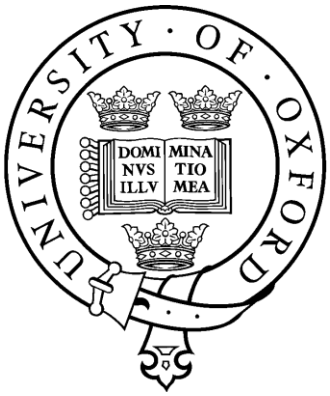
“I could publish my own heart”:
The correspondence of Alexander Pope in manuscript and print



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Abstract

This thesis examines the editorial craft behind Alexander Pope's self-published letters to reveal how these complex social and literary texts illuminate both the self-representative strategies of their author-editor and the ambiguous status of the letter within eighteenth-century culture. Through a series of chapter case studies, it examines manuscript letters alongside those published in Pope's lifetime, including two editions published by Edmund Curll in 1726 and 1735, and the three editions which Pope released in both acknowledged and anonymous forms between 1737 and 1741.[1] These publications contain varied selections and sequences of letters, and many textual alterations ranging from minute detail to entirely fabricated letters. The result is a proliferation of meticulously edited and curated correspondence, which together forms a shifting and complex textual corpus that has never been fully critically discussed as part of Pope's oeuvre. This thesis seeks to explicate different aspects of Pope's editorial practice to demonstrate the value of interrogating these reconstructed texts. It employs a combination of digital, critical, qualitative, and quantitative methods in order to analyse, in greater detail than has previously been attempted, the connections and disparities between formats, and to situate the remediated letters in their biographical and literary context. The range of correspondences covered by the thesis reveals that Pope adapted his approach to suit different manuscript addressees and print audiences, and to explore how the resonances of different relationships could complement and corroborate his poetic modes of self-representation.

[1] I refer throughout the thesis to seven representative editions from the 50+ variant printings of Pope's correspondence. These are discussed in the introduction and are listed in the **Appendix**. See George Sherburn, *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), i. xix-xxv.

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Introduction

> Then the little gentleman said,
> He said next,
> He said finally,[2]
> […]
>
> ———————————
>
> [2] These sayings are too well known to require repetition, and besides, they are all to be found in his published works.[1]

Here, the character "Mr. Pope" enters the world of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. He is a familiar, obliquely glimpsed figure: a crumpled form; a magnetic intellect devoid of kindness; a flattering, treacherous misogyny. This scene of his disruptive entrance into the intoxicating illusion of eighteenth-century society is tantalizingly vivid – but as Pope opens his mouth to speak, his words are immediately displaced by an editorial note deferring to his "published works". Later, on a carriage ride with Pope, Orlando's perception of her companion fluctuates as they travel through dark London streets punctuated by occasional streetlamps. Under cover of darkness, she imagines how "future ages" will "envy" her honoured position, reflecting on the "weight of genius" in Pope's "noble […] brow"; then, lurching into the light, she realizes she is instead admiring a seat cushion: "Mr. Pope had a forehead no bigger than another man's. 'Wretched man,' she thought, 'how you have deceived me! […] When one sees you plain, how ignoble, how despicable you are!"[2] Embedded in this imagined social environment alongside other literary figures from John Donne to Christina Rossetti, 'Pope' as an embodied public figure is a mere compilation of reflections and shadows, fashioned from the acclaim and attacks of others. Meanwhile, Woolf's narrator asserts, a short passage from *The Rape of the Lock*

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[1] Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Virginia Woolf*, Vol. 6, ed. Suzanne Raitt and Ian Blyth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 185.
[2] Woolf, *Orlando* (2018), p. 188.

encapsulates his mind and behaviour, revealing Pope's private self as coterminous with his physical form and poetic works:

> —we know as if we heard him how Mr. Pope's tongue flickered like a lizard's, how his eyes flashed, how his hand trembled, how he loved, how he lied, how he suffered. In short, every secret of a writer's soul, every experience of his life; every quality of his mind is written large in his works; yet we require critics to explain the one and biographers to expound the other.[3]

Through her ironic, multi-layered examination of the artistic representation of human identity and experience, Woolf highlights the fluid nature of the relationships between authors and their subjects, works, and readers. In this way, she invokes the fundamental questions which have long engaged critics, biographers, editors, and theorists: how should we interpret works and their authors, and how do our decisions illuminate, obscure, or distort them? Pope is a fascinating figure through which to engage with these questions, because he frequently participates disruptively in this analytical process through his unrelentingly blurred boundaries between self and work. Pope's poems often perform their own self-critical interrogation and pre-emptive intervention, which seeks to influence a reader's response to both the poem and its author: "in ev'ry Work regard the *Writer's End*".[4] Elsewhere, his direct appeals to readers may invoke the figure of the "Poet" to intercede on behalf of his subjects and, vicariously, himself.[5] In his satire, meanwhile, Pope references and responds to the attacks on his poetry and person that were rife in the press. In turn, as he satirically anatomizes his society – defining his own role in the melee through his constant opposition to or affirmation of its other

---

[3] Woolf*, Orlando* (2018), pp. 191-2.

[4] *An Essay on Criticism*, Butt, John, et al (eds.), *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope,* 11 vols. (London: Methuen, 1938-68), vol. i, p. 268, l. 255. On Pope's early use of this poem to stake his "claim to merit" as a critical standard of measure, see Ripley Hotch, "Pope Surveys His Kingdom: An Essay on Criticism", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 13:4 (1973), 474-487.

[5] 'Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady', *Poems II*, p. 368, l. 75. Dustin H. Griffin explores the pervasive presence in Pope's works of "a voice, speaking in the first person, that identifies itself one way or another as 'Pope'", in *Alexander Pope: The Poet in the Poems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. xiii-xiv; 121-4.

participants – his own identity, too, becomes burlesque by association.[6] In contrast, Pope's poetic *Epistles* offered a detailed and personal defence of his character and a public insight into some of his most significant relationships, taking on an increasingly autobiographical focus over time.[7] Throughout his career, Pope's interposition in his works can also be seen in his consistently careful management of their published form and format.[8] This attention to visual and material features illustrates Pope's consciousness of how editorial remediation could influence the production of textual meaning and alter a work's impact and reception.[9]

Pope's personal correspondence may be seen as the apex of this convergence between opus and identity: like his poetic works, he meticulously prepared his letters for publication, reshaping them repeatedly for consecutive audiences. Here, however, Pope actively concealed his involvement in the publication process and denied the status of his correspondence as a creative product. The prefaces to Pope's published letters lament his "fate", though "a private man, who never troubled [the public] with his opinions of Religion or Government", to be "represented as a dangerous member of Society, a bigoted Papist, and an enemy to the Establishment", and accordingly present his letters as a defence against these aspersions.[10] As these paratexts obscure the craft behind Pope's published correspondence, they clearly establish its status not only as a component of his

[6] The *Dunciad Variorum*, for instance, included an appended "List of Books, Papers, and Verses, in which our author was abused". See J. V. Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks on Alexander Pope*: *1711-1744* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. xvii.

[7] Griffin traces the overall trajectory of Pope's career ("the gradual discovery that he was his own best subject") through his *Epistles*. *Poet in the Poems* (1978), p. 100.

[8] See James McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[9] For instance, on Pope's employment of meticulously detailed and visually overwhelming editorial apparatus to critical and satirical effect in *The Dunciad*, see James McLaverty, "The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art: The Case of the 'Dunciad Variorum'", *Studies in Bibliography* 37 (1984), 82-105.

[10] "Preface to the Quarto Edition of Pope's *Letters* (1737b)", George Sherburn (ed.), *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope,* 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), i. xxxviii-xxxix.

literary accomplishment, but also as a personal proxy, intended to reveal to the public and preserve for posterity a true and unrefined picture of his private character. The letters, Pope claims,

> Many of them having been written on the most trying occurrences, and all in the openness of friendship, are a proof what were his real Sentiments, as they flow'd warm from the heart, and fresh from the occasion; without the least thought that ever the world should be witness to them.[11]

In essence, Pope perceived his correspondence as a malleable literary product which could, while demonstrating that his poetic flair and personal virtue extended to ephemeral or mundane writings, stand as a testament to the network of relationships he had constructed.[12] His meticulous management of this process – involving a tortuous route to publication by subterfuge, and painstaking editorial sleight of hand – has led to a proliferation of variant texts, which have presented a fascinating challenge to later readers, critics, and editors, and hold intriguing implications for our understanding of correspondence as a mutable and liminal form. This thesis aims to demonstrate, through a series of chapter case studies, how the self-representative strategies preserved within his correspondence editions expand our knowledge of Pope as an author, editor, and individual. I argue that Pope's editorial intervention in his correspondence was more extensive, complex, and purposeful than has been previously recognized: his editions have significantly influenced our perception of his character, relationships, and works through both their detailed textual changes and their impact on the surviving correspondence corpus. In this introduction, I will consider Pope's correspondence editions as an important milestone in the history of the letter form through an examination of their place within eighteenth-century letters and literary culture. Firstly,

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[11] "Preface to the Quarto Edition", *Corr*. i. xxxviii-xxxix.

[12] Pope's preface observes that the letters "show he has constantly enjoy'd the friendship of worthy men", *Corr*. i. xxxviii-xxxix.

I will outline the story behind the publication of Pope's letters and examine the contemporary context into which they emerged, before considering their reception and editorial history from initial publication to the present day. I will go on to discuss the insights offered to study of Pope's letters by recent critical and editorial scholarship. Finally, I will present an outline of the methodology of the thesis and the case studies on which it will focus, situating this work within the context of Pope's complete surviving correspondence.

1. Background to the publication of Pope's letters

Biographical context

Pope was a prolific letter-writer from an early age, writing 1,612 surviving letters between December 1704, when he was sixteen, and May 1744, the month of his death at the age of fifty-six. His early letters were written to friends and neighbours from the Berkshire village of Binfield (to which his family had removed from London due to anti-Catholic sentiment and legislation).[13] Most of these early correspondents were distinguished older friends who lived locally, including retired politicians and experienced authors, who recognized and nurtured Pope's precocious talent.[14] However, others provided a thrilling connection with the thriving cultural scene of the London stage, portrait studios, and coffee-houses, and when he was not in London, their correspondence offered Pope an opportunity to participate remotely in this community

[13] For further detail on Pope's biography and relationships, see Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
[14] Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 88-117.

through the exchange of news and poetic criticism.[15] Upon moving to Chiswick in 1716, Pope's flourishing literary career set him on familiar terms with ladies at court and gained him many friends and collaborators in aristocratic circles, despite political and religious tensions.[16] His active management of his career and his growing prosperity led to the increasing prominence of financial matters in his letters, including business correspondence and receipts, as well as details of investments, loans, and charitable gifts to those in need. His success also allowed him to build a villa in Twickenham in 1719; his development of this property as a social hub and a model of Palladian design introduced to his later correspondence, alongside its continuous literary, business, political and social themes, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable discussion of architecture and landscape gardening.[17] Over the course of his life, Pope conducted known correspondences with a diverse network of over 200 people, which included his family, members of the aristocracy, politicians, publishers, architects, artists, bankers, and fellow poets and authors.

This social network was a source of satisfaction for Pope and he often expressed a desire to preserve it for posterity through his correspondence. Pope told Jonathan Swift in 1736 that Swift's esteem:

> is a greater honour to me by far, and will be thought so by posterity, than if […] the King, Queen and Prince crown'd me with Laurel […] You are a very ignorant man; you don't know the figure his name [Bolingbroke's] and yours will make hereafter: I do, and will preserve all the memorials I can, that I was of your intimacy.[18]

Such claims convey Pope's awareness that the informal, reciprocal nature of correspondence could support and extend the legacy of his poetic works, preserving and

[15] Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 143-238.
[16] Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 283-95.
[17] Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 358-87.
[18] 17 August 1736, *Corr*. iv. 28.

conveying his integral status within an important intellectual community. There are also hints that Pope intended to re-use the content of his correspondence for other creative purposes from as early as 1712, when he requested that his friend John Caryll return letters "that may be of use to me in a design I am lately engaged in".[19] In 1729, Swift would look back on Pope's deep-rooted care and pride in his correspondence: "I find you have been a writer of Letters almost from your infancy, and by your own confession had Schemes even then of Epistolary fame."[20] However, in the same letter, Swift goes on to criticize earlier writers with inclinations towards epistolary publication, such as Pliny and Vincent Voiture, determining that such writings "cease to be Letters when they become a jeu d'esprit".[21] Swift's observations here typify the tension between artifice and artlessness in conventional ideals of the personal letter form, and speak to contemporary debates about its position in public and private life.[22]

Pope's sustained attention to these broader concerns about the status of the letter indicate their significant influence on his approach to writing, editing, and publishing his correspondence. Pope consistently presented his letters as the natural product of intimacy, claiming, as early as 1710, that they constituted unpremeditated "Talking upon Paper" (an expression borrowed from Seneca), and describing them in 1712 as "thoughts

[19] Pope's postscript to a letter of November 1712 indicates (as Sherburn notes) that Pope already perceived his letters as "part of his literary 'product'" and may have may have intended to reuse them for Guardian papers: "I never kept any copies of such stuff as I write; but there are several thoughts which I throw out that way in the freedom of my soul, that may be of use to me in a design I am lately engaged in." *Corr*. i. 154-6.

[20] 26 Feb 1729/30, *Corr.* iii. 92.

[21] *Corr.* iii. 92.

[22] On these issues within eighteenth-century epistolary culture, see Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Bruce Redford, *The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Louise Curran, *Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter-Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Eve Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1680-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Susan E. Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

just warm from the brain, without any polishing or dress, the very dishabille of the understanding".[23] His continuous internal analysis of the quality and style of his letters, while marking them as a subject worthy of his critique and an example of his effortless eloquence, also performs a protective purpose. Pope generally attributes the "faults" he identifies to lack of caution: "so many things freely thrown out, such lengths of unreserved friendship".[24] This posture demonstrates the truth of Pope's claim to be "more desirous to be thought honest than prudent", and supports his precautionary efforts to convey a modest lack of ambition for his letters by voicing concern for their private status: "my evil works may rise again in judgment upon me".[25] Such sentiments indicate Pope's early sensitivity to the risk that any potential future efforts to publish his letters would expose him to charges of artifice and vanity; accordingly, the full extent of his intention to print his letters is never made explicit. James McLaverty observes that for Pope, who was actively involved in the publication of his works, printing "was both a serious vocation and an elaborate game" – and when publishing correspondence, autonomous control of its processes was even more crucial, necessitating secrecy and careful management.[26] However, Pope's letters to Ralph Allen, the patron of his 1737 authorized edition, offer a rare glimpse of his hopes – though diffidently and doubtfully expressed – that the published letters might perform a "Service to Virtue" and to "the *Publick*", and may offer an "advantage" to his own "Character *as an author*", and "*as a Man*".[27] Pope's muted triumph as he anticipates the social impact of this edition belies its

[23] Pope to John Caryll, 5 December 1712, *Corr.* i. 160-62.
[24] Pope to Caryll, 5 December 1712, *Corr.* i. 160-62.
[25] Pope to Caryll, 5 December 1712, *Corr.* i. 160-62.
[26] McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (2001), p. 1.
[27] Pope to Ralph Allen, 18 July [1736]", *Corr*. iv, 23; 5 June [1736], *Corr.* iv. 19.

status as a cornerstone of his authorial legacy, and as the result of many years of planning and preparation.

Lifetime publication of Pope's correspondence

The story of the publication of the correspondence begins in earnest in 1726, when the bookseller Edmund Curll published, in his *Miscellanea*, twenty-five of Pope's early letters to his friend, the poet and translator Henry Cromwell (1659–1728).[28] The publication was unauthorized and unexpected: Cromwell had apparently given the manuscript letters to his erstwhile mistress, Elizabeth Thomas, who – keen to alleviate her own impoverishment by profiting from the rise of Pope's reputation – had sold them to Curll.[29] Pope was embarrassed and aggrieved by their appearance in print: he was in his late teens and early twenties when they were written, and evidently writing with affected loucheness to impress his older correspondent. However, over the following years, Pope became aware of the powerful leverage that his fame afforded for a plan of retaliation and restitution. He repeated and expanded his requests that friends return his letters; those received were transcribed with the assistance of Pope's friend Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford, and the copies kept in the Harleian Library – thereby establishing the existence

[28] *Miscellanea. In Two Volumes. Never before Published. Viz. I. Familiar Letters written to Henry Cromwell, Esq; by Mr. Pope… Vol. I.* (London: E. Curll, 1727 [1726]). The editions referred to throughout the thesis are listed in the **Appendix** below. For a full account of the publication history, see Paul Baines and Pat Rogers, *Edmund Curll: Bookseller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 246-276; Sherburn's "Historical Survey", *Corr*. i. xi-xviii; James McLaverty, "The First Printing and Publication of Pope's Letters", *The Library* 2 (1980), 264-80; David Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, ed. James McLaverty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 244-245; James Anderson Winn, *A Window in the Bosom: Letters of Alexander Pope* (Hamden: Archon, 1977), pp. 21-41; 203-221; Pat Rogers, *The Poet and the Publisher* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021), pp. 262-67; 335-405.

[29] See Rebecca Mills, 'Thomas, Elizabeth (1675–1731)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

of texts apparently outside of Pope's control.[30] In the first instance, this archive allowed Pope to respond to Thomas Tickell's 1728 publication of *The Posthumous Works of William Wycherley*: the following year, Pope prepared a second volume which included his own correspondence with Wycherley. Their letters threw the authenticity of Tickell's volume into doubt, while proving that its publication contravened the author's wishes. However, Pope's volume was suppressed, probably because he had reprinted poems which infringed the copyright of the publisher Bernard Lintot. Then, in 1733, Pope responded, under an alias, to an advertisement in which Curll had requested material for a forthcoming *Life of Pope*. Over two years, he posed as 'E.P.' and 'P.T.', alleged acquaintances of Pope with original letters and biographical material to sell, offering Curll tempting snippets of information about Pope's childhood to gradually gain his trust. In 1735, through an alleged agent of 'P.T.' known as 'R. Smythe' (probably James Worsdale, an actor friend of Pope's), Pope supplied Curll with printed sheets of his own letters – thereby introducing carefully edited versions of the previously printed letters, as well as selected new ones – and persuaded him to advertise and publish them. As Pope had certainly planned, immediately after Curll released his advertisement (which detailed the names of Earls with whom Pope had corresponded) he was called to a hearing in the House of Lords on suspicion of publishing the works of peers – which were protected by privilege – without permission. However, the printed sheets Pope had sent were eventually found to contain letters to, but not from, Lords. In consequence, as Pope had anticipated, Curll was dismissed the following day and free to print the letters Pope

[30] See George Sherburn, "Pope's Letters and the Harleian Library", *ELH* 7:3 (1940), 177-187; David Stoker, "Harley, Edward, second earl of Oxford and Mortimer (1689–1741), book collector and patron of the arts", *ODNB* (2004).

had sent to him as *Mr. Pope's literary correspondence for thirty years*.[31] Thanks to the furore, the edition became "the literary event of the year".[32] Through this initial exercise in manipulating the emergent commercial print culture to curate his epistolary identity, Pope both confirmed the demand and prepared the ground for future publications over which he could maintain greater control.

In 1737, ostensibly to correct some of the damage which Curll had done to his reputation in publishing these allegedly stolen and falsified letters, Pope released his own authorized edition, *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope and Several of his Friends*, in folio and quarto formats.[33] This edition, produced under the encouragement and financial support of the philanthropist Ralph Allen, brought Pope's letters to an elite subscription audience through a process which neatly avoided widespread accusations of vanity. One month later, Pope's letters were published again as Volumes V and VI of *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq;* an edition not openly acknowledged by Pope. Printed in octavo format, this smaller and cheaper edition of the correspondence would cater for a wider public readership. Textual changes indicate that Pope had prepared this octavo volume before the authorized edition and would have been satisfied with this version, but Allen's involvement encouraged further revision to develop the literary and moral aspects of the correspondence for the authorized subscription texts.[34] However, these editions of 1737

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[31] *Mr. Pope's literary correspondence for thirty years; from 1704 to 1734. Being, a collection of letters, Which passed between him and Several Eminent Persons. Volume the First* (London: E. Curll, 1735).

[32] *Corr*. i. xii. Although Curll would ultimately publish five volumes of *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence*, difficulties of procurement and legality meant that the quantity of material by Pope diminished dramatically after the first volume. See Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), pp. 257-269.

Shortly afterwards, an account of the transaction was published which, according to Sherburn, was "inspired if not written by Pope", and reinforced his version of events. Anonymous, *A Narrative of the method by which the private letters of Mr. Pope have been procur'd and publish'd by Edmund Curll, bookseller* (London, 1735). See *Corr*. iii. 458-67.

[33] *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope, and Several of his Friends* (London: J. Wright, 1737). I refer to the larger folio as representative of the 'official' edition.

[34] *Corr*. i. xiv-xv.

had not secured a printed personal connection with Pope's most high-profile correspondent, and the following years were marked by his "persistent desire to publish his correspondence with Swift".[35] The Pope-Swift correspondence took a similarly tortuous route to print, as Pope sought to wear down and ultimately bypass the objections of his friend to this project. In 1740, Pope secretly printed an octavo edition, and sent it to Swift by an agent for revision. However, once Swift had authorized the printing in Dublin, Pope protested against the publication, affecting surprise that Swift should have engaged to publish the letters.[36] Meanwhile, he published a revised formal edition of the letters in London as Volume II of *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose*, in quarto format.[37] As the format and presentation of Pope's letters varies widely between these lifetime editions, so too does their textual corpus: from minor typographical variations and the routine omission of quotidian or indelicate detail, to the exclusion of certain correspondents and the inclusion of entirely fabricated letters. As a result, each edition presents a different facet of Pope's personal correspondence networks and his epistolary style. Furthermore, as this thesis will demonstrate, Pope's limited access to material, in combination with his desire to convey selected aspects of his milieu and to highlight different connections with his poetry, necessitated a varied editorial strategy across the correspondences represented in each of these editions.

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[35] *Corr*. i. xv. Pope hoped that the letters would serve as a public testament to their association, but Swift claimed to favour instead the more enduring form of poetry for this purpose. Pope to Swift, 17 August 1736, *Corr*. iv. 28; also see *Corr*. i. xvi.

[36] *Corr*. i. xvii-xviii.

[37] *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose, Vol. II. Containing the rest of his Letters, with the Memoirs of Scriblerus, Never before printed; and other Tracts written either singly, or in Conjunction with his Friends* (London: J. and P. Knapton, 1741).

2. Contemporary context

Pope's deliberate, complex, and varied approach towards publishing his letters indicates his nuanced understanding of the status of his correspondence as a valuable commodity within the contemporary literary marketplace. However, due both to the substantial and enduring literary and cultural impact of his editions, and to his intriguingly clandestine methods, Pope's publication of his own letters has long been viewed as a singular, anomalous, or transgressive cultural event. Pope's first editor William Warburton, for instance, believed his letters to be "the only true models which we […] have, of *familiar Epistles*"; Samuel Johnson later noted their "novelty" ("Our language has few Letters, except those of statesmen"); and more recently, Maynard Mack has asserted that for a writer such as Pope to offer correspondence as a literary work "was by early eighteenth-century standards unthinkable".[38] However, such commentary has concealed the influence of the many self-published vernacular correspondence editions which preceded Pope's in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, including those of James Howell, Thomas Forde, Katherine Philips, Margaret Cavendish, Delarivier Manley, William Walsh, John Dennis, and James Heywood.[39] Johnson, for instance, in stressing the

[38] *Warburton* (1751), i. ix (see the **Appendix** below for full references to previous editions of Pope's correspondence); Robert Halsband, (ed.), *Samuel Johnson's Lives of the Poets*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), vol. iv., pp. 38; 281. Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 657.

[39] James Howell, *Epistolae Ho-Elianae. Familiar Letters Domestic and Forren*, 4 vols. (London, 1645-55); Thomas Forde, *Faenestra in Pectore, or, Familiar Letters* (London, 1660); Margaret Cavendish, *Philosophical Letters* (London, 1664) and *Sociable Letters* (London, 1664); William Walsh, *Letters and Poems, Amorous and Gallant* (London, 1692); Delarivier Manley, *Letters writen by Mrs. Manley to which is added a letter from a supposed nun in Portugal to a gentleman in France, in imitation of the nun's five letters in print, by Colonel Pack* (London, 1696); John Dennis (ed.), *Letters upon several occasions written by and between Mr. Dryden, Mr. Wycherley, Mr. D—, Mr. Congreve, and Mr. Dennis* (1696); Katherine Philips, *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus* (London, 1705); John Dennis, *Original Letters, Familiar, Moral, and Critical* (London, 1721); James Heywood, *Poems and Letters on Several Subjects* (London, 1722). See Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), esp. p. 183; Whyman, *Pen and the People* (2009), esp. pp. 11-18; Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), esp. pp. 47-59.

pioneering nature of Pope's correspondence editions, had dismissed the impact and influence of such predecessors (often erroneously) as "printed only once", "neglected", "hardly known", or "written as exercises".[40] Meanwhile, as Clare Brant has explored, later scholarly discussion of Pope's letters has been dominated by an almost exclusive deference to Classical and Renaissance precedents that has further obscured the existence of a flourishing market for printed correspondence in the early eighteenth century, and neglected the implications of this context for understanding Pope's correspondence editions.[41]

The rising significance of published correspondence from the mid seventeenth-century emerged from wider cultural developments associated with the growth of print: a renegotiation of the terms of authorship and literary celebrity; the increasingly convergent circulation of ideas and works in conversation, manuscript, and print; and new social and collaborative practices among writers.[42] These changes, in turn, forged connections between epistolary and reading culture: as Susan Whyman has demonstrated, from the late seventeenth century, the development of the postal system, along with wider access to new popular literary genres modelled on the letter, increased

[40] Halsband (ed.), *Johnson's Lives* (2006), iv. pp. 38; 281.

[41] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters*, p. 48. Brant notes Howard Erskine-Hill's "studious avoid[ance]" of eighteenth-century examples in favour of Cicero, Pliny, Erasmus, Spenser, and Milton (in *Pope: Selected Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. xiv), and details additional eighteenth-century authors of published letters including George Farquhar, Elizabeth Thomas, Thomas Otway, and William Wycherley. See also Wendy L. Jones, *Talking on Paper: Alexander Pope's Letters* (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria, 1990), pp. 18-24.

[42] See, for example, Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Abigail Williams, *The Social Life of Books* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Paul Trolander, *Literary Sociability in Early Modern England: The Epistolary Record* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014); Dustin Griffin, *Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2014); Betty A. Schellenberg, *Literary Coteries and the Making of Modern Print Culture: 1740–1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

public epistolary literacy and created an audience eager for published correspondences.[43] The diverse strategies and varied rhetorical approaches with which seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century authors responded to these cultural and commercial circumstances indicate that the form, genre, and publication protocols for correspondence were rapidly shifting and indistinctly defined. While correspondence published in the early seventeenth century tended to be either non-vernacular letter collections or posthumous publications of familiar correspondence, Gary Schneider has shown that the increasing relaxation of "licensing laws and the ethics of publishing personal letters" throughout the century led to an influx of vernacular, secular letter collections – including ostensibly or actually stolen letters which "capitalize on the voyeuristic pleasure" of intrusion.[44]

The increasing acceptance of and appetite for published personal correspondence, coupled with the fact that posthumous letter collections were consistently presented as "monuments of fame, learning, and reputation", meant that writers increasingly found the publication of their own letters an appealing prospect.[45] However, living writers were compelled to justify their decision to publish through various means: they presented their published letters as an act of deference to the desire of a friend; as unexceptional or

[43] Whyman, *The Pen and the People* (2009), pp. 4; 13-15; 173. The physical postal system over this period developed from the London Penny Post in the 1680s, to the "national network of post roads and offices" which Pope's supporter Ralph Allen established from 1720-60.

[44] Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), pp. 252-262. See also Gary Schneider, *Print Letters in Seventeenth-Century England: Politics, Religion, and News Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); Diana G. Barnes, *Epistolary Community in Print, 1580-1664* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013). Examples of such collections published in this period include Francis Markham's *Five Decades of Epistles of Warre* (1622) (non-vernacular); Donne *Letters to Several Persons of Honour* (1651), Bacon's *The Remaines* (1648) and *Resuscitatio* (1657), *Letters on Several Subjects by the Late Pious Dr. Henry More* (1694) (posthumous); *The King's Cabinet Opened* (1645); and *The Post-boy rob'd of his Mail: or, the Pacquet Broke Open: Consisting of Five Hundred Letters, to Persons of several Qualities and Conditions…* (1692) (ostensibly unauthorized).

[45] Schneider, *Culture of Epistolarity* (2005), p. 256.

arbitrary; as socially beneficial; or simply as a concession to a wider audience's desire for intimate material. For instance, Thomas Forde's "apologie" for publishing his own *Familiar Letters* in 1660 argues that "I had little to do to publish my follies to the world […] If it be a crime, the number of offenders in this kind, is enough to authorize the fact"; while in 1692 William Walsh defended his publication of his "familiar letters" ("which sort of Writings some Learned Persons have thought unfit to be published") by observing that the universal "Beauty" found within "little Passages of private Conversation" is attested to by "the common Experience of all the World".[46] Meanwhile, in pursuit of the opportunity to bolster or protect their oeuvre or personal character through their correspondence, women writers surmounted the prohibitive reputational risk of open publication through yet more diverse defensive strategies – such as the illusion of unauthorized publication; a veiling of the line between fiction and reality; a concerted display of virtue and friendship; oblique political messaging; and a deference to male, high-status friends. For instance, Margaret Cavendish's carefully edited *Philosophical Letters* and *Sociable Letters*, published in 1664, contained potentially genuine familiar letters in the guise of epistolary "Reflections" written for print.[47] Similarly, Delarivier Manley arranged the surreptitious publication of her *Letters* in 1696 – an act which Kate Ozment has aligned with her "unwavering" view of "publication as a business and her work and commercial persona as commodities".[48] Meanwhile, although the letters of

[46] Forde, *Faenestra in Pectore* (1660); William Walsh, *Letters and Poems* (1692), i. Forde's letters were "quite likely composed for print", and Walsh's revised. Schneider, *Culture of Epistolarity*, p. 256.

[47] See James Fitzmaurice (ed.) *Margaret Cavendish: Sociable Letters*, (Peterborough, OT: Routledge, 2012), pp. xi-xii; James Fitzmaurice "Fancy and the Family: Self-Characterizations of Margaret Cavendish", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 53:3 (1990), 202-6; Ros Ballaster, "Restoring the Renaissance: Margaret Cavendish and Katherine Philips", in *Renaissance Configurations*, ed. G. McMullan (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 234-252.

[48] Manley, *Letters* (1696). Kate Ozment, "'She writes like a Woman': Paratextual Marketing in Delarivier Manley's Early Career", *Authorship* 5.1 (2016), p. 3. See also Chris Mounsey, "A Manifesto for a Woman Writer: *Letters Writen* as Varronian Satire", in *New Perspectives on Delarivier Manley and Eighteenth-Century Literature*, ed. Aleksondra Hultquist and Elizabeth J. Mathews (London: Routledge, 2016), 171-87.

Katherine Philips appeared in print almost four decades after her death in 1664 – posthumously corroborating her abiding poetic theme of friendship and protecting her literary status as "the virtuous Orinda" and the "celebrated Mrs Philips" – she had in fact "secured [their] publication", Clare Brant notes, "by stratagems as devious as any attributed to Pope".[49]

The sustained prefatory focus in these collections on the ability of correspondence to disclose the flawed, speaking, and corporeal self – from Forde's claim that "The pen, like the pulse, discovers our inward condition" to the construction of Manley's letters as "the Droppings of [her] Pen, fatigu'd with Thought and Travel" in which she "speak[s] for [her] self" – indicates a particular appetite for vernacular, familiar letters as a means of making the private and ephemeral public and permanent.[50] Yet, as Schneider notes, such prefaces form a crucial part of the "recontextualization" of letters for print, in which encoded "epistolary mechanisms" were used to signal the letter's "authenticity, objectivity, veracity, privacy", "continuity", and "reciprocity" – often through such paratextual detail as "salutations and subscriptions", "titling", "dates", illustrations, "marginalia, glosses, and prefatory frames".[51] Furthermore, as Nicholas Brownlees has explored, this recontextualization of letters in print also entailed linguistic changes to the text of the original manuscript letter, which could serve to translate its language, modify its

[49] Richardson Pack, *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose* (London, 1719), p. 102. Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters*, p. 49; 349n. Katherine Philips, *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1705), pp. 228-233; 230-33. See also Ellen Moody, "Orinda, Rosania, Lucasia *et aliae*: Towards a New Edition of the Works of Katherine Philips", *Philological Quarterly*, 66 (1987), 325-54; Kathleen M. Swaim, "Matching the 'Matchless Orinda' to Her Times" in *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era, III*, ed. Kevin Cope and Laura Morrow (New York: AMS Press, 1997), pp. 77-108; Claudia A. Limbert, "Katherine Philips: Controlling a Life and Reputation", *South Atlantic Review* 56:2 (1991), 27-42; Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger, "Katherine Philips and Coterie Critical Practices", *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37:3 (2004), 367-387.

[50] Forde, *Faenestra in Pectore* (1660); Manley, *Letters* (1696), pp. i-iii.

[51] Schneider, *Culture of Epistolarity* (2005), pp. 185-7.

orthography, adjust its register, substantiate its claims, elaborate on details, and create textual cohesion.[52]

This intermingling of apparently authentic, extensively edited, and highly stylized forms of correspondence within the seventeenth-century literary marketplace and the often clandestine tactics surrounding them had, by the early eighteenth century, lent the letter form a new "cultural malleability" and assembled a burgeoning epistolary culture and readership.[53] The concept of the letter's liminal status – as a text written both for one reader and for many – was already familiar to eighteenth-century audiences: manuscript letters routinely contained multiple hands, enclosures, and proxy greetings, intended to be shared; and the coterie circulation and criticism of works in manuscript was enacted through and within correspondence.[54] Beyond manuscript, letters entered an overtly public forum through print participation in public discourse, frequently reproduced in papers like *The Guardian* and *The Spectator*, and appearing in published manuals or collections as epistolary models or as vehicles for moral, literary, or political commentary.[55] Meanwhile, the verse epistle form which dominated eighteenth-century

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[52] Nicholas Brownlees, "*Capt. Badiley's answer unto Capt. Appleton's remonstrance (1653)*: The Recontextualisation in Print of Private Correspondence", in *The Language of Public and Private Communication in a Historical Perspective*, ed. Nicholas Brownlees, Gabriella Del Lungo and John Denton (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp. 191-212.

[53] Schneider, *Culture of Epistolarity* (2005), p. 254.

[54] See Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Personal Letters", in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1714*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 623-648; Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters*, pp. 3-9; Ezell, *Social Authorship* (1999); Dustin Griffin, "The Social World of Authorship 1660-1714," in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1714*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 37-60; Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Schellenberg, *Literary Coteries* (2016); Hilary Havens, "Manuscript studies and the eighteenth century", *Literature Compass* 16:7 (2019); Paul Trolander and Zeynep Tenger, *Sociable Criticism in England 1625–1725* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007); Susan B. Fitzmaurice, *The English Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A Pragmatic Approach* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 2002), pp. 5-6.

[55] See Ann C. Dean, "Insinuation and Instruction: Public Opinion in Eighteenth-Century 'Letters to the Printer'", in *Print and Power in France and England, 1500-1800,* ed. Adrian Armstrong (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 85-98, and "Court Culture and Political News in London's Eighteenth-Century Newspapers", *ELH* 73:3 (2006), 631-49; Spacks, "Personal Letters" (2005), pp. 625-6.

poetry, including Pope's own, allowed "real" readers (as W. K. Wimsatt observes) to experience a poem "through the dramatic reader"; to read "over [their] shoulder".[56] Clare Brant has observed that as expanding eighteenth-century print culture and its burgeoning community of authors displaced the court-based literary culture which had preceded it, readers' increasing curiosity about "the human interest of writers' lives" as opposed to "their illustrious families" ensured a "growing market" of published familiar correspondence, as writers and publishers clamoured to exploit its essential role in "construct[ing] the reputation of men of letters".[57] Just as print had opened up the coterie manuscript circulation of literary works and formal epistles to a wider audience, it also offered the opportunity to expose, or to access, the private exchanges of criticism and friendship which constructed and maintained these creative networks and influenced the work they produced. For instance, John Dennis showcased his place within a literary community when publishing his letters "amongst those of [his] Friends", in *Letters […] by and between Mr. Dryden, Mr. Wycherley, Mr. D—, Mr. Congreve, and Mr. Dennis* (1696); and later also perceived his *Original Letters Familiar, Moral, and Critical* (1721) as a tool to enhance public opinion of his character as an individual writer.[58] As Paul Trolander has explored, an authorial community was established in part through the set forms, procedures and roles by which correspondents linguistically encoded their literary activities and narrativized their relationship with other authors and consumers within

[56] W. K. Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), p. xv. See also William C. Dowling, *The Epistolary Moment: The Poetics of the Eighteenth-Century Verse Epistle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 3-12; Bill Overton, *The Eighteenth-Century British Verse Epistle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. ix; Jay Arnold Levine, "The Status of the Verse Epistle before Pope", *Studies in Philology* 59.4 (1962), 658-84.

[57] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), p. 48. See also Schneider, *Culture of Epistolarity* (2005), p. 256; Griffin, *Authorship* (2014), p. 1; Williams, *Social Life of Books* (2017), pp. 95-6.

[58] Dennis (ed.), *Letters* (1696), p. xvi; *Original Letters* (1721). See Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), p. 48.

their letters.[59] Through the appearance of such collective constructions in print, argues Brant, author groups self-consciously established the realm of epistolary publication as a marketplace for their specifically English and masculine community of compliment, wit and criticism.[60]

As more texts originally (or ostensibly) intended for private consumption joined their public counterparts in print, an emerging distinction in style and presentation suggests a continued market shift towards the perceived unadulterated authenticity of the familiar letter form. For instance, James Heywood, in publishing his letters "By the Importunity of some friends", divided them into two sections: one of letters written "purely for my Diversion", "under various Characters", to "the Authors of the *Spectator,* [etc.]"; and one of "Familiar Letters" – which "appear in the genuine and native Dress they were sent in".[61] As a result, overt imitation of gallant and witty French models such as Vincent Voiture increasingly came to be regarded as insincere, and even Classical models such as Pliny and Cicero lost their appeal.[62] Expressions of friendship among writers thus became increasingly predicated on a collaborative, "altruistic", and "fraternal" productive group with shared literary ideologies and reputations; a dynamic which also encouraged publication: in particular, published letters, as Brant notes, offered "evidence for Augustan-style friendships and literariness".[63] Simultaneously, letter-writers sought to

[59] Paul Trolander, *Literary Sociability in Early Modern England: The Epistolary Record* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014), pp. 3-4. Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), p. 49.
[60] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), pp. 48-53.
[61] James Heywood, *Poems and Letters on Several Subjects* (1722), pp. i; 31-2.
[62] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), p. 49. John Dennis, for instance, criticizes Cicero ("too simple, and too dry"); Pliny ("too affected, and too refined"); Balzac ("frequently forced and […] affected") and Voiture ("defective" in "Expression", and "too little diversified" in "Style"), *Letters* (1696), pp. xiv-xv.
[63] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), pp. 52, 55; Trolander, *Literary Sociability* (2014), pp. 3-4. See also Raymond Stephanson, "'Epicoene Friendship': Understanding Male Friendship in the Early Eighteenth Century, with some Speculations about Pope", *The Eighteenth Century*, 38:2 (1997), 151-170.

establish a focus on sincerity and authenticity which adhered to the developing codes of eighteenth-century familiar correspondence, including the common theorization of the familiar letter form as a proxy for or representation of friendly conversation.[64] Brant suggests that this discrepancy between claimed and actual intimacy was not problematic for early eighteenth-century audiences, who cared mostly for the "power of the meaning" of familiar letters – the "scintillation" of their glimpses into the conversation which shaped "brilliant friendships" – and little for their "textual authenticity".[65] However, this emphatically liminal status of the personal letter created both conflict and opportunity within the literary marketplace as writers and publishers competed to harness the value of correspondence as a window into the private world of writers: a tension encapsulated in Pope's construction of the unauthorized "printing [of his] private letters" as "the worst sort of *betraying conversation*".[66] The interdependence of the participants in this conflict – producers, agents, and consumers – meant that published correspondence straddled the apparent divide between high- and low- literature which characterized early-eighteenth-century print culture. Catherine Ingrassia has shown that the established concept of opposition between "true literature" and "crass commercialism" in fact enshrouds a more complex "seepage of categories" in which the relationship of ostensible antagonists such as Pope and Curll was "fundamentally symbiotic".[67] Published

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[64] See Bruce Redford, *The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 8-13; Anderson, Daghlian and Ehrenpreis (eds.), *The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966), p. 272; Trolander, *Literary Sociability* (2014), pp. 3-4; Fitzmaurice, *English Familiar Letter* (2002), pp. 233-39; Dustin Griffin, *Swift and Pope: Satirists in Dialogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 4-11. For example, Walsh recommends that "The Stile of Letters ought to be free, easy and natural; as near approaching to familiar Conversation as possible", *Letters and Poems* (1692), pp. ii-iii; see also Dennis, *Letters* (1696), p. xvi.

[65] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), p. 55. See also Redford, *Converse of the Pen* (1986), p. 8; Erskine-Hill, *Selected Letters* (2001), p. xxii. Schneider, *Culture of Epistolarity* (2005), pp. 284-5.

[66] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), p. 48. "Preface to the Quarto Edition", *Corr*. i. xl.

[67] Catherine Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 41-2. See Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), pp. 47-8; Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), p. 173.

correspondence, as Clare Brant has observed, constitutes a further, particular, collapse of this distinction – as indicated by Pope's own "commodification of himself as a writer through letters", and the co-operatively constructed cultural conflict through which he and Curll drove market narratives to serve their own ends: Pope to enhance his personal and literary reputation; Curll to expand his business.[68]

This context thus reveals Pope's correspondence editions not as aberrant or unique, but rather as high-profile, intermediary, and influential entrants into an established, but nebulous field: Gary Schneider views them as a milestone attesting to the "ever-increasing socioliterary significance of letters in print" over the preceding century; while Susan Whyman notes that "Pope's example" also "opened the floodgates" for future collections of published letters.[69] As a result, his editions formed a material contribution to the development of the English "popular culture of letters", which, as Whyman observes, was increasingly casting off the "formalities" associated with conventional adherence to "an older classical tradition".[70] Furthermore, the uniquely complex puzzle of Pope's "authentic" and "inauthentic" letters both indicate his recognition and exploitation of the competing desires of the current marketplace, and demonstrate, as Brant argues, "the cultural value of letters being wrested into new meanings with new commercial applications".[71] Pope's correspondence editions, then, while inheriting some themes and strategies from earlier published letters, were significant and novel enough in their extent and impact to form a watershed in the nature, process, and perception of published correspondences which would have lasting resonances. Yet Pope's

[68] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), p. 55.
[69] Schneider, *Culture of Epistolarity* (2005), p. 235. Whyman, *Pen and the People* (2009), p. 15.
[70] Whyman, *Pen and the People* (2009), pp. 173; 219.
[71] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters*, p. 55.

contemporary fame, the publishing intrigues behind his successive and extensive correspondence editions, and the legal ramifications of the landmark case *Pope* v *Curll* (1741) all helped to consolidate the concept of published letters as a site of conflict.[72] The practice of publishing personal correspondence remained a troubled and contentious issue later into the eighteenth century: Samuel Johnson, for instance, was conscious of, and resisted, his own commodification against an increasing audience demand for authentic texts.[73] Meanwhile, Louise Curran has explored Samuel Richardson's complex and ambiguous attitudes towards published correspondence and its implications for "[t]he relation between the intimate, undisguised self and the public face of authorship".[74] In the wake of Pope's example, such ambivalence suggests a residual uncertainty surrounding the capacity of correspondence to determine or disrupt a writer's control over their own self-representation.[75] Meanwhile, as consciousness of their place in an existing tradition faded and the details of their journey into print were uncovered, Pope's correspondence editions were viewed increasingly as an isolated and individual act, and as such became emblematic of the moral and cultural tensions inherent in self-published correspondence editions, between private and public; virtue and vanity; authenticity and artifice.

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[72] Pope sought an injunction to prevent Curll from selling the Pope-Swift letters; this case established the rule "that copyright in a letter belongs to the writer". Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 49-66. See also McLaverty, "First Printing" (1980).

[73] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), pp. 56-9; Curran, *Samuel Richardson* (2016), p. 174.

[74] While Richardson arranged and edited his correspondence for "the public Eye" and used it as a tool for authorial self-fashioning and self-promotion amongst a community of readers, he ultimately decided not to publish. Louise Curran, "'Into Whoseoever Hands Our Letters Might Fall': Samuel Richardson's Correspondence and 'the Public Eye'", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 35:1 (2011), p. 60.

[75] See Curran, *Samuel Richardson* (2016), pp. 2-14.

3. Reception and responses

Manuscript and Pope's editions (1705-1750)

The sustained cultural ambivalence surrounding published letters is reflected in the diverse responses to Pope's correspondence, which have focussed variously on its aesthetic, literary, moral, editorial, and biographical implications, and which reflect the changing theories and sentiments of critics, editors, and the reading public.[76] Even before Pope's publication of his own letters, contemporary readers balanced their value as social and material objects against their potential cultural and literary significance. The earliest and most immediate audience of Pope's correspondence, his recipients, frequently expressed "gratitude" for his "obliging" or "ingenious" letters.[77] Other correspondents were more emphatic: in 1727, the Boston clergyman and poet Mather Byles construed his own letter to Pope as an almost spiritual "approach" made "with a real Awe and Reverence", and confessed a "superstitious Ardor to see a Word written by your Pen", telling Pope that "We look upon your Letter as you would upon the original parchment of Homer".[78] For Byles, Pope's "Letter" holds broad resonances: as a communicative act, it bridges spatial and temporal distance, constitutes a point of social connection, and forms a desirable physical relic of literary celebrity; but its role as cultural touchstone is also linked with Pope's poetic works and their place in a tradition of 'Letters' as authoritative erudition.[79] Similarly, Pope's letter encouraging the young poet Christopher Smart in his

[76] On the approaches of Pope's editors and biographers, see Paul Baines, "Life and Death in the Literary Biographies of Pope and his Circle", in *A Companion to Literary Biography*, ed. Richard Bradford (Chichester: John Wiley, 2019), pp. 437-53.
[77] William Wycherley to Pope, 25 January 1404/5 and 27 March 1705 (*Corr*. i. 3-5).
[78] Mather Byles to Alexander Pope, 7 October 1727, *Corr*. ii. 450-51; 29 May 1728, *Corr*. ii. 494. See Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001), pp. 17-39; Bannet, *Empire of Letters* (2006), pp. 83-88.
[79] *Corr*. ii. 494; *Corr*. ii. 450-51.

Latin translations of Pope's works was so prized by the recipient and his colleagues at Pembroke College that he was later painted with it in a portrait.[80]

Meanwhile, the initial 1726 publication of Pope's correspondence with Cromwell indicated the potential response of a new, wider audience for his letters: as he wrote to Aaron Hill, he was no longer "ashamed" of the "unguarded Friendliness, and Freedom" of the letters "which they have exposed in print […] since you have found a Way to turn those Weaknesses into Virtue, by your partial Regard of them."[81] Furthermore, this edition reminded Pope's friends and prospective audience of the prized and vulnerable status of authors' correspondence (Swift, for instance, joked afterwards in a postscript to Martha Blount, "Pray do give a copy of this letter to Curll the bookseller"), and thereby lent potential credibility to Pope's account of the later 1735 publication by Curll – in which letters were stolen or correspondents, messengers, and servants allowed them to fall into the wrong hands.[82] Because of the contemptuous scepticism in which Curll's publishing practices were generally held, Pope's letters as published in 1735 and 'corrected' in 1737 were apparently not met with much suspicion among his initial audience, and were generally well-regarded.[83] William Broome comforted Pope on the publication of the apparently unauthorized edition with the observation that "the humane companion, the dutiful and affectionate son, the compassionate and obliging friend, appear so strongly on every page".[84] Meanwhile, Maynard Mack calls Pope's own

[80] Sherburn, *Corr*. iv. 483. See Karina Williamson, "Smart, Christopher, (1722–1771)", *ODNB* (2004).
[81] Pope to Aaron Hill, [September 1726?], *Corr.* ii. 404-5. For another response to this edition, see Fenton to Broome, 7 September 1726, *Corr*. ii. 397-8.
[82] Jonathan Swift to Martha Blount, [1727], Harold Williams (ed.), *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), vol. iii., p. 235. The primary account is in *Narrative* (1735).
[83] *Corr*. i, xiv; Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1990), p. 11; Halsband (ed.), *Johnson's Lives* (2006), iv. pp. 37-8; 280; Elwin, *Works* (1871), vi, xxi.
[84] Broome to Pope, 1 December 1735, *Corr*. iii. 512-13.

editions a "smashing success", and Wendy Jones Nakanishi argues that the "common view" of them was as a representation of "the moral life of a poet and his illustrious friends" – a perspective indicated by Swift's remark on the quarto edition that "there might be collected from [Pope's letters] the best System that ever was wrote for the Conduct of human life".[85]

However, this acceptance and approbation was by no means universal: early on, traces of doubt emerged as to the source and authenticity of Pope's published letters. Swift, for example, later wrote more pensively on the publication of the 1735 edition:

> I detest the House of Lords, for their indulgence to such a profligate prostitute villain as Curle; but am at a loss how he could procure any letters written to Mr. Pope, although, by the vanity or indiscretion of correspondents, the rogue might have pickt up some that went from him.[86]

Sharper criticism came from Pope's former correspondent Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who recognized that letters she had received from Pope had been readdressed to other correspondents in print, and perceived hypocrisy within the "many little mean Falsitys publish'd in this Monument of Freindship, as he calls it":

> I agree with Mr. P. in all that he says of the indecency and immorality of publishing private Letters, but what then must be said of himselfe, who is now become the Publisher of dead Men's Letters, from whom he could have no previous leave of publication, several of which I do not doubt are wrote by himselfe and falsely ascrib'd to them. [87]

Montagu also later reflected scathingly on the letters themselves, claiming that Pope's published "Literary Correspondance" not only offers "proofe of his being capable of any

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[85] Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 664; Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1990), p. 9; Swift to Pope, [June] 1737, *Corr*. iv. 76-8. See also Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), pp. 269-72; Wendy Jones Nakanishi, "Classical and 'Augustan' notions of the literary letter", *English Studies*, 71:4 (1990), p. 349.

[86] Jonathan Swift to Lady Elizabeth Germain, 8 June 1735, Williams (ed.), *Correspondence of Swift* (1963), vol. iv., p. 344-6.

[87] Montagu's observations appear in an unpublished manuscript fragment, "Letter to A.P. in answer to the preface of His Letters", Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (eds.), *Essays and Poems and Simplicity, a Comedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 98-9.

Action for the sake of Gain", but also "lays open such a mixture of Dullness and iniquity that one would imagine it visible even to his most passionate admirers".[88] These private thoughts are resonant with a wider public undercurrent of distrust about the publication process behind Curll's edition that reached its extreme expression in pamphlet attacks such as the anonymous *Sawney and Colley*, which discusses the "extraordinary Transaction" in which the letters emerge by Pope's "own Contrivance", "Cloath'd in a stiff, pedantic Dress, | Each Line corrected for the Press".[89] However, Thomas Gray's more measured comments in 1746 demonstrate the nascent autobiographical power of Pope's editions: Gray "thought well of" Pope, he told Horace Walpole, "not from what he told me about himself", "but from a Humanity & Goodness of Heart, ay, & Greatness of Mind, that runs through his private correspondence" – despite the "thousand little Vanities & Weaknesses mixed with those good Qualities".[90] These varied responses demonstrate the sensitivity of contemporary readers to the underlying complexities of Pope's self-published editions, and their understanding and employment of his texts as a resource for critical readings of his personal character.

[88] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Lady Bute, 23 June [1754], Robert Halsband (ed.), *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,* 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), vol. iii., pp. 52-59.

[89] *Sawney and Colley, A Poetical Dialogue: Occasioned by A Late Letter from the Laureat of St. James's, To the Homer of Twickenham* (London, 1742). See Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks* (1969), pp. 309-10. However, Pat Rogers suggests that Curll could be the author of this piece. *Poet and Publisher* (2021), p. 394. On similar contemporary responses, see Jones, *Talking on Paper*, p. 9.

[90] Thomas Gray to Horace Walpole, 3 February 1746, Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, (eds.), *The Correspondence of Thomas Gray,* 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), i. 230.

Later editions (1751-1956)

From the mid eighteenth-century, readers increasingly engaged with Pope's correspondence as texts remediated by later editors.[91] Pope's carefully orchestrated and meticulously produced publications offer a unique opportunity to piece together the authorial construction and reconstruction of correspondence material over time. Yet this same evidence, revealing as it does the priority which Pope placed upon his letters' capacity for self-representation, has also led to its troubled reception, as readers struggled to accommodate the artifice of revision into the history of such ephemeral and personal texts. Furthermore, the sheer volume of the complex and shifting correspondence corpus created through Pope's editorial process has confronted later editors with an unusual challenge: to recognize and record Pope's treatment of his letters as public literary productions, whilst also providing readable, coherent and authentic epistolary texts which accommodate their original social and dialogic nature. In consequence, editorial approaches to Pope's editions of the letters have ranged widely in tone and practice and have in turn influenced the interpretations of readers. Responses to Pope's letters are also, inevitably, intimately connected with the shifting perception of his works amidst changing literary fashions, and have been shaped by developing critical attitudes towards and definitions of both letters and poetry over time. Accordingly, the way in which Pope's correspondence has historically been viewed and presented has shaped our interpretation of his character, and engagement with his poems, for almost three centuries.

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[91] On the critical history of the letters, see Raymond Stephanson, "Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope and the Curious Case of Modern Scholarship and the Vanishing Text", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 31:1 (2007), pp. 1-2; Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1990), pp. 7-13; Winn, *Window* (1977).

Eighteenth Century: Warburton (1751) and Warton (1797)

Pope's letters continued to be celebrated throughout the eighteenth century: they featured as models in letter-writing manuals, were praised by readers (such as Benjamin Franklin, who recommended them in the 1770s as "some of the best letters published in our own language"), and were republished in two further editions.[92] The first posthumous edition of his *Works* was completed in 1751 by William Warburton, who had become Pope's friend and literary executor in around 1738.[93] However, while Warburton's edition (as Adam Rounce observes) "cemented Pope's standing" as a poet, it also reintroduced his letters to a public audience which increasingly emphasized and valued authenticity within the letter form.[94] As Maynard Mack notes, Warburton's sometimes self-interested discharging of "editorial responsibility" and his often "heavy-handed" notes also influenced readerly interpretation.[95] In the context of changing cultural perceptions of correspondence, his forceful editorial intervention perhaps amplified readers' doubts about the sincerity of the letters: Catherine Talbot, for instance, wrote in 1751 about her troubled experience of reading "Mr. Pope, in Mr. Warburton's edition", and finding that the "eloquent expressions of benevolence and affection" within the "admirable poems and letters" seemed a "parade" when "overbalanced by such

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[92] Benjamin Franklin, "DCCXXVIII: Sketch of an English School", in John Bigelow (ed.), *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*, 12 vols. (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1904), vol. vii., p. 376. See Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections* (2001), p. 19.

[93] Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 732-45; see also Donald W. Nichol, (ed.), *Pope's literary legacy: The book-trade correspondence of William Warburton and John Knapton, with other letters and documents, 1744-1780*, (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1992). William Warburton (ed.), *The Works of Alexander Pope Esq. In Nine Volumes*, (London: J. and P. Knapton, et al., 1751), vol. vii., pp. iii-xvii.

[94] Adam Rounce (ed.), *Joseph Warton: An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope: Volume I* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p. xi; Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), pp. 56-9; Anderson, Daghlian and Ehrenpreis (eds.), *Familiar Letter* (1966), p. 272.

[95] Warburton, Mack suggests, "insert[ed] notes in later *Dunciad* editions to pay off personal scores", *Life* (1985), p. 745. Warburton noted, for instance, that Pope's letters to Wycherley contained "sober sense", "gravity of manners", and "the sprightliness of manly wit"; while Wycherley's replies revealed "childish jealousy", "puerile affectation", and "total ignorance of order". *Warburton* (1751), p. 1.

bitterness and cutting severity".[96] Other eighteenth-century readers, too, were wary of Pope's epistolary craft: in 1777, Horace Walpole noted that "Mr. Pope laboured his letters as much as the *Essay on Man*, and as they were written to everybody, they do not look as if they had been written to anybody."[97] Furthermore, in his 1781 *Lives of the English Poets*, Johnson recorded a growing scepticism regarding Curll's 1735 edition of the letters, and determined that Pope had "contrived an appearance of compulsion" in order to "decently and defensively publish them himself".[98] Johnson's suspicion that Pope "might have originally had publication in mind" derived also from his perception of Pope's letters as "premeditated and artificial": he notes that flattery had honed Pope's consciousness of his "Epistolary Powers", and inculcated a tendency to write "always with his reputation in his head".[99]

In 1797, Joseph Warton's edition of Pope's *Works* enacted an appraising and character-focused defence of Pope's correspondence. Warton responds, for instance, to Johnson's criticism by asking "Who can wonder at the vanity of Pope? […] the attentions he met with, […] from persons so exalted, would have intoxicated many minds more frigid".[100] This judicial role and dialogue with mid-eighteenth-century responses derives from the foundation of Warton's edition upon on his 1756 *Essay on The Writings and Genius of Pope* in which, while defending Pope's poetry from the extremity of previous criticism, he had

[96] Catherine Talbot to Elizabeth Carter, 16 August 1751, *A Series of Letters between Mrs Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot…* (1809), ii. 46-7. Quoted in John Barnard (ed.), *Alexander Pope: The Critical Heritage*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1973), §101, p. 366.

[97] Walpole to Mason, 13 March 1777, W. S. Lewis, ed., *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, (London: 1937-83), xxviii. 292.

[98] Samuel Johnson, "Pope", *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets, With Critical Observations on Their Works*, (London: C. Bathurst et al., 1781), pp. 93-5.

[99] Anderson, Daghlian and Ehrenpreis (eds.), *Familiar Letter* (1966), pp. 271-273; Johnson, "Pope", *Lives*, pp. 14; 91-8; 152-4.

[100] Joseph Warton (ed.), *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq. In Nine Volumes* (London: B. Law, et al., 1797), Supplement, p. 34

classified it within the province of art, wit, and morals: inherently inferior to the pure poetry of the natural and sublime.[101] Warton methodically corrected and supplemented the "after-gleaning" of "former collectors" of Pope's works with "scrupulous" attention to "orthography" and "spelling", and reproduced the notes from Pope's and Warburton's editions alongside his own similarly critical comments.[102] Despite his consciousness of the "distorted pictures of fame" created by public writings, Warton views "confidential correspondence" as a means to "behold [an author] as he really is" and access the "secret recesses of [his] mind".[103] Warton's qualified praise and careful evaluation of Pope's letters hints at their ambiguous identity and illustrates their status, at the close of the eighteenth century, as a focus of growing moral and aesthetic deliberation regarding the relationship between authorial character, epistolary mores, and literary value.

Nineteenth Century: Bowles (1806), Roscoe (1825), and Elwin (1871)

The sustained attention of eighteenth-century readers to the moral implications of the letters, and their increasing relevance to discussions of Pope's status in the poetic hierarchy, developed into a heated critical debate amongst nineteenth-century editors.[104] This controversy is reflected in the 1806 edition of Warton's former pupil at Winchester College, William Lisle Bowles. Bowles reiterates and reinforces Warton's claim that "images drawn from […] NATURE", including the "*Passions* of the human heart", "are more

[101] Joseph Warton, *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (London: M. Cooper, 1756), pp. iii-iv; 2-3.
[102] For instance, Wycherley is deemed a "vain old man", and Walsh, "a feeble and flimsy poet"; while Pope displays "good taste and sound judgment" and reveals "sentiments" of "liberality, honesty, and candour". *Warton* (1797), Supplement, pp. viii-xiii; vii. pp. 24, 66, 68, 232.
[103] *Warton* (1797), Supplement, pp. v-viii.
[104] See Upali Amarasinghe, *Dryden and Pope in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 48, 54.

beautiful and sublime than any images drawn from ART".[105] Yet despite Bowles's acceptance of "Johnson's suspicion" that "Pope was best acquainted with the means by which his *Letters* came before the Public", he does not implicate the correspondence in his evaluation of natural or artificial writing – indicating, arguably, his perception of the separate status of epistolary writings within the *Works*.[106] Furthermore, Bowles's notes on the letters tend only to elucidate points of poetic principle ("Pope's observations on versification, as far as they go, are credible and judicious, but, in my opinion, he is too confined in his ideas of *harmony*"), further reflecting his sustained and often sceptical focus on Pope's poetic legacy.[107] William Roscoe's 1824 edition of Pope's *Works* directly answers "the charges of Mr. Bowles" and other "attacks upon the memory of the great poet", with a sympathetic and acritical editorial approach intended to prepare the texts "in the same manner as [the author] would have performed it, if living", and including only those notes of his predecessors which he perceived to be true and unbiased.[108] Roscoe added generous headnotes to the letters which excerpt biographies such as those of Ayre (1745), Dilworth (1759) and Ruffhead (1769), and which scrupulously explicate, contextualize, and validate Pope's references.[109] Roscoe also defends Pope's letters from previous criticism, robustly refuting Warton's charge of "stiffness" and insincerity in Pope's letters to Addison ("the last in the collection […] is as manly, open, and conciliatory, as his former letters are friendly, confidential, and respectful.").[110]

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[105] Amarasinghe, *Dryden and Pope* (1962), p. 47; The Reverend William Lisle Bowles (ed.), *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq. In Verse and Prose: In Ten Volumes*, *Vols. VII-X* (London: 1806), x. pp. 362-3.
[106] *Bowles* (1806), vii. p. 426.
[107] *Bowles* (1806), vii. p. 81.
[108] William Roscoe, *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq. with Notes and Illustrations by Himself and Others […] In Ten Volumes,* (London, 1824), i. p. xviii. Amarasinghe, *Dryden and Pope*, p. 58.
[109] For example, see *Roscoe* (1824), viii. p. 47; xiii. p. 54. William Ayre, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Alexander Pope, Esq.,* 2 vols. (London, 1745); W. H. Dilworth, *The Life of Alexander Pope: with a view of his writings* (London, 1759); Owen Ruffhead, *The Life of Alexander Pope, Esq. Compiled from original manuscripts* (London, 1769).
[110] *Roscoe* (1824), viii. p. 180.

Moreover, while he includes the prefaces and catalogues of the editions of the 1730s without comment, Roscoe apparently accepts Pope's account of the publication of the 1735 edition of the letters, marking his preference for the "expression in the author's own edition", and excluding passages and letters "omitted by the author".[111] Until the early nineteenth century, then, Pope's letters were generally regarded by editors as a supplement to his works, offering an insight to the personal character of the poet.

However, thirty years later, in 1854, evidence emerged which made it clear that Pope had not only, as some had suspected, arranged Curll's publication of his correspondence; he had also revised, fabricated, or re-addressed the letters within it. A sheaf of 144 transcripts of Pope's letters to his friend John Caryll were discovered amongst the family papers by Charles Wentworth Dilke – Caryll having evidently made copies before returning the originals to Pope at his request. Dilke reflected regretfully on his realization that Pope, apparently unaware of the existence of the transcripts, had re-addressed many letters and passages from his letters to Caryll to other recipients in print: "We are sorry for the consequence – sorry at the exposure of such duplicity – sorry for the want of sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness of our little hero".[112] Dilke, himself "content to indicate rather than develop" Pope's activities, exhorted "new editors" to "labour diligently to clear away the mystification of the past".[113] Thus Pope's correspondence, side-lined as an auxiliary material during the early nineteenth century editorial and critical wrangling over the nature and value of his "poetic character", became central to the reassessment of his literary value and personal identity within the new context of his

[111] *Roscoe* (1824), viii. pp. 101-2; 125; 140.
[112] "The Life of Alexander Pope", *The Athenaeum* 1393, 8 July (1854), p. 837.
[113] Dilke, *Athenaeum* 1393 (1854), pp. 836-7. However, he had explored some implications in *The Athenaeum*, 22 July 1854 (1395), pp. 907-910.

meticulous authorial self-representation.[114] In introducing his 1871 edition of Pope's *Works*, Whitwell Elwin argues that "[t]he chief importance of the correspondence is in its relation to the morality of Pope", and that it offers little to discussion on the "subordinate point of literary merit".[115] For Elwin, the edited letters are irretrievably morally and stylistically compromised by Pope's awareness of their capacity for influencing public opinion of his character, and thus even eclipse his poetry in public consciousness:

> The public have usually regarded with indifference the picture Pope gave of himself in his letters, and his unprincipled manoeuvres had ceased to assist his good name before they ended by blasting it.[116]

Accordingly, Elwin's editorial approach addressed "[t]he faults of plan and execution in the editions of Warburton, Warton, Bowles, and Roscoe", and claimed the "expos[ure]" of Pope's "deception" as his editorial duty.[117] He sought to correct the "deficiencies" and "erroneous" commentary of previous editions, expanding the correspondence significantly, omitting content only "very sparingly", and duplicating or marking "variations […] worthy of notice" in letters edited or readdressed by Pope for print.[118] After carefully and critically examining the newly visible discrepancies between the surviving autographs and the printed letters, Elwin declared that "the letters [Pope] feigned to be all ease and nature were doubly artificial", and that his correspondence "had been selected, fused, abridged, amended, redirected, and falsified with a steady eye to his self-exaltation".[119] As a result, Elwin interprets Pope's letters as an indictment of his character as both an individual and an author: he argues that Pope's intervention in the texts constitutes "fraud" and indicates his "essentially corrupt" mind, and describes the

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[114] *Roscoe* (1824), i. p. xviii.
[115] J. J. Croker, W. Elwin and W. J. Courthope, (ed.), *The Works of Alexander Pope*, 10 vols. (London: John Murray, 1871-89), i. xxvi.
[116] *Elwin* (1871), vi. xxxiv.
[117] *Elwin* (1871), i. xxiv; xx-xxx. See also vi. cxli.
[118] *Elwin* (1871), i. xxv; i. cxliii-cxlvi.
[119] *Elwin* (1871) specifically discusses the reattribution of the Caryll letters in i. cxix-cxxx. See also iv. 160.

letters themselves as "barren and insincere," "pretentious, stiff, and laboured", "cumbrous" and "manufactured".[120] While Elwin's morally condemnatory approach was not necessarily representative of a wider readership (he ceded his editorship to W. J. Courthope in 1872 in response to the resultant public outcry), his edition nevertheless provided, as he hoped, the "materials for judgment" which would inform "the many battles yet to be fought over Pope": his compelling narrative of Pope's doctoring of the correspondence and his explication of its problematic complexity lent the letters a new and unsettled significance which would dramatically influence their future study.[121]

Twentieth Century: Sherburn (1956)

Eight decades later, in 1956, George Sherburn's edition responded directly to this editorial heritage, rejecting the discourse of morality that had surrounded Pope's correspondence since the revelation of his editorial activities. This attitude reflected a recent critical "rehabilitation" of Pope's work and character.[122] In her influential 1930 biography, Edith Sitwell had sympathetically interpreted Pope's "uncandid" editing of the letters (suggesting that his "longing to be regarded not only as a great poet, but as a great and good man" was hardly an "unworthy wish"); while scholars such as Sherburn and Norman Ault had defended Pope's view of his letters as "prose compositions" rather than "historical documents".[123] Sherburn's edition forms part of this recovery of Pope's reputation: he emphasizes that "Pope himself published only a very small part of his

[120] *Elwin* (1871), vi. xxxi-xxxii; i. xxvi.
[121] *Elwin* (1871), i. cxlvii.
[122] Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1990), pp. 12-13.
[123] Edith Sitwell, *Alexander Pope*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1948), p. 23. Norman Ault, *New Light on Pope*, (London: Methuen, 1949), pp. 14-15. See also James Edward Tobin, "Alexander Pope, 1744-1944", *Thought: Fordham University Quarterly* 19:1 (1944), 71-94.

correspondence" ("Only a little more than 10 per cent."), and condemns the blindness of critics to "the obvious kindliness of [Pope's] friendly instincts and to the graceful and elegant phrasing of which he was capable".[124] This attitude influences Sherburn's editorial approach and commentary; for example, he attributes uncertainties of chronology not (as earlier editors had) to Pope's purposeful manipulation of dates in print, but instead to his "exasperating habit" of "incomplete dating of his letters".[125] However, Sherburn's expansive and meticulous editorial practice also augmented the work of his predecessors by including a dramatically increased number of letters, and fully delineating the publication history of Pope's editions, offering a new list of variant contemporary printings.[126] Although Sherburn determines to answer "the suspicion that has attached to Pope's 'editings' of his letters" by reproducing the texts with "doubtless pedantic" accuracy, he generally observes only those "variants which alter the sense", like Elwin rejecting a "fully 'critical'" edition as "not sufficiently rewarding".[127] Instead, Sherburn's presentation of the correspondence assumes a biographical focus in accordance with his belief that "the proper interest of the letters is […] chiefly psychological".[128] Sherburn is the first editor to present the texts chronologically, taking on that task of assigning conjectural dates which had seemed to Elwin untenable, and thereby enabling readers to "see Pope moving among his friends and his publishers more

[124] *Corr*. i. ix; xxvi.
[125] *Corr*. i. xxvii. See also Ault, *New Light* (1949), p. 14.
[126] Sherburn's edition "increases by about one-third the number of letters printed by Elwin and Courthope". *Corr*. i. xxv. Sherburn's work draws upon Maynard Mack, "The First Printing of the Letters of Swift and Pope", in *The Library*, xix (1939), 465-85; and V. A. Dearing, "New Light on the First Printing of the Letters of Pope and Swift", in *The Library*, xxiii (1943), 74-86. Dearing also discussed "the accumulation of [Pope's] careful and extensive revisions" in the 1737 editions as "abundant evidence for the genealogical relationships of the texts", in "The 1737 Editions of Alexander Pope's Letters", in *Essays Critical and Historical: dedicated to Lily B. Campbell* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), p. 191.
[127] *Corr*. i. xxvi; ix.
[128] *Corr*. i. x.

vividly than has been possible before".[129] In combination with Sherburn's headnotes, which contextualize the letters within the events of each year of Pope's life, this structure creates the impression of an archetypal manifestation of each letter within a linear biographical trajectory. In turn, this arrangement conceals and fragments the sequential and distinct nature of Pope's correspondence editions and the varied extent and impact of their influence on individual correspondences.[130] Sherburn's edition shaped the criticism of the following decades, which further minimized the impact and obscured the process of Pope's editorial intervention: Maynard Mack, for instance, notes that Pope's fabrications were "inconsiderable" in number (nullifying "less than 1.5 per cent" of the letters) and argues that the "intricate deceits" surrounding the publication of the 1735 edition "need not detain us": "It is a silly story rather than an immoral one".[131] Meanwhile, although James Anderson Winn advocates reference to Pope's own editions of the letters as valuable "literary self-portraits" ("in his letters as in his poetry, something powerfully new is created out of a dynamic relationship with the past"), he also argues that the "trivial detail" of Pope's "editorial tightening" is likely to be of interest only to the "biographical scholar".[132] The opposition of twentieth-century scholars to the moral condemnation of earlier criticism, then, tended to reinforce a binary construction of

[129] *Corr*. i. xxv. See *Elwin* (1871), i. cxliv. Sherburn's methodology is congruent with the twentieth-century editorial approach to correspondence as "archive" rather than "literary work", identified by Robert Halsband in "Editing the Letters of Letter-Writers", *Studies in Bibliography* 11 (1958), pp. 25-6.

[130] For instance, Sherburn's adherence to Pope's printed dates for fabricated or reattributed letters mean that these are sometimes distant from the originals or are lent a sense of authenticity by their hypothetical placement within a biographical context (e.g., a letter to Addison fabricated for print is placed in 1713. *Corr*. i. 183-4).

[131] Maynard Mack, "The Sherburn Edition of Pope's Correspondence and Its Uses", and "'These Shadows of Me': Pope's Letters," in *Collected in Himself: Essays Critical, Biographical, and Bibliographical on Pope and Some of His Contemporaries*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1982), pp. 146; 348-9. See also Rosemary Cowler, "Shadow and Substance: A Discussion of Pope's Correspondence", in *Familiar Letter*, ed. Anderson, Daghlian and Ehrenpreis (1966), p. 37; Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1991), p. 13.

[132] Winn, *Window* (1977), pp. 71-72.

Pope's self-published letters as a subject of major or minor biographical import, rather than a potential subject for detailed textual study in their own right.

Pope's correspondence in recent scholarship

Over the last four decades, however, approaches to Pope's letters have increasingly recognized and addressed the historical critical "neglect" of Pope's own editions, as highlighted by Raymond Stephanson, and have brought their convoluted publication history to the foreground.[133] The bibliographical detail of Pope's editions has been carefully explicated, and his motivations have been considered from a legal and political perspective, in the context of the Booksellers' Bill and the origins of copyright.[134] The study of Pope's works more generally has also benefited from an increased critical attention to the significance of materiality in the construction of textual and literary meaning, and a recognition of the holograph manuscript as a primary but not predominant component of a material process that is itself worthy of analysis.[135] For instance, James McLaverty has explored the relationship between the text of Pope's poetry and its printed form, illustrating how an understanding of Pope's intervention in the material dissemination of his work reveals nuanced meaning and new facets of intentionality.[136] Other recent criticism, furthermore, has used this focus on materiality to engage directly with the complexities of Pope's editorial decisions in publishing his

[133] Stephanson, "Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope" (2007), p. 2. See also John Barnard (ed.), *Pope: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1973), p. 23.
[134] See, for instance, McLaverty, "First Printing" (1980); Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007).
[135] See, for example, Melanie Bigold, *Women of Letters, Manuscript Circulation, and Print Afterlives in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Janine Barchas, *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Christopher Flint, *The Appearance of Print in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[136] McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* (2001).

correspondence. Claude Willan has illustrated the potential wider value of this approach through a close analysis of some of Pope's manuscript letters to Henry Cromwell, which reveals how the traces of Edmund Curll's hand on the manuscript – from marked catchwords and deletions, to drafted title pages and calculations – illuminate the editorial and compositorial process, and aid our understanding of the letters' textual evolution throughout the subsequent print editions.[137] Meanwhile, Sören C. Hammerschmidt has observed Pope's employment of editorial and typographical devices, such as encoded symbolism within portraiture, to exploit the eighteenth-century status of published correspondence as a "character matrix" and thereby to influence public perception of his identity as an individual rather than as a purely literary figure.[138] Furthermore, critics such as Wendy L. Jones, Marie Siganto, Stephen Brown, and Vera Coenen have combined this bibliographical focus with a consideration of the changing stylistic and rhetorical postures which emerge from Pope's editions.[139] These studies lend further support to Stephanson's argument that a revival of interest in "the history of published correspondences" in the context of burgeoning digital tools could further a valuable re-interrogation of the relationships between the various editions of Pope's correspondence.[140] Furthermore, the granular analytical approach with which recent scholarship has explored the intriguing complexities and contradictions of Pope's correspondence editions also seems to intersect with a more general trend within Pope

[137] Claude Willan, "'Mr Pope's Penmanship': Edmund Curll, Alexander Pope, and Rawlinson Letters 90", *The Library* 12:3 (2011), 259-80.
[138] Sören C. Hammerschmidt, "Pope, Curll, and the intermediality of eighteenth-century character", *Word and Image* 28:3 (2012), 273-86, p. 280.
[139] Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1990), esp. pp. 36-58; Siganto, Marie, "Pope's Concealed Art: Letters to Several Ladies", *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 75.1 (1991), 21-37; Stephen Brown, "Alexander Pope's Correspondence as Fiction," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 304 (1992), 925-28; Vera Coenen, *Presenting a Self: The Polished Correspondence of Alexander Pope's 1737 Publication* (MA Thesis: Radboud University, 2015).
[140] Stephanson, "Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope" (2007), p. 16.

studies in the twenty-first century, as identified by Emrys Jones: the acceptance, and appreciation, of ambivalence.[141] Jones further notes the significance which such approaches might hold for the next edition of Pope's correspondence, which will form part of the *Collected Works* currently in progress with Oxford University Press:

> It is to be hoped that Oxford's volumes will respond to recent scholarship by Raymond Stephanson (2007) that has shown how George Sherburn's seminal 1956 publication of the poet's correspondence inadvertently obscured from view the texts as they were prepared by Pope and published in his own time.[142]

As I discuss below, the prospect of editorial representation of Pope's self-published correspondence remains problematic, but this critical context highlights the need for further scrutiny of the letters from a textual, material, and bibliographical perspective. Building on this recent research alongside insights from current epistolary scholarship, this thesis will consider how critical and editorial approaches can further incorporate and interrogate the complexity of Pope's own editions.

4. Insights from current epistolary scholarship

Recent critical approaches

The critical reassessment of Pope's letters, which has established the significance of their multiple material forms, has been shaped by a broader re-evaluation of early modern epistolary culture.[143] It is notable, too, that these scholarly developments inhabit a climate of keen public interest in the letter form which has accompanied its declining

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[141] Emrys Jones, "An appetite for ambivalence: Pope studies in the twenty-first century", *Literature Compass* 15:12 (2018), 1-12.

[142] Jones, "An appetite for ambivalence" (2018), p. 12.

[143] The following discussion considers eighteenth-century correspondence within early modern frameworks based on the standard extension of this period to *c.*1800 within historical studies, following Claire Loffman and Harriet Phillips (eds.), *A Handbook of Editing Early Modern Texts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), p. 4. See also Deanna Shemek, "Letter Writing and Epistolary Culture", *Oxford Bibliographies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) <doi: 10.1093/obo/9780195399301-0194>.

quotidian presence, as well as an increasing institutional desire to promote public engagement with scholarship.[144] This recent research employs new methodologies to gain a deeper understanding of epistolary production and development, and to reveal the varied and ambivalent attitudes of the creators and consumers of letters. Scholars such as Janet Gurkin Altman and Patricia Meyer Spacks have highlighted the liminality of correspondence, acknowledging its inherently nebulous location between the private and public realms; between natural and fictive discourse; and between an individual and a socially-embedded act.[145] This ambiguous literary status has historically impeded critical scrutiny: Amanda Gilroy and W. M. Verhoeven note that the construction and commodification of the letter as "a feminine, private form" through tropes of "authenticity and intimacy" has resulted in its evasion of "questions of linguistic, historical, and political mediation"; while Spacks has suggested that letters might "only inhabit the fringes of the canon because we possess inadequate critical procedures for dealing with them".[146] The flourishing critical response to this issue in recent years has accordingly involved careful attention to the social and cultural history of the letter as a genre, drawing connections within and between correspondence corpora to examine the wider influences shaping epistolary practices and interpretations – thereby revealing, as

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[144] For example, see Simon Garfield, *To the Letter: A Celebration of the Lost Art of Letter Writing* (New York: Avery, 2013), and projects such as Shaun Usher's *Letters of Note* <http://www.lettersofnote.com/> and *Letters Live* <http://letterslive.com/about/>.

[145] See Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1982), pp. 3- 5; Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Personal Letters", in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1714*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 623-648; James How, *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 2; Redford*, Converse of the Pen* (1986); Grace Egan, *Corresponding Forms: Aspects of the Eighteenth-Century Letter* (DPhil Thesis: University of Oxford, 2015); Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, *Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Rebecca Earl (ed.) *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600–1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Mireille Bossis, "Methodological Journeys through Correspondences," *Yale French Studies* 71 (1986), 63-75.

[146] Amanda Gilrow and W. M. Verhoeven (eds.), *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture* (Charlotesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2000), pp. 1-3. Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Forgotten Genres", *Modern Language Studies 18* (1988), 52-6.

Claudine Van Hensbergen notes, the inherently "interwoven" histories of "familiar and fictional letters".[147] The early modern letter has consequently been established as a site of "disciplinary confluence" in which, as James Daybell observes, the combination of "diverse perspectives" – such as those of "rhetoric, literary analysis, linguistics, history, historical geography, material culture [and] palaeography" – allow us to "reconstruct and decode" the "social materiality of letter-writing".[148] For instance, Susan M. Fitzmaurice has explored how the linguistic function of familiar correspondence is "negotiable", "dynamic", and "crucially conditioned by context": the letter thus forms an "inter-subjective" site of collective acts of representation and interpretation.[149] Meanwhile, an increased critical attention to materiality has provided further insight into these epistolary contexts: as Daybell argues, the "physical characteristics" of letters – from their handwriting, layout, spacing, and signature, to their paper, folding, and seals – adhered to particular conventions and rhetorics and thus "imparted social meaning", thereby revealing previously overlooked patterns of genre, form, and transmission within networks.[150]

New technologies have shaped both the tools and the outcomes of this research: for instance, digitized images enable institutions and scholars to remotely reassemble and share disparate materials which, as Daybell notes, convey how letters "communicated

[147] Claudine Van Hensbergen, "Towards an Epistolary Discourse: Receiving the Eighteenth-Century Letter", *Literature Compass* 7:7 (2010), 508-18. See also Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti, "Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern Culture: An Introduction", *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 3 (2014), 17-35.

[148] James Daybell and Andrew Gordon (eds.), *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pensylvania Press, 2016), p. 5.

[149] Fitzmaurice, *English Familiar Letter* (2002), pp. 233-40. Patricia Meyer Spacks has also considered how our derivation of "meaning" from letters depends "not on texts but on contexts", "Forgotten Genres", (1988), pp. 52-6.

[150] James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 229-30.

visually as well as textually", and help to resolve the "tension" between scholarly interest in manuscripts and their conservation.[151] Institutional repositories or union catalogues, meanwhile, contextualize and connect letters by collating standardized metadata, classifying material features, and listing available manuscript and edited sources to aid discoverability.[152] At scale, this relational metadata offers new insights through quantitative analysis and visualization, which can map correspondence networks over time and space – aiding understanding of the logistics of epistolary exchange and transmission, and alerting us to inaccuracies and imbalances within our established understanding of epistolary culture.[153] Similarly, digitized transcriptions compiled by repositories enable a macroscopic approach to texts, including the examination of patterns in language use and change through corpus-linguistic tools.[154] While

[151] Daybell, *Material Letter* (2012), p. 226-7. For instance, the *International Image Interoperability Framework* (IIIF) <https://iiif.io/> enables the comparison of images from different repositories in a standard format. Multimedia approaches such as the Letterlocking project <http://letterlocking.org/> address material aspects concealed in digital images, such as tactility, dimensionality, and scale. See Jana Dambrogio, "Historic Letterlocking: the Art and Security of Letter Writing." *Book Arts arts du livre Canada*, 5.2 (2014), 21-23.

[152] Daybell, *Material Letter* (2012), p. 228. For instance, *Early Modern Letters Online* <http://emlo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/> connects edited and calendared correspondences, including sources such as *Electronic Enlightenment* <http://www.e-enlightenment.com/> and *Oxford Scholarly Editions Online* <https://www.oxfordscholarlyeditions.com/>.

[153] For instance, see Dan Edelstein et al, "Historical Research in a Digital Age: Reflections from the Mapping the Republic of Letters Project", *The American Historical Review* 122:2, (2017), 400-424; Chloe Summers Edmondson and Dan Edelstein (eds.), *Networks of Enlightenment: Digital Approaches to the Republic of Letters* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019); Howard Hotson and Thomas Wallnig (eds.), *Reassembling the Republic of Letters in the Digital Age* (Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 2019); Simon Burrows and Glenn Roe (eds.), *Digitizing Enlightenment: Digital Humanities and the Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Studies* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020); Rusnock, Andrea. "Correspondence Networks and the Royal Society, 1700-1750." *The British Journal for the History of Science* 32: 2 (1999), 155-69; Ileana Baird (ed.), *Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: Clubs, Literary Salons, Textual Coteries* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

[154] Camiciotti, "Letters and Letter Writing" (2014), p. 29. For example, see the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online Text Creation Partnership* (*ECCO-TCP*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ecco/>; Ileana Baird (ed.), *Data Visualization in Enlightenment Literature and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). On abstract methods of presenting and interpreting literary and historical material ('distant reading'), see Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History*, (London: Verso, 2005); S. Jänicke et al, "On Close and Distant Reading in Digital Humanities: A Survey and Future Challenges", *EuroVis STAR* (2015); Shawn Graham, Ian Milligan and Scott Weingart, *Exploring Big Historical Data: The Historian's Macroscope* (London: Imperial College Press, 2016); Andrew Piper, *Enumerations: Data and Literary Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); James E. Dobson, *Critical Digital Humanities: The Search for a Methodology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019). On analysis of this field, see Tim Hitchcock, "Confronting the Digital: Or How Academic History Writing Lost the Plot" *Cultural and*

interpretations based on these analyses must inevitably consider data reliability and preservation or curation discrepancies, they nevertheless challenge entrenched critical biases and assumptions and, as Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti has argued, encourage a broader view of letters as "context-sensitive" interactions: as socially constructed physical and stylistic forms, and not as static or isolated texts or "unique rhetorical pieces".[155] These developments provide a new framework for examining Pope's correspondence editions: against this background, they can be seen to challenge traditional critical assumptions about the status of the literary letter, and to offer a rich subject for exploration of these current issues of epistolary self-representation, craft, interpretation, audience, commerce, and materiality. Accordingly, they cease to represent a distraction or detraction from our interaction with Pope's authentic manuscript letters, but rather form a site of novel interest from multiple scholarly perspectives. Meanwhile, new research methods and tools offer alternative ways to interrogate and present the complex nature of Pope's epistolary manipulations to illuminate their influence on, and representation of, his original correspondence and the networks in which it participated.

Recent editorial approaches

The demands of these recent critical approaches have also inevitably influenced editorial approaches towards eighteenth-century correspondence. The shift in perception of the letter from a private or literary document to a complex socially- and materially-embedded text has prompted a reassessment of the longstanding editorial conception of

Social History 10:1 (2013), 9-23; Nan Z. Da, "The Computational Case against Computational Literary Studies", *Critical Inquiry* 45:3 (2019), 601-639.

[155] Camiciotti, "Letters and Letter Writing" (2014), p. 29.

literary correspondence as a defined, often secondary or supportive, critical material.[156] This change also accompanies broader shifts in editorial theory and practice: as Claire Loffman and Harriet Phillips note, the critical focus on material and bibliographical history in recent decades has engendered, paradoxically, both an "abundance of editorial activity", and a crucial re-evaluation of the role of textual editing.[157] The new possibilities which recent critical and digital methodologies offer for analysing such unstable and ambiguous texts as variant letters have revealed and occupied a gap within current editorial practice between, on one hand, the establishment of a copy-text for print; and on the other, the non-critical digital presentation of multiple texts. Faced with works like Pope's letters, editors following traditional critical models which prioritize authorial intention and the establishment of an editorial copy-text face difficult decisions between selecting the original manuscripts or final authorized printing.[158] Meanwhile, as Loffman and Phillips have observed, opposition to these models by advocates of non-critical or documentary reconstructions of the text as a social and material object has extended, in the context of widespread digital access to works in multiple formats, to "a movement against the idea of editing itself", whose proponents argue that the only possible function of an editor today is to "import" their own "preoccupations".[159] Current editorial practice,

[156] Van Hensbergen, "Towards an Epistolary Discourse" (2010), pp. 510-11.

[157] Loffman and Phillips (eds.), *Handbook of Editing* (2018), p. 1.

[158] Walter W. Greg and Fredson Bowers advocated for an editorial copy-text which represented the closest possible approximation of the author's intention. See Walter W. Greg, "The Rationale of Copy-Text", *Studies in Bibliography*, 3 (1950), 19-36. For an overview and discussion of these debates see James McLaverty, "The Concept of Authorial Intention in Textual Criticism", *The Library* 6:2 (1984), 121-138; G. Thomas Tanselle, *Textual Criticism Since Greg: A Chronicle, 1950-2000* (Charlottesville: The Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 2005), pp. 102-4; Robert Stephen Becker, "Challenges in Editing Modern Literary Correspondence: Transcription", *TEXT* 1 (1984), 257-70; Michael Hunter, *Editing Early Modern Texts: An Introduction to Principles and Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 3-12. G. See also James McLaverty, "Issues of Identity and Utterance: An Intentionalist Response to 'Textual Instability,'" in *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, ed. Philip Cohen (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991), pp. 134-51.

[159] Loffman and Phillips (eds.), *Handbook of Editing* (2018), p. 1. See also the argument of W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. and M. C. Beardsley that "the design or intention of the author is neither available or desirable as a standard", "The Intentional Fallacy", *Sewanee Review* 54 (1946), pp. 468-88; and the view of the text as

Loffman and Phillips suggest, responds to this dilemma by recognising the enduring importance of "contextual expertise and judgment" for understanding and teaching textual meaning, and embedding this perspective within an increased awareness of textual "materiality and instability" and a deeper collective scrutiny of how past and present editorial interventions affect our understanding of the text.[160] The new critical context for familiar letters invites the reassessment of traditional editorial protocols to further explore aspects of social materiality, and necessitates a review of customary decisions such as the selection and arrangement of letters, the role of editorial commentary, and the construction of texts and collation of variants.

The purpose and impact of an edition is fundamentally shaped by its scope and organizational principles: whether it contains letters by a single author or a reciprocal correspondence; whether its inclusivity extends to third-party letters, non-letters such as petitions or receipts, and referenced but unknown letters; and whether its contents are arranged by correspondent, or by chronology. The approach taken depends on the nature of the works at hand; in particular, their composition, critical and editorial heritage, and perceived readership. Thus, although many editors since the mid-twentieth century have conceived of their editions as a complete archive presenting letters to, from, and even about their main subject, recent editors such as Pamela Clemit and Stephen Bernard have favoured selected or one-sided correspondences for reasons of extant corpus limitations, critical demand, publishing economies, or to pursue a particular

social object or "material event" on which other influences and agents act in Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 21.

[160] Loffman and Phillips (eds.), *Handbook of Editing* (2018), p. 1.

editorial focus.[161] Similarly, while some editions include miscellaneous documents and memoranda, as well as inaccessible, re-dated, and spuriously-attributed letters, other recent editions, such as that of *The Piozzi Letters*, neglect such documents entirely; or, as in the case of the *Letters of Humfrey Wanley*, refer to such items separately in handlists, calendars, or appendices, as a contextualizing tool and finding aid.[162] Modern editors thus tend to work explicitly within the limited parameters of the print codex, declaring openly and meticulously the capacity and scope of their edition. Similar discussions about the edition's relationship to and reflection of the archive have also shaped recent editorial approaches to organising correspondence material. Since the mid-twentieth-century, the arrangement of letters in a (numbered) chronological sequence based on known or inferred dates has been increasingly accepted as standard.[163] However, as Louise Curran has explored, the possibility of collecting correspondence thematically, by groups of correspondents, has recently become a renewed question of editorial interest, referencing and reigniting eighteenth-century debates.[164] On one hand, chronological arrangement has been established as an aid to our understanding of biographical context for literary works, as a reflection of social and epistolary development and progression

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[161] On mid-twentieth-century editorial practice, see Halsband, "Editing Letters" (1958), pp. 25-37; Pamela Clemit, (ed.), "Introduction", *The Letters of William Godwin, Vol. 1: 1778-1797* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. xxiii-xxvi; Stephen Bernard (ed.), *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 1-6. See also C. F. Burgess, *The Letters of John Gay* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. xii; Martin C. Battestin and Clive T. Probyn (eds.) *The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. vi.

[162] Edward A. Bloom and Lilian D. Bloom (eds.), *The Piozzi Letters: Correspondence of Hester Lynch Piozzi, 1784-1821 (formerly Mrs. Thrale)*, 6 vols. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989); P. L. Heyworth (ed.), *The Letters of Humfrey Wanley: Palaeographer, Anglo-Saxonist, Librarian, 1672–1726* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. xiii. See also Bernard (ed.), *Correspondences of the Tonsons* (2015), pp. 1-6; Clemit, (ed.), *Letters of William Godwin, Vol. 1* (2011), p. 281.

[163] Halsband**,** "Editing Letters", (1958), pp. 25-6; Louise Curran, "Ordering the epistolary: Letters or Correspondence", in *Handbook of Editing*, ed. Loffman and Phillips (2018), p. 141.

[164] Curran discusses divergent eighteenth-century approaches including Pope's arrangement by correspondent "to reflect the importance of classical ideas of friendship in his writing"; and Boswell's belief that chronological arrangement "allowed 'an accumulation of intelligence from various points'", conveying an understanding of character. Curran, "Ordering the epistolary" (2018), p. 141. Curran cites James Boswell, *The Life of Johnson*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934-50), 1:29.

over time, and as a way to secure context and visibility for miscellaneous, minor, or fragmented correspondences within the corpus as a whole.[165] On the other hand, advocates of a thematic approach – including Tom Keymer and Peter Sabor, the general editors of Samuel Richardson's correspondence – argue that a cohesiveness of subject emerges within certain individual friendships and correspondences, that letters in this structure gain a relational relevance as a coherent dialogue, and that mirroring the author's own conception of their letters might reveal additional insights about self-representation.[166] These varying approaches and the debates surrounding them indicate a dynamic and interrogative editorial re-engagement with the material circumstances and contemporary context of correspondence.

Editorial commentary, too, mediates between the text and the reader and conveys assertions about the text's form, context, and meaning within the unique critical environment of each edition.[167] The focus of annotation, for instance, may be guided by textual particularities of the letters or by their rhetorical and cultural context, and might cater to a certain readership or address specific critical priorities.[168] In response to

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[165] Curran, "Ordering the epistolary" (2018), p. 142-3. Clemit, (ed.), *Letters of William Godwin, Vol. 1* (2011), pp. xxiii-xxvii.

[166] Curran, "Ordering the epistolary" (2018), p. 142-3. Tom Keymer and Peter Sabor, 'Preface', in *The Cambridge Edition of the Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Vol. 1: Correspondence with Aaron Hill and the Hill Family,* ed. Christine Gerrard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. xvii; Peter Sabor, "'The Job I have Perhaps Rashly Undertaken': Publishing the Complete Correspondence of Samuel Richardson", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 35:1 (2011), 9-28.

[167] Felicity Henderson, "Annotations", in *Handbook of Editing*, ed. Loffman and Phillips (2018), p. 67; Reid Barbour, "Introductions", in *Handbook of Editing*, ed. Loffman and Phillips (2018), p. 63-7.

[168] For example, Stewart J. Cooke's annotation of Frances Burney's letters addresses her "often innovative use of language" and "habitually misspelled" names, Cooke (ed.), "The Present Edition", in *The Additional Journals and Letters of Frances Burney, Vol. 1: 1784-1786* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. xvii-xviii. Stephen Bernard situates the Tonsons' correspondence in the context of their careers to explore its reflections on publishing history. Bernard (ed.), *Correspondences of the Tonsons* (2015), p. 5-6. On shifts in editorial annotation of Boswell's papers, see Hankins and Caudle (eds.), *The General Correspondence of James Boswell: 1757–1763, The Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell: Research Edition, Vol. 9.* (New Haven and London: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. xi.

changing critical needs, editorial introductions, notes, and headnotes within many recent editions of eighteenth-century correspondence also provide details about textual revision and publication history, alongside information about the location, status, condition, and features of manuscript sources.[169] This increased focus within editorial commentary on the "circumstances of the work's material production" and its "various manuscript and print instantiations" also, Reid Barbour suggests, offers the opportunity to integrate considerations such as the "various intents and purposes" represented by the "developing work"; the role of other agents in the text's transformation; and the insights of "sociological bibliography", which can guide interpretation of material and typographical features.[170] In many editions, then, prominent and accessible explication of textual and material provenance forms part of the fundamental editorial mediation of a work, suggesting the increasingly integral significance of the social and historical dimensions of the text to critical study.[171]

The ambiguous and complex historical and literary status of the letter has also influenced editorial decisions regarding textual transcription, presentation, and collation: whether to select or reconstruct a primary or 'copy' text which best represents the letter, and whether and how to convey textual variants alongside it.[172] As Valerie Rumbold notes, textual apparatus can "offer users a new understanding of the processes that underlie […] the reading text", and editors have traditionally balanced the laborious process of

[169] For instance, see Pamela Clemit, (ed.), *Letters of William Godwin, Vol. 1* (2011), p. xlvii-xlix; Shirley Strum Kenny (ed.), *The Works of George Farquhar, Vol.* 2, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. xv-xviii; 411).
[170] Barbour, "Introductions", in *Handbook of Editing* (2018), p. 63.
[171] Valerie Rumbold, for instance, advocates "a concise discursive headnote" as an alternative to complex symbols and abbreviations. "Textual apparatus and reader engagement", in *Handbook of Editing*, ed. Loffman and Phillips (2018), p. 75.
[172] Tanselle, "Editing of Historical Documents", (1978), pp. 2-3.

collating variant texts and the complexities of their presentation against their value for bibliography and textual criticism, as well as the demands of publishers and readers.[173] Against a new critical attention to the complex social context of letters, editors have increasingly scrutinized the role and identity of multiple manuscript forms, including drafts and copies: even a single manuscript letter may represent layers of meaningful textual intervention, from immediate corrections and obliterations to endorsements or annotations by recipients or later hands.[174] This editorial recognition of the instability of the letter as a document has also encompassed eighteenth-century printed correspondences, such as those of Katherine Philips and George Farquhar, which demonstrate the crucial insights into authorial (self-)representation and epistolary reading culture offered by details of contemporary publication processes and typographical variants.[175] However, the potential complexities of later textual intervention also present a challenge to the editorial preparation of a readable text. For example, in response to the "many layers of revision by authorial and nonauthorial hands" which have dramatically shaped the surviving archive of Samuel Richardson's correspondence, the general editors decided to publish the letters, where possible, as they "went through the post and made an impact on their original readers", thereby

[173] Rumbold, "Textual apparatus" (2018), p. 75. See Sebastiaan Verweij, "Print Collation", and David Colclough, "Variation in copy-text", in *Handbook of Editing*, ed. Loffman and Phillips (2018), pp. 88-9; 136.

[174] For instance, instantaneous manuscript revision is recorded by Bernard (ed.), *Correspondences of the Tonsons* (2015), p. xix; Clemit, (ed.), *Letters of William Godwin, Vol. 1* (2011), pp. xxiii-xxvi; Tom Keymer and Peter Sabor (gen. eds.), *The Cambridge Edition of the Correspondence of Samuel Richardson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[175] On Philips's letters, see Elizabeth Hageman and Andrea Sununu, *Orinda: The Literary Manuscripts of Katherine Philips (1632–1664)* (Marlborough: Adam Matthews, 1995); Paula Loscocco (ed.), *Katherine Philips (1631/2–1664)*: *Printed Letters, 1697–1729*, *Vol. 3* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007); Elizabeth H. Hageman, "Making a Good Impression: Early Texts of Poems and Letters by Katherine Philips, the 'Matchless Orinda'", *South Central Review* 11:2 (1994), pp. 39-65. On Farquhar's letters, see Strum Kenny (ed.), *Works of George Farquhar, Vol.* 2, (1988), pp. xv-xviii. See also Linda Bree and James McLaverty, "The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift and the Future of the Digital Edition", in *Text Editing, Print, and the Digital World*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland and Marilyn Deegan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 135-36.

avoiding a "disfigur[ing]" "plethora of markings".[176] Despite the potential interest of later authorial intervention, then, such approaches evidently place a priority on the reader's ability to access a clean, unadulterated letter as a received manuscript communication, with a secondary focus on the process of immediate composition. They confine significant revision into notes and strip away, as far as possible, previous editorial accretions. Thus, throughout their various approaches to editorial selection, arrangement, commentary and apparatus, modern scholarly editions in print tend to share a focus on precision and transparency over expansive detail: their guiding principles are the communication of the vital tools and context to facilitate the reader's engagement with a readable text, the clear definition of the edition's scope and approach, and the provision of accurate references to source materials to serve further critical needs.

Recent editorial approaches have also been shaped by emergent digital tools – which, as Susan Schreibman has observed, have offered scholars an alternative and "evolving" body of "standards, theories, and methodologies".[177] Most fundamentally, perhaps, digital methods shape the editorial process: the ability to share texts, metadata, and tools, immediately and widely, facilitates editorial collaboration through the remote

[176] Sabor, "The Job I have Perhaps Rashly Undertaken" (2011), pp. 9-28. See also William McCarthy, "What did Anna Barbauld do to Samuel Richardson's correspondence? A Study of her Editing", *Studies in Bibliography* 54 (2001), pp. 191-223.

In editing the letters of William Godwin (who, like Richardson, anticipated publication of his correspondence and copied and annotated his letters), Pamela Clemit also prefers the text of the holograph manuscript, where available, to represent "exactly what [Godwin] wrote and what his correspondent read", Clemit, (ed.), *Letters of William Godwin, Vol. 1* (2011), pp. xxiii-xxvi.

See also Cooke, (ed.), *Additional Journals and Letters of Frances Burney* (2015), vol. i., pp. xv-xxviii; Alvaro Ribeiro, S.J. (ed.), *The Letters of Dr Charles Burney*, *Vol. 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. vii-xxxii; Peter Sabor, "Power in Profusion: Collecting and selecting Jane Austen's letters", in *Textual Studies and the Enlarged Eighteenth Century: Precision as Profusion*, ed. Kevin Lee Cope and Robert C. Leitz (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012), pp. 169-184; Joe Moshenska, *Mise-en-page:* editing early modern letters", in *Handbook of Editing*, ed. Loffman and Phillips (2018), pp. 124-129.

[177] Susan Schreibman, "The Lives of Others: Editing Electronic Editions of Correspondence", in *Digital Scholarship,* ed. Marta Mestrovic Deyrup (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 23-35. See also Elena Pierazzo, *Digital Scholarly Editing: Theories, Models, and Methods* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

communication and development of collective materials, methods, and perspectives. However, digital approaches also hold the potential to resolve some of the long-standing editorial dilemmas and compromises deriving from the constraints of the codex form, and to incorporate new features and focuses to serve modern critical needs. Camille Desenclos, for instance, argues that digital editing can enable us to "reconstruct" the "political, cultural and […] commercial forces" shaping correspondence, and thereby to view a letter not as "the result of a single act, but […] rather, part of a process".[178] This wider view, as Gabriel Hankins notes, is enabled by the capacity of digital approaches to unite often physically disconnected material and to be continually updated; as such, they offer a partial solution to the linear and enclosed, yet "typically incomplete" nature of printed editions.[179] For example, a digital component of or companion to a print edition – such as those accompanying the edited correspondences of Voltaire and Horace Walpole – can extend, update, and enhance it with additional letters, information, and errata.[180] In addition, digital editorial formats facilitate the presentation of additional materials and features, such as high-resolution manuscript images, maps, and illustrations; searchable transcriptions; additional editorial commentary or quantitative analysis; and direct links to related resources.[181] Online components may also offer

[178] Camille Desenclos, "Early Modern Correspondence: A New Challenge for Digital Editions", in *Digital Scholarly Editing: Theories and Practices*, ed. Matthew James Driscoll and Elena Pierazzo (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016), pp. 183-200 <http://books.openedition.org/obp/3419>.

[179] Gabriel Hankins, "Correspondence: Theory, Practice, and Horizons", *Literary Studies in the Digital Age: An Evolving Anthology*, (New York: MLA, 2015), <https://dlsanthology.mla.hcommons.org/correspondence-theory-practice-and-horizons/>

[180] Theodore Besterman's edition of Voltaire's correspondence is supplemented by new letters in *Electronic Enlightenment* <http://www.e-enlightenment.com>. See *Voltaire Foundation,* "Voltaire's Correspondence": <https://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/about-voltaire/voltaires-correspondence>. The Lewis Walpole Library digitized, indexed and updated *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937-1797), in George Ouellette et. al. (eds.), *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, (Yale University Library, 2011) <http://images.library.yale.edu/hwcorrespondence/>.

[181] For example, see Alexander Huber (ed.), *The Thomas Gray Archive* (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, 2000), <https://www.thomasgray.org/>; Nicole Pohl, Caroline Franklin, Michael Franklin, et. al. (eds.), *Elizabeth Montagu Letters and the Bluestocking Circle* (Swansea University, forthcoming)

editors the space to locate correspondence within a broader or more detailed context than the extent of a print edition would allow, and to facilitate access to and engagement with the materials amongst wider audiences.[182] Meanwhile, in terms of organizational structure, digital methods allow editors to re-engage with the "relational aspect" of correspondence: letters can be examined at scale; and can be selected and re-arranged to explore multiple sequences and contexts (such as those of correspondent, chronology, or format).[183] Furthermore, digital approaches both offer a platform to enable the provision of multiple versions of texts to readers, and present new ways to gather and communicate textual variants – including automated collation software such as CollateX, and encoding schemas such as TEI XML – which can enable a reader to dynamically view variants on screen.[184] In light of such editorial tools, Hans Walter Gabler has offered a vision of the future in which, while texts are read in the print medium, use and study of scholarly editions will move to a digital format.[185] Finally, alongside their provisions for editorial practice, digital editions may offer greater accessibility and flexibility in comparison to

<http://www.elizabethmontagunetwork.co.uk/>; *The William Blake Archive*, ed. Morris Eaves, Robert Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, et. al. (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Rochester, 2017) <http://www.blakearchive.org/>; Kerri Andrews, et. al. (eds.), *The Collected Letters of Hannah More: A Digital Edition* (University of Strathclyde, 2016) <http://hannahmoreletters.co.uk/Letters/>.

[182] See, for instance, Adam Budd, Alison Duncan, and Jessica Leeper (eds.), *The Andrew Millar Project* (University of Edinburgh, 2016), <https://www.millar-project.ed.ac.uk/> and Adam Budd (ed.), *Circulating Enlightenment: The Career and Correspondence of Andrew Millar, 1725-1768* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); David O'Shaughnessy, Mark Philp, and Victoria Myers et. al. (eds.), *William Godwin's Diary* (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, 2007-2010) < http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>.

[183] Hankins, "Correspondence" (2015); Paddy Bullard, "Digital Editing and the Eighteenth-Century Text: Works, Archives, and Miscellanies", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 36:3 (2012), p. 58, 71.

[184] For example, the *Swift Archive* <www.jonathanswiftarchive.org.uk> accompanying *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift* provides variant texts: see Bree and McLaverty, "Works of Swift" (2009), p. 133. See *CollateX – Software for Collating Textual Sources* <https://collatex.net/>; *Text Encoding Initiative* <https://tei-c.org/>. On the database collation of Pierre Bayle's correspondence, see Éric-Olivier Lochard and Antony McKenna, "The *Correspondence of Pierre Bayle*, Seventeenth Century Philosopher", *Biens Symboliques / Symbolic Goods* (2018), pp. 1-11.

See also G. Thomas Tanselle, "Critical Editions, Hypertexts, and Genetic Criticism", *Romanic Review*, 86:3 (1995), p. 583; Sebastiaan Verweij, "Print Collation", and Matthew Symonds and Jaap Geraerts, "XML and the 'Archaeology of Reading', in *Handbook of Editing*, ed. Loffman and Phillips (2018), pp. 89-93; 176-183.

[185] Hans Walter Gabler, "Theorizing the Digital Scholarly Edition", *Literature Compass 7:2* (2010), p. 43.

the temporal and financial considerations of traditional print publishing, as well as amenability to wider dissemination and connection with other projects and resources.[186] Yet these techniques also present new questions and limitations: while in many ways expanding the field of editorial endeavour, digital approaches move its boundaries elsewhere – to issues of balancing labour against value; to concerns about sustainability; to the requirement for technical expertise; and to the need to instil standardization and reliability within a proliferation of changeable formats and texts.[187] For instance, despite the wide availability of digital manuscript images, the communication of the meaning of these materials to readers remains paramount: as Daybell notes, the study of manuscript letters requires a high level of "expertise and training in bibliographical techniques"; as well as the consideration and comparison of features and materials which are not accessible or available via digital formats.[188] Furthermore, as Loffman and Phillips observe, while digital formats resolve the "limits of space" that determine an editor's decision on "which version of a text to print", the constraints of "readerly attention" are still present.[189] Such observations, then, underline the enduring importance of selective and expert editorial mediation at a time when primary materials are so readily accessible.

Collectively, the approaches discussed above tend to indicate a conception of the print correspondence edition as offering an explicitly partial view of a text, tailored to a particular audience, with a focus on elucidating commentary and a limited critical

[186] For instance, see Deborah Kempf Wright, "About", *The Matthew Prior Project* (Ohio: Miami University Libraries, 2009) < http://conan.lib.muohio.edu/prior/>.
[187] See Pierazzo, *Digital Scholarly Editing* (2015), pp. 3-5.
[188] Daybell and Gordon (eds.), *Cultures of Correspondence* (2016), p. 13. See also James E. May, "Threats to Bibliographical and Textual Studies Posed by Widely Distributed Filmed and Digitized Texts", in *Textual Studies and the Enlarged Eighteenth Century: Precision as Profusion*, ed. Kevin Lee Cope and Robert C. Leitz (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012), pp. 61-100.
[189] Loffman and Phillips (eds.), *Handbook of Editing* (2018), p. 1.

approach. Textual annotation and editorial commentary, however, give the reader interested in further critical study the information and direction to undertake this research. Meanwhile, digital technologies offer both the tools and space to facilitate and expand editorial work, and to alleviate some of the critical burden from the print edition. This editorial context offers intriguing possibilities for a future edition of Pope's correspondence with the potential to encompass and address its complex textual history. Pope's own edited and published texts could, for instance, be accommodated by a combined print-digital edition. This dual medium would enable the print edition to prioritize readability: for instance, a limited selection and chronological arrangement, with transcriptions taken from manuscript or the earliest print edition, a minimal approach to critical collation, a biographical editorial focus, and an emphasis on manuscript materiality in layout and illustration. Meanwhile, the print edition could be accompanied by an online resource which extends its critical focus and offers supplementary material such as additional letters, expanded critical apparatus and editorial commentary, a complete calendar of the correspondence, or images of letters in manuscript and in Pope's editions. The digitized transcriptions and collated metadata for each letter could also be used to construct a matrix of formats, enabling the reader to select and rearrange the correspondence into Pope's published sequences; or to filter them by correspondent or other assigned criteria such as available source or key topics. Finally, such a resource could also collate and encode textual variants to allow detailed comparison of letters across manuscript and print formats.[190] However, this discussion has also demonstrated that in the context of shifting editorial boundaries, detailed

[190] See Stephanson, "Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope" (2007), p. 16. Additionally, the edition's correspondence metadata could be added to a union catalogue to facilitate further analysis of the temporal, geographical, and social aspects of Pope's epistolary network. See *Early Modern Letters Online*, Cultures of Knowledge, <http://emlo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>.

material studies or critical approaches (such as this thesis's analysis of multiple variant texts to explore eighteenth-century processes of authorial composition and editing) can benefit from the recent expansion of available tools and perspectives to fulfil a unique and separate function not currently represented within editorial practice.[191]

5. Methodology

This thesis employs a composite approach, combining quantitative analysis with biographical, historical, and critical methods, to interrogate and interpret the connections and disparities between Pope's manuscript letters and their print iterations. In each chapter of the thesis, this methodology is applied in turn to a particular set of correspondence. Firstly, the letters are situated within their biographical setting and considered in the context of previous critical discussion and editorial work. Secondly, drawing on the critical approaches discussed above, a distant overview identifies the patterns and trends within the corpus. This method is intended to reveal new facets of how Pope's correspondence is represented across formats, to place the detail of his editorial practice within a broader context, and to support generalized interpretations of its effects. As Andrew Piper observes, such "generalization […] allows us to identify the significance of a particular instance as well as the social and historical significance of some larger set of practices. It is how we move between part and whole".[192] This overview offers a high-level summary of the letters which form each case study, illustrated by

[191] See Michael Hunter, *Editing Early Modern Texts* (2007), p. 1. For example, Valerie Rumbold notes that her critical study of "Swift in print" responds to the fact that "scholarly editing" reveals, "in the lifetime printed texts, expressive traces of human skill, effort and difficulty that are not easy to share", *Swift in Print: Published Texts in Dublin and London, 1691-1765* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. xvi.

[192] Piper, *Enumerations* (2018), p. xi.

visualizations. It will examine each group of letters along such axes as date, correspondent, presence in manuscript and printed formats, print sequencing, and linguistic trends – thereby enabling preliminary conclusions about Pope's editorial approach and revealing areas of interest for more detailed study.[193] These initial hypotheses are then tested and validated through close critical reading which compares the various letter transcriptions from manuscript to print and examines the cumulative impact of variants to demonstrate how Pope's remediation influences the style, subject, and character of the correspondence as a whole.[194] Throughout, I have used the terms "editing" and "remediation", as well as "revision", to emphasize the way in which Pope's preparation of his correspondence for publication alters both its textual form and physical format, and attends to the associated shifts in conventions, cultural status, and readership. These terms also highlight the parallels between the complexities of Pope's practice and the process of scholarly transmission of and interaction with these texts in a digital context.[195]

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[193] This overview is based on a spreadsheet of metadata for 2,194 letters, supplied by Oxford University Press from Sherburn's edition of the correspondence on *Oxford Scholarly Editions Online*, <https://www.oxfordscholarlyeditions.com/>. This was supplemented with 65 new letters, updated with revised information for 17 letters and updated manuscript sources for 134 letters, and edited to exclude 30 discounted, duplicate, or non-letter documents. Omitting the 158 letters about Pope, this leaves a total of 2,071 letters within Pope's own correspondence, including 1,612 letters written by him and 459 to him. See Pat Rogers, "Not in Sherburn", *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 8.1 (1985), 59-64. In addition, digitized transcriptions from *OSEO* facilitated further textual analysis by enabling the reconstruction of edition sequencing, the isolation of individual correspondences, and the comparison of letter extent and vocabulary.

[194] Throughout the thesis, I have accepted dates and texts as represented by Sherburn, except where updated by Rogers, "Not in Sherburn" (1985). References to 'manuscript' texts are to those printed by Sherburn, and where specified include his reproductions of contemporary transcripts and later print sources for originals now lost. I have been able to refer directly to manuscript sources only for the correspondences discussed in chapters 1 and 3. Throughout, I have supplemented Sherburn's collation of variants through reference to the contemporary editions outlined in the **Appendix** below. Within letter transcriptions, text deleted from earlier versions is shown in ~~strikethrough~~ and text added in later versions in **bold**.

[195] Alan Galey et al, "Beyond Remediation: The Role of Textual Studies in Implementing New Knowledge Environments", *Scholarly and Research Communication* 3:1 (2012), pp. 1-9.

The selection of case studies for the thesis, guided by previous critical work, was designed to interrogate correspondences which underwent a particularly intriguing or conspicuous treatment in Pope's editions: they include those which featured prominently in print; those for which manuscripts are extant; and those evidently of particular importance to Pope. In addition, the case studies represent a range of epistolary styles across Pope's lifetime and network and offer a perspective on textual presentation and variance throughout the contemporary publication of Pope's letters, from the unauthorized 1726 *Miscellanea* to the publication of his correspondence with Jonathan Swift in 1741. They also cover a variety of material circumstances, including both correspondences which largely survive in manuscript, and those which are significantly dependent on Pope's editions. Similarly, while some correspondences were repeatedly edited and re-edited by Pope in print, others remain relatively static across his editions. The methodological approach taken for each chapter case study differs according to the size of the corpus, the number of correspondents involved, the nature of its treatment in print, and the variability of its representation between Pope's editions.

The case studies reveal that Pope's editorial approach not only reflects the availability of manuscript material and other logistical factors, but also adapts to suit different manuscript addressees and print audiences, to explore the resonances of different relationships, and to support his self-representative strategies within different contexts. As a result, a range of literary themes emerge from Pope's bespoke editorial practice within each case study. Firstly, Chapter 1 indicates how Pope's revisions across his later editions gradually altered the impression of his teenage character revealed in Curll's first, unwelcome publication of his letters to Henry Cromwell, thereby providing an insight into his curation of juvenile prose from the perspective of a mature author. Pope's

changing presentation of his relationships with women as "Letters to Several Ladies" is presented in Chapter 2, which argues that he selected and sequenced letters and correspondents for each edition according to the expectations of style and genre which he perceived amongst its anticipated audience. Chapter 3 discusses how Pope's letters to John Caryll were systematically readdressed and significantly revised for print but were then presented consistently over different editions to establish, secure, and reiterate their curated theme of steadfast political, religious, and critical neutrality. Finally, Chapter 4 considers how Pope's desire to publish his correspondence with Jonathan Swift led to an entirely new edition of his letters, and juxtaposes this with his more minimal and partial inclusion of John Gay, thereby exploring the complex dynamics of Pope's literary friendships and the impact of coterie and celebrity on his editorial intervention. As a result of their broad temporal, social and material range, these case studies reveal how Pope's correspondence changes over time, from adolescence to his fifties; and how his treatment of these varied epistolary styles alters when revisiting them in the context of preparing different printed formats.

Analysis of Pope's complete correspondence corpus confirms the representative nature of these case studies, which consider the majority (82) of the 109 printed letters for which manuscripts or contemporary transcripts exist. As **Figure 0.1** below indicates, Pope's editions (shown in green) make a significant contribution to the surviving source material of his known correspondence, particularly in its earlier years:

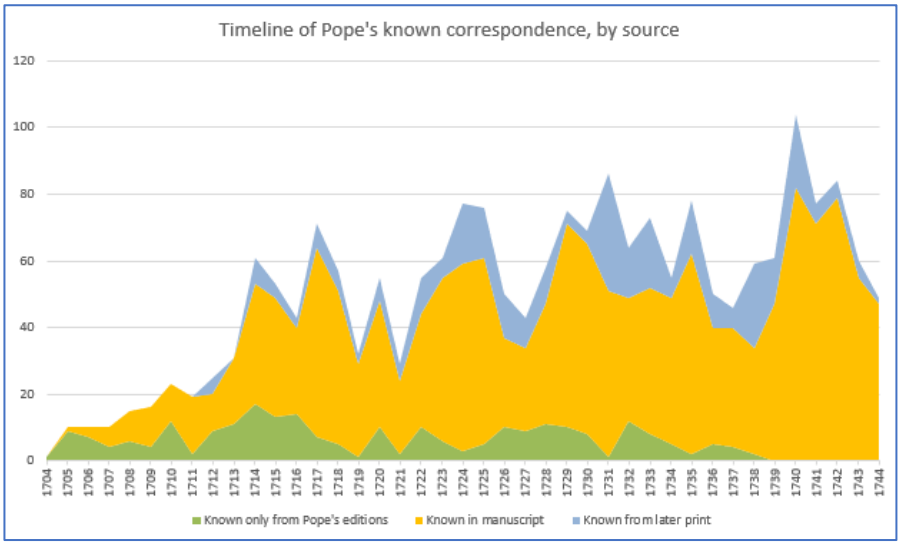


Figure 0.1 Total number of letters in Pope's known correspondence, by year, by the earliest known source format (presented cumulatively).

Furthermore, as **Figure 0.2** below demonstrates, the importance of Pope's published letters for our understanding of his early correspondence derives from a particular focus on these years in print. The case studies discussed in the thesis, in consequence, particularly reflect these earlier years. However, they also extend to cover Pope's printed correspondence with Swift and Bolingbroke of the later 1730s.

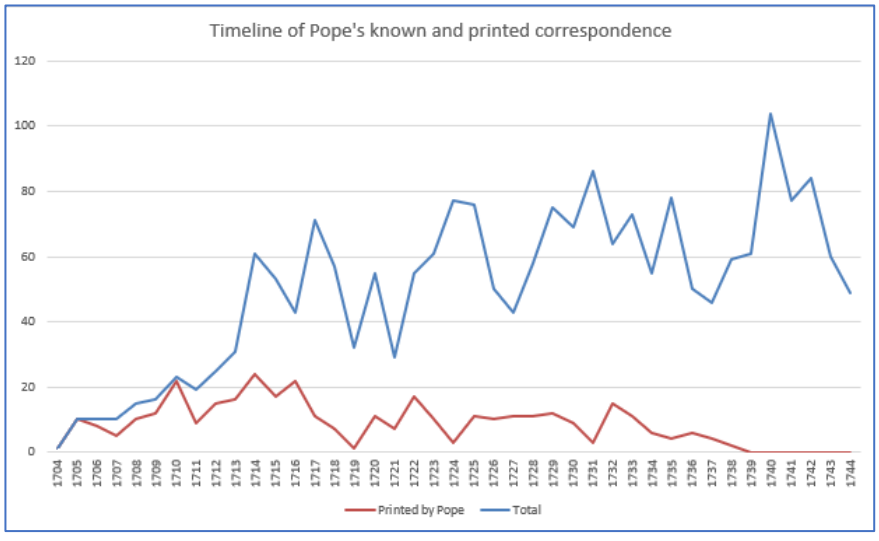


Figure 0.2 Number of letters in Pope's correspondence, by year, overall and as printed by Pope.

In addition, as **Figure 0.3** below demonstrates, while Pope's editions reflect his extensive network, they also contain a particular focus on his correspondence with certain individuals, while excluding others entirely.

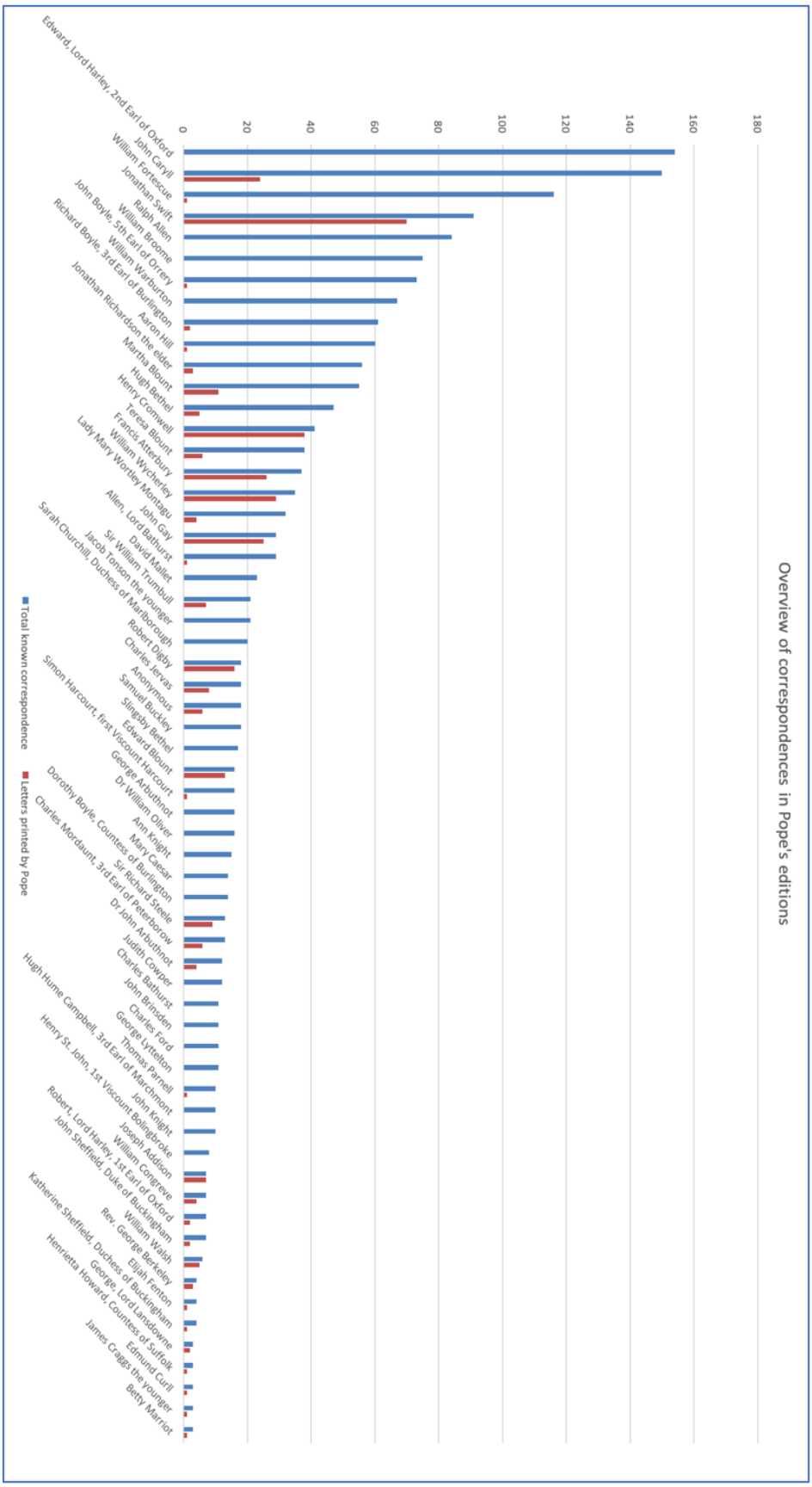


Figure 0.3 Number of letters in Pope's total known (blue) and printed (red) correspondences. Includes all printed correspondences, and unprinted correspondences consisting of more than ten letters (which excludes 122 other correspondences).

As illustrated in this figure, the case studies discussed in the thesis cover Pope's ten most frequently printed correspondences and indirectly (through reattribution of letters) include eighteen of the twenty most printed. Finally, as shown in **Figure 0.4** below, the editions in which Pope's correspondence appeared during his lifetime varied widely in extent and scope.

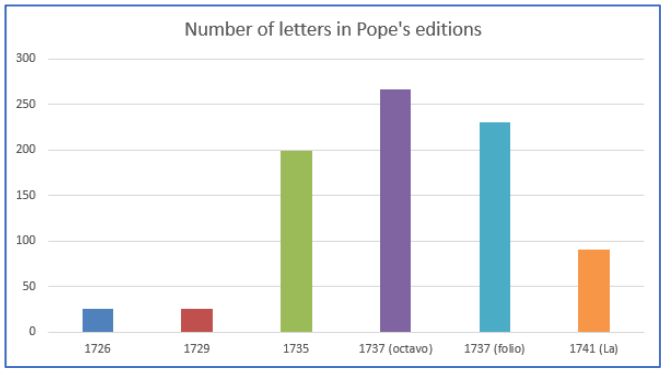


Figure 0.4 Number of letters printed in each lifetime edition of Pope's correspondence.

The thesis considers the majority of these lifetime editions and reflects this divergent treatment: it discusses how Pope responded to the 1726 publication of his letters in Curll's *Miscellanea*, developed his correspondence across his three editions of 1735 and 1737, and published his correspondence with Swift in 1741.[196] Collectively, this broader context suggests that the editorial changes recorded in the thesis are likely to constitute a substantial and reliable sample indicative of Pope's wider editorial work. The thesis draws together the insights from these individual case studies to consider the intriguing implications they may have for the wider corpus and field: suggesting the significance of Pope's self-published correspondence for our understanding of his life and poetry; revealing new avenues and methodological approaches for future critical and editorial work on Pope's letters; and further highlighting the social, material, literary, and context-dependent nature of the eighteenth-century familiar letter.

[196] Pope's correspondence with Wycherley, which Pope prepared for publication in 1729, will also be briefly discussed within Chapter 3.

Chapter 1 : Henry Cromwell

1. Introduction

This chapter will examine Pope's early letters to his friend, the older poet, translator, and dandy Henry Cromwell (1659-1728) – a series of thirty-two letters written between 1707 and 1711 which epitomizes the complex publication history of Pope's correspondence.[1] Edmund Curll's publication of twenty-five letters from Pope to Cromwell in the first volume of his 1726 *Miscellanea* embarrassed Pope by revealing his youthful affectation of a rakish persona and lewd wit in addressing a correspondent thirty years his senior. We have seen in the introduction how this event precipitated the later self-publication of Pope's letters across three editions, in which the Cromwell letters were repeatedly revisited and revised. These editions were Curll's 1735 publication of *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence, Volume the First*, carefully engineered by Pope; the unacknowledged 1737 octavo format which formed *Volume V* of Pope's *Works*; and the 1737 authorized subscription quarto and folio edition, *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*.[2] This case study of the evolving publication of the Cromwell letters thus offers a fascinating insight into Pope's editorial response to a series of letters whose manuscripts and texts were already out of his control – and in which his conflicted editorial motives included refuting Curll's texts, while endorsing, improving, and sanitizing his own. The substantial availability of manuscript evidence, the wider variety of print formats, and the relatively small volume of the correspondence corpus enable a granular and integrated methodological approach

[1] For an account of Pope's friendship with Cromwell, see Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 143-153.
[2] I refer throughout this chapter to these four representative editions, using the abbreviations indicated in the **Appendix**.

to these letters. The chapter will begin by considering the correspondence within its biographical and critical context, followed by a high-level survey outlining the formats in which each letter survives and the structure and composition of each edition. This distant topographical view will inform a close analysis of the correspondence in which, firstly, I will consider in detail the epistolary character and material features of the extant manuscript correspondence and the unique circumstances of its appearance in print before Pope's intervention. Then, guided by a quantitative consideration of changing patterns of vocabulary over time and across formats, I will undertake a close critical reading of Pope's detailed textual editing of the letters throughout his subsequent editions.

Through this combination of distant and close reading, the chapter will demonstrate that particular themes emerge from Pope's editorial remediation of these letters: a careful attention to the material authenticity of the correspondence; the use of minute typographical variation as a tool to assert textual authority; a moderation of conventional courtesies and compliment; and an evolving literary and critical focus. Pope's edited letters to Cromwell illuminate how his personal style developed in the context of shifting wider trends within epistolary culture, and how the mature author viewed his juvenile writings. They also reveal Pope's desire to enhance antithetical aspects of his epistolary persona and personal character (such as his desire to be seen as both a moral, modest man and as a shrewd and daring wit) to cater to his varied readership. The chapter will demonstrate that, because of Pope's retrospective repackaging of this correspondence over successive editions, a consideration of the corpus as a whole offers a more complete and nuanced representation of his epistolary voice and editorial approach than any single incarnation of the letters can provide. Furthermore, the Cromwell letters provide

fascinating early insights into the material history, cultural capital, and ambiguous ownership of letters in the literary marketplace; and suggest how the fluidity and instability of texts could be used to shape the narratives behind and assert the ownership of published correspondence.

1.1 Biographical and critical context

Pope began corresponding with Cromwell in 1707, when he was eighteen or nineteen years old; and over the next four years the two men exchanged forty-one known letters: thirty-two on Pope's side and nine on Cromwell's.[3] By 1707, Pope had already established correspondences with older literary men such as the playwright William Wycherley (bap. 1641–1716), who encouraged Pope's early poetic efforts and who had accompanied him to Will's Coffee House – where Pope once saw his early hero Dryden.[4] Wycherley, Maynard Mack suggests, may well have introduced Pope to the "poetically inclined idler" Henry Cromwell on one such visit to London.[5] Pope's subsequent letters to Cromwell from his home in Binfield embed the correspondence within this early-eighteenth-century literary society and evoke the coffee-house and theatre culture surrounding Covent Garden and Drury Lane.[6] For instance, he wrote to Cromwell in a letter of 7 May 1709:

> I wish you all the Pleasures which the Season and the Nymph can afford; the best Company, and the best Coffee, and the best news you can desire. And what more to wish you than this, I do not know; unless it be a great deal of Patience to read & examine the Verses I send you; and I promise you in return a great deal of Deference to

[3] See Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 143-153.
[4] Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 89; 145. Other such correspondents included the poet William Walsh (1662–1708), and the statesman William Trumbull (1639–1716). For further detail on Pope's early social circle, see Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 88-117.
[5] Mack, *Life* (1985), 145.
[6] On the topographical situation of Pope and Curll's activities within eighteenth-century London, see Rogers, *Poet and Publisher* (2021), pp. 26-43.

> your judgment, & an extraordinary Obedience to your Sentiments for the future, (to which you know I have been sometimes a little refractory.) [7]

As suggested by this passage, Pope's letters combine a focus on topics germane to the "old Diversions" of Cromwell's town life – the theatre, cards, the newspapers, and women – with detailed critical discussion of some of Pope's own earliest works (particularly his *Pastorals* and translation of Statius's *Thebaid*, later published in miscellanies in 1709 and 1712).[8] Pope treats these recurrent themes through a studied epistolary mode which emulates that of this circle, combining masculine wit and raillery with exaggerated personal compliment in the manner of restoration models such as Vincent Voiture.[9] As shown in the passage above, Pope's adherence to this style at times results in an unsettled alternation in tone between a confident, risqué levity and a more serious and self-deprecating humility.

The correspondence had evidently tailed off by 1711, when Pope was twenty-four and his poetic career was flourishing: his reputation was established by the publication of his *Essay on Criticism* in the same year and of *The Rape of the Lock* in 1712, and his literary status would later be consolidated by his *Works* of 1717. However, in 1714, Cromwell gave Pope's letters to his then mistress Elizabeth Thomas, who – seeing an opportunity to profit from Pope's later fame – sold them to Edmund Curll for ten guineas in 1726.[10] Curll promptly published the letters in his *Miscellanea* of the same year – thereby presenting to the public a youthful portrait of Pope which, as Paul Baines and Pat Rogers

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[7] Pope to Cromwell, 7 May 1709, *Corr*. i. 56-8.

[8] Mack, *Life* (1985), 145; Pope to Cromwell, 1 November 1708, *Corr*. i. 51-2. Pope's pastorals were published in Tonson's *Poetical Miscellanies: The Sixth Part. Containing a Collection of Original Poems, with Several New Translations* (London, 1709). His translation of Statius was published in Lintot's *Miscellaneous Poems and Translations* (London, 1712).

[9] See Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), pp. 48-53.

[10] Elizabeth Thomas (1675-1731) also features throughout the letters as "Sapho". She was incarcerated as a debtor in Fleet prison for three years from 1727. Pope satirized her as "Curll's Corinna" in *The Dunciad* in 1728. See *Corr*. i. 42; Mills, "Thomas, Elizabeth", *ODNB* (2004).

note, directly contradicted "the image of himself that Pope had been assiduously cultivating over the years".[11] He appeared in the Cromwell letters as "by turns brash, coltish, bawdy, pedantic, smug, trifling, pretentious and vain".[12] As a result, the *Miscellanea* spurred Pope into offering his own alternative account of this friendship, in which he could embed the letters within a narrative of personal and literary development by situating them amongst other correspondences. Furthermore, Curll's example illuminated for Pope a potential path to publication by affirming the cultural value of his letters and offering proof of their resultant vulnerability to interception and exploitation.

Pope's version of the story behind the correspondence – that he had been entirely unconnected with and wronged by both Curll's 1726 *Miscellanea* and his subsequent 1735 publication of Pope's letters – was widely accepted by his contemporary audience not only because of Curll's professional notoriety, but also because readers were unable to negotiate the complex tangle of textual variations that had been instigated by Pope's manipulation and catalyzed by the fast pace of the eighteenth-century printing process and the obscurity of its sources. As discussed in the introduction, later editorial intervention has tended to further conceal the complexities of the Cromwell letters as plural, public, printed texts: Bowles, for example, merely observed in 1806 that the Cromwell correspondence is characterized by "licentious pleasantry" and accordingly notes Pope's "proper" suppression of the more indelicate passages in print.[13] However, as argued in the introduction, recent criticism has indicated how recognition of the liminal status of Pope's correspondence and attention to its material and textual detail

[11] Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), p. 173.
[12] Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), p. 173.
[13] *Bowles* (1806), I. xxx

can explicate the "myths and counter-myths" that have historically surrounded it.[14] In particular, Claude Willan's close study of the Cromwell letters and other manuscripts published by Curll has uncovered crucial details – such as emendations, calculations, and drafted title pages – that illuminate the nature and provenance of the original documents and reveal how Curll's editorial process shaped these materials in both manuscript and print.[15] Building on this research, the current chapter will combine a view of the Cromwell letters at scale with a close reading of their material detail and textual change, thereby further situating them within the multiple contexts from which they emerged. In this way, rather than viewing the letters as a series of singular, authentic manuscripts from which later printed editions deviate, we may perceive them as mutable texts through which we can observe Pope's responses to previous publications, contemporary events, and cultural developments.

1.2 Overview of correspondence and source material

Pope's correspondence with Cromwell consists of forty-one surviving letters, with the known reciprocal correspondence dating between July 1707 and December 1711. The majority of these – thirty-two letters – are from Pope, while only nine letters survive on Cromwell's side of the correspondence. Two of these letters from Cromwell were apparently sent much later, in 1727, in response to the publication of Curll's *Miscellanea*. Although Pope's side of the correspondence is largely extant in manuscript, none of Cromwell's manuscript letters survive. The *Miscellanea* forms the earliest source for one

[14] John Barnard (ed.), *Pope: The Critical Heritage*, (London: Routledge, 1973), p. 23.
[15] Willan's study encompasses the manuscript material which, sometime after 1740, Curll had passed to his friend and colleague Richard Rawlinson for deposit in the Bodleian Libraries, where it remains under the shelfmark MS. Rawl. Letters 90. Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship" (2011), p. 259.

of Pope's letters, while the edition of 1735 forms the earliest source for five of Pope's letters to Cromwell and all of those from Cromwell to Pope.[16] As a result of this discrepancy in surviving source material, this chapter will focus primarily on the journey of Pope's side of the correspondence from manuscript to print. I will begin by considering a distanced overview of these letters to Cromwell through a visual representation of the dates of the letters and the editions in which they appeared. This view of the correspondence metadata can facilitate interpretation of how letters were selected for publication and how material was developed across successive editions. **Figure 1.1** below shows how the known letters from Pope to Cromwell are distributed amongst each source format, from manuscript through the four representative print editions.

[16] In addition, the *Miscellanea* is the source of the text for Pope's letter of 25 June 1711 (*Corr*. i. 124-5), of which only a fragment survives in manuscript.

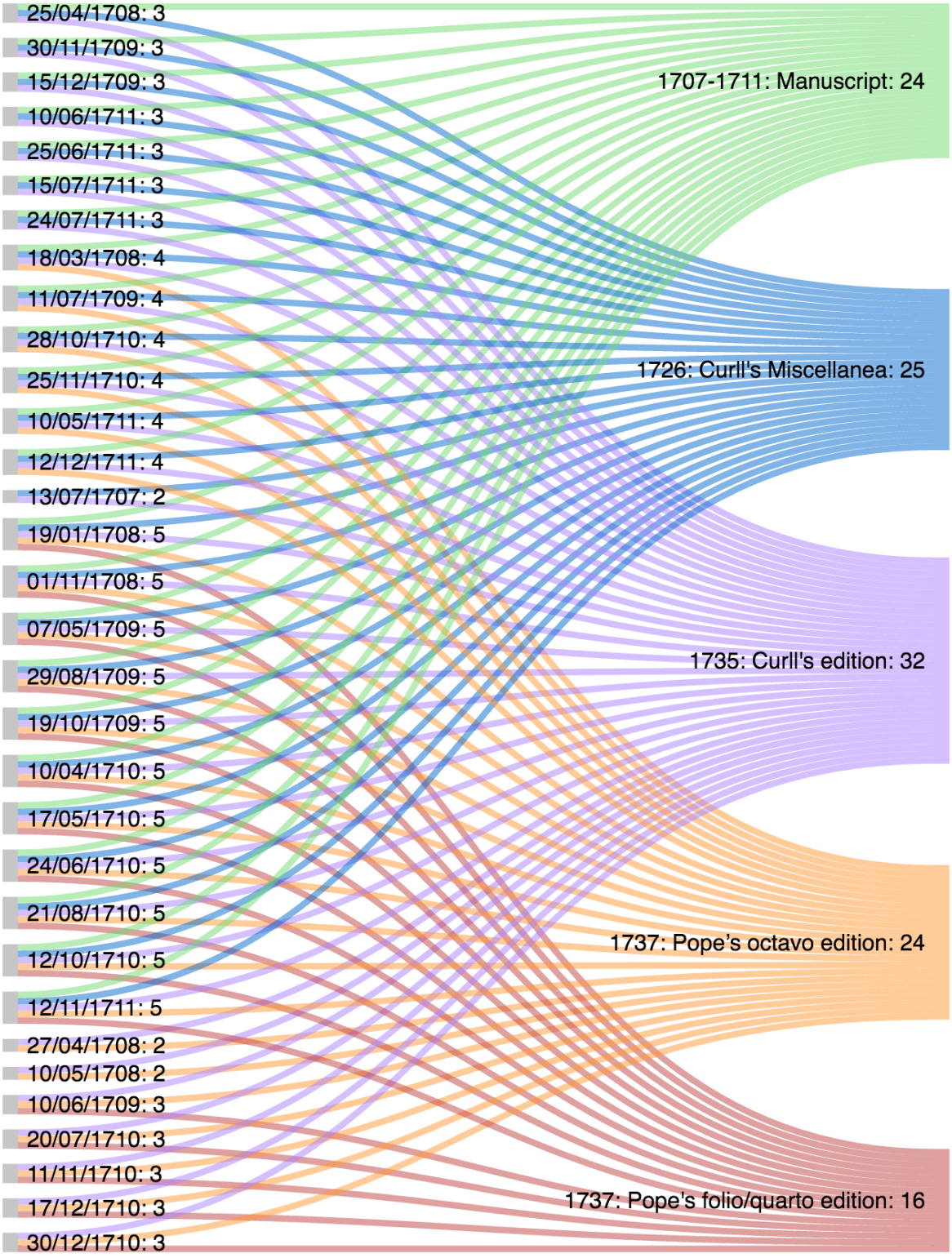


Figure 1.1 Visualization of the extant manuscript source for Alexander Pope's early letters to Henry Cromwell, and the selection included in four of the editions published in Pope's lifetime.

This visualization both illustrates the different formats in which each individual letter is present and indicates the varied representation of this correspondence across the published editions in terms of volume and content. It shows the letters from Pope to Cromwell (listed on the left), with each linked to the variant sources in which it exists, from manuscript (in green) to Pope's 1737 editions (in orange and red). **Figure 1.1** thus highlights that the editions published by Curll (1726 *Miscellanea*, shown in blue; and 1735 *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence*, shown in purple) contain a greater quantity of letters, which correspond more nearly to the manuscript sources available: all but one of the 1726 *Miscellanea* texts is based on an extant manuscript. Curll's 1735 edition – for which the printed copy was supplied by Pope – forms a collection of every available letter in this group, but seven of these have no manuscript source and appear for the first time in this edition. In comparing the remaining two editions for which Pope arranged publication, we can observe an increasingly selective approach: the 1737 octavo (with which Pope's connection was not openly acknowledged) contains twenty-four letters, while sixteen were published in the later, costlier, folio edition which Pope produced in collaboration with Ralph Allen. It appears that Pope used the opportunity of Curll's 1735 edition to expand the pool of available correspondence, before restricting the contents of the 1737 octavo and folio editions to shift their focus towards these inserted letters. As a result, while Curll's *Miscellanea* adheres almost entirely to the manuscript corpus, around one third of the letters which Pope published independently of Curll have no manuscript source. These letters, known only from Pope's editions, may have remained in his possession as manuscript drafts or copies, but could also have been edited or composed by him for inclusion in print. The data shown in **Figure 1.1** thus suggests that, despite his protests that his own editions were designed to promote authenticity, Pope in fact moves away from the manuscript evidence to take greater creative control over the publication

of his epistolary material. Furthermore, it evinces Pope's continual adjustment of the correspondence throughout three sequential published editions, suggesting an active, creative and discriminating editorial intervention. In consequence, this view of the letters indicates that detailed comparison of each format may reveal how Pope's curation of letters serves both to create ambiguity regarding the authenticity of the correspondence by blurring its extent and composition, and to iteratively shape and develop its textual character.

Pope's shifting selection of the correspondence for publication also poses the question of how the original context of the letters – as a series of written communications – is reflected or reconstructed in print. A chronological view of the letters, as shown in **Figure 1.2** below, shows how Pope and Curll's editorial curation sustained or subverted the original timeline of the correspondence.

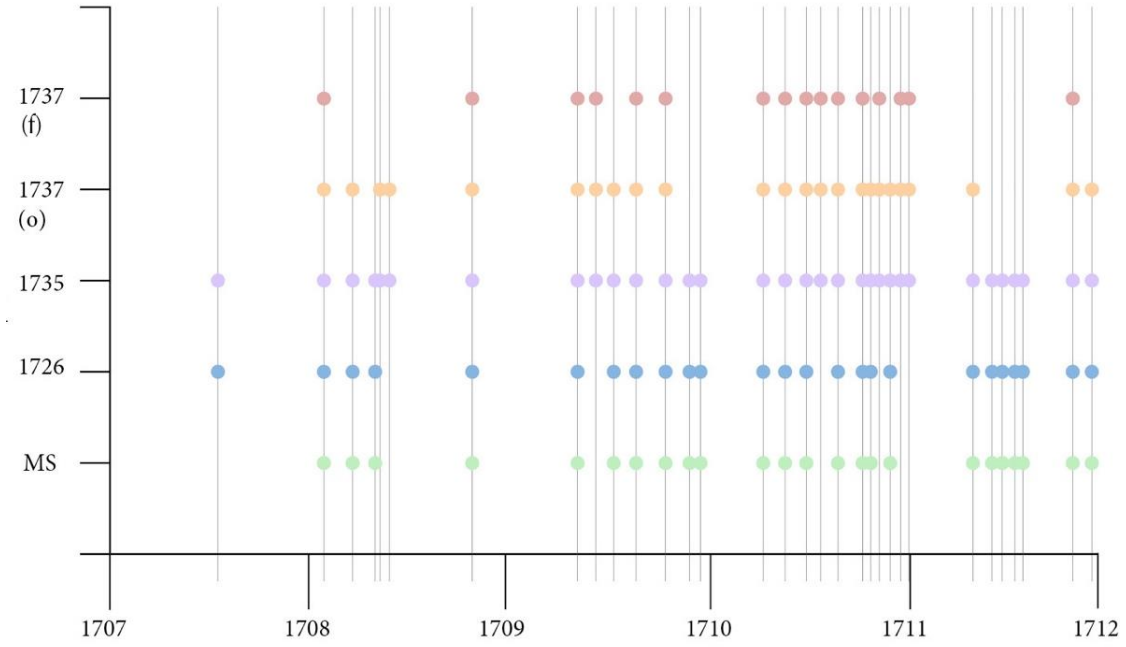
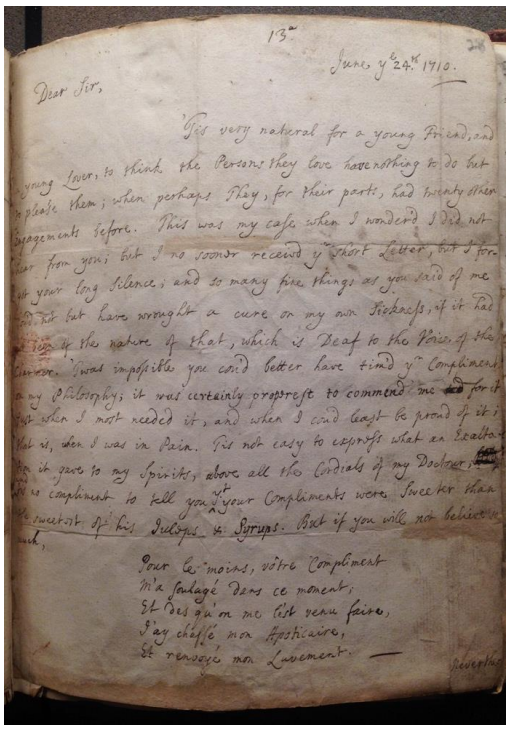


Figure 1.2 Chronological distribution of Pope's letters to Cromwell between 1707 and 1711. Each letter is indicated by a line, with coloured dots indicating the sources in which each letter is present.

On the vertical axis appear the same letter sources that we have already seen in **Figure 1.1**, from manuscript to the 1737 folio edition. The horizontal axis reveals the date pattern of the original correspondence, with each letter represented by a line. A dot indicates each source of each letter, forming, over the course of the correspondence, a picture of the regularity with which Pope and Cromwell corresponded – as well as of the later appearance (or disappearance) of these letters in print. The comprehensiveness of Curll's 1735 edition (shown in purple) is once again immediately noticeable, as is the sparser nature of Pope's 1737 folio (shown in red). We can also now identify more closely the methods by which Pope supplemented or pruned the original correspondence. In the 1735 edition (for which he supplied letters to Curll), the correspondence held in mid-1708 and in late-1710 is clearly extended and intensified. In the 1737 octavo (shown in orange), the next edition which Pope prepared, we observe him cutting short strings of letters – notably in late-1709 and mid-1711. Finally, in the folio version, Pope further cuts short his letters of early-mid 1708, omits his mid-1711 letters completely, and – significantly – selectively edits the correspondence of late 1710 in such a way that an apparent impression of chronological continuity is sustained, but elimination and addition of letters means that the actual documents have significantly deviated from the original series of letters: only one of the final four appears in manuscript. Pope's presentation of a sporadic group of letters over this five-year period, interpolated with added letters, suggests that the form and direction of the conversations enacted within the original correspondence may have been significantly adjusted in print. This view of the authorized folio edition, in particular, raises the question of whether – and if so, how – Pope attempted to construct an apparent dialogue out of letters falling months or even years apart. Again, this visualization demonstrates the responsive and carefully considered development enacted throughout Pope's editions and highlights areas of

interest for closer textual study. The insights gleaned from this distanced view of the correspondence data will guide the following detailed consideration of the letters across manuscript and print formats.

(a)

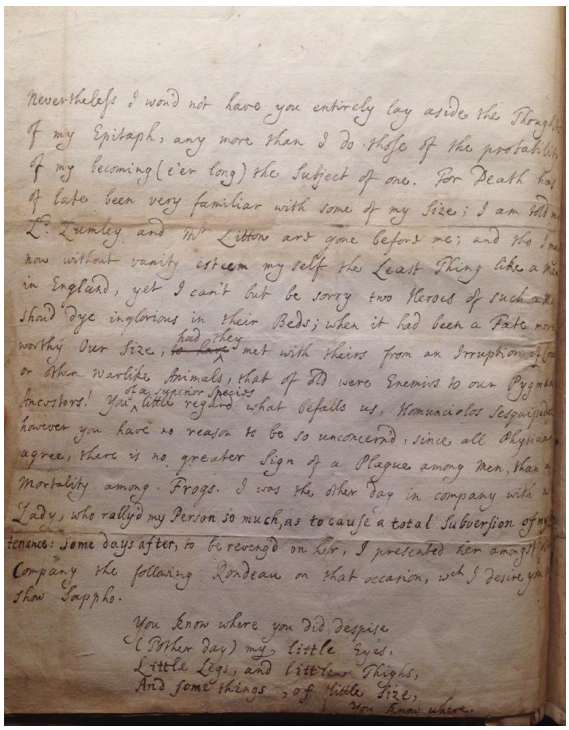


Dear Sir,

'Tis very natural for a young Friend, and a young Lover, to think the Persons they love have nothing to do but to please them; when perhaps They, for their parts, had twenty other Engagements before. This was my case when I wondered I did not hear from you; but I no sooner received y^r short Letter, but I forgot your long Silence; and so many fine things as you said of me — Tho' but have wrought a cure on my own Fickleness, if it had been by the nature of that, which is Deaf to the Voice of the Charmer. 'Twas impossible you could better have tim'd y^r Compliments to my Philosophy; it was certainly prepost to commend me for it just when I most needed it, and when I could least be proud of it; that is, when I was in Pain. 'Tis not easy to express what an Exaltation it gave to my Spirits, above all the Cordials of my Doctor. [illegible] no compliment to tell you, your Compliments were Sweeter than the sweetest of his Julops & Syrups. But if you will not believe me much,

Pour le moins, votre Compliment
M'a soulagé dans ce moment,
Et Dès qu'on me fait vena faire,
J'ay chez moi Apothicaire,
Et renvoye mon Lavement. —

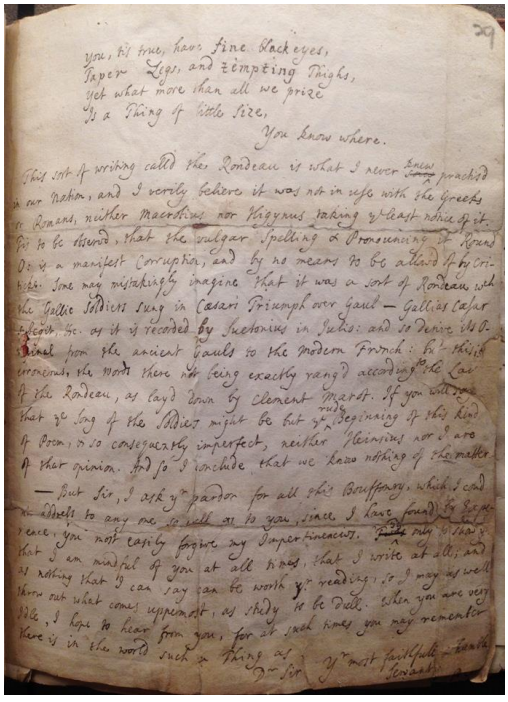
(b)



Nevertheless I would not have you entirely lay aside the Thoughts of my Epitaph; any more than I do those of the probability of my becoming (e'er long) the Subject of one. For Death has of late been very familiar with some of my Size; I am told my L^d Lumley and M^r Litton are gone before me; and tho I pass now without vanity esteem my self the Least Thing like a Hero in England, yet I can't but be sorry two Heroes of such a Size should dye inglorious in their Beds; when it had been a Fate more worthy Our Size, had they met with theirs from an Irruption of Cats or other warlike Animals, that of Old were Enemies to our Pygmean Ancestors! You, a little regard what befalls us, Homunculos Sesquipedales however you have no reason to be so unconcerned, since, all Physicians agree, there is no greater Sign of a Plague among men, than a Mortality among Frogs. I was the other day in company with a Lady, who rallyd my Person so much, as to cause a total Subversion of my Countenance: Some days after, to be revenged on Her, I presented Her amongst Company the following Rondeau on that occasion, w^ch I desire you to Shew Sappho.

You know where you did despise
(The other day) my little Eyes,
Little Legs, and little Thighs,
And some things, of little Size,
You know where.

(c)



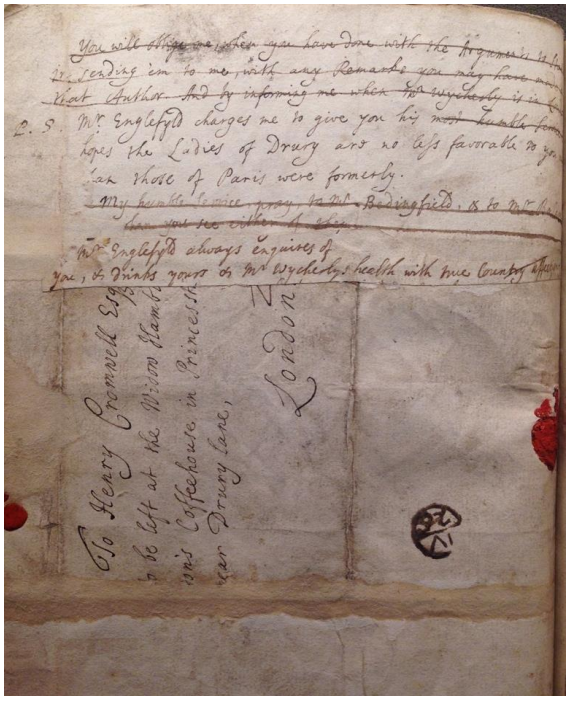
you, 'tis true, have fine Black eyes,
Paper Legs, and tempting Thighs,
Yet what more than all we prize
Is a Thing of little Size,
You know where.

This sort of writing called the Rondeau is what I never knew practised in our Nation, and I verily believe it was not in use with the Greeks or Romans, neither Macrobius nor Prigynus taking the least notice of it. 'Tis to be observed, that the vulgar Spelling & Pronouncing of Round O is a manifest Corruption, and by no means to be allowed of by Critics. Some may mistakingly imagine that it was a sort of Rondeau, wch the Gallic Soldiers sung in Cæsar's Triumph over Gaul — Gallias Cæsar subegit, &c. as it is recorded by Suetonius in Julio: and so Denis Vossius derived from the ancient Gauls to the modern French: but this is concerned, the Words there not being exactly rang'd according to the Law of the Rondeau, as layd down by Clement Marot. If you will say that ye Song of the Soldiers might be but y^e Beginning of this kind of Poem, it is consequently imperfect, neither Scaliger nor I are of that opinion. And so I conclude that we know nothing of the matter.

— But Sir, I ask y^r pardon for all this Bouffonry, which I could not address to any one so well as to you, since I have found by Experience, you most easily forgive my Impertinencys. [illegible] only I fear that I am mistaken in you at all hope, that I write at all; and as nothing that I can say can be worth y^r reading, so I may as well throw out what comes uppermost, as study to be Dull. When you are very Idle, I hope to hear from you, for at such times you may remember there is in the world such a thing as

Sir, y^r most faithfull & Obedt Servant

(d)



You will oblige me when you have done with the Argument of sending 'em to me, with any Remarks you may have made upon that Author. And by informing me when I do wrongly, it is the [illegible]

P. S. M^r Englefyld charges me to give you his most humble [illegible] hopes the Ladies of Drury are no less favorable to you than those of Paris were formerly.

My humble Service pray to Mr Basingfield. & to M^r [illegible] how you see either of 'em.

M^r Englefyld always enquires of you, & drinks yours & M^r Wycherly's health with true Country Affection

To Henry Cromwell Esq^r
to be left at the Widow Hamb[illegible]
's Coffeehouse in Princes
near Drury Lane,
London

Figure 1.3 Pope to Cromwell, 24 June 1710. Bodleian Special Collections, MS Rawl. Letters 90, fols 28r-29v.

2. Manuscript correspondence and initial publication in Curll's *Miscellanea* (1726)

2.1 Manuscripts

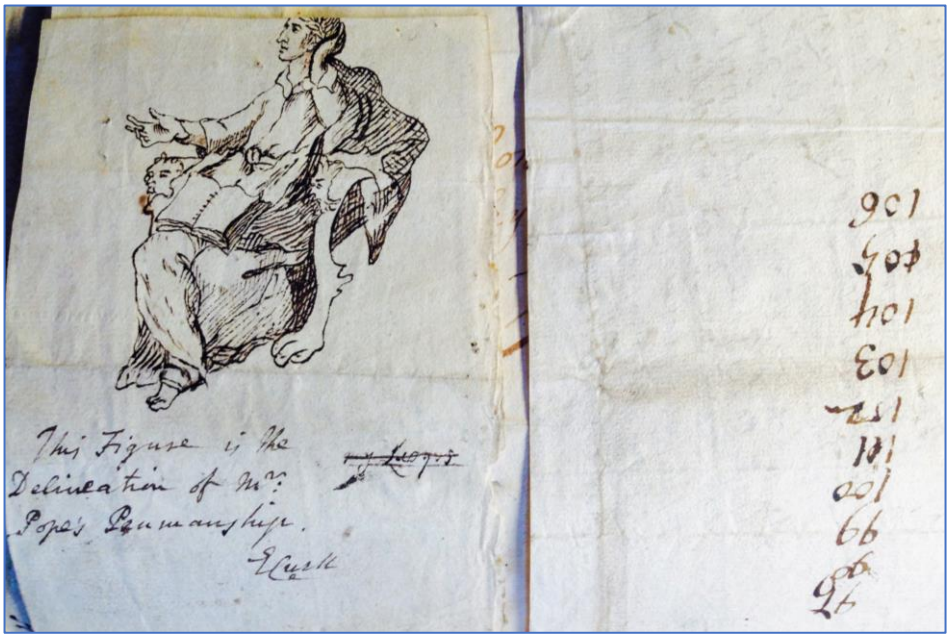
The manuscripts of Pope's letters to Cromwell are a crucial source for our understanding of both the character and status of this correspondence within Pope's broader epistolary practice, and the material and editorial processes that shaped its published forms. The letters form part of a collection of papers held within the Bodleian Libraries, many of which had been in the possession of Edmund Curll and printed in his 1726 *Miscellanea* and later publications.[17] Curll's control over and publication of Pope's manuscript letters to Cromwell both ensured their survival and significantly shaped their later textual development in print. As material documents, the extant manuscripts illuminate the nature of the original correspondence of Pope and Cromwell and offer clues regarding Pope's approach to composition. For example, the address panels of Pope's letters, including that shown in **Figure 1.3 (d)** above, indicate how this correspondence explicitly entered and operated within the geographical and social spaces that accommodated Cromwell's leisurely literary lifestyle: Pope addressed his letters "For Henry Cromwell, Esq" at such locations as "the Widow Hambleton's Coffee-house, at the End of Princes Street, near Drury-Lane, LONDON"; or with instructions "to be given to Mr. Tho: Thorold, at y^{e} King'shead in Duke-street".[18] In addition, throughout the letters, Pope's neat handwriting and formatting, including well-spaced paragraphs and verse, alongside his instantaneous corrections and interlineations, suggest a level of care and attention congruent with his junior status in this milieu and his poetic ambition.

[17] The collection appears under Bodleian Libraries shelfmark MS. Rawl. Letters 90. See Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship" (2011), p. 259; Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), p. 359n.
[18] Pope to Henry Cromwell, 18 March 1707/8, *Corr*. i. 41-3; 10 April 1710, *Corr*. i. 81-2.

Furthermore, as Claude Willan observes, Pope's tendency to fill all available space on the page lends the manuscripts a dense layout which suggests an energetic exuberance in composition.[19]

The material details found throughout this collection of manuscripts also offer potential indications of Pope's self-fashioning of his image over time, such as the portraiture shown in **Figures 1.4 (a) and (b)** below. The first image shows a possible early self-portrait by Pope on the back of a poem by Cromwell, in which he appears seated and wearing laurels.[20] The second shows Pope's later use of his portrait as a seal, in which he appears in profile and again crowned with laurel, in a 1721 letter thanking the keeper of the Bodley library for the "honour" of depositing his Homeric translations.[21] These manuscripts thus encapsulate the trajectory of Pope's image as a proxy for his literary reputation – from his early aspirational experiments with self-representation to the later realized status of his portrait as an iconic emblem of literary status.[22] Through such material features, the Cromwell letters preserve hints of the energy and eagerness of Pope's early epistolary production, as well as his incipient development of an autobiographical strategy to shape his literary reputation.

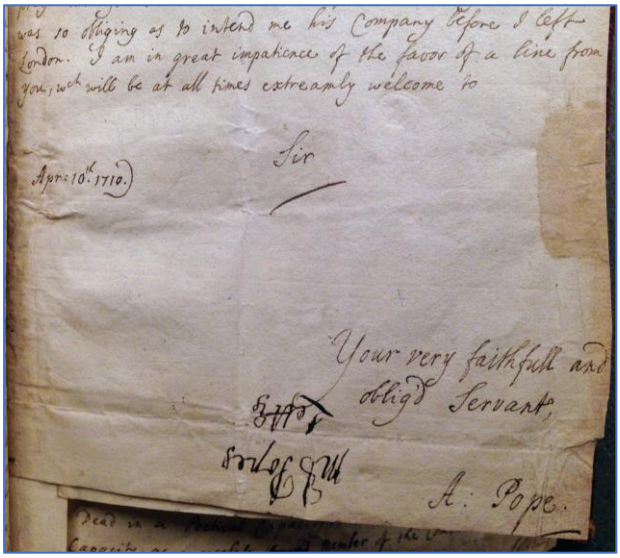
[19] See Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship", p. 275.
[20] As Willan notes, this illustration, if indeed by Pope, would constitute his only known self-portrait. "Mr Pope's Penmanship" (2011), pp. 275-6.
[21] Pope to Joseph Bowles, 26 September 1721, *Corr*. i. 83. See Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship" (2011), p. 277.
[22] See William Kurtz Wimsatt, *The Portraits of Alexander Pope* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Hammerschmidt, "Pope, Curll" (2012), esp. pp. 280-83; Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 172. On Curll's later subversive use of Pope's image, see Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), p. 272.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 1.4 Material detail from MS. Rawl. Letters 90:

(a) Illustration, possibly a self-portrait by Pope; also showing a note ("This Figure is the Delineation of Mr: Pope's Penmanship. E Curll") and calculations in Curll's hand (fol. 50v);
(b) Detail of Pope's later portrait seal in 1721 letter to "Mr. Bowles" (Corr. ii. 83; fol. 47v);
(c) inscription in Curll's hand: "Mr Popes | Letters" (fol. 23r).
Identification of these features is informed by Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship" (2011).

Pope's letters to Cromwell also constitute important artefacts of publishing history: as Claude Willan has shown, Curll's preparation of the manuscripts for publication left permanent marks on the letters, as shown in **Figures 1.4 (a) and (c)** above, including

calculations, analytical notes, drafted title pages, and bracketed catchwords.[23] The manuscripts record, too, the material processes behind Curll's minor editorial intervention. In the letter shown at **Figure 1.3 (d)**, for instance, Willan notes that passages within the postscripts have been struck through, and a slip has been cut from another letter and pasted over the fold line of this one, indicating that this editing activity "took place after the letter was sent" – likely in the process of editorial compilation for the press, and probably by Curll himself.[24] In this way, the manuscripts also help us to understand Pope's later editorial preparation of the letters from the *Miscellanea*: for example, he omitted Curll's reconstructed postscript to this letter within his own editions, presumably due to his suspicion of Curll's text and his later inability to verify it through reference to the manuscripts.[25] The comparison of Curll's and Pope's editorial intervention which the manuscripts enable thus reveals, Willan argues, that Curll in fact displayed a fidelity to obliterations and formatting in his *Miscellanea*, while Pope's doctoring was far more radical: Pope was forced "to disfigure his own text while attempting to 'authorize' it".[26] The specific circumstances surrounding this case study have preserved and disclosed a level of material detail and successive textual change that is unique within Pope's correspondence. As such, the Cromwell letters both offer crucial insights into Pope's editorial techniques and highlight the conflicted status and vulnerability of manuscript letters as a commodity within the eighteenth-century literary marketplace. They further demonstrate the complex interactive chains of events and activities by multiple agents that have historically influenced the survival of correspondence and shaped its textual forms.

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[23] Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship", pp. 262-6.
[24] Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship", p. 259; *Corr*. i. 91n.
[25] Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship", p. 259; *Corr*. i. 91n.
[26] Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship", pp. 266; 260-63.

2.2 First printing: Curll's *Miscellanea* (1726)

The Cromwell letters are an unusual case study in that they offer a perspective on the position of Pope's correspondence in the contemporary literary marketplace when not mediated by Pope himself. Curll's *Miscellanea* is of interest not only because it constitutes Pope's source text for the letters, but also because it forms the only record of some aspects of the correspondence, and reveals how Curll opportunistically packaged and presented the letters of a prominent literary figure to the public (an interesting comparator to Pope's own treatment).[27] The contents page to the first volume immediately suggests Curll's consciousness of the literary value of the letters as embedded within their contemporary milieu: the "*Familiar Letters* written to Henry Cromwell Esq; by Mr. Pope" precede "Occasional Poems by Mr. Pope, Mr. Cromwell, Dean Swift, &c." and "Letters from Mr. Dryden to a Lady, in the Year 1699".[28] As Louise Curran has observed, Curll's prefatory material explores the nebulous social, commercial, and literary status of correspondence in print to further contextualize the letters, extrapolating from the specific material circumstances of their composition and publication to their place in an epistolary tradition.[29] In his opening letter to Cromwell, Curll's examination of his own role as "Editor" of the correspondence highlights the sustained significance of individual character within epistolary exchanges across both manuscript and print media: "I [....] have only to hope, that as you paid the *Postage* of these Letters with Pleasure, you will receive them a *second Time* under a *frank Cover* with

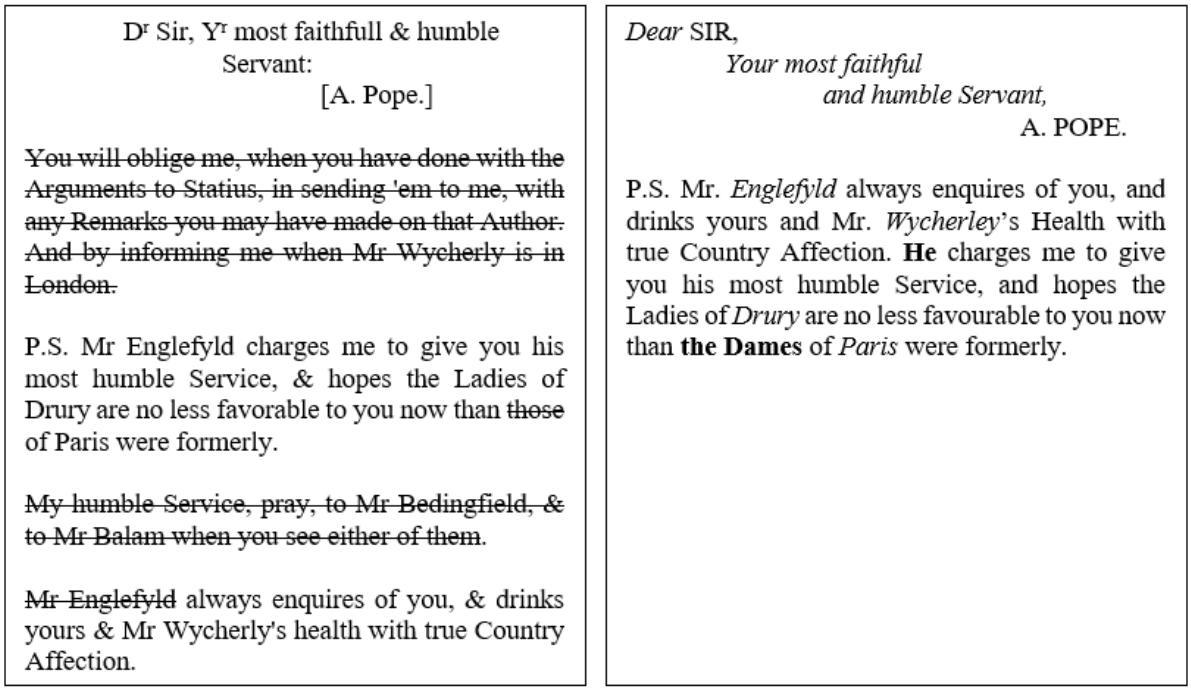
[27] On the background to and contents of this edition, see Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), pp. 171-74; Rogers, *Poet and Publisher* (2021), pp. 262-67.
[28] *Miscellanea* [1726], p. i.
[29] Curran, *Samuel Richardson* (2016), pp. 5-6.

that Candour, which is peculiar to Mr. *Cromwell*."[30] Meanwhile, the following printed letter, from "Corinna" (Elizabeth Thomas), provides evidence that the original manuscripts had been fairly obtained by Curll and remained in his possession: she had "freely" offered "the enclosed Papers" to him for publication, "if you think the *private Thoughts* of this *Great Man* ["Mr. *Dryden*"] may be useful to the Publick".[31] Finally, Curll's preface sets these real letters from real individuals within a literary context. Citing "An eminent Critick" on the "Nature and End of Letter-writing", he observes within the present collection a varied "Style" carefully suited to the "Subject", and accordingly concludes that "the *English* would surpass both the Antients and Moderns" in epistolary writing, "if they would but cultivate it".[32] Curll certainly anticipated, however, the irony and bathos that would arise from the juvenile nature of Pope's letters to Cromwell which immediately follow this statement. In combination, Curll's prefatory material asserts that while the value of letters lies in their private origins, the transparency of their journey to the bookseller and the authenticity of the texts justifies their appearance in print. Meanwhile, he suggests, the literary quality of their writing and the prominence of their authors mark the letters, in any case, as popular cultural property: as texts "*borrowed*" from and "*restored*" to "*the Publick*".[33]

In accordance with this prefatory focus, Curll's minimal editorial work on the letters underlines both their original epistolarity and their wider cultural context. Curll presented the letters emphatically as correspondence, arranging them in chronological order and preserving dates, salutations, valedictions, and postscripts. However, he

[30] *Miscellanea* [1726], p. ii.
[31] *Miscellanea* [1726], p. iv-vi.
[32] *Miscellanea* [1726], p. vii-ix. Curll references Dennis, *Letters* (1696), pp. xiv-xvi.
[33] *Miscellanea* [1726], p. ii.

occasionally intervened in the printed texts, as indicated by his reconstruction of the postscripts in Pope's letter of 24 June 1710 (marked up on the manuscript shown in **Figure 1.3** above):



Dr Sir, Yr most faithfull & humble Servant:
[A. Pope.]

~~You will oblige me, when you have done with the Arguments to Statius, in sending 'em to me, with any Remarks you may have made on that Author. And by informing me when Mr Wycherly is in London.~~

P.S. Mr Englefyld charges me to give you his most humble Service, & hopes the Ladies of Drury are no less favorable to you now than ~~those~~ of Paris were formerly.

~~My humble Service, pray, to Mr Bedingfield, & to Mr Balam when you see either of them~~.

~~Mr Englefyld~~ always enquires of you, & drinks yours & Mr Wycherly's health with true Country Affection.

Dear SIR,
Your most faithful
and humble Servant,
A. POPE.

P.S. Mr. *Englefyld* always enquires of you, and drinks yours and Mr. *Wycherley*'s Health with true Country Affection. **He** charges me to give you his most humble Service, and hopes the Ladies of *Drury* are no less favourable to you now than **the Dames** of *Paris* were formerly.

Figure 1.5 Pope to Cromwell, 24 June 1710, in manuscript (l) and Miscellanea *(r). Here, as in all quotations in the thesis, strikethrough and bold text are my own indication of deletions and additions between versions.*[34]

Here, we see Curll drawing together the scattered names and narratives within Pope's postscript, rendering the original paratext a more coherent, concise, and stylish capsule of social context. His editorial work on the manuscripts elsewhere similarly amplifies the resonances of literary London: he amends Pope's reference to "~~Common~~ Garden" to the more familiar "***Covent*-*Garden***"; consistently expands "Mr W" to "Mr. ***Wycherley***"; and adds contextual footnotes, such as identification of Dennis's "*Remarks on the Essay on *Criticism*".[35] Other changes seem designed deliberately to distance the letters from their original personal function: Curll deletes a postscript in which Pope invokes epistolary

[34] *Corr*. i. 89-91. *Miscellanea* [1726], p. 39. See Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship" (2011), pp. 263-4.
[35] Pope to Cromwell, 7 May 1709, *Corr*. i. 56-8; 19 October 1709, *Corr*. i. 72-5; 25 June 1711, *Corr*. i. 124-5. On other notes by Curll see Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship" (2011), pp. 273-4.

privacy (“~~I desire you will be so kind to me as not to show what I send, to anybody [...]~~”) and omits another in which he devalues his own “~~immeasurable Long Letter~~” as “~~a Large Worthless Countrey present~~”.[36] In addition, he refines the texts more generally, correcting or modernizing Pope’s spelling, making minor changes to punctuation, capitalizing initial letters of nouns, italicizing words, and expanding or apostrophizing contractions. Such changes can be seen in a sample of text from the manuscript letter shown in **Figure 1.3** above:

This sort of writing calld the Rondeau is what I never knew practis'd in our nation, and I verily believe it was not in use with the Greeks or Romans, neither Macrobius nor Higynus taking y^e^ least notice of it. Tis to be observd, that the vulgar Spelling & Pronouncing it Round O: is a manifest Corruption, and by no means to be allow'd of by Criticks. Some may mistakingly imagine that it was a sort of Rondeau w^ch^ the Gallic Soldiers sung in Caesar's Triumph over Gaul—Gallias Caesar subegit, &c. as it is recorded by Suetonius in Julio: and so derive its Original from the ancient Gauls to the Modern French: but this is erroneous, the Words there not being exactly rang'd according to the Laws of the Rondeau, as layd down by Clement Marot. If you will say that y^e^ Song of the Soldiers might be but y^e^ rude Beginning of this kind of Poem, & so consequently imperfect, neither Heinsius nor I are of that opinion. And so I conclude, that we know nothing of the matter.	This Sort of Writing call'd the *Rondeau* is what I never knew practis'd in our Nation, and I verily believe it was not in Use with the *Greeks* or *Romans*, neither *Macrobius* nor *Hyginus* taking the least notice of it. 'Tis to be observ'd, that the vulgar Spelling and Pronouncing it *Round O,* is a manifest Corruption, and by no means to be allow'd of by Criticks. Some may mistakenly imagine that it was a sort of *Rondeau* which the *Gallic* Soldiers sung in *Caesar*'s Triumph over *Gaul—Gallias Caesar subegit, &c.* as it is recorded by *Suetonius* in *Julio*: and so derive its Original from the ancient *Gauls* to the modern *French*; but this is erroneous, the Words there, not being exactly rang'd according to the Laws of the *Rondeau*, as laid down by *Clement Marot*. If you will say that the Song of the Soldiers might be but the rude Beginning of this Kind of Poem, and so consequently imperfect, neither *Heinsius* nor I are of that Opinion; and so I conclude, that we know nothing of the Matter.

Figure 1.6 Pope to Cromwell, 24 June 1710, in manuscript (l) and Curll’s 1726 Miscellanea *(r).*[37]

Curll’s alterations here reveal his perception of the necessary stylistic polishing of epistolary text for a printed format, and thus of the literary status of Pope’s letters. They also form a reminder that the texts from which Pope would later edit were subtly but consistently different to the manuscripts. Curll’s editing of the letters, then, strikes a

[36] Pope to Cromwell, 7 May 1709, *Corr*. i. 56-8; 19 January 1707/8, *Corr*. i. 36-8.
[37] *Corr*. i. 89-91. *Miscellanea* [1726], p. 38. Colour emphasis mine. Willan observes similar changes to the letter of 12 November 1711 letter in “Mr Pope’s Penmanship” (2011), pp. 268-72.

balance between their intrigue as private missives exposing a particular social milieu, and their cultural cachet as public texts within an established epistolary tradition.

Curll preserved further indications of this tension between scholarly prestige and social currency by printing a long verse letter which is not extant in manuscript or in Pope's editions, and is known only from the second volume of Curll's *Miscellanea*. It begins with a lively and immediate evocation of a coffee-house scene:

> DEAR *Mr. Cromwell*,
> MAY it please ye!
> Sit still a Moment; pray be easy—
> Faith 'tis not five; no Play's begun;
> No Game at *Ombre* lost or won.
> Read something of a diff'rent Nature,
> Than *Ev'ning Post*, or *Observator*;
> And pardon me a little Fooling,
> —Just while your Coffee stands a Cooling.[38]

This densely referential poem is richly evocative of the bustling town circles within which the correspondence was situated, underlining its interconnection with various personages – some famous literary figures ("Wycherley"; "Rowe"; "Prior"); and some more obscure or less reputable ("Tydcombe"; "Brocas"; "Fouler" [Fowler]; "Pentlow"; "Whiston").[39] Pope's ironic doggerel emphasizes his self-consciously literary focus, and accommodates a lighthearted treatment of poetic matters ("That Simile is not my own | but lawfully belongs to Donne") in which critical and classical reference is frequently combined with ribald social humour ("Quarrel with *Dryden* for a Strumpet").[40] Throughout, Pope underlines the personalized care with which the letter is tailored to his correspondent through sustained attention to its epistolary form ("Send it, I pray, by the next Post"), and its temporal moment and material status:

> (Now, if you're weary of my Style,

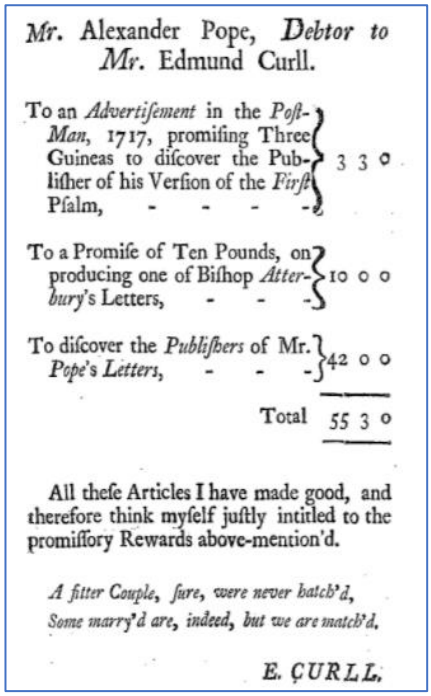
[38] Pope to Cromwell, 12/13 July 1707, *Corr*. i. 25-29. *Miscellanea* [1726], ii. 77-82. *Poems VI*, pp. 24-29.
[39] *Corr*. i. 25-29. See Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 145-6.
[40] *Corr*. i. 25-29.

> Take out your Box of right *Brasil*,
> First lay this Paper under, then,
> Snuff just three Times, and read again.) [41]

As a result, the poem represents a crafted textual performance that belies the apparently occasional and ephemeral letter form and its ostensibly offhand, spontaneous composition. It also underlines the complex original social context of the Cromwell letters and their connection to Pope's evolving identity as a poet. In this way, Curll preserved a somewhat conflicted poetic perspective on a particular cultural moment which Pope evidently later chose to suppress in print.[42]

Curll later reprinted this and other letters from Pope to Cromwell, supplemented with additional notes, in his 1735 *Volume II* of *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence* (a follow-up to the volume instigated by Pope).[43] Here, Curll also addresses Pope directly in a prefatory letter, taking the retrospective opportunity both to explicate Pope's methods of publication ("the Plot is unravelled […] P.T. is Trickster *Pope*") and to critically deconstruct the printed letters Pope had supplied ("Who was it play'd the Gardener, in […] Transplanting a large Shoot from one of your Letters to Mr. *Cromwell*, and Graffing it upon Mr. *Walsh*'s Stock?").[44] Curll's recognition of the letters as contested commercial objects which have served both Pope's career and his own is underlined by his calculation of the "promissory Rewards" owed to him by Pope – a visual echo of his sketched accounts on the Cromwell manuscripts in **Figure 1.4 (a)** – as shown in **Figure 1.7** below.

[41] *Corr*. i. 25-29.
[42] Pope's 1737 octavo notes that "In this [Curll's *Miscellanea*] are *Verses*, &c. ascribed to Mr. P. which were *not his*" (p. 1).
[43] See Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), p. 259-64.
[44] *Mr. Pope's literary correspondence. Volume the Second* (London: E. Curll, 1735), p. xiii.



Mr. Alexander Pope, *Debtor to Mr.* Edmund Curll.

To an *Advertiſement* in the *Poſt-Man*, 1717, promiſing Three Guineas to diſcover the Publiſher of his Verſion of the *Firſt* Pſalm, - - - - } 3 3 0

To a Promiſe of Ten Pounds, on producing one of Biſhop *Atterbury*'s Letters, - - - } 10 0 0

To diſcover the *Publiſhers* of Mr. *Pope*'s *Letters*, - - - } 42 0 0

Total 55 3 0

All theſe Articles I have made good, and therefore think myſelf juſtly intitled to the promiſſory Rewards above-mention'd.

A fitter Couple, ſure, were never hatch'd,
Some marry'd are, indeed, but we are match'd.

E. CURLL.

Figure 1.7 Curll's letter "To Mr. Pope" in Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence, Volume the Second (London: E. Curll, 1735), p. xvi.

Curll thus uses this printed letter to publicly implicate Pope within the mercenary practices that he had sought to obscure through his clandestine publishing methods. Accordingly, in a concluding couplet, Curll explicitly recognizes the "match'd" relationship which enabled both men to exploit the correspondence as a literary commodity.[45] The Cromwell letters thus form the site of, and record the textual manoeuvres of, their first collaborative conflict over Pope's correspondence.

3. Print remediation in Pope's 1737 editions

Pope's own editions are also fundamentally shaped by these tensions between his own and Curll's competing assertions of ownership and authority over the Cromwell letters, and between their conflicting value as texts of social intrigue and as works of literary

[45] See Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), p. 6; 272-3.

significance. Firstly, I will discuss Pope's use of various publishing features and formats – from prefatory and pamphlet paratexts, to typography and printing materials – to present his own editions in opposition to Curll's within the literary marketplace. I will go on to consider how Pope established his own version of the correspondence through the drastic omission and addition of content and significant stylistic and semantic textual adjustments. Pope's sequential remediation of these letters both responded to Curll's published texts and independently developed the correspondence for different audiences. A survey of changing verbal patterns across each format reveals how Pope's careful selection of letters and shifts in textual composition and vocabulary help to define the character and tone of each edition. This discussion will consider how Pope developed the text of Curll's *Miscellanea*, the first printed form of the letters which closely follows the manuscripts, within the two 1737 editions in which he had a certain amount of freedom to reshape the correspondence: the octavo *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.; Vol. V*, and the folio *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope, And Several of His Friends*. The 1735 edition is excluded from consideration, on the basis that Pope's ability to edit the previously published letters was limited here by Curll's involvement in its publication. Instead, the letters introduced within this intermediary edition allowed Pope to establish the materials and publicly justifiable motive to refashion the correspondence as he chose within his later editions. As we will see, the octavo offers an enhanced, more inclusive picture of the correspondence, which Pope further refined and sanitized within the more selective folio edition. Pope's editorial intervention in both editions demonstrates his sustained focus on how the style and substance of his letters to Cromwell would resonate with later readers.

3.1 Paratext, typography, and format

Like Curll, Pope employed correspondence as prefatory paratext in his own editions to embed the revised Cromwell letters within the context of their contentious publication history. Via the preface of the 1735 edition, Pope introduced into the correspondence three letters dated 1727, including two letters from Cromwell and one from Elizabeth Thomas, which respond directly to Curll's *Miscellanea*.[46] Notably, both Cromwell and Thomas had died in the interim, and the letters are unknown in manuscript, offering Pope the potential opportunity to shape their epistolary voices to establish his own narrative. The letters from Cromwell, reprinted in the preface of Pope's 1737 octavo, highlight the discrepancy between Curll's grandiose presentation of the letters and their unguarded, juvenile quality: "When these Letters were first printed, I […] cou'd not but laugh at the pompous title; since whatever you wrote to me was humour, and familiar Raillery".[47] They also evoke the drama surrounding the initial publication, as Cromwell's apologetic admission of his "Indiscretion" directly refutes Curll's account of the letters' publication in the *Miscellanea*:

> finding in the news-papers Letters from Lady *Packington*, Lady *Chudleigh*, and Mr. *Norris*, to the same *Sapho* or *E. T*. I began to fear that I was guilty. I have never seen these Letters of *Curll*'s, nor wou'd go to his shop about 'em; I have not seen this *Sapho*, alias *E. T*. these seven years;—her writing, *That I gave her 'em, to do what she wou'd with 'em*, is straining the point too far [48]

As well as using prefatory letters to emphasize the intrigue of the Cromwell letters' clandestine publication history, Pope employed them to explore the ethics of publishing correspondence. He printed a self-exculpatory letter in which Thomas stridently defends her sale of the letters to Curll: "every one knows that the person to whom a Letter is

[46] *Corr*. ii. 437-41. Since they apparently respond to the publication of the *Miscellanea* in July/August 1726, these letters are presumably re-dated by Pope to match Curll's 1727 postdating of the *Miscellanea*.
[47] Cromwell to Pope, 6 July 1727, *Corr*. i. 439-40.
[48] *Corr*. i. 439-40.

address'd, has the same right to dispose of it, as he has of goods purchas'd with his money".[49] Thomas's defiance underscores the vexed issue of intellectual property surrounding personal letters, thereby vividly demonstrating the high cultural and financial value of authorial correspondence and its consequent vulnerability to theft and forgery. Thomas also encapsulates the obstacles facing early-eighteenth-century authors who might wish to take advantage of the benefits that published letters could offer to a growing literary reputation, whilst maintaining a display of good taste and modesty. She presents the letters' publication as a universally beneficial arrangement, claiming she had been certain that the "publick […] wou'd be pleas'd with" the "agreeable […] amusement" of Curll's edition and arguing that "surely Mr. Pope ought not to resent the publication, since the early pregnancy of his Genius was no dishonour to his character".[50] Thomas's letter thus serves within Pope's editions as a valuable prompt for his audience to appreciate the precocious talent which the letters reveal, and to overlook any faults or youthful indiscretions in letters which he had clearly not intended for publication.

Pope also used pamphlet publication to challenge Curll's publishing practices, discredit the authenticity of his texts, and destabilize their textual integrity. In 1735, these letters from Cromwell and Thomas were reprinted as part of an account of Curll's publication of his letters in *A Narrative Of The Method By Which The Private Letters Of Mr. Pope Have Been Procur'd And Publish'd By Edmund Curll, Bookseller*.[51] The pamphlet methodically establishes Curll's duplicitous dealings, presenting this "Affair" not only as a unique "Curiosity", but a general "Warning" that should "alarm every Person in the Nation".[52] It

[49] Elizabeth Thomas to Henry Cromwell, 27 June 1727, *Corr*. ii, 437-38.
[50] *Corr*. ii, 437-38.
[51] *Narrative* (1735); *Corr*. i. xxxvi. See Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), p. 260.
[52] *Narrative* (1735), p. 1.

refutes, for example, Curll's claims to hold manuscript letters: "notwithstanding the Pretences of Edmund Curl, the Original Letters of Mr. Pope with the Post-Marks upon them, remain still in the Books from whence they were copy'd".[53] It also cites material evidence of Curll's interventions in the text: he has, the pamphlet alleges, marked up published correspondence for his own impressions ("a Copy is extant, which he [Curll] corrected […], interlin'd, and added marginal Notes to, in his own Hand").[54] The pamphlet thus advertises Pope's published letters as a cultural spectacle and fuels the intrigue surrounding them, while simultaneously seeking to establish his status as the incidental victim of a widespread malicious practice.

The established history of the Cromwell letters within the public sphere thus functioned as evidence by which Pope could verify his hesitance to publish his correspondence, authenticate the texts of his own editions, and disclaim earlier publications of the letters. Accordingly, he declared in his preface to the 1737 octavo,

> If in [the letters] printed without my consent, there appear too much of a juvenile ambition of wit, or affectation of gayety, I hope it will be consider'd *to whom*, and at *what age* I was guilty of it, and how soon the folly was over? […] I hope it is needless to say I am not accountable for several passages in the surreptitious editions of my letters, which are such as no man of common sense would have published himself. The Errors of the press too were innumerable, and could not but be extremely multiply'd by the Avarice and Negligence of piratical Printers, in so many repeated Impressions.[55]

In this way, the commercially contested and textually unstable Cromwell letters serve to corroborate the improved texts of Pope's 1737 editions over those he had supplied to Curll in 1735. In combination, Pope's paratexts provide a narrative and context to his published letters which instils them with value by anchoring them both to their material

[53] *Narrative* (1735), p. 36.
[54] *Narrative* (1735), pp. i; 10.
[55] 1737 octavo, pp. v; ix. The note from "The Booksellers to the Reader" in this edition (p. xvi) observes that "we have prefix'd the *Author's Preface*; and to make it known to be such, have put it into the *First Person* […] instead of the *Third* […] lest future times shou'd be led to mistake it for some other Editor's" – thereby lending it a greater personal immediacy without necessitating Pope's acknowledgment of the edition.

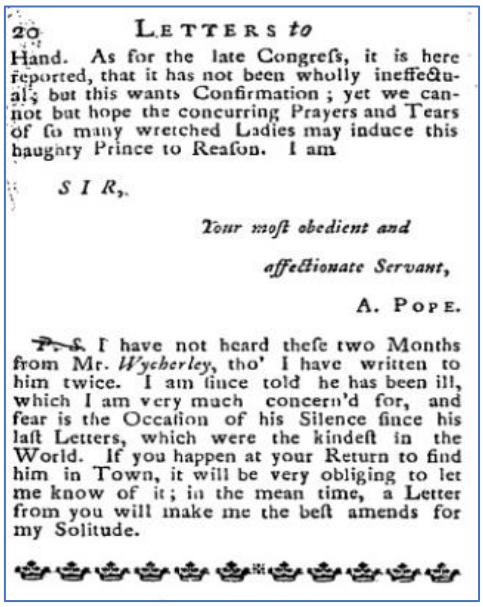
manuscript origins and to the unscrupulous rapaciousness of the literary marketplace, embodied by Curll. Yet despite these claims, as Curll observed, this relationship was in fact one of reciprocity: the two men exchanged correspondence through intermediaries and issued competing advertisements in the newspapers, and Pope employed many of the same tools and tactics as Curll to prepare and publish his own texts and to argue for their veracity.[56] While Curll advertised his possession of autograph letters ("The *Original Manuscripts* […] may be seen at Mr. *Curl*'s House"), Pope advertised material evidence of Curll's editorially compromised texts ("*The Original Papers, in* Curl's *own Hand, may be seen at* T. Cooper's").[57] Even as Pope criticized Curll's editing and reprinting of published texts, he was forced to resort to the same method in his own editions to reconstruct the Cromwell letters from Curll's *Miscellanea*. Through his active participation in and manipulation of the clandestine practices and print proliferation which he decried within contemporary publishing culture, Pope established the textual instability which enabled him to reshape the correspondence across his own editions.

A detailed consideration of Pope's remediation of these letters within his own editions further reveals that his response to the *Miscellanea* entailed close attention to their layout, typographical detail, and physical format. This editorial work formed part of Pope's broader effort to present his letters more advantageously to later audiences by differentiating his letters from Curll's published texts.[58] For instance, Pope's changes to the presentation of the letters alters their appearance within his own editions – perhaps

[56] Curll's letter "To Mr. Pope" in *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence* (1735), ii, p. xvi. See *Corr*. i. xiii-xiv.
[57] *The Daily Post Boy*, 12 May 1735; quoted in *Narrative* (1735), pp. 26-7.
[58] See Willan, "Mr Pope's Penmanship" (2011), p. 271-2.

most strikingly, through the absence of the deferential greetings which open and close his letters in manuscript and in the *Miscellanea*, as shown in **Figure 1.8** below.

1726 *Miscellanea*



20 LETTERS *to*

Hand. As for the late Congreſs, it is here reported, that it has not been wholly ineffectual; but this wants Confirmation; yet we cannot but hope the concurring Prayers and Tears of ſo many wretched Ladies may induce this haughty Prince to Reaſon. I am

S I R,

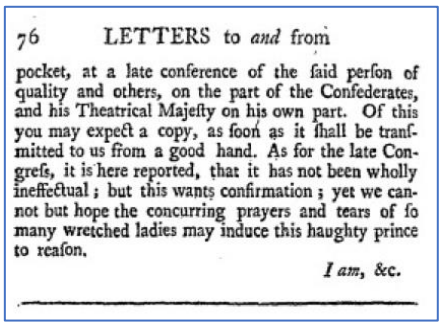
Your moſt obedient and

affectionate Servant,

A. POPE.

~~P. S.~~ I have not heard theſe two Months from Mr. *Wycherley*, tho' I have written to him twice. I am ſince told he has been ill, which I am very much concern'd for, and fear is the Occaſion of his Silence ſince his laſt Letters, which were the kindeſt in the World. If you happen at your Return to find him in Town, it will be very obliging to let me know of it; in the mean time, a Letter from you will make me the beſt amends for my Solitude.

1737 octavo

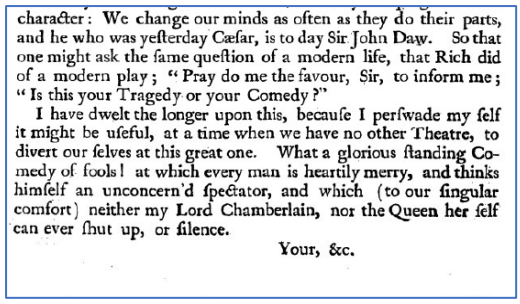


76 LETTERS to *and* from

pocket, at a late conference of the ſaid perſon of quality and others, on the part of the Confederates, and his Theatrical Majeſty on his own part. Of this you may expect a copy, as ſoon as it ſhall be tranſmitted to us from a good hand. As for the late Congreſs, it is here reported, that it has not been wholly ineffectual; but this wants confirmation; yet we cannot but hope the concurring prayers and tears of ſo many wretched ladies may induce this haughty prince to reaſon.

I am, &c.

1737 folio



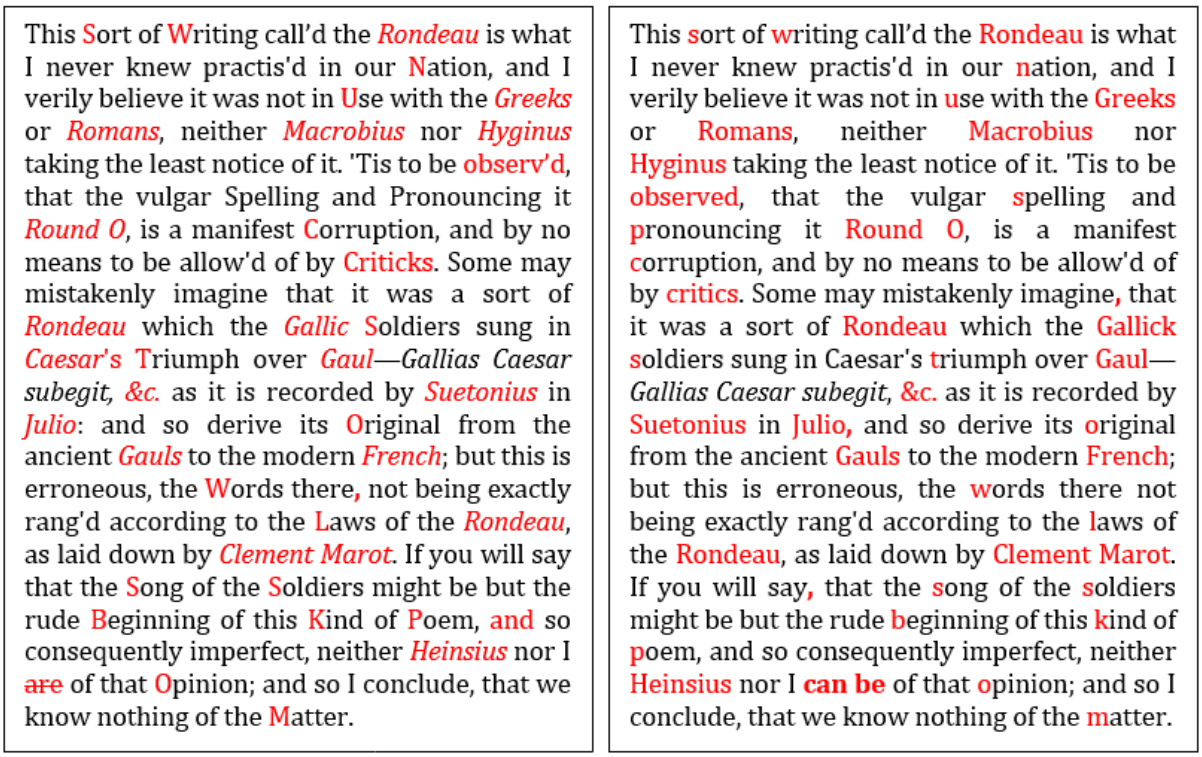
character: We change our minds as often as they do their parts, and he who was yeſterday Cæſar, is to day Sir John Daw. So that one might ask the ſame queſtion of a modern life, that Rich did of a modern play; "Pray do me the favour, Sir, to inform me; "Is this your Tragedy or your Comedy?"

I have dwelt the longer upon this, becauſe I perſwade my ſelf it might be uſeful, at a time when we have no other Theatre, to divert our ſelves at this great one. What a glorious ſtanding Comedy of fools! at which every man is heartily merry, and thinks himſelf an unconcern'd ſpectator, and which (to our ſingular comfort) neither my Lord Chamberlain, nor the Queen her ſelf can ever ſhut up, or ſilence.

Your, &c.

*Figure 1.8 Changing valedictions across editions, as shown in a comparative view of the closure of the letter of August 29 1709 (*Corr. *i. 70-72). Also apparent are the removal of the postscript in the octavo, and the further truncation of the body of the letter in the folio.*

Meanwhile, comparison of part of the letter of 24 June 1710 shown in **Figure 1.3** above, as printed in Curll's *Miscellanea* and in Pope's octavo edition, demonstrates the detailed nature of Pope's typographical changes:



This Sort of Writing call'd the *Rondeau* is what I never knew practis'd in our Nation, and I verily believe it was not in Use with the *Greeks* or *Romans*, neither *Macrobius* nor *Hyginus* taking the least notice of it. 'Tis to be observ'd, that the vulgar Spelling and Pronouncing it *Round O*, is a manifest Corruption, and by no means to be allow'd of by Criticks. Some may mistakenly imagine that it was a sort of *Rondeau* which the *Gallic* Soldiers sung in *Caesar*'s Triumph over *Gaul*—*Gallias Caesar subegit, &c.* as it is recorded by *Suetonius* in *Julio*: and so derive its Original from the ancient *Gauls* to the modern *French*; but this is erroneous, the Words there, not being exactly rang'd according to the Laws of the *Rondeau*, as laid down by *Clement Marot*. If you will say that the Song of the Soldiers might be but the rude Beginning of this Kind of Poem, and so consequently imperfect, neither *Heinsius* nor I ~~are~~ of that Opinion; and so I conclude, that we know nothing of the Matter.

This sort of writing call'd the Rondeau is what I never knew practis'd in our nation, and I verily believe it was not in use with the Greeks or Romans, neither Macrobius nor Hyginus taking the least notice of it. 'Tis to be observed, that the vulgar spelling and pronouncing it Round O, is a manifest corruption, and by no means to be allow'd of by critics. Some may mistakenly imagine, that it was a sort of Rondeau which the Gallick soldiers sung in Caesar's triumph over Gaul—*Gallias Caesar subegit, &c.* as it is recorded by Suetonius in Julio, and so derive its original from the ancient Gauls to the modern French; but this is erroneous, the words there not being exactly rang'd according to the laws of the Rondeau, as laid down by Clement Marot. If you will say, that the song of the soldiers might be but the rude beginning of this kind of poem, and so consequently imperfect, neither Heinsius nor I **can be** of that opinion; and so I conclude, that we know nothing of the matter.

Figure 1.9 Pope to Cromwell, 24 June 1710, in Curll's 1726 Miscellanea *(l), and Pope's 1737 octavo (r).*[59]

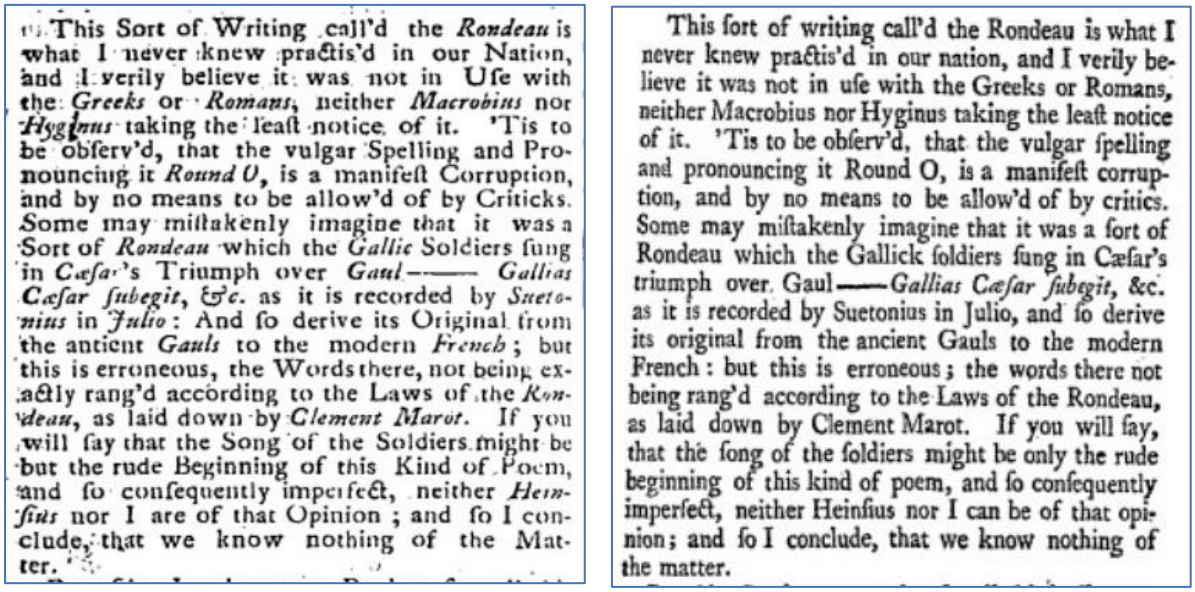
We see here Pope's responsive revision of the changes by which Curll (as discussed above) had standardized the spelling and punctuation of the manuscripts.[60] Throughout the full letter, Pope preserves six of Curll's ten spelling changes, and makes two further alterations ("~~Criticks~~" to "**Critics**"; and "~~observ'd~~" to "**observed**"). In addition, Pope's editions contain occasional adjustments to prose style ("Warlike Animals, ~~that of old~~ were Enemies" becomes "warlike animals, **those ancient** enemies") and – particularly in the authorized folio – conceal names printed by Curll ("Lord L~~umle~~y and Mr L~~itto~~n" become Lord L**y and Mr L**n").[61] Pope also makes minor changes to punctuation: he deletes four commas, including both of those added by Curll, adds one of his own, and reinstates

[59] *Corr*. i. 89-91. *Miscellanea* [1726], p. 38; 1737 octavo, p. 87.

[60] 24 June 1710, *Corr*. i. 89-91. Such 'accidentals', considered by adherents of a copy-text critical approach as potential artefacts of composition, are excluded from Sherburn's edition. See Greg, "Rationale of Copy-Text" (1950), p. 21. However, James McLaverty's work on the intricacies of Pope's involvement in the printing of his poems testifies to his editorial scrutiny on a detailed and practical level, encompassing format, typography, and the quality of printing materials. See *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (2001), pp. 5-7; 46-7;182-5; 214-8.

[61] 24 June 1710, *Corr*. i. 89-91. These figures were identified in the octavo and accompanied by a footnote stating, "The names left out in the Author's Edit."

an “a” that Curll had deleted. Finally, Pope abandons Curll’s sustained use of italics and consistently lowers the initial capital on all but proper nouns, including all of those raised by Curll. Pope’s changes sometimes revert to the manuscript text, suggesting his lingering memory of the original letters or default to his own familiar grammatical style. However, his intervention in the text at this level also indicates a desire to substantially alter the overall typographical character of the letters in his own editions, thereby changing their visual impact on the page, as illustrated in **Figure 1.10** below:



This Sort of Writing call'd the *Rondeau* is what I never knew practis'd in our Nation, and I verily believe it was not in Uſe with the *Greeks* or *Romans*, neither *Macrobius* nor *Hyginus* taking the leaſt notice of it. 'Tis to be obſerv'd, that the vulgar Spelling and Pronouncing it *Round O*, is a manifeſt Corruption, and by no means to be allow'd of by Criticks. Some may miſtakenly imagine that it was a Sort of *Rondeau* which the *Gallic* Soldiers ſung in *Cæſar*'s Triumph over *Gaul*—— *Gallias Cæſar ſubegit, &c.* as it is recorded by *Suetonius* in *Julio*: And ſo derive its Original from the antient *Gauls* to the modern *French*; but this is erroneous, the Words there, not being exactly rang'd according to the Laws of the *Rondeau*, as laid down by *Clement Marot*. If you will ſay that the Song of the Soldiers might be but the rude Beginning of this Kind of Poem, and ſo conſequently imperfect, neither *Heinſius* nor I are of that Opinion; and ſo I conclude, that we know nothing of the Matter.

This ſort of writing call'd the Rondeau is what I never knew practis'd in our nation, and I verily believe it was not in uſe with the Greeks or Romans, neither Macrobius nor Hyginus taking the leaſt notice of it. 'Tis to be obſerv'd, that the vulgar ſpelling and pronouncing it Round O, is a manifeſt corruption, and by no means to be allow'd of by critics. Some may miſtakenly imagine that it was a ſort of Rondeau which the Gallick ſoldiers ſung in Cæſar's triumph over Gaul——*Gallias Cæſar ſubegit*, &c. as it is recorded by Suetonius in Julio, and ſo derive its original from the ancient Gauls to the modern French: but this is erroneous; the words there not being rang'd according to the Laws of the Rondeau, as laid down by Clement Marot. If you will ſay, that the ſong of the ſoldiers might be only the rude beginning of this kind of poem, and ſo conſequently imperfect, neither Heinſius nor I can be of that opinion; and ſo I conclude, that we know nothing of the matter.

Figure 1.10 Pope to Cromwell, 24 June 1710, in Curll’s 1726 duodecimo Miscellanea [1726], p. 38 *(l), and Pope’s 1737 octavo, p. 87 (r).* Corr. *i. 89-91.*

Pope’s attention to capitalization and italics may also be particularly significant in undermining the authority of the *Miscellanea* and reshaping readers’ impression of the texts. Since Curll’s tendency towards introducing upper-case initial letters was observed in other editions around this time, Pope’s lowering of these could conceivably present an

obviously 'corrected' text apparently rescued from Curll's editorial butchering.[62] The removal of this scheme of attributed emphasis also reduces the prominence of many of the words on which Pope's wit and innuendo turns, adding a subtlety to their delivery and softening their impact. This mirrors Pope's treatment of his poetic work after 1717, in which Richard Wendorf observes a "pioneering abandonment" of capitalization and italic which preceded a more widespread move away from such formatting from 1750.[63] Furthermore, through their modernized, standardized, and expanded spelling, and the muted typography of their lowered capitals, Pope's editions seem also to repudiate the old-fashioned published epistolary models of Restoration wits as represented by figures such as Cromwell.[64] Pope's typographical changes also visually move the letter's form on the page away from the cramped printed copy of the *Miscellanea*, rendering the lines smoother and more open. These changes are supported by the printed formats of Pope's own editions, each larger than Curll's duodecimo *Miscellanea*, which underline his perception of the literary quality of his texts. Vinton Dearing observes that Pope's authorized quarto and folio editions were issued "on thick 'fine' paper" and that his published correspondence "match[es] the formats" of his 1717 and 1735 volumes of his poetical *Works* and his eleven volumes of Homeric translations.[65] Pope's approach to accidentals and the material presentation of the text indicates that he believed both that

[62] For instance, in the 1741 *Works* of Edward Young: see James E May, "The Authority of Accidental Variants in the Tonson Second Edition of Edward Young's *Love of Fame*", *Studies in Bibliography* (1984), pp. 187-197.

[63] Richard Wendorf, "Abandoning the capital in eighteenth-century London", *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 78-79.

[64] For instance, see translated and original letters by Dryden, Cheek, Dennis, Cromwell and others in *Familiar and Courtly Letters, Written By Mons. Voiture, to Persons of the greatest Wit, Honour and Quality of both Sex, in the Court of France. Made English by several Eminent Hands* (London, 1700).

[65] Dearing, "1737 Editions" (1950), p. 189.

his correspondence was worthy of the same level of editorial attention as his poetic output, and that its status as a work could be mediated and validated by its physical form.

3.2 Textual overview: edition extent and letter selection

Pope's attention to the letters' material context and visual appearance was accompanied by significant textual variation within and between his editions. A quantitative view of the letter transcriptions within each edition illustrates how these changes collectively shaped the representation of Pope's letters to Cromwell across each format. For instance, the illustration of the editions' overall extent in **Figure 1.11** below indicates that the reduced selection of letters across Pope's two 1737 editions also results in a progressive decrease in their total textual volume.

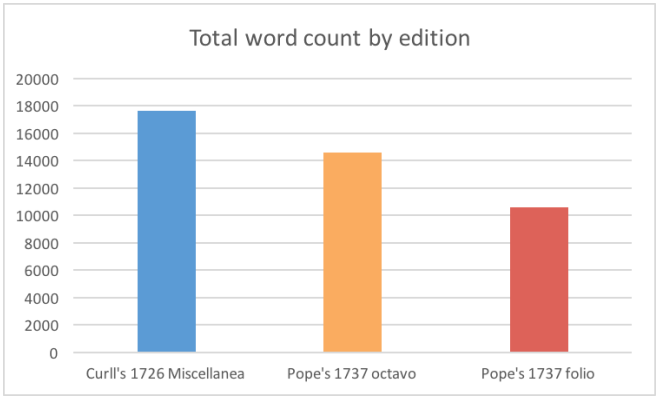


Figure 1.11 A comparative view of the total word count of Pope's letters to Cromwell across three editions.

This view further supports the inference that the octavo represents a point on the editorial scale which bridges the gap between the relatively raw and faithful *Miscellanea* and the more heavily sanitized folio. Similarly, the minor variation across editions in the average word counts of individual letters to Cromwell – 705 words in the *Miscellanea*, 608 in the octavo, and 662 in the folio – confirms that the difference in volume derives from the inclusion of fewer, shorter, letters in Pope's own editions than in Curll's. Since Pope maintained control over his editions of 1737 and was not limited by constraints of

space, access to material, or other restrictions, his editorial reconstruction of the Cromwell letters in these volumes can be perceived as constituting his preferred representation of the correspondence within each context.[66] As such, it suggests Pope's increasingly selective and exclusive approach to both the letters themselves, and the text within them.

A closer view of some of the letters which Pope elected to include in, or omit from, his own editions further indicates his active curation of the correspondence. The fifth volume of Pope's published *Works*, released in 1737 in octavo format, constituted his first opportunity to independently reshape the Cromwell letters. This edition presented a new version of the correspondence, expanded by seven letters which Pope had introduced into Curll's edition of 1735, as well as nine new letters from Cromwell to Pope, and excluding eight letters previously printed by Curll. These introduced and omitted letters thus dramatically alter the octavo's representation of the correspondence from that seen in the *Miscellanea*, while closely replicating, at a surface level, the volume and sequence of the letters Curll had printed. In simultaneously controlling and confusing the linear sequence of the correspondence, Pope both reshapes its narrative structure to suit his own purposes and casts doubt on the authenticity of Curll's edition. As shown in **Figure 1.2** above, Pope introduced letters with dates closely adjacent to those he had omitted, thereby apparently reconstructing a chronological series from the letters printed in the *Miscellanea.* This approach is confirmed by a closer view of such letters: for example, the letter which Pope added under the date of 27 April 1708 was almost certainly designed

[66] However, Dearing attributes the omission of letters in the folio to "Pope's desire to produce a single volume of manageable size without sacrificing too many of the [previously printed] letters", "1737 editions" (1950), p. 196.

to discredit that which Curll had published under the similar date of 25 April 1708. The later letter proves to be a whimsically brief and empty philosophical consideration of "Nothing"; an almost flagrant fabrication in which Pope muses, "Why shou'd a Fellow like me, who all his life does nothing, be asham'd to write nothing?"[67] Turning to the letter it displaces, it is easy to see why Pope might have considered it an undesirable candidate for publication: it contains a verse section on the "~~well-worn Paths~~" of the "~~Nymphs of *Drury*~~" ("~~the Whores of *Drury*-Lane~~").[68] The overview above also indicated that Pope's reconstitution of the correspondence attended to its original communicative nature, and employed its chronological trajectory to reconstruct and redirect the conversation. This strategy is illustrated by a series of letters dating from late 1710, in which inserted letters from Pope respond to added letters from Cromwell, thereby turning this one-sided series into a dialogue. Firstly, Pope's added letter of 11 November 1710 is cemented into the correspondence as "Answer" to a preceding letter of Cromwell's of 5 November, in which Pope's critical opinion is solicited; while that of 17 December 1710 responds to Cromwell's apparent "curiosity" about Crashaw in a previous, unprinted, letter.[69] Yet the artificial nature of this crafted conversation is underlined by Pope's deletion of references to sequential letters elsewhere (e.g. "~~in my last,~~"), thereby curtailing the practical, self-referential nature of a genuine correspondence.[70] Pope's introduced letters also help to bolster and defend the merit of the correspondence itself. For example, that of 30 December 1710 directly addresses the tone and character of Pope's letters:

> As the fooling and toying with a mistress is a proof of fondness not disrespect, so is raillery with a friend. I know there are Prudes in friendship who expect distance, awe,

[67] 27 April 1708, *Corr*. i. 48. This is the only letter within the Cromwell correspondence which Sherburn marks as "suspected as a conflation or fabrication by Pope".
[68] 25 & 27 April 1708, *Corr*. i. 46-48.
[69] 11 November 1710, *Sherburn*, I. 103-104; 17 December 1710, *Sherburn*, I. 109-111. See also the letter of 29 August 1709, redated in Pope's editions as 19 August (*Corr*. i. 70-72).
[70] 28 Oct 1710; *Corr*. i. 101; octavo, p. 98.

> and adoration, but I know you are not one of them; and for my part I am no idol-worshipper, tho' a papist.[71]

Here, without apparent prompt, Pope mounts a carefully argued defence of his epistolary tone, which slyly dares the reader to disapprove. Pope's reconstruction of the correspondence in his octavo thus demonstrates his desire to present the letters as a genuine correspondence which could refute Curll's texts through an impression of authenticity, while crafting them as a means by which to introduce new literary arguments, develop certain themes, and influence readers' perception of and attitudes towards the correspondence.

The proportionate prominence of the Cromwell correspondence was further reduced within the more select authorized subscription quarto and folio volumes of *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*, for which Pope's octavo formed the base text.[72] Pope retained in this edition just sixteen of his letters to Cromwell which he had printed in the octavo, omitting six further letters previously printed by Curll. Pope also omits two of the letters to Cromwell which he had introduced via his 1735 edition, and one from Cromwell to Pope. This mode of curation suggests that in selecting letters for his official edition Pope was not only responding to Curll's *Miscellanea*, but also sought to present a different and more limited form of the correspondence than that which would appear in the octavo. Two of the three letters introduced by Pope but omitted from the folio suggest Pope's increased desire to excise extraneous or quotidian material within this edition – these include his letter about "~~Nothing~~" of 27 April 1708, and Cromwell's account of journeys and health ("~~Mr. *Wycherley* visited me at the *Bath* in my sickness~~").[73] The other letter, meanwhile,

[71] 30 December 1710, *Corr.* i. 111. This characterization endorses Cromwell's observation of their "familiar Raillery" within the prefatory letter of 6 July 1727, *Corr*. i. 439-40.
[72] See Dearing, "1737 editions" (1950), pp. 187, 196.
[73] Cromwell to Pope, 26 October 1711, *Corr*. i. 134.

along with further letters printed in the *Miscellanea* and octavo but not reprinted in the folio, reflects the more sanitized and discreet nature of this edition: it indicates his intention to "~~drown all high Thoughts in the *Lethe* of Cowslip-Wine; […] If ever I seek for Immortality here, may I be d—d!~~".[74] Pope's exclusion of such perceived trivialities and risqué or clumsy expressions within this edition, in combination with his continued disruption of the letters' chronological sequence and curtailment of their conventional greetings, further removes the letters in his authorized editions from their manuscript epistolary origins. These changes lend the texts a more formal and polished quality, closer to that of individual works – a shift underlined by the fact that Pope's explicit references to "Letter(s)" (for which thanks, requests, apologies, etc. had been offered) are reduced from twenty-five in the *Miscellanea* and twenty in the octavo, to just five in the folio.

3.3 Thematic patterns in Pope's textual editing

These variations in volume, extent, and letter selection combine with Pope's nuanced alterations to vocabulary and register to enact a dramatic shift in the style and subject of the correspondence represented within each edition. I will survey these changes through a combination of distant reading and close critical analysis. A comparative view of the letter texts at scale highlights distinct thematic patterns within Pope's editorial approach. As such, it serves to visualize and verify the more subjective impressions that emerge from a close reading of the correspondence in manuscript and print. I will further explore these quantitative trends through a detailed consideration of the textual changes by which Pope adjusts his epistolary voice and refocuses the letters' depiction of various facets of his public character. Firstly, throughout his editions, Pope moderates the

[74] Pope to Cromwell, 10 May 1708, *Corr*. i. 48-9.

deferential and complimentary tone of his letters to Cromwell, staking out a greater claim to precocious authority. Secondly, Pope suppresses his youthful admiration and emulation of his early social circle (including Cromwell and their other coffee-house friends) in favour of a focused and refined demonstration of serious critical acumen, classical learning, and poetic talent. Finally, while Pope frequently censors his own texts to refute the embarrassing reflection on his own character presented in the *Miscellanea*, he preserves certain risqué demonstrations of precocious and critical wit, revealing his apparent pride in these features. Furthermore, this selective self-censorship is undertaken according to a sliding scale that reflects the extent to which the audience of each edition is likely to appreciate or censure the relevant passages. In combination, these findings invite us to postulate a systematic editorial practice, corroborating the view that Pope's process of revision either adheres to an identifiable, deliberately executed schema or an inherent editorial bias, rather than being unconscious or coincidental.

3.3.1 Moderating compliment, deference, and self-deprecation

Pope's editorial curation of letters within his own editions alters the tone and character of the correspondence in ways which suggest an attempt to reconfigure the social dynamics of his relationship with Cromwell. The letters in manuscript and in the *Miscellanea* present a typical homosocial discourse between an older literary man and his protégée – one of compliment, imitation, and deference on the part of the younger correspondent. However, as discussed in the introduction to the thesis, the Restoration style of courtly wit and extravagant compliment to which Pope originally aspired in these letters had been increasingly displaced within broader epistolary culture by a more

muted and fraternal authorial camaraderie.[75] As a result of this cultural shift and of Pope's more mature perspective, we see in his editions a move away from this mode of conventional courtesy and its accompanying hierarchical dynamic, as suggested by the absence of extended conventional greetings and compliment. For example, Pope's wholesale removal of respectful salutations and valedictions, as illustrated in **Figure 1.8** above, helps to reduce the total prevalence of the word "Sir" in the letters to Cromwell from ninety instances in the *Miscellanea* to twenty in the octavo and eighteen in the folio – a significant decrease even when, as shown in **Figure 1.12** below, we account for the differing total extent of each edition.[76]

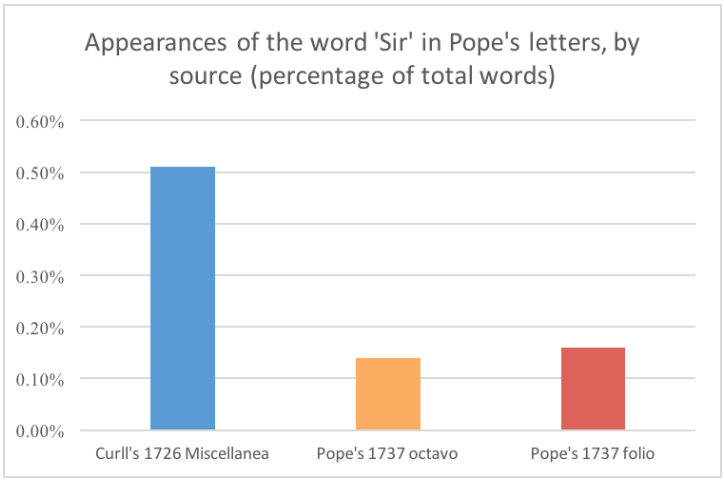


Figure 1.12 A comparative view of the prevalence of the word 'Sir', scaled proportionately as a percentage of the total words in Pope's letters to Cromwell in each edition.

This change, even if a purely practical decision to prune extraneous or repetitive material, has the significant effect of isolating each letter from its original communicative context and reframing it as a more independent and literary text. However, it also serves to conclude the letters in the later editions with an air of curt authority rather than

[75] See Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), pp. 49-55, esp. 53.
[76] Naturally, this is congruent with other traditional elements of this epistolary etiquette: the words "humble" and "obedient" are eliminated from Pope's editions.

courteous deference. Furthermore, greetings and valedictions represent only the surface of this change: even after accounting for these, a significant disparity remains in Pope's use of the word "Sir" between editions, indicating that this word has also been excluded or excised from within the body of the letters ("Well, ~~Sir,~~ for the future […]").[77]

This is congruent with other verbal changes suggesting Pope's desire to control and restrict his register of courtesy within his editions. Compliments receive a similar treatment of disproportionate reduction: the verb "esteem" is reduced from sixteen occurrences in the *Miscellanea* to seven in the octavo and six in the folio, and "admire" from two to zero in both the folio and octavo. Interestingly, though, six out of seven instances of the word "compliment" itself are retained or replaced in the folio (five in the octavo). Pope even inserts a new instance of the word into his own editions – to signal his closure of a letter "without" such praise.[78] These changes suggest that, while content to discuss the phenomenon of this courteous and flattering style in his later texts, Pope is more reluctant to practise it than he had been formerly. This impression is confirmed by a closer view of Pope's more detailed editorial alterations in reprinting from the *Miscellanea*. Pope's letters to Cromwell had conveyed his early self-conscious suspicion of extensive epistolary compliment even as he experimented with it – and his later sensitivity to this conflict is illustrated by his emendation of a somewhat absurdly hypocritical passage in a letter of August 1710, in which he had criticized Cromwell for his excessive admiration:

> I need not tell you how much I really Esteem ~~and admire~~ you, when ~~I assure you~~ I esteem ~~and admire~~ nothing in the World so much as that Quality. I know you sometimes say Civil Things to me in your Epistolary Style, but those I am to make allowance for, as particularly when you talk of *Admiring*; Tis a word you are so us'd to

[77] Pope to Cromwell, 10 May 1708, *Corr*. i. 48-9.
[78] *Corr*. i. 111-12.

> in Conversation of Ladies, that it will creep into your Expressions in spite of you, ev'n to your friends.[79]

If there was a joke in the self-contradiction here, Pope doesn't risk it with his 1737 audience: his deletion of his own repeated admiring assurances instead prioritizes a conscious repudiation of fashionable compliment.

This stylistic shift, which suppresses Pope's tone of youthful eagerness in favour of a more mature confidence, is consolidated by Pope's tendency in his editions to eschew content that suggests an overly deferential or self-deprecating stance, or hints at vulnerability or *pathos*. For example, the letter of 30 November 1709 excluded from both of Pope's editions consists of a stream of apologetic and flattering politeness, reflecting on his own "~~Impertinence~~" and Cromwell's "~~many Civilities~~": "~~you not only have acquainted me with many of my Errours in Scribling, but with some in my Conduct~~".[80] Pope may have felt that his diffident denigration of his own writing here, in particular, was incongruous in the context of his later literary status and of his authoritative censure of such "scribble[rs]" in the *Essay on Criticism*, published just two years after this letter was written.[81] Similarly, Pope omits to print a flattering letter of 15 December 1709 which suggests his position as an outsider, residing beyond the cultural centre of London ("~~I am extremly impatient to enjoy your agreable Conversation, and to let you know how much I prefer it to any here~~").[82] Pope also eliminates unnecessary deference through detailed editorial alterations, perhaps seeking to construct a more equal balance of status. For instance, an expression of gratitude for Cromwell's friendship ("~~Sir I shall be very proud of a Line or~~

[79] Sherburn observes this "amusing" alteration. 21 August 1710, *Corr*. i. 97.
[80] Pope to Cromwell, 30 November 1709, *Corr*. i. 75-6. See also the omitted letter of 25 June 1711 (*Corr*. i. 124-5.
[81] *Poems I*, p. 243, l. 34; p. 307, l. 595.
[82] Pope to Cromwell, 15 December 1709, *Corr*. i. 76-7.

~~two from you sometimes during this Summer~~") is deleted from a letter of May 1709.[83] Similarly, Pope frequently omits his carefully patient and often complimentary solicitations to Cromwell regarding the tense circumstances of his relationship with Wycherley. In two letters of 1710 which he printed in the octavo, Pope excises passages attributing "~~Mr *Wycherley*'s [...] Chagrin~~" to his "~~Illness~~", and voicing his suspicion that "~~Mr. *Wycherley* speaks ill enough of me~~".[84] In the folio, these two letters are omitted altogether, as is a further letter in which Pope constructs Cromwell's letters as "~~a perfect Charity to a Man [...] utterly forgotten of all his Friends but you; for since Mr Wycherly left London I have not heard a word from him~~".[85]

Where self-effacement remains in Pope's editions, perhaps as a result of the value which he placed upon personal modesty, passages are often changed to introduce subtly more assertive phrasing, or an assumption of mutual respect. Pope's edits in this regard are often minute, as shown by his careful adjustment to a letter of January 1709: "if ever you found any pleasure in my company it must ~~only~~ **surely** have been that which ~~almost evryman takes~~ **most men take** in observing the faults and follies of another".[86] Similarly, Pope's description of the "pleasure of ~~Serving~~ my friends" is altered in his editions to the "pleasure of **seeing**" them.[87] As suggested by the omitted letters above, Pope also seems conscious of the verbal repetition surrounding the prevalent topic of social isolation. Accordingly, he removes several references to such obscurity: in a letter of August 1710 Pope presents himself as "a Man ~~as much bury'd~~ in Retirement ~~as ever Hermit was,~~";

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[83] 7 May 1709, *Corr*. i. 58.
[84] 25 November 1710, *Corr*. i. 105-8; 28 October 17810, *Corr*. i. 100-102. See also Pope's postscript omitted from the letter of 29 August 1709, *Corr*. i. 70-2 (shown in **Figure 1.6** above), and the omitted letters 30 November 1709, *Corr*. i. 75-6; 15 December 1709, *Corr*. i. 76-7.
[85] 21 August 1710, *Corr*. i. 96.
[86] 19 January 1708-9, *Corr*. i. 38.
[87] 19 January 1708-9, *Corr*. i. 38.

while in one of 17 May he claims to be a "useless Member of the Commonwealth ~~buryd in solitude~~."[88] In his folio edition, Pope also removes a claim to be "~~*oblitusque meorum, obliviscendus & illis*~~." from his letter of 19 October 1709, perhaps conscious of its duplication in the letter of 17 May 1710.[89] These consistent changes evince Pope's consciousness of how the correspondence functions as a whole, rather than as a series of discrete letters. Such editorial adjustments, while potentially unremarkable in isolation, in combination instill Pope's epistolary voice with a more mature confidence that complements and amplifies his other changes to the letters.

3.3.2 Refining literary reflections: coffee-house society, classical criticism, and poetry

Comparison of the letters across formats also reveals the changing nature and frequency of Pope's specific references to individuals and subjects in print, suggesting an effort to adjust the social milieu and literary focus presented by the correspondence in the *Miscellanea*. Here, Pope's letters to Cromwell had depicted his enthusiastic participation in a coffee-house culture of older, often literary, men.[90] However, **Figure 1.13** below indicates that the frequency of Pope's specific references to individuals within this circle are invariably disproportionately reduced in his own editions.

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[88] 21 August 1710, *Corr*. i. 96; 17 May 1710, *Corr*. i. 87-8.

[89] 19 October 1709, *Corr*. i. 72. Horace, *Epistles*, i. xi. 9: "forgetting my friends and by them forgotten", John Davie and Robert Cowan (eds.), *Oxford World's Classics: Horace: Satires and Epistles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 79.

[90] This social group is here referred to collectively using the model of the coffee-house which had, during Cromwell's lifetime, evolved "from a novelty into an essential institution of urban life in England". It was increasingly associated with print culture and constituted the site of "civility and politeness", while encouraging "social mixing". See Lawrence E. Klein, "Coffeehouse Civility, 1660-1714: An Aspect of Post-Courtly Culture in England", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 59:1 (1996), 30-36.

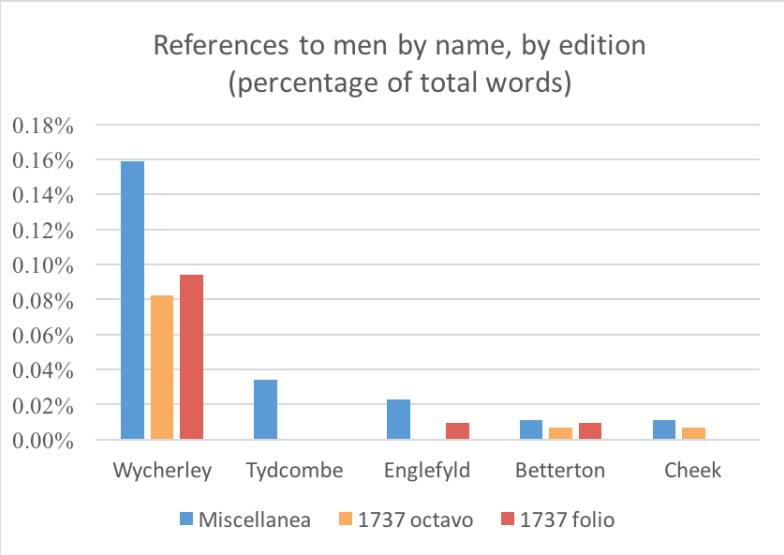


Figure 1.13 Proportionate number of references to individual men by name within each edition.

This figure shows that Pope significantly minimizes the presence in his editions of lesser-known and non-literary individuals such as Anthony Englefyld [Englefield] and John Tydcombe [Tidcombe], while also omitting some mentions of figures such as the actor Thomas Betterton and writer Thomas Cheek.[91] Meanwhile, the *Miscellanea*'s twenty-eight references to William Wycherley are reduced to ten in Pope's editions. In combination, rather than simply distancing the letters from mundane specificity, the diminished prominence of these figures signals a broader shift in the social context of the correspondence in Pope's editions. These changes are echoed by the effect shown in **Figure 1.14** below, in which mentions of "Coffee" and "coffeehouse(s)" were reduced from nine in the *Miscellanea* to four in the octavo and three in the folio, but references to "Poetry" (including "Poet(s)" and "poetical") increased from twenty-one in the *Miscellanea* to thirty-six in the octavo and twenty-three in the folio.

[91] Major-General John Tidcombe (1642–1713); Anthony Englefield (1637–1711); Thomas Betterton (1635–1710); Thomas Cheek. This figure includes individuals associated with this circle who are mentioned in Pope's letters at least twice.

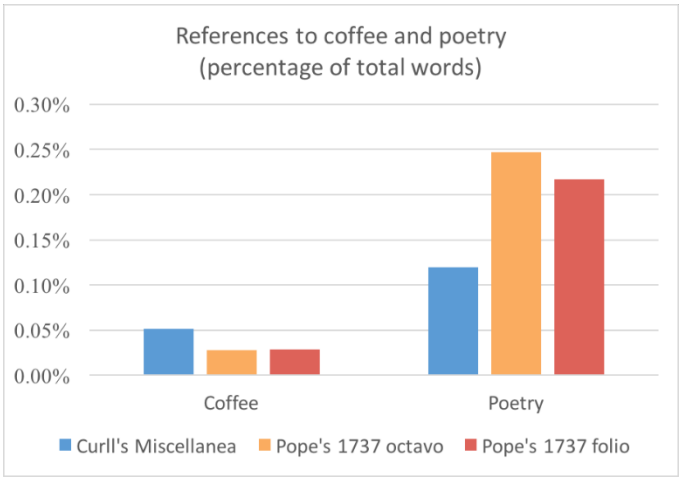


Figure 1.14 Proportionate decrease in references to "coffee" in Pope's 1737 editions, viewed against an increase in reference to "poetry" (including "poet(s)", and "poetical").

These changes suggest a marked shift in the content of the letters within Pope's editions, in which mentions of coffee-house society and its participants are excluded, and references to poetry and poetic influences are actively introduced.

This expansion of poetic matters in Pope's editions is also accompanied by a shift in references to his literary predecessors. For example, **Figure 1.15** below illustrates the comparative frequency with which Pope's classical and more contemporary authorial literary influences are mentioned by name across his editions.

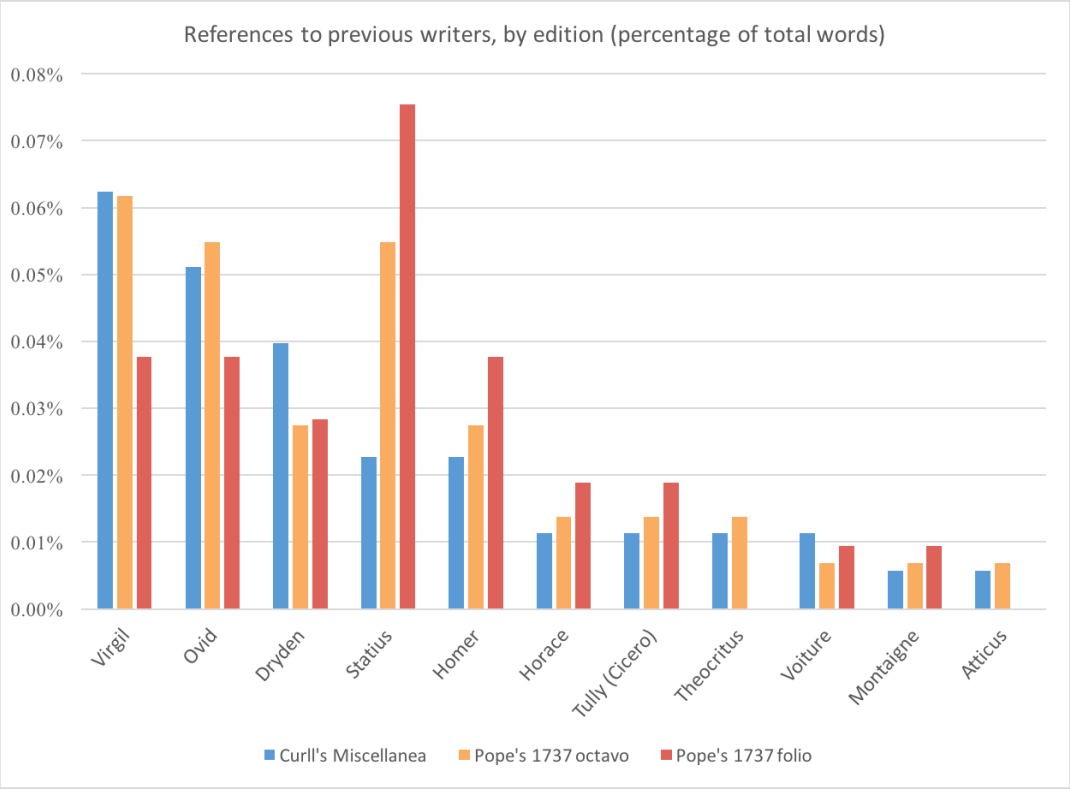


Figure 1.15 References to individual writers, by edition (percentage of the total words) [92]

This figure shows that in Pope's octavo, references to most writers are maintained from or increased in the *Miscellanea* despite the comparative brevity of the later text, suggesting the consistent inclusion of material discussing poetic criticism and translation in this edition. Pope's editorial work on the letters in the folio, meanwhile, appears to assert a broadly levelling influence, balancing the scope of his cultural reference. However, it is particularly notable that, in both of Pope's editions, this effect excludes Statius, of whom mentions by name are doubled in the 1737 texts. This increase indicates that Pope's editions focus on and expand the critical discussion of his early verse translation of the Latin poet, thereby magnifying the presence of his own work in the letters. This effect does not extend to Cromwell's poetic endeavours: references to Ovid,

[92] The figure has been adjusted to accommodate for edition extent: for scale, the highest frequency of reference was 11 (Virgil in the *Miscellanea*) and the lowest, zero (Theocritus and Atticus in the folio).

on whom he was working, are more than halved in the selective folio, though not in the more extensive octavo. The difference in vocabulary across Pope's editions here illustrates how his divergent approach could serve to balance his contradictory editorial impulses: his intention to present a more complete corrected correspondence is achieved in the octavo, while his desire to highlight his precocious literary work shapes the more selective folio. Collectively, these patterns suggest a distinct shift in the social, cultural and literary resonances of the letters within Pope's own editions, and a renegotiation of their representation of this London literary milieu as an influence and context for Pope's early correspondence and works.

Pope's selection of content and textual editing enacts a decline in the representation of coffee-house culture within his editions, accompanied by an increased focus on classical criticism and poetic translation. This adjustment to the presence of his early social and scholarly influences in the Cromwell letters often aligns with his alterations to register, including the careful regulation of compliment and self-deprecation. For instance, we have seen that Wycherley's presence in the correspondence is significantly diminished in the 1737 editions through Pope's excision of his anxious enquiries about his welfare and whereabouts.[93] However, the deletion or modification of more positive references to Wycherley suggest that these changes may also be intended more specifically to reduce the extent of his evident significance and influence. For instance, Pope's effusive praise in a letter of January 1709 is subdued in his editions:

> in this particular ~~as beyond all others~~ I am beyond all acknowledgments obliged to our friend Mr. Wycherley ~~who as if it were not enough to have excelld all *Men* in Wit is resolvd to Excell them in *Good Nature* & Humanity too~~. I know I need no apology to you for speaking of ~~Mr Wycherley~~ **him**.[94]

[93] See Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 99-100.
[94] 19 January 1708/09, *Corr*. i. 38. See also 11 July 1709, *Corr*. i. 68.

Pope appears particularly hesitant in his later texts to praise Wycherley's disposition: in a letter of December 1709, he adjusts his speculation that Wycherley's death would deplete the Nation of "Wit, Probity~~, & Good-nature~~", forecasting instead a loss of only "wit, **and** probity".[95] It might later appear to him somewhat sycophantic to offer such praise to a man whose sustained cantankerousness and displeasure with Pope permeates this selection of letters. Pope also cuts more general complimentary material that explicitly records his admiration and emulation of the older men of this coffee-house culture, and his pleasure and gratitude at being included despite his youth and distance. For instance, from a letter of 10 April 1710, he deletes a long closing passage thanking Cromwell for the "~~abundance of Civility and Goodnature shown to me in Town on all occasions~~", recognizing the "~~Favors~~" of his "~~Friends~~", and offering his "~~Service to those at the Coffeehouse that have so little to employ their Thoughts as to inquire of me.~~"[96] Pope's references to coffee-house society are further restrained and subdued in the folio. Here, he deletes a direct reference to the Widow Hambleton's Coffee House, to which letters for Cromwell were often addressed ("I guess you are return'd by this time, ~~to your old Apartment in the Widow's Corner,~~ to your old business of comparing Critics, and reconciling Commentators"), thereby reducing a perceptible tone of specific familiarity with Cromwell's habits as observed by an outsider.[97] Pope's excision of specific quotidian detail of people and places occurs frequently throughout his published texts, including references and greetings to such peripheral figures as "~~Sir Woolaston Dixey~~", "~~Mr Tydcombe~~", and "~~Mr Englefyld~~".[98] However, such exclusions within the Cromwell letters may also have been intended to conceal unfavourable aspects of the group's activities and

[95] 19 January 1708/09, *Corr*. i. 38; 19 Oct 1709, *Corr*. i. 73.
[96] 10 April 1710, *Corr*. i. 82.
[97] 1 November 1708, *Corr*. i. 51.
[98] 21 August 1710, *Corr*. i. 97; 11 July 1709, *Corr*. i. 68; 12 November 1711, *Corr*. i. 135-6.

dynamics, as reflected in Pope's excised claim that "~~I wou'd as soon write like *Durfey*, as live like *Tydcombe*; whose beastly, laughable Life, is (if you will excuse such a Similitude) not unlike a Fart, at once nasty & diverting.~~"[99]

The editorial intervention we have seen so far indicates that Pope's pride in his association with the literary culture represented by these men, and his desire to emulate their epistolary style, had waned significantly by the 1730s. Due in part to the coffee-house focus on news and novelty, Pope's references to its figures – now deceased and no longer influential – may have seemed dated or obscure in 1737. The shift in focus away from the letters' social setting may also constitute a collateral result of Pope's reduction of the courtesy and self-deprecation which had been necessitated by the mixed nature of coffee-house society. Yet other factors may also contribute to the diminishing prominence of this influential milieu in print. Pope, who achieved literary fame despite his lack of access to a university education, may also have been sensitive to the social and literary resonances of the coffee-house: its confusion of "the learned with the vulgar" and its potential status as "the poor man's university" (as even "each Prentice-boy […] Doth call for his Coffee in Latine").[100] He may have perceived this downmarket association to pose a particular threat to published correspondence emerging from such circles: in 1706, for instance, Charles Gildon had anticipated that "all the Sons of *Wit* about [….] *Wills* [Coffee House…] will be communicating their surprising and occasional Billets to Jilts", encouraged by the "Vanity" of "Epistle-Mongers" who believe "the most trifling of [their]

[99] Pope to Cromwell, 29 August 1709, *Corr*. i. 69-72. See Mack, *Life* (1985), 97. The name "Tydcome" had already been concealed as "T–e" within the 1735 edition. See also Pope's omitted letter of 25 April 1708, *Corr*. i. 46-8.

[100] Klein, "Coffeehouse Civility, 1660-1714" (1996), p. 36. Klein quotes (in parenthesis) *The Coffee Scuffle* (1662).

Productions […] merit the view of the World".[101] Pope may, then, have adjusted the apparent influence of this circle in his letters to Cromwell to reflect the expansion of his own poetic career since these early years. Nevertheless, his retention of carefully moderated references to this group within his own editions suggests his lingering pride in some of these early connections and his consciousness of the insight and context they offer to his poetic development.

The more direct and authoritative register and reduced specificity of reference by which Pope recalibrates the dynamics of his relationship with Cromwell and his circle also facilitates the amplification of literary matters within the letters. Pope's editorial adjustments similarly craft a more mature and confident tone within passages discussing poetic criticism and composition. In his letter of 12 October 1710, for example, Pope removes softening, self-deprecating, or naïve phrasing, and pedantic or superfluous statements:

> the ~~Juvenile~~ Love verses I last troubled you with, where all (I am afraid) is so Puerile, […] Your Judgment of 'em ~~which you give in French,~~ is (I think) very right, […] If you think 'em not worth the Trouble of Correcting, pray tell me so freely, […] you wou'd particularly oblige me by your Remarkes ~~in the Margins~~ on the several Thoughts, as they occurr, ~~& sending me them when you have done.—~~[102]

Pope's removal of the dismissive description of his "Love verses" as "~~Juvenile~~" here demonstrates his desire to restrict negative reflections on his work – an approach extended in the folio by his further excision of the latter part of this passage, including his

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[101] Charles Gildon, *The Post-Boy Robb'd of his Mail: Or, the Pacquet Broke Open*, 2 vols., 2nd edition (London, 1706), vol. i, pp. 348-9. See Brant, "Eighteenth Century Letters" (2006), p. 48.

[102] 12 October 1710, *Corr*. i. 98-9. Sherburn suggests that such specificity results from Pope's attempts to "emulate" the "genteel and superficial pedantry in criticism" of men like Walsh and Sir William Temple, and that the "hidden design" in his letters to Cromwell to which Pope referred in 1735 was probably "that of practising his learning", "to see if it could pass muster". George Sherburn, *The Early Career of Alexander Pope* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), pp. 59-60. James M. Osborn (ed.), *Joseph Spence: Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men: Collected from Conversation*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), i. 43, § 103.

anxiety that Cromwell might "~~think 'em not worth the Trouble of Correcting~~".[103] Pope's omission of obvious or specific observations ("~~which you give in French~~"; "~~in the Margins~~") also serves to create a more relaxed and concise tone and is typical of his editorial changes elsewhere.[104] For instance, he alters his declaration that "You will find, I doubt not, ~~upon reading,~~ that *Statius* was none of the Discreetest poets", and amends his discovery that "there is ~~but one~~ **scarce any**" use of "Hiatus" in all Malherbe's poems – a less definite, and less fervid, declaration.[105] This removal of specificity also extends to critical reference: for example, Pope amends a list of "Rehearsals, Reviews, Gazettes, ~~Tatlers,~~ &c" to avoid the direct invocation of the now-dated 1709-1711 journal (and perhaps its Whiggish coffee-house associations).[106] Meanwhile, in the folio, Pope omits detailed poetic references from one of the letters he had introduced into the series: "~~I cou'd be glad to know if you have translated the 11th Elegy of *Lib*. 2. *Ad amicam navigantem*. the 8th of Book 3, or the 11th of Book 3~~".[107] Such changes contribute towards a more succinct, detached style and general focus in Pope's later editions, and particularly in the folio.

Pope's editorial intervention also subtly adjusts the dynamic of the correspondence as a critical dialogue, resolving the tonal conflicts associated with his junior status. His occasional youthful eagerness is often restrained through attention to phrasing and vocabulary, such as his removal of two instances of the word "~~Noble~~" – from his claim that "*Statius* has a ~~Noble~~ Description of the *Council* of the *Gods*", and from an evaluation of

[103] 12 October 1710; *Corr*. i. 98-100. In the folio, Pope omits the remainder of the paragraph after the word "right".
[104] 12 October 1710, *Corr*. i. 98-9.
[105] 19 January 1707-8; *Corr.* i. 37; 7 May 1709, *Corr.* i. 56-58.
[106] 29 August 1709, *Corr*. i. 70.
[107] 20 July 1710, *Corr*. i. 92-3.

Cromwell's verse as "just ~~& noble~~".[108] Similarly, Pope's emphatic parenthesis on Plutarch – "~~(who if I have any Taste, is the greatest of Moral Philosophers)~~" – is deleted in his editions, while his report of "reading ~~the famous French Poet~~ Malherbe" becomes the more nonchalant "reading Malherbe".[109] Phrases in French, too, are cut from letters, perhaps later seeming superfluous flourishes: Pope removes the expression "~~(sans ceremonie)~~" from a letter of April 1710 and, in a letter of the following month, translates "~~*Tout plein de vie*~~" to "**all alive**".[110] As well as simplifying his delivery, this editing out of juvenile enthusiasms further mutes the influence of models such as Voiture and other writers of the "*French* Rhymes" admired by Cromwell, in favour of a more generalized and worldly literary appraisal.[111] Pope's moderation of his early critical voice also appears to reach for a balance in tone between confidence and humility. For instance, he removes overt suggestions of his consciousness of and pride in his own precocious learning, such as that in his statement in a letter of 25 November 1710 that "tis a mercy that […] I do not give you an account of his [Tycho Brahe's] life and conversation, ~~which perhaps I know a little more of than you imagine~~".[112] Pope's deletions in the folio further control traces of bullishness – for instance, he retains his suggestion that Cromwell's "Judgment […] is (I think) very right,—", while omitting what had followed: "~~for it was my own Opinion before~~".[113]

In combination, Pope's adjustments instill his part in this critical discourse with a more reserved neutrality which lends a greater authority to his pronouncements, and thereby

[108] 23 January 1708-9, *Corr*. i. 36; 11 July 1709, *Corr.* i. 68.
[109] 19 October 1709, *Corr.* i. 75; 7 May 1709, *Corr.* i. 57.
[110] 10 April 1710, *Corr*. i. 1710; 17 May 1710, *Corr*. i. 87-8.
[111] Cromwell to Pope, 3 August 1710, *Corr*. i. 95-6.
[112] 25 November 1710; *Corr*. i. 105.
[113] 12 October 1710, *Corr.* i. 98-99.

imbues these exchanges – in which Pope both invites and promises critical "revenge" – with a greater sense of equal reciprocity.[114] The letters of his own and of Cromwell's which Pope introduced to the correspondence via the 1735 edition also serve to corroborate this impression. For instance, Pope's letter of 20 July 1710 offers a confidently qualified approval of Cromwell's "Version […] of *Ovid*'s Elegy": "It is very much an image of that author's writing, […] You have very judiciously alter'd his method in some places, and I can find nothing which I dare insist upon as an error".[115] Cromwell's side of the correspondence, meanwhile, offers a new perspective on Pope's critical role. For example, Pope's editions reveal and preserve the preceding letter in which Cromwell had emphatically solicited his opinion on this work:

> At last I have prevail'd over a lazy humour to transcribe this Elegy: I have chang'd the situation of some of the *Latin* Verses, and made some Interpolations, but I hope they are not absurd, and foreign to my Author's sense and manner; but they are refer'd to your censure, as a debt; whom I esteem no less a Critic than a Poet: I expect to be treated with the same rigour as I have practis'd to Mr. *Dryden* and you,[116]

As well as evincing the respect in which he held Pope's opinion, Cromwell's languorous tone and convoluted punctuation here highlights, by contrast, the impression of meticulous poetic industriousness that characterizes Pope's published letters. Through Pope's excisions and augmentations, the letters within his own editions thus provide a more favourable perspective on his early critical "Freedoms" – which, as he later claimed in a letter to John Gay (also known only from Pope's editions), may have soured his friendship with Cromwell.[117]

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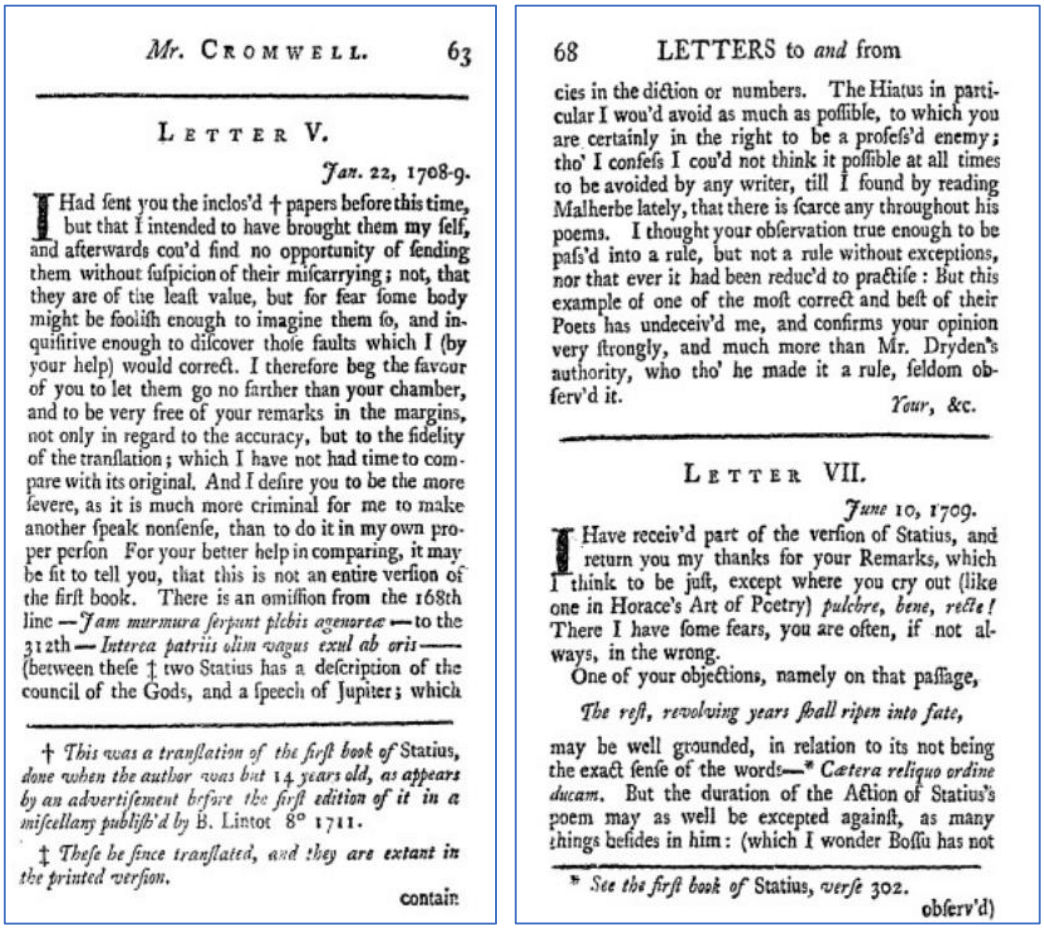
[114] 11 July 1709, *Corr.* i. 96-9; 21 August 1710, *Corr.* i. 96.
[115] 20 July 1710, *Corr*. i. 92-3.
[116] Cromwell to Pope, 15 July 1710, *Corr*. i. 91.
[117] In this letter to Gay of 13 November 1712, Pope wrote, "Our Friend Mr. Cromwell too has been silent all this year; I believe he has been displeas'd at some or other of my Freedoms", *Corr*. i. 153.

Through their more concentrated critical and literary focus, the letters introduced by Pope also ensure the increased prominence of his own poetry within his editions, as indicated by the expanded reference to his translation of Statius shown in **Figure 1.15** above. As a result, Pope's texts also offer new insight to this work, including the circumstances of its production and immediate reception. For example, the inserted letter to Cromwell of 10 June 1709 offers a detailed and assured account of its composition:

> I have receiv'd part of the Version of *Statius*, and return you my thanks for your remarks which I think to be just, except where you cry out (like one in *Horace*'s *Art of Poetry*) *Pulchrè, bené, recté!* There I have some fears, you are often, if not always, in the wrong. […] there are numberless particulars blame-worthy in our Author, which I have try'd to soften […] [118]

The letter serves to illustrate both Cromwell's approbation of his translation and Pope's modest recognition of the merit of his own work – thereby supporting the balanced tone he had fashioned within the previously-published letters. In addition, Pope highlights this precocious achievement through footnotes to the text: as shown in **Figure 1.16** below, the first mention of this work is glossed as "a translation of the first book of *Statius*, done when the author was but *14* years old".[119]

[118] 10 June 1709, *Corr*. i. 63-4.
[119] 19 January 1707-8, *Corr*. i. 36.



Mr. CROMWELL. 63

LETTER V.

Jan. 22, 1708-9.

I Had ſent you the incloſ'd † papers before this time, but that I intended to have brought them my ſelf, and afterwards cou'd find no opportunity of ſending them without ſuſpicion of their miſcarrying; not, that they are of the leaſt value, but for fear ſome body might be fooliſh enough to imagine them ſo, and inquiſitive enough to diſcover thoſe faults which I (by your help) would correct. I therefore beg the favour of you to let them go no farther than your chamber, and to be very free of your remarks in the margins, not only in regard to the accuracy, but to the fidelity of the tranſlation; which I have not had time to compare with its original. And I deſire you to be the more ſevere, as it is much more criminal for me to make another ſpeak nonſenſe, than to do it in my own proper perſon For your better help in comparing, it may be fit to tell you, that this is not an entire verſion of the firſt book. There is an omiſſion from the 168th line — *Jam murmura ſerpunt plebis agenoreæ* — to the 312th — *Interea patriis olim vagus exul ab oris* —— (between theſe ‡ two Statius has a deſcription of the council of the Gods, and a ſpeech of Jupiter; which

† *This was a tranſlation of the firſt book of* Statius, *done when the author was but* 14 *years old, as appears by an advertiſement before the firſt edition of it in a miſcellany publiſh'd by* B. Lintot 8° 1711.

‡ *Theſe he ſince tranſlated, and they are extant in the printed verſion.*

contain

68 LETTERS to *and* from

cies in the diction or numbers. The Hiatus in particular I wou'd avoid as much as poſſible, to which you are certainly in the right to be a profeſs'd enemy; tho' I confeſs I cou'd not think it poſſible at all times to be avoided by any writer, till I found by reading Malherbe lately, that there is ſcarce any throughout his poems. I thought your obſervation true enough to be paſs'd into a rule, but not a rule without exceptions, nor that ever it had been reduc'd to practiſe: But this example of one of the moſt correct and beſt of their Poets has undeceiv'd me, and confirms your opinion very ſtrongly, and much more than Mr. Dryden's authority, who tho' he made it a rule, ſeldom obſerv'd it.

Your, &c.

LETTER VII.

June 10, 1709.

I Have receiv'd part of the verſion of Statius, and return you my thanks for your Remarks, which I think to be juſt, except where you cry out (like one in Horace's Art of Poetry) *pulchre, bene, recte!* There I have ſome fears, you are often, if not always, in the wrong.

One of your objections, namely on that paſſage,

The reſt, revolving years ſhall ripen into fate,

may be well grounded, in relation to its not being the exact ſenſe of the words—* *Cætera reliquo ordine ducam.* But the duration of the Action of Statius's poem may as well be excepted againſt, as many things beſides in him: (which I wonder Boſſu has not

* *See the firſt book of* Statius, *verſe* 302.

obſerv'd)

Figure 1.16 Footnotes advertising Pope's translation of Statius in the 1737 octavo, pp. 63; 68.

Pope's footnotes also offer direct references identifying the passages discussed in the letters ("* See the first book of *Statius*, verse *302*").[120] Given his excision of specificity elsewhere, Pope's meticulous attention to detail regarding this work is notable. In the first letter shown above, Pope even corrects a reference to the "~~167th~~" and "~~310th~~" lines to the "**168th**" and "**312th**" to validate any potential cross-references from readers who follow the footnote advertisement to the full text.[121] The supplemented and annotated correspondence with Cromwell within Pope's own editions thus serves to advertise, emphasize, and contextualize his precocious poetic achievements.

[120] 10 June 1709, *Corr*. i. 63-4.
[121] 19 January 1707-8; *Corr*. i. 36. (Sherburn places under original date)

Pope's careful attention to the prose style of the letters also served to refine them into polished juvenile ephemera more worthy of a nascent literary celebrity. Pope's improvements to his epistolary form include minor editorial tidying throughout ("~~correctest~~" to "**most correct**"); as well as tightening of witticisms and enhancements to rhetoric.[122] For example, in manuscript and the *Miscellanea*, Pope had offered a caricature of the country respect accorded to anyone who can "~~roundly humm~~ out some ~~Fragments or~~ Rhapsodies of [Thomas Durfey's] works"; in Pope's texts, this becomes the concise and alliterative "**roar** out some rhapsodies […]".[123] Meanwhile, Pope's depiction of the theatre of life is given a more poetic and emphatic brevity in the folio, where "~~Here is~~ a glorious Standing Comedy of Fools~~,~~" becomes the exclamatory "**What** a glorious Standing Comedy of Fools**!**"[124] Pope's desire to retain instances of wit is suggested by his unusual retention of the complimentary closure to his letter of 19 October 1709, which had contained a discussion of canine fidelity. However, Pope's original text, largely preserved in the octavo ("believe me, when I say […] that~~, of all Dogs,~~ you ~~shall~~ find ~~none~~ more faithfull than | ~~Dear Sir, |~~ Your ~~most Affectionate humble | Servant, | A: Pope:~~") is toned down in his folio edit: "believe me, when I say […] that you **will** find **no dog** more faithful than | Your, **&c.**"[125] Such stylistic adjustments both instill Pope's early epistolary writing with an impression of innate lyrical sensitivity, and support his pivot to a more assured and literary tone.

[122] 7 May 1709, *Corr*. i. 57. See also e.g., 24 June 1710, *Corr*. i. 89-91.
[123] 10 April 1710, *Corr*. i. 81.
[124] 29 August 1709 *Corr*. i. 71.
[125] 19 October 1709, *Corr*. i. 75.

This honing influence is not just evident in the prose of the letters: it also shapes the verse communicated within them, as Pope revisits youthful work and improves it with a more experienced eye. This treatment is apparent in a poem which Pope sends to Cromwell in 1709: an "Ode on Solitude [...] written when I was not Twelve years old".[126] In the *Miscellanea*, based on the manuscript, the poem begins:

> Happy the Man, who free from Care,
> The Business and the Noise of Towns,
> Contented breathes his native Air,
> In his own Grounds: [127]

However, when printing the letter in his octavo, Pope instead appends a later version of the poem:

> Happy the man, whose wish and care,
> A few paternal acres bound,
> Content to breathe his native air,
> In his own ground. [128]

This change softens the poem: the action becomes more distanced, autonomous seclusion supersedes idle landed indifference, and the arresting capitalized first letter of the nouns is demolished to create a more naturally diminishing and smoother line. The introduced subtlety renegotiates the relationship to Horace's second *Epode*, referring to time-worn "**paternal acres**" at the expense of the brash novelty which "~~Noise of Towns~~" – so redolent of Cromwell's circle – had introduced.[129] Pope's tendency towards revision and his sensitivity to the form and resonances of his early poetry is also apparent elsewhere in his letters to Cromwell. For instance, he deletes the first of the following lines from his poem on Argus and Ulysses:

> ~~And tho' ev'n then expiring on the Plain,~~
> Touch'd with Resentment of ungrateful Man,

[126] 11 July 1709, *Corr*. i. 68-69. See *Works VI*, pp. 3-4, ll. 1-4.
[127] 11 July 1709, *Corr*. i. 68-69.
[128] 11 July 1709, *Corr*. i. 68-69.
[129] Horace, "Epodes II: Beatus Ille" in David West (ed.), *Oxford World's Classics: Horace: The Complete Odes and Epodes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 4. As Mack notes, Cromwell's "life must have represented for Pope the antithesis of most of the values the poem was intended to honour", *Life* (1985), p. 145.

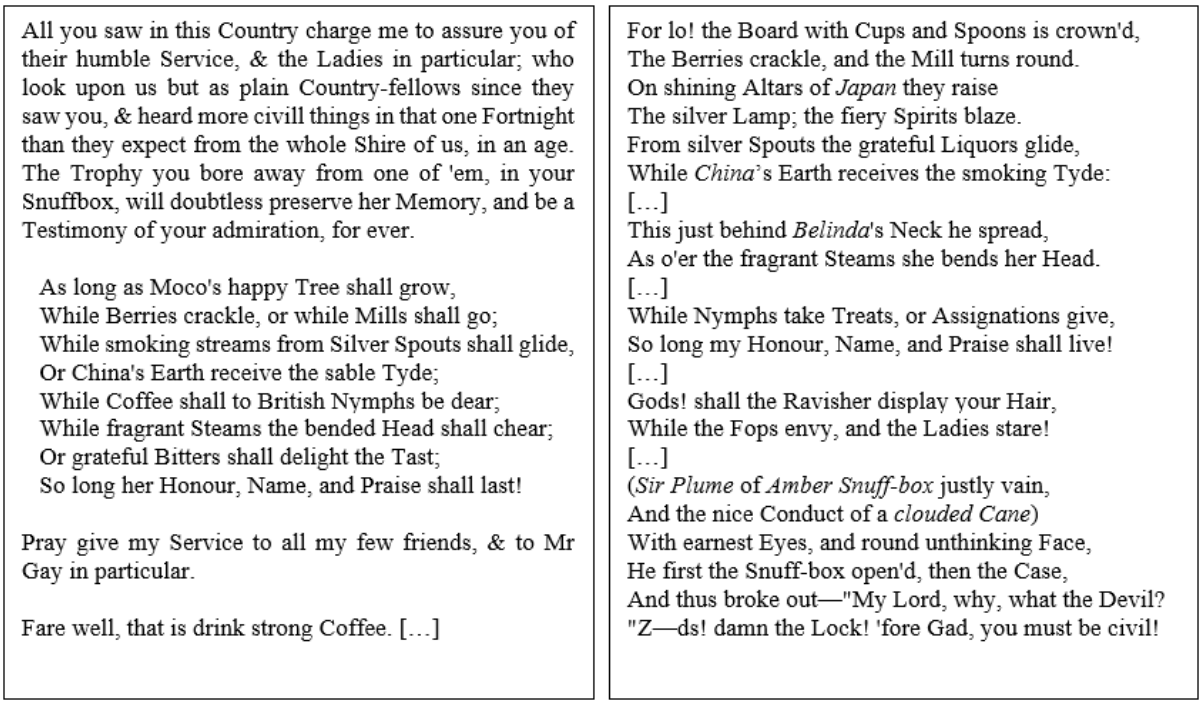
And longing to behold his Ancient Lord again.[130]

Perhaps Pope disliked the pathos here, or the apparent preempting of the last line of the poem, in which Argus "Look'd up, and D'yd". However, in combination with Pope's addition of a second alexandrine, the removal of this line adds balance, allowing the poem to fall into a group of ten lines followed by even groups of four.[131] Pope may also be cautious of flouting his statement in another printed letter that the alexandrine and triple rhyme should "never be allow'd" – unless "some remarkable Beauty or Propriety in them attones for the Liberty".[132] Pope's retrospective critical evaluation of his own poetic work, then, aligns with his approach to the letters in which they appear – thereby demonstrating his similar editorial attitudes towards these different forms as polished public texts and his consciousness of the ways in which they operate and interact in the print marketplace.

In contrast to this effort to showcase and enhance his early poetic work, Pope suppresses other instances of verse within the Cromwell letters, with the apparent desire to avoid publishing trivial or unpolished material. Alongside the verse letter to Cromwell discussed above which is known only from Curll's *Miscellanea*, other letters containing poetry of a quotidian nature are omitted entirely from Pope's editions – such as that wishing Cromwell "~~ev'ry Day a double Dose of Coffee, | To make you look as sage as any Sophy~~".[133] Such omissions may indicate an awareness that less carefully composed verse, or material still in development, could detract from his published work or lend it

[130] 19 October 1709, *Corr*. i. 74. *Poems VI*, pp. 24-29.
[131] Pope modifies "His faithful Dog his rightful master knew!" to the more elegant "The faithful Dog alone his rightful Master knew!"
[132] Printed in a letter to William Walsh, 22 Oct 1706 (reconstructed from a letter to Cromwell of 25 November 1710, not printed by Pope), *Corr*. i. 24.
[133] Pope to Cromwell, 25 April 1708, *Corr*. i. 46-8. See also other omitted verse in this letter, and that of 21 December 1711, *Corr*. i. 137-8. *Poems VI*, pp. 51-52, ll. 13-14.

undesirable associations. In particular, Pope's exclusion of his letter of 15 July 1711 from his own editions thereby omits an intriguing incident and set of lines which are redolent of Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, released in its initial two-canto form the following year:



All you saw in this Country charge me to assure you of their humble Service, & the Ladies in particular; who look upon us but as plain Country-fellows since they saw you, & heard more civill things in that one Fortnight than they expect from the whole Shire of us, in an age. The Trophy you bore away from one of 'em, in your Snuffbox, will doubtless preserve her Memory, and be a Testimony of your admiration, for ever.

As long as Moco's happy Tree shall grow,
While Berries crackle, or while Mills shall go;
While smoking streams from Silver Spouts shall glide,
Or China's Earth receive the sable Tyde;
While Coffee shall to British Nymphs be dear;
While fragrant Steams the bended Head shall chear;
Or grateful Bitters shall delight the Tast;
So long her Honour, Name, and Praise shall last!

Pray give my Service to all my few friends, & to Mr Gay in particular.

Fare well, that is drink strong Coffee. […]

For lo! the Board with Cups and Spoons is crown'd,
The Berries crackle, and the Mill turns round.
On shining Altars of *Japan* they raise
The silver Lamp; the fiery Spirits blaze.
From silver Spouts the grateful Liquors glide,
While *China*'s Earth receives the smoking Tyde:
[…]
This just behind *Belinda*'s Neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant Steams she bends her Head.
[…]
While Nymphs take Treats, or Assignations give,
So long my Honour, Name, and Praise shall live!
[…]
Gods! shall the Ravisher display your Hair,
While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare!
[…]
(*Sir Plume* of *Amber Snuff-box* justly vain,
And the nice Conduct of a *clouded Cane*)
With earnest Eyes, and round unthinking Face,
He first the Snuff-box open'd, then the Case,
And thus broke out—"My Lord, why, what the Devil?
"Z—ds! damn the Lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!

Figure 1.17 Pope to Cromwell, 15 July 1711 (l), lines from The Rape of the Lock *(r).*[134]

Not only does this letter, as Sherburn notes, anticipate much of Pope's imagery surrounding the rituals of coffee in the poem, but Cromwell's "Trophy" is reminiscent of the central theft of the lock of Belinda's hair, and his foppish snuffbox-wielding "civil[ity]" also recalls the character of Sir Plume.[135] Pope may have felt that the specific nature of this anecdote could lead his audience to perceive this letter as a potential contextual backdrop to the poem, or simply that these lines in progress, embedded within a coffee-house context, might detract from the definitive status and cultural uniqueness of the

[134] Pope to Cromwell, 15 July 1711, *Corr*. i. 125-6. *Poems II*, pp. 139-212, ll. iii. 105-10; 133-34; 169-70; iv. 103-4; 123-28. Apparently begun at the instigation of Pope's friend John Caryll in the summer of 1711 in an attempt to "laugh together" two quarrelling prominent Catholic families, the poem offers a satirical fictionalized account of the theft of a lock of hair from the head of Arabella Fermor by her prospective suitor, Lord Robert Petre. The character of Sir Plume was based on Sir George Brown. Osborn (ed.) *Spence: Observations* (1966), i. 43-5, § 104-6.

[135] *Corr*. i. 125-6. See *Poems II*, pp. 85-6.

published work and the more genteel narrative surrounding it. Pope's omission of such quotidian or unfinished verse, then, also contributes to the distancing of the Cromwell correspondence in his editions from its original social setting. This process not only limits the letters' portrayal of this milieu as a significant early influence on Pope's artistic development, but also controls the retrospective potential for its resonances to pervade and shape public perception of his poetic work. Throughout the following chapters, we will again encounter Pope's persistent editorial impulse to revise or omit casual or provisional early verse, and to consider the ways in which his letters contextualize his published works.

3.3.3 Regulating rakish wit

Pope's editorial work on the Cromwell letters also takes the form of censorship of their risqué aspects, undertaken with a particular sensitivity to the varying expectations of his audience. These changes particularly surround the topic of women: Pope and Cromwell often shared raillery and ribaldry relating to "Ladies" and "Nymphs" in general, and to Cromwell's relationship with Elizabeth Thomas in particular. A comparison of Pope's references to women within the Cromwell letters in each edition, as shown in **Figure 1.14** below, demonstrate that they are significantly and inconsistently adjusted in his published texts.

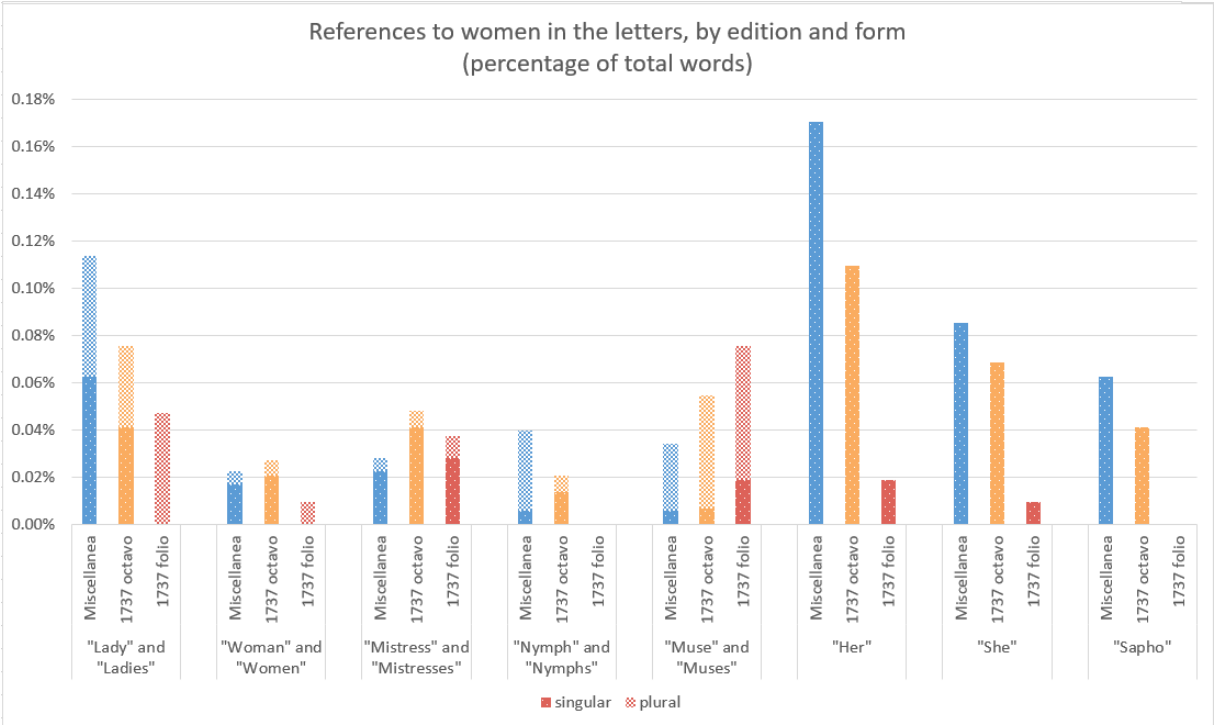


Figure 1.14: References to women in singular and plural forms across each edition, as percentage of total words.

As this figure indicates, women had been frequently discussed throughout the manuscripts and *Miscellanea*, where they are variously referred to, collectively and individually, as "Ladies", "Women", "Mistresses", "Muses", "Nymphs", and a "Gentlewoman". However, many of these modes of reference to women are proportionately reduced in Pope's own editions. This decrease is most significant in the folio, in which not a single "Woman", "Lady", or "Nymph" appears throughout, and there is no mention at all of "Sap(p)ho" (Elizabeth Thomas, the only woman mentioned in the correspondence by name or pseudonym). Due, presumably, to the loss of these specific female characters, mentions of "she" and "her" are similarly restricted, in a drastic reduction of singular forms and pronouns.[136] In comparison, references to men by noun

[136] For scale, the highest frequency of reference is 30 ("her" in the *Miscellanea*) and the lowest is 1 (e.g. "she" in the folio). No female possessive pronoun ("hers") appears anywhere in the Cromwell letters.

and pronoun are generally proportionally increased in Pope's editions, as shown in **Figure 1.15** below – due largely to additional references to male authors and their works.[137]

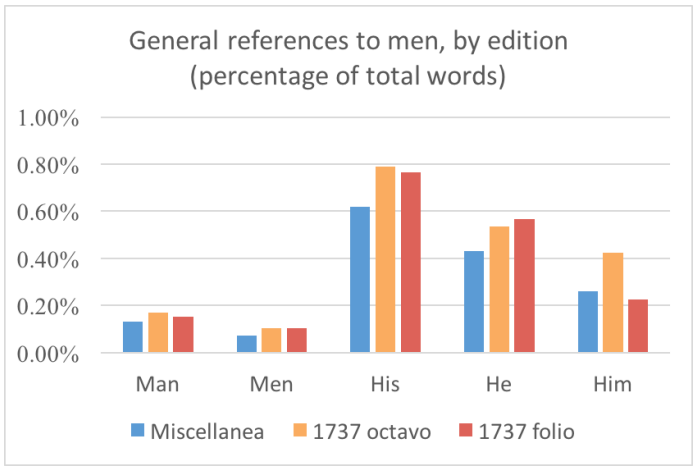


Figure 1.15: General references to men in singular and plural forms across each edition, as percentage of total words.

In contrast to this general trend of decreased references to women, the increased mentions of "Muses" within Pope's editions, despite their shorter extent, may reflect their more literary focus. However, Pope's divergent approach to each edition also highlights their different characters. In the octavo, the retention of references to "Nymph(s)" and "Sapho" suggest Pope's willingness within this edition to mingle discussion of his literary production with ideas of femininity, and to exploit the simultaneous Classical redolence and provocative associations of these terms within the context of his personal life. Pope's exclusion of these words in the folio, however, suggests that he hesitates to draw such associations in this edition. Instead, the fact that more than half of the plural references to women are retained here – "Muses", "Ladies", "Women", and "Mistresses" – indicates a

[137] For scale, the highest frequency of reference is 115 ("his" in the octavo) and the lowest 11 ("men" in the folio).

movement in this edition away from such potentially indelicate or derogatory specificity and towards a more muted, abstract and distanced generality.

In accordance with this view, Pope's octavo edition contains several letters and passages pertaining to women that had been excluded from the folio. This suggests his belief that the segment of his audience who would access this smaller, cheaper, but more extensive volume might both expect a more complete text and appreciate the risqué entertainment of these letters. For example, this edition contains Pope's hopes, developed over a paragraph later omitted in the folio, that a walk in a spring garden will provide Cromwell with the opportunity of "ravishing [Sapho (Elizabeth Thomas)] thro' the Ear with [his] well-penn'd Verses".[138] Yet a more lenient filter also operates in the octavo, as indicated by Pope's careful editing of such passages: he removes from this letter the couplet which he had subsequently offered to Cromwell as a recommended "~~Compliment~~" for this "~~Amourous~~" scene: "~~When at Spring-garden Sappho deigns t'appear, | The Flow'rs march in her Van, Musk in her Rear~~".[139] Similarly, Pope softens the sharpest edges from a letter omitted entirely from the folio which depicts his encounter with a young "Gentlewoman":

[138] 7 May 1709, *Corr*. i. 57.
[139] *Corr*. i. 57.

I perceivd my Vehicle to stop, & heard from the side of it the dreadful News of a Sick Woman preparing to enter it. […] no sooner was her Hood remov'd, but I saw one of the finest Faces I ever beheld, & to increase my Surprize, heard her salute me by my Name. […] she was the Daughter of one in our Neighborhood, lately marry'd, who having been consulting her Physicians in Towne, was returning into the Country, to try what good Air and a ~~new~~ Husband cou'd do to recover her. My Father, you must know, has sometimes recommended the Study of Physick to me, but ~~*the Dev'l take me* if ever~~ I had any Ambition to be a Doctor till this Instant. I ventur'd to prescribe ~~her~~ some Fruit (which I happen'd to have in the Coach) which being forbidden her by Her ~~damn'd~~ Doctors, she had the more Inclination to. In short, I tempted, and she Eat; nor was I more like the Devil, than she like Eve. Having the good Success of the foresaid ~~Gentleman~~ before my eyes, I put on the Gallantry of the old Serpent, & in spite of my Evil Forme~~,~~ accosted her with all the Gayety I was master of; which had so good Effect, that in less than an hour she grew pleasant, her Colour return'd, & she was pleas'd to say, my Prescription had wrought an Immediate Cure~~.~~ In a Word, I had the pleasantest Journey imaginable~~, so that now, as once of yore, by means of the *forbidden Fruit*, the *Devil* got into *Paradise* I shou'd not have us'd this last Phrase but that I know your civill Apprehension will not put any ill Construction upon it, & you will firmly believe that we were as modest even as Sapho & Mr Cromwell. Your most obligd and affectionate Servant, A. Pope~~

I perceiv'd my vehicle to stop, and heard from the side of it the dreadful news of a sick woman preparing to enter it. […] no sooner was her hood remov'd, but I saw one of the finest faces I ever beheld, and to increase my surprize, heard her salute me by my name. […] she was the daughter of one in our neighborhood, lately marry'd, who having been consulting her physicians in town, was returning into the country, to try what good air and a husband cou'd do to recover her. My father, you must know, has sometimes recommended the study of physick to me, but I **never** had any ambition to be a doctor till this instant. I ventur'd to prescribe some fruit (which I happen'd to have in the coach) which being forbidden her by her doctors, she had the more inclination to. In short, I tempted, and she eat; nor was I more like the Devil than she like Eve. Having the good success of the 'foresaid **Tempter** before my eyes, I put on the gallantry of the old serpent, and in spite of my evil form accosted her with all the gaiety I was master of; which had so good effect, that in less than an hour she grew pleasant, her colour return'd, and she was pleas'd to say, my prescription had wrought an immediate cure **:** In a word, I had the pleasantest journey imaginable**.**

Figure 1.18 Pope to Cromwell, 11 July 1709 in manuscript (l) and 1737 octavo (r) [140]

In this anecdote, as James A. Winn notes, we see Pope's experimentation with the "casual swearing", "cavalier" attitude and "Miltonic simile" of the Restoration rake – a pose influenced by contacts such as Cromwell and Wycherley.[141] However, as Louise Curran observes, Pope's later excision of the more emphatic or extreme phrases within this letter

[140] Pope to Cromwell, 11 July 1709, *Corr*. i. 66-9.

[141] See James A. Winn, "Pope Plays the Rake: His Letters to Ladies and the Making of the Eloisa", in *The Art of Alexander Pope*, ed. Howard Erskine-Hill and Anne Smith (London: Vision Press, 1979), pp. 92-95. For instance, a letter from Wycherley to Pope just a month before had described how Cromwell himself, through "creeping advances" to women, would hide his "Face, which like the Devils were enough to frighten them from what his tempting Tongue wou'd perswade them to", 14 June 1709, *Corr.* i. 65.

in print (“~~the Dev’l take me~~”; “d~~amn’d~~”; “~~the *Devil* got into *Paradise*~~”) “reduc[es its] rakish demeanour in favour of a more gallant one” that aligns with Pope’s poetic interrogation of the discourse of gallantry within works such as *The Rape of the Lock*.[142] Pope’s editing of material about women in his letters to Cromwell thus suggests a consciousness of how they might overstep or undercut the nuanced and ironic tonal resonances of his poetic exploration of heterosocial relationships.

Pope’s editorial process also enabled the inclusion of such amorous insinuation within the octavo by removing his comments on specific, real women – including intimate friends like Teresa and Martha Blount. Instead, “Sapho” often serves in this edition as a stock figure of individual femininity and the subject of salaciousness. For example, Pope edits the most extreme innuendo and indiscretion surrounding these figures from his letter of 21 December 1711:

> every moment my Eyes are employed upon this paper, they are taken off from Two of the finest faces in the Universe: ~~For I am at this instant placd betwixt Two such Ladies that in good faith 'tis all I'm able to do, to keep my self in my Skin. *He! Monsieur Cromvell! Entendez-vous bien?*~~ […] these are Eyes that have more Persuasion in one Glance than all *Sapho's* Oratory and Gesture together, let her put her Body into what *moving Postures* she pleases. […] How gladly wou'd I give all I am worth, that is to say, my *Pastorals* for *one* of ~~their *Maidenheads*~~ **them**, & my *Essay* for the other?[143]

Pope’s evocation here of his private perspective of a social scene, as with his lively and romantic tale of the woman in the carriage, lends the letter a vivid immediacy and intimate context that Pope evidently desired to replicate in print. A similar impulse may underlie his inclusion in the octavo of a lewd “Rondeau” modelled on Voiture, on “things, of little Size”, which he had presented to Cromwell as revenge on “a Lady, who rally’d my Person so much, as to cause a total Subversion of my Countenance”, telling him, “I desire

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[142] Louise Curran, “Gallantry and *The Rape of the Lock* Reconsidered”, in *Anniversary Essays on Alexander Pope’s ‘The Rape of the Lock’*, ed. Don Nichol (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), pp. 35-6.
[143] 21 December 1711, *Corr.* i. 137.

you to show Sapho".[144] As James Grantham Turner notes, Pope's invocation of the woman responsible for this Rondeau and his request that Cromwell show it to his mistress opens up the risqué text, beyond its potential for bonding the two male correspondents, to the "excitement" of using such language in "mixed company" – thereby "exploring the outer limits of decorum in search of revenge, applause, smiles and blushes."[145] The capacity of these provocative letters to participate disruptively within a variety of social settings emanating beyond their original recipient is thus magnified within the octavo. However, the more refined and courtly tone and moderated frame of reference created by Pope's editorial intervention serves both to bring the letters sufficiently within the realms of propriety to allow their inclusion in print, and to control their wider resonances as they operate alongside his poetic work in this public context. As I will explore in the following chapter, Pope uses similar editorial techniques within his published letters to women to portray different types of relationships in consonance with his poetry.

However, such risqué reverberations of the Cromwell letters are contained for the more elite audience of Pope's subscription folio edition. As well as omitting the other letters and passages discussed above, he excises his "Rondeau" here, referring to it only obliquely as a knowingly crude yet original piece of literary drollery: "**I am glad you lik'd the foolish Rondeau I sent you upon my own Littleness: It is the first Rondeau, I believe, in our language [...]**".[146] As a result of such omissions, the folio edition tends to exclude references to women both as individuals, and as "Nymphs", the suggestive classical term used frequently in the *Miscellanea* and occasionally in the octavo. The

[144] 24 June 1710, *Corr*. i. 89. See *Poems VI*, p. 61.
[145] James Grantham Turner, "Pope's Libertine Self-fashioning", *The Eighteenth Century* 29:2 (1988), 123-44, p. 128.
[146] 24 June 1710, *Corr*. i. 89.

deliberate nature of this change is demonstrated by Pope's targeted editing of passages such as his wish that Cromwell enjoy "all the Pleasures which the Season ~~and the Nymph~~ can afford".[147] This shift also reflects the increasingly authoritative and selective discussion of literary matters within the folio. While earlier texts present specific women as a distraction from or subject of poetic and epistolary writing, women in this edition are instead invoked as generalized female types pertaining to a broader discussion of literary matters. For instance, Pope tells Cromwell, "I take up with the Muses" ("Those Aeriall Ladies") "for want of your better Company", and advises him in an introduced letter that his translation of Ovid captures "an agreeableness that charms us without correctness, like a mistress whose faults we see, but love her with them all".[148] Pope's adherence to a more decorous and mature tone here is accompanied by additional deletions in the folio designed to enhance the letters' reflection on other aspects of his character. This includes diminishing irreverent frivolity, as seen in Pope's muted discussion of life as comedy: "I wou'd not have my life a very Regular Play; let it be a ~~good merry~~ **tolerable** Farce, ~~a G—ds name~~ and a fig~~g~~ for the Critical Unities!"[149] Other changes indicate a desire to project a more serious image of himself, as can be shown from Pope's deletions and substitutions in a letter of 10 April 1710:

> ~~Sir,—~~I had written to you sooner but that I made some Scruple of sending Profane Things to You in Holy week. Besides Our Family wou'd have been Scandalizd to see me write, who take it for granted I write nothing but ~~ungodly~~ Verses~~; and They say here so many Pray'rs, that I can make but few Poems: For in this point of Praying, I am an Occasional Conformist. So just as I am drunk or Scandalous in Town, according to my Company, I am for the same reason Grave and Godly here~~. I assure you I am look'd upon in the Neighborhood ~~for~~ **as** a very ~~Sober and~~ well-disposd Person [150]

Here, Pope balances carefully the preservation of his sardonic wit against its hints of debauchery and its negative reflection on his religious piety and propriety. Pope also

[147] 7 May 1709, *Corr*. i. 57. See also e.g., 29 August 1709, *Corr*. i. 71.
[148] 12 November 1711, *Corr*. i. 135-6. 20 July 1710, *Corr*. i. 92-3.
[149] 29 August 1709, *Corr*. i. 70-71.
[150] 10 April 1710, *Corr*. i. 81-2.

limits his criticism of others: for instance, Charles Gildon (as identified by Curll), who had been anonymously chastised for "insinuat[ing] malicious untruths" of Pope to Wycherley, is no longer, by the folio, "~~a Scoundrell but that he has the luck to be born a Gentleman~~".[151] Pope's authorized folio edition, then, controls even more meticulously the reflection of his early character and works within his letters to Cromwell.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has shown how Pope employed the intricate and obscure nature of early eighteenth-century publishing practices to reclaim his early correspondence with Cromwell, distancing the letters from both their compromised manuscript origins and their unauthorized published form. In so doing, Pope made use of the very methods and individuals he disparaged within contemporary print culture to help him reshape this potentially embarrassing early material into polished literary juvenilia. He created a product of greater literary heft and integrity which would contextualize the later trajectory of his career. This process reveals the Cromwell letters not as static early productions but as developing, fluid texts in which Pope's youthful and mature attitudes converge. The letters preserved and printed by Curll reveal the significant extent of Pope's editorial intervention: no letter remains untouched. Furthermore, the detailed changes to these letters suggest that those which Pope later introduced to the published correspondence, and which are now known only from his own editions, may be even more intensively edited. Throughout the chapter, we have seen that Pope's editorial work consistently and meticulously adjusts typographic and stylistic aspects of the texts –

[151] 19 October 1709, *Corr*. i. 72-5.

presenting a refined selection of letters, reaching for a more authoritative critical tone, and enhancing his poetic approach. However, the collated changes also indicate a clear divergence between Pope's folio and octavo editions, as his curtailment of contemporary reference and censorship of risqué material is carefully calibrated to resonate with each anticipated audience. The octavo more closely reflects the original correspondence, presenting to a broader readership a more extensive and tonally varied text with a greater specificity of reference. Meanwhile, in the subscription folio, Pope's non-consecutive and limited selection of letters, his move away from conventional epistolary structure, and his moderated reference to individuals all unite to distance the letters even further from their epistolary origins and to set them in greater alignment with Pope's literary works. It is intriguing that Pope takes this approach to distinguish his printed letters from Curll's careful reproduction of the manuscripts because, as we will see in later chapters, Pope purposefully employs such epistolary features elsewhere to establish the material authenticity of his published correspondence. Finally, the combination of distanced and close reading within this chapter has highlighted the depth and impact of Pope's iterative and comprehensive editorial process – spanning from letter selection, through textual editing, to the format of each printed volume. Throughout, Pope demonstrates a commercially astute flexibility, a perfectionist's eye for literary and poetic refinement, and an alert sensitivity to the enduring and developing role of these early letters within his own biographical narrative and literary oeuvre.

Chapter 2 : "Letters to Several Ladies"

1. Introduction

This chapter will explore Pope's elliptical and shifting representation of his extensive and diverse correspondence with women in print. Through publication, these correspondences become a cohesive and discrete entity: the section of "Letters to Several Ladies" in Pope's editions emphatically designates this distinct category of recipient and accordingly presents a uniquely filtered, fragmented, and one-sided epistolary series. However, a survey of the complete corpus of Pope's correspondence with women reveals the complexities and contradictions of the real relationships that underlie this ostensibly homogenous published collection. Pope's known correspondence with women consists of a group of nearly 200 recorded letters exchanged with at least twenty-four women, which span his entire adult life from the age of sixteen.[1] This correspondence is characterized by a striking diversity of tone and approach as Pope's consistently gendered epistolary modes are inflected differently over time, and across relationships. Furthermore, closer analysis demonstrates that the letters printed by Pope, despite their uniform presentation, in fact echo these polyphonic and mutable epistolary voices. Each of Pope's editions offers a different facet of his correspondence with women and presents letters that often interact, directly or indirectly, with the similarly ambivalent attitudes demonstrated within his poetry. His editions anchor *The Rape of the Lock* to its real-life heroine, Arabella Fermor; display the precursory friendship that gave way to vicious

[1] Together, they form around a tenth of Pope's preserved reciprocal correspondence (189 of 2,071 letters), conducted with around a tenth of his known correspondents (twenty-four of 208). The known letters date between 1705 and 1744 (the year of his death, at fifty-six).

satirical exchanges with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in *The Dunciad* and *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*; and present the long friendship with Martha Blount that would lead to her depiction as the ideal woman in his *Epistle to a Lady: Of the Characters of Women*. In line with the crafted nature of these poetic representations, Pope's editorial intervention imbues this group of letters in print with a general, conceptual, and emblematic significance. This often entails a departure from, or elision of, the biographical specificity, distinct character, and chronological trajectory of the relationships concerned.

This chapter will trace Pope's stratified self-fashioning in his letters to women from manuscript through each iteration of the published letters. Firstly, I will consider previous critical approaches to Pope's poetic and epistolary attitudes towards women, before introducing his individual correspondents in brief biographies. I will then undertake a quantitative overview of Pope's correspondence with women in manuscript and print, examining the survival of source material and the composition of each edition. I will go on to explore in detail the character of the letters known only from manuscript, highlighting the many unique features of this extensive corpus that would later be omitted, condensed, or curtailed in print. Finally, I will discuss how these correspondences are represented and supplemented in Pope's successive published editions: the ostensibly unauthorized 1735 first volume of *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence For Thirty Years*, published by Curll; the 1737 octavo *Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.; Vol. V.*, with which Pope was not openly associated; and the 1737 folio format of Pope's own authorized subscription edition, *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope, And Several of His Friends*. This analysis will demonstrate that, as in the letters to Cromwell discussed in the previous chapter, Pope's editorial work included significant and detailed changes

to the selection, sequencing, and texts of his letters. Here, too, Pope enhances or conceals certain styles, themes, and attitudes with careful attention to the intended audience of each successive edition. However, Pope's published correspondence with women also exhibits the ways in which he adapted and diversified his approach in response to a broader choice of material and greater editorial freedom. This chapter reveals how Pope curated a limited selection of letters from amongst a large corpus, and how his access to or control over the original manuscripts shaped both the published texts and the surviving legacy of these correspondences. Furthermore, Pope's letters to women demonstrate how his editorial work was influenced by his perception of correspondence as a gendered form underpinned by specific generic qualities and conventions. This is evident in his impulse to draw connections and comparisons between disparate relationships; to explore the nuances of his developing epistolary voice across an expanded timeframe and social network; and to consider how the stylistic, conceptual aspects of the letters might resonate alongside his poetic work. Throughout, I will consider what Pope's correspondence with women can tell us about his conception of female character: his understanding of, response to, and sympathy with female experience; the extent to which he embodies or subverts conventional constructions of gender; and the varied and capricious nature of his relationships with individuals.

1.1. Critical context

This chapter considers how Pope's repeated repositioning of his correspondences with women in print serves to distil and classify the fragmented and contradictory attitudes within them. As a result, the published letters alternately adhere to and resist, satirize and abandon conventional assumptions regarding proper epistolary relationships

between the sexes. This sharpening of contrasts and conflicts mirrors the manufactured ambivalence within Pope's poetic representations of these same relationships.[2] For example, Felicity Nussbaum has observed Pope's tendency to combine satirical exploitation of the "antifeminist tradition" with the "panegyric" of "romance", avoiding "an artistic dilemma" by keeping "the contradictory impulses women inspire […] forever in unresolved conflict".[3] Yet, as Nussbaum notes, placing Pope's constructions of femininity within their specific social, cultural and biographical context "expands" their "meaning", as an understanding of the complex status of the women in Pope's life as both social actors and poetic subjects reveals new resonances within his works.[4] For instance, Valerie Rumbold has shown how Pope's intimate relationships, alongside shifting eighteenth-century conceptions of gender and Pope's own marginalized engagement with the masculine world as a Catholic and an invalid, shaped his mercurial conduct towards women in life and in print.[5]

This context can also help us to unpick the similarly conflicted attitudes which pervade Pope's correspondence with women and its journey to publication. Pope's epistolary approach altered significantly over time, as the crucial early influence of stylized published models, such as the gallant courtly letters of Vincent Voiture, lost ground in

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[2] See Ellen Pollak, *The Poetics of Sexual Myth: Gender and Ideology in the Verse of Swift and Pope*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Felicity Rosslyn: ""Dipt in the Rainbow": Pope on Women", in *The Enduring Legacy: Alexander Pope Tercentenary Essays*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and Pat Rogers, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 51-62; Christa Knellwolf, *A Contradiction Still: Representations of the Feminine in the Poetry of Alexander Pope* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Paul Baines, "Gender and Body", *The Complete Critical Guide to Alexander Pope* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 171-184.

[3] Felicity Nussbaum, *The Brink of All we Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660–1750*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), p. 158.

[4] Nussbaum, *Brink of all we Hate* (1984), p. 144.

[5] Valerie Rumbold, *Women's Place in Pope's World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). See also Valerie Rumbold, "Pope and Gender", in *The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope*, ed. Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

later years to the more diverse functions and registers of Pope's wider quotidian correspondence.[6] As a result, his epistolary voice contains pervasive tensions between style and sincerity; courtesy and irreverence; devotion and affection; and authority and deference. Some of these patterns are evident in Pope's conflicted editorial response to his early epistolary postures within his letters to Henry Cromwell, as discussed in the previous chapter. Others, however, seem specific to his letters to women – and here, Pope's editions serve more distinctly to encapsulate and explore, rather than resolve, such tensions. The "Letters to Several Ladies" published in Pope's 1737 octavo edition, as Marie Siganto has argued, serve alternately to emulate and satirize the gallant courtly epistle, and finally to subvert it through the addition of letters of genuine intimacy – which, while ostensibly more natural and authentic, are in fact more carefully crafted for print.[7] As such, Pope's editions reflect the wide "variety of constructions of femininity" within the early eighteenth-century literary marketplace, as identified by Kathryn Shevelow.[8] This chapter will draw from this critical background to consider how these contemporary conventions and conflicts, in combination with Pope's personal experience, influenced his epistolary approach and editorial practice. I will argue that the shift from the specific to the generic enacted through Pope's publication of the letters echoes the process underlying his poetic representation of women – entailing the same constructions of ambivalence and the same filtration of individual complexity into conceptualized types. In consequence, Pope's correspondence with women not only contributes to our understanding of his poetry as a source of informing biographical

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[6] Winn, *Window* (1977), pp. 112-143; Winn, "Pope Plays the Rake" (1979), pp. 89-118; Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Imaginations Warm and Tender: Pope and Lady Mary", *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 83:2 (1984), 207-215.

[7] Marie Siganto, "Pope's Concealed Art: Letters to Several Ladies", *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association,* 75.1 (1991), 21-37.

[8] Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1989), p. 16.

context; its preparation for print also offers rich and detailed evidence of the attitudes shaping his poetic works and their public mediation. The edited letters preserve Pope's efforts to complement and corroborate his poetic depictions of women, by redefining the real relationships from which they are drawn.

1.2. Biographical context

A brief introduction to Pope's correspondents allows us a glimpse of the structure and detail of the wider social circle which is represented in a fragmented form within his editions. Pope's surviving correspondence with women spans from 25 May 1712 (just after his 24th birthday and eight years after his known correspondence began) until 25 March 1744, two months before his death, and was conducted with a diverse group of twenty-four known correspondents.[9] However, three of these women – Martha and Teresa Blount, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu – dominate Pope's correspondence as preserved in manuscript, and particularly as presented in his published editions. Collectively, they are the recipients for over half of Pope's surviving letters to women, and for eighty percent of those printed. All three were part of Pope's early milieu. As Catholic gentlewomen, Martha Blount (1690–1763), known as Patty, and her older, more socially outgoing sister Teresa (1688–1759) moved in similar social circles to Pope: his friends John Caryll and Anthony Englefield were their godfather and grandfather, respectively; and Pope met the sisters at the home of the latter in around 1707.[10] The family's financial difficulties and the marriage of their brother necessitated the removal of the sisters and their mother from the Mapledurham family estate to London in 1715, and limited the

[9] These dates exclude the letter to an unknown recipient which Pope printed under the year 1705.
[10] Valerie Rumbold, "Blount, Martha (1690–1763)", *ODNB* (2004); Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 242-8.

marital prospects of both sisters.[11] Pope's relationship with the Blount sisters was complex: although he was initially fascinated by the contrasts between these two very different women – the assertive and striking Teresa, and the shy and modest Martha – his correspondence with Teresa had ceased by 1720, while his friendship with Martha lasted until his death, and the two exchanged 41 surviving letters over 32 years.[12] While Pope's later criticism of Teresa's character hinged on the irreverent wit and frivolity he had once admired, his affectionate praise of the milder, more diffident Martha in later years is often laced with concerned advice and sometimes frustration.[13] Yet, as Valerie Rumbold notes, "this sensitive, retiring, but intensely loyal woman evoked his lifelong devotion"; and on his death, he left Martha a large portion of his assets – enough to ensure that she could establish her own household and live comfortably for the rest of her life.[14]

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (bap. 1689–1762) was another of Pope's early female friends: the thirty-four surviving letters between the two date from July 1716 to October 1723.[15] Montagu's well-known literary and epistolary writings, as well as her contemporary fame and aristocratic status, have made accessible a clearer picture of her character than is available for any other of Pope's female correspondents.[16] She participated in the same intellectual sphere as Pope: like him she was largely self-taught in the Classics, studying Latin in her father's library when "everyone thought I was

[11] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 110; Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 89.
[12] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 112
[13] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 251.
[14] Rumbold, "Blount, Martha", *ODNB* (2004).
[15] According to Sherburn's dating; see *Corr.* i. 345; ii. 204.
[16] See Isobel Grundy, "Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley (bap. 1689, d. 1762)", *ODNB*, (2004); Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 131-145; Clare Brant, "'I Make a Very Shining Figure': Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Intimate Publicity of Authorship", *in Intimacy and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture*, ed. Emrys D. Jones and Victoria Joule (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 211-231.

reading nothing but romances", and like him composed verse from an early age.[17] Lady Mary had struck up a collaborative friendship with Pope and Gay in 1715, having arrived in London and engaged with fashionable society at the court of George I.[18] In the same year she survived smallpox, and in 1716, left to accompany her husband as ambassador to Turkey. Following this brief acquaintance, she and Pope conducted an "entirely epistolary" relationship for two years, followed after Montagu's return by intermittent notes.[19] Their correspondence was shaped by Montagu's distant location – which made possible, on her part, authoritative reportage from a novel vantage point; and on Pope's, an effusive and suggestive flattery, infused with exoticism and sentimental longing.[20] The acrimonious dissolution of the friendship in the 1720s led the two to exchange bitter attacks in print, thereby transforming their famous friendship into an infamous enmity. Ultimately, both Pope and Montagu would prepare their own side of this correspondence for publication against this backdrop – Pope's versions were printed from 1735, over a decade after the demise of the relationship, and Montagu's in 1763, the year after her death.[21] In consequence, Montagu would become known in her own right for the *Turkish Embassy Letters*: her documentation of an "odyssey" (in Cynthia Lowenthal's words) which "open[ed] to her, because of her status and gender, a world denied to the common male traveller".[22]

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[17] Grundy, "Montagu", *ODNB*, (2004).
[18] They worked together on her satirical *Court Eclogues*. Grundy, "Montagu", *ODNB*, (2004).
[19] Cynthia Lowenthal, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), p. 52. On the possible causes for the end of this friendship, see Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 143-4.
[20] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 135-141.
[21] *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M[ar]y W[ortle]y M[ontagu]e, written, during her travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa to persons of distinction* was published in three volumes by Becket and De Hondt. Pope is not named in full as a recipient; letters are headed "To Mr. P—" or "To Mr. —". Halsband (ed.), *Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (1967), i., p. 262.
[22] Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Familiar Letter* (1994), pp. 5-6.

Alongside these three women, Pope's other correspondents included two members of his family – his mother, Edith Pope (bap. 1643–1733), and his elder half-sister, Magdalen Rackett (c.1678–c.1747) – and a large circle of friends and acquaintances.[23] Two early correspondences survive through a single letter from Pope marking the marriage of his recipient: one to Mary ('Molly') Lepell (1700–1768), a Maid of Honour to the Princess of Wales who in 1720 married Pope's subsequent enemy, Lord John Hervey (1696–1743); and the other to Arabella Fermor (1696–1737), a cousin of the Blount sisters and the inspiration for Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, who married Francis Perkins of Upton Court in around 1715.[24] Other early occasional correspondents included the young Miss Betty Marriot and her mother (with whom Pope became acquainted through his literary collaboration with their vicar, William Broome); and Elizabeth (Griffith), Lady Rich (c.1692–1773).[25] At around this time Pope met Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk (1689–1767), also a Maid of Honour and mistress of King George II who later settled at Marble Hill near Twickenham, and who remained a friend of Pope and Martha Blount until the late 1730s; and Elizabeth Hamilton, née Gerard, Duchess of Hamilton (c.1682–1744).[26] In the 1720s, Pope commenced correspondences with Catherine Sheffield, née Darnley, Duchess of Buckingham (c.1681–1743); Mary Caesar, née Freeman (1677–1741), a writer and Jacobite activist under the Duchess's patronage; her friend, the poet Judith Cowper, later Madan, (1702–1781); and Cowper's grandmother, the diarist Lady Sarah Cowper (1644–1720).[27] Occasional correspondence also survives from this time between Pope and Ann Newsham, née Craggs, later Knight (d.1756), the sister of Pope's

[23] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 24-47.
[24] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 38-9; 67-82.
[25] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 50. The attribution of 'Lady Rich' as recipient is problematic; for a different identification, see Sherburn, *Corr*. i. 345-6.
[26] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 208-31; 274. Pope's earliest known correspondence with Howard, however, dates from 1727.
[27] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 168-194; 231-250; 145-150; *Corr*. ii. 496-7

friend James Craggs the Younger; and from a Mrs. D. Robinson, a former neighbour at Twickenham.[28] In the late 1720s and 1730s, Pope also corresponded with Dorothy Boyle, née Savile, Countess of Burlington (1699–1758), an artist and patron of the arts, who had married Pope's friend, Richard, 3rd Earl of Burlington, in 1721.[29] His later correspondents, in the early 1740s, were Ann Price, née Somerset (1694–1741); Margaret Boyle, née Hamilton, Countess of Orrery (1710–1758), who in 1738 married Pope's friend John, 5th Earl of Orrery; and Sarah Churchill, née Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough (1660–1744), who had been Queen Anne's keeper of the privy purse, and the wife of General John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, who had died in 1722.[30] Pope also corresponded briefly during this period with Isabella, Countess of Denbigh (d. 1769); and with Martha Whiteway (1690–1768), Swift's cousin, on the care of his papers.[31]

The biographical background expands the view of this social milieu as seen solely via Pope's letters and makes possible two distinct additional observations. Firstly, it reveals that the surviving correspondence – often incomplete or fragmented – constitutes a remnant of a much wider and interconnected network, sustained over a significant timeframe across diverse courtly, aristocratic, political, and intellectual circles. We can also see that Pope's friendships with women are integrated with his family relationships (his mother befriended Molly Lepell, the Duchess of Buckingham, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu), and his friendships with men (he shared mutual correspondents, including Martha Blount, with Gay and Swift; and was friends with married couples such as the

[28] *Corr*. ii. 242; 329.
[29] Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 753-4.
[30] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 199-207.
[31] *Corr*. iv. 397-8; 240-1.

Knights, Orrerys, and Burlingtons).[32] Secondly, it demonstrates that many of these relationships were, or became, difficult or distant; and that most were limited in duration: by the mid-to-late-1730s, many of Pope's early friendships and acquaintances – such as those with Teresa Blount, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Betty Marriot, Lady Rich, Molly Lepell, Arabella Fermor, and Henrietta Howard – had cooled or ended in acrimony. Yet, as we will see, many of Pope's brief, deeply socially embedded early correspondences nevertheless feature prominently in his correspondence editions, drawn out of their temporal moment and divorced from the complexities of their social and biographical context.

1.3. Overview of correspondence and source material

A distanced quantitative view of Pope's known correspondence with women, considered alongside the contents of his editions, reveals how Pope's highly selective curation of letters for publication both dramatically influenced the surviving source material, and shaped the individual character of each of his editions. Firstly, it is important to note that the surviving correspondences discussed in this chapter are heavily one-sided: since letters written to Pope by women were excluded from his editions and few survive in manuscript, only twenty-eight are now known.[33] For this reason, this overview will consider the journey of only Pope's side of the correspondence into print. The vast majority of Pope's known letters to women are extant manuscripts unseen by the

[32] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 38.

[33] Of these extant letters, half were preserved through their eventual publication by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and the other half principally through Pope's reuse of the letters within the manuscript of his translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (British Library: Homer MSS. Add. 4808). Pope's 1737 octavo contains a letter ostensibly written by a Maid of Honour (Mrs.— to Pope, [1716], *Corr*. i. 380-1), which is excluded from this overview as it cannot confidently be attributed to a female author.

eighteenth-century public: of Pope's 189 known letters, he printed just twenty-seven, leaving 161 letters known only from manuscript or later print.[34] **Figure 2.1** below illustrates the substantial but uneven manuscript base underlying the published letters.

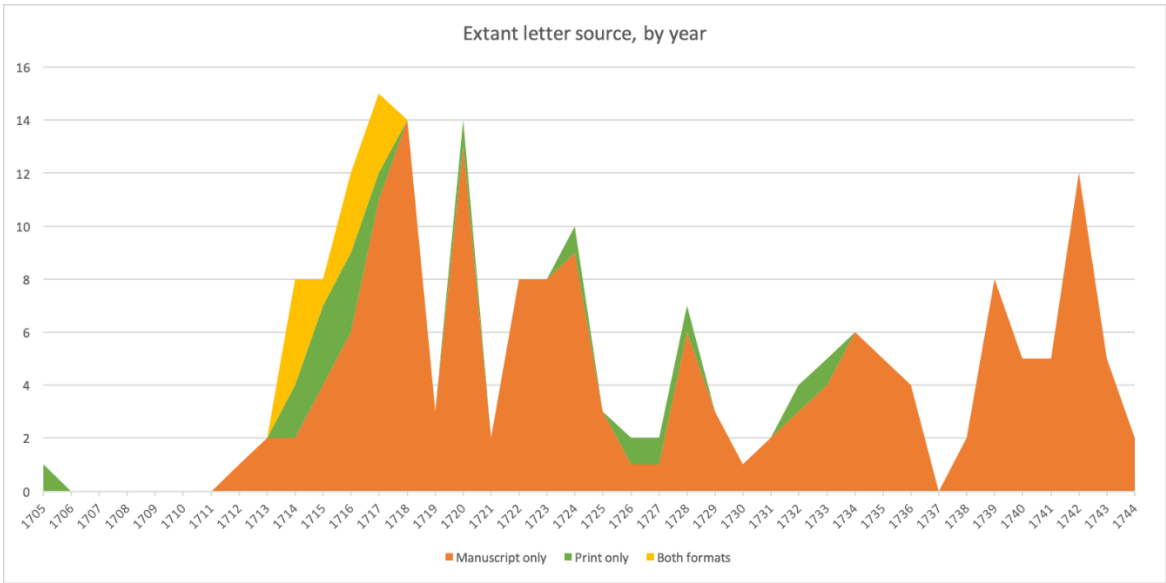


Figure 2.1 Number of Pope's surviving letters to women from each year, and the formats in which they are known: manuscript only (orange), Pope's editions only (green), and in both manuscript and print (yellow).

The letters not published by Pope (shown in orange) date from 1712 throughout his life, with peaks in 1717-18, 1720, and 1742, and with many gaps in the record. The printed letters, meanwhile (in green and yellow), capture only small snapshots of this timeframe – including one letter from 1705, twenty letters between 1714-17, and a scattered group of seven letters written between 1720 and 1733.[35] Pope's editions add to the record seventeen letters known only from print (in green); while the eleven letters written between 1714 and 1717 which survive in both formats (in yellow) offer an insight into Pope's editorial process. This view of the letters highlights the significant disparity between what must have been the reality of this extensive and enduring corpus, and the limited printed legacy found in Pope's editions.

[34] Pope printed about 15% of his known letters to women in at least one format (slightly more than the 10% of his correspondence overall).
[35] 21 (75%) of the printed letters were written before Pope turned 30.

Pope's selection of letters from specific time periods also shaped the content and extent of each edition, enacting a gradual shift towards the inclusion of later correspondence. As **Figure 2.2** below illustrates, while Pope selected letters dating predominantly from his mid-to-late twenties (1714-17) for print, his first 1735 edition (shown in purple) is dominated by earlier correspondence.

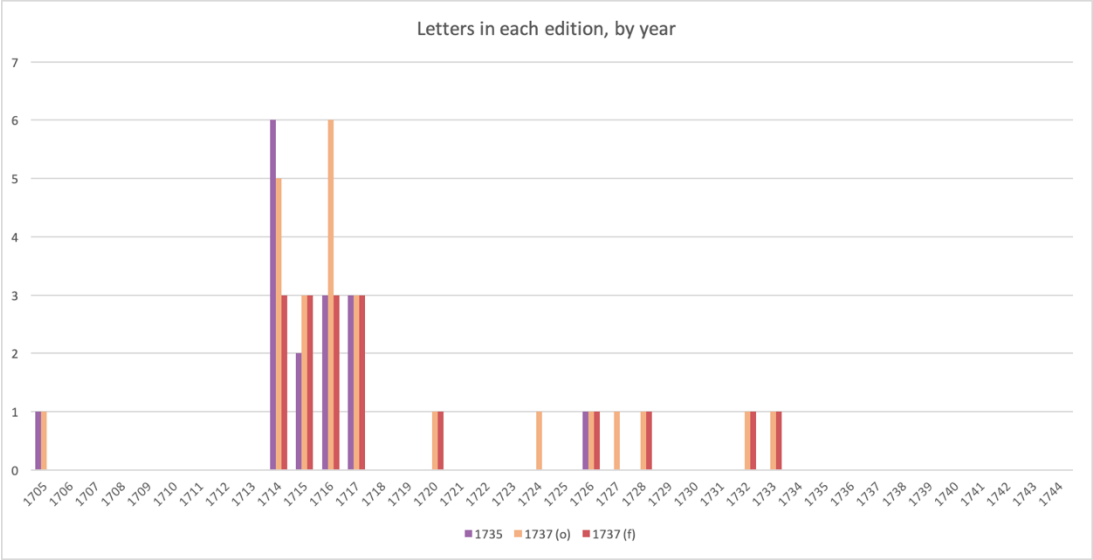


Figure 2.2 Number of Pope's letters to women from each year printed in each of his three editions.

Many of these early letters are reprinted in the 1737 octavo edition (shown in orange), but Pope also introduces later letters here; and in his authorized folio edition of the same year (shown in red), these later letters are generally retained while many earlier letters are not.[36] This divergence between editions is also reflected in their scope and volume. As shown in **Figure 2.3** below, an overlaid comparison of the content of each edition reveals the interconnection and progression between them – with the 1737 octavo again operating as the most inclusive, or 'bridge' edition, as seen in Chapter 1.

[36] Letters written before 1720 dramatically dominate the 1735 edition (94%) but make up only 64% of the folio. 15 of 16 (94%) the letters printed in 1735 date from before 1720; 19 of 26 (73%) of those in the octavo; and 9 of 14 (64%) in the folio.

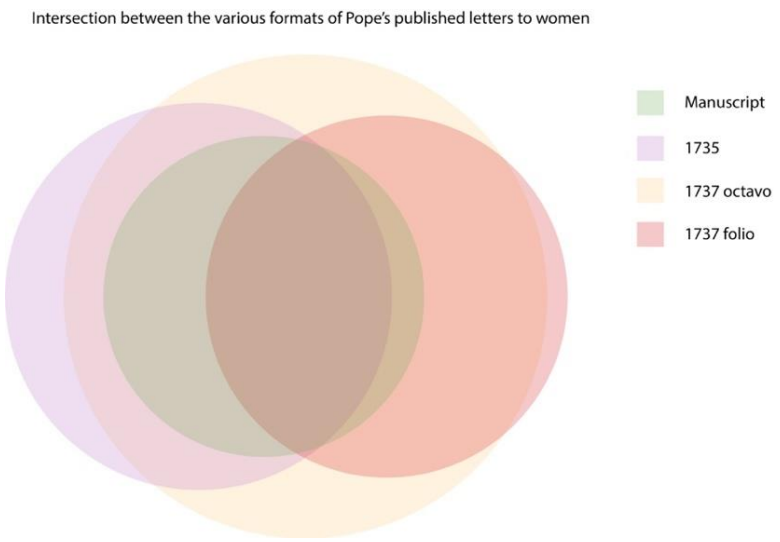


Figure 2.3 Relationship between the contents of the three editions and the known manuscript base. Of his 27 printed letters, Pope published 16 in the 1735 edition, 26 in the octavo, and 14 in the folio; and 11 of these printed letters are extant in manuscript.

Furthermore, **Figure 2.3** also confirms that as Pope's editions progressively draw upon later correspondence, they also increasingly include letters not known in manuscript. This trend suggests Pope's continued use of his authorized editions to introduce and preserve new letters, which may even be fabrications for print.[37] These figures thus further demonstrate Pope's refinement and curation of his correspondence over successive editions, culminating in the selection of more mature and potentially more crafted letters within the folio. The echo here of the patterns seen in the previous chapter suggests that Pope's editorial treatment of the Cromwell letters did not merely result from Curll's prior involvement in the texts; instead, it formed a template that could be applied to other correspondences. As result, Pope's correspondence editions – and particularly those of 1737 – offer a partial and possibly manufactured view of Pope's female relationships.

[37] Of the twenty-seven total printed letters to women, eleven (41%) are extant in manuscript, with the octavo edition disrupting the slight overall trend of a decreasing base of manuscript evidence as the editions progress: nine of the sixteen letters printed in 1735 appear in manuscript (56%); nineteen of twenty-six letters in the octavo (73%); and six of the fourteen letters in the folio (42%).

An unusually high proportion of Pope's female correspondents are represented in his editions: between one third and two thirds; compared to less than a fifth of his male correspondents.[38] This apparent social variety could be due to reasons of accessibility, but may also constitute a deliberate demonstration of diversity and range within his heterosocial correspondence. However, **Figure 2.4** below illustrates that a few specific correspondences were favoured in print: of the total fifty-one letters to known recipients printed across all formats, forty were sent to just three women: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Martha and Teresa Blount.[39]

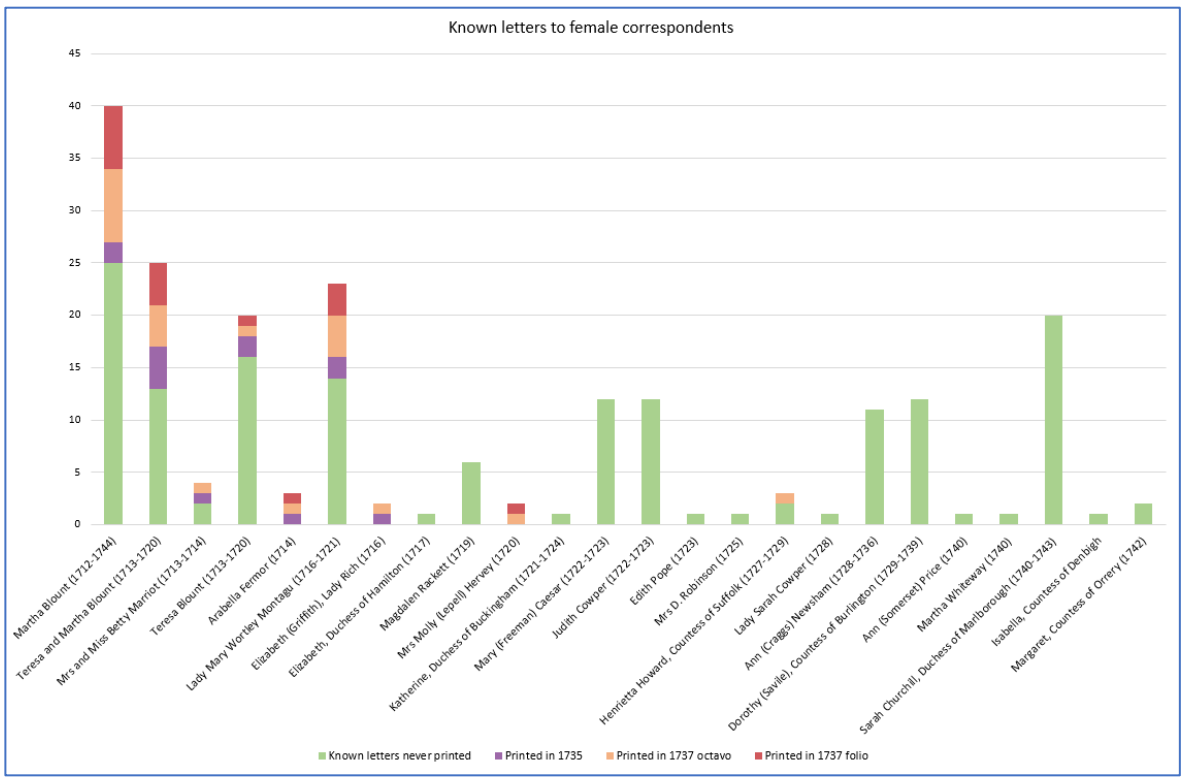


Figure 2.4 Number of letters from Pope to named female correspondents and the formats in which they are present, arranged by the date at which the (known) correspondence began. Letters never printed and known only from manuscripts or transcripts are shown in green, alongside the number of letters printed and reprinted in each edition: 1735 (purple), 1737 octavo (orange), and 1737 folio (red).

[38] The printed letters had originally been addressed to at least eight and up to thirteen different women (recipients of 6 printed letters are unknown). Of 168 male correspondents, thirty-one (18%) appeared in print.

[39] Or seventeen of the twenty-seven letters printed in any format.

This figure confirms, too, Pope's preference for publishing earlier correspondences (just one letter is printed from a correspondence beginning after 1720), and his move towards later correspondences in the octavo and folio (in which two new correspondents are introduced, and letters to Teresa Blount are diminished in favour of letters to Martha). This shift is accompanied by careful attention to the sequencing of letters: as **Figure 2.5** below illustrates, Pope reselected and reordered the letters for each edition.

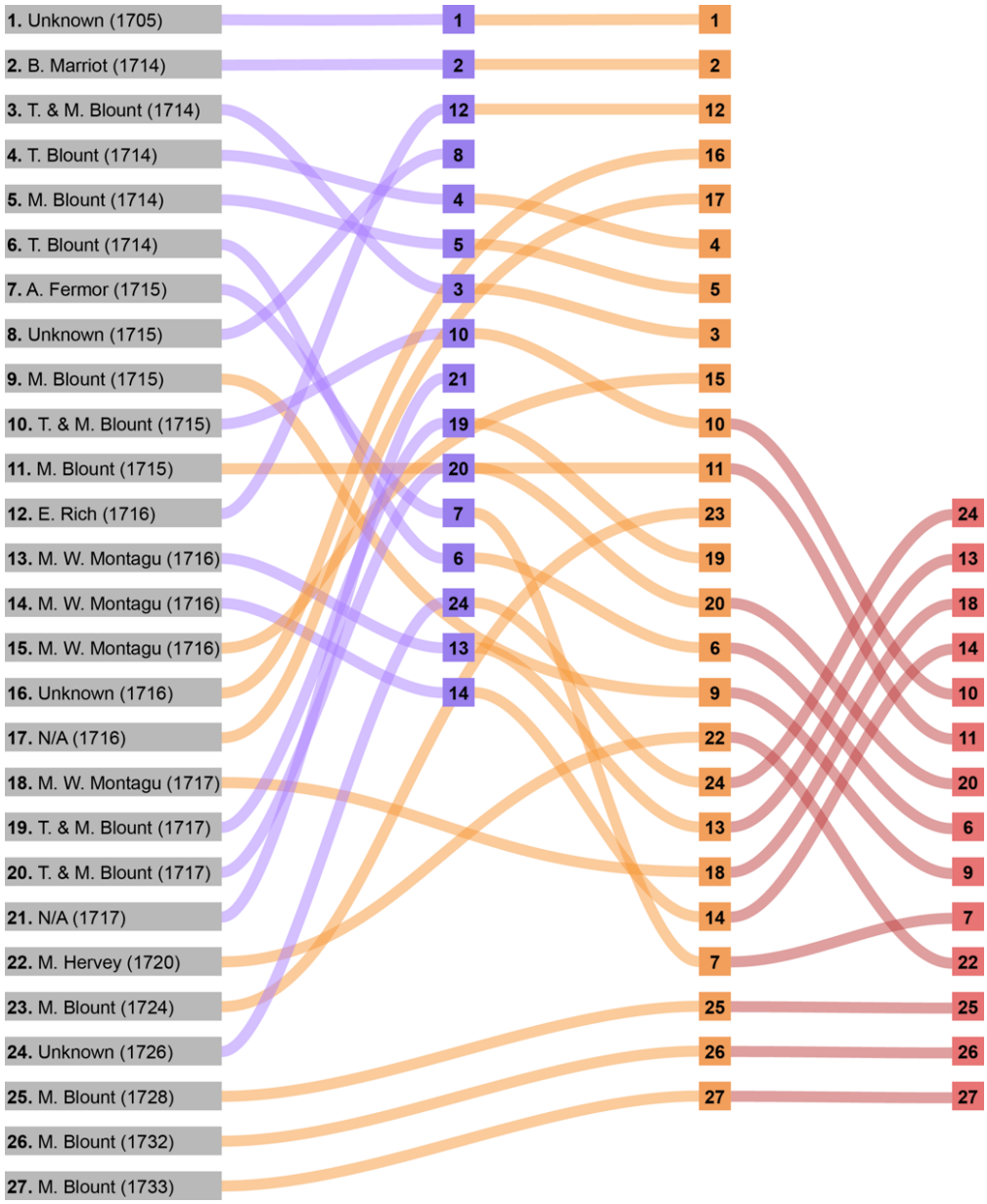


Figure 2.5 Illustration of letter selection and sequencing in Pope's editions. The letters are shown on the left numbered in chronological order (as identified by Sherburn), with lines indicating the order in which the selected letters appeared in each of Pope's editions: 1735 (purple); 1737 octavo (orange) and 1737 folio (red).

The intermingled order of the 1735 edition apparently prioritizes content over chronology or correspondent; and while this is largely retained in the 1737 octavo, the contents are interspersed here with new letters to other recipients. However, a different picture is presented by the sweeping rearrangement of letters in the more select folio, in which Pope excludes many letters to unknown or occasional correspondents and groups others by the identity of the recipients, foregrounding those sent to Montagu and concluding with his later letters to Martha Blount.

This increasing focus on individual correspondents across Pope's successive editions is also indicated by their differing structural and paratextual presentation, as shown in **Figure 2.6** below.

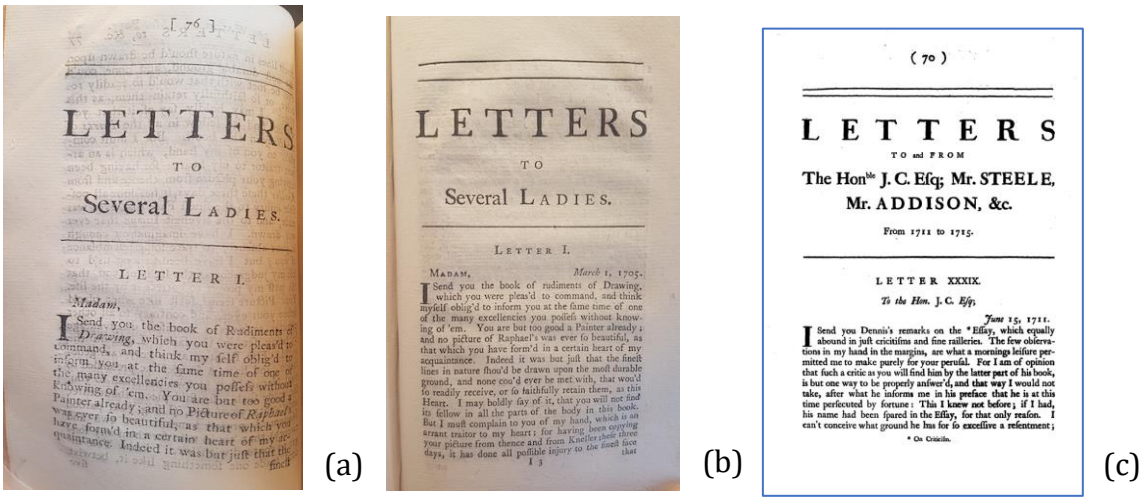


Figure 2.6 Formatting and presentation of letters to women in Pope's editions:
(a) First page of the 'Letters to Several Ladies' in 1735, p. 76.
(b) First page of the 'Letters to Several Ladies in 1737 octavo, p. 117.
(c) First page of the 'Letters to and from the Hon, J. C. Esq, &c.' in 1737 folio, p. 70.

The 1735 and octavo editions group Pope's letters to women under the title "Letters to Several Ladies" – a one-sided and finite framing. However, in the authorized quarto and folio they appear under various headings, interspersed amongst letters to men, and are thereby assimilated into a wider social network. The paratexts of each edition also

highlight different aspects of the letters' material origins and explore divergent notions of authenticity in print. The preface to Curll's 1735 edition, for instance, draws on the "intimate context" of "women's epistolary secrets" which, Gary Schneider notes, was "often exploited in letter publication".[40] It alludes tantalisingly to "Letters […] procur'd" from "several Cabinets; some drawn from thence by Accidents, and others (even of those to Ladies) voluntarily given".[41] Meanwhile, the 1737 octavo includes a disclaimer of certain letters to "*Mrs.* Blount" within Curll's "*surreptitious Editions*" – thereby utilizing the intrigue surrounding the transgressive unauthorized edition to situate the letters within a specific social context and to emphasize the comparative authenticity of this new expanded volume.[42] In the folio, however, Pope's letters to women are merely construed alongside the rest of his correspondence as a testament to friendship, which "preserv'd the memory of some Friendships which will ever be dear to him".[43] As seen in the previous chapter, this diverse presentation emphasizes that the publication process and physical format of each edition acutely influences its textual content and composition. Overall, this overview has revealed that Pope presented a limited and carefully curated sample of his extensive correspondence with women to the public; that this collection was significantly re-worked over his successive editions; and that these editions shifted in focus – from diverse early letters, towards select later letters – according to the profile of their anticipated audience.

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[40] See Schneider, *Culture of Epistolarity* (2005), pp. 253-4.
[41] 1735, p. iii.
[42] 1737 octavo, p. ii. Pope's note in the octavo read, "*Besides these Letters to Ladies, the surreptitious Editions of Mr.* Pope*'s Literary Correspondence have four in his name to Mrs.* Blount*, which he never writ, nor she saw*". Curll had printed translations of Voiture as if written to Martha Blount in *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence, Volume the third* (London: E. Curll, 1735). See *Corr.* iii. 487; Baines and Rogers, *Curll* (2007), p. 266, n. 41. On public perception of Pope's relationship with Martha Blount, see Guerinot, *Pamphlet Attacks* (1969), pp. 90-91.
[43] 1737 folio, p. iv.

2. Manuscript correspondences

The significant corpus of Pope's surviving manuscript letters to women offers a crucial insight into the source material from which his editions were formed. Furthermore, a detailed consideration of the manuscript letters that were not printed in Pope's lifetime illustrates the complex, varied, and dialogic character of his original correspondences, and indicates some of the factors that may have shaped his selection of letters for publication. Many of these letters might have been excluded from print because of their polite, occasional, or transactional nature; because the recipient's identity made publication impossible or undesirable; or because they were inaccessible to Pope or simply written too late for inclusion. The absence of other letters in print and their survival in manuscript might also relate to the intervening deterioration of the recipient's relationship with Pope.[44] However, alongside these factors, the letters known only from manuscript also contain discernible patterns of tone, voice, and subject. The following discussion explores the various themes of these omitted letters: alongside quotidian content, they may contain risqué, passionate or tender expressions of admiration, affection, and advice; convey uncertainty, discord or melancholy; explore the detailed gendered dynamics of particular relationships; cater to, acknowledge, or explore female learning and literature; or cast difficult or undesirable reflections on Pope's poetry or his identity as a writer.

[44] Henrietta Howard, for instance, attributed the end of her friendship with Pope to her refusal to return his letters: she told him, "falsely, that she had burned them, and she believed that he never forgave her", Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 228.

2.1 Arrangements and transactions

Much of the surviving manuscript correspondence is brief and transactional in nature, concerning the immediate arrangement of meetings, the exchange of items, or Pope's financial activities on behalf of his recipients: he informs Martha Blount in 1716, for example, that "the sum of 1121ll will be left for you in Mr Gay's hands".[45] These quotidian letters illuminate the immediate physical circumstances within which Pope's relationships were conducted and the ongoing logistical care by which they were maintained. Longer letters from further afield often bridge the distance between correspondents through offers and acknowledgements of gifts, such as "Haunch[es] of Venison", "fine Nectarines", "white Elder Wine", and "Pineapples" ("I have had none yet, but I bad him send you the *very first* that ripen'd, I mean for *yourself*").[46] Pope often treats even such occasional matters with a certain artistry, as seen in a note sent to the Blount sisters in Autumn 1715:

> Dear Ladies, -- You have here all the Fruit Mr Dancastles Garden affords that I could find in any degree of ripeness: They were on the Trees at eleven this morning, & I hope will be with you before night. Pray return, seald up, by the bearer, every single bit of paper that wraps 'em up: for they are the Only Copies of this part of Homer. If the Fruit is not so good as I wish, let the Gallantry of this Wrapping-paper make up for it. I'm Yours.[47]

Here, Pope employs the potential lasting literary significance of his precious manuscript work to imbue his ephemeral, quotidian gift with a greater sense of trust, care, romance, and physical connection.

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[45] Pope to Martha Blount [December 1716], *Corr*. i. 379. See also, e.g., Pope to Teresa Blount, [1717?], *Corr*. i. 434; [1718?], *Corr*. i. 467-8; [*c.* 2 February 1719/20?], *Corr*. ii. 31; [6 or 13 March 1720], *Corr*. ii. 38; Teresa Blount to Pope, [Autumn 1717], *Corr*. i. 435; Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [1720?], *Corr*. ii. 26; [1720], *Corr*. ii. 57; Pope to Martha Blount, 30 October [1719?] *Corr*. ii. 16-17; [January 1720], *Corr*. ii. 30; Mrs. D. Robinson to Pope, 9 October 1725, *Corr*. ii. 329; Pope to Magdalen Rackett, [1728/9], Corr. iii. 6; 30 October [1719?] *Corr*. ii. 16-17.

[46] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [1717?], *Corr*. i. 435; [August 1718], *Corr*. i. 490-91; Pope to Martha Blount, [19 August 1715], *Corr*. i. 315; 4 July [1739], *Corr*. iv. 185-6.

[47] Pope to Teresa Blount, [Autumn, 1715?], *Corr*. i. 317.

Pope's style within even such transactional letters changes over time, alters according to his mood, and is carefully tailored to his correspondent. Sometimes, such letters are playful or performative – as, in 1717, having received an invitation from the inebriated Lady Hamilton ("My Lady Dutchess being dru*nk at this present* & not able to write herself has *commanded me to* acquaint you that there is to be *musick on the water* on Thursday next"), Pope replies in a similar state, dating his letter "London, October the — Between day and night — The writer drunk—".[48] Later, in 1729, Pope offers of a copy of *The Dunciad* to the Countess of Burlington with a comical mix of self-deprecation and imperiousness: "If my Lady Burlington cares to be troubled with the Weight of Mr Pope, and his Dunciad, her Ladyships Coach will carry them all to day to Chiswick".[49] Pope's tone changes when writing to less familiar acquaintances, often requesting favours on behalf of others – for instance, he writes to Lady Cowper with a tone of studied politeness ("I hope to be forgiven if I presume so far […] as to beg your Interest […] for a Friend of mine").[50] Meanwhile, when drafting a charitable letter at the dictation of an illiterate acquaintance, Pope's alteration of his spelling to enhance the missive's authenticity suggests a self-effacing benevolence: "Please your Ladiship,—I do humbly crave your good Honourable Ladiships pardon to your poor alms woman Francis Bourne".[51] The attentive and adaptive fluidity of style which Pope's occasional letters display, then, reaches behind and beyond the range of epistolary voices showcased in his editions.

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[48] G. Maddison (on behalf of Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton), [June 1717?], *Corr*. i. 404-5; Pope to the Duchess of Hamilton, October [1717], *Corr*. i. 436-8.

[49] Pope to the Countess of Burlington, [1729], *Corr*. iii. 20. See also e.g., Pope to the Countess of Orrery, 14 October 1742, *Corr*. iv. 422.

[50] Pope to Lady Sarah Cowper, [30 May 1728], *Corr*. ii. 496-7.

[51] Pope to the Mrs. Blounts, [24 October 1717], *Corr*. i. 447; Pope to Lady —, [October 1717?], *Corr.* i. 436.

2.2 News, greetings, and health

The surviving manuscript correspondence also highlights the letter's status as a crucial source of personal and social news and greetings: an aspect often diminished in Pope's editions. The only surviving letter from Edith Pope to her son informs him of family health and local events: "Your Sister is very well but Your brother is not, There Mr Blunt of mapill Durom is ded the Same day that mr Ingilfild died, my Sirvis to mrs Blunts, and all that aske of me"; and many of Pope's letters, too, function only as greetings: "about Christmass time there is great plenty of Good wishes sent about the kingdome, and I should be ashamed if Gosfield had not mine."[52] Pope's letters to Martha Blount, in particular, are often dominated by social updates and health issues. A letter of 1739, for instance, conveys a comical barrage of messages to "Friends in Town": "Pray tell my Lady Suffolk […] Pray ask the Duchess of Queenbury […]".[53] Pope also offers reports of his own social activities – such as John Arbuthnot's nightly "Parties at Cards" at "Hampstead" in September 1734 – and gives detailed accounts of his movements: "I rise at seven, drink at the Well at 8, breakfast at 9, dine at 2, go to bed at ten, or sooner".[54] These letters often include humorous reports on Pope's health and its remedies – such as, in 1728, his having been detained "at Sir William Codrington's" by the officious attentions of "his sisters, [who] insisted I should take physic":

> My Lady Cox […] mixed my electuary, Lady Codrington pounded sulphur, Mrs. Bridget Bethel ordered broth. Lady Cox marched first up-stairs with the physic in a gallipot; Lady Codrington next, with the vial of oyle; Mrs. Bridget third, with pills; the fourth

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[52] Edith Pope to Pope, [26 January 1719/20?], *Corr*. ii. 29-30; Martha Blount and Pope to Mrs. Knight, 10 December [1736], *Corr*. iv. 47-8.

[53] Pope to Martha Blount, 27 December [1739], *Corr*. iv. 211-12. See also [December 1716], *Corr*. i. 379; 25 August 1735, *Corr*. iii. 487-8.

[54] Pope to Martha Blount, [17 September 1734], *Corr*. iii. 434-5; See also [March 1716?], *Corr*. i. 338-9; [December 1716], *Corr*. i. 379; 4 July [1739], *Corr*. iv. 185-6; [?19 November 1739], *Corr*. iv. 200-2.

> sister, with spoons and tea-cups. It would have rejoiced the ghost of Dr. Woodward to have beheld this procession.[55]

Such passages, in which Pope deliberately and meticulously reconstructs days and events to draw his correspondent into the scene, or casually and light-heartedly shares a comic sketch, seldom appear in his editions. While the omission of these letters contributes to a general shift away from quotidian detail and specificity in print, it also means that the editions exclude a view of correspondence as a transitory service, performed on request to satisfy the immediate tastes and interests of individual female correspondents.[56]

2.3 Gallantry and affection

Pope's manuscript letters to women exhibit a pervasive scheme of admiration, which ranges – over time and across correspondents – from suggestive and exaggerated flattery, to sincere and earnest expressions of affection. Pope's early letters to the Blounts and Montagu are infused with romantic and sexual possibility through – as Valerie Rumbold notes – "epistolary gallantry derived from seventeenth-century French models" like Vincent Voiture, which mediate "between the style of the rake and that of the enraptured lover".[57] In print, however, this style is selectively deployed and its tone carefully moderated, as we saw in Pope's published letters to Cromwell. Some omitted manuscript letters, for instance, display an over-eager or unpolished quality: in November 1714, Pope writes tipsily of the passion sparked by his correspondence with Martha: "Most Divine!—'Tis some proof of my Sincerity towards you that I write when I am prepared by Drinking to speak Truth, […] That Heart must have abundance of Flames which is at once

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[55] 4 September [1728], *Corr*. ii. 513-14. See also 30 October [1719?] *Corr*. ii. 16-17; 24 [November 1739], *Corr*. iv. 204-5.

[56] Pope mocks such epistolary accounts of social itineraries in a letter to Teresa and Martha Blount, 8 October [1718], *Corr*. i. 514-6; as does Montagu in a letter to Pope of 17 June [1717], *Corr*. i. 411-13.

[57] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 48-49.

warm'd by Wine and You".[58] Other unprinted manuscript letters may also transgress into excessively lewd or risqué territory. This tendency is particularly apparent in Pope's letters to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu during her travels, as he insistently objectified and reconstructed her absent figure, alternately as longed-for disembodied "Spirit" and sexual prize.[59] In a letter of September 1718, for example, he had declared, "I expect to see your Soul as much thinner dressd as your Body; […] I have a burning desire to see your Soul stark naked".[60] The responses of Pope's recipients to this style are neither present in his editions, nor preserved in manuscript. However, Montagu's own published letters record her guarded inclination to "take the fine things you say to me for wit and raillery".[61]

The manuscripts also preserve indications of the vulnerability and emotion which may have underlain Pope's epistolary personae. James A. Winn has observed that Pope's rakish style is facilitated by the "self-ridicule" which he habitually employed in response to his recognized lack of the last requisite "qualification" of a true rake: "physical beauty".[62] Yet the self-deprecating humour with which Pope balanced his gallantry and innuendo is often omitted in print, as in the case of a letter to Montagu of 1716 in which Pope writes, "I am capable myself of following one I lov'd, […] to those parts of India, where they tell us the Women best like the Ugliest fellows".[63] Pope neglects to print, too, the more serious, tender, and verbose professions of affection which are also frequent

[58] Pope to Martha Blount, [Post 24 November 1714], Corr. i. 268-9. See also Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [June 1717], Corr. i. 409; Pope to Mrs. Marriot, 19 July [1713?], *Corr*. i. 180-82.
[59] Pope to Montagu, [1718], *Corr*. i. 469-71; See Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 136; Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Letter* (1994), pp. 55-56.
[60] Pope to Montagu, 1 September 1718, *Corr.* i. 493-6.
[61] Montagu to Pope, 14 September [1716], *Corr*. i. 361-2. See also Montagu to Pope, 1 September 1718, *Corr.* i. 493-496.
[62] See Winn, "Pope Plays the Rake" (1979), pp. 92-95.
[63] Pope to Montagu, [October 1716], *Corr*. i. 363-4.

throughout his early manuscript letters. For instance, he writes to Martha Blount in 1719: "I am sure there is scarce an hour in which I am not thinking of you, and of every thing relating to you; […] there is really no day of my life that I don't long to see you."[64] Later in his correspondence with Martha, however, these urgent effusions mature into broad, unconditional assurances: Pope's final letter affirms that "I don't think half so much what will become of me, as of You; […] I love you upon unalterable Principles."[65] However, the manuscripts which preserve this affectionate style often post-date Pope's editions. As a result, the more extreme expressions of admiration which characterize Pope's manuscript correspondences with women – from his early indecorous or yearning ardour to his late familiar tenderness – are not represented in his editions.

2.4 Emotion and conflict

Many of Pope's unprinted manuscript letters also contain frank divulgences of his mental state at the time of writing, often revealing the frictions and difficulties that surrounded his female friendships. For instance, Pope tells the Blount sisters dejectedly in 1716, "Adieu—I am Melancholy—and Drunk—".[66] The following year, meanwhile, Pope sends them a direct two-sentence scrawl which conveys raw grief: "My poor Father dyed last night. Believe, since I don't forget you this moment, I never shall".[67] Yet such emotional openness is often also proximate to the frequent indications of tensions in this friendship pertaining to Pope's fraught relationship with Teresa. Pope lamented to the sisters in

[64] Pope to Martha Blount, 30 October [1719?] *Corr*. ii. 16-17. See also Pope to Montagu, [June 1717], *Corr*. i. 405-7; [October 1716], *Corr*. i. 363-4.
[65] Pope to Martha Blount, [25 March 1744], *Corr*. iv. 510-11. See also 4 September [1728], *Corr*. ii. 513-14; 4 July [1739], *Corr*. iv. 185-6.
[66] Pope to Martha Blount [December 1716], *Corr*. i. 379.
[67] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [24 October 1717], *Corr*. i. 447.

1718 that "I scarce ever come but one of two things happens, which equally afflicts me to the Soul. Either I make her Uneasy, or I see her Unkind."[68] This discord engenders an emotionally and psychologically searching and self-critical tone seldom seen elsewhere in Pope's correspondence: for instance, he asks Teresa's "forgiveness […] for That very Fault, of which I taxd others, my Vanity, which made me so Resenting".[69] Meanwhile, although the manuscripts do not record the final conflict in the friendship between Pope and Montagu, there is a distinct shift in tone following her return in 1718, as the correspondence turns to brief notes on quotidian concerns.[70] Pope's later letters are characterized by a subdued delivery which emphatically recognizes and respects Montagu's agency: "But I submit to you in all things, nay in the manner of all things; your own pleasure, & your own time."[71] This hesitant and deferential tone is entirely absent from Pope's editions.

After the end of Pope's friendships with Montagu and Teresa, the manuscripts preserve further social difficulty and distress concerning Martha Blount and their mutual friends. Pope's only known manuscript letter to Henrietta Howard, dated 1727, is emphatic in its expressions of "True Concern": for Howard herself; for Martha; and for other "friends" such as Swift and Gay, about whose difficulties Pope is "truly afflicted".[72] Similarly, in response to Martha's complaints of rude and inconsiderate behaviour from his friends Mr. and Mrs. Allen in 1743, Pope expressed his "disappointment" at this "Monstrous

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[68] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [1718?], *Corr*. i. 460. See also Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [Late 1717?], *Corr*. i. 455-6; [1718?], *Corr*. i. 460; Pope to Teresa Blount: [1717?], *Corr*. i. 456; 31 December [1717], *Corr*. i. 458; [1718], *Corr*. i. 459; 21 February [1717/18], *Corr*. i. 468; [October 1718], *Corr*. i. 517.
[69] Pope to Teresa Blount, [1720?], *Corr*. ii. 25-6; See also [early 1720?], *Corr*. ii. 26.
[70] Pope to Montagu, 22 August [1720], *Corr*. ii. 52; [1721?], *Corr*. ii. 62, 15 September 1721, *Corr*. ii. 82-3; [1720?], *Corr*. ii. 21-22. See Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Letter* (1994), p. 64; Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 141-4.
[71] Pope to Montagu, [1720?], *Corr*. ii. 22-23.
[72] [October 1727?], *Corr*. ii. 445-7.

Treatment" with viscerally intense feeling: "the bitter Reflection that I was wholly the unhappy cause of it, did really so distract me while with you, that I could neither speak, nor move, nor act, nor think. I was like a Man stun'd, or stabbd, where he expected an Embrace".[73] In various ways, then, Pope's correspondence with women invokes and preserves in manuscript some of his most intense emotional statements, which often suggest a lack of control – over both his own feelings, and the trajectory of his relationships. Pope's exclusion of these letters in print suggests his retrospective desire to obscure the tonal instability associated with intimacy and interpersonal conflict, and thereby to control and contain the published representation of these relationships.

2.5 Gendered attitudes and advice

The manuscripts also reveal Pope's use of explicitly gendered attitudes to examine the characters of his individual correspondents and to navigate the vagaries of his personal relationships. In his early letters, Pope often invokes generalizations against which to evaluate his recipients: he praises the Blounts where they surpass expected female behaviour ("I must owne I should never have look'd for Sincerity in your Sexe"); and mocks or criticizes where they comply ("O Pin-money! dear, desirable Pin-money! in thee are included all the blessings of woman!)".[74] Similarly, Pope ascribes value through hierarchical constructions of femininity – in 1718, for instance, he elevates Montagu above her sex and even her humanity in emphasising her superiority: "Indeed there is

[73] Martha Blount to Pope, [28 July or 4 August 1743], *Corr*. iv. 462; Pope to Martha Blount, [Early August 1743], *Corr*. iv. 463. See also Pope to Martha Blount, [Early August 1743], *Corr*. iv. 463; [25 March 1744], *Corr*. iv. 510-11.

[74] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [July 1713?], *Corr*. i. 182-3; 17 September [1718], *Corr*. i. 512-13. See also 1 August [1715], *Corr*. i. 310-11.

little or nothing Angelical left behind you. The women here are—Women".[75] However, Pope elsewhere subverts such idealization, revering the Blounts as "Goddesses", before crudely proclaiming, "But oh dear Angels! do not on any account Scratch your backsides: and oh heavnly Creatures! never leave the company to p—ss".[76] Here, Pope explores the intersection between elevated and base constructions of femininity as a source of intimate provocation, and as a site of personal knowledge of and access to his recipients. The early manuscripts, then, offer a glimpse of how Pope employed the contradictions and ambiguities surrounding broader concepts of gender, power, and decorum to address and adjust the dynamics of his own relationships.

In contrast, the editions also exclude the affectionate concern of Pope's later manuscript letters to Martha – his thinking "*of* & *for*" her – which extends to advocacy and advice on her behalf, and a tacit understanding of the social circumstances of women.[77] Their long correspondence reveals further conflicts and complexities within Pope's ideals of female character and behaviour. Pope frequently exhorts Martha to "settle" independently; to be more proactive and assertive in pursuit of her own "ease" and happiness; and thereby to preserve her "cheerful […] Temper" and "Calm of Mind".[78] Yet he resignedly admits that "this, I know, is a Dream: and almost Every thing I wish, in relation to You, is so always!"[79] As Valerie Rumbold observes, Pope's admiration of Martha's constancy and good nature is tempered by his sense that these very qualities render such advice futile.[80] Accordingly, Pope's later letters to Martha are permeated alternately by sympathy, frustration, and

[75] Pope to Montagu, [1718], *Corr*. i. 469-71. See also [July 1716], *Corr*. i. 345.
[76] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, 8 October [1718], *Corr*. i. 514-6.
[77] Pope to Martha Blount, 4 July [1739], *Corr*. iv. 185-6.
[78] Pope to Martha Blount, [Early August 1743], *Corr*. iv. 463; 4 July [1739], *Corr*. iv. 185-6; [7 July 1739], *Corr*. iv. 187-8.
[79] Pope to Martha Blount, [7 July 1739], *Corr*. iv. 187-8.
[80] See Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 263.

wearied pragmatism: "Leave them [the Allens], without a word, & send for your things But I hope you have, I am sure you have, surely you must have, done this already".[81] The subtleties of this relationship are demonstrated by a letter of December 1739 in which Pope mocks both the dissolute superficialities of female social engagements, and Martha's timorous perception of them:

> I am sorry you are so engaged, & dissipated, as you say. […] to be all day, first dressing one's body, then dragging it abroad, then stuffing the guts, then washing them with Tea, then wagging one's tongue, & so to bedd; is the life of an Animal, […] But as next to Action is Contemplation, so Women unmarryd betake themselves wisely to Thinking; as I doubt not you do sometimes, when after the fatigues of the day, you get to bed; and then how must every Considerate Woman be struck, when she hears the Watchman every hour, telling how *Time is Past*! If you think I write a little extravagantly, you are mistaken, for this is Philosophy: I am just come from hearing Dr Cheyne, and besides I have the headake, which heats my brain, and he assures me I might be inspired if It had but one Turn more.[82]

Here, Pope's teasing ventriloquism of Martha's social reserve in fact depends on his sensitive appreciation of her individual character, while his cynical depiction of society calls upon the ties of their shared experience. The passage is further softened by Pope's anticipation of Martha's criticism of his "extravagant" writing, and by his ironic, self-deprecating picture of his own philosophical inspiration.[83] Thus, while the manuscript letters reveal the critical and contradictory nature of Pope's early attitudes towards women, as he alternately adopted and satirized conventional gender constructions, they also underline how Pope's application of these generalizations to his personal relationships diminished over time. The later letters instead reveal a more nuanced attention to the specificities and idiosyncrasies of individual character and circumstance.

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[81] Pope to Martha Blount, [Early August 1743], *Corr*. iv. 463.
[82] Pope to Martha Blount, 27 December [1739], *Corr*. iv. 211-12.
[83] *Corr*. iv. 211-12.

2.6 Literary letters

While women seldom appear in Pope's editions as the recipient, reader or author of literary material, or as participants in his intellectual sphere, such references suffuse the manuscript letters. Here, the presence of literature and learning is also underpinned by conflicts between conventional gender constructions and the dynamics of his individual relationships. In one letter of 1713, for instance, Pope treats the concept of female wit with wry irony in his praise of a "very witty Epistle" from Mrs Marriot, which he has not yet read: "If I were so wise as to proceed cautiously, I should summon a Council of all the Witts at Button's Coffee house before I attempted it."[84] Furthermore, while Pope's manuscript letters frequently directly accompany shared literature, such references to literary consumption are often emphatically gendered.[85] The "Present" of "the five Volumes of the Grand Cyrus" which Pope sent to Martha Blount in November 1716, for example, forms the basis for an exploration of divergent female transgressions.[86] Although Pope facilitates and sanctions Martha's private reading pleasure, he also provocatively rationalizes her feminine taste: "It is usual with unfortunate Young Women to betake themselves to Romances, and therby feed & indulge that melancholy which is occasioned by the Want of a Lover".[87] Meanwhile, in the following paragraph, he instead teases Teresa for her public vices: she has "Prostituted herself to a man in a Sheet of paper" and exposed herself to "the Gaze of Fools" by attending the "Pageant of a Birth-night".[88] The echo in this letter of Pope's 'Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady' of

[84] Pope to Mrs. Marriot, 19 July [1713?], *Corr*. i. 180-82.
[85] See e.g., Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [June 1717], *Corr*. i. 409; Pope to Teresa Blount, [October 1718], *Corr*. i. 517.
[86] Pope to Martha Blount, [November 1716], *Corr*. i. 375-6.
[87] *Corr*. i. 375-6.
[88] *Corr*. i. 375-6. Teresa has sent Pope money to invest.

the following year (in which the melancholy tenderness of his female subject is set in contrast to "The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!") underlines Pope's conceptual division of the sisters' characters.[89] It also highlights the connections between Pope's epistolary and poetic writings, and the way in which they mediate between these private and public realms. Elsewhere, Pope explicitly draws such links in sharing his own work with his correspondents, presented variously as risqué provocation or emotional stimulus. Pope informs Martha Blount, for instance, that she may read *The Rape of the Lock* despite its "dangerous" content, "tho' you shou'd Blush for it, since Blushing becomes you the best of any Lady in England".[90] Meanwhile, he tells Montagu suggestively in 1717 that "you have all I am worth, that is, my Workes: [in] the Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard […] you will find one passage, that I can't tell whether to wish you should understand, or not?"[91] The manuscripts, then, offer direct equations of Pope's own identity with his works and of his poetic subjects with his correspondents, and contain glimpses of his recipients' identities as wider readers – but these reflections are generally withheld from the editions.

Congruently, the editions also occlude the role of Pope's letters to women as a vehicle for much of his epistolary writing of a creative, descriptive, and literary character. Such writing is often tailored to his audience: as Rumbold notes, many of Pope's letters to Martha Blount cater to her particular "sensibility to landscape".[92] For instance, Pope wrote from Bristol in 1739:

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[89] *Poems II*, p. 366; l. 44.
[90] Pope to Martha Blount, [March 1716?], *Corr*. i. 338-9. See also Pope to Mrs. or Miss Marriot, 28 February [1713/14], *Corr*. i. 211.
[91] Pope to Montagu, [June 1717], *Corr*. i. 405-7. See also Pope to Martha Blount, [March 1716?], *Corr*. i. 338-9.
[92] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 253.

> I hardly knew what I undertook when I said I would give you some Account of this place. […] From the room where I write, I see the Tyde rising, and filling all the bottom between these Scenes of Rocks, […] mixd with Trees & Shrubs, but much wilder, and huge Shaggy Marbles, some in Points, some in Caverns, hanging all over & under them in a thousand shapes. —I've no more room, but to […] wish you'd see next summer or spring what I'm sure would charm you, & fright most other Ladies. [93]

Pope responds here to Martha's singular appreciation of melancholy and romantic scenes, enabling her to vicariously share his experience through a careful attention to detail and atmosphere. Pope's editions also omit his receipt and recognition of similarly descriptive, literary or poetic writing by women. For instance, he refers approvingly in 1717 to a "romantic description" sent to him by Martha Blount from Stonor, in a letter which is now lost.[94] Meanwhile, Montagu's highly expository letters from the continent (largely preserved only through her own publication of them) assert her intention to "entertain" and inform: "I have done my best endeavours to find out something worth writing to you. I have seen every thing that was to be seen with a very diligent curiosity".[95] The detached, descriptive, and analytical tone with which Montagu apparently replies to Pope's deeply personal letters may, as Cynthia Lowenthal suggests, be intended to assert her status as an "artist and intellectual equal" in response to Pope's epistolary romantic gallantry.[96] However, as Valerie Rumbold notes, this distance may also derive from her own later editorial reshaping of the correspondence into a literary work – thus reminding us of the extent to which the surviving evidence of this relationship is a product of textual editing by both Pope and Montagu.[97] Pope's surviving manuscript letters do record his recognition of Montagu's critical acumen and acknowledgement of her enhanced

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[93] Pope to Martha Blount, [?19 November 1739], *Corr*. iv. 200-2. See also 24 [November 1739], *Corr*. iv. 204-5; 22 June [1724?], *Corr*. ii. 236-40; 4 July [1739], *Corr*. iv. 185-6; 11 August [1734], G. S. Rousseau, "A New Pope Letter", PQ 45 (1966), pp. 409-18 (*Corr*. iii. 427-8); Pope to Teresa Blount, 11 December 1720, *Corr*. ii. 59.

[94] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, 13 September 1717, *Corr*. i. 426-9.

[95] Montagu to Pope, 10 October 1716, *Corr*. i. 365-6. For example, see Montagu to Pope, 14 September [1716], *Corr*. i. 361-2.

[96] Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Letter* (1994), pp. 36; 53-59; Spacks, "Pope and Lady Mary" (1984).

[97] See Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 140.

perspective as a reader: in 1717, he assured her that "I make not the least question but you could give me great Eclaircissements upon many passages in Homer, since you have been enlightend by the same Sun that inspired the Father of Poetry".[98] Such reflections, however, are absent from his editions. Years later, meanwhile, female learning of Montagu's distinction would appear in Pope's manuscript correspondence only as distant anecdote, as in a letter to Ann Price of September 1740: "*Sint tales animæ concordes!* […] I leave it to his Lordship to translate, if you pretend you cannot. […] I desired Mrs. Blount to write this sentence to you, […] but she would not trust herself with so much Latin: I know some Ladies that would".[99]

Elsewhere, Pope's manuscript correspondence seems yet more sensitively conscious of the influence of gender on literary production. In a series of letters sent in 1722-3 to Judith Cowper, who had solicited his criticism on her verses, Pope establishes a dynamic in which Cowper's role becomes that of patient rather than poet: "I would, with as much readiness, play the Apothecary or the Nurse, to mend your Headakes, as I would play the Critick to improve your verses".[100] Furthermore, Pope stresses that Cowper's attributes – her "valuable Soul; & Wit, Sense & Worth" – are indivisible, and her literary ability is contingent upon her unassuming virtue.[101] He sets out this qualification clearly to Cowper in verse:

> Tho sprightly Sappho force our Love & Praise,
> A softer Wonder my pleasd soul surveys,
> The mild Erinna, blushing in her Bays.
>
> So while the Sun's broad beam yet strikes the sight,

[98] Pope to Montagu, [June 1717], *Corr*. i. 405-7. See also [1718], *Corr*. i. 469-71; Montagu to Pope, 1 April 1717, *Corr*. i. 396-402; Lowenthal, *Montagu and the Letter* (1994), pp. 58-9.
[99] Pope to Ann Price, [8 September 1740], *Corr*. ii. 266.
[100] Pope to Judith Cowper, 30 September 1722, *Corr*. ii. 136-7; 18 October [1722], *Corr*. ii. 138-9. Pope's letters to Cowper were printed in *Letters of the Late Alexander Pope, Esq. to a Lady: Never before Published*, (London, 1769).
[101] *Corr*. ii. 136-7; *Corr*. ii. 138-9.

> All mild appears the moon's more sober Light,
> Serene, in Virgin Majesty, she shines;
> And un-observd, the glaring Sun declines.[102]

This verse establishes a dichotomy that pervades Pope's poetic representations of female character and literary production. As Valerie Rumbold observes, Pope here sets the retiring, soft, and melancholy "ideal moons", such as Judith Cowper and Martha Blount, against the vibrant, challenging, and provocative "suns", such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Teresa Blount.[103] Yet Pope's correspondence editions undercut this distinction to exclude almost any indication of his recipients as critical and creative writers and readers. Pope did not print his correspondence with Cowper, but instead adapted these verses for inclusion in his *Epistle to a Lady*, published in 1735.[104] His selection of letters for print in the same year thus underlines by omission the didactic message of this poem: that female literary production is an activity to be commended and encouraged only in private. As a result, while the manuscript correspondences reveal Pope's conditional personal recognition of various modes of female literary consumption and production, their public remediation transforms Pope's correspondents from individual interlocutors and creators into generalized recipients and poetic subjects.

2.7 Representations of Pope as writer

Pope's manuscript letters to women also contain glimpses of the process behind his own poetic and epistolary writings. Pope often confers upon his recipient the role of distraction, comfort, or confidant: "Madam,—I am here studying ten hours a day, but thinking of you in spight of all the learned".[105] Such references indicate the contradictory

[102] *Corr*. ii. 138-9. *Poems VI*, p. 306.
[103] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 148-149; 155.
[104] *Epistle to a Lady: Of the Characters of Women, Poems III-ii,* p. 70, ll. 253-6.
[105] Pope to Martha Blount, [March 1716?], *Corr*. i. 338-9.

ways in which Pope's attitudes to and identification with women are bound up with his literary work. For example, in a letter to Martha Blount of June 1715, Pope claims oblivious solitude, but solicits news; privately degrades his public relationship with his "Muse"; and aligns his studious retirement with the confinements of pregnancy:

> Madam,—[…] if ever I could have any merit with you, it is in writing to you at a time when I am studying to forget every Creature I ever lov'd or esteemed: […] When I am to be entertain'd only with that Jade whom every body thinks I love, as a Mistress, but whom in reality I hate as a Wife, my Muse. Pitty me, Madam, who am to lye in of a Poetical Child for at least two Months. As soon as I am up again I'll wait upon you: but in the mean time I beg to hear if you are quite recoverd from your Ague, the only thing I desire to hear from anyone in my present State of Oblivion.[106]

The conventional metaphor of composition as childbirth, like the irreverent reference to the archetypal female figures of "Mistress" and "Muse", is recurrent in Pope's discussion of the writing process.[107] His correspondence editions feature early letters to Wycherley in which he identifies as poetic "Midwife" and defines "True Wit" as "a perfect Conception, with an easy Delivery"; while the *Dunciad* later explored the satirical resonances of this concept through the "Laborious" Dulness and her dunces.[108] In accordance with these attitudes, and in alignment with the dictates of propriety and genre, Pope's editions filter out the more complex and conflicted reports of his own poetic production which he had addressed to female recipients. As a result, such private admissions of caution, concern, isolation, and laboured or distracted creativity seldom feature in Pope's public depictions of his working practice. Pope's letters to women thus form a rich resource for exploring his sense of the creative process – but only if we read them in manuscript.

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[106] Pope to Martha Blount, 3 June [1715], *Corr*. i. 293-4.

[107] See also, "I would write more but my Head akes enough to be brought to bed of some dead-born Poem", Pope to Martha Blount, [November 1716], *Corr*. i. 375-6.

[108] Pope to Wycherley, 10 April 1706, *Corr*. i. 15-16; 26 December 1704, *Corr*. i. 1-2; *Poems V*, p. 61, ll. i. 13. See Raymond Stephanson, "The Symbolic Structure of Eighteenth-Century Male Creativity: Pregnant Men, Brain-Wombs, and Female Muses (with some comments on Pope's *Dunciad*)", *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 27 (1998), 103-130.

Similarly, Pope's editions rarely reflect the evidence in the manuscripts of the creative effort and discernment inherent in his epistolary writing to women. The manuscript letters frequently reveal Pope's critical examination and articulation of the writing process: "—I write very dully. I must send a better letter next".[109] They also demonstrate Pope's consciousness of the distinct character and subject of these correspondences. Writing to Martha Blount in 1739, Pope reflects on the "triffling" nature of his letters to her with a defiant reference to post office surveillance:

> You have often rebuked me for talking too much of myself & my own Motions, & it is surely more triffling & absurd to write them, than to talk them; considering too that the Clerks of the Postoffice read these Letters. But I am not at all ashamed, that They & all the world know how much I esteem You.[110]

Such declarations of pride and resolute candour despite potential epistolary intrusion serve as markers of authenticity within Pope's more prestigious printed correspondences.[111] Here, however, Pope's affirmation of the unique personal significance of his correspondence with Martha instead highlights his awareness of the discrepancy between his public identity and this private persona. The material details of the manuscripts contain further clues to the care and labour of Pope's correspondence with women. They preserve careful stylistic improvements, such as the interlineated detail which Pope adds to strengthen a declaration of affection to the Blounts: "I [….] will love you **Forty years hence, when your eyes begin to twinkle**, in a Retirement".[112] Paratexts, too, are employed to enhance epistolary effect: the sisters might already anticipate gallantry in the French mode from a sealed letter addressed to "Au Mademoiselles, | Mademoiselles

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[109] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount [August 1718], *Corr*. i. 490-91. See also Pope to Martha Blount, [7 July 1739], *Corr*. iv. 187-8.
[110] Pope to Martha Blount, [7 July 1739], *Corr*. iv. 187-8.
[111] See below, Chapter 4, pp. 308-9.
[112] Pope to Martha and Teresa Blount, [?September 1714], *Corr*. i. 252-3. See also manuscript edits in Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [23 July 1715], *Corr*. i. 307-9; Pope to Martha Blount, 6 October [1714], *Corr*. ii. 259-62.

de Maple- | Durham."[113] The stylized and studied nature of Pope's original letters is also suggested by his repurposing of ideas across correspondences – highlighting that his flexible reuse of choice passages and phrases operates in manuscript as well as print. For instance, he tells the Blounts in September 1717 that "I would not have you think I have any other reason to be melancholy: And after all, He must be a beast that is so, with two such fine women for his friends"; a phrase which is reconfigured in a letter to Montagu of the following year: "And after all, he must be a Beast, that can be melancholy with such a fine Woman as you to his friend."[114] Conversely, the surviving manuscript letters also contain occasional obliterations: eight words at the end of a letter to Martha Blount in 1734 were illegibly overscored, before or after sending; and Pope's only surviving letter to his mother Edith was, notes Sherburn, "heavily overscored" by Pope before he translated "the end of Bk. III of the *Odyssey* on the back".[115] These features, then, suggest the breadth of Pope's conception of his letters to women: from trivial material whose transitory function is to sustain relationships, to carefully-crafted texts worthy of preservation, redaction, and publication.

Overall, this consideration of the manuscripts demonstrates that the surviving correspondence which Pope did not print, while still constituting a partial view, represents a large, complex, and varied corpus. Pope's manuscript letters to women contain many features common to his correspondence as a whole and display the extensive variety of his epistolary voice. Pope's tone and subject develops over time,

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[113] Pope to Martha and Teresa Blount [?September 1714] *Corr*. i. 252-3; [June 1717], *Corr*. i. 409.

[114] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, 13 September 1717, *Corr*. i. 426-9; Pope to Montagu, [1718], Corr. i. 469-71. The same two letters also contain similar descriptions of Hampton Court; and this letter to Montagu also contains echoes of Pope's figure regarding "the Sun as a Spangle & the World as a Hazel-nut" from a letter to Teresa Blount, September [1714], *Corr*. i. 256-8.

[115] Pope to Martha Blount, [17 September 1734], *Corr*. iii. 434-5; Pope to Edith Pope, [14 May 1723], *Corr*. ii. 172.

changes according to his situation and mood, and is attuned to the nuances of each relationship and to the expectations, identity, and status of his recipient. Although Pope's gendered observations, advice, and flattery often indicate his female audience, his attitudes are fluctuating and often contradictory. As a result, the letters which he sent to women throughout his life are not inherently identified collectively as a distinct form, or by specific characteristics, as the published collections might suggest. However, Pope's manuscript letters to women also offer a uniquely detailed and candid glimpse into his writing and social life, contain some of his most considered and vivid descriptive writings, and comprise some of his most unguarded and emotionally resonant extant letters. Such aspects may be preserved here partly because of the distinct nature of Pope's relationships with women, and partly as these manuscript letters were more likely to survive due to the factors affecting Pope's ability or inclination to request their return: the subsequent breakdown of early friendships, or the perceived unsuitability of such material for publication. These letters offer intriguing insights into how the original correspondence was editorially reconstructed; reveal the transitory, fragmented, emotional, and diurnal aspects which Pope excised for print; and suggest how this process has shaped our knowledge of these relationships and the individuals involved.

3. Print remediation

Pope's editorial intervention operates differently within each of his editions to showcase distinct characteristics of his correspondence with women. Here, I will examine each edition in turn, exploring how Pope sequentially adjusted the previous incarnation of the letters to present new facets of these correspondences to public view. I will review the selection of content presented in each edition, examine omitted or excised material, and

discuss how Pope's textual editing modified the tone and content of the letters from the manuscript text or that of the previous printing. I will also consider the letters introduced by Pope for which his editions form the earliest known source. This detailed textual analysis builds on the quantitative overview above to suggest the collective impact of Pope's editorial intervention in sequentially reshaping the character of these correspondences in print. Firstly, in the earliest 1735 edition, Pope excises many of the features identified within the unprinted manuscript letters discussed above, and introduces new, potentially fabricated, letters. These changes support a polished and stylized version of his early epistolary style, characterized by an urbane and often risqué wit. Secondly, I will show the way in which this focus is supplemented in the 1737 octavo through the introduction of later letters, which present a wider variety of epistolary modes and reveal an increasingly critical, yet conflicted, consideration of the role of gender in character and correspondence. Lastly, I will demonstrate that in the authorized 1737 folio, this group of letters is further filtered and augmented to reveal a stable, benevolent and mature epistolary voice through which the characters of Pope's female correspondents are more subtly differentiated. Throughout, I will consider how the shift from specificity to generality in print facilitates Pope's development of stylistic and thematic aspects of the letters which resonate with his poetic works.

3.1 *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence For Thirty Years, Vol. 1* (1735)

Pope established the foundations of his published correspondence with women when, in 1735, he included sixteen "Letters to Several Ladies" in the printed sheets which he surreptitiously sent to Edmund Curll for publication. This edition included seven letters

to the Blounts, two letters to Montagu, one letter each to Betty Marriot, Arabella Fermor, and Lady Rich, and four letters to unknown correspondents. Apart from one of 1726, all of the printed letters date from before 1718. This early focus, and the fact that Pope's letters to Montagu and Teresa Blount feature prominently in his editions 15 years after these friendships had ended, implies that Pope's editorial selection is not driven by a desire to showcase letters which he regards, at the point of editing (now at around 46 years of age), to be of immediate intimate value or current biographical insight. Instead, it suggests Pope's perception of his letters' aesthetic or literary worth, an awareness of the market or future historical value of their social associations, or even a nostalgic desire to reconstruct his past friendships and to recall them to personal (and, inevitably, public) consciousness. Such considerations shape not only the inclusion or exclusion of letters in print, but also the content of the letters themselves. An examination of the letters to the Blounts and Montagu, which are known in both manuscript and print, reveals intriguing changes for publication. Firstly, the excision of certain material – such as ephemera and news, excessively indecorous or tender expressions, passages suggesting melancholy or uncertainty, and those containing unconventional constructions of gender and writing – accords with the omission of much of the manuscript material discussed above. Additionally, these letters also reveal Pope's careful refinement of his epistolary style through adjustments to structure, phrasing and vocabulary. Furthermore, this reshaped correspondence is supplemented and bolstered as a series of 'Letters to Several Ladies' through the addition of six letters known only from this edition. In combination, these changes suggest that Pope's editorial intervention crafted his letters as a series of stylized set pieces: generalizing their appeal by widening their frame of reference; enhancing the confidence of their tone; and highlighting and balancing their risqué humour and urbane gallantry.

3.1.1 Excisions

The surviving manuscripts of letters published by Pope reveal that a significant quantity of passages and phrases were excised from the printed texts. Some of these changes form part of a move away from specific and ephemeral detail that is typical of Pope's published letters, and of published correspondence in general. In adherence to polite convention in protecting the identity of female correspondents, the letters in this edition are almost entirely anonymously attributed.[116] The almost universal removal of most or part of person and place names from within letters ("Mrs P~~atty~~"; "Mrs T~~eresa~~"; "Mrs ~~Nelson~~ expects the Pretender at her Lodgings"; "~~At Binfield~~ **In the forest**") also enables the inclusion of passages which are densely populated and suggestive, without compromising propriety – such as Pope's depiction of Hampton Court:

> I met the Prince with all his Ladies ~~(tho few or none of his Lords)~~ on horseback coming from Hunting. Mrs B~~ellendine~~ & Mrs L~~epell~~ took me into protection […] & […] an opportunity of conversation with Mrs H~~oward~~. […] Mrs L~~epell~~ walk'd ~~all alone~~ with me three or 4 hours, by moonlight.[117]

Rather than being merely conventional, in the context of public scrutiny of and sensitivity to Pope's relationships, such partial obfuscation may also be intended to baffle or intrigue the reader through glimpses of an inaccessible coterie and to contrive a sense of variety and cohesion. Pope's replacement of Martha's name in print with a romance pen name from the early days of the correspondence of their circle – "Lady ~~Martha~~ **Sylvia**" – also employs the convention of addressing women using Latin names, as seen in the Cromwell

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[116] Schneider, *Culture of Epistolarity* (2005), pp. 261; 278. See also Katharine Ann Jensen, *Writing Love: Letters, Women, and the Novel in France, 1605-1776* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), p. 17; Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), p. 53.

[117] Pope to Martha and Teresa Blount, [?September 1714], *Corr*. i. 252-3; Pope to Martha Blount, 6 October [1714], *Corr*. ii. 259-62. Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [23 July 1715], *Corr*. i. 307-9; Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, 13 September 1717, *Corr*. i. 426-9.

letters.[118] As James Winn notes, such fictionalization "blur[red] the distinction between real and imaginary mistresses", enabled the development of personae, and facilitated intimate disclosures.[119] Similarly, as Katharine Jensen notes, the imposition of "anonymity" by "epistolary editors" can serve "as a marker of an emotional femininity that keeps women in a literarily marginal […] place".[120] Thus, the anonymity of Pope's female correspondents in print, and their status solely as recipients, not only creates freedom to shape the printed texts, but also imbues them with specific tonal resonances and genre associations.

The excision of other features of the manuscript letters further serves to distance the published letters from their original social context. Dates, signatures, post-scripts, and greetings are routinely omitted ("~~Sept. 13th 1717~~"; "~~Your faithfull obliged humble Servant. A. P.~~"; "~~My faithful Service to Mrs Blount Mr Blount & Mr Holman~~").[121] Passages of news are also frequently excised. For instance, Pope removes many snippets of gossip from a 1715 letter to the Blounts; particularly those which dwell on Jacobite news ("~~The Duke of Ormond is retired […]~~"), and those tailored to the interest and humour of the sisters ("~~I mett my Lord Finch in Red, trimmd with Gold; […] So that he may beg (with Mrs Patty's leave) to be as gay as a *Gold Finch*~~").[122] Pope also removes accounts of his own activities, such as his 1714 report to Martha Blount that "~~My whole Day is shar'd by the Pump-Assemblies, the Walkes, the Chocolate houses, Raffling Shops, Plays, Medleys,~~

[118] Pope to Teresa Blount, September [1714], *Corr*. i. 256-8. See Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 55.
[119] Winn, "Pope Plays the Rake" (1979), pp. 89, 102.
[120] Jensen, *Writing Love* (1995), p. 17.
[121] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, 13 September 1717, *Corr*. i. 426-9; Pope to Martha Blount, 6 October [1714], *Corr*. ii. 259-62; Pope to Martha and Teresa Blount, [?September 1714], *Corr*. i. 252-3; See also Pope to Teresa Blount, [Late October 1714], *Corr*. i. 264-5. Pope to Martha Blount, 4 September [1728], *Corr*. ii. 513-14.
[122] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [23 July 1715], *Corr.* i. 307-9. See also Pope to Teresa Blount, 7 August [1716], *Corr*. ii. 349-51.

~~&c.~~"[123] However, such passages may not be excluded merely because of their quotidian nature or social specificity, but because they suggest Pope's status as uncertain observer rather than participant, or hint at a certain youthful affectation or social giddiness – for instance, his claim to Martha that "~~I neglect the Company of a great number of Ladies to write this letter: From the Window where I am seated, I command the prospect of twenty or thirty~~".[124] Similarly, Pope avoids suggestions that his social reports constitute an indulgence in or service to feminine gossip, including the admission that "~~Scandal [...] refreshes me and elevates my Spirits.~~"[125] Pope's removal of specificity here, as in his letters to Cromwell in the previous chapter, facilitates a more measured and detached tone. In isolating the letters from their original context in print, these changes thus also serve to distance them from any associated anxieties or indiscretions of that time.

Pope also omits to print the extremes of provocative flirtation, emotional appeal, and self-consciousness found in the unprinted manuscripts. For instance, he excises the most extreme epistolary innuendo from a letter sent to Teresa in 1716:

> ~~It is not enough, Madam, for your reputation, that you keep your hands pure, from the Stain of Such Ink as might be shed to gratify a male Correspondent; [...] I am vain enough to conclude (like most young fellows) that a fine Lady's Silence is Consent, and so I write on.~~[126]

In accordance with this more decorous focus, Pope removes jocular references to himself as a "~~Rake~~" – along with the associated suggestions of his dissolute lifestyle ("go ~~a Rakeing~~ **and see the world**") and of the irony and self-consciousness that underpins this posture ("~~I endeavour (like all awkward Fellows) to become agreeable by Imitation; & observing~~

[123] Pope to Martha Blount, 6 October [1714], *Corr*. ii. 259-62. See also Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [September 1717], *Corr*. i. 429-31.
[124] Pope to Martha Blount, 6 October [1714], *Corr*. ii. 259-62. See also Pope to Teresa Blount, 7 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 349-51; Pope to Martha Blount, 6 October [1714], *Corr*. ii. 259-62.
[125] Pope to Martha Blount, 6 October [1714], *Corr*. ii. 259-62.
[126] Pope to Teresa Blount, 7 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 349-51. See also Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [September 1717], *Corr*. i. 429-31.

~~who are most in favor with the Fair~~").[127] Similarly, the self-deprecation involved in this pose is also carefully limited in print: "~~were I a handsome fellow I should do you a vast deal of good: but as it is, all I am good for is to write a civil letter~~".[128] Along with such risqué material, Pope also regulates the extremes of emotional intensity within the printed letters. For example, he removes his more directly sentimental expressions of anxiety from a letter of 1714, when Martha was ill with smallpox:

> I have ever since suffer'd Alarms upon Alarms on her account. ~~A Month ago I should have laughd at any one, who had told me, my Heart would be perpetually beating for a Lady that was thirty miles off from me; […] But Madam it is with the utmost Seriousness I assure you, no Relation you have~~ **No one** can be more sensibly touched at this, than I […][129]

Pope excises, too, the descriptive and poetic passages which cater to the "romantic" tastes of his correspondents, including the mournful verse meditation on the "~~Melancholy~~" "~~Groves~~" at "~~Stonor~~" with which he had concluded a letter of 1717: "~~All hail! Once pleasing, once inspiring Shade | Scene of my youthful Loves, and happier hours!~~".[130] Finally, Pope's omissions exclude the unfavourable reflections on poetic production present in the manuscript letters. For instance, he removes a passage sent to Teresa Blount in 1714, which casts his letter as a service performed on demand to avoid the painful labour of poetic work:

> ~~I write to you for two reasons: one is because you commanded it […] the other, because I sit at home to take physick, and they tell me I must do nothing that costs me great application *or great pains*, therefore I can neither say my prayers nor write verses.~~[131]

In combination, these excisions exclude from the edition many of the characteristic features of the manuscript correspondence, including its specific social context and its extremes of irreverence or emotion. The effect is to consolidate the impression of a

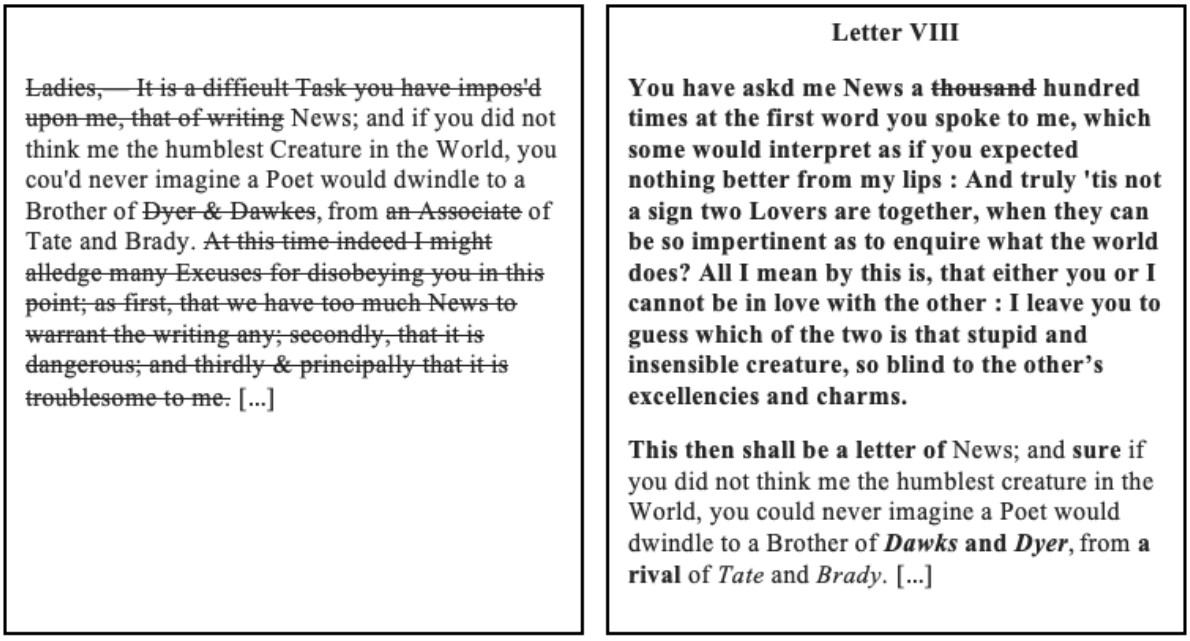
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[127] Pope to Martha Blount, 6 October [1714], *Corr*. ii. 259-62.
[128] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [September 1717], *Corr*. i. 429-31; See also Pope to Teresa Blount, 7 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 349-51.
[129] Pope to Teresa Blount, [Late October 1714], *Corr*. i. 264-5.
[130] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, 13 September 1717, *Corr*. i. 426-9.
[131] Pope to Teresa Blount, September [1714], *Corr*. i. 256-8.

consistent, controlled epistolary voice – smoothing out suggestions of caprice or emotional fluctuation, reinforcing the boundaries of decorum, and excluding potential contraventions of gender norms or subversions of poetic ideals.

3.1.2 Modifications

Elsewhere, the manuscript letters are modified for print through specific refinements to content, tone and style that enact a shift towards a more assertive epistolary voice. For instance, in place of the apprehensive tone with which Pope had opened a 1715 letter of news to the Blount sisters, he imports a paragraph from a letter to Teresa Blount of the following year:



~~Ladies,— It is a difficult Task you have impos'd upon me, that of writing~~ News; and if you did not think me the humblest Creature in the World, you cou'd never imagine a Poet would dwindle to a Brother of ~~Dyer & Dawkes~~, from ~~an Associate~~ of Tate and Brady. ~~At this time indeed I might alledge many Excuses for disobeying you in this point; as first, that we have too much News to warrant the writing any; secondly, that it is dangerous; and thirdly & principally that it is troublesome to me.~~ [...]

Letter VIII

You have askd me News a ~~thousand~~ hundred times at the first word you spoke to me, which some would interpret as if you expected nothing better from my lips : And truly 'tis not a sign two Lovers are together, when they can be so impertinent as to enquire what the world does? All I mean by this is, that either you or I cannot be in love with the other : I leave you to guess which of the two is that stupid and insensible creature, so blind to the other's excellencies and charms.

This then shall be a letter of News; and **sure** if you did not think me the humblest creature in the World, you could never imagine a Poet would dwindle to a Brother of ***Dawks* and *Dyer***, from **a rival** of *Tate* and *Brady*. [...]

Figure 2.7 Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [23 July 1715], in manuscript (l) and as printed in 1735 (r) [132]

The transplanted passage approaches the subject of news with a teasing humour, replacing the manuscript indications of compulsion and uncertainty with polished, active,

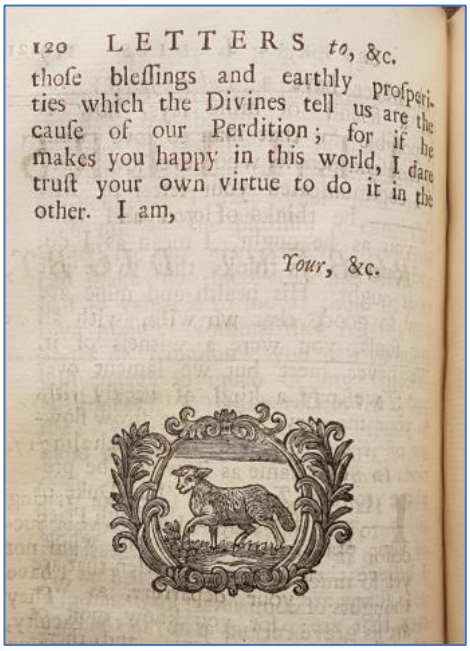
[132] Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [23 July 1715], *Corr*. i. 307-9, including a paragraph from Pope to Teresa Blount, 7 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 349-51. See also Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, [September 1717], *Corr*. i. 429-31.

and assured language. Pope's changes demonstrate a careful attention to detail: he adds a casual "sure"; balances the prosody of "Dawks and Dyer"; identifies as "rival" rather than "Associate"; and mutes the hyperbole of "a ~~thousand~~ times" in his transplanted opening sentence. The declarative opening created by Pope's removal of his salutation, "~~Ladies,—~~" further distances the letter from its transactional manuscript origins – and highlights the potential rhetorical impact created by the routine loss of such epistolary elements in the transition from manuscript to print. Pope's changes here further regulate the transactional dynamic and emotional specificity of this correspondence, instilling his epistolary voice with confidence and shifting his construction of letter-writing from an act of obligation and service, into one of declarative control.

The two letters to Montagu of August 1716 which conclude this section of letters, meanwhile, are treated with an even more meticulous editorial attention. While they include many seemingly arbitrary adjustments to grammar and vocabulary (a ~~Sort~~ **kind** of […]), Pope's subtle changes also enhance the letters' impression of intimacy.[133] He adjusts the nature of the value placed upon Montagu's letters, configuring them as tokens of interaction rather than informative documents: discussing the "Advantage of ~~learning~~ **hearing** your Sentiments", and expressing his "pleasure that your Thoughts upon paper will be ~~more durable~~ **a more lasting possession to me**".[134] Pope's edits also emphasize their prior physical proximity – he alters "~~the House~~" to "**your house**"; inserts a comment on Montagu's "Departure~~,~~ **which I was there a witness of**", and confesses "a

[133] Pope to Montagu, 20 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 355-8. As Sherburn notes, such minor changes could be artefacts of later mistranscription, deviations from draft within the fair copies sent, misreadings by the printer, or attempts to indicate to Montagu the corrupt texts of Curll's edition.
[134] *Corr*. i. 355-8. See also Pope to Montagu, 18 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 352-5.

gloomy kind of ~~Satisfaction~~ **pleasure**" in having been present for "those last moments".[135] Other minor changes occlude Montagu's husband ("~~that Person for whom you have left all the world~~"), and influence the letters' reflection of her identity, as Pope laments the "~~Merit~~ **Virtue** [...] taken from us".[136] The significance of this last alteration is seemingly underlined by the inclusion of a printer's ornament of a lamb at the end of this section, below another observation of Montagu's "virtue", as shown in **Figure 2.7** below.[137]


120 LETTERS *to*, &c.
those bleſſings and earthly proſperities which the Divines tell us are the cauſe of our Perdition; for if he makes you happy in this world, I dare truſt your own virtue to do it in the other. I am,

Your, &c.

Figure 2.8 Figure 2.7 Printer's ornament, 1735 edition, p. 120

Whether derived from the printer's interpretation, or specifically selected by Pope to associate the "Letters to Several Ladies" with a sincere or ironic suggestion of virtuous innocence, this ornament indicates an impulse to integrate, polish, and emblematize these correspondences in print, and to reference Pope's various constructions of female character.[138]

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[135] *Corr*. i. 352-5.
[136] *Corr*. i. 352-5.
[137] *Corr*. i. 355-8.
[138] On Pope's involvement in the printing process including ornament selection, see McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (2001), pp. 5; 61-6.

3.1.3 Additions

The six letters for which the 1735 edition forms the earliest known source also suggest Pope's impulse to categorize correspondence with women through a specific range of subjects and styles. These letters are more stylized rhetorical pieces that may in some cases may have been written specifically for print. The anonymous recipients or occasional status of many of these letters, in combination with the ostensibly unauthorized nature of the edition, enables the exploration of particularly risqué or contentious tones and topics. For example, Pope's brief opening letter, influenced by Voiture, is addressed to an anonymous lady with a "book of Rudiments of *Drawing*": "'tis certain you have a strange happiness, in making fine things of a sudden and at a stroke, with incredible ease and pleasure".[139] Here, Pope displays the "compulsion to push a style of refined compliment to *double-entendre*" which, as Rumbold notes, characterized his early letters, but which he opted to exclude where it could potentially be traced to or recognized by its original recipient.[140] For instance, in a letter whose recipient is hinted within the letter text ("Mrs *Betty M*—"), Pope includes a phrase which he had excised from a printed letter to Teresa Blount: "I am to think (like a true Coxcomb) that your silence gives consent".[141] Pope also publishes a ribald letter under the heading "*To a Lady in the Name of her Brother*", apparently re-worked for print from an early manuscript game with the Blounts, in which he reports salacious social news: "Mr. Cromwell [declares] the present Reign very lewd and corrupt, in permitting a Lady by Authority […] to expose her personal curiosities for a shilling".[142] Pope's recourse here to the brand of

[139] Pope to —, 1 March 1704/5. *Corr*. i. 4-5.
[140] Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 49-50.
[141] Pope to Mrs Marriott, [1714?], *Corr.* i. 205. See Pope to Teresa Blount, 7 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 349-51.
[142] To a Lady from her Brother, [10 Feb. 1714/15?], *Corr*. i. 277-9.

bawdy rakish wit that had often characterized the leaked Cromwell letters further infuses this edition with the illicit connotations surrounding this purloined correspondence. Other introduced letters, in contrast, include kindly reflections on the "adversities" of an unknown unfortunate lady; and a detailed and scathing satirical description of Blenheim Palace.[143] These letters to anonymous or low-profile correspondents thus suggest that Pope's section of "Letters to Several Ladies" functions both as a showcase for an exploration of the conventions and boundaries of the gendered epistolary mode of gallantry, and as a vehicle for material which he evidently desired to print, but not to associate with a named recipient.

Pope also introduces to the edition two letters with named or initialled recipients who would be recognizable to contemporary audiences. Pope's part of a joint letter written with Montagu, printed under the heading "*To a Lady, written on the opposite pages of a Letter to her Husband from Lady M.*", emphasizes their social proximity through careful attention to materiality.[144] The published letter conveys and preserves the physical and temporal aspects of manuscript correspondence – including its graphical features and the contextual knowledge that Montagu will read Pope's gallant flattery before the letter is sent:

> all the letters that compose these words lean forward after Lady *M*'s letters, which seem to bend as much from mine, and fly from them as fast as they are able. […] Let us see how far Lady *M*. her self dares do any thing like it, with all the wit and address she is mistress of.[145]

This letter thus serves in print to embed the predominantly long-distance correspondence of Pope and Montagu within the physical presence and shared society of

[143] Pope to Mrs.—, [February 1726], *Corr*. i. 367-8; Pope to Mrs. —, [September 1717?], *Corr*. i. 431-2.
[144] Pope [and Montagu to Lady Rich], [July 1716], *Corr*. i. 345-6.
[145] *Corr*. i. 345-6.

earlier years. A similar contextualization is enacted through Pope's letter "*To Mrs.* Arabella Fermor *on her Marriage*". This letter, written in around 1715, references the turbulent print and social history surrounding Pope's public identification of Fermor in 1714 as the inspiration for Belinda, the heroine of *The Rape of the Lock*.[146] Pope's simultaneous poetic elevation and satirization of Fermor's character as Belinda is echoed in his published letter, which announces her transition from celebrated society "Belle" to enshrined and secluded matrimony and motherhood:

> You are by this time satisfy'd how much the tenderness of one man of merit is to be prefer'd to the addresses of a thousand […] It may be expected perhaps, that one who has the title of Poet, should say something more Polite on this occasion: But I am really more a well-wisher to your felicity, than a celebrater of your Beauty, Besides, you are now a married woman, and in a way to be a great many better things than a fine Lady; such as an excellent wife, a tender parent, and at last as the consequence of them all, a saint in heaven.[147]

Accordingly, Pope's congratulations evoke images and ideas from his poetry. Fermor's newfound obscurity is reminiscent of "the dull glory of a virtuous wife" decried in 'Epistle to Miss Blount, with the Works of Voiture'.[148] Such a peacefully mundane life ends, Pope suggests, in sainthood: an ironic parallel of the apotheosis at the end of *The Rape of the Lock* ("*This Lock*, the Muse shall consecrate to Fame, | And mid'st the Stars inscribe *Belinda*'s Name!").[149] The letter thus presents the polite quotidian realities from which Pope's poetic imagination took flight, and thereby emphasizes both the social accuracy and authenticity of the poem, and its permanence in comparison with its subjects. The inclusion of these letters indicates that while Pope principally used the unauthorized status of the 1735 edition to present anonymized, fictionalized, and polished letters of risqué and gallant wit to public view, he also sought to reveal glimpses of his individual

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[146] See *Poems II*, pp. 98-102; Chapter 1 above, p. 131, n. 133; Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), pp. 67-8; 74-5; 79-80.
[147] Pope to Arabella Fermor, [1714-15], *Corr*. i. 271-2.
[148] *Poems VI*, p. 62, l. 46.
[149] *Poems II*, p. 212, ll. v. 149-50.

correspondents that could offer insight into his relationships and provide social context to his poetry.

3.2 The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.; Vol. V (1737 octavo)

3.2.1 Excisions and additions

The adjusted 'Letters to Several Ladies' which Pope published in octavo format in 1737 as Volume V of his *Works* expands and refines the picture offered by the 1735 edition. Pope's changes here resulted in an extensive and polished set of emphatically heterosocial correspondence, conducted with a diverse array of more distinct female characters, that illustrates how Pope's correspondence with women developed over time. Firstly, Pope comprehensively edits the letters he had previously printed to exclude lewd or harsh aspects, and to further conceal identities, dates, and locations. For example, in the letter to Betty Marriot, Pope removes references to her "~~ogling too fiercely~~"; and adjusts names: "~~Mr. *B*— tells me~~ **I am told**"; "Mrs. ~~Betty~~ M—".[150] In selecting letters for this edition, Pope also omitted incongruous letters such as the indecorous set piece *To a Lady in the Name of her Brother* and his critical description of Blenheim.[151] He added eleven letters in their place, and the 1737 octavo forms the earliest known source for nine of these. Again, many of these introduced letters are of a stylized and occasional nature, are anonymously addressed, and present new modes of and forums for heterosexual correspondence. A group of three letters, for example, display Pope's participation in court society in around 1716. These include a lively, urbane, and flirtatious letter of quotidian social news, written to an unnamed Maid of Honour ("You have put me into so

[150] Pope to Mrs Marriott, [1714?], *Corr.* i. 205.
[151] *Corr*. i. 431-2; *Corr*. i. 277-9.

much gayety of temper, that there will not be a serious word in this day's letter"), followed by an ostensible reply in the same mode, and a facetious letter *In the Style of a Lady* in which Pope adopts an exaggeratedly fragmented and flighty tone.[152] Far from the sense of isolation, self-deprecating humour, and meticulous detail which characterize Pope's reports of social matters in manuscript, such letters appears here as an active and immediate form of communication which entertains and bonds its participants through alert, extroverted, and critical humour. Meanwhile, the letters also form a satirical meditation on the role of gender in shaping correspondence.

However, other letters introduced in this edition serve instead to indicate the development of Pope's personal character and epistolary values since these early courtly years. A letter to Henrietta Howard of 1727 emphasizes Pope's increasingly exclusive social lifestyle ("I […] desire to see nothing of the court but yourself").[153] Meanwhile, in a letter addressed in print to "The Hon. Mrs. H.", probably Molly Hervey (née Lepell), Pope advocates for epistolary simplicity and sincerity, as "proof we correspond only for our selves, in meer friendliness".[154] This focus on epistolary sincerity and development is consolidated by the five additional letters to Martha Blount which are introduced into this edition, extending this relationship into later years and expanding its detail. These letters reveal the philosophical and melancholy aspects of Pope's correspondence with Martha ("I am growing fit, I hope, for a better world […] I cannot think without tears of being separated from my friends").[155] They also highlight Pope's consciousness of the

[152] Pope to Mrs.—, [1716], *Corr*. i. 380. Mrs.— to Pope, [1716], *Corr*. i. 380-1; Pope to —, [1716], *Corr*. i. 381-2.
[153] Pope to Mrs. Howard, 20 June [1727], *Corr*. ii. 435-6.
[154] Pope to the Hon. Mrs. H[ervey], [1720], *Corr*. ii. 41-2.
[155] Pope to Martha Blount, [1715], *Corr*. i. 318-20.

idiosyncrasies of this epistolary style ("This is an odd way of writing to a lady"), and of the inequalities underlying such gendered modes ("I wish you were as free as I").[156] The letters added to and known from this edition, then, indicate Pope's broad epistolary range: evincing that alongside and after his lively early correspondence within courtly circles – which display his alternate indulgence in and satirization of conventional constructions of gender – Pope wrote letters characterized by a private and sensitive sincerity which disregard these expectations entirely. In this way, Pope presents and preserves an idealized trajectory of youthful to mature heterosocial correspondence, and explicitly highlights its vital qualities and contradictions.

3.2.2 Modifications

Despite the impression of chronological development and more nuanced heterosocial relationships instilled by these new letters, Pope's editorial changes to letter texts and presentation elsewhere in this edition instead reinforced a gendered construction of correspondence. This is demonstrated by reworked versions of two descriptive manuscript letters addressed to women, which in print are ascribed instead to a new, male, recipient. The first of these is a letter which Pope wrote to Montagu shortly before her return to England in 1718, which depicted Stanton Harcourt, where he was staying:

> You must expect nothing regular in my description of a House that seems to be built before Rules were in fashion […] in a poetical Fitt you'd imagine it had been a Village in Amphions time, where twenty Cottages had taken a dance together, were all Out, and stood still in amazement ever since […] You will not wonder I have translated a great deal of Homer in this Retreat [157]

[156] Pope to Martha Blount, [February 1715?], *Corr*. i. 280; Pope to Martha Blount, [15 June 1724], *Corr*. ii. 235-6.

[157] Pope to Montagu, 1718, *Corr*. i. 505-508. Compare the similar style of Montagu to Pope, [1717], *Corr*. i. 411. See also reference to a similar letter, now lost, in Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount [August 1718], *Corr*. i. 490-91.

In Pope's 1737 editions, however, a similar letter is printed addressed instead to the Duke of Buckingham, apparently in reply to a letter enclosing a "Description of Buckingham-house".[158] In its published setting, this letter is further cemented within the learned Classical and architectural dialogue of aristocratic gentlemen through Pope's altered preamble, which traces the tradition of the vagabond poet and aligns his own activity with that of "Pliny", "Virgil" and "Juvenal": "when Virgil came to Rome, he had no lodgings at all."[159] Pope, then, in addressing this letter to a male recipient, bolsters its cultural reference and personal intellectual touchstones; and it is these resonances with which he chooses to connect such descriptive writing in print. Another series of letters sent from Stanton Harcourt in the same year is treated similarly in the 1737 editions. After two betrothed farm labourers were killed in a lightning strike, Pope sent to Martha Blount a tragic and romantic depiction of the "true and tender Story", which instilled the scene with pastoral charm: "Perhaps [...] in the intervals of their work, they were talking of their Wedding Cloaths".[160] However, while the letter on this incident published in Pope's editions employs the resonant and poetic pathos of his letter to Martha, it is attributed to John Gay, and addressed to a "Mr F—".[161] Pope thus removes the letter in print from its originally gendered origins, reducing its individualized appeal to Martha's feminine sensibility through tender, child-like or colloquial aspects in favour of a more distanced, refined and scholarly tone:

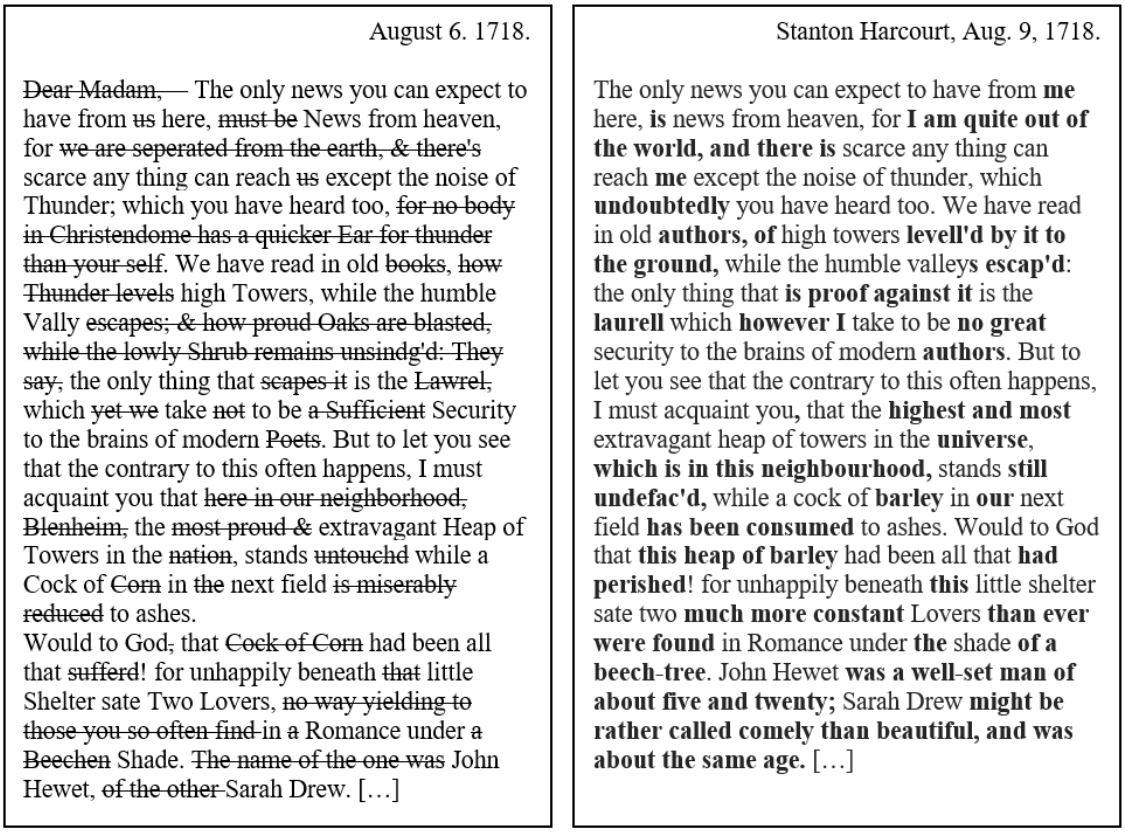
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[158] Pope to the Duke of Buckingham, [1718?], *Corr*. i. 508-11. Montagu noted that "I have seen under his own hand addressed to another person, [...] that letter which he pretends to have sent to the late Duke of Buckingham" Halsband and Grundy (eds.), *Essays and Poems* (1977), pp. 98-9.

[159] Pope to the Duke of Buckingham, [1718?], *Corr*. i. 508-11.

[160] Pope to Martha Blount, 6 August 1718, *Corr.* i. 481. Pope wrote accounts of this event to several other recipients, which varied widely in tone from emotive, to irreverent, to philosophical. See Pope to Montagu, 1 September [1718], Corr. i. 493-6; Montagu to Pope, 10 September 1718; Pope to Teresa Blount, August 1718 (dated by Sherburn [1716?]), *Corr*. i. 349. Pope to John Caryll, 3 September 1718, *Corr*. i. 497; Pope to Atterbury, 3 September 1718, *Corr.* i. 499; Lord Bathurst to Pope, 14 August 1718, *Corr*. i. 488-9.

[161] Gay to Mr. F–, 9 August 1718, *Corr*. i. 482.



August 6. 1718.

~~Dear Madam,~~ — The only news you can expect to have from ~~us~~ here, ~~must be~~ News from heaven, for ~~we are seperated from the earth, & there~~'s scarce any thing can reach ~~us~~ except the noise of Thunder; which you have heard too, ~~for no body in Christendome has a quicker Ear for thunder than your self~~. We have read in old ~~books~~, ~~how Thunder levels~~ high Towers, while the humble Vally ~~escapes; & how proud Oaks are blasted, while the lowly Shrub remains unsindg'd: They say,~~ the only thing that ~~scapes it~~ is the ~~Lawrel,~~ which ~~yet we~~ take ~~not~~ to be ~~a Sufficient~~ Security to the brains of modern ~~Poets~~. But to let you see that the contrary to this often happens, I must acquaint you that ~~here in our neighborhood, Blenheim,~~ the ~~most proud &~~ extravagant Heap of Towers in the ~~nation~~, stands ~~untouchd~~ while a Cock of ~~Corn~~ in ~~the~~ next field ~~is miserably reduced~~ to ashes.
Would to God~~,~~ that ~~Cock of Corn~~ had been all that ~~sufferd~~! for unhappily beneath ~~that~~ little Shelter sate Two Lovers, ~~no way yielding to those you so often find~~ in ~~a~~ Romance under ~~a Beechen~~ Shade. ~~The name of the one was~~ John Hewet, ~~of the other~~ Sarah Drew. […]

Stanton Harcourt, Aug. 9, 1718.

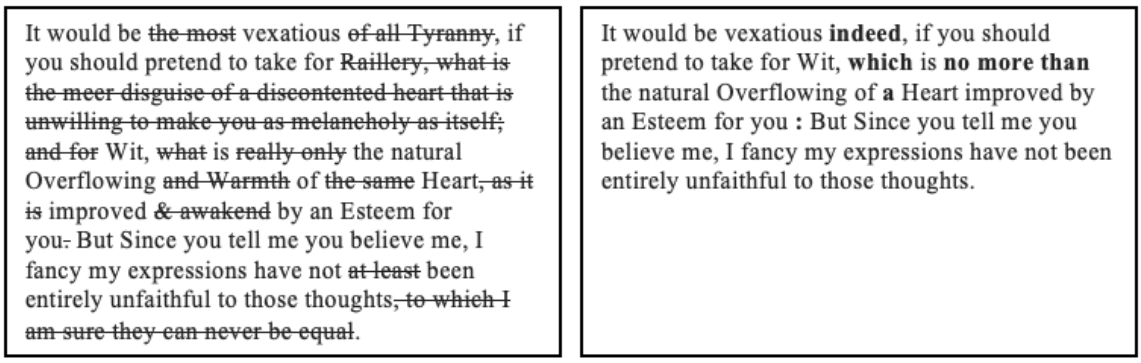
The only news you can expect to have from **me** here, **is** news from heaven, for **I am quite out of the world, and there is** scarce any thing can reach **me** except the noise of thunder, which **undoubtedly** you have heard too. We have read in old **authors, of** high towers **levell'd by it to the ground,** while the humble valley**s escap'd**: the only thing that **is proof against it** is the **laurell** which **however I** take to be **no great** security to the brains of modern **authors**. But to let you see that the contrary to this often happens, I must acquaint you**,** that the **highest and most** extravagant heap of towers in the **universe**, **which is in this neighbourhood,** stands **still undefac'd,** while a cock of **barley** in **our** next field **has been consumed** to ashes. Would to God that **this heap of barley** had been all that **had perished**! for unhappily beneath **this** little shelter sate two **much more constant** Lovers **than ever were found** in Romance under **the** shade **of a beech-tree**. John Hewet **was a well-set man of about five and twenty;** Sarah Drew **might be rather called comely than beautiful, and was about the same age.** […]

Figure 2.9 Manuscript letter, Pope to Martha Blount; (r) letter from Gay to Mr. F— in the 1737 octavo [168]

The published letter adds a rational and scientific tone through changes to vocabulary ("proof against"; "undefac'd"; "consumed"; "perished"); creates an emotionally distanced but physically immediate perspective through the possessive and direct observations of the first-person narrative ("our next field"; "this little shelter"; "a well-set man"); and strengthens the letter's mediation between the local and the general ("in this neighbourhood"; "in the universe"). This change lends the letter a solemn neutrality in print, where its pathos is not coloured by an appeal to a specifically feminine audience; as a result, it perhaps seemed to Pope a more dignified backdrop to his published epitaph on the couple.

[162] Pope to [Martha] Blount, 6–9 August 1718, *Corr*. i. 479-82; Gay to Mr. F—, 9 August 1718, *Corr*. i. 482.

Pope's editorial adjustment of the emotional resonances of his letters to women is also evident in the controlled epistolary style of the two additional letters to Montagu printed in the octavo edition. Pope's modifications instil these letters of 1716-17 with a sense of calm authority – muting, for example, his rejection of Montagu's reportage and demand for personal information: "~~For Gods sake Madam,~~ **Pray** when you write to me, talk of your self".[163] Pope undertakes detailed editing to soften the emotional intensity of the letters and to limit suggestions of a loss of control, as seen in the following passage:



It would be ~~the most~~ vexatious ~~of all Tyranny~~, if you should pretend to take for ~~Raillery, what is the meer disguise of a discontented heart that is unwilling to make you as melancholy as itself; and for~~ Wit, ~~what~~ is ~~really only~~ the natural Overflowing ~~and Warmth~~ of ~~the same~~ Heart~~, as it is~~ improved ~~& awakend~~ by an Esteem for you~~.~~ But Since you tell me you believe me, I fancy my expressions have not ~~at least~~ been entirely unfaithful to those thoughts~~, to which I am sure they can never be equal~~.

It would be vexatious **indeed**, if you should pretend to take for Wit, **which** is **no more than** the natural Overflowing of **a** Heart improved by an Esteem for you **:** But Since you tell me you believe me, I fancy my expressions have not been entirely unfaithful to those thoughts.

Figure 2.10 Pope to Montagu, 1716-17, in manuscript (l) and as printed in the 1737 octavo (r).[164]

Such adjustments thus serve both to imbue Pope's epistolary voice with greater authority, and to moderate the dynamics of his personal relationships in print.

This control of the intimate interpersonal reflections of his letters in print also attends Pope's curation of concepts which resonate with his poetic works. For instance, he omits in print various suggestive passages within the manuscript letters which conflate epistolary candour with nudity, such as that within a letter to Montagu:

> ~~if this correspondence continues on both sides at the free rate I would have it, we shall have very little Curiosity to encourage our meeting at the Day of Judgment. […] Let us be like modest people, who when they are close together keep all decorums, but if they~~

[163] Pope to Montagu, 10 November [1716], *Corr*. i. 367-70. See also Pope to Montagu, [1716-17], *Corr.* i. 382-5.
[164] Pope to Montagu, [1716-17], *Corr.* i. 382-5.

> ~~step a little aside, or get to the other end of a room, can untye garters or take off Shifts without scruple.~~[165]

Only one instance of this analogy is published, in another letter to Montagu of 1716:

> I must be content to show my taste in Life as I do my taste in Painting, by loving to have as little Drapery as possible. […] there will certainly come some Day of Judgment to uncover every Soul of us. We shall then see how the Prudes of this world owed all their fine Figure only to their being a little straiter-lac'd […][166]

Pope's selection of this more abstract, artistically focused passage in preference to several direct and personal alternatives seems not merely to avoid repetition and attend to the dictates of propriety, but also to align his correspondence with the more developed and polished appearance of similar concepts within his poetry. For example, this letter echoes lines within his *Epistle to a Lady: Of the Characters of Women*:

> Poets heap Virtues, Painters Gems at will,
> And show their zeal, and hide their want of skill,
> 'Tis well —but, Artists! who can paint or write,
> To draw the Naked is your true delight:
> That Robe of Quality so struts and swells,
> None see what Parts of Nature it conceals.[167]

This selective approach suggests Pope's desire to conceptualize his published correspondence with women in the context of his poetic work.

A similar regulation of subject and tone in line with Pope's poetic treatment of women is found in his adjustments in this edition to an undated letter to an unnamed recipient, first printed in 1735.[168] Pope's edits to this letter, in which he recalls having "often condol'd with" his recipient in her "adversities", create a more didactic and serious tone to suit the letter's charitable function:

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[165] Pope to Montagu, [1716-17], *Corr*. i. 382-5. See also Pope to Teresa and Martha Blount, 8 October [1718], *Corr*. i. 514-6; Pope to Montagu, 1 September 1718, *Corr.* i. 493-6.
[166] Pope to Montagu, 18 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 352-5.
[167] *Poems III-ii,* p. 65, ll. 185-190. See Smith, Molly, "The Mythical Implications in Pope's 'Epistle to a Lady'", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 27:3 (1987), p. 431. See also the *Essay on Criticism*: "Poets like Painters, thus, unskill'd to trace | The *naked Nature* and the *living Grace* […]", *Poems I*, p. 272, ll. 293-96.
[168] Pope to Mrs.—, [February 1726], *Corr*. ii. 367-8

I ever was of opinion that you wanted no more to be vindicated than to be known~~: and like Truth, cou'd appear no where but you must conquer~~. […] to give the world its due, it is always very fond of Merit when 'tis past its power to oppose it. Therefore if you ~~should~~ **can,** take it into favour again upon its repentance, and continue in it~~, you would be so far from leading what is commonly call'd an unsettled life, (and what you with too much unjust severity call a Vagabond Life,) that the wise cou'd only look upon you as a Prince in a progress, who travels to gain the affections he has not, or to fix those he already has; which he effectually does wherever he shews himself~~. But if you are resolv'd in revenge to rob the world of so much example as you may afford it, I believe your design will be vain; for even in a Monastery your devotions cannot carry you so far toward the next world as to make This lose the sight of you, but you'll be like a Star, that while it is fix'd to Heaven shines over all the Earth.

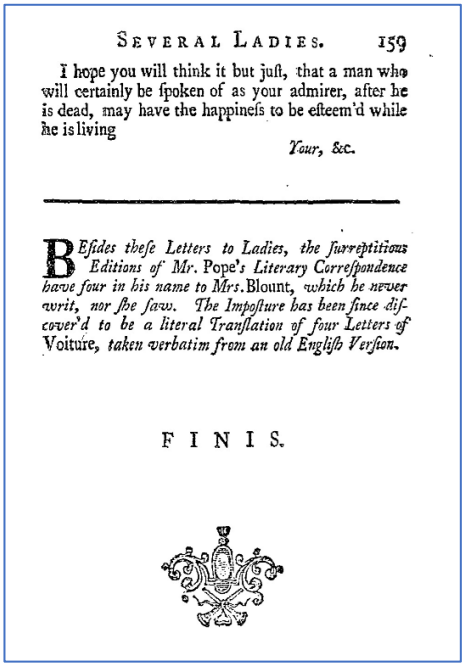
Figure 2.11 Pope to Mrs, — [February 1726], as edited from 1735 to 1737 octavo.[169]

Pope adjusts the tone of the letter by removing the kind of extravagant flattery found in other letters to women, and by diminishing its contextual specificity. This includes the removal of an analogic narrative of masculine social integration and development ("~~a Prince in a progress~~"), which had contained within it a hint of the recipient's own voice and her potential for movement and agency. As such, it renders more prominent Pope's interpretation of his recipient's prospective monastic seclusion. This theme holds various resonances in the context of Pope's poetic depictions of secluded or unfortunate women and is evocative of works such as 'Eloisa to Abelard' and 'Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady'. Furthermore, depiction of the consequent reward of apotheosis ("you'll be like a Star" in "Heaven") also mirrors the message of Pope's letter to Arabella Fermor.[170]

This edition, then, constitutes the most extensive and varied representation of Pope's correspondence with women, seeming actively to draw together and delineate the facets of female character and their corresponding epistolary modes, and to capture the resultant conflicts between style, satire, and sincerity. It surveys Pope's youthful and maturing responses to the lively frivolity of Fermor and the Maids of Honour; documents the intimacy created by the particular "value" he places on Montagu and the Blounts due

[169] *Corr*. ii. 367-8.
[170] *Corr*. ii. 367-8.

to their "superior" "Qualities"; and sketches the characters of various peripheral women.[171] The frequent absence of dating and identity and the jumbled sequence of letters further fictionalizes the section of "Letters to Several Ladies" by disrupting a sense of biographical context and chronological progression. This abstracted and episodic presentation mirrors the portrait gallery of women's follies and caprices presented in *Epistle to a Lady*: "How many pictures of one Nymph we view, | All how unlike each other, all how true!"[172] This conceptualization is again underlined by the tailpiece following the letter to Arabella Fermor which concludes the section, shown in **Figure 2.12** below, in which trumpets, ribbons, and a centrepiece evocative of the toilette perhaps evoke *The Rape of the Lock*'s themes of female beauty, fame, and the herald of contest (the "curious Toil" and "sacred Rites of Pride", as "awful Beauty puts on all its Arms").[173]



SEVERAL LADIES. 159

I hope you will think it but juſt, that a man who will certainly be ſpoken of as your admirer, after he is dead, may have the happineſs to be eſteem'd while he is living

Your, &c.

BEſides theſe Letters to Ladies, the ſurreptitious Editions of Mr. Pope's *Literary Correſpondence have four in his name to Mrs.* Blount, *which he never writ, nor ſhe ſaw. The Impoſture has been ſince diſcover'd to be a literal Tranſlation of four Letters of* Voiture, *taken verbatim from an old Engliſh Verſion.*

FINIS.

Figure 2.12 Printer's ornament, 1737 octavo, p. 159.

[171] For example, of "Lady Sandwich", who "still continues that easie, lively, & independent Creature that a sensible woman always will be"; and of an "old Beauty […] painted and patch'd". Pope to Martha Blount, 6 October [1714], *Corr*. ii. 259-62. Pope to Mrs.—, [1716], *Corr*. i. 380. Pope to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 18 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 352-5.

[172] *Poems III-ii,* p. 48, ll. 5-6. See Rosslyn, "Pope on Women", (1988), p. 216; Knellwolf, *A Contradiction Still* (1998), pp. 15-27.

[173] *Poems II*, p. 155-6, ll. i. 131, 128, 139.

Yet, as Christa Knellwolf notes, Pope "never completely endorses" the conventional "gender categories" he invokes in his poetry: "he always asks us to question the assumptions on which his claims are made".[174] In line with this approach, the varied and often contradictory nature of Pope's epistolary voice in this group of letters also reveals a polished glimpse of the complexities and conflicts underpinning such poetic responses.

3.3 Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope, And Several of His Friends (1737 folio)

3.3.1 Excisions and additions

Pope's letters to women are reconfigured once again in the 1737 authorized edition which he produced for a genteel subscription audience in quarto and folio formats. Within this more selective and decorous edition, Pope moves away from the stylized and often risqué nature of the 1735 edition, and towards the tone of intimacy introduced in the 1737 octavo. As part of this process, the edition departs from the impression of a distinctive stylistic quality common to letters to women established in the earlier editions – a shift underlined by the fact that letters to women are here interspersed amongst those to men, rather than collected as a discrete category. Pope removes many of the letters that had indicated a potentially formulaic or derivative gendered epistolary mode – such as his gallant letters emulating Voiture, and those to, from, and in the style of the Maids of Honour. Instead, he retains a small selection of 14 letters to the Blounts, Montagu, Hervey, Fermor, and the unknown unfortunate lady; whose careful rearrangement – first chronologically, and then by recipient – suggests a more specific focus on individual identity and biography within the edition. However, despite this renewed attention to

[174] Knellwolf, *A Contradiction Still* (1998), p. 155.

their original communicative context, these letters are further refined in this edition to suit its adjusted emphasis. The restructured sequencing and added contextual detail in this edition are also employed to bring new resonances to the letters. For instance, Pope's placement of his letter to the unnamed unfortunate lady within a group of letters dated from 1711 to 1715 both marks it as an early composition and situates it amongst his correspondence with John Caryll. This positioning, in turn, hints at the real identity of the recipient ("Mrs. W.") and contains Pope's commentary on the letter ("*P.S.* I have inclos'd my letter to the Lady. You'll see 'tis in the lofty style, agreeable to her spirit; but includes sound advice").[175] The integrated placement of letters in the folio thus offers a new context for Pope's earlier correspondence with women, replacing the lively letters of gallantry and satire of previous editions with a suggestion of level-headed youthful generosity.

3.3.2 Modifications

Elsewhere, Pope actively adjusts the letters' reflections on literary matters by creating a more distanced and consistent tone. In reprinting a 1715 letter to Martha Blount from the octavo, Pope retains its detached and positive reports of literary production ("I have done a great deal of Homer"), as well as its valuation of female friendship, set in opposition to his poetic work ("Fame is a thing I am much less covetous of, than your Friendship").[176] As if to reinforce this impression, Pope excises in the folio edition a more direct connection with literary success: "~~Now I talk of fame, I send you my Temple of~~

[175] Pope to Mrs. —, [February 1726], *Corr*. i. 367-8. The recipient has been identified as Mrs. Cope, see Rogers, *Not in Sherburn* (1985), p. 62. See Caryll to Pope, 23 May 1712, *Corr.* i. 142; Pope to Caryll, 28 May 1712, *Corr*. i. 143-5.
[176] Pope to Martha Blount, [February 1715?], *Corr*. i. 280.

~~Fame, which is just come out~~".[177] He removes, too, the roguish epigram containing an ironic consideration of the questions and contradictions surrounding female public character which had, in the octavo, disrupted and complicated the letter's sincere emphasis on friendship:

> ~~What's Fame with Men, by custom of the nation,~~
> ~~Is call'd in women only Reputation:~~
> ~~About them both why keep we such a pother?~~
> ~~Part you with one, and I'll renounce the other.~~ [178]

In the folio, then, Pope appears consciously to sever the conflicted connections between women, poetry, and fame which he had established in the previous editions.

This more detached and decorous approach also shapes the letters to Montagu reprinted in the official edition. However, Pope's further adjustments to these letters also seem designed to distance their earlier correspondence from the later hostilities they shared in print. One more suggestive letter which Pope had printed in the octavo is excluded entirely here, including its remaining references to Montagu's "~~leav[ing] one Article of Faith after another~~" and having "~~out-traveld the Sin of Fornication~~".[179] Removing such allusions to promiscuity within the folio serves not only to refine Pope's epistolary voice, but also to evade the new resonances they might acquire through the later satirical attacks in which Pope equated, as Clare Brant notes, Montagu's "literary productiveness" with "Sexual looseness": "Hard furious Sappho scarce a milder fate, | P-xed by her love, or libelled by her hate."[180] As a result, the folio contains the letters most complimentary to Montagu, in their most restrained and controlled form. A minor change to one of these

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[177] *Corr*. i. 280.
[178] *Corr*. i. 280.
[179] Pope to Montagu, 10 November [1716], *Corr.* i. 267-370.
[180] Clare Brant, "Introduction", *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Letters* (New York: Penguin, 1992), p. x. *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* (1733), *Poems IV*, p. 13, ll. 83-4.

further suggests Pope's careful attention to the letter's capacity for nuanced reflections on character and relationships:

> What a world of Good might you have done in your time, if you had allowed half the fine Gentlemen who have seen you to have but conversd with you? They would have been strangely ~~caught~~ ~~**bitt**~~ **deceived**, while they thought only to fall in love with a fair Face, and You had bewitchd them with Reason and Virtue;[181]

Pope's return to a single word over subsequent editions intriguingly alters his depiction of Montagu's beauty and wit: the deliberate "caught" of the manuscript is altered to the aggressive "bitt" in 1735, and then the more neutral "deceived" in 1737. Pope's alteration of this word also establishes and then removes a potential chime with a satirical reference to Montagu in his *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, composed in 1734: "Yet soft by Nature, more a Dupe than Wit, | *Sapho* can tell you how this Man was bit".[182] This softening refinement of content and vocabulary in the folio, then, seems to enact a move away from the harshness of the later satire, and towards a more muted and complex representation of the original relationship. Pope may have seen this authorized edition as an opportunity to refute, through an indication of their original cordial friendship, Montagu's own satirical charges against his character:

> Those, who thy Nature loath'd, yet lov'd thy Art,
> Who lik'd thy Head, and yet abhorr'd thy Heart:
> Chose thee to read, but never to converse,
> And scorn'd in Prose, him whom they priz'd in Verse.[183]

Finally, Pope's latest printed letters to a woman (both chronologically and sequentially) were introduced in the octavo through three letters to Martha Blount which had been

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[181] Pope to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 18 August [1716], *Corr*. i. 352-5.

[182] *Poems IV*, p. 123, ll. 368-9. Valerie Rumbold explores the evolution of this couplet in *Women's Place*, (1989), p. 145.

[183] "Verses Address'd to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book Of Horace", Halsband and Grundy (eds.), *Essays and Poems* (1976), p. 269, ll. 93-96. Pope's 1737 editions also record his initially positive disposition towards Montagu's co-author and Pope's later satirical target, Lord Hervey, through his published letter to the Hon. Mrs. H[ervey], [1720], *Corr*. ii. 41-2.

printed there outside the boundaries of the "Letters to Several Ladies".[184] However, the identity of these letters shifts as a result of the newly integrated structure of the folio, in which – although printed in a section entitled "Letters To and from Mr. Gay. From 1712 to 1732" – they nominally become potential letters to women. Yet their origins nevertheless remain ambiguous and uncertain: all three are known only from their appearance, without addressee, in Pope's editions; and one letter is a suspected fabrication.[185] All three echo the philosophical tone and psychological openness of Pope's earlier printed letters to Martha, also introduced in the octavo; but their principle subject – the difficult circumstances of John Gay's death – means that they further transcend the gendered boundaries and conventions which characterize letters to women within Pope's editions. It may be that Pope reaches towards the emotional tone of his letters to women – and to Martha Blount in particular – to instil his treatment of this topic with the greatest possible poignancy in print. His letter of 1732 written following the death of "our poor friend", for instance, is an almost relentless outpouring of grief: "I am unfeignedly tired of the world […] I have shed many Tears, but now I weep at nothing".[186] As in his other published letters to Martha, Pope stresses that consolation for such loss lies in friendship: "Let us comfort one another".[187] Through these themes, the letters in this section, most of which are known only from Pope's editions, offer evidence of Martha's integral position within his circle of literary friends: Pope told Gay in 1730 that "Mrs. Blount deserves your remembrance, for she never forgets you, and wants nothing of being a friend".[188] In his letter to Martha of 1733, meanwhile, Pope declares that "every

[184] Pope to [Martha Blount], [September 1728], *Corr*. ii. 511-12; [6 December? 1732], *Corr*. iii. 335-6; 7 September 1733, *Corr*. iii. 385-6.
[185] Sherburn confidently identifies Martha Blount as the recipient only for the letter of 1732 (*Corr*. iii. 335-6); and identifies the letter of 1728 (*Corr*. ii. 511-12) as a suspected fabrication.
[186] Pope to [Martha Blount], [6 December? 1732], *Corr*. iii. 335-6.
[187] *Corr*. iii. 335-6.
[188] Pope to Gay, 23 October 1730, *Corr*. i. 142-3.

part of this wood puts into my mind poor Mr. Gay with whom I past once a great deal of pleasant time in it, and another friend who is near dead, and quite lost to us, Dr. Swift".[189] As a result, Pope would reprint these letters within the 1741 edition of the coterie correspondence of himself, Swift, Gay, and Bolingbroke, in which their reflective, nostalgic tone and didactic discussion of friendship is pervasively echoed.[190] The letter within this section which precedes Gay's death, in particular, touches upon the trials of separation ("Methinks we live to be more and more strangers"), the difficulties of ill-health and growing older ("It is a true saying that misfortunes alone prove one's friendships"), and concern for his recipient's wellbeing ("my chief uneasiness of mind is in your regard").[191] However, given its lack of material *about* Gay, this undated and unaddressed letter might in fact have been intended to read as Pope's final letter written *to* him. In any case, the complexity of both the tone and the provenance of Pope's published letters to Martha Blount preserves within his editions a glimpse of the interconnected and obscured network of correspondence which lies behind and beyond the printed "Letters to Several Ladies" and the surviving manuscripts. In this way, Pope's representation of this friendship in print also offered his readers a partial portrait of the real woman whose resilient good nature Pope would idealize within *Epistle to a Lady*:

> The gen'rous God, who Wit and Gold refines,
> And ripens Spirits as he ripens Mines,
> Kept Dross for Duchesses, the world shall know it,
> To you gave Sense, Good-humour, and a Poet. [192]

In this poem, Pope secures Martha's lasting value and recognition through his ability to express her virtues publicly, if anonymously.

---

[189] Pope to [Martha Blount], 7 September 1733, *Corr*. iii. 385-6.
[190] This edition is discussed in Chapter 4.
[191] Pope to [Martha Blount], [September 1728], *Corr*. ii. 511-512.
[192] *Poems III-ii,* p. 74, ll. 289-92.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated Pope's transformation of a diverse set of correspondence that documents real, domestic scale, and sometimes broken relationships with women into a series of polished and often generic missives for public view. Pope repeatedly and systematically reconfigured these correspondences in print, extracting different stylistic elements for each edition and exhibiting a selection of the varied relationships they sustained and recorded. The chapter has revealed that Pope used the complexities of the publication process to introduce, expand, and refine these letters within the literary marketplace. As a result, his editions not only reflect the conventional proprieties surrounding editing letters to women – such as concealed identities, generalization, and sanitization – but employ them as tools through which to display diverse interactions and signal textual genre, interest and value. Furthermore, Pope's editorial intervention minutely calibrates the dynamics of the relationships represented within his editions, enhancing and emboldening the tone, style, and subject of the letters and adjusting their perspective on his own character and conduct. While, as we see in other chapters, Pope edits his letters to men to refine their sentiments, enhance their prestige, or adjust their reflections on his works within the context of individual friendships, Pope's letters to women are instead treated collectively and conceptually in alignment with his poetry as more consciously literary texts. Passive, silent, often unidentified, and sometimes caricatured, Pope's female recipients open his letters to a general audience and thereby infuse them with oblique reflections.

Pope's editorial practice synchronizes into three editions, published over two years, many of the shifting and developing attitudes to women which infused his poetry over

three decades, crystallizing its conflict between affection, devotion, and derision. The editions at times echo Pope's early consciousness of the social hypocrisies restricting women's opportunities and behaviour – including his indulgent admiration of their transgression, as expressed in the 'Epistle to Miss Blount' ("Too much *your Sex* is by their Forms confin'd, | Severe to all, but most to Womankind") and his sympathy for the "sad" and "tender stor[ies]" of the unfortunate women in 'Eloisa' and the 'Elegy'.[193] Yet they also reflect Pope's later, sharper poetic depiction, in *Epistle to a Lady*, of the futile superficiality of female identity ("Most Women have no Characters at all") and experience ("Alive, ridiculous, and dead, forgot!").[194] In many of these poems, Pope offers a dual remedy to such ephemerality: he advocates recourse to the resilience provided by "Good-humour" in the present, and promises poetic immortality for the future.[195] These themes also pervade the correspondence editions, where they are represented most conspicuously, as in *Epistle to a Lady*, by Martha Blount. Yet even as Pope's editions collaborate in this poetic idealization of her character, the process behind them obscures our view of the complex quotidian reality of Martha's own identity and her relationship with Pope. Pope's impulse to emphasize the autobiographical and poetic qualities of his letters to women within his editions dramatically affected the survival of these correspondences. As a result, Pope's editions have significantly influenced our understanding of the individual characters and epistolary voices of his female correspondents.

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[193] 'Epistle to Miss Blount, with the Works of Voiture', *Poems VI*, p. 62, ll. 31-32; 'Eloisa to Abelard', *Poems II,* p. 348, l. 364; 'Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady', *Poems II*, pp. 362-8.

[194] *Poems III-ii,* p. 46*,* l. 2; p. 70, l. 248.

[195] *Epistle to a Lady: Of the Characters of Women, Poems III-ii,* p. 48*,* l. 292. See Rumbold, *Women's Place* (1989), p. 80. See also 'Epistle to Miss Blount, with the Works of Voiture' (*Poems VI*, p. 64, l. 61); *The Rape of the Lock* (*Poems II*, p. 201, ll. v. 30-34); 'Eloisa to Abelard' (*Poems II*, pp. 347-9, ll. 343-66)*;* 'Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady' (*Poems II*, pp. 75-82).

Chapter 3 : John Caryll

1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the surviving correspondence from one of Pope's most enduring and most extensively documented epistolary friendships: that with John Caryll (1667-1736), a devoutly Catholic man more than two decades Pope's senior, with whom he exchanged at least 147 letters over twenty-five years. While also personal and detailed – offering, according to Maynard Mack, "many of the best clues we have to his interior world" – Pope's correspondence with Caryll is of major interest here because it played a unique and fundamental role in the formulation of Pope's correspondence editions, infiltrating and influencing the other friendships documented there.[1] The seeds of this significance were planted in 1712, when Pope first asked the dependable, familiar, and approachable Caryll to return his letters, evidently already considering other public uses to which they might be put.[2] This request would later be repeated, and Caryll's compliance afforded Pope an unusual opportunity to revisit an extensive collection of his own informal writing over many years.[3] The original letters exhibit notable variety and development, as Pope's perception of the relative status of himself and his correspondent was influenced over time by characteristics such as age, financial position, fame, and religious or political leanings. Later, in preparing his correspondence editions, Pope revisited these wide-ranging personal literary and theological discussions, and conceived new applications for them. Choice phrases were extracted and inserted elsewhere;

[1] Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 89.
[2] See Pope to Caryll, 19 November 1712, *Corr*. i. 154-156.
[3] Three recorded requests were made, in 1712, 1726, and 1727. See *Corr*. i. 156; ii. 418-19; ii. 423.

various letters conflated into new ones; and many entire letters readdressed. The striking result of these efforts is that, although Pope's editions contain over thirty of his letters to Caryll, these are excerpted, readdressed, and anonymized until the man himself is barely identifiable.[4]

As a result, this chapter reveals Pope's most overt and deliberate use of his correspondence as a textual resource to adjust the dynamics of his relationships in print. In Chapter 1, we saw Pope developing the biographical resonances of his early correspondences in print by filtering the prominence of named individuals within it; while in Chapter 2, we saw Pope's adaptation of his letters to women into more abstract and fictionalized pieces. In this chapter, meanwhile, we see Pope combining these approaches, as he employed the conceptual resonances and intimate tone of his correspondence with Caryll as a raw material which could enhance his printed epistolary relationships with other individuals. This chapter will consider how Pope employed the Caryll letters to further his agenda of presenting a moderate and non-partisan political and religious focus within his editions. It will begin by examining the biographical and critical background to the correspondence and its publication, before undertaking a quantitative overview of the surviving source material and examining the impact of Pope's reattribution of letters in his editions. I will go on to consider the qualities of the manuscript correspondence that rendered these letters a valuable resource for Pope's editorial remediation. Finally, I will examine Pope's treatment of this correspondence in print as a tool to offer evidence of his loyalty and equanimity in response to conflict within both the public sphere and his private relationships. In this way, Pope's letters to Caryll

[4] The proportion of 32 printed letters out of 145 – 22% – is more than double the proportion of printed letters within Pope's entire known correspondence. See Sherburn, *Corr*. i. xxvi.

serve to justify and validate his poetic satire as a poised and targeted form impelled by objective moral rigour rather than private pique.

1.1 Biographical and critical context

Both the fact of this material's availability, and the nature of its appearance in print were, in turn, underpinned by Caryll's character and the tenor of his friendship with Pope. Caryll was patriarch of a significant Catholic family, who had inherited from his uncle, along with his estate and title (Jacobite second Baron Caryll of Durford), an interest in literature, and a number of literary acquaintances such as Dryden and Wycherley.[5] However, this patrimonial legacy had also led to his brief imprisonment alongside his uncle in 1696, in connection with a plot to assassinate William III, before he regained possession of the family estates in 1697. Pope and Caryll probably met when Pope was in his mid-teens, after 1703.[6] By 1711, Caryll's integral position amongst the prominent families of Catholic society and his interest in and encouragement of Pope's poetry led to his famous suggestion that Pope versify the dispute central to *The Rape of the Lock*; and subsequently to the preservation of his name to posterity through the obscured credit "This Verse to C— Muse! is due".[7] As Howard Erskine-Hill suggests, it is uncertain whether this concealment of Caryll's full name in the published poem is due to his own "aristocratic propriety, or personal modesty", or rather to "Pope's caution to acknowledge a member of a known Jacobite family".[8] This deeply subtle recognition of influence and limited revelation of identity is also typical of Pope's treatment of Caryll in

[5] Howard Erskine-Hill, "Caryll, John, (1667–1736)", *ODNB*, (2004).
[6] Pope writes, in a letter of 2 June 1733, of the "proofs of my friend's humanity now experienced near thirty years." *Corr*. iii. 373-4.
[7] *Poems II*, p. 144, l. i. 3.
[8] Erskine-Hill, "Caryll, John", *ODNB*, (2004).

his published letters – offering a striking reminder of how Pope's editions collaterally altered the traces which his correspondents left behind for posterity. Without Caryll's transcripts, little evidence would remain of their friendship, a fact particularly interesting in the context of Joseph Hone's recent study of Pope's influential yet critically neglected early relationships with Caryll and other Jacobite conspirators for which limited correspondence survives.[9] Alongside the potential political significance of Pope's marginalization of Caryll in print, the complex motivations revealed by his broader epistolary editing practices may offer new contexts for understanding his ambivalent attitudes towards this relationship. Pope's presentation of the letters in his editions notably also echoes an alteration in their friendship: according to Howard Erskine-Hill, Caryll was "mortified" by Pope's neglect of him in favour of other more famous friends in later years.[10]

When preparing his editions, Pope was unaware of the fact that Caryll had made full transcripts of his letters before returning the originals – documents which would, following their discovery in the nineteenth century, expose to the scrutiny of later editors the true character of the original friendship and its problematic relationship with Pope's editions.[11] Pope's use of the Caryll letters has subsequently been considered perhaps the most shocking of his editorial feats, due in large part to the uncomfortable juxtaposition it presents: the friendly intimacy of the transcripts sits accusingly behind the evidence of Pope's extreme editorial dissection. Accordingly, the Caryll correspondence came to epitomize Pope's duplicitous approach to his letters, representing the sacrifice of a

[9] Joseph Hone, *Alexander Pope in the Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 2.
[10] Erskine-Hill, "Caryll, John", *ODNB*, (2004).
[11] The transcripts are held in the British Library, Add. MS. 28618. They were discovered amongst the family papers by Charles Wentworth Dilke, *Athenaeum* 1393 (1854), p. 837. See above, Introduction, p. 39.

genuine friendship to the ruthless demands of Pope's self-fashioning in print. Early critics took a harsh view of Pope's actions, insinuating that they represented a cynical or naïve egotism.[12] Others have been more sympathetic, explicitly invoking as a mitigating factor the hardships which Pope suffered due to his Catholicism, which provoked his habitual "attitude of caution and concealment".[13] It is certainly interesting, and not coincidental, that the editorial exertions for which Pope would later become notorious were practised on a prolific correspondence with an intimate and relatively obscure Catholic friend. However, later studies of Pope's correspondence have tended to divert this focus on the moral aspects of the Caryll letters into a more neutral consideration of how the close but ambivalent relationship they depict illuminates Pope's character, biography, and epistolary practice.[14] In consequence, revisiting these epistolary exchanges in the context of the broader evidence of Pope's editorial practice offers a new perspective on this debate.

Of paramount importance for the current study is, of course, the valuable evidence that the correspondence contains regarding the detail of Pope's editorial work. Closer examination of the letters reveals that their remediation in print is not merely the incidental result of an opportunistic reflex to redistribute a desirable correspondence to more eligible recipients. Instead, the letters to Caryll offer a unique glimpse of Pope's careful adjustments to the dynamics of different relationships, allowing us to postulate the public and private factors which influenced his perception of his correspondents'

[12] See Elwin, *Works*, 1871, i. cxxi.
[13] Francis Beauchesne Thornton, *Alexander Pope, Catholic Poet*, (New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1952), p. 9. See also Dilke, *Athenaeum* 1393 (1854), p. 837.
[14] Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Social Milieu of Alexander Pope: Lives, Example and the Poetic Response*, (New Haven: Yale, 1975), pp. 42-102, esp. 88-90; Mack, *Life* (1985), esp. p. 663; Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1990), pp. 32-35; 44-46.

position and role within his social sphere. Furthermore, this uniquely substantial body of evidence reveals the complexity and purpose of Pope's editorial process when focussed upon a single correspondence for which the manuscripts were in his possession. The previous chapters have discussed Pope's strategic editorial practice when constrained by manuscripts out of his control, texts in the public sphere, or by limited or fragmentary access to material. Pope's greater editorial freedom here, by contrast, results in a coherent and intensive wider strategy of personal, religious, political and professional vindication, through a careful attention to how the specific phrases and themes he had expressed within the parameters of the original friendship might best reverberate elsewhere.

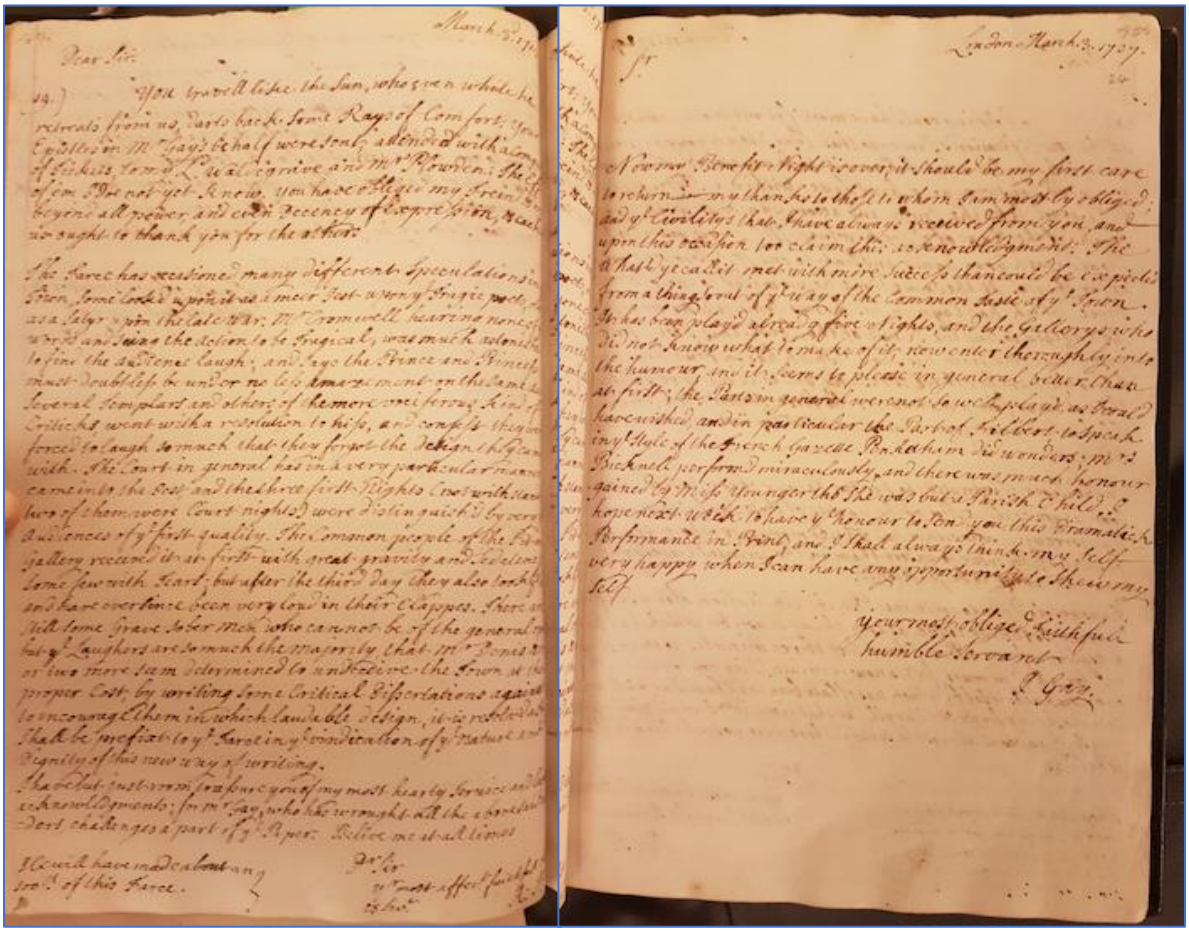


Figure 3.1 Transcript of a letter from Pope and Gay to John Caryll, 3 March 1715. British Library, Add. MS. 28618, ff. 23v-24r. Corr. i. 282-3.

1.2 Overview of correspondence and source material

This study is possible solely because of the detailed and complete picture of the original correspondence provided by Caryll's scribe's thorough transcripts.[15] These intermediary documents offer a different perspective on the transition between manuscript and print to that seen in previous chapters, as they preserved most of Pope's part in the original correspondence without his knowledge. They form almost our only record of this relationship, as reflected in the extreme disparity between the surviving letters on each side of the correspondence. Of Pope's 143 known letters to Caryll, 138 are extant in transcript and three in manuscript. Meanwhile, only three of Caryll's four known letters to Pope are preserved in manuscript. **Figure 3.1** above shows a methodically transcribed, dated, and numbered letter originally sent to Caryll by Pope and John Gay in 1715, which would otherwise not have survived. Even the scribe's "somewhat careless" approach to detail (as detected by George Sherburn) may inadvertently reveal additional circumstantial information.[16] For instance, the misdating of the second part of the letter as "1727" – accompanied by a hurried script, occasional scribal errors, and the back-to-back, though not always perfectly ordered, collation of the letters – suggests that rather than being a product of habitual record-keeping, this section of transcripts may have been hastily made at this date, perhaps following Pope's renewed request that Caryll return his letters in the wake of Curll's 1726 publication of the *Miscellanea*.[17] The transcripts reveal the dramatic textual change that resulted from Pope's possession of an extensive set of reciprocal manuscripts. As such, the transcripts form an important resource for understanding the possible extent of intervention that may have shaped other letters

[15] Erskine-Hill suggests Caryll's daughter may have been the scribe, *Social Milieu* (1975), p. 89.
[16] Sherburn, *Corr*. i. 93, n.1.
[17] Pope to Caryll, 5 December 1726. *Corr*. i. 418-19. See also 30 June 1717, *Corr*. i. 413-415.

known only from Pope's editions, and the potential impact of his editorial practice on the survival of other correspondences.

The transcripts can also be mapped against Pope's editions – as shown in the overview in **Figure 3.2**, below – to reveal the contours of the friendship contained in the letters and the factors that dictated their publication.

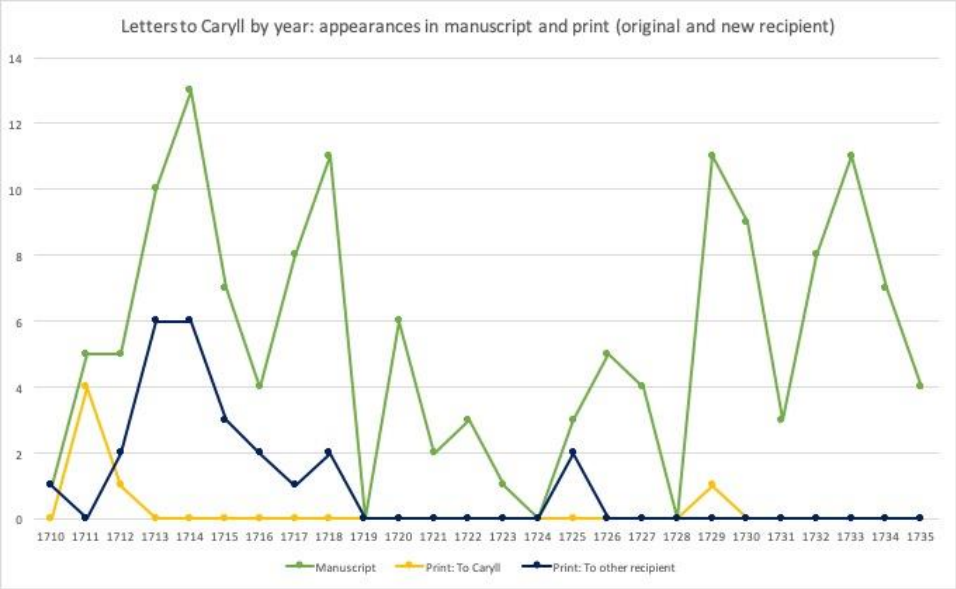
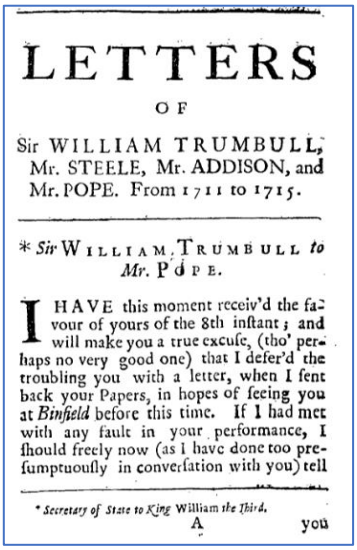


Figure 3.2 Transcript and printed letters to Caryll, by year and new printed recipient (including 3 letters printed anonymously)

The green line here traces the number of extant letter transcripts by year, illustrating intermittent gaps in a lengthy and prolific correspondence which lagged in its middle years.[18] The yellow line of the graph, meanwhile, makes clear that Pope named Caryll as the correspondent for only six of the thirty-two letters which he printed in his editions in some format (including just one from Caryll). The blue line indicates that material from

[18] Some of these gaps are actual lapses in the correspondence; others, e.g., that of June 1716-June 1717, are not remarked upon in following letters and so suggest that "not all letters were preserved". See Sherburn, *Corr*. i. 410.

twenty-five of the letters to Caryll was readdressed in print to an anonymous recipient, or to another of Pope's correspondents. The graph also demonstrates that that Pope's earliest, most enthusiastic letters to Caryll are dramatically favoured in print – echoing his selection of the earliest letters to women for print, as we saw in Chapter 2. Pope used the letters of the early 1710s – with one exception – for his printed letters to Caryll, and generally chose the letters spanning from the middle to the end of this decade to readdress to other correspondents, or to an anonymous recipient.



LETTERS

OF

Sir WILLIAM TRUMBULL, Mr. STEELE, Mr. ADDISON, and Mr. POPE. From 1711 to 1715.

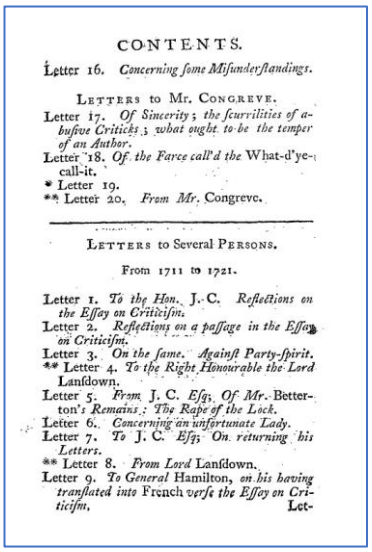
* *Sir* WILLIAM TRUMBULL *to Mr.* POPE.

I HAVE this moment receiv'd the favour of yours of the 8th inſtant; and will make you a true excuſe, (tho' perhaps no very good one) that I defer'd the troubling you with a letter, when I ſent back your Papers, in hopes of ſeeing you at *Binfield* before this time. If I had met with any fault in your performance, I ſhould freely now (as I have done too preſumptuouſly in converſation with you) tell

* *Secretary of State to King* William *the Third.*

A you

(a)



CONTENTS.

Letter 16. *Concerning ſome Miſunderſtandings.*

LETTERS to Mr. CONGREVE.

Letter 17. *Of Sincerity; the ſcurvilities of abuſive Criticks; what ought to be the temper of an Author.*
Letter 18. *Of the Farce call'd the* What-d'ye-call-it.
* Letter 19.
** Letter 20. *From Mr.* Congreve.

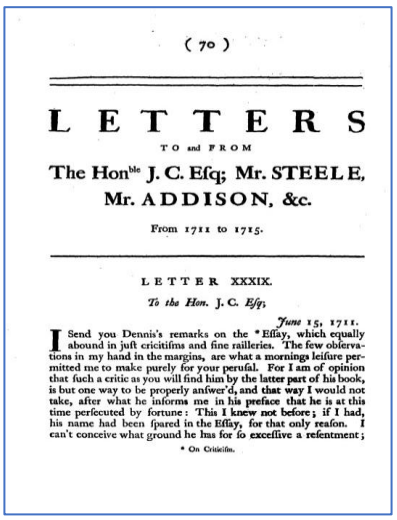
LETTERS to Several PERSONS.

From 1711 to 1721.

Letter 1. *To the Hon.* J. C. *Reflections on the Eſſay on Criticiſm.*
Letter 2. *Reflections on a paſſage in the Eſſay on Criticiſm.*
Letter 3. *On the ſame. Againſt Party-ſpirit.*
** Letter 4. *To the Right Honourable the Lord* Lanſdown.
Letter 5. *From* J. C. *Eſq; Of Mr.* Betterton's *Remains: The Rape of the Lock.*
Letter 6. *Concerning an unfortunate Lady.*
Letter 7. *To* J. C. *Eſq; On returning his Letters.*
** Letter 8. *From Lord* Lanſdown.
Letter 9. *To General* Hamilton, *on his having tranſlated into* French *verſe the Eſſay on Criticiſm.*

Let-

(b)



(70)

LETTERS

TO and FROM

The Hon^ble J. C. Eſq; Mr. STEELE, Mr. ADDISON, &c.

From 1711 to 1715.

LETTER XXXIX.

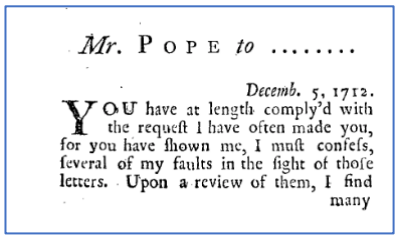
To the Hon. J. C. *Eſq;*

June 15, 1711.

I Send you Dennis's remarks on the *Eſſay, which equally abound in juſt criticiſms and fine railleries. The few obſervations in my hand in the margins, are what a mornings leiſure permitted me to make purely for your peruſal. For I am of opinion that ſuch a critic as you will find him by the latter part of his book, is but one way to be properly anſwer'd, and that way I would not take, after what he informs me in his preface that he is at this time perſecuted by fortune: This I knew not before; if I had, his name had been ſpared in the Eſſay, for that only reaſon. I can't conceive what ground he has for ſo exceſſive a reſentment;

* On Criticiſm.

(c)



Mr. POPE *to* .....

Decemb. 5, 1712.

YOU have at length comply'd with the requeſt I have often made you, for you have ſhown me, I muſt confeſs, ſeveral of my faults in the ſight of thoſe letters. Upon a review of them, I find many

(d)

Figure 3.3 Appearance of the letters to Caryll in Pope's editions:
(a) section heading from 1735 edition (which includes letters to "The Hon. J. C. Esq", and other miscellaneous letters) (p. 1);
(b) contents page of Pope's 1737 octavo edition;
(c) section heading from Pope's 1737 folio edition (p. 70);
(d) Anonymized letter (on letters returned from Caryll) in 1735 edition (p. 36).

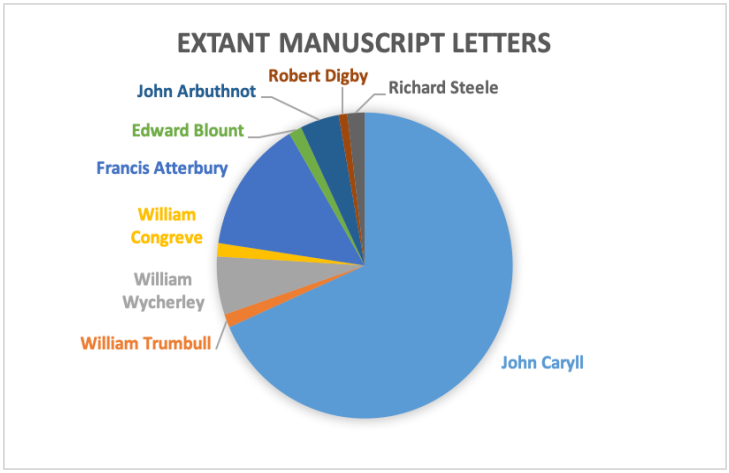
Meanwhile, looking behind the numbers, a glance at Pope's correspondence editions reveals the small group of letters actually addressed to Caryll in print as a similarly arresting anomaly: they are characterized by a stark brevity and lack of specificity, as illustrated in the pages shown in **Figure 3.3** above. Here we see that, highly unusually, letters to Caryll are designated only by his initials, and that only in the 1737 folio edition do they have their own heading ("Letters to and from the Honourable J. C., Esq; From 1711 to 1715"); in other editions, they are amalgamated into other groups of correspondences.[19] The contents pages further suggest the somewhat homogenous nature of these letters through their summaries ("reflections on a passage in the Essay on Criticism"; "On the same") which contrast with the often lengthier and more varied literary or social topics of letters to other recipients. Beyond this core group of letters to "The Hon. J. C.", other letters to Caryll are even more obscurely identified in Pope's editions: for instance, as shown in **Figure 3.3 (d)**, the letter in which Pope acknowledges receipt of the letters returned from Caryll in order to reflect on their "faults" of candour is unsurprisingly printed anonymously "to ……..".[20] Another letter, addressed to "Mr. C— ", had been interpreted as a letter to James Craggs (1686–1721) by Pope's editors and biographers until Dilke corrected this impression on discovery of the transcripts.[21] However, the very fact that this identification could be made – that this letter could be connected to a prominent Protestant and Whig statesman – raises interesting questions about Pope's strategy in publishing this correspondence, and about editorial acceptance of his narrative.

[19] Pope also – more typically – concealed their friendship elsewhere in his correspondence editions: for instance, in his otherwise expansive octavo, a familiar reference to Caryll becomes one to "Mr. C*". Pope to Henry Cromwell, 10 May [1711], *Corr.*, I. 115.
[20] Pope to Caryll, 5 December 1712, *Corr*. i. 160.
[21] Pope to Caryll, 3 February 1728/9, *Corr.* iii. 12. Dilke, *Papers of a Critic, Vol. I* (1875), p. 99.

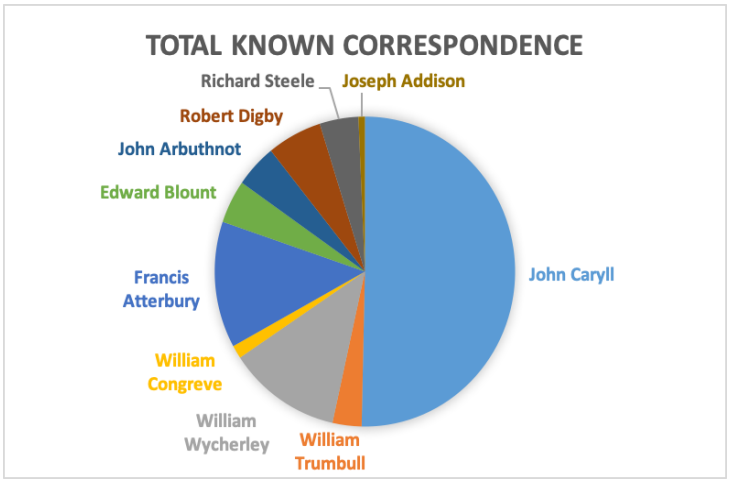
The apparent dating and position of the letters to Caryll in Pope's editions is also of interest. Pope's selection of letters – primarily from 1711 – for addressing to Caryll in print would suggest a conceptual placing of this correspondence as a formative acquaintance between a precocious youngster and an older man – overlapping in timeframe and dynamic with the printed letters to Cromwell covered in Chapter 1, which ended in the same year. Yet the letters printed to "the Honourable J. C., Esq" are in fact fluidly placed across the editions, taking on an intermediate, transitional character. After 1735, they generally follow the section of early, formative friendships which opens Pope's correspondence editions, which features the more prominent (and more conspicuously identified) figures of William Trumbull, William Wycherley, and William Congreve, to whom Pope printed no letters dated after 1715. Most of the correspondences surrounding or following the letters to Caryll in Pope's editions, meanwhile – such as letters to and from Francis Atterbury, Edward Blount, Robert Digby, John Arbuthnot, Richard Steele, and Joseph Addison – stretch into later dates (running past 1720) or are undated. The manufactured nature of this biographical re-structuring is further emphasized by the fact that material originally sent to Caryll – largely before 1720 – appears readdressed to each of the other correspondents named above.[22] Material mined from the Caryll letters, it seems, could be displayed to greatest advantage when cut, polished, and set in the context of more prestigious and diverse friendships.

[22] Five letters containing material originally sent to Caryll were addressed to Addison, three to Edward Blount, two to Congreve, Digby and Arbuthnot, and one each to Atterbury, Digby, Steele, Trumbull and Wycherley.

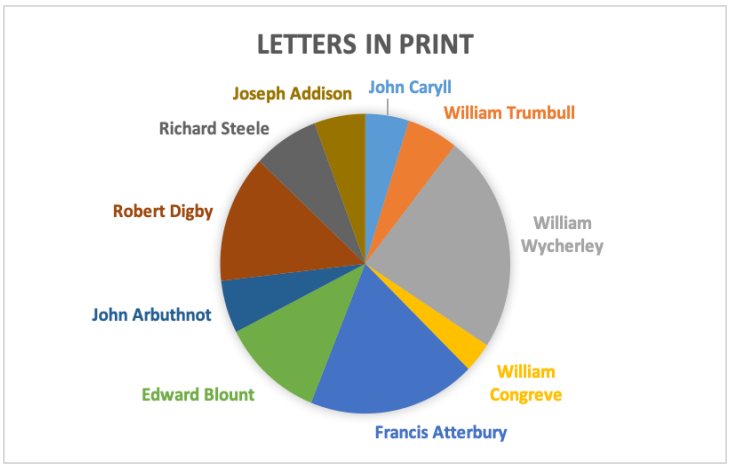
Pope's curatorial process led to dramatically divergent representations of his correspondence network across the different formats in which we find his letters today; a contrast illustrated in **Figure 3.4** below.



(a)



(b



(c)

Figure 3.4 Comparative representation of the 10 correspondences influenced by the Caryll letters, across formats:
(a) 212 letters in manuscript;
(b) 288 known letters in manuscript and print (excluding known fabrications);
(c) 117 letters printed in Pope's editions (including fabrications from 23 letters originally sent to Caryll

Figures 3.4 (a) and (b) demonstrate that the extensive surviving manuscript base of letters to Caryll form a body of evidence which informs our exceptionally comprehensive picture of this epistolary relationship. Conversely, they highlight our inevitably partial understanding of other correspondences known mainly or entirely from print – such as that between Pope and Addison. Meanwhile, **Figure 3.4 (c)** indicates that, as a resource, these manuscripts also facilitated Pope's introduction of balance and diversity to the reconfigured correspondence networks featured in the printed editions.

Since Pope had available (and probably employed) the ready excuse that Curll was to blame for the partial excision of Caryll's figure from his unauthorized 1735 edition, it is interesting that he did not take this opportunity to exclude him altogether: Pope clearly wished to present certain aspects of this relationship, though in a diminished and obscured fashion.[23] This assumption will shape my approach to this chapter: I will begin by considering the nature of the friendship between Pope and Caryll as documented in the larger corpus of transcripts, before examining the limited and distorted view of this relationship which is presented in Pope's editions. I will then go on to discuss the detail of Pope's re-contextualization of this material in the fabricated acts of correspondence which constitute the dominant presence of the Caryll letters in Pope's editions. There is little discrepancy between Pope's editions in terms of which letters from this group were included – dramatically less variation, for instance, than we saw in the editions of letters discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 – so this chapter will largely focus on the insight gained through comparison of Pope's editorial revision against the transcripts of his letters to

[23] Sherburn suggests that Pope's editing of letters to in the 1735 edition printed by Curll would have offered "evidence to Caryll that the publication was not authentic", *Corr*. iii. 455. Pope's 1737 editions were protected by Caryll's death the year before.

Caryll, and the remainder of his surviving correspondence with the individuals to whom these were readdressed in print. In this way, the chapter seeks to determine the rationale behind Pope's expurgation of Caryll's name and many of the ideas they shared, and to explicate his reframing of this friendship. It demonstrates how the openness and intimacy of an individual correspondence created a unique resource that could be mined to present the enduring consistency of Pope's personal values to public view in the context of diverse and high-profile relationships.

2. Manuscript correspondence

Pope's letters to Caryll are characterized amongst the rest of his correspondence by their number, warmth, and their philosophical and theological musings – including affectionate jokes on Catholic rites, as well as more serious discussion of matters of "the Catholic interest".[24] The earliest letters from Pope to Caryll are polite formulations to a man twenty-one years Pope's senior, containing the same conventional protestations against the apparently excessive compliments paid to him as we see in other contemporaneous letters to admiring older men, such as Cromwell and Wycherley ("I've been often in danger of being notably tainted with [vanity], but never more than when I read your last letter").[25] Yet in the absence of the swaggering style which had belied these entreaties in the Cromwell letters, Pope's self-deprecation seems more genuine: he styles himself not as a rake but as a "young scribler" and claims that, in his own eyes, he is "not the great Alexander Mr Caryll is so civil to, but that little Alexander the women laugh at".[26] Howard Erskine-Hill also notes that despite the "consciously witty and essayistic" style

[24] *Corr*. i. 497-499.
[25] Pope to Caryll, February 1711, *Corr.* i. 113–115. See above, Chapter, 1 pp. 106-9.
[26] Pope to Caryll, 31 July 1710, *Corr.* i. 94; Pope to Caryll, 25 January 1710/11, *Corr.* i. 114.

of these early letters, Pope's "ritual protestations of frankness and spontaneity" gradually "become true", giving way to habitually "plain communication".[27] There are, however, persistent signs of Pope's efforts to render the correspondence a literary corpus to be proud of, particularly in the long, early letters ("You see, Sir, I improve in my Style by your correspondence").[28] These even extend to hints of his future plans – for instance, the postscript in which Pope first requests the return of his letters is preceded by a kernel of truth wrapped in courteous valediction:

> For my part, there are some things I would be thought besides a wit; as a Christian, a friend, a frank companion, and a well natured fellow, and so forth. And in particular I would be thought Dear Sir
> Your most faithful and obliged friend and servant.[29]

Such familiar minor juxtapositions of formality and familiarity in the manuscript letters are complicated here by their religious content and context, an important consideration when tracing this correspondence from manuscript to print. John Bossy has explored the sense of "separation" which English Catholics had experienced over the previous two centuries (heightened by the Glorious Revolution in the year of Pope's birth), which severed the "bonds of collective behaviour", displacing Catholic rites and "sacramental acts" from their position in a "uniform society".[30] As a result, according to Alison Shell, "swift, reliable, controllable information networks" had become "essential" to the recusant Catholic community, disseminating "news", arranging "masses and other illicit gatherings", and providing imaginative, "emotional information about the state of Catholicism".[31] Correspondence also performed such functions, participating in a wider

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[27] Erskine-Hill, *Social Milieu* (1975), p. 66.
[28] Pope to Caryll, February 1711, *Corr.* i. 113–115.
[29] November 1712, *Corr*. i. 154-156.
[30] John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850,* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975), pp. 108-148. See also Peter Davidson, "Pope's Recusancy", *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 38:1, (2005), pp. 63-76.
[31] Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 15-17.

theological community through a covert and personal medium whose privacy is rendered both more vulnerable and more valuable by this context.[32] The manuscript correspondence reveals tensions arising from this background: for example, in Caryll's unique attentiveness to the intersection between Pope's religion and his poetry, and his solicitousness regarding the perception among the wider Catholic community that aspects of Pope's work were suspiciously unorthodox.[33] In such a capacity, he draws both Pope's thanks for his role as mediator ("I can never enough thank you, dear sir, for your extreme goodness and friendship in acquainting me with everything as you have done of late"), and his critical fervour.[34] For instance, in his fourth letter to Caryll, Pope discusses a passage from his *Essay on Criticism* beginning with the following couplet ("(if you please to cast your eye once more upon it)"):

> (Thus *Wit*, like *Faith*, by each man is apply'd
> To *one small Sect*, and All are *damn'd beside*.)[35]

In defending this passage from the insinuations of these "Criticks" and "disputants", Pope – somewhat spuriously – invokes the power of his "full stop" to insist that the unflattering "simile of wit and faith" does not continue after these lines (and therefore does not incorporate his criticism of the "stale nonsense" of a "servile herd" who "Meanly […] seek the Blessing to confine").[36] Furthermore, Pope claims that a precise definition of "sect" attests that "the censure of damning lies not on our Church".[37] This sensitive and at times defensive balancing of wit and faith is a central and fundamental feature of the correspondence with Caryll.

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[32] See Shell, *Catholicism*, (2004), p. 17; Brant, *Eighteenth Century Letters* (2006), p. 281.
[33] See Patrick Cruttwell, "Pope and his Church", *The Hudson Review*, 13.3 (1960), pp. 392, 398-9; Chester Chapin, "Alexander Pope: Erasmian Catholic", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 6. 4 (1973), p. 412; Thornton, *Catholic Poet*, (1952), pp. 3-25; Erskine-Hill, *Social Milieu* (1975), p. 68; 92-96.
[34] Pope to Caryll, 18 June 1711, *Corr.* i. 118.
[35] *Poems I*, p. 285, ll. 396-97.
[36] Pope to Caryll, 18 June 1711, *Corr.* i. 118. See Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 61 on the placement of this criticism within the wider Catholic community.
[37] *Corr.* i. 118.

In consequence, this correspondence offers unusual insight into this axis of Pope's theological thought, through a discussion of religion and poetry not merely pedantic but alternately jocular, indulgent, affectionate, sceptical and sincere. The letters suggest a relationship based on mutual fondness and shared experience, achieved through Pope's frequent demonstrations of a desire to learn from Caryll's virtue, generous charity, and Catholic piety. Pope comically juxtaposes religious practice and poetry when thanking Caryll for his generous gift of oysters, "without which, had I kept Lent here, I must have submitted to the common fate of my brethren, and have starved: yet I should (I think) have been the first poet that ever starved for the sake of religion."[38] A few lines later, Pope adds, "I may tell you that you have done a thing you was not aware of, and reclaimed a sinner; for you'll be the cause that I shall obey a precept of the Church, and fast this Lent, which I have not done many years before."[39] This is a wry claim – as Mack notes, Pope is twenty-two, and fasting is only required of Roman Catholics from the age of twenty-one – but the shared purpose behind this in-joke harbours an element of sincerity.[40] Beyond such joviality, Pope's letters of condolence of May and June 1718 express his sympathy on the death of Caryll's son through fittingly reverent and traditional phrases: Pope wishes him "all happiness, or in default of all happiness, all resignation", and expresses once again a desire to "imitate" Caryll's "virtue".[41] In the letters surrounding this event, Pope consistently portrays Caryll's faith conventionally as foundation or anchor: the "strong supports" of his "religious thoughts" "must maintain" him; his status as "a good

[38] Pope to Caryll, 25 January 1710/11, *Corr.* i. 113.
[39] *Corr.* i. 113. Pope printed this letter as if sent to Wycherley but omitted this passage and kept only the sections on compliment and criticism.
[40] Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 64.
[41] Pope to Caryll, June 1718, *Corr*. i. 475.

man and a resigned Christian" imbue him with "grounded […] virtue" and "constancy".[42] Caryll's committed faith is thus a significant theme in the letters, frequently interpreted by Pope as a reflection of his benevolence and moral probity.

The personal loyalty which Pope sought to convey through and alongside these discussions of faith is perhaps most clearly observed in his early letters to Caryll's son, to whom he arguably wrote more candidly.[43] David Nokes suggests that Pope may have embedded certain sentiments – such as the emphatic "I dare stand to posterity in the character of an unbigoted Roman Catholic and impartial critic" – expecting them "to carry to John Caryll senior".[44] In 1712, for example, Pope writes to Caryll Jr. in a "temper soured by […] a piece of s[curvy] news", insistently denouncing insinuations of Caryll's Jacobitism:

> You see I write in some heat […] the rascally scri[bbler], the Flying Post, has maliciously reflected upon Mr. Caryll, on [account] of his crossing the seas at this time. […] I beg you to offer him my utmost service […] with the only weapon I have, my pen, in reply to, or raillery upon, that scoundrel, and in whatever method he thinks most proper. I am on fire to snatch the first opportunity I ever had of doing something […] for your father and my friend. I hope he is not now to be told with what ardour I love, and with what esteem I honour him [45]

Pope's offering of his services as poet here prefigures the language he later uses to thank Caryll Sr. himself for his efforts in support of his literary endeavours: "what an infinite pleasure it was to me to find you snatching the first opportunity you ever had of serving my worldly interests with so distinguishing an alacrity and so warm a pursuit".[46] The tonal similarities between Pope's offer of his own service and his recognition of Caryll's

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[42] Pope to Caryll, 1 May 1718, *Corr*. i. 474.
[43] See David Nokes, "Pope's friends and enemies", in *The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope*, ed. Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 26.
[44] Pope to John Caryll, Jr., 8 November 1712, *Corr*. i. 151. Nokes, "Friends and enemies" (2007), p. 26.
[45] *Corr.* i. 151. See J. A. Richardson, *Slavery and Augustan Literature: Swift, Pope, Gay* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 54.
[46] Pope to Caryll, 29 June 1714, *Corr*. i. 232-33.

effectively conflate these transactions between writer and aristocrat, transmuting potential acts of patronage into reciprocal and gentlemanly – almost chivalric – fidelity and beneficence. Pope almost makes this explicit when he evasively thanks Caryll for his financial assistance:

> I look upon money to be one of the least things I am obliged to you for, and I should be heartily ashamed to thank you for forty guineas after I had enjoyed your friendship with silent satisfaction for many years."[47]

Yet Pope's expression of gratitude for Caryll's "industry" in "procuring" subscribers for the Iliad contains another half-truth belied by the changes wrought in print mediation: "you have been […] too kind in listing so many [subscribers] out of your own family. 'Twill be a satisfactory piece of vanity to me, to have all the world know, and read in this list, how partial the Carylls have been to me".[48] While Pope was happy for the names of the Carylls (or "Caryl[s]") to appear in the long list of subscribers which preface the grand publication of the *Iliad*, he did not publish in his correspondence editions either the financial or political aspects of the staunch allegiance which permeates the original letters.

Such traces of mutual generosity are just one of many elements of this long and complex epistolary friendship which are not reflected in Pope's printed correspondence editions. Following the patterns of editing seen in the previous chapters, the quotidian and personal content present in the transcripts – both light-hearted and emotional – is often omitted in print. Pope excludes, for example, the recycled lewd "Rondeau" originally sent to Henry Cromwell, alongside glances of droll self-deprecation: "I had forgot to tell you in

[47] Pope to Caryll, 29 June 1714, *Corr*. i. 232-233.
[48] Pope to Caryll, 19 March 1713/14, *Corr*., i. 214.

my list of rambles"; "I have been full an hour on this foolish letter already".[49] Such passages root the letter in the prosaic moment of composition by acknowledging the effort inherent in its construction. In the same way, Pope excludes content which negatively reflects his mental state: he does not print those letters sent to Caryll while "labor[ing] under a very ill state of health" and "soured to the world".[50] Letters which intimate the pervasive tensions in the relationship are also excluded from print. Hints of these appear early on in the correspondence, primarily when Pope answers charges of neglect – for instance, in 1714 ("Nothing could have mortified me more (amidst all the mortifications I undergo this Lent) than your reproach of my silence"), and particularly in 1718, in the letters sent six months after the death of Caryll's son: "I can hardly tell you how uneasy your letter has made me […] I am sorry you can think my friendship depends on so trivial [a circumstance] as that of writing every two months".[51] This reached a crisis as the correspondence flagged in the early 1720s, explaining why Pope printed no letters from these years: "Of late your letters pique me: they are writ in a style of suspicion and coldness, as if you doubted my inclinations to hear from you or see you".[52] Pope sought to ameliorate these difficulties by appealing to his and Caryll's long acquaintance and common ground ("Dear sir, believe me truly yours, and think well of me; that is, as a Christian should, charitably, forgivingly and kindly").[53] Such entreaties are recurrent throughout the correspondence in transcript, but absent from the published editions. In print, then, the letters lose much of the familiar specificities, tensions and social lubricant

[49] Pope to Caryll, 19 July 1711, *Corr*. i. 126-130; [6 August 1717], *Corr*. i. 418; 25 January 1710/11, *Corr.* i. 113.
[50] Pope to Caryll, 5 October 1727, *Corr*. ii. 448-449.
[51] Pope to Caryll, 12 March 1714, *Corr*. i. 214; 11 August 1718, *Corr*. i. 483. See Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 291.
[52] Pope to Caryll, 2 April 1722, *Corr*. i. 111-12.
[53] *Corr*. i. 111-12. See also 28 February [1733/4], Corr. i. 402-3; 29 June 1714, *Corr*. i. 232-33; 5 October 1727, *Corr*. ii. 448-49.

associated with a sporadic epistolary friendship – and thereby are isolated from the unique context which enabled their original composition.

3. Print remediation

3.1 Letters addressed to Caryll

The exclusion in print of the specific personal and emotional aspects of the letters, combined with Pope's partial concealment and inconsistent presentation of Caryll's identity, lend this correspondence an abstract, opaque and restricted quality. Caryll forms a shadowy figure who is never clearly identified, and whose primary function as a recipient is as a reflection of Pope himself. Pope's edited letter of 3 February 1729, for instance, published in his 1737 editions with the recipient "Mr. C—", offers little insight into their relationship, but serves various other purposes. It offers evidence of Pope's altruism, indicating the financial assistance which he had given to "Mrs. [Ann] Cope" (Caryll's cousin and a mutual acquaintance in distress), and erroneously reproaching Caryll for not having done the same.[54] The letter offers a further generalized example of Pope's dutiful nature in his excuse for not making the long trip to Caryll's estate ("~~Ladyholt~~ **your country House**"): "I have never ~~but once left~~ **ventur'd to leave** my mother (at her great age) for more than a week".[55] As an unusually late inclusion, printed under the yet later date of "2 Sept. 1732", this letter also offers a broad and timely personal defence of Pope's published correspondence:

[54] *Corr.* iii. 12. Pope omits in print the following letter – in which he had recognized that he had been misinformed regarding Caryll's lack of charitable intervention. Pope to Caryll, 16 February [1728/9], *Corr.* iii. 17. See Dilke, *Athenaeum* 1395 (1854), pp. 907-910.
[55] *Corr.* iii. 12.



~~Now~~ for the interruption of our correspondence; I am sorry you seem to put the test of my friendship upon that ~~issue of my writing as formerly~~, because it is what I am disqualified from towards ~~all~~ my other acquaintance, with whom I ~~hold no such correspondence~~. I'll name you ~~a few~~ obstacles which I can't surmount: want of health, want of time, want of eyes~~,~~ and one yet stronger than all~~:~~ I write not upon the terms of other ~~honest men; and~~ however glad I might be of expressing my respects, opening my mind, or venting my concerns to my private friends, I ~~dare not~~, while there are Curlls in the world. If you please to reflect either on the impertinence of weak admirers, the malice of low enemies, the avarice of mercenary booksellers, or the silly curiosity of people in general, you'll confess I've small reason to indulge correspondences ~~(~~in which too I want materials, as I live altogether out of town, and have entirely abstracted my mind (I hope) to better things~~), unless~~ my friends would ~~do (as indeed some have been prevailed upon, and as you know I have many years desired you would do)~~ send me back those forfeitures of my discretion, commit to my justice what I trusted only to their indulgence, and return me at the year's end those trifling letters, which can be to them but a day's amusement, but to me may prove a discredit ~~to posterity.~~

As for the interruption of our Correspondence; I am sorry you seem to put the Test of my friendship upon that, because it is what I am disqualify'd from toward my other acquaintance, with whom I **cannot hold any frequent commerce**. I'll name you **the** obstacles which I can't surmount: want of health, want of time, want of **good** eyes**;** and one yet stronger than **them** all**,** I write not upon the terms of other **Men. For** however glad I might be**,** of expressing my respect, opening my mind, or venting my concerns**,** to my private friends**;** I **hardly dare**, while there are Curlls in the world. If you please to reflect either on the impertinence of weak admirers, the malice of low enemies, the avarice of mercenary Booksellers, or the silly curiosity of people in general; you'll confess I've small reason to indulge correspondencies**:** in which too I want materials, as I live altogether out of town, and have entirely abstracted my mind (I hope) to better things **than common news. I wish** my friends wou'd send me back those forfeitures of my discretion, commit to my justice what I trusted only to their indulgence, and return me at the years end those trifling letters, which can be to them but a day's amusement, but to me may prove a discredit **as lasting and extensive, as the aforesaid weak admirers, mean enemies, mercenary scriblers, or curious simpletons, can make it**.

Figure 3.5 Pope to Caryll, 3 February 1728/9, in transcript (l) and 1737 octavo (r).[56]

Pope's curtailed apology for not "~~writing as formerly~~" serves here to forestall any criticism of the style and content of the published correspondence as a whole: because of the vulnerability of his letters to opportunistic adversaries, Pope claims, "I've small reason to indulge correspondencies".[57] Pope removes direct reference to his requests that his letters ("those forfeitures of my discretion") be returned to him, replacing this with a prudent – but apparently futile – plea for security against the "**aforesaid**" list of encroaching enemies (now, in print, artfully reiterated).[58] The letter thereby serves to corroborate Pope's account of his letters' publication in the prefaces to his

[56] *Corr.* iii. 12.
[57] *Corr.* iii. 12.
[58] *Corr.* iii. 12.

correspondence editions, as discussed in Chapter 1.[59] It retroactively validates Pope's claim that he had no involvement with Curll's 1735 edition of his correspondence, and had attempted unsuccessfully to avert this violation of privacy.[60] As such, the surviving transcripts reveal that Pope not only employed his letters to Caryll to enhance his published correspondence, but also used the traces within them of interpersonal pressures and complex material transactions to defend his editions within the literary marketplace.

Elsewhere in his editions, Pope employs the unique reflections on his literary works contained within his correspondence with Caryll. In the single printed letter from Caryll to Pope (the only one of his four known letters not extant in manuscript), he impatiently asks after the *Rape of the Lock* with a favourable reflection on Pope's skill and discretion: "But where hangs the *Lock* now? (tho' I know that rather than draw any just reflection upon your self, of the least shadow of ill-nature, you would freely have suprest one of the best of Poems.)"[61] Pope's selective curation of the literary resonances of this correspondence as a context for his early career is further indicated by his edited reflection that "I've till now doubted […] that my ~~Trifles~~ **writings** are taken some notice of to the world in general".[62] Pope also invokes the camaraderie of the Caryll letters to explore the social aspects of authorship. One letter printed "to the Honourable…", not present in transcript, records a literary dispute which demonstrates "[Ambrose] *Philips's* malignity" towards Pope, and reveals the support of friends such as "Mr. *Addison*", "Mr.

[59] See above, pp. 93-95.
[60] *Corr.* iii. 12.
[61] Caryll to Pope, 23 May 1712, *Corr.* i. 142.
[62] Pope to Caryll, 2 August 1711, *Corr*. i. 131-3. On Pope's regulation of his mode of reference to his works, see below, Chapter 4, pp. 293-4.

Congreve" and "Lord *Hallifax*".[63] Thus, while little evidence of the mutual loyalty of their longstanding friendship is present in print, Pope's thanks for Caryll's "zeal and friendship" in protecting him "from all those little tales and calumnies, which a Man of any genius or merit is born to" anonymously bolsters the list of "noble defenders" on Pope's side in this conflict.[64] Elsewhere, Caryll appears in print, under the initials "J. C., Esq;", as the recipient of Pope's lengthy defences of his own work and character against charges which pertain particularly to religion. For example, Pope printed a letter of July 1711 which begins:

> THE concern which you more than seem to be affected with for my reputation, by the several accounts you have so obligingly given of what reports and censures the holy Vandals have thought fit to pass upon me, makes me desirous of telling so good a friend my whole thoughts of this matter.[65]

This opening, largely maintained from the transcript, suggests that the letter originated as a response to some perceived officiousness on Caryll's part. As a result, this lengthy, fastidious and sometimes repetitive group of letters ("*On the same.*") accommodate arguments which Pope evidently desired to bring to public view, but which might have appeared incongruous or cumbersome within other correspondences.

The core purpose of the printed Caryll correspondence appears to be the conveyance and reiteration of an essential image: the steadfast equanimity of the Catholic poet caught in the crossfire of critical or religious dispute. This message is affirmed through allusive and evocative links between Pope's epistolary and poetic writing. We first encounter this theme in Pope's indignant response to disapproval of the *Essay in Criticism* from both John Dennis and the Catholic community in 1711:

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[63] Pope to Caryll, 8 June 1714, *Corr*. i. 229-230.
[64] *Corr*. i. 229-230.
[65] Pope to Caryll, 19 July 1711, *Corr*. i. 126-30.

> You will see by this, that whoever sets up for wit in these days ought to have the constancy of a primitive christian, and be prepar'd to suffer martyrdom in the cause of it. But sure this is the first time that a Wit was attack'd for his *Religion*, as you'll find I am most zealously in this treatise: and you know Sir, what alarms I have had from the opposite side on this account.[66]

Pope's reference here to "the constancy of a primitive Christian" is echoed, almost verbatim, in his anticipation of attacks on his translation of the *Iliad* in a letter of 1714:

> I must expect an hundred attacks upon the publication of my *Homer*. Whoever in our times would be a professor of learning above his fellows, ought at the very first to enter the world with the constancy and resolution of a primitive Christian, and be prepared to suffer all sort of publick Persecution.[67]

These collected images draw upon Pope's invocation in an earlier letter of an essential figure: the Dutch Catholic Humanist, Erasmus (1466–1535), who, Pope declared, had "in the midst of calumny proceeded with all the calmness of innocence, the unrevenging spirit of primitive Christianity!"[68] Through these echoes, Pope aligns his own experiences and conduct with the *via media* of this "great man and great saint", a figure he had praised in *An Essay on Criticism*:

> At length, *Erasmus*, that *great, injur'd* Name,
> (The *Glory* of the Priesthood, and the *Shame*!)
> *Stemm'd* the *wild Torrent* of a *barb'rous Age*,
> And drove those *Holy Vandals* off the Stage.[69]

Given Pope's careful attention to repetitive phrasing in his published letters, as seen in the previous chapters, the presence of this recurrent motif in print may be interpreted as a deliberate restatement of an important message.

Pope's published letters to Caryll thus provide a biographical context for the development of the broader theological and critical concepts he had explored within the

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[66] Pope to Caryll, 25 June 1711, *Corr*. i. 120-23.

[67] Pope to Caryll, 25 July 1714, *Corr*. i. 238-9. This letter is addressed "To the Honourable —" and is not known in transcript.

[68] Pope to Caryll, 18 June 1711, *Corr*. i. 117-120.

[69] *Corr*. i. 117-120; *Corr*. i. 126-30; *Poems I,* p. 318-19, ll. 693-6. Both Pope's *Essay on Criticism* and his letters to Caryll contain distinct echoes of Thomas Brown's 1711 *Life of Erasmus*: see James King, "Pope and Erasmus' 'great, injur'd name'", *English Studies* 55:5 (1974) 424-7.

Essay on Criticism, and to which he would return throughout his career.[70] The letters refresh the poem's censure of partisan and reductive religious or poetic criticism, with its tendency to "make the *Whole* depend upon a *Part*", instead advocating strenuously for a tolerant and holistic attitude to both faith and art.[71] Accordingly, they emphasize the moderate and critical "humility" inherent in Pope's own religious belief, which follows the "excellent example" of Erasmus: "I will do or say nothing […] that is unbecoming the character of a true Catholic".[72] This stance, as Patrick Cruttwell notes, resists both narrow doctrinal attitudes, and contemporary perceptions of Catholicism as "superstitious", "medieval", and lacking in "intellectual prestige" and "intellectual champions".[73] Pope's invocation of the steadfast Erasmus thus also defends and dignifies his own resistance to his friends' entreaties to convert to Protestantism following the death of his father, whose simple and "honest" faith, as a "Stranger to Civil and Religious Rage", was recorded in Pope's 1735 *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* as the model for his own.[74] Prompted by Caryll's personal and interested enquiries and by public and private criticism of his early work, Pope's thoughtful meditations on the connections between his religion and poetry were a product of the unique context of this correspondence. Later, these private letters to a co-religionist evidently appeared to Pope to offer ideal material for a public defence of both his poetic work and his ambivalent yet resolute relationship with the Catholic church.

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[70] Pope to Caryll, 19 July 1711, *Corr*. i. 126-30.

[71] *Poems I*, p. 269, l. 264. See G. Douglas Atkins, *Alexander Pope's Catholic Vision: "Slave to No Sect"*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), viii.

[72] Pope to Caryll, 18 June 1711, *Corr*. i. 117-120. See Thomas Woodman, "Pope: the Papist and the Poet", *Essays in Criticism*, Volume XLVI, Issue 3, (1996), 219-33; Chapin, "Pope: Erasmian Catholic" (1973).

[73] Cruttwell, "Pope and his Church" (1960), p. 393.

[74] *Poems IV,* p. 123, ll. 394; 400. See Pope to Atterbury, 20 November 1717, *Corr*. i. 453; Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 336-37.

The fact that some of Pope's printed letters to Caryll are known only from his editions and others are significantly edited from the manuscripts again indicates Pope's efforts to polish, restructure, and augment this discussion. The material selected for print suggests that Pope's anticipation of a wider readership inspired him to strike a balance between placating the Catholic community and corroborating the dispassionate and incisive view of his own religion offered in his poetry. The printed letters cater to the former objective through declarations of good-humoured neutrality and an all-embracing faith founded upon core values such as "the charity of mankind, the very greatest bond in which we are engaged by God to one another as Christians".[75] Meanwhile, Pope presents his satirical examination of the schisms, "artifices", and "*piae fraudes*" of "our religion" as the just observations of an affectionate insider, which thereby inoculate "our Church" against more damaging accusations from "our enemies".[76] However, the detailed textual changes which Pope made in preparing these letters for print also reveal his desire to frame these arguments within a more consistent, measured, and confident critical tone. Many of Pope's routine changes to enhance concision support this purpose. In the edited letter of 19 July 1711, for instance, Catholics are not always "~~wanting~~ vindication ~~from a slander~~" but just "**in need of** vindication"; "~~In your last~~ you ~~most charitably~~ inform me" becomes "you inform**'d** me"; a "~~very little suspicious~~" passage in the *Essay on Criticism* becomes an "**innocent**" one; and Pope is no longer the subdued "~~unworthy subject of~~ […] reports and censures", but rather they are "**pass[ed] upon**" him.[77] Similarly, the aesthetic correction of repetition also diffuses the suggestion of fixated insistence which accompanies it: for example, the potentially-dogmatic "~~true~~ light" in which Pope reveals the "true state" of

[75] Pope to Caryll, 19 July 1711, *Corr*. i. 126-30.
[76] *Corr*. i. 126-30.
[77] *Corr*. i. 126-30.

things becomes a more analytical "**clear** light"; and his community are not always explicitly "~~Catholics~~" but "**professors of our faith**".[78] Structural changes serve to further focus and abstract the discussion, and to reinforce its solemn tone. Pope terminates this letter in the middle of a sentence, including the generic "You shall find me a true Trojan in my faith and friendship, in which I will ever persevere until the end," but omitting the more light-hearted and personal comment that follows: "~~and you shall be convinced that [...] I shall prove a submissive disciple, and renounce all dangerous temptations of the private spirit~~".[79] Similarly, in Pope's letter of 25 June 1711, personal specificity is removed through the adjustment of references to places (such as "~~Ladyholt~~") and people ("~~Mr. Thomas Southcote~~", becomes "**Our friend the Abbe**").[80] Such changes also alter the letters' impact: in that of 19 July, Pope transmutes "~~Mrs. Nelson['s]~~" defence of the religious conformity of Pope's poetry into the potentially more authoritative advocacy of "**that gentleman**", "**Mr. —**".[81] Finally, other minor changes to this letter also serve to enhance its impression of Pope's own character: he alters a third-person reference to himself as one "~~free and bold enough~~" to defend Erasmus, becoming instead one merely "**willing**" to, and claims more modestly to praise the dead because he "expects no thanks ~~from them~~ for it".[82] Even when the letters in Pope's editions are ostensibly addressed to Caryll, then, Pope's editorial approach demonstrates their value as a stock of robust analytical writing that could be adapted, with the benefit of hindsight and mature experience, to offer a coherent and confident defence of his poetic work and personal beliefs.

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[78] *Corr*. i. 126-30.
[79] Pope to Caryll, 19 July 1711, *Corr*. i. 126-30. See also 18 June 1711, *Corr*. i. 117-120.
[80] Pope to Caryll, 25 June 1711, *Corr*. i. 120-123
[81] Pope to Caryll, 19 July 1711, *Corr*. i. 126-30.
[82] *Corr*. i. 126-30.

3.2 The friendship reattributed: readdressed letters

The discussion above indicates a correspondence distinctly shaped by Caryll's sensitivity to the personal, political and religious undercurrents of the critical dialogue to which Pope was subjected, and by his genuine interest – both literary and moral – in Pope's work and its reception. The resultant combination in Pope's letters to Caryll of a relaxed and forthright familiarity with a detailed discussion of poetic and religious matters also rendered them a valuable source for re-addressing to others. Pope's reattribution of material from the Caryll letters to other addressees suggests an awareness of these characteristics, as he divides content with an ear to its tone. We see two important uses of the tone of the Caryll letters for other remodelled correspondence: candid intimacy is prioritized for reattributing to earlier, more senior correspondents, while intellectual and critical rigour is favoured for letters to his friends and peers of the 1720s onwards. For both purposes, as noted above, Pope primarily deploys the established but still enthusiastic correspondence of the mid-1710s, with its warmly recounted and richly specific reflections on contemporary events. While Pope printed the driest and most defensive aspects of his poetic and doctrinal discussions within letters to "J. C., Esq.", livelier or more emotionally resonant passages were reused to mould discussions with other friends. In these diverse contexts, they evince an unequivocal, lifelong, and universally proffered declaration of poetic purpose and religious identity. In the following section, I will examine first letters to Pope's earlier, more senior correspondents, and then those to later contemporaries. This analysis indicates how the transplantation of Pope's letters to Caryll into a diverse, extensive, and publicly visible

social network expands and amplifies both their vivid, intimate tone and their enduring theme: Pope's resistance to both religious bigotry and political partisanship.[83]

3.2.1 The early crowd: Trumbull, Wycherley and Congreve

Pope readdressed six of his letters to Caryll into that circle of older men which comprised his earliest correspondents: one to William Trumbull (1639-1716), one to William Wycherley (bap. 1641, d. 1716), and four to William Congreve (1670-1729). Each man was Pope's senior by eighteen years or more, and each had enjoyed a successful career – Trumbull's political, Wycherley and Congreve's dramatic. Pope's desire to publicize his correspondence with these men is predictable: as Maynard Mack states, letters to these correspondents demonstrate "that he had won the respect of honourable and talented men from the beginning"; and the printed letters would showcase his "elegant precision" in articulating "views as diverse as couplet versification and the errors of the Roman Church".[84] Yet Pope had few letters from correspondences with some of these early friends, and little hope of acquiring more.[85] Wycherley and Trumbull had died in 1716, and Congreve in 1729, and the stock of letters to Caryll provided an opportunity to make public an apparent record of these early acquaintances. Beyond their quantity and availability, the material contained in these letters offered a means by which to correct and improve the documentary evidence of these other important, but problematic relationships: his uneven friendship with Trumbull; his tumultuous collaboration with Wycherley; and his somewhat stiff acquaintance with Congreve. In these contexts, Pope

[83] See Erskine-Hill, *Social Milieu* (1975), p. 66.
[84] Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 662.
[85] As Mack states, "the sheer distinction and seniority" of a correspondent such as Congreve "may have made it too great a presumption to suppose either that his letters had been saved, or if saved, could be asked back", *Life* (1985), p. 662.

prints material sent to Caryll between 1710 and 1715 under dates from 1704 to 1715, thereby suffusing the affectated style of these early correspondences with a more mature and often more intimate one. Furthermore, he elevates his informal comment on political, religious and literary topics – and particularly, criticism of his own work – through the implicit approval of such prominent men.

William Trumbull (1639–1716)

In around 1705, Pope forged "perhaps the most intimate and affectionate" of his early friendships with his neighbour Sir William Trumbull, a retired lawyer and government official.[86] Pope rode frequently with him in Binfield, during which time Trumbull, a former Fellow of All Souls, acted informally as Pope's "tutor in the Classics".[87] The familiarity of the 21 known letters between Trumbull and his "little Pope" display, as James Osborn observes, Trumbull's "mellowed" character in his later years, and offer no indication of his previous reputation as a "zealous opponent of Roman Catholicism".[88] Instead, Trumbull's manuscript letters are generally benevolently mundane and charmingly self-deprecating, valuing Pope for both his "Bookes" and his "Conversation": "I am sure it will be my fault, if I do not improve by both"; and bestowing praise on Pope's father for his "skill in Gard'ning", and "thankes" for his gifts of "Hartichokes": "I am afraid we shall Copie [them] but in Miniature".[89] Yet the letters nevertheless demonstrate a

[86] Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 104. A. A. Hanham, "Trumbull, Sir William (1639–1716), civil lawyer and government official", *ODNB*, (2004).
[87] Sherburn, *Corr*. i. 10. See also Osborn (ed.), *Spence: Observations* (1966), i. 31.
[88] Osborn (ed.), *Spence: Observations* (1966), i. 31, §71n. See also Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 108. On the 12 new letters not in Sherburn's edition, see George Sherburn, "Letters of Alexander Pope, Chiefly to Sir William Trumbull", *The Review of English Studies*, 9:36 (1958), 388-406; Rogers, "Not in Sherburn" (1985), pp. 59-64.
[89] Trumbull to Pope, 15 June 1706, *Corr*. i. 17.

certain awareness of the "unequal" nature of the friendship.[90] Contributing to this is Trumbull's assiduous support of Pope's work: he lavishly praises his "reach of thought" and "comprehensive genius" and encourages him to translate the *Iliad* in full, proclaiming his "Zeal to Promote [Pope's] interest" in this "undertaking".[91] Pope's responses, meanwhile, are extremely deferential ("I must beg your permission to fill up a little more paper"; "I hope you will be so just as to believe a plain Country Fellow, who never had either Ability or Inclination to make you a Compliment") and Sherburn notes the "serious […] almost obsequious" character arising from Pope's "excess[ive]" adherence to the "customary […] procedure" of flattery and objection to flattery.[92]

In Pope's editions, however, this convention is flattened. The five printed letters from Trumbull contain abundant praise of Pope, and record with pride his engendering role in Pope's translation on the *Iliad.*[93] In contrast, the two published letters from Pope to Trumbull are dominated by protest against flattery.[94] One of Pope's responses, for instance, seems pointedly to ignore the fatherly concern and advice of Trumbull's previous letter ("get out of all Tavern-company" for the "preservation of your health"; "come away and take a little time to breathe in the country"), returning instead to a favourite theme: the danger that Trumbull's "style of compliment" might "render him a

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[90] Pope noted their "unequal years" when dedicating his first Pastoral to Trumbull; quoted in Osborn (ed.), *Spence: Observations* (1966), i. 31, §71n.

[91] Trumbull to Pope, 6 March 1713/14, *Corr.* i. 212; Trumbull to Pope, 21 November 1713, in Sherburn, "Letters of Alexander Pope" (1958), p. 399.

[92] Pope to Trumbull, 19 December 1713, in Sherburn, "Letters of Alexander Pope" (1958), pp. 400; 390.

[93] Sherburn notes that, in printing Trumbull's encouraging letter of 9 April 1708, "Pope established publicly the fact that his Homer was translated at the request of friends", contradicting "his statement that Addison was the first to encourage him in the project" (*Corr*. i. 45-6). See Pat Rogers, "Pope and his subscribers", *Publishing History* 3:7 (1978), 8-16.
One of the published letters from Trumbull is known in a manuscript draft (22 February 1714/15; *Corr*. i. 281-282), the others are known only from Pope's editions (19 October 1705, *Corr*. i. 10; 9 April 1708, *Corr*. i. 45; 6 March 1714, *Corr.* i. 212; 19 January 1716 *Corr.* i. 327).

[94] Neither of the two printed letters from Pope to Trumbull are extant in manuscript (12 March 1714, *Corr.* i. 212; 16 December 1715, *Corr*. i. 323).

coxcomb for life".[95] Pope thereby effectively absorbs the distinction conferred on him by Trumbull's respect and affectionate concern, and matches it with proofs of his own youthful wilfulness, precocity, and gregariousness. In this way, he plays down the unequal status and parental dynamic of the original correspondence, and, as seen in the Cromwell letters, reduces his own adherence to conventional courtesies of compliment.

The supplementary letter originally sent to Caryll which is readdressed to Trumbull in print serves to further moderate the tone of the relationship.[96] While the two printed letters to Trumbull are dominated by studied quotations and allusion to historical figures ("*Caesar*", "*Milton*", "*Homer*", "*Pythagoras*", "*Petronius*"), the reattributed letter is one of more informal, personal news, rendered even more relaxed: "I've been almost every day employed in […] ~~learning to paint~~ **amusing myself in painting**"; "As to poeticall affairs I am content at present to be a bare looker on."[97] However, this apparently casual observation of contemporary cultural events – specifically, the first performance of Joseph Addison's *Cato* in 1713 – constitutes the principal value of this letter for publication.[98] Pope omits in print the contextual detail which had indicated the outsider status of Caryll and highlighted the sensational popularity of the play: "~~This play was published but this Munday and Mr Lewis tells me it is not possible to convey it to you before Friday next. The town is so fond of it, that the orange wenches and fruit women in the Park offer the books at the side of the coaches~~".[99] However, he retains his derisive comments on the "foolish industry" which strove to interpret *Cato* as "a party play", and

[95] Trumbull to Pope, 6 March 1713/14, *Corr.* i. 212; Pope to Trumbull, 12 March 1713/14, *Corr.* i. 213; 212.
[96] Pope to Caryll, 30 April 1713, *Corr*. i. 174-6
[97] Pope to Trumbull, 12 March 1713/14, *Corr.* i. 212-3; 16 December 1715, *Corr*. i. 323; Pope to Caryll, 30 April 1713, *Corr*. i. 174.
[98] *Corr*. i. 174.
[99] *Corr*. i. 174.

to claim its stirring themes of patriotism and liberty variously as Tory or Whig virtues.[100] Pope himself (as author of the prologue) was dragged reluctantly into the fray, "clapped into a staunch Whig sore against his will, at almost every two lines".[101] Yet the letter also relates an amusing public stunt by "my Lord Bulling-brooke" which had, by ridiculing the Duke of Marlborough as the "*perpetual dictator*" Julius Caesar, apparently won the play's values of patriotic justice and freedom for the Tories.[102] By addressing this letter of light-hearted yet ambivalent observations on the intersection of politics and art to an Anglican and moderate Tory (who had "disavowed any attachment to party", and whom Pope could identify in a footnote as "Secretary of State to King William the Third") – rather than to Caryll, a man from a notoriously Jacobite family with quietly-held Jacobite sympathies – Pope strengthens several interconnected aspects of its message.[103]

Firstly, and most straightforwardly, the fact that Bolingbroke and Trumbull were both prominent men and close friends means that the reattributed letter cements Pope firmly as a crucial conduit for events and friendships both in town and at home.[104] In addition, the moderate figure of Trumbull as the implicitly approving recipient arguably offers greater support to Bolingbroke, whose incisive wit in the anecdote reverberates anew in the 1730s; at which time his renewed political activity in opposition to Robert Walpole's government remained troubled by his earlier support of the failed 1715 Jacobite

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[100] *Corr*. i. 174.

[101] *Corr*. i. 174. See Mack *Life,* p. 220.

[102] *Corr*. i. 175. Dickinson, H., "St John, Henry, styled first Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), politician, diplomatist, and author", *ODNB*, (2004). Bolingbroke had mocked the Duke of Marlborough for (as Sherburn states; *Corr*. i. 175) "his desire to be appointed Captain-General for life" by giving the lead actor of *Cato*, Barton Booth, "50 guineas; in acknowledgement […] for defending the cause of liberty so well against a *perpetual dictator*".

[103] Hanham, "Trumbull, Sir William", *ODNB*, (2004). *Corr*. i. 45-6; see **Figure 3.3** above.

[104] See Adrian C. Lashmore-Davies, "The Correspondence of Henry St. John and Sir William Trumbull, 1698–1710", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 32:3 (2008), 23-179; Brean S. Hammond, *Pope and Bolingbroke: A Study of Friendship and Influence* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984).

rebellion and subsequent exile.[105] Similarly, by balancing Pope's cross-party and inter-denominational connections, this letter establishes and corroborates the central declaration of a later printed letter to Trumbull, in which Pope reflects soberly on the currently unfolding Jacobite rising: "I can pray for opposite parties, and for opposite religions, with great sincerity".[106] Through his printed letters to Trumbull, then, Pope publicly and explicitly extricates his own contribution to *Cato* from these apparent early allegations of Whiggism and staves off potential charges of Jacobitism, striving for the detached neutrality which he had declared in *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* in 1733:

> Papist or Protestant, or both between,
> Like good *Erasmus* in an honest mean,
> In Moderation placing all my Glory,
> While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.[107]

As a result of this emphatic neutrality, Pope's correspondence with Trumbull provides a protective setting for the more critical sentiments expressed in his letter to Caryll. Pope's discussion of *Cato* here has the potential additional effect of challenging Addison's own definition of his play's political connotations.[108] In advance of *Cato*'s first performance, Addison had "assure[d] the Tory ministry" that he "never in the least designed it as a party play"; and Pope, Swift, and Bolingbroke had all seen the unfinished draft.[109] Yet Pope's letter, when published over two decades later, evokes numerous external threats

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[105] See Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 504-507; Christine Gerrard, "Pope, Politics, and Genre", in *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole: Politics, Poetry, and National Myth, 1725-1742* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 70-71; Jones, *Talking on Paper,* pp. 48-9.

[106] See also Pope to Trumbull, 16 December 1715, *Corr.* i. 324. On Trumbull's influence on Pope's tolerant outlook, see Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 264.

[107] *Poems IV*, p. 11, ll. 65-68.

[108] On Pope's evaluation of his own critical and poetic approach as "politically neutral", while "presenting partisanship as the preserve of the opposition", see Abigail Williams, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681-1714*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 40-41.

[109] Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 220; David Walker, "Addison's Cato and the Transformation of Republican Discourse in the Early Eighteenth Century", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26:1 (2003), p. 91.

to this apparent objectivity. To begin with, Bolingbroke's quip recalls Addison's previous celebration of the Duke of Marlborough's victory at the battle of Blenheim in his 1704 poem *The Campaign*.[110] Then, at the time of the play's release, its party-political connotations were popularly applied to the context of the divisive 1713 treaty of Utrecht, and Addison himself had published a pamphlet "weigh[ing] into the attack on Bolingbroke", its "architect".[111] Furthermore, while Addison had "baulked" at the "gesture of commitment" invoked by a potential dedication of *Cato* to Queen Anne, after her death in 1714 he addressed the play, with verses of effusive praise, to the new Princess of Wales, Caroline of Ansbach.[112] That Pope remained piqued by this behaviour as he prepared his correspondence editions is apparent from his 1737 *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* (addressed satirically to Caroline's husband, now King George II), which numbers poets "useful to the State" ("I scarce can think him such a worthless thing, | Unless he praise some monster of a King"), particularly noting the tarnished example which Addison offers the current age: "And in our own (excuse some Courtly stains) | No whiter page than Addison remains."[113] This letter to Caryll, as reattributed to Trumbull, thus demonstrates Pope's frequent use of this correspondence as a record of past events whose resonances could be retrospectively explored within new social contexts. As such, this repurposing highlights the changing political currency

[110] Joseph Addison, *The Campaign, a Poem, to His Grace the Duke of Marlborough. By Mr. Addison* (London, 1705 [1704]). Pat Rogers, "Addison, Joseph (1672–1719), writer and politician", *ODNB* (2004).

[111] Rogers, "Addison, Joseph", *ODNB* (2004); *The trial and conviction of Count Tariff*, which "allegoriz[es] the debate over international trade" in the wake of the treaty. On Tory and Whig poetic responses to the War of the Spanish Succession and the subsequent peace treaty, see Williams, *Whig Literary Culture*, (2005), pp. 135-171.

[112] Rogers, "Addison, Joseph", *ODNB* (2004); *To Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales, With the Tragedy of Cato, November 1714* (London, 1716 [1715]).

[113] *Poems IV*, pp. 211-13, ll. 204; 209-10; 215-16. Pope here seems to imply the hypocrisy of Addison's approach, such as his *Spectator* columns of 1711 warning of the dangers of "Party-Spirit", and his later praise of George I in *The Freeholder*. See Walker, "Addison's Cato", p. 99-104.

of letters and addressees, and the complex way in which external concerns shaped the letters in manuscript and print.

William Wycherley (bap. 1641, d. 1716)

Pope's correspondence with William Wycherley – known mainly from letters which Pope first printed in 1729 – began in 1704.[114] While Pope took pride in his association with the famous playwright, the dynamic of their correspondence was influenced by Wycherley's waning career and financial and domestic difficulties.[115] The correspondence is initially dominated by the politeness, reservation and "formal manners" which reputedly circumscribed Wycherley's "clubbable" good humour and gentlemanly "wit" (his friend Knightley Chetwode asserted that Wycherley believed "some degree of ceremony should be preserved in the strictest friendship").[116] He addressed to Pope lengthy strings of formal and extensive compliment, praising Pope's "Profuseness of Wit and Humanity", "Ingenuity", and "Judgment".[117] Pope's letters, in turn, reveal his delight and pride at gaining access to the circle of literary greats represented by Wycherley: in his earliest known letter, he speaks of his "Satisfaction" at meeting "your dead friend Mr. *Dryden*", claiming that had he "been born early enough", he would have "known and lov'd" him like

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[114] Pope had printed 26 letters from his correspondence with Wycherley in volume 2 of his 1729 *Posthumous Works* of Wycherley. In 1735 he omitted two of these and added two others, one of which was fabricated from letters to Caryll. Twelve transcripts survive in the Portland Papers at Longleat house, but only two of these are of letters printed by Pope (*Corr*. i. 1).
On previous publication of the Wycherley letters, see: Sherburn, "Pope's letters and the Harleian Library", *ELH* 7:3 (1940), 177-87; Vinton A. Dearing, "Pope, Theobald, and Wycherley's Posthumous Works," *PMLA* 68: 1 (1953), 223-236; Shef Rogers, "Uncovering Wycherley's Miscellaneous Remains", *BSANZ Bulletin* 25:1-2 (2001), 145-156; and Jones, *Talking on Paper*, (1991), pp. 40-44.

[115] Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 96.

[116] Kate Bennett, "Wycherley, William (bap. 1641, d. 1716), playwright", *ODNB*, (2004); Bennett quotes Knightley Chetwode to Jonathan Swift, [April 1732], *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, Vol. 4: 1732-1736*, ed. Harold Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 13. See Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 98.

[117] Wycherley to Pope, 25 January 1704/5, *Corr*. i. 3.

"your self, […] Mr. *Congreve* and Sir *William Trumbul*".[118] This letter, like much of his correspondence with Wycherley, is known only from Pope's editions. In contrast with Pope's deletion of uncomplimentary or excessively deferential references to Wycherley within his letters to Cromwell, Pope's deliberate inclusion of individual names here suggests his desire to situate this relationship within a more prestigious social context in print.

Nevertheless, other aspects of Pope's letters to Wycherley indicate the complexities in this relationship, as he experimentally measures his own precocity against his correspondent's experience. Pope's reflection on his correction and preparation of Wycherley's verse for print, for example, contains flamboyant figurative language: in a single paragraph, Pope compares his editorial labour alternately to optics, horticulture, "Trade", "Haberdasher[y]", "paint[ing]" and Midwifery.[119] Yet the undertone of the letters sometimes reflects the growing tensions in this collaboration, as Pope emphasizes the extent of his alterations: "some [lines] I have taken quite away, as we take Branches from a Tree, to add to the Fruit; others I have entirely new express'd, and turned more into Poetry."[120] This arboreal metaphor appears again in a back-handed compliment to Wycherley elsewhere, as Pope emphasizes his own ambition: "Most Men in years, as they are generally discouragers of Youth, are like old Trees, that being past Bearing themselves, will suffer no young Plants to flourish beneath them."[121] The letters also demonstrate Pope's early confidence in his poetic abilities. In Pope's earliest known letter, dated 26 December 1704, he compares criticism of Dryden's work with that of his

[118] Pope to Wycherley, 26 Decmber 1704, *Corr*. i. 1-2.
[119] Pope to Wycherley, 10 April 1706, *Corr.* i. 15-16.
[120] *Corr*. i. 15-16.
[121] Pope to Wycherley, 25 March 1705, *Corr*. i. 5. See Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 99-100.

own ("I'm far from thinking the attacks of such people either any honour or dishonour, even to me, much less to Mr. Dryden"); and reflects with gratitude on Wycherley's reassurance that his "own performances were above those Criticks".[122] However, as Sherburn notes, Pope's comments "seem strange coming from a sixteen-year-old poet who has published nothing", and suggest that the letter may have been "polished" for publication in 1735 – emphasising our dependence on Pope's editions for our understanding of his early career and relationships.[123]

Pope's self-assured tone within this correspondence is further supported by the material introduced from his letters to Caryll, which contribute crisp poetic imagery, frivolous humour, and a more relaxed style. The Caryll letters provide a source of more succinct metaphor, which draws away from the frantic acrobatic wordplay of other letters to Wycherley. Pope protests against an excess of compliment, for instance, as damaging "Rain to a tender flower", and the "Smoak of Friendship".[124] Such brief, select borrowings demonstrate the labour and pride behind the artistic constructions of courtesy which pervade Pope's letters of this time, while also highlighting their broad applicability. Furthermore, a letter fabricated from two later letters to Caryll and addressed to Wycherley in print under the date of 1705 employs the more mature and intimate context of this correspondence to transform the theme of compliment into a less stiffly polite, and more humorous, mode: "when those incorrigible things, Poets, are once irrecoverably Be-Mus'd, the best way [to] secure your selves from the effects of their Frenzy, is to feed their

[122] Pope to Wycherley, 26 December 1704, *Corr*. i. 1.
[123] *Corr*. i. 1n.
[124] Sherburn notes the "similar imagery" between the two letters, but the fact that Pope addressed other parts of this Caryll letter to Wycherley in print suggests that the borrowings may have occurred at the time of printing. Pope to Wycherley, 25 March 1705 *Corr*. i. 5; Pope to Caryll, 31 July 1710, *Corr*. i. 94-5.

Vanity; (which indeed for the most part is all that is fed in a Poet.)".[125] Accordingly, this reconstructed letter takes on the longer length and more relaxed syntax typical of Pope's letters to Caryll, and thereby maintains the conversational setting which authenticates their heartier camaraderie: "But is this all you can say to my honour? You said ten times as much before, when you call'd me your Friend".[126] Pope may have felt that such open exclamations of friendship would bestow more honour when directed to such an august correspondent as Wycherley than they would if addressed to Caryll.

William Congreve (1670–1729)

The Caryll letters also contribute significant animating detail to Pope's documented relationship with another celebrated playwright, William Congreve, to whom Pope dedicated his *Iliad*.[127] The known correspondence originates mainly from Pope's editions, which contain three letters from Pope to Congreve – all of which Sherburn identifies as suspected fabrications – and one letter from Congreve to Pope, which is not known in manuscript.[128] The three letters from Congreve which constitute the only manuscript evidence of the correspondence are brief missives of a few lines mentioning friends ("Lady Mary"; "Dr Arbuthnot"); visits ("I had designd to have waited on you to day"); ill health ("I am better my selfe but upon a very indifferent foot"); and remedies ("bath water"; "Spaw water").[129] Meanwhile, the letter printed by Pope in 1737 is more

[125] Pope to Wycherley, 23 June 1705, *Corr*. i. 9; Pope to Caryll, 31 July 1710, *Corr*. i. 93-95 and 25 January 1710/11, *Corr*. i. 113-115.
[126] Pope to Caryll, 25 January 1710/11, *Corr*. i. 113-15. Pope to Wycherley, 23 June 1705, *Corr*. i. 9-10.
[127] See C. Ferdinand and D. McKenzie, "Congreve, William (1670–1729), playwright and poet", *ODNB*, (2004); See Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 662-663.
[128] *Corr*. i. 274n.
[129] Congreve to Pope, [1719], *Corr*. ii. 12-13; 23 June [?1719], *Corr*. v. 4; 20 January [1719/20], *Corr*. ii. 27-8.

expansive, conveying, from Congreve's appreciative perspective, their longstanding association: "I have always been obliged to you for your friendship and concern for me".[130] A chronological placing late in the friendship (Sherburn suggests 1727) is also encouraged by Congreve's significant reference to shared experience and sympathy in the world of publishing: "I am like to be impress'd, and enroll'd in the list of Mr. Curll's Authors; but I thank God I shall have your company. I believe it is high time you should think of administring another *Emetick*."[131] Thus, this letter simultaneously glorifies Pope's status as one of Curll's targets, bolsters Pope's later retaliations against him, and reminds the reader that the 1735 correspondence edition in which the letter first appears ostensibly constitutes another such transgression.

Meanwhile, Pope's side of the printed correspondence focuses on the earlier formative years of both his friendship with Congreve, and the interactions with literary and print culture which form its backdrop. The single letter from Pope to Congreve not known to have been fabricated from the Caryll letters contributes to this theme with discussions of Pope's "anxiety" (or lack thereof) concerning "the fate" of his *Iliad*.[132] Pope, referencing the tirade of "an abusive, angry Critick", thanks Congreve for his "heroick manner of congratulation upon this scandal", reflecting again on the status conferred – one shared with "all the great and good that ever lived" – by the "envy" and censur[e]" of "bad writers".[133] After revelling in these points of literary connection, Pope turns to matters of state, reflecting on how, because of his outsider status ("not […] worth a groat, being born

[130] Congreve to Pope, 6 May [1727], *Corr*. ii. 433-4.
[131] *Corr*. ii. 433-4.
[132] Pope to Congreve, 16 January 1714/15, *Corr*. i. 274-5.
[133] As Sherburn notes, the dating of the letter in print is two years before the publication of Dennis's *Remarks on Mr. Pope's* Homer, referenced in Pope's footnote, suggesting the fabricated nature of this letter. Pope to Congreve, 16 January 1714/15, *Corr*. i. 274n.

both a Papist and a Poet"), he "pay[s] his respect to great Men" (such as "my Lord *Bolingbroke*", "Mr. M[ethuen]", and "my Lord *Halifax*") "without any prospects" of personal gain.[134] Thus, these recorded associations, accompanied by his expressed gratitude for Congreve's "continued endeavours to enrich" him, are underlined as a victory of merit over circumstance.[135] This letter thus further illustrates Pope's use of his correspondence editions to showcase the support of influential friends against his critics.

The other two letters to Congreve composed from four of his letters to Caryll, meanwhile (like that readdressed to Trumbull), use Congreve's stature to endorse Pope's views on the work of others. Through the new recipient of Congreve, Pope's cultural-political commentary gains the leverage conferred by the tacit approval of a literary great and is diversified through its association with a Protestant and Whig. The first letter, dated March 1714-15, draws together contrasting topics from two letters sent to Caryll a year apart: the success of a dramatic "Farce" by John Gay (identified in print as "the *What-d'ye-call-it*"), and Richard Steele's expulsion from the House of Commons in the previous year, following his pamphlet disputes with Jonathan Swift.[136] Gay's play, vividly presented as a triumph of subtlety, forms an interesting prelude to the blunt dismissal of Steele. Pope depicts the audience's reaction to *The What d'ye Call it* as a tableau of contagious hilarity which conveys the success of its innovative mock-tragic form: "*Mr. Cromwell*" (deaf to the dialogue) and "the Prince and Princess" of Wales (having little English) were all "astonished to find the audience laugh" at such tragic scenes; "criticks" who intended to

[134] Pope to Congreve, 16 January 1714/15, *Corr*. i. 274-5.
[135] *Corr*. i. 274-5.
[136] Swift had accused Steele of "sedition" (in the latter's Whig propaganda pamphlet *The Crisis*, which expressed anxieties about the royal succession); and Calhoun Winton notes the significance of this "key term" in fulfilling "Harley's ministry['s intention] to punish Steele", in "Steele, Sir Richard (bap. 1672, d. 1729), writer and politician", *ODNB* (2004).

"hiss" were "forced to laugh"; and the "common people", who first received the play with "great gravity" and "tears", later "took the hint" and applauded.[137] The printed letter to Congreve omits the original occasion for this report: to thank Caryll for his "~~epistles in Mr Gay's behalf~~" to promote the author's benefit night ("~~You have obliged my friend and me beyond all power~~"); instead connecting the play publicly with the more powerful retrospective approbation of Congreve.[138]

This attributed complicity and endorsement extends to the second half of the letter, in which Pope announces that "Yesterday Mr. *Steele*'s affair was decided": "I am sorry I can be of no other opinion than yours, as to his whole carriage and writings of late".[139] Pope thereby validates his account of the incident by combining the familiar tone of the Caryll letters with the ostensible political neutrality conferred by the assent of Congreve, Steele's fellow member at the Kit-Kat club. He continues to pronounce, with detached superiority, that "This Gentleman, among a thousand others, is a great instance of the fate of all who are carried away by party-spirit, of any side". [140] Furthermore, Pope's rebuke of Steele's political scheming and pettiness is modified, through a minor alteration, from hyperbolic disgust to aloof disapproval: "I […] am really amazed that so much of that ~~vile~~ **sower** and pernicious quality shou'd be joyned with so much natural good humour".[141] Pope's juxtaposition of the two asynchronous incidents in this letter is, perhaps, not coincidental. *The What-d'ye-call-it* had lampooned Addison's *Cato*, and Pope had later reported Steele's declaration, in defence of his friend, that "the farce should not have been

[137] Pope to Congreve, 19 March 1714/15, *Corr*. i. 286. See also p. 283. "a Tragi-Comi-Pastoral Farce"
[138] Pope and Gay to Caryll, 3 March 1714/15, See note 7, *Corr*. i. 282.
[139] Pope to Congreve, 19 March 1714/15. *Corr.* i. 286. Pope omits the explanatory "~~in his expulsion from the House~~" - perhaps to detract attention from the fact that this event had actually occurred the previous year.
[140] *Corr.* i. 286.
[141] *Corr.* i. 286. See below, p. 258, on an edited letter to Addison which echoes this word choice.

acted if he had been in town".[142] Meanwhile, Addison, as David Nokes records, had apparently "resented its attack" enough to use "his position as secretary to the council of regents to prevent Gay's advancement".[143] If Pope's criticism of Steele in print as a man overcome by "Party-spirit" and undone by his own writings is indeed a calculated retaliation, its placement alongside a depiction of the roaring success of a play which he would have liked to suppress creates an effective last word which is both partisan and personal, but re-packaged as an early and glancing slight which had occurred in casual correspondence with a Whig celebrity.[144]

The second letter readdressed to Congreve is carefully composed from two other letters to Caryll which had been jointly written with Gay, to form a congenial, allied, and humorous discussion of the critical responses to each other's works.[145] Gay, for instance, discusses "a six-penny criticism" on *The What d'ye Call It*, in which the author absurdly alleges that "every particular passage" "alludes to some fine part of [the] Tragedy" of *Cato*, and "with much judgment and learning calls me a blockhead, and Mr. Pope a knave".[146] Pope's editing demonstrates both his preoccupation and familiarity with the criticism of two decades previous, and his desire to address it with wry insouciance. Gay's straightforward paraphrase of the critic ("~~printed~~"), for example, becomes a mocking quotation: "**(as he quaintly expresses it) *visited the press***".[147] Furthermore, Pope also

[142] Pope and Gay to Caryll, [c. 19 March 1714/15], *Corr.* i. 286-7. Sherburn notes that "Steele as patentee of Drury Lane could have prevented performance".
[143] David Nokes, "Gay, John (1685–1732), poet and playwright", *ODNB*, (2004).
[144] Pope may also have been contemplating Steele's project of a theatre of didactic value, *The Censorium*, which seems to have collapsed around June 1713, as Steele's political activity meant he could not fulfil his original plan for it to "comprehend both Whigs and Tories"; John Loftis, "Richard Steele's Censorium", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 14:1, (1950), 51-3. On Pope's potential involvement, see *Corr*. i. 153; *Corr*. i. 174.
[145] Gay and Pope to Congreve, 7 April 1715, *Corr.* i. 290-91. See also Pope and Gay to Caryll, [c. 19 March 1714/15], *Corr*. i. 286-7; Gay and Pope to Caryll, [April 1715], *Corr.* i. 288.
[146] *Corr.* i. 290-91. Pope identifies the author in a footnote as "Griffin, assisted by Lewis Theobald".
[147] *Corr.* i. 290-91.

transfers a reference to Caryll's "gout" (conveniently, Congreve actually was a fellow sufferer) in order to align this affliction with the "persecution" of critics – a "grievous" "distemper" which, however, allows "some relieving intervals of laughter".[148] Thus, Pope uses the coincidence of subject and personal circumstance in his letters to Caryll to create continuity within these reattributed correspondences. This strategy helps to mitigate Congreve's otherwise indistinct and passive presence in these letters, silently sanctioning the part of Pope and Gay in their critical disputes.

Pope's reattribution of the Caryll letters to Congreve, as with Trumbull and Wycherley, thus highlights the importance of context and paratext in his reuse of manuscript material in print. Pope employs the shared characteristics of his recipients and Caryll – as early older friends with literary interests – to provide different perspectives on a particular cultural moment. Pope's distorting of time in his letters to Congreve (condensing the events of fourteen months and six letters into four months and three) serves to preserve and encapsulate the events they depict. Yet it also obscures subsequent developments: the letters chronologically overwrite the reversal of Steele's political fortunes the following year (when, after the fall of Harley's government, he was elevated to manager of the Drury Lane theatre); as well as the hostile critical response which clouded the debut of Gay's next play, the 1717 *Three Hours after Marriage* (branding it "lewd" and "obscene").[149] Furthermore, the plays of Congreve himself had suffered similar criticism: Jeremy Collier's "envenomed attack", *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* had denounced him, along with Wycherley and Dryden, shortly before

[148] *Corr.* i. 290-91.

[149] When this play, written in collaboration with Pope and Arbuthnot, failed, Gay accepted sole responsibility. See Nokes, "Friends and enemies" (2007), p. 27; *Corr*. i. 388.

he left the stage in 1700.[150] In this context, Pope's use of the Caryll letters to invoke the authority of Trumbull, Wycherley, and Congreve can perhaps also be read specifically as part of his resistance to the perceived insurrection of a new brand of sententious, partisan, Whiggish criticism.[151] As respected veterans of an older style of wit and politics who informed Pope's own poetic identity and supported his career, the prominence of these figures within Pope's correspondence editions attests to the inability of such censure to occlude its subjects.[152] Pope's letters to Caryll, then, allowed him to instil his part in these correspondences with a more mature, confident and consistent tone – thereby creating a more equal dynamic within these influential early relationships. Simultaneously, Pope employed the content of the Caryll letters to place these correspondences more firmly within their broader contemporary cultural context, and to demonstrate this prestigious group's approbation of his literary works and endorsement of his critical attitudes.[153]

3.2.2 Later acquaintances: Atterbury, Blount, Digby, Arbuthnot, Steele and Addison

Pope also readdressed letters originally sent to Caryll to a diverse group of later acquaintances, further illustrating his sense of their adaptability to different relationships and contexts. From his letters to Caryll dated from 1713 to 1725, Pope fabricated texts readdressed to Francis Atterbury (1663–1732), Edward Blount (d.

[150] Ferdinand and McKenzie, "Congreve, William", *ODNB* (2004).
[151] See Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 169; Williams, *Whig Literary Culture* (2005), pp. 22-54.
[152] Congreve's support had contributed to the initial publication of Pope's poetry, as shown in a letter from Jacob Tonson in 1706: "I have lately seen a pastoral of yours in mr. Walsh's and mr Congreves hands, which is extreamly ffine & is generally approv'd off by the best Judges in poetry", *Corr*. i. 17. See James McLaverty, "Pope and the Book Trade", in *The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope*, ed. Pat Rogers, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 186-7.
[153] See "And *Congreve* lov'd […] my Lays", *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, *Poems IV,* p. 105, l. 138.

1726), Robert Digby (c. 1692–19 April 1726), John Arbuthnot (1667–1735), Richard Steele (bap. 1672–1729) and Joseph Addison (1672–1719). When making use of these letters dating from the slightly later portion of the friendship in preparation for publication, the themes extracted remain similar, with a particular focus on non-partisan political neutrality. Firstly, from two of Pope's letters to Caryll, Pope drafted, but did not print, a letter to the High-Church Anglican Francis Atterbury, bishop of Rochester, which expresses his aversion to political and religious "wrangling".[154] As such, this letter was presumably intended to supplement and support a high-profile but potentially contentious published correspondence which covers Pope's resistance to Atterbury's entreaties to convert to the Protestant faith; Atterbury's arrest for treason in August 1722 for plotting a new Jacobite rising; and his exile in 1723.[155] Meanwhile, the three letters to Caryll from 1713-1716 which Pope readdressed to his friend Edward Blount of Blagdon in Devonshire employ the shared religious sympathies of these two recipients ("May I venture to say, who am a Papist, and to say to you who are a Papist") to demonstrate Pope's conciliatory attitude in the years surrounding the 1715 rebellion – including his hopes for the "total end of all the unhappy divisions of mankind by party-spirit".[156] In the 1735 edition printed by Curll, Pope also reworked four of his letters to Caryll into two letters to Robert Digby, the Tory MP for Warwickshire, transferring Caryll's "Charities", "Devotions", and "*Christian* Chearfulness" to Digby, along with his estate (from "~~Ladyholt~~"

[154] Pope to Atterbury, 3 September 1718, *Corr*. i. 499; Pope to Caryll, 18 January 1717/18, *Corr*. i. 461-2. This letter was ultimately not printed in preference to another depiction of the same event (see above, Chapter 2, pp. 191-2).

[155] On these events, see Atterbury to Pope, 10 April 1723, *Corr*. ii. 165-6; Pope to Atterbury, 20 November 1717, *Corr*. i. 453; [20 April 1723], *Corr*. ii. 166-7; May 1723, *Corr*. ii. 169-70; Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 336-37; Thornton, *Catholic Poet*, (1952), p. 9

[156] Pope to Edward Blount, 27 August 1714. *Corr*. i. 246-247.

to Digby's "**Coleshill**").[157] The letters to Digby also discuss critical matters, as Pope declares that the "merit" of his *Odyssey* "will extinguish all […] nasty scandal" disseminated in "railing papers".[158] In Pope's 1737 editions, however, these letters were again readdressed, to John Arbuthnot (1667–1735), who had died in February 1735, and to whom Pope had rushed to dedicate his satirical *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* the previous month.[159] This reattribution suggests Pope's desire to support the poem's dedication by bolstering his epistolary connection with Arbuthnot, as well as his more general inclination to emphasize the higher-profile relationships that interact with his poetry – an impulse we will encounter again in Pope's published correspondence with Swift, discussed in the following chapter. Pope's use of his letters to Caryll as a means by which to re-examine cultural issues and events is particularly apparent in the letters readdressed to Steele and Addison in print. Here, too, the Caryll correspondence helps Pope to explore the literary and political resonances of the social context which shaped his early career, and to construct an elevated, detached stance in critical disputes. As a result, Pope's editions shaped contemporary perception of the complexities and conflict underlying these relationships and have significantly shaped their surviving epistolary record.

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[157] Pope to Robert Digby, 28 December 1724, *Corr*. ii. 280-281. In the 1735 edition, before Caryll had died, the estate name is omitted. Sherburn also notes Pope's sensitivity to intervening political changes in editing this letter.

[158] Pope to Digby, 10 September 1724, *Corr*. ii. 254. Fabricated from letters to Caryll of 23 Nov. 1725 (Corr. ii. 341) and 25 Dec. 1725 (*Corr*. ii. 352-354). Sherburn notes Pope's "strange" dating of this letter before the *Odyssey*'s publication, in an echo of the premature criticism of the *Iliad* in the letter reprinted as to Congreve (see *Corr*. i. 274n).

[159] Pope to Arbuthnot, 10 September [1725], *Corr*. ii. 318-19. *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, *Poems IV,* p. 96, l. 1. The five letters in their correspondence printed by Pope up to 1737 include only one other letter from Pope, another suspected "forgery". Pope to Arbuthnot, 26 July 1734, *Corr*. iii. 418-20.

Richard Steele (bap. 1672, d. 1729)

We have seen that Pope may have used the Caryll letters to cast an unfavourable light upon Richard Steele (bap. 1672, d. 1729), the writer and playwright, but Pope's early letters to him – among his earliest literary correspondence – are cordial.[160] A surviving manuscript reveals a letter similar to others of this period: Pope reuses the phrase "just warm from the brain" and a favourite simile, also seen in both letters to Caryll and to Wycherley, on the moderation of "Praise": "as a little Rain revives a Flower, which too much overcharges & depresses".[161] However, Steele was editor (with Joseph Addison) of *The Spectator* and then *The Guardian* between 1711 and 1713, and many of the letters to Steele printed in Pope's editions seem to have been written with an eye to publication, and had duly appeared in Steele's magazines.[162] In 1735, meanwhile, Pope revised and printed these letters as if they had been merely personal. To add to this affect, Pope fabricated an additional letter to Steele from one to Caryll, in which he replaces his indirect complaint about the publication of his letters ("~~I only sent it as my private notion to Mr Steele~~") with a forthright opening line: "**I am sorry you publish'd that notion about *Adrian's Verses* as mine; had I imagin'd you would use my name, I shou'd have express'd my sentiments with more modesty and diffidence**".[163] This not only retrospectively implies a humble reticence to publish, but also an open candour in his

[160] Caryll may have introduced Pope to Steele (*Corr*. i. 113). On Steele and Addison as letter writers see William Henry Irving, *The Providence of Wit in the English Letter Writers* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1955), pp. 164-177.

[161] Pope to Steele, [December 1712], *Corr*. i. 159-60; 30 December 1711, *Corr.* i. 139-40. On this imagery elsewhere, see *Corr*. i. 5; *Corr*. i. 94-5; *Corr*. i. 160.

[162] Winton, "Steele, Sir Richard", *ODNB*, (2004). See, for instance, Pope to Steele, 18 June 1712, which was printed in the *Spectator* for 16 June 1712 (*Corr*. i. 146-7); Pope to Steele, 15 July 1712, which appeared in *The Guardian*, No. 132, for 12 August 1713 (*Corr*. i. 147-8); and Pope to Steele, 7 November 1712, which was printed in the *Spectator*, No. 532, for 10 November 1712 (*Corr*. i. 149-150).

[163] Pope to Steele, 29 November 1712, *Corr*. i. 158-159, fabricated from Pope to Caryll, 29 November 1712, *Corr*. i. 156-158. See Winn, *Window* (1977), pp. 14-17.

friendship with Steele. This balance is encouraged by other material adapted from the Caryll letter, which portrays Pope's confident willingness to interrogate Steele's own interpretation: "**I think** the supposition you draw […] ~~seems to me~~ **is** a little uncharitable".[164] Meanwhile, Pope maintains a focus on his own work, and avoids praising his later rival, by omitting his comment on the "~~beauties~~" of Thomas Tickell's poem *On the Prospect of Peace*.[165] In contrast to this focused and confident tone, another letter to Steele printed by Pope displays a respectful, youthful deference: Pope seeks news of his "errors" and "faults" ("I mean, if Mr. Addison and your self shou'd like it in the whole"); and Pope's precocity is once again highlighted in a footnote ("Hence it appears this Poem was writ before the Author was 22 Years old.").[166] Unusually, Pope retains here a closing reference to Steele's friend (an epistolary feature which he generally omits in print): "Assure Mr. Addison of my most faithful service".[167] It seems, then, that Pope is careful to ensure that the printed letters evince his respectful conduct towards these powerful elders; but uses the Caryll correspondence to control the narrative of their literary transactions, and to introduce a tone of bold defiance.



Figure 3.6 Portrait of Addison, featured prominently in the 1735 edition (p. viii)

[164] *Corr*. i. 158-159; *Corr*. i. 156-158.
[165] *Corr*. i. 158-159; *Corr*. i. 156-158.
[166] Pope to Steele, 16 November 1712, *Corr*. i. 153-154.
[167] *Corr*. i. 153-154.

Joseph Addison (1672–1719)

Pope's early correspondence with Steele's friend and collaborator Joseph Addison (1672-2719) is similarly respectful and friendly, despite the more complicated depictions of Addison and *Cato* discussed earlier in this chapter. This play was the source of a rupture in the previously cordial relationship between Pope and Addison: when it was attacked by the critic John Dennis, Pope jumped to Addison's defence in what David Nokes terms a "wicked satire [and] a careful act of friendship".[168] Addison, however, unimpressed by this combative response, asked Steele to reprove Pope for this "manner of treating Mr. *Dennis*."[169] Pope's memory of this incident may have prompted the display, in the conflated letters to Congreve discussed above, of a staunch comradeship against criticism that surrounds, yet excludes, mentions of Addison and Steele. This event also initiated a decline in the friendship between Pope and Addison which, as Nokes observes, was "no doubt assisted by Pope's epigram *On a Lady who P-st at the Tragedy of Cato"*.[170] Their cordial relationship was finally terminated by Addison's covert editorial work on and support of a rival translation of the *Iliad* by his protégé Thomas Tickell, although he had already seen and supported Pope's version a year earlier.[171] The disagreement became infamous, as did Pope's eventual revenge – which involved his satire of Addison as the hypocritical, jealous patron and "suspicious friend", "*Atticus*", in his *Epistle to Dr*

[168] Nokes, "Pope's friends and enemies" (2007), pp. 28-29.
[169] Nokes, "Pope's friends and enemies" (2007), pp. 28-29.
[170] Nokes, "Pope's friends and enemies" (2007), pp. 29-30.
[171] Rogers, "Addison, Joseph", *ODNB*, (2004); Pope argued that Addison himself was the author of Tickell's translation and remarked in November 1730: "He was very kind to me at first but my bitter enemy afterwards", Osborn (ed.), Spence: *Observations* (1966), i. 67-70, §160-164

Arbuthnot, and his validation of this caricature through a comprehensively fabricated published correspondence.[172]

The correspondence between Pope and Addison is known only from Pope's editions: four of the five printed letters to Addison were readdressed from letters to Caryll, while Sherburn suggests that Pope fabricated at least one of the two printed letters from Addison.[173] Both of the letters from Addison printed in Pope's editions offer enthusiastic support for his *Iliad*: "I question not but your Translation will enrich our Tongue and do Honour to our Country".[174] However, the letter suspected as a fabrication implies the fraudulence of Addison's expressed "zeal" for Pope's "ease and happiness" (which echoes that of the project's other early supporter, William Trumbull).[175] In it, Addison explicitly tells Pope that "The work wou'd cost you a great deal of time, and unless you undertake it will I am afraid never be executed by any other, at least I know none of this age that is equal to it besides your self."[176] As Sherburn notes, the appearance of this letter in print constitutes "a clear indictment of Addison's sincerity".[177] The letters to Addison which Pope fabricated from the Caryll letters, meanwhile, contribute further to this theme. The coincidence of concepts in the letter of 30 July 1713 – which Sherburn calls "Pope's masterpiece in this kind" – suggests the pointedness of his approach and the skill with which he could adapt good-humoured letters to Caryll into subtle barbs directed at

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[172] *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, *Poems IV,* pp. 109-111, ll. 193-214. On Pope's doctored correspondence with Addison, see Dilke, *Papers of a Critic, Vol. I* (1875), pp. 100-106; Dearing, "1737 Editions" (1950), pp. 185-97; Winn, *Window*, (1977), pp. 70-71; Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 663; Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1991), pp. 44-7.

[173] Pope to Addison: 30 July 1713, *Corr*. i. 183-4; [December 1713?], *Corr*. i. 197-8; 14 December 1713, *Corr*. i. 201-2; 30 January 1713/4, *Corr*. i. 208-9; 10 October 1714, *Corr*. i. 263-4. Addison to Pope, 26 October 1713, *Corr*. i. 196; 2 November 1713 (*Corr*. i. 196-7).

[174] Addison to Pope, 26 October 1713, *Corr*. i. 196.

[175] *Corr*. i. 196. See above, p. 236; Trumbull to Pope, 21 November 1713, in Sherburn, "Letters of Alexander Pope" (1958), p. 399.

[176] Addison to Pope, 26 October 1713, *Corr*. i. 196.

[177] *Corr*. i. 196.

Addison.[178] Pope vindicates here his own defence of Addison's play – his directness forming an implicit contrast to Addison's reprimand of it, which had been mediated by Steele:

You may conclude from what I here say that ~~it~~ was never in my thoughts to offer you my ~~poor~~ pen in any direct reply to such a ~~scoundrel (who like Hudibras needs fear no blows but such as bruise)~~, but only in some little raillery ~~in the most contemptuous manner thrown upon him,~~ not ~~as~~ in ~~your~~ defence ~~expressly~~, but ~~as~~ in ~~scorn~~ of him ~~*en Gaieté de Cœur*~~.	You may conclude from what I here say**,** that **'t**was never in my thoughts to **have** offer**'d** you my pen in any direct reply to such a **Critic**, but only in some little raillery**;** not in defence **of you**, but in **contempt** of him.

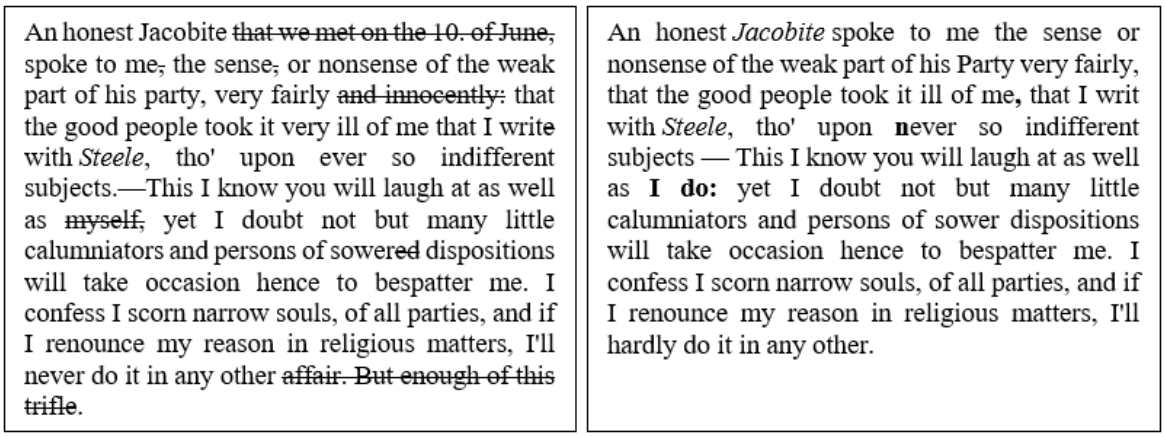
Figure 3.7 Pope to Caryll, 19 November 1712, in transcript (l) and as readdressed to Addison in 1735 (r)[179]

In the original letter, this had been a reference to one of the acts of loyalty by which Pope defended Caryll from political aspersions, but in the printed letter to Addison it is translated into a blithe act of critical censure.[180] Furthermore, Pope continues here to disparage Dennis, and thereby makes Addison, as alleged recipient, complicit in the critical denigration he had tried to resist: "I apprehend but one danger from *Dennis*'s disliking our sense; that it may make us think so very well of it, as to become proud and conceited".[181] Finally, Pope adds, in another subversion of Addison's promises of "zeal", a closing note on "Mr. Gay, whose zeal in your concern is worthy a friend, and honourer of you."[182] This reference, too, may be intended to highlight Addison's poor repayment for these good offices: Pope believed that years later, nettled by satire, he had also surreptitiously impeded Gay's career.[183]

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[178] *Corr*. i. 183.
[179] Pope to Addison, 30 July 1713, *Corr*. i. 183. Fabricated from Pope to Caryll, 19 November 1712, *Corr*. i. 154-156.
[180] *Corr*. i. 154-156.
[181] *Corr*. i. 183.
[182] *Corr*. i. 183.
[183] "Two weeks before he died, according to a story told by Pope", Addison sought to "apologize for some mysterious injury he had once done to Gay." Rogers, "Addison, Joseph", *ODNB*, (2004). See also Nokes, "Gay, John", *ODNB*, (2004); Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 663.

Pope further employs the Caryll letters to assert a stance of unbiased neutrality within this correspondence – this time, to evince his own plain dealing in response to Addison's assumed attitude of elevation above party politics. In his printed letter of 2 November 1713, Addison had advised Pope "not to content your self with one half of the Nation for your admirers […] I think you are very happy that you are out of the Fray".[184] However, Pope's competing response to Addison, in a letter adapted from three letters to Caryll, pointedly depicts partisanship as a binary construction with himself at the centre:



An honest Jacobite ~~that we met on the 10. of June,~~ spoke to me~~,~~ the sense~~,~~ or nonsense of the weak part of his party, very fairly ~~and innocently:~~ that the good people took it very ill of me that I write with *Steele*, tho' upon ever so indifferent subjects.—This I know you will laugh at as well as ~~myself,~~ yet I doubt not but many little calumniators and persons of sower~~ed~~ dispositions will take occasion hence to bespatter me. I confess I scorn narrow souls, of all parties, and if I renounce my reason in religious matters, I'll never do it in any other ~~affair. But enough of this trifle~~.

An honest *Jacobite* spoke to me the sense or nonsense of the weak part of his Party very fairly, that the good people took it ill of me**,** that I writ with *Steele*, tho' upon **n**ever so indifferent subjects — This I know you will laugh at as well as **I do:** yet I doubt not but many little calumniators and persons of sower dispositions will take occasion hence to bespatter me. I confess I scorn narrow souls, of all parties, and if I renounce my reason in religious matters, I'll hardly do it in any other.

Figure 3.8 Pope to Caryll, 12 June 1713, in transcript (l) and as readdressed to Addison in 1735 (r) [185]

Pope's routine removal of specificity serves to strengthen his assertion of neutrality here. Similarly, his minor edit to a statement of charitable equanimity borrowed from another letter to Caryll enhances its emotional detachment: "I feel not the least malevolence or ~~embittered~~ resentment against any of those who represent me, or are dissatisfied with me".[186] Having thus employed the Caryll letters to establish his own non-partisanship and goodwill, Pope's final, ostensibly reconciliatory, letter to Addison offers frank "proofs of sincerity" and expresses his "hope that some late malevolencies have lost their effect".[187]

[184] Addison to Pope, 2 November 1713, *Corr*. i. 196-197.
[185] Pope to Addison, [December 1713?], *Corr*. i. 197-198. This passage is fabricated from Pope to Caryll, 12 June 1713, *Corr*. i. 176-79.
[186] *Corr*. i. 197-198. This passage is fabricated from Pope to Caryll, 23 June 1713, *Corr*. i. 179-180.
[187] Pope to Addison, 10 October 1714, *Corr*. i. 263-4. This letter may have been a copy, an unsent draft, or a composition for print.

However, despite this apparent candour, Sherburn notes the "sarcastic" tone of the letter, evident in such phrases as "I shall never believe that the Author of *Cato* can speak one thing and think another."[188] Moreover, having used the Caryll letters to establish his own moderate and principled character, Pope assumes a tone of defiance in his statement that

> I am only to get as much from the *Whigs*, as I got by the *Tories*, that is to say, Civility; being neither so proud as to be insensible of any good office, nor so humble, as not to dare heartily to despise any man who does me an injustice.[189]

Pope's account of this dispute in his published letters to Addison is thus supported by the redistributed material from his letters to Caryll throughout his editions, which offers comprehensive evidence of his sustained friendship and longstanding rejection of bias and partisanship across numerous diverse correspondences.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has explored Pope's use of one of his most extensive and intimate correspondences as a resource by which to enhance his published depictions of other relationships. Our understanding of this process is enabled by the unique material circumstances of this correspondence, which provide a new perspective on Pope's editing practices. The extant transcripts preserved by Caryll record his influential status in Pope's life as a religious role model, a sympathetic audience for grievances, and a critically and financially active literary supporter. However, they also reveal that these characteristics lent the correspondence qualities which could be profitably applied to various contexts in print. As a result, Pope's repurposed correspondence with Caryll functions in three distinct but interconnected ways within his editions. Firstly, Pope

[188] *Corr*. i. 263-4.
[189] *Corr*. i. 263-4.

employed these letters as persuasive rhetorical pieces, isolated from their original social context, to illustrate his early development of an impartial critical rigour in his approach to his own faith and work. Secondly, he reattributed his letters to Caryll to develop a mature and friendly tone within his early correspondence with prominent literary figures, and thereby to indicate his precocious but valued participation in an important cultural moment. Finally, Pope reused aspects of this correspondence to convey his moderate attitude and personal equanimity in the context of literary disputes. In combination, material from his letters to Caryll infuse Pope's editions with evidence of his tolerant but critical integrity within both his personal relationships and public debates. Pope's reattribution of this correspondence in print is reflective of his tendency, as observed by David Nokes, to draw up poetic and biographical "cast lists", in which his "friends and enemies have firm, emblematic qualities".[190] While Caryll's age, Catholicism, and family reputation meant his name did not fit easily in these lists, his essential qualities – integrity, generosity, principle and piety – were valued by Pope for their wider resonance. As a result, their published correspondence nevertheless attests to Caryll's influence on Pope's intellectual and moral development and reveals his personal contribution to shaping enduring perceptions of Pope's character. It also serves to protect Pope from some of the vulnerabilities and aspersions associated with his public life as a Catholic recusant.[191]

The themes of political, critical, and religious non-partisanship which characterize Pope's correspondence with Caryll are congruent with similar declarations made in his poetry – perhaps most notably, in his first Horatian imitation of 1733, *The First Satire of the Second*

[190] Nokes, "Pope's friends and enemies" (2007), pp. 25-6.
[191] Mack, *Life* (1985), p. 664.

Book of Horace Imitated, which was likely written as Pope began in earnest to organize the publication of his correspondence.[192] This poem performs a defence of Pope's satirical approach, and suggests a potential conception of his letters to Caryll as a public literary product which could demonstrate how, "Head and Heart thus flowing thro' [his] Quill", he applied its maxims to both his life and his work.[193] Pope's lines emphasize that true critical rigour is exercised within diverse social contexts, and accompanied by both self-awareness and personal defiance:

> In me what Spots (for Spots I have) appear,
> Will prove at last the Medium must be clear.
> In this impartial Glass, my Muse intends
> Fair to expose myself, my Foes, my Friends;
> Publish the present Age; but where my Text:
> Is Vice too high, reserve it for the next:
> […]
> And who unknown defame me, let them be
> Scribblers or Peers, alike are *Mob* to me.[194]

Pope's letters to Caryll, accordingly, assisted him in demonstrating that he adhered consistently to these principles of fair and open-minded criticism throughout his private correspondence. Furthermore, Pope's defence in *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* of the "grave *Epistle*" form – which is framed in opposition to "lawless" "*Libels*" and "*Satires*" as a vehicle of truth, "bringing Vice to light" – again chimes with his use of his letters to Caryll for personal vindication.[195] Pope rights wrongs and re-writes relationships through his artful cultivation of a material which is mutual, communicative, civilized, and personal. Pope's determined development of these liberal attitudes throughout his poetry and correspondence reflects both his own extensive experience of

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[192] On the connection between Pope's epistolary self-definition and the Horatian satires, see McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (2001), p. 143. On the transfer of ideas between Pope's real and poetic letters, see Winn, *Window* (1977), pp. 90-93. On their shared dialogic purpose, see Paul Baines, *Complete Critical Guide* (2001), pp. 189-99.

[193] *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated, Poems IV*, p. 11, l. 63.

[194] *Poems IV*, pp. 9-11, ll. 55-60; p. 19, ll. 139-40.

[195] *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated, Poems IV*, p. 19, ll. 150-51.

prejudice, and his desire to correct public perception of his character and conduct amidst criticism and conflict: "I am ambitious of nothing but the good opinion of all good men of all sides."[196]

[196] Pope to Addison, 30 January 1713/14, *Corr*. i. 208-9.

Chapter 4 : Swift and the Scriblerians

1. Introduction

Pope's publication of his correspondence with Jonathan Swift formed a major departure from the previous editions of his letters, which had brought to public view selected aspects of Pope's private identity gleaned through a varied and fragmentary series of correspondence. In contrast, the editions of 1741 present a unified set of interconnected correspondences conducted over twenty-four years between a small group of prominent individuals – Pope, Swift, and their mutual friends John Gay and Henry St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke.[1] Here, in an approach which significantly deviates from that seen in previous chapters, the individual identities of Pope's correspondents become paramount within Pope's editorial practice. In bringing to light for the first time the private side of a literary network which had long been publicly celebrated in reciprocal poetic inscriptions, the editions situate the works of the group within their informal and mutually-enriching coterie origins, instilling them with vital social and cultural context.[2] Furthermore, the involvement of both Swift and Pope in consecutive iterations of the editorial process renders the three editions of 1740-41 a fascinating contribution to our understanding of individual and collective authorial self-representation. This chapter will argue that the reconstruction of this correspondence in the editions of the 1740s has materially shaped our understanding of the social and literary aspects of the group now

[1] Swift and Pope exchanged 95 known letters over 28 years (1713-1741), of which only three letters had been printed in the editions of the 1730s.

[2] Pope's dedications include the *Dunciad Variorum* and "Epistle to Augustus", dedicated to Swift; the *Essay on Man*, dedicated to Bolingbroke, and the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*; while Swift inscribed to Pope the *Libel on Dr. Delany* and *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*. See Dustin Griffin, *Swift and Pope: Satirists in Dialogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 1.

known as the 'Scriblerus Club', and has influenced our perception of the characters of its members.

The chapter begins with a delineation of the publication process, which reveals the divergent editorial roles of Pope and Swift and forms the basis of the attribution of authority for the editorial variants which appear across the three editions. An overview of the composition of the editions in comparison with the available manuscript sources demonstrates how these letters were curated and presented for print and illuminates how this process has shaped the epistolary record. In contrast to previous chapters, it reveals Pope's collective treatment of correspondence within a coherent and discrete network, often including jointly written and addressed letters, and his approach to letters outside of his personal reciprocal correspondence. This overview forms the foundation for a detailed analysis of the prominent themes and features within these correspondences, from which two intriguing and interconnected facets of the network emerge – its familiar, epistolary properties and its formal, literary aspects – both illuminated by new critical perspectives on the eighteenth-century literary coterie in general, and the Scriblerus Club in particular. Close comparison between the printed editions and available manuscripts further reveals how particular elements of these themes are concealed or emphasized in the published editions, and the tensions between them resolved. Firstly, the self-consciously or conventionally epistolary aspects of the letters, which serve to delineate and reinforce the coterie over time and distance, are frequently refined in print as markers of authenticity. Secondly, careful editorial attention is also paid to literary references and attitudes in the letters: their record of the collaboration, criticism, and advocacy which underlies the creative process, and of shared poetic and authorial ideologies, is subtly adjusted and augmented. Ultimately, the chapter

will demonstrate that these features are consistently combined and enhanced in print to convey the informal eloquence of an idealized literary community, thereby endorsing poetic representations of these friendships. The resultant editions preserve a fascinating representation of social authorship that forms a significant contribution to our inherited record of this network and reveals a different pattern in Pope's editorial approach to his letters.

1.1 Story of the publication of the letters

There has been extensive critical discussion of the publication of the letters between Pope and Swift, which has often, like Pope's correspondence with Caryll, generated morally charged responses. The Pope-Swift correspondence thus also highlights the historical tendency of such approaches to occlude the textual detail of Pope's editorial practice. The story of its publication, in Dustin Griffin's interpretation, is one "of (on Pope's side) vanity, manipulation, equivocation, dissimulation, and outright lies, and (on Swift's side) acquiescence and perhaps some confusion".[3] While some details may never be known with certainty, there is scholarly consensus on the general process by which the various texts were exchanged, edited, and published.[4] The story begins in earnest in the mid-1730s when, having long desired to publish their correspondence more extensively as a

[3] Griffin, *Swift and Pope* (2010), p. 203.

[4] Accounts of the publication of the editions of 1740-42 can be found in Mack, "First printing", *The Library*, xix (1939), 565-85; Dearing, "New light" (1943), 74-86. Abel, John F., *The Personal Relationship of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift as Revealed by Their Mutual Correspondence* (Master's Thesis: Loyola University Chicago, 1949), pp. 22-28; Sherburn, *Corr*. i. xv-xviii; Williams (ed.), *Correspondence of Swift* (1963), vol. i., pp. xviii-xx; A. C. Elias, Jr., "The Pope-Swift 'Letters' (1740-41): Notes on the First State of the First Impression", *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 69:3 (1975), 323-343; Griffin, *Swift and Pope* (2010), pp. 196-205; Ashley Marshall, "Epistolary Swift", *Swift Studies* 26 (2011), 61-107, esp. pp. 84-6; Abigail Williams, "Epistolary Forms: Published Correspondence, Letter-Journals and Books", *Jonathan Swift and the Eighteenth-Century Book*, ed. Paddy Bullard and James McLaverty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 119-34; Valerie Rumbold, *Swift in Print: Published Texts in Dublin and London, 1691-1765* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 257-9.

public testament to their association, Pope began to request the return of his letters to Swift (ostensibly out of concern for their safety) until Swift's eventual compliance in 1737.[5] Then, in 1740, Pope secretly printed an octavo edition, and sent it to Swift anonymously for revision.[6] Once Swift (correctly believing the edition to have come from Pope) had revised the volume and authorized the Dublin printing in 1741, his publisher Faulkner asked Pope for authorization – and, on receiving no reply, proceeded with printing a month later. At this point, Pope sent his refusal to authorize the edition and protested against its publication, affecting surprise that Swift should have arranged it. Thanks to the agency of Lord Orrery, Pope was then able to secure a copy of the 1740 'clandestine' edition, and also requested and received the preliminary sheets of Faulkner's Dublin edition. As a result, although the edition subsequently released in 1741 in London purports to be a response to and reprint of the Dublin edition, it was in fact published two months earlier than the completed Dublin reprint, lending it the copyright. This fact is exploited by Pope in the London edition to attribute the publication to Swift: the preface explicitly declared that the letters are "copied from an Impression sent from *Dublin*, and said to be printed by the Dean's Direction".[7] Furthermore, the London editions added "a few more" of Swift's letters "to clear up the History of their Publication", in which significant passages suggesting that the bulk of Pope's letters remained with Swift, yet out of his control, are "marked with Comma's".[8] The subterfuge surrounding the transfer of letters and the publication of the editions seems to have been successfully designed to obfuscate their origin to all parties involved, even Swift himself. The last

[5] See Pope to Swift, 16 February 1732/3, *Corr*. iii. 347-50; [August 1723], *Corr*. ii. 183-186; 30 December 1736, *Corr*. iv. 49-51l Bolingbroke to Swift, [August 1723], *Corr*. ii. 186-9.
[6] [Pope] to Swift [? May 1740], *Corr*. iv. 242-3.
[7] 1741 La, pp. v-vi.
[8] 1741 La, pp. v-vi. For example, see Swift to Pope, [June] 1737, *Corr*. iv. 77; 22 April 1736, *Corr*. iv. 11-13; 21 October 1735, *Corr*. iii. 505; 31 May 1737, *Corr*. iv, 71-2. *Corr*. iii. 96-7; *Corr*. iii. 319-21; Swift to Pope and Bolingbroke, 8-24 August 1738, *Corr*. iv. 115-16.

surviving letter in the Pope-Swift correspondence poignantly concludes their recorded friendship with a demonstration of Pope's relentless commitment to both the public-facing nature of their association and the story he has constructed around it. Here, Pope reproaches Swift for the release of the letters ("a late Incident has given me some pain"; "This was not of my erecting, but yours") even as he celebrates the result (declaring himself "pleas'd […] that the strict Friendship we have born each other so long, is thus made known to all mankind").[9]

1.2 Attributing changes to Pope and Swift

The intricate processes by which this edition entered the print marketplace compounds the difficulty of inferring responsibility in the publication of joint correspondence. In particular, it complicates our ability to understand Swift's role in and attitude towards the edition. However, the distinct editions that emerged preserve successive stages in the complex editorial process, and thus allow us, to a certain extent, to attribute editorial authority for the changes made for print – which, as Ashley Marshall has observed, are "not merely aesthetic but substantive".[10] Based on the lack of evidence of active impetus in or encouragement of the publication on Swift's part, in this chapter I ascribe overall responsibility for the editions to Pope, and assume that his decisions shaped the editions' contents and the major editorial changes (between the extant manuscript letters and the 1740 edition, and between the 1741 Dublin and London editions) which form the primary subject of this chapter.[11] Yet we do know that Swift responded to the 1740 edition which Pope had prepared and sent anonymously to him for revision, and the changes specific to

[9] The Earl of Orrery and Pope to Swift, 22 March 1740/1, *Corr*. iv. 336-7.
[10] Marshall, "Epistolary Swift" (2011), p. 86.
[11] Sherburn, conversely, presents Swift as an active participant; see *Corr*. i. xvi-xviii.

the Dublin edition – which consist primarily of corrections, expansions, and explanatory footnotes – can therefore be said to have been made or authorized by Swift, as far as such attribution is possible.[12]

A sample of Swift's interventions in the Dublin edition, which tend towards clarity and accuracy, provide an interesting contrast with Pope's meticulous and subtle re-mediation of letters into the public sphere as emphatically private and epistolary texts. Minor variants, for example, demonstrate Swift's careful and minute editorial attention – spelling alterations, changes of tense and mood, substitutions of individual words, and corrections of errors – including, for instance, "**Houyhnhnm**" for "~~Honynhnm~~" and "**Gulliver's Travels**" for "~~Gulliver's Travellers~~".[13] Elsewhere, Swift's changes involved interlineations, expanded names, and added footnotes – most of which serve to translate Latin passages into English or to provide contextualising detail. This extended even to risqué references: Swift's reference to "a Nameless person [who] sent me eleven Messages before I would yield to a Visit", for example, is identified in a footnote only present in the Dublin edition as "**The Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline**".[14] Such alterations, which contrast dramatically with Pope's more reticent approach, are consistent with Swift's advice regarding the 1728 publication of *The Dunciad:* "twenty miles from London no body understands hints, initial letters, or town-facts and passages […] have your Asterisks fill'd up with some real names of real Dunces" – and accordingly,

[12] On the background to publication of Swift's works, see Stephen Karian, *Jonathan Swift in Print and Manuscript* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Bullard and McLaverty (eds.), *Swift and the Eighteenth-Century Book* (2013), esp. James McLaverty, "George Faulkner and Swift's collected works", pp. 154-175, and Adam Rounce, "Swift's texts between Dublin and London", pp. 199-209; Rumbold, *Swift in Print* (2020).

[13] On the detailed variants in the Dublin edition, see Mack, "First printing" (1939), pp. 475-7n.

[14] Pope to Swift, 18 June 1714, *Corr*. i. 230-32. See also, for example, changes in Swift to Pope, 11 August 1729, *Corr*. iii. 42-3; 31 October 1729, *Corr*. iii. 64-5; 22 April 1736, *Corr*. iv. 11-12; 17 August 1736, *Corr*. iv. 27-8; Swift to Bolingbroke and Pope, 5 April 1729, *Corr*. iii. pp. 27-9.

they incline towards clarity for the reader of his letters rather than propriety towards the figures mentioned within them.[15] Meanwhile, the letter from Swift to Pope dated July 1721 seems in fact to be a vindicatory pamphlet nominally reformatted as personal correspondence for publication, containing a methodical account of his "sentiments […] relating to publick affairs".[16] This approach is congruent with Swift's routine and conventional use of the letter elsewhere as a "framing device" for poems and pamphlets in the public domain.[17] However, this letter contrasts significantly with the apparently genuine correspondence surrounding it here, further suggesting the divergent editorial approaches of Pope and Swift. Swift, it seems, is content to break down the constructions of the original epistolary format where he senses an opportunity for greater correctness and clarity, or a more direct address. These editions, then, suggest how competitive and contradictory editorial intervention may influence our attribution of editorial responsibility and our understanding of how each author viewed the publication process and the role of the epistolary form in print.

1.3 Overview of correspondence and source material

An overview of the editions and their underlying source material also reveals how their complex publication history has dramatically influenced our knowledge of the correspondence between Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke, and Gay, both by furnishing and by

[15] Swift to Pope, 16 July 1728, *Corr*. ii. 504-5. See Abigail Williams and Peter Huhne, "'If I Had Known Him, I Would Have Loved Him': Bloomsbury Appropriations of the Scriblerian Coterie", in Bowers and Crummé (eds.), *Literary Coterie* (2016), p. 88.

[16] Swift to Pope, 10 January 1720/1, *Corr*. ii. 64-72. On the history of his letter, see Elias, "Pope-Swift 'Letters'" (1975); Marshall, "Epistolary Swift" (2011), p. 87. The London editions reprinted the letter, appending the footnote "*This Letter Mr.* Pope *never receiv'd*". See also Pope to Orrey, 17 Oct 1740, *Corr*. iv. 282-4; 10 Dec 1714, *Corr*. iv. 300-302.

[17] Williams, "Epistolary Forms" (2013), p. 213.

suppressing letters.[18] Furthermore, a closer consideration of the composition and structure of the editions illustrates that their curation in print serves to reconstitute their social structure, enmeshing the joint correspondence of Pope and Swift with Bolingbroke, and minimising, isolating, and encapsulating Gay's part in the epistolary network. This chapter considers the three editions of Pope's correspondence with Swift which were published in 1740 and 1741. These are, firstly, the clandestine 1740 octavo without a title page, which Pope sent to Swift for his review in May or June of 1740.[19] Secondly, the 1741 quarto which constituted the second volume of *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose* – the first London publication of the letters.[20] Finally, the first Dublin edition of the letters, which represents the clandestine volume as revised by Swift; and which, while largely prepared before the 1741 London editions, was published afterwards, initially appearing in octavo under the title *Letters to and From Dr. J. Swift*.[21] The contents of the correspondence, as finalized in the 1741 London edition, consists of, firstly, a series of forty-eight largely chronologically-arranged letters between Swift, Pope, Bolingbroke and Gay dating between 1714 and 1732, which include several jointly composed or addressed letters detailing present events, such as visits and publications. These are followed by a section of forty-one letters under the heading "Letters of Dr. Swift to Mr. Gay: From the Year 1729 to 1732", of which the first twelve letters are between Swift, Gay, and the Duchess of Queensbury; while the following twenty-nine letters return to the correspondence of Swift and Pope between 1732 and 1738 – a period which covers

[18] For a detailed consideration of how this affected the survival of Pope's correspondence with Swift, see Marshall, "Epistolary Swift" (2011), p. 86.
[19] *Corr*. i. xxiv.
[20] *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose. Vol. II.* (London: J. and P. Knapton, C. Bathurst, and R. Dodsley, 1741), 4º. *Corr*. i. xxiv.
[21] *Letters to and From Dr. J. Swift*, D.S.P.D. from the Year 1714, to 1738… (Dublin: Printed by and for George Faulkner, 1741) 8º. *Corr*. i. xxiv.

Gay's death, their reflection on their long friendship and respective legacies, and discussion of the various editions of Pope's correspondence.

Pope's editorial work and his disposal of manuscripts thereafter has significantly shaped the epistolary legacy of this group. Overall, Pope's editions form the earliest source for just over half of the 173 letters that passed between Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke and Gay, as shown in **Figure 4.1** below – and, as such, they are instrumental in our understanding of these relationships.

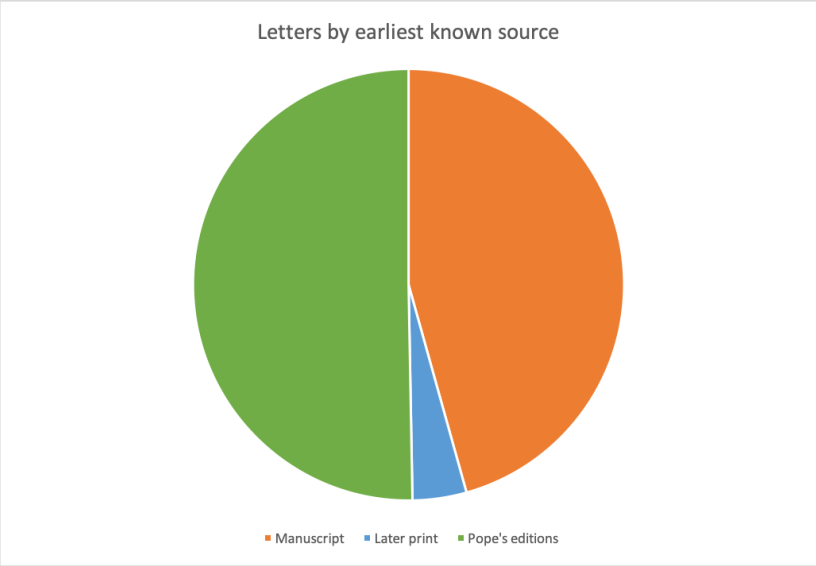


Figure 4.1 Earliest available source for the 173 known letters exchanged between Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke and Gay, showing 79 known from manuscript, 7 known from later print sources, and 87 known from Pope's editions.

The Pope-Swift correspondence, for instance, comprises ninety-two known letters, dating between 8 December 1713 and 22 March 1740/1. Of these, sixty-five letters were printed in Pope's editions, forming the earliest surviving source for fifty-three letters – or nearly 60% of the correspondence.[22] Furthermore, Swift claimed to have returned sixty

[22] Pope's side of the correspondence consists of 41 letters, of which 35 were printed. The 1740-1 editions remain the earliest extant witness for all but five of the printed letters; while the remaining letters are known from contemporary transcripts or later print. Of the 51 preserved letters from Swift to Pope, 30 were ultimately printed, forming the earliest known source for 23 letters. I have here cited Pope-Swift letters in Sherburn; however, Griffin (*Swift and Pope* (2010), p. xi) cites 95 letters in this correspondence

of Pope's letters to him in 1737 – if this is true, Pope must have suppressed a significant part of their correspondence, actively using the editions to mediate the epistolary record.[23] Almost 90% of Pope's surviving correspondence with Gay, meanwhile, is known from his editions of 1735-37, including three of Gay's seven known letters to Pope, and all twenty-two of Pope's to him. Pope's editions also form our only window onto this group's epistolary activity during some time periods: as **Figure 4.2** below illustrates, they record all known correspondence occurring between 1714 and 1716 and provide most of our knowledge of the years 1725-30 and 1736-38.

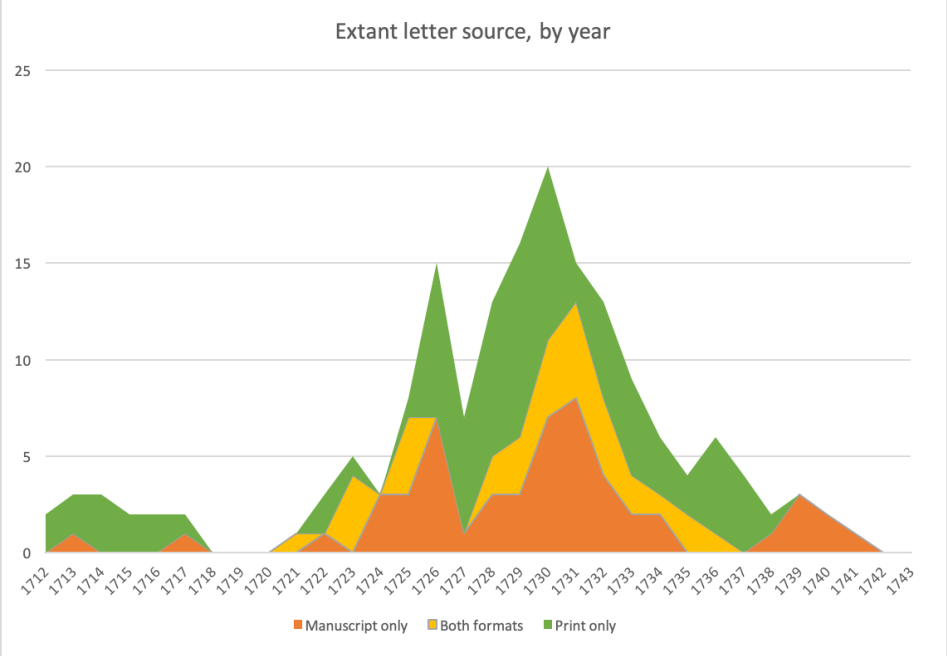


Figure 4.2 The number of surviving letters in this correspondence between Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke and Gay from each year, and the formats in which they are known: manuscript only (orange), Pope's editions only (green), and in both manuscript and print (yellow).

In addition, it is interesting to observe, in **Figure 4.3** below, how the 1740-1 editions build on the letters from these correspondences printed in Pope's earlier editions, filling

based on the reattribution of three letters in David Wooley (ed.) *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, 4 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999-2007).

[23] Swift to Pope, 31 May 1737, *Corr*. iv, 71-2. Sherburn calculates that "at least half" of these letters were suppressed.

in gaps (for instance, in 1716 and 1721), and dramatically expanding and extending the published representation of this correspondence between 1725 and 1738.

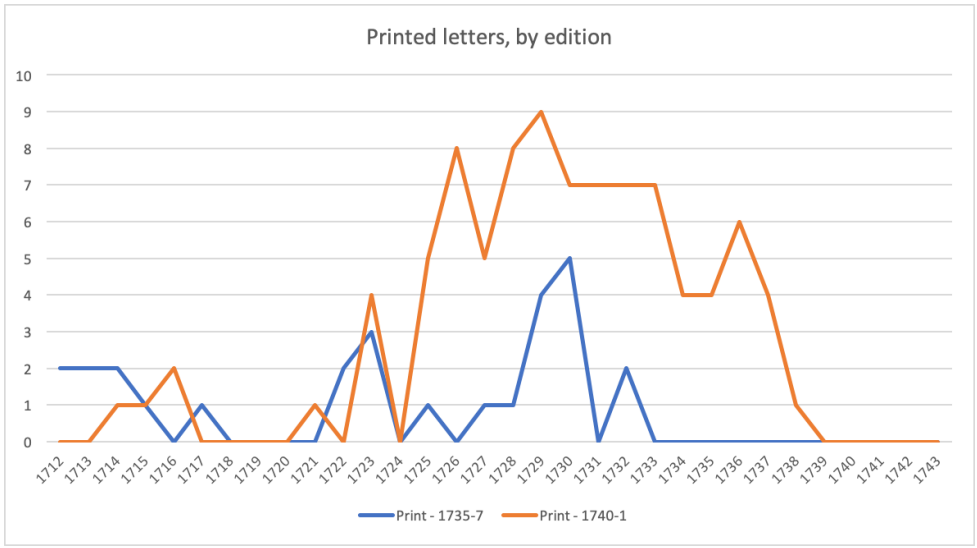


Figure 4.3 Letters from each year of the correspondence between Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke and Gay, as printed in Pope's correspondence editions of 1735-7 (in blue) and in 1740-1 (in orange). This includes an overlap of 4 letters published in both sets of editions.

This process has also shaped our view of each individual correspondent's role in the network, as illustrated in **Figure 4.4** below. This figure shows clearly that our knowledge of Pope's part in this correspondence – the most extensive – is almost entirely dependent on his own editions. It also hints at the divergent publication and preservation of letters by Gay and Bolingbroke.



Figure 4.4 Available source for letters in the correspondence between Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke and Gay, by author. The correspondence contains 69 letters by Pope, 65 letters by Swift, 15 letters by Bolingbroke and 29 by Gay (jointly authored letters are here attributed to all authors).

The 1740-1 editions present the letters of Pope and Swift as interconnected with nine jointly-written and mutually-referential letters to and from Bolingbroke.[24] Yet Gay's appearance as the recipient of thirteen letters from Swift is removed to a separate dedicated section, and the editions contain only four letters by Gay, all but one written to Swift.[25] This imbalance may have been influenced in part by Pope's perception of the distinct character, role, and value of these correspondences. However, Gay's diminished epistolary voice in the edition may also result from material logistics: the fact that the correspondence between Gay and Pope had been previously published, and the correspondence between Gay and Swift remained in the latter's possession. This circumstance has resulted in a clearer view of this original correspondence: the 21 known letters from Gay and 17 letters from Swift all exist in manuscript. Swift's letters to Gay, then, provide an intriguing insight into how Pope chose to curate and edit a single side of this correspondence (which he had copied after Gay's death, before returning to Swift) in the knowledge that the manuscripts would likely survive. They also comprise the majority (25 of 33) of the small group of letters known in both extant holograph and published formats, which together present a unique insight into the detailed editorial process which underlies much of the known correspondence. The uneven and limited nature of the extant manuscript source for these correspondences suggests that editorial decisions were influenced by the availability and accessibility of letters, and in turn dictated their survival. This complex process of transfer, publication, loss and suppression of letters has ultimately shaped the known correspondence both by accident

[24] This includes six letters from Bolingbroke (of which it is the earliest known source for four); and three letters to him (of which it is the earliest known source for two). Of this correspondence, one letter was jointly received and three letters jointly written with Pope.
[25] Two of the printed letters by Gay were jointly written with Pope.

and by design – a process which both intriguingly informs, and significantly complicates, our interpretation of these letters and our perception of the relationships involved.

1.4 Coterie and Scriblerian correspondences

As the analysis above shows, the editions of 1741 do not only take the opportunity to bring the Pope-Swift correspondence to public view; they also situate it within a select network, recognizable as a subset of the group known as the 'Scriblerus Club'. An important contextual framework for understanding the remediation of these correspondences is provided by recent scholarship exploring the conduct and commodification of the eighteenth-century coterie. This has included critical questioning of the idea of the 'Scriblerus Club' as a distinct, limited and homogenous productive and stylistic entity. In combination, such work provides a frame through which to examine more closely the integral cultural importance of the more diffuse, sustained, and informal aspects of this group – and to consider the recognition and exhibition of these features enacted in the correspondence editions of 1740-1. Firstly, the re-presentation of an epistolary network in print demonstrates the increasingly complex identity of the coterie form throughout the eighteenth century. This was a period during which, as Will Bowers and Hannah Leah Crummé have outlined, writers began to "navigate between coterie composition and print publication", and the authorial sincerity, intimacy and immediacy of coterie writing was alternately celebrated, simulated or satirized in the growing literary marketplace.[26] Bowers and Crummé identify as perhaps the most significant characteristic of coterie writing "a consciousness of exclusivity, and the performance of

[26] Will Bowers and Hannah Leah Crummé (eds.), *Re-evaluating the Literary Coterie, 1580-1830: From Sidney to Blackwood's* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 1-2.

it" – noting that "The private becomes a currency by which literary work gains public merit" – as well as expression of a nostalgic "longing for a past, for a Platonic society of creativity and debate".[27] Betty A. Schellenberg, in distinguishing the coterie from such terms as "circle", and "network", excludes those groups whose identity is derived solely from representations of sociability in print, adopting a more precise definition than some previous scholarship:

> I define a literary coterie more precisely as a physically realized entity, a relatively cohesive social group whose membership may undergo shifts over time, but which is held together as a continuous identifiable whole by some combination of kinship, friendship, clientage, and at least occasional geographical proximity. Most importantly, a literary coterie's cohesiveness is based on, and is maintained to a significant degree by, strong shared literary interests, expressed in the scribal exchange of original compositions, reading materials, and critical views. [28]

This particular coterie, meanwhile, has been most often represented and celebrated as the 'Scriblerus Club', a collaborative set of self-fashioned wits who strove satirically against the folly of the day.[29] This group is traditionally seen as comprising of Pope, Swift, and Gay, with Dr John Arbuthnot and Thomas Parnell (and with the peripheral involvement of political friends Bolingbroke and Robert Harley).[30] It has long been critically framed as a significant formative influence which shaped the development of its members' literary identity and satirical approach.[31] However, recent scholarship has increasingly recognized that the now-familiar critical concept of 'Scriblerus' – used to refer to a formal club, as shorthand for a social group, and as a touchstone for a particular

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[27] Bowers and Crummé (eds.), *Literary Coterie* (2016), p. 12.

[28] Betty A. Schellenberg, *Literary Coteries and the Making of Modern Print Culture: 1740-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 8.

[29] For an interesting comparator see Christine Gerrard, "The Hillarian Circle: Scorpions, Sexual Politics and Heterosocial Coteries", in Bowers and Crummé (eds.), *Literary Coterie* (2016), pp. 93-109.

[30] See Patricia C. Brückmann, *A Manner of Correspondence: A Study of the Scriblerus Club* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p. 3.

[31] For example, see George Sherburn, *The Early Career of Alexander Pope* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), p. 82; Griffin, *Swift and Pope* (2010), p. 14; Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 73-80.

satirical mode – is in fact underpinned by limited concrete knowledge of the Club's activities.[32] Furthermore, the Scriblerian project has been re-interpreted as a construction emerging from the materials left by the group themselves – their poetic works, letters, and anecdotes – rather than purely evidenced by biographical facts. Brean Hammond, for instance, has identified a "satiric mode that we can confidently designate 'Scriblerian'"; yet interprets the recurrent targets in these critiques of the changing intellectual landscape ("pedantry", "the mis-application of talents" across the arts and sciences, and the degradation of writing to "a mechanical, material act") as part of a self-consciously and self-referentially constructed shared philosophy which is inextricable from the autobiographical impulses of its proponents: their desire to define and exemplify a literary career, and to craft their own images of themselves and their circle.[33] Similarly, Conal Condren argues that the group's "invention of a lunatic philosophical persona" demonstrates "how satire could be an idiom of philosophizing, being used to shape and maintain an intellectual community."[34] Furthermore, the few explicitly collaborative works published by members of the group served to consolidate and polish the nebulous concept of 'Scriblerus' within the contemporary literary marketplace. Pat Rogers notes that the "*Miscellanies* of the Scriblerus circle" formed an attempt by Pope and Swift to address and correct the unauthorized publication of their works by Curll and other booksellers.[35] Similarly, Wendy Jones observes that the published Pope-Swift correspondence presented a united "celebration of friendship and virtue" in defence

[32] Charles Kerby-Miller (ed.), *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works, and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 1. See also Valerie Rumbold, "Scriblerus Club", *ODNB* (2004); Henry Power, *Epic into Novel: Henry Fielding, Scriblerian Satire, and the Consumption of Classical Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 36–41; Judith Hawley, 'Corporate Acts of Satire', *The Oxford Handbook of Eighteenth-Century Satire*, ed. Paddy Bullard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 23–38.

[33] Brean S. Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning", *Yearbook of English Studies* 18 (1988), 108-24.

[34] Conal Condren, *Hobbes, the Scriblerians and the History of Philosophy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p. 1.

[35] Rogers, *Poet and Publisher* (2021), pp. 267-72.

against pamphlet attacks such as the 1727 *Gulliver Decypher'd*, which satirized Pope, Swift, Gay, and Arbuthnot for their "Alliance offensive and defensive".[36] In addition, Dustin Griffin argues that "[w]hen Pope edited and published" the collaborative work *The Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life […] of Martinus Scriblerus*, appended to the 1741 London edition of the correspondence, "he in effect retrospectively established – or invented – the importance of the Club".[37] Meanwhile, Joseph Hone's recent study of Pope's early career "shift[s] the focus […] onto another set of authors": a group whose formative influence, along with its implications for Pope's early political engagement, has perhaps hitherto been overshadowed or obscured by the more comprehensively and publicly documented connections between the "luminaries" of the Scriblerus Club.[38]

Other studies have considered how the notion of the club has been cemented by later readers' interpretation and acceptance of these materials. Abigail Williams and Peter Huhne, for example, have explored how the Bloomsbury group found, in the Scriblerians, a model of a defiantly independent, relaxed, and elite form of social authorship during an era of shifting print culture which paralleled their own, offering a vision of an appealing alternative to mass readership, commercialization, and the uncertain role of the author and scholar.[39] Yet, as Williams and Huhne demonstrate, the Scriblerians' "invocations of clubbable bonhomie" were in fact "self-constructions"; part of the nostalgic "myth-making" exercise which formed their response to the anxieties of their own age.[40] Furthermore, they argue, the "legacy of friendship" represented in the published

[36] Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1990), pp. 47-50. *Gulliver Decypher'd: or Remarks on a late Book, intitled, Travels Into Several Remote Nations of the World* (London, 1727), p. 4.
[37] Griffin, *Swift and Pope* (2010), p. 69. Griffin also doubts Pope's assertion to Spence that Swift "took his first hints for *Gulliver*" from the *Memoirs*. See Osborn (ed.), *Spence: Observations* (1966), pp. 55-57.
[38] Hone, *Pope in the Making* (2021), p. 2.
[39] Williams and Huhne, "Bloomsbury Appropriations" (2016), pp. 75-92.
[40] Williams and Huhne, "Bloomsbury Appropriations" (2016), pp. 75-92.

correspondence of Pope and Swift "also reveal[s] the extent to which their union was constructed through the acts of printing and editing".[41] Ashley Marshall, meanwhile, has argued convincingly that the modern scholarly concept of the group is a later critical construction based on scant contemporary evidence, ascribing particular responsibility for its inception to George Sherburn.[42] If this is so, there may, perhaps, be a connection between Sherburn's role as the leading proponent of the term 'Scriblerian' to denote a distinct, discrete, and sustained literary community, and his work as the first editor of Pope's correspondence and biographer of his early life and career to have seriously and sympathetically considered Pope's own editions of his letters. This reminds us of the degree to which Pope's editing of the letters has continued to shape critical and biographical constructions of his poetic identity throughout the twentieth century.

Pope's self-published correspondence has played a significant role in mediating inherited interpretations of the Scriblerus Club and the interactions of its members. Biographical texts have drawn on letters known only from Pope's editions – including that which underpins Edith Sitwell's imaginary reconstruction of the literary coterie: "On the 4th May the two friends [Parnell and Pope] invited John Gay to join them, and spend a month in the Forest, surrounded by books, and friendship, and the comforts that he loved."[43] George Sherburn's examination of Pope's early career ascribes to Pope a letter to the *Spectator* (which proposes "*An Account of the Works of the Unlearned"*), through reference to another letter known only from Pope's 1735 correspondence edition in which Pope reports that "Dr. Swift much approves what I proposed" and that Parnell "enters heartily

[41] Williams and Huhne, "Bloomsbury Appropriations" (2016), pp. 75-92.
[42] Ashley Marshall, "The Myth of Scriblerus", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31:1 (2008), p. 78.
[43] Sitwell, *Pope* (1948), pp. 90-93. See Parnell and Pope to Gay, 4 May 1714, *Corr*. i. 222-3.

into our design".[44] Meanwhile, Dustin Griffin locates his study of the mutually enriching literary interchange between Swift and Pope in the observation that a claim in a letter by Swift – that "the chief end in all my labours is to vex the world rather than divert it" – can only be understood "as *a reply*" to Pope's previous suggestion that "two or three of us may yet be gather'd together; not […] to vex our own or others hearts with busy vanities […] but to divert ourselves, and the world too if it pleases".[45] However, as Pope's letter is known only from print, such insights into the group's dialogic synthesis of literary ideology, too, are reliant on Pope's published texts. As Griffin notes, the already "literary" nature of the letters of Pope and Swift is enhanced "when they are edited and presented to the world" in Pope's editions – and the surviving manuscript letters offer an opportunity to examine "the raw biographical materials from which literary works were shaped".[46]

The editions discussed in this chapter, then, not only reflect the self-constructed nature of the Scriblerus Club, but also showcase the self-conscious, sustained, and richly social correspondence of a genuine coterie over twenty-four years. While four correspondents – Pope, Swift, Gay, and Bolingbroke – emerge most prominently from the edition, their letters also contain frequent references to mutual friends such as Thomas Parnell, Dr John Arbuthnot, Robert Harley, and Martha Blount.[47] The early correspondence of the group suggests a firm adherence to Schellenberg's definition of coterie, as the epistolary form is employed to unite a rotating, yet cohesive group of present and remote participants in a

[44] Sherburn, *Early Career* (1934), p. 75. See *Corr*. i. 195-6. Marshall, "Myth of Scriblerus" (2008), p. 78.
[45] Griffin, *Swift and Pope* (2010), pp. 3-5. Swift to Pope, 29 September 1725, *Corr*. ii. 324-6; Pope to Swift, 14 September 1725, *Corr*. ii. 321-2. See also Pope to Swift, [17 *February* 1726/7], *Corr*. ii. 426-7.
[46] Griffin, *Swift and Pope* (2010), pp. 5-8.
[47] On Martha Blount's role in this coterie, see above, Chapter 2, pp. 201-2.

companionable discussion of literary matters. For example, in a joint letter to Gay of 1714, we see Pope and Parnell dispensing literary advice on Gay's recently-published *Shepherd's Week* and imploring him to come "to us, where your taste for books, friendship, and ease, may be indulg'd".[48] However, the letters also record the alteration in the dynamics of the coterie over time: as the careers of its members develop, their physical distance persists, and members of the group pass away, the correspondence becomes increasingly fragmented. As a result, the interconnection between epistolary and in-person discourse becomes increasingly crucial and the limits of letters apparent. For instance, at the end of a letter of March 1729, Swift tells Pope, "This letter is an answer to Mr. *Ford*, whose hand I mistook for yours […] forgive my blunders: for, reading the letter by candle-light […] I thought it must be yours, because it talks of our friends".[49] As a result of these shifts, the later letters of the group also become increasingly nostalgic for its early days, and simultaneously ever more insistent in their purposeful discussion of literary projects and their reiterations of friendship. Thus, Pope reassures Swift:

> Whatever you seem to think of your withdrawn & separate State, at this distance, & in this absence, Dr Swift lives still in England, in ev'ry place & company where he woud chuse to live; & I find him in all the conversations I keep, & in all the Hearts in which I wou'd have any Share. We have never met these many Years without mention of you.[50]

Yet this self-conscious reconstruction of the early coterie in the later letters is not the end of the story. The fact that Pope and Parnell's early appeals for Gay's company are known only from the 1735 edition, and that this later passage to Swift appears in a letter published by Curll in 1736 (having likely been supplied by Pope), reminds us that our understanding of this group as a coterie is also complicated by its dependence upon the

[48] Parnell and Pope to Gay, 4 May 1714, *Corr*. i. 222-3.
[49] Swift to Pope, 6 March 1728/9, *Corr*. iii. 21. See also Swift to Martha Blount, 29 February 1727/8, *Corr*. ii. 475-7.
[50] Pope to Swift [August 1723], *Corr*. ii. 184-6.

published editions. The view offered by these texts is that of a curated correspondence, which collects together the various transitional phases and iterations of the coterie and polishes them retrospectively for public view. In so doing, the published correspondence draws connections between the collaborative, geographically proximal early years, the later entrance of the major works of its members into the print sphere, and the culminating reminiscences in which the writers contemplate their individual and collective legacies. Throughout this endeavour, a careful attention to epistolary features authenticates the remediated letters by anchoring them to their material coterie origins. In this way, the editions take advantage of the nebulous status of coterie and correspondence within the eighteenth-century marketplace to bring the intimate history of this group to public view for the first time, creating a form of nostalgia and cultural capital which would lend new depth and context to the works of its members and instil them with a new collective value.

2. Manuscript correspondences

2.1 Coterie correspondences: epistolary features

I will begin by examining the epistolary and literary features which characterize the surviving manuscript correspondence of this group, before considering how these aspects of the letters are developed through print remediation. The manuscripts reveal how these correspondents employed a combination of conventional and distinct epistolary features to bind and sustain their network. These techniques serve to root their letters in time and place, embed them in their social context, and express care,

concern, and nostalgia.[51] For example, dates and places are documented in detail as writers separated by distance detail their journeys, describe their surroundings, convey their news, and advocate for physical proximity. As Gay writes to Parnell in 1716, "My Dear Doctor,—I was last Summer in Devonshire [and] am this Winter at Mrs Bonyers; in the Summer I wrote a Poem & in the Winter I have publish'd it, […] I am in hopes of making you a Visit this Summer".[52] Such conventional features sharpen as the group disperses – Bolingbroke to France during his exile and later residency, Swift to Ireland, and Gay to the seat of his patrons the Queensberrys at Amesbury, while Pope remained at Twickenham. The letters insistently anticipate a renewed acquaintance, although ill-health and domestic obligations obstruct a gathering after 1727: in January 1728, Pope tells Swift, "you cannot be absent, go where you will. Do you but keep well and live, and if I keep well and live, we *must* meet."[53] Such attention to location is often attended by imaginative reconstructions of the group's lost physical proximity. In 1730, three years after Swift's last visit to England, Gay conjures him into the Wiltshire countryside: "I wish you were here, […] you might fancy yourself at home, for we have a Cathedral near us, where you might find a Bishop of the same name. You might ride upon the Downs & write conjectures upon Stonehenge".[54]

The letters of this dispersed group also frequently interact with the circle beyond the recipient, as writers share news of, enquire after, or offer regards and remembrances to individuals geographically distant to themselves or their recipient – thereby delineating

[51] On the practices, material forms, and conventions of eighteenth-century letters, see Whyman, *Pen and the People* (2009); Redford, *Converse of the Pen* (1986); Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006).
[52] Gay, Jervas, Arbuthnot and Pope to Parnell, [February 1715/16], *Corr.* i. 331-333.
[53] Pope to Swift, [? January 1727/8], *Corr*. ii. 467-70. See also Swift to Pope, 20 April 1731.
[54] Gay to Swift, 4 July 1730, *Corr*. iv. 119-20.

a wide and interconnected network. As a result, the letters are often densely populated with names; at times consciously subverting the formulaic postscript or valediction as a vehicle for regards to mutual acquaintances. Swift finds humour in the repetitiveness of this convention ("My humble service (I must still name them) to […]"); while the lack of punctuation with which he often presents his "List" of friends is suggestive of a breathless perfunctory duty:

> I hope you will present my humble service to my List Lord Per Lord Oxford Lord Bol. & Lady Lord Bathurst Lord Masham, Mr Poulteney the Dr Mr Lewis Mrs Pope and Patty very heartily. Nothing to Mrs Howard, you drew me in to write to her, and see how she hath served me, for which She is a—[55]

However, his selective naming here also indicates the genuine demarcation and reinforcement of the network that such passages enact within the sometimes strained and necessarily reciprocal nature of epistolary communication.

Another notable technique by which the correspondents in this group collapse the distance between them is their frequent evocation of the moment of composition or of reading, through a sustained temporal and material sensitivity. These features often accompany the letters' adherence to the conventional conflation of 'writing' and 'reading' with 'speaking' and 'hearing', which serves to reconstruct immediate physical presence, and to negotiate and evaluate the relationship between correspondence and conversation: as Pope tells Swift, "You see how I talk to you (for this is not writing)".[56] Occasionally, comparisons between the two favour the letter: for example, Swift reflects

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[55] Swift to Pope, 15 January 1730/1, *Corr*. iii. 160-3; Swift to Pope, 20 April 1731, *Corr*. iii. 190-92. Henrietta Howard apparently failed to answer Swift's letter.

[56] Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, 15 September 1734, *Corr*. iii. 431-3. See also Swift to Pope, 29 September 1725, *Corr*. ii. 324-6; 26 February 1729/30, *Corr*. iii. 92-4; Swift to Pope and Gay, 15 October 1726, *Corr*. ii. 406-9.
On letters as conversation, see Redford, *Converse of the Pen* (1986); Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters* (2006), esp. pp. 21-24; Keith Stewart, "Towards defining an aesthetic for the familiar letter in eighteenth-century England", *Prose Studies* 2:3 (1982), 179-92, esp. pp. 180-82.

that he does not grow "weary of writing" a "Long letter […] because I do not hear my Self talk and yet I have the Pleasure of talking to you".[57] Later letters, however, increasingly lament the protraction and detachment of correspondence as a shortcoming: Pope observes to Swift in 1736 that "increase of years makes men more talkative but less writative […] I grow Laconic".[58] The vulnerability of letters to interception, too, is another barrier to communication: Bolingbroke, for instance, having "deferred" a letter "by waiting an opportunity of sending [it] by a safe hand", cautions Swift, "if you answer me by the post, remember […] that you write by the post".[59] Such references are not merely practical: they also highlight the letter's personal interest and value and invoke its mode of carriage as a mark of candour or an excuse for delay or reserve.

In this context, letters are presented as a tactile and exclusive token of true esteem – "Deeds" of "Friendship" – and their physical form and transit, as well as their conveyance of their writer's present surroundings and state of mind, becomes critical to their success as a substitute for in-person discourse.[60] Writers invoke the physical boundaries of their paper to convey their freedom or constraint: Bolingbroke tells Swift in August 1731 that "it is well for you that I am got to the end of my paper, for you might else have a letter as long again".[61] Within these restrictions, writers reflect on how their letter represents, or fails to represent, their writer's emotional state at the moment of composition. For example, Swift assures Pope in November 1726 that "my Face and Letters are Counterparts of my heart, I fear I have not expressed that right, but I mean well, and I

[57] Swift to Gay, 8 January 1722/3, *Corr*. ii. 152-4.
[58] Pope to Swift, 17 August 1736, *Corr*. iv. 27-8.
[59] Bolingbroke to Swift, 2 August 1731, *Corr*. iii. 210-15; Swift to Pope, 8-24 August 1738, *Corr*. iv. 115-16.
[60] Pope to Swift, [August 1723], *Corr*. ii. 183-7.
[61] Bolingbroke to Swift, 2 August 1731, *Corr*. iii. 210-15. See also Swift to Gay and Pope, 23 November 1727, *Corr*. ii. 460-62; Swift to Pope, 20 April 1731, *Corr*. iii. 190-2; Swift to Gay, 28 August 1731, *Corr*. iii. 218-21.

hate blots".[62] Such depictions of mental state are often intensely evocative of time and place, highlighting the role of the physical letter as emotional stimulus. For instance, Swift describes how, on returning from "a Short Christmas Ramble" in January 1723, he found an unexpected letter from Gay which "raised" a "Spirit" that disrupted his "humdrum way of life": "what can be the Design of your Letter but Malice, to wake me out of a Scurvy Sleep".[63] Epistolary connections are rendered yet more timely and tactile through the physical transfer of works and other documents ("I have at length received your poem out of Mr. Addison's hands") and through jointly-composed or addressed letters ("P.S. Our friend […] left this letter with me yesterday, and I cannot seal and dispatch it till I have scribled the remainder of this page full").[64] By rooting the letters within their broader social context and highlighting their physical and psychological dimensions, such features help to demarcate and sustain this interconnected network.

Swift and Gay's sensitive, often creative and sometimes subversive use of these physical and temporal markers of epistolarity play a particularly significant role in enveloping a new correspondent – Gay's patron, the Duchess of Queensberry – into the network; and in casting her as part of the coterie rather than of the nobility. Swift, for instance, exploits the conventions dictating the use of space on the page as part of an ironic persona which playfully combines deference with impertinence to assert intimacy, addressing the Duchess, "Madam,—My beginning thus low is meant as a Mark of respect, like receiving your Grace at the bottom of the Stairs".[65] The group also explore the tensions between

[62] Swift to Pope, 26 November 1725, *Corr*. ii. 342-44.
[63] Swift to Gay, 8 January 1722/3, *Corr*. ii. 152-4.
[64] Pope and Gay to Parnell, 18 March [1714/15], *Corr*. i. 284-5; Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, 15 September 1734, *Corr*. iii. 431-3. See also Bolingbroke to Swift, 19 November 1729, *Corr*. iii. 70-72.
[65] Swift to Gay and the Duchess of Queensberry, 19 November 1730, *Corr.* iii. 151-3.

epistolary clarity and confusion: Swift performs with physical immediacy the effect of a joke in which Gay and the Duchess had written interchangeably in their similar hands ("—Lo here comes in the Dutchess again (I know her by her dd's […])").[66] Elsewhere, the letters explore the boundaries and freedoms of epistolary discourse in comparison with conversation: Swift claims, for instance "your pen is always more natural and sincere and unaffected then your tongue. In writing you are too lazy to give yourself the trouble of Acting a part."[67] Through these features, the correspondence is instilled with a distinct playfulness and intimacy which serves both to draw the Duchess into this epistolary space, and to dictate its terms – which are predicated on the strengths of the satirists: wordplay, irreverence, and irony.[68]

Another aspect of the letters shaped by the geographical distribution of the group – that is, its initially closely convivial nature, followed by sustained distance in later years – is the prevalence of general details of their writers' everyday lives: reports of domesticity, hospitality and health. The early letters of the group are often rich and vibrant in this regard: for instance, in one befuddled joint letter to Swift written from a chop-house dinner in February 1716, Pope connects the epistolary effusion of his friends with the material comforts of their companionship:

> Their Love to you indeed wants no Spur, their Ink wants no Pen, their Pen wants no Hand, their Hand wants no Heart, and so forth […] Time, Place, and Conveniency concur, to sett them a writing; as at present, a sociable Meeting, a good Dinner, a warm Fire, and an easie Situation do, to the Joint Labour and pleasure of this Epistle.[69]

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[66] The Duchess of Queensberry and Gay to Swift, 18 July 1731, *Corr*. iii. 204-7; Swift to Gay, 28 August 1731, *Corr*. iii. 218-21.

[67] Swift to Gay and the Duchess of Queensberry, 12 August 1732, *Corr*. iii. 303-5.

[68] On Swift's exploration elsewhere of the complexities of epistolary communication, see Abigail Williams, "'I Hope to Write as Bad as Ever': Swift's Journal to Stella and the Intimacy of Correspondence", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 35:1 (2011), 102-18; and "The Difficulties of Swift's *Journal to Stella*", *The Review of English Studies*, 62:257 (2011), 758-76.

[69] Gay, Jervas, Arbuthnot and Pope to Parnell, [February 1715/16], *Corr*. i. 331-3.

Other correspondence of this time explores topics of gastronomy and gossip in playful doggerel – for instance, Pope and Gay's "receipt for Stewing Veal" in 1726:

> In a few pieces cut it,
> In a Stewing pan put it […]
> O then, with what rapture
> Will it fill Dean & Chapter![70]

Later letters, in contrast, contain frequent reports of ill health and domestic dissatisfaction. Most notable are Swift's complaints of his increasingly isolating and debilitating illnesses ("I have entirely lost my memory, uncapable of conversation by a cruel deafness").[71] However, we also hear frequently of the illnesses of Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, and Bolingbroke: as Swift writes in January 1731, "I am unhappy in Sickly friends".[72] These complaints are accompanied by reports of the mitigating cures and domestic arrangements by which Swift, in particular, "battle[s] with" his "disorders": "riding and walking", and "a pint and half of wine every day", taken "as a medecine".[73] From the late 1720s, Pope and Swift address the difficulty of each other's precarious health from a now-insurmountable distance through persistent solicitations of physiological detail, and earnest expressions of care and concern. For instance, in a letter to Pope of 1731, Swift offers the plea, "Pray God long preserve my dearest Friend in Life and health"; while Pope promises Swift in 1738 "my prayers for your health of body and mind".[74] Such regular wishes, reports, and enquiries regarding health – conventions commonly used to create intimacy in letters of this period – help to bridge the physical distance between correspondents through sympathy and shared experience.

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[70] Gay to Swift, 16 September 1726, *Corr*. ii. 399-400. *Poems VI*, pp. 253-4, ll. 3-4; 29-30. See also Swift's reply to Pope and Gay, 15 October 1726, *Corr*. ii. 406-9.

[71] Swift to Pope, 8-24 August 1738, *Corr*. iv. 115-16. See also *Corr*. iii. 20-23; 160-3; 360; 377; *Corr*. iv. 4. On Swift's health, see Thomas H. Bewley, "The Health of Jonathan Swift", *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 91 (1998), 602-605.

[72] Swift to Pope, 15 January 1730/1, *Corr*. iii. 160-3.

[73] Swift to Pope, 20 April 1731, *Corr*. iii. 190-2; [31 March 1733], *Corr*. iii. 361-2.

[74] Swift to Pope, 2 December 1736, *Corr*. iv. 44-6; Pope to Swift, 12 October 1738, *Corr*. iv. 134-5.

2.2. Scriblerian correspondences: literary resonances

As well as employing and adapting the more conventional or formal aspects of correspondence to bind their network, the letters of the group are also defined by more distinctly and explicitly literary characteristics. The manuscript letters of Pope, Gay, Swift and Bolingbroke suggest their self-identification as members of a coterie, as the correspondents reflect on the contribution of the epistolary network to their identity as writers and individuals, and to their own public and posthumous "reputation".[75] Writers frequently solicit public recognition of their friendship from their recipients: Swift, for instance, informs Gay in June 1731 that "I do Sometimes reproach you for not honoring me by letting the world know we are friends", and expresses to Pope in October 1729 "the happiness of being recorded your friend, while wit, and humour, and politeness shall have any memorial among us".[76] These friendships are also emphatically set in contrast with the evils and follies of the literary marketplace, as the group define themselves in opposition to other participants of contemporary print culture: Swift reflects on Pope's "enemies" as "Tools in my opinion as necessary for a good writer, as pen, ink, and paper".[77]

This thematic preoccupation with literary status is also reflected in the style and subject of the manuscript letters. For example, the sequence of verse letters by which Arbuthnot, Swift, Pope, Parnell and Gay invited Lord Oxford to join their gatherings between 1714

[75] Swift to Gay, 29 June 1731, *Corr*. iii. 202-4.
[76] *Corr*. iii. 202-4; Swift to Pope, 31 October 1729, *Corr*. iii. 64-5.
[77] Swift to Pope, 30 August 1716, *Corr*. i. 358-60.

and 1718 exemplify the convivial, congenial, collaborative, and literary nature of their early friendship:

> The Doctor and Dean, Pope, Parnell and Gay
> In manner Submissive most humbly do pray,
> That Your Lordship would once let Your Cares all alone
> And Climb the dark Stairs to Your Friends who have none:[78]

In addition, the prose letters of the group are often figuratively rich, lexically agile, and attuned to rhythm and prosody. Their frequent sustained use of figurative language and farcical imagery references and recalls the group's satirical work, and has since formed a rich source for its critical consideration.[79] Swift's letters, for instance, often contain a forceful misanthropy: in a letter to Pope of November 1725, he declares, "Drown the World, I am not content with despising it, but I would anger it if I could with safety".[80] Meanwhile, Pope's reply presages the satirical structure of *The Dunciad*, as he disclaims "Anger against the Great" – instead attacking "the little rogues" through juxtaposition ("It would vexe one more to be knockt o' the Head by a Pisspot, than by a Thunderbolt") and mimicking, minimizing repetition ("to be Squirted to death […] by *Potecaries Prentices*, by the under Strappers of Under Secretaries, to Secretaries, who were no Secretaries").[81] Such sketches and statements thus form dialogues of satirical design which resonate within and beyond the correspondence. As Dennis Todd has noted, this passage offers a glimpse of "the rhythm of Pope's anger and contempt, his anxious circling of the problem of the Dunces."[82] These correspondences, then, combine quotidian or conventional epistolary approaches with conscious literariness. Overall, the manuscript letters show

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[78] Scriblerus to Lord Oxford, [20 March 1713/14], *Corr*. i. 216. *Poems VI*, p. 117, ll. 1-4; 6. See also *Corr*. i. 216; 217; 228; 230; 478 and 479.
[79] See Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988), pp. 116-7.
[80] Swift o Pope, 26 November 1725, *Corr*. ii. 342-3.
[81] Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, 14 December 1725, *Corr*. ii. 348-51.
[82] Dennis Todd, The "Blunted Arms" of Dulness: The Problem of Power in the "Dunciad", *Studies in Philology* 79:2 (1982), 177-204. p. 183. See also Dennis Todd, *Imagining Monsters: Miscreations of the Self in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 219-223.

how these writers used correspondence to build intimacy and group identity, through features which are later recognized and amplified in Pope's later editions.

3. Print remediation

We have seen so far that Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke, Gay, and their wider circle employed a variety of epistolary techniques to maintain their relationships over many years of distance; and instilled their manuscript letters with a literary quality and reference that established semantic, stylistic and social connections with their published works. However, the development of these themes within the letters known only from print reveals the extent to which our knowledge and interpretation of these practices and patterns are dependent upon Pope's correspondence editions. Furthermore, close comparison of the printed letters with surviving manuscripts reveals how these features were selectively excised or enhanced to instil the edition's representation of these relationships with exclusivity, intimacy, authenticity, context, and narrative impact. As we have seen in earlier chapters, Pope's editorial process tends to obscure some more prosaic aspects of the original letters, including their conventional courtesies, quotidian minutiae, specificity of reference, and some dissonant aspects of their tone and content. These characteristics are diminished in favour of more abstract representations of friendship through explicit expressions of tenderness, emotive nostalgia, and figurative language, which align the letters more closely with Pope's poetic depiction of these friendships. Such changes chime with Pope's perception and presentation of this group as a distinct literary coterie, and his editorial mediation of the correspondence reveals a sustained focus on the cultural significance of its participants, an awareness of its

capacity as an informing context for literary works, and an attention to its depiction of the group's literary style and ideologies of authorship.

3.1 Features concealed in print

Certain features of the letters are concealed in print to support the transition from a quotidian, familiar correspondence to a literary, public-facing one. One aspect of these changes is the basic pruning of conventional features which we have seen in other chapters. Greetings which address peripheral figures, or which are too repetitive, long, intimate, or servile, are omitted from print – for instance, Swift's "~~humble service to Mrs Pope, & Patty~~", and a long paragraph of his regards which had begun "~~I am very much pleased and honoured with three lines from Mr. Pulteney [...]~~".[83] Similarly, deletions from printed letters indicate that some original references to the logistics and difficulties of epistolary composition were evidently undesirable for publication. These include Swift's fussy calculations of epistolary transactions ("~~If I write to you once a Quarter will you promise to Send me a long Answer in a week, and then I will leave you at rest till the next Quarter day, and I desire you will leave part of a blanck Side for Mr Pope~~") and his frequent references to the potential of letters to disrupt fluent discourse through illegibility ("~~if you are not good at reading ill hands, [this letter] will cost you as much Time as it has done me~~").[84] In places, the presence of some epistolary markers is even used to authenticate the removal of others: a letter of Swift's concludes in print, "—But

[83] Swift to Pope, 1 May 1733, *Corr*. v.10-11; 8 July 1733, *Corr*. iii. 377-80. See also 26 November 1725, *Corr*. ii. 342-44; Swift to Gay, 8 January 1722/3, *Corr*. ii. 153-4; 10 November 1730, *Corr*. iii. 147-9; Swift to Gay and Pope, 23 November 1727, *Corr*. ii. 460-2.
[84] Swift to Gay, 8 January 1722/3, *Corr*. ii. 152-4. See also Swift to Pope, 1 November 1734, *Corr*. iii. 438-40.

my paper is ended.", omitting the conventional regards and post script which had followed.[85]

Elsewhere, however, excisions and exclusions seem to serve more deliberate creative purposes, controlling the reflection of the letters on the status of and process behind the works of the group, and refining their style and content towards greater alignment with the literary ideologies expressed within this oeuvre. For instance, the exclusion of three letters from Swift to Pope of early 1730 serves, in part, to evade the lack of literary gravitas conferred by Swift's sustained focus on trivial matters and his dismissive and offhand attitude towards both his own and Pope's poetry: "~~I have not seen the new 8°. Dunciad nor do I believe they will reprint it here: The Kingdom cannot afford it~~".[86] However, these omissions also suppress Swift's perspective on the conception and reception of his 'Libel on the Reverand Dr. Delany', a poem which became the subject of dispute when Pope (apparently embarrassed by its lavish praise of his own contempt for the Court) excluded it from their joint *Miscellanies* against Swift's wishes.[87] Its appearance in the correspondence editions is thereby reduced to oblique references which underline Pope's disapproval ("We have here some verses in your name, which I am angry at") and Swift's chastened response ("one paper, for which Mr. Pope very lately chid me").[88] Furthermore, in a letter of February 1733, known only from print, Pope discusses the preparation of the *Miscellanies* – insinuating that the 'Libel' was omitted as "carelessly" written "chaff", and explicitly stating his desire to "teach the publick […] to

[85] Swift to Gay, 10 November 1730, *Corr*. iii. 147-9.
[86] Swift to Pope, 6 February 1729/30, *Corr*. iii. 89-90; 26 February 1729/30, *Corr*. iii. 92-94; 2 May 1730, *Corr*. iii. 107-9.
[87] See Sherburn, *Corr*. iii. 90n; Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988), p. 121.
[88] Pope to Swift, [4 March 1729/30], *Corr*. iii 95; Swift to Bolingbroke, 21 March 1729/30, *Corr*. iii. 98-99.

distinguish betwixt our studies and our idlenesses, our works and our weaknesses".[89] Pope thereby also echoes and endorses the preface to the *Miscellanies* itself, which had cautioned that the "Collection […] consists of […] not our Studies, but our Follies; not our Works, but our Idlenesses".[90] In this way, the 1741 edition contributes to Pope's efforts to shape public perception of the group's works as a collective product.

Other aspects of the correspondence concealed in print might also be attributed to an editorial sensitivity to the letters' capacity to embody or undermine the literary approach of their writers. As we have seen, the original letters are often careless in matters of spelling and punctuation, contain doggerel or incomplete verse, and present unguarded hints of vanity or unflattering domestic portraits. Given the group's sharp satirization of such weaknesses elsewhere as markers of cultural degeneration, the correction or omission of some of these aspects could also be interpreted as an attempt to avoid any suggestions of hypocrisy that might puncture the edition's consolidated representation of a collective satirical strategy.[91] Swift's careful attention to grammar, spelling, and clarity in the Dublin edition, for example, is contextualized by his earlier criticism of the showy sloppiness of the "*Grub-street* Book": "they appear in all Sizes and Shapes, and in all Places: […] You may see them gilt, and in Royal Paper […] you shall not be able to find ten Lines together of common Grammar, or common Sense".[92] Pope, too, satirized this focus on the format and the financial and social rewards of publishing at the expense of

[89] Pope to Swift, 16 February 1732/3, *Corr*. iii. 347.

[90] Rosemary Cowler (ed.), *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope, Volume II: 1725-1744* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 92. See also Pope's reference to "smiling at all our own ~~designs~~ **follies**," Pope to Swift, 15 October 1725, *Corr*. ii. 321-4.

[91] My interpretation of these features draws from Brean Hammond's delineation of common themes of Scriblerian satire in "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988).

[92] Herbert Davis et al (eds.), "Tatler No. 230, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 1710", *The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift,* 16 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939-1968), ii. 174. Quoted in Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988), pp. 108-110.

substance – such preoccupations of professional, popular, or patronized authorship are derided in works such as *The Dunciad*:

> Volumes, whose size the space exactly fill'd,
> Or which fond authors were so good to gild;
> […]
> There march'd the bard and blockhead side by side,
> Who rhym'd for hire, and patroniz'd for pride.[93]

It is notable, then, that the omission from the editions of one of Pope's letters of 1728 – in which he had reflected on the publication of *The Dunciad* ("~~my Chef d'œuvre, […] which after I am dead and gone, will be printed with a large Commentary, and letterd on the back, *Pope's Dulness*~~"), and reported on his material prosperity ("~~I am a hundred pounds a year richer, than when you was here; And I owe it to no Great Man. […] and my Lord Oxford has given me a great Gold Cup and Salver~~") – thereby excludes even jocular hints of such material and mercenary concerns and the irony with which they colour Pope's expression of pride in his independence.[94]

The letters as edited for print also seem studiously to avoid any proximity to the textual modes satirized by the Scriblerians, from the formulaic pedantry of bad poetry, to the tedious technicalities of science and medicine.[95] The total exclusion in print of the whimsical lines that had adorned early letters ("~~Yet Dew or Rain may wett us to the shif[t] / We'll not be slow to visit Dr Swift~~") is congruent with the omission of such light-hearted verse throughout the Cromwell letters in Chapter 1.[96] Here, too, such exclusions help to bolster Pope's public identity as an arbiter of poetic taste, established early in his *Essay on Criticism* and sustained through a running catalogue of the qualities of unsuccessful

[93] *Poems V*, p. 77, ll. i. 117-18; p. 351, ll. iv. 101-2; p. 280, ll. 137-8.
[94] Pope to Swift, [? January 1727/8], *Corr*. ii. 467-71.
[95] Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988), p. 118.
[96] Pope to Dr Arbuthnot, 11 July [1714], *Corr*. i. 233-5. *Poems VI*, p. 120, ll. 1-2; 6.

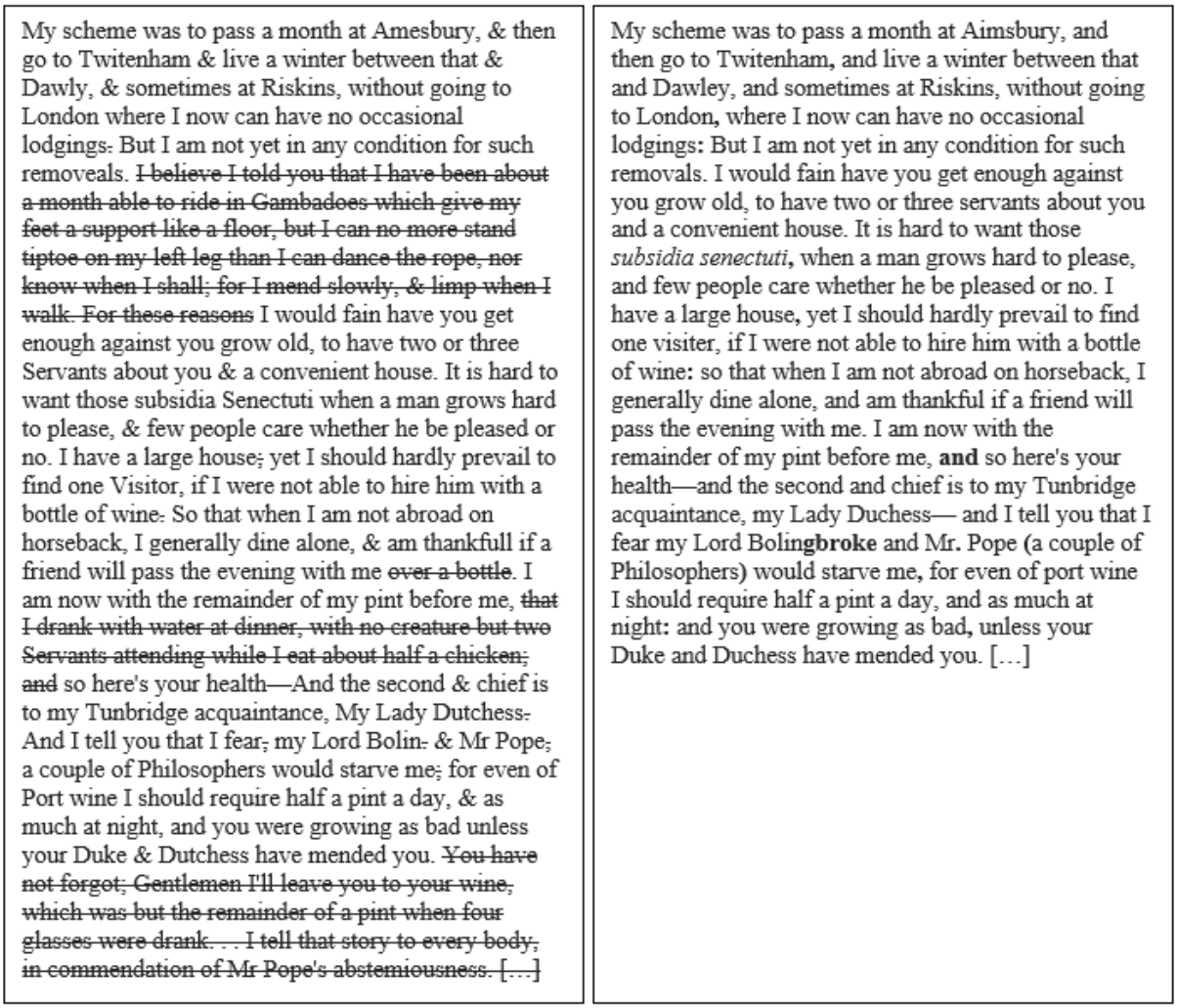
verse in his later works – including "half form'd", precise, but "crawl[ing]" "rhyme"; "Emptiness"; "florid Impotence"; "vile Antithesis"; "ill-paired" and "motley" imagery; "jumbled" "farce and epic"; and a meandering "ductile dulness".[97] Furthermore, Pope was likely attuned to the risk of bathos arising from the frequent proximity in the letters of mundane triviality and intellectual or emotional heft: the satire of his "inverse manual of rhetoric", the *Peri Bathous*, is dependent on his very deliberate juxtaposition of serious sublime against base ineptitude.[98] Such a consideration may have guided Pope's deletion of passages that hint at the "Ponderous drudgery" and "Literal-mindedness" which Hammond identifies as another "hallmark" of Scriblerian targets.[99] These include convoluted, repetitive, or ironic passages of uncertain impact, such as Pope's tangled claims that "~~You say you don't much care whether I write to you or not, and therefore I don't much care if I do. But whereas you tell me You'l write whether I do or not [...]~~"[100] The removal of such material thus ensures that the writers of these letters sound like the Scriblerians, rather than those they satirized.

In this context, the careful curtailment of references to domesticity and health, which tends to avoid both excessive frivolity and fastidiousness, might also serve a secondary purpose in safeguarding the literary integrity of the letters. Most of the early letters of cosy conviviality are excluded entirely, perhaps with a consciousness of the "laborious facetiousness" which David Nokes observes within them.[101] Such corporeal aspects are often also excised from published letters: for instance, Gay's lively imaginary tracing of

[97] *The Dunciad*, *Poems V*, pp. 67-68, ll. 59-68. *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, *Poems IV,* pp. 118-19, ll. 315-25.
[98] Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988), p. 116-7.
[99] Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988), p. 116.
[100] Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, 14 December 1725, *Corr*. ii. 348-51.
[101] Gay to Swift, 16 September 1726, *Corr.* ii, 399-400. David Nokes, *John Gay: A Profession of Friendship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 376.

Swift's journey in October 1727 – with its "~~excellent Claret~~", "~~little smoaky room[s]~~", "~~wine~~", "~~storm[s]~~", "~~oysters~~", "~~lazy dull horses~~" and "~~English Apples~~" – is omitted; as are the aspects of comfort, comestibles and logistics within Bolingbroke's reports of travel in 1729.[102] Such gastronomical matters might, perhaps, be too redolent of the contemporary satirical trope which depicted culinary production and consumption as the means and end of commercial literary production – as in Pope's 'Receipt to make an Epick Poem'.[103] Details of illness and its remedies are also carefully managed: such references are removed where they become particularly repetitive or pedantic, tend towards bathos, or suggest hindered productivity. This particularly affects letters from Swift: for example, details of his "disorder" are excised from a letter to Gay of November 1730, along with his claim to have become "~~listless, & good for nothing~~", and to "~~have left of writing, but not wine~~"; while his complaints of his tendency to "~~commit many blunders [...] Particularly in writing~~" are omitted from a letter to Pope of November 1734.[104] Comparison of the printed letters against the surviving manuscripts highlights the selective nature of these exclusions of domestic detail – including, in this letter of July 1732, Swift's unflattering portrait of Pope's parsimonious hospitality:

[102] Gay and Pope to Swift, 22 October 1727, *Corr*. ii. 454-456. Bolingbroke to Swift, 30 August-5 October 1729, *Corr*. iii. 47-50.
[103] See Power, *Epic into Novel* (2015), pp. 1-44, esp. p. 30.
[104] Swift to Gay, 10 November 1730, *Corr*. iii. 147-9; Swift to Pope, 1 November 1734, *Corr*. iii. 438-40.



My scheme was to pass a month at Amesbury, & then go to Twitenham & live a winter between that & Dawly, & sometimes at Riskins, without going to London where I now can have no occasional lodgings. But I am not yet in any condition for such removeals. ~~I believe I told you that I have been about a month able to ride in Gambadoes which give my feet a support like a floor, but I can no more stand tiptoe on my left leg than I can dance the rope, nor know when I shall; for I mend slowly, & limp when I walk. For these reasons~~ I would fain have you get enough against you grow old, to have two or three Servants about you & a convenient house. It is hard to want those subsidia Senectuti when a man grows hard to please, & few people care whether he be pleased or no. I have a large house; yet I should hardly prevail to find one Visitor, if I were not able to hire him with a bottle of wine. So that when I am not abroad on horseback, I generally dine alone, & am thankfull if a friend will pass the evening with me ~~over a bottle~~. I am now with the remainder of my pint before me, ~~that I drank with water at dinner, with no creature but two Servants attending while I eat about half a chicken; and~~ so here's your health—And the second & chief is to my Tunbridge acquaintance, My Lady Dutchess. And I tell you that I fear, my Lord Bolin & Mr Pope, a couple of Philosophers would starve me; for even of Port wine I should require half a pint a day, & as much at night, and you were growing as bad unless your Duke & Dutchess have mended you. ~~You have not forgot; Gentlemen I'll leave you to your wine, which was but the remainder of a pint when four glasses were drank. . . I tell that story to every body, in commendation of Mr Pope's abstemiousness.~~ […]

My scheme was to pass a month at Aimsbury, and then go to Twitenham, and live a winter between that and Dawley, and sometimes at Riskins, without going to London, where I now can have no occasional lodgings: But I am not yet in any condition for such removals. I would fain have you get enough against you grow old, to have two or three servants about you and a convenient house. It is hard to want those *subsidia senectuti*, when a man grows hard to please, and few people care whether he be pleased or no. I have a large house, yet I should hardly prevail to find one visiter, if I were not able to hire him with a bottle of wine: so that when I am not abroad on horseback, I generally dine alone, and am thankful if a friend will pass the evening with me. I am now with the remainder of my pint before me, **and** so here's your health—and the second and chief is to my Tunbridge acquaintance, my Lady Duchess— and I tell you that I fear my Lord Bolin**gbroke** and Mr. Pope (a couple of Philosophers) would starve me, for even of port wine I should require half a pint a day, and as much at night: and you were growing as bad, unless your Duke and Duchess have mended you. […]

Figure 4.5 Swift to Gay and the Duchess of Queensberry, 10 July 1732, in manuscript (l) and 1741 edition (r).[105]

As well as deleting Swift's repetitive references to wine here, Pope also removes his vivid images of physical discomfort, and of dining alone, that lend the letter a somewhat vulnerable and melancholy air. Furthermore, letters dominated by or presenting an unremittingly negative view of Swift's state generally do not appear in print at all – for example, that in which he bemoans the quotidian apathy and disaffection which mars his life and work:

> ~~I awake so indifferent to every thing […], that I hardly think it worth my time to rise, […] I write Pamphlets and follys meerly for amusement, and when they are finished, as I grow weary in the middle, I cast them into the fire, partly out of dislike, and chiefly because I know they will signify nothing.~~[106]

[105] *Corr*. iii. 296-9.
[106] Swift to Pope, 15 January 1730/1, *Corr*. iii. 160-3.

This vision of Swift's misery, presumably, does not accord with the portrait of collective literary eminence and vigour which Pope hoped the editions would convey. Such deletions indicate Pope's particular care in this edition over the letters' reflection on the identities and literary legacies of his friends, as well as his own.

However, Pope may also have perceived Swift's meticulous passages of his domestic arrangements and remedies to have posed another risk to the published correspondence through their occasional drift towards the kind of carefully-calculated nonsense satirized by the group – as demonstrated in a mock-autopsy by Arbuthnot: "in the course of his practice he had administered 20473 vomits, 756 hogsheads, four gallons, and a pint of sack-whey, and above 50 ton of oil."[107] The regular reckonings of Swift's cures ("~~I drink a pint and half of wine every day, the pint at noon, & the half at night~~"; "~~I am almost every second day on horseback for about a dozen Miles~~") are often deleted from print, and Pope also excludes an extended letter of remedies in which Swift had solicitously prescribed him "Asses milk":

> ~~I am glad you are got into Asses milk. […] I long to know the Success of your Ass's milk, […] My old Presbyterian Housekeeper tells me, that if you could bring your Stomach to woman's Milk, it would be far better then Asses.~~[108]

Such exclusions, then, defend the group's satirical high ground: Pope had mocked Lord Hervey for taking this same invalid's remedy in the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* ("*Sporus*, that mere white Curd of Ass's milk?"), and such passages perhaps also detrimentally recall Swift's own satire, in *Gulliver's Travels*, of excessive consumption of alcohol ("the use of

[107] Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988), p. 116. Hammond quotes "An Account of the Sickness and Death of DR. W—DW—RD by Dr. TECHNICUM (1719)" in *The Life and Works of John Arbuthnot*, ed. George A. Aitken (Oxford, 1892), pp. 467-68.

[108] Swift to Pope, 1 May 1733, *Corr*. i. 10-13; [31 March 1733], *Corr*. iii. 360-64; 20 April 1731, *Corr*. iii. 190-2. See also Bolingbroke and Pope to Swift, [20 March 1730/1], *Corr*. iii. 183-6.

this liquor filled us with diseases which made our lives uncomfortable and short") and the interminable prescriptions and "abominable" "Composition[s]" of quack doctors.[109]

The more substantial omissions which result in the diminished presence of John Gay in the editions could also be interpreted as part of this editorial alignment with Scriblerian ideals.[110] The figure of Gay – as a professional author and beneficiary of patronage – presents a complication to a Scriblerian vision of independent social authorship, elevated from aristocratic obligations and mercenary concerns.[111] By the 1740s, Pope and Swift's management of Gay's legacy seems already to have addressed this discrepancy: Pope assumed control of his papers (telling Swift "I will take care to suppress things unworthy of him"); and subsequently re-presented him to public view, describing Gay in anecdotes as his "pupil" and in his epitaph as a benign figure "Of Manners gentle, of Affections mild; | In Wit, a Man; Simplicity, a Child".[112] In the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, Pope subsequently presented Gay's tragically thwarted promise as a result of the indifference of "the great":

> Left me to see neglected Genius bloom,
> Neglected die! and tell it on his Tomb;
> Of all thy blameless Life the sole Return
> My Verse, and QUEENSB'RY weeping o'er thy urn![113]

This simplified picture is characteristic of Pope's epitaphic impulse, as observed by Paul Baines: "Pope's instinct is toward the character sketch" rather than "story" or

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[109] *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, *Poems IV,* p. 117, l. 306; see Griffin, *Poet in the Poems* (1978), pp. 182-88. David Womersley (ed.), *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift: Gulliver's Travels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 376; 379; see Leo Damrosch, *Jonathan Swift: His Life and his Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 273; Bewley, "Health of Swift" (1998), p. 603; Michael DePorte, "Vinum Daemonum: Swift and the Grape", *Swift Studies* 12 (1997), 56-68.

[110] See Jones, *Talking on Paper* (1990), p. 49.

[111] See Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 99-122. Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988), p. 124.

[112] Pope to Swift, 2[0] April 1733, *Corr*. iii. 365-7. Osborn (ed.), *Spence: Observations* (1966), i. 62. 'Epitaph on Mr. Gay', *Poems VI*, pp. 349-52, ll. 1-2; 6.

[113] *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, *Poems IV,* p. 114, ll. 257-60. See Nokes, *John Gay* (1995), pp. 533-39.

"biography"; "the narrative compressed into stasis".[114] Pope's intervention in Gay's posthumous reputation, then, entailed a stripping of complexity and voice in favour of a synthesized portrait. This provides an informing context to Gay's minimal presence in the 1741 editions, which contain only two of his solely-authored letters – one of November 1726 celebrating the impact of *Gulliver's Travels* ("it is universally read, from the Cabinet-council to the Nursery"), and the other, from October 1727, truncated to a brief report of having "declin'd accepting" the degrading post of "Gentleman-usher to princess Louisa": "As I am us'd to disappointments I can bear them".[115] As a result, Gay appears almost exclusively though the voices of others, as recipient or subject, often of perturbed advocacy ("I hear Mr. Gay's second Opera which you mention, is forbid, and then he will be once more fit to be advised, and reject your advice"); or of pathos ("I attended him to his last breath").[116]

While the exclusion of Gay's letters could be attributed to various logistical factors, the editorial intervention in Swift's side of the correspondence suggests instead that the editions in fact serve to bolster Pope's posthumous re-construction of Gay's character and its reflection on the ideologies of the coterie. In the published editions, Swift's wearied concern and solicitation for Gay's welfare is edited to emphasize literary production and material prosperity – but to omit the details of the connection between the two. For instance, "I am glad you determine upon something ~~that will bring you money. But you have misunderstood me, for~~ there is no writing I esteem more than Fables".[117] Similarly,

[114] Paul Baines, "Life and Death in the Literary Biographies of Pope and his Circle", in *A Companion to Literary Biography*, ed. Richard Bradford (Chichester: John Wiley, 2019), pp. 440-41.
[115] Gay to Swift, 17 November 1726, *Corr*. ii. 413-5; Gay and Pope to Swift, 22 October 1727, *Corr*. ii. 454-6.
[116] Swift to Pope, 13 February 1728", *Corr*. iii. 15-16. Pope to Swift, 16 February 1732/3, *Corr*. iii. 347-50.
[117] Swift to Gay and the Duchess of Queensberry, 10 July 1732, *Corr*. iii. 296-9.

in another letter of June 1731, Pope retains the particularities of imaginary money and domestic bliss, but excludes Swift's sudden interrogation of specifics on how such circumstances might be brought about:

> I cannot allow you rich enough till you are worth 7000ll, which will bring you 300ll per ann. and this […] when you are old will afford you a pint of Port at night, two Servants and an old Maid, a little garden, and pen and ink provided you live in the Country, —— ~~you never mentioned whether you were Seriously a manager for my Lord Duke in his estate, which the Doctor and Mr Pope absolutely affirm. And pray what will you do with my 200ll? will it yield nothing in the funds? and what are you doing towards encreasing your fame and your fortune,~~ have you no Scheam either in verse or prose?[118]

Here, as elsewhere, Pope deletes references to the practical responsibilities of Gay's position. Meanwhile, we do not see in print the earnest assertions of industry, thrift, and financial capability by which Gay had attempted, unsuccessfully, to counter his characterization by Swift as indolent and profligate.[119] Even if Pope did have the opportunity to publish Gay's side of the correspondence, his dense defensive passages, along with his frequent "Reproaches" of Swift's silence ("~~I find you are determin'd not to write to me according to our old stipulation~~"), perhaps mark the letters as insufficiently stylish and literary for publication.[120] However, the exclusion of Gay's letters also notably suppresses from public view his cheerful part in the group's statements of satirical philosophy ("~~I dont hate the world but I laugh at it; for none but fools can be in earnest about a trifle~~"), and his pride and satisfaction in his own situation ("~~I am very happy in my present independency~~").[121]

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[118] Swift to Gay, 29 June 1731, *Corr*. iii. 202-4. See also 19 March 1730, *Corr*. iii. 96-7; 10 November 1730, *Corr*. iii. 147-9.

[119] See The Duchess of Queensberry and Gay to Swift, 18 July 1731, *Corr*. iii. 204-7; 24 July 1732, *Corr*. iii. 300-302; Nokes, *John Gay* (1995), pp. 513-21.

[120] Swift to Gay, 20 November 1729, *Corr*. iii. pp. 72-3; Gay to Swift, 3 March 1729/30, *Corr*. iii. 94-5.

[121] Gay to Swift, 3 March 1729/30, *Corr*. iii. 94-5; Gay to Swift, 20 March 1730/1, *Corr*. iii. 185-6.

Another potentially problematic aspect of Gay's correspondence from a Scriblerian perspective is its integration with Gay's patrons, the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry. Swift's early mentions of Gay's "~~Goddess-Dutchess~~" are excluded from a printed letter which had praised Gay's independence – ensuring that all mentions of his patrons are contained within the dedicated concluding section.[122] Here, the relationship appears in fact to be one not of dependency but of genuine affection, with the ostensible hierarchy only appearing as a subject of jest: "The Dutchess Should keep you at hard meat, and by that means force you to write".[123] The Queensberrys – banished from court for their solicitation on Gay's behalf – are depicted in print as emphatically friends rather than superiors, as the dynamic of patronage is further obscured by the excision of more deferential aspects of the letters: for example, in the valedictory "Respect ~~and gratitude~~" which Swift offers to the Duke, and the removal of passages which edge too close to servile sincerity: "~~—I must desire you (raillerie a part) to let my Lady Dutchess know, that no man is or can be more sensible than my self of her Grace's undeserved civility favour and condescention~~".[124] Furthermore, the editions present only Swift's assertive perspective of the lively, idiosyncratic epistolary scheme discussed above, though his occasional stridency of tone is subtly muted. For instance, minor edits soften Swift's breathless, petulant, and commanding impression of the "ungratefull Dutchess": "I heard her Say, ~~prethee~~ Mr Gay fill your letter to the Dean that there may be no room for me, […] *~~polliveles~~* **positively** I will not write a Syllable more, ~~The jest is grown Stale.~~"[125] These

[122] Swift to Gay, 28 March 1728, *Corr*. ii. 481-484.
[123] Swift to Gay, 29 June 1731, *Corr*. iii. 202-4.
[124] Swift to Gay and the Duchess of Queensberry, 12 August 1732, *Corr*. iii. 303-5; Swift to Gay, 28 August 1731, *Corr*. iii. 218-21.
[125] Swift to Gay, 29 June 1731, *Corr*. iii. 202-4. On the linguistic games which shape Swift's fluid epistolary vocabulary elsewhere, see Abigail Williams (ed.), *Journal to Stella: Letters to Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, 1710-1713* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Irvin Ehrenpreis, *The Personality of Swift* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 50-58.

changes tame the hysterical, runaway tone of the passage, leaving a gentler and more controlled humour. Overall, Pope's editorial attention ensures that the published letters serve as a polished context to his depiction, in the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, of the Queensberrys' sincere participation in his lonely, loyal vigil to Gay, and endorse his claim in a printed letter dated after Gay's death that "[t]he Duke has acted more than the part of a brother to him".[126] The figure of Gay in the editions is thus defined in negative, circumscribed by the supportive community surrounding him. The aspects of this correspondence omitted in print, then, reveal how the letters are edited to chime with the poetic representations of these friendships, by removing material that might challenge or undermine them.

3.2 Features enhanced in print

3.2.1 Epistolary features

Elsewhere in the editions, other aspects of the original letters are enhanced, augmented, or adapted to further reshape their depiction of this coterie. While, as we have seen above, some epistolary features are diminished in the transition to a published literary correspondence, others serve instead to reinforce and contextualize this shift. Circumstantial details, for example, help to establish a coherent geographical and temporal mapping of the letters in print. Unlike Pope's previous correspondence editions, the letters published in 1740-1 are primarily arranged not by correspondent but by chronology. Furthermore, they largely contain full dates and places of composition: "*Dublin, Feb.* 13, 1728".[127] The retention of the physical and temporal properties of the

[126] Pope to Swift, 16 February 1732/3, *Corr*. iii. 347-50.
[127] Swift to Pope, 13 February 1728, *Corr*. iii. 15-16.

original communication has the effect of interleaving these connected correspondences, recording the group's physical gathering and dispersal, and allowing us to map the letters precisely to external events, journeys and publications. For instance, Pope's enthusiastic celebration of Gay's return from Hanover in a letter of "Sept. 23, 1714", which is known only from print, conflates their renewed geographical closeness with an affirmation of social belonging: "Welcome to your native Soil! welcome to your friends!"[128] Establishing this contextual detail in print may involve the occasional invention of information: here, as elsewhere, this specifically ascribed date is flagged by Sherburn as "questionable".[129] Given the consistent dating and endorsement of the surviving manuscripts, such discrepancies may not result merely from guesswork or mistakes, but instead form a deliberate attempt to suggest a more regular correspondence, or to simplify the chronological progression of events.[130] For example, a letter from Bolingbroke to Swift, written episodically on a journey between 30th August and 5th October 1729 (from Aix la Chapele, Brussels, Ostend, Calais, and his own farm), is carefully condensed in print to two stages: "*Brussels, Sept.* 27, 1729", and "*From my Farm, Oct. 5"* – thereby presenting a smoother and more coherent narrative.[131] Similarly, the largely chronological arrangement of the earlier letters is disrupted later in the editions, where conversations are reordered or reconstructed in order to establish and develop particular themes – for instance, the period between March 1730 and March 1731, when Bolingbroke is staying with Pope and reflects philosophically to Swift on the development of the *Essay on Man*.[132] In this way, the print editions consolidate the letters' record of how the lives, characters,

[128] Pope to Gay, 23 September 1714, *Corr*. i. 254-255.
[129] *Corr*. i. 254-255. See also Pope to Swift, 12 [October] 1728, *Corr*. ii. 521-2.
[130] For instance, the edition conflates two of Swift's journeys to Ireland into consecutive letters: see Swift to Pope, August 1726, *Corr.* ii. 393-4. See also Swift to Pope, 4 [August] 1726, *Corr*. ii 384.
[131] Bolingbroke to Swift, 30 August – 5 October 1729, Corr. iii. 47-50.
[132] The 1741 La edition's numbered sequence for the letters in this series, if reordered chronologically according to Sherburn's dating, would run: Letter 45, 49, 36, 45, 50, 51, 46, 52, 47.

and works of their writers unfolded and developed. Overall, the print presentation and structure of the correspondence suggests that it is anthologized consciously as a linear, interconnected and geographically contextualized series of letters, which trace the biography of a group rather than an individual.

Similarly, while we have seen above and in previous chapters that conventional epistolary regards and greetings were routinely removed from Pope's correspondence editions, they are notably often retained in the letters of this circle. Such printed conventional greetings include Swift's direction in a letter of 1715: "I desire you will present my humble service to Mr. Addison, Mr. Congreve, and Mr. Rowe, and Gay".[133] However, the consciously selective preservation of these features is demonstrated by the retained references to one group of men in a 1723 letter from Swift to Gay ("Congreve, Arbuthnot, Lewis, &c.", "Mr. Pope", "Bolingbroke"), while mentions of peripheral figures are excised ("~~The D. of Wharton, Dr. Young~~", "~~Mr. Budgill~~", "~~Ben Took~~").[134] Ultimately, the published correspondence seems to employ these features to highlight the interconnected correspondence of a core group (Pope, Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, and Bolingbroke), while demonstrating its proximity to leading literary figures such as Addison and Congreve – thereby lending it an increased distinctness, cohesiveness, and exclusivity in print. This approach is congruent with that seen in chapters 1 and 3, as Pope edits his early correspondence with Cromwell and Caryll to enhance its connections to influential figures.

[133] Swift to Pope, 28 June 1715, *Corr*. i. 301-2. See also Parnell and Pope to Gay, 4 May 1714, *Corr*. i. 222-3; Pope and Gay to Parnell, 18 March [1714/15], *Corr*. i. 284-5.
[134] Swift to Gay, 8 January 1722/3, *Corr*. ii. 152-4.

The immediate temporal and material properties of the letter are also actively deployed in the editions to underline both the pleasures and the perils of shared epistolary discourse, with a consciousness of its potential representation in print. The published letters frequently reproduce reflections on the moment of composition – resurrecting the instantaneous epistolary act they depict, and often forming our only record of it. In 1727, for instance, Pope tells Swift that "It is a perfect trouble to me to write to you, and your kind letter left for me at Mr. Gay's affected me so much, that it made me like a girl"; while in 1729 he exclaims, "I must throw away my pen; it cannot, it will never tell you, what I inwardly am to you."[135] Such performative portraits of the writer's mental state lend the letters a greater currency and immediacy in print. Furthermore, the fierce yet whimsical tenderness found in this correspondence is markedly different to the urbane raillery or conventional civility that characterize Pope's epistolary relationships elsewhere in his editions. This infusion of the physical present within the epistolary abstract is further demonstrated by a letter to Swift of June 1728, in which Pope records an idyllic pastoral scene of shared composition: "I now hold the pen for my Lord Bolingbroke, who is reading your letter between two Haycocks, but his attention is sometimes diverted by casting his eyes on the clouds, not in admiration of what you say, but for fear of a shower".[136] Here, Pope's focus on the changing weather and his instantaneous transcription of Bolingbroke's unfolding responses ("He is pleas'd […] tho' he says") encapsulate the current moment for the absent Swift – and thus also for his later print audience.[137]

[135] Pope to Swift, 2 October 1727, *Corr*. ii. 447-48; Pope to Swift, 9 October 1729, *Corr*. iii. 57-8. See also Swift to Pope, 26 November 1725, *Corr*. ii. 342-44.
[136] Pope to Swift, 28 June 1728, *Corr*. ii. 503.
[137] *Corr*. ii. 503.

The published letters also retain contemplations of the vulnerable status of their originals. These observations endorse Pope's frequent use of the conventional construction of stylistic openness as contingent on the letter's material form; its ephemerality and vulnerability construed as a physical reflection of its candour and integrity. For instance, in a letter to Swift of November 1729 known only from print, Pope reflects on Swift's "sending your last to me quite open, without a seal, wafer, or any closure whatever, manifesting the utter openness of the writer".[138] Pope develops this theme into a wider consideration of epistolary transparency, observing that his own "love" and "esteem" for Swift lead him to write "negligently" and "openly" despite the risk of post-office intrusion.[139] Yet while the editions preserve Pope's interpretation of the meaning behind the material form of Swift's letter, they do not record its more straightforward explanation in his reply: "~~If I sent my last letter without a Seal it was an honest pure blunder~~".[140] Elsewhere, Pope's suggestion in a letter of 1714 that Swift take it with him "to that place where men of studious minds are apt to sit longer than ordinary" highlights the risks to the longer-term survival and privacy of such occasional documents in tones reminiscent of his censure, in the preface to the Pope-Swift *Miscellanies*, of those who "have fished the very Jakes, for Papers left there by Men of Wit".[141] Yet an alteration to Pope's suggestions of other potential uses of this letter in the 1741 London edition clearly delimits the acceptable level of irreverence towards such valuable objects: "you may find entertainment in folding it into divers figures, either doubling it into a

[138] Pope to Swift, 28 November 1729, *Corr*. iii. 79-81.
[139] Pope to Swift, 28 November 1729, *Corr*. iii. 79-81. See also Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, 15 September 1734, *Corr*. iii. 431-3; Pope to Swift, 16 February 1733, *Corr*. iii. 347-50; Pope to Swift, 17 August 1736, *Corr*. iv. 27-8.
[140] Swift to Pope, 26 February 1729/30, *Corr*. iii. 92-4.
[141] Pope to Swift, 18 June 1714, *Corr*. i. 230-32. Cowler (ed.) *Prose Works II* (1986), p. 91.

pyramidical, or twisting it into a Serpentine form ~~to light a pipe~~:"[142] These constructions of the manuscript letter as a vulnerable, mundane, and singular material object are complicated and contradicted by their survival only in print – a form which instead confers permanence and multiplicity, and thereby affirms the status of these letters as objects of intellectual interest and social intrigue. Here, the shadows of the material manuscripts serve to authenticate their printed counterparts, and to instil within them an impression of prescience and sincerity.

The material manuscript features which denote the infrastructure of joint correspondence – postscripts, changes of hand, and bundled letters – are similarly redeployed in the editions to invoke, or contrive, the letters' original context. Such features also facilitate active reconstruction of the correspondence: for instance, in printing a brief note of 1730 which charitably requests Swift's help on behalf of an acquaintance, Pope appends Bolingbroke's section of another joint letter of the same year.[143] Bolingbroke's comment at the original moment of composition is retained ("I did not take the pen out of Pope's hands […]"), and Pope's inserted "**P.S.**" employs a customary epistolary formula to verify this new join in print as the product of a lively social scene.[144] However, the postscript in fact brings to this apparently quotidian letter a crucial reflection on the value of authentic correspondence as a social record:

[142] *Corr*. i. 230-32. This passage recalls the common satirical trope of material valuation of poetic works – for instance, 'An Extempore Epigram, on seeing a Pipe lighted with one of the Laureate's Odes', *The London Magazine*, January 1737.
[143] Pope to Swift, [4 March 1729/30], *Corr*. iii 95; Bolingbroke to Swift, 19 November 1729, *Corr*. iii. 70-71. See also Pope to Swift, 28 November 1729, *Corr*. iii. 79-82
[144] Bolingbroke to Swift, 19 November 1729, *Corr*. iii. 70-71.

April 14, 1730.

This is a letter extraordinary, to do and say nothing, but to recommend to you, (as a Clergy-man, and a charitable one,) a pious and a good work, and for a good and an honest man: Moreover he is above seventy, and poor, which you might think included in the word honest. I shall think it a kindness done myself if you can propagate Mr. Westley's subscription for his Commentary on Job, among your Divines (Bishops excepted, of whom there is no hope) and among such as are believers, or readers, of scripture. Even the curious may find something to please them, if they scorn to be edified. It has been the labour of eight years of this learned man's life; I call him what he is, a learned man, and I engage you will approve his prose more than you formerly could his poetry. Lord Bolingbroke is a favourer of it, and allows you to do your best to serve an old Tory, and a sufferer for the Church of England, tho' you are a Whig, as I am.

We have here some verses in your name, which I am angry at. Sure you wou'd not use me so ill as to flatter me? I therefore think it is some other weak Irishman.

P.S. I did not take the pen out of Pope's hands I protest to you, but since He will not fill the Remainder of the Page, I think I may without offence. I seek no Epistolary fame, but am a good deal pleased to think that it will be known hereafter that you and I lived in the most friendly intimacy together.—Pliny writ his letters for the Publick, so did Seneca, so did Balzac, Voiture &c. Tully did not, and therefore these give us more pleasure than any which have come down to us from Antiquity. when we read them, we pry into a Secret which was intended to be kept from us, that is a pleasure. We see Cato, and Brutus, and Pompey and others, such as they really were, and not such as the gaping Multitude of their own Age took them to be, or as Historians and Poets have represented them to ours, that is another pleasure. […] Adieu.
I am most faithfully and affectionately yours.

Figure 4.6 Pope to Swift, [4 March 1730], with postscript (in bold) inserted in 1741 edition from Bolingbroke to Swift [9 April 1730].[145]

Pope removes this passage from its original dialogic context, rendering it instead an apparently incidental addition to an occasional letter.[146] In this way, he appears to use Bolingbroke's dispassionate, positive perspective to ventriloquize his own hopes for the edition at hand. The transferred passage deftly ensures that this letter demonstrates the unselfconscious intimacy, virtue, and authenticity of the correspondents, while simultaneously inviting its reader to recognize and appreciate these qualities.

[145] *Corr*. iii 95; *Corr*. iii. 101-103.

[146] This passage forms part of the discussion in which Pope had responded to Swift's observation of his "Schemes […] of Epistolary fame", with protestations that "I never had any Fame less in my head". Swift to Pope, 26 February 1729/30, *Corr*. iii. 92-94; Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, [9 April 1730], *Corr*. iii. 101-103.

As we have seen, many aspects of the letters pertaining to domesticity and health were excluded from print – and this lends a particular resonance to those that remain. Where domestic detail is retained, it generally serves to add comedy or status. For instance, while Swift's fastidious domestic arrangements were often omitted, the humorous irony with which the lively epistolary personae of Swift and the Duchess of Queensberry instil such matters secures their inclusion in print as self-deprecating caricatures of the peremptory aristocrat and cantankerous satirist. Consequently, Pope prints Swift's claim that

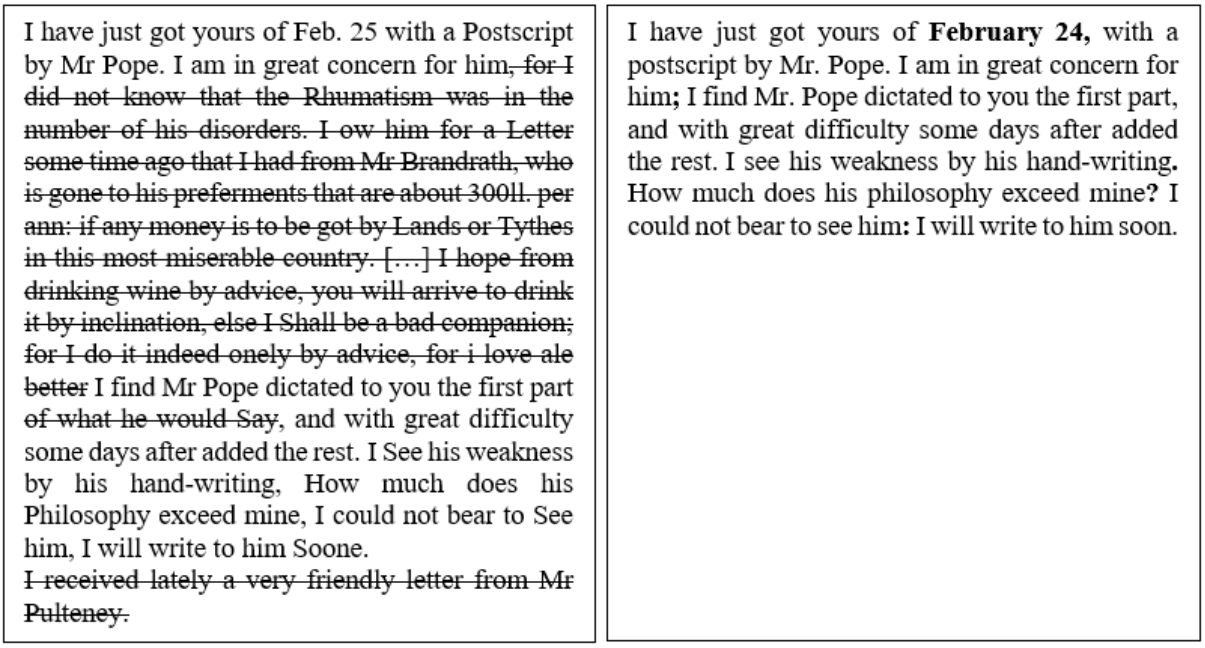
> Valitudinarians must live where they can command, and Scold; I must have horses to ride, I must go to bed, and rise when I please, and live where all mortals are Subservient to me. I must talk nonsense when I please; and all who are present must commend it. I must ride thrice a week, and walk three or 4 miles besides every day. [147]

The energy and self-awareness of this passage may have presented a desirable counterpoint to Swift's complaints of his "disorders of deafness and giddiness" contained elsewhere in the edition.[148] The editions also record the mutual concern of Pope and Swift for each other's "health", suggesting an impulse to retain and enhance such quotidian material where it offers an opportunity for reflection or pathos.[149] Thus, while the editions exclude repetitive detail on ailments and cures, they do preserve the attendant conventional features which would signal familiar intimacy to print readers – such as Pope's assurance to Swift that "you cannot be too particular in the accounts of your health to me […] it pleases me that you make me the person you wou'd complain to."[150] Also included in print are reports of grave illness – the uncertain outcomes of which often lead to moving expressions of tenderness. For instance, in one letter of September 1725

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[147] Swift to Gay, 29 June 1731, *Corr*. iii. 202-4. See also Swift to Gay and the Duchess of Queensberry, 19 November 1730, *Corr.* iii. 151-3. Swift to Gay, 10 November 1730, *Corr*. iii. 147-9.
[148] Swift to Pope, [June] 1737, *Corr*. iv. 77.
[149] Pope to Swift, 12 [October] 1728, *Corr.* ii. 521-23; 28 May 1733, *Corr*. iii. 372-3; Swift to Pope, 12 October 1727, *Corr.* ii. 451-3.
[150] Pope to Swift, 23 March 1727/8, *Corr*. ii. 79-81.

known only from print, Pope writes to Swift from the bedside of Arbuthnot, who is "ill of a very dangerous distemper, an imposthume in the bowels", and who "bids me tell you […] he lives or dies your faithful friend" – perhaps reminding the reader of Pope's poetic plea to "preserve my Friend" in the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* a decade later.[151] Furthermore, Pope's careful modification of epistolary features adds emotional heft to this topic in the published letters – as seen in his stripping of extraneous detail from a postscript from Swift to Gay:



I have just got yours of Feb. 25 with a Postscript by Mr Pope. I am in great concern for him~~, for I did not know that the Rhumatism was in the number of his disorders. I ow him for a Letter some time ago that I had from Mr Brandrath, who is gone to his preferments that are about 300ll. per ann: if any money is to be got by Lands or Tythes in this most miserable country. […] I hope from drinking wine by advice, you will arrive to drink it by inclination, else I Shall be a bad companion; for I do it indeed onely by advice, for i love ale better~~ I find Mr Pope dictated to you the first part ~~of what he would Say~~, and with great difficulty some days after added the rest. I See his weakness by his hand-writing, How much does his Philosophy exceed mine, I could not bear to See him, I will write to him Soone.
~~I received lately a very friendly letter from Mr Pulteney.~~

I have just got yours of **February 24,** with a postscript by Mr. Pope. I am in great concern for him**;** I find Mr. Pope dictated to you the first part, and with great difficulty some days after added the rest. I see his weakness by his hand-writing**.** How much does his philosophy exceed mine**?** I could not bear to see him**:** I will write to him soon.

Figure 4.7 Swift to Gay and the Duchess of Queensberry, 13 March 1730/1, in manuscript (l) and 1741 edition (r) [152]

This change ensures that the letter concludes poignantly and succinctly on the subject of concern for Pope's health. Meanwhile, the rhetorical effect is further sharpened through adjustments to Swift's punctuation. Overall, then, Pope's editing for print seems to suppress the mundane or trivial aspects of domesticity and health within the letters, instead emphasising, through passages of particular resonance, their representation of the anxieties inherent in sustaining remote friendships in an unpredictable world.

[151] Pope to Swift, 14 September 1725, *Corr*. ii. 321-2. *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, *Poems IV,* p. 127, l. 415
[152] *Corr*. iii. 179-82.

In line with this reconfiguration of the quotidian concerns of friendships and lifestyle into a more profound aesthetic and moral message, themes of memory and absence pervade the later letters of the edition. The amplification of these subjects and their attendant pathos in print is suggested by the fact that many such passages are known only from Pope's published texts. These letters dwell particularly on the dispersal of the group: for instance, Pope laments to Swift in 1734 that "Death has not done worse to me in separating poor Gay, or any other, than disease and absence in dividing us"; and Swift complains in February 1737 of the "havock" wrought by "Time, Death, Exile and Oblivion".[153] As hopes of future meetings fade, Pope and Swift instead express their shared wish "that God almighty would […] let old friends be acquainted in another state".[154] Accordingly, later letters increasingly recollect earlier, happier days: Pope tells Swift in September 1733, "my whole amusement is in reviewing my past life"; while Swift claims mournfully that "my greatest misery is recollecting the scene of twenty years past, and then all on a sudden dropping into the present."[155] These difficulties also result in reflections on correspondence as an unsatisfactory substitute for physical proximity: in 1734, Pope explains that he has been too "troubled" and "grieved" to write to Swift, correspondence having become merely an inadequate reminder of the distance between them: "can you abstract the letters from the person who writes them, so far, as not to feel more vexation in the thought of our separation, […] than satisfaction in the nothings he can express? If you can, really and from my heart, I cannot".[156] This recognition of the

[153] Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, 15 September 1734, *Corr*. iii. 431-4; Swift to Pope, 9 February [1736/7] *Corr*. iv. 55-7. See also Pope to Swift, 6 January 1733/4, *Corr.* iii. 400-402.
[154] Swift to Pope, 12 October 1727, *Corr*. ii. 451-2. See also Pope to Swift, 2 October 1727, *Corr.* ii. 447-8; 19 December 1734, *Corr*. iii. 444-5.
[155] Pope to Swift, 1 September 1733, *Corr*. iii. 383-4. Swift to Bolingbroke and Pope, 5 April 1729, *Corr*. iii. 27-30.
[156] Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, 15 September 1734, *Corr*. iii. 431-4.

failure of correspondence to connect its writers instils the later letters with a powerful sense of regret: while epistolary expressions of tenderness and care are the crucial threads sustaining these longstanding friendships, they are incapable of truly recapturing the vibrancy and intimacy of their writers' earlier acquaintance.

However, the 1741 edition also highlights the capacity of correspondence to reconnect, restore, and celebrate such friendships. Pope tidies and tightens for print a passage in a 1725 letter to Swift, in which he imagines an assembly of these "old friends" as orbiting celestial bodies:

> your kind answer […] makes me hope you are coming towards us, and that you incline ~~more and more~~ toward your old friends in proportion as you draw nearer to them; ~~in short, that you~~ **and** are getting into Our Vortex. Here is one, who was once a powerful Planet. ~~Lord Bol.~~ […] Here is another, [Lord Oxford] who thinks one of the greatest Glories of his Father was to have distinguish'd and Lov'd you, and who loves you hereditarily. Here is Arbuthnot, ~~yet living,~~ recover'd from the jaws of death.[157]

Such nostalgic reconstitutions of the network are evocative of the 1722 dedicatory epistle in which Pope had implored Lord Oxford to remember the intimacy and informality of their earlier meetings to revive these friendships dulled by distance or death:

> Absent or dead, still let a friend be dear
> (A sigh the absent claims, the dead a tear);
> Recall those nights that closed thy toilsome days,
> Still hear thy Parnell in his living lays; [158]

In his 1737 editions, Pope also reproduced Oxford's response to this poem – in which he had expressed his fond recollection of "those Evenings […] usefully & pleasantly spent".[159] Pope's commemoration of the early days of these friendships in both verse and prose suggests his conception of his works and letters as interconnected resources by which to

[157] Pope to Swift, 15 October 1725, *Corr*. ii. 331-34.
[158] 'Epistle to Robert, Earl of Oxford, and Earl Mortimer, *Poems VI*, pp. 238-40, ll. 13-16. See Griffin, *Poet in the Poems* (1978), pp. 117-119; Mack, *Life* (1985), pp. 389-392.
[159] Lord Oxford to Pope, 6 November 1721, *Corr*. ii. 91

preserve and mythologize them – an impulse which came to fruition in the editions of the 1740s.

3.2.2 Literary features

The Pope-Swift correspondence editions also offered the opportunity to actively and positively shape and supplement the letters' depiction of this circle as a literary coterie: to present an ideal authorial life which would stand in opposition to the nadir of authorship and scholarship portrayed in texts such as *The Dunciad*.[160] The editions thus preserve many of the self-defining statements of the group, including their shared desire to unite their names and characters publicly. For instance, in a letter to Swift of 1737, Pope expressed his wish to "leave some sort of Monument, what Friends two Wits could be in spite of all the fools of the world".[161] The printed letters also record connections between the members of the group and their works. In a series of letters of 1728-9, for example, Pope traces the foundations of the *Dunciad* back to Swift, to whom it is inscribed: "It was my principal aim in the entire work to perpetuate the friendship between us, and to shew that the friends or the enemies of one were the friends or enemies of the other"; "without you it had never been".[162] Throughout the correspondence, friendship is paramount, but literature is pervasive: as Pope writes to Swift in a letter of December 1734, "I always consider you so much as a friend, that I forget you are an author, perhaps too much, […] However, if I could inspirit you to bestow

[160] Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1988), p. 119.
[161] Pope to Swift, 23 March 1736/7, *Corr*. iv. 62-4. See also Swift to Pope, 1 June 1728, *Corr*. ii. 497-98; 31 May 1737, *Corr*. iv. 71-3; Bolingbroke and Pope to Swift, [March 1731/2], *Corr*. iii. 274-6.
[162] Pope to Swift, 9 October 1729, *Corr*. iii. 57-8; Pope to Swift, 12 [October] 1728, *Corr*. ii. 521-3. See also Swift to Pope 9 February [1736/7], *Corr*. iv. 55-7.

correction upon those three Treatises […]".[163] Through these letters, the published correspondence negotiates the attitudes of its writers to their literary careers, and establishes a contextual infrastructure for their literary works.[164] Literary production is emphatically configured as a service to friendship rather than to fame or to the public, and literature and personal letters are presented in symbiosis: the works having emerged from the mutual literary respect, affection, and collaboration which characterizes the correspondence, they are in turn presented within it as an offering to friendship.

The reconstruction and celebration of a supportive literary community enacted within the editions often explicitly or implicitly recalls Pope's poetry. Pope's letters frequently theorize on the mutually uplifting nature of friendship and collaborative authorship between embattled public figures. For instance, in a letter of March 1728 known only from print, he observes that "As the obtaining the love of valuable men is the happiest end I know of this life, so the next felicity is to get rid of fools and scoundrels", and claims, "I have always found (if I may quote myself) *That each bad Author is as bad a Friend*".[165] Here, Pope aligns literary prowess with personal virtue, located within and evinced by social connection. Furthermore, as Freya Johnston notes, Pope's alteration of the line from the *Essay on Criticism*, from "*Ill Author*" to "*bad Author*", further emphasizes "the contrasting notion of himself as a *bonus orator*".[166] This concept is congruent, too, with Pope's contemplation of his writing life in his *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, in which his friends are framed as impetus for and arbiter of his literary production ("Happy my Studies,

[163] Pope to Swift, 19 December 1734, *Corr*. iii. 444-5.
[164] See Marshall, "Epistolary Swift" (2011), p. 87.
[165] Pope to Swift, 23 March 1727/8, *Corr*. ii. 479-81. See also Pope to Swift, 12 [October] 1728, *Corr*. ii. 521-3.
[166] Freya Johnston, *Samuel Johnson and the Art of Sinking: 1709-1791* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 218-19. *Poems I*, p. 296, l. 519.

when by these approv'd! | Happier their Author, when by these belov'd!"); and in which such "honest" and "worthy" men are emphatically distinguished from the "babling blockheads" who form the objects of his satire.[167] Furthermore, these constructions of social authorship in the literary marketplace are echoed and underlined in the Scriblerian *Thoughts on Diverse Subjects* appended to the 1741 London edition of the correspondence, which reflect on the benefits of "friendships"; the misdirected attacks of "slanderers"; the importance of sharing "Wit"; and the observation that "Authors in England seldom speak well of each other, but when they have a personal friendship."[168] These attitudes suggest Pope's conception of the correspondence editions of the 1740s as both a constituent part of, and a tool to shape, the literary legacy of the group.

Editorial decisions also carefully mediate the prominence and impression of the poetic works that emerged from the group's processes of collaboration, composition, publication, and reception. For example, a minute change to a 1736 letter of Swift's serves to solidify Pope's 'Epistles' as a more distinct and canonical body of work: "I have a little repined at my being hitherto slipped by you in ~~some Epistle~~ **your Epistles**".[169] Pope similarly clarifies Swift's reports in 1725 of "finishing correcting, amending, and Transcribing ~~my Travells~~ ***Gulliver's Travels***".[170] More substantially, when Pope compiles excerpts from three letters written by Swift between 1727-28 into a single letter for print, he brings a sharper focus to the relationship between the three recent and forthcoming major works of Swift, Gay, and Pope during this time – *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Beggar's*

[167] *Poems IV,* p. 106, ll. 143-44; pp. 116-7, ll. 284; 303-4.
[168] 1741 La p. 307-10.
[169] Swift to Pope, 22 April 1736, *Corr*. iv. 11-12.
[170] Swift to Pope, 29 September 1725, *Corr*. ii. 324-6.

Opera, and *The Dunciad*. The reconstituted letter concludes with a coupled reflection which unites the three works in both the specific and abstract:

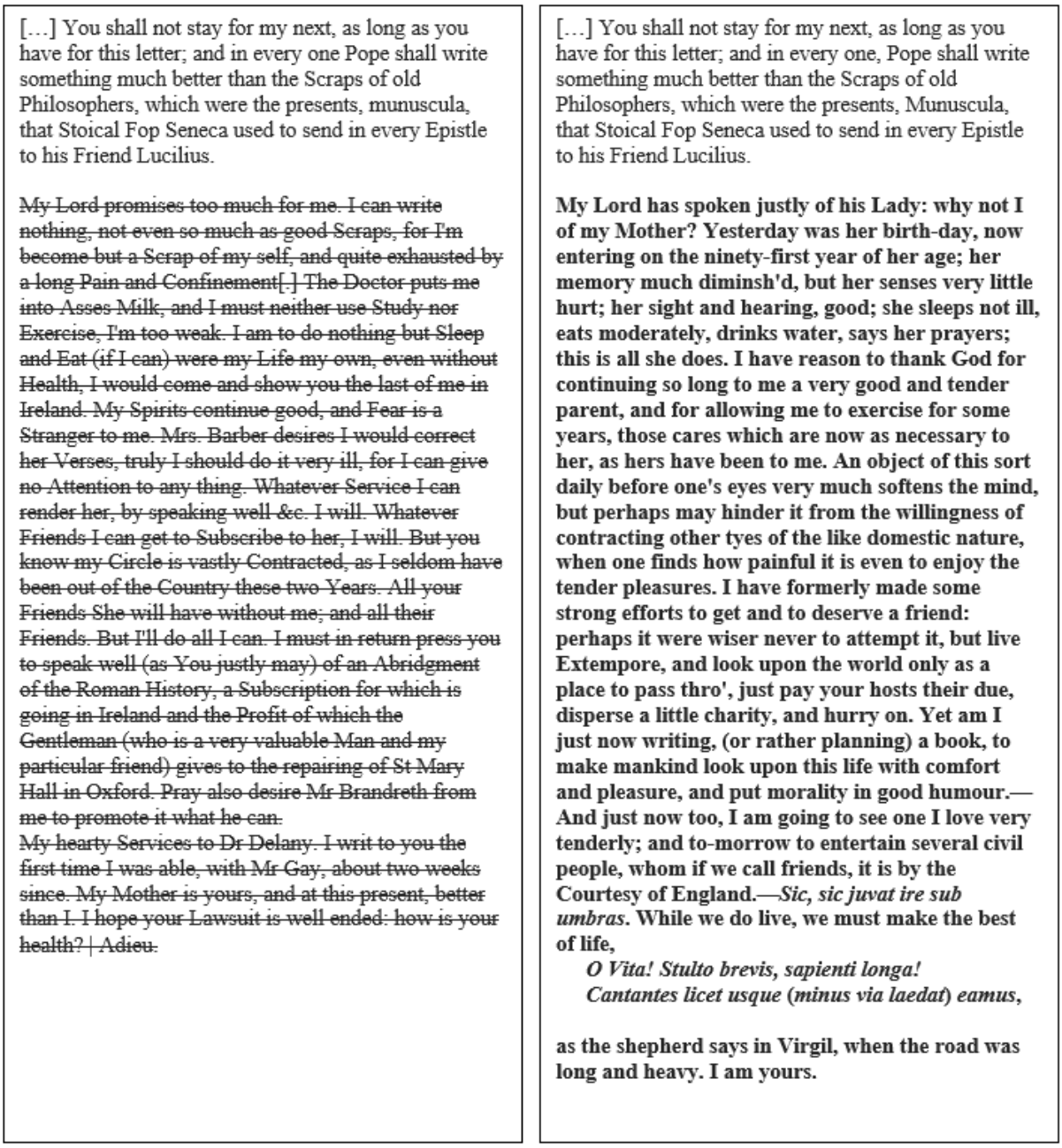
> The Beggars-Opera hath knock'd down Gulliver ; I hope to see Pope's Dulness knock down the Beggars-Opera, but not till it hath fully done its jobb.
> ~~[...]~~
> To expose vice, and make people laugh with innocence, does more publick Service than all the Ministers of State from Adam to Walpole, and so adieu.[171]

Pope's meticulous changes to these letters clearly signifies his use of the editions to connect and celebrate the works of the group and to reveal the enriching common ground in which they are rooted.

Alongside such emphatic statements of collective legacy, other editorial changes to the letters seem designed subtly to enhance their status as social and biographical context to poetic works. For example, in a joint letter of March 1731, Bolingbroke movingly considers health difficulties "in the decline of life" – observing the importance of protecting "against Physical Evil by care", and "moral Evil by Philosophy" – and deferentially situates this discussion in the developing poetic work which would later be inscribed to him, Pope's *An Essay on Man* ("Passions, says our divine Pope, as you will see one time or other, are the Gales of life").[172] Yet Pope's portion of the original letter had merely reflected briefly on his illness and isolation, and on favours for acquaintances. Apparently finding this passage undesirable for publication, Pope again redeploys the authenticating connection of the postscript to append a new section in print, which seems designed to meet Bolingbroke's promise of his philosophical wisdom:

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[171] Swift to Gay, 26 February 1727/8, *Corr*. ii. 475; 28 March 1728, *Corr*. ii. 481-84. On this passage see Griffin, *Swift and Pope* (2011), p. 118.
[172] Bolingbroke and Pope to Swift, [20 March 1730/1], *Corr*. iii. 183-85.



[…] You shall not stay for my next, as long as you have for this letter; and in every one Pope shall write something much better than the Scraps of old Philosophers, which were the presents, munuscula, that Stoical Fop Seneca used to send in every Epistle to his Friend Lucilius.

~~My Lord promises too much for me. I can write nothing, not even so much as good Scraps, for I'm become but a Scrap of my self, and quite exhausted by a long Pain and Confinement[.] The Doctor puts me into Asses Milk, and I must neither use Study nor Exercise, I'm too weak. I am to do nothing but Sleep and Eat (if I can) were my Life my own, even without Health, I would come and show you the last of me in Ireland. My Spirits continue good, and Fear is a Stranger to me. Mrs. Barber desires I would correct her Verses, truly I should do it very ill, for I can give no Attention to any thing. Whatever Service I can render her, by speaking well &c. I will. Whatever Friends I can get to Subscribe to her, I will. But you know my Circle is vastly Contracted, as I seldom have been out of the Country these two Years. All your Friends She will have without me; and all their Friends. But I'll do all I can. I must in return press you to speak well (as You justly may) of an Abridgment of the Roman History, a Subscription for which is going in Ireland and the Profit of which the Gentleman (who is a very valuable Man and my particular friend) gives to the repairing of St Mary Hall in Oxford. Pray also desire Mr Brandreth from me to promote it what he can.~~
~~My hearty Services to Dr Delany. I writ to you the first time I was able, with Mr Gay, about two weeks since. My Mother is yours, and at this present, better than I. I hope your Lawsuit is well ended: how is your health? | Adieu.~~

[…] You shall not stay for my next, as long as you have for this letter; and in every one, Pope shall write something much better than the Scraps of old Philosophers, which were the presents, Munuscula, that Stoical Fop Seneca used to send in every Epistle to his Friend Lucilius.

My Lord has spoken justly of his Lady: why not I of my Mother? Yesterday was her birth-day, now entering on the ninety-first year of her age; her memory much diminsh'd, but her senses very little hurt; her sight and hearing, good; she sleeps not ill, eats moderately, drinks water, says her prayers; this is all she does. I have reason to thank God for continuing so long to me a very good and tender parent, and for allowing me to exercise for some years, those cares which are now as necessary to her, as hers have been to me. An object of this sort daily before one's eyes very much softens the mind, but perhaps may hinder it from the willingness of contracting other tyes of the like domestic nature, when one finds how painful it is even to enjoy the tender pleasures. I have formerly made some strong efforts to get and to deserve a friend: perhaps it were wiser never to attempt it, but live Extempore, and look upon the world only as a place to pass thro', just pay your hosts their due, disperse a little charity, and hurry on. Yet am I just now writing, (or rather planning) a book, to make mankind look upon this life with comfort and pleasure, and put morality in good humour.— And just now too, I am going to see one I love very tenderly; and to-morrow to entertain several civil people, whom if we call friends, it is by the Courtesy of England.—*Sic, sic juvat ire sub umbras*. While we do live, we must make the best of life,

O Vita! Stulto brevis, sapienti longa!
Cantantes licet usque (minus via laedat) eamus,

as the shepherd says in Virgil, when the road was long and heavy. I am yours.

Figure 4.8 Bolingbroke and Pope to Swift, [20 March 1730/1], in transcript (l) and print (r).[173]

This fragment, known only from print, appears to respond naturally both to Bolingbroke's personal, philosophical tone, and to his mention of the *Essay*, contextualising its origins against his dutiful care for his mother.[174] The quotidian detail of this biographical background also amplifies the portrait of filial piety which Pope had presented in his *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*:

[173] *Corr*. iii. 183-85, 1741 La, pp. 110-112.
[174] Pope to Swift, [c. 19 June 1730]. *Corr*. iii. 117-18.

> Me, let the tender Office long engage
> To rock the Cradle of reposing Age,
> With lenient Arts extend a Mother's breath,
> Make Languor smile, and smooth the Bed of Death,[175]

The letter thus becomes a coherent, united composition, in which the authentic context conferred by joint epistolary composition, rather than exposing the unhappy reality of the moment, is employed to construct a refined vision of the personal ideology and social exchange that shaped Pope's literary works.

The brief letter from Bolingbroke to Swift which follows this in print (although dated by Sherburn to January 1731 – two months earlier), preserves to us another illuminating glimpse of the collaborative writing process, and encapsulates its dialogic synthesis of ideas. In the context of attempts to remedy the "feeble and precarious" health of his wife, Bolingbroke expresses an idea ("by the help of a little chymistry the most noxious juices may become salubrious") which would find poetic form in the *Essay on Man* (the bee "From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew").[176] Bolingbroke goes on to draw this connection between letters and poetry explicitly, in contrasting the ephemerality of his own present writing with the permanence of Pope's and Swift's:

> Pope is now in my library with me, and writes to the world, to the present and to future ages, whilst I begin this letter which he is to finish to you. What good he will do to mankind I know not, this comfort he may be sure of, he cannot do less than you have done before him.[177]

The epistolary apparatus of the joint letter thus creates, for the later reader, the impression of intercepting Bolingbroke's vivid, immediate despatch from the crucible of poetic production. Pope's part of this letter is not printed and therefore is not known –

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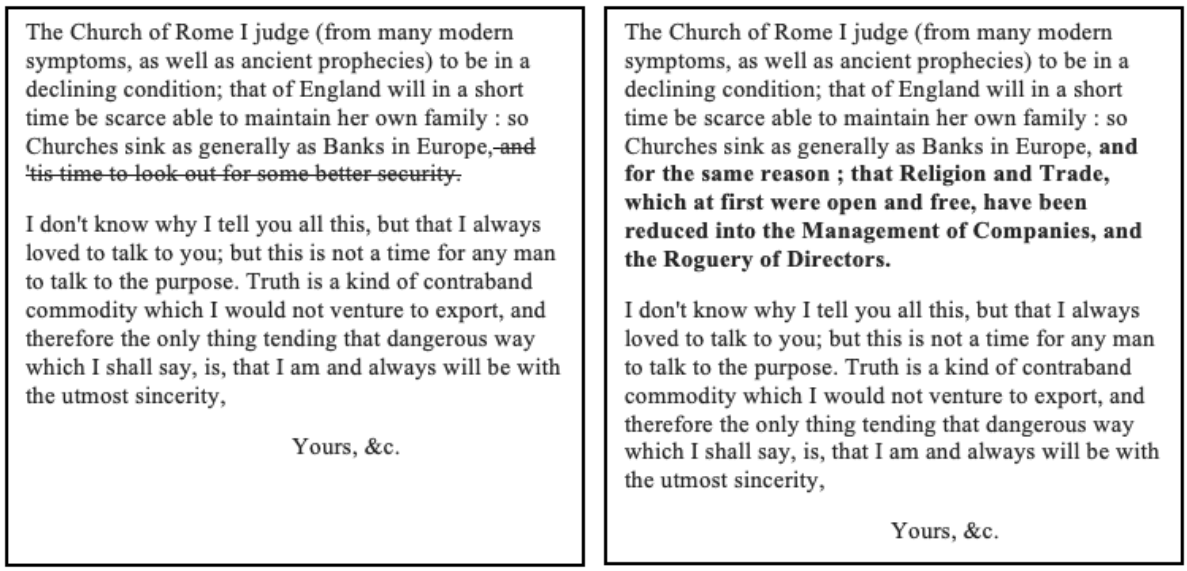
[175] *Poems IV,* p. 127, ll. 408-411.
[176] Bolingbroke to Swift, January 1730/1, *Corr*. iii. 163 (as noted by Sherburn). *Poems III-i*, p. 42, l. i. 220.
[177] *Corr*. iii. 163.

his silence here perhaps serving to avoid any interruption of quotidian specificity, and thereby to sustain the idea of his poetic voice resonating into posterity.

The 1741 editions also forge tacit connections between the group's correspondence and their works through their poetic or satirical epistolary style. For example, Pope's letters to Swift explore the parallels between epistolary and literary writing ("If I writ this in verse, I would tell you, you are like the sun […]") and express even mundane matters lyrically (The Dr. goes to Cards, Gay to Court; one loses money, one loses his time […]").[178] Figurative passages within Swift's letters often take on the "elliptical" symbolic and narrative qualities and recurrent "central theme of disappointment and displacement" through which, James Ward suggests, he "mythologize[d] his life".[179] For example, Swift reminisces on a childhood incident in a letter of April 1729: "when I was a little boy, I felt a great fish at the end of my line which I drew up almost on the ground, but it dropt in, and the disappointment vexes me to this very day."[180] Meanwhile, Partricia C. Brückmann has observed Swift's recourse to a Scriblerian "strain" of "retributive justice" in a letter of March 1730.[181] Here, Swift employs a fable-like allegory and persistent zoomorphism which, in turn, identifies his political targets ("[I] would gladly […] stand by, while my betters were driving the Boar [Walpole] out of the garden"); emphasizes his despairing misanthropy ("It is time for me to have done with the world […] and not die here in a rage, like a poison'd rat in a hole"); and allegorizes his destructive satirical impulses: "I have likewise seen a Monkey overthrow all the dishes and plates in a kitchen, merely for the

[178] Pope to Swift, 18 June 1714, *Corr*. i. 1730-32. Pope to Swift, 3 September 1726, *Corr*. ii. 394-6.
[179] James Ward, "Jonathan Swift" in *A Companion to Literary Biography*, ed. Richard Bradford (Chichester: John Wiley, 2019), pp. 423-4.
[180] Swift to Bolingbroke and Pope, 5 April 1729, *Corr*. iii. 27-30.
[181] Brückmann, *Manner of Correspondence* (1997), pp. 54-56.

pleasure of seeing them tumble".[182] Furthermore, letters are adjusted within the 1741 editions to consolidate and develop poetic ideas: for instance, Pope amends a passage from a letter to Swift of June 1716 to expand an analogy between religion and banking:



The Church of Rome I judge (from many modern symptoms, as well as ancient prophecies) to be in a declining condition; that of England will in a short time be scarce able to maintain her own family : so Churches sink as generally as Banks in Europe, ~~and 'tis time to look out for some better security.~~

I don't know why I tell you all this, but that I always loved to talk to you; but this is not a time for any man to talk to the purpose. Truth is a kind of contraband commodity which I would not venture to export, and therefore the only thing tending that dangerous way which I shall say, is, that I am and always will be with the utmost sincerity,

Yours, &c.

The Church of Rome I judge (from many modern symptoms, as well as ancient prophecies) to be in a declining condition; that of England will in a short time be scarce able to maintain her own family : so Churches sink as generally as Banks in Europe, **and for the same reason ; that Religion and Trade, which at first were open and free, have been reduced into the Management of Companies, and the Roguery of Directors.**

I don't know why I tell you all this, but that I always loved to talk to you; but this is not a time for any man to talk to the purpose. Truth is a kind of contraband commodity which I would not venture to export, and therefore the only thing tending that dangerous way which I shall say, is, that I am and always will be with the utmost sincerity,

Yours, &c.

Figure 4.9 Pope to Swift, 20 June 1716 in the 1740 clandestine edition (l) and 1741 edition (r).[183]

The insertion here, by elaborating on the commercial theme, also connects and resonates with Pope's closing ironic construction of words as a tradeable resource ("truth" as a "contraband commodity"), which encapsulates the contrasting capacities of language to be nuanced, critical and sincere, or to be slippery, corrupt, and mercenary.[184] This editorial change thus heightens the echoes in this letter of the economic and cultural degeneration decried in works such as Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and Pope's *Epistle to Bathurst* ("Blest paper-credit! last and best supply! | That lends Corruption lighter wings to fly!").[185] These letters highlight the fact that many of the exchanges from which we

[182] Swift to Bolingbroke, 21 March 1729/30, *Corr.* iii. 98-9. The London texts amended to "*boars*", diffusing the direct reference.
[183] *Corr*. i. 341-42; 1741 La pp. 5-7. See also Swift to Pope, 26 November 1725, *Corr*. ii. 342-44.
[184] Pope to Swift, 20 June 1716, *Corr*. i. 341-42.
[185] *Epistle to Allen Lord Bathurst, Poems III-ii,* p. 93, ll. 69-70. See Tom Jones, "Pope's *Epistle to Bathurst* and the Meaning of Finance", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 44:3 (2004), 487-504.

draw much of our knowledge of the developing satirical attitudes of Pope and Swift are known to us only from their polished self-published texts.

Elsewhere, minor editorial adjustments made to literary aspects of the letters further suggest Pope's conception of the editions as a satirical manifesto and portfolio – as both a declaration of purpose and a demonstration of principles in practice. Pope minutely refines, for example, a series of letters of Autumn 1725 which discuss the development of *Gulliver's Travels*, including the addition of conviction to Swift's assertion of the work's origins: "Upon this great foundation of Misanthropy […] The whole building of my Travells is erected […] The matter is so clear that it will admit ~~little~~ **of no** dispute".[186] Pope also edits Swift's impatient anticipation of *The Dunciad* in November 1727, so that it evokes in print deliberate precision rather than indiscriminate rage: "the rogues he ~~mawles~~ **marks** will die of themselves in peace".[187] Furthermore, minor changes made in the London edition to a 1733 letter from Pope to Swift refine and balance several clauses defining his satires ("I would rather call my satires, Epistles: They will consist more of morality than **of** wit") and improves the letter's internal consistency by adjusting his reference to the "threats […] occasion'd by my ~~satires~~ **verses**".[188] Such detailed editorial attention reveals the precise poetic and cultural sensitivity with which Pope prepared these editions, and illustrates his continuous endeavour to perfect the style, substance, and social context of his correspondence to cultivate his poetic legacy.

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[186] Swift to Pope, 29 September 1725, *Corr*. ii. 324-6. Swift had corrected to "of little dispute" in the Dublin edition. Pope to Swift, 15 October 1725, *Corr*. ii. 321-4. See also Pope to Swift, 15 October 1725, *Corr*. ii. 321-4.

[187] Swift to Gay, 23 November 1727, *Corr*. ii. 460-62.

[188] Pope to Swift, 2[0] April 1733, *Corr*. iii. 365-7. *Poems III-i*, p. 166, l. iv. 394. On satires and epistles, see above, Chapter 3, p. 261.

4. Conclusion

This discussion has demonstrated that the correspondence which maintained the coterie surrounding Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke and Gay over many years, and which has formed such a crucial source for our understanding of the social nature and literary activities of the Scriblerus Club, is in large part mediated by Pope's lifetime editions of his letters. Furthermore, it has illustrated the way in which the distinctive curation of the letters in these editions helped to fashion the group identity we have inherited today. In this way, as well as shaping the surviving record of this epistolary network, the correspondence of the 1741 editions adjusts its character and tone to present to public view a carefully refined aetiological work, which provides social context and narrative to the literary and personal development of Swift, Pope, and Gay. The attention in the published letters to the careful delineation of the group's "works" and their "weaknesses" seems, in one sense, to be enacted by the editorial work which refines the correspondence and controls its references to and reflections on literary works.[189] Yet through their hints of material epistolarity and their obliquely recorded observations, the editions also cut through this dichotomy by allowing access to an emphatically private and material communication network – one coveted, yet unguarded – which enriches and illuminates the literary works of the group by revealing the exemplary loyalty, sincerity, and support which bonded their authors. This seems to be congruent with Pope's aim, as stated in a letter known only from print, of "collecting the best monuments we can of our friends, their own images in their writings […] to shew the silly world that men of Wit, or even Poets, may be the most moral of mankind".[190] Yet an intriguing irony is presented by the fact

[189] Pope to Swift, 16 February 1732/3, *Corr*. iii. 347-50.
[190] *Corr*. iii. 347-50.

that Pope's idealized depiction of private social authorship, set in opposition to the degenerate, mercenary concerns of contemporary print culture, is itself reliant on an exchange of manuscript for print.

The editions' complex journey to publication also marks them as a site of the continued tension in Pope and Swift's competing poetic biography, in which, Brean Hammond observes, they "began to project images of each other in a way that neither found satisfactory".[191] We see a similar tendency here, as Pope uses the correspondence to demonstrate the divergence and congruence between the character and works of the two men, which is in turn subtly altered by Swift's desire to shape his own legacy. Furthermore, as we have seen, Pope's reconstruction of the correspondence once again reveals attitudes that can be mapped onto his insistent representation of this group, and his place among it, in his poetry ("Gay dies unpension'd with a hundred friends, | Hibernian Politics, O Swift! thy fate; | And Pope's, ten years to comment and translate.").[192] In particular, the themes drawn from the letters here are reminiscent of Pope's defence and explanation of his writing life in the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, with its emphasis on the importance, within a poetic career, of deference to virtue, independence, domestic duty, literary style and integrity, and true friendship. The refined correspondence presents evidence of these genuine social ties – and thereby affirms the truth and assures the permanence of Pope's poetic self-presentation by displaying its roots in enmeshed, interconnected, contemporary social context. Yet the editions also, once again, carefully conceal Pope's role in and ambitions for the publication of his letters,

[191] Hammond, "Scriblerian Self-Fashioning" (1989), pp. 121-2. See also Seth Rudy, "Pope, Swift, and the Poetics of Posterity", *Eighteenth-Century Life* 35:3 (2011), 1-28.
[192] *The Dunciad, Poems V*, p. 336, ll. iii. 330-32.

obscuring even his admission that "~~the Fame I most covet indeed, is that, which must be deriv'd to me from my Friendships~~".[193] In this chapter, we have seen how Pope's desire to use this group of correspondence to shape his own legacy within the context of a wider coterie resulted in an approach which diverges significantly from that observed in previous chapters. Within this new edition, Pope's editorial practice is carried out with a more defined focus that entails careful attention to the reciprocal and quotidian nature of the original correspondences, to the differentiated identities of its participants, and to the ways in which his literary works are situated in, and operate in dialogue with, a broader cultural context.

[193] Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, [9 April 1730], *Corr*. iii. 101-103.

Conclusion

Personal letters, Virginia Woolf argued, populate and familiarize the literary landscape of the past: they illuminate "Lives and characters" beyond a "stark outline" and "fill in the spaces between the great books with the voices of people talking".[1] As a result, Woolf suggests, "there is a bareness about an age that has neither letter-writers nor biographers".[2] Throughout this thesis, we have seen Pope adopt both of these roles simultaneously: his surviving correspondence forms an edited record of his character, life, and milieu. In remediating his correspondence in print, Pope sought to reveal his private voice as congruent with, but separate to, that of his "published works".[3] Yet Pope's selective curation of his epistolary legacy also served both to amplify and to distort, or even silence, the voices of those around him. Pope's correspondence editions invoke his own identity and those of his correspondents in diverse ways to present a series of portraits that sometimes reveal textured detail, and sometimes silhouettes. We have seen, for example, how Pope explores in print the generic associations of his letters to women and his early correspondence with older literary men, experimenting with and challenging their formal conventions and expectations. Meanwhile, he employs the nuanced resonances of other correspondences with individuals such as Caryll, Swift, Bolingbroke, and Gay to provide more detailed and specific biographical context which could support his poetic self-representation. The thesis has shown, too, how Pope's editorial approach served to extract or highlight certain themes emerging from the

[1] Virginia Woolf, "Dorothy Osborne's 'Letters'", *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Volume V,* ed. Stuart N. Clark (London: Hogarth Press, 2009), p. 383.
[2] Woolf, *Essays V* (2009), p. 383.
[3] Woolf, *Orlando* (2018), p. 185.

specific circumstances of each correspondence. In print, the correspondences discussed above are used alternately to highlight Pope's literary development; to explore gender constructions and relations; to assert his political and religious neutrality; and to emphasize his place within an important literary coterie.

The thesis has also demonstrated that Pope's editorial practice was responsive to the practicalities of the publication process and the status of source material; to the new contexts provided by print formats; and to the vagaries of the contemporary literary marketplace. Pope catered to the demands of different audiences through careful attention to both the textual content and physical format of his editions, and he repeatedly engaged with the publishing process to reshape, refine, and reframe his letters in print. Meanwhile, his approach to remediation shifted according to the material circumstances of each correspondence and the availability of manuscripts: he problematized the manuscripts of the Cromwell letters to challenge texts already in the print marketplace; distanced his "Letters to Several Ladies" from their quotidian manuscript origins; employed his manuscript letters to Caryll as a reserve of draft material which could be refined and developed; and, finally, invoked manuscript features within the printed Swift letters as an indicator of textual and emotional authenticity. Pope's presentation of his letters in print also exploits the material and textual shifts associated with this change of format, disrupting notions of the letter's stable form, quotidian purpose, and reciprocal nature. Pope often removed, fragmented, or supplemented the texts and paratexts of his letters to establish their significance to a new, public readership, and altered details of correspondent or chronology to explore their resonances within new contexts. Overall, then, the evidence presented within this thesis reveals both a pragmatic flexibility and a nuanced and detailed sensitivity within Pope's

editorial practice. It also demonstrates how Pope's concerted desire to represent diverse and wide-ranging aspects of his life, works, character, and milieu through his letters has significantly influenced their survival, and has thereby shaped our understanding of his personal identity and relationships as well as those of his correspondents.

Based on these findings, this thesis has argued that the relationship between Pope's correspondence in manuscript and printed forms is an important and rewarding subject for detailed textual study. James A. Winn has observed that Pope's letters "are not merely raw historical material" but also "literary documents": as a result of the similar "imaginative and rhetorical processes" that shaped both Pope's letters and his poetry, study of these forms is mutually enriching.[4] This reciprocity extends, I argue, to Pope's editorial approach to his correspondence, which consistently highlights its thematic and textual connections to his works and develops its role as an informing context to their composition. Pope's sequential remediation of his letters also echoes his tendency to his return to and revise sentiment and phrasing within his poetic work, reiterating and developing central themes and concepts: "True Ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance".[5] Furthermore, Pope's poems and letters function together as part of the strategy of self-representation by which he sought to shape his identity as *bonus orator* in the eyes of the public and posterity. In his initial statement on authorship within the preface to his 1717 *Works*, Pope considers his status as "a man building a monument" and frames his poems as a "testimony" which, he hopes, will reflect their author's status "not only [as] a

[4] Winn, *Window* (1977), p. 9.

[5] *An Essay on Criticism, Poems I*, p. 281, l. 362. For example, see "*Fame* (our *second* Life)" (*An Essay on Criticism, Poems I*, p. 293, l. 480); "How vain that second life in others' breath, | Th' estate which wits inherit after death" ('Temple of Fame', *Poems II*, p. 288, ll. 505-6); "What's Fame? – a fancy'd life in others breath, | A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death." (*Essay on Man*, *Poems III-i*, pp. 149-50, ll. iv. 237-8). See Mack, *Collected in Himself* (1982), pp. 329-39; McLaverty, *Pope, Print, and Meaning* (2001), pp. 74-5.

good writer, but a good man".[6] Two decades later, Pope printed a letter in his 1737 correspondence editions in which he claimed, "I could publish my own heart too, I will venture to say, for any mischief or malice there's in it".[7] Pope's letters, then, like his poetry, insistently address both the present and future; and their message is highlighted, clarified and strengthened through his meticulous and purposeful approach to revision and publication.

In consequence, Pope's correspondence epitomizes the "interpenetration of 'literature' and 'life'" within this form, as observed by Patricia Meyer Spacks.[8] His complex approach to epistolary composition and editing offers unique insights into the role of eighteenth-century published correspondences and authorial self-representation within the public sphere. As a result of this liminality, as discussed in the introduction, Pope's correspondence presents an intriguing challenge to critical study and editorial mediation. This thesis has sought to disentangle the textual complexities of Pope's letters to gain a new understanding of the interaction between their manuscript and print formats and to examine the intersection of their historical, social, biographical, and literary aspects. The evidence presented as part of this approach, in order to construct arguments about what the patterns within the textual changes can tell us about Pope's editorial practice, must necessarily be selective and subjective. Yet behind this analysis lies a vast range of variants across the provisionally complete set of manuscripts, transcripts, lifetime editions, reprints, and later collections which make up Pope's correspondence. The substantial textual variation within this corpus and its obscure material history raises

[6] "Preface", *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope* (London, 1717), pp. x-xi.
[7] Pope to Hugh Bethel, 17 June 1728, *Corr*. ii. 501.
[8] Spacks, "Forgotten Genres" (1988), p. 52.

interesting questions about provenance, agency, authority, and intention, and about modes of scholarly transmission and discussion. In interrogating the textual instability of Pope's letters from various methodological perspectives, the thesis has shown the benefit of studying them in multiple states, as plural, transitional documents.[9] Reaching beyond the editorial copy-text and its 'substantive' variants allows us to examine the shifting epistolary and literary qualities of Pope's letters in the context of his own changing approach and attitudes towards them. Considered in this way, we can appreciate the richly nuanced and humanly intricate textual complexities that have helped to shape our understanding of Pope as an individual and poet.

[9] See McGann, *Textual Condition* (1991), p. 97; Jack Stillinger, *Coleridge and Textual Instability: The Multiple Versions of the Major Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 119-121.

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Further details of the major lifetime and posthumous editions of Pope's correspondence are given in the Appendix.

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Appendix: Editions of Pope's letters

This appendix provides a list of the editions of Pope's letters referred to in the thesis.

Lifetime editions of Pope's letters

I refer to representative versions of the seven editions discussed in the thesis by the corresponding abbreviations (listed in order of printing):

Abbreviation	**Edition**	**Date published**	**Reference**	**Relevant chapters**
Miscellanea	*Miscellanea. In Two Volumes. Never before Published. Viz. I. Familiar Letters written to Henry Cromwell, Esq; by Mr. Pope…* Vol. I. London: Printed in the Year, 1727. 12º	July 26 1726	Griffith, I. 134-135 (no. 177)	1
1735	*Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence For Thirty Years; from 1704 to 1734. Being, A Collection of Letters, Which passed between him and Several Eminent Persons. Volume the First.* (London. Printed for E. Curll, M. DCC. XXXV) 8º	May 23 1735	Griffith, II. 297-298 (no. 376)	1-3
1737 octavo	*The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.; Vol. V.* and *Vol. VI*, (London: J. Roberts, 1737) 8º	June 17 1737	Griffith, II. 364-365 (no. 461)	1-3

1737 folio	*Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope, And Several of His Friends*, (London: J. Wright, for J. Knapton, L. Gilliver, J. Brindley, and R. Dodsley, 1737) 2º	May 19 1737	Griffith, II. 359-361 (no. 456)	1-3
1740	[Letters of Pope and Swift], (Clandestine edition, 1740) 8º	May-June 1740	Sherburn 1740	4
1741 quarto	*The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose. Vol. II.* (London: J. and P. Knapton, C. Bathurst, and R. Dodsley, 1741), 4º	1741	Griffith, II. 429-430 (no. 531) Sherburn 1741 La1	4
1741 octavo	*Letters to and From Dr. J. Swift, D.S.P.D. from the Year 1714, to 1738…* (Dublin: Printed by and for George Faulkner, 1741), 8º	1741	Sherburn 1741 Da	4

Further delineation of specific editions of the letters is complicated by multiple impressions of each one. Sherburn provides a comprehensive "List of Editions of Pope's Letters: 1726–1742".[1]

[1] *Corr.* i. xviii-xxv. Further detail on the lifetime editions can be found in R.H. Griffith, *Alexander Pope: A Bibliography*, 2 vols. (Austin: University of Texas, 1922-27); Dearing, "1737 Letters" (1950), pp. 185-97; and McLaverty, "First Printing" (1980).

Later editions of Pope's letters

Pope's letters have appeared in the following scholarly editions since his death in 1744.

They are referred to throughout the thesis by the corresponding abbreviations:

Abbreviation	**Edition**
Warburton (1751)	William Warburton (ed.), *The Works of Alexander Pope Esq. In Nine Volumes* (London: J. and P. Knapton, et al., 1751)
Warton (1797)	Joseph Warton (ed.), *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq. In Nine Volumes* (London: B. Law, et al., 1797)
Bowles (1806)	The Reverend William Lisle Bowles (ed.), *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq. In Verse and Prose: In Ten Volumes* (London: 1806)
Roscoe (1824)	William Roscoe, *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq. with Notes and Illustrations by Himself and Others […] In Ten Volumes* (London, 1824)
Elwin (1871)	J. J. Croker, W. Elwin and W. J. Courthope, (ed.), *The Works of Alexander Pope*, 10 vols. (London: John Murray, 1871-89)
Sherburn (1956) or *Corr*.	George Sherburn (ed.), *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956)