare, Gay, Centlivre, Farquhar. The popularity of each of these writers can be attributed in large part to just a few titles. Of the 18 dramatic editions published under Gay’s name in the 1740s, 8 were editions of *The Beggar’s Opera*, 4 were of *Acis and Galatea*, 3 were of *The Distress’d Wife*, and 2 were of *Polly* (the sequel to *The Beggar’s Opera*). Centlivre was represented by a larger selection of works (9 separate titles were associated with her in the 1740s published output), but her reputation was likewise primarily based on *The Busie Body* (5 editions) and *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* (3 editions). Farquhar’s 15 editions included 5 of *The Beaux Strategem* and 4 of *The Recruiting Officers*. Only one of these three playwrights’ dramatic outputs was published in a collection devoted solely to his or her work in the 1740s (the eighth edition of *The Works of the Late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar*), suggesting that readers were more interested in the plays than in the writers themselves.

No earlier playwright was as much or as variously published as Shakespeare in the 1740s. Readers on a budget or with interest in particular works could have purchased editions of some of Shakespeare’s single plays: for example, five editions of *Hamlet* and two each of *As You Like It* and

---

70 H. Stonecastle, Response to “To the Universal Spectator” *The Universal Spectator* (13 Mar 1742).
71 George Farquhar, *The Works of the Late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar: Containing All His Poems, Letters, Essays and Comedies* (1742).
Romeo and Juliet were published. Three unique, expensive, multi-volume edited collections of Shakespeare’s complete dramatic works were also published in the 1740s: Lewis Theobald’s 7-volume duodecimo edition (originally published in 1733, with a second edition in 1740), Thomas Hanmer’s 1744 6-volume quarto edition out of Oxford (reprinted in London in octavo in 1745 and in 18mo in 1747 and 1748), and William Warburton’s 1747 8-volume octavo edition. The cultural significance of Shakespeare’s works is evident in the amount and vehemence of published responses. Warburton’s edition was advertised and acclaimed seven years before its publication in a 34-page History of the Works of the Learned discussion of the editor’s plans for emending Theobald’s text. The reviewer predicts a worthy result: “we are like to be shortly furnished with a more complete and accurate Edition of his Writings than has heretofore been published.” After its publication Warburton’s edition was much less critically appreciated: Thomas Edward satirized the editor’s style in A Supplement to Mr. Warburton’s Edition of Shakespear and Zachary Gray questioned the editorial principles in An Answer to Certain Passages in Mr. W—’s Preface to His Edition of Shakespear. John Holt’s feelings about recent editions could not be more clearly expressed than in his title: An Attempte to Rescue that Aunciente, English Poet, and Play-wrighte, Maister Williaume Shakespere; From the Maney Errours, Faulsely Charged on Him, by Certaine New-Fangled Wittes; and To Let Him Speak for Himself, as Right Well He Wotteth, When


[Thomas Edwards], “Another Gentleman of Lincoln’s-Inn,” A Supplement to Mr. Warburton’s Edition of Shakespeare. Being the Canons of Criticism, and Glossary, Collected from the Notes in that Celebrated Work, and Proper to be Bound Up With It (1748) and [Zachary Grey], An Answer to Certain Passages in Mr. W—’s Preface to His Edition of Shakespeare, Together with Some Remarks on the Many Errors and False Criticisms in the Work Itself (1748).
Shakespeare was to be read and revered.

1740s drama critics devoted more commentary to Shakespeare than any to other playwright—and possibly more than to all other playwrights combined—and for no other writer was praise so soaring and universal. Shakespeare was celebrated for its natural representations of human nature and the passions. Samuel Foote declares that “I do not believe, that it ever was in the Power of Man, to furnish out a more elegant, pleasing, and interesting Entertainment, than Shakespeare has, in many Instances, given us, without observing any one Unity, but that of Character; his adhering to that alone . . . produced, in one Instance alone, more Matter for Delight and Instruction, than can be collected from all the starv’d, strait-lac’d Brats, that every other Bard has produc’d,” and an anonymous critic asserts that “‘tis unanimously agreed among those of real Taste that SHAKESPEARE was the greatest Dramatick Poet that ever was in this, or any other Nation.” And the man himself was defended as worthy of emulation, as seen in Peter Whalley’s argument that Shakespeare was better educated than generally assumed and John Upton’s characterizations of the playwright as manly and wise in his 346-page Critical Observations on Shakespeare. The most nuanced 1740s critical discussion of Shakespeare is Samuel Johnson’s Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth: With Remarks on Sir T. H.’S Edition of Shakespeare which, in addition to functioning as an early advertisement for Johnson’s planned edition, proves Johnson to have been one of the only critics willing to suggest that the bard was sometimes inconsistent and that his works could be improved upon even if his sensibilities could not.

---

75 [John Holt], An Attempte to Rescue that Aunciente, English Poet, and Play-wrighte, Maister Williaume Shakespeare; From the Maney Erroers, Faulsely Charged on Him, by Certaine New-Fangled Wittes; and To Let Him Speak for Himself, as Right Well He Wotteth, When Freede from the Many Careless Mistakeings, of The Heedless First Imprinters, of His Workes (1749).
76 Samuel Foote, The Roman and English Comedy Consider’d andCompar’d. With Remarks on the Suspicious Husband. And an Examen into the Merit of the Present Comic Actors (1747), p. 21; Anon., An Examen of the New Comedy, Call’d The Suspicious Husband, p. 20.
77 Peter Whalley, An Enquiry Into the Learning of Shakespeare, With Remarks on Several Passages of His Plays (1748); John Upton, Critical Observations on Shakespeare (1746).
Shakespeare’s influence extended beyond the ubiquity of his own works; playwrights included England’s bard in original plays and revisions. In Elizabeth Boyd’s *Don Sancho*, for example, the title character and a few college students summon the ghosts of Shakespeare and Dryden and return them to their places of glory. Adaptations ranged from abridgements with just a few tweaks (like Theophilus Cibber’s *Romeo and Juliet*), to adaptations (like Colley Cibber’s version of *King John*, *Papal Tyranny*, James Thomson’s posthumously published adaptation of *Coriolanus*; or the prosaic reworking of *As you Like It* into *The Modern Receipt*), to changes in the style of the plays (as in James Worsdale’s *A Cure for a Scold*, which presents *The Taming of the Shrew* as a ballad farce), and reconsiderations of the plot and content (as seen in James Miller’s mixture of Shakespeare and Molière in *The Universal Passion*). However closely the text adhered to Shakespeare’s work, associating a play with him seems to have given writers and booksellers good reason to believe it would sell.

Informed 1740s drama enthusiasts were obviously interested in the origins of the modern stage, and in addition to their demand for the best of England’s earlier drama, readers were increasingly interested in tracing the lives and work of theatrical celebrities. Curll’s *The History of the English Stage, from the Restauration to the Present Time* (which the bookseller spuriously attributed to Thomas Betterton) and the very similar *The History of the Stage*, provide theatrical biographies of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century actors and actresses, including descriptions of their favorite roles, as well as significant theatrical events like the opening of new theatres. A broader, more basic, and less Anglo-centric history of drama could be found in Chetwood’s *A General History of the Stage, from its Origin in Greece Down to the Present Time*. The educated reading class obviously wished to be informed about the dramatic arts.

---

80 Theophilus Cibber, *Romeo and Juliet, A Tragedy, Revis’d, and Alter’d from Shakespear* (1748); Colley Cibber, *Papal Tyranny*; James Thomson, *Coriolanus*; Anon., “J. C.,” *The Modern Receipt*; James Worsdale, *A Cure for a Scold. A Ballad Farce of Two Acts. (Founded Upon Shakespear’s Taming of a Shrew) As it is Acted by His Majesty’s Company of Comedians at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane ([1738]); [Miller], *The Universal Passion*.
81 [William Oldys and Edmund Curll], “Thomas Betterton,” *The History of the English Stage, From the Restauration to the Present Time* (1741); Anon., *The History of the Stage. In Which is Included, the Theatrical Characters of the Most Celebrated Actors Who Have Adorn’d the Theatre* (1742).
The turmoil surrounding the production of plays and management of the theatres in the 1740s contributed to the development of contemporary theatrical celebrities. Rivalries between actors and managers at each of the theatres were exhibited in print, and in the published pamphlets containing disputes between Garrick and Macklin, and Thomas Sheridan and Theophilus Cibber. Disputes between actors and theatre managers, especially the arguments surrounding the actors’ rebellion, and the advisability of Garrick’s decision to try his hand at theatre management were likewise fodder for the pamphlet sellers. And the publication of Colley Cibber’s Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre-Royal, and the satirical spoof on his son, An Apology for the Life of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, Comedian, demonstrated the public’s interest in theatrical stars beyond just debates over their contributions to the stage.

Drama was culturally significant. 1740s dramatic critics expressed great pride in England’s contributions to that art. The English “not only equal but surpass all Nations in dramatick Poetry” particularly for the English playwrights’ abilities to create genuine representations of the human experience: “the Stage is, or ought to be a Representation of human Nature: — In this the English Theatre is allow’d, even by Foreigners, to have the Preference of all others.” English drama’s supremacy to French was unsurprisingly a particularly frequently invoked sentiment. French and English dramatists argued about their nations’ strengths. For example, Aaron Hill explains in his advertisement that he decided to write his own version of *Meropé* using the English simplicity of expression in response to

---

82 C.f. [Thomas Sheridan], *The Buskin and Sock; Being Controversial Letters between Mr. Thomas Sheridan, Tragedian, and Mr. Theophilus Cibber, Comedian* (1743); Charles Macklin, *Mr. Macklin’s Reply to Mr. Garrick’s Answer. To Which are Prefix’d, All the Papers, Which Have Publickly Appeared, in Regard to This Important Dispute* (1743); David Garrick, *Mr. Garrick’s Answer to Mr. Macklin’s Case* ([London, 1743]); Anon., *An Essay on Acting: In Which Will be Consider’d the Mimical Behaviour of a Certain Fashionable Faulty Actor, and the Laudableness of Such Unmannerly, As Well As Inhumane Proceedings* (1744).

83 C.f. Anon., *The Case Between the Managers of the Two Theatres, and Their Principal Actors, Fairly Stated, and Submitted to the Town* (1743); Anon., *Queries to be Answer’d by the Manager of Drury-Lane Theatre, For the Satisfaction of the Publick, in Regard to the Present Dispute between Him and His Actors* (1743); Anon., *A Letter to Mr. Garrick, on His Having Purchased a Patent for Drury-Lane Play-House* (1747); Anon., *D-ry-L-ne P-yh-se Broke Open. In a Letter to Mr. G--* (1747).

84 Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre-Royal* (1740); Anon., “Theophilus Cibber,” *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, Comedian. Being a Proper Sequel to The Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian* (1740).


Voltaire’s claims that the English are incapable of writing good tragedies.\footnote{[Aaron Hill], 
\textit{Meropé: A Tragedy}, advertisement.} But besting the French at their own game was not enough satisfaction for everyone: James Worsdale complains in the prologue to \textit{A Cure for a Scold} that English playwrights have spent too much time remaking French plays—especially Molière’s—and suggests his model of following Shakespeare as a better alternative.\footnote{Worsdale, \textit{A Cure for a Scold}, prologue.} The production of drama was viewed as central to the health of the nation—and its modern state of the art was cause for concern for some: as Thomas Cooke complains, “\textit{WHAT, alas! Shall we say, when we see in a nation, whose greatest boast was its freedom and its trade, large steps, or rather strides, taken to abridge it of one of the most valuable branches of liberty, the liberty of the press? What construction must be made of the conduct of those who lay a restraint on the most useful part of what are called the belle lettres, I mean dramatick poetry?}”\footnote{Thomas Cooke, \textit{The Mournful Nuptials, or Love the Cure of all Woes, A Tragedy. To Which is Prefixed a Preface, Containing Some Observations on Satire, and on the Present State of Our Public Entertainments} (1739), p. vii.} 

But for all the importance readers, booksellers, and critics seemed to place in drama, the nation’s new dramatic output was little discussed and analyzed in print. Only a few new plays were reviewed in pamphlets and periodicals. Works that received the most attention were more often discussed for their connections to other controversies than for their dramatic merits, as with debates over the political content of \textit{Gustavas Vasa}.\footnote{C.f. Alg. Sidney, “Conclusion of Remarks on Gustavas Vasa,” \textit{The Daily Gazeteer} (24 May 1739) and Anon., \textit{The Country Correspondent: Humbly Address’d to Gustavus Vasa, Esq; And All The Never-Enough-To Be Admir’d, Inimitable, and Incomparable Authors of That Famous, Excellent, and Fine New Patriot Play, Call’d, the Deliverer of His Country} (1739).} Mention of plays in periodicals were often short and non-critical, like the \textit{Gentleman’s Magazine} summary of Edward Moore’s \textit{The Foundling}.\footnote{Anon., “The Foundling, a New Comedy, Having Given So Much Pleasure in the Representation, That it Has Been Already Exhibited Ten Nights,” \textit{The Gentleman’s Magazine} (Feb 1748): 51- 54.} In 1749 the \textit{Monthly Review} added an important outlet for discussions of new plays: reviews in that journal covered Smollett’s \textit{Regicide} (“we think it no hazarded judgment to pronounce it one of the best theatrical pieces that has appeared these many years”) and a dramatic adaptation of Swift’s \textit{A Complete Collection of Genteel and
Ingenious Conversation called Tittle Tattle, or Taste-a-la-Mode (“by throwing it into a kind of drama, with some additions, or rather substitutions of fresh flowers, makes it a sort of new piece”).

For new plays, the serious attention lavished especially upon Shakespeare, and to a lesser extent on classical playwrights, was nearly unheard of. An important exception was Benjamin Hoadly’s Suspicious Husband, which was the focus of two critical treatises. In the anonymous An Examen of the New Comedy, Call’d the Suspicious Husband the comedy is declared the best new play in ages: it is “not only an acting but a reading Play” and “no Comedy in the Language is more completely wound up, or more consistent to the last.” Samuel Foote’s evaluation is no less complimentary: “It will (I doubt not) be often mentioned by future Generations, that in the Year 1746, Dr. Hoadly produc’d a Comedy, called the Suspicious Husband; in which he has found Means to give the highest Delight, without having recourse to the low usual Arts of Bawdy and Buffoonry.” One can easily see why The Suspicious Husband stood out against its meager, dull competition. The rowdy action of Hoadly’s play employs many plot devices from Restoration comedies—a young woman locked up by an over-zealous protector, a frustrated, drunken rake, cross-dressing, and mistaken identity—but with a cheerfully moral conclusion.

Critical discussion was only sometimes tied to contemporary taste, however, and trends in published drama were much more closely tied to trends in theatrical performances than to reviews and abstract discussions of dramatic principles. New English drama was most likely to be frequently reprinted when it was being frequently performed. The Dragon of Wantley, for example, was staged 62 times in London between 1737 and 1738, and in the same years 15 editions of that play were published in the city. Between 1739 and 1749 the play was staged an average of around 7 performances per year (although its popularity was not consistent), and only three editions were published. Hoadly’s Suspicious Husband saw a similar peak in both performance and publication, with 38 performances and three

---

93 Anon., An Examen of the New Comedy, Call’d the Suspicious Husband, pp. 7 and 9.
94 Foote, The Roman and English Comedy Consider’d and Compar’d, pp. 26–7.
95 Performance figures were obtained from Ben Ross Schneider, Jr., Index to the London Stage 1660–1800 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979).
editions its first year (1747) and 24 performances and one edition in the following two. But popularity on
the stage did not guarantee continued interest in the literary marketplace: Dodsley’s *The King and the
Miller of Mansfield* was performed 37 times and published in 6 editions in 1737, but no edition was
published later in the period in spite of its average of 12 performances per year between 1738 and 1749.
Plays banned from performance by the Licensing Act could continue to find audiences in print. And of
course dramatic works never intended for the stage, like *The Congress of the Beasts*, could be popular
only in print.

Reprinted English drama in the 1740s to some extent also reflected the plays in performance. Many plays from earlier in the century were both produced and published between 1737 and 1749, as were Lillo’s *London Merchant* (56 performances and 9 editions), Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera* (210 performances and 8 editions), and Rowe’s *Fair Penitent* (97 performances and 4 editions). As these figures demonstrate, there is no clear correlation between numbers of performances and numbers of editions. And while Shakespeare’s plays were a staple on London’s stages, the popularity of individual plays in performance does not seem directly tied to the publication of those plays in single editions: *Hamlet*, for example, was performed 142 times on London stages between 1737 and 1749, which is comparable to the number of performances for many of Shakespeare’s other plays, including *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Richard III*, but of the latter three plays only *Othello* was separately published (and only in one edition), while *Hamlet* was published in 5 separate editions. The drama purchased and read yields a different picture of the genre than the plays staged.

Although the Licensing Act seriously curtailed the production of new plays, drama remained a
central component of the London market for literature. Published collections of drama and dramatic
criticism demonstrate the nation’s pride in its superior drama and the desire to promote the features it was believed to exemplify: natural representation of human nature and a range of non-farcical approaches to comedy. And steady dramatic publication suggests readers’ and collectors’ steadfast devotion to the genre even when the number and quality of new works were meager compared to earlier periods.
II. 1740s Fiction

In contrast to drama, which, in spite of the Licensing Act, maintained a position as a culturally valued art and commodity, 1740s fiction struggled to achieve acceptance as a literary art. Reading fiction was associated with youth, ignorance, and a lack of taste and understanding. And unlike writing poetry (and, to a lesser extent, drama), writing fiction was not considered a desirable pastime for the educated gentry. Authors who wrote fiction were, with just a few notable exceptions, outside of the literary elite, as their authors were either anonymous, or unknown in other literary realms, or both. Thus what many scholars might consider one of the most significant contributions of the mid-eighteenth century to the development of English literature at the time largely was considered mere popular entertainment and, when discussed in criticism at all, was kept distinctly separate from distinguished literature like poetry and drama.

Yet in spite of fiction’s place within literary culture in the 1740s, the period saw the publication of more significant novels in a shorter period of time than the century had yet seen. Any student of the eighteenth-century novel will be familiar with *Pamela*, *Joseph Andrews*, *Clarissa*, and *Tom Jones*. Richardson’s and Fielding’s ground-breaking novels proved greatly popular with readers. *Pamela* in particular created an unprecedented stir in the marketplace, spawning many adaptations, imitations, and parodies. The period’s great authors were demonstrating the possibilities fiction could hold, both within high literary culture and in the popular marketplace. But Richardson’s and Fielding’s great, long novels were far from the only fiction published—and republished—in the 1740s. Although, as I demonstrated in Chapter 1, the market for fiction did not show discernable growth between 1737 and 1749, readers in the period could still have found a wide selection of fictional books to read or purchase. As Leah Orr has shown, by the 1730s the market for fiction was robust and diverse. And in spite of the ingrained complications of writing, publishing, and selling fiction (e.g. the genre’s reputation, the potential lengths of novels), booksellers continued to publish it, and authors experimented with the new styles and content.

---

96 Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor demonstrate the techniques used to market Richard’s first novel in *Pamela in the Marketplace*.

that would influence the genre in years to come. In this section I will illustrate and analyze the fiction for sale in the 1740s. What place did fiction hold within booksellers’ lists? How expensive were novels and shorter works of fiction, and what was the range of physical sizes and forms? What was the critical reaction to fiction? What were writers’ and booksellers’ assumptions about the audience for fiction? And, finally, how representative are Richardson’s and Fielding’s work of the quality and experimentation of 1740s fiction?

Practical Influences: Possibilities and Limitations for Purchasing Fiction

Fiction was not accepted as an established genre of literature. While booksellers could expect reasonable selling potential for drama and poetry, few works of fiction—and especially fiction originally written in English—had been proven as large commercial successes, especially before the publication of *Pamela*. When the greater average length and associated production costs of new fiction (as compared to poetry or drama) were taken into consideration, the genre posed tremendous financial challenges to booksellers and their customers. The amount and form of published output of fiction in the 1740s reflects the risk it posed.

As I showed in Chapter 1, duodecimo was the most common format for fiction, accounting for more than half of all fictional works published between 1737 and 1749. As the smallest of common formats, duodecimo was a natural choice for lengthy novels: books printed in that size tended to be two hundred pages or more, and many (roughly one-third or more) spanned multiple volumes. Many of the most famous new novels published in the 1740s were printed in duodecimo, including *Pamela*, *Joseph Andrews*, *Clarissa*, *Roderick Random*, and *Tom Jones*. Other new fiction in duodecimo included novels by English authors, like John Wilson’s *The British Heroine: Or, an Abridgment of the Life and Adventures of Mrs. Christian Davies*; English translations of French works, like the Marquis d’Argen’s *The Jewish Spy*; and collections of stories like William Musgrave’s pseudonymously published *The Atalantis Reviv’d* and anonymous assemblages of tales and fables with titles like *The Agreeable
Companion and Polite Amusements. Works in octavo were slightly more likely (around one and a half times) to be reprints than new: new editions of major novels were common in the format, and included editions of *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *The History and Adventures of Gil Blas of Santillane*. Most works of duodecimo fiction did not advertise their prices on their title pages, probably because sales of these high-price editions would not have benefited by advertising their costs and because most of those who could afford to purchase them could likely have afforded 6s (the cost of a bound second edition of *Celenia and Adrastus*) as easily as 4s (the price of the 453-page *Iberian Tales and Novels*).

The second most common format for fiction was octavo, which slightly larger format accounted for forty percent of the works published in that genre. Octavo fiction was generally shorter than duodecimo, with few multi-volume editions and more short tales than novels. In further contrast to duodecimo, the just over 210 works of octavo fiction included approximately one and a third more new works than reprints. In octavo, readers would have found topical works and trendy tales. For only 2d one could have purchased the 12-page nostalgically patriotic satire, *The Ass Race*, while 6d would have been enough to take home fictitious pamphlets, including short stories like a 35-page version of *The History Thamas Kuli Khan, Shah, or Sophi of Persia* or the amorous tales in *A Court Lady’s Curiosity; or, The Virgin Undress’d*, as well as a range of fictionalized “true” tales like *A Woeful Voyage Indeed! Being a Full and Particular Account of the Voyage, Adventures and Distresses of the Crew Belonging to the Nimble Nancy* or *Genuine and Impartial Memoirs of the Life and Character of Charles Ratcliffe, Esq; Who was Beheaded on Tower-Hill, Monday, December 8, 1746*. But octavo was not reserved only for short, inexpensive new fiction; the format was also used for larger, pricey editions of longer works like

---


99 Anon., *The Ass Race: Or the Secret History of Archy Armstrong, Fool to King Charles I* (1740); Anon., *The History of Thamas Kuli Khan, Shah, or Sophi of Persia* (1740); Anon., *A Court Lady’s Curiosity; or, The Virgin Undress’d* (1740); Anon., *A Woeful Voyage Indeed! Being a Full and Particular Account of the Voyage, Adventures and Distresses of the Crew Belonging to the Nimble Nancy* (1744); [Gerard Penrice], *Genuine and Impartial Memoirs of the Life and Character of Charles Ratcliffe, Esq; Who was Beheaded on Tower-Hill, Monday, December 8, 1746*.
the 3s 6d 220-page *A Voyage to the South-Seas* and the 5s 2-volume *Memoirs of the Nutrebian Court.* Reprinted octavo fiction commanded similar prices, like 4s for a bound edition of the 340-page *The Female Page*, though the most reprinted works of octavo fiction in the 1740s were accounts of the lives of the 1745 rebels, like *Memoirs of the Life of Lord Lovat* and *An Authentick Account of the Conduct of the Young Chevalier.* Topicality was evidently a selling point for narratives.

With the exception only of a couple of authors like Richardson and Fielding, whose works were sometimes touted as “by the author” of an earlier famous book, 1740s readers would not have been able to rely on the identity of fiction writers to estimate their worth. Most published fiction was not definitively attributed, especially when it was originally written in English. Because duodecimo fiction was more likely to be reprinted than a new work, it was more likely than octavo fiction to be definitively attributed: more than 38% of the roughly 270 works of duodecimo fiction listed an author or translator’s name on its title page, compared with a meager 13% of the roughly 210 works of octavo fiction. Pseudonymous works were more common in octavo than in duodecimo, accounting for approximately 42% and 22%, respectively, with pseudonyms for true tales and pamphlet fiction especially often taking the form of vague descriptions of the “gentleman” or “lady” from whose mouth the tale was supposed to have been taken. And both formats had significant percentages of completely anonymous works: 38% of duodecimo and 44% of octavo fiction contained no indication of their author’s or translator’s identities on their title pages or in their front- or back-matter. Attribution does not seem to have been expected or particularly rewarded in fiction publication, possibly because there were so few famous English novelists and because some works in the genre could have benefited from the artifice of a narrator’s assumed background.

---

100 John Bulkeley and John Cummins, *A Voyage to the South-Seas, in the Years 1740–1* (1743); Anon., *Memoirs of the Nutrebian Court* (1747).

Because of the higher financial risks involved in publishing fiction, as well as the lack of works in that genre (especially relative to poetry), no bookseller specialized in producing new works of fiction. Even for the booksellers whose names appear in the imprints of the greatest numbers of titles of new fiction, like Cooper, Robinson, Gardner, Dodd, the venture never represented more than 10% of their total published output. In part, these small percentages are a reflection of the large scale of the firms able to afford the required overhead. But the prospect of reprints must also have weighed heavily on the decision to invest in new fiction: as I showed in Chapter 3, of poetry, drama, and fiction, new works of fiction were most commonly reprinted, with more than 43% of all fiction first published between 1737 and 1749 appearing in more than one edition. Either booksellers were very cautious and successful when estimating the likelihood of a second edition, or readers were hungrier for and more tolerant of new fiction than most booksellers yet realized.

Although the publishing costs were high, more than half of new fiction was published with only a single bookseller’s name in its imprint. Octavo editions of short fiction were most common amongst single-bookseller fiction enterprises. The Coopers, for example, published octavos of many short, thrilling fictional tales supposedly based on real events, like An Account of the Apparition of the Late Lord Kilmarnock, to the Revd. Mr. Foster (29 pages for a cost of 6d) and Morality from the Devil. Quevedo in England: or, The Dreamer (62 pages at 1s).\(^\text{102}\) Gardner similarly published short, topical fiction in octavo, like the 52-page Memoirs of the Lives and Families of the Lords Kilmarnock, Cromartie, and Balmerino and the 63-page A Brief Account of the Life and Family of Miss Jenny Cameron, the Reputed Mistress of the Pretender’s Eldest Son, each of which sold for 1s.\(^\text{103}\) Like short, topical poetry, fictional works that addressed current events would have been safe sales risks and as they sold for the same price as a poem of a similar length, booksellers would have had reason to feel similarly confident in their likely sales.

\(^{102}\) Anon., An Account of the Apparition of the Late Lord Kilmarnock, to the Revd. Mr. Foster (1747); Anon., Morality from the Devil. Quevedo in England: Or, The Dreamer (1743).

\(^{103}\) Anon., Memoirs of the Lives and Families of the Lords Kilmarnock, Cromartie, and Balmerino (1746); Anon., A Brief Account of the Life and Family of Miss Jenny Cameron, the Reputed Mistress of the Pretender’s Eldest Son. Containing Many Very Singular Incidents (1746).
As in drama, publishing reprints constituted a higher percentage of booksellers’ fiction business than new works. Booksellers with large, diverse book lists, including Hodges, Osborn, and Ware, were most likely to appear in the imprints of fictional reprints. Osborn made particularly significant investments in reprinted fiction, with 27 of the 201 total works bearing his name in their imprints falling under that designation. His contributions to publishing editions of Pamela accounted for 12 of his editions of reprinted fiction, but Osborn’s name also appears in the imprints of reprinted editions of other major works, including editions of Aesop’s Fables, Roderick Random, and The Adventures of Gil Blas, suggesting that he may have been positioning himself as a preeminent merchant of fiction.104

One reason that booksellers like Osborn who commonly reprinted fiction were likely to run large bookselling operations was the expense. For established novels, copyright alone could be prohibitive. For example, in 1751 half the copyright of Roderick Random sold for £64, and the following year the entire copyright for Robinson Crusoe sold for £100.105 And as I showed in Chapter 2, the paper and labor required to produce a multi-volume work like Smollett’s four-volume, illustrated translation of The Adventures of Gil Blas of Santillane would have been extremely high.106 The fact that so many expensive, duodecimo multi-volume reprints of fictional works were published with multiple booksellers’ names in their imprints therefore is unsurprising. Five booksellers appear in the imprint of Eliza Haywood’s Secret Histories, Novels, and Poems; the 4-volume eighth edition of Don Quixote was printed for fourteen booksellers; and an edition of The Adventures of Telemachus, though a relatively modest 2 volumes, bore the names of sixteen booksellers, probably because by its fifteenth edition it had safely proven its worth as an investment.

For readers the challenges booksellers faced in publishing fiction posed a number of problems. Any collector interested in amassing a library of fiction would have had to visit many booksellers shops

and carefully peruse catalogues and advertisements—there was no John Watts or Robert Dodsley acting as a barometer for taste and a promoter of the most and best works in the genre. Consumers of fiction would also needed extensive funds and the willingness to spend freely to satisfy their personal tastes rather than to follow the high-culture critical views of literature, which eschewed all but a very few novels. That fiction sold at all in this climate is something of a wonder.

1740s Published Fiction and its Reception from Critics and Readers

Although the number of fiction titles published each year was not growing at any discernable rate and although the market was dispersed amongst many booksellers, 1740s fiction readers could have found plenty to keep them interested in the genre. As Jerry C. Beasley demonstrates in his useful account of 1740s fiction, the works published tended to feature contemporary settings and topics, to focus on middle class characters, and to adhere to ideals of Christian morality. But, though he identifies and draws from a wide range of sources, Beasley’s analysis of the content of 1740s fiction favors writers like Fielding, Richardson, and Haywood gives nothing like a complete sense of the variety of works available and the place fiction held within critical discussions. Between 1737 and 1749, writers of fiction were struggling to establish the legitimacy of the genre and to build a recognizable canon of works on which they could build its reputation.

The very nature of fiction was looked upon with derision. Literature should address great truths, not obscure them with fanciful lies designed to appeal to readers’ baser natures. The distinction between truth and fiction made some writers uneasy and defensive. An essayist in The Daily Gazetteer, for example, cautions against assuming stories are fictitious: “I cannot help thinking, That if every intelligent Man would run over in his Mind all the extraordinary Events which have happen’d within the Compass of his own Knowledge, and which, if they had not so happen’d, would infallibly have appeared incredible in his Opinion . . . I am inclined to think he would have less Doubts upon him than a common Reader in perusing Memoirs, Travels, and Secret Histories, wherein all that is marvelous ought not immediately to

107 Beasley, Novels.
be concluded *Fiction.*”^108^ But with nearly every novel, secret history, or romance claiming a basis in reality keeping such an open mind would have been difficult. As the editors of *The Fortunate Foundlings* complain, “The many Fictions which have been lately imposed upon the World, under the Specious Titles of Secret Histories, Memoirs, &c. &c. have given but too much room to question the Veracity of every Thing that has the least Tendency that way” (though, of course, the work at hand is strictly based on verifiable fact).^109^ Books not based on fact were considered trashy entertainment, though writers like the author of *Menander and Aurelia* worried about their popularity: “neither Matter of Fact, Circumstances, nor Stile are of much Consequence to the Taste of the Town. The Booksellers Maxim has mostly obtain’d, that That is the best Book which sells best; and Publick Taste has confirm’d it,” leaving little room for works like his that relate fact and promote morality.^110^

A more pragmatic approach to the truth/fiction divide was to argue that fiction fosters new paths to the truth or new kinds of truth. The translator of a collection of Lope de Vega’s stories, asks in his dedication to that work, “is there not *Moral Truth,* as well as *Historical?*” and argues that by reading fiction “Minds utterly incapable of bearing with the *Pedantry of Schools,* or the *Formality of the Learned,* are cheated into Understanding, and are forced to apprehend *Moral Truth,* while they seek to be *amused* by an *entertaining Story.*”^111^ A failure to relate actual events, then, should not be mistaken as a failure to bring readers to a sense of truth. Fables were particularly common fodder for such arguments, as an exemplified by an essay in *The History of the Works of the Learned* which argues that “Whether it be that Men cannot bear the whole Glare and Weight of Truth, and are better pleased to behold it clouded under Shadows and Fictions, or whether they are more affected with the Images and Resemblance of Things,

---

than with the Truth and Reality itself,” the form is a useful instructive tool.\textsuperscript{112} In critical discussions, then, fiction’s value was nearly always equated with its educational possibilities.

More specifically, fiction often was justified as a potential moral influence—a natural response to claims that its works were mere entertainment, or worse, an invitation to sin. As the author of Fortune’s Favorite argues, fiction provides perspective: although one cannot read the story of his own life, “by pointing out to ourselves the false Steps, which we apprehend have been made by the Actors in the Narrative, we are instructed to correct our own Errors, and lay down Rules for out future Conduct.”\textsuperscript{113} The editor of The General Entertainer argues that “Reading is to the Mind, what Exercise is to the Body. As by the one, Health is preserved, strengthened and invigorated; by the other, Virtue (which is the Health of the Mind) is kept alive, cherished and confirmed,” and that reading fiction is especially salubrious because “the Virtue which we gather from a Story, is like the Health we get by Hunting; as we are engaged in an agreeable Pursuit that draws us on with Pleasure, and makes us insensible of the Fatigues that accompany it.”\textsuperscript{114} Arguing for fiction’s ability to make arduous work pleasant was a common tactic for appealing to reader’s fine and base desires, as when the author of The Busy-Body assures readers that he is aware that moral discourses are often dry and understand the author’s responsibility to enliven “the most serious Part of his Moral Discourses in order to engage his Readers Attention.”\textsuperscript{115} In fiction, then, more so than in poetry or drama, readers were expecting entertainment above enlightenment, and writers anticipating censure needed to find a purpose for amusement.

Concerns over fiction’s influence and utility were closely connected to assumptions about its readership. The women and young people who were supposed to have been fiction’s primary audience were considered particularly susceptible to enticing pictures of vice. A character in a short fictitious

\textsuperscript{112}Charles Lamotte, “Remarks Upon the Pleasure, Usefulness and Advantage of Fables; with a Vindication of Aesop, Whose Person and Writings Have by Painters and Poets Been Very Much Abus’d,” The History of the Works of the Learned (Feb 1742): 94–109, at p.94.

\textsuperscript{113}Anon., Fortune’s Favourite: Containing, Memoirs of the Many Hardships and Sufferings, Together with the Surprizing Deliverance and Advancement to Plenty and Happiness, of Jacobo Anglicano, a Young Nobleman (1744), p. vi.


\textsuperscript{115} [Charles de Fieux, Chevalier de Mouhy], The Busy-Body: Or, Successful Spy (1742).
dialogue published in the *Daily Gazetteer* clarifies that he danger lies in “such Mixtures of Truth and Fiction as are liable to impose on the Understandings of young People, to whom such Things are usually addressed” and whose reasoning powers are still being shaped.116 Fiction’s approachability and capacity for amusement were thought to make the form appealing to those lacking formal education. The editor of *French Novels* follows common form in dedicating the romantic stories to the “Ladies,” and she explains that “When I reflect on the common Method of Our Education, I’m not at all surpris’d that Romances, Plays, and Novels are Our favourite Books, and I attribute Our Distaste of serious Reading more to that, than to any Inability in Our Understandings.”117 Writers often turned fiction readers’ perceived inexperience and lack of taste into arguments for the benefit of particular works. *Love and Avarice*, for example is addressed “To the young Ladies, who are single, and whose Hearts, as well as their Fortunes, are yet in their own Possession” and promises that the novel will demonstrate that “Too much Credulity in the Woman on one Side, and too much Avarice and Subtlety in the Man, on the other, gave Birth to those terrible Misfortunes, Troubles, and Anxieties, that are the Subjects of this History.”118 A collection of Aubin’s novels is recommended as a diversion “to regale the gay and sprightly Fancies of the Youth of both Sexes, the Vivacity of whose Tempers, so natural to their Time of Life, require somewhat to allure, to amuse, and to entertain,” while the collection of very brief anecdotes and stories in the *General Entertainer* is cast as sort of fables for adults.119 Readers did not read fiction because they were educated, as might be considered the case with poetry or some drama, but because they required education in morality.

Demonstrating its reformatory role, however, does not establish fiction’s literary merits; for that, writers attempted to connect works of fiction to work in other genres. Fiction sometimes posed as other genres with a boldfaced lie, as when the *Athenian Letters* are said to have been based on a manuscript

---

118 Anon., “Lady of Shropshire,” *Love And Avarice: Or, the Fatal Effects of Preferring Wealth to Beauty* (1748), pp. iii and v.

263
found amongst the papers of a Jewish scholar and which the translator’s preface calls a “hidden treasure
of antiquity, which may be considered as a large accession to the wealth it already stands possessed of.”\footnote{120}

Others attempt to elevate fiction by comparing it favorably to more established, respected genres.

Lockman’s preface to his translation of *The Bachelor of Salamanca* attempts to distance the work from
fiction: “SOME People rank all such Pieces as the Bachelor of Salamanca, with Novels and Romances,
for which Reason they have them in the highest Contempt . . . Most of Mr. Le Sage’s Productions seem to
be so many Pictures of human Life, and would be moral Plays, were they divided into Acts and Scenes,
and the Dialogue drawn up after the Manner of our Dramas.”\footnote{121} And the author of *Celenia and Adrastus*
takes the boldest approach, declining to call his work truthful but asserting that “an innocent Story might
be as diverting, and more useful, than reading the senseless, indecent, impious Productions of our Modern
Dramatic Poets and Novelists.”\footnote{122} Fiction writers were attempting to establish a foothold within literature.

As a prose form lacking the formal signifiers of poetry and drama (metrical line breaks or scene
changes, for example), fiction is difficult to classify as a coherent genre—especially as many novels took
the form of common nonfiction works like personal histories and autobiographies. The more sensational
of these are easily recognizable as fiction. Works like *The Life and Adventures of Mrs. Christian Davies,
Commonly Call’d Mother Ross*, which follows the life of a woman who poses as a man to take her
husband’s place in the military, are unlikely to be strictly factual accounts, though even these sometimes
have a basis in truth.\footnote{123} Even works that seem primarily designed to entertain or titillate, like the account
of messy divorce proceedings and the life of a courtesan in *An Apology for the Conduct of Mrs. Teresia
Constantia Phillips*, have been classified by different modern scholars as either memoirs or fiction.\footnote{124}
Accounts of public figures, like the nearly day-to-day story of Ormond’s life and communications displayed in *Memoirs of the Life of his Grace James, Late Duke of Ormond*, sometimes betrayed their fictionality through detailed, less-than-polite descriptions of their subjects’ personal lives, though the final judgment was the reader’s. And, as Cheryl L. Nixon has shown, factual events could provide inspiration and detailed plot structure for a fictionalized narrative, as when the details of the legal case Annesley v. Anglesey were converted into the *Memoirs of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman*. Much of 1740s published fiction fell into this factual grey-area.

Like biographies and character sketches, travel narratives offered fictionalized versions of real events. Disastrous sea voyages were particularly popular, and included the story of a sailor’s bloody death at the hands of ruthless pirates and the return of his ghost to complain of the perilous lives of English sailors found in *Bloody News from Carolina*, or the description of the misdirection and loss of life the crew of the Nimble Nancy experienced, as described in *A Woeful Voyage Indeed! Being a Full and Particular Account of the Voyage, Adventures and Distresses of the Crew Belonging to the Nimble Nancy*. But less sensational travel descriptions, like the descriptions of the land and people of South America in *A Voyage to the South-Seas, in the Years 1740–1*, also entertained readers with ideas of voyages to far-off places that were based on, if not strictly adhering to, reality.

As in poetry, interest in current events contributed to the publication of topical and political satirical fiction. In fiction, too, Walpole was a common target, and the Great Man was lampooned in in small, literal narratives like *A True and Impartial History of the Life and Adventures of Some-Body* and

---

127 Anon., *Bloody News from Carolina: Or, The English Sailors, Tragedy* (1742) and Anon., *A Woeful Voyage Indeed!*
128 Bulkeley and Cummins, *A Voyage to the South-Seas*. 
The Unfortunate Princess, Or, the Ambitious Statesman, as well as in less direct but no less pointed ways, like Fielding’s send-up of the Prime Minister in Jonathan Wild. Walpole’s French counterpart, Cardinal Fleury, was similarly satirized in works like A Particular Account of Cardinal Fleury’s Journey to the Other World, and His Tryal at the Tribunal of Minos, in which Fleury and other deceased public officials discuss whether a statesman should serve the people or the king, and L’ombre du feu Cardinal: or, Cardinal Fleury’s Ghost, in which the cardinal’s ghost appears in the private office of a political enemy to argue about their differences in life. Other satires offered broader criticism of the Parliamentary system. The Book of the Chronicles of the Chief Minister of E----d masks its topical discussion of Parliament, the king, and the prime minister in Arabic history. And the diffuse, light satire in The Lovers Petition to Parliament Against the Thieves gives a general critique of city society in its argument over which group should control the streets at night.

Most topical fiction, however, addressed specific people and situations, and no event prompted more fiction publication than the ’45 rebellion. Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat’s duplicity earned him special public interest, as demonstrated in numerous published speculative biographies like Genuine Memoirs of the Life of Simon Lord Fraser of Lovat, Memoirs of the Life of Lord Lovat, and The Life, Adventures, and Many and Great Vicissitudes of Fortune of Simon, Lord Lovat, the Head of the Family of Frasers—all of which covered very similar ground, and each of which were published in more than one edition in 1746. Following Lovat’s execution, an report of his final days was published in A Candid and Impartial Account of the Behaviour of Simon Lord Lovat, from the Time His Death-Warrant Was

---

129 Anon., A True and Impartial History of the Life and Adventures of Some-Body (1740); Eliza Haywood, The Unfortunate Princess, Or, the Ambitious Statesman (1741); Henry Fielding, The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great in Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq; Volume Three, ed. Hugh Amory with notes and introduction by Bertrand A. Goldgar (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
132 Anon., The Lovers Petition to Parliament Against the Thieves (1743).
133 Anon., Genuine Memoirs of the Life of Simon Lord Fraser of Lovat (1746); Anon., Memoirs of the Life of Lord Lovat (1746); Anon., “Archibald Arbuthnot”, The Life, Adventures, and Many and Great Vicissitudes of Fortune of Simon, Lord Lovat, the Head of the Family of Frasers (1746).
Deliver’d, To the Day of His Execution, which appeared in three editions in 1747. Scandal, rather than heavy-handed history or politics, was the primary selling point for ’45 narratives, and the more scandalous the subject’s betrayal, the more likely it would be immortalized in fiction. Women who supported the Pretender’s cause therefore received some of the harshest fictional treatment, as A Brief Account of the Life and Family of Miss Jenny Cameron, the Reputed Mistress of the Pretender’s Eldest Son’s depiction of the Young Pretender’s mistress as hot-tempered and the plague of her family, or in the description of Scottish women with “weak Heads and warm Hearts” who “whatever Opinions they embrace, they assert them with greater Constancy and Violence, than the Generality of Mankind” whose actions are chronicled in The Female Rebels.

But no figure was as much, as variously, or for as many years after the rebellion chronicled in fiction as the Charles Edward Stuart himself. Stories of the Young Pretender’s military campaign and subsequent escape to France often followed patterns of popular adventure tales, as in Ascanius; Or the Young Adventurer, a True History (published in 6 editions between 1746 and 1747) and The Wanderer: or, Surprizing Escape, which begins with a lengthy critique of Ascanius for its author’s liberal additions to the facts of the story (published in 4 editions in 1747). Later books used new perspectives to build interest in and credibility for their versions, as when The Young Chevalier is said to have been written by a Scottish man who was present to observe his actions between his defeat and his escape from Scotland, or M. Michell’s decision to begin Young Juba: Or, the History of the Young Chevalier with the Young Pretender’s early life in an attempt to illustrate the nature and formation of his character. Even four years after the Rebellion fictionalized accounts of Stuart’s actions could capture the public’s interest: An

---

134 Anon., “Gentleman who attended his Lordship in his last moments,” A Candid and Impartial Account of the Behaviour of Simon Lord Lovat, from the Time His Death-Warrant Was Deliver’d, To the Day of His Execution (1747).


136 [Ralph Griffiths?], Ascanius; Or the Young Adventurer, a True History (1746); Anon., The Wanderer: or, Surprizing Escape (1747).

137 Anon., The Young Chevalier: Or, a Genuine Narrative of all That Befell That Unfortunate Adventurer ([1748]); Anon., Young Juba: Or, the History of the Young Chevalier, From His Birth, to His Escape, from Scotland, After the Battle of Culloden, trans. M. Michell (1748).
Authentic Account of the Conduct of the Young Chevalier. From His First Arrival in Paris, After His
Defeat at Culloden, to the Conclusion of the Peace at Aix-La-Chapelle was published in 6 editions in
1749.\textsuperscript{138}

Not all 1740s published fiction was so grounded in its contemporary English context. Though
their authors often attempted to create a historical background for their narratives by claiming they were
based on translations or brought forth from ancient manuscripts, the oriental tales popular at the time
primarily offer escapist entertainment. Exotic love stories full of betrayal and virtuous heroes, like
Menander and Aurelia: Or, the Triumph of Love, and Constancy, were perennial favorites.\textsuperscript{139} Also
popular were collections of moralizing fables supposedly culled from the archives of Eastern nations like
the tales supposedly collected by French students in Turkey and amassed in Oriental Tales, Collected
from an Arabian Manuscript, or the work of an Eastern philosopher compared to Aesop and published as
The Instructive and Entertaining Fables of Pilpay, an Ancient Indian Philosopher.\textsuperscript{140} The culture and
history of the far-east offered scope for writers’ and readers’ imaginations, and accounted for the
popularity of works like The Perseis; or, Secret Memoirs of Persia, which strung together personal and
political anecdotes about the sultans and rulers of Persia into a surprisingly readable narrative and which
was published in two editions its first year.\textsuperscript{141}

Sales of The Perseis would also have benefited from the 1740s trend of publishing court secrets
and spy narratives. Books like The Affecting Case of the Queen of Hungary, The Busy-Body: or,
Successful Spy, Memoirs of the Love and State-Intrigues of the Court of H-, and Memoirs of the Nutrebian
Court described intrigues, court politics, and love affairs in countries like Hungary, France, Germany, and

\textsuperscript{138} Anon., “Gentleman residing at Paris,” An Authentic Account of the Conduct of the Young Chevalier. From
His First Arrival in Paris, After His Defeat at Culloden, to the Conclusion of the Peace at Aix-La-Chapelle (1749).
\textsuperscript{139} Anon., Menander and Aurelia.
\textsuperscript{140} [Anne Claude Philippe, Comte de Caylus], Oriental Tales, Collected from an Arabian Manuscript, in the
Library of the King of France, 2 vols. (1745); Anon., “Pilpay,” The Instructive and Entertaining Fables of Pilpay,
an Ancient Indian Philosopher (1747).
\textsuperscript{141} Anon., The Perseis; or, Secret Memoirs of Persia (1745).
Assyria often with themes that would have been very familiar to English readers. Secret histories set closer to home were less common, though the gossipy letters in The Spy at Oxford and Cambridge likely entertained those familiar with their in-jokes. But the perhaps greatest evidence of the popularity of this from of narrative is the five-volume Jewish Spy, first published in 1739 and published again in all its bulk just five years later.

The taste for entertainment and escapism was most prominently displayed in the great number and variety of 1740s romances. Marketed toward women, romances followed clichéd plots, but distinguished themselves with different lengths, settings, and references to different sources. Collections of romances employed simple gimmicks to tie their stories together, like framing The Lady’s Drawing Room as a series of letters or conversations between female characters, or relying on an exotic setting to spice up standard love stories in The History of the Tales of the Fairies. Relying on the popularity of other forms also helped to differentiate a romance. Oriental romances like the story of a Muslim woman abandoned by her husband in The Adventures of Malouka, the Beautiful Arabian were common. And others cast new light on well-known stories, as in the prose fiction adaptation of Abelard and Eloisa in Cupid Triumphant. Others were cast as moral tonics. For example, the anonymous author of The Ladies Advocate: Or, Wit and Beauty a Match for Treachery and Inconstancy promises that the novel’s dual plots will allow the reader to learn “from the Indiscretion and Misconduct of others, to prevent or rectify Mistakes in his own Behaviour,” though the likelihood that readers were drawing lessons from these stories of Teresia Constantia Philips and Laetitia Pilkington is small.

---

142 Anon., “Author of the Court-Secret,” The Affecting Case of the Queen of Hungary; [Charles de Fieux, Chevalier de Mouhy], The Busy-Body: or, Successful Spy; Anon., “Countess of K- k,” Memoirs of the Love and State-Intrigues of the Court of H- (1743); Anon., Memoirs of the Nutrebian Court.
144 [Marquis d’ Argens], The Jewish Spy.
146 Anon., “Louis d’ Rustain de Saint-Joury,” The Adventures of Malouka, the Beautiful Arabian: Or, the Triumph of Virtue and Innocence Over Malice, Corruption and Perjury (1738).
148 Anon., The Ladies Advocate: Or, Wit and Beauty a Match for Treachery and Inconstancy (1749), p. [v].
Though it does not represent the most original 1740s fiction, romance’s to so many of the other
trends in fiction like the combination of romance and fictionalized biographical sketches in *The Ladies
Advocate* demonstrates its centrality to the genre. Sensationalized autobiographies of prostitutes and
fallen women could even be considered a subset of the romance form. Narratives like those in *The Ladies
Advocate* typically begin in a state of innocence, monitor the first signs of temptation, and follow their
color through her years of adultery. Famous courtesans’ lives were chronicled like the pop-stars of
today. Teresia Constantia Phillips, for example, makes another appearance as the protagonist in *A
Counter-Apology: or, Genuine Confession*, which first-person fictionalized account of her life claimed to
focus on her private, rather than public, history. And of course the most famous eighteenth-century
erotic novel, John Cleland’s *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, challenged the comparatively tame
standards of the form with its graphic and personal descriptions of Fanny Hill’s sex life.

Most trends in new fiction were not originally or at least not solely of English derivation. Of the
three genres of literature, new fiction was by far the most likely to have been translated from another
language. Nearly half of all works of fiction published in London for the first time in the 1740s were
translations, as compared to approximately six percent of each drama and poetry. French novelists were
responsible for the greatest numbers of works translated. Roughly half of all translated fiction was
attributed to its original language author, as compared to approximately thirteen percent of fiction
originally in English. French novelists often would have been better known than their English
counterparts. The French were perhaps most associated with romances like the upper-class love stories in
*Select Novels, Translated from the French of Madame de Gomez*. But the biographical narratives and
character sketches of Antoine François Prévost and Le Sage made more interesting contributions to the
available fiction. Prévost’s *Memoirs of a Man of Quality, The Dean of Coleraine*, and *The Memoirs and
Adventures of the Marquis de Bretagne, and Duc D’Harcourt* each impart Christian moral messages by

---

150 [John Cleland], *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749).
151 Madame de Gomez, *Select Novels, Translated from the French of Madame de Gomez* (1745).
using their title characters’ lives as examples of how to live—or how not to.\textsuperscript{152} Le Sage’s \textit{The Bachelor of Salamanca} and \textit{The Adventures of Robert Chevalier, Call’d de Beauchene, Captain of a Privateer in New-France} feigned similar morality, but offered more adventure (Robert Chevalier, for example, tells of his early life raised by Indians in Canada).\textsuperscript{153} Prévost’s and Le Sage’s novels were published in 2-volume duodecimo, marking the works as popular rather than elite entertainment.

But in spite of the insurgence of French novelists, it was the Spanish who were most often credited with the greatest contributions to fiction: the author of \textit{Polite Amusements} writes, “Dryden has not thought it beneath him to borrow of Spain, the most fertile Country in the World in Novels; and Congreve has built his \textit{Mourning Bride}, not so much on the history of Spain, as a Novel founded on the History.”\textsuperscript{154} New editions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish novels were marketed on the basis of that origin: an abridgement of Lope de Vega’s \textit{The Pilgrim}, (a set of fables presented as the recollections of the people a pilgrim meets on his journeys through Spain) was printed alongside a version of George De Montemajor’s \textit{Diana}, a bland pastoral romance which shares only the connection of having originally been written in Spanish.\textsuperscript{155} And collections of anonymous romances like \textit{Iberian Tales and Novels} and \textit{Novellas Españolas} were similarly advertised by their Spanish origins.\textsuperscript{156} Translations of French novels were more numerous, but Spanish fiction was most revered.

The Spanish novels’ elevated reputation was of course thanks to Miguel Cervantes. Three different translations of \textit{Don Quixote} were published in the 1740s—one by Thomas Shelton, one “translated by several hands and published by the late Mr. Motteux,” and one by Charles Jarvis.\textsuperscript{157}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{152} [Antoine François Prévost], \textit{Memoirs of a Man of Quality} (1738); [—], \textit{The Dean of Coleraine}, 3 vols. (1742–43); [—], \textit{The Memoirs and Adventures of the Marquis de Bretagne, and Duc D’Harcourt} (1743).
\item \textsuperscript{153} Alain René Le Sage, \textit{The Bachelor of Salamanca}; [—], \textit{The Adventures of Robert Chevalier, Call’d de Beauchene, Captain of a Privateer in New-France} (1745).
\item \textsuperscript{154} Anon., \textit{Polite Amusements}, vi.
\item \textsuperscript{155} Lope de Vega, George de Montemajor, and Gaspar Gil Polo, \textit{The Pilgrim, or the Stranger in His Own Country}.
\item \textsuperscript{156} Anon., \textit{Iberian Tales and Novels. As They Were Publickly Rehearsed for the Entertainment of the Spanish Nobility} (1745); [Alonso de Castillo Solórzano], \textit{Novellas Españolas. Or, Moral and Entertaining Novels: Translated from the Original Spanish} (1747).
\item \textsuperscript{157} Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, \textit{The History of the Valorous and Witty Knight-Errant, Don Quixote of the Mancha}, trans. Thomas Shelton (1740); [——], \textit{The History of the Renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha}, trans. “by
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Persiles and Sigismunda: a Celebrated Novel.\textsuperscript{158} Don Quixote’s popularity and status is reflected in the booksellers who collaborated on its publication. Between four and fifteen booksellers appear in the imprints of Quixote editions, and the names represent many of the largest and most prestigious firms, including the Tonsons, Hitch, Knapton, Ward, Longman, and Dodsley. The larger formats of the Jarvis translation were especially posh: its first translation was a 2-volume quarto, and the second appeared as a 2-volume octavo, both of which likely would have been more appealing to serious collectors than the small duodecimo format in which the other translations were published.

Admiration for Don Quixote was used to market other works by and in the style of Cervantes. 1740s readers might have been tempted by Cervantes’ short fiction because of its connection to Quixote. Shelton’s translation of Instructive and Entertaining Novels (also published as Novellas Exemplares) was described as “from the original Spanish of the inimitable M. Cervantes, Author of Don Quixot,” and Two Humorous Novels (which include a dialogue between two dogs, and a short picaresque) were “written by the celebrated author of Don Quixote”.\textsuperscript{159} Cervantes’ name was also invoked to bolster sales, as when the farcical personal satire, The Cornutor of Seventy-Five, was falsely attributed to him, or when a Spanish-English dictionary was described as containing “An Explanation of the Difficult Words, Proverbs, And Phrases in Don Quixote.”\textsuperscript{160} And of course Joseph Andrews was “Written in Imitation of The Manner of Cervantes, Author of Don Quixote.”\textsuperscript{161} Quixote was the great novel in the 1740s.

Spin-offs, imitations, and abridgements of previous works were more common in fiction than in drama or poetry. Because new novels struggled for acceptance, publishing a work connected to one of the few reputable novels would have seemed a smart gamble, though such works never became as popular as

\textsuperscript{158} Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Persiles and Sigismunda: A Celebrated Novel (1741).
\textsuperscript{159} Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Instructive and Entertaining Novels; Designed to Promote Virtue, Good Sense, and Universal Benevolence, trans. Thomas Shelton (1742); —, Novellas Exemplares: Or, Exemplary Novels, in Six Books (1743); —, Two Humorous Novels (1741).
\textsuperscript{160} [John Douglas], The Cornutor of Seventy-Five (1748?); Peter Pineda, A New Dictionary, Spanish and English and English And Spanish . . . And An Explanation of the Difficult Words, Proverbs, And Phrases in Don Quixote (1739).
\textsuperscript{161} [Henry Fielding], The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams (1742).
the originals. For example, translation of Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda’s *The History of the Life and Adventures of the Famous Knight Don Quixote, de la Mancha, and His Humourous Squire Sancho Panca, Continued* was published in 1745, and *The History and Adventures of Don Alphonso Blas de Lirias, Son of Gil Blas of Santillane*, a purported Spanish-language continuation of Le Sage’s *History of Gil Blas*, reached two editions in the 1740s. Occasionally English novels were also fodder for spin-offs, as in the two editions of the episodic sequel to Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones the Foundling, in His Married State.*

But no novel was more imitated, referenced, or ridiculed than *Pamela*. Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor have demonstrated that the responses to *Pamela* prove the financial advantage of controversy and the willingness of 1740s authors to set aside originality for monetary gain. Some connections to Richardson’s novel were tenuous. *Memoirs of the Life of Lady H------ The Celebrated Pamela*, for example, gives a brief account of a failed marriage and unfortunate love affairs of the real Lady Hesilrige that bear little literal or satirical resemblance to Richardson’s moral heroine, though as Keymer and Sabor point out the circumstances of her life did fit the outline of Pamela’s biography. And James Parry’s *The True Anti-Pamela: Or, Memoirs of Mr. James Parry* is an autobiographical account of a young man’s amour with an older woman that gives a fictionalized account of Parry’s real affair. Other novels offered continuations of the story, like *Pamela’s Conduct in High Life, to the Time of Her Death* and the similarly titled *Pamela in High Life: Or, Virtue Rewarded*. A less creative anonymous author published

---

163 Anon., *The History of Tom Jones the Foundling, in His Married State* (1750 [1749]).
164 For an extended account of the responses to *Pamela*, see Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, *Marketplace*.
166 James Parry, *The True Anti-Pamela: Or, Memoirs of Mr. James Parry, Late Organist of Ross in Herefordshire* (1741).
167 [John Kelly?], *Pamela’s Conduct in High Life: to the Time of Her Death* (1741); Anon., *Pamela in High Life: Or, Virtue Rewarded* (1741).
The Life of Pamela, which recast Richardson’s story without its epistolary form. The most famous contributions to the Pamela frenzy are remembered both for their famous authors and for their satire. Eliza Haywood’s Anti-Pamela and Fielding’s An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews feature protagonists whose cunning and cut-throat attempts to ascend the social ladder mock Pamela’s wide-eyed virtue.

The responses to Pamela are a useful example of fiction’s transitional state in the 1740s. Between 1737 and 1749 published fiction both attained astonishing success and innovation, like Richardson’s novel, and pandered to readers’ desire for scandal and base amusement, like many of the quickly written and produced responses to it. Most fiction remained low-quality work churned out for the masses, but writers in the genre were beginning to aspire to more. Frequent citation of great novels like Pamela and Don Quixote in subtitles, prefaces, and criticism proves that such works were recognized as different and important and suggests writers and readers alike were beginning to appreciate what authors of fiction could accomplish.

Examining published drama and fiction shows that the genres did not follow opposite trajectories in the 1740s: drama was not as declining nor was fiction as flourishing as previous scholars have claimed. In fact, if measured by the number of works published neither drama nor fiction expressed much of a trajectory at all. As I showed in chapter 1, following a drop in new plays after the Licensing Act took effect, the number of published dramatic works remained relatively stable at between 30 and 60 annually. The annual numbers of published works of fiction were similar, and similarly stable. But neither genre was stagnant.

---

168 Anon., The Life of Pamela, Being a Full and Particular Relation of the Birth and Advancement of That Fortunate and Beautiful Young Damsel, Who, from the Lowest Degree of Rural Life, Came to be the Mistress of a Most Splendid House and Fortune, by Her Steady Adherence to the Principles of Virtue and Honour (1741).

169 [Eliza Haywood?], Anti-Pamela: Or, Feign’d Innocence Detected; In a Series of Syrena’s Adventures (1741); [Henry Fielding], “Conny Keyber,” An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews (1741).
Drama remained a pillar of elite literature. Though new plays were scarce, the texts of other theatrical productions like operas and oratorios were commonly published. Reprints of earlier English plays abounded. And criticism demonstrated high levels of pride in the country’s dramatic tradition, from encomiums on its great playwrights’ abilities accurately to represent human nature to histories of the stage and English actors’ lives. The Licensing Act curtailed 1740s drama on the stage, but it in no way quenched demand for its artifacts in print.

Though its authors and supporters often tried to connect its narrative form and moralizing potential to drama, 1740s fiction was a very different proposition. High prices kept novels for elite audiences, but these were works for entertainment, not for personal cultural growth. Most 1740s fiction was nothing like the innovative work of the period’s greatest novelists—it was rough, often sensational, and frequently framed with preachy overtones. But the success of novels like Pamela was beginning to create a sturdier market for fiction that authors could capitalize on with works that followed convention and were designed to fulfill readers’ expectations for escapist reading.
Conclusion
The Market for Literature, 1737-1749

What does this study of the quantity, genre, and form of published poetry, drama and fiction and of the people who published it tell us about the market for literature between 1737 and 1749? The assumptions of modern scholars (which I outlined in Chapter 1) are not borne out by my analysis of the 1740s book trade and literature. Little of what has long been assumed about mid-century literary culture is true for the majority of the books published and sold in London. Contrary to the standard narratives of book historians and cultural critics, I have found that

- most booksellers had limited power and influence in the marketplace,
- print technology did not change enough to influence the form or style of the literature published,
- writers could not have supported themselves on copyright fees, and
- literature remained an elite luxury commodity.

I have also challenged literary critics’ characterization of mid-century literature by demonstrating that

- very little published poetry was long-form, contemplative, or “pre-Romantic,”
- public interest in drama remained steady despite a scarcity of new plays, and
- fiction continued to be disparaged as popular literature.

Examining a wider swath of published material shows that booksellers employed sophisticated strategies to mitigate the financial risks of publishing literary genres, authors often published anonymously and were rarely associated with more than a few works, poetry continued to dominate the market, drama remained a publication mainstay, and no significant rise in the amount or quality of fiction occurred.

Bibliographers and those who study legal and economic history point to the 1740s as a period in which booksellers had especially strong control of and influence over the works published in London, citing their ability to enforce copyright restrictions by de facto control over the market and ability to mitigate the effects of piracy and influence the discussion of books in print. While this perspective is true to an extent, appreciating the sheer number of bookselling firms represented in imprints is an important
reminder that the business of selling books was much larger and more complicated than the power and success of its largest and best connected operations would suggest. The trade comprised a lot of small businesses, and a few prolific booksellers had a disproportionally great amount of power. Most would have had nothing like the influence of Hitch or Robinson. As the clusters of bookshops selling similar lists of books designed to entice the inhabitants of their neighborhoods suggest, establishing a loyal customer base was often more important than dominating one’s competition. The challenge of turning a profit for a bookseller of small or middling size was great (as evidenced by the twelve 1740s bookseller bankruptcies), and most members of the trade would have had little time or ability to fight publishing pirates or chase down copyright violations.

Most booksellers were conservative about their investments and the large numbers of reprints and derivative works suggests that few were willing to take the risk of publishing books that had no established successful predecessors. Different strategies aimed to mitigate the risks of the business, and most booksellers were either very highly specialized (publishing, say, only pamphlets with a particular religious bent, and then only the work of a few writers who were likely acquaintances), or they were very generalized, contributing to the publication of a smattering of standard works in a handful of the more common genres. Very few members of the trade published enough new literature to have exerted much influence on its style and development—Dodsley’s interest in poetry and Watts’ in drama was exceptional. More booksellers were responsible for confirming the canon by contributing to the publication of reprinted books than were interested in expanding it by focusing on new literature. And no one seems to have expected customers to consider poetry, drama, and fiction as related wares: each genre was its own subset of the trade, and literature as a whole as we understand it today was not a specialty of any bookseller.

Scholars like Siskin and Justice who study connections between the publishing trades and the style and content of literature published have also argued that booksellers and printers shaped the available literature through advances in print technology, though they do not specify what those advances are supposed to have been. Siskin, for example, claims vaguely that writing was the “technology whose
proliferation helped to elicit disciplinary or professional control.”¹ My examination of the books published between 1737 and 1749 offers no evidence to support such claims. There does not seem to have been any discernable change in the appearance, format, or quality of printed materials in the period that would suggest a significant shift in the available technology. That printing practices seem to have remained stable is another indication of the conservative nature of the trade.

Book historians and literary critics including Warner, Ellis, Raven, and Wetherill point to the mid-eighteenth century as a period when writing and reading literature became activities that transcended class boundaries. Certainly circulating libraries, coffee houses, literary magazines, and review journals made literature, and especially short-form poetry, accessible to greater numbers of readers. But while the audience for literature was growing larger in the 1740s, greater numbers of readers did not translate into large increases in the number of books published, precisely because growth in readership was due to increased availability of shared reading material rather than to any known change in average literacy rates or amounts of expendable income. The content and reception of literature offer no indication that the composition of the audience was becoming more diverse or middle class: poetry continued to be lauded as the pursuit of the educated gentleman; drama was esteemed as the nation’s great literary achievement; and fiction featured more stories either of criminals and working poor (like Richard Cross’s picaresque tale of a gambler, *The Adventures of John Le-Brun*) or of court life (like *The Affecting Case of the Queen of Hungary*) than of the lives of “middle class” tradesmen and the like that are supposed to have reflected a democratization the genre does not exhibit.²

According to studies of authorship by Folkenflik, Butler, and others, the mid-eighteenth century is supposed to have seen an increase in the possibilities for supporting oneself as a professional writer and, moreover, to have led to more writers considering themselves as authors. Those who would have been fortunate enough to have the connections required to secure a patron or to develop the relationship

---

with a bookseller required to negotiate good copyright prices would have circulated in the upper classes and would neither have needed or, in some cases, even particularly desired to earn money from their literary pursuits (gentlemen not being supposed to desire the publicity of publication). Poetry, drama, and even fiction, from what can be discerned from the surviving records, remained the products of an elite group of culturally-advantaged men. Authors associated with the greatest numbers of editions of literature include men like the laywers McNamara Morgan and Paul Whitehead or the Oxford-educated ordained preacher James Miller who were not fabulously wealthy but whose education and status would have commanded respect and attention. Any idea of professional authorship could only have been associated with a very few, very well-known literary celebrities like Pope and, later, Samuel Johnson, and should not be misconstrued to represent a type of author.

While other published genres (especially scientific and legal writing) seem to have offered some assurance that one’s work could earn a respectable profit, writers could not have earned a living through literature in London. The generous average copyright fees I estimated in Chapter 3 of £5 for short works of poetry, £30 for poetry collections, £50 for a play, and £20 for a novel realistically would only have been offered to the most successful writers, and even that select group would have been hard-pressed to earn anything like the couple hundred pounds that living for a year in London would have cost for an individual, never mind a family. Writers were not indifferent to the typically small returns they received for their efforts. A tongue-in-cheek epilogue to The Humorous of Whist depicts the author negotiating with his bookseller: the bookseller argues that “The Copy is but small, Sir. ‘Twill make but a Shilling Thing,” to which the author replies that the bookseller has sold other smaller works for more and that while “my Fortune puts me above writing with any mercenary View, as to my self” he wants a fair price for the work and plans to give his profit to a friend in need.³ 1740s prefaces often expounded upon their authors’ anxieties about anticipated public reception and its possible effects on its sale, proving that writers were aware that popularity was an important indication of their earning potential in future copyright negotiations.

³ Anon., The Humours of Whist (1743), pp. 57-8.
Although many of the known authors descended from elite backgrounds and composing literature would not on its own have offered enough financial support to constitute a decent living, writing was not always a high-minded pursuit. Grub-Street-style hack work continued to be published in 1740s London. The preponderance of short poems and topical pamphlet fiction suggests that booksellers continued to be interested in works of lesser quality that had short-term appeal for readers caught up in current events, and growth of coffee house libraries demonstrates that these genres might have been in greater demand than ever. The number of very quickly published responses to the '45 are evidence that writers and booksellers were eager to take advantage of present moods. Even fiction could be churned out quickly to satisfy a hot market: all of the novels published as continuations and parodies of *Pamela* were first published in 1741, which meant that they were written and printed within around a year of Richardson’s November 1740 original. Literature was designed to sell.

The seemingly low levels of interest in developing a reputation or persona as a writer also seems to suggest that nothing like a modern conception of authorship had developed by the mid-eighteenth century. Many writers published anonymously, and their correspondence and contracts with booksellers often suggest that they had to be carefully persuaded to attach their names to literature. Anonymity was common in poetry, drama, and fiction, and publishing a work without attribution does not seem to have had much material effect on its success: many of the period’s runaway hits, including *Pamela* and *Night Thoughts*, did not display their author’s names on their title pages. If readers were unconcerned with the identity of a work’s creator there would be little reason for a writer who wished for a private life to expose himself as the composer of a new title, especially as acceptance as a literary giant seems to have taken much longer in the 1740s than it does now. Prize-winning modern-day writers are often cited by modern critics as influential, but Henry Fielding’s name was rarely similarly invoked by his contemporaries. The writers cited by 1740s critics as most important were not alive and actively publishing. The popularity of reprints demonstrates readers’ desire to purchase works that had been determined to be of lasting cultural and aesthetic value.
But while works like *Paradise Lost* and *Don Quixote* perennially sold well, literature that addressed current events was also popular. Scholars who claim that literature became less political after Walpole’s reign do not take into account the range of titles published. Certainly the best writers of the 1740s were not known for their political satire as, say, Dryden and Swift had been, but topical works were a mainstay in literature. Walpole himself remained an important figure (one need look no further than Fielding’s *The Life and Death of Jonathan Wild, the Great*, written earlier but first published in 1743, to see that the great man’s presence continued after his term in office), and the problems of Parliament more broadly featured in many poems and fictitious court-secret narratives. Military events provided even more fodder for literature and satire. The War of Jenkins’ Ear and the War of the Austrian Succession (especially the Battle of Dettingen) were featured in numerous poems. And the Rebellion of 1745 inspired works in all genres of literature, from poems in celebration of the Young Pretender’s defeat, to plays celebrating the defeat of insurgent groups, to fictitious biographies like the *Memoirs of the Life of Lord Lovat*. Few such topical works lasted beyond a couple of editions published quickly after the events they concerned, but they always constituted a significant proportion of the literature—and especially the poetry—published.

Critics like Marshall Brown who have found pre-Romantic strains in the 1740s have argued that the period’s verse can be characterized as long-form, imaginative, and contemplative. But even a cursory glance through the common formats in which poetry was published demonstrates that long-form poetry was not the dominant style. More than thirty percent of all poetry published in London between 1737 and 1749, both new and reprinted, appeared in folio—the genre’s most common format. Folio poems were typically fewer than twenty pages, and included ballads, satires, and odes to friends and patrons. Though poetry in octavo and quarto, the next most common formats, tended to be a bit longer, most were neither long-form nor contemplative. Certainly some important long-form poetry was published in the 1740s. Young’s *Night Thoughts* is perhaps the most significant of these: thirty-seven different editions of part or all of the work were published in the 1740s, making it one of the most popular works of the period. But *Night Thoughts* was the exception and not the rule. Long poems were a small percentage of all poetry
published, and others did not enjoy the popular success of Young’s work. For example, the next-most cited poem in discussions of the period’s lengthy poetry, Richard Glover’s *Leonidas*, appeared in only five editions, which renders it successful but not remarkable compared to others on the market. However important long-form poems may be to literary history, they were not a dominant trend in their own times and should not be used to characterize 1740s poetry.

The standard view of new drama’s mid-century decline and the corresponding increased interest in Shakespeare is somewhat supported by an examination of the works sold in the 1740s. The decrease in the amount of published drama after 1737 supports claims about the Licensing Act’s impact: fewer new plays on the stage really did lead to a decrease in the drama’s role within 1740s literature. But following the initial crash of 1737, drama continued to constitute a consistently significant part of the book trade, roughly equal in number of titles published to fiction over the period. And the extremity of the effects of the Licensing Act on staged drama are not reflected in drama publication. Though very few new mainpieces and afterpieces were written, and though new published drama yielded only a few runaway successes like *The Dragon of Wantley* and *The Suspicious Husband*, booksellers continued to invest in the genre. Dual-language translations of operas and the texts of oratorios provided records of staged performances, and translations of foreign drama and new editions of celebrated English playwrights (especially Shakespeare) satisfied interest in the genre many considered the most edifying and valuable form for representing human nature.

Fiction’s significance to mid-century literature has been greatly overstated by later critics. By and large, novels were not increasingly popular, nor did fiction become more celebrated or even accepted as a literary art. Though the number of works of fiction did gradually and inconsistently increase after 1740, the increases were not large enough to make fiction significantly a larger part of the book trade. Works of fiction, both reprinted and new, were never more than three percent of the total market for published books, and no more than sixty-five fiction titles were published in any year between 1737 and 1749. Nor does the content and style of the fiction seem to have changed as drastically in these years as has been believed. Richardson’s and Fielding’s novels, which many critics most cite as foundational, were not
representative of most of the fiction that was being published. Beasley’s categories of fiction, which highlight the importance of adventure tales and exotic fables rather than interior-driven personal narratives, provide a more accurate picture of the most common novels. Examining the published fiction also demonstrates that most authors would have been unlikely to have written novels—fiction was not a significant part of English literary identity and with few exceptions, writers did not write novels in addition to plays or poetry. Much of the fiction published was derived from older works: reprints of a few celebrated novels and translations of foreign fiction were more common than new titles. Neither the number of titles nor the quality of fiction rose meaningfully in the 1740s.

Poetry, drama, and fiction were not categorized in the 1740s as related forms of literary arts: booksellers who published one did not necessarily devote themselves to the others and neither critical discourse nor authorial prefaces typically compared works across genres. But English literature was beginning to build a cohesive identity. Classical poets were less frequently upheld as the artistic and philosophical ideal: European and English writers were more and more often invoked for their depictions of nature, reality, and the human experience. Milton and Pope appear as suggested models nearly as often as Homer and Horace, and admiration for Shakespeare supported arguments about the unmatched quality of English drama. And while there was no theme that tied the genres to one artistic goal (for example, to write the most cutting satire or the best classical imitation or the most stirring representation of rustic life) producing quality literature was becoming a national project.

The 1740s was not the “age” of anything, but it was a period that produced astonishing individual achievements in literature—*Pamela, Joseph Andrews, Night Thoughts, Pleasures of the Imagination, An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College, Clarissa,* and *Tom Jones* were each, in their own way, outliers compared to anything else published in their genres. Projects like the competing editions of Shakespeare’s works and the beginning of Johnson’s *Dictionary* also were extending the limits of criticism and the literary arts. That the major authors whose work has come to represent the 1740s were anomalous rather than representative makes their separate projects all the more impressive. No other poet wrote a meditation on religion through nature and sublimity like Young’s or a treatise on imagination like
Akenside’s. Richardson and Fielding, though often grouped together for their contributions to realism in the novel, each followed his own distinct narrative model. As readers were developing their tastes for literature through the derivative popular poetry, drama, and fiction that comprised the majority of the market, a few authors were beginning to test the boundaries of what those forms could accomplish.

Though the changes were gradual and nonlinear, the published literature of 1737 looked very different from that of 1749. The influence of the early eighteenth century’s towering literary figures was waning. Pope, for example, remained a presence in critical discussions, but editions of his work had fallen sharply: 79 titles were associated with him between 1737 and 1743 (an average of 11.3 per year) compared to only 21 (or 4.3 per year) between 1744 and 1749. Fielding was the only well-known author who published major works at the beginning of the period and was still writing at its end, but a reader in 1737 might hardly have recognized the Fielding of the 1740s. His sharply satirical drama had been superseded by his two novels, which surpassed the complexity and conscious artistry of earlier fiction. Poetry shifted from a taste for classical imitations and sharp, political satires toward blank-verse odes and lyrics that celebrated English greatness (the country’s devotion to liberty, the beauty of its countryside, and so on) and topical poetry that either lauded victorious battles or offered generalized political or social satire. In drama, only around fifteen new mainpieces and afterpieces were published in 1749 compared to the few dozen of 1737. By the end of the period the list of published drama included enough histories of the English stage and editions of earlier playwrights to prove England’s pride in its contributions to the genre. Fiction, though it continued primarily to include popular, somewhat slapdash works, had changed most of all. Compared to the 1737 market, the 1749 selection of fiction included a greater percentage of fiction published originally in English rather than as a translation, more fiction that dealt with contemporary figures and events, and a few more complex and ambitious novels. 1740s booksellers, writers, and readers built the foundations for our modern understanding of poetry, drama, and fiction as related English literary arts.
Works Cited

The following is a list of all of the works cited here, with separate sections for primary works (which are further divided into lists of poetry, drama, fiction, and other prose works) and secondary works. Works that were first published between 1737 and 1749, including first and subsequent editions, are marked with an “†.”

Primary Works

N.B. Most primary works are cited in contemporary editions rather than modern edited editions in order to give a sense of the original attribution and imprint information and, in some cases, in order to represent a work cited in a particular format. Brackets denote information supplied in the ESTC that does not appear on the work’s title page. Names in brackets are ESTC attributions to anonymous works, some of which are likely to be spurious. Names in quotation marks are what appear to be pseudonyms that appear on the title page. I have included separate entries for authors whose work appears with different attributions; for example, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams is listed twice, once for works attributed to him on their title pages, and once for works published anonymously. When the editors of the ESTC give an attribution for a pseudonymous work, the work is listed under that author’s name; when no attribution is given, it is listed under “Anon., ‘Pseudonym’.”

Poetry


Anon., “Peter Plain-Truth”. The Litchfield Squabble. An Humorous Poetical Narration of the Several Transactions at the Elections for the County of Stafford and City of Litchfield. London: Printed for the author and Sold by B. Dickinson, 1747. †


———. *Beef and Butt Beer, Against Mum and Pumpernicle. H--n--r Scrubs, Or; a Bumper to Old England,--Huzza. A Drinking Song*. London, Printed for B.C., 1743. †


———. *The Consequence of a Late Famous Treaty Concluded at Aix la Chapelle: Or, the Hostages, a Pledge; An Historico-Satirical Poem*. London: Printed for T. Fox, 1749. †


———. *The Down-Fall of S-n and W-r; or, the Independant Westminster Electors Triumph. To the Tune of, Come Let Us Prepare, &c. [London], [1741]. †

———. *The D-v-l and His Deputies. A New Song to an Old Tune*. London, 1747. †


———. *The English Sailors Resolution to Fight the Spaniards*. [London, 1739]. †


———. *Fair Margaret's Misfortunes: Or, Sweet William's Frightful Dreams on His Wedding Night. With the Sudden Death and Burial of Those Noble Lovers*. London: Printed and Sold by William and Cluer Dicey, [1740]. †
——. The Freeholder. An Excellent New Ballad, Tune, King John and the Abbot. [London], [1741]. †
——. The Funeral of Faction. London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1741. †
——. Here’s Coming and Going; Or, Going and Coming: Or, Hey for Litchfield Races! To the Tune of The King Shall Enjoy His Own Again. [London, 1743]. †
——. His Catholic Majesty’s Most Christian Manifesto, and Reasons for Not Paying the Ninety-Five Thousand Pounds; Faithfully Rendered into English Metre. London: Printed for C. Corbett, 1739. †
——. The Historical and Poetical Medley: Or Muses Library; Being a Choice and Faithful Collection of the Best Antient English Poetry, from the Times of Edward the Confessor, to the Reign of King James the First. London: Printed for T. Davies, 1738. †
——. Horace’s Instructions to the Roman Senate: And Character of Caius Asinius Pollio. London: Printed for R. Amey, 1740. †
——. A Joyful Ode: Inscribed to the King, On the Late Victory at Dettingen. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1743. †
——. Louis le Rampant; Or, Argenson in His Altitudes. An Heroical Epistle, to be Learn’d by Heart, by All Non-Associators; and All Who are Bashful in the Day of Battle. London: Printed for the author and sold by G. Lyon, [1746]. †
——. The Muse in Good Humour: Or, a Collection of Comic Tales, &c. London: Printed for J. Noble, 1744. †
——. A New Ballad on the Taking of Porto-Bello, By Admiral Vernon. London: Printed for R. Dodsley, and Sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1740. †
——. A New Bloody Ballad on the Bloody Battle at Dettingen: Printed in Bloody Characters. London: Printed for W. Webb, 1743. †
——. The New Ministry. Containing a Collection of all the Satyrical Poems, Songs, &c.; Since the Beginning of 1742. London: Printed for W. Webb, 1742. †
——. The Patriots Motion; or, the Wise Men of Gotham. London: Printed for W. Webb and Sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1741. †
——. The Plaid Hunting. London: Sold by William Owen, 1747. †
——. Plain Truth, or Downright Dunstable. A Poem. Containing the Author’s Opinion of the Sale of Poetic and Prose Performances. London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1740. †
——. A Poem, Inscrib’d to the Right Honourable the Earl of Orford. [London], [1742].
——. Poems Occasion’d by the Present Rebellion. London: Printed by J. Tilly, for J. Rockall, and Sold by Mr. Duncomb, Mr. Blackman, Mr. Andrews, and at the pamphlet-shops in London and Westminster, 1746. †
———. *Pope’s Ghost: A Ballad. To the Tune of William and Margaret*. London: Printed for W. Lewis and Sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1744. †

———. *Pretty Kate of Windsor: or, the Miller’s Daughter*. London: Printed and Sold by W. and C. Dicey, 1747. †

———. *Robin Hood’s Garland. Being a Compleat History of All the Notable and Merry Exploits Perform’d by Him and His Men on Divers Occasions*. London: Printed for W. and C. Dicey, [1740]. †

———. *Sir *’s Speech Upon the Peace with Sp—N*. London: Printed for Jacob Lock, 1739. †


———. *They Are Not*. London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1740. †

———. *Thoughts in Sickness*. London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1743. †

———. *Tommy-Thumb’s Pretty Song Book*. [London]: Printed for M. Cooper, [1744?]. †

———. *A Touch of the Times*. London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1740. †


———. *What of That! Occasion’d by a Pamphlet, Intituled, Are These Things So? And Its Answer, Yes, They Are*. London: Printed for T. Cooper, and Sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1740. †


———. *The Yellow Sash or, H----r Beshit. An Excellent New Ballad. To the Old Tune, of Lillibullero*. London: Printed for J.S., [1743]. †


[———]. *The Oeconomy of Love: A Poetical Essay*. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1745. †

[Barber, James]. *Tom K----g’s: Or, the Paphian Grove with the Various Humours of Covent Garden, the Theatre, L—d M----ton’s, &c*. London: Printed for J. Robinson and Sold at the Pamphlet-Shops at the Royal-Exchange, 1738. †


[———]. *The Olive, An Ode; Patriotic Love; An Ode. Occasion’d by the Auspicious Success of His Majesty’s Counsels, and His Majesty’s Most Happy Return*. London: Printed and Sold by R. Amey, 1737. †

———. *An Hymn to the Supreme Being. With a Preface, on the General Design of It.* London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1739. †


Brown, John. *On Liberty: A Poem, Inscribed to His Grace the Chancellor and to the University of Cambridge, on Occasion of the Peace.* London: Printed for C. Davis and Sold by M. Cooper, 1749. †


Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, in the Original, From the Most Authentic Manuscripts; and as They are Turn’d into Modern Language by Mr. Dryden, Mr. Pope, and Other Eminent Hands.* London: Printed for the editor; and sold by J. Walthoe, W. Bickerton, and O. Payne, 1737. †

Collier, Mary. *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; and Sold by J. Roberts and at the Pamphlet-Shops near the Royal Exchange, 1739. †

Collins, William. *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects.* London: Printed for A. Millar, 1747. †


[———]. *The Progress of Physic. 2nd edition.* London: Printed for J. Stagg and Sold by J. Roberts, 1743. †


Duck, Stephen. *An Ode on the Battle of Dettingen. Humbly Inscrib’d to the King.* London: Printed for R. Dodsley and sold by M. Cooper, 1743. †

———. *The Vision. A Poem on the Death of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Caroline.* London: Printed for J. Roberts and J. Jackson, 1737. †
Duick, J. *A Memorial for Britons*. London: Published by Tho. Bakewell, [1746]. †

[Fortesque, James]. *Nature a Poem; Being an Attempt Towards a Vindication of Providence, in the Seemingly Most Exceptionable Things of the Natural World*. London: Printed for M. Cooper and Sold by J. Fletcher, 1747. †


Gibbons, Thomas. *Britannia’s Alarm: A Poem, Occasioned by the Present Rebellion. To Which is Added, A Fable of the Vine and Bramble*. London: Printed for R. King, J. Buckland, M. Cooper, and M. Marshal, 1745. †


[Gray, Thomas]. *An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*. London: Printed for R. Dodsley and Sold by M. Cooper, 1747. †


[Hervey, Baron John]. *The Patriots Are Come; Or, a New Doctor for a Crazy Constitution. A New Ballad to the Tune of Derry Down*. London: Printed for W. Webb and may be had at the Booksellers, and Pamphlet Shops in London and Westminser, 1742. †


———. *The Satires, Epistles, and Art of Poetry of Horace Translated into English Prose, as Near the Original as the Different Idioms of the Latin and English Languages Will Allow*. London: Printed for Joseph Davidson, 1743.

Hughes, Jabez. *Claudian the Poet his Elegant History of Rufinus*. London: Sold by Jacob Robinson, 1741. †

[Lennox, Charlotte], “A Lady”. *Poems on Several Occasions.* London: Printed for S. Paterson, 1747. †

Lockman, John. *An Ode, on the Crushing of the Rebellion, Anno MDCCXLVI. Presented to His Majesty at Kensington, and Humbly Inscrib’d to His Royal Highness the Duke.* London: Printed for the author and sold by M. Cooper, H. Chapelle, G. Woodfall, P. Russell, and at the several Pamphlet-Shops, 1746. †


[Mason, William]. *Musæus: A Monody to the Memory of Mr. Pope, in Imitation of Milton's Lycidas.* London: Printed for R. Dodsley and Sold by M. Cooper, 1747. †


———. *Miscellaneous Works in Verse and Prose.* London: Printed by J. Watts, 1741. †


[Miller, James]. “The Author of, Are These Things So?” *The Great Man’s Answer to Are These Things So? In a Dialogue Between His Honour and the Englishman in His Grotto.* London: Printed for T. Buck, [1740]. †

[Miller, James]. *Are These Things So? The Previous Question from an Englishman in His Grotto to a Great Man at Court.* London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1740. †

[———]. *The Year Forty-One. Carmen Seculare.* London: Printed for Jacob Robinson, 1741. †


[———]. “Porcupinus Pelagius”. The *Processionade: In Panegyri-Satiri-Serio-Comi-Baladical Versicles.* London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1745 [1746]. †

[———]. “Porcupinus Pelagius”. The *Sequel. Containing What Was Omitted in the Triumvirade, or Broad-Bottomry, at the Asterisks.* London: Printed for M. Cooper, [1745]. †


[Morris, Robert]. *An Enquiry After Virtue.* London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1743. †

[———]. *Yes, They Are: Being an Answer to Are These Things So? The Previous Question from an Englishman in His Grotto to a Great Man at Court.* London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1740. †

[Morris, Robert], “The Author of Yes, They Are”. *Have at You All: Being a Proper and Distinct Reply to Three Pamphlets Just Published, Intituled, What of That? The Weather-Menders, and, They Are Not. By the Author of Yes, They Are.* London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1740. †

[Newcomb, Thomas]. *A Supplement to One Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty-Eight. Not Written by Mr. Pope.* London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1738. †

[———]. *A Supplement to a Late Excellent Poem, Entitled, Are These Things So? Addressed to the * * *.* London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1740. †


[Nugent, Robert, First Earl of Nugent]. *An Ode to Mankind: Address’d to the Prince of Wales.* London: Printed for R. Dodsley and Sold by T. Cooper, 1741. †


———. *Gualtherus and Griselda: Or, the Clerk of Oxford’s Tale. From Boccace, Petrarch, and Chaucer* London: Printed for R. Dodsley, 1739. †


Ovid. *The Epistles of Ovid, Translated into English Prose, as Near the Original as the Different Idioms of the Latin and English Languages Will Allow.* London: Printed for J. Davidson, 1746.


Parnell, Thomas. *Poems on Several Occasions. Written by Dr. Thomas Parnell, Late Arch-Deacon of Clogher, and Published by Mr. Pope.* London: Printed for H. Lintot, J. and R. Tonson, and S. Draper, 1747.


———. *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight. A Dialogue Something like Horace.* London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1738. †


———. *The Sixth Epistle of the First Book of Horace Imitated.* London: Printed for L. Gilliver, 1738. †


[———]. *First Epistle of the Second Book Horace Imitated.* London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1737. †


[Pope, Alexander], “Scriblerus”. *The Dunciad, in Four Books. Printed According to the Complete Copy Found in the Year 1742.* London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1742. †

Prior, Matthew. *Miscellaneous Works of His Late Excellency Matthew Prior Esq; Consisting of Poems on Several Occasions, viz. Epistles, Tales, Satires, Epigrams, &c. With Some Select Latin Performances.* Edited by Adrian Drift. London: Printed for the editor, 1740. †


———. *Songs in Henry and Emma, Or, The Nut Brown Maid; A New Musical Drama, Taken from Prior: As Perform’d at the Theatre Royal in Covent-Garden. The Musick Compos’d by Mr. Arne.* London: Printed for the author and Sold by Manby and Cox, 1749. †


———. *Poetical Works of Mrs Elizabeth Rowe.* London: Printed for E. Curll, 1738. †

Savage, Richard. _Of Public Spirit in Regard to Public Works._ London: Printed for Robert Dodsley, 1737. †

Scott, Thomas. _Reformation A Poem._ London: Printed and Sold by J. Waugh, 1746. †

[Smollett, Tobias]. _Advice: A Satire._ London: Printed for George Freer, 1746. †


Spence, Joseph. _An Essay on Mr. Pope’s Odyssey. In Five Dialogues._ London: Printed for S. Wilmot and Sold by S. Birt and T. Longman, 1737. †

Spiltimber, George. _To the King, on His Majesty’s Happy Return. An Ode._ London: Printed for Charles Corbett, [1740]. †


———. _The Weather-Menders: A Tale. A Proper Answer to Are These Things So?_ London: Printed for T. Carpenter, 1740. †


[Swift, Jonathan], “J. S. D.S.P.”. _The Beasts Confession to the Priest, on Observing How Most Men Mistake Their Own Talents._ Dublin, printed; London: Re-printed and Sold by T. Cooper, 1738. †


———. _The Works of Mr. Thomson._ 2 vol. London: Printed for A. Millar, 1739. †

Turner, Joseph. _An Epistle to Dr. Young._ London: Printed for W. Mears and Sold by J. Roberts, 1738.


———. _The Works of Virgil Translated into English Prose, as Near the Original as the Different Idioms of the Latin and English Languages Will Allow._ London: Printed for Joseph Davidson, 1743.

Wakefield, Benjamin. _The Warbling Muses, Or Treasure of Lyric Poetry: Containing Seven Hundred and Thirty-One Songs, on All Sorts of Subjects, and in Every Measure of Verse; A Great Many of Them from Manuscripts, and Scarce Any Found in the Collections._ London: Printed for G. Woodfall, 1749. †


[Warton, Thomas]. *Five Pastoral Eclogues: The Scenes of Which are Suppos’d to Lie Among the Shepherds, Oppress’d by the War in Germany*. London: Printed for R. Dodsley, 1745. †


[Williams, Sir Charles Hanbury]. Esq; S—ys’s Budget Open’d; Or, Drink and Be D—d. *A New Ballad, to the Tune of, A Begging We Will Go*. London: Printed for W. Webb, 1743. †

[———]. *The Heroes: A New Ballad. To the Tune of - - - Sally in Our Alley*. London: Printed for M. Moore, 1745. †

[———]. *An Ode from the E---- of B---- to Ambition*. London: Printed for A. Moore, [1746]. †

[———]. *An Ode to the Honourable H---- F--x, on the Marriage of the Du----s of M----r to H----s----y, Esq*. London: Printed for A. Moore, 1746. †

[———]. *The Old Coachman: A New Ballad. To Which is Added, Labour in Vain*. London: Printed for J. Jones, 1742. †

[———]. *Old England’s Te Deum*. London: Printed for J. Jolly, [1743]. †

[———]. *Plain Thoughts in Plain Language. A New Ballad*. London: Printed for W. Webb, 1743. †

[———]. S----s and J----l. *A New Ballad*. London: Printed for W. Webb, 1743. †


[———]. *The Complaint: or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, & Immortality*. London: Printed for R. Dodsley, 1747. †

Drama


Anon., Anon., “Baron Huffumbourghausen,” *The Congress of the Beasts, Under the Mediation of the Goat, for Negotiating a Peace Between the Fox, the Ass Wearing a Lion’s skin, the Horse, the Tigress, and Other Quadrupedes at War: A Farce of Two Acts*. London: Printed for W. Webb, 1748. †


———. *The Bravo Turn’d Bully; Or, the Depredators. A Dramatic Entertainment. Founded on Some Late Transactions in America*. London: Printed for and Sold by J. Purser and by the Booksellers and Pamphlet-sellers of London and Westminster, 1740. †


———. *The Greatest Glory of a Prince, is the Conquest of His Own Passions. A Comedy*. London: Printed and Sold by S. Stubbs and at the King’s Theatre in the Hay-Market, [1740]. †


———. *Rex et Pontifex*. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1745. †


[———], “Signor Carini”. *Margery; Or, a Worse Plague Than the Dragon.* London: Printed for J. Shuckburgh, 1738. †


———. *The School-Boy: Or, The Comical Rival. A Farce of Two Acts.* London: printed for the proprietors; and sold by the booksellers in town and country, [1740].


———. *The Mournful Nuptials, or Love the Cure of all Woes, A Tragedy. To Which is Prefixed a Preface, Containing Some Observations on Satire, and on the Present State of Our Public Entertainments.* London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1739. †

Cutts, John. *Rebellion Defeated; Or, the Fall of Desmond. A Tragedy.* London: Printed for the author, 1745. †


———. *The King and the Miller of Mansfield.* London: Printed for the author and Sold by T. Cooper, 1737. †

———. *Sir John Cockle at Court*. London: Printed for R. Dodsley and Sold by T. Cooper, 1738. †

———. *The Triumph of Peace, a Masque*. London: Printed for R. Dodsley and Sold by M. Cooper, 1749. †

Dower, E. *The Salopian Esquire, or Joyous Miller*. London: Sold at Mr. Warren’s, Mrs. Riggall's, and at Messieurs Thomas and Loyde, 1738. †


[Fielding, Henry], “The author of Pasquin”. *The Historical Register, for the Year 1736*. London: Printed and Sold by J. Roberts, [1737]. †


[———]. *Miss Lucy in Town. A Sequel to The Virgin Unmasqued. A Farce; With Songs*. London: Printed for A. Millar, 1742. †


———. *Beggar’s Opera*. London: Printed for the proprietors, and Sold by the booksellers in town and country, 1737.


[———]. *Saul, an Oratorio; Or, Sacred Drama*. London: printed for Tho. Wood, and sold by Tho. Astley, J. Shuckburgh, and at the King’s Theatre in the Hay-Market, 1738. †


[———]. *Joseph and His Brethren. A Sacred Drama*. London: Printed for John Watts and Sold by B. Dod, 1744. †


———. *Joseph and His Brethren. A Sacred Drama*. London: Printed for John Watts and Sold by B. Dod, 1744. †


[Morell, Thomas]. Solomon. An Oratorio. As it is Perform’d at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. Set to Musick by Mr. Handel. London: Printed for J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper, 1749. †


[Ralph, James]. The Astrologer, A Comedy. As it Was Once Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1744. †


Rowe, Nicholas. The Fair Penitent. London: Printed for the proprietors and Sold by the booksellers in town and country, 1737.


Salvi, Antonio. Berenice, Queen of Egypt. An Opera. As it is Perform’d at the Theatre Royal in Covent-Garden. Composed by Mr. Handel. London: Printed by T. Wood, 1737. †


*Terence’s Comedies, Translated into English Prose, as Near as the Propriety of the Two Languages will Admit*. Translated by Patrick. London: Printed for J. Oswald, 1745.


Thomson, James. *Agamemnon*. London: Printed for and Sold by A. Millar, 1738. †

———. *Coriolanus*. London: Printed for A. Millar, 1749. †

———. *Edward and Eleonora*. London: Printed for the author and Sold by A. Millar, 1739. †

———. *Tancred and Sigismunda*. London: Printed for A. Millar, 1745. †


Vanneschi, Francesco. *Bellerofonte. Drama, per il Teatro di S.M.B*, 1746. †

———. *Fetonte. Drama, per il Teatro di S.M.B*. London: Printed by G. Woodfall, 1747. †

———. *Mitridate. Drama, per il Teatro di S.M.B*. London: Printed by G. Woodfall, 1746. †


[Weddell], “The Author of the City Farce, The Voyage Up the Thames, &c.”. *Incle and Yarico: A Tragedy, of Three Acts. As it Was Intended to Have Been Performed at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent-Garden*. London: Sold by T. Cooper, 1742. †


Worsdale, James. *A Cure for a Scold. A Ballad Farce of Two Acts. (Founded Upon Shakespear’s Taming of a Shrew) As it is Acted by His Majesty’s Company of Comedians at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane*. London: Printed for L. Gilliver, [1738]. †
Fiction


Anon., [“Archibald Arbuthnot”]. *The Life, Adventures, and Many and Great Vicissitudes of Fortune of Simon, Lord Lovat, the Head of the Family of Frasers.* London: Printed for John Threkold, 1746. †

Anon., “Author of the Court Secret”. *The Affecting Case of the Queen of Hungary.* London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1742. †


Anon., “A Countryman”. *A Journey to Llandrindod Wells, in Radnorshire.* London: Printed for the author, and Sold by M. Cooper, Mr Wilson, Mr. P. Brown, Mr. B. Haslewood, and by all other booksellers in town and country, 1746. †


Anon., “Englishman of Figure”. *The Second Court Secret: A Moving Scene. For the Year Seventeen Hundred Forty-Three.* London: Printed for J. Brown, 1744. †

Anon., “Gentleman residing at Paris”. *An Authentic Account of the Conduct of the Young Chevalier. From His First Arrival in Paris, After His Defeat at Culloden, to the Conclusion of the Peace at Aix-La-Chapelle.* London: Printed and Sold by Nutt, Dodd, and Barr, 1749. †

Anon., “Gentleman who attended his Lordship in his last moments”. *A Candid and Impartial Account of the Behaviour of Simon Lord Lovat, from the Time His Death-Warrant Was Deliver’d, To the Day of His Execution.* London: Printed for J. Newbery and W. Owen, 1747. †


Anon., “Louis d’ Rustaind de Saint-Joury”. The Adventures of Malouka, the Beautiful Arabian: Or, the Triumph of Virtue and Innocence Over Malice, Corruption and Perjury. London: Printed for J. Huggonson, 1738. †


Anon., “Pilpay”. The Instructive and Entertaining Fables of Pilpay, an Ancient Indian Philosopher. London: Printed for S. Birt and D. Browne, 1747. †


Anon., “Zelis, the Persian”. Celenia and Adrastus. 2 vols. London: Printed for J. Hodges, 1740. †

Anon. An Account of the Apparition of the Late Lord Kilmarnock, to the Revd. Mr. Foster. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1747. †


Anon. The Ass Race: Or the Secret History of Archy Armstrong, Fool to King Charles I. London, 1740.

Anon. Athenian Letters: Or, the Epistolary Correspondence of an Agent of the King of Persia. 4 vols. London: Printed by James Bettenham, 1741. †

Anon. An Authentick Account of the Conduct of the Young Chevalier, From His First Arrival in Paris, After His Defeat at Culloden, to the Conclusion of the Peace at Aix-la-Chapelle. London: Printed and Sold by Nutt, Dodd, and Barnes, and all the pamphlet-shops in London and Westminster, 1749. †


Anon. A Brief Account of the Life and Family of Miss Jenny Cameron, the Reputed Mistress of the Pretender’s Eldest Son. Containing Many Very Singular Incidents. London: Printed and Sold by T. Gardner, 1746. †

Anon. A Court Lady’s Curiosity; Or, The Virgin Undress’d. London: Printed for Joseph Pearce and Sold by the book-sellers of London and Westminster, 1740. †


Shuckburgh, J. Hodges, E. Wicksteed, J. Oswald, J. Comyns, C. Bathurst, C. Corbet, J. Ward, A. Clarke, and A. Wilde, 1748. †


———. *Fortune’s Favourite: Containing, Memoirs of the Many Hardships and Sufferings, Together with the Surprizing Deliverance and Advancement to Plenty and Happiness, of Jacobo Anglicano, a Young Nobleman*. London: Printed for the author, and Sold by the booksellers in town and country, 1744. †

———. *French Novels*. Translated by “a young lady”. London: Printed and Sold by the booksellers in town and country, 1737. †

———. *Genuine Memoirs of the Life of Simon Lord Fraser of Lovat*. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1746. †


———. *The History of Tom Jones the Foundling, in His Married State*. London: Printed for J. Robinson, 1750 [1749]. †

———. *Iberian Tales and Novels. As They Were Publickly Rehearsed for the Entertainment of the Spanish Nobility*. London, 1745. †

———. *The Ladies Advocate: Or, Wit and Beauty a Match for Treachery and Inconstancy*. London: Printed for C. Long, 1749. †


———. *The Life of Pamela, Being a Full and Particular Relation of the Birth and Advancement of That Fortunate and Beautiful Young Damsel, Who, from the Lowest Degree of Rural Life, Came to be the Mistress of a Most Splendid House and Fortune, by Her Steady Adherence to the Principles of Virtue and Honour*. London: Printed for C. Whitefield, 1741. †

———. *The Lovers Petition to Parliament Against the Thieves*. London: Printed for S. Dial, 1743. †

———. *Memoirs of the Life of His Grace James, Late Duke of Ormond*. London: Printed by and for J. Stanton, 1738. †

———. *Memoirs of the Life of Lady H------ the Celebrated Pamela. From Her Birth to the Present Time*. London: Printed for T. Cooper, 1741. †

———. *Memoirs of the Life of Lord Lovat*. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1746. †

———. Memoirs of the Nutrebian Court. 2 vols. London: Printed for M. Laugham and Sold by Epsom, J. Robinson, and W. Reeves, 1747. †

———. Memoirs of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman, Return'd From a Thirteen Years Slavery in America Where He Had Been Sent by the Wicked Contrivances of His Cruel Uncle. London: Printed for J. Freeman, 1743. †


———. Memores of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman: Or, the Triumph of Love, and Constancy. London: Printed and Sold by B. Milles and A. Dodd, 1741. †

———. Pamela in High Life: Or, Virtue Rewarded. London: Printed for Mary Kingman, 1741. †

———. The Perseis; or, SECRET MEMOIRS OF PERSIA. London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1745. †

———. Polite Amusements, Containing Select Histories Equally Instructive and Entertaining. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1745. †

———. The Travels and Adventures of Mademoiselle de Richelieu. 3 vols. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1744. †


———. A WOEFUL VOYAGE INDEED! BEING A FULL AND PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE VOYAGE, ADVENTURES AND DISTRESSES OF THE CREW BELONGING TO THE NIMBLE NANCY. London: Sold at the Cheshire Cheese in Wine-Office Court, 1744. †

———. The Young Chevalier: Or, a Genuine Narrative of all That Befell That Unfortunate Adventurer. London: Printed for the author and Sold by R. Griffiths, [1748]. †


Argen, Marquis d’. The Jewish Spy. 5 vols. London: Printed for D. Browne and R. Hette, 1739. †


[Aulnoy, Madame d’]. A Collection of Novels and Tales of the Fairies. 3 vols. London: Printed for J. Brotherton, W. Meadows, R. Ware, T. Astley, and J. Hodges, 1749. †
[———]. *The History of the Tales of the Fairies. Newly Translated from the French.* 3 vols. London: Printed for R. Ware, C. Hitch, and James Hodges, 1749. †


Bulkeley, John and John Cummins. *A Voyage to the South-Seas, in the Years 1740–1.* London: Printed for Jacob Robinson, 1743. †


———. *Instructive and Entertaining Novels; Designed to Promote Virtue, Good Sense, and Universal Benevolence.* Translated by Thomas Shelton. London: Printed for J. Nourse, 1742. †


———. *Two Humorous Novels.* London: Printed by H. Kent for Ward and Chandler, 1741. †


[———]. *The Wonderful Life, and Most Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York; Mariner.* London: Printed for A. Bettesworth, C. Hitch, R. Ware, and J. Hodges, 1737.


Fielding, Henry. The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling. 6 vols. London: Printed for A. Millar, 1749. †

[Fielding, Henry], “Conny Keyber”. An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews. London: Printed for A. Dodd, 1741. †


[Fielding, Sarah], “The author of David Simple.” The Governess; Or, Little Female Academy. London: Printed for the author and Sold by A. Millar, 1749. †

[Fieux, Charles de, Chevalier de Mouhy]. The Busy-Body: Or, Successful Spy. 2 vols. London: Printed for F. Cogan, 1742. †

Gomez, Madame de. Select Novels, Translated from the French of Madame de Gomez. London: Printed and Published by T. Gardner and W. Shropshire, 1745. †

[Griffiths, Ralph?]. Ascanius; Or the Young Adventurer, a True History. London: “Printed and Sold by Messrs. Grimky and Voguel Booksellers in Amsterdam; and by all other booksellers in Great-Britain, Ireland and Holland”, 1746. †


———. The Unfortunate Princess, Or, the Ambitious Statesman. London: Printed for T. Wright, 1741. †
———. The Unfortunate Princess: Or the Life and Surprising Adventures of the Princess of Ijaveo. London: Printed for James Hodges, 1741. †

[Haywood, Eliza?]. The Fortunate Foundlings. London: Printed for T. Gardner, 1744. †

[———]. Anti-Pamela: Or, Feign’d Innocence Detected; In a Series of Syrena’s Adventures. London: Printed for F. Cogan, 1741. †

Kelly, John. The Third Volume of Peruvian Tales. London: Printed for J. Hodges, 1739. †

Le Sage, Alain René. *The Bachelor of Salamanca; Or, Memoirs of Don Cherubim de la Ronda*. 2 vols. Translated by Mr. Lockman. London: Printed for A. Bettesworth, C. Hitch, C. Davis, and G. Hawkins, 1737. †


[Manley, Delarivier]. *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality of Both Sexes from the New Atalantis*. Printed and Sold by James Hodges, 1741. †


Parry, James. *The True Anti-Pamela: Or, Memoirs of Mr. James Parry, Late Organist of Ross in Herefordshire*. London: Printed for the author and Sold by the booksellers in town and country, 1741. †


[Penrice, Gerard]. *Genuine and Impartial Memoirs of the Life and Character of Charles Ratcliffe, Esq; Who was Beheaded on Tower-Hill, Monday, December 8, 1746*. London: Printed for the proprietors and Sold by B. Cole, 1746. †


[Richardson, Samuel], “The editor of Pamela”. *Clarissa. Or, the History of a Young Lady: Comprehending the Most Important Concerns of Private Life*. 7 vols. London: Printed for Samuel Richardson and Sold by A. Millar, J. and Ja. Rivington, John Osborn, and J. Leake, 1748. †


Other Prose Works

N.B. This category includes criticism, advertisements, letters, and intellectual prose.


Anon., “Theophilus Cibber”. *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, Comedian. Being a Proper Sequel to The Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian*. London: Printed for J. Mechell, 1740. †

Anon. *The Case Between the Managers of the Two Theatres, and Their Principal Actors, Fairly Stated, and Submitted to the Town*. London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1743. †

———. *The Country Correspondent: Humbly Address’d to Gustavus Vasa, Esq; And All The Never-Enough-To Be Admir’d, Inimitable, and Incomparable Authors of That Famous, Excellent, and Fine New Patriot Play, Call’d, the Deliverer of His Country*. London: Printed for R. Swan and Sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1739. †

———. *D-ry-L-ne P-yh-se Broke Open. In a Letter to Mr. G---*. London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1747. †


———. *An Examen of the New Comedy, Call’d The Suspicious Husband. With Some Observations Upon Our Dramatick Poetry and Authors; To Which is Added, A Word Advice to Mr. G--rr--ck; and a Piece of Secret History*. London: Printed for J. Roberts, [1747]. †

———. *The History of the Stage. In Which is Included, the Theatrical Characters of the Most Celebrated Actors Who Have Adorn’d the Theatre*. London: Printed for J. Miller and Sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1742. †

———. *A Letter to Mr. Garrick, on His Having Purchased a Patent for Drury-Lane Play-House*. London: Printed for J. Freeman and to be had of Mr. Lewis, 1747. †

———. *A Letter to the Society of Booksellers, On the Method of Forming a True Judgment of the Manuscripts of Authors; And on the Leaving Them in Their Hands, or Those of Others, for the Determination of Their Merit: Also, of the Knowledge of New Books*. London: Printed for J. Millan, 1738. †

———. *Queries to be Answer’d by the Manager of Drury-Lane Theatre, For the Satisfaction of the Publick, in Regard to the Present Dispute between Him and His Actors*. London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1743. †


Bracken, Henry. *Farriery Improv’d.* London: Printed by J. Clarke and J. Shuckburgh, 1738. †


Cibber, Colley. *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre-Royal.* London: Printed by John Watts for the Author, 1740. †


———. *A Commentary Upon Mr Pope’s Four Ethic Epistles, Intituled, An Essay on Man. Wherein His System is Fully Examined.* London: Printed for E. Curll, 1738. †

———. *An Examination of Mr Pope’s Essay on Man. Translated from the French of M. Crousaz, Member of the Royal Academies of Sciences at Paris and Bourdeaux; and Professor of Philosophy and Mathematics at Lausanne.* [Translated by Elizabeth Carter]. London: Printed for A. Dodd, 1739. †

[Cruden, Alexander]. *A Verbal Index to Milton's Paradise Lost. Adapted to Every Edition but the First, Which Was Publish’d in Ten Books Only.* London: Sold by W. Innys and D. Browne, 1741. †


[Edwards, Thomas], “Another Gentleman of Lincoln’s-Inn”. *A Supplement to Mr. Warburton’s Edition of Shakespear. Being the Canons of Criticism, and Glossary, Collected from the Notes in that Celebrated Work, and Proper to be Bound Up With It.* London: Printed for M. Cooper, 1748. †

Foote, Samuel. *The Roman and English Comedy Consider’d and Compar’d. With Remarks on the Suspicious Husband. And an Examen into the Merit of the Present Comic Actors.* London: Printed for T. Waller, 1747. †
[Foote, Samuel]. *A Treatise on the Passions, So Far as They Regard the Stage; With a Critical Enquiry into the Theatrical Merit of Mr. G-k, Mr. Q-n, and Mr. B-y. The First Considered in the Part of Lear, the Two Last Opposed in Othello.* London: Printed for C. Corbett, [1747]. †

Garrick, David. *Mr. Garrick’s Answer to Mr. Macklin’s Case.* [London, 1743]. †


[Holt, John]. *An Attempte to Rescue that Aunciente, English Poet, and Play-wrighte, Maister Williaume Shakespere; From the Maney Errours, Faulsely Charged on Him, by Certaine New-Fangled Wittes; and To Let Him Speak for Himself, as Right Well He Wotteth, When Freede from the Many Careless Mistakeings, of The Heedless First Imprinters, of His Workes.* London: Printed for the author, and sold by Messieurs Manby and Cox, 1749. †

[Hume, David]. *A Treatise of Human Nature.* London: Printed by John Noon, 1739. †


Macklin, Charles. *Mr. Macklin’s Reply to Mr. Garrick’s Answer. To Which are Prefix’d, All the Papers, Which Have Publickly Appeared, in Regard to This Important Dispute.* London: Printed for J. Roberts and A. Dodd, 1743. †


Montagu, R. *At R. Montagu’s Book-Warehouse, the General Post-Office, That End of Great Queen-Street, Next Drury-Lane. Is a Choice Collection of Valuable Books in All Faculties and Parts of Learning.* London, 1738. †

———. *At R. Montagu’s Book-Ware House, the General Post-Office, That End of Great-Queen-Street Next Drury-Lane, Are Two Libraries Just Purchased, of Valuable Books.* London, 1741. †

[Oldys, William and Edmund Curll], “Thomas Betterton”. *The History of the English Stage, From the Restauration to the Present Time.* London: Printed for E. Curll, 1741. †


[Sheridan, Thomas]. *The Buskin and Sock: Being Controversial Letters between Mr. Thomas Sheridan, Tragedian, and Mr. Theophilus Cibber, Comedian*. Printed in Dublin and Reprinted in London for Jacob Robinson Robinson, 1743. †


[———]. *A Letter from an Author, to a Member of Parliament, Concerning Literary Property*. London: Printed for John and Paul Knapton, 1747. †

Whalley, Peter. *An Enquiry Into the Learning of Shakespeare, With Remarks on Several Passages of His Plays*. London: Printed for T. Waller, 1748. †

Whitefield, George. *A Brief Account of the Occasion, Process, and Issue of a Late Trial at the Assize Held at Gloucester, March 3, 1743*. London: printed for J. Robinson; and sold at the Tabernacle, and by Mr. John Sims, 1744. †

———. *Directions How to Hear Sermons*. London: Printed for James Hutton and to be Sold by J. Wilson, J. Leake, and Messrs. Harris, sen. and jun, 1739. †

———. *Directions How to Hear Sermons*. London: Printed for C. Whitefield, 1739. †


———. *Satan’s Devices*. London: Printed for James Hutton, 1739. †

———. *Satan’s Devices*. London: Printed for C. Whitefield, 1739. †

Secondary Works


Patricia Gael
434 Martin Terrace • State College, PA 16803 • Phone: 512-853-0784
E-Mail: patricia.gael@gmail.com • Web: http://www.personal.psu.edu/pag191/

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University, English Literature (2014)
M.A., Pennsylvania State University, English Literature (2010)
B.S., Iowa State University, English Literature and Chemistry (2006)

PUBLICATIONS

“Kingship and Catholicism in Posthumous Representations of Charles II, 1685–1714”
Forthcoming from The Seventeenth Century

“William Congreve as Satirist”
Forthcoming from 1650-1850

“Lyrical Ballads in British Periodicals, 1798-1800”


REVIEW


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“The Economics of Publishing Imaginative Literature, 1737-1749”
EC/ASECS, Baltimore, MD, November 2012

“Defining Kingship and Debating Catholicism: Posthumous Representations of Charles II, 1685-1702” EC/ASECS, Pennsylvania State University, November 2011

“Anonymous Publication in London, 1740-1749”
SHARP, Washington, D.C., July 2011

“The Importance of Satire in William Congreve’s Comedies”
EC/ASECS, Pittsburgh, PA, November 2010

“The Book Review in England Before 1749”
EC/ASECS, Bethlehem, PA, October 2009