Reading Aloud?
Elocution Manuals and Reading Practices (1750-1800)

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Thesis Abstract

This thesis examines eighteenth-century elocution manuals: instructional works concerned with the practice of reading aloud. The term 'elocution manual' is a retrospective one, but it is useful in identifying instructional texts designed to aid the performance of reading aloud in social settings. The instruction such books provide is not limited to practical instruction in reading aloud, as outlined by the tenets of the elocution movement; elocution manuals also concerned themselves with broader issues related to the value of reading literature in English, sociability and politeness, and the relationship between print and various types of theatrical and oral performance. In particular, works offering elocutionary education were highly sensitive to the limitations of print in instructing oral performance.

By offering close-readings of elocution manuals alongside other forms of contemporary evidence of elocutionary practice, the thesis proves that the eighteenth-century understanding of the relationship between print and orality was more complicated and sophisticated than has been acknowledged by previous scholars. Elocution manuals had to navigate the internal contradiction inherent in their form: these are texts which argue for the superiority of oral performance over the written text, whilst being printed texts themselves. Oral performance, these texts argue, cannot only be taught through books. Elocution manuals give material form to the intersections between literacy and orality, as their professed purpose was to direct oral reading performances. As historical artefacts, they offer alternative ways of thinking about the relationships between print and performance. Elocution books in particular function as sites of aurality (a combination of the written and the oral) by fostering practices of reading aloud where the reader uses their voice to produce a version of the text from print. Writing, then, can function to *produce* a

voice, as well as to *represent* one. This thesis explores some of the complexities of this dynamic between print and orality, acknowledging that eighteenth-century readers and writers were sensitive to its intricacies.

This thesis emphasises the importance of understanding reading, and reading aloud, as a historical practice. It contributes to the history of reading by considering the historical specificity of the theoretical, idealised readers constructed by elocution books in the mid- to late-eighteenth century. Doing so reveals much about the assumptions about reading that went into producing books for a growing literate readership and illustrates the role of the material book in understanding social forms of reading. Elocution manuals attempted to shape eighteenth-century oral reading practices and were also shaped *by* them. Such books were written, edited, compiled and sold into a culture where reading was often conducted in company. Studies of eighteenth-century literary culture have tended to underestimate the significance that contemporary forms of reading, especially those less familiar to modern readers, had on the construction and reception of literary texts. It is possible to learn more about the ideals and assumptions underlying reading in the past by analysing literature that offered models of instruction on how to do it. This is what this thesis offers.

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Abbreviations

DMI — *Digital Miscellanies Index*

ECCO — *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*

ESTC — *English Short Title Catalogue*

ODNB — *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

OED — *Oxford English Dictionary*

RED — *Reading Experience Database*

A Note on Texts, References and Dates

When quoting from contemporary sources, I have retained their original spelling, punctuation and typography, including italicisation and capitalisation. The long 's' is generally not preserved, except in cases where it is necessary to transliterate quotations to retain non-standard elocutionary punctuation.

Quotations are referenced in full in the first instance of each chapter. Subsequent references provide the author's surname (where known), the name of the text, and the page number(s). Where surnames are shared by multiple authors, first names are given for clarity.

The dates used are the ones recorded at the time of events and publications.

Introduction: Reading Allowed?

'Silence Please'?

The Bodleian Library in Oxford is filled with signs politely imposing silence. A placard can be found in the Old Bodleian quadrangle, held up on a stand; tourists take pictures of themselves next to it. Inside the library the silence notice is screwed on to the walls, pinned to notice boards, propped up on the enquiries desk in a plastic frame. There are even miniature replicas of the sign in the library gift shop, where the rule is also printed on coasters, tiny espresso cups and paper bookmarks for visitors to buy and take home.[1] The rule — 'Silence Please' — supposes that readers require silence. But do they? Having spent the past three years in an assortment of hushed library reading rooms, I am inclined to think that it depends on what you are researching.

This thesis offers an analysis of elocution manuals dating between 1750-1800, a period often known as 'the golden age of British oratory'.[2] Elocution manuals were instructional works which taught their readers how to read aloud printed texts or recite them from memory in different social contexts. They provided practical instruction to their readers, and materials to use. Such books appealed to readers by promising them improved skills in reading and speaking, emphasising clear, articulate speech and suitable accompanying gestures. This thesis studies these manuals in the context of this 'golden

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[1] [Unknown], 'Silence Please Collection', https://bodleianshop.co.uk/collections/silence-please. Accessed 16th July 2020.

[2] Harry Caplan *et al.*, 'The Classical Tradition: Rhetoric and Oratory', in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly,* 27:2 (1997): 7-38 (p. 29); see also Frans de Bruyn, 'Burke and the uses of eloquence: political prose in the 1770s and 1780s', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 768-793 (p. 768).

age', considering the social values assigned to elocutionary skills and oratorical prowess. The terms 'elocution' and 'oratory' are not synonymous. The word 'oratory' tends to refer to parliamentary speech-making by members of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, reflecting the historical use of the word 'oratory' to mean political speeches.[3] 'Elocution', in contrast, refers to speech-delivery more generally, which is not strictly confined to parliamentary occasions. Elocution manuals offer a more detailed look into what may retrospectively be called the 'elocutionary culture' of the period: the broader, extra-parliamentary interest in methods of reading aloud and speech-based performance.

Encountering elocution manuals as a researcher has constantly reminded me of the disjunct between how these books were designed to be read, and how I have been able to read them. This is of course true for all historical texts, not just eighteenth-century ones confined to library rare book rooms. But in the case of elocution manuals, with their elaborate theories of oral delivery, the changing conditions of access are more evident. Experiencing elocution books as they were intended to be read by their initial compilers and editors is impossible. In conducting my analysis I have been forced to be aware that I have been reading my research materials in ways contrary to their intended uses, contrary to their expressed advice, and contrary to the rhetorical strategies they employed to construct their ideal reader.

The 'Silence Please' rule is just one aspect of the controlled environment of the library. In the rare book room, the conditions for reading are further determined by the library environment. Readers must sign in, surrendering ink pens and water bottles to the lockers downstairs. Once in the reading room, readers must collect the books requested

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[3] Matthew Bevis, *The Art of Eloquence: Byron, Dickens, Tennyson, Joyce* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), p. 22.

from the online catalogue, having no more than four out on a desk at any one time. Given the general age and condition of elocution books published in the period 1750-1800, they must be placed delicately on foam book rests, held open with weighted snakes. They must not be picked up with the one-handed studied nonchalance which eighteenth-century teachers of elocution recommended. Readers are certainly not allowed to put them in their bags and take them home to entertain their household. My performance of an elocutionary text — were I inclined to make one — would certainly be prohibited, both in the library and in the domestic setting.

When the libraries and archives in the UK closed due to the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic, my interactions with elocution books were further limited. I had annotated printed copies of digital scans while consulting the physical books, but in the final stages of my project I did not have their originals to hand. My printouts distorted the original books even more than the electronic scans: to save ink and money I chose printer settings which printed multiple pages on both sides of sheets of mass-produced A4. The non-standard sizing of eighteenth-century folio, octavo or duodecimo pages was obscured by both the scans and my printing of them, uneven hand-cut yellowing leaves replaced with paperwhite machine-sliced sheets. The result to the researcher is a severance from the material object of the book: its size, weight, shape, colour, texture and smell. No eighteenth-century writer or compiler of elocution books could have anticipated this kind of afterlife for their reading manuals, just as I could not have anticipated the changes to the conditions of my reading and research caused by Coronavirus.

All my experiences as a reader and researcher of elocution manuals have made me acutely aware of the issues at the heart of this thesis. The forms of reading elocution manuals instructed and encouraged their users to adopt are rarely possible for modern

readers constrained by rules and the conditions of institutional access. This dissonance has inevitably forced me, as a researcher, to think harder about the role of location, cultural context and intended use in evaluating their content. My own experiences of reading these books has been one characterised by assorted feelings of earnest interest and boredom, enjoyment and frustration. I have often felt very far from the ideal pliant reader many elocution books required or constructed in their prefatory material. Yet my experiences have had their use in this project. While it is important for scholarly readers not to project their own experiences and underlying assumptions about reading on to eighteenth-century texts and subjects, the differences between how I accessed these books and how they were intended to be accessed has made me all the more sensitive to the wider issues explored by elocution manuals. These are not just books about the practical application of elocutionary theory: they also grapple with issues surrounding performance, identity, class, authority, and the cost and value of reading literature in English. The original writers, editors and compilers of elocution books could not have foreseen the new methods of reading available to future readers due to changes in the expectations and conventions surrounding reading, and advancements in digital technology. It is these changes which make this thesis. My analysis or readings may be contrary in method and delivery to the kinds of reading elocution books advocated, but written readings can — in a different way — prove eloquent.

Representing Elocution

My research has been shaped by heavily controlled reading environments designed to be conducive to research, maintained by a mixture of shushing library staff and the presence

of other readers. Similarly, eighteenth-century readers' experiences of elocution books were also shaped by exterior expectations surrounding elocution and oratorical performance. These expectations were born out of an environment where the exercising of eloquence was a contested activity. Elocution manuals were not written, edited and compiled in a literary landscape wholly sympathetic to their endeavours. These were books constantly wrestling with arguments both for and against the value of elocution and elocutionary teaching. They worked hard to convince their buyers and readers of their utility, drawing on a variety of very specific social values attached to certain forms of reading to market themselves as indispensable instructional tools. They had to do this despite the preference of elocutionary theory for the spoken over the written. It is this paradoxical wrangling between writing and speaking which makes them so compelling. Such thinking can seem alien to us in the present day. For researchers, the written word can be rewarding, even if conference papers and publications do not always tend to our more immediate pecuniary concerns. Yet it is important to understand the conditions which produced elocution books, and the expectations surrounding vocal performance in the period. Doing so allows us to see the broader concerns which elocution manuals addressed, moving beyond practical reading methods. Reading's value was highly dependent on who was reading, their manner of doing it, and what was being read.

The contested nature of speech-delivery is clearly seen in historical representations of people exercising their skills in eloquence and oratory from the period. Consider Thomas Rowlandson's parallel cartoons representing two different kinds of orator (Figure 1, below).



Figure 1: Thomas Rowlandson, 'An Essay on the Sublime & Beautiful / The Maiden Speech' (1785).
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

The two images are companions etched on the same plate and printed on one sheet.[4] The left shows a man declaiming to a startled congregation-like audience as though from a pulpit. The man points with his right hand over a stand holding up a large open book, ostensibly on the subject indicated by the title — 'the Sublime & Beautiful'. Presumably he has read Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Burke was himself a celebrated orator, and the image draws on this association through its title.[5] The man, the image implies, uses ideas of the sublime and

[4] Thomas Rowlandson, 'An Essay on the Sublime & Beautiful / The Maiden Speech', hand-coloured etching, 222 x 345 mm (London: Published by T. Cornell Bruton Street, 1785). British Museum, London: BMSat 6863 / BMSat 6864, respectively.
[5] Ian Harris, 'Publishing Parliamentary Oratory: The Case of Edmund Burke', in *Parliamentary History,* 26:1 (2007): 112-130.

beautiful to inform his delivery. He is recognisable as a cobbler due to the shoe poking out of his coat pocket, sole up. The man's occupation may have been chosen to pun on the idea of the preaching cobbler saving *souls* rather than *soles*. In this way, the image pokes fun at the idea of the everyday tradesman conducting himself as though he has knowledge of concerns loftier than the bottom of shoes. The cobbler appears confident in his understanding: his left hand is raised into the air in an impassioned fist, his legs planted wide. The image on the right offers a stark contrast to its companion. It shows an aged politician giving an ineffectual maiden speech in the gallery at the House of Commons. The politician's audience looks on his performance with a mixture of amusement, contempt and boredom. In the House there was room for rudeness when listening to speakers — particularly new ones.[6] The politician's stance suggests a cautious, halting speech, contrasting with the conviction of the cobbler. The speakers' poses are actually quite similar: the politician's right hand is also raised to point, but his index finger is not fully extended. Similarly, the left hand is also curled into a fist, albeit a weak one, the arm kept close to the body.

Read together, the two images raise questions about the nature of oratory. Of the two men, the cobbler seems to be the more successful speech-maker. He takes up more space in the composition of his print, forcefully occupying the performance space in a way which his political counterpart does not. That said, the visual reminder of his occupation — the shoe — reminds us that there is something inappropriate about a cobbler preaching to an audience. He lacks the finery and refinement of the politician with the red coat, wig and sword; the cobbler is unkempt and wigless, his blue cravat wrapped roughly round his

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[6] Jerome B. Landfield, 'Sheridan's Maiden Speech: Indictment by Anecdote', in *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 43 (1957): 137–142 (p. 127).

neck. His dress and the exaggerated orator's pose suggest a degree of fervour that verges on enthusiasm — that is, bordering on 'an excess of religious zeal'.[7] Proper speech — polite, befitting the speaker — has failed to be achieved in both images, but for different reasons. The cobbler, it is implied, overreaches, acting as though he has the authority to speak on the sublime. The politician, in contrast, fails to deliver the authoritative maiden speech his audience expects.

The satire is predicated on expectations surrounding the occupation and identity of orators: they should be wealthy, upper class men — Members of Parliament rather than tradesmen. The contrasts drawn between the two figures raise questions about many of the broader issues surrounding performance, class and identity played out by elocution manuals. How can it be that a cobbler delivers more effective and affecting speeches than a Member of Parliament? Does this mean that oratory is a gift which can be given to anyone, regardless of class? Or is it a matter of education and self-improvement, which the cobbler has undertaken but the politician — to his shame — has not? Who should have the power to address an audience? And what should they be saying?

These questions were addressed in contemporary print, and can be seen in Oliver Goldsmith's review of John Ward's *A System of Oratory* (1759).[8] Ward's *System* was originally a series of lectures on elocution delivered at Gresham College, where he was Professor of Rhetoric from 1720.[9] In his review, Goldsmith actually spends very little time outlining Ward's theories. Instead, the majority of the text is spent offering his own discussion of the importance of contemporary oratory. Goldsmith writes, 'we all would be orators: we

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[7] See Jon Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), especially pp. 1-18 (p. 9).
[8] John Ward, *A System of Oratory, delivered in a course of lectures publicly read at Gresham College,* 2 vols. (London: 1759).
[9] Anita McConnell, 'Ward, John (1678/9-1757)', in *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2008). Web.

live in an age of orators: our very tradesmen are orators.'[10] Even in this short line there is evidence of the tensions which are played out repeatedly in elocution manuals and the Rowlandson cartoon. Everyone, it seems, is an orator these days. Goldsmith's tone suggests that this is not desirable, mocking those in professions or trades who aspire to improve their oratorical skills. Oratorical performance, the review suggests, is not appropriate for everyone. There is a difference, after all, between what 'we would be' and what we 'are'. How could a 'tradesman' simultaneously be an 'orator'?

Presentations of aspirational forms of speaking are often accompanied with judgements about who should have the power of performance. The manuscript letters of Jemima Yorke, Marchioness Grey, for example, include one addressed to her sister, in which she describes 'the last new Wildness & Impropriety of these Odd times, The Oratorical Meeting for Ladies only.'[11] The letter records her husband Philip Yorke's description of hearing 'Three Female Orators on a question relating to the Abilities of Women to Govern' in March 1780. Grey passes on Yorke's surprise at the whole spectacle. While 'The Speakers were well dressed Decent looking Women', Yorke found the scene 'New & Extraordinary'. The initial mention of the comparatively respectable appearance of the women is contrasted with Yorke's further description of how unusual he found the event. Grey's letter appears to retain some of Yorke's struggle to clearly articulate his reaction to witnessing the women's speeches: they are '— One may add Improper and Hurtfull'. The long dash in the manuscript, coupled with the phrase 'One may add', suggests a level of uncertainty over how to react, taking the time to pause to consider it. The

[10] Oliver Goldsmith, *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966): I.168.
[11] Jemima Yorke, Marchioness Grey, [Letter, dated 'Wednesday Night, March 1780'], Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service, L30/11/122.237. The letter's pages are unnumbered.

addition, when it does come, however, is unequivocal in its condemnation of the women displaying their debating and speaking skills: 'The very Idea of Womens Speaking in Public, could it be managed without other Improprieties, is in itself so void of all Decorum & Modesty'. The 'very Idea' of female public speech is distasteful to Yorke. The 'other Improprieties' which Yorke is sceptical of being successfully eradicated are unspecified. Research on debating societies in London in 1780 suggests that Yorke may have objected to their reputation for disorder and drunkenness, even though by the 1780s debating societies were attempting to present themselves as respectable, alcohol-free establishments, where tea and coffee was served to mixed-gender company in genteel rooms.[12] The success of this, however, was limited: in February 1780, just a month before Grey's letter, the *Morning Chronicle* reported that more than a thousand people had attended an unruly debate at The School of Eloquence at Carlisle House.[13] Contemporary reports of debates of this kind are filled with anecdotes of their disruption, such as the 'disturbing of the Entertainment' undertaken by a 'Mr. B.', who frightened 'two or three ladies' with his behaviour before he eventually 'submitted quietly to be carried out of the Room under the Arm of a Gentleman who took him up like a Monkey'.[14] The chaos of these events was so often reported in newspapers that The School of Eloquence was even the subject of an early Rowlandson cartoon from the same year.[15] Despite the attempts of debating societies to maintain respectability, it was female oratory itself to which Yorke objected. Implicitly,

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[12] See Donna T. Andrew, 'Popular Culture and Public Debate: London 1780', *The Historic Journal,* 39:2 (June 1996): 405–23.

[13] *The Morning Chronicle*, 25th February 1780.

[14] For more examples of the assortment of interruptions speakers faced, see Donna T. Andrew (ed.), *London Debating Societies*, *1776-1799* (London: London Record Society, 1994), pp. 64-124. The example offered here is a report of a meeting at Carlisle House, 19th February 1780, as found in the *St James Chronicle*. Taken from Andrew (ed.), *London Debating Societies*, number 405.

[15] See Thomas Rowlandson, 'The School of Eloquence (The Grand Debating Society)' in Kate Heard, *High Spirits: The Comic Art of Thomas Rowlandson* (London: Royal Collection, 2013), pp. 52-53.

by passing on this lengthy account in her letter, Grey agrees with her husband's sentiments: female oratory is a sign of these 'Odd', modern times. Female participation in oratory, while permitted publicly, was still subject to reproach.

All of these representations of public speaking show the varying expectations surrounding oratory, and the censure to which certain forms of oratory were subject. Participation in oratorical acts was not automatically deemed praiseworthy, and could often attract hostile criticism. Readers and speakers were therefore participating in heavily controlled activities, where every action was potentially subject to denunciation. Yet there was something about public speaking in this way which still attracted spectators, as both the Rowlandson cartoons and Grey's letter attest: tellingly, Grey discloses to her sister while describing these events that 'M^{r} Yorke has been at them all.' It was, for some, gripping to witness speakers — good and bad — and to judge their performances. The range of people participating in elocutionary events, displaying their speaking and performance skills, was fairly broad: gentlemen, respectable women, tradesmen and other people from across society could participate in the forms of public speaking which elocution manuals sought to cultivate in their readers.

It was in this context which the market for elocution manuals existed, targeted at those with an interest in participating in oratorical activities, and engaging in discussions about what those activities should look like. These examples illustrate the range of debates in which one could participate: What was oratory for? Who could be an orator? Who stood to benefit from delivering or listening to oratory? What even *was* oratory? That in itself was debatable. For Goldsmith, in his review of Ward, 'Oratory is nothing more, than the being able to imprint on others, with rapidity and force, the sentiments of which we are possessed

ourselves.'[16] Oratory, for Goldsmith, blends into the elocutionary; the 'sentiments' or ideas expressed do not necessarily have to be political. Yet this emphasis on self-expression does not account for oratory as a form of delivery of others' writings. What happens when we are reading the sentiments of others, when our spoken performance is based on a pre-existing text? This is the kind of performance advocated by the very existence of elocution manuals.

Further to this, considering all this evidence alongside elocution books brings to our attention wider discussions about who gets to speak, who they should be speaking to and their manner of speaking. Elocution books asked broader questions about identity, performance, and social mobility — that is, movement across the categories of social class. If identity is constructed by both speakers and listeners, and one can occupy *multiple* positions, swapping between them at different points in time, what does that say about the nature of social hierarchy? Should people openly aspire to be orators, if bound up in the aspiration is also the desire to change their social status? If oratory is both a skill which can be learnt, and an indicator of class, then does oratory destabilise the very notion of a fixed hierarchy? Consequently, is oratory something which *should* be taught by books, if it even can? Where did elocution books position themselves in all these debates surrounding the performance of the self and one's position in relation to others?

My study seeks to address these interconnected questions. It provides the first full-length analysis of eighteenth-century elocution manuals as texts worthy of study in their own right. It explores how elocution manuals attempted to shape contemporary reading practices, but also how they were shaped *by* them. Consequently, this study pays particular

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[16] Goldsmith, *Collected Works*: I.168.

attention to social reading practices, and their influence on the practice of reading aloud. It examines a broad range of evidence outside of the tenets of elocutionary theory, considering the impact of a range of cultural institutions on elocution books, such as universities, schools, Parliament, the theatre and the Church. Elocution books caused their readers to think about many issues beyond reading methods; modern researchers should pay these subjects equal attention.

Evidence of Elocution and Methodology

Elocution manuals from the period 1750-1800 constitute my primary form of evidence. Yet these books can only tell us so much. The contemporary representations and accounts of oratory discussed in the last section allow us to reflect on the nature of the evidence that elocution manuals can provide. Such books, being instructional works, present ideals rather than representations of how reading performances were actually conducted day-to-day. Other forms of evidence are necessary to inform this project, providing context and useful points of comparison for my readings of elocution manuals. Considering a broader range of material in this way provides a more rounded idea of how oratory was debated in the period. My project therefore uses evidence outside of elocutionary texts. As well as accounts of elocutionary performances, like Yorke's descriptions recorded by his wife, or general theoretical discussions on the nature of oratory like Goldsmith's, I draw upon literary representations of oratorical activities found in plays, poems and prose. These representations are often satirical, but can also be sincere. Satirical representations of oratory, both textual and visual, like Rowlandson's cartoons, can also provide evidence of contested forms of oratory, where contemporary debates regarding public reading and

speaking are played out for humorous effect. All this material is close-read alongside each sub-genre of elocution book in its relevant contexts, allowing further assessment and interpretation of these instructional works.

When considering the nature of the evidence discussed, it is also important to think of the forms in which that evidence is accessible to modern researchers, and the methods of reading and interpretation which these forms make possible. Where feasible throughout the duration of this project, due attention has been paid to consulting original physical copies of evidence, which have features which can be lost in the process of digitisation. Digital photographs or scans are provided where it aids the reader's comprehension of the evidence being discussed. Where relevant, notice has been paid to features such as the size of the book, the orientation of individual pages (landscape or portrait), the weight of the whole object, the quality of the paper or other materials used to make it, marginalia, the conventions of printing and other parts of book manufacture, and the inclusion or insertion of illustrations and advertisements. All of these features are key in understanding the link between orality and book history, as choices regarding print size and book format were made to increase a text's suitability for performance.[17] These features communicate to modern readers the differences that eighteenth-century ones would have been able to see and feel between a large and expensive folio, such as a first edition copy of Thomas Sheridan's *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* (1762), and a tiny duodecimo book such as *The Thespian Oracle* (1791).[18]

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[17] Abigail Williams, *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), p. 3.

[18] See Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution: together with two dissertations on language and some other tracts relative to those subjects* (London: printed by W. Strahan, for A. Millar *et al.*, 1762). Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet. A5 d.433; and [Unknown], *The Thespian Oracle; Or, A New Key to Theatrical Amusements* (London: Printed for J. Barker, 1791). British Library, London: RB.23.a.8235.

Of course, digital resources also make new forms of interpretation possible. They have made material accessible to me with none of the costs of travel associated with archive visits and have made it possible to consult works online before requesting to see physical copies, saving time. As well as this, digital resources such as *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (ECCO), the *Digital Miscellanies Index* (DMI) and the *Reading Experience Database* (RED) make texts searchable, allowing comparisons across texts to be made comparatively quickly. Such resources have facilitated the identification of potential sources for elocutionary material taken from other books and have helped identify books which appear to have a common source. Because elocution manuals are compiled from other texts, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to identify the sources of much of the material included in their pages. Most of the texts are not unique to elocution books, but also had past lives in plays, newspapers, other books (such as jestbooks), as well as lives as oral performances. Search facilities make this tracing increasingly possible. Of course, these search capabilities are reliant on erratic digital transcriptions of microfilm using Optical Character Recognition software, and consequently are often affected by typographical errors, warped type, difficulties with the long 's' and ligatures, or texts which are limited by being too tightly bound to be fully opened when scanned.[19] Yet these digitally remediated texts have been sufficient to find a large volume of material related to specific words and phrases including 'elocution', 'oratory', 'extracts', 'spouting' and 'spouters', and tracing the reprinting of specific phrases. Fortunately these terms had standardised spellings in the

[19] See Patrick Spedding, '"The New Machine": Discovering the Limits of *ECCO*', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 44:4 (2011): 437-53.

period covered by this topic; other researchers face more complex terms to trace.[20] The term 'reading' often brought up records related to the Berkshire market town ('Reading'), but using Boolean operators such as quotation marks for specific phrases ('"reading aloud"') easily refined the search results.

So what kinds of analysis are made possible through this combination of consulting the physical text and making use of digital technology? One key method of literary analysis offered by this thesis is that advocated by Vicki Tolar Collins: 'rhetorical accretion'.[21] The expression refers to the process of accumulation of other texts over and around the originals. This process of accretion is a way 'of controlling a text', with each addition causing the original speaker of the core text to be 'respoken'. This 'respeaking' can be a way 'for the production authority to modify the ethos of the original speaker' or call it into question.[22] In the case of elocution manuals this includes processes such as quotation, extraction, compilation, and the addition of prefatory material. However, Collins's definition of rhetorical accretion does not include processes which might be termed 'rhetorical *erosion*' — that is, where material is taken away rather than added. Of course, the addition of material is always easier to observe than its absence, but searchable digitised texts make such observation possible by allowing the researcher to look at multiple versions of a text alongside one another. It is not always possible to identify antecedent texts even with this method, and nor is this necessarily the aim of such research. Rather, one can make comparisons between earlier forms of a text presented for the use of

[20] Spedding notes the difficulties of finding references to condoms using *ECCO*, given its variant spellings and the tendency to refer to condoms euphemistically as 'armour' or 'machines', or else censor the word entirely using dashes. See Spedding, '"The New Machine"', pp. 441-43.
[21] See Vicki Tolar Collins, 'The Speaker Respoken: Material Rhetoric as Feminist Methodology', in *College English,* 61:5 (1999): 545–73. For an application of this method, see Katie Homar, 'Rhetorical Accretion and Rhetorical Criticism in William Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate*' in *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*, 20:3 (2017): 285-301.
[22] Collins, 'The Speaker Respoken', p. 548.

elocutionary instruction, and see how it has been altered to fit this new purpose. Consequently, in this thesis I do not seek to privilege 'firstness'; I identify and analyse what is particular to experiencing literary material in the contexts of elocution manuals. Elocution manuals are just one part of the reception history of spoken events which found afterlives in print.

As well as considering what surrounding contexts can tell us about elocution books, it is worth considering what elocution books can tell us about the society in which they were produced. Scholars should be attuned to the potential complications we may encounter when reading texts which claim to be records of oratorical events. Conversely, we should always remember the potential of the printed text to prompt future oratorical events. The phrase 'oratorical event' is used to designate an occasion where a speaker (or possibly multiple speakers) delivers some kind of speech, designed to display their elocutionary skills. Printed elocutionary texts, I argue, tested the relationship between the original spoken events they claim to record and the new speaking performances they desired to prompt. Through elocution books we also gain insights into the way the book was conceptualised in the processes of recording spoken performance and stimulating it. In prompting these questions and engaging in debates attempting to offer their answers, elocution manuals are central to understanding ideas surrounding speech and performance in the period.

Identifying Elocution Manuals

What is an elocution manual? As noted, the term 'elocution manual' is itself a retrospective one, not being in use at the time or occurring in any of the texts examined in this thesis.

Yet for the purposes of this study it is useful for identifying instructional texts designed to aid text-based performance in front of an audience. Broadly, elocution manuals are designed to assist reading aloud and speaking performance by providing their users with texts to read, and methods of reading and performing them. The materials they provide and the methods they propose vary from text to text. This definition therefore excludes extempore orations that do not rely on a pre-existing text which is either read or recited. Instead, the term 'elocution manual' is useful as it gives a common name to texts which have a similar professed intended use, even as they are designed in a variety of ways to facilitate that use. Elocution manuals provide a focal point where print and orality co-exist.

Eighteenth-century elocution manuals preserved a variety of forms of spoken performance. Often these records are linked to occasional literature - spoken performances delivered by identified individuals in a specific time and place. For example, spouting collections such as *The Spouter's Companion; or, Theatrical Remembrancer* (1778) often identify actors like Samuel Foote and David Garrick speaking the prologues and epilogues within their pages.[23] Other kinds of elocutionary text retain traces of their origins as verbal performances in elocution books. Speeches by famous politicians such as Charles James Fox or Richard Brinsley Sheridan can be found in John Mossop's *Elegant Orations, Ancient and Modern* (1788).[24] Implicitly and explicitly, elocution manuals claimed that these examples of modern English oratory were celebrated events worthy of preservation. This included cases where the pieces were originally printed as throwaway items, such as the

[23] See [Unknown], *The Spouter's Companion; or, Theatrical Remembrancer. Containing a select collection of the most esteemed prologues and epilogues* (London: Printed for J. Cooke, 1778). For example, the book contains a prologue to a play called *The Author*, 'Written and spoken by Mr. Foote' (p. 17); and the Prologue to *Barbarossa*, 'Written by Mr Garrick, And Spoken by him in the Character of a Country Boy' (p. 19).
[24] John Mossop, *Elegant Orations, Ancient and Modern, for the use of schools; originally compiled for the instruction of his own pupils; by the Rev. J. Mossop, A. M.* (London: Printed for G. Kearsley, No. 46 Fleet-Street, 1788).

prologues and epilogues designed to be delivered alongside the first performance of a play, or parliamentary speeches printed in newspapers like the *London Magazine*.[25] This phenomenon raises questions about what is seen as 'ephemeral', and how texts might attempt to capture that quality of evanescence inherent to oral performance.

As well as looking backwards to past oratorical performances, these books looked forwards towards the future oratorical events they could potentially facilitate. The kinds of performance they are designed to prompt vary. Like John Walker's *Elements of Elocution* (1781), they might instruct the user to read aloud, the book 'held in the left hand'.[26] Alternatively, they might instruct readers of the book to commit passages to memory for later recitation. For example, Walker's later collection, *The Academic Speaker* (1791), suggests that the speeches found in the book are 'most proper for pronouncing by heart'; even elocutionary theorists offered different approaches depending on the intended audience and use of the elocution book.[27] This second method of learning by heart encourages the reader to place the book aside after a period of practice, creating the illusion of spontaneous speech. Instructional information of this kind is almost exclusively found in the prefatory material to elocution books, as it is in William Enfield's *The Speaker* (1774), although there are occasionally exceptions, such as in the anonymously-compiled *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method of Reading and Reciting English Poetry* (1796), where extra annotation and editorial comments in italics are attached to each chosen text to aid with performance.[28]

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[25] For more on the ephemeral nature of prologues and epilogues, see Diana Solomon, *Prologues and Epilogues of Restoration Theater: Gender and Comedy, Performance and Print* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2013); and for more on the publication of parliamentary speeches in the period see Nikki Hessell, *Literary Authors, Parliamentary Reporters: Johnson, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Dickens* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012).

[26] John Walker, *Elements of Elocution. Being the Substance of a Course of Lectures on the Art of Reading.* 2 vols. (London: printed for the author; and sold by T. Cadell; T. Becket; G. Robinson; and J. Dodsley, 1781): II.267.

[27] John Walker, *The Academic Speaker; or, a Selection of Parliamentary Debates, Orations, Odes, Scenes, and Speeches, from the Best Writers* (Dublin: Printed for Messrs, Burnett, Byrne, Wogan, Rice, Moore, J. Jones, and W. Porter, 1796), p. xiii.

[28] William Enfield, *The Speaker: or, Miscellaneous Pieces, Selected from the Best English Writers, with a view to facilitate the Improvement of Youth in Reading and Speaking* (London: Printed for John Johnson, [1774]); [Unknown], *Sheridan's and*

Elocution books therefore looked simultaneously backwards and forwards: back to the oratorical event upon which the text claimed to be based, and forward to the oratorical events they hoped to instruct. These books acted to test the relationships between a spoken event, its printed afterlife, and future renditions of the event based on that print afterlife.

The need to provide material useful for practicing oratory influenced the kinds of texts generally included in elocution manuals. The most common form of text found in these books was the single speech. Material was generally edited to suit this form: for example, Richard Turner's *The Young Orator* (1783) is divided up into 'Easy Lessons for the Exercise of The Young Orator', where each lesson is made up of an extract suitable for a short speech.[29] The sources of the extracts vary: there are excerpts from Alexander Pope's translation of Homer's *Iliad* (Lesson II) and from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Lesson IV).[30] The extract from *Hamlet* is the 'Soliloquy on Death', the title given to it in *The Young Orator*. Both extracts are taken from substantially larger works, chosen based on their focus on a single theme ('death') or event ('The parting of Hector and Andromache'). Both extracts are presented as though they were single coherent speeches which are whole in themselves, without any further context, although their titles do gesture towards their original surrounding works. The texts are in some sense mounted or displayed in these books, presented as single artistic units divorced from their places in wider works. The editors of elocution books therefore had a curatorial function: they chose texts appropriate for display and framed them accordingly.[31]

Henderson's Practical Method of Reading and Reciting English Poetry, Elucidated by a Variety of Examples taken from some of our most Popular Poets. (London: Printed for E. Newbery, the Corner of St Paul's Church Yard: and J. Scatchard, Ave Maria Lane, 1796).

[29] Richard Turner, *The Young Orator* (London: printed by R. Hindmarsh, No. 32, Clerkenwell-Close, [1783]).

[30] Turner, *The Young Orator*, pp. 11-16 and 18-19, respectively.

[31] For more discussion on this culture of 'recycling' in miscellanies, see Vivien Jones, 'Mary Wollstonecraft and the literature of advice and instruction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia L. Johnson

But because these books were designed to teach 'compulsory fluency' in a culture which prized conversation, elocution books also included other kinds of material which aided the acquisition of the 'verbal facility necessary to participate in public life'.[32] Such material comprised of shorter forms displaying verbal virtuosity: jests, jokes, epigrams, anecdotes and toasts. Spouting collections such as the anonymously-compiled *The Complete London Jester* (1777), for example, included pages of little witty anecdotes which could be learnt and reeled off at an appropriate moment. For example, one wit, 'being at a Sermon, when a dry empty Fellow preach'd most of his Auditors out of the Church, said *he made a very* moving *Sermon.*'[33] This one-liner need not be learnt word-for-word: as the introductory material to the book makes clear, one should not 'be not too close a Copyist of the Story he hears, but rather tell it in his own Way'.[34] Verbal performances should leave room for individual touches. Books like *The Complete London Jester* also included lists of jokes. To return to cobblers:

> Why is a Cobler's stall like Hell?
> *Because there are* bad soles *in it.*[35]

These forms of joke-telling required the appearance of an easy extemporaneity — one which elocution manuals such as this claimed to help one to practise. The writing down of texts designed for use in conversation tested the relationship between ephemeral speech and canonical text by granting casual speech comparative permanence. These books juggled

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(Cambridge: CUP, 2002), pp. 119-140 (especially pp. 129-139); and Abigail Williams and Jennifer Batt (eds.), *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 41:1 (2017). This collection of articles repeatedly refers to the curational function of miscellanies more generally.

[32] The phrase 'compulsory fluency' is borrowed from Jared S. Richman, 'The Other King's Speech: Elocution and the Politics of Disability in Georgian Britain', in *The Eighteenth Century*, 59:3 (2018): 279–304 (see especially p. 282).

[33] [Unknown], *The Complete London Jester, or, Wit's Companion* (London: Printed for T. Lowndes, 1777), p. 100. This is the seventh edition.

[34] *The Complete London Jester*, p. 5.

[35] *The Complete London Jester*, p. 139.

their professed instructional purpose with their entertainment value, as jokes and anecdotes (often ruder than the examples given here) found space next to grand speeches.[36] Shorter texts such as these, whether extracts forming single speeches, or epigrammatic snippets for conversational use, were all chosen and adapted for their suitability for use in oratorical events taking place in company.

Scholarly Contexts

This project is indebted to a large body of interconnected scholarship relating to the social and cultural contexts of reading and performance in the eighteenth century. Such scholarship encompasses a wide variety of topics, including sociability and the politics of politeness in the period, the history of the elocution movement, the history of theatre and the understanding of theatricality in the period, theories on the relationship between print and orality, the history of reading and the history of the book, and scholarship on instructional works. All this work provides important contexts for thinking about elocution manuals. At its widest, this project seeks to complicate histories and scholarly narratives which privilege the printed text: such works tend to forget the existence of these texts as speech acts or oratorical events.

[36] For further examples of eighteenth-century jokes, see Simon Dickie, *Cruelty and Laughter: Forgotten Comic Literature and the Unsentimental Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Sociability, Sensibility and Politeness

Scholarship on eighteenth-century sociability and politeness provides an essential context for understanding elocution manuals. The discourse of polite social engagement and social aspiration begins to explain some of the underlying needs driving elocutionary teaching: the appeal it had for readers, and why they desired to improve their manners and speech. This relates to elocution manuals' wider concerns surrounding the performance of identity and aspirational modes of behaviour. When considering ideas connected to ideal forms of politeness, it is necessary to remember that it is impossible to formulate politeness without considering its reverse: rudeness.

There has been much influential work in the past few of decades on sociability and politeness.[37] Paul Goring's *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (2005) is perhaps the most significant work on this subject in relation to this thesis.[38] Goring considers the performance of feeling in the eighteenth century; he draws attention to the body as a major tool for the representation and the performance of politeness. His study considers the elocution movement and its associated publications, particularly the tenets of elocution as put forward by the elocutionist Thomas Sheridan. Significantly for this project, Goring's work reminds scholars that practices such as oratory are ephemeral, 'only knowable as mediated through the meta-texts produced around them'.[39] Scholars such as Lawrence Klein and Paul Langford also explore the nature of 'politeness' and its impact on

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[37] For example, see John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1997); and Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite (eds.), *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770-1840* (New York: CUP, 2002).
[38] Paul Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).
[39] Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility*, p. 13.

eighteenth-century people. Klein argues that politeness, as 'a dominant paradigm', helped shape cultural institutions in the period, and was accessible to a wider range of people beyond the elite.[40] Langford considers how politeness initially governed relations among the privileged few, but then spread to inform the interactions between many people.[41] Considering social interactions more broadly, Jon Mee's work examines eighteenth-century associational culture and its impact on constructing conviviality in the period.[42]

Politeness cannot always be successfully divorced from rudeness, and the construction of elocution books reiterates this. Recent work has been done to remind scholars that there could not be one without the other. Many studies on politeness mention the difficulties in maintaining politeness, particularly where the human body is involved.[43] Simon Dickie's *Cruelty and Laughter* (2011), for example, analyses crude literature as found in chapbooks and jestbooks. The study reminds us of the 'gulf between precept and practice', providing a useful counterpoint to studies focusing exclusively on politeness.[44]

Elocution books demonstrate that there was a difficulty in maintaining ideal forms of politeness in instructional works — and sometimes no desire to. There has previously been a tendency to privilege ideal forms of politeness without adequately acknowledging that the conditions of participation in polite society — particularly that among equals — required not only a fluency in politeness, but also in forms of wit which could on occasion be considered impolite or outright rude. Elocution books glamorised forms of vulgarity

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[40] Lawrence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), p. 9.
[41] Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
[42] See Jon Mee, *Print, Publicity and Radicalism in the 1790s: The Laurel of Liberty* (Cambridge: CUP, 2016); and Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: OUP, 2011).
[43] For example, Paul Goring writes of the 'organic potential for impoliteness' in 'Anglicanism, Enthusiasm and Quixotism: Preaching and Politeness in Mid-Eighteenth Century Literature', in *Literature & Theology: An International Journal of Theory, Criticism and Culture*, 15:4 (2001): 326-41 (p. 327).
[44] Dickie, *Cruelty and Laughter*, p. 6.

which function as entertainment, particularly in collections such as *The London Jester,* which contained explicit references to sex and bodily functions. The entertainment function of elocution manuals should not be ignored in favour of their instructional one. When thinking about these books, we should be attuned to the difference between the precepts of politeness put forward in their prefatory material, and the witty (and rude) material contained in their main body. Elocution manuals could not help but gesture to the cultural context which made them possible: one which valued conversational exchange in both its polite and impolite forms.

The Elocution Movement and the History of Rhetoric

It is impossible to talk about elocution manuals without discussing the very specific intellectual context which produced the elocutionary theories upon which they are based. The elocution movement of the later eighteenth century sought to advocate the teaching of elocution in English in schools, paying attention to the manner of speech-delivery, which included one's use of tone and gestures. Historians of the movement, such as Wilbur Samuel Howell, have considered the movement in relation to its precedents in classical oratory. Howell offers extensive study of the theories of the main proponents of the elocution movement, such as Thomas Sheridan and John Walker. His work is primarily interested in these printed texts and their classical intellectual sources.[45] This thesis supplements Howell's work, considering the importance of contemporary social reading practices in influencing the principles of elocutionary theory. Such thinking is not exclusive

[45] See Wilbur Samuel Howell, 'Sources of the elocutionary movement in England: 1700–1748', in *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 45:1 (1959): 1-18.

to my work here: Jacqueline George has written on the practice of reading aloud in the eighteenth century in relation to some of the tenets of elocutionary theory, moving her work beyond Sheridan and Walker's theories to consider how reading aloud is represented elsewhere in fiction.[46] As well as this, M. Wade Mahon and Michael Shortland have both written analyses of Sheridan and Walker's theories in relation to acting theory and the role of the body in performance, respectively.[47]

Uniquely, this thesis considers the role of elocutionary theory in shaping the form of elocution manuals, staking a claim for elocution manuals and other texts stemming from the elocution movement as objects worthy of extended scholarly attention. It resituates the elocutionary movement within the print culture of its own time and acknowledges the importance of contemporary reading practices in the formulation of elocutionary theory. Moving beyond establishing the tenets of elocutionary theory, this project considers how these theories have been exercised in instruction manuals dedicated to elocutionary practice, drawing on wider assorted contexts to understand how elocution books attempt to shape their users' reading performances. Doing so allows for a reconsideration of the impact of the elocution movement on contemporary literature and attitudes towards print and performance. The impact of the movement was wider than has been previously acknowledged; elocution manuals in their assorted sub-genres operated as alternative iterations of elocutionary theory.

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[46] See Jacqueline George, 'Public Reading and Lyric Pleasure: Eighteenth Century Elocutionary Debates and Poetic Practices', *ELH*, 76:2 (2009): 371-397.

[47] See M. Wade Mahon, 'The Rhetorical Value of Reading Aloud in Thomas Sheridan's Theory of Elocution', in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 31:4 (2001): 67-88; and Michael Shortland, 'Moving Speeches: Language and Elocution in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *History of European Ideas,* 8 (1987): 639-653.

Theatre and Theatricality

As well as being concerned with the theories of reading performance advocated by those invested in the elocution movement, this thesis is concerned with the culture of performance more generally. In recent years there have been numerous works on the eighteenth-century theatre and related topics, including the history of theatrical practices, the nature of theatrical celebrity, and the history of literature and printed works surrounding the theatre including printed plays and ephemera.[48] Such work increasingly focuses on the occasion of theatrical performance, its materiality, the communities of practitioners who made performances possible, and their eighteenth-century audiences.[49] But the relationship between elocution and both the theatre and the quality of 'theatricality' was vexed. The term 'theatricality' is broad: it refers to qualities relating to the theatre, and the practice of acting — two aspects of theatre to which this thesis pays equal attention. Theatricality was an ambivalent property, in part because the concepts of the 'theatre' to which it was attached was so diverse and wide-ranging. David Worrall's work on the different forms of theatre in the period is essential to understanding these contemporary concerns relating to the differences between patent and provincial theatres, and legitimate and illegitimate forms of theatre. Worrall argues that theatricality was not a quality limited to professional actors in playhouses — it was 'a mode of being, a representation of the

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[48] For example, see Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre 1730–1830* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007); on the nature of eighteenth-century celebrity (both inside and outside the theatre) see Emrys D. Jones and Victoria Joule (eds.), *Intimacy and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture: Public Interiors* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2018); and on theatrical ephemera see Gillian Russell, 'Sarah Sophia Banks's Private Theatricals: Ephemera, Sociability, and the Archiving of Fashionable Life', in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction,* 27.3 (2015): 535-55; and James Raven, 'Why Ephemera Were Not Ephemeral: The Effectiveness of Innovative Print in the Eighteenth Century', in *Yearbook of English Studies,* 45 (2015): 56-73.

[49] For an overview of the field, see David F. Taylor, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737-1832*, eds. Julia Swindells and David F. Taylor (Oxford: OUP, 2014), pp. 1-7.

self'.[50] Most pertinently for this thesis, scholars have long been interested in acting theory and contemporary questions related to whether it is necessary for the outer gestures of a person to accord with their inner feelings when acting.[51] This potential for acting to lead to dissimulation and impropriety, especially if practised off the stage, was part of the reason for the negative reaction to it, which has been characterised as 'Romantic anti-theatricality'.[52] This thesis, by considering elocution books from the Romantic period, recognises a more varied response to theatrical culture and its practitioners by including the readers of elocution books within these categories.

All of this scholarship is concerned with how theatrical culture and ideas surrounding the theatre were translated into domestic contexts. Studying elocution manuals adds to this body of work by considering how elocutionary theories were translated for domestic or amateur use in the same period. Elocutionary theories and oratorical acts are performances, and therefore cannot be wholly separated from the theatre and from theories of performance. This is particularly the case given the theatrical careers of actors-turned-elocutionists such as Thomas Sheridan and John Walker. There are already studies on the intersections between elocution and acting theory in relation to Sheridan and Walker's works, discussing the influence of contemporary ideas surrounding theatrical performance on their elocutionary theories.[53] It is important to consider how

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[50] David Worrall, *Theatric Revolution: Drama, Censorship and Romantic Period Subcultures 1773-1832* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p. 2.
[51] See George Taylor, '"The Just Delineation of the Passions": Theories of Acting in the Age of Garrick', in *Essays on the Eighteenth Century Stage*, ed. Kenneth Richards and Peter Thomson (Manchester: University of Manchester, Department of Drama, 1972), pp. 51-72; and more recently, Jacques Bos, 'Individuality and Inwardness in the Literary Character Sketches of the Seventeenth Century', in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 61 (1998): 142-157.
[52] See Teresa Michals, '"Like a Spoiled Actress off the Stage": Anti-Theatricality, Nature, and the Novel', in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 39 (2010): 191-214.
[53] See Conrad Brunström, *Thomas Sheridan's Career and Influence: An Actor in Earnest* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2011); and Tanya Cassidy and Conrad Brunström, 'Playing is a Science: Eighteenth-Century Actors' Manuals and the Proto-Sociology of Emotions', in *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 25:1 (March 2002): 19–31.

elocution books positioned themselves in relation to different aspects of theatricality and theatrical culture; the quality of theatricality is heterogenous and cannot be easily classified as either a positive or negative quality in relation to elocution manuals. Here I take a fresh approach by not assuming that elocutionary theory had an easy or positive relationship with the theatre or theatricality. Rather, readers were expected to navigate a complex set of associations related to the theatre, including the celebrity of contemporary actors and actresses, and associations with illegitimate (and even illegal) forms of theatre. For example, spouting collections sought to tie themselves to legitimate forms of theatre, capitalising on the carefully constructed celebrity of David Garrick, even though spouting as an activity — the reading aloud of dramatic material in pubs and clubs — was often associated with illegitimate forms of acting.[54] Conversely, many elocutionary miscellanies presented extracts from plays by Joseph Addison or Shakespeare without signposts of their previous existences as live performances, creating the illusion that they are 'dialogues' with no association with the theatre whatsoever.[55] Elocution manuals offer a new way of understanding the diverse ways in which eighteenth-century readers were expected to position themselves in relation to the theatre, both defending themselves against possible accusations of theatricality in manner or delivery, and also claiming to teach it. Consequently, this study offers a new insight into the theatrical culture of the period by examining texts which sought to instruct modes of non-professional performance outside of the legitimate theatres.[56]

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[54] For example, see [Unknown], *The Court of Thespis; a collection of the most admired prologues and epilogues* (London: Printed for Richardson and Urquhart, under the Royal Exchange, 1769). This book has a dedication to Garrick.
[55] For example, see Enfield, *The Speaker,* especially pp. 217-236. These sections present extracts from Shakespeare as 'dialogues'.
[56] For more on amateur theatricals and forms of domestic performance in the period, see Sybil Rosenfeld, *Temples of Thespis: Some Private Theatres and Theatricals in England and Wales, 1700–1820* (London: Society for Theatre Research. 1978); for more recent work see David Coates, 'Mapping London's Amateur Theatre Histories', in *The on,*

Print and Oral Performance

As well as being concerned with theatre history, this project is also informed by recent scholarship which addresses larger questions related to the intersections between print and orality. Scholarship in this regard tends to take two forms: general theories regarding literacy and orality, and studies which focus on the subject in relation to a specific historical period. Most influential in the category of general theories on the relationship between print and orality is Walter J. Ong's *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982). The book discusses the differences between orality and literacy, and oral and literate culture.[57] Ong generally characterises the connection between print and orality as a relationship which sees more of one (literacy) leading to less of the other (orality). Orality, according to Ong, is something which remains or is left over: he uses the term 'oral residue' to refer to the habits of thought and expression which refer back to 'pre-literate' practice, which he sees as 'indicating a reluctance or inability to dissociate the written medium from the spoken.'[58] Such phrasing suggests that this separation or 'dissociation' from speech should be the aim of written forms. It also suggests that there has been a linear and teleological transition from more orally-inclined ways of reading to increasingly silent forms. As J. Paul Hunter correctly points out, scholarship emphasising the oral reading

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Methuen Drama Handbook of Theatre History and Historiography, eds. Claire Cochrane and Jo Robinson (London: Methuen Drama, 2019). For work on the notion of 'amateurs' in theatre more broadly, see David Gilbert, Judith Hawley, Helen Nicholson and Libby Worth, 'On Amateurs: An introduction and a manifesto', in *Performance Research*, 25 (2020): 2-9. The rest of this issue of *Performance Research* is dedicated to exploring the 'amateur' in different contexts; most relevant here is Judith Hawley, 'Dilettante Theatricals': 67-72.

[57] Walter J. Ong*, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word, with Additional chapters by John Hartley* (London: Routledge, 1982, reissued 2002).

[58] Walter J. Ong, 'Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style', in *PMLA,* 80:3 (June 1965): 145-154 (p. 146).

practices of the past is often skewed by the assumption that past cultures were always 'more orally orientated' than we are now.[59]

The existence of elocution manuals poses a problem to Ong's orality/literacy model, as they form a point of intersection between speech and text. As historical artefacts, these books offer alternative ways of thinking about the relationships between print and performance that eighteenth-century readers understood, refusing an artificial division between the two. This combination of the written and the oral has been termed 'aurality' by Joyce Coleman.[60] The word refers to the shared hearing of written texts, which gives them a social presence.[61] Such a term, while originally applied to medieval literature, is transferable to elocution books, or indeed any text which is read to an audience. Elocution books in particular function as sites of aurality by fostering practices of reading aloud in ways where readers use their voices to produce versions of the text from print. Writing functions to produce a voice, as well as representing one.[62] Thinking of reading aloud in this way allows us to understand that reading may not be exclusively experienced by the eyes, but also the ears, thus encouraging us to consider the role of an audience when considering readers of any time period.[63] As well as this, Colman argues that medievalists have too quickly accepted Ong's orality/literacy paradigm, which can then result in a failure for scholars to acknowledge the importance of orality in the composition of written texts.[64] Such thinking applies to scholars of the long eighteenth-century too.

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[59] J. Paul Hunter, 'Sleeping Beauties: Are Historical Aesthetics Worth Recovering?', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 34:1 (Fall 2000): 1-20.
[60] See Joyce Coleman, 'Interactive Parchment: The Theory and Practice of Medieval English Aurality', in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 25 (1995): 63-79.
[61] See Joyce Coleman, 'Aurality', in *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (Oxford: OUP, 2015), pp. 68-84.
[62] Jesper Svenbro, 'Archaic and Classical Greece: The Invention of Silent Reading', in *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Oxford: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 37-63 (p. 56).
[63] Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender and Literacy* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), p. 51.
[64] Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), p. xi.

Building on these discussions of the general relationship between the spoken word and the printed text, there is also scholarship on the specificities of how this relationship existed in the early modern period and the long eighteenth century. This body of work is useful in providing both relevant information on the intersections between orality and literacy in the period of the each of the studies, but has also provided examples of how such analysis may be conducted. Adam Fox's *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (2000), for example, considers an earlier period than that discussed here. Fox argues against a 'crude binary' between oral and literate culture, as such a model 'fails to accommodate the reciprocity between the different media' in the setting of his study.[65] Fox examines material such as written records of proverbial wisdom, which were kept to facilitate the composition and delivery of speech events such as lectures or sermons.[66] His account provides a useful model for how print can function as evidence of oral practices. Moving beyond the vocabulary of 'oral' and 'literate' established by Ong, Jennifer Richards's *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance* (2019) considers what she terms the 'vocal' — that is, the voice or speech as it comes from living body.[67] In preferring the adjective 'vocality' to describe this quality, Richards pays attention to the physicality of sound and the 'acoustic context' of the reading of a book.[68] The book, then, is not just a material object when read aloud, but also an embodied experience. Elspeth Jajdelska, in her 2016 monograph *Speech, Print and Decorum in Britain 1600-1750* also considers how the relationship between the printed book and speech might be described, this time in the period leading up to the parameters of this study. Jajdelska's work considers how printed texts perform a variety of

[65] Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 6.
[66] See Chapter 2, 'Proverbial Wisdom', in Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, pp. 112-172.
[67] Jennifer Richards, *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance: A New History of Reading* (Oxford: OUP, 2019).
[68] Richards, *Voices and Books*, p. 16.

performance-adjacent functions, including acting as prompts for future speech acts, reports of past speech acts, or even as proxies for the physical presence of the author or authorial voice.[69]

All of these scholars have set the parameters of their respective enquiries prior to 1750.[70] Paula McDowell, on the other hand, examines the relationship between orality and print throughout the full length of the eighteenth century in her recent monograph *The Invention of the Oral: Print Commerce and Fugitive Voices in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2017). The book provides a genealogical account of how the categories of 'print' and 'the oral' developed over the course of the eighteenth century. McDowell argues that 'the oral' is not a timeless category, but 'a back-formation of print'.[71] By this it is meant that our understanding of what constitutes the oral is by necessity shaped by print, whether textual or visual. Consequently, McDowell looks at a variety of printed and visual sources in her account of how the category of the oral came to be developed, including plays, poems, legal records and cartoons. The book also considers the role of the elocution movement in developing the notion of the 'oral', examining a range of material beyond Sheridan's lectures on elocution, such as satirical plays representing elocutionists. Her analysis also draws attention to the lectures' existence as oral performances prior to the printed works.[72] Even though it does not address elocution manuals at any great length, McDowell's study has been foundational to the methods of this project. The work is a strong reminder that

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[69] Elspeth Jajdelska, *Speech, Print and Decorum in Britain, 1600-1750: Studies in Social Rank and Communication* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[70] Looking to a period *after* the long eighteenth century is Matthew Bevis's *The Art of Eloquence* (2007). The book reconsiders the works of Byron, Dickens, Tennyson and Joyce within the context of nineteenth-century oratorical developments. The work keeps a strict definition of 'oratory' as something both public and political.

[71] Paula McDowell, *The Invention of the Oral: Print Commerce and Fugitive Voices in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 287.

[72] See McDowell, 'How to Speak Well in Public: The Elocution Movement Begins in Earnest', in *The Invention of the Oral*, pp. 162-191.

the relationship between orality and print needs to be adequately historicised. Accounts of the interactions between printed works and spoken discourse are always shaped by the conditions of particular times and places. In the case of this project, my range of material is chosen to enable comparisons to be made regarding different forms of elocution manual, focusing on how oral performances were considered to relate to texts designed to prompt them.

The History of the Book and the History of Reading

This project takes the unique intersection between print and orality offered by elocution manuals to explore how they theorise and play out the relationship between printed texts and oral performances. Considering them in this way contributes to scholarship on the history of the book and the history of reading, and further emphasises how these two areas of study are interlinked. This project requires both areas of scholarship to remain connected due to its concern with how the form of elocution books was determined by contemporary book production.

Scholarship on *l'histoire du livre* originated in France in the 1960s, and was linked to the desire to discover the literary experience of ordinary readers. In scholarship in English, Robert Darnton's 1982 article 'What is the History of Books?' outlined his initial components of the 'communications circuit' — that is, a model for understanding the relationships between the various agents involved in book production: authors, booksellers, publishers, binders and readers (including purchasers, borrowers, clubs and

libraries).[73] In 2007, Darnton revisited the communications circuit, emphasising its interdisciplinary nature, and adding other aspects of the book trade including — but not limited to — piracy and politics.[74] The article considers how books can exist in multiple editions and forms, with Darnton paying particular attention to the roles of paratextuality and intertextuality in working on the perceptions of the reader and shaping the meaning of the book. D. F. McKenzie focuses on how the material sign systems of books, such as their size or punctuation, can alter the meaning of their contents.[75] The history of the book and its material form is inextricably linked to literary history, and as the 2009 edited collection *Producing the Eighteenth-Century Book: Writers and Publishers in England, 1650-1800* makes clear, scholars have been increasingly attuned to the 'intersection of material fact with literary interpretation and value'.[76] Adrian Johns's *The Nature of the Book* (1998) similarly reminds scholars that we should not assume the print form results in the 'fixity' of the text: any appearance of stability is transitive, a matter of interpretation as much as any other attribute given to the book.[77] Elocution books provide further evidence of the impact of the material book on reading practices because the tenets of elocutionary theory upon which they are based, and consequently the methods of reading they instruct their users in, openly discuss the role of the physical book and methods of production in determining reading methods. Variations in the form of elocution books affect their meanings: key factors include the size of the book and the role of typesetters in determining the frequency of punctuation.

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[73] Robert Darnton, 'What is the History of Books?' in *Daedalus*, 111:3 (1982): 65-83.
[74] Robert Darnton, '"What is the History of Books?" Revisited', in *Modern Intellectual History*, 4:3 (2007): 495-508.
[75] D. F. McKenzie, 'The book as an expressive form', in *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 9-30.
[76] J. Paul Hunter, 'Forward', in *Producing the Eighteenth-Century Book: Writers and Publishers in England, 1650-1800*, eds. Laura L. Runge and Pat Rogers (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), pp. 7-8 (p. 8).
[77] Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 19.

As well as the conditions of book-manufacture, we should consider other elements forming the material conditions surrounding elocution books, including the shape of common or expected reading events, and the communities of readers and listeners who participated in them. This is a key concern for the scholar of elocution manuals, as it allows us to consider the history of reading practices in the period. Abigail Williams's *The Social Life of Books* (2018) stresses the importance of social behaviours (particularly social aspirations) in shaping reading practices.[78] Williams considers the intersections between orality and the history of the book '[by] considering the life of books read out loud'.[79] My thesis aims to contribute to this endeavour by offering an extended reading of elocution manuals across an assortment of sub-genres and different reading situations, including formal lectures, amateur performances of literature and drama, political speeches and religious forms of reading. Of course, the examination of this intersection is not a straightforward process: as Stephen Colclough puts it, '[n]o source simply offers an unmediated insight into reading practices'.[80] Elocution books, however, do offer a more direct insight into *ideal* reading practices than other sources reporting the nature of reading. When coupled with this other evidence, we are provided with more information about how reading may have been conceptualised by instructors on the subject, and the possible forms of reading which were actively encouraged in instruction manuals.

There is related scholarship on other forms of instructional work in the period, which also informs the approaches used here. Ian Michael focuses on the history of the

[78] See Williams, 'How to Read', in *The Social Life of Books*, pp. 11-35.
[79] Williams, *The Social Life of Books*, p. 3.
[80] Stephen Colclough, 'Readers: Books and Biography', in A *Companion to the History of the Book*, eds. Jonathan Rose and Simon Eliot (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), pp. 50-62 (p. 54).

school textbook in *The Teaching of English: From the sixteenth century to 1870* (1987).[81] The work describes many different forms of instructional text, including those for the use of teachers as well as parents. More recently, scholars such as Vivien Jones and Elspeth Jajdelska have focused on instruction and advice offered outside school settings, writing on the relationship between instruction manuals and the construction of gender and social identity in the home.[82] Others focus on the possibilities of the advice book to provide entertainment as well as instruction. Lance Bertelsen, for example, has discussed the intersections between forms of instruction and popular entertainment by examining a variety of texts and dramatic practices, including conduct books.[83] It is important to remember that instruction and entertainment were not mutually exclusive categories; in order to remain marketable, elocution books had to stress their educational worth whilst valorising conviviality and entertainment. These works on instruction manuals focus on the ways in which they constructed ideal forms of behaviour. Elocution books, as a sub-category of instruction manual, operated in a similar fashion, advocating ideal forms of reading and performance. That said, elocution books were also uniquely self-aware about the limitations of their form: the book form can only do so much in instructing elocutionary practice, which is necessarily concerned with the living body.[84] They addressed wider issues related to the tensions in the relationship between print and performance.

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[81] Ian Michael, *The Teaching of English: From the sixteenth century to 1870* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987).
[82] See Jones, "Mary Wollstonecraft and the literature of advice and instruction"; and Elspeth Jajdelska, '"The very defective and erroneous method": reading instruction and social identity in elite eighteenth-century learners', in *Oxford Review of Education*, 36:2 (2010): 141-156.
[83] Lance Bertelsen, 'Popular entertainments and instruction, literary and dramatic: chapbooks, advice books, almanacs, ballads, farces, pantomimes, prints and shows', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 61-86.
[84] For more on the limitations of instruction manuals as a genre (rather than focusing explicitly on the book form), see Vivien Jones, 'Mary Wollstonecraft and the literature of advice and instruction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia L. Johnson (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), pp. 119-140.

Elocution books therefore encourage researchers to think more about the role and purpose of instructional works, and the part which entertainment can play in their appeal. Elocution manuals also had to manage the potential they had to encourage participants in reading performances to aspire to different lives other than their own, by allowing them to temporarily inhabit different identities. Unlike a lot of other instruction manuals, elocution books had to work hard to convince readers that the kinds of reading that they encouraged were respectable and suitable for their target audiences.

Intersecting Scholarship: Conclusions

This thesis is indebted to all of this intersecting scholarship on sociability and politeness, the elocution movement, theories surrounding theatre and performance, accounts (with varied historical parameters) of how 'orality' and 'print' came to be conceptualised as categories which it was possible to separate, the intertwined histories of reading and the book, and scholarship on instructional works. My work is both informed by and builds on this scholarship. In the case of elocution books, print and orality cannot exist as separate categories; the nature of these books demands the co-existence of both. This relationship is not one of ease: elocution books were keenly aware of the limitations of print in both recording and prompting examples of eloquence. Eighteenth-century readers were much more open to the idea of print and orality co-existing — however uncomfortably at times — than many modern critics have been. They understood that the balance between print and orality depended on what was being read and the manner of reading. The balance could shift on smaller timescales than grand narratives of the period can adequately describe. Integral to this project is the understanding that individual readers could read books in a

myriad of flexible ways, both aloud and silently, in company and alone. Their manner of reading was determined by utility or the needs of the moment rather than a retrospective historical narrative.

Elocution Manuals and Historical Readers

So how did people read in the mid- to late-eighteenth century? The answers to *how* they read are closely related to *why* they read. Their reasons for reading had an impact on how elocution books were compiled, edited and constructed. Historical evidence reveals to us that people read for lots of different reasons: for didactic and educational purposes (both religious and secular); as a form of entertainment which lent itself to forms of sociability; as part of scholarly activities such as commonplacing; and for combinations of these reasons. Alongside all of this, the growth of the category of 'the professional' meant that reading aloud and oratorical performance more broadly were seen as desirable professional skills for members of the clergy, or those in the legal professions.[85] How people seemed to have understood the purpose of reading varied, and we can see how readers developed strategies to make their reading useful to themselves and others. Reading is a polymorphous and historically-specific activity, difficult to characterise generally in any meaningful sense. It took forms which may seem strange to us now, given that we are unlikely to engage with books in many of the ways described here. People commonly read

[85] For more on the category of 'professional' as it developed in the eighteenth century, see Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 1995); for more on the gentrification of the legal profession in the period, see David Lemmings, *Professors of the Law: Barristers and English Legal Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

aloud to one another, taking part in domestic forms of reading. They also read letters or other forms of writing such as shared annotations or commonplace books.[86] As with modern readers, these tasks were performed with varying amounts of diligence and gusto. An illustration of past reading practices enables us to place elocution books — and the kinds of reading they attempted to encourage — within a historical context populated with actual readers. As historians of reading have stated, this is easier said than done: '[the] history of reading is largely the history of attempting to cope with what writing does not represent'.[87] Elocution manuals can begin to help populate these absences by considering formulations of ideal readers. There are no substantial records (to my knowledge) of readers explicitly discussing their use of books of this kind.[88] Elocution books form just one part of a broad and varied landscape of possible reading activities.

Eighteenth-century subjects read together as a form of both instruction and entertainment. Reading helped to forge and maintain relationships between different members of households or friends. Sometimes instructional reading was religious: the diaries of Catherine Talbot often describe her reading religious texts with other women. For Talbot, reading could be an act of devotion to be shared with friends.[89] Gertrude Saville shared a similar kind of religious reading with her family, where reading functioned as a replacement for church attendance. Saville wrote in her diary that she listened to her

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[86] See David Allan, *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010); and on commonplace books throughout history, see Earle Havens, *Commonplace Books: a history of manuscripts and printed books from antiquity to the twentieth century* (New Haven, CA: Tale University Press, 2001).
[87] David R. Olson, *The World on Paper: The conceptual and cognitive implications of writing and reading* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), p. 145.
[88] There are instances of elocution manuals being briefly mentioned by readers. For example, Dorothy Wordsworth records in her journal reading Enfield's *The Speaker* with her brother William in her Grasmere Journal, mentioning the book only by name. The account, dated Wednesday 15th April 1802, does not detail *how* the pair read to one another. Dorothy Wordsworth, 'The Grasmere Journal', in *The Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), p. 94.
[89] Cynthia Aalders, '"Serious Books" and "Excellent Meditations": Recovering Religion in Catherine Talbot's Reading', in *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 41:2 (2018): 211-223.

mother reading scriptures to the rest of the family when they did not go to church one Sunday.[90] The Sussex shopkeeper Thomas Turner repeatedly recorded instances of his reading Tillotson's sermons to a variety of listeners in his diary.[91] Instructional reading could also be a secular activity with room for amusement. Anna Larpent's diary describes her taking turns to read 'a dialogue on taste by Mr Ramsay' with her sister, Clara.[92] Larpent calls it as 'a lively original book with some entertaining and instructive remarks', using the dialogue to initiate a conversation about the nature of beauty with her sister. Her description highlights the possibility for instruction and entertainment to co-exist. The sisters discuss the different positions put forward by Ramsey and Cozens. The conversation about this 'difference of opinion' leads to the pair consulting other books. In her account, Larpent positions herself as the authority on Ramsay's argument in *A Dialogue on Taste* (1762), mentioning her own ability to '[point] out' an argument so that Clara may 'carry on the pursuit [of it] in her mind'. This form of reading together articulates a dynamic between the two sisters where Larpent takes on the role of instructor or teacher guiding her sister through different opinions surrounding a polite topic.

Some forms of reading activity were designed to be less explicitly instructional. In these cases, reading was used as a regular form of entertainment at home, or as a way to pass the time. Thomas Turner's wife read *Clarissa* to him while he sorted through his correspondence in the evenings.[93] Jane Austen recorded in a letter that her father 'reads

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[90] Gertrude Savile, *Secret Comment: The Diaries of Gertrude Savile, 1721-1757*, ed. Alan Savile (Nottingham: 1997), p. 86.
[91] See Thomas Turner, [Manuscript Diaries]. East Sussex Record Office, MSS. AMS 6532. There are numerous instances in which Turner recalls reading Tillotson's sermons - for examples, see entries dated 18th September 1756 and 4th December 1763.
[92] See Anna Larpent, diary entry dated 19th August 1780. Huntington Library, HM 31201.
[93] Turner, MSS. AMS 6532, entry dated 23rd February 1756.

Cowper to us in the evening, to which I listen when I can'.[94] Both of these examples show reading — and being read to — were activities which could form part of a household routine. Readers could work through long texts in their entirety or explore the works of particular authors. The level of commitment of the listener might vary: as well as listening to his wife, Turner organised his papers, and Austen's letter makes clear that she occasionally had other duties or demands on her time which prevented her attendance on her father. A variety of texts were read, both modern and classical. Maria Edgeworth recalled her father reading John Gay's poem '*Trivia*' to the family; she recommended it to her aunt who was not there.[95] Frances Burney reminisced with affection on her sister Esther 'reading with our dear Mother all Pope's Works, & Pitt's "Aeneid"'.[96]

These examples show reading for entertainment as an activity which demanded varying levels of attention and commitment from listeners. Yet sometimes reading performances in the home could be more formal affairs, with people from outside the household brought in to perform. Reading aloud could become a great event in domestic life. In a letter, the writer Mary Berry recalled hearing the actress Sarah Siddons read *Hamlet* to her family, 'which was to me a great treat'.[97] Professional performers could also use dramatic readings to give people an exclusive preview of a work. Samuel Richardson recounted in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh how he heard the actor David Garrick read Edward Moore's *The Gamester* (1753) before it was staged.[98] Richardson praises Garrick for

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[94] Letter from Jane Austen to Cassandra Austen, 18-19 December 1798, in *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Dierdre Le Faye (Oxford: OUP, 1995), p. 27.
[95] Maria Edgeworth, *The Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth*, 2 Vols., ed. Augustus J. C. Hare (London: Edward Arnold, 1894): I.31.
[96] Frances Burney, *The Life in the Works*, ed. Margaret Anne Doody (New Brunswick, NJ, 1988), p. 21.
[97] Letter from Mary Berry to Bertie Greathead, 2 August 1798 in Mary Berry, *Extracts of the Journal and Correspondence of Miss Berry From the Year 1783 to 1852*, ed. Lady Theresa Lewis (London, 1865): II:70.
[98] This play should not be confused with James Shirley's 1633 play of the same name.

his 'very affecting performance', but finds some 'faults' in an otherwise 'moral and seasonable piece'.[99] His praise for Garrick's performance is separated from the written work. Part of what makes these instances of reading remarkable to the people recording them (in the case of Mary Berry, several years after the fact) is the celebrity of the people doing the reading. Richardson and Berry's accounts, alongside the others previously given, indicate that perhaps the sources which survive as evidence for scholars tend towards reading events where the readers, listeners and the material are in some way special or noteworthy, and therefore worth recording in more detail.

The examples examined so far have mostly focused on instances of reading aloud, where readers took part in the primary form of reading participation advocated by elocution books: participating in a reading event, where a performance is made based on a pre-existing text. In these instances, listeners occupied the same spaces as the people performing. Yet understanding other forms of sociable reading is important. Reading communities were not only constructed out of geographical proximity. Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot read fiction and corresponded in writing about it, discussing an assortment of subjects including French writers, and authors such as Eliza Haywood.[100] While they were able to meet in person occasionally, the majority of their friendship was long-distance, taking place through letters which were 'frequently accompanied by "pacquets" that included books and manuscript writings on temporary loan'.[101] Talbot also lent books to Jemima Yorke, Marchioness Grey — Grey replies to a letter and 'pacquet'

[99] Samuel Richardson, *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson: Author of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison*, 6 vols., ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld (Cambridge: CUP, 2011): VI:245-6.
[100] Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 96.
[101] Aalders, '"Serious Books" and "Excellent Meditations"', p. 213.

from Talbot by mentioning that 'The Books you sent are come safe'.[102] Grey's letters to Talbot frequently discuss their reading, offering recommendations and responses to reading material. The letters further reveal Grey to be a frequent borrower of books from a variety of people.

There were also other forms of shared reading over long distances which did not necessarily involve the sending of large parcels of books. One could share one's reading material in the form of manuscript extracts, either as part of letters or of larger manuscript books such as albums, commonplace books or other forms of personal miscellany.[103] Samuel Richardson received from his friend Susannah Highmore in 1750 some 'transcriptions and observations from Pliny'. Richardson sent back his appreciation, for 'as you say, I should never find time to read the book. What stores of knowledge do I lose, by my incapacity of reading, and by my having used myself to write, till I can do nothing else'.[104] Richardson trusted Highmore's judgement in extracting significant parts from Pliny's works, and further, her 'observations' on them, to save him the labour of reading them after spending the day writing. Reading requires time and effort. Sharing extracts — of writing while reading, or shortly afterwards — was common in the period. This 'culture of extraction', as it may be termed, stemmed from the pedagogical tradition of commonplacing, with its 'insistence upon gathering together quotations for practical or studious purposes'.[105] While commonplace books were themselves a book form, this act

[102] Jemima York, Marchioness Grey, 'Extracts of Old Letters to Miss T-lb-t Second Part', Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service, L30/9a/4.23. This manuscript book is a later transcription of Grey's letters by her daughter, Amabel.
[103] The generic boundaries between these types of manuscript book are not fixed, although books of these kinds tend to be catalogued in archives - correctly or not - as 'commonplace books'.
[104] Richardson, *The Correspondence*: II:223-4.
[105] Stephen Colclough, *Consuming Texts: Readers and Reading Communities, 1695–1870* (London: Palgrave, 2007), p. 38.

of extraction is also a method of reading, connecting reading and transcription.[106] Commonplace books did allow readers to personalise their reading by making it 'useful' to them, but the process of extraction was highly prescribed, filtering 'one's reading through social norms that determined which textual elements were significant and which were not'.[107] From the example of Richardson we can see the value of the short extracted form; similar texts appear in collections of elocutionary material. Readers were quite willing to repackage what they had read for ease of consumption, either for their future use, or the use of others. The editors of elocution books sold a version of this practice to their customers, with the books containing ready-edited snippets suitable for domestic public reading.

All the examples given here so far have shown people who are for the most part keen to read or to be read to. Reluctant readers should also be remembered, even in a study which takes as its subject books about reading. We know from our own experiences that reluctant readers exist — we may have even been one ourselves at some points in our lives. Teachers or parents may have devised a variety of methods to convince us to read. The same was true in the eighteenth century. Hester Lynch Thrale used reading aloud as a strategy to force her daughters to become familiar with texts they did not want to read: 'I have read to them what I could not force or perswade them to read for themselves. The English & Roman Histories, the Bible; — not Extracts, but the whole from End to End'.[108] The power of the parent to impose reading is here revealed to be limited — but one can

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[106] Colclough, *Consuming Texts*, p. 70.
[107] Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio, *Book Use, Book Theory 1500-1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2005), p. 70.
[108] Hester Lynch Thrale, *Thraliana: The diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (later Mrs. Piozzi) 1776-1809*, 2 vols., ed. Katharine C. Balderston (Oxford: 1951): I.519.

still experience texts without reading them for oneself. Here, Thrale articulates her belief in the importance of having thorough knowledge of certain texts, perhaps for the sake of sharing common knowledge, but also for moral and religious reasons. Consequently, mere 'Extracts' will not do: only 'the whole from End to End'. The process of extraction is revealed to be ambivalent: it was clearly useful to Richardson, who was grateful to Highmore for saving him time by carrying out the labour of extraction. Thrale, in contrast, prefers her children to have a knowledge of the whole.

Other children *were* successfully made to read (rather than listen) against their inclinations: Mary Berry recalls her 'dear grandmother', who

> made me read the Psalms and chapters to her every morning; but, as neither explanation nor comment was made upon them, nor their history followed up in any way, I hated the duty and escaped it when I could. The same consequence took place by the same dear parent making me read every Sunday to her a Saturday paper in the "Spectator," which, till the middle of life, prevented my ever looking at those exquisite essays, or being aware of the beauties of the volumes they were in.[109]

Here, reading is presented as a familial duty, which had a lasting impact on Berry's tastes. The lack of discussion surrounding the reading materials resulted in negative feelings in association with the chosen texts. In consequence, Berry developed a reluctance to explore them until much later in later life — something she recalls with regret. Reading as a child was a 'duty' to be 'escaped' — a very different experience to the pleasure with which Berry recalled hearing Sarah Siddons read. Some people clearly preferred to be read to, not to read. Yet attitudes towards the use and value of reading could change over a lifetime too. Actual readers, unlike the theoretical constructs of scholarly critics, so rarely behave as the texts they read should wish them too — that is, if they even read them at all.[110] Readers

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[109] Berry, *Extracts of the Journal and Correspondence*: I.7.
[110] Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England,* p. 6.

have always been free to ignore or misread the 'protocols' or conventions set up to direct their readings.[111]

Reading itself could be a form of performance and entertainment, or else a way of fostering intimacy in difficult times. It could be an aid to serious learning, or just a way to pass the time. It could be laborious — but it could be fun. It is impossible to characterise entirely what significance these forms of reading had for eighteenth-century readers. In my account of the role of reading aloud and social reading practices, I have obviously given less space to solitary, silent forms of reading. This is not an implicit claim that these forms of reading should be ignored; rather, sociable forms of reading and public interest in oratory and elocution deserve continued scholarly attention. Eighteenth-century literary studies have tended to underestimate the significance that contemporary forms of reading had on the construction and reception of texts. Elocution manuals lend themselves well to correcting this critical omission by forcing their readers to consider the relationship between the text and performance, or between print and orality. This thesis uses elocution manuals to develop the arguments of previous scholars who contend that historians (literary or otherwise) need to take into account how reading functioned as a social, rather than solitary, activity.[112] Elocution manuals were written, edited, compiled and sold to tap into this culture where reading was often conducted in company, and in which it was important to read well.

This study contributes to the history of reading by considering the historical specificity of the theoretical, idealised readers constructed by elocution books in the mid- to late-eighteenth century. Doing so reveals more about the assumptions about reading

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[111] Colclough, *Consuming Texts*, p. 15.
[112] Colclough, *Consuming Texts*, p. 89.

that went into producing books for a growing literate readership. Their listening audiences should also be included in this understanding of 'readership', as should those — like Austen and Richardson — who did not always have time to engage with reading in the ways that they would have liked. Consequently, this work forms a reply to Robert Darnton's call for a history of reading in which it is possible to learn more about the ideals and assumptions underlying reading in the past.[113] One of the simplest ways to examine these ideals and assumptions is to offer readings of the literature which addressed the nature of reading at the time, offering models of instruction on how to do it. This is what this thesis offers.

Chapter Summary

Elocutionary instruction manifested itself in a range of sub-genres, which this thesis surveys across its five chapters: printed lectures on elocution, miscellanies of poetry and prose literature, collections of political speeches, spouting companions and printed sermons. These generic divisions are not fixed, and like the broader term 'elocution manual' itself, they are partly anachronistic reconstructions. The texts in the first two chapters have been grouped together as they position themselves in relation to elocutionary theories, openly stating their likeness and dissimilarity to other elocution manuals in their prefatory material. The texts in the last three chapters have been grouped together due to similarities in the kinds of performance they seek to facilitate: readings of past political speeches, collections of material for 'spouting' and the performance of sermons. These categories

[113] See Robert Darnton, 'Toward a History of Reading', in *The Wilson Quarterly*, 13:4 (1989): 86-102, especially pp. 94-100.

allow us to understand that oratory took a variety of forms, giving us an overview of the different kinds of vocal performance eighteenth-century readers were keen to practise and develop. The sub-genres also give us insight into the kinds of books on elocution that eighteenth-century writers and booksellers thought would sell. This genre-based arrangement should not detract from the fact that readers might have read across genres, or have seen genres as more flexible categories than my chapter headings imply.[114] Elocution manuals themselves often contain material across an assortment of sub-genres which was intended to be read in a variety of ways. These chapters, when read together, illustrate the wide variety of activities which involved reading aloud, both out of professional necessity and leisure, forming an activity which was key to the formation of eighteenth-century social relationships and the construction of social authority.

The first chapter takes as its primary subject the printed lectures of the elocutionists Thomas Sheridan and John Walker. I argue that previous scholars have ignored the significance of these lectures in their spoken iterations, privileging the printed text over the spoken word. A comparative close reading of the printed lectures reveals that the elocutionists viewed the relationship between orality and print in the opposite way, privileging the spoken forms of the lectures over the printed text. The printed lectures therefore highlight their own limitations as instructional works by drawing their readers' attention to how the material conditions of book production and the physical process of reading aloud can adversely affect a reading-event. Elocution manuals of this kind are integral to understanding how speech and performance were conceived by theorists in the period.

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[114] Ian Jackson, 'Approaches to the History of Readers and Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *The Historical Journal*, 47:4 (2004): 1041-1054 (p. 1044).

The thesis then moves beyond the main proponents of elocutionary theory to explore other kinds of texts concerned with elocution. The second chapter examines how elocutionary miscellanies were constructed by their editors to aid the teaching of reading aloud. This sub-genre of miscellany showed readers how to navigate the complex demands of reading in social situations in two ways. Firstly, these books provided reading material designed to aid the physical performance of reading aloud. Secondly, they provided the reader with a variety of fictional social reading situations in which to place themselves. Elocutionary miscellanies presented the reader with positive and negative models of reading aloud in social situations, against which readers could measure their own performances. Consequently, I argue that elocutionary miscellanies encouraged readers to develop highly sophisticated self-reflective attitudes towards reading by providing them with a variety of instructive material. Such material moves beyond merely listing the tenets of elocutionary theory. The books gesture towards wider questions regarding the accessibility of elocutionary theory to readers by making its teaching available to readers in cheaper, more easily digestible formats. Elocutionary miscellanies made the social value accrued though the development of elocutionary skill comprehensible to a wider range of people than elocutionary lectures (both printed or spoken) could.

This issue of accessing examples of elocution — including political oratory more specifically — is further addressed in the third chapter. The chapter examines how political oratory was modelled for extra-parliamentary readers in elocution manuals. Elocution manuals repurposed records of political oratory for new readers, using speeches and debates to draw attention to the continuously contested nature of polite political oratory. Collections of parliamentary speeches have a particularly vexed relationship to their source; their previous existence as parliamentary reports makes it more difficult for these books to

present a singular, coherent attitude towards parliamentary speech. The accumulation and erosion of material from different stages in these speeches and debates' rhetorical afterlives meant that political speeches repurposed for elocutionary teaching often ended up advocating conflicting approaches to delivery. The chapter explores how the parliamentary debates extracted into elocution manuals were primarily concerned with decorum: speeches delivered by politicians were often used to regulate the debate, drawing attention to breaches of propriety and attempts to repair them. On occasion, polite parliamentary procedure appears to have been disrupted entirely. This raises issues surrounding what arguments elocution manuals actually make about parliamentary debate. As well as these debates surrounding decorum, these books forced readers to consider their own ambitions as public speakers, and to evaluate how politicians may or may not have been suitable models for aspiring orators to emulate.

The penultimate chapter takes spouting collections as its subject. Spouting collections (also called spouting 'companions') were collections of dramatic prologues and epilogues designed to provide material and guidance for amateurs interested in imitating their favourite professional actors. This chapter explores how spouting collections tried to control amateur oratorical performances that took place in local taverns. I argue that spouting collections attempted to stake a claim for spouting as a moral and socially appropriate pastime. In doing so, these books rejected pre-existing narratives surrounding spouting, which associated the practice with vagrancy and sedition. Through its broad survey of the literature and images produced in anxious response to spouters' activities, this chapter offers a more detailed reading of spouting collections than has been offered by previous scholarship. The contemporary response to spouting reflected concerns surrounding theatricality, and debates about what forms of performance were acceptable

and for whom. There were also concerns surrounding the possible undermining of class distinctions as a result of non-professional performers' aspirations to fame.

The final chapter explores an entirely different kind of elocutionary practice: the reading and delivery of sermons. The chapter considers how reading aloud in religious contexts was modelled in printed sermons. Rather than explicitly outlining elocutionary theories in relation to the performance of printed sermons, printed sermons offered broader models of the ideal sermon-reading event. Texts concentrating on the role of the preacher tended to focus on their performance as orator, whereas texts concerned with the role of the laity focused on the importance of listening to sermons. Printed sermons, therefore, functioned as instructional elocutionary texts which (unlike the other kinds of elocutionary text discussed in this thesis) did not always privilege the role of the speaker over the role of the auditor(s). The idea of anyone being able to preach — regardless of education and training — was associated with the dangers of enthusiasm and Methodism, the popularity of which was commonly said to hang on its charismatic preachers. Consequently, Anglican sermons suggest that elocutionary aspirations should be viewed with caution; the role of the good listener is a far more appropriate ambition. Religious texts were highly important in fostering and maintaining relationships in households, and reinforcing the importance of religious authority from legitimate Anglican sources. In this instance, elocution displayed through religious text was not something to which one should aspire to outside of the Church, although we know that people often used the reading of religious texts as a way to replace or supplement regular church attendance.

I conclude the thesis with a brief exploration of the interpretive possibilities which elocution manuals allow today, using a description of my attempts to hold a modern social reading event in the style of a spouting club meeting. Such public engagement projects

show us that the issues encountered by modern readers taking part in reading events are similar to those encountered by their eighteenth-century counterparts. Then I reiterate my main arguments and their wider implications for scholars: that elocution books were aware of their limitations as instructional works, and that consequently this reflects back on the relationship between print and orality more broadly. The elocutionary movement spawned a wider range of literature than has previously been acknowledged by historians of rhetoric. There can be no uniform conception of eighteenth-century elocutionary culture, but we can begin to see how eighteenth-century people were encouraged to participate in normative social reading practices. Further to this, eighteenth-century conceptions of the relationship between print and orality were complex; the literature of the elocution movement sheds new light on this complexity.

The chapters of this thesis, when read together, illustrate the variety of forms that reading aloud took in the period, both in professional and leisure contexts. Reading aloud was an activity integral to the construction and maintenance of eighteenth-century social relationships and the establishment of social authority. Readers of elocution manuals, in their interest in text-based performance, were encouraged by the editors and compilers of these books to engage with broader questions related to identity and performance, the accessibility of text, forms of authority (literally — who gets to speak, and who gets to listen), and navigating aspirational behaviour. The project is valuable for anyone wishing to think about how the history of reading has been understood, and the knotty intersections between print and performance or literacy and orality.

Chapter 1: Printed Lectures on Elocution

'readers shall continue to search for that in books,
which it is beyond the power of books to teach'

— Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* (1762)

The Elocution Movement

It is a commonplace of literary criticism that the period 1750-1800 was the 'golden age of British oratory'.[1] This phrase generally refers to political speech-making in the period, but can also be used to describe other forms of extra-parliamentary speech-delivery. An interest in public speech more broadly was shared by the elocution movement, which also sprang to prominence in the same period. The elocution movement was not a cohesive collection of writers, texts and oratorical events; the term is used retrospectively by historians to characterise a noticeable shift in the formal discipline of rhetoric towards the performance of public speech in English.[2] The elocution movement was concerned with all kinds of speaking and public reading, from political speech-making to the quality of preaching in church services, and the teaching of public speaking more broadly. It paid particular attention to oral delivery as comprised of both the voice and gesture. The beginnings of the movement can be sourced to a variety of printed texts, such as John Mason's *Essay on Elocution* (1748) and James Burgh's *The Art of Speaking* (1761), which offer normative

[1] Harry Caplan *et al.*, 'The Classical Tradition: Rhetoric and Oratory', in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly,* 27:2 (1997): 7-38 (p. 29)

[2] For a detailed history of the elocution movement, see Wilbur Samuel Howell, 'Sources of the elocutionary movement in England: 1700–1748', in *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 45:1 (1959): 1-18.

methods of reading aloud and speaking.[3] Participants of the movement offered an assortment of theories and methods with which to read aloud and produce text-based oral performances.[4] This chapter focuses primarily on the writings and performances of Thomas Sheridan and John Walker; their writings had a demonstrable lasting influence on the elocution manuals produced throughout the rest of the century.

Thomas Sheridan was an actor and theatre-manager who became a teacher of elocution. For Sheridan, the reform of eloquence was linked to the improvement of the nation and British nationalism.[5] Lecturing widely on the subject, Sheridan was the author of several printed texts in which he sought to stake a claim for elocution as a necessary part of eighteenth-century masculine education, such as *British Education: Or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain* (1756).[6] Sheridan's writings were often published alongside or after public reading performances in which he demonstrated to auditors ways to improve their own oratorical performances. His lectures on elocutionary theory and practice regularly attracted large paying crowds.[7] Versions of these lectures were then printed in folio as *Lectures on Elocution* (1762).[8] As Sheridan's elocutionary career continued, he also published

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[3] Other elocutionary texts from the period not discussed at length here include John Rice, *An Introduction to the Art of Reading with Energy and Propriety* (1765); John Herries, *Elements of Speech* (1773); William Cockin, *The Art of Delivering Written Speech* (1775), Joshua Steele, *Prosodia Rationalis* (1775); and William Scott, *Lessons in Elocution* (1779).

[4] For a summary of these competing methods, see Paul Goring, 'The Elocutionary Movement in Britain', in *The Oxford Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*, ed. Michael J. MacDonald (Oxford: OUP, 2017), pp. 1-12.

[5] See Don Paul Abbot, 'The Genius of the Nation: Rhetoric and Nationalism in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly,* 40:2 (2010): 105-127.

[6] Thomas Sheridan, *British Education: Or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain* (London: printed for R. and J. Dodsley in Pall-mall, 1756).

[7] Paul Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), p. 11.

[8] The *English Short Title Catalogue* (*ESTC*) records eleven different printings of Sheridan's *A Course of Lectures on Elocution*. The first edition was published in 1762 in London, and was followed by the second and third editions (printed Dublin) in 1764 and 1770, respectively. Later printings, such as the 1781 printing by J. Dodsley, do not specify an edition number, tending to be titled 'A New Edition'. A surviving copy of the first edition in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, shows it to have initially been printed as a large folio measuring 21 x 26cm. Measurements taken from Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution: together with two dissertations on language and some other tracts relative to those subjects* (London: printed by W. Strahan, for A. Millar *et al.*, 1762). Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet. A5 d.433. As this first edition was funded by subscription, it includes an inserted subscription list. Contrastingly, the 1764 Dublin printing held in the British Library, London ('The Second Edition. Revised by the Author') is a much smaller duodecimo copy measuring 10 x 16.5cm. Measurements taken from Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution, The Second Edition.*

his *Lectures on the Art of Reading* (1775) in duodecimo.[9] The spoken versions of the lectures penetrated many of the polite and fashionable cultural centres in Britain.[10] In 1758 and 1759, he lectured at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and was also invited by the Scottish Select Society to lecture in Edinburgh. Members of the Scottish Select Society included David Hume, Adam Smith, Alexander Wedderburn, Hugh Blair, and Lord Kames, among many others with an interest in rhetoric, elocution and the *belles lettres*.[11]

Sheridan's popularity meant that he was able to lecture outside of the university towns, in places famed for recreation, such as Bath and the London theatres.[12] Attending these lectures became a popular fashionable activity among the upper-classes.[13] Sheridan's son, the playwright and politician Richard Brinsley Sheridan, permitted his father to use the Drury Lane stage for his *Lectures on Elocution* and 'Attic Evenings' when he was the theatre manager there.[14] The Attic Evenings comprised of elocutionary teaching interspersed with theatrical entertainment designed to make the instructional parts more palatable to paying audiences. The link between elocutionary performance and theatrical performance is also strengthened when we bear in mind Sheridan Senior's own career:

Revised by the Author. (Dublin: Printed for Samuel Whyte, [1764]). London: British Library, General Reference Collection 1607/2704. This book, bound by itself, has marbled pasteboard covers with a leather spine, and contains no subscription list. It also contains an advertisement for Samuel Whyte's English Grammar School, Grafton Street, Dublin at the beginning of the book.

[9] According to the ESTC, Sheridan's *Lectures on the Art of Reading* (1775) survive in six separate printings. A copy of the first edition, printed in duodecimo, is held in the British Library, London. It is bound with other texts, including the anonymous-authored *Treatise on Modern Education, respecting Young Ladies as well as Gentlemen* (1775). See Thomas Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading* (Dublin: printed by assignment from the author for Samuel Whyte, 1775). British Library, London: General Reference Collection 1578/8128(1&2). An annotator has written on the title page 'by Mr Whyte', likely the same Whyte involved in the printing of the second edition of Sheridan's lectures, who was a teacher at the Grafton Street Grammar School. These two texts are bound together, along with others, in a book with pasteboard covers and a leather spine labelled 'The Art of Reading'.

[10] Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility*, p. 95.

[11] For more on the Scottish Select Society, see David McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement* (Washington: Washington State University Press, 1969).

[12] Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility,* p. 98.

[13] Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility,* p. 11.

[14] William Benzie, *The Dublin Orator: Thomas Sheridan's Influence on Eighteenth-Century Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (Yorkshire: Scholar Press Ltd., 1972), p. 65.

while often known as an 'actor-turned-elocutionist', Sheridan actually held these careers concurrently, operating as both an actor and theatre-manager at the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin whilst composing his elocutionary theories.[15] William Benzie, in his biographical writing on Sheridan, argues that the Attic Evenings resulted in the increased popularity of 'elegant extracts' and other forms of elocutionary miscellany, and that these books were an 'important by-product' of these types of event.[16]

John Walker, whose writings provide a point of comparison for Sheridan's in this chapter, also followed a similar career trajectory. Walker likewise began his career as an actor, progressing from provincial theatres to London's Drury Lane and Covent Garden. He quit acting in 1769 and became a teacher of elocution after a brief stint running a school.[17] Here he was successful, attracting many young men keen for careers in Parliament or at the bar. Building on his reputation as a teacher of elocution, Walker was invited to give lectures in Edinburgh in 1775, and from there went on to lecture at Dublin and various Oxford colleges. These lectures were later printed as Walker's *Elements of Elocution* (1781) in two volumes.[18] As well as the lectures, Walker published a variety of elocution manuals

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[15] For more on the link between elocutionary theory and acting, see Jacqueline George, 'Public Reading and Lyric Pleasure: Eighteenth Century Elocutionary Debates and Poetic Practices', in *ELH,* 76:2 (2009): 371-397 (p. 374); and Michael Shortland, 'Moving Speeches: Language and Elocution in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *History of European Ideas*, 8 (1987), 639-653.

[16] See William Benzie, 'Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788)', in *Eighteenth-Century British and American Rhetorics and Rhetoricians: Critical Studies and Sources*, ed. Michael Moran (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), pp. 197-206 (p. 203); and Benzie, *The Dublin Orator*, p. 70.

[17] For more biographical information, see Joan C. Beal, 'Walker, John (1732–1807)', in *ONDB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

[18] *Elements of Elocution* survives in only three printings: the first edition in 1781, and the second in 1799, and the third in 1806. The first edition came in two octavo volumes, including fold-out engravings illustrating the required changes of inflection when speaking. John Walker, *Elements of Elocution; being the substance of a course of lectures on the art of Reading* (London, printed for the author; and sold by T. Cadell *et al.*: 1781). British Library, London: General Reference Collection 840.d.29. The second edition, 'with alterations and additions', is also an octavo, with both volumes contained in a single binding. The plates in the book are the same size as all the other pages, they do not unfold into larger images. Walker, *Elements of Elocution, in which the principles of reading and speaking are investigated* (London: printed by Cooper and Wilson, 1799). British Library, London: General Reference Collection 1570/3327; the prints inserted into in the 1806 edition are the same. See Walker, *Elements of Elocution, To which is added, A complete system of the passions. The Third Edition.* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, J. Walker et al, 1806). Oxford, Bodleian, Vet. A6 e.1089. Included at the front of the 1799 printing is an engraving of Walker: by 1799, it seems he was famous enough for his image to be included as a kind of 'preface' to the book.

in the form of miscellanies containing extracts of material suitable for reading aloud, such as *Exercises for Improvement in Elocution* (1777) and *The Academic Speaker* (1796).[19]

Sheridan and Walker's elocutionary works (both printed and performed) existed in a culture where rhetoric and elocution were popularised, taken out of the traditional academic environment and placed into a leisure context where displaying good elocution was seen as a rational accomplishment. Hugh Cunningham notes the growth in numbers and influence of 'the middling sort', who, he argues, developed ways of spending leisure time that could not be seen as being merely 'idle'.[20] Peter Borsay calls this method of spending time and money 'serious leisure', where pastimes mimic work or education in order to legitimise leisure 'in a society where work and learning are dominant ethics'.[21] This alternative way of categorising mid- to late-eighteenth-century interest in elocution – as a 'serious leisure pursuit' – begins to explain the popularity of elocutionary instruction manuals amidst a wide range of forms of oratorical and elocutionary culture.

This evidence of elocution's apparent respectability as a serious pastime should not cause scholars to forget that elocutionary teaching was nonetheless a contested activity. By appealing to broader audiences through their emphasis on dramatic and entertaining material in English (rather than in the classical languages), the elocutionists came to be resented for blurring class distinctions.[22] Evidence of such thinking can be found in contemporary satires of the elocution movement, such as those by the actor and theatre

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[19] John Walker, *Exercises for Improvement in Elocution, Being Select Extracts from the Best Authors, for the use of those who study the Art of Reading and Speaking in Public.* (London: Sold by T. Becket, [1777]); and John Walker, *The Academic Speaker; or, a Selection of Parliamentary Debates, Orations, Odes, Scenes, and Speeches, from the Best Writers* (Dublin: Printed for Messrs, Burnett, Byrne, Wogan, Rice, Moore, J. Jones, and W. Porter, 1796).
[20] See Hugh Cunningham, *Time, Work and Leisure: Life Changes in England Since 1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), especially pp. 1-88.
[21] Peter Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience Since 1500* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 7.
[22] Thomas P. Miller, *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Cultural Provinces* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), p. 138.

manager Samuel Foote. *The Orators* (1762), for example, takes a swipe at Sheridan's elocutionary lectures. The play is framed as one such lecture itself, supposedly taken from a series. The lecture is designed to improve the oratorical skills of those in professions involving public speaking, as well as those with a more amateur interest in oratory. The fictional lecturer claims to be able to improve the elocutionary practices of vicars, barristers, 'all candidates to the sock or buskin' and 'the new members of any of those oratorical societies with which this metropolis is at present so plentifully stock'd'.[23] One potential student, who has come to see the lecture, asks the elocutionist, 'what, is this telling of lectures a thriving profession?' He agrees, saying that 'the public have been very indulgent'.[24] Foote's satires articulate the contemporary criticisms of elocutionists, who were often seen as quacks quick to perpetuate and take advantage of the public desire to increase standards in public reading and speaking. This point is made in another of Foote's satires: the plot of *The Commissary* (1765) involves the commissary of the title, Zac Fungus, taking elocution lessons because he wants to become a gentleman. The appeal of elocution lessons for tradesmen such as Fungus is that they claim to be able to make customers 'speak in any manner he pleases; as a lawyer, a merchant, a country gentleman; whatever the subject requires'.[25] Here the elocutionist functions as a jack of all trades, making out to possess the expertise required to further advancement in an assortment of careers and occupations requiring an ease with public speech – and by implication, to enable speakers to masquerade as their social superiors. As the elocution teacher proclaims, ever the salesman, 'if the gentleman has any ambition to shine at a vestry, a common-hall, or even

[23] Samuel Foote, *The Orators* (London: Printed for J. Coote *et al.*, 1762), p. 67.
[24] Foote, *The Orators*, p. 56.
[25] Samuel Foote, *The Commissary: A Comedy in Three Acts* (London: Printed for P. Valiant, 1765), p. 36.

a convivial club, I can supply him with ample materials.'[26] The elocutionist effectively functions as a tradesman flogging his literary wares. As well as this, the satire points to the dangers that such salesmanship promises: the elocutionist promises to help customers achieve their aspirations towards certain professions, moving across class boundaries. Anyone can pose as anyone else if they sound the part, and teachers of elocution have no scruples about making it happen. This historical perception of teachers of elocution as eighteenth-century educational salesmen continued to colour the teaching of modern rhetoric as late as the mid-twentieth century.[27]

The elocutionist in *The Commissary*, Mr Gruel, is clearly modelled on Sheridan: he is 'the famous orationer that has publish'd the book'.[28] The allusion to Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution* is sustained as the dialogue progresses: Gruel's speech is clearly modelled on Sheridan's as it is represented in the printed text of the *Lectures*. Sheridan's lengthy sentences, comprised of numerous clauses with frequent use of parentheses and other elocutionary punctuation, are closely emulated in Gruel's lines. As Fungus notes, 'he talks just as if it were all out of a book; what would you give to be able to utter such words?'[29] The line articulates issues at the heart of this chapter. To talk 'as if it were all out of a book' is, according to the commissary, the ideal to which a public speaker should aspire. The speaker, in this sense, is figured as a *reader*: the words they speak have their origins in a pre-existing textual authority. Whether these are words written by the reader themselves or are

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[26] Foote, *The Commissary*, p. 37.
[27] Such criticism seeks to distance the endeavours of modern rhetoricians and teachers of elocution from eighteenth-century elocutionists. See Warren Guthrie, 'The Development of Rhetorical Theory in America 1635–1850—V: The Elocution Movement—England', in *Speech Monographs*, 18:1 (1951): 17-30; Wayland Maxfield Parrish, 'Elocution — A Definition and A Challenge', in *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 43:1 (1957): 1-11; and Giles Wilkeson Gray, 'What Was Elocution?', in *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 46:1 (1960): 1-7 (p. 1). For a summary of other 'revisionist' work from the 1950s and '60s in relation to the elocution movement, see David H. Grover, 'John Walker: The "Mechanical" Man Revisited', in *Southern Journal of Communication,* 34:4 (1969): 288-297.
[28] Foote, *The Commissary,* p. 35.
[29] Foote, *The Commissary*, p. 36.

the compositions of others is unclear, although the word 'book' in this context implies a printed work, composed by another. The line is a thinly veiled criticism of Sheridan's brand of elocution. In this representation of the elocutionist, good utterance is assumed to have a basis in print and, like print itself, is assumed to be available for purchase. What readers will 'give to utter such words' is, of course, money. To speak '*as if* it were all out of a book' (emphasis mine) gains an air of ridiculousness – rather than simply 'reading', the elocutionist speaks *as though* reading. The book, by the nature of simile, is in some degree removed, both present and absent in this satirical praise of the elocutionist. His speech is contrived, the sentiments merely recitations of the written thoughts of others, convoluted and hard to follow. In this example we begin to see the complex relations between orality and print, the printed work and the act of reading or speaking as conceived by eighteenth-century writers. The written work which forms the basis for Gruel's speech is mocked for its impenetrability; the reader-elocutionist is criticised for his reliance on the printed word to articulate ideas worth hearing. As the satire shows, rather than existing in dichotomy with one another, physical texts and oral performances can be characterised as having a tense, dynamic relationship with varying levels of intersection between the two.

The possibilities of this relationship between printed text and performance are also played out in the objects of Foote's satire: the printed lectures of the elocutionists such as Thomas Sheridan and John Walker. My main contention of this chapter is that Sheridan and Walker's navigation of the relationship between print and orality, as uniquely evident in the material form of their printed lectures, is integral to the development of their theories of social reading practices. The elocutionists argue for the importance of physical presence in facilitating social reading by using a form — the printed text — which is used as a proxy for the physical presence of the lecturer. Both Sheridan and Walker pay distinct attention

to the ways in which the material text can impact spoken performance, both positively and negatively. The practice of reading aloud was inextricably tied to commercial processes and the conditions of print production. Consequently these elocutionary theories could only have been developed in their specific book-making culture. The material form of elocution manuals directly influenced the content of elocutionary theory. Other forms of elocution book, discussed in subsequent chapters, are more usefully understood by being read in conjunction with Sheridan and Walker's lectures.

The Contradictions of a 'Printed Lecture'

My account of the elocution movement and its main proponents has been careful to acknowledge its existence both as a series of spoken performances and printed works. Scholars of the elocutionary movement have tended to privilege the printed form of the lectures over their spoken counterparts.[30] This is understandable given that the content of lectures on elocution is only evident to modern scholars through their survival as printed artefacts. The primary form of historical evidence of elocutionary teaching is print-based, where printed works act as records of previous oratorical performances as well as prompts for future ones. Yet, as Paul Goring rightly reminds us, 'it is important to recognise "elocutionary discourse" as something wider than the sum of printed traces that now provide the primary routes for historical research' into eighteenth-century elocutionary

[30] For example, see Benzie, 'Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788)'. This short biography of Sheridan argues that his claim to being one of the leaders of the elocution movement 'rests not so much on the popularity of the [spoken] lectures as on the influence of his *Course of Lectures on Elocution*' (p. 198).

practice.[31] All spoken performances, whether based on written text or not, are intrinsically ephemeral, and printed texts can lend an authority and weight (literally, when in book-form) to speech acts that have not previously existed in this form. Understanding this, the dual life of printed texts used for performance should be borne in mind at all times. One should be aware that printed texts are not entirely representative of the acts they claim to record, and nor can they tell us everything – or indeed much – about future performances that they may prompt. As I prove in this chapter, paying attention to the complexities of the dynamic between the printed lectures and their spoken counterparts reveals new complexities in eighteenth-century elocutionary theory which have not previously been acknowledged.

The relative lack of interest in the way elocutionary texts frame the relationship between print and speech is evident in multiple critical accounts. Philippa M. Spoel, for example, in her reading of Sheridan and Walker's elocutionary lectures, calls them 'elocutionary treatises', the word 'treatise' implying a printed artefact. In her analysis of their printed forms she does not acknowledge their previous incarnations as spoken performances.[32] Even more tellingly, Wilbur Samuel Howell refers to the publication of Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution* as 'the publication […] of the *actual* lectures' (emphasis mine).[33] This turn of phrase implicitly grants an authenticity or tangibility to the printed lectures which the spoken lectures that Sheridan 'had been giving here and there since 1756' might, contrastingly, lack. Howell argues that these printed lectures, authorised by

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[31] Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility,* p. 13.
[32] Philippa M. Spoel, 'Rereading the Elocutionists: The Rhetoric of Thomas Sheridan's *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* and John Walker's *Elements of Elocution*', in *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 19:1 (2001): 49-91 (p. 52).
[33] Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 234.

Sheridan, may be read as an adequate representation of the lectures Sheridan had delivered in previous years, and a text upon which future deliveries might be based. This argument wrongly assumes that these printed lectures (and printed lectures more generally) are fully representative of their spoken versions, and that the printed versions are in some way more 'actual' or 'real' than the ephemeral speech acts.

Choosing printed lectures as objects of study can present complex issues because the relationships between printed lectures and their spoken counterparts vary. Not all lectures have corresponding printed texts – some lectures may be based on manuscript texts such as notes made by the speaker for use during delivery. Often these do not survive, either through accident or deliberate action: Adam Smith ordered most of his papers to be destroyed before his death, with a few authorised for future publication.[34] Scholars are now confined to what Smith's contemporaries had said about his theories on rhetoric, using records and notes made by John Millar, John Woodrow and Hugh Blair. John Witherspoon's lectures on eloquence originally survived in manuscript form, and were published after his death. The lectures were delivered while he was president of the College of New Jersey between 1768 and 1795.[35] The manuscript lectures no longer survive and the printed versions read like a set of condensed notes: it appears that Witherspoon preferred to elaborate on his notes when delivering his lectures. Printed records and prompts cannot be regarded as complete records of what was spoken, and have limitations for anyone seeking to reconstruct the experience of auditors at a lecture. This assumes the texts may be taken to be 'records' at all – sometimes surviving material *anticipated* an

[34] For a fuller account of Adam Smith's lectures on rhetoric, see Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric*, pp. 536-7.
[35] For accounts on Witherspoon's lectures, see S. Michael Halloran, 'John Witherspoon on Eloquence', in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 17:2 (1987): 177-192; and Howell, *British Logic and Rhetoric*, p. 675.

oratorical performance. John Rice's pamphlet, *Syllabus of a Course of Rhetorical Lectures* (1765), for example, summarises a course of lectures to be delivered in the next year, advertising their proposed contents.[36] The text is not a summary of lectures past, but rather a gesture towards a series of promised future events – events made possible by the financial support of subscribers. The accuracy of these texts in their description of these future orations – if they ever happened – is always indeterminable.

The precise nature of the relationship between print (or manuscript) and an oral performance cannot always be pinned down. Nor can the relationship between printed texts and the performances they record be generally theorised, although an understanding of historical forms of the lecture proves useful. The lecture, as an academic form, often demanded the co-existence of performance and print, as auditors (students) were expected to write while listening, and lecturers often read from pages verbatim. This connection survives in the modern French verb *lecture*, which stems from the Latin for 'reading'. Early forms of the lecture in the Middle Ages were effectively 'a site of dictation and verbatim note taking', and speaking in the lecture hall was grounded in the authority of the text, rather than the authority or charisma of the speaker as it was by Sheridan's and Walker's time.[37] Both elocutionists were able to capitalise on the fame they had garnered during their theatrical careers, using them as a basis for their authority as teachers of public reading and speaking. By the end of the eighteenth century the lecture had become more focused on the authority of the lecturer, who appeared to have less reliance on the printed text. At the University of Jena in the 1790s, Johann Gottleib Fichte regularly lectured without a text,

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[36] John Rice, *Syllabus of a Course of Rhetorical Lectures* (London: 1765).
[37] Norm Friesen, 'The Lecture as a Transmedial Pedagogical Form: A Historical Analysis', in *Educational Researcher*, 40:3 (2011): 95-102, p. 97.

and mocked those who could only 'recite what lies printed on the page for all to see'.[38] Emphasis shifted from the written or printed text as authority, to the individual lecturer being perceived as the author of his spoken thoughts or words. The form of the spoken lecture was historically specific, by the mid-eighteenth century relying more heavily on the performance of the lecturer as a person of authority.

Studying lectures on elocution in a way that acknowledges the complex relationship between printed texts and speech acts allows us to draw a fuller picture of the elocution movement than that drawn by intellectual historians. In focusing on tracing the intellectual roots of eighteenth-century ideas surrounding elocution, the body of criticism discussed here omits two things: firstly, Sheridan's and Walker's emphasis on the social value of reading as a social practice, and secondly, their awareness of the tensions inherent in the form of a printed lecture. The elocutionists' models of reading centred around the belief that a practical system of elocution would allow polite society to judge good and ill practitioners of elocution, where gentlemen (and those *aspiring* to gentility) could enact the rules of reading and reciting correctly. Conversely, those who failed to adhere to the mode of instruction established in elocutionary works might have their self-fashioning as a gentleman threatened. Their appearance risked being revealed as mere affectation. Lectures on elocution offered an opportunity to receive instruction in methods of reading and speaking that could be utilised in social situations where reading aloud was an accomplishment that could be publicly praised – or condemned.

Resituating the elocutionists' work in a broader narrative which is also concerned with the understanding and practice of elocution and oratory in the period reveals

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[38] Quoted in Friesen, 'The Lecture as a Transmedial Pedagogical Form', p. 98.

Sheridan's and Walker's awareness of the literary market they addressed with their printed works and spoken performances. The temporary nature of lectures and other oratorical performances was evident to the lecturers themselves. While the they were indeed keen to present their printed works as valuable for anyone seeking to improve their own status, they did so in a way that proclaimed the superiority of their spoken counterparts which could only be accessed through attending their lectures.

Sociability and the Importance of Physical Presence

A significant way in which the elocutionists emphasised the value of the spoken lectures over their printed equivalents was by stressing the importance of physical presence in creating sociability. For Sheridan in particular, the spoken was prioritised over the written because he saw speech as possessing a socialising power which writing lacked.[39] Printed lectures on elocution therefore expose contradictory impulses towards silent reading and reading aloud within elocutionary lectures.

Sheridan puts forward a case for the inferiority of the book to speech by using somatic metaphors to argue that solitary reading is an antisocial activity. Reading aloud, in contrast, is shared. According to Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution,* a 'delight' in silent reading is 'in its nature a selfish one, as the exercise is performed alone, and the reader has no one to participate in his satisfaction'.[40] Sheridan reasons that silent modes of reading are selfish, because 'silent reading contributes to weaken or destroy' the 'social feelings' of a person,

[39] Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sociablility*, p. 107.
[40] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. 183.

which are not 'exercised' as they should be.[41] Through the metaphorical use of the verb 'exercised', Sheridan connects an individual's capability for social feelings to the idea of bodily exertion. The *Lectures on Elocution* sustain this somatic connection throughout, further arguing that by participating in spoken conversation, or by reading aloud and listening to others do the same, 'all the social feelings, all the delicate sensibilities of our nature, will be regulated, and duly *exercised*, by keeping good company' (emphasis mine).[42] Again the verb 'exercise' is used. The upkeep of such sociability is described as a duty, one regulated by the presence of observers. Current failure to do so, argues Sheridan, has resulted in 'calculated conversation', which is in a state 'like that of public elocution', and has rendered us more 'unsocial, or dissocial, than social beings'.[43] The individual ability to participate in polite conversation is linked to the broader national state of elocution. Perhaps the different prefixes ('un-' and 'dis-') imply different kinds of failures to be 'social': as well as deliberately *not* seeking the company of others (suggesting a reversal of the usual order, typically indicated by the prefix 'un'), it may also suggest a 'distancing' or even a 'removal' from company altogether (indicated by 'dis').[44] The exact difference Sheridan hopes to indicate by using both 'unsocial' and 'dissocial' is unclear from the context of the surrounding passage. What is clear, however, is that for Sheridan, social reading practices provide circles of acquaintance and friendship the opportunity to perform a polite sociability which can be looked upon by others with approval. Elocutionary writings such as Sheridan's engage in the culture of politeness described in the introduction by

[41] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. 184.
[42] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. 184.
[43] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. 184.
[44] See 'un-, *prefix*' and 'dis-, *prefix*', both in *OED Online*.

encouraging the aspiration to engage in polite conversation and governing how sociability is conducted.

Similarly, in his *A Discourse Delivered in the Theatre at Oxford,* Sheridan argues that 'we may plainly perceive the vast superiority which the former [speech] must have over the latter [writing]'.[45] Speech must lead because it cannot be separated from the body, as sound has 'the whole force of the natural' behind it, this dominance functioning as 'a natural power over the human frame'.[46] Speech has power over the body, simultaneously stemming from the body and appearing as an external force which controls its movements. Implicitly the 'nature' of speech contrasts with the artificiality of written text. Ironically, this argument includes the printed text of the *Discourse* itself. As the *Discourse* continues, Sheridan is again drawn to body-based metaphor, describing speech as 'the legible hand of nature'. [47] Nature is personified as a living being with a 'hand' allowing it to 'write' using the speaker's body. The word 'hand' unites both the sense of the body-part and the idea of handwriting: just as this written work is a form of speech, so too is speech a kind of writing. Sheridan returned to these somatic preoccupations in his later *Lectures on Elocution*. In the *Lectures on Elocution,* Sheridan places the 'living voice' in opposition to the 'dead letter', further locating the origins of speech within the body.[48] Such metaphors remind the reader or listener of the importance of physical presence to sociability and reading aloud; the reader (and his or her auditors) gains a greater sense of vivacity than if they were looking at the 'dead letter' alone.

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[45] Thomas Sheridan, *A Discourse Delivered in the Theatre at Oxford, in The Senate-House at Cambridge, and At Spring-Garden in London. By Thomas Sheridan, M. A. Being Introductory to His Course of Lectures on Elocution and the English Language.* (London: printed for A. Millar, *et al.,* 1759), p. 18.
[46] Sheridan, *A Discourse*, p. 22.
[47] Sheridan, *A Discourse*, pp. 18-19.
[48] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. xii.

For Sheridan, humanity's tendency towards sociability is actively prohibited by silent reading. In 'Dissertation II' of his *Lectures on Elocution*, Sheridan contends that man should seek to be a social creature rather than a solitary one. Because of the general desire for conviviality, mankind

> seeks out company for this reason, and delights in society: his social passions, thus constantly exercised, became predominant, and exert themselves vigorously on all proper occasions. Whilst the silent thinker, or the bookish man, finding that he can not express himself before company, in a manner pleasing to them, or satisfactory to himself, avoids society, retires to solitude where he indulges himself in thinking, to the utter starving of all his other faculties.[49]

Again, like a muscle to be exercised, one's social capabilities grow stronger with practice, allowing one to participate in social events with others. Conversely, the character of the 'bookish man' is placed in contrast to an idealised social being, his solitude branded as a selfish 'indulgence', resulting in a lack of cultivation or growth of his social connections. The failure of the 'silent thinker' is not just 'to himself' but also to others, the 'company' that he increasingly loses touch with due to his inability 'to express himself'. Sheridan's choice of somatic metaphor once again reminds the reader of the physical exertion involved in reading aloud, where the passions are 'exercised', and one may over-indulge in certain forms of reading that result in weakness and lassitude. Sheridan's consistent stress on the role of the body in reading aloud and elocution reveals the elocutionist's concern with how reading books can both facilitate and hinder social engagement with others, depending on the kind of reading being carried out. Reading aloud in company facilitates sociability in a way which silent reading cannot. Sheridan's printed versions of his spoken

[49] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. 176.

lectures are implicitly revealed to share this selfish silence, even as they were designed to facilitate reading aloud: the printed text is no replacement for the sociable orator.

Reconstructing Audiences in Print

Sheridan's focus on the body and the physical presence of the reader-aloud is mirrored in his representation of the significance of the audience's physical presence. The audience of the spoken versions of the printed lectures are constantly referred to, both in the main text of the lectures and in paratextual material contained within the printed book. For example, Sheridan's subscription lists can be seen as acting to evoke an ideal audience, preserving a sense of the spoken event in the printed text. Such inclusions attempt to reconstruct the sociable atmosphere of being physically present at one of Sheridan's lectures whilst also highlighting the limitations of the text in doing so. How far can the material text come to substitute for the physical audience so integral to public reading? Only so far, the printed versions of the lectures suggest. Reading aloud requires the physical presence of an audience in order to have any social value. In the absence of an audience, the printed text is used to evoke one, encouraging the reader to visualise sociable reading practices and the complex set of relationships between speakers and auditors. For Sheridan, there is a mutual duty between the performing reader and their audience to monitor one another and remain accountable to each other. The ideal reader must be continually aware of the needs of the audience and the space they inhabit; reciprocally, the audience must function as a guide to the reader. Once again, the printed lectures on elocution point to the dissonance between their printed forms, and past and potential performances.

Remnants of the lectures' previous lives as spoken events are evident in the main text of the lectures. At first, Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution* seem to be addressed only to their print readers, as the lecturer repeatedly refers to 'readers of but moderate discernment', or 'the bulk of my readers'.[50] This introduction, we can infer, was added to the written text for its print publication: later, in the main lectures, Sheridan refers to his audience in a way implying they are *listeners*, suggesting that the text of the *Lectures on Elocution* was based on Sheridan's speaking notes. When presenting an example text to read, the lecture reads, 'I shall now read the text in two ways', as though the audience may *hear* the difference between them. 'Read' in the context of a spoken lecture means 'read aloud'. Of course, a reader of the printed book is not in Sheridan's presence to hear the lecturer himself read, only having access to the printed text in front of them. Sheridan's *Lectures on the Art of Reading* also retain repeated references to 'my hearers'.[51] Use of the first person and the first person possessive pronoun ('my') highlights the role of a single speaker addressing a wider audience, whether that is the physical voice of 'Sheridan the lecturer' or the construction of Sheridan the author through the printed texts.

The paratextual material and organisation of material in Sheridan's publications further evokes his writings' oral past. Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution* and *Lectures on the Art of Reading* and the earlier *A Discourse Delivered in the Theatre at Oxford* are divided up into numbered 'discourses', preserving the organisation of information given at each oratorical performance. The choice of the word 'discourse' (rather than, say, 'chapters') is significant: the word retains resonances of speech as well as 'written discourse', having meanings

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[50] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution,* xii and xiii, respectively.
[51] For examples, see Thomas Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading,* 2 Vols. (London: printed for J. Dodsley, *et al.,* 1775): I.120 and II.34.

related to conversing and conversation.[52] The relation of the printed discourse and the oral performances is therefore ambiguous — the word seems to suggest that Sheridan may have preferred to read aloud from a substantial manuscript text, which is reproduced for readers in print. Alternatively, it may mean that the text has been written up based on the memory of multiple oral events. Walker's *Elements of Elocution*, in contrast, is described on its title page as 'the *Substance* of a Course of Lectures' (emphasis mine).[53] The title page claims that the content or substance of the lectures is preserved, but makes no claim of a resemblance of the written text to the delivered lectures. The substance may be a reconstruction, or it may be based on Walker's speaking notes for the lectures. Again, the phrasing is nebulous, perhaps to avoid making false claims regarding the relationship between the printed text and the prior lectures.

Sheridan also utilised other features of the material book to connect the printed lectures to the experience of attending a one live. Subscription lists can be read as a way of brandishing cultural authority and patronage; Sheridan also used them to evoke the audience of his lectures. Sheridan claims to have had 'not less than' 1700 subscribers for the printed lectures, but admits to some limitations of his records, as names were 'hastily taken down at the door' and some lists subsequently lost.[54] Sheridan provides this information to further validate his claim of the superiority of speech over writing by highlighting the numbers which his lectures attracted, and the identities of attendees.

Signing a subscription list also indicates a demand for an authorised printed version of the lectures. Yet the list, inserted later into the book (it is printed on separate,

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[52] See 'discourse, n.', *OED Online*.
[53] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I, title page.
[54] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. xv.

unnumbered leaves), cannot be taken as a complete indication of the market of Sheridan's books. It is 'notoriously difficult to define a market', and even taking a subscription list as a kind of survey cannot tell us everything about the class and income-structure of the people who expressed an interest in buying (and perhaps reading) Sheridan's book.[55] Philippa Spoel has offered an analysis of Sheridan's subscription list for the *Lectures*, noting that from the titles of the people named, we can see that his audience included a mix of the middling professional orders with some members of the landed gentry, and 'ranged from the highly learned to the polite reading public'.[56] There were numerous instances of the titles 'Mr' and 'Rev', and a few instances of 'Esq', 'Sir', 'Countess' and 'Lady'. As well as this, names such as 'Mr Campbell', 'Dr Fordyce', 'Hon. Lord Kaims', and 'Dr Smith' probably indicate the presence at Sheridan's lectures of 'an impressive component of the eighteenth-century scholarly and literary community'.[57] Yet, as Michael F. Suarez reminds us, lists of subscribers do not necessarily indicate readership.[58] This is because for many people, subscribing may have been more an exercise of patronage than a desire to actually read the book: 'Subscribing is at once a form of conspicuous consumption and of public approbation in a way that conventional retail purchasing is not.' Consequently, Suarez concludes, subscription lists may be taken to reflect 'a more affluent clientele than the readership of the book as a whole'. [59] The list also displays the names of people Sheridan wanted to advertise came to listen to him speak, reinforcing the superior social cachet that

[55] John Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), p. 33.
[56] Spoel, 'Rereading the Elocutionists', p. 62.
[57] Spoel, 'Rereading the Elocutionists', p. 62, n. 46.
[58] That said, in the case of the Sheridan's lectures, subscription lists do indicate audience as subscribers had to be physically present to write their names on the lists, unless they had others do it for them. See Michael F. Suarez, 'The Production and Consumption of the Eighteenth-Century Poetic Miscellany', in *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays*, ed. Isabel Rivers (London: Leicester University Press, 2001), pp. 217-252.
[59] Suarez, 'The Production and Consumption of the Eighteenth-Century Poetic Miscellany', p. 220.

accompanied reading aloud and oratorical displays. This idealised audience is created by merging lists of names of attendees at multiple events, encouraging readers of the printed list to picture an eminent audience present to hear the elocutionist. Such a list acts to rebut contemporary criticisms of elocutionary teaching (such as those in Foote's satirical plays) which present elocution as a tool for destabilising class distinctions: Sheridan's constructed subscription-list-cum-audience-register is affluent. The list also highlights the inefficacy of the printed text (essentially, its own ineffectuality) in evoking sociability – the text is no replacement for the large collection of elite figures that Sheridan claims his lectures have attracted in the past.

The construction of the subscription list also supports another of Sheridan's arguments for the superiority of speech over the written word. While there can only be one silent reader of a book at a time, of a speech, 'many hundreds may be made partakers at one and the same time'.[60] Here, in *A Discourse,* Sheridan conveniently omits the fact that print runs of texts may have run into several hundreds, significantly enlarging the possible audience of a printed text. This was especially the case for books (like Sheridan's) printed by subscription, where print runs of over five-hundred could be achieved.[61] Sheridan deliberately misrepresents the figures to propagate his own agenda: advertising his own skills as a lecturer. In distinguishing so sharply between writing and speaking, Sheridan also neglects to mention that people may have read his book (like any other) aloud, albeit to smaller audiences than those Sheridan and Walker were able to attract at the Universities and theatres. Yet for Sheridan, using a book for instruction means reading it silently.

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[60] Sheridan, *A Discourse*, p. 18.
[61] See Michael F. Suarez, 'The Business of Literature: The Book Trade in England from Milton to Blake', in *A Companion to Literature from Milton to Blake*, ed. David Womersley (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 131-147.

Despite his lectures, 'readers shall continue to search for that in books, which it is beyond the power of books to teach'.[62] The lecture's printed form ironically attests to the truth of this statement. The sharp distinction the elocutionist draws between silent reading and speech leaves Sheridan offering his reader a book that makes false claims.

Moving beyond the social networks represented by Sheridan's subscription lists, the printed lectures also encourage readers to think about their own network of acquaintance. Both Sheridan and Walker recommend that friends may be utilised to aid oratorical instruction, implicitly compensating for the limitations of the printed text in fostering sociability. For example, Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution* instruct readers to practise in a performance space where possible. While trying to achieve the appropriate speaking volume, the reader should practise 'in the hearing of a friend' in 'a large room', so that the chosen friend may offer advice and commentary on the amateur's performance.[63] Similarly, in *Elements of Elocution* Walker suggests that readers should study alone 'before a glass' and then practise 'before a few friends, whose candour and judgement we can rely on'.[64] First, readers are encouraged to look upon themselves performing, acting as their own monitors. After some practice a few chosen friends should be admitted to witness the performance. Readers should be able to trust their friends' guidance, for the good of both the reader and their (present and future) auditors. Conversely, good friends are ones who help their friends to perform their best. Friendship is therefore intimately related to reading aloud; initial audiences are to be chosen based on trust.

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[62] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. x.
[63] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution,* p. 86.
[64] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: II.265.

The reader should therefore be mindful of the impact of their reading methods and environment on how they read and how their audience perceives them. Yet Sheridan also argues that the audience needs to provide ready criticism to readers who fail to perform adequately. Sheridan suggests in *A Discourse* that readers need to feel that there is a possibility of social castigation if they do not read in an acceptable manner. While 'it is reckoned a great disgrace for a gentleman to spell ill', and not 'to speak or read ill', these are still 'defects' in need of correction.[65] The responsibility of judgement should be collective; failure to be a good reader 'ought to excite universal indignation' from others.[66] Without this fear of public criticism, 'a man shall rise up in a public assembly, and, without the least mark of shame, deliver a discourse to many hundred auditors, in such disagreeable tones, and unharmonious cadences, as to disgust every ear'.[67] Readings that do not adhere to Sheridan's standards of elocution should result in feelings of 'shame'. The concept of shame, feeling embarrassment by the consciousness of wrong behaviour, is the flipside of the appeal of public performance: everyone seeking social approbation also risks being castigated for their delivery. The reader, therefore, is required to be self-possessed and self-aware, but this can only happen in response to the authority of others in the same social group. After all, readings that make 'improper and false use of emphasis, as to conceal or pervert the sense', are permitted to occur all the time 'without fear of any consequential disgrace'.[68] Audiences need to make speakers accountable for the quality of their performances without fear of being considered impolite. Sheridan makes a similar argument in his *Lectures on Elocution,* where he notes that 'blemishes and defects' in speech

[65] Sheridan, *A Discourse*, p. 24.
[66] Sheridan, *A Discourse*, p. 25.
[67] Sheridan, *A Discourse*, p. 25.
[68] Sheridan, *A Discourse*, p. 25.

are often 'obvious only to strangers', but that 'they in good manners will not mention them'.[69] Friends can be too forgiving. The French, conversely, have no such reservations according to Sheridan: 'On the contrary, they are always ready, with the utmost politeness, to set people right, whenever they call into any mistakes.'[70] The role of the audience is to be a corrective force. Such monitoring need not be seen as at odds to notions of politeness — in fact, it can help 'set people right'. As well as this, amateur performers should fear the castigation of their audiences as much as professionals do. Public reading had high social stakes, demanding 'correct' modes of behaviour and active participation from auditors as well as performers.

The printed lectures offer scholars insight into the complex operation of social interaction in the period. The audiences for oratorical events imagined by the lectures are conceptualised as sophisticated groups, where the role of auditor — as well as the orator — is defined in relation to normative expectations surrounding reading practices. Oratorical performance was designed to knit these groups together by providing readers with the opportunity to display their social skills as well as their elocutionary ones. The lectures in their printed forms draw on kinds of social authority which were present at the oratorical events they claim to represent, and the oratorical events which they hope to prompt. The lectures constructed social networks to evoke a sense of sociability, both through Sheridan's representation of his lectures' audiences using the subscription list and through his representation of his readers' networks of friendship and acquaintance. Consequently, the lectures continually draw attention to the limitations of their printed

[69] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. 26.
[70] Sheridan, *Lectures on Elocution*, p. 38.

forms in fostering social connection: they can only ever gesture backwards to past oratorical and social events, or forwards to potential ones.

Rejecting the Authority of the Printed Text?

The elocutionists assigned real-life performance a superior value to print-based records of performances, even as they made money from printed texts. As we have seen in the previous section, they utilised parts of the book form to compensate for the limitations of print in evoking the sociability of the spoken lecture. Yet this was not the full extent of the elocutionists' interest in the material book. On the contrary, Sheridan and Walker were highly invested in how the features of the text, as presented in the physical book, could impact a spoken performance. Their elocutionary theories explicitly address contemporary methods of textual production, paying close attention to the mutability of punctuation and the difference it can make to textual interpretation and performance. For the elocutionists, the conditions of textual manufacture altered the text to such a degree that it required editing by the reader. As a result, Sheridan's and Walker's theories of reading construct reading aloud as a form of textual criticism, where the reader has to correct the text as it appears in print. A successful reading is therefore one that acknowledges the role – both positive and negative – that the features of the printed book play in the exercising of elocutionary skill.

Studies on the elocution movement and instruction manuals have emphasised the role of punctuation in attempting to provide the reader with instruction for reading.[71] Punctuation, in this way, is a sign-system which records and prompts sound, much like musical notation.[72] But in this period, the punctuation of printed works did not necessarily reflect the usage of the author: it could also indicate the preferences of the compositor or printer, and anyone else involved in the book-production process. Sometimes authors preferred to leave the issue of punctuation to their publishers: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, William Wordsworth and Charlotte Brontë all asked their respective publishers to correct the punctuation in their manuscripts.[73] Punctuation was not simply attributable to the author — others, such as typesetters and printers, might have 'final editorial control' over a work.[74] Both Sheridan and Walker suggest that readers should reject this editorial control in favour of their own agency as orators. This is because the conventions of eighteenth-century punctuation were seen as inadequate by the elocutionists in illustrating to readers how a text ought to be performed. Amateur orators where therefore encouraged to think about how they might reject the authority of the printed text.

The elocutionists take two different approaches to punctuation: Sheridan suggests that readers should remove punctuation from the printed text, whereas Walker suggests its addition. Sheridan recommends that readers practise reading their chosen text by copying it out without the punctuation or 'marking any stops'. As a result, 'the sense [of the text]

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[71] For example, see Noelle Chao, 'Listening to the Voice on the Page: Joshua Steele and Technologies of Recording', in *The Eighteenth Century*, 54:2 (2013): 245-261.
[72] For more on the possible functions of punctuation, see Malcolm Beckwith Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992), especially pp. 1-6.
[73] Parkes, *Pause and Effect,* p. 5.
[74] Naomi S. Baron, 'Commas and canaries: the role of punctuation in speech and writing', in *Language Sciences,* 23 (2001): 15-67 (p. 47).

alone must guide them'.[75] Sheridan suggests that a text's punctuation is of limited use to an orator of the text. The elocutionist ignores the possibilities of punctuation to indicate grammatical units of sense and 'resolve structural uncertainties in a text'.[76] Instead the reader is encouraged to pay more attention to the words used and less attention to the punctuation provided in print. Only when readers can give their 'whole attention to the meaning of the words' should the reader return to the printed book, being 'utterly regardless of the stops, as if they were not there'.[77] Such a method allows the reader to lose old 'associations of ideas' attached to certain punctuation marks, and their readings will be guided 'by the sense' of the passage alone.[78] In effect, the reader is expected to verbally punctuate the piece being read, rather than being reliant on the punctuation on the page. Even as the nominal purpose of the printed work is to instruct the reader, they are expected to exert their own authority over the printed text through their verbal performance. The autonomy of the reader is favoured over the material presentation of the text.

Walker, in contrast, encourages the editing of texts by *adding* punctuation marks and other forms of commentary to the printed text. The reader should 'analyse his composition' (as though he were the author), and 'mark it with the several passions, emotions, and sentiments it contains'.[79] Readers ought to add punctuation that indicates pauses where they consider it appropriate, as Walker claims that he 'can with confidence affirm, that not half the pauses are found in printing which are heard in the pronunciation of a good reader, or speaker'.[80] Walker suggests that printers are responsible for a lack of elocutionary

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[75] Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*: II.172.
[76] For more on the possible uses of punctuation, see Parkes, *Pause and Effect,* p. 4.
[77] Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*: II.172.
[78] Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*: II.182-3.
[79] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: II.412.
[80] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.111.

punctuation in printed texts as they have 'fear of crouding the line with points, and appearing to clog the sense to the eye', but that as a result 'the ear is often defrauded her unquestionable rights'. Printers have different priorities to elocutionists: they are concerned with the text's appearance on the page, and not with how their alterations to punctuation may affect reading performances. Walker provides reasons to question the punctuation found in printed texts: the marks are often non-authorial, and printers are concerned with the eye, not the ear. Walker, conversely, is more concerned with the instructional function of punctuation, where its presence in print aids the orator's performance of a text. Punctuation's ideal elocutionary function is to form the union between print and orality which elocutionary texts advocate.

Printers also had other concerns shaped by the practicalities of the printing business. Jobbing printers produced works that they had been commissioned to carry out, and did not always have access to complete founts as they were very expensive.[81] Punctuation would therefore be rationed across a publication to prevent it from running out. As Foote's satires, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, have highlighted, elocutionists such as Sheridan tended to favour long sentences with a lot of punctuation used to mark pauses. Given that printers only had access to a limited amount of marks such as commas (unless they borrowed them from elsewhere), we can begin to see why Walker accuses them of being parsimonious with punctuation. Yet the practice of readers inserting punctuation into printed books by hand was not unusual.[82] Such a method accords with Walker's proposed one: good readers add pauses that should be indicated by

[81] See James Raven, 'The Book Trades', in *Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays*, ed. Isabel Rivers (London: Leicester University Press, 2001), pp. 1-34.
[82] Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 5.

punctuation, but have instead been omitted by printers who have other priorities during the book-production process. Such a reading technique raises the question of who has the authority over a printed text: its compositors, who determine its physical form, or the reader, who exercises control over the oral presentation of the text? For the elocutionists, authority is located in the orator.

As well as considering the role of compositors, Walker also mentions proof-readers or 'correctors of the press'.[83] Walker argues that correctors do not tend to consider the impact of their choice of punctuation marks, and that they fail to choose colons and semicolons when a longer length of pause is required. He outlines his very specific set of rules for punctuation use. For example, Walker's rules claim that colons and semicolons indicate when a reader needs to use the 'falling inflection' when reading (rather than shifting up in tone, as when asking a question).[84] The choice of punctuation mark can therefore cause the reader to mistake the inflection required. Without frequent use of semi-colons, he argues, the performance will lack variety, as the reader sticks to a monotone occasionally accompanied with a rising inflection. For the importance of maintaining this falling inflection at the end of sentences, Walker refers his reader to 'the method approved and practised by the inimitable Mr. Garrick', who he claims varied his tones appropriately.[85] Readers are — perhaps inexplicably to the modern eye — asked to correct printed punctuation using the memory of a man whose performances they may not necessarily have seen. Again, Walker highlights a difference between his understanding of how

[83] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.184.
[84] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.184.
[85] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.242.

punctuation should be used (to indicate how a piece should be read aloud), and the understanding of others responsible for print production.

Walker accuses printers of further erroneous use of punctuation. He notes that 'it may not be improper to take notice of a very erroneous practice among printers, which is, substituting commas instead of the hooks which mark a parenthesis'.[86] For Walker, this change is significant, as 'hooks' (brackets) function as a useful piece of elocutionary punctuation. 'Slight as this fault may appear at first sight', he says,

> we shall find upon reflexion, that it is productive of great inconveniences; for if the parenthesis ought to be read in a lower tone of voice, and these hooks which enclose it are a mark of this tone, how shall a reader be able to understand this at sight, if the marks of the parenthesis are taken away and commas inserted in their stead?[87]

Replacing one form of punctuation with another alters the shift in tone that an orator might attempt to use when reading aloud, leading them to fail to read the text as it 'ought' to be read. Here is an underlying assumption that the writer's choice of punctuation, evident in the manuscript sent to the printers, indicates how the writer intended the text to be read aloud. Even making small changes such as this, Walker argues, makes a significant difference to the performer. All of this shows that Walker understood punctuation marks to have an elocutionary function, as well as a syntactical one. While punctuation 'clears and preserves the sense of a sentence, by combining those words together that are united in sense', it also 'directs to such pauses, elevations, and depressions of the voice, as not only mark the sense of the sentence more precisely, but give it a variety and beauty which recommends it to the ear'.[88] Alterations to punctuation can potentially alter the text's meaning, resulting in misinterpretation. Unlike Sheridan, Walker does not

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[86] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.350.
[87] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.350.
[88] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.3.

want to introduce a new system of punctuation with a solely elocutionary function, but rather suggests that punctuation should function as 'real embellishment' to textual meaning – it is not merely decorative.[89]

Punctuation, Walker acknowledges, has its limits, for '[t]he truth is, something relative to pronunciation can be conveyed by written marks, and something cannot'.[90] Printers of elocution books *can* begin to aid readers by using other methods, such as 'printing the emphatical words in Italics'.[91] Other contemporary writers also suggested italics as a possible solution to resolving textual ambiguities.[92] While Walker notes that the 'precise degree of emphatic force is not conveyed by printing', highlighting the limitations of printing's assistive function to readers, he concedes that printing some words in italics is 'not entirely useless'. Walker points out that this has been the practice of past 'books of instruction'.[93] Exactly what kind of book of instruction is not stated, but this is likely to refer to other kinds of elocution book, where passages are quoted and marked up, suggesting how they might be read aloud with emphasis placed in certain places.

Sheridan also perceived commonly-used punctuation to have its limits. The discourses following Sheridan's *Lectures on the Art of Reading* are marked using his own system of punctuation, where commas and full stops are not used to mark grammatical sense. Rather, changes in tone and pauses of varying length are indicated using other marks, as transliterated below:

> And our theàtrical repreſentations ſhew clèarly' how ne`ceſſary the language of tones' looks' and geſture' is' to diſplay the workings of the imagination' and all the internal

[89] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.3.
[90] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.114.
[91] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.114.
[92] See Vivienne Mylne, 'The Punctuation of Dialogue in Eighteenth-Century French and English Fiction', in *The Library*, 1:1 (1979): 43-61, especially p. 50. Mylne considers printers' conventions in England and France, including their use of italics, and readers' responses to different preferred uses.
[93] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: I.114.

> emotions of the mind" for' were the actors to deliver their parts' with the ſame una`nimated' mòtionleſs declamation' which is generally uſed in other places' who could endure to ſit out a play =[94]

These discourses are thus 'annotated' (in print) to provide more detailed instructions for a reader. The use of unusual marks defamiliarises the passage, forcing the reader to pay closer attention to the way these words and sentences should be pronounced than they would if the passage were written using commas and stops in the manner expected by eighteenth-century readers. The didactic content of the passage is also apt, as it considers how readers might learn from actors about speech-based performance. Broader matters of character and identity are intrinsically linked to the representation of speech and the features of the material book. When making appropriate use of the correct tones, looks and gestures to accompany the words being delivered, the imagined interior feelings of the character are displayed for the audience to see and experience. As well as this, the discourse once again reminds performers that they should not assume that spectators have unlimited patience with bad amateur performances. The hypothetical question (not marked with a question mark here due to Sheridan's temporary rejection of standard punctuation) prompts readers to position themselves in the place of the audience. Standard punctuation has been rejected by the elocutionist in favour of a new system of elocutionary punctuation designed to provide greater guidance to the performer.

Sheridan's and Walker's elocutionary theories paid extensive attention to the role of punctuation and the physical appearance of the printed text in aiding oral performance. In doing so, not only is the role of punctuation interrogated: the authority of the physical book begins to be questioned. The presentation of the text in print can offer the reader a

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[94] Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*: I.300.

limited amount of guidance in how to deliver it vocally, once again pointing to the uneasy relationship between print and performance which elocution manuals were forced to navigate.

Consider the Book in Hand

The elocutionists displayed a consistent reluctance to trust the material book. This attitude did not just reveal itself in their attitude towards the presentation of the printed text. It is also evident in their attitude towards the physical interactions between the book and the reader. The elocutionists instructed amateur orators not to be too reliant on the printed text, and in some cases encouraged them to reject it entirely in order to perform in the best way. Once again, the book form is shown to have limits in providing elocutionary instruction and evoking a sense of sociability at a reading event. Further to this, the formats of some books are shown to be more conducive to elocutionary performance than others.

Sheridan cautions against over-reliance on the printed book when performing. Lecture III of *Lectures on the Art of Reading* discusses how clergymen should speak to their congregations. On delivering a sermon, Sheridan notes, 'we usually find that the clergyman's eye is fixed on the book, and that he utters the words as a mere matter of form'.[95] Rather than paying attention to his congregation, they are ignored in favour of the book. For Sheridan, privileging the book in this way fails to create the 'truly Christian and affectionate address', which 'ought to be made with earnestness, and his eyes looking

[95] Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*: II.187.

around the whole congregation'.[96] Like the amateur reader, professional clergymen ought to practise reading in a sociable (and here, Christian) manner by paying attention to everyone present. Given that the intended audience of this book was not limited to clergymen, the advice here may have been also implicitly directed at other readers, of both secular and religious texts.

Sheridan later advocates clergymen 'lay aside the use of the book entirely' where possible, for 'it is impossible whilst the eye is on the book, that the heart can be upward, and therefore no earnest and fervent prayers can be produced'.[97] Again, the word 'earnest' is used: readers (and by extension, those in prayer during mass) should be sincere in their sentiments, and able to communicate them with others. The book, as conveyor of the printed text, is an object that blocks the successful communication of prayer by limiting the expressiveness of the body: the eye looks towards the book (presumably downwards, were the book on a lectern, or held in the hand), not to the audience, nor 'upwards' towards the divine. Yet again, the printed lectures attempt to undermine their very existence: while the extensive punctuation characterising Sheridan's prose suggests that the printed text should be treated as an authority on the intonation of delivery, the book discourages over-reliance on itself and other books like it. This tension characterises Sheridan's entire elocutionary oeuvre: the printed texts seek to establish themselves as coming from an authority on the subject in order to appear marketable, but at the same time, the point put forward in these texts is that public readers and speakers ought to have less dependency on the printed word during their performances.

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[96] Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*: II.187.
[97] Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading*: II.282.

A good reader should be able to create a shared feeling between themselves and their audience, whether it is a domestic one, or a public congregation in a church. Sheridan argues that the book's physicality may interfere with this, and that readers can improve by decreasing their reliance on the printed text. Walker makes a similar argument, noting that 'in reading much less action is required than in speaking'.[98] This is because physical interaction with the book limits one's ability to move when reading. When reading 'to a few persons only in private', Walker notes that

> we should accustom ourselves to read standing; that the book should be held in the left hand; that we should take our eyes as often as possible from the book, and direct them to those that hear us. The three or four last words at least of every paragraph, or branch of a subject, should be pronounced with the eye pointed to one of the auditors.[99]

As with Sheridan's instructions to clergymen, the domestic reader is encouraged to maintain eye-contact with his audience as 'often as possible'. Walker suggests that readers look a different spectator after delivering a section of a text, whether that is paragraphs evident in print, or when they judge there to have been a change in subject matter. Instructions such as this are part of the reason why Walker tends to be named as the 'leader' of the 'mechanical school' of elocution; he offers 'detailed rules concerning voice production, posture, and gesture'.[100] Because a familial audience in a domestic setting may be assumed to be fairly small, one can single out audience members due to their increased proximity with one another. Unlike Sheridan, however, Walker does not suggest that performers should attempt to be rid of the book entirely – depending on the material, and the reader's familiarity with it, it may be too difficult to recite. While the book may partially

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[98] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: II.266.
[99] Walker, *Elements of Elocution*: II.267.
[100] See Joan C. Beal, 'Walker, John (1732–1807)', in *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004). Web.

inhibit gesture, it is not appropriate for amateur performers to do away with the printed text entirely. After all, in Walker's ideal form of domestic reading, the book is 'held in the left hand', leaving the right for the use of expressive action. This supposes that the book may be held, and held open, by a single hand. Smaller books must be more suitably sized for this method of reading than larger ones. Of course, rather than considering the needs of a performing reader, book size was often chosen as a matter of economy: books with smaller leaves, using fewer sheets of paper were cheaper, helping to bring down the prices of longer works such as novels – or lectures on elocution.[101]

Yet Walker's description of the ideal reader's stance also draws from contemporary understandings of the ideal orator, and has direct parallels with illustrations of orators from the period. Take, for example, an engraving of Sheridan (Figure 2, below), showing Sheridan in his acting career, playing the eponymous character in Joseph Addison's *Cato* (1712).[102] The engraving represents the beginning of Act V Scene I, where Cato contemplates committing suicide, whilst '*in his hand [is] Plato's book on the Immortality of the Soul*'.[103]

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[101] Robert D. Hume, 'The Value of Money in Eighteenth-Century England: Incomes, Prices, Buying Power— and Some Problems in Cultural Economics', in *Huntington Library Quarterly,* 77:4 (2015): 373-416.

[102] [Unknown], *Mr Sheridan in the Character of Cato* (London: J. Wenman, 1776). Engraving. Victoria and Albert Museum, London: S.2099-2013.

[103] Joseph Addison, 'Cato', in *Bell's British Theatre* Vol. 3 (London: John Bell, 1776). Oxford: Bodleian Library, Mal. I 300(5), p. 59. There is currently no formal scholarly edition of Addison's *Cato*; a scholarly edition of the play edited by David F. Taylor will form part of the OUP edition of Addison's dramatic works (forthcoming). This edition of the play in *Bell's British Theatre* has been chosen here as it contains a similar engraving of 'Sheridan in the Character of Cato', depicting the same scene from the play and published in the same year as Figure 2. This image was one of the marketable features of the text: an advertisement for the series in the back of Bell's *Circulating Library Catalogue* lists Volume Three as containing 'Tragedies', and 'an elegant representation of Mr. Sheridan in Cato'. See John Bell, *A New Catalogue of Bell's Circulating Library* (London: [1778]). London: British Library, 11903.b.4, insert. For more on John Bell's use of theatrical portraits, see Aparna Gollapudi, 'Selling Celebrity: Actors' 'Portraits in Bell's Shakespeare and Bell's British Theatre', in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 36:1 (2012): 54-81.



Figure 2: *Mr Sheridan in the Character of Cato* (1776).
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Like Walker's description of the ideal reader, Sheridan's Cato holds the book in his left hand, as though reading, leaving the right for action – in this case, gesturing to the dagger with which he will later stab himself. The image presents Sheridan's Cato as the ideal orator by drawing on the conventions used by artists depicting the act of oration in the period. Orators were typically presented in profile, facing either to the left or right, with expressive hands outstretched, occasionally with a text in the left hand — this variant presenting the orator not just as a speaker but as a reader.[104] Walker, in his description of the ideal drawing-room orator, draws on the conventions of this imagery to instruct his readers on how to emulate these images and present themselves in a similar manner. Reading the engraving in this light, Sheridan's image comes to represent the intersections between classical orator (Cato), professional actor ('Mr. Sheridan in the Character of Cato'), and the accomplished public reader and teacher of elocution that he was by this time famous for being. The collapsing of these identities draws equivalence between modern celebrated orators and their classical antecedents. We can also see that smaller-format books, easily held open in one hand, are included as props for the orator to use – the reader, unlike the actor, not being expected to know large passages of text off by heart. In this image we begin to see how the orator could be figured as a *reader*, book in hand. Such readers should perform like actors, using codified gestures to convey certain passions.

The image presents the book as an actor's prop: the book is not responsible for instructing Cato's speech in the play. Yet in thinking of the book in this way — as a material object, present primarily for the associations with Plato which it brings — it is useful to

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[104] For examples of images of orators from the period, see John Hamilton Mortimer's drawing *An Orator Surrounded by Admirers* (1774). British Library, London: Binyon 1898-1907 29(8); or for satirical examples aimed at Charles James Fox, see [Unknown], *A Spirited Attack* [1780]. British Library, London: BM Satires 5755; and see J. Barrow (pub.), *The Parliament Sampson* (1784). British Library, London: BM Satires 6420.

consider the sizes of trade books in this period more generally, and trends in book sizes. Book catalogues are helpful sources for book-formats in the period. *A New Catalogue of Bell's Circulating Library* (1777), for example, lists all the books available for loan from the circulating library. Books are entered into the catalogue and are grouped, as the contents page reveals, first by size, and then by type or subject of book.[105] The exact measurements of the bound books are not given, but a sense of their relative size is conveyed through their categorisation. 'Poetry and Plays' have their own section under 'Octavo et Infra' (i.e. books of octavo-size or smaller), as do 'Miscellanies'. The two categories include books that modern scholars would not necessarily place under those respective headings; under 'Miscellanies' in octavo, books such as *Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Johnson's *Dictionary,* the entry 'Sheridan on Education' and multiple volumes of Locke's essays are also included, as well as expected titles such as *Beauties of English Prose* or *Joineriana, or the Book of Scraps*.[106] These last two titles imply the conventional 'miscellany' format of short extracts of writing (poetry or prose) collected together. Conversely, *The British Spouter* (1763), is included in 'Poetry and Plays' rather than 'Miscellanies'.[107] It becomes evident that the business of categorising books was anything but clear. Yet even with this taxonomy of books, which seems confusing to the modern eye, by looking at the catalogue it becomes evident that certain book sizes tend to be used for books on certain topics: plays, poetry and miscellanies are all much more numerous in the 'Octavo et Infra' section of Bell's *Catalogue*.[108] These books are all suited to amateur oratory and performance, given that

[105] Bell, *A New Catalogue*, contents page.
[106] See Bell, *A New Catalogue,* pp. 112-156.
[107] Bell, *A New Catalogue,* p. 92.
[108] 'Poetry and Plays' under 'Quarto', fits on to a single page (p. 21), whereas the same category under 'Octavo et Infra' is 22 pages long; 'Miscellanies' has its own sub-category under 'Octavo et Infra' and is 44 pages long.

poetry and miscellanies containing extracts are short enough for amateur performance (and are often collected for that purpose), and plays tend to be designed for performance from composition. Consequently, we can see why Walker, in his description of the ideal reader, can assume that a reader is able to hold a book containing potential performance-texts open with a single hand: books containing content more likely to be chosen to be read as part of a performance tended to be published in smaller formats.

The elocutionists were therefore highly sensitive to the kinds of texts from which aspiring orators were likely to read. The physical features of such books, partly determined by the working conditions of the literary marketplace, were seen as being potentially conducive to acting out ideal forms of oration, where the reader is able to adopt the poses of orators represented in contemporary visual culture. Yet the supremacy of the book as a technology for prompting oratorical performance was also interrogated by Sheridan and Walker, who were once again aware of the material book's potential to inhibit the kinds of sociability that social public reading was meant to foster.

Conclusions

In understanding these theories of reading and of elocution, we can begin to see how previous scholarship with the eighteenth-century elocution movement has been limited in its concern with rhetorical theories and their classical roots. By instead considering the role of the material book it becomes clear that the two elocutionists' theories could only be developed in their specific book-manufacturing culture. This chapter has proven that their work has value by exploring how the process of reading aloud is tied to the circumstances created by commercial processes. The spoken word and printed text intersect in the act of

reading aloud, and consequently the relationship between orality and print is heavily altered by the circumstances in which the two exist.

Reconsidering eighteenth-century elocutionary theories in light of the conditions of textual production provides the intellectual context for the rest of this thesis. These theories, as expressed by Sheridan and Walker, identify and enact the themes which will be found throughout: the tensions between print and orality and the limitations of the physical book in instructing sociable reading practices. Such conflicts are also evident in other kinds of elocutionary work designed to cater to readers' aspirations towards improved elocution, including elocutionary miscellanies, school textbooks designed to teach parliamentary oratory, and spouting collections. In understanding the elocution movement's complex conceptualisation of social reading practices and its emphasis on the limitations of the book form in offering elocutionary instruction, we can begin to rethink the significance of other iterations of elocutionary theory.

Chapter 2: Elocutionary Miscellanies

'they inflame young readers with the vanity of reciting'

— Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799)

Criticism of Miscellanies, Elocutionary and Otherwise

As we saw in the previous chapter, elocutionary theories had to justify their life in print. Printed lectures existed almost contrary to their instructional purposes, which focused on reinforcing the superiority of oral performance over the printed word. Other iterations of elocutionary theory, such as those found in elocutionary miscellanies, also had to navigate the difficult relationship between print and performance, albeit in slightly different ways to printed elocutionary lectures. Elocutionary miscellanies were collections of extracts of poetry and prose designed for reading aloud and the practising of one's elocutionary skills. A useful way of thinking about them might be as a sub-genre of miscellany.[1] These miscellanies often contained translations of the classics into English as well as native verse. Like 'elocution manual', the term 'elocutionary miscellany' is a retrospective one, but it is beneficial for grouping texts together for comparison. Texts were assembled for the purpose of reading aloud, as often indicated by their titles, subtitles, prefaces, and other paratextual material.[2]

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[1] The term 'miscellany' is preferred here; for discussion of the terms 'miscellany' and 'anthology', see Carly Watson, 'Verse Miscellanies in the Eighteenth Century', in *Oxford Handbooks Online* (2016); and Jennifer Batt, 'Eighteenth-Century Verse Miscellanies', in *Literature Compass,* 9:6 (2012): 394-405 (especially pp. 395-6). Unlike 'anthology', the word 'miscellany' can encompass collections that include material that was both old and new at the time the compiler gathered them.

[2] Examples of texts which may be defined as elocutionary miscellanies through their prefatory materials include: John Drummond's *A Collection of Poems for Reading and Repetition* (1762); William Enfield's *The Speaker* (1774) and it's 'sequel'

In getting their readers to think about both the corporeal and social aspects of reading, elocutionary miscellanies attempted to counter contemporary arguments which saw them as encouraging superficial modes of reading. As well as participating in the eighteenth-century debate surrounding the role of elocution, elocutionary miscellanies also had to defend themselves against criticisms surrounding the miscellany format. Elocutionary miscellanies, I argue in this chapter, explored the tensions between the print form and oral performance by encouraging readers to both imagine and physically act out sociable forms of reading, collapsing the print/orality dichotomy which would see the print form divorced from oral performance.

In the past two decades there has been renewed critical attention to miscellanies and miscellany culture.[3] In particular, the DMI (http://digitalmiscellaniesindex.org) and ECCO have offered new digital access to texts which rarely exist in modern editions. The DMI provides a detailed picture of the range and composition of eighteenth-century miscellanies in particular; much recent scholarship draws upon it.[4] Particularly relevant to this project is Barbara M. Benedict's 2003 work on 'anthologies', her preferred term for books of this kind. Benedict regards miscellanies as evidence for 'the great shift in the nature of literature over the early modern period from an oral to a printed form, and from

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Exercises in Elocution (1780); John Walker's *Exercises for Improvement in Elocution* (1777); Richard Turner's *The Young Orator* (1783); Vicesimus Knox's *Elegant Extracts* (both of prose, 1784, and poetry, ?1789); Mary Weightman's *The Juvenile Speaker* (1787); Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Female Reader* (1789, published under the name 'Mr Cresswick'); *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method of Reading and Reciting English Poetry* (1796, compiled by an anonymous editor); John Wilson's *Principles of Elocution, and Suitable Exercises; or, Elegant Extracts, in Prose and Verse* (1798); and *The Reader, or Reciter* (1799, also compiled by an anonymous editor). This list is by no means exhaustive.

[3] Jennifer Batt has summarised the scholarship on miscellanies prior to 2012. See Batt, 'Eighteenth-Century Verse Miscellanies': 394-405. Beyond 2012, a 2017 issue of *Eighteenth-Century Life* was dedicated to articles drawing on the DMI. See Abigail Williams and Jennifer Batt (eds.), *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 41:1 (2017). Of particular relevance in the issue is Abigail Williams, '"A Just and Graceful Elocution": Miscellanies and Sociable Reading", in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 41:1 (2017): 179-196.

[4] See Abigail Williams, 'The Digital Miscellanies Index: Mapping an Evolving Poetic Culture', in *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies,* 13:4 (2013): 165-168; and also Carly Watson, 'Verse Miscellanies in the Eighteenth Century'. Watson has a book (forthcoming) on 'Miscellanies and the Conversation of Culture'.

an elite to a mass-produced commodity'.[5] I contest the former part of this claim by considering elocutionary miscellanies as texts that form sites where the dichotomy of 'orality' and 'print' is collapsed. Challenging the assumption that such a 'shift' occurred, we can see how the relationship between print and orality in the period was not considered to occur irreversibly in one direction. Contrary to Benedict's assertion that 'the anthology is an entirely printed genre', where 'oral genres' are transformed into 'distinct, printed forms', elocutionary miscellanies are evidence that printed forms were also produced in order to prompt oral performances. Oral texts, therefore, can be transformed into print — *and* have other lives as ephemeral speech acts. There is a 'reciprocity between the substance of the "oral" and "literate" realms' which allows movement back and forth across the orality/literacy divide.[6] As eighteenth-century readers often read texts of all kinds aloud, this idea applies to miscellanies other than those explicitly concerned with elocutionary education.

My arguments in this chapter are, of course, concerned with elocutionary miscellanies in particular. This chapter explores the way in which miscellanies represented reading practices and the nature of sociable reading.[7] The compilers of elocutionary miscellanies used the print form to mediate both these technical and social aspects of reading, and their editorial choices can tell us much about the plurality of underlying values and assumptions about reading and readers that existed.[8] Elocutionary miscellanies were

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[5] Barbara M. Benedict, 'The Paradox of the Anthology: Collecting and *Différence* in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *New Literary History*, 34:2 (2003): 231- 256 (p. 235).
[6] See Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 39.
[7] Not enough attention has been paid to the role of miscellanies in attempting to shape the way poetry and prose were read in the eighteenth century; see Claudine van Hensbergen, 'Unlocking The Cabinet of Love: Rochester, Reputation, and the Eighteenth-Century Miscellany', in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 41:1 (2017): 56-75. Hensbergen focuses her enquiry on poetic miscellanies.
[8] On the importance of accepting this lack of uniformity, see Paddy Bullard, 'Digital Editing and the Eighteenth-Century Text: Works, Archives, and Miscellanies, in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 36:3 (2012): 57-80 (p. 65).

compiled to encourage social reading practices for a variety of readers, male and female, older and younger — albeit mostly for middle-class readers. The chapter begins by exploring how readers were encouraged to see elocutionary miscellanies as fitting into a canon of elocutionary texts. These books situated their origins both positively and negatively in relation to the theories of the elocution movement discussed in the previous chapter. Miscellanies were then able to carve out increasingly specific niches in the print marketplace, justifying the existence of elocutionary texts in the miscellany format. I argue that elocutionary miscellanies encouraged readers to cultivate reading as an accomplishment in two ways: firstly, by getting readers to practise their physical reading skills by providing texts deliberately designed to stretch the reader's ability to perform; and secondly, by placing the reader in a variety of social situations where reading is used — or misused — to cultivate friendships and other relationships. In paying attention to both the technical and social aspects of reading, readers of elocutionary miscellanies were expected to adopt a highly self-aware approach to the development of their own reading practices.

Marketing Miscellanies

Eighteenth-century elocutionary miscellanies varied in cost and paper quality, but tended towards smaller formats — octavos and duodecimos. They also varied in length, from just under one hundred pages for shorter works, to over five hundred pages long.[9] Elocutionary

[9] Richard Turner's *The Young Orator* (1783) contains 92 pages, including prefatory material; on the slightly longer side - to say the least - Vicesimus Knox's *Elegant Extracts* (of prose, 1784, and poetry, ?1789) are both over five hundred pages long. Later editions of both books exceeded seven hundred pages! See Richard Turner, *The Young Orator (*London: printed by R. Hindmarsh, No. 32, Clerkenwell-Close, 1783). Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet.A5f.1781; Vicesimus Knox, *Elegant Extracts: or useful and entertaining passages in prose* (London: printed for Charles Dilly, 1784).

miscellanies approached their subject in diverse ways: some, such as William Enfield's *Exercises in Elocution* (1780), the 'sequel' to *The Speaker* (1774), began with a short preface, whereas others, such as the second edition of Knox's *Elegant Extracts* (1784) in prose, contained higher volumes of prefatory material. Knox's book contains multiple prefaces and a lengthy extract from one of Hugh Blair's lectures on elocution, before finally moving on to material for reading aloud. The editors of elocutionary miscellanies such as these were acutely aware of the market for elocutionary texts. Consequently, the prefatory material of such books shows evidence of a preoccupation with other elocutionary works, in relation to which they positioned themselves. The market for elocutionary miscellanies is shown to be self-generating.

The inclusion of prefatory material in elocutionary miscellanies allowed compilers to position their reader's elocutionary endeavours in relation to a line of modern elocutionary history. Generally, this history was named in the collections in two forms: firstly, the works of the elocutionists, such as Thomas Sheridan and John Walker, and secondly, through the naming of other elocutionary miscellanies, particularly Enfield's *The Speaker*. In identifying their predecessors, elocutionary miscellanies were able to legitimise their existence in print by creating a canon of works in relation to which they could be placed and recognised. Yet this notion of relation is not inherently positive: some elocutionary miscellanies sought to emphasise their own marketability by drawing the reader's attention to their other selling points, defined in contradistinction to their predecessors' perceived shortcomings. My argument here is contrary to Roberta Mullini's 2018 article on 'Reading Aloud in Britain in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century',

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British Library, London: 12269.d.4; and Vicesimus Knox, *Elegant Extracts: or useful and entertaining pieces of poetry* (London: printed for Charles Dilly, [?1789]). British Library, London, England, 1560/59.

which discusses the theoretical context of elocutionary miscellanies.[10] Mullini sees elocutionary miscellanies as publications 'embodying' the principles of the elocutionary movement. This view is upheld by the underlying assumption that these books were always positioned *positively* in relation to the elocutionary movement, or that the elocution movement was their sole source of inspiration. Conversely, I argue that while some elocutionary miscellanies did place themselves as closely-aligned representatives of elocutionary theory, others wished to present themselves as distinct from it.[11] In doing so, elocutionary miscellanies sought to carve out for themselves an increasingly specialised segment in the literary marketplace, and defend themselves against criticisms that they encouraged superficial modes of reading due to their commercial interests.

For an example of this particular criticism of miscellanies, consider Hannah More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799). The *Strictures* summarise her views of contemporary female education.[12] The work presents miscellanies as a common source of educational readings for female children and adults, but takes a swipe at the commercialism of elocutionary miscellanies in particular. More argues that these books can be found everywhere, in great abundance, much to the detriment of their readers: 'The swarms of *Abridgements, Beauties* and *Compendiums*, which form too considerable a part of a young lady's library, may be considered in many instances as an infallible receipt for making a superficial mind.'[13] Collections of these books — which are in themselves collections of

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[10] Roberta Mullini, 'Reading Aloud in Britain in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century: Theories and Beyond', in *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, 7 (2018): 157-176.

[11] This is not the case for all kinds of miscellanies. See Michael F. Suarez, 'Trafficking in the Muse: Dodsley's Collection of Poems and the Question of Canon', in *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*, eds. Alvaro Ribeiro and James G. Basker (Oxford: OUP, 1996), pp. 297-313. Suarez argues that it was not in Dodsley's interest for the miscellany to be 'representative' of English literature - rather, Dodsley wanted it to be 'distinctive, even exclusive' (p. 312).

[12] See S. J. Skedd, 'More, Hannah (1745–1833), writer and philanthropist', in *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2014). Web.

[13] Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education,* 2 vols. (London: printed for T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1799): I.160.

literary material — form a recipe ('receipt') for making a young lady a superficial reader. More does not use the nouns that modern scholars would commonly use to denote collections of literary material, such as 'collection' or 'miscellany', but her description makes clear that she has these kinds of books in mind:

> A few fine passages from the poets (passages perhaps which derived their chief beauty from their position and connection) are huddled together by some extract-maker, whole brief and disconnected patches of broken and discordant materials, while they inflame young readers with the vanity of reciting, neither fill the mind nor form the taste: and it is difficult to trace back to their shallow sources the hackney'd quotations of certain *accomplished* young ladies.[14]

For More, the shortcomings of such collections of extracts are two-fold: firstly, the extracts are 'disconnected patches', 'broken and discordant', so that the 'beauty' of a passage is lost without its context within a larger work. Secondly, she suggests that they encourage young readers to seek 'the vanity of reciting' — of oral performance — for an audience. Rather than seeking to gain an increased understanding of the beauty of a passage in its entirety, readers of extracts tend to use them as basic matter to fuel their vanity-motivated performances. For More, such pieces lack value, as the sources provided by these books are 'shallow'. She extends the metaphor further: readers 'have drawn it [the text] from its true spring, the original works of the author from which some beauty-monger has severed it.'[15] It is as though the text has been cut from its true course, the verb 'to sever' emphasising the unnaturalness of this action — how might one 'sever' the flow of water? Yet 'some extract-maker', or 'some beauty-monger' manages it — one of many such producers and sellers of poetic miscellanies, who prioritise profit over propriety when cutting up texts. The suffixes 'maker' and 'monger' (usually accompanied by prefixed nouns, often

[14] More, *Strictures*: I.161.
[15] More, *Strictures*: I.161.

commodities) indicate some element of manufacture and commerce, contrasting with the natural 'source' of More's metaphorical river of poetry. The word 'monger', in particular, has connotations with 'petty or disreputable' trade.[16] More's view of miscellanies presents them as volumes designed to feed the narcissism of young women desperate to show off their reading skills in front of others. Tradesmen (editors, publishers, booksellers) are more than happy to meet this demand. As in the case of the elocution teachers discussed in the last chapter, the commercialism surrounding the elocutionary book trade is at issue here. For More, there is an inappropriate association between the social aspiration of amateur orators and the profiteering 'mongers' who would seek to profit from them.

Yet, taking More's advice, and considering her remarks in the wider context of the *Strictures*, it becomes evident that her criticism of miscellanies is more complex. Selecting extracts means that readers can access 'valuable works' which might otherwise in 'their bulk would be inaccessible to a great number of readers'.[17] Rather, it is 'in the *use* of abridgements' where error occurs. These books 'are put systematically into the hands of youth, who have, or ought to have leisure for the works at large; while abridgements seem more immediately calculated for persons in more advanced life'.[18] Miscellanies are 'useful for persons immersed in the business of the world who have little leisure for voluminous reading'.[19] By More's reckoning, miscellanies are suited to older, more experienced readers, preferably men; women should take the time to peruse the entire work.[20] Traders in miscellanies, however, had no such reservations about marketing their books to a variety

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[16] See 'monger, n.1.', *OED Online*.
[17] More, *Strictures*: I.162.
[18] More, *Strictures*: I.163.
[19] More, *Strictures*: I.163.
[20] Criticisms surrounding such 'incorrect' modes of reading are not unique to More - cf. contemporary criticisms directed at novel reading and readers. See Abigail Williams, *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), pp. 210-11.

of readers including women and children by emphasising their moral and educational use. In doing so, they countered accusations such as More's that elocutionary miscellanies encouraged superficial and unnatural forms of reading.

Elocutionary miscellanies borrowed from the writings and performances of the writers of the elocution movement to lend their work social and intellectual weight. This relationship, however, was different to the relationship between the printed lectures and their performance counterparts discussed in the previous chapter; printed miscellanies had a more tangential relationship to the print and performance events of the elocution movement. For example, the earliest of these — by almost two decades — is John Drummond's *A Collection of Pieces for Reading and Repetition* (1762). Published in the same year as Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution*, Drummond's collection contains mostly 'pieces that were read by Mr SHERIDAN at his public lectures in Edinburgh' in 1761.[21] Drummond elaborates on his relationship with Sheridan no further; presumably he attended at least some of Sheridan's lectures in order to make a note of the texts Sheridan used, although he does not appear in the subscription list for the printed lectures.[22] Drummond's miscellany therefore draws on the social and intellectual cachet of being able to have attended Sheridan's lectures in Edinburgh first-hand and pass on the 'pieces' used in them to potential buyers and readers. Drummond's miscellany is the one most directly (and most positively) connected to Sheridan's lectures, albeit in their oral, rather than printed, format. Like the printed versions of these lectures, Drummond utilises the miscellany form to refer

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[21] John Drummond, *A Collection of Poems for Reading and Repetition* (Edinburgh: printed for the editor, 1762), pp. vii-viii. This mention of Sheridan is also noted in Louise Curran, 'Reading Milton in Eighteenth-Century Poetic Miscellanies', in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 41:1 (2017): 32-55. (p. 41).

[22] There is a 'George Drummond, Esq.', but no John Drummond. See subscription list insert to Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* (London: printed by W. Strahan, for A. Millar *et al.*, 1762). Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet. A5 d.433.

back to exclusive and elite social occasions, thus giving his collection greater value through association with an oratorical event.

Other compilers preferred to draw on alternative teachers of elocution. Knox's *Elegant Extracts* (in prose) directs readers to the printed works of Hugh Blair. The second edition of the book — differing from the first — contains an 'Introduction on Pronunciation, or Delivery, from Dr. Blair's Lectures', which Knox considers to contribute greatly to the '*book in its improved state*', the second edition being '*under great obligation to the works of* DR. BLAIR' and a general recommendation of his '*Sermons and Lectures at large*'.[23] Knox's *Elegant Extracts,* in turn, seems to have influenced John Wilson's *Principles of Elocution and Suitable Exercises* (1798), which has the subtitle: *or, Elegant Extracts, in Prose and Verse*. Wilson, however, does not explicitly mention Knox as the source of his inspiration. Instead, he notes that '[s]everal of the ideas, indeed, are borrowed from Blair, Walker, Fordyce, and other eminent writers on eloquence.'[24] Sheridan is not mentioned, except as the writer of a pronouncing dictionary. Wilson does not provide an explicit outline of his 'borrowings', but from his phrasing it is clear that he tends to view the ideas of his 'eminent writers' positively, although how he synthesised or contrasted their ideas is unclear.

Other elocution books offer a critique of previous iterations of elocutionary theory, making a claim for their uniqueness while doing so. For example, the anonymously-compiled *The Reader, or Reciter* (1799) looks back on several decades of elocutionary writings and finds them inadequate. According to the editor of the volume, 'the multifarious methods to improve the art of reading and speaking have almost wholly failed to

[23] Knox, *Elegant Extracts* (Prose, 1784), p. iv.
[24] John Wilson, *Principles of Elocution, and Suitable Exercises; or, Elegant Extracts, in Prose and Verse* (Edinburgh: printed by Ja. Pillans & Sons, and sold by the author, *et al.*, 1798), p. iii.

accomplish the end proposed'.[25] The editor uses this to justify the existence of his own volume, for as a result 'another attempt, new in its principles, is now offered to the Public'.[26] These 'new principles' include heavily annotating texts with directions (akin to stage directions) for readers to follow — a scheme similar to that adopted by the anonymous compiler of *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method* (1796). The editor of *The Reader, or Reciter* suggests that followers of Sheridan can never give truly affecting performances:

> If the scholar's only object be only that of rendering himself correct, he must follow the instructions laid down by the late Mr. SHERIDAN, and others in the same way; but if these have already been pursued by him, and he still find himself deficient of that attractive power to engage the attention, and afford gratification to himself and those who are his hearers, he may, in all probability, gain some advantage by attentively perusing the plan pursued in the following small Volume.[27]

Whether or not the editor means Sheridan's rules were 'laid down' in print or during his performances is unclear. Given that this book was published after Sheridan's death, however, access to Sheridan's teachings could only have occurred in print by this date. Regardless, according to the editor, 'correctness' as defined by the rules of the elocution movement is not enough to give a good reading performance. To be a mere follower of Sheridan's rules, it is suggested, is insufficient — the reader would be better off purchasing this book and learning from it how to be a truly engaging reader. In making this assertion, the book places itself at the end (at the time) of a long line of works attempting to improve the state of the nation's elocution. It is the failure of this movement which, the editor claims, results in the need for the present work: for most people have 'far from gaining the summit of excellence, have rarely reached the level of mediocrity'.[28] Buyers and readers of

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[25] [Unknown], *The Reader, or Reciter* (London: printed for T. Cadell jun. and W. Davies, Strand, 1799), p. iii.
[26] *The Reader, or Reciter*, p. iii.
[27] *The Reader, or Reciter*, p. iv.
[28] *The Reader, or Reciter*, p. 138.

this book will actually be able to impress their audiences if they can move beyond the written instructions of the elocutionists. The *Reader, or Reciter* paradoxically reinforces its place within a canon of elocutionary texts whilst simultaneously suggesting the need to move beyond them.

In their desire to emphasise performance over book-learning, some elocutionary miscellanies refashioned the elocutionists as actors rather than the writers of instructional works. For example, *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method* draws on the performances of Sheridan (as actor, rather than elocutionist) and John Henderson. The compiler of this work is more concerned with Sheridan's dramatic performances, rather than his printed writings or lectures. The miscellany's editor repeatedly emphasises Sheridan's acting career over his one as a teacher of elocution. While expressing scepticism of elocutionary theory, Sheridan is not mentioned by name at all: like the compiler of *The Reader, or Reciter*, the editor is wary of 'systems of study which have been laid down as necessary for the scholar'.[29] This is because there is 'but little novelty in them, and that the writer of each has nearly followed in the steps of his predecessor, without trying to explore a new path'. Surely a description of the history of elocutionary theory implicitly alludes to Sheridan, whose lectures form the intellectual basis of other works on the subject.[30] Yet, the editor — almost perversely — avoids naming Sheridan in the elocutionary context, focusing on his readings as a performer. When contrasting the two actors, Sheridan's career as an elocutionist is only suggested — he is characterised as 'possessing a perfect theoretical knowledge of the

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[29] [Unknown], *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method of Reading and Reciting English Poetry, Elucidated by a Variety of Examples taken from some of our most Popular Poets* (London: Printed for E. Newbery, the Corner of St Paul's Church Yard: and J. Scatchard, Ave Maria Lane, 1796).

[30] For an initial reading of the relationship between Sheridan's theories and elocutionary miscellanies, see Mullini, 'Reading Aloud in Britain'.

language'.[31] This knowledge is actually presented as a disadvantage; it made him a more restrained performer, as he had a 'character to support with the public, [and] often felt his exertions curbed by this reflection'.[32] The 'character' he needed to support was that of his career as an elocutionist, although it is not explicitly stated here. Instead, Sheridan's 'curved' and 'abated' manner is contrasted with Henderson's 'loose' manner, which was 'freed from such restraint'.[33] Implicitly, the rules of the elocutionary movement are presented as in some way limiting to the performer, particularly to amateur performers interested in emulating famous readers. Ironically, this preference for drawing on real life models actually aligns the volume with Sheridan's elocutionary theories, even as it expresses a preference for his methods of acting.

Consequently we can see that elocutionary miscellanies had a more complex relationship towards the tenets of the elocution movement than many modern critics, such as Mullini, have tended to assume. Elocutionary miscellanies focused on the importance of the performer in winning over the audience, rather than fixating purely on elocutionary theory. This was the case even when the performer was himself an elocutionist, like Sheridan, and to a lesser extent, Walker. In drawing attention to and then snubbing elocutionary theory, elocutionary miscellanies allowed readers to feel as though they were at the forefront of discourses surrounding reading and performance. Such miscellanies, while born out of the elocution movement, sought to disavow their connection to it in order to emphasise the value of elocutionary practice over elocutionary theory.

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[31] *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method*, p. viii.
[32] *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method*, p. viii.
[33] *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method*, p. viii.

The publications discussed so far appeared on the back of celebrity elocutionary performers. Yet others appeared in imitation of particularly successful compilations; the market for elocutionary miscellanies was self-generating. One miscellany which spawned many imitators was *The Speaker*. The popularity and influence of Enfield's book was significant — even in the twentieth and twenty-first century it is characterised as an important work, the 'Adamic ancestor of the Norton anthologies'.[34] Margaret Weedon, for example, attempted to prove the relationship between *The Speaker* and Jane Austen's novels in 1988. She argued that there was a 'possible significance of a book of extracts […] behind the allusions to reading and reciting at Fullerton Parsonage and Mansfield Park'.[35] Rather than suggesting that Austen makes more general references to miscellanies, Weedon claims such references *must* be to Enfield's book, even though neither it nor he is ever named by Austen.[36] Knox's *Elegant Extracts*, on the other hand, *is* mentioned by Austen by name in *Emma.*[37] The desire to make such claims reveals the influence of Enfield's work even on modern scholars. Weedon's argument relies on Enfield's book being more popular or prominent than any other kind of elocution book, rather than *The Speaker* being one of many such books. While this chapter makes no grand claims to the 'Adamic' nature of *The Speaker,* at least as far as elocutionary miscellanies are concerned, its extensive influence on compilers and editors must be acknowledged.

Enfield's *Speaker* begins with 'An Essay on Elocution', which outlines eight rules for reading aloud. The book's professed purpose was to develop the oratorical skills of the

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[34] John Guillory *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.101.
[35] Margaret Weedon, 'Jane Austen and William Enfield's *The Speaker*', in *The British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 11 (1988): 159–62 (p. 161).
[36] Weedon, 'Jane Austen and William Enfield's *The Speaker*', p. 162.
[37] Mullini quotes the relevant passage. 'Reading Aloud in Britain', p. 159.

students at Warrington School, where Enfield was a teacher. The book was dedicated to the students and designed for their use. The taxonomy of texts laid out in the contents page reveals *The Speaker*'s original intention as a schoolbook and also suggests reasons for its popularity outside of the classroom. The work is divided into several 'Books', where texts are separated into categories: 'Select Sentences', 'Narrative Pieces', 'Didactic Pieces', 'Argumentative Pieces', 'Orations and Harangues', 'Dialogues' and 'Descriptive Pieces'. The order of the books suggests a kind of curriculum, where readers begin with short 'Select Sentences', which read like aphorisms, before progressing on to longer pieces centred around narrative and moral ('Didactic') messages. Towards the end of the book are texts which would appear to require more knowledge and skill from the reader: formal speeches emulating famous politicians ('Orations') and pieces designed to test the reader's ability to evoke descriptive scenes for an audience. As well as this, there is a section dedicated to taking turns to read with others: 'Dialogues'. The titles of individual pieces also suggest the influence of the structure of grammar school education on *The Speaker*. In Book III, 'Didactic Pieces', the majority of the extracts have names such as 'On Honour' or 'On Sincerity', much like printed commonplace books, or the manuscript versions which schoolboys would have been encouraged to keep.[38] This similarity between Enfield's extracts and a commonplace book deliberately exploits the scholarly associations such personal compilations had — commonplace books were often associated with professionals such as lawyers.[39] As well as mimicking the form of commonplaces, the titles

[38] Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
[39] See David Allan, *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), especially p. 44.

lend an illusion of each extract being a complete 'piece' or poem on a singular, coherent theme, suitable for reading aloud.[40]

Many later miscellanies drew on the success of *The Speaker* to advertise their suitability to other readers. Texts of this kind tend to highlight their utility for a different audience than that intended for *The Speaker* — books aimed at younger students, for example, whose reading may not be advanced enough to attempt the selection of texts in *The Speaker*. *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method* presents itself as 'a Necessary Introduction to Dr. Enfield's Speaker' on its title page.[41] The title suggests that it fills a gap in the market for an elocution book for younger, less able readers — they must read this book before progressing onwards to *The Speaker*. Mary Weightman's *The Juvenile Speaker* (1787) also positions itself as a prefatory or companion work to *The Speaker*, its title making that clear from the outset. The book suggests that *The Speaker* may be too advanced for younger students for whom 'youth seems to exclude them from the benefit offered to those of riper understanding'.[42] In consequence of this neglect, 'there are numerous young English pupils left without any aid of this sort, till qualified to have Enfield's, or some less easy Speaker, put into their hands, which is seldom very early, particularly in seminaries for female education'.[43] This assertion counters Hannah More's description of a literary landscape filled to burst with miscellanies designed to capture the attentions of women and girls: Weightman claims that books of this kind are rarer for younger readers. *The Juvenile Speaker* is therefore able to position itself as a kind of 'prequel' to *The Speaker*; one has to

[40] Ian Michael, *The Teaching of English: From the Sixteenth Century to 1870* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), p. 195.
[41] *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method*, title page.
[42] Mary Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker: or Dialogues, and Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse; for the Instruction of Youth, in the Art of Reading* (London: printed for W. Bent, Pater noster Row, 1787), p. i.
[43] Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker,* p. i.

prove that one is 'qualified' to read the texts within Enfield's collection. If *The Speaker* is the only elocutionary education a student (male or female) receives, then it is too late — there must be earlier intervention, and Weightman markets her book as being the right one.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Female Reader* was also heavily influenced by *The Speaker*, but was explicitly addressed to a female audience.[44] Wollstonecraft wrote to her publisher Joseph Johnson in 1788, requesting a copy of *The Speaker.*[45] Johnson had published Enfield's book, and would publish *The Female Reader* the year after Wollstonecraft's request. Many of the texts included in *The Female Reader* were also published by Johnson.[46] Its prefatory material mentions Enfield by name, crediting him for the idea for the organisation of literary extracts: 'Before the publication of DR. ENFIELD'S SPEAKER*, a methodical order in the arrangement of the pieces selected was not attempted, or even thought of.'[47] The asterisk indicates a footnote: '*As this work and the sequel to it are generally used in schools, the editor has avoided selecting pieces that are in either of them'. Wollstonecraft professes to avoid material which one can already find in *The Speaker* and *Exercises in Elocution*, suggesting that she thought her readers ought to look to these volumes for more suitable material, albeit material not explicitly directed to women. Her system of

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[44] For an account of Enfield's influence on Wollstonecraft, see Don Paul Abbott, '"A New Genus:" Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminization of Elocution', in *Rhetorica*, 36:3 (2018): 269–295. Abbot suggests that Wollstonecraft's book might be the first 'anthology' by a woman in England, being published in 1789 (p. 272), although the attribution of *The Juvenile Speaker* to Mary Weightman suggests otherwise. *The Juvenile Speaker* was published two years earlier in 1787.

[45] Abbott, '"A New Genus"', p. 278.

[46] See Vivien Jones, 'Mary Wollstonecraft and the literature of advice and instruction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia L. Johnson (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), pp. 119-140. Jones suggests that the emphasis on 'reading' means that Wollstonecraft was keen to distance her collection from the elocution movement - yet, as the introduction and first chapter of this thesis have made clear, 'elocution' could encompass both reading aloud and performances learned off by heart.

[47] Mary Wollstonecraft (credited as 'Mr Cresswick'), *The Female Reader; or miscellaneous pieces in prose and verse* (London: printed for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1789), p. iii.

organisation, however, is similar to Enfield's, and its origins are credited to him.[48] There are, however, some differences: she rejects the categories of 'Argumentative Pieces' and 'Orations and Harangues' in favour of a new section, entitled 'Devotional Pieces, and Reflections on Religious Subjects', which is absent from the 'Speaker'.[49] The inclusion of a different 'Book' suggests that Wollstonecraft saw a need for a collection of women's reading material to prioritise spiritual instruction over the emulation of political figures (as required in 'Orations and Harangues'), aligning it more clearly with other forms of conduct literature targeted at women.[50] Once again, elocutionary miscellanies are shown to be deeply embedded in their own print culture, positioned very clearly in relation to other printed texts.

Other miscellanies go further in their rejection of Enfield's organising system. For example, Richard Turner's *The Young Orator* is clearly modelled on *The Speaker*, but rejects the latter's textual categories in favour of a different method of elocutionary teaching. *The Young Orator* contains extracts 'Selected for the Use of Loughborough-House School', and is 'Made with a View to assist you in acquiring the first Principles of that most useful and desirable Accomplishment, —— A JUST AND GRACEFUL ELOCUTION'.[51] The phrase 'a just and graceful elocution' is lifted straight out of *The Speaker*, where it occurs repeatedly in the prefatory material.[52] Turner also dedicates his book to the students of Loughborough House, just as Enfield dedicated *The Speaker* to Warrington's pupils. Yet

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[48] Similar, but significantly, not identical. See Abbot for a full description of the differences between Wollstonecraft and Enfield's systems of organisation.
[49] Abbot, '"A New Genus", p. 241.
[50] For information about women's conduct literature more broadly in the period, see Vivien Jones, 'The Seductions of Conduct: Pleasure and Conduct Literature', in *Pleasures in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), pp. 108-132.
[51] Turner, *The Young Orator*, title page and dedication, respectively.
[52] See the dedication (p. iii) and the preface (pp. v-vi) to Enfield, *The Speaker*.

despite the repeated references to *The Speaker*, and mimicry of its form, Turner's book abandons Enfield's commonplace-book-like system of organisation in favour of a series of 'lessons', shifting the emphasis towards the classroom, rather than the influence of printed or manuscript commonplace books. Each lesson comprises of an extract from a poem or play. Dividing the extracts into individual lessons provides more precise instructions to readers using the book: there is a clear numerical order in which the texts should be read, and the contents of the book is broken up into school-like lessons focusing on a single passage at a time.

Other compilers go further still, openly criticising Enfield's method. William Scott alludes to and criticises texts which have an organising principle in a similar vein to *The Speaker*. His *Lessons in Elocution* (1779) will cause his reader to 'proceed, by a gentle gradation, from those which are simple and easy, to the most complex and difficult.*'[53] The book has been planned out in an order which will encourage students to read increasingly challenging passages. A footnote (again indicated by an asterisk) then makes a direct allusion to Enfield, by adding that

> A plan of this nature, was thought more eligible, than that of classing the Lessons under separate heads according to their species (as *narrative*, *didactic*, &c.); such a disposition being by no means essential to improvement, and producing a tedious uniformity, of which the natural consequence is — to tire and disgust.[54]

The references to 'narrative' and 'didactic' lessons refers to the titles of sections used by Enfield and others such as Wollstonecraft. This statement rejects the organising principles Enfield used to compile his book, suggesting that the book does not facilitate a 'progression' in one's reading. Grouping texts in this way fails to engage the reader,

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[53] William Scott, *Lessons in Elocution; or, miscellaneous pieces in prose and verse, Selected from the Best Authors*, (Edinburgh: printed for, and sold by the compiler, [1779]), p. vi.
[54] Scott, *Lessons in Elocution,* p. vi.

according to Scott, due to its 'tedious uniformity'. The organising principle of Scott's volume is therefore positioned against Enfield's to present it as a superior alternative. These 'heads' are of no use to readers, as the mass of material under them produces boredom. As well as this, larger amounts of material might make the book 'too bulky and expensive for general use'.[55] This concern is used as the reason for 'deviating, in several instances, from the originals' — that is, the length of the original texts.[56] One noticeable example of the 'Speech of Henry V, At the Siege of Harfleur', which is a mere twenty-two lines from 'Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more' to 'Cry — God for Harry, England, and St George!'[57] Cutting texts in this way was not unusual, and is in keeping with eighteenth-century trends in editing, where texts were readily cut and altered before inclusion into an elocutionary text.[58] Scott's shortening reduces the length it takes for the passage to be read aloud, perhaps to make sure that the reader is not intimidated by its length, or alternatively to make sure that readers do not command the attention of their audience for too long. As posited by printed lectures on elocution, a given printed text is not always suitable to prompting elocutionary performance and needs further alteration to serve that purpose. The alteration to the speech from *Henry V* suggests that even play-texts were seen to be in need of editing, even though they were composed for performance-use.

From this account we can begin to see how heavily elocutionary miscellanies were embedded within their own print culture. Whilst they stressed the superiority of oral performance in instructing elocution, these books were nonetheless positioned by their

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[55] Scott, *Lessons in Elocution,* p. vii.
[56] Scott, *Lessons in Elocution*, p. vii.
[57] Scott, *Lessons in Elocution*, p. 380. Cf. William Shakespeare, *Henry V,* in *Folger Digital Texts*, ed. Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, and Rebecca Niles. *Folger Shakespeare Library.* www.folgerdigitaltexts.org. Web. Here, the speech is 34 lines long (Act III, Scene i).
[58] For more on the treatment of Shakespeare in elocutionary texts, see Paul C. Edwards, 'Elocution and Shakespeare: An Episode in the History of Literary Taste,' in *Shakespeare Quarterly,* 35:3 (1984): 305–14.

compilers in relation to other print items. This once again highlights the tensions inherent in having elocutionary instruction in print form. Assorted elocution manuals aligned themselves with or positioned themselves against their predecessors, linking themselves to elocutionary theories or the work of Enfield in an attempt to increase their marketability. By identifying a market, and gaps within that market, elocutionary miscellanies claimed to be able to appeal to a broad range of readers' needs whilst advertising their own specificity.[59] Doing so persuaded readers to do the same with themselves: to align themselves to certain ways of thinking about elocution, or reject the techniques of others. Elocutionary miscellanies therefore do more than provide readers with reading material — they also provided readers with an intellectual framework within which to position their own reading practices. The relationship between elocutionary miscellanies and their antecedents is therefore more complex than critics such as Mullini have argued.

As well as this, the prefatory materials in elocutionary miscellanies display a clear preoccupation with the categorisation of texts, either in the traditional commonplace-book manner or else in ways which created the impression of a series of set 'lessons' for the student — or reader — to follow. This emphasis on 'methodical order' works in partial contradiction to Benedict's argument that literary collections have a 'decentered structure'.[60] While readers *could* read the contents in any order, elocutionary miscellanies were clearly compiled with an intended order which is indicated to readers. This order is marked by the contents pages, where extracts are numbered in an ascending order, implying a series of progression if — and only if — followed in order. Of course, there is no way of knowing whether readers actually followed the instructions of elocutionary

[59] Michael, *The Teaching of English,* p. 179.
[60] Benedict, 'The Paradox of the Anthology', p. 237.

miscellanies, or bothered with their paratextual material, but assumptions about conventions surrounding reading order in English are not unique to these books.[61] While readers were free to 'dip-and-skip', the arrangement of texts in the book implies a 'correct' order of reading — one which readers concerned with improving their elocution would be wise to apprehend. Compilers of elocutionary miscellanies did not stop here, further embedding detailed descriptions of reading norms into the main text of their collections.

Exercising Elocution

So far, I have focused on the prefatory material of elocutionary miscellanies in exploring how their compilers created a network of prior texts against which they could position themselves favourably. For the intended readers of elocutionary miscellanies, this was designed to create a sense that in buying and using the book they were participating in or contributing to the improvement of elocution. Yet it is also important to turn our attention to the texts extracted and collected within the miscellanies themselves. The compilers of elocutionary collections provided readers with many texts which were on the subject of reading itself. Such texts were deliberately chosen to encourage the reader to think about the physical act of reading from a printed text. Often readers were given pieces that played with the conventions of poetry, or else they were given material encouraging them to emulate famous orators, both historical and contemporary. Reading material of this kind was deliberately chosen to exercise the reader. Where it was deemed necessary, editors

[61] There is always a 'schism' in miscellanies, between how they are produced, and how they were intended to be used. See Daniel Cook, 'Authors Unformed: Reading "Beauties" in the Eighteenth Century', in *Philological Quarterly*, 89:2-3 (2010): 283-309.

made modifications to render texts more suitable for reading aloud, including altering their structures, shortening them, or adding extratextual apparatus such as additional instructions, annotations or elocutionary punctuation. Such texts once again reveal the limitations of print in teaching oratorical performance.

Elocutionary miscellanies often contained texts concerned with physical reading technique. For example, consider John Armstrong's *The Art of Preserving Health* (1744). The four-book poem was popular in the eighteenth century; for more than a century after its publication it was praised by critics and physicians, and was widely pirated.[62] Extracts from the poem are found in at least 55 different miscellanies included in the DMI.[63] It can be found in its entirety in Knox's *Elegant Extracts* of poetry.[64] The poem encourages its readers to look after their health, in part by cultivating the 'reflective corporeal sensibility' of readers by teaching them to recognize the anatomical meaning of particular sensations.[65] By reflecting on the bodily sensations caused by passions and emotions, it was thought that one could gain a greater understanding of one's physical wellbeing. One section of *The Art of Preserving Health* describes the bodily sensations caused by reading aloud. This section can be found in John Drummond's *A Collection of Poems* (1762), under the title 'Reading':

> Toy with your books, and as the various fits
> Of humour seize you, from philosophy
> To fable shift, from serious Antonine
> To Rabelais' ravings, and from prose to song,
> While reading pleases, but no longer, read,
> And read aloud resounding Homer's strains,
> And wield the thunder of Demosthenes;
> The chest so exercis'd improves its strength,
> And quick vibrations through the bowels drive

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[62] Adam Budd (ed.), *John Armstong's* The Art of Preserving Health: *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility in Practice* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011).
[63] This figure is given according to a DMI search for all entries listed under the poem alias 'The Art of Preserving Health'. Search conducted 15/04/2019.
[64] Knox, *Elegant Extracts* (Poetry, 1789), pp. 267-283.
[65] Budd (ed.), *John Armstong's* The Art of Preserving Health, p. xi.

> The restless blood; which in unactive days,
> Would loiter else thro' unelastic tubes,
> Deem it not trifling while I recommend
> What posture suits. To stand and sit by turns,
> As nature prompts, is best; but o'er your leaves
> To lean for ever, cramps the vital parts,
> And robs the fine machinery of its play.[66]

The poem argues that one should only read what pleases you, when it pleases you, offering authors such as Antonine and Rabelais as examples of suitable reading material. The description outlines an expectation of variety in one's choices of reading matter — much like the variety within a miscellany. One should 'read, and read aloud' this assortment of material to get the most physical benefit from what one reads, to manage the 'fits of humour' by which one may be seized. The poem considers the impact of reading on one's physical health, presenting it as a form of exercise and exertion. Reading aloud can enliven the body: rather than using the body to animate a text (an argument made by contemporary works of acting theory), the *text* animates the *body*, providing a driving force which can help the blood circulate around the body. Reading, therefore, is presented as an act integral to one's physical health by preventing sluggishness and improving the strength of the chest. But this only applies to a certain kind of reading. Contrastingly, silent reading — where one is left to 'o'er your leaves / To lean for ever' — is unhealthy, resulting in cramp and robbing the 'fine machinery' of the body its 'play'. The passage, ending in 'play', alludes back to the passage's opening imperative, to 'toy' with your books. This impression of near-circularity is created by the format of the extract as given in Drummond's collection, where it appears as a single stanza under its assigned title ('Reading'). This gives the extract the illusion of being a complete artistic unit. Yet previous editions of the poem show that the

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[66] Drummond, *A Collection of Poems,* pp. 92-3.

passage actually falls across two stanzas; the extract is formed by extracting the end of one stanza, and the beginning of another.[67] The lines immediately prior to the start of the extract allude to the scholar Pieter Burman, who is used to represent fatal devotion to scholarly pursuits — scholars like him are '[o]'erwhelm'd with phlegm' and become 'in a dropsy drown'd'.[68] Such a reader 'sinks in lethargy before his time'.[69] Negative depictions of 'study' (which implicitly includes silent reading) are omitted, in favour of compressing material about reading aloud into a new single stanza.

In choosing to exclude this surrounding material, the passage rejects scholarly forms of reading. These scholarly forms of reading are characterised as causing the symptoms of illness, such as the 'lethargy' associated with dropsy (a condition characterised by an excessive 'wateriness' or the amassing of fluid in the body). In removing the passage from this wider context, the focus of the extract becomes focused exclusively on active forms of reading, rather than the presentation of the lazy 'pedant'.[70] These alterations focus the text on the object of the miscellany itself: reading aloud. The extracted section is therefore

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[67] See Budd's critical edition of the poem. Here, the same extract of the poem reads thus:

> Toy with your books and, as the various fits
> Of humour seize you, from Philosophy
> To Fable shift; from serious Antonine
> To Rabelais' ravings, and from prose to song.
>
> While reading pleases, but no longer, read;
> And read aloud resounding Homer's strain,
> And wield the thunder of Demosthenes.
> The chest so exercis'd improves its strength;
> And quick vibrations thro' the bowels drive
> The restless blood, which in unactive days
> Would loiter else thro' unelastic tubes,
> Deem it not trifling while I recommend
> What posture suits: To stand and sit by turns,
> As nature prompts, is best. But o'er your leaves
> To lean for ever, cramps the viral parts,
> And robs the fine machinery of its play.

[68] Budd (ed.), *John Armstong's* The Art of Preserving Health, Book IV, l. 55. See p. 113, n.185.
[69] Budd (ed.), *John Armstong's* The Art of Preserving Health, Book IV, l. 56.
[70] Budd (ed.), *John Armstong's* The Art of Preserving Health, Book IV, l. 52.

filled with verbs and nouns characterised by activity, movement and noise rather than stagnation and illness: 'fits', 'seize', 'ravings', 'wield the thunder', 'exercise'd', 'quick vibrations', and 'restless'. These then give way to another contrast in the subjunctive (indicated by 'would'): the 'unactive' and 'unelastic'. Such a shift in emphasis mirrors the possible alterations in tone the text may have when performed by the reader — a movement from quick and animated performance, to something more sedate to reflect the changing meaning of the passage. By performing in this way the reader enacts the bodily feeling that can result from active forms of reading. In doing so the reader comes to 'read aloud resounding' not 'Homer's strain' but the poem itself. The reader becomes an orator, wielding their own 'thunder' like Demosthenes, whose oratorical skills are alluded to in the extract. The reader, in choosing to read this passage, embodies the sentiments expressed in it.

Other extracts found in elocutionary miscellanies test their readers' physical reading technique by playing with rhyme and metre, challenging expectations of how poems and readers ought to behave. William Enfield's *Exercises in Elocution*, the 'sequel' to *The Speaker*, contains an extract from 'The Actor' by Robert Lloyd. The poem talks about the nature of performance in ways which also apply to amateur orators. The beginning of the extract sets up and meets the expectations of royal couplets, expressing common sentiments about the combined use of voice and gesture in performance: "Tis not enough the voice be sound and clear, / 'Tis modulation that must charm the ear', or 'The voice all modes of passion can express, / That marks the proper word with proper stress'.[71] Both pairs of lines meet the requirements of royal couplets, comprising of two ten syllable lines made up of five

[71] William Enfield, *Exercises in Elocution* (Warrington: printed by W. Eyres, for J. Johnson, No. 72, St. Paul's Church-Yard, London, 1780), both p. 272.

iambs (a metrical foot containing a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one), and a rhyme. The latter couplet emphasises the importance of placing the stresses on words in the correct place, and does not deviate from the iambic structure, enacting the very sentiment it expresses. The reader, too, is therefore encouraged to perform this 'proper' regularity aided by repetition and regular metre. Yet the poem also forces its reader to deviate from the expected form:

> Repeating what the poet sets not down,
> The verb disjointing from its friendly noun,
> While pause, and break, and repetition join
> To make discord in each tuneful line.[72]

The lines describe the awkward, 'disjointed' performance that can result from failing to read out a poet's lines correctly: it breaks the harmony of the original. Ironically, the last line given here fails to meet the expectations of rhyme and iambic pentameter, being a syllable short and not rhyming with its predecessor. 'Line' does not rhyme with 'join', at least not without some wrangling. This means that if the reader reads the line as it is printed, they will be forced to mimic an incorrect reading of a passage, even as they read it correctly! Doing this, however, demonstrates to readers and listeners how awkward such mis-readings can be: by forcing the reader to utter a line that fails to meet expectations, the importance of even metre and regular rhyme is reinforced. A reader could play the line's failure for comic effect, emphasising 'each tuneful line' to try and stretch out the line to the required length and draw even more attention to the lack of rhyme in 'join' and 'line'. By reading the passage aloud, the reader shares a joke with his or her audience, creating a bond between those who notice and understand the error. Those who witness it are able to

[72] Enfield, *Exercises in Elocution*, pp. 272-3.

position themselves as good judges of what constitutes an accurate reading, thanks to the deliberate error in the poem delivered by the reader. The reader temporarily embodies a 'bad' reader until the poem continues and the regular metre and rhyme scheme are restored. In the context of the poem, the blame for poor performance is firmly placed on the performer, not on the poet for failing to write lines which scan.

As well as providing descriptions of the process of reading in their extracted material, elocutionary miscellanies often provided descriptions of archetypal orators, both actual people (historical or contemporary), or idealisations to which the reader was meant to aspire to actualise. All these images of readers functioned to provide material against which readers could compare themselves. Through the choice of such texts, editors of elocutionary miscellanies were able to direct the physical aspects of performance in multiple ways. Let us return to *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method of Reading and Reciting English Poetry*. For potential buyers or readers, the intended draw of the book is the use of the actors as performance role models. The editor claims to have seen Sheridan and Henderson perform, hearing them read or recite 'either in public or in the hour of social enjoyment', apparently seeing them perform in more intimate social contexts.[73] This claim suggests that the compiler is in a position to more accurately convey the methods of delivery employed by the actors, using texts they apparently performed as examples. The compiler does admit to the limitations of this approach, due to the 'difficulty of the undertaking', noting that 'in some cases I shall fail'.[74] The compiler does not elaborate, but the reasons are presumably to do in part with the inability of text to accurately record ephemeral dramatic performances. As well as this, there are presumably limitations in the

[73] *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method*, p. vii.
[74] *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method*, p. vii.

ability of the editor to remember everything about particular performances, despite what the level of detail in the textual interventions may suggest. Once again, the writers of elocutionary texts are concerned with the limitations of print in adequately providing elocutionary instruction. The book promises readers access to the actors as models of recitation, previously 'limited only to the well-off and well connected'.[75] Sheridan and Henderson's reputations as actors are drawn on in order to suggest very particular ways of reading certain passages aloud. Rather than performing, say, parts of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, one is encouraged to perform Sheridan and Henderson's *version* of it: '[t]he first [actor] afforded more satisfaction to the critic, the latter to the majority of an auditory'.[76] 'Sheridan' and 'Henderson' in this context take on nearly fictional forms — the descriptions' relations to actual performances are impossible to reclaim from history.

Other historical figures were also fictionalised, such as Cato the Younger. Cato the Younger's reputation in the mid- to late-eighteenth century was one of being an archetypal stoic, and he is often cited as an exemplar orator, known for the power of his rhetorical sway.[77] Joseph Addison's play, *Cato, A Tragedy* (first performed in 1713) takes its narrative from the final days of Cato the Younger, and found great popularity throughout the remainder of the century.[78] Descriptions of Cato's power as an orator are occasionally included in elocutionary miscellanies.[79] Two scenes seem to be favoured by editors of these

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[75] Elspeth Jajdelska, '"The very defective and erroneous method": reading instruction and social identity in elite eighteenth-century learners', in *Oxford Review of Education*, 36:2 (2010): 141-156 (p.152).
[76] *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method,* p. 163.
[77] Whether or not Addison intended for his Cato the Younger to be seen as an example is the subject of current critical debate. See Christine Dunn Henderson and Mark E. Yellin, '"Those Stubborn Principles": From Stoicism to Sociability in Joseph Addison's *Cato*' in *The Review of Politics,* 76 (2014): 223–241.
[78] As we saw in the last chapter, Sheridan was known for his performance of Addison's Cato. See Figure 2.
[79] For example, see Middleton's 'Character of Cato' in Knox, *Elegant Extracts* (Prose, 1784), p. 311; or also Enfield, *Exercises in Elocution*, pp. 363-4. Presentations of Cato, such as Middleton's, caution against following his example of stoicism too closely.

books: the first is the 'Senate Scene', where Cato and his remaining loyal Roman senators plan to defeat Caesar's advances, with the Senators Sempronius and Lucius discussing the advantages of war and peace, respectively.[80] The second is the beginning of Act V, often known as 'Cato's Soliloquy on the Immortality of the Soul'.[81] Pope's prologue to the play is also included in some miscellanies.[82] The popularity of these passages is reflected in anecdotal evidence from eighteenth-century readers. James Boswell records in his London journal that he 'repeated' Cato's soliloquy on the immortality of the soul — oddly enough, when he claimed to be feeling 'all life and joy'.[83] Whether Boswell isolated this scene himself, or found it extracted in a book is unclear. What is clear, however, is that readers like Boswell thought *Cato* worth reading and reciting long after its initial run of performances.

Scenes from *Cato* were extracted by editors for instructional purposes in different ways. Some editors retained obvious markers of their previous literary lives as dramatic performance, such as stage directions — '*A sound of trumpets.*'[84] How an amateur performer is meant to produce the sound is uncertain — if they were at all. Perhaps the instructions of performance were left in the text to gesture towards its theatrical origins. Other texts, such as 'Cato's Soliloquy', as found in Enfield's *The Speaker*, are without stage directions entirely — even ones which one may imagine would be of use to an amateur performer. The extract does not have, for example, the direction, '[*Laying his hand on his sword*]' before

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[80] See John Walker, *Exercises for Improvement in Elocution, Being Select Extracts from the Best Authors, for the use of those who study the Art of Reading and Speaking in Public*. (London: Sold by T. Becket [...], [1777]). British Library, London: 11633.bbb.39, p. 104; Scott, pp. 319-322; and Enfield, *Exercises in Elocution*, pp. 194-199.

[81] See Knox, *Elegant Extracts* (Poetry, 1789), p. 488; Turner, *The Young Orator,* pp. 16-18; and Enfield, *The Speaker*, pp. 350-351.

[82] For example, see Knox *Elegant Extracts* (Poetry, 1789), pp. 698-9. The book also contains another prologue to Cato', which was 'Acted in 1753, by the Scholars of the Free Grammar School at Derby, for the Benefit of the Orphan of the late Usher. Written by one of the Scholars, aged 16' (p. 705).

[83] James Boswell, *The London Journal* (London: Penguin, 2010), p. 7.

[84] Walker, *Exercises for Improvement in Elocution,* p. 104. This is taken from the senate scene.

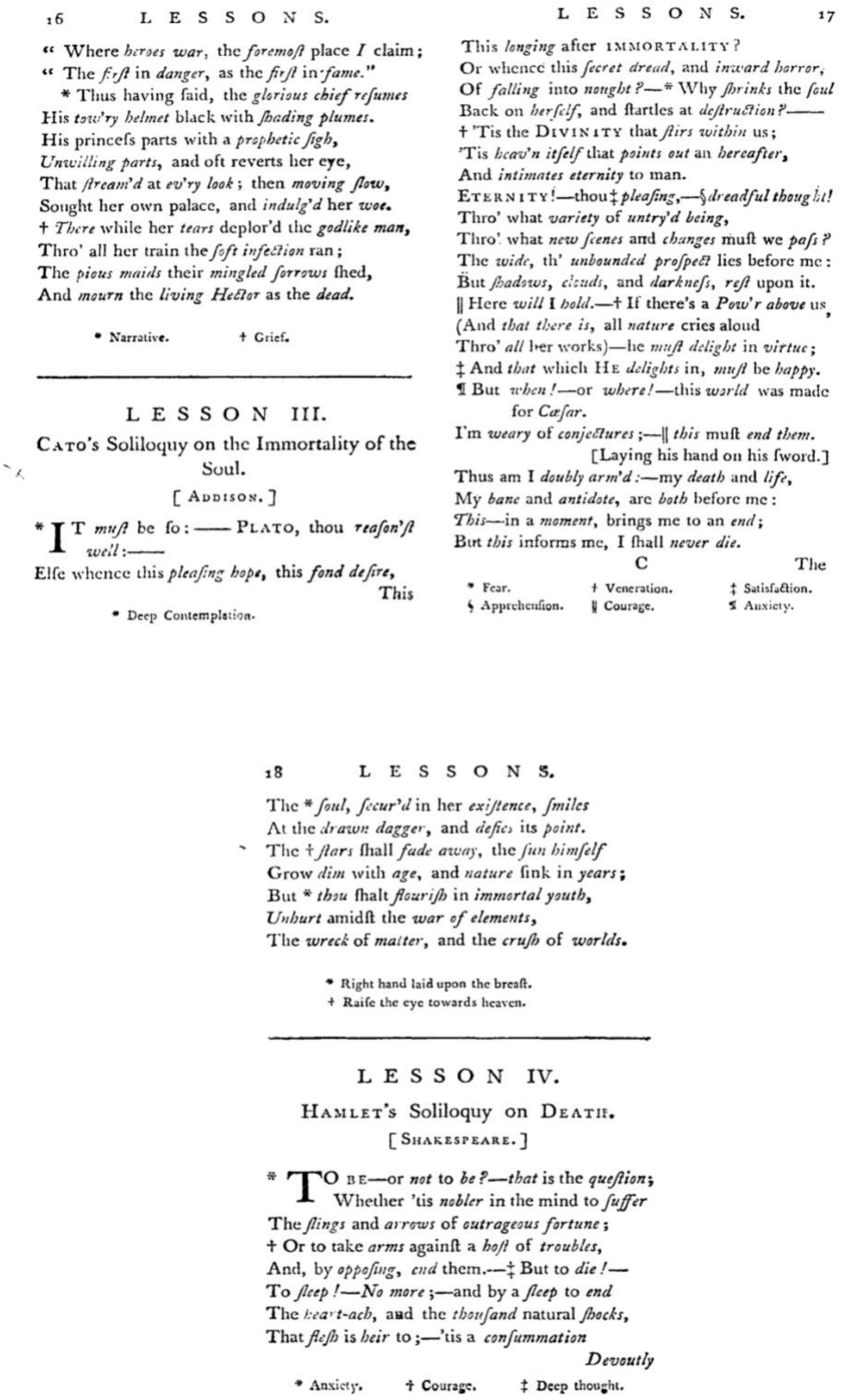
the line, 'Thus I am doubly armed.'[85] Enfield's work then pays more attention to the words to be uttered, rather than any potential for the reader to use the props required for the scene, such a sword, and a book, which would help make the referents (and meaning) of the 'thus' clearer.

Other editors of elocutionary miscellanies took a more invasive approach to presenting extracts from Addison's *Cato*. For example, Richard Turner's *The Young Orator* (1783) heavily edits Cato's soliloquy to aid a reader's performance (see Figure 3, below).[86] The text, like others included in the volume, is edited to indicate to the reader where stress is required. Emphasis is marked by the use of italics throughout, and occasional small capitals: 'This *longing* after IMMORTALITY?'. The exact nature of the emphasis the text seems to require of its reader is unclear; no key is given at the beginning of the volume. What *is* given at the beginning of the volume, however, is a summary of some of the passions required to perform throughout the piece, and the gestures one might use to communicate them effectively. The passions required for the piece, according to the editor, are 'Deep Contemplation', 'Fear', 'Veneration, 'Satisfaction', 'Apprehension', 'Courage' and 'Anxiety'. The beginning of each passion is marked by a footnote at the beginning of the relevant part of the passage, marked with the standard punctuation for marking non-numbered footnotes: the asterisk (*), dagger (†, ‡), section sign (§), vertical bar (|) and pilcrow (¶).

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[85] Quotation taken from Enfield, *The Speaker*, pp. 350-1. C.f. Joseph Addison, *Cato*, eds. Christine Dunn Henderson and Mark E. Yellin (Carmel, IN: Liberty Fund, 2004), pp. 88-9, where the word 'this' is italicised to emphasise the change in referent from the book to the sword.

[86] Extract of 'Cato's Soliloquy on the Immortality of the Soul', from Richard Turner, *The Young Orator* (London: printed by R. Hindmarsh, [1783]), pp. 16-18. Scans from Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet.A5f.1781 via ECCO.



16 LESSONS.

" Where *heroes war*, the *foremoſt* place *I* claim;
" The *firſt* in *danger*, as the *firſt* in *fame.*"
* Thus having ſaid, the *glorious chief reſumes*
His *tow'ry helmet* black with *ſhading plumes.*
His princeſs parts with a *prophetic ſigh*,
Unwilling parts, and oft reverts her eye,
That *ſtream'd* at *ev'ry look*; then *moving ſlow*,
Sought her own palace, and *indulg'd* her *woe.*
† *There* while her *tears* deplor'd the *godlike man*,
Thro' all her train the *ſoft infection* ran;
The *pious maids* their *mingled ſorrows* ſhed,
And *mourn* the *living Hector* as the *dead.*

* Narrative. † Grief.

LESSON III.

CATO's Soliloquy on the Immortality of the Soul.

[ADDISON.]

* IT *muſt* be ſo:—PLATO, thou *reaſon'ſt well*:—
Elſe whence this *pleaſing hope*, this *fond deſire*, This

* Deep Contemplation.

17 LESSONS.

This *longing* after IMMORTALITY?
Or whence this *ſecret dread*, and *inward horror*,
Of *falling* into *nought*?—* Why *ſhrinks* the *ſoul*
Back on *herſelf*, and ſtartles at *deſtruction*?—
† 'Tis the DIVINITY that *ſtirs within* us;
'Tis *heav'n itſelf* that *points out* an *hereafter*,
And *intimates eternity* to man.
ETERNITY!—thou‡ *pleaſing*,—§ *dreadful thought!*
Thro' what *variety* of *untry'd being*,
Thro' what *new ſcenes* and *changes* muſt we *paſs*?
The *wide*, th' *unbounded proſpect* lies before me:
But *ſhadows*, *clouds*, and *darkneſs*, *reſt* upon it.
‖ Here *will* I *hold*.—† If there's a *Pow'r above* us,
(And *that there is*, all *nature* cries aloud
Thro' *all* her works)—he *muſt delight* in *virtue*;
‡ And *that* which HE *delights* in, *muſt* be *happy.*
¶ But *when!*—or *where!*—this *world* was made for *Cæſar.*
I'm *weary* of *conjectures*;—‖ *this* muſt *end them.*
[Laying his hand on his ſword.]
Thus am I *doubly arm'd*:—my *death* and *life*,
My *bane* and *antidote*, are *both* before me:
This—in a *moment*, brings me to an *end*;
But *this* informs me, I ſhall *never die.*

C The

* Fear. † Veneration. ‡ Satisfaction.
§ Apprehenſion. ‖ Courage. ¶ Anxiety.

18 LESSONS.

The * *ſoul*, *ſecur'd* in her *exiſtence*, *ſmiles*
At the *drawn dagger*, and *defies* its *point.*
The † *ſtars* ſhall *fade away*, the *ſun himſelf*
Grow *dim* with *age*, and *nature* ſink in *years*;
But * *thou* ſhalt *flouriſh* in *immortal youth*,
Unhurt amidſt the *war of elements*,
The *wreck* of *matter*, and the *cruſh* of *worlds.*

* Right hand laid upon the breaſt.
† Raiſe the eye towards heaven.

LESSON IV.

HAMLET's Soliloquy on DEATH.

[SHAKESPEARE.]

* TO BE—or *not* to *be*?—*that* is the *queſtion*;
Whether 'tis *nobler* in the mind to *ſuffer*
The *ſlings* and *arrows* of *outrageous fortune*;
† Or to take *arms* againſt a *hoſt* of *troubles*,
And, by *oppoſing*, *end* them.—‡ But to *die!*—
To *ſleep!*—*No more*;—and by a *ſleep* to *end*
The *heart-ach*, and the *thouſand* natural *ſhocks*,
That *fleſh* is *heir* to;—'tis a *conſummation*
Devoutly

* Anxiety. † Courage. ‡ Deep thought.

Figure 3: Extract of 'Cato's Soliloquy on the Immortality of the Soul', from Richard Turner's *The Young Orator* (1783).

Only 'Fear' and 'Courage' were listed in the prefatory material, as part of a list of 'Rules for expressing some of the principal passions, &c'.[87] To play fear, for example, the reader is instructed to

> — Draw back the elbows parallel with the sides: lift up the open hands, joining the fingers together, to the heighth [*sic*] of the breast, as if the palms faced the dreaded object, as shields apposed against it. Draw one foot back behind the other, so that the body seems shrinking from the danger, and putting itself in a posture for flight. The voice must be weak and trembling.

Detailed instructions for gesturing and tones of voice are provided, appearing to follow the 'mechanical' method of instruction. By annotating the passage from *Cato* in short notes, Turner draws on previous instructions, with which the reader is assumed to be familiar. Again, this implies an intended reading of the book where the reader works from beginning to end. Rather than guessing what Cato's 'fear' should look and sound like when he asks '*Why *shrinks* the *soul* / Back on *herself* and startles at *destruction?* —', the notes depend on knowledge given in other, earlier parts of the text. 'Courage' is noted in the prefatory list of rules alongside 'Confidence, Resolution', and also gives specific instructions for gesture such as moving the right hand 'to the left breast, but with quickness and vigour, recoiling as it were from the heart'. Such actions are to be accompanied with a 'voice firm and even'.[88] The instruction for 'courage' is marked at Cato's resolution to be just that: '|| Here *will* I *hold*. —' The emphasis placed on '*will*' through its italicisation implies a strength of conviction which connotes a certain degree of courage, but here the annotations serve as a guide to the reader, directing them through the changes in sentiment and tone which would make this text an impressive one to perform for an audience.

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[87] Turner, *The Young Orator,* p. vi.
[88] Turner, *The Young Orator,* p. vi.

The text exploits the inventive use of typography and the resources of the printed text to convey the physicality of movement which could only be experienced in an off-page event. The annotations therefore help a potential performer consider the possibilities that the texts hold for displaying a variety of passions in quick succession, whilst helping to identify them and work out how words, tones and gestures are to co-operate in their performance. Again, the reader is exercised, encouraged to develop their range of performable passions. Such annotations relieve the reader of the responsibility of marking out these passions themselves, just as John Walker's *Elements of Elocution* (1781) included a section of texts chosen to be representative of certain emotions, where 'passions are marked in the margin as they promiscuously occur in the passage'.[89] As noted here by Walker, sometimes passages of poetry or prose move quickly between passions and sentiments, and alterations through the progression of a passage should be observed so that each part is read out in a way which accurately conveys its meaning. Reading in this way, in accordance with contemporary theories of the passions, suggests that every piece will have 'correct' places where there are transitions between different emotions. Agile readers are those who are able to parse texts in this way. *The Young Orator*, in being designed for a younger audience, helps to develop this method of reading by demonstration. Walker, in contrast, expects his audience to already be capable of this kind of annotation and commentary on literary texts.

The expectations underpinning these reading practices rely on a reader's willingness to reflect on the literary piece and to take the time to analyse its components. Yet readers were also expected to reflect on the nature of the ideal orator whilst being made to read in

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[89] John Walker, *Elements of Elocution. Being the Substance of a Course of Lectures on the Art of Reading.* 2 vols. (London: printed for the author; and sold by T. Cadell; T. Becket; G. Robinson; and J. Dodsley, 1781).

the manner of one. For example, John Wilson's *Principles of Elocution* contains a text called 'Advantages of an Orator's Studying Himself', which describes the ideal orator as one who is self-reflective in his practice. The poem reflects on how one might use self-reflection to improve one's oratorical prowess. Constructed in a way which lends itself to oratorical performance, the text is filled with rhetorical flourishes:

> But, you may ask, where is this ideal man, composed of so many different traits, to be found, unless we describe some chimerical being? Where shall we find a phantom like this, singular but not outré, in which every individual may recognise himself, although it resembles not any one? Where shall we find him? — In your own heart.[90]

The three questions, initially seemingly rhetorical, are answered at the end. The passage begins with longer questions filled with pauses indicated by commas. The questions then get shorter, before a pause indicated by a dash builds up to the ultimate answer. Other than the punctuation (?, —) used to indicate tone and pauses, there are no further aids to delivery, even in the prefatory material to the book. Readers are expected to work out how to read the text correctly for themselves. Part of this process of increased understanding comes from being able to look inside oneself, moving beyond the mythical chimera or phantom. This ideal orator should be exceptional, but not too outlandish ('outré'), and in some manner be able to be both relatable, but not *too* like anyone in particular. The result is an image that is both specific and vague, designed to seem individual and yet able to include all (male) readers.

The passage repeatedly recommends self-reflection, arguing that 'To be eloquent, we must enter within ourselves'.[91] To study oneself, one must be able to observe oneself from the outside, as well as the inside: to 'become, so to speak, the auditor of your own

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[90] Wilson, *Principles of Elocution*, p. 111.
[91] Wilson, *Principles of Elocution*, p. 111.

discourses; and thus, by anticipating the effect which they ought to produce, you will easily delineate true characters'.[92] This suggests that 'character' is created in the space between the performer and the *witness* to a performance — and that to be able to describe or 'delineate' characters, one must be able to create this necessary distance. The boundaries between different characters need to be observed precisely — observed *aurally*. Rather than seeing oneself from the outside, one is encouraged to *hear* oneself whilst performing, being concurrently speaker and auditor. Doing so places oneself as an audience member in order to anticipate the 'effect' or 'affect' one hopes to achieve. Encouraging the reader to observe themselves in this way reveals the intersections between social knowledge and self-understanding — knowledge of oneself. Such 'seeing' helped to ensure that 'one's involvement in polite sociability had the requisite effect'.[93] Considerations of one's own reading performances necessarily included thought about one's audience, and one's relationship towards them.

Sentiments like these are found throughout Wilson's *Principles of Elocution*, which emphasises the importance of self-regulating one's behaviour using the opinions of others. In a passage called 'Remarks on Reading', the reader is encouraged to 'guard against' any 'intemperance of reading' by letting 'your friends see master-pieces in your hands'.[94] Part of the value of reading — aloud or not — comes from being observed. When reading aloud, one should be acutely aware of the opinions of others regarding your performance, by 'attach[ing]' yourself to their thoughts, and the 'exertion of assiduity' — that is, playing close attention to what you are doing. While others may help provide a yardstick against

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[92] Wilson, *Principles of Elocution*, p. 112.
[93] John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 106.
[94] Wilson, *Principles of Elocution*, p. 129.

which to measure the value of one's reading, the passage is clear: 'Be not precipitate: call yourself often to account for what you have read.'[95] Observing oneself once is not enough — it is through constant repetition and practice ('often') that one can achieve consistently good reading.

Thus we can see how passages about the physical practicalities of reading were chosen and edited in order to create sets of norms which emphasised virtuosity in performance, the skill to parse texts for their passions, and the ability to reflect on one's own reading methods. Editorial apparatus is used to manipulate a possible reader's performance by offering a high level of instruction, both through annotation, alterations to punctuation and typographical changes. Such codes rely on the reader taking the time to *decode* them, either by paying attention to the prefatory material (rather than skipping ahead to certain passages), or understanding what possible distinctions can be conveyed through the use of italics or small capitals. Elocution books tend to assume that readers will take the time to study and practise the piece first, to be able to produce a performance which seems to have not been studied at all — or at least, one that does not take time to pause for the footnotes. The subtleties required may not have been evident to the students who were set the book for their studies, or any near-contemporary readers, let alone the modern scholar. Yet such heavy intervention in the reading of passages like this shows the importance that was placed on being 'correct'. It also proves that good reading was understood in two ways — firstly, as the art of physical performance, using complex passages to display a variety of literary techniques and passions, and secondly, as an act of analysis. Both these sets of skills were promoted as methods enabling the reader to perform

[95] Wilson, *Principles of Elocution*, pp. 129-30.

the part of the ideal orator, whether that was modelled on an actor like Sheridan, a fictional representation of the historical Cato, or else on an idealised description.

Representations of Sociable Readers in Elocutionary Miscellanies

The examples in the previous section instructed readers in physical methods of reading and how to analyse literary texts. These passages tended to focus on the solo 'orator', occasionally gesturing towards their imagined audience in order to encourage a sense of sociability in the reader. Yet eighteenth-century miscellanies also presented their readers with descriptions of people reading in complex social contexts. These textual images can be extraordinarily detailed, constructing a series of social relationships between readers and listeners. The focus is relocated from the action of a single idealised performer to the possible social landscapes readers might have to navigate. Example readers in these fictional reading situations are faced with audiences able to respond to their reading performances and interpretations of texts. The real reader is placed both inside and outside these scenarios when they read them aloud: the fictional scenes allow readers to evaluate the scenes they encounter, but the reader also becomes part of the scene he or she evokes. These textual images of eighteenth-century social reading scenarios can be productively compared with visual images from the same period, which have a similar function to elocution books: playing with presentation of social reading so that readers are provided with models against which to compare their own practices. As shall be shown, these example readers are not necessarily *exemplar* readers, and this actually aids their didactic purpose by teaching readers to be self-reflective in their practice by applying the judgements they make of others to themselves.

The complexities of relationships between readers are explored in elocutionary miscellanies which get the user to imagine different reading scenarios. Mary Weightman's *The Juvenile Speaker*, for example, includes original 'Introductory Dialogues' that construct the value of public reading and recitation as it is conducted among an audience of local people. The four dialogues concern George, a boy who is worried about his ability to read aloud in public. His anxieties have been fuelled by seeing a younger boy, Henry, performing 'many pieces so well, that you would have thought they were all his own'.[96] Henry is described as a fluent performer, who is able to present the sentiments of others as though they were his. George describes these anxieties to his brother, explaining that he fled the company of adults 'before he [Henry] had finished speaking, for I feared Mr. Smith would call upon me, to oblige the company in the same way'.[97] The potential for comparison between himself and Henry is what creates much anxiety: 'when you hear Henry,' he tells his brother, 'you will own I have reason to be ashamed of my manner of repeating, he speaks with so much freedom, and so easy and agreeable'.[98] An older boy called Charles, who was also there, arrives and asks George why he left so suddenly. George confesses his social anxieties, and Charles quips that he should 'rejoice the escape you have had', as another boy, Master Jones performed next, and did so quite badly.[99] Charles describes Master Jones's performance thus:

> When he first came forward, the company had high expectations, and were impatient for him to begin. But there he stood, hemming and clearing his voice, as though he had some great and difficult talk to engage with. But no sooner had he spoke the first sentence, than the surprise and disappointment of the company were apparent; for you never heard such a disagreeable, unnatural tune in all your life.

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[96] Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker,* p. 2.
[97] Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker,* p. 2.
[98] Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker,* p. 3.
[99] Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker,* p. 4.

Charles concludes with an understatement: Master Jones 'was not a little mortified' by his bad performance, which failed to meet the expectation of 'the company'. Master Jones's performance is contrasted with Henry's: it comes across as 'unnatural' and produced with great difficulty. The boy's audience react with 'disappointment'; their expectations have not been met.

All the children in Weightman's dialogues have a heightened awareness of the stakes of performing well in social situations requiring displays of one's reading ability. The children are able to look at their own abilities and decide whether or not they have performed well, either in the immediate past, like Master Jones, or in the longer term. Even Henry, the exemplar reader in the scenario, seems to be aware of the value of his talent: Charles reports that Henry receives 'many presents' for his speaking and is conscious of 'the high favour he is in with all the party'.[100] The dialogue suggests that the public approbation for good reading habits can, for particularly good children, translate into pecuniary reward as well as social integration within a group. Yet, as George's fears and Master Jones's bad performance show, with every social reading event comes the risk of shame. Just like the adult readers Sheridan imagined in his lectures, children were also apparently meant to be aware of the risks of embarrassing oneself; using elocution manuals such as this one implicitly helps place the odds of approval in one's favour.

Weightman's final two dialogues show Charles teaching George the tenets of good reading performance, revealing George to be a highly self-reflexive learner. The structure of the dialogues tends to be the same: Charles offers his advice in response to hearing George read; these readings are not described as part of the dialogue. George then asks

[100] Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker,* p. 7.

relevant questions or applies the newly acquired information to his own experience. For example, they discuss the difficulties of reading poetry written in blank verse:

> *Geo.* But blank verse seems to me very hard, and I can never read it tolerably.
> *Char.* That I do not wonder at; for I observe you never stop, but at the points, which prosaic reading destroys all the harmony of its numbers.
> *Geo.* Pray, should it not be thus read?
> *Char.* The printing alone will inform you otherwise, if you attend to it; for if it was not intended to be noticed in the reading, the writer and printer would be at liberty to fill each line, as in prose.
> *Geo.* In this has always been my error, for I have always run forward till I came to a point.[101]

Charles here suggests that the layout of the text in print should indicate to George how to read it. Typography, Charles advises, can instruct the performance of poetry if the reader correctly interprets features of the text. Line breaks can be taken as indicators of when to pause. The dialogue positions Charles as the teacher correcting George's mistakes. George questions Charles until he understands his error, stating it again to show his newly acquired understanding. This pattern of conversation highlights how George is able to apply rules to his own methods of reading, resulting in improved understanding and ultimately improved practice. As well as encouraging self-reflection through the discussion of his own performances, Charles gets George to consider specific parts of Henry's performances. As these performances do not form part of the dialogue, and so are not shown to the reader, they are described under the guise of reminding George of certain details: 'if you remember, in one part he seemed quite angry, and in another part ready to sink with grief'.[102] The reader of the dialogues is not able to witness any of these performances, being only permitted to see the abstract conversation about the nature of social reading performances. The dialogues end by gesturing towards future readings not contained in the text: George

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[101] Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker,* pp. 16-17.
[102] Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker,* p. 13.

asks Charles if he will listen to him read again, and the latter assents upon the condition that 'the pieces may be as different as possible, both with respect to authors and subject, which will not fail to assist and approve you, in various readings.'[103] The collection of texts which follows are therefore presented as possessing the quality of variety recommended by Charles, suggesting that these are the pieces to be read by George. The reader of the miscellany, by continuing through the book's material, is positioned as George. George, in this case, may not yet be a model *reader*, but he is a model *learner*, keen to improve and seeking help from older, wiser and more experienced friends who are willing to correct his efforts. He is presented as taking the time to consider his own practice, developing a keen sense of self-awareness in regard to his reading, and the effects it will have on an audience — the local 'company'. Beginning the book with these four dialogues encourages other younger readers to seek similarities between themselves and George, who is presented as a relatable young man: he is not gifted at reading, like Henry, or Charles, but is in a position to try and become like them.

Using an instructional format, Weightman's *The Juvenile Speaker* represents the social skills associated with good reading. It represents the potential complexities of reading aloud to people across the neighbourhood, from multiple households. Satirical representations of similar reading groups or gatherings do not present the scenes in quite such a respectable way. Take, for example, the watercolour by John Colley Nixon (1755-1818) showing a chaotic drawing-room reading scene (see Figure 4, below).[104]

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[103] Weightman, *The Juvenile Speaker,* p. 19.
[104] John Colley Nixon, [Untitled], (1788). Watercolour, 290 x 438 mm. British Museum, London: 1923,0714.6.



Figure 4: John Colley Nixon, *Untitled* (1788).
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

The image, like Weightman's dialogues, represents the sort of complex social group which might be gathered at a domestic reading performance. Both the reader's performance and the audience's reaction to it are shown. A fat woman reads to a room filled with people. The open pages of the book reveal what she is reading: 'Jane Shore'. Shore was a mistress of King Edward the IV, who was notoriously witty. She was the subject of many later writings, including Nicholas Rowe's *Tragedy of Jane Shore* (1714), which might be the piece referred to in the illustration, although the piece appears to be in prose — the wavy lines mimic the layout of prose on the page, with text reaching the edges of the page.[105] The

[105] Rosemary Horrox, 'Shore [née Lambert], Elizabeth [Jane] (d. 1526/7?), royal mistress', in *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004). Web.

woman's histrionic performance is clearly a surprise, particularly to the servants in the room: one, on his way to stoke the fire, drops pieces of coal on the floor, while another man serving drinks spills one on the skirt of a lady sat on a chair against the wall of the room. The satire reflects the post-elocutionary movement tendency to prefer 'conversational' styles of reading over 'theatrical' forms: the latter was not seen as suitable to the drawing room.[106] Like the scenes described by Weightman's boys in the dialogues, the image takes a broad view of the room, but the scene is different in other ways: the large room is in chaos and the audience mostly inattentive. There is an amorous couple flirting in the foreground to the right; opposite is another pair, mouths open as though yawning. Even the bust on top of the bookcase is turned away from the reading woman, deliberately breaking the symmetry of the piece of furniture. The presence of animals emphasises the chaos: a cat and dog fight in the foreground (reminiscent of the cartoons of Thomas Rowlandson), and a monkey pulls books from the bookcase which tumble towards the ground.[107] One of the books falls open so that we can see its title page: 'Much Ado About Nothing', a comment on the reader's over-the-top performance, or perhaps on the scene as a whole. Regardless, there is much commotion in the scene. The falling books draw the reader's eye down the image via the central beam in the large bookshelf in the background to the figures in the foreground, who are in the bottom half of the image. The size of the bookcase is telling: it exists as a statement to the wealth of the participants in the scene. Having access to so many books, however, is not guarantee of being able to read them well, even if 'fluent' readers need access to a wide range of texts.[108] Affluence does not

[106] Jajdelska, '"The very defective and erroneous method"', p. 143.
[107] See Kate Heard, *High Spirits: The Comic Art of Thomas Rowlandson* (London: Royal Collection, 2013).
[108] Readers also need leisure time to read. See Jajdelska, '"The very defective and erroneous method"', p. 150.

equate to fluency. The books are organised by size, the largest books on the bottom of the shelf, where they are juxtaposed with the small book held by the reading woman in a single hand. The visual comparison suggests that the woman is reading from a cheaper book, further devaluing her choice of reading material. Unlike Weightman's dialogues, the image also shows us the reading space, and the practicalities of lighting in a pre-electricity era: the reader has her back to the fireplace, so that the book is sufficiently illuminated. There are also candlesticks mounted on the wall to further increase the sources of light.

Like the web of relations described by Charles and George, there are lots of groups of people in the image, with a variety of relationships between them. The precise nature of the connections is unclear: the distinctions between friends, neighbours or relatives are blurred in both the dialogues and the image. Both scenes make clear, however, that drawing rooms had the potential to hold quite large audiences made up of different local families. Taking a broad look at social reading scenes in this way, the image shows how difficult it can be to navigate all these connections, or 'read' them correctly. While George is shown to have made the 'correct' judgement in not inflicting a bad reading performance on to local people, the woman has failed to read the reaction of the room, continuing her performance despite the negative reactions she has provoked. George is presented as wisely having chosen to isolate himself from reading in front of the company until he felt confident in his performance abilities; the woman in the cartoon has no such reservations. Her faults in reading have also resulted in her failure to 'read' the room. The boys, in contrast, are hyperaware of the benefits of good performance and the dangers of performing badly. Their performances in front of the adults of other local families are scrutinised, and they grant similar levels of inspection to other reading boys. The reader of Weightman's dialogues is expected to identify with George, but Nixon's image requires no

such identification from the viewer: the broad sweep of the image, seeing the assembled figures from a distance, seeks to distance the viewer from the performer. The viewer of the image is instead invited to share a knowing glance with the woman on the far right, who looks directly at the audience from behind her fan.

Both Weightman's dialogues and Nixon's watercolour show that participants in reading events were expected to navigate complex social landscapes. Reading's ability to foster harmonious social relationships was not guaranteed. It rested on having both a skilled reader and an attentive audience. Elocutionary miscellanies were aware of reading's potential to be a site of conflict. For example, Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Female Reader* takes an extract from *The Adventurer* which depicts two female readers using reading to antagonise one another. Rather than using reading to form and maintain sociable bonds, two sisters are described as using reading to facilitate indirect expressions of their competitiveness and dislike for one another. The passage is called 'Indirect disputes', and it explores how 'people have learned to disguise, not to subdue, the passions'.[109] Doing this results in outright 'malice', which is characterised as a mostly middle-class vice: they are unlike 'the vulgar' classes' who 'vent their passions' and whose 'quarrels are generally soon made up'.[110] The narrative describes Miss Harriet and Miss Fanny, whose 'unhappiness arose from their continual bickerings with each other'.[111] One day '[after] breakfast Miss Fanny took up a volume of Shakespeare's plays that lay in the window, and out of the Midsummer Night's Dream read the following part of a speech which Helena makes to her friend Hermia'. The passages chosen is one in which Helena calls Hermia a 'most ungrateful maid' who has

[109] Wollstonecraft, *The Female Reader,* p. 288.
[110] Wollstonecraft, *The Female Reader,* p. 285.
[111] Wollstonecraft, *The Female Reader,* p. 289.

'contriv'd / To bait me with this foul derision'.[112] Miss Fanny has clearly chosen this passage from Act III to antagonise her sister, given its allusion to 'sisters' vows' being 'all forgot'. Tears fall from Fanny's eyes as she places herself in the position of the 'wretched Helena' who feels betrayed by her sister — implicitly placing Harriet in the position of the traitor. Fanny does this by 'laying down the book, with tears half starting from her eyes, she [looking] earnestly at her sister', and expressing sympathy with Helena's feelings 'in a tone' which the narrator characterises as being 'more theatrical than I wish to hear off the stage'.[113] Miss Harriet responds to this attack 'with some warmth', reminding Fanny: 'You should remember, *sister*, that Helena was a foolish weak girl'.[114] The pair then have a quick exchange, transitioning from 'sister' to 'Miss Harriet' and 'Miss Fanny', before eventually referring to one another as 'Madam'. The heightened civility ironically represents the utmost of disrespect; it is a movement away from intimacy or affection and towards an unnecessary level of ceremony. Witnessing the exchange causes the narrator to fear 'that passion would at last introduce open rudeness', and so the piece ends upon his abrupt exit.[115]

The extract presents reading as a possible site for antagonism. Rather than express their displeasure with one another openly, the sisters are forced to use a pair of literary sisters to create a set of identifications which allude to ill-feelings. In doing so, the sisters take opposing sides. While they appear to be having an argument about interpretations of Shakespeare, the meanings they identify in the text are openly transferred on to themselves. The narrator fears that this may culminate in an awkward display of actual rudeness,

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[112] Wollstonecraft, *The Female Reader,* p. 289-290.
[113] Wollstonecraft, *The Female Reader*, p. 290.
[114] Wollstonecraft, *The Female Reader,* p. 290.
[115] Wollstonecraft, *The Female Reader,* p. 290-1.

revealed from underneath the veneer of respectability created by the situation of reading. Identifying with literary characters too strongly and then forcing that identification on to others results in arguments; character criticism becomes too close to criticism of one's own family members. The sisters become examples of how *not* to read: the activity has become less about the complex relationships between Shakespeare's characters, and instead about their own fraught relationship. Rather than using their reading to describe or display the passions of others, as typically understood to occur in sociable reading practices, the two sisters use their communal reading experience as a cover for their true, acrimonious feelings towards one another, albeit unsuccessfully. The reader, like the narrator, is forced to see how shared reading experiences do not always adhere to the ideals of elocutionary theory. The women described have failed to use Shakespeare (or fiction more generally) to exercise polite forms of judgement; but in reading about the pair, the reader of the miscellany (and listeners of the reading performance) can exercise *their* judgement.[116]

Elocutionary miscellanies presented their users with more than idealised images of readers. The social landscapes readers were expected to navigate were complex; elocutionary miscellanies guided their users through them by presenting readers with possible social situations where good reading skills might be displayed. Readers were expected to use their awareness of the possible social value of reading to interpret these texts, forming judgements of the kinds of readers they represent. Sociable reading did not just function to smooth group relationships: it could also be a site of antagonism and conflict between readers and listeners. It could also prompt feelings of anxiety or

[116] For more on contemporary criticism of female readers, particularly novel readers, see Temma Berg, 'Eighteenth-Century Reading Sites', in *Reader: Essays in Reader-Oriented Theory, Criticism, and Pedagogy,* 55 (2006): 15-35.

embarrassment. Participants in domestic public reading were not necessarily keen or willing.

Conclusions

My arguments in this chapter show that previous accounts of elocutionary miscellanies have not paid due attention to their complexities as instructional works. Rather than merely parroting the tenets of elocutionary theory, as generally assumed by historians of the elocutionary movement, these texts positioned themselves in relation to previous iterations of elocutionary theory in different ways in order to carve themselves a place in the literary marketplace. Scholarship on the elocution movement has tended to focus on its intellectual antecedents, but the movement had literary *descendants* as well as ancestors.[117] As well as this, it has been integral to this chapter to recognise that elocutionary miscellanies were not just concerned with the mechanical aspects of reading, but also its social ones. Focusing on that social aspect has once again revealed that writers on the subject of elocution were sensitive to the contested role that the material book form could play in prompting reading performances.

While elocutionary miscellanies provided a wide range of literary material, they returned again and again to texts concerned with the nature of reading, presenting their readers with many different images of reading against which to compare themselves. They had a thematic preoccupation with reading, as well as concern for its physical and technical

[117] See Wilbur Samuel Howell, 'Sources of the elocutionary movement in England: 1700–1748', in *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 45:1, (1959): 1-18.

aspects. It would be easy to assume that elocution books would only be concerned with ideal images of readers due to their instructional function: that their focus would be on how to read, rather than on how *not* to. Yet as we have seen, this was not the case at all. Images of bad readers were presented alongside ideal readers, so that readers could exercise their own judgement and consider who they wished to be like, and who they wished to distance themselves from. Such detailed images rebut arguments, like Hannah More's, which posit that elocutionary miscellanies only prompted superficial modes of reading as they 'inflame young readers with the vanity of reciting'.[118]

The elocutionary models found in miscellanies allowed readers to consider their values surrounding reading and reflect on their own practice in relation to others, fictional or real. Elocutionary miscellanies therefore encouraged their readers to see their time as auditors or audience members as valuable in providing many ways of measuring oneself against one's peers, whether in real life, or in fiction. Sometimes, specific instances of reading were recorded; other times, more abstract notions of the 'ideal' against which one can compare oneself. Readers are situated in a variety of social contexts. All these images served the same function — to encourage readers to develop a self-reflexive attitude towards reading and learning, and to be able to exercise their social judgement, as well as their elocutionary skills. As well as verbal fluency, readers were expected to have social fluency: the ability to read the room as well as the book.

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[118] More, *Strictures*: 1.161.

Chapter 3: Political Oratory in Elocution Books

'To interrupt the debate, the debate on a subject so important as that before us, is, in some measure, to obstruct the public business'

— Thomas Winnington, as presented in Samuel Johnson's *Debates in Parliament* (1787)

Politics, Print and Oratory

So far I have focused on elocution rather than political oratory. The terms elocution and oratory, although often used interchangeably, are not synonymous: elocution refers to speech-delivery more generally, whereas oratory historically refers to parliamentary speech-making specifically.[1] Yet elocutionary instruction and political speech co-existed in elocution books. Political speeches were one of the more formal manifestations of public speaking performance in the period, particularly those delivered in the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Iterations of these speeches in print — including in elocution manuals — formed part of how public speaking and recitation was understood in the eighteenth century. The publication of political oratory in print was an important conduit for political argument, made accessible to extra-parliamentary readers. Despite limited suffrage, there is clear evidence of popular engagement with politics and politicians outside parliament. In the latter-half of the eighteenth century, the right to vote in parliamentary elections was restricted to adult men meeting certain property qualifications. By the late eighteenth century this included roughly 400,000 voters, or 17% of all adult men in

[1] Matthew Bevis, *The Art of Eloquence: Byron, Dickens, Tennyson, Joyce* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), p. 22.

England and Wales.[2] Yet disenfranchised people were still able to engage with and participate in political happenings. Parliamentary elections attracted disenfranchised spectators, as voting was public and openly expressed. These elections became a form of street-theatre or public spectacle: 'emotionally charged theatrical event[s]' complete with music, bonfires, fireworks, and feasting for the whole community.[3] Recent accounts of the period by historians of politics are keen to emphasise that while politics was — in part — dominated by the aristocratic, landed elite who could wield patronage and influence over election results, local and central government could also be influenced by large numbers of people.[4]

Popular engagement with politics is also evident in contemporary print culture. The radical orator John Thelwall used cheap and popular forms of print alongside his public lectures to allow political information to circulate within a wider community.[5] Pamphlets were commonly used in attempts to manipulate readers' political opinions.[6] Speeches directly from the House of Commons also found space in the literary marketplace. The publication of speeches was sometimes necessary when some members were not present in St Stephen's Chapel when speeches were delivered; publication allowed the content of speeches to reach MPs as well as extra-parliamentary readers.[7] Reports of parliamentary debates in newspapers became commonplace in the 1770s, and 'by the end of the decade

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[2] See H. T. Dickinson, 'Popular Politics and Radical Ideas', in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 97-111 (p. 98).
[3] Dickinson, 'Popular Politics and Radical Ideas', p. 99.
[4] See H. T. Dickinson, 'Introduction', in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. xv-xviii.
[5] See John-Erik Hansson, 'The genre of radical thought and the practices of equality: the trajectories of William Godwin and John Thelwall in the mid-1790s', in *History of European Ideas,* 43:7 (2017): 776-790.
[6] See J. A. Downie, 'Public opinion and the political pamphlet', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 549-571.
[7] Ian Harris, 'Publishing Parliamentary Oratory: The Case of Edmund Burke', in *Parliamentary History,* 26:1 (2007): 112-130 (p. 117).

they were a staple item.'[8] The newspaper reporting of political speeches, in publications such as the *Morning Chronicle* and the *General Evening Post*, made a significant difference to the number of people who could engage with politics.[9] It is estimated that by 1750 around a quarter of London's residents read newspapers.[10] Beyond the capital, 'an increasingly extensive network of provincial papers was in existence', whose readers included the social and political elites, and also skilled labourers, tradesmen and shopkeepers.[11] Because of this interest in reading political speeches, politicians began delivering speeches with the expectation that they would be published and discussed outside of the House.[12] Speeches appear to have consequently lengthened, from around ten minutes on average in 1780, to forty minutes in 1830.[13]

Political speeches had a complex rhetorical afterlife in print. It is one thread of this rhetorical afterlife which forms the subject of the present chapter: parliamentary speech as it was presented for the use of readers of elocution books. This chapter examines political debates and single speeches which have their origins in Samuel Johnson's parliamentary reporting for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, where the debates were presented as being reports from a fictional Lilliputian Parliament. These were then edited into *Debates in Parliament*, and printed as supplementary volumes to *The Works of Samuel Johnson, LLD* (1787). In the *Debates*, the Lilliputian framing is removed, presenting the parliamentary records in a more

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[8] Christopher Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers: the Rhetorical Culture of the House of Commons 1760-1800* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), p. 9.
[9] See Bob Harris, 'The *London Evening Post* and Mid-Eighteenth-Century British Politics', in *The English Historical Review*, 110:439 (1995): 1132-1156.
[10] Michael Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole: A Study of the Origins of the Modern English Press* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987), p. 190.
[11] See Bob Harris, *Politics and the Nation: Britain in the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), especially pp. 106-7.
[12] Brendan Maartens, '"What the country wanted": The houses of parliament, the press and the origins of media management in Britain, c. 1780–1900', in *Public Relations Review*, 45 (2019): 227–235 (p. 230).
[13] Peter Jupp, *The Governing of Britain, 1688-1848: The Executive, Parliament and the People* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 207.

factual style. It is this rendering of the *Debates* which forms the basis for many of the political speeches presented by elocution books as examples of exemplary parliamentary oratory. The *Debates* therefore moved between degrees of factuality and fictionality. The examples of political oratory focused upon here are found in John Mossop's *Elegant Orations, Ancient and Modern, for the use of schools* (1788), and John Walker's *The Academic Speaker; or, a Selection of Parliamentary Debates, Orations, Odes, Scenes, and Speeches, from the Best Writers* (1796). Elocutionary miscellanies such as these re-presented political debates and individual speeches for new audiences. My main contention is that elocution books repurposed records of political oratory for new readers, using the speeches and debates to draw attention to the continuously contested nature of polite political oratory.

Yet how does this compare to what we have seen so far, in lectures expounding elocutionary theory, and miscellanies with an explicitly expressed elocutionary function? Given the canonising function of poetic elocutionary miscellanies, it might have been reasonable to expect that collections of political material function similarly, capturing a canon of rhetorical events or printed speeches to form a parliamentary history. Indeed, some nineteenth-century collections of parliamentary speeches purport to have a similar history-making endeavour in mind.[14] Yet elocutionary miscellanies assembled partly or wholly from recontextualised parliamentary reporting instead show that the nature of

[14] These texts were essentially compiled in the same way as elocution books, with much of the same material, but they lack the framing paratextual material designed to aid the process of reading aloud. Examples of these nineteenth-century compilations include William Hazlitt's *The Eloquence of the British Senate* (1810), Chauncey Goodrich's *Select British Eloquence* (1852), Robert Cochrane's *The Treasury of British Eloquence* (1877) and Julian Hawthorn's somewhat tautologously named *Orations of British Orators* (1900). Some, such as Hazlitt's *Eloquence of the British Senate* also included complex metacommentary on the speeches included in the book, often in the form of explanatory footnotes and detailed character sketches of MPs. While these texts are not strictly 'elocutionary' in the way that the texts this thesis focuses on are designed to be, the scholarship on these related texts provides a useful model for thinking about earlier collections of parliamentary material, where that material *was* collected for an elocutionary purpose. For more information about these nineteenth-century collections, see Katie Homar, 'William Hazlitt's "Eloquence of the British Senate"' in *The Wordsworth Circle*, 44: 2/3 (Spring/Summer 2013): 127-131.

parliamentary oratory was contested. These collections were not interested, as their nineteenth-century successors were, in recording the peculiarities and particularities of parliamentary procedure - the full debates, and records of the decisions made. Rather, elocutionary collections of political speeches, like other elocution miscellanies, showed a concerted preference for self-reflexive material. They supplied their readers with texts which were interested in the nature of the activities at hand — speech-making, debating — rather than being exclusively interested in the content of the debates. Instead of the fictional readers and real-life actors described in elocutionary miscellanies, both modern and historical political orators were used as models for performance. Politicians were not presented as ideal models, but ambivalent ones for evaluation by readers. That said, the figure of a politician was seen as much more appropriate for emulation than that of the actor, as Chapter 4 proves. Yet collections of parliamentary speeches had a particularly vexed relationship to their source — their previous existence as parliamentary reports made it more difficult for these books to present a singular, coherent attitude towards parliamentary speech. The accumulation and erosion of material from different stages in the rhetorical afterlives of these speeches and debates meant that political speeches repurposed for elocutionary teaching often ended up advocating conflicting approaches to delivery.

The chapter begins by considering the impact that the conditions surrounding parliamentary reporting had on the survival of debates and single speeches. Wider conditions for the preservation and publication of political oratory are discussed before an account of the genealogy of the debates which form the primary subject of discussion is given. The limitations of print in instructing oral performance are again explored; as I have argued in previous chapters, elocutionary texts (both political and poetical) continuously

point to the limitations of their print forms. The compounded efforts of multiple compilers and editors of parliamentary oratory in elocution books resulted in the co-existence of competing notions of 'theatricality' in relation to oratorical performance. Parliamentary debates extracted into these books are primarily concerned with parliamentary decorum: MPs often used their speeches to regulate debate by drawing attention to breaches of decorum and attempting to repair them. On occasion, polite parliamentary procedure is disrupted entirely, raising questions about what lessons elocution books offer about parliamentary debate.

Extant Eloquence

Parliamentary reporting was not a smooth process from oratorical event to the printed page. The material conditions of parliamentary reporting impacted on the survival of particular political debates and individual speeches. There were calls to canonise rhetorical performances in Parliament, which are useful in revealing contemporary concerns regarding the preservation of parliamentary oratory. Yet the historical realities of preserving those speech events was more complex. In considering the textual genealogy of parliamentary oratory we can explore wider issues related to parliamentary reporting and the textualisation of historical speech acts: questions regarding the authenticity of parliamentary reports, the authority of different agents involved in the recording and publication process, as well as broader points related to the relationship between print and orality.

In 1786 *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* published a piece called 'Reflections on Parliamentary Eloquence'. The article lamented the lack of a book of

modern parliamentary eloquence. 'Of all the speeches spoken in the [upper] house,' the unnamed author writes, 'how few have ever been collected and preserved in libraries, as models of classical elegance.'[15] For the writer, modern political oratory should occupy the same space as other models of 'classical elegance', and could hope to 'stand in competition with the orations of Cicero'.[16] Staking a claim for modern political speeches as events worthy of both preservation and publication, the author asks if any such volume is 'extant'.[17] The use of the word extant suggests that for such a volume to exist, the speeches within it have to have survived, almost fortuitously. The 'Reflections' lament the lack of such books using the *ubi sunt* formula:

> where are to be found the volumes of oratorical elegance? Have the speeches, which have gained the praise of admiring kingdoms, been nowhere collected and recorded? Do we lock them up in our book-cases, and put them into the hands of our children as models for imitation, as lessons to form their young minds, and raise a succession of orators and patriots? No.[18]

The Latin phrase *ubi sunt* comes from the rhetorical question *ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt?* or 'where are those who were before us?'[19] The formula is used to mourn a lost past — in this instance, the transient oratorical performances of peers in the House of Lords. Using the formula implies that these speeches form part of a valuable and honourable history. This value is not just monetary: without preserving the speeches, children will lack suitable models to imitate and thus fail to become the 'orators and patriots' that they ought to be. The author concludes, that if such a book exists, it should 'be openly produced, and the

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[15] See [Unknown], *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, 78:541 (January 1786): 24-25 (p. 24).
[16] *The Universal Magazine,* p. 24.
[17] *The Universal Magazine,* p. 24.
[18] *The Universal Magazine,* p. 24.
[19] This is the Latin title given to an Old English poem found in MS. Digby 86. See Frederick Tupper, 'The Ubi Sunt Formula', in *Modern Language Notes*, 8:8 (1893): 253–254.

public will embrace it as an invaluable treasure'.[20] Essentially, the piece calls for an elocution book composed primarily of modern parliamentary speeches.

There is, however, a limit to how contemporary these speeches should be: '[o]f the great Speakers in the Present Parliament it is yet too delicate to speak'.[21] This is because the main purpose of the proposed volume is to provide examples of oratorial elegance, rather than illustrate political arguments or cross-party divides. Propriety prevents speeches which are too modern from being included, as 'men have their favourite orators, whom they judge, not upon the permanent principles of reason and taste, but by political principles, prejudice, and party.'[22] This brings the entire piece back to its starting argument, that 'Parliamentary eloquence should be considered as totally independent of party.'[23] Speeches from the past are, with the passage of time, apparently able to shed some of this party 'prejudice', becoming artefacts of 'reason and taste' which are seen as timeless. Historical significance, the 'Reflections' imply, accrues only with the passage of time.

We see here competing views of parliamentary speeches: they are both timeless pieces of rhetoric, worth preserving into a political history, but also ephemeral speech acts, constantly on the verge of being lost forever. The 'Reflections' stake a claim for these instances of rhetoric to be preserved like their classical ancestors. This reverence for contemporary parliamentary speech contrasts with recent accounts of political rhetoric. Paddy Bullard, for example, sees political speeches as occupying a 'marginal place in the literary world, mixed in with the trashiest journalism'.[24] Yet the argument made by the

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[20] *The Universal Magazine,* p. 25.
[21] *The Universal Magazine,* p. 25.
[22] *The Universal Magazine,* p. 25.
[23] *The Universal Magazine,* p. 24.
[24] Paddy Bullard, 'Parliamentary rhetoric, enlightenment and the politics of secrecy: the printers' crisis of March 1771', in *History of European Ideas*, 31:2 (2005): 313-325 (p. 324).

'Reflections' (and implicitly the elocution books which seem to answer its call for a volume of parliamentary eloquence), is that such ephemeral speech events are worth preserving in the longer term. Seeing both viewpoints reveals a dualism which should shape how we view eighteenth-century parliamentary oratory. It was both ephemeral and made permanent; speeches were witty creations of a moment which achieved greater longevity through print. The 'Reflections' imagine an *ur*-text where all the speeches from the House of Lords are conveniently collected and preserved in manuscript form. In conceiving book-production in this way — from manuscript, to the printed book being locked in the bookcases of its imagined readers — the 'Reflections' assume that the preservation of parliamentary oratory is easily achievable and that there is a clear, uninterrupted path of transmission from orality to print. Print, by this understanding of book-production, confers status and canonicity due to its apparent ability to accurately 'record' a speech and lend it permanence, moving beyond that offered by manuscript renderings of a speech.[25]

Yet there were historical factors affecting the preservation of parliamentary speech. Before 1771, reporting on parliamentary debates in the press was prohibited. There was a tradition of secrecy in both Houses: parliamentary privilege meant that occurrences inside the walls of St Stephen's Chapel were not meant to be reported outside of it. After 1771, however, following a complex legal case involving several newspaper printers, successive governments began to 'turn a blind eye' towards press-coverage of parliamentary affairs.[26] Despite this, journalists were prohibited from taking notes in the Commons until 1783, and in the Lords until the 1820s.[27]

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[25] Cf. Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
[26] Maartens, '"What the country wanted"', p. 229.
[27] Maartens, '"What the country wanted"', p. 229.

Yet this did not mean that parliamentary reporting did not occur in the rest of the eighteenth century prior to 1771. Instead, reporters and newspapers were obliged to present reports of parliamentary debates in more oblique forms; print strategies were used to get around the law, ensuring the continued representation of oral events. For example, the *Political State of Great Britain* (first published in 1711) was a periodical which took the shape of a pretended monthly letter from an English writer to a friend in Holland. The *Historical Register* then republished these reports. These publications were allowed to continue for years, alongside other regular publications such as the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *London Magazine*. The former magazine initially presented parliamentary reports which were summaries of material taken directly from the *Political State*.[28]

From in April 1738, however, these publications were forced to further alter their procedures for publishing parliamentary reporting. That year a newspaper printed the King's answer to an address from the Commons before it had been officially reported from the Chair. Consequently, the House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution preventing the publication of accounts of parliamentary debates.[29] The *London Magazine*, for example, began publishing reports under the new title of the 'Proceedings of the Political Club'. The reports therefore took on the guise of reporting on a fictional parliamentary club, where members spoke in the style of MPs. The members were given assumed names, which readers were expected to interpret as referring to real peers — for example, 'Tullius Cicero' for Robert Walpole, or 'Cato' for William Pulteney.[30] The choice

[28] For a fuller account of parliamentary reporting in the first few decades of the eighteenth century, see Benjamin Beard Hoover, *Samuel Johnson's Parliamentary Reporting:* Debates in the Senate of Lilliput (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), especially pp. 6-13.
[29] Hoover, *Samuel Johnson's Parliamentary Reporting,* p. 14.
[30] Hoover, *Samuel Johnson's Parliamentary Reporting*, pp. 16-7.

of pseudonyms makes a direct link between modern parliamentary speakers and famed classical orators. The *Gentleman's Magazine* took a slightly different approach, publishing reports on parliamentary debates under the title 'Debates of the Lilliputian Senate'. Politicians were assigned names akin to those found in Johnathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (from which the premise of Lilliput is taken), although the names tended towards the recognisable — for example, 'Walelop' for 'Walpole', and 'Ptit' for 'Pitt'.[31] Consequently, readers would still have been able to access parliamentary speeches in print, playing the game of decoding names, seeking the facts underneath accounts of fictional parliaments.

Many of these Lilliputian debates were composed by Samuel Johnson, and published posthumously in the supplementary volumes to *The Works of Samuel Johnson, LLD*. They were heavily edited by their publisher, John Stockdale, who retitled them Johnson's *Debates in Parliament* (1787).[32] This recontextualised many of the parliamentary speeches from the *Gentleman's Magazine* for new readers, presenting them under the name of a single author. As well as this, the satirical Lilliputian terminology was removed and placed in an appendix. This contributed to the elision of the environment in which the speeches were originally published — the fictional framework, which made readers aware of the amount of re-creation that was necessary to parliamentary reporting, had been removed.[33] To newer readers who had not encountered the debates in their original publications these debates appeared as though they were more accurate representations of what was said. Yet the afterlives of these debates do not stop here: they also appear in

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[31] Benjamin Beard Hoover attributes this 'Lilliputian disguise' primarily to Johnson, rather than the magazine's editor William Guthrie, although he concedes that 'it may have been the joint achievement of a number of editorial minds'. See Hoover, *Samuel Johnson's Parliamentary Reporting*, p. 19.
[32] See Samuel Johnson, *Debates in Parliament*, *by Samuel Johnson, LLD.* 2 vols. (London: Stockdale, 1787).
[33] Nikki Hessell, *Literary Authors, Parliamentary Reporters: Johnson, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Dickens* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), pp. 26-31.

elocution manuals. The Stockdale edition of the *Debates in Parliament* is the likely source for the speeches in elocution manuals which have their origins in Johnson's time at the *Gentleman's Magazine*.[34] There are some editorial changes, as will be discussed, but the majority of the phrasing of the speeches is retained.

One such elocution book is John Mossop's *Elegant Orations*. The book was published as a single-volume duodecimo in 1788, with no subsequent editions.[35] Mossop was the master of a boarding-school in Brighthelmstone (modern Brighton); the book was designed for the use of schoolboys.[36] The miscellany contains political speeches dating from 1734 (on the repeal of the Septennial Act) to 1785 (Charles James Fox on the subject of parliamentary reform), just three years before the publication of the book.[37] This range of dates suggests that Mossop took advantage of the greater accessibility of parliamentary reporting post-1771, including material beyond Johnson's accounts, which date from the 1730s and early 1740s. In *Elegant Orations* the speeches from speakers in the Commons are regularly interspersed with English renderings of speeches delivered by classical orators such as Demosthenes and Cicero. Unlike the ideal elocution book proposed by the 'Reflections on Parliamentary Oratory', Mossop's miscellany binds both modern and classical oration in the same volume; the influence of the classical-era oratory on eighteenth-century eloquence is clear.[38] The volume is therefore much like the collections

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[34] The inclusion of Johnson's parliamentary reporting in elocution books from the latter half of the eighteenth century is not discussed in Hoover's genealogy of the 'Debates from the Senate of Lilliput'. This is presumably because Hoover did not have access to the search engines and databases which make research of this kind much easier for modern scholars.

[35] John Mossop, *Elegant Orations, Ancient and Modern, for the use of schools; originally compiled for the instruction of his own pupils; by the Rev. J. Mossop, A. M.* (London: Printed for G. Kearsley, No. 46 Fleet-Street, 1788).

[36] Mossop, *Elegant Orations,* title page.

[37] See 'Contents', in Mossop, *Elegant Orations,* pp. ix-xii.

[38] For more on this, see John L. Mahoney, 'The Classical Tradition in Eighteenth Century English Rhetorical Education', in *History of Education Journal*, 9:4 (1958): 93-97; and Peter France, 'Quintilian and Rousseau: Oratory and Education', in *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 13:3 (1995): 301-321.

of poetic miscellanies discussed in the previous chapter — native verse combined with translations of the classics into English. These modern speeches 'joined the canon of great speeches as models for the young to recite and imitate'.[39] Like many other instructional books at the time, these books are the precursors to modern textbooks: 'they can draw their precepts and examples equally from the classics and from the new national canon that the books also represent'.[40] Longer speeches, both modern and classical, are split into two or three parts, presumably to aid their reading by preventing them from being too lengthy. The title of the book is similar to that of Vicesimus Knox's *Elegant Extracts: or useful and entertaining passages in prose* (1784). Knox's volume of poetry with the same name was not published until 1789, the year after *Elegant Orations*. The connection of *Elegant Orations* to other collections of 'beauties' is further strengthened by the advertisements for other books which appear in the book, such as *The Beauties of Shakespeare* and — significantly for the purposes of this chapter — *The Beauties of Samuel Johnson*, the latter being advertised as being 'A new edition, being the seventh.'[41] While the first two speeches in *Elegant Orations* are written by Johnson, he is not named as their author in the book: they have no attribution. Perhaps readers were expected to recognise the origins of the speeches where William Pitt the Elder and Horace Walpole came to verbal blows. Even if readers were unfamiliar with the source material, the speeches compiled in *Elegant Orations* are commercially aligned with other English 'beauties' which have been extracted or collected for the use of readers in books at a similar price point — 3s 6d.[42]

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[39] Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers*, p. 15.
[40] Stephen Bygrave, *Uses of Education: Readings in Enlightenment in England* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2009), p. 49.
[41] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. viii.
[42] For more on the 'Beauties' tradition, see Daniel Cook, 'Authors Unformed: Reading "Beauties" in the Eighteenth Century', in *Philological Quarterly*, 89:2-3 (2010): 283-309.

Another elocution manual which takes material from Johnson's *Debates* is John Walker's *The Academic Speaker*. We previously encountered Walker in the first chapter, through his lectures on elocution. Walker's manual was published in London in 1789 as a single-volume duodecimo with four inserted illustrated plates. Further editions were published in London in 1791 and 1797, as well as another two published in Dublin in 1796 and 1800. Like Mossop's book, *The Academic Speaker* is designed for the use of schoolboys in the classroom: its title page proclaims it to be 'Proper to be read and recited by youth at school'.[43] Walker was also a school-teacher: the dedication of the book, written in January 1789, describes his experience of teaching at the Rev. Dr. Thomson's school in Kensington. The book contains a substantial prefatory essay called 'Elements of Gesture'. Walker takes a very different approach to Mossop in the presentation of parliamentary debates. Unlike Mossop's book, only the first section — 'Parliamentary Debates' — includes speeches from parliamentary orators from the eighteenth century. These speeches take the form of four debates which date from 1732 to 1740 and are arranged chronologically. The rest of the book contains assorted speeches from dramatic works by writers such as Shakespeare or Addison. According to Walker these sections are arranged by order of difficulty, beginning with 'the Declamatory' and ending with 'the Comic'.[44] The section containing declamatory speeches is actually the second in the book, coming after the parliamentary debates. This order suggests that the section containing Walker's presentation parliamentary debates is somehow separate from the rest of the book and its design. Perhaps this is because the form of the debates differs from the other speeches

[43] John Walker, *The Academic Speaker; or, a Selection of Parliamentary Debates, Orations, Odes, Scenes, and Speeches, from the Best Writers* (Dublin: Printed for Messrs, Burnett, Byrne, Wogan, Rice, Moore, J. Jones, and W. Porter, 1796).
[44] Walker, *The Academic Speaker,* p. xvi.

contained in the book, as each debate involves multiple speakers rather than a single orator. Walker explicitly names Johnson as his source. 'Such parliamentary debates are chosen', he writes in the prefatory essay, 'as were elected and arranged by Dr Johnson, when Pitt and Pulteney shone with unrivalled lustre'.[45] Walker's choice of verbs presents the speeches as those chosen and organised by Johnson, suggesting that the speeches in the collection are not meant to be taken as verbatim records of the original oratorical events. The debates are lent an air of distinction due to their connection with Johnson, which is at odds with them being compiled as part of parliamentary reports found in popular magazines. In citing his source, albeit in the prefatory material (rather than in the main collection, or even in the contents page), Walker draws on Johnson's proximity to the time of Pitt and Pulteney's fame ('when') to justify his choice to include these versions of the text. This attribution of the texts might easily be missed, particularly if readers skip the prefatory material in favour of the extracted texts. Weight is given to Johnson's choice, which in turn is used to provide weight to Walker's choice to include them. The debates as Walker presents them are significantly abridged from Stockdale's edition, cutting entire speeches, although the speeches which are permitted to remain are quoted in their entirety. Again, like Mossop, Walker has his intended schoolboy readers in mind: he writes that 'These [debates] are so abridged as to form a good exhibition of about half an hour, for the upper boys in the school, and chiefly those who have not confidence enough to show themselves in single speech.' The debates are shortened to facilitate classroom use, and to help those too nervous to tackle an oration on their own by allowing them to participate in a group exercise.

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[45] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. xiii.

In order for political speeches and debates to appear in elocution manuals, a lot of prior editing and extraction occurred: from their composition and delivery by their original speakers, to their construction by Johnson into reports for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, their editing by Stockdale into *Debates in Parliament*, and finally their appearance in elocutionary miscellanies. Not all the speeches contained in elocution books of this kind have their origins in Johnson, but a lot of the conditions which applied to these reports also applied to others. The account offered here reminds us of the complications surrounding the preservation of parliamentary speech and the transition from orality to print. Reporters like Johnson were faced with difficulties resulting from the space which they were allowed to occupy: often without seating, they could not always see or even hear the person delivering a speech.[46] This construction of the debates would have been fairly common knowledge, particularly by the time extracts from them appeared in elocution books. There is an anecdote found in Arthur Murphy's 'An Essay on the Life of Samuel Johnson' (1798), where Johnson attends a dinner party hosted by the actor Samuel Foote. During the dinner, a particular speech given by William Pitt the Elder during the Walpole administration is praised in the conversation. Johnson remains silent until 'the warmth of praise subsided'; it is only then that he reveals 'That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter-street.'[47] The anecdote reveals Johnson only attended the gallery of the House of Commons once, and that he used notes from other people who were actually present to draft up the speeches.[48] Regardless of the anecdote's accuracy, it becomes clear that some readers knew that these

[46] Maartens, '"What the country wanted"', p. 229.
[47] Arthur Murphy, 'An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson', in *The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.,* Vol. 1 (London: Printed for T. Longman, *et al.*, 1798), pp. 44-5.
[48] Hessell, *Literary Authors, Parliamentary Reporters*, pp. 39-40; see also Murphy, 'An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson', p. 45.

parliamentary speeches should not be read as authentic or verbatim records. As historians remind us, parliamentary reporting was 'an imperfect art, greatly reliant on memory and accident, and often of doubtful accuracy'.[49] In the case of parliamentary speeches, print forms had a claim to offer a better version of the oral performance than the thing itself, which was lost and inaccessible as soon as the oratorical event was over. Once again, the relationship between print and oral versions of the same event is shown to be complex.

Politicians were themselves aware of the conditions under which their speeches might make the transition from an oral event to a speech circulating in print. Edmund Burke and Richard Brinsley Sheridan were able to manipulate these conditions to help manage their reputations as parliamentary speakers.[50] Burke, for example, tended to publish speeches on subjects of national and imperial importance, favouring material on policy over his speeches on other, more mundane subjects related to the running of Parliament — subjects such as the details of the budget or election returns.[51] Alternatively, politicians could refuse to allow their speeches to circulate from an authorised source: Sheridan refused to offer his speeches for publication, so they only survive in the published accounts of his listeners.[52] Frans de Bruyn describes these accounts as 'imperfect records of his orations', suggesting that authorised versions of speeches are more exact records of what was said in the speeches.[53] Such description exemplifies the critical tendency to

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[49] Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers*, p. 1.
[50] Modern scholarship tends to focus on this reputation management aspect of their parliamentary speeches. For example, see Stephen H. Browne, 'The Gothic Voice in Eighteenth-Century Oratory', in *Communication Quarterly* 36:3 (1988): 227-236; Paddy Bullard, *Edmund Burke and the Art of Rhetoric* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011); or Frans de Bruyn, 'Burke and the uses of eloquence: political prose in the 1770s and 1780s', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 768-793.
[51] Ian Harris, 'Publishing Parliamentary Oratory: The Case of Edmund Burke', p. 128.
[52] See David F. Taylor, 'Byron, Sheridan, and the Afterlife of Eloquence', in *The Review of English Studies, New Series,* 65: 270 (2013): 474-494 (p. 482).
[53] de Bruyn, p. 784.

privilege accounts of speeches that can be verified as accurate through their authorial backing. Yet to consider 'imperfect' records as not worth studying is to reject them for the very reasons which make them so fascinating; methods of recording by parliamentary reporters and note-takers, followed by interventions by editors and printers significantly altered how readers were able to experience a political speech. Even author-approved printed texts are editorial constructions, albeit ones where the speaker and writer are the same person.[54] Speakers may have produced neat copies of their speeches from their speaking notes, if they had them, although as Lord Chesterfield noted in a letter to his godson and heir Philip Stanhope, speaking extempore was expected and preferable. In writing of the importance of a good parliamentary career (a theme also well-established in his letters to his natural son, also called Philip Stanhope), Chesterfield advises his godson to 'never write down your speeches beforehand; if you do you may perhaps be a good declaimer, but will never be a debater'.[55] In debate, spontaneity was prized. As Christopher Reid has pointed out, there are actually many similarities between the skills of an orator responding to other speakers in a debate, and a parliamentary reporter tasked with writing it all down: 'a retentive memory, a quickness to spot the general structure and heads of an argument, [and] an ear for catchphrases' being just some of the useful 'continuum of skills' parliamentary speakers and listeners were expected to possess.[56] Perhaps author-approved speeches should be instead regarded as texts which reveal something about what the speaker *planned to say* (if taken from speaking notes), or what they felt they *ought to have said*, rather than having any greater claim to accuracy or authenticity over reports of speeches

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[54] Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers*, p. 79.
[55] Philip Stanhope, Fourth Earl of Chesterfield, *Lord Chesterfield's Letters,* ed. David Roberts (Oxford: OUP, 1992), pp. 378-9.
[56] Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers*, p. 79.

made by listeners. Consequently, it is difficult to use print as straightforward evidence of what was said during an oratorical event.

For historians, or scholars interested in questions surrounding authenticity, these printed speeches cannot present an accurate account of the oratorical performances given by Members of Parliament in the period: the words they spoke, the order in which they spoke them, and the manner used for delivery. The mediation of political speech is a complex and imperfect process. It is important to remember that parliamentary speeches were both occasions *and* documents, and that documents of speeches have the potential to prompt *new* occasions or oratorical events. Their complex afterlife in print raises questions of authenticity and authority — two things which it is very difficult to control in print after the original oratorical event. These issues shape our understanding of political oratory in print. Parliamentary speeches more broadly (regardless of how they came to be written or recorded) offer an insight into how extra-parliamentary readers accessed speakers in the House through text. Considering the conditions of access to these speeches (particularly as they are presented in elocution books) necessitates thinking about the specific speeches included, their length, any framing paratextual material, and differences in words and punctuation. These issues surrounding the editing and framing of this material provide an alternative way of thinking about how eighteenth-century readers accessed the words of politicians and how the purposes for which these texts were collected altered their potential meanings for readers. This account does not privilege firstness, as this would be to deliberately ignore how parliamentary speeches accumulated and lost material over their afterlives in print. It would also be a failure to acknowledge how later readers encountered heavily altered texts.

Gesturing Towards Meaning

Having considered the complex history of parliamentary debate in print, we can begin to consider in more detail how elocutionary miscellanies repackaged debates and single speeches for audiences interested both in parliamentary speech and in improving their own skills in reading aloud. Elocution books of this kind were aware of the limitations of print in instructing oral performance and had to adopt a variety of techniques to help compensate. Such techniques included extra editorial material and illustrations to help readers understand the importance of gesture to parliamentary speech, both in the House and when readers were attempting to recreate it for themselves using elocution books. Vicki Tolar Collins's idea of 'rhetorical accretion' is useful here: rhetorical texts inevitably contain traces of their past selves, which accumulate as texts are recontextualised and repurposed for new readers.[57] As well as this, it is important to add to Collins's definition of rhetorical accretion by considering that material from a text can be *eroded* as well as *accumulated*. Elocution books, after all, that took part of their material from Johnson's parliamentary debates made a series of deliberate editorial choices which impacted how schoolboy and domestic readers experienced them. Some of these changes are found in the Stockdale edition of the debates, and some are unique to their elocutionist editors. These distinctions are important to draw; by paying attention to the accretions and erosions evident in elocutionary texts, we can see how self-conscious elocution manuals were of the limitations of the print form in providing oratorical instruction.

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[57] Vicki Tolar Collins, 'The Speaker Respoken: Material Rhetoric as Feminist Methodology', in *College English,* 61:5 (1999): 545–73.

The speech events elocution manuals purport to help one recreate are themselves subject to alteration through the material conditions of the elocution book itself. For example, parliamentary speeches tend to be filled with demonstrative terms which ground the speeches in their original location of delivery.[58] Demonstrative terms include words such as 'this' and 'that', or 'here' and 'there'. Christopher Reid cites the example of Pitt the Elder, who was recorded by a parliamentary reporter as using spatial references which 'now require quite detailed decoding'.[59] Pitt's gestures highlight a detailed history of political connection, which is why the reporter 'found it necessary to make careful note of his physical movements and gestures'.[60] In elocution books specifically, a common form which such verbal gestures take is in reference to where people were sat in the House. For example, in *Elegant Orations*, we commonly find phrases such as 'my Honourable Friend that sits near me', or 'an honourable and learned gentleman, who sits opposite me now, and who is likely to do so on all occasions'.[61] As discussed in Chapter 1, public speakers were expected to be continually aware of the space they and their audience inhabited; politicians speeches were constructed to make continual reference to how other members were placed in the House. The indications to the relative positions of the gentlemen are used to denote whether or not they were 'on the same side' (both physically and metaphorically) of the speaker. The intended referents were presumably clear in the original delivery of the speeches, as the speaker and listeners inhabited the same space (passing over the limitations that parliamentary reporters were subject to, outlined above). Yet these verbal gestures can lose their intended referent when translated into text alone; in their

[58] Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers*, p. 42.
[59] Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers*, p. 38-9.
[60] Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers*, p. 38.
[61] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, pp. 54 and 126, respectively.

chamber-delivery they may have been supported or reinforced with gestures, significant looks or perhaps an emphatic tone of voice.

Editors of printed speeches could attempt to compensate for this potential loss. The second example, of the 'honourable and learned gentleman, who sits opposite me now', comes from a speech by Charles James Fox, '*on East India Affairs*'. The gentleman originally referred to was '[*Mr. Dundas, the late Lord Advocate of Scotland, who sat on the Opposition side, close by Mr. Pitt*]'.[62] This insertion, indicated by square brackets, is editorial — it comes from the 1784 edition of the *Parliamentary Register*, which was Mossop's source for this particular speech.[63] The original reporter, and the compiler of the *Parliamentary Register* were sensitive to this need for editorial clarification. Mossop retains the gloss verbatim, whilst making significant changes to the original parliamentary report. The report as it appears in the *Parliamentary Register* is actually in the third person. Mossop has inserted the first person pronoun into the speech in its place, removing the sense of it being a distanced 'report' of the speech. Consequently, the speech now appears to be a verbatim record of what was said by Fox, rather than a descriptive record. Of course, this is only a side-effect of Mossop's primary purpose as elocutionary editor: to provide a text which a reader can use to practise delivering speeches of this kind, where the 'I' pronoun would be necessary. But again we see here the ways in which elocutionary texts were shaped by the challenges of moving between oral and printed material.

Walker takes a different approach to the significance of gesture to parliamentary speech. The prefatory essay to *The Academic Speaker*, 'Elements of Gesture', specifically

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[62] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. 126.
[63] Great Britain, *The Parliamentary Register; or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons, Vol. XII* (London: Printed for J. Debrett, successor to J. Almon, 1784), p. 129; for the corresponding passage in Mossop, see *Elegant Orations*, p. 126.

addresses concerns regarding how to make physical movements while performing single speeches, either alone or as part of a group performance of a parliamentary debate. The essay includes four inserted plates illustrating the methods of recitation or 'the attitudes described' in the book, which further aid the cause of teaching the art of gesturing while speaking.[64] The essay and images address the act of oration (including both speech and gesture) without reference to specific performance texts, preferring to treat the subject in a more abstract sense. Consequently, the importance of gesture is divorced from specific performance contexts, even though Walker is careful to date his debates and provide a list of speakers to help contextualise them for his readers. These plates offer instruction which is not specific to any particular text, contrasting with the elocutionary miscellanies examined in the last chapter, such as *Sheridan's and Henderson's Practical Method* or Richard Turner's *The Young Orator*. The plates in *The Academic Speaker* were a big selling-point of the book, as they are mentioned on the title page, and also in a contemporary review of the book.[65] The presence of the plates suggests that for Walker the use of text was insufficient to explain the manner of delivery he expected from his intended schoolboy readers. They are 'annexed' to the relevant descriptions, so that they 'will greatly facilitate the reader's conception' or understanding of the poses required for performance.[66] The illustrations are simple black and white engravings, showing young boys performing speeches. They often have an arm held out in front of them to illustrate the importance of gesture to Walker's conception of elocution as including both speech and action. From the illustrations, we can see that Walker expects his students to be able to perform orations by heart: none of

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[64] Walker, *The Academic Speaker,* p. ii.
[65] [Unknown], 'The Academic Speaker; or a Selection of Parliamentary Debates', in *The Critical Review, or Annals of Literature*, 67 (January 1789): 54-6 (p. 55).
[66] Walker, *The Academic Speaker,* p. ii.

the boys illustrated holds a book or paper of any kind, leaving both hands free for expression (see Figure 5, below). When referring to other books concerned with elocution, Walker describes them as 'attempts to improve the art of Reading and Speaking', marking a distinction between these books and his own: this compilation being 'more particularly articulated for Speaking'. Those who are more interested in reading are directed in a footnote to a book called *The English Classics Abridged.*[67] Here, in both the illustration and the essay, the difference between 'Reading' and 'Speaking' is the use of the book: reading requires the book in hand, whereas speaking is akin to 'pronouncing by heart'.[68]



Figure 5: Plate 4 from John Walker's *The Academic Speaker* (1796).

In Figure 5, a pair of boys in contemporary dress debate.[69] They face one another at a distance, implying opposition. The illustrator pays attention to where the weight of the

[67] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. xiii.
[68] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. xiii.
[69] [Unknown], Plate 4, from John Walker, *The Academic Speaker* (London: 1796). Engraving. Huntington Library, California: 359804. The plate is inserted between pp. 10-11. The image of the plate is taken from *ECCO*, where it has been flipped so that readers can see it without rotating the screen; I have kept it this way for ease of viewing.

figure rests on one foot, just as the 'Essay on Gesture' recommends; the one with his arm raised in front of him is 'with grace and propriety only [making] use of one hand', as Walker directs.[70] This instruction does not directly refer to the illustration, but the printer's note specifying the location of the plate opposite the instruction draws the connection created by the print's deliberate placement. The illustration also pays attention to where the figures make contact with the floor through the use of hatched shadows. There is no further indication here of the space which the boys occupy, nor in any of the other illustrations.

This lack of a specific sense of space is of note given that Walker's essay carefully grounds the use of the book in the classroom setting. It concludes by considering classroom practicalities, in a passage directed specifically at fellow teachers. Boys should be 'classed' or ordered 'according to their abilities', and a class 'should not consist of more than ten'.[71] Presumably the preference for smaller class sizes allows more attention to be paid to each individual pupil, and will stop lessons from getting too long if everyone is meant to practise their reading in front of an audience. Walker further advises that group reading activities should start with the best readers performing first, so that they may prove an exemplar to others. Pertinently, at least for book sales, the schoolboys should be 'all having a book of the same kind, and all reading the same portion'.[72] A book per schoolboy would soon add up — and given that Walker's book ran into multiple editions perhaps this was a successful suggestion.

The selected examples highlight the problems of representing parliamentary speech in print. Gestures needed to be reinserted back into the speech in order for it to be spoken

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[70] Walker, *The Academic Speaker,* p. xi.
[71] Walker*, The Academic Speaker*, p. xvi.
[72] Walker*, The Academic Speaker*, p. xvi.

again; words and pictures aided this. Of course, these limitations of print-based instruction also apply to other kinds of text designed to provide elocutionary instruction. Elocutionary theories posited elocution as a physical, embodied practice: readers were expected to manage their own bodies whilst occupying a physical space, being positioned relative to other figures to whom (or *at* whom) one could gesture. A record of the words — as accurate or inaccurate as it might be — does not help students to manage their gestures, and the referents of specific speeches can be lost without the guidance of a more knowledgeable instructor. Elocution books therefore nod both backwards and forwards: back towards the past event, whose verbal gestures need decoding for extra-parliamentary audiences, and forwards, towards future speech events needing new gestures.

Competing Definitions of Theatricality

The preoccupation with gesture in elocution manuals shows that elocutionary performance was related to broader ideas surrounding the nature of performance. As we have seen in previous chapters, elocutionary theories stood in a vexed relationship with the theatre and theatricality.[73] This is also true of the representation of political oratory in elocution manuals; books of this kind contain competing or even contradictory notions of theatricality. There was an uneasy tension between the definitions of theatricality presented to readers of the prefatory material of elocution manuals, and the definitions of theatricality explored in politicians' debates.

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[73] For more on the links between elocutionary and acting theory, see Wilbur Samuel Howell, 'Sources of the elocutionary movement in England: 1700–1748', in *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 45:1 (1959): 1-18.

Both Mossop and Walker distance themselves from the theatre in their elocutionary teaching, staking a claim for the superiority of political oratory over other kinds of elocutionary text. For example, Mossop justifies the singular use of political speeches in his compilation by arguing that in reading them, 'youth (with very few exceptions) acquire a facility, steadiness and accuracy in reading and speaking, in less time, by the frequent use of Harangues or Orations, than by that of any other species of composition whatever'.[74] For Mossop, the exercise of reading political speeches is pedagogically effective: 'Experience has pointed out [their] utility.'[75] In completing the exercises in the book, 'the pupil is led imperceptibly, not only to the knowledge of words, but of things also'.[76] As well as having an elocutionary purpose, the speeches included in the volume have been chosen for their content: for example, Mossop includes a speech by the Tory politician William Bromley, '*on a motion for repealing the* Septennial Act. — 1734', which provides a history of the changing lengths of a parliamentary term throughout history, and he also includes a speech from Lord Chesterfield on the importance of freedom in elections, which contains an historical account of how elections in England have been run in accordance with the law.[77] Readers are offered a potted history of British parliamentary procedure, justifying the book's claim to be more useful than 'other species of composition'.[78]

These types of composition are not explicitly named, but we can infer that by this Mossop refers to dramatic material, as his justification of parliamentary speeches contrasts them with plays. For Mossop, reading speeches allows students to improve their public

[74] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. vi.
[75] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. vi.
[76] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. vi.
[77] See Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. 210, and pp. 234-5, respectively.
[78] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. vi.

speaking 'without that hazard of their morals which accrues from the foolish custom to acting plays'.[79] Play-acting threatens moral behaviour, growing in danger the more it occurs. Such a view is contingent with the condemnation which amateur theatricals often provoked in the latter-half of the eighteenth century.[80] Amateur theatricals were seen to threaten social stability by revealing the potential for performance to facilitate transformation across a variety of boundaries dictated by categories such as gender and class.[81] Once again we see that attitudes towards domestic performance were shaped by this negative perception of amateur play-acting, meaning that elocutionary works had to distance their instruction from non-professional engagement in theatre and theatricality. Mossop's point of view makes sense in this context; he argues that the reading of plays tends to 'break down the barriers of modesty and diffidence, those sweetest ornaments of youth, and dismisses the pupil from his course of Education, without a qualification of any sort, except that noisy, troublesome, and the Editor ventures to add, useless one, of — *a Spouter*.'[82] Acting, for Mossop, is not suitable for the 'course of Education' which should qualify a schoolboy to become a fluent orator. The end result of play-reading (the worst result, given that it ends the long, cumulative, multi-clausal sentence) is that the schoolboy should become not an *actor*, but a mere *spouter* — that is, an amateur performer of play-speeches, inappropriately obsessed with the transformative possibilities of acting and the social prestige attached to it. This argument against spouting explains why Mossop does not extend his definition of political speeches to include dramatic ones, meaning that unlike Walker's compilation

[79] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. vii.
[80] See Sybil Rosenfeld, *Temples of Thespis: Some Private Theatres and Theatricals in England and Wales, 1700–1820* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1978). Rosenfeld refers to 1770-1810 as 'the golden age' of amateur theatricals (p. 15).
[81] See Gillian Russell, 'Private Theatricals', in *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre 1730-1830*, eds. Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), pp. 191-203.
[82] Emphasis Mossop's own. *Elegant Orations*, p. vii.

Elegant Orations is composed exclusively of speeches which purport to be recordings of real historical oratorical events.

Like Mossop, Walker also argues for the superiority of speech-reading over acting entire plays. Walker's prefatory essay on the 'Elements of Gesture' is divided into two parts, and the second is 'On the Acting of Plays at Schools'. Walker states that 'it may be confidently affirmed, that the acting of a play is not so conducive to improvement in Elocution' as the reading of speeches.[83] He gives many reasons for this: he argues that the 'quick transition from one passion to another' which is the mark of a good actor is not an appropriate skill for schoolboys to learn. Instead, it 'is a plain, open, distinct, and forcible pronunciation which school-boys should aim at'.[84] This allows Walker to make a distinction between 'speaking' and 'acting': the 'finesses of acting' are distinct from the speaking of speeches which 'require a full, open, animated pronunciation'.[85] Walker's approach seems to take a more neutral attitude towards play-performance: his main objection to the use of plays is that they are not as effective at teaching 'speaking' as 'single speeches', as in plays the focus is more on the expression of the passions, rather than precise pronunciation.[86] Walker's category of 'single speeches' is broad enough to include the texts extracted from plays which are found in the rest of the book: the texts are divorced from their dramatic context, no longer forming part of a dialogue with multiple speakers. Fiction and history are commingled, and distance from play-acting does not necessarily prohibit the performance of dramatic material. Walker argues that the kinds of text to which schoolboys should be 'confined chiefly' are 'Orations, Odes, and such single speeches of plays as are

[83] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. vii.
[84] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. viii.
[85] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. ix.
[86] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. vii.

in the declamatory and vehement style'.[87] Dramatic material is fine so long as it is restricted to speeches rather than dialogues, removing much of the context which is necessary to render them play-like. Play-speeches become similar to other kinds of non-conversational and formal speeches, with a single speaker and no interlocutors interrupting the flow of speech and thought.

Consequently, we can see that elocution manuals containing parliamentary speeches positioned political oratory as superior to other kinds of performance material. Theatricality is contrastingly something of which to be suspicious. Schoolboys should avoid it: their professional ambitions should be directed towards Parliament rather than the stage. Reading parliamentary speeches are therefore the most suitable reading material, particularly as defined by their perceived distance from plays and acting.

Other definitions of theatricality, particularly in relation to parliamentary speech, were also found in the speeches within elocutionary miscellanies. The famous exchange between William Pitt the Elder and Horace Walpole hinges on a contested definition of theatricality and (pertinently for elocution books) the importance of delivering original speech. The debate, as recorded by Johnson, was actually a series of debates in the House, but was published in the September, October and November issues of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1741 as though it were from a single event.[88] The debate is erroneously dated 1740 in *The Academic Speaker*, even though the live debates took place after the first reading of the Seamen's Bill in Parliament on 27th January 1741.[89] The debate was on the subject

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[87] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. ix.
[88] For the coverage of the debates including Pitt's speech, Walpole's attack and Pitt's famous counter-attack, see *The Gentleman's Magazine*, XI: 562-571; for more context of the surrounding debates, see Hoover, *Samuel Johnson's Parliamentary Reporting*, p. 185.
[89] Perhaps this date refers to the 1740 Navy Act, which included the Seamen's Bill (14. Geo. 2 c. 28). Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 56; Hoover, *Samuel Johnson's Parliamentary Reporting*, p. 185.

of placing controls on seamen's wages, to prevent private companies from offering higher wages which competed with the navy in times of war. The part of the debate which includes the exchange between Pitt and Walpole occurred on 4th March 1741.[90] A brief description of the Seamen's Debate, as it appears abridged in *The Academic Speaker*, is necessary to contextualise the exchange. In the course of the debate, Walpole objects to Pitt's theatrical manner of speaking, and blames it on Pitt's comparative youth; in 1741, Pitt would have been around 33.[91] Pitt replies that he cannot deny being guilty of '[t]he atrocious crime of being a young man', and contests Walpole's accusation of theatricality.[92] This close-reading focuses on this exchange as it is found in both *Elegant Orations* and *The Academic Speaker*. The latter book contains more (but not all) of the debate. In Walker's rendering of it, Thomas Winnington interrupts Pitt's rebuttal of Walpole, calling for a return to the debate without resorting to personal attacks. Following this interjection, Pitt interrupts Winnington in return, objecting to being lectured on parliamentary decorum by someone who refuses to let him finish his speech. Winnington once again responds, before George Lyttleton ends the debate by reminding the House of the importance of maintaining parliamentary decorum.

As this summary of Walker's presentation of the Seamen's Debate suggests, the argument centres around the conditions of participating in parliamentary debate. Mossop's collection, in contrast, presents the two speeches as two separate but linked orations, with none of the preceding nor proceeding speeches which made up the rest of the debate. Walpole's speech against Pitt is the first in the volume and is given the editorial title '*Mr.*

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[90] Hoover, *Samuel Johnson's Parliamentary Reporting*, p. 185
[91] See Marie Peters, 'Pitt, William, first earl of Chatham [known as Pitt the elder] (1708–1778), prime minister', in *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004). Web.
[92] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 68.

WALPOLE *against Mr.* PITT *(the late Lord Chatham), reflecting on his youth and theatrical manner.* — 1741'.[93] Pitt's response is then labelled 'No. II. Mr. PITT's Reply'.[94] The meaning of Pitt's speech is dependent on it being a reply to Walpole's original criticism; the two are presented simultaneously as separate entities and a pair. This presentation of the debate also shows how speeches could be framed as single events and as part of a connected debate. Much like theatrical epilogues and prologues, or snippets of verses, the compilation of collections of political oratory offers insights into the selection and curation of texts. In his study of Johnson's parliamentary debates, Benjamin Beard Hoover argues that 'Johnson's contemporaries took the speeches rather than the debates as the artistic units. His orations are compared to those of Demosthenes and Cicero; debates as wholes are ignored.'[95] This is the case in Mossop's presentation of the debates: the speeches are separated from their context, and presented as whole 'beauties' of parliamentary speech. In the case of Walker, this idea might also still apply: his distillation of the debates has been deliberately designed so that classrooms of schoolboys have the chance to practise individual orations in a group context. The reader of Mossop's collection, and the auditors in the classroom are conversely brought into the debate *in medias res*, with Walpole admonishing Pitt for a speech which is not included in the volume. Mossop's presentation of part of the debate through the two speeches emphasises the possibility of reading them separately, partly divorced from the context of the wider political discussion in the house: the end of Pitt's reply does not have the interruption from Mr. Winnington, demanding a return to order, nor Pitt's interruption of Winnington in return.[96] The result is a pair of

[93] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. 1.
[94] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. 3.
[95] Hoover, *Samuel Johnson's Parliamentary Reporting*, p. 140.
[96] For comparison, see Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 70.

speeches which simplify the nature of a debate between multiple parties, restricting it to just two. These collections, with their concern for elocution rather than debating, focus on the delivery of the speech as a single unit, much like the elocutionary miscellanies discussed in the last chapter. Debating, and the composition of one's own speeches, was considered less relevant to the purposes of elocution manuals.

Walpole's criticism of Pitt, as presented in *The Academic Speaker*, begins with Walpole arguing that he 'was unwilling to interrupt the course of this debate, while it was carried on with calmness and decency by men, who do not suffer the ardour of opposition to cloud their reason, or transport them to such expressions as the dignity of this assembly does not permit'.[97] He suggests that Pitt allows his emotions to affect his reason, no longer meeting the requirements of 'dignity' that the House demands. The speech is presented in *The Academic Speaker* as though it is how Walpole spoke verbatim, an effect achieved by the removal of a direction from Stockdale's presentation of the report, which introduces Walpole's speech thus: 'Mr. HORACE WALPOLE, who had stood up several times, but was prevented by other members, spoke next, *to this purport*' (emphasis mine).[98] Many of the other speakers in the Stockdale printing of the debates are described as having 'spoke thus', 'to this effect', or 'to the following purport'.[99] Phrases of this kind draw attention to the nature of the texts as *reports* of speeches, rather than exact transcriptions: no claim to accuracy is made. In the context of *The Academic Speaker*, the removal of this introduction to the speech also prevents the reader of Walpole's speeches from having to act out the motion of standing up from his seat repeatedly in order to speak. Perhaps this is also

[97] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 67.
[98] Johnson, *Debates in Parliament*, p. 305.
[99] Johnson, *Debates in Parliament*, pp. 288-309.

designed to make the classroom activity less play-like, so that participants do not have to continue to make gestures when it is their turn to listen rather than speak.

The contents of the speech centre around criticisms of Pitt's 'theatrical' manner of speaking. Walpole describes Pitt's speech thus: Pitt 'declaimed against the bill with such fluency and rhetoric, and such vehemence of gesture'. The verb 'declaim' suggests that Pitt is not engaging in *debate*, but rather using the debate as a chance to display his 'fluency and rhetoric', alongside violent gestures. The older man then chooses to 'remind' Pitt

> how little the clamour of rage, and petulance of invectives contribute to the purpose, for which this assembly is called together; how little the discovery of truth is promoted, and the security of the nation established by pompous diction, and theatrical emotion[100]

The speech positions Walpole as a speaker reminding another of the reason or 'purpose' of the House meeting: the 'discovery of truth' and 'the security of the nation'. Speech can, it is implied, help contribute to the accomplishment of these aims - but not if the speaker takes a juvenile manner of delivery like Pitt. The use of the word 'petulance' implies a childishness to Pitt's critical language, undercutting the force of his 'invectives'. The result is 'pompous', or affected and self-important. Significantly for our elocution-book context, Walpole directly accuses Pitt of theatricality, suggesting that 'theatrical' displays of the passions were not considered appropriate to parliamentary speeches. This stance is similar to Mossop's and Walker's in their respective elocution books. The emphasis placed by Johnson's rendering of Walpole, however, is on 'theatrical emotion' — that is, the display of the passions. Such a display is implicitly more appropriate for an actor than a Member of Parliament. The 'Formidable sounds, and furious declamation' of Pitt, coupled with 'the

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[100] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 67.

heat of his temper', are not appropriate for parliamentary oratory. The speech is then constructed to take the form of an old man offering a younger one advice regarding the impropriety of displaying theatrical emotion when delivering a speech. Johnson's Walpole blames Pitt's relative youth for his preference for a theatrical mode of delivery. Speech of Pitt's kind 'may affect the young and inexperienced', and may therefore stir feelings among younger auditors, who do not have the experience to know better. Walpole suggests that 'perhaps the Gentleman may have contracted his habits of oratory by conversing more with those of his own age than with such as have more opportunities of acquiring knowledge, and more successful methods of communicating their sentiments'. This insinuates that Pitt would benefit from — in essence — listening to his elders, who have not only more knowledge, but also have 'more successful' (i.e. non-theatrical) methods of communicating it.

Yet the presentation of this debate, both in Walker's *Academic Speaker*, and in Mossop's *Elegant Orations*, does not exclusively present Walpole as in the right with regards to his condemnation of Pitt's speech-making manner. This is because Pitt's *reply* to all these accusations is also included in both books. Pitt's speech, as rendered by Johnson, is so thoroughly linked to Walpole's initial attack that it refers to it throughout, deconstructing some of the criticisms put forward by the older gentleman. He begins by tackling the issue of his comparative youth:

> SIR, — The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honourable gentleman has, with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny, but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience.[101]

[101] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 68.

This text is taken from *The Academic Speaker*. Here, Pitt takes the crime he has been accused of and claims to be guilty of it, highlighting the problems of being blamed for possessing a quality he cannot change. Whether or not Walpole is meant to be counted among those who remain 'ignorant in spite of experience' in uncertain. Pitt's rebuttal remains clear: youth does not equate ignorance, nor age wisdom. This argument gains a new inflection from being included in elocutionary miscellanies: it implies that youth and the passion which Walpole decried in his previous speech might actually be acceptable modes of communication for the young, particularly when supported with the reasons Pitt supplies in the rest of his speech. Yet here Pitt characterises Walpole's speech as being made 'with such spirit and decency', suggesting that Walpole too is guilty of a passionate delivery. For Pitt, however, such an energetic manner of delivery does not exclude 'decency'.

Johnson's Pitt develops his riposte by deconstructing at length Walpole's accusation of theatricality. Addressing the Speaker, Pitt continues, 'But youth, Sir, is not my only crime; I have been accused of acting a theatrical part. —'[102] The punctuation in the Stockdale edition of the Debates is slightly different, reading, 'But youth, Sir, is not my only crime; I have been accused of acting a theatrical part —' where the dash leads on to the next sentence without a full-stop.[103] It cannot be said with certainty that Walker is responsible for the additional punctuation — as discussed in the first chapter, 'Lectures on Elocution', typesetters were also involved in the process of punctuation. The dash might act to represent both hurried speech or a pause — either way, it can have an elocutionary purpose. Pitt then continues (after the long dash) by considering what theatricality might mean in the context of parliamentary speechmaking: 'A theatrical part may either imply

[102] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 69.
[103] Johnson, *Debates in Parliament*, p. 307.

some peculiarities of gesture, or a dissimulation of my real sentiments; and an adoption of the opinions and language of another man.' For Pitt, 'theatricality' seems to suggest a particular way of moving, which should be confined to the stage. He also interprets Walpole's use of the phrase as an insinuation that he is lying, or that there is an element of using a script, written by someone else, and passing the words off as his own. Pitt claims to be using his 'own language', and to not be servile to anyone else's example: 'I shall not lay myself under any restraint, nor very solicitously copy his diction or his mien, however matured by age, or modelled by experience.'[104] To use such models is to be restrained or limited in some way, or perhaps characterised by a kind of 'anxiety' to please by emulation. Pitt is apparently appalled to be accused of borrowing the words of others, for 'if any man shall by charging me with theatrical behaviour imply that I utter any sentiment but my own, I shall treat him as a calumniat or and [*sic*] villain'.[105] (A 'calumniate' is a person who makes defamatory statements against an individual.) Pitt presents Walpole as having an almost puritanical view of theatricality, where using the words of another as though they were one's own is tantamount to deception. The sentiment expressed by Pitt offers an interpretation of theatricality which is opposed to the very way in which instructional elocutionary exercises function: schoolboys are instructed to use the words of others and adopt the gestures shown to them by their teachers.

In its context in both *Elegant Orations* and *The Academic Speaker*, Pitt's speech suggests that users of the book, by uttering the sentiments of politicians past, are guilty of the very theatricality their prefatory materials seek to deny. As well as this, the inclusion of the Pitt-

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[104] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 69.
[105] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, pp. 69-70. This should probably read 'a calumniate and villain'; cf. Johnson, *Debates in Parliament*, 'I shall treat him as a calumniator and a villain', p. 307. The typesetter may have had both 'or' and 'and' in mind while arranging the letters for printing.

Walpole exchange in elocution manuals implicitly glamorises this kind of witty riposte, where responses to speeches are formed quickly in response to detractors. Both of these things reveal the possible contradictions in elocution books which arise as a direct result of their accretion and erosion of the properties of their previous contexts. Despite the justifications offered by the elocutionists for their choice of parliamentary speeches as texts suitable for schoolboys learning how to perform single speeches, their chosen texts act to undermine both the endeavour of elocutionary teaching, and their expressed disapproval of theatrical manners of delivery.

The speeches discussed here are chosen from a wider context of a debate, which was itself one of many such parliamentary debates. These were not exclusively about how young men should behave: they were about public affairs and making decisions. Yet the collections in which these speeches are found reshape or distort the historical record to suggest a preoccupation with the behaviour of young men, much as other collections of elocutionary materials privilege self-referential content. This selection skews the sense of what parliamentary debates were actually like, making it seem as though politicians were permanently arguing about how young men should be arguing. When these words — or something like them — were originally spoken and recorded, neither Pitt, Johnson nor subsequent editors could have had the context of an elocution book in mind. Pitt's original audience was not a group of schoolboys seeking to emulate the better speakers in their class, and nor were Johnson's Lilliputian renderings of the speeches for the *Gentleman's Magazine* intended for schoolboy use. Their inclusion in elocution books was decades after the original oratorical events and first printing of the debates. The classroom is a different context, where learning happens through the direct emulation of approved examples,

where the sentiments expressed do not have to be original compositions, and where substance can sometimes be secondary to the mode of expression.

All of these changes in the presentation and context of the speeches result in ironies and contradictions in their elocutionary contexts. The chosen texts also show the inter-permeability of different genres of elocutionary material: the 'theatrical' is not a fixed category. While teachers of elocution, and compilers of elocution books were keen to draw their pupils away from the vice of acting, or even *spouting*, they did so by drawing on the reputations and performances of the great parliamentary orators of the past. Yet these speakers were presented by Johnson as being themselves highly attuned to contested definitions of theatricality.

Debating and Disrupting Decorum

The crux of the Walpole-Pitt exchange is the perceived need to regulate the speech of others. Decorum and polite learning were still expected to function within gentlemanly exchange, and parliamentary debates were seen as its ultimate form.[106] Being particularly interested in instances where debate is itself the subject of debate, elocutionary miscellanies containing political oratory are themselves self-reflexive. Thanks to this tendency towards self-examination they give insight into contemporary understandings of reading, speech, performance and decorum. The desire to regulate the process of debate was not unique to this particular set of speeches. There is evidence of it in both the Seamen's Debate more widely and in the other speeches and debates included in elocution manuals, regardless of

[106] Bygrave, *Uses of Education*, p. 95.

whether they have their origins in Johnson. These speeches and debates tended to be concerned with the self-regulation of parliamentary decorum by politicians, who were conscious of when it was being disrupted. On occasion in the speeches, decorum and parliamentary procedure appear to have been ruptured entirely. This raises questions about what the 'real' lessons about parliamentary speech are, at least as offered by elocution books.

Evidence of this attention to parliamentary decorum is evident in the Seaman's Debate as it is found in *The Academic Speaker*. The debate's participants were sensitive to digressions and disruptions to parliamentary decorum, and were highly invested in regulating ongoing debates. Following Pitt's response to Walpole, Thomas Winnington (a supporter of Robert Walpole) interrupts Pitt to berate him for making personal attacks on other speakers:

> SIR, — It is necessary that the order of this assembly be observed, and that the debate be resumed without personal altercations. Such expressions as have been vented on this occasion, become not a House entrusted with the liberty and welfare of the country. To interrupt the debate, the debate on a subject so important as that before us, is, in some measure, to obstruct the public business, and violate our trust[107]

For Winnington, the exchange between Pitt and Walpole has created chaos; order has failed to be observed. The language of politeness is invoked here: the verb 'become', in the sense of 'being suited to' or 'being appropriate to', is used to suggest that the language used in the House should always work to embellish a House 'entrusted' with the freedom and wellbeing of its country. To interrupt the process of debate in this way is compared to the

[107] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 70.

obstruction of public business, which is then further equated to a violation of 'trust'. The notion of trust is repeatedly evoked by Winnington to present Pitt as its opposer.

The rest of the debate is taken up with the issue of maintaining order in Parliament. Pitt contests Winnington's notion of order by pointing out that its self-appointed protector is himself guilty of destroying it: '[o]rder may sometimes be broken by passion, or inadvertency, but will hardly be re-established by a monitor like this, who cannot govern his own passion, whilst he is restraining the impetuosity of others'.[108] This 'passion' has shown itself by Winnington interrupting Pitt; the process of parliamentary debate, where speakers take turns speaking and discussing a political issue has been knocked off-kilter. Pitt places 'passion' and 'inadvertency' as his reasons for possibly breaking decorum: his strength of feeling may have broken order, but it was not intended. George Lyttleton also contributes to the debate, providing the concluding speech of Walker's presentation of it in *The Academic Speaker*. He hopes that 'it will always be remembered, that he who first infringes decency, or deviates from method, is to answer for all the consequences, that may arise from the neglect of parliamentary customs'.[109] This is an implicit criticism of Pitt: both of his defence of 'inadvertency', and for being the initial instigator of this debate. Yet, Lyttleton does not entirely place the blame at Pitt's feet, for he argues that 'he, who wanders from the question, will not be followed in his digressions and hunted through his labyrinths': subsequent speakers should not indulge the change in topic, and should stick to the matter at hand. Lyttleton also defends the display of passion, for he 'cannot forbear

[108] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 71.
[109] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 73.

to observe, that zeal for the right can never be reproachful'.[110] In this concluding speech it is unclear who is in the right regarding the breach of decorum.

Functioning similarly in *The Academic Speaker* is Johnson's record of William Pulteney, First Earl of Bath, navigating interruptions to his '*Motion for giving any Prizes taken in a War with Spain, to the Officers and Seamen concerned in taking them*'.[111] Much of the debate on prizes — as presented in *The Academic Speaker* — is concerned with how Pulteney and the other members are forced to deal with interruption and personal insult. The focus of the original motion is soon lost, as it is interrupted by the Speaker, who takes 'the liberty to interrupt the debate, by calling the attention of the House to another subject, which is to the amendments of the Corn-bill'.[112] Pulteney feels forced to defend his choice of subject, saying that 'When I made the motion, it was not with a design to put the House to any inconvenience, or to interrupt the other business of the day.'[113] He then goes on to defend the discussion of his proposed bill by emphasising its importance outside of the House — it is 'a bill for which the public are anxious'.[114] Winnington and Hay argue that the Corn-bill is of a greater concern and should therefore be prioritised. This leads Pulteney to accuse his opponents of using 'thin disguises', for 'some gentlemen have a recourse to a mere expedient to hinder us from continuing the debate'. He does not explicitly name Winnington and Hay, nor does an editor gloss them in. One can easily see how emphasis might be placed on the phrase 'some gentlemen', which is vague, to make clear his intended targets. He continues to insult his opponents, addressing the Speaker thus: 'I hate, Sir, all

[110] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 73.
[111] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 22.
[112] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 28.
[113] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 29.
[114] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 30.

expedients, and I distain all Ministers who use them. Some ministers, Sir, there are who live upon expedients, and who cannot do their dirty work without them.'[115] Again, the word 'some' is used for its lack of specificity. The strength of his accusations are clear in the phrasing. His bill 'leaves no room for cobweb negotiations, inconsistent treatise, or mock expeditions for the future'; his opponents are weak and false, lacking substance despite their delicate 'webs'.[116]

Pulteney is careful to avoid naming his targets, but this is not enough to avoid censure from others. Robert Walpole is recorded as speaking next, saying that Pulteney has given 'a speech so very unparliamentary, and so inconsistent with the rules of common decency'.[117] Pulteney has, according to Walpole, failed to adhere to the rules of politeness expected in the chamber, so much so that his discourse is 'unparliamentary'. His speech was mere 'common-place railing against Ministers'.[118] The topic of debate is even further removed from Pulteney's bill, and whether it should be put aside for the discussion of amendments to the Corn-bill. Instead, the focus is yet again on the nature of parliamentary speaking, and what kinds of speech are acceptable forms of participation in the House.

Yet the appropriateness of having this kind of discussion is questioned by speakers. As the next speaker, Mr Wright, points out, even having this debate is an affront to the House:

> SIR, — I doubt not but every Gentleman in this House feels himself as much hurt as I am at the present debate: how must it affect every lover of parliamentary decorum to see Gentlemen of the first abilities descend to personal reproaches, and to take up the time of the House'.[119]

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[115] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 34.
[116] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 34.
[117] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 35.
[118] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 35.
[119] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 36.

The discourse of personal feeling now enters the debate — 'personal reproaches' are hurtful to everyone to witness, not just the intended targets. Participants in parliamentary debates must 'love' decorum enough to maintain it within the House. Such discussion denigrates the entire House, leading Wright to appeal to the authority of the Speaker to clear up the debate, for 'each of the contending parties will chearfully acquiesce in your decision'.[120] This appeal is vocally supported by others in the chamber, who are recorded as joining in a call to the Speaker: '(All, *Chair! Chair! Chair!*)'. In keeping this interjection, Walker reminds us of the wider framework of the debate: in the House, there were more than the speakers present. In the context of Walker's classroom exercises in *The Academic Speaker*, perhaps all participants (and possibly a wider audience of listeners) were expected to join in this call to the Speaker's judgement. The Speaker decides that the discussion of the Corn-bill will 'probably be over in half an hour', and that they should soon return to Pulteney's proposed bill.[121] This explanation prompts an apology from Pulteney: 'I own the warmth of my temper transported me, when I spoke last, into some expressions for which I am now very sorry.'[122] The end of the speech marks the end of the debate, it being resolved with a suitable level of contrition, and Pulteney's express agreement with the Speaker's proposal for proceeding. The fate of Pulteney's bill, however, is significantly not recorded in the extracts from the debate reproduced in Walker's book. Conversely, Johnson's *Debates* always conclude with the resolution, creating the sense of a narrative with a distinct point of closure. Walker has a different impetus for his presentation of the debates in *The Academic Speaker*: the real point of interest for the elocutionist is in the debate

[120] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 37.
[121] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 38.
[122] Walker, *The Academic Speaker*, p. 38.

surrounding the nature of political disagreements, and how they ought to be resolved by peers. The actual outcome is, for Walker, irrelevant.

In reading the wider Seamen's Debate, and the one on the bill on prizes taken in war with Spain, we can see how Walker's extraction of Johnson's *Debates* into *The Academic Speaker* privileges debates which centre around the contested nature of parliamentary decorum. The debates easily shift to focus on what parliamentary speech ought to be like, and what is to be done when the discussion moves away from a specific piece of proposed legislation, and towards personal insult. The focus of elocutionary miscellanies was a different kind of history from parliamentary history, or the intricacies of the arguments surrounding proposed motions. Rather, elocution manuals sought to record a kind of performance history, a record of parliamentary speech constructed to aid the performance of further speeches. The editors of elocution books, in isolating instances of rupture in debate, implicitly glamorised such obstruction to the public business. Speakers such as Pitt and Pulteney have had their speeches collected in books which frame these disruptions as celebrated pieces of oratory. By placing these speeches in a new interpretive context — that of elocution books — these digressions are reconfigured as useful examples to those schoolboys who have aspirations to political careers. The speeches prompted readers to consider several things simultaneously: the nature of political debate; parliamentary procedure and decorum; how decorum is meant to be upheld or monitored by everyone in the House; and how some of the most-celebrated speakers have been imperfect orators who had to defend their own speaking conduct. Collections like *The Academic Speaker* show oration to be an act of distraction as much as the assertion of rhetorical power and authority.

Breaching Decorum Entirely: 'The Old Rat of the Constitution'

The process of extracting of a parliamentary speech into an elocution manual often occluded the debate originally at hand. We see this tendency amplified in Mossop's *Elegant Orations*, in which there is a speech from Robert Craggs, Lord Nugent, '*on the Appellation "Old Rat of the Constitution"*'. Lord George Gordon called Nugent 'the old rat of the constitution' due to his opposition to the economic reform movement.[123] Nugent, who was an Irishman, was known for his chaotic but witty speeches. Horace Walpole characterised his style as 'floridly bombast'.[124] On meeting Nugent, Nathanial Wroxall described him as 'possessing a stentorian voice' speaking 'fluently, as well as with energy and force, [and he] was accounted an able debater, and possessed a species of eloquence altogether unembarrassed by any false modesty or timidity.'[125] This lack of embarrassment identified by Wroxall reveals itself even in the speech included in *Elegant Orations*. In the speech, Nugent recalls reading about his new nickname in the papers, trying to find out what others had thought Gordon had meant by it: 'and the newswriter was also puzzled to account for the title: he had not endeavoured to discover what property of a rat belonged to him'.[126] Here, Nugent draws attention to his acknowledgement that speeches were recorded and read outside of the House, even by speakers themselves. In this case, Nugent has deliberately sought out commentary on parliamentary speeches in order to provide material for his response to the moniker. The newspaper has failed to provide the answers

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[123] See Patrick Woodland, 'Nugent, Robert Craggs, Earl Nugent (1709–1788), politician and poet', in *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004). Web.
[124] Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Second*, 3 vols., ed. Baron Henry Richard Vassall Holland. (London: Henry Colburn, 1846): I.45.
[125] Nathanial Wroxall, *The historical and the posthumous memoirs of Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall*, 5 vols., ed. Henry B. Wheatley (London: Bickers and Son, 1884): I.91.
[126] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p. 194.

he is looking for; he provides possibilities in his speech instead. He considers both the qualities of the animal that he disavowed, and 'the qualities of this animal I admire'.[127] The speech ends with an attack on Lord Gordon, likening him to a rat in return:

> The Noble Lord who has called me an old rat, has something of a rat in his own constitution; he likes good things. I remember when the Noble Lord was some years ago on a visit to my house, he was fond of going into the cook's pantry and dairy. Indeed I must tell the House, I had at that time a remarkable pretty dairy-maid.[128]

The speech ends here, the anecdote forcefully implying that Gordon is anything but 'noble' in his repeated attempts to seduce Nugent's dairymaid. The listener and reader, however, are left to bridge the gap between Gordon's visiting the pantry, and the maid. The anecdote preserves the moment a private visit is brought into the public. In this speech, a personal anecdote has now been made more widely available (both in the House, and later in print) and takes the route of personal attack to rebut accusations of being 'the old rat of the constitution'. The speech more widely, as it is extracted in *Elegant Orations*, does not address the debate on economic reform at all. Rather, the intention of the extract seems to be a focus on the phrase 'old rat'.

Contemporary evidence reveals the name stuck, even with Nugent's rebuttal. A satirical etching, published in 1783, shows Nugent in a typical pose for an orator, in profile with a hand on his chest to signify the expression of heartfelt feeling (see Figure 6, below).[129] The right hand holds his coattails to expose his posterior, the folds of fabric suggestive of a toga such as those worn by classical orators. Alternatively, the gathers possibly parody sheets of paper, as though reading. Nugent's eloquence is characterised as

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[127] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p, 195.
[128] Mossop, *Elegant Orations*, p, 195.
[129] [Unknown, signed W.D.], *The Old Rat of the Constitution / Eloquence* (Published by W. Dent, Strand: August 1783). Etching on paper, 158 x 110mm. British Museum, London: BM Satires 6255.

mere 'hot air' in the etching, taking the common metaphor of passing wind as a kind of speech act.[130] Flatulence was also commonly associated with corruption in the period.[131]



Figure 6: Unknown [signed W.D.], *The Old Rat of the Constitution / Eloquence* (1783). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

[130] Keith Thomas, 'Bodily Control and Social Unease: The Fart in Seventeenth-Century England', in *The Extraordinary and the Everyday in Early Modern England,* eds. Angela McShane and Garthine Walker (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 9-30 (p. 15).

[131] See Clare Brant, 'Fume and Perfume: Some Eighteenth-Century Uses of Smell', in *Journal of British Studies,* 43:4 (2004): 444-63.

The fart is labelled 'my Son in Law', who was George Nugent Temple-Grenville, Earl Temple, later Marquess of Buckingham.[132] While they were not related by blood, George Nugent took on his father-in-law's name in 1779; the fart seems to play on the idea of George Nugent wishing to be his father-in-law's natural 'issue'.[133] The metaphor of the rat is not visualised by the illustrator: it remains limited to text accompanying it, and thereby identifying its subject.

The inclusion of the 'old rat' speech in Mossop's *Elegant Orations* raises questions about the lessons schoolboys were meant to draw from the speech, or the lessons which teachers helping a boy to practise reading it were teaching. The structure of the speech, as presented here, shows an example of witty rhetoric. It takes a derogatory metaphor used by the opposing side and dismantles it, looking at how it might be a compliment as well as an insult. Finally, it applies the insult back to the person from whom it originated, in a pleasing circularity. The speech in which Gordon calls Nugent 'the old rat of the constitution' to begin with is not included; *Elegant Orations* was formatted as a collection of singular orations rather than as a collection of parliamentary debates. Consequently, the wider debate is excluded in favour of addressing name-calling and anecdotes. The speech is included in the book for its humour and the entertainment value it provides. This purpose initially appears to be at odds with the book's claims to elegance and education, but really it reminds us of the co-existence of rudeness and politeness in eighteenth-century

[132] See Mary Dorothy George (ed.), *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum*, Vol. 5 (London: British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, 1935), entry for BM Satires 6255.
[133] See *The London Gazette*, No. 12036. 30 November 1779, p. 1.

culture.[134] All these instances of parliamentary decorum being breached show the interests of eighteenth-century elocution manuals to be very different to later nineteenth-century collections of parliamentary speech. Rather than being interested in presenting a parliamentary history or recording the lives and arguments of speakers, elocution books were often more interested in providing readers with examples of witty one-upmanship, where the subject of debate is debate itself.

Conclusions

Maria Edgeworth's novel *Belinda* (1801) features a woman called Harriet Freke who dresses as a man to be able to enter the gallery in the House of Commons and hear Richard Brinsley Sheridan speak.[135] She publicly boasts of her deception, which allows her to circumnavigate the rules banning the presence of women in the House.[136] Part of the thrill for Mrs Freke is being able to access parliamentary orators in the moments of performance — something that was impossible for the majority of people interested in parliamentary speech, who had to be content with written reports. The novel itself highlights this inaccessibility by its refusal to represent or quote Sheridan's speech. All the reader is granted is Mrs Freke's victorious account of her conduct. As in elocution books, the content of the speech is not the most important thing for Mrs Freke: she has been able to gain access to Sheridan's famed oratorical prowess, and that is enough.

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[134] See Simon Dickie, *Cruelty and Laughter: Forgotten Comic Literature and the Unsentimental Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
[135] See Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* (1801) (Oxford: OUP, 2008).
[136] The extent to which this rule was enforced is unclear. Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers*, p. 95.

Elocution books also offered a complex kind of access to oratorical events by providing repurposed records of political speeches for new readers. The political speeches found in elocution books, a little like those found in newspapers, allowed readers to 'imagine themselves part of the political nation' and to bring 'the House into the home'.[137] Repackaging these texts made the performances of famous orators more accessible to readers unable to enter the Stranger's Gallery, albeit some years — or even decades — after these speeches were delivered. For teachers of elocution such as Mossop and Walker, such eloquent speech was a condition of participation in public life to which they encouraged the users of their books to aspire.[138]

The issues that the editors of elocution books addressed were not necessarily the things they claimed to care about in their prefatory material. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly for instructional works on ideal forms of oratory, these books did not encourage their readers to consider the use of rhetorical devices or techniques which make up a parliamentary speech. Elocution lessons did not focus on parsing examples of classical oratory, even as parliamentary speeches were rebranded as *English* classics. Instead, readers and users of elocution books were given all the trappings of the House — all the gestures and filibustering — rather than the meat of the decisions made as a result of a debate. The distance provided by the passage of time allowed readers to set their primary focus on form, rather than the specific arguments or of the debates and speeches. These were speeches where the content was focused on the nature of speech-giving itself.

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[137] Reid, *Imprison'd Wranglers*, p. 75.
[138] For more on this idea of 'compulsory fluency', see Jared S. Richman, 'The Other King's Speech: Elocution and the Politics of Disability in Georgian Britain', in *The Eighteenth Century*, 59:3 (2018): 279–304.

The speeches in elocution books reveal parliamentary decorum to be a system of procedure under constant debate, which speakers must contribute to in order to maintain some semblance of order. These volumes of collected speeches provided lessons both in what to do, and what *not* to do, and the difference between the two could be indistinct. Repeated insistence on politeness was juxtaposed in these books with examples of humorous rudeness; humour and wit were as much celebrated as the adherence to codes of politeness. What we glean from reading compilations of eighteenth-century political elocution books is the range in subject and tone that parliamentary speeches could encompass, swinging from matters of national importance, to anecdotes about an opposition peer's sexual tastes. To modern eyes, these changes in tone can seem inconsistent, especially in books which are essentially precursors to the modern school textbook. Yet as we know from recent criticism and social history, eighteenth-century readers would have been more open to these changes in tone, and that the forms of masculinity promoted by parliamentary speech and ideas surrounding oratory also viewed humour as something to be celebrated.[139] Collected speeches were used by teachers of elocution to draw their pupils' attentions to the difficulties of navigating parliamentary debate, as well as providing examples of wit and rhetoric. Bearing this intended purpose in mind, we can see why the political speeches contained in elocutionary miscellanies often included examples of parliamentary conduct being criticised. This context allowed speeches where the behaviour of politicians was not in accordance with ideals surrounding parliamentary oratory to be discussed. The books allowed for ambivalent readings of the speeches: is this behaviour to be condemned or admired? Whose side of the debate over

[139] See Dickie, 'Jestbooks and the Indifference to Reform', in *Cruelty and Laughter*, pp. 16-44.

decorum are we on? Is digression to be admired? At what point do schoolboy readers stop reading and reciting the arguments of others, and start producing their own? Surprisingly for instructional works, elocution books containing parliamentary debates offered many possible answers to these questions, but none of them definitive.

For works with a professed instructional purpose, collections of parliamentary oratory left a lot of room for debate about what actually constitutes good parliamentary oratory. The texts refused to offer a single way of approaching parliamentary speech, resulting in collections which are self-contradictory and self-reflexive, more interested in debating the nature of debate than actually showing an exemplary polite parliamentary speech. Elocutionary miscellanies revelled in parliamentary oratory in all its contradictory and humorous nature, both discouraging the derailing of debate while implicitly glamourizing it. The terms of parliamentary decorum are just that — debatable.

Chapter 4: Spouting Collections

'they meet in Public Houses to act Speeches; there they all neglect Business, despite the Advice of their Friends, and think of nothing but to become Actors'

— Arthur Murphy, *The Apprentice: A Farce in Two Acts* (1756)

Club Conviviality and Spouting

Verbal wit was prized in elocution manuals, especially those containing collections of poetry, prose and political speeches. Making witty rebuttals or telling amusing stories brought social value to the speaker. Records of such verbal virtuosity in Parliament suggest that there was also value in *retelling* such stories too. As the following chapter shows, displaying wit and humour in this way was highly valued in a culture invested in defining the parameters of acceptable public speech, even as there was conflict between the modes of entertainment and politeness. Spouting collections were miscellanies which sought to provide readers with witty or even rude material which was to be used to display their speaking talents. The majority of such material was dramatic, taken from the prologues and epilogues of plays (rather than the main play for which they were originally written), but such books also included shorter, more epigrammatic forms of wit such as riddles, jokes, toasts, and — of course — epigrams. The emphasis on occasional forms of material in spouting collections is significant, as it points to the influence of contemporary associational culture on their forms and substance.

Eighteenth-century gentlemen were expected to engage in masculine forms of sociability. This included taking part in associational culture by being a member of assorted associations, clubs, and other kinds of societies. An issue of the *London Magazine* from 1766

satirises the vogue for clubs: 'You must belong to drinking clubs, spouting clubs and disputing clubs,' the issue declaims.[1] When taken out of context, this quotation appears to be sincere in its suggestion that to be considered a gentleman one must be a member of numerous societies advocating diverse activities: drinking, spouting and disputing alongside one's friends. Yet the context of the satire reveals the reverse to be true: the 'genteeler and politer' mode of behaviour that the satire suggests 'purifies the morals, and refines the taste' is actually anything but moral and refined.[2] The article argues that clubs accommodate those who are anything but gentlemen: men who seduce milliners, stare at women in church, rudely mimic those with speech impediments, drink excessively, swear and sing bawdy songs until they are 'carried home triumphantly in a chair, senseless, speechless and motionless' at the end of a long night.[3] This distorted representation of eighteenth-century club culture highlights the importance clubs and societies had in constructing masculine sociability in the period, and the debates surrounding their acceptability.[4] Throughout its length, the satire has a refrain: that 'This is seeing life and knowing the world'.[5] It is these social activities that constitute living, not what one does *for* a living. To men unable to make claims to gentility through birth or wealth – often tradesmen or apprentices — these clubs offered the chance to perform gentility despite their professions. Of course, in apparently saying this, the article suggests the opposite: membership to these recreational clubs should not distract men from their day-jobs. In focusing on recreational activities that permit the performance of gentility, one forgets —

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[1] [Unknown], 'Modern Way of Knowing the World and Seeing Life', in *The London Magazine: Or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer,* November 1766, 577-578 (p. 578).
[2] 'Modern Way of Knowing the World and Seeing Life', p. 578.
[3] 'Modern Way of Knowing the World and Seeing Life', p. 578.
[4] See Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).
[5] 'Modern Way of Knowing the World and Seeing Life', p. 578.

even temporarily —one's proper position in society. This, the satire suggests, is the 'Modern Way'.

The satire's mention of drinking, spouting and disputing clubs assumes that readers are familiar with the nature of these organisations and activities. For a modern reader, drinking and disputing — debating — are recognisable activities. But what about 'spouting'? Spouting clubs were organisations where men would perform extracts from theatrical texts formerly delivered on the professional stage. Participants would take turns to read or recite their favourite parts, often mimicking the style of their favourite actors. These performances would take place in local taverns, at the end of the working day. Spouters, as members of these clubs were known, were heavily invested in theatrical culture, moving their performances beyond the plainer display of elocutionary skills advocated by the poetry, prose and political speeches found in miscellanies. As well as declaiming, spouters were interested in staging, costumes and the performances of famous actors of the period. The performances of these professionals provided members with living models of performance, rather than the static images of print-representations and other forms of theatrical ephemera. Spouting clubs had both the promise of 'intellectual and social improvement' that other societies offered, but with the additional opportunity to engage with contemporary theatrical culture.[6] Of course, debating societies and spouting clubs may have had overlapping memberships, but spouting clubs had an additional appeal to those interested in non-professional speaking and performance.[7] The exact origins of

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[6] See Leslie Ritchie, 'The Spouters' Revenge: Apprentice Actors and the Imitation of London's Theatrical Celebrities', in *The Eighteenth Century*, 53.1 (2012): 41-71 (p. 47).

[7] For related work on eighteenth-century debating societies such as the Robin Hood Society, see Iain McCalman, 'Ultra-Radicalism and Convivial Debating-Clubs in London, 1795-1838', in *The English Historical Review,* 102:403 (April 1987): 309-33; and Mary Thrale, 'The Case of the British Inquisition: Money and Women in Mid-Eighteenth-Century London Debating Societies', in *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies,* 31:1 (April 1999): 31-48.

spouting clubs are unclear, although evidence for their existence can be found across the latter-half of the eighteenth century, and into the nineteenth.[8]

All of these clubs were formed in a culture that prized their 'collaborative, social model'; they provided an alternative to coffeehouses, which were perceived to be increasingly old-fashioned.[9] Contemporary interest in spouting was part of a wider interest in the club culture that formed a key part of the eighteenth-century social landscape. Such private associations, were 'overwhelmingly male, meeting on a regular, organised basis, mostly in public drinking places, where they combined a common sociability with a more specific purpose'.[10] The clubs' more specific purpose was the performance of theatrical pieces in front of an audience of other theatrical culture enthusiasts. This sense of a club developed from the vaguer use of the word during the Restoration period, which was nebulous enough to refer to any regular gathering, meeting 'under the most spontaneous conditions'.[11] By the eighteenth century, associational culture had the more specific aim of common sociability, with clubs acting as social networks. Clubs allowed participants with common interests and goals to practise an 'ideal form of conversation', where spatial proximity aided spiritual closeness.[12] Yet not everyone viewed spouters' ideals and aspirations positively. As the eighteenth century continued, clubs came to occupy an ambiguous public position.[13] This was partly because clubs did not often have official

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[8] See Donna T. Andrew, 'Introduction', in *London Debating Societies: 1776-1799*, ed. Donna T. Andrew (London: London Record Society, 1994), pp. vii-xiii.
[9] See Daniel Lupton, *Letters & Laws: How Literary Genre Shaped Eighteenth-Century Clubs* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2012), especially pp. 1-3.
[10] Clark, *British Clubs and Societies,* p. 13. Clark's study makes no direct mention of spouting clubs, but the definition applies here.
[11] David Allan, 'Political Clubs in Restoration London', in *Historical Journal* 19.3 (1976): 561-80 (p. 563).
[12] Ileana Baird, 'Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: The Public Sphere Revisited' in *Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: Clubs, Literary Salons, Textual Coteries*, ed. Ileana Baird (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), pp. 1-28 (p. 2).
[13] Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p. 179.

recognition, and taverns needed 'close observation and careful municipal regulation' in response to fears surrounding gatherings of members of the lower orders.[14]

By being aware of the class anxieties in the period, we can see why many were apprehensive about spouting clubs. Spouting clubs — and local clubs of any kind — were often viewed with suspicion, as larger and more openly political associations were increasingly seen by the government as organisations designed to encourage sedition against the monarchy and government. Other societies with similar membership demographics, such as the London Corresponding Society and the Society of Constitutional Information, formed part of the Radical Movement, the main aim of which was democratic reform.[15] Members of such societies were primarily tradesmen and shopkeepers. As well as this, there was perceived social confusion in the period, often attributed to the rise of disposable income and the decline of traditional status indicators such as occupational dress.[16] It is important to remember that perceptions of class were not fixed, nor unequivocal: as Dror Wahrman notes, some people were eagerly hailing the 'middle class' and others denying its existence or relevance.[17] The language of the representation of class was changing from a language of 'ranks and orders', and was slowly being replaced with the conception of 'class' with which we are so familiar.[18] Understanding all of this allows us to consider spouting collections in their associational context — a

[14] Brian William Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 196.
[15] See David G. Wright, *Popular Radicalism: The Working-Class Experience 1780-1880* (London: Longman, 1988); and Jon Mee, *Print, Publicity and Radicalism in the 1790s: The Laurel of Liberty* (Cambridge: CUP, 2016).
[16] Clark, *British Clubs and Societies,* p. 155.
[17] Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), p. 8.
[18] Wright, *Popular Radicalism*, p. 2.

context which made them subject to a range of responses, including approbation, satire and even fear.

Spouting clubs were often seen as organisations that promoted unsatisfactory social values among lower classes of reader. I argue that spouting's reputation as a questionable activity stems from the social anxieties surrounding it in the latter-half of the eighteenth century. The figure of the spouter was often ridiculed in written and visual material from the period, becoming a clear 'type' as the century progressed. In this chapter I explore how spouting collections, a sub-genre of elocution manual, attempted to shape amateur oratorical performances that took place in local taverns. My main contention is that spouting collections sought to stake a claim for spouting as a moral and socially appropriate pastime. In doing so, these books rejected pre-existing narratives surrounding spouting, which tended to associate the practice with illegitimate forms of theatre, vagrancy and sedition. The response to spouting, characterising it as a form of sociable reading particularly deserving of contempt, reflected contemporary concerns surrounding theatricality, and what forms of performance are acceptable and for whom. There were also anxieties surrounding the blurring of class boundaries that could occur as a result of non-professional performers' aspirations to fame. Spouting collections countered this perception of spouters by tempering the ambition of their users and linking spouting to legitimate forms of theatre.

Through its broad survey of the literature and images produced in anxious response to spouters' activities, this chapter offers a more detailed reading of spouting collections than has been offered by previous scholarship.[19] Spouting and spouting collections have

[19] For examples of previous scholarship on spouting collections, see John Thième, 'Spouting, Spouting-Clubs and Spouting Companions', in *Theatre Notebook* 29 (1975): 9-16; Ritchie, 'The Spouters' Revenge'; and Gillian Russell,

been rather neglected in previous studies of the culture of club conviviality; conversely, studies of spouting have not adequately placed the activity within this context of clubs. Work on spouting collections has mostly used them as evidence of spouting practices, which are then used as a counterpoint to other kinds of contemporary theatre practice, both amateur and professional.[20] This scholarship does not consider how spouters conceptualised the nature of their own activity — spouting, as distinguished from acting on the professional stage —and, in particular, how these prologues and epilogues were appropriated from professional performances into amateur settings. This is where this chapter's interests lie.

The earlier research described here uses spouting collections as evidence for accounts of spouting, although the books themselves are often consigned by scholars to footnotes and lists in favour of fictional representations. Even when briefly discussed, no exploration has been made of these books' attempt to reshape contemporary debates surrounding the nature of spouting and club culture. A more comprehensive account of the literature that came out of spouters' activities is required. Fictional accounts — visual as well as textual — should not be entirely dismissed; they are useful for what they tell us about the reception of spouting clubs. That said, spouting collections uniquely provide material allowing us to explore the intersections between negative representations of spouters and how spouters themselves wished to be seen. Like the other kinds of elocution manual discussed so far, spouting collections were highly self-aware and attuned to contemporary criticisms from those who disapproved of spouting as a pastime. Spouting

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'Private Theatricals' in *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre 1730-1830*, eds. Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), pp. 191-203.

[20] Russell, 'Private Theatricals', pp. 191-199; Ritchie, 'The Spouters' Revenge', p. 63; and Bolton, 'Theorising Audience and Spectatorial Agency', p. 33.

companions appropriated satirical representations of spouting and used them to temper spouters' activities, trying to stake a claim for spouting as a reputable activity. These books were designed to guide the performer into more refined methods of performance, whilst encouraging them to retain a tongue-in-cheek manner. Spouting collections did this by recontextualising dramatic material from legitimate forms of theatre, particularly prologues and epilogues from plays, to further outline acceptable reading practices. This chapter explores the role of spouting companions in instructing aspiring orators, but also answers questions about the genuine objections spouters faced.[21]

Describing Spouting Collections

Spouting collections tended to be quite cheap, the prices on their title pages rarely going above 1s 2d.[22] *The New Spouter's Companion, or a Selection of Prologues and Epilogues, as Delivered at the London Theatres* (1796), for example, cost only 6d, unbound.[23] One reason for their cheapness is their comparative brevity: unlike many other eighteenth-century elocutionary miscellanies, such as Knox's lengthy *Elegant Extracts in Prose* (1784), these collections tend to be much shorter, at around one hundred pages long. The books contain extracts of theatrical material, mostly the prologues and epilogues surrounding main-piece plays. Links to the legitimate theatre are further reinforced by illustrations or frontispieces of famous actors such as David Garrick. For example, a copy of *The Theatrical Bouquet* (1778) held at

[21] Thième, 'Spouting, Spouting-Clubs and Spouting Companions', p. 15.
[22] Ritchie, 'The Spouters' Revenge', p. 64, n. 12.
[23] [Unknown], *The New Spouter's Companion, or a Selection of Prologues and Epilogues, as Delivered at the London Theatres* (London: Printed for R. Rusted, 1796).

the Bodleian Library, Oxford, contains a frontispiece showing 'Mr. Garrick in the Character of a Drunken Sailor, Speaking the Prologue to Britannia a Masque'.[24] Moving beyond the world of the legitimate theatres, spouting collections occasionally contain other forms of text designed for conversational performance, including jokes, toasts and riddles to be read or recited to others at an appropriate moment. They often contain guidance for the reader on the delivery of theatrical speeches.

My description of spouting companions challenges John Thième's 1975 account of such books. He argues that spouting companions differ from other 'manuals of recitation' because, in the latter, the 'material is general (mainly songs, comic anecdotes and elocution practices), rather than specifically dramatic.'[25] Contrary to this definition, I take spouting companions to be *part* of the culture of recitation which Thième seeks to differentiate them from. This is due to the material they contain, their interest in the nature of amateur performance and reading aloud, and the significance of the theatre and theatricality to the elocution movement more broadly.

For example, *The Sentimental Spouter* (1774) contains an introduction called 'A Treatise on Oratory in General'.[26] The text is essentially an elocutionary tract, offering rules for reading and speaking. The text is also found, word-for-word, in the later *The Thespian Oracle* (1791), where it appears under a different title: 'An Introduction on Oratory and Acting, with Rules for Acquiring the Same'.[27] Introductions concerning the art of reading

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[24] [Unknown], *The Theatrical Bouquet: containing an alphabetical arrangement of the prologues and epilogues, which have been published by distinguished wits* […] (London: Printed for T. Lowndes [1778]). Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet. A5 e.1454.
[25] Thième, 'Spouting, Spouting-Clubs and Spouting Companions', p. 15.
[26] [Unknown], *The Sentimental Spouter: or, Young Actor's Companion* (London: Printed for J. Wheble, 1774). British Library, London: General Reference Collection 641.b.36(2).
[27] [Unknown], *The Thespian Oracle; Or, A New Key to Theatrical Amusements* (London: Printed for J. Barker, 1791). London: British Library: RB.23.a.8235.

and recitation acted as key justifications for collecting dramatic material into purchasable volumes. The introduction presents acting as a superior form of oratory:

> Though the general rules for pleading and speaking, as laid down for the closet, the bar, or the pulpit, may, with propriety, be applied also to the stage, yet it may not be amiss to observe, that the last of these [i.e. the stage] requires personal accomplishments, exertion of abilities, and justness of action and expression, more than either of the former.[28]

In positioning the professional actor as the superlative orator, theatrical models of instruction for readers are presented as the most appropriate way to teach readers how to read. Elocutionary-focused material of this kind should thus be considered related to the theatre, and relevant to the interests of spouters.

Similarly, the seventh edition of *The Complete London Jester* (1777) has an introductory treatise on 'The Art of Story-Telling' and anecdotes to read aloud. Often these anecdotes have theatrical origins or are to do with inept orators found in other contexts; the contents of the book mirror the self-reflexivity we have seen elsewhere in this thesis. One anecdote in the book concerns an 'orator in embryo', who, after getting wittily taken down by someone in Parliament, never attempts to speak publicly again.[29] Another tells of an amateur actor attempting to find fame on the stage:

> A young Fellow came to offer himself to the Play-house, whose Talent lay in Comedy; and having given a Specimen of his Capacity to Mr. Quin, he ask'd if he had play'd any Parts in Comedy? the former answered, Yes; he had play'd Abel in the Alchymist. I am rather of the Opinion you play'd Cain, says Quin, for I am certain you murder'd Abel.[30]

Old anecdotes of this kind — often involving the actor James Quin, or the theatre manager John Rich — pepper *The Complete London Jester*, allowing the speaker to demonstrate his or

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[28] Quoted from *The Thespian Oracle,* p. vii.
[29] [Unknown], *The Complete London Jester, or, Wit's Companion* (London: Printed for T. Lowndes, 1777).
[30] *The Complete London Jester*, p. 35.

her own oratorical prowess whilst laughing at stories of those unable to perform. Such books, like a lot of contemporary jestbooks, also contain material which makes jokes about people with speech impediments.[31] In volumes concerned with the acquisition of verbal fluency, these jokes are particularly apposite.

Often, this shorter non-theatrical material was added to subsequent editions of these books: the twelfth edition of *The Complete London Jester* (1786), for example, contains an additional section titled 'Toasts, Sentiments, Hob-Nobs, &c'.[32] Books such as this are excluded by Thième's description of spouting companions, but their inclusion here works to further entrench these books in a context of clubs and sociable reading practices that encouraged enacting a public masculinity. Toasts, riddles, songs and anecdotes all formed part of 'the structured conviviality of the associational world', and thus books composed of this material should also be included in studies of spouters and spouting club culture.[33] These other kinds of texts intended for oral performance should be included as they are part of a culture to which spouting clubs provided access. Books such as *The Thespian Oracle* and *The Complete London Jester* (in its several editions) are included in this study of elocution manuals because they contain material directly or tangentially related to the interests of the elocution movement.

Specific surviving copies of spouting collections provide further evidence in support of widening the definition of spouting companions. Contemporary bindings give an indication of how theatrical material was often considered as poetry, and show how dramatic material beyond prologues and epilogues might also have been considered part

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[31] For more on jestbooks, see Simon Dickie, *Cruelty and Laughter: Forgotten Comic Literature and the Unsentimental Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 16-44.
[32] See [Unknown], *The Complete London Jester: or, Wit's Companion,* 12th edn. (London: 1786).
[33] Mee, *Print, Publicity and Radicalism*, p. 8.

of the spouters' repertoire. For example, a copy of *The Court of Thespis* held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford is bound into a small collection of three texts entitled 'Poetry'.[34] This title is embossed in gold onto the volume's leather spine. The book contains volumes of poems by a 'J. Aiken' and Captain Alexander Montgomery, and is completed by the collection of prologues and epilogues found in *The Court of Thespis*. The binding of these texts indicates that some would have considered prologues and epilogues as 'poetic' material — that is, material not solely defined by its roots in theatre performances. This also gives an indication as to why scholars such as Mary Knapp have included *The Court of Thespis* in studies of miscellanies of poetry.[35] Categorising these books as miscellanies of 'poetry' rather than just 'dramatic' material does not exclude them from being outside spouters' interests; it suggests that these texts were seen as having beauty as poetry as well as drama. Entire plays might also be considered part of the spouters' repertoire. A copy of *The Spouter's Companion: or, Theatrical Remembrancer* (1770), also held at the Bodleian Library, is the leading text in a sammelband containing unabridged plays including Dryden's *All For Love* and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.[36] The spine of this book is labelled 'Spouters Companion'. The title placed here may be read as collectively referring to all the texts in the book, and not just the prologues and epilogues collected into the *Theatrical Remembrancer*. Longer-form dramatic texts, this book suggests, were also appropriate material for spouters.

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[34] [Unknown], *The Court of Thespis; A Collection of the Most Admired Prologues and Epilogues* (London: Printed for Richardson and Urquhart, under the Royal Exchange, 1769). Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet. A5 e.533 (3).
[35] Mary Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 7.
[36] See [Unknown], *The Spouter's Companion; or, Theatrical Remembrancer. Containing a select collection of the most esteemed prologues and epilogues* (London: Printed for J. Cooke, 1770). Bodleian Library, Oxford: Harding E219.

It is important to remember that material considered appropriate for spouting was not limited to the prologues and epilogues of plays. As the examples described here have shown, spouting collections could include more ephemeral texts of the moment, such as short jokes and anecdotes, but could also include longer older texts with longer publication histories.

Satires of Spouting and (Anti)Social Reading Practices

Such a description of the contents of spouting companions would suggest that spouters had a harmless enthusiasm for the professional theatre coupled with a taste for displays of quick-wittedness, some of which might occasionally offend modern sensibilities. Yet this is not the whole picture. Spouting cultivated anxieties associated with debates surrounding acceptable forms of public speaking and social reading (and the accompanying fears of the destruction of class boundaries), contemporary concerns with forms of illegitimate theatre, and even fears of crimes such as sedition. By looking at contemporary narratives surrounding spouting found in satirical texts and images which perpetuate the 'type' of the spouter we can begin to understand why the participants of spouting clubs were often represented with contempt and viewed with suspicion.

The pattern for satirical representations of spouting was set up by Arthur Murphy's *The Apprentice* (1756) and Henry Dell's *The Spouter, or the Double Revenge* (1756). Published in the same year, both plays feature spouters as characters. Two years later, William Woty published a lengthy poem called *The Spouting-Club* (1758) that describes a spouting club meeting in a tavern. Murphy's *The Apprentice,* in particular, was foundational in constructing the narratives surrounding spouters. The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the play as its first

recorded instance of the verb 'spouting' in relation to oratory or recitation.[37] The play was very successful: it was performed sixteen times during its first season.[38] It is often mentioned alongside *The Spouter* as a piece characterising the behaviour of spouters.[39] The miscellany *Original Prologues, Epilogues, and Other Pieces Never Before Printed* (1756), suggests that readers interested in 'the character of the SPOUTERS, [should] see Mr. Murphy's *Apprentice*, or the new comic farce called the *Spouter*, or the *Double Revenge*.'[40] This reference to these external texts suggests that as well as being interested in spouting and reading aloud for an audience, readers of the miscellany might also be interested in discovering satires of that very same activity. Rather than being attracted to merely participating in spouting, readers were also invested in its representation.

Satires of spouting often attacked spouters for their ill attempts to disguise their position of tradesmen. William Woty's poem *The Spouting-Club*, for example, has a lengthy passage dedicated to describing a spouter called Rantwell. The premise of the satire is Rantwell's performance of a heroic persona, which is at odds with his station as a tradesman – he is a 'tonsor', or barber. This is much like the cobbler that we encountered in the Introduction (see Figure 1), who focused on saving souls rather than soles. The mock-heroic description describes the spouter's 'exalted soul', which was 'Launch'd 'yond the

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[37] See 'spouting, n.1.', *OED Online.*

[38] M. Victor Alper, *Arthur Murphy, Tragedian: A Critical Edition Of 'The Grecian Daughter'* (NY: New York University, Ann Arbor, 1973), p. ix.

[39] Murphy also wrote a play called *The Spouter, or the Triple Revenge* (1756), but it was never performed. The objects of the play's satire are theatre managers, such as David Garrick and John Rich, and actors, such as Theophilus Cibber. Rather than spouters, professional actors are the target of Murphy's acerbic descriptions; consequently it tends to be left out of accounts of spouters, despite its title and author. See Arthur Murphy, *The Spouter: or, The Triple Revenge. A Comic Farce in Two Acts* (London: Printed and sold by W. Reeve, in Fleet-Street, 1756). British Library, London: 643.i.14(2). This copy's *dramatis personae* is annotated to identify characters with real-life persons associated with the theatre.

[40] [Unknown], *Original prologues, Epilogues, and Other Pieces Never Before Printed. To which is added, a collection of such as are celebrated for wit, humour or entertainment, spoke at the theatres or at private plays* (London: printed for and sold by the booksellers in Pater-Noster-Row, at the Royal-Exchange, and at all the pamphlet-shops, 1756).

Limits of his narrow Sphere'.[41] Through acting, the spouter can escape his usual, small circle of acquaintance, moving metaphorically beyond his usual social boundaries. Yet Rantwell's performance reveals that he is not as noble and heroic as he would wish to present himself. It is exposed as mere affectation, and one which is unconvincing to the observer: his speech is 'labour'd' and 'Sounds gutt'ral', just as his name — Rant-well — suggests. The name, like many found in satire, is a cruel piece of nominative determinism: the name suggests bad speech rather than a good performance. The spouter's movements, too, reveal themselves as affectations: he 'with awkward Strut / Affects majestic Air'.[42] In attempting to reproduce the refined movements characteristic of a celebrity actor, Rantwell's adopted mannerisms reveal the very thing that he attempts to conceal: he is not an actor, but a barber. Each day, the poem claims, 'Beheld this Hero looking on his Trade / With Eyes indignant'.[43] As a result of his experiences of amateur performance, Rantwell has become discontented with his lot. The phrase 'his Trade' may refer to both his profession as a barber, but also to his customers; Rantwell's distaste may be directed at both. The spouter now has 'extended Notions of the Stage'.[44] Again, there is this sense of the spouter occupying a larger space than may be considered rightfully his: like his 'narrow sphere', his ideas or 'notions' have become 'extended'.

The extension of Rantwell's sphere of connection is attributed to the spouting club. The satire gives the group an almost monstrous quality. They are a 'many-headed Crowd', evoked through a series of disembodied parts: 'the Clap of Hands and Thump of Feet' and

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[41] William Woty, *The Spouting-Club: A Mock Heroic, Comico, Farcico, Tragico, Burlesque Poem. By the Author of The Robin Hood Society: A Satire* (London: Printed for R. Withy, 1758), p. 6.
[42] Woty, *The Spouting-Club,* p. 7.
[43] Woty, *The Spouting-Club*, p. 6.
[44] Woty, *The Spouting-Club,* p. 7.

'Knuckles on the Table's Verge'.[45] The description is an allusion to *Coriolanus*'s 'many-headed multitude', where the crowd functions as a political body. Shakespeare's crowd is referred to as 'the rabble', painting associations of 'the lowest class of people' who are 'regarded as socially inferior, uncouth, or disorderly; the mob'.[46] If the function of Shakespeare's 'many-headed multitude' was to provide an audience on-stage for the play's audience to observe, Woty's collection of spouters may be read as performing in a similar manner.[47] The 'mingling' noises and motions of the scene turn out to be a defamiliarising description of 'the Thunder of Applause'.[48] The applause has been rendered unrecognisable thanks to the vulgar movements of the spouters, their motions reduced and restricted to disembodied parts. Attention is deliberately directed to the body-parts rather than the whole, making the collection of spouters seem like an indistinct mass, lacking the refinement required to unite the whole body in performance. As well as Rantwell, the rest of the spouters have revealed themselves as vulgar and uncouth, almost frightening in their numbers. Gatherings of tradesmen, it seems, have an element of sinister power about them. The crowd has completely failed to participate in acceptable social reading practices. Such a representation of the audience acts as a caution to spouters: when being a spectator it is expected that they should continue to act in a polite and refined manner.

Other representations of spouting clubs reveal the inattentiveness of spouters who would prefer to be the centre of attention. Such an attitude again disrupts the expectations surrounding polite interactions between a single speaker and his auditors. Consider the

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[45] Woty, *The Spouting-Club,* p. 5.
[46] 'rabble, n.1 and adj', *OED Online*. See 3c.
[47] For analyses of the crowd in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, see Kai Wiegandt, *Crowd and Rumour in Shakespeare* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2012); and Jerald W. Spotswood, '"We Are Undone Already": Disarming the Multitude in Julius Caesar and Coriolanus', in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 42:1 (2000): 61-78.
[48] Woty, *The Spouting-Club* p. 5.

print *A Spouting Club* (1794), held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Figure 7, below):

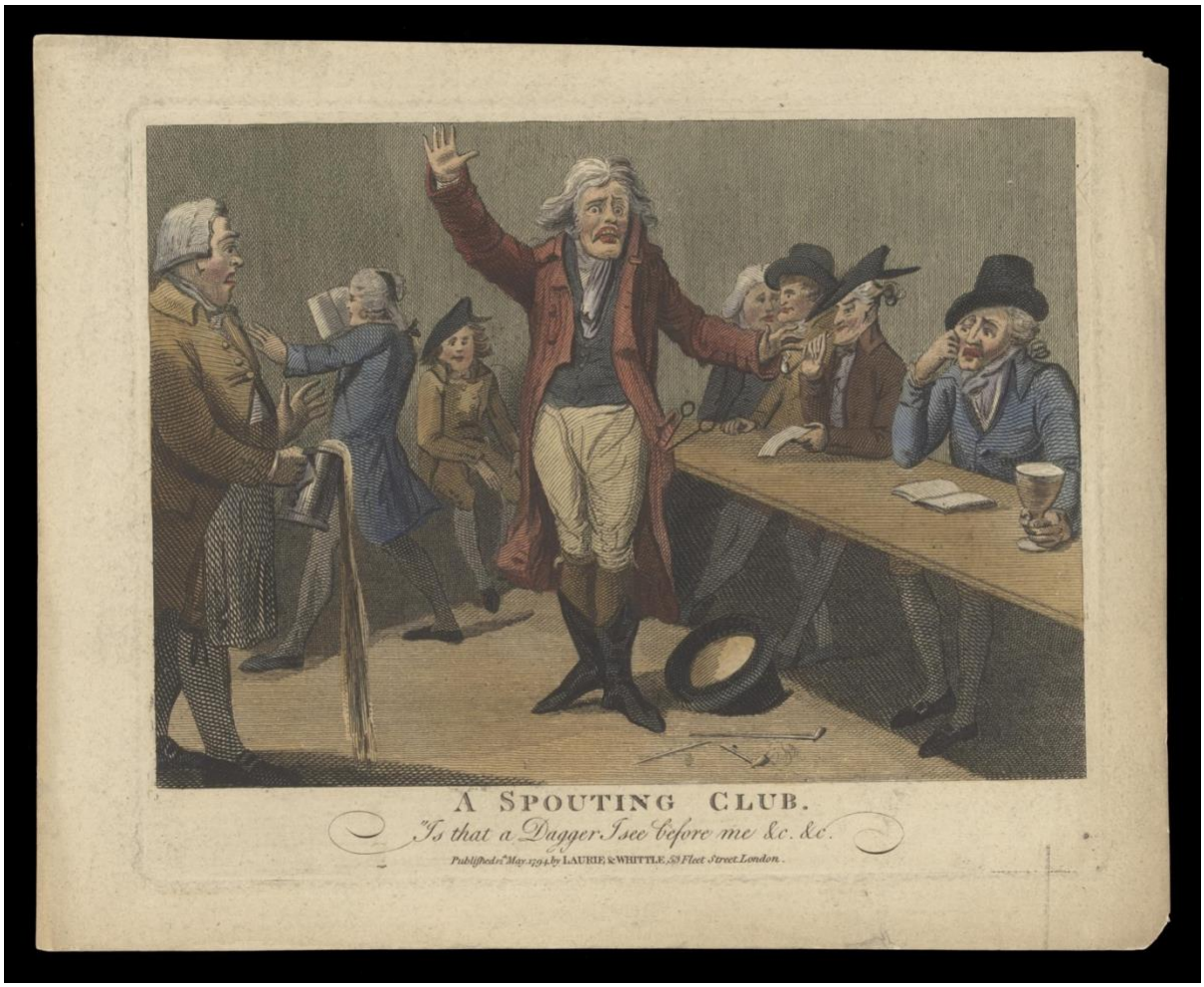


Figure 7: Unknown, *A Spouting Club* (1794).
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The spouter in the red coat is positioned in the centre, his wide and dramatic posture suggesting an exaggerated expression of fear. From the quotation below the print's title ('*Is that a Dagger I see before me &c. &c.*'), viewers can infer that this spouter is performing the dagger scene from *Macbeth*.[49] Pointedly, there is a pair of forceps sticking out from his pocket, rather than a knife. The object acts as a reminder of the spouter's trade — like

[49] [Unknown], *A Spouting Club* (London: R. H. Laurie, 1794). Coloured etching, 24 x 30.2 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London: Henry Beard Collection: S.2716-2009.

Rantwell, a barber-surgeon, despite his acting aspirations. Perhaps like Macbeth himself, the spouter is too ambitious. Yet for all the spouter's posturing, the other club members fail to play the part of the attentive audience. As expected in a tavern, they are drinking; one spouter spills beer in apparent surprise at his companion's declaiming. They are smoking from clay pipes – an acceptable indoor activity – but some have been smashed on the floor in the foreground. The broken pipes add past violence and movement to an already-busy composition. While the central spouter is positioned to be the focal point of the print, the other spouters reject his claim for their attention by facing in assorted directions. Some of the men are reading, perhaps too busy learning their own parts to pay attention to anyone else performing his. Whether these are parts from spouting collections or play-length works is unclear: the pages held by three of the spouters appear to be unbound, or without covers. This, along with their relatively small size suggests cheaper texts. Here, the spouters have failed to perform the refined sociability that their clubs were meant to promote; theirs is not a shared conversation, but rather a mutual ignoring of one another in favour of one's own interests. The spouters appear to be reading more to themselves than to each other. They have failed to create a sense of club conviviality, where reading fosters mutual admiration and conversation. Perhaps part of the failure of the group is to do with the quality of the performance; the spouter has failed to captivate his audience. Once again, the spouters have not reached the heights to which they have aspired, their sphere of attention remaining 'narrow' like that of Woty's Rantwell. Both the spouter and his inattentive fellow club-members are to blame for this failure; their performance-based aspirations are selfish, not social.

This anxiety about spouters' aspirations to gentility ruining any form of politeness is evident in early definitions of spouting. In Murphy's *The Apprentice*, the play that set the

precedent for many later narratives surrounding spouters, the titular character, Dick, is an apprentice apothecary. The action of the play begins after Dick has run away from his master Gargle, who has discovered that his apprentice attends a spouting club. Upon hearing the news, Dick's father asks what a spouting club is. Gargle replies that it is

> A Meeting of Prentices and Clerks and giddy Young Men, intoxicated with Plays; and so they meet in Public Houses to act Speeches; there they all neglect Business, despite the Advice of their Friends, and think of nothing but to become Actors.[50]

As Dick's apprentice-master, Gargle has a financial investment in Dick's labour, which he perceives is being wasted in spouting. Plays are characterised as being, like alcohol, 'intoxicating', making them appropriate material to consume in a public house. As a result of this metaphorical (and probably literal) drunkenness and dissipation, business is neglected. So are the spouters' friends: their advice to be more attentive of work is rejected. Spouters, it is suggested, seek sociability in the wrong place: they prefer to spend time chasing celebrity with others of similar aspirations. They seek the intoxication of plays rather than conversation with their peers. In this description there is no suggestion that the spouters have formed sociable bonds with other another: they prefer monologue — 'speeches' — over dialogue. The spouters have rejected their acceptable social sphere among their peers – note that the 'giddy Young Men' are identified by their occupations as apprentices and clerks. Their position in the lower orders is made clear from the outset. Rather than valuing their peers, they seek to leave them behind in favour of fame.

Spouters' abandonment of their social networks is also expressed through their negligence towards their families as well as their friends. The print *Timothy Lustring the Spouter waked out of his Reverie* (1772) represents a spouter old enough to have a family,

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[50] Arthur Murphy, *The Apprentice: A Farce in Two Acts, As it is Perform'd at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane* (London: Printed for Paul Valliant, facing Southampton-street, in the Strand, 1756), p. 8.

providing an alternative kind of spouter to the young apprentices discussed so far (Figure 8, below).[51] Lustring is posed like an actor addressing the boxes, his hands held widely outwards as he looks out the window, rather than at his family. At first glance his inattentiveness is humorous – his wife drawn with a Judy-like quality (as suggested by her profile, particularly the crook of her nose) and is about to reprimand her husband with a broom. The caption below the image emphasises her shrewishness. She is referred to as 'Xantippe', or a scold.[52] Adopting her voice, the caption chastises Lustring for neglecting his wife: 'Must I go in Rags whilst you're sputtering & Spouting'. Her representation of his speech contrasts with the apparent refined position he has adopted. The child in the background, chewing on something, has a tattered jacket with a hole in the elbow: whether this suggests more neglect on his mother's part (for a failure to mend the hole) or his father's is unclear. Xantippe places the blame squarely on her husband. The spouter's neglect has caused the family to suffer. While the shrewishness of the wife is exaggerated for comedic effect, the point remains — the appearance and therefore the reputation of the entire family suffers while the patriarch is concerned only with his own appearance. Lustring cannot hear his wife over his own expounding. Once again, spouters are presented as preoccupied with their own performances, ignoring the corrective influence of friends and family. Despite her shrewish appearance, Lustring's wife's voice acts as a device to temper the desires of spouters who begin to neglect their families. His aspirations also prevent his participation in a wider social life: in the print, Lustring performs on his own and not as part of a club.

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[51] [Francis Edward Adams], *Timothy Lustring the Spouter waked out of his Reverie* (London: Francis Adams, 1772). Mezzotint, 35.4 x 25 cm. London: British Museum, 2010.7081.386.
[52] 'Xantippe, n.', *OED Online*.



Figure 8: Francis Edward Adams, *Timothy Lustring the Spouter* (1772).
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

As well as this, Lustring's wife is forced to commit an act of unrefined violence, contrary to expected gender roles. Her own chastising of her husband, represented in the text, turns her into a female performer akin to the kind of puppet suggested by her likeness, her broom a domestic replacement for Judy's traditional club. Her voice, in this context, is also a weapon through which she hopes to gain the attention of her husband. The female voice in the context of spouting is rarely presented as a socially acceptable presence. Female spouters may well have existed, although they were unlikely to be welcome in the usual tavern setting. *The Apprentice* has an epilogue that discusses female spouters. Kitty Clive, who is not listed in the play's *dramatis personae*, warns both men and women against spouting, asking them to instead 'Study Arithmetic, and burn your Plays'. Female spouters have 'voice[s] like London Cries', or the voices of street-traders shouting to sell their wares. This characterisation of women involved in public speaking is similar to Richard Lewis's representation of female orators in his poem *The Robin Hood Society* (1756), which describes a meeting of the debating society with the same name. For the poem's narrator, such women possess 'the Eloquence of Billingsgate' and any 'Domestic Orator' shall be called 'a scold' — much like Lustring's wife.[53] Female oration, in this context, is as vulgar and undesirable as the cries of market traders selling fish. While the oration of men is hardly welcome in the context of negative representations of spouters, the participation of such women in clubs further undermines their femininity. The importance of decorum, especially to women, is significant in representations of spouting where such decorum is lost. Timothy Lustring's neglect, for example, results in his wife being shrewish towards

[53] Richard Lewis, T*he Robin-Hood Society: A Satire. With Notes Variorum. By Peter Pounce, Esq.* (London: 1756), p. 83.

him; the print suggests he only has himself to blame. She is forced to adopt the persona of a female orator — that her role is an impolite scold is no surprise.

All of these examples show the negative consequences of spouters' failure to acceptably perform sociability. Satires of spouters show them to prefer maladaptive reading practices that privilege one's own personal performance above the needs of a social or familial group. The aspirations of spouters are shown to potentially destabilise class boundaries, as they sought to abandon their professions in favour of fame and celebrity. Yet their performances cannot disguise their 'true' lower-class nature — the quality of their elocution always gives them away by the ill-formed combination of their speech and gestures. Their performances act contrary to the acceptable modes of sociable and oral reading advocated by elocutionary miscellanies and the elocution movement more broadly. According to such modes of thought, ideal oral reading performances were an opportunity to foster harmonious social relationships and display modest elocutionary skills. Such thinking stems directly from Thomas Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution* (1762), which claimed that 'a social being' such as man, with 'right regulation' would become 'elegant and delightful' through the adoption of correct reading practices.[54] Spouters were presented as lacking such discipline.

[54] Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution: together with two dissertations on language and some other tracts relative to those subjects* (London: printed by W. Strahan, for A. Millar *et al.*, 1762), p. ix.

Spouting, Illegitimate Forms of Theatre and Crime

Satires of spouting did not just limit themselves to accusing spouters of poor social reading practices. They also attacked spouters for their connections to illegitimate theatre, and their aspirations towards legitimacy. As has been argued across this thesis, theatricality was itself an ambivalent concept. Part of the reason for this was the various connotations which different types of theatre had in the period. Forms of theatre outside the 'legitimate' patent theatres were not only seen as lacking quality and refinement, but also had connections to criminality. Spouting was often seen in connection to these illegitimate forms of theatre, thus linking spouting to vagrancy or itinerancy.

The illegitimate nature of spouting clubs is highlighted by the plot of Murphy's *The Apprentice*. After Dick (the apprentice of the title) goes missing, his father Wingate is informed of his son's whereabouts by a letter from a friend in Bristol. Dick, the letter explains, has been arrested for being a vagabond. He has been bailed out by Wingate's friend, and is on his way home to his father. The letter describes how 'thy son came to our Place with a Company of Strollers, who were taken by the Magistrate, and committed as Vagabonds, to Jail'.[55] The spouter has been arrested for being a strolling player, that is, an actor without a permanent residence or association with a theatre. There were legal contexts affecting theatrical activity.[56] Strolling actors were classified as 'vagabonds' by the Vagrancy Act 1714, which did not recognise their profession.[57] Strollers had to wander across the country in search of work, and so had no permanent residence or affiliation with

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[55] Murphy, *The Apprentice*, p. 5.
[56] David Worrall, *Theatric Revolution: Drama, Censorship and Romantic Period Subcultures, 1773-1832* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p. 18.
[57] Loren Kruger, *The National Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 18. This was the case until the introduction of the Theatre Registration Act 1843.

a theatre. To be a strolling actor was near-synonymous with vagrancy, a position expressed by Wingate as he exclaims, 'Dick's turned Vagabond'.[58] 'Vagabond' is here used as a short-hand for a strolling player. Wingate further maintains this connection in his interpretation of *Hamlet*. He describes it as 'that nonsensical Play', where 'the Prince is keeping Company with Strollers and Vagabonds'.[59] While in this instance, strollers are now made distinct from vagabonds, the two are nonetheless paired to refer to a troop of travelling actors.

Of course, in the resolution of *The Apprentice*, Dick is a reformed character who resolves to attend professional productions of plays rather than spout them. The professional theatre has an obvious stake in this message: amateur work should not be permitted to undercut the professionals. Theatre-goers deserve approbation for having invested time and money into professional performances instead of (or perhaps in reality, as well as) amateur productions. Rural strollers and spouters fit into this category of 'amateur' or non-professional. Garrick, for example, described strollers with contempt, using them as a counterpoint his own practices. In a letter to Peter Garrick, dated 6th November 1762, he wrote that strolling players were 'a hundred years behind hand — We in Town are Endeavouring to bring the Sock & Buskin down to Nature, but *they* still keep to their Strutting, bouncing & mouthing.'[60] Garrick's description privileges his kind of acting as a profession with a noble purpose: his work is an 'endeavour' to make actors perform in a 'natural' manner, whereas strollers, like the spouters in satires, have affected physical movements. Rather than keeping up with the fashions 'in Town' — by which is meant London — the rural strollers are comparatively backward. All of this contributes to

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[58] Murphy, *The Apprentice*, p. 5.
[59] Murphy, *The Apprentice*, p. 6.
[60] David Garrick, *The Letters of David Garrick,* 3 vols., eds. David M. Little and George M. Kahrl (London: OUP, 1963): I.367, no. 297.

Garrick's attempts to make his profession seem just that – a profession, distinguished from the 'strutting' of the homeless strolling player, with no fixed (theatrical) abode. Garrick is well known to theatre historians and literary critics for his exploitation of the power of 'celebrity' as an economic tool in the theatrical marketplace.[61] Rather than accepting the perceived inferior social status of a player, actors and theatre managers such as Garrick increasingly tried to lay claim to a bourgeois professional status through their self-presentation as defined against other kinds of actor.[62] By opposing his 'endeavours' to the 'behind' practices of the strolling players, Garrick perpetuates the stereotype of the inferior quality of the strolling players' work in order to improve the reputation of his own.

Other narratives about spouters follow the pattern of criminality set up by *The Apprentice*, although often without the moral resolution demanded by the play. For characters such as Dick, it is not a great leap from spouter to stroller to vagrant. This downward progression is the opposite of the aspirations to gentility and celebrity characterising interest in spouting. For example, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London holds in its collection an untitled 1793 print by Richard Newton depicting a spouter's career trajectory (see Figure 9, below).[63] The cartoon's narrative begins after the spouter has picked up a taste for acting, much like Dick in *The Apprentice*. In fact, the first panel shows the spouter delivering a speech as Dick in *The Apprentice* himself, leading the spouter to earn a role as Hamlet in a local countryside production after being spotted by a country theatre manager. Perhaps the spouter is keen to play the part of Dick so he can

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[61] Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody, 'Introduction', in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000,* eds. Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 1-11 (p. 4).
[62] Helen M. Burke, *Riotous Performances: The Struggle for Hegemony in the Irish Theater, 1712-1784* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), p. 129.
[63] Richard Newton, *Untitled* (London: William Holland, 1793). Hand-coloured etching, 33.9 x 53.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London: S.2704-2009.

define his own acting ambitions against the satirical representations of similar men; it may also be out of a genuine desire to emulate Dick's initial career path and try out life as a strolling player.



Figure 9: Richard Newton, *Untitled* (1793).
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The cartoon suggests, however, that spouters cannot hope to escape the 'type' that 'Dick the Spouter' has now become, inevitably descending into poverty and a life of crime. Unlike Dick in *The Apprentice*, however, this actor does end up with the chance to perform on the professional London stage. After performing in front of another theatre manager, the actor gets to play Othello, complete with blackface make-up. The accompanying caption is apt: 'Rude I am in speech', a quotation from the play, now ironically refers to the spouter-turned-actor's delivery. His performance does not pass muster in front of the professional

critics, and he is forced back into the countryside to be a vagabond once more. His position as a vagrant in the countryside is highlighted through the crime represented earlier in the cartoon. One panel shows the spouter 'dining' in a turnip field. The caption is ironic: the spouter-turned-strolling-actor has stolen the turnips to eat. The theft is not explicitly named; the illegality of his actions is left for the viewer to decode. While the cartoon does not use the word, the strolling actor is now a vagabond – one now confronted by an angry farmer wielding a knobstick in retribution for this theft. The actor's attempts at seeking fame on the professional stage have left him without anything; the life and living of the stroller was precarious. Attempts to position oneself beyond one's station result in failure and punishment.

Vagrancy and theft are not the only crimes associated with spouting. Dell's *The Spouter* gives a definition of spouting very similar to that in *The Apprentice*, but one highlighting concerns surrounding spouting's associations with violence and disorder which borders on sedition. Florimond, describing his love-rival Buskin, says that he is one who 'pretends so much to the Art of acting, that he imagines himself equal to our best Players — The King of the Spouters'.[64] Once again, spouting is separated from acting; spouters are always a degree removed from their true goal of professionalism. As Florimond continues his attack on Buskin, he notes that Buskin's affliction is not unique to him, for there are

> thousands more, who, intoxicated with Plays, neglect their proper Business, make Clubs, where they meet together to rehearse Parts and Speeches of Plays, making such a Noise and Confusion, and breeding such Riots and Disturbance, they often get themselves into the Roundhouse.[65]

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[64] Henry Dell, *The Spouter, or The Double Revenge: A Comic Farce, in Three Acts. As it was intended to be Acted.* (London: printed for and sold by S. Crowder and H. Woodgate, 1756), p. 13.
[65] Dell, *The Spouter, or The Double Revenge*, p. 13.

As in *The Apprentice*, the 'intoxicating' effects of plays are highlighted in this characterisation of the fashion for spouting. Once again, spouting results in a neglect of one's work. But the image moves beyond a concern for one's work-ethic or economic productivity: the definition emphasises the sheer numbers of spouters and the resultant power numbers provide. The number of spouters is presumably an exaggeration, but it underscores how commonplace spouting was perceived to be, whilst giving an indication of how such groups might be intimidating in public places. Mere 'Noise and Confusion' builds to 'Riots and Disturbance'. This single sentence continues, connecting the 'Speeches' of the spouters to their imprisonment in 'the Roundhouse'.[66] These clubs are not just inconvenient, but outright dangerous. This is because according to Florimond's definition, spouters are criminals who often end up imprisoned. The power in these large groups of people is identified as a cause for concern. Significant here are words such as 'Riot' and 'Disturbance'. Both imply a specific kind of violence related to rebellion.

Dell's satire is not alone in its direct identification of spouting the incitement of rebellion against ruling authorities. There is further evidence in spouting collections that highlights contemporary connections between spouting and rebellion. Such books offer a defence against spouters' supposed seditiousness. For example, *The Young Spouter* (1790) contains an occasional piece, 'Spoken at a Spouting-Club, on Account of an Information having been made to suppress it'.[67] Judging by its title, it was prologue to a spouting meeting written in response to an attempt to stop the activities of a particular group of

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[66] For modern readers, this meaning of the word 'roundhouse' may also have to compete with the performance space in Camden, London, known as The Roundhouse, further linking the idea of 'theatre' with 'prison'. Camden's Roundhouse actually used to be a third kind of building: a railway engine turntable.

[67] [Unknown], *The Young Spouter, Being a New Collection of Prologues and Epilogues* (London: printed for the proprietors: and sold by all booksellers in town and country, 1790), p. 86.

spouters, but their name and location is not preserved in the text. The piece identifies a concern that outsiders may have had about spouting clubs as a place for possible dissent, resulting in the existence of informers keen to monitor their activities. The text positions the club's members as both defiant and in the right. The act of meeting at all occurs despite the threat 'of Bridewell and the Cage' — that is, imprisonment.[68] Given that the estimated publication date of *The Young Spouter* is only five years before the Seditious Meetings Act 1795 was passed, it is significant that rebellious texts of this kind were being published in spouting collections. The date that the prologue was written is unclear, but its inclusion in the 1790 volume suggests that the need to defend spouting against informers to the local authorities was still pressing. The Seditious Meetings Act was intended 'for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies'.[69] The Act's definition of what constitutes sedition is broad, but may have had spouting clubs in mind when attempting to suppress all kinds of large public gatherings, including lectures and club meetings. The law forbade meetings of more than fifty people at a time, unless such a meeting was advertised in a local paper at least five days before it was due to take place, identifying the time and place of the gathering, and its intended purpose. Meetings failing to adhere to these conditions were 'deemed and taken to be unlawful Assemblies'.[70] Whether spouting clubs could attract membership or attendance numbers as high as fifty is also unclear, but the government's suspicion of large groups of men meeting in public places — particularly when spouters had a reputation for disorder — suggests that spouting itself could attract surveillance. The piece in *The Young Spouter* suggests that participants in the activity had to

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[68] *The Young Spouter,* p. 86.
[69] Great Britain, *The Statutes at Large, From the Thirty-fifth Year of the Reign of King George the Third, to the Thirty-eighth Year of the Reign of King George the Third, inclusive* (London: 1798), p. 256.
[70] Great Britain, *The Statutes at Large*, p. 257.

be careful in the lead-up to the passing of the Seditious Meetings Act. The speaker asks his audience of fellow club-members, 'Is th'Informer here? pray look about', suggesting a concern that there is a spy amid the spouters. If this prologue were delivered at the beginning of a spouters' meeting, it would also act as a warning to such spies that they risk discovery.

The speaker argues that the informer's objection to spouting is a misplaced 'religious zeal' with which he 'cloaks his rage'. He threatens to 'lash' the informer, ironically referring to doing so 'on this sinful stage'.[71] Such an informer has spread lies about the spouting club, in calling it 'sinful'. He has come 'With false pretence, to break our social love'.[72] The work of these meetings, according to this impassioned defence of spouting, is not sinful at all. Rather, the phrase 'social love' suggests that for this group of spouters — and through the circulation of the book, for spouters more widely — spouting was an activity that forged and maintained the social bonds between men.[73] Here we see two diametrically opposed views of spouting clubs: one sees them as building natural social ties, and the other sees them destroying them through their seditious intent.

Rejecting satirical representations of spouters as men failing to maintain expected social bonds, spouting is instead presented as an activity encouraging sociability through reading. Social connections and a universal love are helped through spouting, and not hindered; the values it promotes are presented as truthful and natural. Appealing to an understanding of man as a social being, the informer is positioned by the prologue as someone seeking to destroy the attachments that were considered to form naturally among

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[71] *The Young Spouter*, p. 86.
[72] *The Young Spouter,* p. 86.
[73] See David Allan, *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), especially pp. 15-17.

men, and which the spouting societies worked to maintain. The forms of oratory here are, according to spouting collections, harnessed to notions of politeness that make them unlike the satirical representations of spouters that resulted in spouting being used as a shorthand for rude and uncouth behaviour. Engagement with performance outside the theatre – be it in the tavern or in the home – allowed readers to begin to perform politeness and gain a greater understanding of moral social relations.[74]

A Defence of Spouting

As the prologue in *The Young Spouter* shows, spouting companions often contain material drawing attention to the suspicion with which they were viewed. Such texts also constituted a defence of spouting, directly responding to contemporary criticism. Spouting collections often presented their content as a reputable form of practicing elocution. Spouting collections contested negative representations of spouters by re-appropriating satirical material produced by the legitimate theatre. Material of this kind deliberately encouraged meta-theatrical reflection on performance techniques and cautioned spouters against certain modes of behaviour. Spouting collections, in addressing these concerns, were situated in a context of suspicion which surrounded associational practices, and the print culture that formed part of club culture.[75]

As spouting collections tended to be made up of the prefatory material to plays, they provided a high concentration of material concerned with the conventions of

[74] Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representations in the Age of Garrick and Kemble* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), p. 13.
[75] See Mee, *Print, Publicity and Radicalism in the 1790s*, pp. 19-60.

performance, clearly outlining the expectations of the event to follow. This is because, as scholars such as Daniel James Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle have noted, prologues and epilogues are a highly meta-theatrical genre.[76] Such texts may be read as forming a commentary on aspects of eighteenth-century theatre.[77] Prologues and epilogues containing satirical references to spouters are also included in spouting collections.

Evidence for the meta-theatrical nature of prologues and epilogues is found in many of the texts included in spouting collections. For example, *The Spouter's Companion* contains the 'Prologue to *The Citizen*', which declares that 'Without a Prologue nothing can be done'.[78] This prologue, like many, is aware of the conventions of prologue delivery, and how the performance space and aspects such as costuming are to be used. The text sets up the audience's expectations of the performances to come. Until it is delivered, no play is performed. The speaker declares to the audience: 'You see I come in black — the usual form!' Audiences were expected to be familiar with these conventions. The black dress of the prologue-speaker, designed to distance the deliverer from the character they would later play, was a tradition stemming from the early modern period.[79] As the actor Mr Palmer claims, speaking the prologue to Elizabeth Inchbald's comedy *I'll Tell You What* (1786), he'll 'not, like ancient prologue, tell the plot — / But like a modern prologue, try each way / To win your favour towards the coming play'.[80] Such a statement acknowledges the history of prologue-speaking while appealing to modern expectations of content and delivery. The

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[76] Daniel James Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle, 'Introduction', in *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers, and Afterpieces: The Rest of the Eighteenth-Century London Stage*, eds. Daniel James Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), pp. 13-29 (p. 21).
[77] Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century,* p. 8.
[78] *The Spouter's Companion*, p. 33.
[79] Martin White, *Renaissance Drama in Action: An Introduction to Aspects of Theatre Practice and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 125.
[80] *The Young Spouter*, p. 73.

modern prologue, it is argued, is more concerned with the needs and pleasure of the audience, rather than being a mere vehicle for information concerning the coming drama. It is the duty of the performer to 'win' their 'favour'. The self-reflexivity of prologues such as this make them perfect for spouting collections, as they show the close but complex connection between spouting and professional theatre performance.

Spouters were acutely aware of the contested nature of their activity, particularly in relation to the anxieties surrounding class transgressions and the law. Participants were therefore aware of a need to defend spouting's reputation. This is especially true given that satirical accounts of spouters are found within spouting collections themselves. For example, the prologue to *The Apprentice*, as delivered by Mr Woodward, is found in both *The Spouter's Companion,* and *The British Spouter* (1763).[81] The prologue provides a satirical representation of spouters, much like the ones discussed above. A spouting club is defined by the prologue as 'A place there is where such young Quixots meet', also referring to spouters as 'Prentic'd Kings'.[82] Even while they are 'Kings', spouters cannot escape their station as apprentices. The idealism of spouters — marked by the comparison to Don Quixote — is highlighted, mocking the impossibility of their aspirations to royalty, and their desire to transgress accepted class boundaries through acting. Rather than identifying as their day-time occupation, they prefer to play other, more desirable roles. The prologue describes how a tobacconist can play Hamlet while his father's ghost might be played by a haberdasher. Such aspirational tradesmen are acknowledged in the play's original theatre-

[81] The prologue is the same as the one found in the 1756 edition of the play, but in this edition the prologue is said to have been written by Garrick, and read by the author, Arthur Murphy. Woty's 'The Spouting-Club' (1758) quotes part of the prologue as an epigram to his poem on its title page, also attributing it to Garrick. Cf. [Unknown], *The British Spouter; or, Stage Assistant: Containing the most celebrated Prologues and Epilogues, That have been lately spoken, In the different Theatres* (London: Printed for J. Roson, at the Circulating Library, 1763), p. 107; *The Spouter's Companion* p. 25.
[82] *The Spouter's Companion*, p. 25.

audience: '— Look round — You'll find some Spouting Youths among ye'.[83] The prologue acknowledges that amateur performers still attended professional performances, as well as spouting clubs. Nonetheless, these spouters need to be brought back 'to their reason – and their Shop'.[84] In the context of a spouting collection, the inclusion of such material can be read as a device designed to caution spouters using the book to consider their own attitude to spouting, and consider ('Look') how others might conduct themselves in less-than-ideal manners. The reader or listener of the prologue is therefore distanced from the behaviour of other spouters through the use of the meta-theatrical text.

Critics of spouting could also find themselves victims of satire designed to teach good elocutionary practice. *The Juvenile Roscius* (1770), for example, includes a 'Prologue in the Character of a Reforming Constable. Addressed to the Spouters'.[85] Addressing the spouters directly ('you, good sirs'), the constable is a satirical character representing cultural authorities who rejected spouting. As an authority, however, he is ineffectual: he is called 'Small Staff', because he holds a '*small staff of authority*', a prop designed to make him seem weak and impotent. Small Staff outlines his previous encounters with spouters in public, such as meeting a 'spouting spark' in the street.[86] The character's main objection to spouting, according to this prologue, is 'your noise', which he wants to 'stop': 'For 'tis agreed such ranting, roaring, swearing, / Such starts and attitudes are past all bearing'. The actions of spouters are unrefined enough to merit objection, being likened to a public nuisance. Their speech is not recognisable as *speech* either, being mere noise which he argues the

[83] *The Spouter's Companion*, p. 25.
[84] *The Spouter's Companion*, p. 25.
[85][Unknown], *The Juvenile Roscius: or, Spouter's Amusement. Being a collection of original prologues, epilogues, […] &c.* (London: Printed for Lewis Tomlinson, 1770), p. 4.
[86] *The Juvenile Roscius*, p. 4.

public should not have to bear. Refined elocutionary practices — the unity of voice and gesture — are not being achieved.

Consequently, Small Staff wants to stop these performances: they are so bad they are almost criminal. William Woty's poem *The Spouting-Club* also makes use of this trope of the constable: the poem ends when the spouting club meeting is broken up after the appearance of some constables, and all the spouters 'Exit [which] ends the Tragic Scene'.[87] Small Staff's prologue constructs a rhetoric which claims to encourage positive change. He refers to himself as 'your first reformer' and is also described as a 'reforming' constable in the prologue's title.[88] But the reforms the constable proposes are not really reforms at all. 'Let me advise you then to burn you[r] plays', he suggests, encouraging spouters to go back to their 'proper callings', which should be regarded as their 'real interest'.[89] Once again spouters are encouraged to return to their occupations rather than aspiring to work in the professional theatre, being 'Romeos no more'.[90] It is important, however, to remember that throughout Small Staff is represented as an ineffectual power, his suggestions to end spouting deliberately implausible. The prologue itself may have been read at spouting club meetings, adding further irony. His ability to stop spouters from meeting is ridiculed, but at the same time listeners and performers are encouraged to consider the nature of their chosen pastime. Spouters are reminded that while spouting companions might have an entertainment function, one must not forget one's 'proper' occupation.

Spouting companions also had to address suspicions surrounding their potentially seditious nature. As studies of other forms of associational culture in the eighteenth century

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[87] Woty, *The Spouting-Club*, p. 16.
[88] *The Juvenile Roscius*, p. 6.
[89] *The Juvenile Roscius,* p. 6.
[90] *The Juvenile Roscius,* p. 6.

have shown, this culture of suspicion was not uniquely directed at spouting clubs. By considering spouting collections in the context of the circulation of texts concerned with popular politics, we can begin to see how they functioned as a defence of non-professional forms of public-speaking related to that of debating societies. Associational culture was considered potentially radical, especially when placed in the context of English fears and excitement surrounding the French Revolution. Positioning spouting clubs and collections in this context results in a deeper understanding of the anxieties surrounding wider participation in eighteenth-century club culture and adds another kind of club to historical accounts of eighteenth-century associations. While spouting clubs did not place political reform explicitly at the centre of their aims, spouting itself is an activity that may be read as having potentially revolutionary aims. It did, after all, encourage aspirational behaviours and the temporary abandonment of one's defining occupation. The practice of spouting, particularly in its fascination with modes of performance and the accoutrements of the theatre, bore with it the radical suggestion that class distinction might be a matter of costume and performance, undermining traditions of authority that privilege birth and wealth. The aspirations of spouters, whilst openly mocked, had the potential to be dangerous. Spouting collections attempted to sidestep this by presenting spouting as an activity that fostered acceptable sociable reading practices, where the formation of groups outside of the familial unit offers an alternative place to socialise and form friendships with others with similar interests. Rather than attempting to upset the natural order, spouting collections argued that spouting was an activity that maintained the social connections that were perceived to form naturally among men. Spouting companions thus constituted a defence of amateur performance and public speaking.

Most of the evidence of spouting is satirical or negative, even within spouting

collections themselves. This tells us two things. Firstly, the legitimate theatre had a clear stake in satirising spouting in order to position itself as a superior mode of engaging in theatre and performance. Secondly, it suggests a tendency for spouting collections to enjoy more tongue-in-cheek representations of spouting, even if many of these representations were far from flattering. The satires produced by the legitimate theatre were used for both their entertainment and instructional functions: while poking fun at spouting, they also encouraged spouters to reflect on the nature of their chosen pastime by directly engaging with contemporary criticisms of spouting.

Associations with the Legitimate Theatre

Theatrical prologues and epilogues were directly taken from the professional theatre spouters emulated. Consequently, spouting collections offered a defence of spouting by drawing on associations with the legitimate — rather than illegitimate — theatre, directly countering negative representations of spouting which associated them with strolling actors and itinerancy. Spouters and their audiences were encouraged to consider the relationship between professional and amateur theatre, particularly through discussions of the idea of trade or labour. Spouting had an ambiguous relationship different forms of theatre and had to navigate their connotations carefully in order to bolster spouting's connection to respectable forms of performance. In forging these acceptable connections, spouting collections sought to ease contemporary anxieties related to the transformative possibilities of acting and performance which had a negative impact on the reputation of the elocution movement as a whole.

Spouting collections were careful to remind readers of the superiority of the legitimate theatre through their accumulated prefatory material. *The Young Spouter* starts with the prologue 'to the Comic Farce called the Spouter'.[91] According to the collection, the prologue was spoken by the actor John Palmer at the opening of his Royalty Theatre. Palmer presumably chose the prologue to emphasise the superiority of the professional stage over the efforts of amateurs. The Royalty was opened in 1787 in an (unsuccessful) attempt to challenge the power of the Covent Garden, Haymarket and Drury Lane Theatres, the last venue being one where he was previously an actor.[92] Through the prologue, the opening of the new theatre represents a departure from older forms of theatre: 'No more the stroller with his mimic art / Rumbl'd about each village in his cart'.[93] The prologue works, like Garrick's letter, to define professional theatre in contradistinction to the work of strollers performing in non-theatre spaces, transforming taverns and local halls into their own stages. Again, the prologue draws on the cultural understanding of strollers as inferior kinds of actor, ones that the spouter should *not* seek to emulate. But rather than giving up their interest in amateur theatrics, as Dick promises to at the end of *The Apprentice*, spouters should aim to make their performances as refined as possible, moving beyond mere 'mimick art'. Encouraging such self-reflection, spouting collections align this kind of elocutionary practice with the legitimate theatre, distancing themselves from lower-value productions. As Palmer was hoping to achieve with the Royalty Theatre, spouting collections argue that legitimate forms of acting can exist outside of the patent theatres. Yet Palmer's theatre failed, only a few of years before the publication of *The Young*

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[91] *The Young Spouter,* p. 13.
[92] For more on this 'fiasco', see Edward J. Sullivan and Kevin B. Pry, 'Eighteenth Century London Theater And The Capture Theory Of Regulation', in *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 15:2 (1991): 41-52, especially p. 43.
[93] *The Young Spouter*, p. 15.

Spouter in 1790, as a result of combined legal action by the proprietors of the patent theatres. Presumably readers of spouting collections, with their interest in theatrical culture, would have known about the scandal surrounding Palmer's defection from Drury Lane. These events add further complications to the prologue for readers to navigate: to what extent was it possible to provide respectable forms of theatre and performance outside the patent theatres? Palmer's example suggests that the Licensing Act 1737 still held strong, and that 'alternative' forms of theatre would struggle to survive.

For those like Palmer, acting was a profession. Yet in spouting collections which addressed the needs of amateur performers, acting was positioned as an alternative trade. It is, however, only a temporary one, as the reader is constantly reminded. Such an emphasis on trade calls upon wider debates related to ideas surrounding social hierarchy and aspiration. The 'Prologue to Daphne and Amyntor', in *The Spouter's Companion,* describes a cook wanting to become an actress. The speaker, now adopting the voice of the cook (highlighted from the rest of the prologue-text by quotation marks), expresses her desires to become an actress: '"Though young I am, and difficult the trade is / In time, I'll do as much as other ladies"'.[94] The voice of the amateur is delivered on stage by a professional, although if the prologue were delivered by a spouter, once again the voice would be an amateur's. Acting is referred to as a 'trade', albeit one undertaken by 'ladies', suggesting to the cook's aspirations to become an upper-class woman. The contrasting pulls of the two words suggest that the cook's aspirations are still tied to her understanding of the importance of someone of her position having a 'trade'. Once again, the prologue suggests that such aspirations should be tempered: likening acting to a 'trade' cautions

[94] *The Spouter's Companion*, p. 74.

spouters against unduly glamorising the profession. Acting is hard work, not to be taken lightly.

Later in *The Spouter's Companion*, acting is further likened to a trade through its being associated with being bound by an indenture to someone as an apprentice. In the 'Prologue Spoken by Mr. T. Smith at a Private Benefit', the speaker refers to being 'bound' to 'serve' his audience, which in the context of the prologue is the speaker's 'family and me'.[95] Such a sentiment expressed by a spouter offers an alternative interpretation to spouters being a rowdy group meeting in a local tavern – rather, the spouter, like any performer, has a temporary 'bind' to the audience for whom he or she performs. This short-term relationship is characterised as both familial and professional, suggesting a natural connection between spouters which is intimate and unreserved, but nonetheless proper. The performer is not positioning himself as the superior in being the current performer at the centre of attention – rather, he inhabits his temporary position in order to entertain his audience. Such language stakes a claim for spouting as a sociable activity which looks beyond the performer inhabiting the centre of attention. Spouters should also be considerate of the needs of their audience and their connections to them.

Further strengthening the associations between actors and tradesmen are sentiments such as those expressed in an 'Epilogue to A Cure for the Heart Ache' found in *The New Spouter's Companion.* The epilogue briefly parodies Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, replacing 'All the world's a stage' with 'all the world's a shop [… and] all the men and women merely Tailors'.[96] Replacing 'stage' with 'shop' and 'players' with 'Tailors', causes listeners familiar with the line to hear the echoes of the original words underlying their

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[95] *The Spouter's Companion,* p. 85.
[96] *The New Spouter's Companion*, title page.

replacements. By referencing both at once, spouters' tendency to conflate 'shop' with 'stage', and themselves with 'players' is highlighted for satirical effect. Performers and listeners are expected to know the difference and understand that such conflation is inappropriate for an extended length of time. The parody of *As You Like It* is itself sustained only for the length of the line, further suggesting this sentiment: spouters can never hope to be convincing for long.

The opening poem in *The Spouter's Companion*, 'The Playhouse Display'd', sets up a similar premise. It proclaims, 'A Little World, the Theatre must be', where actors playing characters such as 'Lord Foppington' and 'Kings' get 'drunk' and 'sit down to cribbage for a pint of wine'.[97] The theatre space is transformed into a tavern space; in a spouting club meeting, the tavern is transformed into another tavern. Different characters mix behind the scenes, with the actors playing lords and kings juxtaposed with actresses playing chambermaids. The entire poem raises questions of representation, particularly representation across class divides, as the actors of the stage are able to play people of all classes: 'Some what they cannot be, wou'd fain appear / And thus a clown oftimes enacts a peer'.[98] As well as suggesting that peers are clowns, the line implies a performative element to class. In the context of a spouting collection, the sentiment becomes aspirational: if professional actors can perform such roles, why shouldn't spouters in a club, even if only temporarily? Much prefatory material contained within the book frames the stage as like the town, and socialising as a kind of performance: the prologue to *The Oxonian in Town*, for example, refers to going out into society, and 'play[ing] my part on this great

[97] *The Spouter's Companion*, pp.1-2.
[98] *The Spouter's Companion*, p. 3.

stage, *the town*.'[99] The public town space of the tavern appropriated by spouters also comes to represent the stage where prologues such as this are read. The overlapping of the stage and tavern, represented in both directions in prologues and epilogues, creates a connection between the two spaces that makes spouters' performances possible as social events. *The Spouter's Companion* uses a prologue to *The Winter's Tale* and *Catherine and Petruchio* (an alternative name to *The Taming of the Shrew*) to 'Let this theatre a tavern be', for 'You cannot miss the sign, 'tis *Shakespear's head',* the name referring to both a popular tavern name and the works of Shakespeare's 'head' – the plays themselves. Once again, the transformative possibilities of acting are revealed, both for places and persons. Spouters, in performing these texts, temporarily get to participate in this suspension of the usual boundaries. Once again, spouting collections — like other kinds of elocution manual — bring to the foreground issues surrounding the possibilities of class-transgression inherent in performance.

Other spouting companions, however, are keen to emphasise that the differences between acting and spouting should be observed, even as spouters seek to emulate professionals. The introduction to *The Young Spouter*, for example, is careful to distinguish the difference between professional actors and others, termed 'orators', who wish to perform texts to others. Spouters, in not being professional actors, tend to come under this term of 'public speaker'. They should *not* speak like actors, as the introduction instructs:

> As the player is more exposed to public view and criticism, and his excellencies and defects more strongly contracted, while his field of action is generally longer than that of any other public speaker; his voice, therefore, requires greater modulation, his action should be stronger and more frequent; and he must, besides, acquire the peculiar manner of the stage, in order to succeed in his profession.[100]

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[99] *The Spouter's Companion*, p. 52.
[100] *The Young Spouter*, p. 6.

Such instruction identifies a correct mode for the stage which should not be mimicked elsewhere. Mimicking stage-manners is not appropriate for spouters who do not occupy a large professional stage: they do not need to exaggerate their motions to fill the space.

The Young Spouter then goes on to offer 'Rules for Expressing some of the Principal Passions', in which directions are very precise, perhaps taking direction from the more 'mechanical' schools of acting.[101] The rules function as an illustrative tableau, providing specific instructions for the performer conveying a passion. For example, *The Young Spouter* characterises the expression of fear thus:

> FEAR opens wide the eyes and mouth; draws down the eyebrows; gives the countenance an air of wildness; draws back the elbows parallel with the sides; lifts up the open hands to the height of the breast, so that the palms face the dreadful object as shields against it. One foot is drawn back behind the other, so that the body seems shrinking from the danger, and putting itself in the posture for flight.[102]

The attention to facial expressions implies a smaller, more intimate performance space where subtle changes to the face may be observed by the audience.[103] The precision of these instructions also implies a more static performance, like an orator reading to an audience rather than an actor performing on the professional stage. Such a presentation of specific passions has its parallels in contemporary art theory, such as the work of Charles Le Brun: his *Conference Sur l'Expression* was published in English in 1701, and influenced theories of acting and painting, particularly in relation to ideas about muscular motion and the expression of the passions.[104] In time this came to influence spectators' reception of performances, as his ideas on the relationship between gestures and the expression of

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[101] See Joan C. Beal, 'Walker, John (1732–1807)', in *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004). Web.
[102] *The Young Spouter*, p. 8.
[103] Frederick Burwick, 'Georgian Theories of the Actor' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737-1832*, eds. Julia Swindells and David F. Taylor (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp. 178-191 (p. 183).
[104] See Jim Davis, 'Spectatorship', in *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830*, eds. Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), p. 66.

feeling became widely understood. In texts like this, or Aaron Hill's *The Art of Acting* (1746), actors and audiences 'were encouraged to recognize the representation of the passions as a codified semiotic system'.[105] Spouters were also expected to become familiar with these elocutionary rules.

The description of the entire pose of fear has similarities to William Hogarth's famous 1745 portrait of Garrick as Shakespeare's Richard III.[106] Garrick's celebrity was another way in which spouting collections drew on the approbation received by professional theatre practitioners. A copy of *The Court of Thespis*, held at the British Library, for example, has a variety of theatrical prints added to it, including images of 'Mr Garrick, in the Character of Benedick', the playwright George Colman, 'Mr Foote as Zack Fungus', and a scene from *The School for Rakes*, among others.[107] Images of Garrick in particular are quite common in spouting collections: a representation of the actor 'in the Character of a Drunken Sailor Speaking the Prologue to Brittannia: A Masque' forms the frontispiece to a copy of *The Spouter's Companion* (1778) held at the Bodleian Library.[108] As mentioned before, a similar image is included in a copy of *The Theatrical Bouquet* (1778) held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.[109] The image presents Garrick in a similar way to how the spouters would have been behaving if using the spouting collection itself. He is performing with a text in hand, probably some kind of playbill. The image emphasises the entertainment function of spouting collections over their instructional purpose: as in

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[105] Davis, 'Spectatorship', p. 67.
[106] See William Hogarth, *David Garrick as Richard III* (1745). Oil on canvas, 190.5 cm x 250.8 cm. Liverpool: Walker Art Gallery.
[107][Unknown], *The Court of Thespis; a collection of the most admired prologues and epilogues* (London: Printed for Richardson and Urquhart, under the Royal Exchange, 1769). London: British Library, 11631.b.42.
[108] See [Unknown], *The Spouter's Companion; or, Theatrical Remembrancer. Containing a select collection of the most esteemed prologues and epilogues* (London: Printed for J. Cooks, 1778), frontispiece. Bodleian Library, Oxford: Harding A1435.
[109] See frontispiece to *The Theatrical Bouquet*. Bodleian Library, Oxford: Vet. A5 e.1454.

images that satirise spouters and their tavern meetings, Garrick's character is performing whilst drunk.

The inclusion of images of or references to theatrical celebrities such as Garrick and Foote in spouting collections exploits the marketability of theatrical culture outside the theatre.[110] *The New Spouter's Companion*, for example, is 'Dedicated to the School of Garrick', or rather, those who sought to emulate Garrick, as spouters did.[111] Contained within the older *Spouter's Companion; or Theatrical Remembrancer*, is 'An Occasional Prologue, Spoken at the Spouting-Club'. The occasion for which the prologue was written is unclear; it may have been a general prologue spoken at the start of meetings. The prologue frames Garrick as the inspiration for spouting, for 'Since Garrick's first appearance on the Stage / The British Youths the spouting flame has rag'd'.[112] The account takes an almost mythical form, as Garrick 'with spouting did inspire' men and boys. 'Hence Clubs arose' to form 'Nature's school'.[113] Garrick is presented as the source of this origin-myth, where spouting clubs formed organically in response to his performances. Spouters tried hard to associate their practice with that of professionals such as Garrick in order to implicitly distance themselves from the forms of illegitimate theatre with which they were usually associated.

This emphasis on Garrick should not result in scholars falling into the trap of Garrick-centric criticism. Historians such as Allardyce Nicholl have tended to over-emphasise Garrick's importance in accounts of the theatres in the period, in studies which privilege the patent theatres.[114] But, as this account of spouting and spouting collections

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[110] See Heather McPherson, 'Theatrical Celebrity and the Commodification of the Actor', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre*, pp. 193-211.
[111] *The New Spouter's Companion,* title page.
[112] *The Spouter's Companion*, p. 62.
[113] *The Spouter's Companion*, p. 63.
[114] Allardyce Nicholl, *The Garrick Stage: Theatres and Audience in the Eighteenth-Century,* ed. Sybil Rosenfeld (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980).

has shown, Georgian theatricality also existed outside of the patent theatres in illegitimate forms heavily influenced by the theatrical celebrities of the period, including – but not limited to – Garrick.[115] Using drama to represent a self was not confined to the dramas performed in the playhouses, but also occurred in the recontexualisation of these texts in tavern performances. Whilst deliberately looking to the performers that played these parts professionally, spouters sought to perform their own representation of a sociable self that was not confined to the dramas performed in the playhouses, even as it was influenced by them.[116]

Spouting collections offered a complex series of rebuttals to contemporary satires of spouting. They encouraged readers to adopt a self-reflexive attitude towards reading and performance by predominantly reproducing texts such as prologues and epilogues which are principally metatheatrical. They also sought to draw on the associations of the legitimate theatre to lend spouting its own air of legitimacy, even as they encouraged the kinds of amateur performances which the professional theatre - as expressed in plays such as *The Apprentice* - tended to see as competition. Spouting collections, due to the wide range of material that they collected, often struggled to project a wholly positive representation of the role and reputation of the spouter, especially as it related to contemporary theatrical culture.

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[115] See David Worrall, 'Theatrical Celebrity as Social Assemblage: from Garrick to Kean' in *Celebrity, Performance, Reception: British Georgian Theatre as Social Assemblage* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 72-95.
[116] Worrall, *Theatric Revolution*, p. 2.

Conclusions

Spouting companions contested satirical representations of spouting. They did so by attempting to shape spouters' elocutionary practices into forms which were influenced by the professional theatre. They acted as a reminder that sociable reading practices required spouters to have a self-reflective attitude towards their practice, much as elocutionary miscellanies containing other material did. Theatrical models of instruction – particularly the presentation of celebrity actors and contemporary understandings of acting theory – were used to connect spouters' reading methods to the ideals of professional performances. That said, spouting companions were also careful to avoid encouraging thoughtless mimicry of professional actors playing noble parts, reminding participants in spouting that entertainments should not displace one's occupation. Aspiring to high-quality acting were acceptable when influenced by respectable actors; aspiring to the nobility of the parts they played was not. Spouting collections, like other forms of elocution book therefore had to navigate complex attitudes towards the performative nature of class, which saw amateur acting have the potential to undermine existing class hierarchies.

Read in this way, spouting collections and contemporaneous representations of spouting reveal how models of amateur oratory were contested. While reading aloud to polite audience was something to be encouraged as it demanded technical skill, hopeful spouters often failed to reach the heights of those whom they sought to emulate. Exemplary elocution, therefore, was not something everyone was able to accomplish, a position argued by the very volumes which claimed to be able to aid speakers to achieve it. Once again, elocutionary texts pointed to their limitations of works of instruction: some performances were best left to the professionals.

Chapter 5: Sermons

'These clergymen, it must be owned, are seldom guilty of reading,
for they seldom take the trouble to write.'

— *The Fashionable Preacher* (1792)

Sermon-Events

No study of eighteenth-century reading practices could make any claim to comprehensiveness without considering the use of reading as a form of worship and religious expression. The literary market place was dominated by devotional works; religious reading was the most practised form of reading in the period.[1] People from diverse Christian denominations were interested in religious oratory, whether that was watching and listening to a clergyman deliver a sermon as part of a congregation, or using printed sermons and other religious works as the basis for communal worship in the domestic space.[2] Just as attending church could act as a public expression of faith within the parish, reading aloud in the home could also function as a non-solitary form of worship. For many, religion provided ample opportunity for display and social interaction, satisfying the need for performance and entertainment.[3] Religious worship was more than a matter of performing piety in public: it was also a matter of politeness and sociability.

[1] Isabel Rivers, *Vanity Fair and the Celestial City: Dissenting, Methodist, and Evangelical Literary Culture in England 1720-1800* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), p. 9.
[2] Rivers, *Vanity Fair*, pp. 75-118.
[3] William Gibson, 'Introduction', *Religion and Society in England and Wales, 1689-1800*, ed. William Gibson (London: Leicester University Press, 1998), pp. 1-15 (p. 8).

This chapter examines how reading aloud in religious contexts was modelled in the period, particularly in printed sermons and representations of sermon-delivery. Printed collections of sermons and other kinds of religious elocutionary text were designed to help readers and listeners participate in 'sermon-events' — that is, performances of sermons in a specific time and place, with both speakers and listeners participating in the occasion.[4] Rather than explicitly outlining elocutionary theories in relation to the performance of printed sermons, religious elocutionary texts offer broader models of the ideal sermon-event. Clergymen were expected to compose and deliver sermons as part of their profession, and the laity could participate as both speakers and listeners when reading printed sermons in the home. This chapter explores the socioreligious value invested in the act of reading a sermon aloud, and how these values differed depending on profession and setting — whether one was a clergyman or not, and whether the setting was in church or in the home.

The chapter begins with a close-reading of a famous fictional representation of a sermon-event: the scene in Volume II of Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759), in which Corporal Trim reads a sermon to Walter and Toby Shandy, and the physician Dr Slop. The scene illuminates some of the intersections between religious reading and the elocution movement: the expectation of readers' extensive knowledge of the conventions of oral delivery (even prior to the elocution movement), the consequences that different denominations' soteriology had on contemporary expectations surrounding sermon writing and sermon-delivery, and the

[4] This term is borrowed from Gibson, who uses it in 'The British Sermon 1689-1901: Quantities, Performance and Culture', in *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689-1901*, eds., William Gibson and Keith A. Francis (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp. 3-30 (first used on p. 7).

textual afterlives of sermons beyond their initial conditions of composition and delivery.[5] All of these issues are pertinent to elocutionary texts which model religious forms of reading and performance. Through close-readings of such texts, we can see that the expectations surrounding the delivery of sermons by preachers were completely different from the conditions of participation for the laity. Sermons functioned unlike other kinds of elocutionary text; their instructional models of the reading-event did not always privilege the role of the orator over the role of the auditor. Texts centred around the role of the preacher tended to focus on their manner of delivery and performance as an orator, whereas texts addressing the role of the laity in sermon-events emphasised the importance of participating as a listener rather than a speaker.

Corporal Trim Reading Yorick's Sermon

The sermon-reading scene in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* occurs over several chapters towards the end of the second volume of the work. Tristram's mother is still yet to give birth to him, and Tristram's father Walter, his Uncle Toby and the Catholic Dr Slop wait as her labour progresses. Corporal Trim has been sent to fetch Toby's copy of a book by Simon Stevin (known as Stevinus), the military engineer. When Trim arrives with the book, some papers fall out of it. Trim identifies the manuscript as a sermon in 'a fair hand' and asks to read it aloud to the party: 'for Trim, you must know, loved to hear

[5] Given the impossibility of homogenising the religious landscape in the period specific attention will be paid to denominational differences where relevant, particularly as they relate to the principles underlying the socioreligious value of sermon-events. Scholars should not attempt to homogenise the period for the sake of ease. See Laura Davies and Emma Salgård Cunha, 'Introduction: Writing Eighteen-Century Religion', in *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 41:2 (2018): 155-161.

himself read almost as well as talk'.[6] Trim has an enjoyment of reading aloud, and listening to himself read: there initially seems to be little concern for the subject of the sermon as a moral instructional work. The sermon later turns out to be one composed by the parson Yorick, who left it in the book after borrowing it from Toby.

The reading of the sermon itself, as it appears in *Tristram Shandy,* is much like the rest of the work: long, interrupted and full of digressions. It takes Trim several attempts to read it: his reading of the title of the sermon is disrupted by both Walter and Dr Slop, who have a disagreement over the opening line, and Trim is then overcome with emotion at Slop's approving mention of the Holy Inquisition, which reminds him of his brother, who has been imprisoned by the Inquisition in Portugal for fourteen years. Once he is able to gather himself and start again, with encouragement from Walter, the sermon is continuously interrupted with interjections from Walter and Dr Slop, whose opposing religious views result in different reactions to the content of the sermon.

The description of the reading of this sermon illuminates some of the issues to which scholars of sermons should be sensitive. The sermon-reading parodies many of the earlier artistic representations of oratory (which predate the formalised elocutionary theories of Sheridan and Walker from the 1760s onwards) in its description of Trim's manner of reading, offering an example of the intersections between earlier representations of elocutionary theory and religious forms of reading aloud. The sermon, both as a composition by Sterne and, in the world of *Tristram Shandy*, as a composition by Yorick, had a complex life as a series of fictional and real publications and spoken events. Scholars are able to construct an overview of this information in a way which eighteenth-century

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[6] Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, eds. Melvyn New and Joan New (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1978), p. 138.

readers could not possess without hindsight. Consequently, we should be particularly sensitive to how Yorick's sermon plays with the effects of a sermon having a life beyond that its author intended. In addition, the constant interruption of the sermon by Walter and Slop's commentary reminds us that sermon-events were not always the idealised peaceful events where speakers were permitted to preach or read without interruption.

Sterne's description of the sermon-event parodies many of the conventions of speech-making, which would be later expressed in elocution manuals. Tristram's narration pays detailed attention to Trim's use of gesture before he even begins to speak:

> Corporal Trim laid his hand upon his heart, and made a humble bow to his Master; — then laying down his hat upon the floor, and taking up the sermon in his left hand, in order to have his right at liberty, —he advanced, nothing doubting, into the middle of the room, where he could best see, and be best seen by, his audience.[7]

Each of Trim's movements is described, his actions choice and deliberate. As in the conventions later outlined by the elocutionists, the sermon is taken up in his left hand, with the right left free for gesture. Trim is momentarily presented as an ideal orator, confident and able to position himself in the space in the best way to facilitate communication between himself and his audience. Before speaking, his actions speak plenty: Trim gestures to his auditors 'with a slight movement of his right hand' which is described as 'bespeaking attention'. Trim's movements are glossed by the narrator as having corresponding meanings long before he actually begins to speak.

The reading is further delayed by Tristram's extended description of Trim's posture or 'attitude' — both as the reader might imagine it to be, and how it supposedly was: 'otherwise he will naturally stand represented, by your imagination, in an uneasy posture'.[8]

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[7] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 139.
[8] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 140.

In Tristram's rendering of the reader's imagining of the scene, the sermon is 'clinched' tightly in the Corporal's left hand, like his 'firelock' or musket. In the fictional reader's mind it is 'as if he was standing in his platoon ready for action', 'stiff' and upright, or 'perpendicular' to the floor.[9] The pose does not have the studied ease required for domestic public reading. Even Trim's weight-distribution is wrong: he divides the weight of his body 'equally upon both legs', contrary to Walker's later suggestion in the prefatory material to *The Academic Speaker* that readers shift their weight from one leg to the other repeatedly as they read.[10]

Yet as the narrative moves on to how Trim actually stood, rather than how the reader might picture him to stand, the overdetermined precision of descriptions of orators' postures is parodied: with 'mathematical exactness', Trim stands at the 'precise angle of 85 degrees and a half'.[11] Rather than being 'perpendicular' to the floor (i.e. at a 90 degree angle to it), he is bent slightly forwards. The description continues beyond 'Corporal Trim's body and legs' to focus on the rest of his body:

> —He held the sermon loosely,—not carelessly, in his left hand, raised something above his stomach, and detach'd a little from his breast;—his right arm falling negligently by his side, as nature and the laws of gravity order'd it,—but with the palm of it open and turned towards his audience, ready to aid the sentiment, in case it stood in need.[12]

Here Trim is described in the usual pose that orators were shown to hold in visual art. Again, the sermon is still in his left hand, and is held up away from himself at a suitable distance for reading. The right arm is described as ready to make gesture, or 'ready to aid

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[9] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 140.
[10] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 140; John Walker, *The Academic Speaker; or, a Selection of Parliamentary Debates, Orations, Odes, Scenes, and Speeches, from the Best Writers* (Dublin: Printed for Messrs, Burnett, Byrne, Wogan, Rice, Moore, J. Jones, and W. Porter, 1796), p. xi.
[11] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 141.
[12] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 141.

the sentiment' of the reading, as though waiting for its purpose and movement, despite its initial appearance of 'negligence' by his side. The description pays attention to further small details of Trim's body, including the 'eyes and the muscles of his face' which 'were in full harmony with the other parts of him'.[13]

From all this description, we can see that Trim has a developed understanding of what an orator looks like, and therefore how to present himself accordingly. The reader of *Tristram Shandy* is also expected to have a highly detailed understanding of the attitude of an orator and the conventions of reading aloud. As noted previously, this description predates the elocutionary theories advocated by the elocutionists such as Sheridan and Walker, but we can see how the instructions of the elocutionists also stem from the sources of Sterne's parodies. There was a broad understanding of elocutionary norms long before the elocutionary movement took off. The sermon-reading plays with the reader's familiarity with other representations of oratory, which helped to determine the expectations surrounding religious reading events. The reader is able to see and judge Trim to be carrying them out correctly, even before the sermon begins. As Tristram himself puts it in his description of the event, here 'the eloquence of the senate, the pulpit, the bar, the coffee-house, the bed-chamber, and fire-side, fall under consideration'.[14] We glimpse the weight of cultural expectations which were present at sermon-events, even as readers such as Trim struggled to maintain the role of orator. Elocution books containing sermons, or offering advice for their composition, had to remain sensitive to these expectations.

Trim's sermon is shaped by its religious contexts as well as cultural ones. After Trim suggests reading the sermon, Walter asks Slop, who is a Catholic, if he has 'any objection'

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[13] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 141.
[14] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 141.

to the sermon being read. Slop replies in the negative, 'for it does not appear on which side of the question it is wrote; it may be a composition of a divine of our church, as well as yours, —so that we run equal risks.'[15] The exact nature of the 'risk' is not specified, but the suggestion is that listeners of the sermon risk being on the wrong 'side' of its teachings — that is, they might not be of the correct denomination. Trim tries to prevent an argument by quipping that the sermon is 'wrote upon neither side [...] for 'tis only upon Conscience'.[16] The participants of the sermon-event, both speakers and listeners, are aware of the tensions which may surface as a result of sermon-reading if the speakers and listeners do not agree with the message of the sermon, or the interpretations of others.

The impact that differing religious beliefs had on reading practices is evident even as Trim begins his first attempt to read the sermon. When he reads the quotation from *Hebrews* at its head — 'For we trust we have a good Conscience', Walter interrupts him, criticising him by saying that 'you give that sentence a very improper accent; for you curl up your nose, man, and read it with such a sneering tone, as if the Parson was going to abuse the Apostle'.[17] For Walter, Trim's reading of the sermon's head uses the wrong tone, setting up the sense of the sermon as one which rhetorically deconstructs a passage of the Bible to prove it wrong. Slop, in contrast, takes Trim's reading to be appropriate to the sermon which follows, by assuming to be an Anglican composition:

> Sir, quoth Dr. Slop, Trim is certainly in the right; for the writer, (who I perceive is a Protestant) by the snappish manner in which he takes up the Apostle, is certainly going to abuse him,—if this treatment of him has not done it already. But from whence, replied my father, have you concluded so soon Dr. Slop, that the writer is of our Church?—for aught I can see yet,—he may be of any Church:—Because, answered Dr. Slop, if he was of ours,—he durst no more take such a licence,—than

[15] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 139.
[16] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 139.
[17] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 143.

> a bear by his beard: If, in our communion, Sir, a man was to insult an Apostle, a saint,—or even the paring of a saint's nail,—he would have his eyes scratched out.[18]

In including this exchange, Sterne comments on his practice — also evident in the sermon which Trim eventually gets to finish — of beginning a sermon by disagreeing with the Biblical text which opens it.[19] In contrast, Slop argues that such rhetorical play takes 'a licence' or liberty with the Biblical text and the authority which wrote it. By such thinking, then, 'the Apostle is altogether in the wrong, I suppose [...] and the Protestant divine is in the right.'[20] Ironically, while Slop cautions against the sermoniser criticising the Biblical text he undertakes to interpret, he takes Trim's 'tone' to establish the meaning of the passage to follow from the outset, before he has even uttered a word of it. Consequently, Slop is guilty of the very thing of which he disapproves: prioritising the authority of the speaker over that of the prior Biblical text.

This reveals something of the conventions of sermons with which readers of *Tristram Shandy* and churchgoers would have been more familiar. Different delivery styles were advocated by different denominations. There were some similarities: Protestants (of all kinds) alongside Catholics were expected to be familiar with their shared heritage of classical rhetoric; pulpit oratory was considered to be a practical application of rhetorical learning as taught at school.[21] Yet there were also differences: Anglican sermons in particular were believed to be necessarily persuasive, or having a conversion effect on auditors; conversely, Roman Catholic sermons focused on 'admonition'.[22] Additionally,

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[18] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 143.
[19] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 143, n. 143.8-11.
[20] Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, p. 146.
[21] Françoise Deconinck-Brossard, 'The Art of Preaching', in *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. Joris van Eijnatten (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 95-130 (p. 97).
[22] Alexander Bitzel, 'The Theology of the Sermon in the Eighteenth Century', trans. Charlotte Masemann, in *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. Joris van Eijnatten (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 57-94 (pp. 87-88).

there was a pronounced contrast between the 'Puritan plain style' of preaching and the evangelistic sermon style which grew in popularity during the Evangelical Revival.[23] The plain style of preaching developed after the Restoration, involving a 'simplicity of construction and sobriety of style'.[24] It deliberately distanced itself from the witty preaching of early seventeenth-century high churchmen, and the enthusiastic and inflammatory preaching of puritans and nonconformists.[25] The notion of enthusiasm shaped the understanding of pulpit rhetoric in this period. In its strictly religious sense, enthusiasm was a pejorative term meaning an excess of religious zeal, and preachers across denominations were anxious to avoid accusations of enthusiasm.[26] The label was partly associated with the tradition of delivering sermons spontaneously, without notes or a printed text, as Dissenters traditionally tended to favour, and later, as Methodists did too; there was a long tradition of improvisation in the non-conformist pulpit.[27] Preachers such as John Wesley and George Whitefield were able to make strong impressions on their listeners due to the force of their personalities and their 'extemporaneous' and 'gesticulatory' mode of address.[28] Whitefield, for example, was said to have attracted crowds of thousands with his sermons, even though he did not prepare written notes and

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[23] O. C. Edwards, Jr., 'Varieties of Sermon: A Survey of Preaching in the Long Eighteenth Century', in *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. Joris van Eijnatten (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 3-56 (especially pp. 11-15).
[24] Deconinck-Brossard, 'The Art of Preaching', p. 111.
[25] Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780*. 2 Vols. (Cambridge: CUP, 1991): I.49-57.
[26] See Jon Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), especially the 'Introduction', pp. 1-18.
[27] Deconinck-Brossard, 'The Art of Preaching', pp. 120-1.
[28] James Downey, *The Eighteenth Century Pulpit: A Study of the Sermons of Butler, Berkeley, Secker, Sterne, Whitefield and Wesley* (Oxford: OUP, 1969), p. 20.

often claimed not to have a biblical text in mind before he began preaching to his audience.[29]

Consequently, as well as expectations set up by contemporary understanding of oratory and social reading practices, there were also the conventions of religious teaching to consider when participating in sermon-reading. These conventions varied across denominations, both Catholic and Anglican in the case of Yorick's mislaid sermon, and — more pertinently for elocution books — between the established Anglican church and non-conformists.

The Before and Afterlife of Yorick's Sermon

Yorick's sermon, which is given the title 'The SERMON. Hebrews xiii. 18. For we trust we have a good Conscience', was not originally composed for *Tristram Shandy*. It had a previous life as one of Sterne's real-life sermons, which was published as a pamphlet in 1750 under the title *The Abuses of Conscience Considered*.[30] After it appeared in *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne published the sermon as the last in *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*, Vol. IV (1766). *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick* were carefully marketed to make the most out of the fashionable buzz generated by *Tristram Shandy* and the popularity of the parson Yorick.[31] The *Sermons* eventually made Sterne more money than the *Tristram Shandy* itself.[32] Of course, in both the pamphlet and

[29] Jonathan Strom, 'Pietism and Revival', in *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. Joris van Eijnatten (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 173-218 (pp. 207-210).
[30] Arthur H. Cash, 'The Sermon in Tristram Shandy', in *ELH*, 31:4 (1964): 395-417 (p. 396, n. 3).
[31] See Tim Parnell, 'The Sermons of Mr. Yorick: The Commonplace and the Rhetoric of the Heart', in *The Cambridge Companion to Laurence Sterne* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009): 64-78.
[32] William Gibson, 'The British Sermon 1689-1901: Quantities, Performance and Culture', in *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689-1901*, eds., William Gibson and Keith A. Francis (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp. 3-30 (p. 20).

the *Sermons of Mr Yorick*, the sermon on conscience does not have Walter and Slop's critical commentary. The sermon exists very differently in each of these iterations, existing both in print and as a fictionally-staged performance which altered its future presentation as a sermon by 'Mr Yorick' rather than Sterne. The representation of the oral event draws attention to the possible readings which written texts can prompt, once again complicating the relationship between print (or manuscript) and vocal performance.



Figure 10: William Hogarth, Frontispiece to *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. 1 (6th edn., 1767).

The sermon also had a life in visual representations of the sermon-event which were designed to accompany Tristram's narration. William Hogarth designed an engraving of the scene at Sterne's request, which was used as a frontispiece for several editions of the book (see Figure 10, above).[33] Hogarth's presentation of the scene turns it on its head, showing Trim's back, rather than his front or side as in usual depictions of orators. This deliberately plays with the perspective of the scene: Trim, who has been so careful to position himself in the room to be 'best' seen, is now not positioned in the composition in a way which can usefully display his elocutionary skill. The afterlife of the sermon-event has not been adequately anticipated by Trim, just as Yorick accidentally misplaced its manuscript pages to begin with. Once again, the life of a text designed to be read aloud is complex, and the multiple representations of the sermon both in the novel and in the real world attest to this.

The representations of the sermon and sermon-event in *Tristram Shandy* highlight key issues surrounding previous scholarship on sermons, whether in print or orally delivered. There has been a growth in scholarship on sermons in recent years, perhaps due to claims of the subject's neglect.[34] However, despite this there has been little focus on the intersections between the elocution movement and eighteenth-century religious practice, bar the notable exception of Carol Poster's 2015 work on William Enfield's educational and elocutionary philosophies in a religious context.[35] Scholarship has tended to focus on

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[33] Image from Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman. The Sixth Edition*. Vol. 1. (London: 1767). Pembroke College, Oxford: BH.STE. See also Sterne, *Tristram Shandy,* n. 140.7.

[34] For recent edited collections of scholarly work on sermons, see Eds. Peter McCullough and Lori Anne Ferrell, *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History 1600-1750* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000); and eds. William Gibson and Keith A. Francis, *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689-1901* (Oxford: OUP, 2012). In development alongside the more recent scholarship on the sermon in English, there has also been broader work on the sermon form in the eighteenth-century across Europe. See Joris van Eijnatten (ed.), *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2009).

[35] Carol Poster, 'A Good Dissenter Speaking Well: William Enfield's Educational and Elocutionary Philosophies in Religious Context', in *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*, 18:1 (2015): 97-122. Other work discussing eighteenth-century

written and printed forms of devotional text rather than oral forms of sermon-reading.[36] While scholars have touched upon how printed sermons might navigate the relationship between print and orality, there has been little explicit discussion of the potential of printed sermons to function as prompts for elocutionary acts. Scholars implicitly assume that hearing a sermon delivered by a preacher and silently reading a printed sermon as a layperson must be two mutually exclusive activities, where the former is characterised by an embodied voice and the latter is characterised by silence. Further, these assumptions suggest that these are the only two ways to experience sermon-events.[37] Perhaps these assumptions pass generally uninterrogated because we, as scholars, tend to read sermons silently, our experience in the archive or library colouring our perception of how eighteenth-century readers (and listeners) experienced sermons. Such assumptions allow critics such as Tony Claydon to state that 'preaching was *read* as well as heard'.[38] The phrasing (emphasised by Claydon's use of italics) suggests that 'reading' a sermon previous preached must have been a silent activity, placed in binary opposition with the vocal sound which allowed them to be 'heard'. Where scholars are able to acknowledge the potential for sermons to be read aloud (simultaneously read *and* heard), it is often as part of a

religious thought and practice often touches upon elocutionary writings, but does not take it as its primary subject, preferring to focus on other forms of religious custom. For example, see Donna T. Andrew, 'On Reading Charity Sermons: Eighteenth-Century Anglican Solicitation and Exhortation', in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43:4 (1992): 581-591.

[36] Most recently (in 2018), the *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* published a special edition focusing on 'Writing Religion 1660-1830', in which contributors considered all kinds of religious writing, including manuscript work such as letters and diaries alongside printed sermons and other kinds of printed religious texts. See Laura Davies and Emma Salgård Cunha (eds.), *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 41:2 (2018).

[37] A recent exception to this is Jennifer Richards, *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance: A New History of Reading* (Oxford: OUP, 2019). Focusing on the period prior to the parameters of this thesis, Richards argues that scholars should be attuned to the ongoing relationship between print and vocal performance.

[38] Tony Claydon, 'The sermon, the "public sphere" and the political culture of late seventeenth-century England', in *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History 1600-1750,* eds. Peter McCullough and Lori Anne Ferrell (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 213-234 (p. 213).

conclusion.[39] This chapter takes the ability of printed sermons to be 'preached again and again by both [their] creators and imitators', as its starting point, rather than its end.[40] Sermons were not just read aloud by the clergy, and then silently in the home: they had multiple oral afterlives outside of the church context, just like Sterne's sermon on conscience.

The discussion of sermons as performance events is limited by its tendency to characterise the performance of sermons as solely the preserve of their original writers. This fails to acknowledge sermons' afterlives in manuscript and print, and the process by which printed sermons fed back into oral performances. Preachers may have composed their own sermons, reading from manuscripts, but they also read out the sermons of others — mostly in print, but occasionally in print designed to look like manuscript. John Trusler earned the enmity of booksellers due to his decision to sell his sermons directly to clergymen and bypassing booksellers entirely. Printed in cursive script-type, these were deliberately designed to mimic handwriting, so that they could be passed off as the speaker's own sentiments.[41]

Printed sermons also found an afterlife in the home, outside the formalised environment of the church service. James Rigney characterises this kind of reading as 'within the realm of private, *relatively* de-institutionalised textual decoding' (emphasis

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[39] For example, Arnold Hunt's *The Art of Hearing* (2010) makes a more sustained attempt at considering the performance potential of printed sermons, albeit saving this discussion until the conclusion of the relevant chapter (see p. 180). The book focuses on early modern printed sermons, but asks many of the same questions which should be put to eighteenth-century ones: What importance was preaching given? Who used printed sermons? Did printed sermons set the standards to which live preaching was expected to conform? See Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences 1590-1640* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010).

[40] Keith A. Francis, 'Sermons: Themes and Developments', in *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689-1901*, eds., William Gibson and Keith A. Francis (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp.31-44 (p. 43).

[41] See William Gibson, 'John Trusler and the Culture of Sermons in Late Eighteenth-Century England', in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 66:2 (2015): 302-319 (especially p. 307).

mine).[42] The word 'relatively' suggests concession to the notion that reading in the home is also to some extent a controlled form of consumption, with its own set of rules or conventions. The movement from speech to print, for Rigney, corresponds to a movement from public to private, where readers are 'rejecting the community of their consumption'.[43] By 'the community of consumption', it is meant their *original* consumption by a congregation who experienced the sermon as a spoken event in a church or other religious space. While Rigney correctly acknowledges that the change in context creates a space for new forms of exegesis, such change should not be characterised as a 'rejection'. As Sterne's representation of Trim's sermon-reading shows, reading aloud co-existed with church worship, providing multiple ways for people to express devotion and creating *new* communities of consumption which were regulated by figures other than the clergyman — figures such as Slop and Walter Shandy. The afterlife of an oratorical performance in print, such as a printed sermon, is not necessarily a rejection of the original context.

By acknowledging this diversity in the sermon-form, we can begin to understand how printed sermons attempted to control the sermon-event and navigate the relationship between print and orality. By re-evaluating both the study of printed sermons and elocution books, we can attempt to understand the complex ways in which eighteenth-century readers and listeners were directed to conceptualise reading aloud as a form of religious practice. In this context of domestic performance, the clear dichotomy between the 'professional' religious reader and the devout listener is muddied in ways that pose problems to the scholar. We can consider how the people collecting sermons thought

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[42] James Rigney, '"To lye upon a Stationers stall, like a piece of coarse flesh in a Shambles": the Sermon, Print and the English Civil War', in *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History 1600-1750*, eds. Peter McCullough and Lori Anne Ferrell (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 188-207 (p. 198).
[43] Rigney, '"To lye upon a Stationers stall"', p. 200.

about the relationship between print and orality, preacher and listener, clergymen and laity. In offering a close reading of sermons and collections of sermons addressing these issues, the different expectations surrounding reading and performing biblical exegesis for clergymen (invested with the authority of the church) and lay people become evident. Who was allowed to read aloud sermons? And how should they be going about it? What do printed sermons themselves have to say about it? As Madeleine Forell Marshall puts it, 'a certain passage in the history of orality and of literacy seems to be at issue here'.[44] In considering the relationship between print and orality, as articulated by printed sermons, we can rediscover the intricate models of religious reading that eighteenth-century readers and listeners navigated.

The Religious Landscape in Print

Religious elocutionary events are in some ways very different from the reading in secular contexts that this thesis has addressed. The stakes were higher. Rather than being simply a means of entertainment, the eternal salvation of the congregation or audience was in the balance. Unlike the theatre, churches did not charge an entry-fee, and nor was attendance restricted to ticket-numbers. The make-up of the congregation was meant to be determined geographically — by parish lines, rather than the ability to pay — contrasting with attendance to Sheridan's lectures on elocution, or spouting-club membership.[45] Unlike a ticketed event, attendance was not restricted by number — the more people in attendance

[44] Madeleine Forell Marshall, 'Late Eighteenth-Century Public Reading, with Particular Attention to *Sheridan's Strictures on Reading the Church Service* (1789)', in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 36 (2007): 35-54 (p. 36).
[45] For changes in patterns to sermon attendance, see Hunt, *The Art of Hearing*, pp. 188-218.

to hear the word of God the better. Yet sermon-events were not just limited to indoor pulpits: they also occurred in the eighteenth-century home thanks to the availability of sermons in a wide variety of print forms, including elocution books.

Sermons became commodities just like other forms of printed literature in the period.[46] This is evident not just from the huge volume of sermons published in the period, but also from contemporary records of copyright sales. The copyright of sermons came to be extremely valuable. Hugh Blair sold the copyright for his first volume of sermons for £50 in 1777, but by 1794 his reputation had grown sufficiently so that the copyright for the final volume in the series was sold for £7,000.[47] Even as early as 1719, booksellers were envisaging substantial sales of Tillotson's sermons — his widow was paid £2,500 for the manuscripts.[48] Booksellers were keen to invest in the production of print sermons.

The printed texts on the market were targeted at both professional clergymen and lay-readers. These texts were designed to help make a sermon-event happen, by providing material to be read and performed. There were more specialist books aimed specifically at the clergy, which were more concerned with the *composition* of sermons. For example, there were indexes of sermons such as John Cooke's *The Preacher's Assistant* (1783), which was based on an earlier book by Sampson Letsome also called *The Preacher's Assistant*, published three decades earlier in 1753. Letsome's book was a revision of an earlier index of sermons he compiled which was published in 1751.[49] Letsome's indexes were clearly of use to clergymen: Thomas Sharp, of a 'distinguished' ecclesiastical family, acquired an interleaved

[46] Rigney, '"To lye upon a Stationers stall"', p. 190.
[47] Gibson, 'The British Sermon 1689-1901: Quantities, Performance and Culture', p.20.
[48] Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment*: I.41.
[49] For more information on Letsome's indexes, see Deconinck-Brossard, 'The Art of Preaching', pp. 101-2.

copy of Letsome's book soon after its publication.[50] The various iterations of these indexes suggests that they were considered useful tools for preachers, and consequently needed to be updated to maintain or increase their usefulness to the clergy. Cooke's book expanded the range of sermons included in the index by three decades. It lists sermons by author, in a table, noting the occasions for which they were composed and delivered, as well as the size and edition of the book where one might find the sermon in full. Other than the titles, there is no indication of the contents of the sermons: the book is designed for 'YOUNG STUDENTS in Divinity', whom Cooke assumes will have the means to access the books listed in order to refer to them.[51]

William Enfield, whom we encountered in Chapter 2 as the author of *The Speaker* (1774), also published a book concerned with the composition of sermons called *The Preacher's Directory* (1771). The book was directed at professional clergymen who needed material to compose their own sermons. Made up of a collection of biblical quotations (with references), the verses are arranged under heads of Enfield's devising. Headings were named things such as 'Concerning the Deity', and 'On Social Virtues', which is followed by 'On Personal Virtues'.[52] The book was designed to help preachers find relevant material to quote and discuss in their sermons: it functions as a kind of printed commonplace book, with the biblical material it contains designed to prompt a future oral performance. Unlike either Letsome or Cooke's indexes, which point the user to sermons on specific subjects (providing examples of sermons for readers to emulate), Enfield's *The Preacher's Directory*

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[50] Deconinck-Brossard, 'The Art of Preaching', pp. 102.
[51] See John Cooke, *The Preacher's Assistant (After the Manner of Mr. Letsome).* (Oxford: Printed for the Editor, at the Clarendon-Press, 1783), iii.
[52] William Enfield, *The Preacher's Directory; or a series of subjects proper for public discourses, with texts under each head.* (London: printed for Joseph Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1771). London: British Library, 4498.e.15.

provides biblical material ripe for exegesis. A copy of the *The Preacher's Directory* in the British Library, London, has been annotated by a reader who has added their own biblical references to a few pages of the book, suggesting that one reader, at least, found the heads worthy of additions.[53] Whether this particular user of the book then used these references to actually write sermons is unclear, but the book still hints at the potential for this kind of book to generate oratorical performances. Both the indexes and Enfield's *The Preacher's Directory* were designed to aid the composition of sermons, by pointing clergymen to material which they could shape into their own sermons. From their content as well as their titles these books were evidently for the use of professional religious orators.

There were also printed sermons designed for lay users which are concerned with religious oratory. Unlike the other forms of elocution manual discussed in the previous chapters, these texts do not have an explicit, cohesive theory of reading which they attempt to get readers to follow. Sermon texts, either printed separately or as part of larger single- or multi-volume collections, are not accompanied by lists of rules for their delivery by either clergymen or laity. Unlike the spouting collections, elocutionary miscellanies and printed lectures on elocution discussed in the rest of this thesis, even though there were close links between elocution and pulpit oratory, printed sermons and related works on the composition and delivery of sermons were not directly born out of the elocutionary movement: there is no cohesive body of texts with a central reference-point. Instead of providing lists of rules, sermons tended to implicitly inform participants in sermon-events (both readers *and* listeners) of the expected modes of behaviour for everyone involved. Enfield argued that this was a lacuna in elocutionary theory in his introduction to *The*

[53] As above: Enfield, *The Preacher's Directory,* British Library, 4498.e.15.

Preacher's Directory, writing that he 'wishes that the principles of this art [i.e. preaching] were thoroughly investigated' and 'laid down' in writing.[54] Perhaps as a result of this lack of formalised elocutionary theory, while printed sermons occasionally have something to say about sermon-performance, sermons on elocutionary subjects are less concerned with the mechanics of reading or delivery, instead preferring to focus on auditors' behaviour. This is different from the other elocutionary texts discussed so far in this thesis, where the role of the performer is generally privileged over the role of the listener. This is because the content of these printed sermons was aimed at domestic lay audiences, rather than professional clergymen. While the clergy were a 'major group of book buyers', and printed sermons could also be for their use, it was congregations who demanded religious texts in forms suitable for use in domestic reading situations, both solitary and communal.[55]

Religious books helped lay-readers to develop methods of reading which functioned appropriately as displays of religious devotion. Example titles include *Sermons for the Use of Families* (1768); *The English Preacher: or, Sermons on the Principal Subjects of Religion and Morality* (1773); *Sermons on Practical Subjects* (1798); and *The Pulpit Orator: Being a New Selection of Eloquent Pulpit Discourse* (1804). From this selection of titles alone, we can see that some texts emphasised their use to families, while others maintained the link to church-based sermon-events by mentioning the preacher and the pulpit. Books of this kind are what Isabel Rivers calls 'practical works': devised to be 'transformative', they were 'designed to enable readers to practise the Christian life', rather than being purely scholarly affairs.[56] By providing material for reading — the sermons within the books — these works gave

[54] Enfield, *The Preacher's Directory*, p. iv.
[55] John Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), p. 38.
[56] See Rivers, *Vanity Fair*, especially pp. 248-274 (p. 248).

religious and moral instruction to readers. Listening to sermons, or reading them, could be one such element of 'practising' Christian life — but, as the next section proves, only to a certain extent.

Preachers Reading Aloud?

One way of discovering how eighteenth-century people understood the relationship between print and orality in a religious context is by looking at differing contemporary opinions on the issue of sermon-delivery. By the late eighteenth century, congregations were much more accepting of the idea that preachers reading sermons written by other clergymen was a legitimate method of sermon-delivery.[57] That said, tolerance was not guaranteed. How preachers were meant to carry out their preaching duties and what constituted a learned sermon continued to be debated across the century. Representations of preachers from the period, both satirical and non-satirical, suggest that too much emphasis on school-learning can actually be a hinderance to effective oratory. This is not to suggest education is itself the problem: rather, it is misconceived ideas of how to *display* religious learning which encumbers pulpit performance. Regardless of whether one should perform a sermon extempore, or else read one from a manuscript or printed book, there were clear expectations surrounding how preachers' performances displayed their religious learning. These expectations were determined in part by religious denomination: the appeal of the theatrical methods of preaching favoured by Methodists is contrasted with the preference for reading attributed to Anglican preachers.

[57] Gibson, 'John Trusler and the Culture of Sermons', p. 319.

The appeal of Methodist preachers for many churchgoers was their performance style. The lapsed Methodist turned bookseller James Lackington reported in his memoirs that 'instead of hearing the sensible and learned ministers at Taunton, I would often go four, five, or six miles, to some country village, to hear an inspired husbandman, shoemaker, blacksmith, or woolcomber, &c'.[58] Lackington admits to having a preference for speakers who are 'inspired' (by the Holy Spirit), even if they are not 'sensible and learned' clergymen, but rather men of more humbler occupations, such as farmers and craftsmen. Their audiences are humble too, often being 'not more than ten or a dozen people'.[59] His dedication to hearing them is evident through the distances he claims to have travelled. Taunton, in Somerset, is contrasted with 'some country village', which despite its singular form is actually plural — he 'would often go' to these other, smaller places. The lack of names suggests their comparative insignificance to Taunton, further emphasising the men's lack of importance. Exactly how the humble preachers displayed their oratorical skills is unclear — the verb 'hear' refers to Lackinton's participatory role in sermon-events, and tells us nothing of the preachers' performances. Given that they were Methodist preachers, however, it is not unreasonable to assume an extempore manner of delivery.

Lackington's *Memoirs* describe his conversion to Methodism. In them, he calls himself a 'very sincere enthusiast' — that is, overly zealous.[60] Yet there were concerns about religious fanaticism of this kind. Although preachers of the Evangelical Revival famously drew on 'affect' to move their audiences, even Wesley was keen to distance his brand of

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[58] James Lackington, *Memoirs of the Forty-Five First Years of the Life of James Lackington* (London, 1791); also partly quoted in Jennifer Snead, 'Sacred Colportage: Readers and Agency in Early Methodist Book Distribution', in *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 41:2 (2018): 179-191 (p. 183).
[59] Lackington, *Memoirs,* p. 69.
[60] Lackington, *Memoirs,* p. 70.

Methodism from the criticism of enthusiasm.[61] Of course, members of the established church were most concerned about Methodist methods of preaching, and more apt to voice (or write) them. For example, Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, expressed his hostility to Methodist preachers by describing them as

> itinerant preachers run[ning] up and down from place to place, and from county to county, drawing after them confused multitudes of people, and leading them into a disesteem of their own pastors, as less willing or less able to instruct them in the way of salvation.[62]

The description of Methodist preachers as 'itinerant' draws on the contemporary associations of strolling actors and vagabonds discussed the previous chapter. Methodist preaching, by this account, had associations with illegitimate forms of theatre and performance, and — more broadly — the potential anti-establishment sentiment such gatherings could foster. There is a sense of chaos in the passage, with the Methodist preachers leading large volumes of people ('multitudes') across parish boundaries as well as county ones, all of which now fail to contain them. The people make unfavourable comparisons between their parish preachers and the itinerant Methodists, making the former seem unable to guide their parishes towards salvation. As well as leading their auditors to 'disesteem' their parish preachers, the Methodist preachers lead them all over the country, creating disorder. The description reveals contemporary fears surrounding 'sermon-gadding' — that is, crossing parish lines to hear sermons delivered by different preachers.[63] In urban areas such as London, there was an increase in the provision of preaching across denominations, which 'made it possible to attend sermons more

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[61] Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation*, p. 16.
[62] Edmund Gibson, *Observations upon the Conduct and Behaviour of a Certain Sect usually distinguished by the Name of Methodists* (London, 1744); qtd. in William Gibson, *Religion and Society*, p. 117.
[63] Hunt, *The Art of Hearing,* p. 119.

frequently and in a variety of different venues'.[64] The parochial unit was no longer strong enough to contain listeners interested in preachers who had accrued popularity and celebrity due to their theatrical manner of delivery. For example, the dissenting minister known as Orator Henley, attracted large crowds of auditors from across London to his frequent sermons, which he delivered in a famously theatrical manner.[65]

Even those who disagreed with the theology of the Methodists could admire their oratorical abilities: the anonymous writer of *The Fashionable Preacher* (1792), a satirical description of the state of contemporary oratory, concedes with a straight face that

> the famous Whitefield was admired by the people; and every one must allow him to have possessed, in a very eminent degree, all those accomplishments that form the orator: and, without regard to his principles, he was an honour to his profession as a preacher; and his eloquence has raised a monument to his praise that will perpetuate his name to latest posterity.[66]

While Whitefield's 'principles' were (to the Anglican author of *The Fashionable Preacher*) worth disregarding, his renown as an orator is acknowledged — so much so that this is one of the few sincere parts of the entire text. Whitefield's reputation managed to transcend denominations, his performances becoming more famous than his doctrine.[67] The elocutionist Thomas Sheridan, who was the son of an Anglican divine, praised the 'wild uncultivated oratory of our Methodist Preachers' in *British Education: Or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain* (1756), even as he characterised their oratory as 'canting' and accompanied by 'frantick gestures'.[68] For further comparison, the author of *Pulpit Elocution:*

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[64] Hunt, *The Art of Hearing,* p. 118.
[65] Floyd Douglas Anderson, 'Orator Henley and the Oratory Chapel', in *Central States Speech Journal*, 17:1 (1966): 29-32 (p. 30).
[66] [Unknown], T*he fashionable preacher; or, modern pulpit eloquence displayed* (London: printed for and sold by Thomson and Drury, No. 34, St. Martin's Lane; sold also by H. D. Symonds, Paternoster Row; Murgatroyd, Chifwell Street; and Ash, Little Tower Street, 1792), p. 23.
[67] Strom, 'Pietism and Revival', p. 210.
[68] Thomas Sheridan, *British Education: Or, the Source of the Disorders of Great Britain* (London: printed for R. and J. Dodsley in Pall-mall, 1756), p. 91 and p. 153, respectively.

or Characters and principles of the most popular preachers, of each denomination (1782) expresses a preference for impromptu performances, perhaps due to its inclusion of many dissenting ministers: of John Wesley, for example, the author records that 'He preaches without notes; and there is something in his pathetic delivery at once original and engaging, nervous, sublime, and beautiful.'[69]

In *The Fashionable Preacher*, it is orality which is prized: both by the narrator, and — so it is claimed — the entire nation: 'The people in this country discover a just taste for eloquence, when they prefer a sermon from a poor illiterate stroller, who, perhaps, a few days ago threw by his awls and turned preacher'.[70] Yet such oral performances are connected to unsavoury forms of performance and raise issues related to who has the authority of speech. Even a strolling actor, homeless or unconnected to a theatre, is able to give audiences a good sermon. The image recalls the 'type' of the spouter discussed in the previous chapter, who abandons his trade in favour of performance. He is 'illiterate', so *cannot* read — and this, perhaps, is the secret to his success as a preacher, despite rejecting his tools ('his awls') in favour of a new occupation only very recently. An education, puts the satire glibly, is actually a hindrance to sermon-delivery. While a 'gentleman of a philosophic turn, and a refined taste, may contemn [the people's] choice', their preference for the illiterate stroller is 'founded on reason'.[71] This 'reason' is, ironically, almost intuitive: like the new strolling preacher's eloquence, the 'just taste' of his auditors is not hampered by learning. The correlation between education and effective oratorical

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[69] [Unknown], *Pulpit Elocution: or Characters and principles of the most popular preachers, of each denomination, in the metropolis and its environs* (London: Printed for J. Wade, No. 163, Fleet-Street, and may be had of all booksellers in town and country, [1782.]), p. 53.
[70] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 13.
[71] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 13.

performance is the reverse of the insinuations made by satires on spouters: as the previous described, audiences expected amateurs to use professional actors as models for emulation, rather than other amateurs with ideas above their stations. From these images we can see the ongoing uncertainty over who had the authority to conduct religious oral performance.

There was an ambivalence towards Methodist preachers and their manner of preaching. Descriptions of preaching show both the appeal and danger of Methodism to parishioners tempted to stray away from their local clergymen. Methodist preachers were known for their theatrical performances, but once again the forms of theatre they are compared to are far from respectable. Theatricality should have no place in a religious context, yet it clearly appealed to listeners.

This collective ambivalence towards Methodist preaching methods sat alongside contemporary criticism of Anglican clergymen, particularly preachers who preferred to read their sermons, rather than deliver them extempore, or without notes. Even without the dangerous appeal of Methodism, Anglican clergymen were often seen to be failing to meet their professional obligations as preachers by reading their sermons from the page and failing to capture the attention of their parishioners. For example, William Cockin concludes his work *The Art of Delivering Written Language; or, An Essay on Reading* (1775) by 'lamenting the generality of the inferior clergy' who are not 'proficients' in 'the necessary and agreeable qualification, which has been the subject of this essay [i.e. reading]'.[72] That reading should be the 'necessary [...] qualification' of the clergyman would lead one to assume that Cockin advocated delivering sermons by reading, particularly given that his final focus of the essay is the state of clergy across the nation. Yet while he describes the

[72] William Cockin, *The Art of Delivering Written Language; or, An Essay on Reading* (London: printed by H. Hughs, for J. Dodsley, in Pall-Mall, 1775), p. 152.

'talents of elocution' as a (pre)requisite for the job of the clergyman, his explanation permits two methods for clergymen to 'rehearse their sermons'.[73] A preacher could practise, firstly, 'in the manner of an extemporary harangue'.[74] The word 'harangue' in this context means a 'long speech', lacking the modern negative connotations of aggressiveness.[75] For a contemporaneous example, recall William Enfield's use of the title 'Orations and Harangues' in *The Speaker* (1744), where the nouns are both neutral.[76] Alternatively — presented with an impartial 'or' — Cockin argues that the preacher may deliver his sermon 'in the more humble capacity of one, who is content to entertain and instruct his hearers with reading to them his own or some other person's written discourse'. The 'more humble' method of reading may be desirable, particularly given the subject of the essay, but the exact weighting of the preference is difficult to capture.

Foreign visitors to England apparently found the decision to read a sermon-text to a congregation slightly bemusing. In Carl Moritz's account of a visit in 1782 to Nettlebed, in Oxfordshire, the author records attending a local church service. He writes, 'My attention was taken by the fact that every word was set down for the priest for his conformity'.[77] He is struck by the reliance of the preacher on the printed text, the idea of 'conformity' to the words of the sermon suggesting that Moritz expected preachers to be more willing to deviate from the text, using notes as a guide to delivery rather than reading out a sermon word-for-word. The clergyman's reliance on reading dominates Moritz's account of the service, as he also notes that 'Under the pulpit was a reading desk where the

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[73] Cockin, *The Art of Delivering Written Language*, p. 134.
[74] Cockin, *The Art of Delivering Written Language,* p. 134.
[75] See 'harangue, n.', *OED Online*.
[76] See William Enfield, *The Speaker: or, Miscellaneous Pieces, Selected from the Best English Writers, with a view to facilitate the Improvement of Youth in Reading and Speaking* (London: Printed for John Johnson, [1774]). London: British Library, 12269.cc.3 (contents pages, unnumbered).
[77] Text taken from Gibson, *Religion and Society in England and Wales, 1689-1800*, p. 225.

preacher stood before the sermon and read out a very long liturgy to which the parish clerk responded to each time, the congregation joining in softly'.[78] The desk is named as though it were *only* for reading, taking space up under the pulpit. The liturgy, rather than being performed, is also 'read', and perhaps it is this reading which makes it seem 'very long'. This reliance on reading may have been a failing of this particular preacher — Moritz is not impressed by his general manner, noticing that 'the preacher was unsociable; he seemed haughty when he acknowledged the greetings of the country people, doing so with a superior nod'.[79] Once again, overreliance on the printed text is understood to indicate a lack of sociability.

The tendency of Anglican clergymen to read aloud their sermons is mocked in *The Fashionable Preacher*, which satirises the state of the clergy in England. It describes how the 'prevailing itch for learning and refinement has led our fashionable preachers into another absurdity; and that is the reading of sermons.'[80] Reading is linked to this desire to display learning and refinement; 'fashionable' is used in a derogatory sense. The preachers 'will trust nothing to memory; all must be read'.[81] Preachers feel the need to construct an image of themselves which is erudite and cultivated; to do so they read (and quote, aloud) the works of others in order to draw on their learned reputations. Yet for the narrator, reading is not the same thing as learning, and is even contrary to a successful oratorical performance, for 'it is a certain fact, that the same discourse has a much better effect when it is properly delivered'.[82] Ironically, reading someone else's work reveals a *lack* of learning

[78] Qtd. in Gibson, *Religion and Society in England and Wales, 1689-1800,* p. 225.
[79] Qtd. in Gibson, *Religion and Society in England and Wales, 1689-1800,* p. 226.
[80] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 10.
[81] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 11.
[82] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 11.

by implying that the preacher is incapable of writing his own sermons. The preacher should have relevant material for a sermon in his memory for use in sermon-composition and delivery — knowing one's material presumably helps one deliver it without being over-reliant on reading directly from the page. Reading a sermon does not constitute learning — rather, *writing* one does.

The narrator claims that his own disgust at the preacher's reading the sermons of others is not unique to himself, as there is 'that aversion which the people had and always will have to the reading of sermons'.[83] Reading is not a 'proper' mode of delivery. The passage continues in this line of thought:

> But when a discourse is servilely read, the voice is strained and uniform; the action, if there be any, and must be generally the same, whatever the nature of the subject: the reader addresses himself to his paper, instead of his audience; and the drudgery of reading ingrosses him so much, that he can think of nothing else besides.[84]

To read is to be 'servile', enslaved to the instructions of the piece of paper, rather than attentive to the needs of the congregation. Reading *is* work, and it becomes laborious 'drudgery' which wholly occupies the mind of the preacher to the detriment of his voice and 'action'. The preacher is caught in a closed loop of reading *from* a paper and then *back* 'to his paper'. Such a system of reading is closed to the possibilities of creating a connection between orator and auditor, preacher and congregation. By reading in this way, the pulpit orator fails to fulfil his function as a performer. The laboured reading, revealed by the 'strained' quality of his voice, shows none of the ease of learning that reading aloud and oratorical performance were meant to imply. The preacher becomes the opposite of the figure of the orator, lacking the identifying skills which characterised good oratorical

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[83] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 11.
[84] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 11.

performance in the period: projecting the voice outwards, using codified gestures and capturing the attention of the audience through his direct address. Rather than a performance, the congregation witnesses 'drudgery', making preaching seem like dull, menial work, unsuited to the ideal pulpit orator. The archetype orator, as described in contemporary writings on the subject, should 'literally embody belief in his voice, eyes, hands and whole body.'[85] *An Essay on the Action Proper for the Pulpit* (1753), for example, emphasises the value of the affective power of religious oratory, where the preacher's voice and gesture are essential to arousing the passions of the audience.[86] The *Essay* places great importance on the skills advocated by classical rhetoricians: 'it is well known what great Stress the most celebrated Orators in those Times laid on *Action*, how exceeding imperfect they reckoned Eloquence without it, and what Wonders they performed with its Assistance'.[87] It was expected that preachers would have knowledge of the classical tenets of oratory, applying them to their own performances in the pulpit.

The narrator of *The Fashionable Preacher* does not cease at characterising pulpit-reading as mere 'drudgery'. Reading in the context of preaching is further compared to other situations of scholarly 'labour'. Preachers who read their sermons are likened to schoolboys struggling through their lessons:

> like a boy at school, he reads and blunders, and blunders and reads: he stands in the pulpit like a speaking statue, without life and motion; his eyes are fixed down to the space of a few square inches, as if he stared at a ghost: he hangs his logger-head over his dirty scroll, like a thief receiving sentence of death. If the poor drudge could look around him, he would see half the audience dozing over his dull repetition, not

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[85] Herman Roodenburg, 'From embodying the rules to embodying belief: on eighteenth-century pulpit delivery in England, Germany and the Netherlands', in *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. Joris van Eijnatten (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 313-341 (p. 340).

[86] See Roodenburg, 'From embodying the rules to embodying belief', p. 325. The essay is attributed to James Fordyce by the British Library Catalogue and the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), but it is also sometimes attributed to John Mason.

[87] [Unknown; sometimes attributed to James Fordyce or John Mason], *An Essay on the Action Proper for the Pulpit* (London: Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1753), pp. 8-9.

> a soul affected, unless perhaps an old beggar gives a groan from a dark corner when he hears the sound.[88]

The image is quoted in full to retain the rhetorical effect of the long running sentences composed of multiple clauses. Again, there is the suggestion that reading is mere menial work in the use of the noun 'drudge'. The idea of the 'lesson' in a church service has been transformed by simile into a schoolboy's 'lesson' at school, the pulpit not quite likened to a desk. The chiastic movement between 'reading' and 'blundering' would appear to mimic the movement of the act it describes: the eye across the page when reading English, forward to the end of one line, and back to the beginning of the next. Yet this sense of rhythm and motion is contrary to the lack of movement in the preacher's eyes, 'fixed down to the space of a few square inches', the paper being described as being like a 'ghost'. Adding further resonances of death, the statue-like preacher is himself described as 'without life'. Perhaps the suggestion of the 'ghost' via simile is meant to evoke an author-like figure, who haunts the sermon-performance; implicitly the writer of the text is not the preacher. As the passage continues, the text is again transformed — instead of being 'a few square inches' it becomes a 'dirty scroll', like one with a death-sentence written on it. The preacher's sight remains fixed to it, however — so, unlike the reader of the passage, he is unable to see his sleeping audience. Only an 'old beggar' in a 'dark corner' responds: an incoherent 'groan' prompted by the equally inarticulate 'sound' made by the preacher's reading.

After this erratic collection of images, the narrator of *The Fashionable Preacher* continues the attack on the poor preaching practices of clergymen. Again, a link between the preacher and poor use of educational tools is made: 'Some, from a common-place

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[88] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 13.

book, will patch up a tolerable sermon in half an hour; others are prepared for Sunday by reading over a sermon of Tillotson.'[89] There are two (poor) methods of preparing a sermon — firstly, by cobbling one together from a commonplace book (print or manuscript), and secondly by not preparing one at all, but simply reading out a sermon by someone else. Again, the potential of the commonplace book to prompt oral performances is evident: the material in the book provides material to be discussed as part of a sermon, functioning much like Enfield's *The Preacher's Directory*.[90] While preachers were encouraged to memorise commonplaces they had collected for use in sermons, they were also warned against 'slavish imitation' of their predecessors.[91] In both methods described there is a clear indication of the laziness of the preacher, in using 'patches' of text to create a new sermon in a mere half-hour, or else in not writing anything at all: 'These clergymen, it must be owned, are seldom guilty of reading, for they seldom take the trouble to write.' Writing one's own sermons is clearly valued by the narrator of *The Fashionable Preacher*, and there is an expectation that sermons should be of the preacher's own composition. Yet this process of composition is not always carried out satisfactorily, as some preachers are 'so indolent that they will hardly look over what they have composed; so that often in the Pulpit they are extremely puzzled to read what they have wrote.'[92] Preachers should be practicing and looking over their compositions, so that by the time they perform them they are familiar with their material; otherwise it is though they are reading their own work for the first time. Preachers like this are called 'paper-geniuses' by the narrator: that is, they are only articulate

[89] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 18.
[90] For more on the affinity between commonplace books and orality, see David Allan, *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), pp. 143-4.
[91] See Deconinck-Brossard, 'The Art of Preaching', pp. 98-101.
[92] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 18.

with the help of a piece of paper, and their genius is about as robust as one too — which is to say, not at all.[93]

The writer of *An Essay on the Action Proper for the Pulpit* takes a slightly different approach, representing the problems which can result from *too much* learning. The *Essay* makes a division between unaffecting 'learned' preaching and a more moving delivery. The opening of the *Essay* juxtaposes two preachers that the writer claims to have recently heard. The first is a 'Gentleman [...] of fine Taste and great Learning', and the second a 'plain Man, of ordinary Capacity, little Literature, and no Refinement'.[94] The first man is praised for his composition, which was 'truly masterly'; he had 'taken care of his Composition to improve it'.[95] Yet despite all the craft that has gone into his writing, the 'Preacher pronounced his Discourse without the least Justness, Grace, or Pathos'.[96] This sermon fails to move its auditors: 'The Consequence was, that it made but *small* Impression even on his more Intelligent Hearers, and *none* upon his more Insensible; whereas had it been properly *Delivered*, it must have ravished the former, roused the latter, and bettered both.'[97] While good composition is to be praised, the preacher has failed in his delivery, making '*small*' impact on the audience. The audience is made up of both 'Intelligent Hearers' and those who are more indifferent or 'Insensible' — yet even those auditors who would be most disposed to listening to the preacher were not moved by his words. For the writer, the sermon must aim to 'ravish' and 'rouse' listeners: to bring them into movement and activity in direct response to his words. The ideal result is the improvement of the audience, which

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[93] *The Fashionable Preacher*, p. 13.
[94] *An Essay on the Action Proper for the Pulpit*, pp. 1 and 3, respectively.
[95] *An Essay on the Action Proper for the Pulpit*, p. 2.
[96] *An Essay on the Action Proper for the Pulpit*, p. 2.
[97] *An Essay on the Action Proper for the Pulpit*, p. 3.

here has not occurred. This advancement is intrinsically connected to affective response: without evoking such a response, a sermon cannot achieve its improving function. Conversely, the 'plain Man' of little reading may treat his subject ('Repentance') 'much after the common way', but 'he *delivered* himself in so strong, so significant, and so agreeable a Manner, that I could easily perceive the whole Auditory profoundly attentive, and sensibly moved'.[98] The writer observes the preacher and audience, seeing that they are 'attentive' and 'moved' in a way that the more refined preacher failed to achieve in his sermon. Whether or not part of the difference in performance quality is the act of reading (rather than extempore delivery) is unclear, although the writer of the *Essay* does attribute a more mechanical or automatic response to the task of reading a sermon: reading aloud is 'little calculated to persuade' when 'the Preacher runs over his Discourse much in the same superficial way, in which he would read a *News-paper*, or any other thing of equal indifference'.[99] Given that persuasion was a key part of the purpose of a sermon, it fails in one of its primary objectives if it is treated as inconsequentially as other forms of material.

From all the material discussed here, both satirical and non-satirical, we can see that the expectations surrounding preacher's performances in the pulpit or elsewhere were varied and often contradictory. Expectations differed depending on denomination, but also within them: while Methodist preachers were well-known for their dramatic, extempore methods of preaching, the position of the Anglican preacher was more mixed, with open debates about the value of learning and reading from a text. Writers held different stances surrounding the role of Anglican clergymen: while reading aloud was permissible, it generally seems that less book-dependent methods of sermon-delivery were preferable.

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[98] *An Essay on the Action Proper for the Pulpit*, p. 3.
[99] *An Essay on the Action Proper for the Pulpit*, p. 38.

Expectations for Anglican preachers in particular were rooted in contemporary understandings of the ideal, classical orator, and appropriate methods of displaying one's education. Preachers were often modelled as performers, similar to actors or lecturers. Yet be able to read aloud was not enough, as it did not guarantee to the congregation that their preacher actually possessed in his mind the knowledge that he offered in a sermon: one could pass off others' knowledge as one's own, or else fail to produce a persuasive sermon by writing one cobbled together from the work of other, better preachers. The quality of Anglican preaching was of the utmost concern, as the salvation of auditors was at stake: auditors were often swayed by the superior delivery offered by the Methodists.

Readers or Listeners? The Role of the Laity in Sermon-Events

The previous section explored the expectations surrounding professional preachers' performances, and the failure to meet them. Consequently, it focused on the nature of sermon-reading or performance as it occurred in public places. Yet reading religious texts gave the laity a way of presenting religious devotion in the home. Reading aloud printed sermons in a domestic context was again a different kind of reading from that performed by a professional preacher. As an activity it was also contested. But the expectations surrounding the behaviour of the laity participating in religious reading events was very different. An alternative kind of 'performance' was required: the performance of religious devotion. This did not just include reading performance, but also playing the role of devout listener. The conditions of elocutionary performance, in the context of religious practice, are once again filled with expectations for all participants, not just the speaker. Sermon-

reading was also carefully demarcated as a separate activity from preaching, which demanded religious authority that amateur performers — by definition, laity — lacked.

What did sermon-reading in the home look like in the mid- to late-eighteenth century? There are a few historical documents which can provide insight into how eighteenth-century readers used printed sermons as part of their religious lives. Thomas Turner, for example, was a shopkeeper in Sussex whose diary records him reading sermons aloud to his friends and wife.[100] He particularly enjoyed the sermons of John Tillotson, rereading them multiple times. On Sunday 27th November 1757, he wrote: 'I this day completed reading of Tillotson's sermons over the second time, and so far as I am a judge I think them to be a complete body of divinity, they being written in a plain familiar style, but far from what may be deemed low.'[101] Turner often read multiple sermons at one time — as many as six a night.[102] He saw no harm in preachers reading sermons aloud either: on 20th January 1758 he read a pamphlet called *Primitive Christianity propounded or an Essay To revive the Antient Mode or manner of Preaching the Gospel* (1755) by the Baptist preacher Daniel Dobel.[103] The *Essay* argues in favour of extempore preaching — or, as Turner puts it, 'of preaching without notes'.[104] The *Monthly Review, or Literary Journal* summarised the *Essay* in similar terms shortly after its publication, stating that the preacher, Dobel 'has taken much pains to prove, that *reading* is not *preaching*, and that, consequently reading *sermons* is not *preaching*'.[105] The writer of the *Monthly Review*'s 'Monthly Catalogue' does not add much in favour or against this argument, although implicitly seems to agree with it, ending in 'the

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[100] For an edited selection of the diary, see Thomas Turner, *The Diary of Thomas Turner 1754-1765*, ed. David Vaisey (Oxford: OUP, 1984).
[101] Thomas Turner, MSS. AMS 6532/2, Sunday 27th November 1757, p. 600.
[102] Turner, MSS. AMS 6532/1, Sunday 14th November 1756, p. 349.
[103] Turner, MSS. AMS 6532/3, Friday 20th January 1758, p. 640.
[104] Turner, MSS. AMS 6532/3, Friday 20th January 1758, p. 640.
[105] 'Monthly Catalogue', in *Monthly Review, or Literary Journal*, March 1755, p. 240.

Wise Man's caution, *be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God*'.[106] Turner added his own reflection on the pamphlet in his diary: 'I must in my own private opinion say that I can see no harm consequent on our method of reading, as the author is pleased to call it.'[107] The referent of the pronoun 'our' is unclear — he may mean the reading of Anglican clergy, including himself in the broad category of 'Anglican', or it may refer to his own reading of printed sermons at home. If it is the latter, there is a suggestion that Turner defends his sermon-reading as a practice which does not attempt to grant him any form of religious authority, or usurp that of another, but is instead simply one form of religious practice among many.

Women also regularly participated in religious reading, although the conditions of their participation were often determined by their gender. Thomas Turner and his first wife often reversed reading roles, and she read sermons to him.[108]Anne Lister used to regularly listen to her aunt read from the Book of Psalms.[109] Lady Elizabeth Hastings took a more formal approach to religious reading in her household, reading aloud religious works before family prayers every evening and having devotional works read aloud to the wider household — including servants — in preparation for receiving communion.[110]

The eighteenth-century concept of the household was broad and fluid: people came and went, particularly as the category could also include domestic servants and lodgers. For people outside of the core members of the family, there was 'an implicit contractual

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[106] 'Monthly Catalogue', in *Monthly Review, or Literary Journal*, March 1755, p. 240.
[107] Turner, MSS. AMS 6532/3, Friday 20th January 1758, p. 640.
[108] Turner, MSS. AMS 6532/1,Thursday 23rd September 1756, p. 311.
[109] Abigail Williams, 'Piety and Knowledge', in *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), pp.239-274 (p. 243).
[110] W. M. Jacob, "Conscientious Attention to Publick and Family Worship of God": Religious Practice in Eighteenth-Century English Households', in *Church History*, 50 (2014): 307-317 (p. 313).

element' to their membership of a household.[111] Private chaplains could also be included, occupying an ambiguous position between upper servant and family member.[112] Religious practice could act to help control household dynamics — as Isabel Rivers notes, among the perceived social benefits of religion included 'fostering the habit of deference to superiors'.[113] I have discovered evidence of this desire to control the behaviour of social inferiors in an annotation found in a copy of William Enfield's *Sermons for the Use of Families* (1768), at The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. Sermon V, 'On Compassion', concerned with 'the condition of Job' (i.e. his suffering), has been annotated by a previous reader, 'for the use of the Servants', although the exact date of the annotation is unclear.[114] From the writing, however, it becomes evident that people read sermons with the expectation that they could be used to help regulate the behaviour of the household. By marking the sermon on Job's suffering as relevant 'for the use of the Servants', it can be inferred that this sermon would have either have been read to the servants of the household, or that the servants would be expected to read it to or amongst themselves. One could, of course, read outside of the household unit too: the correspondence and diaries of Margaret and Joseph Woods records that their household not only read daily in private, and aloud to servants, but also read in meetings for worship and among women's groups.[115] Reading could take up large portions of the day for people wealthy enough to own books and run a household large enough to require the labour of servants.

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[111] Jacob, "Conscientious Attention to Publick and Family Worship of God", p. 308.
[112] Jacob, "Conscientious Attention to Publick and Family Worship of God", p. 314.
[113] Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment:* I.82.
[114] Given the lack of a long S in the writing, the annotations may date from the late eighteenth-century onwards. The copy is not marked up in any other way, except for another annotation which is illegible when viewed via ECCO. See William Enfield, *Sermons for the Use of Families* (London: printed for J. Johnson, No. 8. Pater-Noster-Row, 1768). The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester, Manchester, UCC F349, p. 101.
[115] Jane Desforges, '"Satisfaction and Improvement": A Study of Reading in a Small Quaker Community 1770–1820', in *Publishing History*, 49 (2001): 5-48.

We can begin to see from all this historical evidence how a variety of readers and listeners engaged with printed sermons, using them to instigate their own sermon-events that formed part of the regular performance of religious duty in the household. As contemporary representations of sermon-events show, these were not always successfully carried out. As well as representations of such events in fiction, as in *Tristram Shandy*, there were other textual and visual satires of the laity's attempts to perform religious devotion. For example, François de la Rochefoucauld wrote a series of impressions of English life in 1784, when he was nineteen, including accounts of tours in Norfolk and Suffolk. The papers were translated into English and published in the 1930s as *A Frenchman in England*. One of the things he finds worth recollecting is his experience of English behaviour on Sundays. His account describes how morose he finds them, culminating in an account of a family reading together in the evening:

> Either the father or mother reads aloud from the Bible as fashioned according to Henry VIII, and, more often than not, at the end of half an hour everyone is asleep in his chair. All this is strictly true, I have seen it happen many times with my own eyes in the family with whom we spent the whole winter of 1784.[116]

In this image of familial reading, de la Rochefoucauld presents himself as an outsider: that he was able to see everyone falling asleep 'with my own eyes' implies that he himself was always awake! While the editor Jean Marchand describes the text as 'a reliable document', there is a satirical vein to this account which — coupled with the insistence that the tale is 'strictly true' — suggests that the account should also be taken with a little scepticism. This is especially the case for this account of the reading (and sleeping) family, given that de la

[116] François de la Rochefoucauld, *A Frenchman in England, 1784: Being the Mélanges Sur L'Angleterre of François De La Rochefoucauld* (Cambridge: CUP, 1933).

Rochefoucauld draws a comparison between his description and an engraving he has seen multiple times:

> A gentleman of this country made an admirable drawing, of which an engraving has been made, and you see prints of it everywhere. The subject is Sunday evening: the father is seen at a table, lighted by a candle, and is reading the Bible; he has a pair of spectacles on his nose; the mother is listening with half-closed eyes and the children are asleep with their heads on each other's shoulders.[117]



Figure 11: James Bretherton, A Sunday Evening (1772).
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

[117] de la Rochefoucauld, pp. 80-81.

The image described is similar to *A Sunday Evening* (1772), an etching by James Bretherton after Henry William Bunbury (see Figure 11, above).[118] The drawing is not quite the same as the one de la Rochefoucauld describes, as while there is a candle on the table the patriarch is not wearing reading glasses, and a young boy reads instead. In addition, there is a cat and dog fighting in the foreground; the scene suggests chaos. Yet the point stands: there is surviving evidence of contemporary images of this kind, which show the limitations of reading as a form of domestic worship. *A Sunday Evening* also shares a similar composition to John Opie's painting *A Moral Homily* (sometimes known as *A Moral Sermon*, n.d.).[119] The painting is one of a pair, where the boredom-inducing sermon-reading is contrasted with the reading of a romance. *A Moral Homily* shows a woman reading, but again the group around the table is falling asleep while listening, just as in *A Sunday Evening* and de la Rochefoucauld's account. The written account owes much of its description to these contemporary images.

This struggle to pay attention — or even stay conscious — while performing readerly acts of devotion in the home was recognised by writers and preachers. Some sermon books designed for reading in the home were structured to help readers avoid this problem. For example, Isaac Watts's *Sermons on Various Subjects, Divine and Moral* (published in three volumes from 1721 to 1727) has a preface (to the third volume) which notes that 'Where the Sermons are too long to be read in a Family at once, I have mark'd out proper Pauses, that the religious Service may not be made tedious.'[120] Watts is sensitive to the

[118] James Bretherton, after Henry William Bunbury, *A Sunday Evening* (1772). Etching, 268 x 295 mm. London, British Museum: BM Satires 5084.
[119] I cannot trace the whereabouts of the originals of these paintings; images exist online from auction websites and Pinterest.
[120] Isaac Watts, *Sermons on Various Subjects, Divine and Moral* (London: E. Matthews; R. Ford; and R. Hett, 1729): III.xiii.

difference a change in context makes: while a sermon in a church had the potential to be quite long, the effort of sitting down a family to listen to one in the home, and read it aloud, could be enough to hinder its performance. Consequently, he has edited the texts to provide indication of where it would be acceptable to pause in a sermon and return to it at a later time. The 'pauses' here are not elocutionary ones, but rather places in which it is appropriate to pause in reading the sermon — perhaps to tend to household needs, or do other things. John Wesley took a similar approach to pausing while reading. He wrote about how to read religious works in ways which encourage dwelling on them for a prolonged length of time. His 'Directions How to Read This and Other Religious Books with Benefit and Improvement' was originally published as an appendix to his abridgement of John Norris's *Treatise on Christian Prudence* in 1734.[121] The text offers a series of instructions on reading, including:

> Be sure to read not cursorily and hastily, but leisurely, seriously and with great Attention: With proper Intervals and Pauses, that you may allow Time for the enlightenings of Divine Grace. Stop every now and then to recollect what you have read, and consider how to reduce it to practice.[122]

Instructions such as these are less interested the physical process of reading, instead focusing on the surrounding thought-processes. Reading, according to Wesley's editing of Norris, should not be rushed. This may be evidence of Wesley implicitly cautioning readers against reading practices which could result in accusations of enthusiasm. The result is an emphasis on a 'modest restraint' which is useful for the production of 'practical piety'.[123] The *Treatise*'s insistence on pausing serves a different function to Watts's *Sermons*: Watts is conscious of time-constraints which might limit a family's inclination to read a sermon for

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[121] See Rivers, *Vanity Fair,* p. 78.
[122] Qtd. in Rivers, 'Appendix: John Wesley's "Directions How to Read"', in *Vanity Fair,* p. 118.
[123] Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation*, p. 34.

an extended amount of time. Wesley's Norris, in contrast, does not mention time (or tedium), instead assuming that the reader will be able to read their reading material at a leisurely pace, taking plenty of pauses for contemplation. The instruction then concludes by asking the reader to make the transition from 'recollection' to 'practice'. Here, reading is not practice enough — one must move beyond the limits of reading to get the most out of what one has read.

This evidence shows the variety of expectations surrounding religious reading undertaken without the guidance of clergymen. Occasionally such guidance took the form of reading texts related to religious practice, as in Wesley's abridgement of Norris. Even alongside such guidance, however, there was space for anxieties surrounding the role of the clergyman being usurped by the reading of sermons at home. Religious authority had the potential to be undermined through such practices, and readers did not always have the discipline required to read sermons sufficiently well to communicate their content. Consequently, it was often deemed necessary to emphasise the importance of *listening* over performance in printed sermons.

Printed sermons produced for the use of the laity tended to focus on the value of participating as a listener to a reading-event, rather than as a speaker. For example, William Enfield compiled nine volumes of *The English Preacher: or, Sermons on the Principal Subjects of Religion and Morality* (1773-4). The volumes were designed for the use of families. Sermon III, in Volume I, is called 'On Hearing the Word of God', and is attributed to Rev. George Smalridge in the contents page.[124] The sermon begins, as do all in the collection, with a biblical quotation from the Gospel of Luke introducing the theme of the sermon: 'Take

[124] William Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher: or, Sermons on the Principal Subjects of Religion and Morality*, 9 vols. (London: printed for J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1773-4): I.43; contents I.xvi.

heed therefore how ye hear.'[125] From the very beginning it is clear that the sermon is concerned with how to listen, rather than how to speak. Those listening to the sermon being delivered are to be instructed on how to listen to sermons, by hearing a sermon on the very subject. The focus is explicitly *not* on delivery or elocution.

> Those, who have written concerning the art of oratory, have been very diligent to lay down certain rules and precepts, by the careful observance of which, men might speak as to persuade. But since persuasion depends much more upon the disposition of the hearers, than upon the skill of the speaker, it seems very requisite, that the art of hearing should be as much studied, as the art of speaking; and that rules should be proposed to direct men how to hear, as well as instruct them how to speak.[126]

Smalridge's sermon draws the hearer's attention to the assorted writings on 'the art of oratory', which he feels are characterised by prescriptive rules. This is not a criticism of the rules characterising a lot of elocutionary writing in the period. Rather, Smalridge feels that there should be corresponding rules for the 'art of hearing'. Drawing this distinction does, however, suggest that the rules and precepts for speaking and delivery are not the most useful or appropriate model for readers of religious texts to emulate. Implicitly this is because it was not the place of the reader to emulate the preacher — laypersons are by definition *not* ordained or chosen for the role. The art is one which focuses on the role of a single performer who is the centre of attention, and encourages one to position oneself in the role of speaker or leader. This is different from religious models, which ask listeners to perceive themselves as one of many, listening to an ordained or chosen authority — the preacher delivering the word of God. These models of reading are therefore limited and limiting to a religious reader. Audience receptiveness is key for the function of oratory (persuasion) to occur. It is important to remember that the sermon form was often

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[125] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*: I.43; cf. *Luke*, 8:18.
[126] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*: I.44.

conceived of as an act of persuasion, particularly in Anglican traditions. This in part stemmed from the influence of classical rhetoric, which had three aims: instruction (*docere*), persuasion (*movere*), and delight (*delectare*).[127] The Anglican emphasis on persuasion also stemmed from the Reformation, when the soteriology of the sermon-genre rested on the idea that a successful sermon convinced its hearer of the truth of its account of God.

Smalridge's sermon in *The English Preacher* does not place all the blame on the listeners, acknowledging the limitations of preachers' abilities, or 'the unskillfulness or negligence of those who preach' the word of God.[128] Presumably this comment is not meant to reflect back on the speaker of the sermon during any given performance. Yet following this, the text moves swiftly back to the agency of the listener, for 'on the other hand it must also be owned, that the unfruitfulness of our preaching is in some measure owing to inattention or prejudice in those to whom we preach'.[129] The text still retains the 'our', referring collectively to clergymen, not laity, even though the volumes of sermons were also used for domestic use. When reading silently, the 'our' can easily still refer to an absent clergyman, but when read aloud, the 'our' may result in the reader having to impersonate a clergyman. How readers were meant to deal with the possibility of inhabiting the role of the clergyman (and one criticising other clergymen) is unclear.

The sermon continues in its examination of how listeners should behave by interpreting the Parable of the Sower. In the parable, a man sows seeds and the seeds grow to varying degrees, depending on whether they have fallen on the path, rocky or thorny soil, or good soil conducive to growing crops. The parable ends with a call to 'Let anyone

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[127] Deconinck-Brossard, 'The Art of Preaching', p. 120.
[128] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*: I.44.
[129] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*: I.44.

with ears to hear listen', after which Jesus explains the story to his disciples.[130] In Smalridge's brief explanation of the parable, the seed represents the word of God, and the ground represents the receptiveness of its auditors. The sower is incidental and does not represent anything at all; if he does, it is not explained in accounts of Jesus's explanation of the parable. Smalridge, in his longer exegesis of the parable, draws a parallel between the preacher and the sower, arguing that the 'seed brought forth more or less fruit, not according to the skill of him who scattered it, or the virtue of the seed itself, but according to the nature of the soil of which it fell'.[131] The mention of the sower again emphasises that the role of the preacher is not to be discriminating in regards to whom he preaches (or 'sows seeds'); 'growth' or understanding is dependent on the receptiveness of the soil. If 'the earth be closed up', it is as 'if men's ears are shut against instruction'.[132] Again, the role of the listener is to be receptive. This is especially the case in religious oratorical events, which Smalridge argues is a special case, for in 'the oratory of the antients, those who studied to excel, thought it the first and principle point of their art, to make their hearers attentive; but we, whose office it is to preach the word of God, may well presume upon the attention of those, to whom we address ourselves'.[133] The preacher, Smalridge believes, should be able to assume that his audience is interested in the word of God. The preacher need not 'make' his hearers listen; he should be able to assume that they are listening already. They 'must' hear the word of God 'with candour, and meekness, with patience and temper; without any ill-will, nay with some degree of good will towards those who preach

[130] *Luke* 8:8.
[131] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*: I.45.
[132] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*: I.47.
[133] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*: I.47.

it'.[134] The listener is instructed not just to have a neutral position when listening to a sermon, but rather to be openly positive to it. Similar to Enfield's directions for reading, Smalridge concludes by saying that listening is not enough, that the congregation or listeners should hear the sermon 'with the actual intention of practising it'.[135] This notion of practice does not include listening, just as Enfield's did not include 'reading'. To be content just to listen is posited as a form of complacency:

> Some there are, who place a great part of their religion in hearing sermons; who think, that if they have been present at these pious exercises, if they have carefully listened to them, but especially if they have been warmly affected by them, they have, without going any farther, done a good work[136]

The practice of religion is not merely 'hearing', 'presence', or even feeling — genuine or otherwise — but *doing*. It is difficult to say with certainty to what extent Enfield agreed with this interpretation of speaking and listening; the extent to which he edited the sermon is unclear, although its prominence in the first volume of sermons suggests that the topic was important to his conception of the value of sermons. What this edited sermon does tell us, however, is that preachers such as Smalridge and Enfield saw a need to teach the laity that listening, while important, just was not enough. Unlike in other forms of elocutionary theory (and, relatedly, acting theory) from the period, which consider an effective oratorical performance to be one which displays the passions and moves the audience, for congregations or listeners this is not enough to be considered a performance of religious duty. Active participation, in order to count, must continue even after the oratorical performance.

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[134] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*, I.54.
[135] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*, I.55.
[136] Enfield (ed.), *The English Preacher*, I.55.

Thus we can see that sermons were able to heavily theorise and determine the role of the auditor. Preachers were expected to provide this kind of instruction in their sermons and had a clear stake in repeatedly indicating to listeners the importance of listening. In managing their auditors' behaviour in this way, preachers could attempt to manage the flexible relationships between speakers and listeners. Take, for example, *The Preacher's Directory*, the collection of biblical quotations collected by William Enfield for the use of preachers in their sermons. While not intended for the use of laity in the same way as a full text of a printed sermon, *The Preacher's Directory* provides some insight into the ideal priorities of preachers. The heads in the book indicate the themes that Enfield considered important or worth preaching — perhaps for himself as well as other users of the book. The entries under each head are also revealing, showing Enfield's repeated interest in speech and conversation, which has particular resonance given the extracts' intended use as material in a spoken sermon. Taken from all over the Bible, the extracts are greatly concerned with the physical aspects of speech: 'The lip of truth shall be established forever'; 'The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips'; 'Let no communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers'; there is even a subheading on 'The Government of the Tongue'.[137] Cumulatively, the chosen passages discuss the nature of truth and communication whilst drawing attention to various parts of the vocal organs — the mouth, lips and tongue. Their use is to be limited: no speech should be made unless it has value, for: 'I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgement; for by thou words thy shalt be justified, and by

[137] *Proverbs* 12:19; *Malachi* 2:6; *Ephesians* 4:29; and Enfield, *The Preacher's Directory*, p. 92, respectively.

thy words thy shalt be condemned'.[138] The passage draws attention to the power that words can have to earn one praise, and condemnation. It may resonate with both performers of sermons, and their listeners: one must know when to speak, and when to listen.

Many of the passages found in *The Preacher's Directory* are concerned with the volume or amount of speech, and how it may sometimes (but not always) be of use to limit it. The head 'Self-Government' is mostly composed of passages concerned with self-control, where the manifestation of that self-control is through controlling the tongue. The section is filled with passages warning the reader or listener to 'Take good heed what thou speakest', and that 'he that hatest babbling shall have less evil'.[139] In providing material for sermons, the passage asks the preacher to speak less or avoid 'babble' — excessive, pointless speech. Should a sermon featuring any of these sentiments be written, these quotations may become ironic in a new oratorical context if the preacher is especially long-winded. The section also has passages which indicate that speech might not be necessary at all. Such passages are presumably chosen to be directed at listeners, not the composers of sermons using the book. The section on 'Self-Government' also considers conduct in wider contexts. Taking a passage from *Ecclesiaste*s, readers and listeners are told that 'Sweet language will multiply friends, and a fair speaking tongue will increase kind greetings'.[140] Here, speech is permitted to promulgate and generate more speech, modelling conversation as something reciprocal. Unlike a sermon-event or any other oratorical occasion, there is no element of performance, no single actor speaking to an audience. Taking the passages quoted here together, the general message is that listeners should be

[138] *Matthew* 12:36.
[139] *Ecclesiastes* 1:29; and *Ecclesiastes* 19:6, respectively.
[140] *Ecclesiastes* 6:5.

careful of the amount they speak, ensuring that conversation is reciprocal. Rather than focusing on the value of oratorical performance, the biblical material intended for use in sermons focuses on the value of knowing when *not* to speak.

Fordyce and Gendered Rules of Participation in Sermon-Events

As well as emphasising the importance of listening, printed sermons also provided gendered rules for participation in sermon-events, and oratorical performances more widely. For example, James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) takes great pains to manage the behaviour of its imagined audience of female listeners. A distinction between the speaker and listeners is maintained throughout. The sermons make frequent use of the first person ('I apprehend', 'I have selected') to address the audience.[141] Auditors of these sermons are assumed to be female, and the speaking 'I' male. Consequently, 'our sex' is repeatedly contrasted with 'yours', the 'young women' to whom the sermons are addressed.[142] The sermons allow the speaker to offer advice to his 'fair auditory' on the nature of conversation.[143] This male speaker gives 'a few hints on the spirit and manner, in which I conceive your conversation should be conducted'.[144] The consonance of the 'con' sound is designed to be pleasurable to read aloud and listen to. Of course, the sermon-event itself, and the act of listening to one is *not* a conversation, and the constant reinforcement of the distinction between speaker and auditor is designed to highlight this.

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[141] James Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*, 2 vols. (Printed for A. Millar and T. Cadell in the Strand, J. Dodsley in Pall-Mall, and J. Payne in Pater-Noster Row, 1766): I.6.
[142] Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*: I.17.
[143] Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*: I.185.
[144] Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*: I.182.

The sermon on conversation, like Enfield's chosen Bible verses in *The Preacher's Directory*, condemns unnecessary speech or 'endless prattling, and loud discourse', and 'noisy, empty, trivial chatter', the opposite of the kind of speech the sermons are meant to deliver.[145] Women's participation in conversation, let alone the sermon-event, was 'predicated on tight constraints'.[146]

The ideal modes of conversation do not leave room for entertainment-orientated performance, just as the gendering of the 'I' as male functions to exclude women from reading Fordyce's sermons aloud. The conversation of 'cultivated women' should be different from masculine forms of conversation, according to Fordyce: it is a kind of 'Unstudied Correctness' or an 'easy elegance of speech, which results from clear and lively ideas, expressed with the simplicity of nature, somewhat aided by the knowledge of books'.[147] The use of books to provide material for conversation should be restrained: 'somewhat aided' rather than just 'aided'. The conversation requires that not too much learning should be displayed, a deliberate 'unstudied' manner that should appear effortless. 'The knowledge of books' also seems distanced from women's acquisition of information or understanding: rather than openly saying that women should not read books (aloud or otherwise), the knowledge is merely 'of books', not even *from* them.

The position of women's reading, particularly reading aloud, is ambiguous in Fordyce's sermons. One of the sermons in Volume I describes at great length the 'Elegant Accomplishments' suitable for women.[148] Dancing, singing, needlework and playing

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[145] Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*: I.197.
[146] For more on eighteenth-century thought surrounding conversation, and women's expected role in conversation, see Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), p. 63.
[147] Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*: I.199.
[148] Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*: I.234.

musical instruments are all described as appropriate, unlike, for example, playing cards. Reading aloud is also mentioned, but its exact position in the ranking of 'Elegant Accomplishments' is unclear. The preacher of the sermon shares an anecdote: 'I once knew a lady, noble by birth, but more noble by her virtues, who never sat idle in company' who was 'a perfect mistress of her needle'.[149] Presumably a performer of the sermon would pretend that this anecdote was his own. It continues, 'For the sake of variety and improvement, when in her own house, some one of the company would often read aloud, while she and her female visitants were thus employed'.[150] The gender of the reader ('some one') is unclear, but we can see that being read to — as an accompaniment to other work — was valued as a way to pass the time.

Close-reading Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* in this way gives us further insight into the abortive sermon-reading scene in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). The passage, at the end of Chapter 14, Volume I, describes what happens when the clergyman Mr. Collins is invited to read to the Bennet sisters by their father.[151] Mr Collins chooses to read aloud Fordyce's *Sermons* rather than a novel, 'every thing [about which] announced it to be from a circulating library'.[152] Aghast at Collins's choice of reading material, Lydia 'gaped' and 'exclaimed' in astonishment and Kitty 'stared at him'.[153] Mr Collins begins to read (the narrative voice reports — Fordyce is not quoted directly), but soon Lydia interrupts him by talking about the latest news from Meryton. This dynamic is the opposite

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[149] Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*: I.251.
[150] Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*: I.252.
[151] For another reading of this scene, see Vivien Jones, 'The Seductions of Conduct: Pleasure and Conduct Literature;, in *Pleasures in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), pp. 108-132.
[152] See the opening paragraph to Lee Erickson, 'The Economy of Novel Reading: Jane Austen and the Circulating Library, in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* 30:4 (1990), 573-590; passage quoted from Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), ed. Frank W, Bradbrook (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 60.
[153] Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 61.

of the 'I'-led interaction that Fordyce constructs in his writing, and Collins reconstructs in his reading. Ideally, the speaking man is able to perform uninhibited by his female listeners. Jane and Elizabeth (the 'two eldest sisters') understand that politeness demands that they listen rather than speak, and 'bid' Lydia to 'hold her tongue'. Mrs Bennet and her daughters then feel obligated to apologise to Mr Collins, although the extent of the sincerity of the apology is neatly hidden in the use of reported speech: 'Mrs. Bennet and her daughters apologised most civilly for Lydia's interruption, and promised that it should not occur again, if he would resume *his* book' (emphasis mine).[154] Note that the book is described as *his*, even though he has chosen it from the Bennets' available selection of owned and borrowed books. For Collins, Fordyce's *Sermons* are 'of a serious stamp', and are valuable for being an instructional work. The entire interaction fails as a reading-event, and Mr Collins is forced to offer to play backgammon with Mr Bennet at another table. Lydia's insistence on talking about events involving Meryton and the officers disrupts the polite reading event going on between the members of the family present in front of her in the drawing-room. The result ruptures Fordyce's construction of the idealised attentive female audience. Adding to the irony even further is that Mr. Collins is himself a clergyman: out of his usual setting, positioned as a guest in the Bennet home, he is unable to fulfil his usual function as a preacher. The sermons, for all their attempts at controlling the interactions between speaker and listeners, have been thwarted; the authority of the speaking clergyman usurped.

We can see that for all the efforts of sermons to control auditors' behaviour, ideal modes of reading and listening remain just that — ideals. The models attempt to draw

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[154] Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 61.

attention to appropriate modes of conversational behaviour, instructing listeners in the performance of religious duty, where listening is only one aspect of practising Christian life. But participation in reading events, both real and (in the case of the Bennet family) fictional, could act to disrupt the models of sermon-events described in sermons themselves. The elocutionary models offered by preachers in their sermons attempt to maintain clear distinctions between the speaker and his listeners. This may have worked to some extent in the church setting, but printed sermons allowed the laity to recontextualise the oratorical event, participating in readings that were not led by an ordained man. In a church setting, the distinction between preacher (speaker, male) and congregation (listeners, all genders) was clearly demarcated through dress and the relative positions of the people. Yet outside the church context, the dynamics between speakers and listeners could be more flexible. For example, historical evidence proves that women participated in religious reading-events, including sermon-events. After 1760 women began preaching in the Methodist movement, and Wesley himself supported a number of women such as Sarah Crosby, Mary Bosanquet, and Sarah Mallet in their efforts to convert more people to Methodism.[155] Due to negative public reactions, however, Wesley was later forced to curtail the actions of female preachers.[156] Women also made up nearly half of regular attenders of nonconformist meeting houses for which records are available.[157] Women were regular participants in both public and domestic religious reading, although the conditions of their participation were dictated by the reactions of others, and often

[155] Jonathan Strom, 'Pietism and Revival', p. 212.
[156] Charlotte Sussman, 'Women's Private Reading and Political Action, 1649-1838', in *Radicalism in British Literary Culture, 1650-1830*, eds. Timothy Morton and Nigel Smith (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), pp. 133-150 (p. 145).
[157] Tess Whitehouse, 'Memory, Community and Textuality in Nonconformist Life-Writings, 1760-1810', in *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 41:2 (2018): 163-178 (p. 165).

controlled by the decisions of men. All this evidence acts as a counterpoint to the gendered models of reading and listening which can be found in printed sermons. Historically women were able to inhabit — albeit if only temporarily, or in a highly-controlled fashion — the role of speaker.

Conclusions

Many sermons were designed to manage the behaviour of all participants in the sermon-event, both clergy and laity. The expectations surrounding performing preachers in the pulpit were necessarily different from the expectations surrounding domestic readers. Printing sermons allowed them to have an afterlife beyond the pulpit, and thus complicated the models of reading which posited idealised relations between the speaker and his listeners. Religious reading could not be conceptualised without listening, with the conditions of the participation in sermon-reading heavily determined by social factors such as gender. Many had concerns regarding the ability of the laity to read sermons in ways which would provide moral instruction without undercutting the authority of ordained ministers. But as has been stated repeatedly in relation to other kinds of elocutionary text, these models remain limited in the face of historical evidence of contemporary reading practices, where the relationships between speakers and listeners were much more flexible.

The soteriology of sermons varied across Christian denominations, but generally emphasised the importance of the congregation putting the words of the sermon into practice beyond the sermon-event. While Anglican preachers in particular were expected to emulate classical orators, in reality their performances were not always enough to prevent auditors seeking out new oratorical experiences across parish or even

denominational boundaries. The texts targeted at clergymen, both for their use or else satires of them, focus on the role of the preacher as performer — someone who reads or speaks. Conversely, the printed sermons designed for the instruction of the laity were concerned with the performance of religious duty through listening. Auditors were asked to pay attention to their modes of conversation, how they socialised, and the skills they displayed in gatherings. All of these gestures shift attention away from performance and towards listening. What is at stake here is the role of reader: of who is permitted to read or speak and who is permitted to listen. Participation in this mode of performance was dictated by materials which implicitly invested the appointed speaker (who, in domestic contexts, was not necessarily ordained) with an authority not intended to be shared in the way that the materials in spouting collections or collections of poetry was designed.

Eighteenth-century models of the sermon-event are far more complex than previous scholars have acknowledged. Modern accounts of printed sermons have tended to ignore the possibilities of performing and reperforming elocutionary texts, inadvertently simplifying accounts of how eighteenth-century writers encouraged readers and listeners to think about religious reading. Unlike texts discussing other forms of reading, the 'rules' for religious reading are not explicitly expressed, but instead only become visible through a variety of textual and visual representations of sermon-events. In printed sermons designed for the domestic reader, elocution and performance is always secondary to the needs to religion. Consequently, the majority of discussion surrounding reading and performance is focused around the related modes of listening and conversation. In being able to view printed sermons as part of this complex network of elocutionary thought and theology, scholars begin to get closer to 'listening' to what these elocutionary texts were trying to say, and engaging with the very kinds of discussion they were designed to prompt.

Conclusion

Practice as Research: A Modern Day Spouting Club Meeting

Elocution manuals gesture both forwards and backwards — back to the original compositions and past speakers who spoke to auditors, and forwards to future oratorical events. This thesis, by the nature of its historical subjects, has exclusively focused on what elocution manuals can tell us about the past. Even when examining the ways in which elocution manuals look forward to future oratorical events, I have restricted my focus to the historical reading methods such books advocate. This thesis has, after all, been dedicated to discovering what elocution manuals can tell us about how performance was theorised and controlled in the period 1750-1800.

But as well as considering the forms of control exerted by elocution manuals, I am also interested in the interpretive possibilities which they encourage. Even as they seek to guide the reader to 'correct' forms of oral textual interpretation, attempting to control the rhetorical afterlife of a speech-act in print, there is always room for the reader's agency. This has been shown even through my own scholarly reading of elocution manuals, so antithetical to the short instances of impromptu wit they display and celebrate. I began this thesis by articulating the struggles of a scholar forced to read elocution manuals in a way which was contrary to their instructions. Yet as this project has proved, there is value in reading them in ways antithetical to their intended uses. New interpretive possibilities have been opened. It is possible for present-day readers to re-enact the reading practices advocated by elocution manuals, playing out in practice their rhetorical construction of the

ideal reader and reading performance. Knowing the theory, it is possible to read in ways similar to those that elocutionary theorists and the compilers of elocution manuals envisaged.

The primary way I have attempted to re-enact a small part of eighteenth-century elocutionary culture is through a public engagement event called 'The Spouting Club'. I have hosted the event three times to date: twice in Oxford and once in York. The event encourages attendees to participate in a recreation of an eighteenth-century spouting club meeting. The first meeting was held in the top floor of the St. Aldate's Tavern in Oxford, where there were seventeen participants, composed of a mixture of local people. I used a script to structure the event (see the Appendix) and prior knowledge of the eighteenth century was not assumed. The other two meetings were held in university spaces: at a lecture theatre in Balliol College, University of Oxford and the King's Manor, University of York. The audiences and participants of these events were primarily academic: graduate students and academic staff. In these instances, the re-enactment of the meeting was book-ended with academic discussion regarding the evidence surrounding elocutionary practices and spouting collections, and the value of public engagement events to members of the public and researchers.

What could re-enactments of this kind tell researchers? A lot, it transpired; many of the concerns uniting the various chapters of this thesis were shared by modern-day spouters. In all three meetings, there was plenty of time to discuss issues surrounding the performance of texts as part of a social reading event. Readers expressed concerns regarding understanding the material, or not knowing the full context of the passages that they were reading. Some spouters volunteered personal reasons for choosing the texts they did: it was something they had enjoyed in the past, encountered at school, seen in real life

in a modern production (often linked to a famous actor, such as Derek Jacobi or David Tennant), or was in some other way linked to significant life-moments. As well as this, readers chose texts based on the length ('not too long'), and whether or not they felt confident that they understood the text, and consequently the way in which they felt it should be read. I had already anticipated that some readers would prefer the modern-transcriptions of Shakespeare which were without eighteenth-century typesetting, but some suggested printing out the extracts using larger font to facilitate reading aloud in comparatively dark spaces (the tavern, old lecture halls), despite electric lighting. Some readers felt that they needed a little more time to practise. It was difficult to read loudly, clearly and confidently, with the appropriate accompanying gestures all at the same time.

All these issues are similar to those addressed by spouting collections and elocution manuals more generally. Editors of elocution manuals were conscious of the physical design of the books, manufacturing them to be conducive to reading aloud. Similarly, in choosing the reading materials for the workshop I tried to keep the extracts short. I should have been more attuned to the difficulties of reading unfamiliar material presented in an unfamiliar way, and printed more modernised copies of texts. Both the modern spouting club meetings and elocution manuals make clear that printed texts can be both a help and a hinderance to oral reading performances: for modern readers unused to it, eighteenth-century type was difficult to read. Some readers annotated their chosen passages to help parse the text, and to remind themselves of how the long 's' should be pronounced. All of this raises questions about the difficulties eighteenth-century readers had while reading elocutionary texts with surrounding meta-texts such as annotations, footnotes or added elocutionary punctuation. To read clearly and without error one must have had to practise.

The prefatory material of elocution manuals was designed to address concerns similar to those of modern readers, including issues surrounding literary interpretation and reading passages 'correctly'. Some modern participants of the spouting club were shyer than others, needing a lot of reassurance and encouragement, or even preferring to watch rather than perform. Some expected less of an interactive experience from a reading event and were therefore surprised at being asked to perform at all. Unlike the majority of the representations of eighteenth-century readers and orators found in the evidence examined in this project, real-life readers can be a lot more self-conscious. Modern readers, like their eighteenth-century counterparts, worried about what they were reading and how they were reading. They often felt nervous. The group had to learn to find a dynamic where anxieties were put at ease, and encouragement readily given to create a welcoming reading environment. Inevitably, the burden of some of this fell to the person in charge. In this, perhaps modern concerns were different: all readers were welcome here, and materials were free.[1] Some participants said — not necessarily negatively — that the whole thing reminded them of school: elocutionary instruction, even in its more amusing forms, comes across as 'learned' to modern readers.

As well as all these issues, there were some unplanned elements which the modern spouters had to navigate. Once again, we are reminded that there is always a space — large or small — between the event planned in or prompted by print, and the one which occurs at any given time. Accidents happened: like the spouters in 'A Spouting Club' (Figure 7), participants in the modern spouting club meetings practised their parts and drank, spilling wine and pints over some of the reading materials. For the tavern spouters, the realities of

[1] The Spouting Club was part-funded by TORCH, who contributed £250 towards the cost of the event, to cover room booking, printing and other materials. Spouters were asked to buy their own drinks.

performing in a pub were rarely absent: bar staff came to check on progress and clear empty glasses, and a few people walked in to see what was going on or else to try and find a seat. Eighteenth-century readers may well have experienced similar interruptions wherever they read, but some are perhaps unique to twenty-first century readers. One spouter in the tavern, reading an extract from Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, was interrupted at the end of the first line — 'The bell strikes one' — by a ringing mobile phone.

In taking elocutionary texts out of the library scholars can become newly attuned to the complexities which real-world settings can add to social reading performances. Through hosting this workshop I became increasingly aware of the issues which would form the overarching themes of this thesis: the difficulties surrounding the practicalities of reading aloud, the social stakes of a good performance, the fragility of constructed conviviality, the relationships between reading aloud in an amateur setting and the professional stage, the challenges of accessing certain kinds of books and performances, and of how print can only do so much to prompt oratorical instruction.

Elocution Manuals and the Co-Existence of Print and Orality

A public engagement event led by an early-career researcher is inevitably different from both the envisioned reading events elocution manuals were designed to prompt and the actual practices of historical readers. Yet once again, by reading elocution manuals in ways different from their original intended uses we have been able to see the challenges eighteenth-century readers may have had to navigate. By dint of their print form, elocution manuals inevitably struggled to prompt the kinds of oratorical performances they construct

and idealise. The kinds of performance elocution books valorised were far from uniform; this thesis has shown that eighteenth-century attitudes towards reading aloud and the relationship between reading aloud and speaking were constantly debated.

The conditions of participation in eighteenth-century reading events has been shown to be determined by a variety of interconnected factors: of the kind of reading event, the nature of the chosen text, the education or profession of the speaker, their aspirations of self-improvement or fame, their gender or class, or their role in the household or other space in which the reading event occurred. Elocution manuals grappled with larger questions related to the power dynamics between speaker and auditor(s), of who had the power to speak and who to listen, and of what it was worth saying or repeating. Elocution manuals had no uniform approach to these issues. Who was reading, what they were reading, why, where and to whom were all important questions. The assumptions underlying elocutionary thinking and social reading practices show how eighteenth-century reading practices shaped elocution books just as much (if not more) than they were shaped by them.

Elocution manuals consistently pointed to the tensions inherent in using print to instruct oral performance. In considering the variations on elocutionary theory in different genres of elocution book, it has been shown that eighteenth-century readers and writers were highly sensitive to the complex relationships between print and oral performance. Modern scholars of elocutionary texts and eighteenth-century literature and print culture should embrace a more nuanced and historically-informed sense of the relationship between the two which – as this thesis has shown – can also be found in textual and visual representations of reading aloud. Elocution manuals demand the co-existence of the categories of 'print' and 'orality' whilst acknowledging the difficulties such a relationship

must have. Such books were acutely aware of the limitations of print in instructing oral performance, and the difficulties that text has in capturing the excitement of witnessing a skilled orator at work.

The methods of reading elocution books recommend were sensitive to the technical and social needs of their various intended readers. They taught lessons and skills beyond the mere recitation of texts: how to navigate social situations involving reading, how to manage reading events, how to emulate famous performers and not overreach in those aspirations, and how to participate appropriately in forms of religious worship requiring reading and oral performance. In reading elocution manuals in a variety of genres — printed lectures, miscellanies of poetry and prose, schoolbooks teaching political oratory, spouting collections and printed sermons — we can see the variety of situations in which elocution and oratory were considered important. Who was allowed to assume the responsibility of reading aloud and other forms of text-based performance varied: lecturers, professional actors and clergymen had very different forms of authority over an audience than schoolboys reading to teachers, or friends engaging in amateur performances as part of a club. Reading aloud was significant in the formation of eighteenth-century social relationships and the construction of social authority.

In moving beyond the main proponents of elocutionary theory and examining a variety of sources representing both ideal and not-so-ideal forms of reading aloud, this thesis has shown that eighteenth-century subjects were intensely interested in developing self-reflexive reading practices for the social approbation which one could accumulate through reading to others. In making elocutionary theory and practice more accessible to others, elocution manuals were tapping into a broader set of interests related to the

performance of identity, both individual and as part of a social or professional group, and wider interest in engagement with literary texts.

Is it possible to create a new print-orality model based on the evidence provided by elocution manuals? I think not — and to attempt to do so would be to miss the point made by their writers and editors. Integral to this project has been the understanding that individual readers could read books in a myriad of flexible ways, both aloud and silently, in company and alone, both with and against the grain of elocutionary theory. The manner of reading any text was determined by the needs of the moment rather than the ideals expressed in elocution manuals. Accounts which adopt a teleological approach to the period fail to recognise the nuanced and dynamic understanding eighteenth-century theorists and readers had of the print-orality relationship on a case-by-case, text-by-text or reading-by-reading basis. Their variety in subject, tone and approach to literary texts is part of what has made elocution manuals fascinating fodder for the researcher interested in an assortment of eighteenth-century literary issues related to politeness and sociability, the history of rhetoric, the theatre and theatricality, and the relationship between print and oral performance. While addressing all these themes, this thesis has had to navigate the vexed relationships elocution books have with their source material: these were books made up of other books, and it was impossible for the compilers of elocution manuals to produce a consistent attitude towards the relationship between print and orality. There is no overarching elocutionary system in the mid- to late-eighteenth century, no neat summary which can adequately espouse their theories. Elocution books have proved difficult to grasp, even though they were (mostly) designed to fit in the palm of one's hand.

Appendix: The Spouting Club (2018)

The following is a description of a modern-day spouting club held as part of the IF Oxford Science + Ideas Festival. The event took place on Sunday 14th October 2018, at 7:30-9:30pm, at the St Aldate's Tavern, Oxford. It was advertised through the distribution of posters and a description of the event in the IF Oxford Science + Ideas Festival catalogue. The event description ('It's like eighteenth-century karaoke, but with less Britney and more Bard') deliberately over-emphasised the role of Shakespeare in the eighteenth-century spouting repertoire to appeal to modern readers without a knowledge of eighteenth-century reading practices.[1]

I began by inviting people into the performance space and encouraging them to purchase a drink from the bar downstairs. Fortunately, the room in the tavern was spacious for the numbers of people anticipated (people could register interest using an online form), and there was space to both sit drink and to stand and read. As participants arrived, everyone was given a name label: unlike clubs which meet regularly, participants were not expected to know one another. I gave an introductory speech, introducing myself as the 'President Spouter' — that is, the facilitator of the spouting club meeting. I gave a brief explanation of spouting clubs and related eighteenth-century reading practices, emphasising the importance of reading aloud. I asked participants to describe images of spouters which I had printed and pinned to the walls of the pub.

[1] The event was developed for members of the public with the help of The Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities (TORCH), which hosted a Public Engagement with Research Summer School (9-13th July 2018).

Having identified a few stereotypes surrounding the anti-social reading practices of spouters, I then compared these to spouting collections, which — as argued in Chapter 4 — present spouting as an acceptable pastime, countering contemporary representations of spouters. Participants were then eased into reading aloud in front of others by practicing some short eighteenth-century toasts, drawn at random from a bag. These were all taken from *The Complete London Jester*, 7th edition (1777), except for the last, which was my modern composition for the occasion: 'To books and reading, and our spouting club proceeding'. This starting activity was designed to help readers practice reading aloud in the space in front of others, and to illustrate the humour and conviviality integral to spouting.

Then, I introduced participants to the materials from which they would be reading aloud. From ECCO, I had printed off extracts from spouting collections, and William Dodd's *The Beauties of Shakespeare* (1752), a miscellany containing short extracts from Shakespeare's works suitable for reading aloud. I had deliberately highlighted passages which could be used, to make it easier to identify texts to choose. Participants were invited to browse the texts and practice their chosen passage in front of the other spouters, before performing to the entire group at the end. I also explained the use of the long 's', and how to read it aloud. After half an hour of practicing, spouters took turns to read, volunteering if and when they were ready. After the reading performances had occurred, I asked readers for feedback on the workshop, both verbal and written, to help with future events.

My original script for the event is reproduced below.

THE SPOUTING CLUB (2018)

[If people arrive early, tell them that if they want a drink, there's time to get one. Ask them to take a look at the pictures and text around the room. Hand out labels – participants are allowed to have pseudonyms, like 'Rantwell'.]

THE INTRODUCTION (30 minutes)

[Tapping glass] Hello everyone, my name is Ellen Brewster and I'm tonight's president Spouter. Thanks for coming along tonight, for our evening of beer and the Bard. I'm here to tell you a little bit about eighteenth-century spouting clubs, and hopefully give you a sense of what people thought reading ought to be like in the eighteenth century. The main thing that I'm hoping you'll get from this is an understanding of how reading wasn't just seen as a something you do by yourself, alone, or quietly on a journey – it was also seen as a key social activity, and a chance to show off your reading skills. Tonight, we're going to attempt to recreate that sense of sociability, of being social, by mimicking how some eighteenth-century readers experienced reading.

I'm doing this because I'm doing a PhD at the University, and I'm looking at how people in the second half of the eighteenth century thought about reading. I'm using lots of different kinds of evidence for this, including illustrations of people reading, and books which claimed to be able to teach people how to read aloud. One subcategory of the kinds of readers I'm looking at, which should make a chapter of my PhD, were people who went to 'Spouting Clubs'. As you probably know from the advertising of this workshop, 'spouting' was a bit like eighteenth-century karaoke, with less Britney and more Bard. People would pay a subscription fee, and go to a chosen pub to drink and take turns to

read extracts from their favourite plays. These performances would take place in local taverns, at the end of the working day. They were known to get quite rowdy and loud, and participants were often looked down upon or viewed with suspicion because they tended to be tradesmen.

These pictures you've been looking at should give you an idea what it's about – what things do you see? *[Discuss images of spouters that are passed round or pinned up on the walls. Tap glass again for silence.]* Yet the thing about these images is that they're all satirical – they're all taking the piss out of what spouters did. To me, that seems very much at odds with how spouters are presented in spouting collections, extracts from which you'll be looking at in a bit. In these books, wanting to emulate your favourite actors, or read part of your favourite plays was presented as a good thing to want to do, something that you could do in front of others in exchange for praise and applause. And thinking about it in this way, I've discovered there's a huge gap in the evidence that we have about spouting collections – where are all the descriptions of spouting clubs, or accounts from people that went and were sincere in their enjoyment of amateur dramatic performances? In order for people to take the piss out of something, it has to be a thing originally, right? How can we possibly know what spouting in its sincere form was like? And what did a spouting club meeting look like? Spouting clubs carried on well into Victorian times, and then seem to have fallen out of fashion – why did people stop? And so it also got me thinking – what would it be like if we tried to do it again?

So, for one night only, that's us — the twenty-first century 'spouters'. I've drafted you all in to help me with my research, to try and get a glimpse of what it might have been like to be a member of such a club.

To begin, I'm going to ask everyone here to get a drink of some kind (even if it's just a glass of water), because we're going to start proceedings in a very eighteenth-century way – with a few toasts. *[Wait for everyone to come back with a drink, if they do not have one already.]*

To make this easier, I'm not expecting anyone to come up with their own toasts – instead, here are some suggestions from an eighteenth-century spouting collection called *The Complete London Jester* – these are all from the 7th edition published in 1777. [*Pass bag containing toasts around, so that readers can pick one.]* The book has the usual reading material taken from plays at the front, with some extra stuff at the back: riddles, jokes and toasts. I'll start us off with my favourite: *[Raise Glass]* "To all true Hearts and Sound Bottoms." *[We go around in the circle and read everything out.]* And finally — to books and reading, and our spouting club proceeding.

PRACTISING OUR PERFORMANCES (30 minutes)

Right – now for the actual spouting bit. I've got a large span of material for you to choose from and read, which some of you will have looked at already: some stuff from eighteenth-century spouting collections, designed for spouters to use; some extracts from other eighteenth-century books that encouraged readers to read aloud, and some speeches from Shakespeare that I've taken from the BBC website. There are also videos of professional actors reading these speeches, so you can check those out later if you're interested. Here are the extracts – feel free to look at these on the table, and pick up anything you fancy. You have 30 minutes to pick an extract and practise. Feel free to pick anything you like, or if you happen to have something in mind and can access a copy of the texts, you're more than welcome to do that. (Bearing in mind that our eighteenth-century predecessors didn't

have access to these resources!) Please do look at the images though! I'm sorry they can't be the actual books, but the ones I look at as part of my research are part of the Bodleian Library's collection and you need special permission to view them, and so I couldn't borrow them to show them too you. Fortunately for us, a lot of these books have been scanned, and so I've printed bits out for you. If you want to pick something from an older book, you'll notice that the eighteenth-century texts have a funny letter that looks like an f without the cross – that's the long 's', and you pronounce it just like an ordinary 's'. Sometimes you'll come across a double 's' that is a long 's' followed by a short 's', but that's just pronounced 'ss' as in 'dissent'.

So, feel free to have a browse and choose a text here. Take the time to read it aloud – I know it can be really tempting to practise in your heard, but I want you to have a real feel for the words in your mouth – get a sense of how they feel, and how loud you have to be to be heard. Feel free to chat to other people if you want, and discuss the texts that you're looking at. Where are they from? Do you know? If you've come to this event with someone else, will they help you practise? If you've come alone, can you find someone else who'd be willing to listen to you? If you need any help interpreting the passage you've chosen, do let me know and I'll help where I can. Have a think about how can you convey the sense of emotion in the text that you're reading – might you be able to use expressive gestures to convey the emotions of your character? Does the title of the piece help? Feel free to wander off and get another drink at any point – you've got about half an hour, and you'll hear me tapping my glass to bring everyone back together again. *[The spouters choose their speeches and practise.]*

THE SPOUTERS' MEDLEY (55 minutes)

Right – well done! I've been hearing some excellent readings. I hope you're all feeling ready to read aloud in front of everyone else. This is an encouraging environment, and all the extracts are generally short, so please don't worry about making mistakes, and try not to be too nervous. Please introduce yourself before you begin – just your name, and what you do outside of spouting will do! If we could give each of our spouters a short (emphasis on the short!) round of applause after they're done, that would be great. Let me know if you'd like to go first or early, just in case you have to go. If we're all ready? *[The spouters take turn to read their texts to the others.]*

THE CONCLUSION

That was brilliant! Thank you so much for coming tonight! I hope you've had a good time and have enjoyed seeing how eighteenth-century readers might have encountered Shakespeare and other writers. You've all given me so much to think about – how people might go about choosing extracts to read, and the logistics of performing in a pub and how that might be different to performing in other spaces, like a living room or a stage.

Just a couple of notices before we go: if you could take a post-it note and a pen and write down any feedback you might have, that would be really useful for me, in case I ever run one of these sessions again. What did you like? What did you learn? You can also send me messages on Twitter and Instagram at @_ellenbrewster, or using the hashtag #spouting2018. I'm also happy to take verbal feedback! You'll soon be getting an email from the Oxford Festival of Science and Ideas, who helped me organize this event – they'll

be asking for more feedback and donations. Please do consider giving: they waived the event booking fee for me so that I could run this event without charging, and all the money goes to organizing next year's festival. I have some materials advertising future events that are happening as part of the festival, so if you'd like to take a look at those I'll leave them out. I'd also like to thank The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH) for helping to fund this event by paying for the printed materials – all I've spent tonight is my time, and a bit of money on drinks. That's about it for today's spouting club meeting – so to end on a brief poem:

> To please I've taken wond'rous pains,
> And weary'd out my little brains;
> In these two hours just preceeding
> I've lov'd to hear your metered reading
> But now our time has run its luck
> It's over now – so off you *go*.

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