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## **The Role of Women in the Canonisation of Shakespeare From Elizabethan Theatre to the Shakespeare Jubilee**

Kitamura, Sae

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*From Elizabethan Theatre to the Shakespeare Jubilee*

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**The Role of Women in the Canonisation of  
Shakespeare: From Elizabethan Theatre to  
the Shakespeare Jubilee**

Kitamura Sae

King's College London

PhD

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to clarify the role that female interpreters in Britain played at an early stage in the canonisation of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare, one of the popular playwrights in English Renaissance theatre, became increasingly famous during the first half of the eighteenth century, and the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769 marked the climax of the popularisation of his works. It is said that since then, he has maintained his position as the ‘national poet’ of England (or Britain). Although women had supported Shakespeare even before his works had established their canonical status, the extent to which female interpreters contributed to the canonisation of Shakespeare, how they participated in the process, and why they played the roles that they did have not yet been sufficiently visible. In this thesis, I illustrate women’s engagement in the process of the popularisation of Shakespeare by examining the early reception of his works, and to document how individual women’s pleasure of reading and playgoing relates to their intellectual activities. I adopt three approaches to provide answers to my research questions in this thesis: reading critical and fictional works by women; analysing the descriptions of female readers and playgoers by male writers; and conducting a large-scale survey of the ownership history of pre-mid-eighteenth-century printed books of Shakespeare’s plays.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, I analyse women’s engagement with theatre in Renaissance England, and consider Shakespeare’s popularity amongst them based on records about female audiences. The second chapter discusses female readers and writers in Renaissance England and their responses to Shakespeare’s works. Chapter 3 focuses on Restoration Shakespeare and female interpreters from 1642 to 1714. The fourth chapter discusses women’s playgoing, play-reading, writings, and their participation from the early eighteenth century to the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769.

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## Introduction: The Canonisation

I Wonder how that Person you mention in your Letter, could either have the Conscience, or Confidence to Dispraise Shakespear's Playes [.]<sup>1</sup>

We all well know that the immortal Shakespears Playes ... have better pleas'd the World than Jonsons works [.]<sup>2</sup>

Who has given us nobler or juster Pictures of Nature, than Mr. *Shakespear*?<sup>3</sup>

Seventeenth-century female writers wrote all three of these encomia to William Shakespeare. The author of the first passage, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, published an epistolary essay on Shakespeare in *Sociable Letters* (1664), and this is the earliest substantial review of Shakespeare's plays in existence (Thompson and Roberts, Introduction, p. 12). The second comes from Aphra Behn's Preface to *The Dutch Lover* (1673), and the third from *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* (1696), a feminist pamphlet written by Judith Drake. When they wrote these passages, Shakespeare's canonical status had not yet stabilised. While his works were often rewritten and adapted in accordance with contemporary conventions, he was only one of several popular playwrights of the time, 'at worst [considered] as an artless rustic, at best an archaic father-king' (Dobson, *Making*, p. 14). Nevertheless, these three female writers from different social backgrounds praised Shakespeare and criticised those who did 'Dispraise' him.

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Cavendish, *Sociable Letters*, Letter 123. Quotations from her letters refer to Fitzmaurice's edition of 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Aphra Behn, Preface to *The Dutch Lover*, in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, edited by Janet Todd, v, p. 162. Quotations from Behn refer to this edition.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Drake, *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*, p. 42. This book was first published in 1696. Quotations from Judith Drake refer to *The Pioneers: Early Feminists*, an anthology edited by Marie Mulvey Roberts and Mizuta Tamae. It includes the facsimile version of the fourth edition of 1721.

This thesis aims to clarify the role of female playgoers and readers in Britain in the canonisation of Shakespeare. Scholars have shown that many *interpreters* (a term I use in this thesis to refer to both those who read Shakespeare in book form and those who watched his plays at playhouses) contributed to establishing his canonical status, including critics, theatre professionals, readers and teachers of English literature. Female interpreters, including Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn, Charlotte Ramsey Lennox and members of the Shakespeare Ladies Club, energetically read and watched Shakespeare from the seventeenth century onward. However, only a few women's names are remembered in the history of Shakespearean criticism. For example, Brian Vickers' *William Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage* anthologises 309 texts on Shakespeare from 1623 to 1801, but only five women's works are included among these. The issues of how much (or little) women contributed to the popularisation of Shakespeare and why they played the roles that they did remain to be explored.

I am greatly indebted to recent studies involving gender-focused analyses of the reception history of Shakespeare, but hope to focus on aspects which they have not yet fully examined. In 1997, Ann Thompson and Sasha Roberts suggested that 'a rich history of women's criticism of Shakespeare' is still 'a history that is often forgotten today' (Thompson and Roberts, p. 1). Several scholars shared this sentiment, and began studies of early female interpreters of Shakespeare about ten years before Thompson and Roberts made this comment. For example, Andrew Gurr's *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (hereafter *Playgoing*), first published in 1987 and then revised in 2004, offers a definitive work on audience studies in Renaissance England; Gurr describes the playgoing culture in early modern London in detail by examining a variety of materials ranging from plays to legal documents, and mentions many female playgoers. However, because his major concern involves the social conditions surrounding playgoers and playhouses as a whole, his work does not focus on women's (especially female readers') interpretations of Shakespeare's works. Charles Whitney's *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (hereafter *Early Responses*) of 2006 dedicates

one chapter to the responses of female playgoers; the study collects many individual playgoers' responses to various playwrights' works in Renaissance England, but it does not focus on the canonisation of Shakespeare. Michael Dobson's *The Making of the National Poet* (1992) clarifies the process of the canonisation of Shakespeare in theatre between 1660 and 1769 and provides a detailed analysis of adaptations of his works in this period; however, although it analyses female playgoers' participation in the process and contains a significant discussion about the Shakespeare Ladies Club, women's responses to Shakespeare are not its main subject matter, and it does not cover the English Renaissance period. Fiona Jane Ritchie's studies of women's responses to Shakespeare reveal that the influence of female playgoers became impossible to ignore. Still, her work only discusses female playgoers and performers in the long eighteenth century, and does not deal with female book readers during the period or women's responses before the Restoration.<sup>4</sup>

My research differs from these previous studies in five ways. I cover the period from the English Renaissance to the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769; I argue that the experience of pleasure – as defined by Barthes and others – represents one of the key factors in the process of canonisation regardless of interpreters' gender and other cultural backgrounds; I deal with both female playgoers and readers throughout the period and discuss the effects of the combination of these two modes of reception; I incorporate frameworks from recent fan studies to analyse playgoing and playreading from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries; and I analyse under-investigated female writers, such as Judith Drake, not discussed in these studies. I will explain these five points in turn to clarify the aims of my research.

My project examines the interpretations of Shakespeare by women who read

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<sup>4</sup> Ritchie, "'The Merciful Construction of Good Women': Women's Responses to Shakespeare in the Theatre in the Long Eighteenth Century' (hereafter 'The Merciful Construction'). See also Ritchie's shorter articles, 'The Influence of the Female Audience on the Shakespeare Revival of 1736–1738: The Case of the Shakespeare Ladies Club' (hereafter 'The Shakespeare Ladies Club') and 'Women and Shakespeare in the Restoration and Eighteenth Century' (hereafter 'Women and Shakespeare').

books or watched theatrical performances from the Elizabethan era through the Restoration to 1769, the year of the Shakespeare Jubilee. I decided on this time span for three major reasons. First, few scholars have examined contemporary women's responses to Shakespeare's works in the English Renaissance period because of the scarcity of materials. By combining records about women's playgoing and playreading, this thesis aims to understand clues to female responses to Shakespeare's texts. For example, I analyse addresses to women in the prologues and epilogues of English Renaissance plays to find clues about female playgoers, and I investigate the ownership marks and marginal notes of early printed playbooks for signs of women's reading.

Second, I place an emphasis on the continuity of theatre before and after the London theatre closure from 1642 to 1660. As Susan Wiseman points out, private or illegal stage performances took place and dramatic works were published and republished during this time (pp. 19–39). I deepen the understanding of the threads of continuity by analysing female readership of playbooks and their involvement with drama during the Civil War. Third, I focus on women's interpretations of Shakespeare before he achieved the status of 'national poet'. Dobson and other scholars have shown that the Shakespeare Jubilee in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1769 marked one of the climaxes of his canonisation, which had gone through several stages from the seventeenth century; this trend has continued to the present.<sup>5</sup> Anti-French sentiment and the exaltation of 'Englishness' during the Seven Years War from 1756 to 1763 boosted Shakespeare's popularity, and as Gerald Newman points out, he and other popular English poets enjoyed an increasing association with 'the Sincerity of the English National Character' (pp. 128–29). The Shakespeare Jubilee, a three-day festival produced by David Garrick, marked a peak of 'Bardolatry', and to use Jonathan Bate's

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<sup>5</sup> Dobson, *Making*, pp. 134–84. Many researchers have commented on the reception and canonisation of Shakespeare. For example, Taylor's *Reinventing Shakespeare* deals with the reception of Shakespeare from the Restoration to the 1980s. Furthermore, Hume focuses on the reception of Shakespeare in the early eighteenth century in 'Before the Bard: "Shakespeare" in Early Eighteenth-Century London'. Dugas analyses how Shakespeare came to be commercially consumed through stage performances and publication in his *Marketing the Bard: Shakespeare in Performance and Print 1660–1740*.

phrase, '[a]fter the Jubilee it was universally acknowledged that Shakespeare was at the very least *the* National Poet and for many people not merely a poet but a god' (*Shakespeare Constitutions*, p. 30). As a result, even in the twentieth-first century, when Shakespeare is globally popular, his works are often 'read as a marker of Englishness or Britishness'.<sup>6</sup>

The second aspect of my approach involves a focus on the 'pleasure' of watching theatrical performances and reading books in the process of canonisation. Little research has examined the concept of pleasure and canonical works and, as Frank Kermode points out, 'pleasure and the canon may seem uneasy bedfellows' in literary studies (p. 20). Since the 1960s, a 'canon debate' has taken place in which scholars have discussed the following question: What is the dominant factor in the process of canonisation – the social and political situations surrounding a text or its inherent universal values?<sup>7</sup> Many scholars have participated in this debate, but while they have mentioned the pleasure of reading sporadically, they have rarely made it a central issue. Some scholars, such as Harold Bloom, consider a text canonical because of its inherent aesthetic values or the 'mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction' (*The Western Canon*, p. 29). Bloom believes canonical texts provide 'difficult pleasures', or pleasures neither 'universally accessible' nor 'easier' (p. 532). As Robert Alter suggests, Bloom 'sees the canonical in terms of constant struggle and confrontation' even when he discusses pleasure; he disregards the playful, comical, or 'unserious' aspects of the pleasure of canonical texts.<sup>8</sup>

Other scholars think that certain works become canonical not because they have universal values, but because they have fulfilled the aesthetic or moral standard of

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<sup>6</sup> McManus, 'What Is My Nation?', p. 188. See also Bate's *The Genius of Shakespeare*, pp. 157–216. For nationalism and women in Britain, I am greatly indebted to Linda Colley. For the relationship between the canonisation and nationalism in general, see Helgerson, pp. 193–246; and Shrank, pp. 14–15. For the canons in modern states in general, see also Jusdanis, p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> For the course of the canon debate, see Górak, pp. 1–8. For the course of the debate on Shakespeare's authority, see also Bristol, pp. 3–29.

<sup>8</sup> See Alter's Introduction to Frank Kermode's *Pleasure and Change: The Aesthetics of Canon*, p. 11.

certain powerful supporters in the past, and therefore were considered suitable for teaching values convenient for the dominant class. Such scholars tend to regard a canon 'as what other people, once powerful, have made and what should now be opened up, demystified, or eliminated altogether'.<sup>9</sup> As W. T. J. Mitchell summarises it in *New Keywords*, scholars of gender studies, African-American studies, film studies and studies of visual and mass culture – especially those interested in French theory, such as deconstruction and poststructuralism – tend to question the authority of the canon (pp. 21–22). For example, feminist critics such as Nina Baym, Christine Froula and Lilian S. Robinson reconsider the canon as 'an entirely gentlemanly artifact' (Robinson, p. 106), and try to enlarge the canon by re-evaluating relatively unknown female writers. These scholars seldom discuss the pleasure of reading, although their opinions differ greatly from those of Harold Bloom. As Alter points out, many scholars 'seem to share his sense that literature is an existentially serious business' (p. 11).

Several possible reasons exist as to why literary critics, especially those interested in both canon formation and French theory, avoid the issue of pleasure. Ronald Huebert, referring to a new historicist (Stephen Greenblatt) and a feminist (Catherine Belsey), argues that recent scholars' 'dismissive attitude towards pleasure' derives partly from their reception of two influential French scholars, specifically Michel Foucault, who considered pleasure 'the sign of power', and Jacques Lacan, who considered it 'the sign of pathology' (Huebert, pp. 12–13). I agree with Huebert's opinion that scholars interested in Foucauldian and Lacanian theory focus much on the issues of power and/or pathology and treat the issue of pleasure as merely incidental to their main concerns. Along with these two scholars, Pierre Bourdieu might be another major influence on scholars' relative negligence toward pleasure. He distinguishes 'cultivated pleasure' from 'vulgar' pleasure and considers them deciding factors between intellectuals and non-intellectuals in society:

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<sup>9</sup> See von Hallberg, Introduction to *Canons*, p. 1.

it [pure pleasure] is irreducible to the pursuit of the profits of distinction and is felt as the simple pleasure of play, of playing the cultural game well, of playing on one's skill at playing, of cultivating a pleasure which 'cultivates' and of thus producing, like a kind of endless fire, its ever renewed sustenance of subtle allusions, deferent or irreverent references, expected or unusual associations.... Cultivated pleasure feeds on these intertwined references, which reinforce and legitimate each other, producing, inseparably, belief in the value of works of art, the 'idolatry' which is the very basis of cultivated pleasure, and the inimitable charm they objectively exert on all who are qualified to enter the game, possessed by their possession. Even in its purest form, when it seems most free of 'worldly' interest, this game is always a 'society' game, based, as Proust again says, on a 'freemasonry of customs and a heritage of traditions' (*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, pp. 500–501).

Cultivated pleasure, or the pleasure of exploring a text, helps intellectual readers to confirm their social status, and this distinguishing function, rather than pleasure itself, is the main concern of those influenced by Bourdieu's works. Those who participate in the canon debate under his influence (especially in English-speaking regions) approach discussions of pleasure cautiously, fearing that the valorisation of pleasure in reading might lead to authoritarianism. For example, in his discussion with Frank Kermode, John Guillory expresses anxiety that an emphasis on 'higher pleasure' in reading would only be utilised to justify the status of already canonical works.<sup>10</sup> In such frameworks, an individual interpreter's experience of pleasure – one of the main concerns in this thesis – is not a major subject matter. However, Bourdieu's analysis of these two

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<sup>10</sup> See Guillory's 'It Must Be Abstract', a short discussion with Frank Kermode in *Pleasure and Change*, pp. 65–75. See also Guillory's *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*, p. 10.

pleasures provides valuable insight into social constructs, and I refer to this in analysing the development of Shakespearean criticism and the changes in the reception of his works, especially in the eighteenth century.

I resituate pleasure as one of the main driving forces in the process of canonisation. How individual female interpreters' pleasure relates to their intellectual activities has not sufficiently been made visible, partly because the connection between pleasure and canonicity has not fully been discussed and partly because documents of women's reception of literary and dramatic works are relatively scarce. In describing women's playgoing and playreading as pleasure-seeking activities, I utilise Roland Barthes' distinction between the *plaisir* and *jouissance* of the text, as presented in *The Pleasure of the Text*:

Text of pleasure [*plaisir*]: the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a comfortable practice of reading. Text of bliss [*jouissance*]: the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language.<sup>11</sup>

Barthes seems to suggest that pleasure derives from an encounter with familiar aspects of a text that can reinforce a pre-existing bond between readers and the culture to which they belong, while 'jouissance' derives from an encounter with something unfamiliar, strange, puzzling or mysterious.

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<sup>11</sup> *The Pleasure of the Text*, translated by Richard Miller, p. 14. I refer to *plaisir* as 'pleasure' but keep the French word *jouissance* for three reasons: first, Miller's English translation 'bliss' is too spiritual to express the sexual connotation of the original word; second, I maintain the phonetic and etymological association with the English word 'joy'; third, 'jouissance' was used as a loan word in English until the sixteenth century, and now many English-speaking scholars in French studies use 'jouissance'. See 'jouissance | jouissance' in *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*).



Whether an interpreter finds *jouissance* in a text depends on his or her way of reading, and it is possible that a text provides pleasure in one place but *jouissance* in another for the same interpreter. Some interpreters might even feel the sense of *jouissance* as another kind of pleasure, because the shock felt in an encounter with something new or startling is not always unpleasant. Barthes himself admits that one can perceive *jouissance* as ‘a brutal immediate (without mediation) pleasure’ (*The Pleasure of the Text*, p. 20), and he also recognises the difficulty in defining and separating these terms in ‘The Adjective Is the “Statement” of Desire’: ‘the ambiguity of the expression “pleasure of the text” must stand, sometimes specific (pleasure versus bliss), sometimes generic (pleasure and bliss [*jouissance*])’ (*The Grain of the Voice*, p. 173). Following Barthes, I use the word *pleasure* in this broader meaning in some cases, for it is difficult to completely separate *jouissance* from pleasure in analysing interpreters’ individual responses to a text.

Frank Kermode’s *Pleasure and Change: The Aesthetics of Canon* (2004), perhaps the only substantial work that focuses on the role of pleasure in canonisation, tries to clarify Barthes’ ambiguity:

The experience of pleasure and *jouissance* are not always sharply distinguished, for they can occur together, but the text of *jouissance* always involves a loss, a dispersion; it is outside the context of pleasure, is indeed closer to pain. The experience in question is beyond the scope of descriptive criticism, for such commentary would have to be of the nature of *jouissance* itself .... As Stephen Heath expresses it, pleasure arises from a link with “cultural enjoyment and identity,” whereas *jouissance* shatters that identity and is not to be identified with enjoyment.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Kermode, pp. 21–22. See also Heath’s Introduction to Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*.

Kermode argues for both pleasure and ‘dismay’ (or *jouissance* in Barthes’ terms) as requisite conditions for a text to be regarded as canonical (pp. 30–31); moreover, he contends that canons remain powerful because they are subject to constant updating or reinterpretation and reselection: ‘Individuals, sharing with others certain powers, change the canon to match their modernity. So a canon changes, and the changes renew the supply of both pleasure and its potent derivative, dismay’ (p. 50). Scholars interested in the canon debate widely share this idea of the canon as a dynamic system—for example, Mitchell also defines the word ‘canon’ as ‘not a closed, absolute system, then, but a dynamic, evolving entity that can be reopened, reinterpreted, and reshaped’ (pp. 20–22). Although Kermode places too great an emphasis on ‘dismay’ and disregards the pleasure of laughter, I partly agree with him on the necessity of a text to provide readers with the pleasure or *jouissance* to maintain its canonical status.<sup>13</sup> If a text provides neither pleasure nor *jouissance*, it will be abandoned in the course of time, although I keep social, cultural, political or commercial factors in mind in my analysis.

Having defined pleasure and *jouissance* as the second focus of my thesis, I now move on to my third concern: the attempt to cover both the female experiences of reading and playgoing. The experience of reading plays in book form and the experience of watching them at playhouses differ greatly; I examine how women evaluated Shakespeare’s plays in relation to the different modes of reception. Although the circulation of printed playbooks contribute to the popularisation of Shakespeare’s works, to use Marta Straznicky’s phrase, playreading ‘as a historical practice has been marginalized by critical inquiries’.<sup>14</sup> The term ‘separated’ may be more apt than ‘marginalized’, for several substantial studies of playbooks have been published since

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<sup>13</sup> For the emphasis on dismay and the pleasure of laughter, Alter points out that the works of Jane Austen and Alexander Pope show ‘no dissolution of the self nor an existential abyss but a delighting play of perception, an invitation to ponder motives and make subtle discriminations about behaviour, character, and moral predicaments’ (p. 9). On comical works, Flieger also argues that ‘[j]oking pleasure’ is different from Barthes’ *jouissance* (p. 122).

<sup>14</sup> Straznicky, Introduction to *The Book of the Play*, p. 1. Peters’ *Theatre of the Book 1480–1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* and Stern’s *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page* also discuss the relationship between performances and playbooks.

the 2000s, but only a few cover both playgoing and playreading. By conducting large-scale, first-hand research on pre-1769 copies of Shakespeare's works in major libraries using bookplates, signatures, and library catalogues, I hope to clarify how women read his works and to compare reader response to audience response.<sup>15</sup>

I argue for two striking differences between reader response and audience response, especially in the field of drama: these have to do with the number of mediators and the frequency of the communication between interpreters during the enjoyment. As Martin Meisel suggests, while a reader interprets a playbook as 'a manual or a blueprint of performance' (p. 1), an audience member watches a performance as a product modelled on a blueprint and completed by people working for the theatre. Readers do not necessarily need a mediator other than the playbook they read, although other readers sometimes influence them as they read a text, especially in a teaching environment or in using annotated editions. Further, the physicality of the book, such as the thickness and sleekness of the paper or the type of font, can also influence the reader's interpretation. Recent cognitive studies show that readers tend to remember information better if delivered in hard-to-read fonts than information delivered in easy-to-read fonts.<sup>16</sup>

Compared to readers, audience members need help from more mediators to watch a performance. As John Russell Brown suggests, a stage performance represents a complex product of collaboration, in which many creators' interpretations intertwine with each other: 'A director may intend a play to carry specific messages, but the organisation of the theatre and the day-to-day life of its members will be reflected in all they produce and be evident on stage, whether the director likes it or not' (p. 144). Audience members have to receive the performance through the filter of the interpretations of various other mediators, such as directors (or their equivalents),

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<sup>15</sup> In Appendices 1 – 5, I present the results of my research on playbooks.

<sup>16</sup> See Oppenheimer and Frank, p. 1192; and Diemand-Yauman, Oppenheimer, and Vaughan, p. 114. For the physicality of the book and its influence on interpretation, see also Genette's discussion in his pioneering work *Paratexts* and Earle's analysis of paperbacks (p. 158).

players and other working theatre professionals, who embody their interpretations on stage and enable audience members to understand them through their directing, production or performance skills. Furthermore, when an individual attends a stage performance, an ‘audience’ emerges as a temporal but sharply defined and exclusive community.

An audience member can share the playgoing experience with many other people (mostly strangers); in contrast, readers can interpret books on their own and less frequently communicate with other readers during the enjoyment of the text than playgoers do. Early modern Europeans often read (or recited) books aloud in groups, but the number of listeners was far smaller than that of audience members at playhouses, the capacities of which were between 1,000 and 3,000 people (Hill, *Stages and Playgoers*, p. 165). Public reading became a less frequent but more intimate event in England, especially after the Restoration when literacy increased and personal reading became more common.<sup>17</sup> Scholars must keep these differences in mind when they analyse the reception of theatrical works.

The responses of theatre audiences as opposed to readers tend toward the homogeneous because of the influence of mediators’ interpretations and other audience members’ responses. Scholars interested in audience response criticism, including Gary Taylor, Kent Cartwright, and Verna Foster, place a strong emphasis on the ‘advantage of greater homogeneity than those of solitary readers’.<sup>18</sup> Taylor’s *Reinventing Shakespeare* (1989) highlights the difference between reader response and audience response: ‘[r]eader-response criticism presupposes that literature is characterized by anonymity, absence, isolation, and silence’ (p. 323). On audience response, he states:

Theatre can enable isolated dispersed individuals to recognize that they form

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<sup>17</sup> Chartier; and Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England*, pp. 80–81.

<sup>18</sup> Foster, p. 3. See also Cartwright, p. 25; and Taylor, *To Analyze Delight: A Hedonist Criticism of Shakespeare*, p. 117.

part of a cohesive, and therefore powerful, present group consensus. Groups are less inhibited than individuals. The consciousness of belonging to a crowd tempts and enables an individual to do things that, left alone, s/he would resist – something any censor understands (Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, p. 325).

This ‘homogeneity’ can be regarded as both an advantage and a defect in the reception of a play. It enables audience members to enjoy a solidarity and to influence the creators of theatre as a large group. Inside playhouses, audiences who clap, boo, hiss or give a standing ovation together can affect the performance. Outside playhouses, playgoers sometimes form playgoing groups to share the audience experience, too, and some of them become influential in the process of canonisation. However, the homogenous atmosphere often makes it difficult for audience members to shape their own critical analysis, and sometimes tempts them to follow the crowd. This sometimes makes theatre a powerful tool of political propaganda to agitate audience members.<sup>19</sup> In analysing the reception of Shakespeare’s plays, the functional difference between propaganda of printed publications and drama should be noted. As Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities*, printed publications contribute to nationalism by wide-scale dissemination.<sup>20</sup> Theatrical performances work slightly differently: they may not enjoy the wide distribution of printed publications, but they can trigger a more homogenous response.

A strong emphasis on the homogeneity of the audience, however, can lead to too much generalisation and a disregard for the individual pleasure of playgoers. To avoid this problem and to take communal influences into consideration at the same time, I argue for the consideration of three major factors in analysing audience response: individual interpreters’ preferences, which are largely based on personal experiences and cannot be generalised; communal audience response during the performance; and

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<sup>19</sup> On theatrical propaganda and nationalism, see also Shaffer, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> See also Peacy’s discussion, pp. 2–5.

general interpretive strategies shared by interpretive communities to which playgoers belong outside playhouses. To clarify these factors, I evoke the notion of ‘interpretive communities’ as first proposed by Stanley Fish. Fish’s study of reader response, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (1980), states that interpretive communities are ‘made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading but for writing texts’ (p. 14). Multiple interpretive communities adopt different interpretive strategies and make ‘different texts’, and their balance of power, avoiding both ‘perfect agreement’ and ‘interpretive anarchy’, provides ‘just enough stability for the interpretive battles to go on’ (Fish, pp. 171–72). Because Fish believes that those who belong to the same interpretive community ‘will necessarily agree because they will see (and by seeing, make) everything in relation to that community’s assumed purposes and goals’ (p. 15), his work presumes that there is broad agreement about interpretive strategies between readers, and his model is useful for analysing general cultural codes shared among playgoers outside playhouses and understanding the dynamics of canonisation. At the same time, however, it ignores small differences in readers’ interpretations based on individual preferences, for example, how personal experiences of royalist women writers – such as Margaret Cavendish’s life of exile, Jane Cheyne and Elizabeth Egerton’s experience of the siege at Welbeck – influenced their readings of drama.

Using Fish’s notion of reader-response criticism, Gary Taylor states that ‘the interpretive community of Shakespeare’s theatre’ differs greatly from ‘the interpretive community of university professors’, because audience members interpret plays based on ‘the sense of communal response’ at playhouses (*Reinventing Shakespeare*, pp. 326–27). With no further analysis of Fish’s notion, Taylor does not clearly explain the difference between audience-based interpretive communities and reader-based ones. However, he seems to suggest that as for theatre, we should consider a ‘temporary community’ (*Reinventing Shakespeare*, p. 326) of an audience attending a stage performance – active only during the performance and generating communal interpretive strategies on site – as a significant interpretive community sharing

interpretive strategies, instead of Fish's stable community of readers who share interpretive strategies for a relatively long time. Taylor's model more appropriately pertains to understanding audience responses during a stage performance; however, it does not focus on small individual differences between playgoers' responses, either. While both Fish's and Taylor's models contribute to discussing playgoers' responses to drama, individual preferences based on their personal experiences also influence playgoers' interpretations. Three interacting factors create a playgoer's interpretation: Outside of playhouses, playgoers belong to certain interpretive communities and visit playhouses with the interpretive strategies shared by the other members; during a performance, playgoers become involved in a temporal audience community inside the playhouse and become affected by the communal response of the audience to a certain extent; and playgoers maintain their own preferences and reflect on their own interpretations of the performance.

In analysing the role played by female interpreters' playgoing and playreading in the process of Shakespeare canonisation, I document the individual pleasure or *jouissance* of each of the early female readers and playgoers of Shakespeare rather than placing emphasis on the homogeneity of their responses; at the same time, I must note that in some cases, the similarities in various readers' and playgoers' interpretations suggest the existence of the same powerful interpretive strategies shared by many people. We should not generalise female interpreters of Shakespeare simply as 'women', given that various factors such as historical backgrounds, class, education, ethnicity and sexual orientation cross each other at different angles in the case of any one interpreter. These factors have had a great influence on women's experience of reading and watching plays, thus making each interpretation (or pleasure) unique. However, such interpreters sometimes understand Shakespeare based on their self-consciousness of being 'women interpreting Shakespeare', for instance, by focusing on the details about female characters usually ignored by male interpreters, as when Margaret Cavendish favourably mentioned small roles like Doll Tearsheet and Mistress Quickly (Letter 123).

When a female interpreter expresses gender-specific concern about Shakespeare's plays, I examine her interpretive strategies and analyse in what respects they resemble or differ from those of other female interpreters.

In analysing the reception of Shakespeare's works by female readers, I owe a great debt to previous studies of reader-response criticism focusing on female writers and readers, such as Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* (1987, republished in 1991), which analyses female communities reading romance novels, and Ellen Gardiner's *Regulating Readers* (1999), which examines how eighteenth-century novels functioned as literary criticisms and contributed to the rise of modern literary critics through many discussions about female readers and writers. In terms of female playgoers, however, there are far fewer works focusing on gender in theatre audience studies than in film or TV audience studies. Although the exact reason for this is unknown, one possibility is that feminist theatre studies began with criticism against traditional theatre studies dominated by males and tended to focus on female creators until the late 1990s; in contrast, film studies have discussed female moviegoers since the 1970s.<sup>21</sup> Despite its visible presence at stage performances and commercial significance for people working in the theatre, scholars regard audience response in theatre as one of the least considered (and most difficult) fields in theatre studies.

In a work published in 1993, Marco De Marinis calls audience response 'a glaring "black hole"' in theatre studies, mainly because scholars tend to focus more on 'what spectators *should* or *should not* do' than 'what the spectator *actually* does' (*The Semiotics of Performance*, p. 159). Foster still agreed with this eleven years after his study (Foster, p. 3). Major works on general audience responses to Shakespeare and English Renaissance theatre, including Jean E. Howard's *Shakespeare's Art of Orchestration* (1984), E. A. J. Honigmann's *Shakespeare: Seven Tragedies Revisited:*

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<sup>21</sup> Although some pioneering works in the field of theatre studies, such as Susan Bennett's *Theatre Audiences* (1990), featured women as audiences, later feminist studies have tended to focus on creators rather than in audiences. See Kitamura's discussion in 'Queens, Girls, and Freaks', p. 162, n6.



*The Dramatist's Manipulation of Response* (first published in 1976 and revised in 2004) and Jeremy Lopez's *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (2003), focus not on individual playgoers' responses, but rather on the playwright's audience-attracting techniques. While the analysis of the playwright's manipulation of the audience's attention greatly discloses the response of his contemporary playgoers, analysing individual women's responses to Shakespearean performances will also contribute to the development of theatre audience studies.

The fourth characteristic of my research is closely related to the third. I adopt methodologies borrowed from fan studies to counter the scarcity of theatre audience studies and place them in the wider context of reception studies in general. As discussed above, theatre audience studies are the least developed and recognised among audience studies, although several significant works have been published. Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst's *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination* (1998), a comprehensive review of the history of audience studies, rarely refers to theatre audience studies, although it extensively covers sports, TV shows, films and other types of media. Moreover, *The Audience Studies Reader* (2003) contains no work mainly focusing on playgoers. While it is true that the difficulty facing the field partly has to do with technical and financial issues which discourage the painstaking process of collecting and documenting audiences' individual pleasures, I suspect that theatre scholars as professionals tend to have an affinity for people working for theatre rather than 'lay' audiences – for instance, with the exception of Judith Fisher's historical study on the eighteenth-century audiences, the articles in *Audience Participation: Essays on Inclusion in Performance* (2003) mostly focus on creators' manipulative techniques. Furthermore, the controversial nature of this volume's title is not fully discussed. I regard the word 'inclusion' as a slightly problematic term in theatrical contexts, for it presupposes creators and their performances as subjects that need to *include* audiences; this implies that creators should work on passive audiences to invoke more of a response than merely watching performances in their seats. Thus, playgoers'

quiet observations and evaluations are rarely appreciated as a participatory or creative process. What I aim to do in this thesis is to empower seemingly quiet female interpreters in the history of the reception of Shakespeare.

Fan studies, which has witnessed rapid development in the last two decades, can provide useful frameworks to analyse audiences as viewers, because research has been accumulated on a variety of media fandoms as creative communities of interpreters and their pleasure-seeking activities. Fan studies regards the fan as an 'active audience' who maintains a tense relationship with the creator in the battlefield of interpretation, and differs greatly in approaches to the text.<sup>22</sup> I am greatly indebted to Henry Jenkins' method of analysing media fandoms, which involves collecting and documenting the activities of audiences who easily cross the borders of genre. In *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (originally published in 1992 and revised in 2012), referring to Michel de Certeau's concept of 'poaching', Jenkins defines active fans of modern television programs as 'textual poachers' who attempt 'an impertinent raid on the literary preserve that takes away only those things that are useful or pleasurable to the reader' (p. 24). This concept is useful in discussing the reception of the adaptations and derivative works of Shakespeare in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Another of Jenkins' works, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006), describes recent media culture as 'convergence culture'. In his definition, 'convergence' means 'the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want' (p. 2). In Renaissance England, which witnessed the rise of commercial theatre and print culture, audiences experienced a small-scale version of convergence culture, seeking pleasure both in playgoing and playreading. The fan

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<sup>22</sup> See Jenkins, "'Strangers No More, We Sing": Filking and the Social Construction of the Science Fiction Fan Community', pp. 208–09.

studies' approaches which consider fans as active consumers are also helpful in analysing eighteenth-century playgoers' and readers' wide-ranging intellectual activities in the rise of consumer culture.

Fan studies also help scholars to observe the similarities in past and present fan behaviours in the history of popular culture. Jenkins likens textual poachers, or a 'particularly active and vocal community of consumers whose activities direct attention onto this process of cultural appropriation' to 'the members of the "pit" in nineteenth-century theatre who asserted their authority over the performance', hinting at the power of theatre audiences in the past (*Textual Poachers*, p. 27). Although research on early modern popular culture developed greatly after Peter Burke's pioneering work, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978), scholars of seventeenth-century culture have recently come to note the significance of the continuity of popular culture from the early modern period to the present. As Vera Keller points out, fans in early modern Europe were identified as 'lovers' in England, and '[a] variety of new media of the early modern period foregrounding the association of lovers can be compared to today's social media and its emphasis on networks, collaborative authorship, and reuse of multimedia objects' (1.1). Relying on the frameworks provided by scholars of fandoms such as Jenkins and Keller, while avoiding simplified comparison or generalisation, I try to demonstrate the similarities of popular cultures between the past and present and the continuity of women's engagement in them wherever possible.

The fifth key approach I adopt in this thesis – analysis of under-investigated female writers' responses to Shakespeare – will recover such female interpreters' forgotten pleasure and jouissance. For example, I consider the work of Judith Drake, a feminist writer of the Restoration period, and Sarah Fielding. While some scholars have discussed their works from different points of view, they have not been analysed in terms of the canonisation of Shakespeare, although the two figures mention his writings. As illustrated in the quotation at the beginning of this section, Drake praises Shakespeare's works in *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*. Moreover, Sarah

Fielding refers to Shakespeare frequently and uses his plays as sources for her novels; this is discussed in detail in my fourth chapter. Drake's and Fielding's works deserve more attention because they were relatively widely read by their contemporaries and influential in their time.

Before concluding this introduction, I wish to address the reason for my particular concern with canonisation: I argue that the desire to preserve what people do not want to forget drives not only poets, but also readers and playgoers alike, and that the act of canonising is part of this preservation drive. In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt suggests that human beings think that only they are mortal in the universe, unlike immortal gods or other creatures that are easily replaceable or reproducible (pp. 17–21). She defines human beings' passion for immortality in relation to art and literature as follows:

[t]he task and potential greatness of mortals lie in their ability to produce things—works, deeds and words—which would deserve to be and, at least to a degree, are at home in everlastingness, so that through them mortals could find their place in a cosmos where everything is immortal except themselves (Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 19).

Arendt suggests that human beings' desire to create art and literature partly stems from their obsession with 'everlastingness', or preserving great things. Moreover, as if to attest to Arendt's argument, Aaron Kunin suggests that this 'preservation fantasy', or the desire to 'surviv[e] through culture' (pp. 92–93) – which I would call the preservation drive – has driven various English poets from Shakespeare to Ray Davies of the Kinks. Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, as typical examples, declare the power of poetry to overcome death and oblivion and perhaps even grant his young patron immortality. According to the poet, 'in eternal lines to time thou grow'st', and 'My love shall in my verse ever live

young'.<sup>23</sup> Cleopatra declares her 'Immortal longings' when she dies in *Antony and Cleopatra* (V. 2. 281). It is impossible to separate the canonisation from the issue of preservation – a recurrent subject in the history of art, literature, and philosophy.

Henry Louis Gates, the researcher credited with re-evaluating African American literature as a cultural heritage, defines the canon in relation to memory and preservation as follows:

I suppose the literary canon is, in no very grand sense, the commonplace book of our shared culture, in which we have written down the texts and the titles that we want to remember, that had some special meaning for us. How else did those of us who teach literature fall in love with our subject than through our own commonplace books, in which we inscribed, secretly and privately, as we might do in a diary, those passages of books that named for us what we had for so long deeply felt, but could not say? (*Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars*, p. 21)

For Gates, the canon signifies a list of titles written down in a memorandum shared by a cultural community; thus, the preservation drive motivates him as a reader. Like Gates, I argue that the act of canonising signifies a mark of the interpreters' efforts to prevent what they find unforgettable from falling into oblivion. Analysing the process of canonisation leads to consideration of the fear of being forgotten and the desire to be preserved in memory. In this thesis, I examine what kind of 'special meaning' female interpreters attached to Shakespeare's works and why they wanted to pass them down to their successors.

In this research, I address a wide variety of little-studied documentary sources that provide information about the relationship between women and Shakespeare's

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<sup>23</sup> Sonnet 18.12 and Sonnet 19.14. Quotations from Shakespeare refer to the second Riverside edition.

works from the Elizabethan era to the Shakespeare Jubilee. Reviews, fictional works and private documents by women serve as major sources of evidence, for they represent the most direct expressions of how female readers and playgoers interpreted Shakespeare (albeit this is often embellished, attuned to the taste of the time or even self-censored as literary performances, as my analysis demonstrates). Although it is necessary to examine the reception of Shakespeare by women of lower social ranks and the private records of women, such as unpublished diaries and letters, which often provide information about a reader's unique interests, I mainly focus on published texts (or manuscript works circulated among many readers) generally written by women who were far more intellectually active than the average in their period.<sup>24</sup> Through the circulation of their works, these 'privileged' female writers were more likely to make their interpretations known to others and exert their influence in the canonisation of Shakespeare than those who only kept private diaries or wrote unpublished fiction.

Because of the scarcity of materials in this field written by women, I also turn to other types of records for analysis. Governmental or household documents, such as records about court performances or private accounts, sometimes contain entries about female readers or playgoers enjoying Shakespeare's works that provide data central to my argument. Nonfiction or fiction written by male writers also provides information about how their contemporaries regarded women reading or watching Shakespeare, although one must handle these records carefully, for they sometimes exaggerate or include unsubstantiated gossip, as the theatrical anecdotes analysed in Chapter 1 show.

I divide my PhD thesis into four chapters: The first two deal with Shakespeare and his female contemporaries, and the latter two with women in the post-Renaissance era, from the theatre closures during the English Civil War to the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769. Since Shakespeare was just one popular playwright in the commercial theatre in the early seventeenth century, and there was no clear trend toward canonising him as a

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<sup>24</sup> Edith Snook summarises the difficulty surrounding women's literacy rates in early modern England (pp. 8–10). I will discuss this issue further in Chapter 2.

national poet, Chapter 1 aims to clarify female playgoers' engagement in theatre and to investigate Shakespeare's popularity among early modern women; research on prologues and epilogues will show how much he and his co-workers paid attention to female playgoers. Chapter 2 discusses women's reading and writing in Renaissance England; I conduct large-scale original research on women associated with early playbooks of Shakespeare to clarify what kind of women used Shakespeare's books, and to analyse women writers' references to Shakespeare in this period. Chapter 3 deals with Restoration women's playgoing, reading and writing activities. Finally, the last chapter focuses on eighteenth-century women's engagement in the canonisation of Shakespeare's works and their participation the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769.

## **Chapter 1. Shakespeare and Female Playgoers in Renaissance England**

This chapter aims to show how female playgoers in the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline eras watched Shakespeare's performances. The paucity of resources about female playgoers in Renaissance England makes it difficult to obtain a sufficient picture of their culture. To overcome this problem, I take two approaches that will be helpful. One is to develop an understanding of female theatre audiences by analysing contemporary references to them in general; the other is to examine Shakespeare's works and contemporary references to him. In this chapter, I first examine primary materials related to female playgoers, especially prologues and epilogues of English Renaissance plays, to elucidate the cultural and social backgrounds of female playgoers and their responses to theatre. The second section investigates the creator-audience relationship between Shakespeare (with his playing company) and female playgoers by looking at paratexts of his plays and records of court performances.

### **Section 1: Theatre and Women in Renaissance England**

This section aims to demonstrate the presence of active and influential female playgoers at playhouses in Renaissance England. I regard playgoers as 'active' when they are interested in the contents of the performances, try to attend theatrical performances willingly and frequently and have detailed knowledge about the theatre – in short, active playgoers are ones who find pleasure or jouissance in theatre. Such individuals are more likely to be involved in the process of canonisation than those who occasionally visit playhouses, for the former are able to compare different plays and evaluate them according to their own standard. The term 'influential' connotes the political aspect of the canonisation. Using their social, economic or intellectual resources, influential playgoers can make an impact on creators or sway other playgoers' opinions. Active playgoers who have no insufficient resources to express their responses to theatre would have difficulty exerting an influence on theatrical trends. Playgoers with wealth or



social status, but without interest in the content of plays, could not greatly contribute to establish critical criteria; for example, it is possible that aristocratic people are willing to receive dedications from artists or to attend playhouses as part of their social life, yet they do not necessarily take much interest in evaluating dramatic works. Although looking at the playgoing patterns of non-privileged women is essential when it comes to establishing critical criteria for theatre as popular culture, I will devote more attention to women of higher social ranks because such playgoers tend to be more influential and to leave more records.

### **1.1 Previous Studies of Women and Theatre in Renaissance England**

Before analysing primary materials, I briefly review previous studies of female playgoers in early modern England. Various studies have dealt with playgoing in this period and offered considerable knowledge of female playgoers. Although there are debates surrounding the details of playgoing culture, and it is difficult to draw a complete picture, most studies agree that a substantial number of women attended playhouses during that period.

Before the 1940s, women's playgoing in early modern London had not been a major focus of interest for scholars. Female playgoers were only sparsely mentioned: E. K. Chambers' *The Elizabethan Stage* (1923) supposed that most female playgoers in Elizabethan playhouses were 'light women' or ladies, based on a record about a Venetian ambassador's playgoing to pursue a woman (ii. p. 549). However, Alfred Harbage's *Shakespeare's Audience* (1941), the first substantial research on audiences in Renaissance London, examined what kind of people attended playhouses using a wide variety of materials, ranging from diaries to anti-theatrical treatises, and found plenty of evidence about the playgoing of common people and women. He censured scholars who underrated the number of female playgoers in 'imposing their own sense of decorum upon the Elizabethans' (p. 77). Based on the records about the capacity of playhouses and the size of their average audience, he also argued that Shakespeare's plays were

very popular in his time (p. 51).

After Harbage's study, audience studies did not attract scholars' attention until the end of the 1970s. The exact reasons for this are unknown, but I point out three possibilities. First, after Harbage finished his work, World War II made it temporarily difficult for scholars to obtain the primary materials necessary for audience studies due to financial and transportation problems. Second, audience studies, which focus on the social environment surrounding theatre, went out of fashion in the vogue of New Criticism after World War II, for New Criticism tended to separate a text from its social background. Third, the studies of social and economic history made considerable progress in the late 1970s; scholars who have engaged in audience studies after the 1970s are greatly influenced by social historians, such as Lawrence Stone.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until Ann Jennalie Cook published *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576–1642* (1981) that audience studies gained ground. Cook assumed that playhouses in early modern London mainly provided entertainment for the socially privileged, although she admitted that 'as frankly commercial enterprises, the theaters opened their doors to anyone with the price of admission' (p. 216). She focused on privileged women with money and prostitutes seeking business as comprising the majority of the female audience; her analysis of female playgoers differed from Harbage's and led to a similar conclusion to that of Chambers, though class and economic factors were more fully discussed than in his book (Cook, pp. 109 and 202–204). Although the significance of privileged playgoers proposed in her work is widely acknowledged, some scholars are critical of her analysis. For example, Martin Butler argues that it was impossible for theatre companies to gain profits from large playhouses by targeting only such playgoers, because the population of gentry in London was smaller than her estimation (Butler, pp. 293–306).

As mentioned in my introduction, Andrew Gurr's *Playgoing in Shakespeare's*

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<sup>1</sup> See Ann Jennalie Cook's reference to Stone in Preface to *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576–1642*. Gurr's *Playgoing* also refer to Stone (p. 306).

*London*, one of the definitive studies in this field, identified about 250 people who visited playhouses in London from 1557 and 1642, and showed that about thirteen percent of them were women of different classes (pp. 58–94). He also examined 474 references to playgoers and found evidence of the presence of female playgoers. He concluded that ‘women from every section of society went to plays, from Queen Henrietta Maria to the most harlotry of vagrants’ throughout the entire period (p. 67). Among the thirty-two identified female playgoers, Gurr regarded twenty-one women as ‘ladies’, or privileged female playgoers with social status and wealth (p. 71). On the other hand, he found various references to unidentified female commoners, such as citizens’ wives, fishwomen and applewomen. Judging from the expenditure per customer, women of higher ranks were more ‘visible’ customers than women of lower ranks.<sup>2</sup>

While these studies focus primarily on London, women’s participation in theatrical performances outside London has gradually come to light, thanks to the Records of Early English Drama (REED) project. Evidence of participation in performances of every class of woman has been found in many parts of England.<sup>3</sup> For example, Ann Thompson finds that in Hereford, an unmarried, untitled wealthy woman, Joyce Jeffreys, hired many entertainers between 1638 and 1648, during the theatre closure in London (‘Women/“women” and the Stage’, p. 110). After analysing a variety of records about female performers and audience members appearing in REED, Fiona Ritchie concludes that women in and outside of London both attended theatrical performances in large numbers in various ways (‘The Merciful Construction’, p. 50). However, although these records demonstrate women’s involvement in drama outside London, most of them participated in non-commercial theatre, such as pageants and guild plays. It is difficult to discuss their engagement in the canonisation of the

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<sup>2</sup> For the price of admission, see Gurr’s *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574–1642*, pp. 214–15.

<sup>3</sup> See Williams and others, ‘Payments, Permits and Punishments: Women Performers and the Politics of Place’; and Stokes. These two studies cover theatrical activities of women in rural areas.

commercial drama.

## 1.2 Women's Interest in Theatre

This subsection describes female playgoing as a pleasure-seeking activity in Renaissance London. It mainly utilises primary materials, such as privileged women's memoirs, to collect information related to individual women's pleasure in playgoing. I also utilise records written by male contemporaries and containing references to female playgoers, although their depictions of women in theatre, especially those in anti-theatrical works, do not always reflect the reality of female audiences.

Many of the privileged female playgoers began attending plays in their girlhood, which suggests that the early exposure to theatre helped them to develop their own taste in theatre and influenced their ways of thinking. For example, Hatfield House documents reveal that the Cecils, including Ann and her sister Elizabeth, were 'enthusiastic playgoers from childhood', and Ann Cecil was fifteen when she visited the Globe by boat in 1627 (Peck, 'The Caroline Audience', p. 477). Playgoing as a girlhood experience was closely linked to female friendship in records written by women. Lady Ann Halkett's memoir, written around 1677 and 1678, shows that she visited playhouses with a female group 'together withoutt any man', although a male escort was usually expected for a woman of higher ranks at playhouses, because she 'loved well to see plays' but wanted to avoid becoming a subject of rumour by men about 'how much itt had cost them'.<sup>4</sup> She and her female companions could enjoy the temporary escape from male surveillance at playhouses. Since Halkett's memoir is largely based on her playgoing experience before the London Theatre closure in 1642, when she was nineteen, her playgoing group was perhaps mainly composed of her young female acquaintances.

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<sup>4</sup> Halkett, *The Memoir of Anne, Lady Halkett* in John Loftis' *The Memoir of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, p. 11. For male escorts at playhouses, see Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 68; Ritchie, 'The Merciful Construction', p. 26; and Whitney, pp. 224–32. For Halkett's life, see Seelig, p. 111.

Lady Mary Rich (née Boyle), Countess of Warwick, also visited playhouses under the influence of her sister-in-law Elizabeth Boyle, sister of playwright Thomas Killigrew and wife of Francis Boyle, Mary's brother. While Francis was absent, the Boyle sisters 'grew so great a kindness' between them, and Elizabeth enticed Mary 'to spend (as she did) her time in seeing and reading plays and romances' by using 'a great and ruling power' over Mary (Mary Rich, *Autobiography of Mary Countess of Warwick*, p. 4). Mary was about fifteen years old when her brother and seventeen-year-old Elizabeth got married in 1639. After she grew older, Mary abandoned playgoing, became interested in religion, and thought that she had been 'vain' in her adolescence (Rich, p. 21). What is significant about these records is that some of the young female playgoers bonded through sharing the pleasurable experience at playhouses. These hitherto unrecognised small female playgoing groups would develop into wider and more influential female interpretive communities in the next century, such as the Shakespeare Ladies Club, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Among women's supportive activities regarding theatre, their enthusiasm for boy actors was noted by their contemporaries. Boy actors were essential components of the all-male stage in early modern England. Even Mary Sidney Wroth's criticism of the artificial and highly stylised acting of boys specialising in female roles in *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* provides evidence for the boy actors' influence on early modern playgoers' imaginations. Wroth twice likened women who behaved in an ostentatious manner to boy actors playing female roles. In *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, a man pursued by a woman 'was no further wrought, then if he had seene a delicate play-boy acte a loving womans part, and knowing him a Boy, lik'd onely his action'.<sup>5</sup> As Helen Hackett argues, Wroth described boy actors as 'aesthetically pleasing, but ... emotionally unconvincing' (*A Short History of English*

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<sup>5</sup> *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, 1.1.73. Quotations from *Urania* refer to *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (hereafter *Urania 1*), edited by Josephine A. Roberts, and its sequel, *The Second Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, edited by Josephine A. Roberts and others (hereafter *Urania 2*).

*Renaissance Drama*, p. 167). Apparently separating theatre and everyday life, Wroth thought that female characters played by boy actors were only plausible in theatre, a place governed by the power of illusion. *The Second Part of the Countess Montgomery's Urania* also depicts a female character's 'over-acting fashion' as 'more like a play-boy dressed gawdely up to shew a fond, loving, woemans part then a great Lady' (2.1.160). The comparison between boy actors and ostentatious women hints at Wroth's complex idea of gender performance, a notion that excessive femininity was something to be learned and performed, regardless of the learner's gender, and that an excessively 'feminine' woman could look like a boy in drag. Although Wroth did not appreciate the lack of reality in boy actors' performances, these comments in *Urania* illustrate that boy actors inspired female playgoers' interest.

While Mary Sidney Wroth's often-quoted comments show her negative attitude toward boy actors, several records demonstrate how much power boy actors specialising in female roles had over women, mostly unidentified female playgoers. Until the end of the 1600s, boy companies mainly performed at court and private playhouses such as Blackfriars (Shapiro, 'Boy Companies and Private Theaters', pp. 321–22). The price of admission to Blackfriars and other indoor playhouses, which mainly targeted wealthy playgoers, was higher than those of open-air playhouses such as the Globe.<sup>6</sup> Blackfriars and the boy actors were supported by court ladies and received relatively generous patronage from Elizabeth I, despite her usually parsimonious policy.<sup>7</sup> In 1605, active female playgoers attending the performances of boy actors were alluded to with a slightly derisive tone as the 'sisterhoode of Blackfriars' by male playgoer Dudley

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<sup>6</sup> Hill, *Stages and Playgoers*, p. 165; and Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> McCarthy, p. 99. However, before the construction of Blackfriars, several inhabitants of this area petitioned against it: Lady Elizabeth Russell, a translator and literary patroness, was one of the petitioners, and Blackfriars did not receive universal patronage from court ladies initially. Because Lord Hunsdon, the owner of Lord Chamberlain's Men, and Richard Field, printer of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, signed the petition, Andrew Gurr calls their attitude 'the NIMBY principle' ('London's Blackfriars Playhouse and the Chamberlains Men', p. 24).

Carleton.<sup>8</sup> Restoration playwrights could easily remember these ladies' love of boy actors. In 1677, when actresses could play female roles on stage with Charles I's permission, Nathaniel Lee's *The Rival Queens* retrospectively and playfully stated that female playgoers would prefer boy actors in female clothes to real-life suitors:

For we have vowed to find a sort of toys  
Known to black friars, a tribe of chopping boys.  
If once they come, they'll quickly spoil your sport;  
There's not one lady will receive your court,  
But for the Youth in petticoats run wild,  
With, "O, the archest wag, the sweetest child."  
The panting breasts, white hands and little feet  
No more shall your palled thoughts with pleasure meet.<sup>9</sup>

Relating to this epilogue, Stephen Orgel argues that cross-dressing allowed female playgoers in a patriarchal society to 'disarm' boy actors, and to see them 'not as a possessor or master, but as companionable and pliable and one of them', with the reservation that 'there is a large element of fantasy in Lee's warning'.<sup>10</sup>

I agree with Orgel's hypothesis, and would also argue that Lee's description was not a mere fantasy, but partly based on fact. Early eighteenth-century actor Colley Cibber retrospectively mentions ladies' preference for Edward Kynaston, one of the last Restoration boy actors specialising in female roles in adult companies:

Kynaston, at that time was so beautiful a Youth, that the Ladies of Quality prided themselves taking him with them in their Coaches, to Hyde-Park, in

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<sup>8</sup> See the transcription in Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, iv, 139–40.

<sup>9</sup> *The Rival Queens*, Epilogue, 16–23. Quotations from this play refer to the 1970 edition.

<sup>10</sup> Orgel, *Impersonations*, p. 81. See also Stallybrass, "Transvestism and the "Body Beneath"", pp. 67–68.

his Theatrical Habit, after the Play (*An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*, p. 101).

The 'Ladies of Quality' in this story were enthusiastic supporters of theatre. Kynaston's female clothes gave them confidence; as long as he wore a 'Theatrical Habit', Kynaston remained an unthreatening and beautiful theatrical female character, and the female playgoers were able to invite him to their 'Coaches' – a semi-private space and a mark of their wealth – and to take him with them into public spaces comfortably. As women of higher ranks and major customers of playhouses, they had the power to make his theatrical performances last after the end of the show. A professional, popular actor, Kynaston had to comply with their demand and continued the masquerading game after the show. These female playgoers were simultaneously active and influential; they obviously found pleasure in stage performances, and could exert influence on theatre using their wealth and social status.

Some female commoners with rank or wealth were condemned for this kind of conduct. In a case at Bridewell in 1629, Katherine Speire, an untitled and unmarried woman, was accused as a 'Lewd young Wench', who 'will not be ruled by her friends but followeth the company of players and idle company' (Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 242). She was, to use Charles Whitney's phrase, 'aspiring to be a groupie' (*Early Responses*, p. 206). While privileged women's power enabled them to invite players to their coaches with little risk, ordinary women had to make more efforts to attract the actors' attention personally, by chasing after them and even risking legal punishment.

Not only legal records, but also 'anecdotes' also are useful when it comes to inferring women's 'groupie' behaviours in Renaissance England. I use the word 'anecdote' to cover various unsubstantiated and episodic stories about history, such as gossip, rumour, legends or jokes about historical figures. Anecdotes do not tell what



happened in the past, but rather speak to what people believed in the past.<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Bate states that '[t]he point of the anecdote is not its factual but its representative truth', and anecdotes should be handled differently from other 'factual' records.<sup>12</sup> Recent studies in Greek drama also tend to consider theatrical anecdotes as 'evidence of what the writer thought his audience would believe to be possible' (Duncan, p. 18) and use them to analyse the process by which 'the experiences of spectators coloured collective awareness and imagination' (Easterling and Hall, p. xx). Theatrical anecdotes which were circulated in Renaissance England can be considered the results of spectators' collective awareness and imagination.

One famous anecdote from William Prynne's anti-theatrical treatise *Histrion-mastix* (1633) tells the story of a playgoing gentlewoman obsessed with Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, and illustrates a stereotypical image of female playgoers:

I shall annex the parallel example of a late English Gentlewoman of good ranke; who daily bestowing the expence of her best houres upon the Stage, and at last falling into a dangerous sicknesse of which she died, her friends in her extremity sent for a Minister to comfort, counsell, and prepare her for her end, who comming to instruct her, and advising her to repent, and call upon God for mercy, she made him no reply at all; but cryed out Hieronimo, Hieronimo; O let mee see Hieronimo acted; (calling out for a Play, in stead of crying unto God for mercy,) and so closed her dying eyes.<sup>13</sup>

This anecdote was relatively well known and sounded plausible in Renaissance London, for it was printed at least three times.<sup>14</sup> The origin of the

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<sup>11</sup> For anecdotes in general, see Fineman; and Gallagher and Greenblatt, pp. 49–74.

<sup>12</sup> Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare*, p. 5. See also Bratton, pp. 103–04.

<sup>13</sup> William Prynne, *Histrion-mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragaedie, Divided into Two Parts* (London, 1633), p. 556. For antitheatricalism in general, see also Barish, especially pp. 80–190.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Braithwait first mentioned a short story about a gentlewoman who loved theatre too much and

story might be older than the 1630s, for anecdotes tend to be ‘told and retold until they wind up in a text’ (Duncan, p. 18). Even though it was an old anecdote about an old play, readers were able to understand that it referred to *The Spanish Tragedy*, for this play was highly popular and frequently reprinted throughout the English Renaissance; moreover, it was often referred to as ‘Hieronimo’, and not as ‘The Spanish Tragedy’.<sup>15</sup>

This anecdote is a product of anti-theatrical writers’ ‘collective awareness and imagination’ as coloured by fear of actual active female playgoers. Prynne’s emphasis on crying into ‘God for mercy’, which is not found in the other printed versions, implies the similarity between antitheatricalism and religious iconoclasm. As Anthony Dawson states, ‘iconoclasm and anti-theatricalism are thus tied up with distrust of the power of representation, because of the all-too-human tendency to forge a false identity between external image and internal reality’ (p. 133). Iconoclasts in early modern England considered the visual images of God, which were produced and reinforced by idolatry, as far from the genuine God, through whom people could connect to a purely internal experience; theatre was also similar to idolatry, for it displayed an embellished imitation of life, and made it difficult for playgoers to understand real life. In describing how a fictional character on stage replaced God in the woman’s mind, allowing her to stray away from the genuine God, Prynne compared religious idolatry to love of theatre as the result of the exposure to influential representations. For the gentlewoman, Hieronimo was an alternative to religious faith before her death. The behaviour of the gentlewoman in the anecdote is similar to the stories of women chasing after players and becoming enthusiastic for boy actors in female clothes, for they were all attracted to the false identity of performers rather than the performers themselves. I argue that this

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‘clozed her *dying scene* with a vehement calling on Hieronimo’ in the 1631 edition of *The English Gentlewoman* (pp. 53–54), and after Prynne published his version in 1633, it reappeared in Brathwait’s 1641 extended edition, as a revised story about a gentlewoman who considered herself as Hieronimo and said to the doctor, ‘Thankes good *Horatio*, take it for thy paines’.

<sup>15</sup> For the date and performance history of the play, see Erne, *Beyond The Spanish Tragedy*, pp. 79–94, 119–45. See also Shapiro, “‘Tragedy Naturally Performed’: Kyd’s Representation of Violence *The Spanish Tragedy* (c.1587)”, pp. 108–10.

anecdote became plausible because contemporary people had seen such active female playgoers.

One possible reason for women to be attracted to English Renaissance theatre is that they felt as if they were gaining enormous power to control their gaze, which they were not allowed to exert in ordinary life. Jean Howard's 'Scripts and/versus Playhouses: Ideological Production and the Renaissance Public Stage' (hereafter 'Scripts'), a study on antitheatricalism, shows that a woman in Renaissance England, and especially one of higher social ranks, was not allowed to be a 'desiring subject' – an agent who voluntarily looked at others with desire – but was always treated as an object of desire, gazed at desirously *by* others. What made antitheatrical writers feel uneasy was the possibility that a female playgoer could become an appraiser licensed to evaluate things displayed in the theatre, including the male players and male audience members around her ('Scripts', p. 36). In the commercial theatre, the audience members (including women) have the power to judge whether a stage performance satisfies them or not. In English Renaissance playhouses, where the female gaze was so powerful as to threaten antitheatrical writers, playing companies would have tried to comply with women's needs for economic reasons. They provided female viewers with the pleasure of temporary subversion, although they did not subvert the entire male-dominated system of the gaze – female playgoers continued to be objects of male audience members' gaze at playhouses.

One fictional, but nonetheless revealing example of this power of playgoing can be found in Shakespeare's works in the portrayal of Ophelia, a young female audience member attending the play within a play in *Hamlet*. Although this play within a play is frequently analysed, the portrayal of Ophelia as a playgoer has rarely been scrutinised.<sup>16</sup> Laurie E. Osborne discusses Ophelia as a female playgoer, but mainly focuses on the sexual conversation between Ophelia and Hamlet rather than on

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<sup>16</sup> For the play within a play in *Hamlet*, see also Greiner, pp. 3–4; and Novy, p. 257.

analysing her characterisation as a whole (pp. 209–14). According to Elaine Showalter, Ophelia is often regarded as an object of male desire in the history of the reception of *Hamlet* (pp. 77–80). However, this playgoing scene is somewhat exceptional, for it is the only one in which Ophelia behaves independently as a ‘desiring subject’.

In *Hamlet*, Ophelia is seldom allowed to act according to her own will. When she first appears on stage, she is told not to be looked at: her brother Laertes says to her, ‘keep you in the rear of your affection, / Out of the shot and danger of desire’ (I. 3. 34–35), and her father Polonius tells her to ‘[b]e something scanted of your maiden presence’ in forgetting Hamlet’s courtship (I. 3. 121). Furthermore, she says that she will keep Laertes’ words ‘[a]s watchman to my heart’ (I. 3. 46), which means that her mind will be monitored by her brother while he is away. When she next appears on the stage, she explains Hamlet’s frightening gaze and behaviour: ‘[h]e falls to such perusal of my face / As ’a would draw it’ (II. 1. 87–88). In Act III, Scene i, Ophelia is robbed of the control of her gaze in two ways: she is not only looked at, but also forced to see what she does not want to see. She is ordered to meet Hamlet under the secret surveillance of Polonius and Claudius. While being monitored by these two authority figures, she is made to see Hamlet’s disturbing behaviour against her will, and she pities herself as an unhappy gazer: ‘O, woe is me / T’ have seen what I have seen, see what I see’ (III. 1. 160–61). In Act IV, Scene 5, Claudius, Gertrude and Laertes are surprised to see Ophelia’s insanity. Even when she drowns, she is an object of gaze; Gertrude’s detailed explanation of the dying girl wearing flowers presents her death as a kind of spectacle (IV. 7. 163–184). In this scene, Gertrude, a female character, makes Ophelia an object of gaze. As a queen, she is older and in higher rank, which endows her with a privileged status as a gazer: her speech at Ophelia’s burial, ‘I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet’s wife’ (5.1.233), implies that Gertrude could have controlled Ophelia’s life if she had not died. Gertrude’s speech about Ophelia’s drowning suggests that even though it is too late to save her from death, it is possible to observe her.

The scene of the play within a play in Act III, Scene ii, highlights Ophelia's spontaneous interest in theatre. Here, she is relatively calm and obviously attracted to the performance, even though she meets Hamlet for the first time since he perplexed her in Act III, Scene i, and he embarrasses her with bawdy conversation. Thinking about the content of the play and explaining what she feels, Ophelia behaves like a representative of the audience watching *Hamlet* in a playhouse and tries to interpret the meaning of the play performed in front of her. During the dumb-show, she asks Hamlet, 'What means this, my lord?' (III. 2. 136), and when he does not answer seriously, she tries to work out its meaning by herself: '[b]elike this show imports the argument of the play' (III. 2. 140). When Hamlet makes a bawdy remark about exposing her body, she refuses his attempt to make her an object of gaze, and declares that she will be a viewer of the performance:

Ophelia. Will 'a tell us what this show meant?

Hamlet. Ay, or any show that you will show him.

Be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you  
what it means.

Ophelia. You are naught, you are naught. I'll mark

the play. (*Hamlet*, III. 2. 144–148)

For Ophelia, to 'mark the play' is the way to escape from other people's gaze and acquire her own right to look. It is her turn to make comments on the performance, which was patronised and organised by Hamlet. She can even afford to compare Hamlet to players and make him an object of gaze: 'You are as good as a chorus, my lord' (III. 2. 245). Ophelia, concentrating on the stage performance – with little attention to the words of her princely lover – is somewhat similar to the ladies portrayed in the Epilogue to *The Rival Queens*, who will never 'receive your Court' because they are busy watching plays and running after boy actors rather than talking with their suitors. The

stage performance is so pleasurable that it can temporarily chase Hamlet away from Ophelia's mind.

The scene of the play within a play in *Hamlet* strikingly underlines the power of theatre, which reveals what was dimly implied but almost concealed. One of the major functions of this scene is to enable Hamlet and the audience to be sure of Claudius' crime by using the stage performance. Another is to present Ophelia's hidden vivacity, which intensifies the tragic quality of her madness depicted later. She is portrayed as a young woman who can be bright when she is allowed, but it is obscured while she remains an object of gaze for other characters. In the scene in which she first appears, she advises Laertes not to tread 'the primrose path of dalliance' (I. 3. 50), which means that she can exchange a witty repartee with young men when it is possible. After this conversation, her wit is concealed, but the scene of the play within a play would remind audience members that Ophelia is a theatre-loving girl whom they could find at court performances or public playhouses in Renaissance England. Since she is mad when she next enters the scene, her conversation with Hamlet about the stage performance may be viewed as the last flash of her lively nature.

In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare depicts the power of theatre to provide a woman with pleasure and a temporary escape from the duty of obedience to males. This scene demonstrates that, to some extent, the playwright himself notices the power of theatre over female playgoers. Effectively staged, the play within a play in *Hamlet* asks the audience to interpret it through the eyes of Ophelia as their representative, so that they may feel as though they have attended a court performance with Hamlet. This can excite their sympathy for the heroine's tragic fate, especially that of female audience members, who also found subversive pleasure in theatre.

### **1.3 Theatre's Response to Female Playgoers**

Playwrights and playing companies had to think about active female playgoers because they were prospective customers of commercial playhouses. However, due to the

scarcity of pertinent records, it is difficult to determine how they treated female playgoers. To find clues to the theatre's response to women, I use the prologues and epilogues of English Renaissance plays. In these texts, playwrights and playing companies address their audience directly, and sometimes express their thoughts on the target audience. Mostly written by men, prologues and epilogues might not reflect the reality of female playgoers of different social backgrounds, but at least they tell us what kind of reaction the creators expected from the audience in Renaissance England.

A comprehensive survey of the prologues and epilogues of English Renaissance plays (1558–1642) has not yet been conducted in terms of gender, as David Roberts and Fiona Ritchie did in the field of Restoration plays.<sup>17</sup> Richard Levin made a substantial contribution to audience studies by analysing several Jacobean, Caroline and early Restoration prologues and epilogues from the viewpoint of gender, and used his findings to supplement Gurr's conclusion that many women attended playhouses. Nevertheless, he admits that his research was based 'on incomplete data'; he did not check all the English Renaissance plays, and rarely mentions Elizabethan prologues or epilogues (p. 167). In his ground-breaking textual research on the prologues and epilogues of English Renaissance drama, Brian W. Schneider devotes one chapter to gender and points out the gradual increase of women's presence in theatre (pp. 93–114). However, unlike Roberts and Ritchie, Schneider does not conduct statistical analysis, and like Levin, he does not discuss early Elizabethan paratexts in detail. Furthermore, he focuses on gendered metaphors in paratexts rather than actual addresses toward female spectators.<sup>18</sup> My concern in this chapter is playwrights' and players' techniques

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<sup>17</sup> Roberts, *The Ladies*, pp. 5–48; and Ritchie, 'The Merciful Construction', pp. 55–96.

<sup>18</sup> I am sceptical of Schneider's relatively positive analyses of gendered metaphors in paratexts. For example, discussing Jonson's use of the female muse in *Cynthia's Revels*, Schneider states that '[t]he authority granted to the female is only symbolic or metaphoric, but it is still a fact that the audience is being treated to partial feminization of the text being presented' (p. 107). However, as Susan Stanford Friedman argues, 'the dominating economy of male desire' has placed women 'in the position of man's muse, the object rather than the subject of discourse' (p. 84), and male poets' feminisation of literature does not always empower female audience members but even sometimes constrains women's intellectual activities. Analyses of gendered metaphors surrounding drama should be separated from those of

when it comes to pleasing female audiences, as well as women audience's responses to these techniques.

Before analysing prologues and epilogues, it is necessary to explain my survey method. I reviewed all of the English Renaissance plays registered in the database *English Drama in Literature Online*, based on the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*. This comprised 596 plays first printed between 1558 and 1642, from the accession of Elizabeth I to the London theatre closure (167 Elizabethan plays, 221 Jacobean plays and 208 Caroline plays as of February 2011). The plays performed during the period but unpublished before 1642, manuscript plays, non-English plays and plays published outside of England, prologues and epilogues published or survived separately from the playtexts were excluded.<sup>19</sup> When plays involved textual problems concerning the paratexts, I followed Schneider's list of English Renaissance plays with prologues and epilogues, although I found some plays with paratexts which Schneider does not include.<sup>20</sup>

Of the 596 plays in total, 240 (about 40%) have epilogues or prologues.<sup>21</sup> As Tiffany Stern argues, prologues and epilogues in early modern England were often discarded, reused, and interchanged, and more plays were performed with prologues

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playwrights and players' more direct efforts to please female playgoers.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Braithwait's *Mercurius Britannicus, or the English Intelligencer* was published and reprinted in 1641 with new paratexts, but it is not included in *English Drama* because it was published in Paris. *Philotus*, published in 1603 and 1612 with an epilogue and prologue, is not included because it is a Scottish play. Latin plays are not included either. Some of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, which were unpublished before 1642, are not included.

<sup>20</sup> Schneider, pp. 157–273. Schneider's list contains unpublished manuscript plays and plays published outside England. It does not contain Thomas Newman's English translation of Terence's *The Eunuch* and *The Andrian Woman*; both have English prologues and epilogues, and were published as one book in 1627. Schneider does not include Thomas May's *Julia Agrippa* of 1639, which has a long induction before Act 1. I suspect that Ionas's last speech in Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's *A Looking Glass for London and England* (1594) should be regarded as an epilogue, for he addresses 'London' after all the other characters have exited.

<sup>21</sup> According to W. W. Greg's *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, only a few plays were republished with completely different prologues or epilogues before 1642, and notable examples of replacement of paratexts were already discussed by Schneider (p. 105).



and epilogue than this result suggests.<sup>22</sup> Some plays use only gender-neutral terms of address, such as ‘audience’, ‘spectators’, and ‘gentles’, but I argue that performers also used ‘you’ and imperatives as gender-neutral terms of address because most plays include these. It is difficult to judge whether the speaker used ‘you’ as a vocative-case pronoun to address an audience or as an indefinite pronoun to say general things about ‘everyone’ or ‘anyone’. It may have depended on the stage directions and the speaker’s preferences.

Of the 240 plays with epilogues or prologues, sixty-five (about 27%) particularly address male audiences using terms such as ‘gentlemen’, ‘lords’, ‘gallants’, and ‘Sir’, while twenty-nine plays (about 12%) address especially female audiences, using terms such as ‘ladies’, ‘gentlewomen’, ‘dames’, ‘damsels’ and ‘the gentler sex’. Compared to the Restoration plays, in which over eighty percent of the plays include references to gallants and about forty percent of the plays include references to ladies, this rate appears low.<sup>23</sup> However, both in the English Renaissance period and the Restoration, the number of plays addressing women is slightly less than half of that addressing men, which is enough to conclude that the theatre often expected the presence of female playgoers as well as male counterparts in the seventeenth century. Twenty-one address both sexes separately, forty-four address men only and eight address women only. Here, I analyse the prologues and epilogues by playwrights other than Shakespeare, as his works are discussed in detail in the next section.

The addresses to women are found in prologues or epilogues throughout the English Renaissance, but several patterns are evident within distinct historical periods. Under Elizabeth I’s reign, only seven plays address women, but many of them obviously target Elizabethan court ladies. The prologue to *Apus and Virginia*, a play performed in the 1560s and published in 1575, persuades ‘Virgins you, oh Ladies faire’ to remain chaste. Addresses to ‘virgins’ are rare in Jacobean and Caroline plays, and

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<sup>22</sup> Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (hereafter *Documents*), pp. 81–119.

<sup>23</sup> Roberts, *The Ladies*, p. 28; and Ritchie, p. 59.

perhaps this epilogue was written for the Virgin Queen and court ladies.<sup>24</sup> While this play celebrates the love of marriage in the epilogue, the prologue advises virgins, ‘Let not the blinded God of Love, as Poets tearme him so, / Nor Venus with her venery, nor Lechers cause of wo / Your Virgins name to spot or file’. It places strong emphasis on virginity as a female virtue for its time. While Elizabeth began using the rhetoric to compare herself to a virgin and a mother soon after her accession, before 1578, court performances mainly praised the chastity of marriage, not virginity, to encourage Elizabeth to get married; the cult of Elizabeth’s virginity was promoted after she experienced complicated marriage negotiations with the Duke of Anjou.<sup>25</sup> If *Apus and Virginia* was performed in the early 1560s, when the marriage between Elizabeth and Robert Dudley was a matter of political concern, such a prologue could be interpreted as advice to the queen to be cautious about marriage with her subject.

The epilogue of Robert Wilmot’s *Tancred and Gismund* (performed in the 1560s at court and published in 1591) prays that ‘our English dames / May never lead their loves into mistrust’.<sup>26</sup> It praises chastity, but does not emphasise virginity, which fits into her subjects’ hope for Elizabeth’s marriage. The plays performed at court in the late 1580s address women more familiarly. For example, Nicholas Trotte’s *Induction to Thomas Hughes’ The Misfortunes of Arthur*, written for the Queen and performed by the gentlemen of Gray’s Inn around 1588, playfully states that ladies and the muses, or the patronesses of arts, are similar in talkativeness: ‘Ladies are not secrete all. / Speach and not silence is the Muses grace’.<sup>27</sup> This Induction suggests that female playgoers, especially aristocratic women surrounding the Queen, had the right to express their opinions freely at playhouses, but it also presents a problematic connection between

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<sup>24</sup> R. B., *A New Tragical Comedie of Apus and Virginia* (London, 1575). Unless otherwise stated, all the quotations from the prologues and epilogues refer to the first editions. Margaret E. Owen also thinks that this play was performed at court (p. 87).

<sup>25</sup> Doran, p. 271; and Hackett, ‘The Rhetoric of (In)Fertility’, p. 169.

<sup>26</sup> For the date of the play, see Kingsley-Smith, p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> This play is included in Hughes’ *Certaine Devises and Shewes Presented to her Maiestie*, published around 1587. For the date of the play, see also Spradlin, pp. 2–4.

actual women in theatres and muses as products of male imagination.

The epilogue of John Lyly's *Gallathea*, performed in front of Elizabeth in 1587–88 and published in 1592, encourages ladies to do the opposite of what *Apus and Virginia* counsels: 'Yeelde Ladies, yeeld to loue Ladies, which lurketh vnder your eye-lids whilst you sleepe, and plaieth with your hart strings whilst you wake .... Loue conquereth all things but it selfe, and Ladies all harts but their owne'. Instead of praising virginity, it asks female audiences to 'yield to love' because the power of Cupid and Venus is strong. Its tone is consistent with the story of *Gallathea*, in which Venus' divine power fulfils the young love of two girls; this play contains 'gentle criticism of her [Elizabeth's] attitude towards love and marriage' (Lancashire, p. xxii), and the epilogue is part of this. In general, whether they emphasise chastity or love, the prologues and epilogues of Elizabethan court plays try to attract court ladies' attention by addressing them, which demonstrates that playwrights and players could not ignore the power of Elizabeth I and her female subjects.

In analysing prologues and epilogues in the Jacobean and Caroline eras, I adopt Levin's model, which divides these into three categories according to how the creators' assumptions about female playgoers are expressed. Levin's model is based on a small sample of plays, but it is applicable to many cases in my survey.

The first category includes prologues and epilogues expressing a hope that women will be more tolerant of the performance than men so as to soften men's harsh criticism. This category includes Shakespeare's 2 *Henry VI* and *Henry VIII*, Richard Brome's *The Court Begger* (published in 1653), Fletcher's *Love's Pilgrimage* (published in 1647), Lodowick Carlell's Part I of *Arviragus and Philicia* (1639), James Shirley's *The Coronation* (1635) and his another play *The Imposture* (published in 1653). Although Levin does not mention it, I add the epilogue to William Davenant's *The Platonick Lovers* (1636), which expects 'these soft Ladies' to 'thinke his [the author's] Doctrine good', unlike 'the Masculine'. The prologue of John Suckling's *Aglaoura* (1638) can be included here, for it praises 'Ladies you, who never lik'd a

plot .... will like't w' are confident, since here will bee, / That your Sexe ever lik'd, varietie'. Henry Glapthorne's *The Ladies' Priviledge* (1640) belongs to this category, for it says that ladies will 'At least allow his language and his plot'. The prologue of Robert Chamberlain's *The Swaggering Damsel* (1640) is slightly perverse, as it praises ladies' 'smiles' but asks them to 'your Candors bring' because the speaker is sure of the play's success. The prologue of *Everie Woman in Her Humor* (1609), spoken by the female character Flavia, is an interesting variant of this category.<sup>28</sup> She addresses 'Gentles of both sexes', and teases male playgoers' chivalrous (or somewhat flirtatious) attitudes toward women: 'the rather I come woman, because men are apt to take kindlye any kinde thing at a womans hand; and wee poore soules are but too kinde, if we be kindly intreated, marry otherwise, there I make my *Aposiopesis*'. Flavia states that she is not a woman but a boy actor, which recalls Rosalind's famous lines, 'If I were a woman' (*As You Like It*, Epilogue, 18). However, unlike Rosalind, Flavia does not declare her non-female identity, but transforms herself into the representative of 'wee poore soules' – female audience members. Distinct from other prologues and epilogues in which male speakers entreat female audience members to appease men's criticism, Flavia herself becomes a female negotiator to appeal to male playgoers' kindness.

Such frequent appeals to tenderness, a traditional female virtue, suggest that playing companies wanted to be well received by female playgoers for commercial reasons, although it is impossible to know how successful these appeals were. These prologues and epilogues also support Jean Howard's hypothesis about female playgoers as desiring subjects; they encourage women at playhouses to express their opinions about the plays before male playgoers do. However, this encouragement also connotes a limitation; even in the playhouse, women in Renaissance England are asked to be more kind than men, or in Virginia Woolf's phrase in 'Professions for Women', to '[b]e sympathetic; be tender; flatter; deceive; use all the arts and wiles of our sex' (p. 150),

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<sup>28</sup> Because of its distinctly female-focused content, Schneider also analyses Flavia's speech in detail (p. 110).

which means that they are unwittingly discouraged from interpreting the all-male theatre's products critically or analytically, an activity essential in the process of canonisation. These paratexts imply that women are satisfied with the superficial pleasantness of the play; in contrast, evaluating plays critically and building an aesthetic standard are the role of 'the Masculine'. They advise female playgoers to follow the gender norm at playhouses, and do not assume that women will participate in the canonisation of theatrical works.

Levin's second category includes prologues and epilogues that focus on the morals of female virtue associated with the contents of the play; it contains several non-dramatic works found by Levin and Thomas May's *The Heir* (1622). The epilogue to Thomas Randolph's *The Muses' Looking Glass* (1638), which praises ladies' chastity, also belongs in this category. I have found several prologues and epilogues addressing both sexes and preaching morals, but I do not discuss them here because they do not mention specifically female virtue, but rather a general virtue common to all. Levin regards the category as 'least interesting' (p. 169). The Elizabethan prologues and epilogues about virginity are precedents for this category.

Levin's third category comprises prologues and epilogues mentioning women's sympathy or concern with female characters in the plays, and this category is closely associated with the first. He includes the 1664 revised version of Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*, Fletcher's *Swetnam the Women-Hater* (1620) and *The Woman's Prize* (1647). I add the epilogue of Thomas Nabbes' *The Bride* (1640), and the prologue of Thomas Randolph's *Amyntas* (1638) to this category.

In the epilogue of Thomas Nabbes' *The Bride*, the Bride says, 'I am a Mayden yet, how can I then / Without some feare and blushes speake to men? Ladyes and gentlewomen pray stick to me / If the rude men should offer to undo me'. The female character tries to win sympathy from female playgoers, playfully asking the female company to save her from men's 'rude' intentions. This would not sound very funny unless both women and men were present at the playhouse, for the Bride, as the

representative of the female playgoers before her, exaggerates men's flirtatious attitudes toward women and teases them. Since the Bride appeals to women's kindness, this speech also has an element of the first category. Her hope of being defended from men's rudeness by women is identified with the performers' hope of being defended from men's harsh criticism against the play.

The long prologue of Thomas Randolph's *Amyntas* (1638) is a notable variant within the third category. It begins with a conversation between a nymph and a shepherd about the abilities of men and women, and obviously expects the co-existence of a male and female audience community:

[Nymph]. Ile speak the Prologue.

[Shepherd]. Then you doe mee wrong.

[Nymph]. Why, dare your Sexe compare with ours for Tongue?

[Shepherd]. A Female Prologue !

[Nymph]. Yes, as well as Male.

[Shepherd]. That's a new trick;

[Nymph]. And t'other is as stale.

[Shepherd]. Men are more eloquent then women made:

[Nymph]. But women are more powrfull to perswade.

[Shepherd]. It seemes so; for I dare no more contend.

[Nymph]. Then best give ore the strife, and make an end.

[Shepherd]. I will not yeeld.

[Nymph]. Shall we divide it then?

[Shepherd]. You to the Woemen speak.

[Nymph]. You to the Men.

...

[Shepherd]. Gentlemen doe but you

Like this, no matter what the Woemen doe.

[Nymph]. It was a sawcy Swaine thus to conclude!

Ladies, the Gentlemen are not so rude,  
If they were ever school'd by powrefull love,  
As to dislike the things you shall approve.<sup>29</sup>

This prologue has an element of the first category, for it praises the power of women's speech over men, a familiar concept at the playhouses in Renaissance England. As a representative of female audience members, the Nymph tries to win women's sympathy by praising their power. However, slightly differently from other prologues, this prologue does not set a limit to this power. The Nymph places women's power of persuasion, the ability to change other people's opinions peacefully and reasonably, above men's eloquence. She claims a change, for a prologue spoken by a male is 'stale'. By exercising the power of persuasion, the Nymph does 'give ore the strife' with the Shepherd, and decides that the prologue should be distributed by gender. When the Shepherd tries to disregard the ladies' opinions, the Nymph argues that such an attitude is 'so rude' and unfit for a gentleman. This prologue praises women's strong power of persuasion.

There are also prologues and epilogues that address women but which can be classified into none of Levin's three categories. The addresses to women in Ben Jonson's plays are highly original. The prologue of *Epicene* (1616) is a declaration of a festivity 'fit for ladies: some for lords, knights, squires, / Some for your waiting wench, and citie-wires, / Some for your men, and daughters of *white-Friars*'.<sup>30</sup> It lists all the types of playgoers whom he wanted to entertain through his play, ranging from 'citie-wires' (fashionable citizens wearing wires to fix the hairstyle or to wear a ruff; mostly women) to 'men, and daughters of white-Friars' (meaning both male and female playgoers attending boy companies' performances at the Whitefriars, and poor residents

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<sup>29</sup> I have added the speech prefixes to clarify the speakers.

<sup>30</sup> Ben Jonson, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (London: 1616), p. 529.

near the playhouse).<sup>31</sup> This is also the only play other than William Hawkins' *Apollo Shroving* (1637) to address various Londoners, including ordinary women. A short prologue-like speech in Jonson's court masque *Love Restored* (1616) counters the court ladies' expectations for luxurious entertainments; instead of the typical speech appealing to female tenderness, it perversely teases them: 'In troth, ladies, I pity you all. You are here in expectation of a device tonight, and I am afraid you can do little else but expect it' (*The Workes of Benjamin Jonson*, p. 989). These prologues imply that Jonson and his fellow players were making an effort to provide a sense of novelty for their targeted audience. The prologue of *Epicene* is prepared for commercial playhouses, and it aims to please any type of audience. The prologue-like speech of *Love Restored* is written for court, and tries to attract the attention of a small number of sophisticated audience members with theatrical knowledge; Jonson and his fellow players can tease them with a perverse joke because they know their taste.

Ritchie and Levin have found several Restoration paratexts claiming that the play is for women, but I have found only one play of this kind in Renaissance England, although it has neither prologue nor epilogue: Thomas Middleton's *The Inner-Temple Masque* (1619). A short epigraph is attached to the main text which states that this masque is 'made for Ladies, Ladies vnderstood'; the title page also marks it as 'an Entertainment for many worthy Ladies'. This masque gives evidence that it was common for the women of higher ranks to visit the Inner Temple when there were stage performances. Although a distinctly male-focused space, the Inner Temple sometimes invited and treated 'many worthy Ladies' to stage performances.

These paratexts show that playwrights and playing companies expected a considerable number of female playgoers at playhouses. When women of higher ranks were in the majority, they prepared addresses to such influential female playgoers, as seen in the Elizabethan court plays and Middleton's *The Inner-Temple Masque*. Most of

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<sup>31</sup> See 'city wire' in *Oxford English Dictionary* and Dutton's note 24 (p. 116).



the paratexts may be divided into three categories, but there are also exceptions to this classification. Moreover, some prologues and epilogues contain jokes and addresses that would be more effective with the presence of female playgoers.

Women in early modern London were clearly involved in playgoing culture. Many female playgoers attended playhouses. Like Ann Halkett and the ‘sisterhoode of Blackfriars’, some became active playgoers, and created small playgoing communities and shared their experiences. As the prologues and epilogues show, commercial playwrights and playing companies had to mind female responses to the theatre. Although the contemporary playgoers enjoyed the stage performances without the consciousness of being engaged in the process of canonisation, their playgoing contributed to the popularisation of drama, and led to more influential canonising activities in the following period.

## **Section 2: Women Watching Shakespeare**

Materials documenting the early seventeenth-century stage performances of Shakespeare’s plays are scarce. Even the dates of the first performances of his plays remain mostly unknown (Wells and others, pp. 69–144). This section elucidates the relationship between Shakespeare’s plays and his contemporary female playgoers, shedding light on materials related to women’s attendance at the performances of Shakespeare’s plays. It deals primarily with the texts of Shakespeare’s plays themselves, particularly his prologues and epilogues, and relies on private writings by contemporary playgoers, as well as records of court performances.

### **2.1 Female Playgoers in Shakespeare’s Plays**

Very few women’s names are given in the records of the performances of Shakespeare’s plays. Only one female playgoer is identified in the public performances: the wife of Antoine Le Fevre, a French ambassador, saw *Pericles* with her husband and others around April of 1607 at the Globe (Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, ii, p. 335).

However, Shakespeare's plays and especially the prologues and epilogues to his plays are useful in investigating what reactions Shakespeare and his company expected from women. Only in prologues and epilogues do the playwright and his fellow players express their expectations regarding the audience or opinions about theatre. They do so not as fictional characters, but as professional performers – although such paratexts portray an ideal audience rather than the actual playgoers. I do not regard prologues and epilogues to Shakespeare's plays as expressions of his personal opinions; as Tiffany Stern argues, it is difficult to judge the authorship of prologues and epilogues because they were sometimes prepared by other playwrights, who did not write the playtext itself (*Documents*, pp. 112–117). Nevertheless, it is worth looking at 'what may be a Shakespeare prologue' or epilogue (Stern, *Documents*, p. 102), and the prologues and epilogues published with Shakespeare's plays were at least approved and performed by his company; they are helpful in understanding the marketing policy adopted by Shakespeare and his fellow players. By combining the results of the survey of prologues and epilogues with the analysis of the portrayals of female playgoers in Shakespeare's plays, I discuss how Shakespeare and his company viewed female playgoers.

Among forty plays (at least partly) written by Shakespeare, eleven (about 28%) were published at least once with prologues, epilogues or short prologue- or epilogue-like texts attached to the main texts during the English Renaissance period: *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *As You Like It*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Tempest*, *Pericles* (perhaps partly written by George Wilkins) and two works created in collaboration with Fletcher, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.<sup>32</sup> Several speeches, which modern editions consider prologues or epilogues, have textual problems, and I follow modern editors' opinions. Puck's speech in the last section of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Gower's introductory and concluding speeches in *Pericles* lack headings, and are not clearly

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<sup>32</sup> Jackson, *Defining Shakespeare*, p. 217; and Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author*, pp. 291–332.

separated from the main text in the seventeenth-century editions.<sup>33</sup> The epilogue of *All's Well That Ends Well* in the First Folio is only a six-line speech spoken by the King at the end of the play, with no heading. The famous prologue of *Romeo and Juliet*, the 'star-crossed lovers' speech, is contained in all the quarto editions published before the Restoration, including the fifth quarto in 1637, but is omitted in the First Folio of 1623. I do not include *Twelfth Night* here, for Feste's last speech is not an epilogue but a song. As I discuss later, Thomas Heywood wrote an additional prologue and epilogue for *Richard III*, but these were not published with the playtext.<sup>34</sup>

Among the surviving prologues and epilogues of Renaissance England, the prologues and epilogues to Shakespeare's plays most frequently address female playgoers. Although Levin thinks that 'about the role of women in Renaissance audiences ... Shakespeare himself is not very helpful' (pp. 167–68), compared to other playwrights, Shakespeare and his fellow players are often concerned about female playgoers and deliver prologues and epilogues that take their presence for granted. Of those eleven plays with prologues or epilogues, four address both female and male audience members: *As You Like It*, *2 Henry IV*, *Pericles*, and *Henry VIII*. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* addresses gentlemen only. However, it is for this very reason that Levin thinks that its epilogue was not written by Shakespeare (p. 168). I agree with him and suspect that it was written by Fletcher because out of the thirty-five plays in the 1647 Beaumont and Fletcher Folio, seven address gentlemen only. Cyndia Susan Clegg and Marta Straznicky argue that 'The Stationer to the Readers' section in this folio is the most striking example of the recognition of female readers in English Renaissance playbooks, but it is the stationer, Humphrey Moseley, who was greatly concerned about female

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<sup>33</sup> As for Puck's speech, the Arden and Riverside editions provide no heading, and treat it as a part of the main text. However, many scholars and stage directors consider it an epilogue because it obviously addresses audience members; for example, Juliet Dusinberre, editor of the Arden edition of *As You Like It*, regards it as an epilogue (p. 349).

<sup>34</sup> For textual problems concerning prologues and epilogues, see Stern, *Making Shakespeare*, pp. 137–58.

readers' responses because Moseley himself added this section.<sup>35</sup> Shakespeare's other plays always use gender-neutral terms to address the audience: *Henry V* addresses 'gentles all' (Prologue, 8), the epilogue of *All's Well That Ends Well* uses 'you' (3, 4), and *Romeo and Juliet* also uses 'you' (Prologue, 13). The prologue of *Troilus and Cressida* addresses 'fair beholders' (26), while Puck's last speech in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is friendly toward the audience – Puck calls them 'Gentles' (V. 1. 429), uses 'you' three times in sixteen lines (425, 430, 436), and asks them to 'Give me your hands, if we be friends' (437). Prospero's epilogue in *The Tempest* is similar to Puck's last speech; Prospero uses 'you' twice in twenty lines (4, 19) and asks for applause as Puck does: 'release me from my bands / With the help of your good hands' (9–10). He also frequently entreats the audience's favour when he says 'Gentle breath of yours my sails / Must fill, or else my project fails' (11–12) and 'As you from crimes would pardon'd be, / Let your indulgence set me free' (19–20). Some scholars think that Prospero's epilogue was prepared for a court performance (Vaughan and Vaughan, *The Tempest*, p. 285).

The last speech of *Henry VIII* is a typical epilogue filled with conventions about female playgoers. As Levin mentions, it appeals to women's kindness and emphasises female playgoers' gender-specific concern about women portrayed in the play. It postulates the presence of female playgoers:

All the expected good w' are like to hear  
 For this play at this time, is only in  
 The merciful construction of good women,  
 For such a one we show'd 'em. If they smile,  
 And say 'twill do, I know within a while  
 All the best men are ours; for 'tis ill hap

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<sup>35</sup> Straznicky, 'Reading through the Body', p. 59; and Clegg, p. 30.

If they hold when their ladies bid 'em clap.

(*Henry VIII*, Epilogue, 8–14)

This epilogue asks its female audience to support the play, because it portrays ‘good women’ such as Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn and Queen Elizabeth I; it says that these female characters will please female playgoers who are interested in women’s characterisation in the play (Frye, p. 191). Although the title role is that of Henry VIII, this epilogue emphasises the significance of the female characters surrounding him. The auspiciousness of women’s smiles at playhouses can be found in other plays, such as the prologue of Robert Chamberlain’s *The Swaggering Damsel*, which states that ‘all your smiles will be, / Propitious to our labours’. The last two lines of the epilogue to *Henry VIII* hint that when both men and women are at playhouses, men must follow women’s opinions about the play. Employing various conventional theatrical techniques targeting female playgoers, this epilogue asks women’s favour. Susan Frye thinks that it was prepared for court performances, and praises the royal women’s political power by likening Anne Boleyn and Elizabeth I to Anne of Denmark and her daughter Elizabeth (p. 191). If this is the case, it means that Shakespeare, Fletcher and their fellow players are actively seeking these women’s support for theatre.

The epilogue to *2 Henry IV* similarly claims women’s power over men at playhouses. It consists of three parts, each of which was prepared for different occasions. Some scholars think that the first sixteen lines were written for a court performance for Elizabeth I and spoken by Shakespeare himself.<sup>36</sup> The third part is an explanation about Falstaff’s future. The second part, which I discuss here, is an example of Levin’s first category, an appeal to women’s tenderness:

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<sup>36</sup> Many scholars discuss this epilogue. For example, see Wilson, *The Second Part of the History of Henry IV*, pp. 214–15; Humphreys, p. 186; Wiles, p. 128; and Shapiro, 1599: *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 32–36. See also Chambers’ general explication about epilogues in *Elizabethan Stage*, ii, p. 550.

All the gentlewomen here have forgiven me; if the gentlemen will not, then the gentlemen do not agree with the gentlewomen, which was never seen in such an assembly. (*2 Henry IV*, Epilogue, 22–25)

Howard and Rackin argue that this epilogue ‘makes all the women in the audience into “gentlewomen,” thus distancing them from any imputation that they are Mistress Quickly or Doll Tearsheets’ (p. 185). My opinion is slightly different. The point of this epilogue is that it tries to subsume all women attending playhouses by eliminating class differences rather than distancing women of lower social ranks. The use of ‘gentlewomen’ or ‘ladies’ is conventional for prologues and epilogues; about seventy-seven percent of the English Renaissance plays addressing women use only the terms referring to privileged women, such as ‘ladies’, ‘gentlewomen’ and ‘dames’.<sup>37</sup> The use of these terms is a common theatrical technique to flatter the audience by lifting them above their primary social status, for English Renaissance theatre was, in Paul Yachnin’s words, ‘populuxe theatre’ full of luxuries and pleasant activities, or the game of social masquerade, which would give men and women ‘an opportunity to play at being their social “betters” and a limited mastery of the system of social rank itself’ (p. 41). People of lower social ranks imagined that they could enjoy the same performance at the same playhouse as privileged people did. The epilogue of *2 Henry IV* should be considered as one such effort for women’s favour.

The address to women in Gower’s prologue-like speech in *Pericles* is far less direct than other addresses found in prologues and epilogues, but it hints at the powerful pleasure of theatre, which attracts all people regardless of class or gender, referring to the birth of commercial theatre. Gower uses the gender-neutral ‘you’ to address the audience, saying that his poetry is supported by readers of both sexes:

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<sup>37</sup> This tendency is not limited to theatre; works of other genres often use ‘ladies’ and ‘gentlewomen’ to address female readers in Renaissance England. For this point, see Fleming, p. 158; and Wall, p. 265. For women’s books in general, see also Hull, pp. 1–28.

To sing a song that old was sung,  
From ashes ancient Gower is come,  
Assuming man's infirmities  
To glad your ear and please your eyes.  
It hath been sung at festivals,  
On ember-eves and holy [-ales],  
And lords and ladies in their lives  
Have read it for restoratives.

...

If you, born in these latter times  
When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes,  
And that to hear an old man sing  
May to your wishes pleasure bring,  
I life would wish, and that I might  
Waste it for you like taper-light. (*Pericles*, I.O. 1–16)

Gower hints that there is a difference in the form of reception of poetry between common people and privileged people; ordinary people once enjoyed his poetry through oral performances at festivals, while aristocratic people, or 'lords and ladies', appreciated his work by reading books. However, 'in these latter times, / When wit's more ripe', all of these people, including women who were readers in the past, have become playgoers of the commercial theatre, and he hopes that the audience before him enjoys the play. Poetry was once circulated through oral performances at local festivities or in books, but is now performed for various kinds of people at commercial playhouses in Renaissance London as drama.

Like other paratexts, the epilogue to *As You Like It* appeals to women's kindness in relation to the content of the play. This epilogue uses the term 'women', not

'ladies', which is unusual in English Renaissance prologues and epilogues. As Dusinberre states, Rosalind's use of 'women' and 'men' instead of 'ladies' and 'gentlemen' means that the epilogue was not spoken at court, but rather in public playhouses (*As You Like It*, p. 42). Since her oath about women's love satirised an antitheatrical writer Stephen Gosson's apprehension about the lewdness of female playgoers (Dusinberre, *As You Like It*, p. 347), it was more suitable for public theatres, which were a major target of Gosson's sarcasm. Furthermore, it matches Rosalind's unpretentious character – especially down-to-earth attitude toward love – throughout the play.

ROSALIND. It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue; but it is no more unhandsome than to see the lord the prologue. ... My way is to conjure you, and I'll begin with the women. I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you; and I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women (as I perceived by your simp'ring, none of you hates them), that between you and the women the play may please. If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleas'd me [.]

(*As You Like It*, Epilogue 1–19)

Like the epilogue of *The Bride*, Rosalind's joke about 'simp'ring' targets an audience composed of both sexes, because it jests at the male audience's presumed flirtatious attitude toward their female counterpart; the effect of the joke would have been reduced, if the audience had consisted mainly of men. To make this joke successful, a boy actor would be required to grasp the reactions of the male and female audience members appropriately, and to deliver the lines in a timely manner. By addressing women first, he must be accepted by female playgoers as 'companionable and pliable and one of them' (Orgel, *Impersonations*, p. 81). Thereafter, he must tease the male audience as a highly



enigmatic but sensual figure; he begs kisses from them as the representative of the female audience, while denying that he is a woman. This is one of the most complex and well-developed epilogues in all of Shakespeare's plays, utilising many theatrical tricks to attract the attention of the audience, such as an appeal to women's kindness and a display of the charm of boy actors.

The knowledge gained from the analysis of prologues and epilogues gives insight into Shakespeare's own portrayals of female playgoers in his plays. I argue that *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* satirise a conventional theatrical assumption about women's abhorrence of violent entertainment, which is often mentioned in the prologues and epilogues of English Renaissance plays. For example, the prologue of John Fletcher's *Rule a Wife, and Have a Wife* (1640) says, 'hold your Fannes close, and then smile at ease, / A cruell Sceane did never Lady please'. The prologue of Thomas Nabbes' *Hannibal and Scipio* (1637) tries to calm female playgoers down more directly: 'Nor need you Ladies feare the horrid sight'.

*As You Like It* shows that this theatrical assumption is inappropriate. In the wrestling scene in Act II, Scene ii, Le Beau tells Celia (and Rosalind), 'Fair princess, you have lost much good sport' (I. 2. 99–100). He explains to them that they could not see that the wrestler Charles beat the opponent and 'broke three of his ribs' (I. 2. 127), and says, 'if it please your ladyships, you may see the end, for the best is yet to do' (113–15). Touchstone teasingly answers:

Touchstone. But what is the sport, Monsieur, that the ladies have lost?

Le Beau. Why, this that I speak of.

Touchstone. Thus men may grow wiser every day. It is the first time that  
ever I heard breaking of ribs was sport for ladies.

Celia. Or I, I promise thee.

Rosalind. But is there any else longs to see this broken music in his side? Is there yet another dotes upon rib-breaking? Shall we see this wrastling, cousin?

Le Beau. You must if you stay here, for here is the place appointed for the wrastling and they are ready to perform it.

Celia. Yonder sure they are coming. Let us now stay and see it.

*(As You Like It, I. 2. 134–48)*

This conversation implies that wrestling is regarded as too violent for ladies.<sup>38</sup> Shakespeare's audiences were perhaps familiar with conventional warnings to female playgoers, and like Touchstone and Celia, never heard that 'breaking of ribs was sport for ladies'. However, contrary to this assumption, Rosalind and Celia do want to see wrestling. As Cynthia Marshall states, '[w]hile the normal audience for wrestling is evidently male ... Rosalind's desire to break the code — and her urging Celia to join her — sets in motion the pattern of transgressing gender boundaries' (p. 271). Obviously, Rosalind is interested in wrestling, and she urges not only Celia but also the audience; Lesley Wade Soule points out that her speech 'Shall we see this wrastling?' was spoken toward them (p. 146). Furthermore, as Rick Bowers points out, Celia and Rosalind themselves compare love with wrestling (p. 28). These two heroines are portrayed as vivacious young women who hardly fear violent entertainment. Rosalind is even fascinated with the 'excellent young man' Orlando (I. ii. 213) while watching the match. This scene describes wrestling as a sport pleasurable for female audiences, who can enjoy the exhibition of 'excellent' men's physical ability and attraction.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* also satirises the theatrical convention expressed in prologues and epilogues. As Dymphna Callaghan points out, the amateur players in Athens 'attribute naïve spectatorship to women' (p. 144). The players fear that 'the

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<sup>38</sup> See Dusinberre, 'Boys Becoming Women in Shakespeare's Plays', p. 6.

Duchess and the ladies ... would shriek' (I. 2. 75–76) when they see Snug playing the role of the Lion. However, their anxiety is mocked in the scene of the play within the play. When Snug appears on stage, he denies that he is a Lion in a short prologue-like speech to appease 'ladies . . . whose gentle hearts do fear The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor' (V. 1. 219–20), and Theseus, Demetrius and Lysander ridicule him, saying that he is rather like a fox or goose (V. 1. 231–38). Snug's speech is described as a mark of the amateur players' misconception about theatre; far from being preferred by ladies, it greatly reduces the thrill, and meets with the audience's scornful laugh. This satirical description of meticulous but needless apprehension about the female audience shows that Shakespeare and his playing company place more trust in audience members when it comes to the reception of violent scenes performed on stage, and that they consider such scenes as not very disturbing for female audiences.

Shakespeare also portrays female audiences in *Love's Labour's Lost*; the Princess in this play and Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are both described as influential and generous. As Levin points out, their portrayals follow the theatrical convention of regarding female audiences as more tender than their male counterparts (p. 168). They are both royal women who use their influence to support the players, overlooking their bad performances. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the King of Navarre tries to cancel the play within the play because of its poor quality, but the Princess changes his mind and authorises it, saying: 'let me o'errule you now' (V. 2. 515). Using her charm over the King, who is in love with her, she is temporarily licensed to 'o'errule' men in theatre. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a comedy performed a few years after *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare first presents Hippolyta as a reluctant audience member, and describes her change of mind. Hippolyta tries to cancel a performance of the workers in Athens because she is caring enough to be worried that the players will fail: 'I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharg'd, / And duty in his service perishing' (V. 1. 85–86). Her bridegroom Theseus, however, persuades her: 'The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing. / Our sport shall be to take what they mistake' (V. 1. 89–90).

Influenced by his advice to use ‘imagination’ (V. 1. 212), Hippolyta, having complained that ‘[t]his is the silliest stuff that ever I heard’ (V. 1. 210) at the beginning of the play, eventually comes to overlook the players’ faults: ‘Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man [Pyramus]’ (V. 1. 290). In a sense, the Princess and Hippolyta represent Shakespeare’s ideal female audience; they are influential and meet the expectations expressed in his prologues and epilogues.

The prologues and epilogues to Shakespeare’s plays and his portrayals of female playgoers suggest that he and his company expected a substantial number of women to be present in their playhouse and paid a great deal of attention to their responses, although their compliments to female audiences should be interpreted cautiously. The surviving paratexts of Shakespeare’s plays frequently addressed women, and those of *As You Like It*, *2 Henry IV*, and *Henry VIII* aim at women as a target audience, as well as their male counterparts; this suggests that Shakespeare’s plays were relatively popular among women. The addresses were largely based on the theatrical conventions related to women at that time, and Shakespeare’s company skilfully developed them; they expressed the worries about female playgoers’ perceptions shared by the playwright and his company, made jokes that would work better in front of a female audience, and satirised the general assumption about women’s naivety at playhouses. Thus, Shakespeare and his company did try to please female playgoers at their playhouses.

## **2.2 Shakespeare and Burbage’s popularity**

I propose the hypothesis that one of the reasons that Shakespeare had to be conscious of the presence of female playgoers was Richard Burbage’s popularity among women. When many women gathered at playhouses to see Burbage’s performances, Shakespeare and other fellow players would have to consider them as significant customers, and take their taste into consideration.

Among Burbage's signature roles, Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy* was highly popular.<sup>39</sup> Thomas May's *The Heir* (1622), written soon after Burbage's death, attests to this; in this play, after talking about Hieronimo, Polimetes states, 'Ladies in the boxes / Kept time with sighes, and teares to his sad accents / As had he truely bin the new man he seemd' (B1). Burbage's Hieronimo made female playgoers weep, which indicates his popularity among women. Hieronimo is also the role mentioned in William Prynne's anecdote about a theatre-loving gentlewoman, and I argue that the anecdote spread broadly in part because Burbage's Hieronimo was popular among women.

Burbage also played Richard III, along with 'young Hamlet, old Hieronimo, / Kind Lear, the grieved Moor' in Shakespeare's plays.<sup>40</sup> John Manningham's anecdote, recorded in his *Diary* in 1602, illustrates that Burbage's Richard III was also popular among female playgoers: 'Vpon a tyme when Burbidge played Richard III, there was a citizen grone soe farr in liking with him, that before shee went from the play shee appointed him to come that night vnto hir by the name of Richard the Third' (p. 39). Because *Richard III* was first performed around the early to mid-1590s, I suspect that this anecdote had already spread before 1602, when Manningham wrote it down, and seemed viable enough as a joke for playgoers in London. This anecdote represents an exaggerated variation of active female playgoers' 'groupie' behaviours.

It should be noted that the woman asked Burbage to come by the name of Richard III. This is indeed a pun on the name of the actor himself, but I also argue that playgoers in Shakespeare's London regarded Richard as a sexually attractive figure to heterosexual women. Thomas Heywood's additional prologue and epilogue, written for the revival of *Richard III* by Queen Anne's Men at the Red Bull, were prepared for 'A young witty Lad playing the part of Richard the third' (*Pleasant Dialogues and*

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<sup>39</sup> Although Philip Edwards, editor of *The Spanish Tragedy* in *The Revels Plays*, casts doubt on whether Burbage played Hieronimo (pp. 146–47), Jeffrey Kahan counters Edwards' argument (pp. 253–54).

<sup>40</sup> 'A Funeral Elegy on the Death of the Famous Actor Richard Burbage Who Died on Saturday in Lent the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1618/9', in *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660*, edited by Wickham and others, p. 182.

*Dramma's*, p. 247), which indicates that the role was allotted to a charming actor – although he was much younger than Burbage, as evidenced in his being called a ‘Boy’. Although Richard III is often presented as a crafty but unhandsome man ‘curtail’d of this fair proportion . . . / Deform’d, unfinish’d’ (*Richard III*, I. 1. 18–20), he exerts his sexual influence to win Anne’s heart in Act I, Scene 2, and it is always possible for actors to play Richard III with an emphasis on his sexual charisma.<sup>41</sup>

The gossiping account of the woman, contemporary documents about Burbage and seventeenth-century references to *Richard III* hint that many women found pleasure in watching Burbage’s Richard and his other leading roles in English Renaissance drama. Judging from Edward Kynaston’s concern about his female supporters, I argue that Burbage also had to keep in mind his female fans’ responses. It is natural that Shakespeare and his company often addressed women in prologues and epilogues, because active female playgoers were financially prospective customers for his company. Collaboration with players who were popular among women, such as Burbage, would contribute to women’s participation in the process of the canonisation of Shakespeare’s works, for it meant that he had enough motivation to create charismatic male leading roles for Burbage. After Burbage died, these roles could be performed as attractive male roles and tempt female playgoers to visit playhouses. The popularity of Shakespeare’s plays among women was gained not only through the playwright’s talent, but also by the talent of his fellow actors and the collaboration between them.

### **2.3 Royal and Aristocratic Women and Shakespeare’s Court Performances**

Although his plays were mainly performed at commercial playhouses like the Globe and Blackfriars, Shakespeare’s reception at court is a notable factor in the canonisation

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<sup>41</sup> See Casey’s review of the performance history, especially pp. 39–40. Furthermore, as an actor, Antony Sher discusses whether Richard III should be played as sexy, mentioning the anecdote about Burbage in his diary (p. 158).

of his works because court performances targeted influential customers, including women in high ranks.<sup>42</sup> There are several documents to show that his plays were performed at court and that royal and aristocratic women attended such productions. This subsection focuses on influential women's dramatic and literary activities and the court performances of Shakespeare's plays.

Privileged women's active patronage for literature and art has been discussed by many scholars. For example, some of them, such as Lady Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk; Lady Katherine Mountjoy; and Lady Lettice Dudley, Countess of Essex, nominally patronised theatre companies.<sup>43</sup> Others received dedications from playwrights. At least 23 published plays were officially dedicated to 19 women in England (Appendix 6). Some manuscript plays were also dedicated to women; John Marston's *Entertainment at Ashby* in 1607 was dedicated to the sponsor of the performance, Lady Alice Spencer, Countess of Derby (Marston, p. 191).

These privileged women's dramatic activities were more conspicuous in court masques and private entertainments than in commercial theatres. Among the plays dedicated to women in the list of Appendix 6, six were closet plays, and five were court entertainments. Many works, such as Clare McManus's *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court 1590–1619* and Karen Britland's *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, highlight the two Stuart queens' involvement in court masques as dancers and patrons. Unlike commercial theatre in England, aristocratic women took part in these court entertainments as performers, and sometimes, they even played speaking or singing roles (McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, pp.185–186). Although there is no record to suggest the existence of women writing for public playhouses in Renaissance England, 'a woman writer can use the elite genre of closet drama to engage in political discourse

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<sup>42</sup> The second volume of Chambers' *Elizabethan Stage* mainly covers royal women's attendance at court performances.

<sup>43</sup> Schoone-Jongen, p. 53; John Tucker Murray, 1, pp. 72–74; and Wiggins, Richardson, and Merry, 2, p. 1572.

without exposing her views to an indiscriminate public' (Straznicky, *Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama, 1550–1700*, p. 1). Unlike commercial theatre, closet plays mainly targeted readers, although they were sometimes privately performed, and women were able to participate in private productions as performers.<sup>44</sup> First, female writers were involved in the development of closet drama as translators. Lady Jane Lumley's translation of *Iphigeneia in Aulis* around 1553 is a pioneering closet play by a woman writer: it is the first English translation of Euripides and the earliest extant English drama written by a woman (Williams, 'Translating the Text, Performing the Self', p. 16). Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, published *Antonius* in 1592, which was the English translation of Robert Garnier's closet drama *Marc Antoine*. Influenced by Mary Sidney's play, Samuel Daniel dedicated the closet drama *Cleopatra* to her in 1594. Mary Sidney's niece Lady Mary Sidney Wroth, author of *Urania*, also wrote a closet play entitled *Love's Victory* around 1620. Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland, published *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry* (hereafter *Mariam*) in 1613 (Hodgson-Wright, pp. 55–67), which is the earliest original play published as the work of an English woman. These three female authors of closet dramas received dedications from other playwrights, which suggests that intellectually active aristocratic women sometimes participated in literary and theatrical networks, both as writers and patrons. Although these women's activities were separated from commercial theatre, these privileged women were intellectually active enough to cross the boundary from recipient to creator; they watched drama as audience members, supported theatre as patrons, performed on stage, and wrote plays. These dramatic activities by privileged women led to the emergence of aristocratic female intellectuals who actively wrote closet plays during the Restoration period, such as Margaret Cavendish and her stepdaughters.

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<sup>44</sup> For example, Hannay suspects that Mary Sidney Wroth's closet play *Love's Victory* was privately performed by her relatives and friends, including women (*Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, p. 221).



At court, theatre companies and playwrights gained opportunities to seek patronage from influential customers, including privileged women. As Suzanne Westfall summarises, royal women in early modern England, ‘including seven queens (Katharine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Mary Tudor, Elizabeth, Anne, and later Henrietta Maria), served as patrons to player troupes, artists, and playwrights’ (pp. 37). Sometimes, the authors of the plays performed at court were introduced to the royals; for example, John Lyly was perhaps presented to Elizabeth I by his patron Edward de Vere (Hackett, *Shakespeare and Elizabeth*, p. 9). Although Lyly did not enjoy as much patronage from the queen as he hoped, his plays were frequently performed at court with prologues and epilogues targeting court ladies, which implies that Lyly and his fellow players attempted to curry favour with privileged women surrounding Elizabeth.<sup>45</sup> Lyly’s comedies most frequently appeared at court before Shakespeare started writing and were presented at least five times in the 1580s.<sup>46</sup>

Shakespeare’s early romantic comedies might have been considered as suitable for Elizabethan court performances as Lyly’s by the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, the theatre company for which Shakespeare wrote plays; at least two of Shakespeare’s comedies were performed at court after the 1580s under Elizabeth I’s reign.<sup>47</sup> The title page of the first quarto documents that *Love’s Labour’s Lost* was ‘presented before her Highness’.<sup>48</sup> The title page of the first quarto also says that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was performed in front of the queen at least once before 1602; some scholars believe that the court performance took place on 23 April 1597 at the feast of the Order of the Garter.<sup>49</sup> Several other comedies of Shakespeare are also suspected to have been

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<sup>45</sup> See Austin’s transcription of letters about John Lyly in ‘John Lyly and Queen Elizabeth’

<sup>46</sup> For Lyly and Elizabethan court taste, see Happé’s discussion (pp. 37–44).

<sup>47</sup> See ‘Performance at Court 1558–1642’ in John H. Astington’s *English Court Theatre 1558–1642*, pp. 221–267. If not stated, all the records about court performances refer to this list.

<sup>48</sup> For the exact date of the court performance, see Woudhuysen’s discussion in the Arden edition, p. 74–87.

<sup>49</sup> See Melchiori’s Introduction to the Arden edition, pp. 1–3. This hypothesis was proposed in Hotson, *Shakespeare Versus Shallow*, pp. 111–22.

performed at court, although the surviving evidence is scarce.<sup>50</sup> As Helen Hackett argues, however, although the Lord Chamberlain's Men most frequently performed at court, there is no evidence to show that Queen Elizabeth supported Shakespeare more actively than she did other playwrights (*Shakespeare and Elizabeth*, pp. 8–10). The records of court performances during this period only suggest that Shakespeare could participate in court performances as a resident playwright for the company.

Soon after Elizabeth I died, Shakespeare and his company became concerned with Anne of Denmark's court taste. Sir Walter Cope's letter, dated '1604', hints that the King's Men, nominally patronised by Anne's husband King James, wanted to provide 'wytt and mirthe' for the new queen by reviving Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*:

Burbage ys come, and sayes ther ys no new playe that the Quene hath not seene, but they have revyved an olde one cawled *Loves Labore lost*, which for wytt and mirthe he sayes will please her exceedingly. And thys ys

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<sup>50</sup> *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* were often suspected of being performed before Elizabeth I. Some argue that *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a play containing compliments to her, was performed at one of the marriage ceremonies of aristocratic couples conducted in her presence around 1595–1596, but no evidence survived about court performances of the play. See Foakes's summary in the Cambridge edition, pp. 2–3; Holland's Introduction to the Oxford edition, pp. 111–12; Williams, *Our Moonlight Revels*, pp. 263–5; and Hackett, *Shakespeare and Elizabeth*, pp. 120–24. Judging from court records and allusions in the play, Juliet Dusinberre claims that *As You Like It* was performed at court on Shrove Tuesday, 20 February 1599 ('Pancakes and a Date for As You Like It', pp. 379–80). Dusinberre also argues that it 'is geared to Elizabethan court taste. It boasts, in a pastoral drama full of music and witty word-play, a uniquely powerful heroine posing as a shepherd, Elizabeth's favourite image for her own rule' (Introduction to *As You Like It*, p. 41). Michael Hattaway is dubious about this date, but he also thinks that this play was performed at court (p. 167). Helen Hackett also argues against Dusinberre's discussion ('"As The Diall Hand Tells Ore": The Case for Dekker, Not Shakespeare, as Author', pp. 40–42). Moreover, some suspect that *Twelfth Night*, another romantic comedy featuring a powerful heroine, was performed at court, but there has been much debate about its date. In *The First Night of 'Twelfth Night'*, Leslie Hotson argues that *Twelfth Night* was performed on the night of 6 January, or 'twelfth night', in 1601, when the Queen invited Don Vilginio Orsino, Duke of Bracciano, to attend. Josephine Bennett maintains that the court performance took place one year later. Henk Gras argues that the play was prepared for the revels of Middle Temple. Kawai Shoichiro thinks that it was written around 1599. However, according to Keir Elam's summary in the introduction to the Arden edition, none of these hypotheses is certain. I am inclined to agree with Kawai, who believes that judging from allusions, metrical similarities, and the atmosphere of the play, *Twelfth Night* was written between *As You Like It* and *Hamlet*.

apointed to be playd to-morowe night at my Lord of Sowthamptons, unless  
yow send a wrytt to remove the corpus cum causa to yor howse in Strande.  
Burbage ys my messenger ready attendyng yor pleasure.  
(Halliwell-Phillipps, ii, p. 83)

It is believed that the King's Men performed this play at Robert Cecil's house in the Strand or at Southampton House between 9 and 14 January 1605 (Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost*, pp. 74–87). Since *Love's Labour's Lost* was already performed before Elizabeth I, this play had been successful at court, and was also considered suitable for the new queen. Woudhuysen points out that if this play were performed at Southampton House, it meant that Shakespeare's early patron Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton provided a private stage for the King's Men to entertain Anne of Denmark. This suggests that the new queen was building relations with courtiers through attending a theatrical performance, while the King's Men were trying to establish a connection with her through their old aristocratic patron (Woudhuysen, *Love's Labour's Lost*, p. 85). As I have already mentioned, it is conjectured that the epilogue of *Henry VIII* was prepared for Anne of Denmark and her daughter Elizabeth (Frye, p. 191). This suggests that Shakespeare and his fellow players were interested in gaining support from the new queen.

Although Shakespeare's plays continued to be performed at the Caroline court, there is no particular evidence to show that Charles I and Henrietta Maria preferred his plays to other playwrights' works. The King's Men performed *Richard III* for the queen's birthday festivity on 16 November 1633.<sup>51</sup> This was the first performance that she attended following the delivery of her second son, the Duke of York (later James II of England), one month earlier. Although *Richard III* contains a description of the

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<sup>51</sup> Henry Herbert, *The Dramatic Record of Sir Henry Herbert*, p. 53. According to Furdell, when she gave birth to Charles II, Henrietta Maria was attended by Peter Chamberlen, an obstetrician and nephew of famous obstetrician Peter Chamberlen the elder (p. 132). It seems that male obstetricians did not prevent the postpartum mother from attending festivities as long as she was healthy.

offstage assassination of two young princes, neither court audiences nor the King's Men found the content of the play inappropriate for the postpartum mother. Charles I and Henrietta Maria saw and 'Likt' *The Taming of the Shrew* on 26 November and '[v]ery well likt' John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (hereinafter *The Woman's Prize*), a sequel to *The Shrew*, on 18 November.<sup>52</sup> Although these entries are too brief to clarify the couple's responses, they attest that Shakespeare's plays were still in the repertory for court performances.

Some of the records regarding Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia, daughter of James I (VI) and Anne of Denmark, suggest that Shakespeare was one of the popular playwrights among privileged playgoers. Obviously, she had knowledge of theatre, including Shakespeare (Hughes and Sanders, pp. 9–11). She was a nominal patron of Lady Elizabeth's Men in England and organised masques and plays at her exile court in the Hague to the extent that she 'irritated the strict Dutch Calvinists', her militant anti-Catholics supporters.<sup>53</sup> She was familiar with Shakespeare's plays: she obtained a copy of Shakespeare's Second Folio as a gift from the Countess of Angus between 1632 and 1662 (Folger Second Folio 22) and bequeathed it to her son Prince Rupert, Count Palatine of the Rhine and Duke of Cumberland. The note pasted on the copy shows that he gave this copy to Lady Amelia Hollandina Fredrica Augusta de Solmes, Countess of Veerhoven, and that it was handed down to multiple female users, specifically Lady Aubery, Lady Hewit, and Lady Lister.<sup>54</sup> Another copy of the Second Folio belonged to Elizabeth's brother Charles I's library, and it is now housed in the Royal Library (West, *Census*, ii, p. 129). This means that Shakespeare's works came to be known among the children of James and Anne of Denmark. Many of Shakespeare's plays were performed at Elizabeth of Bohemia's wedding celebration. When Elizabeth of Bohemia married

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<sup>52</sup> *The Dramatic Record of Sir Henry Herbert*, p. 53. See also Daileader and Taylor's Introduction to *The Tamer Tamed, or, The Woman's Prize*, pp. 26–27.

<sup>53</sup> See Asch's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>54</sup> Sasha Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems in Early Modern England* (hereafter *Reading Shakespeare's Poems*), p. 48.

Frederick V, Elector Palatine, in 1613, about twenty performances of plays were held, at least seven of which were Shakespeare's. These were *Much Ado about Nothing* (possibly performed twice, but details unknown), *The Tempest*, *Othello*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Julius Caesar*, *1 Henry IV*, and *2 Henry IV*.<sup>55</sup> Shakespeare and his fellow players' efforts to curry favour with Anne of Denmark and her daughter were therefore successful to a certain extent.

Although these records regarding court performances only suggest that Shakespeare's plays continued to be performed at court by his company from his time until the Caroline era, there is one noteworthy record, the production patronised by France Howard. Frances Howard (1578–1639), daughter of Thomas Howard, first Viscount of Bindon, was a notable female playgoer in Renaissance England. She sponsored a court performance of *The Winter's Tale* and perhaps made one of the earliest references to Shakespeare's works by women.

Because Frances Howard married three times and changed her surname, to avoid confusion I will call her Frances hereafter. In 1591, she first married a merchant, Henry Prannell, who died in 1599. In 1601, she married her second husband, Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, a widower about forty years older than she. Soon after his death in 1621, she married Ludovick Stuart, Duke of Lennox, who died in February 1624.<sup>56</sup> Frances' surviving poem, 'The Answer of the Countess of Hertford to Sir George Rodney's Elegy' (hereafter 'The Answer'), sent as a private letter in 1601, attests to the fact that she was an intellectually active woman. After the death of her first husband Henry Prannell, Sir George Rodney wooed her, and could not abandon the hope of winning her love even after her remarriage in 1601. Rodney wrote 'Elegia' for Frances, and 'The Answer' was her expression of refusal. According to Arthur Wilson's

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<sup>55</sup> Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, ii, 343. See also Foakes' analysis in the Arden edition of *King Henry VIII*, p. xxxiv.

<sup>56</sup> Scholars should carefully clarify the difference between Frances Howard, Duchess of Lennox and Richmond, the woman discussed in this subsection, and Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset, one of the suspects in the murder of Thomas Overbury, for readers' convenience.

account in 1653, after receiving her reply, Rodney killed himself (p. 258).

Apart from the wife of Antoine Le Fevre and royal women, Frances is the only non-royal Englishwoman reported to attend a theatrical performance of Shakespeare in Renaissance London. As far as I have found, few scholars have paid attention to her attendance of performances of *The Winter's Tale*. Sir Henry Herbert recorded that 'To the Duchess of Richmond, in the king's absence, was given *The Winter's Tale*, by the K, company, the 18 Janu. 1623. Att Whitehall' (p. 51). This date means 18 January 1624 in the present calendar, and because Frances's husband Ludovick was made the Duke of Richmond on 17 August 1623, five months before this court performance, this 'Duchess of Richmond' must be Frances. According to Herbert's records and Astington's list, only Frances, a Spanish Ambassador (19–21 February 1615), Sir John Digby (30 November 1618), Ludovick Stuart (*Pericles* by the King's Men for a French Ambassador on 20 May 1619) and the Lord Chamberlain ('for the ladys' on 1 November 1624 and for the royal couple on 3 May 1632) sponsored court performances apart from the royals.<sup>57</sup> Both Frances and Ludovick patronised the court performances of Shakespeare's late romances by the King's Men.

Frances and Ludovick were powerful and wealthy enough to sponsor court performances. James I treated Ludovick preferentially because he was the son of the late Esmé Stuart, the king's favourite cousin, and Frances was so close to the king that it was even rumoured that she would become his lover after Anne of Denmark and Ludovick died.<sup>58</sup> Algernon Percy's letter to his sister Dorothy on 10 October 1639 also states that Frances bequeathed her son a large fortune when she died (Brennan and others, p. 146). The couple also had a connection with the King's Men and some knowledge of Shakespeare's plays. Ludovick nominally patronised the Duke of Lennox's Men until around 1608, issuing a licence to protect his company.<sup>59</sup> This experience as a nominal

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<sup>57</sup> Herbert, *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert*, pp. 51–52; Astington, pp. 222–67.

<sup>58</sup> Wilson, *The History of Great Britain, Being the Life and Reign of King James I*, pp. 258–59.

<sup>59</sup> *Henslowe Papers*, Article 40; Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, ii, p. 241; and Wickham and Berry, p.

patron acquainted him with several players and enabled him and his wife to sponsor court performances.

Frances had another possible link to Shakespeare's plays in her youth. Some scholars believe that 'The Answer' contains one of the few contemporary allusions to Shakespeare's *As You Like It*; this was first pointed out by Donald W. Foster, and has been supported by Eric Langley.<sup>60</sup> To Rodney, who frequently alludes to dying for love in his 'Elegia' (71–77, 110–14, 121–26), Frances replies:

No, no, I never yet could hear one prove  
That there was ever any died for love. ('The Answer', 139–40)

These lines are suspected to allude to Rosalind's 'no one dies for love' joke in *As You Like It*, in which she – disguised as Ganymede – teases Orlando, who states that he will die for Rosalind's love:

Rosalind. The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in  
all this time there was not any man died in his own person,  
*videlicet*, in a love-cause... men have died from time to time, and  
worms have eaten them, but not for love.  
Orlando. I would not have my right Rosalind of this mind, for I protest her  
frown might kill me.  
Rosalind. By this hand, it will not kill a fly.

(*As You Like It*, IV. 1. 94–111)

In addition to the similarity between the lines, I point out that circumstantial evidence

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<sup>60</sup> Foster, "Against the Perjured Falsehood of Your Tongues": Frances Howard on the Course of Love' (hereafter 'Against the Perjured Falsehood'), p. 74. Quotations from Rodney and Howard refer to Foster's transcription included in this article. See also Langley, p. 13.

suggests that Frances had knowledge of *As You Like It*. The play was staged between 1598 and 1600 at the Globe, shortly before she wrote 'The Answer'. Frances, like other educated women in Renaissance England, could attend public playhouses. Since she was acquainted with Shakespeare's former patron Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton, and even tried to marry him around 1600, she would have been able to obtain knowledge of Shakespeare and other dramatists through the social network around Wriothesley.<sup>61</sup> Her later connection with the King's Men also implies her familiarity with drama, although no scholars have connected the record of her playgoing to the similarity between 'The Answer' and *As You Like It*.

Both this play and the anti-Petrarchan tendency of English poetry are now so well-known that using such mockery to counter a Petrarchan lover's complaint appears clichéd. For example, Mary Sidney Wroth, another female playgoer in early modern England, sometimes ironically describes chivalric romance in *Urania 1*, which appeared about twenty years after Frances's poem (*Urania 1*, p. xxii). However, this kind of anti-Petrarchan joke was relatively new in England around 1600, and Shakespeare's major sources – which were also available to educated women like Frances – include no such expressions.<sup>62</sup> Partly because it is unprecedented in English literature, Frederick A. de Armas thinks that Shakespeare imported this kind of anti-Petrarchan jest from Spain because *El Ganso del Oro* (*The Golden Goose*), a lesser-known work by Lope de Vega, written between 1588 and 1595, includes a somewhat similar expression (pp. 38–41). It is unlikely that Frances had access to this unfamiliar Spanish play, and I argue that Frances, a female playgoer, knew Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Concerning Frances's resolute attitude in this poem, Christopher Boswell states that her 'assertion of her subjectivity against Petrarchan objectification ... might be seen as part of a paradigmatic

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<sup>61</sup> See Simon Forman's Casebooks in The Casebooks Project: Simon Forman and Richard Napier's Medical Records 1596–1634. This website contains the transcription of Forman's casebooks.

<sup>62</sup> For example, Cole points out the rarity of such rhetoric in this time, saying that this passage is 'absolute heresy to Lodge and to his acknowledged master, John Lyly' (p. 412). For the emergence of anti-Petrarchism in English poetry, see also Dubrow, p. 61.



shift in which there emerges a transition in women's literary presence from representation to self-representation' (p. 261). If Frances consciously alluded to *As You Like It*, she actively incorporated knowledge gained from theatrical works and utilised them for self-representation.

Although the records regarding court performances of Shakespeare are scarce and there is no evidence to suggest that he gained substantial patronage from royal women, some of them illustrate that several privileged and intellectually active women, such as Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia and Frances Howard, knew Shakespeare's plays. As Frances Howard's poem suggests, privileged female playgoers in early modern England were sometimes transformed from members of the audience into writers. It seems that royal and aristocratic women in early modern England more easily became writers or performers in private spheres; Elizabeth of Bohemia organised private performances, and Frances Howard wrote a poem as a private letter.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that female playgoers in Renaissance England had their own presence at theatres in which Shakespeare's plays were performed and that Shakespeare and his company had women's responses in mind. The frequent addresses found in the prologues and epilogues of Shakespeare's plays suggest the popularity of the playwright and his fellow players among female playgoers and their attempt to curry favour with them. Although he and his company did not deeply depend on court patronage, his plays were performed at court, and his works were known by several influential women who were actively engaged in dramatic activities. In the next chapter, I will focus more on the dramatic and literary activities of intellectually active women in early modern England.

## **Chapter 2: Reading and Writing about Shakespeare**

Through a focus on playbooks associated with women and women's own writings, this chapter explores women's reception of Shakespeare via reading and writing from Shakespeare's time until 1660. It consists of two sections: the first deals with women's usage of playbooks relating to Shakespeare by conducting a large-scale survey of early playbooks in major libraries, while the second section examines women writers. Unlike the previous chapter, which dealt with the period before 1642, this chapter covers the period from the 1590s to the 1660. The publication of playbooks continued during the Interregnum, and they had significance in allowing playgoers and readers to maintain knowledge about drama during the London theatre closure.

### **Section 1: Women, Books, and Shakespeare**

This section discusses women's uses of books containing Shakespeare's works from his time until 1660, examining copies of his early playbooks associated with women's names. The rise of print culture and the circulation of playbooks during the theatre closure had an impact on the reception of Shakespeare. Various dramatists' works were constantly published and provided readers with entertainment during the war, despite the decrease in the number of public stage performances in London.<sup>1</sup> Studies of women's ownership marks in books will help to elucidate how women used the books containing Shakespeare's works in this period and how their book-related activities contributed to Shakespeare's popularity.

#### **1.1 Previous Studies of Literacy, Playbooks, and Readers**

It is difficult to estimate the reading population in early modern England, where there was no compulsory education or statistics on literacy rates. The literacy rate during the Renaissance period is estimated to have been about five to ten percent among Englishwomen and Scotswomen, while the male literacy rate in England at this time is estimated to be about twenty percent.<sup>2</sup> However, analyses based on the number of individuals able to sign their names are not necessarily reliable, because reading skills

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<sup>1</sup> For readership and theatre during the English Civil War, see Wiseman, pp. 1–18.

<sup>2</sup> Cressy, p. 176; and Houston, p. 57.

and writing skills should be considered as distinct phenomena, and signature-based statistics cannot include women of all classes and unprivileged males, who had no opportunities to leave official documents.<sup>3</sup> Because female education heavily focused on reading skills in early modern England, scholars point out that a certain number of women were able to read but could not write.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps more women could read than the estimated literacy rate suggests, although only a small number of women had access to books compared to in later periods, and it is impossible to estimate the reading literacy rate among women at this time; from a historical perspective, as explained in David Cressy's often-quoted phrase, '[u]nfortunately, reading leaves no record' (p. 53), and evidence of reading rarely survives.

Although the literacy rate was low, books were constantly published and read in Renaissance England. I am greatly indebted to the results of the development of book history in the 2000s, which has shed light on both how books were produced and how they were received by readers. A book-history approach to reader response has developed not only in literature but also in the history of science; for example, James A. Secord's *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* and Owen Gingerich's *The Book Nobody Read: Chasing the Revolutions of Nicolaus Copernicus* focus on the reception of a particular title, and I am greatly indebted to their analyses of books as media for knowledge. On the one hand, Shakespeareans have reconsidered Shakespeare as a dramatist who wrote not only for playgoers, but also for readers, challenging the performance-centred approach to Shakespeare that flourished in the late twentieth century and instead focusing on the printing business in Renaissance England.<sup>5</sup> Lukas Erne's *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (2003) and Andrew Murphy's *Shakespeare in*

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<sup>3</sup> For this point, see also Graff, p. 155; Eales, p. 18; and Ferguson, *Dido's Daughters*, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England', pp. 102–03; and Sanders, pp. 138–64. For women's education in Renaissance England, see Thomson, p. 215, n38; Kamm, pp. 18–19; Henderson and McManus, p. 88; O'Day, pp. 179–95; and Charlton, pp. 77–105.

<sup>5</sup> For the performance-centred tendency of scholars, see Mazer, p. 99.

*Print: A History and Chronology of Shakespeare Publishing* (2003) have provided a more well-balanced view of the relationship between books and theatrical performances, suggesting that reading and watching plays were activities that coexisted in Shakespeare's time. Following these previous studies, I consider reading and playgoing to be deeply connected intellectual activities. On the other hand, studies of readers' annotations have revealed much about reader-response in Renaissance England. For example, William H. Sherman's *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (2008) discusses women's archival activities in Renaissance England in detail by conducting research on annotations (pp. 53–67). Sherman tries to collect individual readers' interpretations, which is also an aim of this thesis.

## **1.2 Using Shakespeare's Books**

Records of women readers of Shakespeare's books, especially those before the Restoration, are scarce; even records of male readers of Shakespeare are far from abundant.<sup>6</sup> There are four major types of sources available: library catalogues associated with women, references to female readers by male writers, women's writings and bookplates and signatures of women left in books. Though useful, only a small number of library catalogues have survived: *Private Libraries in Renaissance England* contains no inventories associated with women so far, and Sears Jayne states that his book *Library Catalogues of the English Renaissance* includes only three lists of books of women.<sup>7</sup> References to female readers by male writers are, in general, sporadic and sometimes unreliable, for they are often influenced by gossip. Since women's writings are significant resources to understand active female readers' responses to Shakespeare, I devote the next section to analysing female writers.

Compared to other resources, bookplates and signatures have not been

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<sup>6</sup> Among the male library owners appearing in *Private Libraries in Renaissance England* so far, only two men owned Shakespeare's playbooks.

<sup>7</sup> Jayne, p. 46. However, Hackel points out that Jayne's attribution of library catalogues in this work is not appropriate in terms of gender ('The Countess of Bridgewater's London Library', p. 154, n1).

systematically studied, and I focus on these marks of ownership histories in this thesis. As Sonia Massai summarises, most of the early female readers of Shakespeare's books are unidentified, and Sasha Roberts' studies are the only substantial works in this field (Massai, 'Early Readers', p. 153, n45). Roberts analysed copies owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library (hereafter the Folger) in detail, but other major libraries have not yet been thoroughly examined. Furthermore, compared with the First Folio – about which *The Shakespeare First Folios: A Descriptive Catalogue*, the latest worldwide census of the First Folio, was published in 2011 by Eric Rasmussen and Anthony James West – ownership histories of other Folio editions and quartos are far less frequently studied. No worldwide quarto census has been conducted since Henrietta C. Bartlett and Alfred W. Pollard published the second edition of quarto census in 1939, and the locations and the owners registered in this census are not necessarily correct now. The Second, Third and Fourth Folios have no major census, except for Harold M. Otness' *The Shakespeare Folio Handbook and Census*, which covers the copies held by American institutions as of 1990.<sup>8</sup> Recognising the merits and limits of these previous studies, I will describe less-studied copies of the Second, Third and Fourth Folios and quartos associated with women rather than the First Folio, conducting research in major libraries which Sasha Roberts could not cover, such as the British Library.

To understand one of the least-explored fields in the reception of Shakespeare, I conducted a survey of bookplates and signatures of women in Shakespeare's playbooks from before the mid-eighteenth century. My aim was to accumulate information about the social backgrounds of women associated with Shakespeare's playbooks. I took two approaches to achieving my goal. First, I conducted a large-scale survey in four libraries. I wanted to look at all of the copies of Shakespeare's playbooks

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<sup>8</sup> Sidney Lee's *Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies: A Census of Extant Copies* (1902) is the pioneering census of the First Folio. Anthony James West made a new census in 2003, *The Shakespeare First Folio: The History of the Book* (hereafter *West Census*), and this is updated by Rasmussen and West. For Shakespeare's quartos, Henrietta C. Bartlett and Alfred W. Pollard published *A Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto, 1594–1709* in 1916 (hereafter *Bartlett and Pollard 1916 Census*) and updated it in the second edition in 1939 (hereafter *Bartlett and Pollard 1939 Census*).

from before the mid-eighteenth century at the British Library, the Senate House Library of the University of London, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and the Meisei University Shakespeare Folio Collection (hereafter the Meisei Collection), in order to check whether they were associated with women's names. Second, I consulted the copies which I suspected to be related to women by searching library catalogues and censuses and visiting major libraries: I checked such copies at Folger, the Huntington Library, Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, the New York Public Library, the Morgan Library, the Auckland City Library and the Bodleian Library.

I mainly focused on bookplates and signatures, and did not analyse annotations in detail except for notable ones. It is rare for playbooks to have both ownership marks and annotations, and if a copy has both of them, the annotations are not always written by the user indicated by the ownership mark, because old books are often used by many people. In a few cases in which the signer is highly likely the annotator, the copies have already been studied by scholars because of their rarity. To offset the scarcity of resources, I relied on other materials, such as library catalogues and general references to female readers. Although I mainly discuss books published before 1660 and used by women born in Renaissance England in this section, the results of my survey of playbooks will also be analysed in subsequent sections throughout the thesis on a chronological basis.

Before introducing the results of my survey, I should point out that the information gained from my survey of playbooks pertains to the women 'users' of the playbooks. It is inappropriate to define the women who signed or pasted bookplates on books as either 'readers' or 'owners'.<sup>9</sup> As for the word 'readers', those who obtained books, especially those who had large libraries, did not necessarily read closely or even

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<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to Sherman's *Used Books* for the choice of the term 'user' (pp. 95–96), but Sherman himself more frequently uses the word 'reader'; annotators, the main subject of his study, should be considered as active readers. I am also influenced by Gérard Genette's *Paratexts*, which deals with books as material objects, and Barthes' 'From Work to Text', in which he separates 'reading' from 'playing with the text'.

read through each book.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, ‘reading’ is only one aspect of various activities concerning books; it cannot include activities such as selecting, purchasing, classifying and storing. As for the word ‘owners’, the law concerning women’s property in Renaissance England was far more complex than today, limiting women’s property rights. I am uncertain that the women associated with books legally owned them, even though most of them virtually used their books as owners – some of the books may have been bought by their male family members.<sup>11</sup> I choose the word ‘users’ because it can encompass a variety of intellectual and leisure activities concerning books as material objects, ranging from economic ones such as vending, purchasing and owning, to interpretive ones such as reading and annotating.

In conducting a survey in the British Library, the Senate House Library, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the Meisei Collection, I attempted to scrutinise all the pre-1769 printed books associated with Shakespeare as one of the authors, including adaptations, songbooks and anthologies, for Shakespeare’s works were frequently received in adapted forms during the Restoration and the early eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup> When a copy was unavailable for consultation in the reading rooms, I used the online image services, microfilms and detailed censuses for the First Folio. I counted the number of copies with identifiable bookplates or visible signatures of women’s names. I did not include the signatures of the curators or librarians at the libraries, bookplates of current library patrons (such as participants of the British Library’s ‘Adopt a Book’ project) or bookbinders’ receipts. My estimation is generally a conservative one, for I did not count cropped or mostly invisible signatures, written names similar to the

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<sup>10</sup> As Pierre Bayard suggests, early modern readers like Montaigne did not always read texts intensively and sometimes forgot about the books altogether (pp. 52–55).

<sup>11</sup> For the complexity of women’s property right in early modern England, see Korda, pp. 40–42.

<sup>12</sup> I list Shakespeare’s works and adaptations which I consulted in the appendices. I also checked the Shakespeare apocrypha in major libraries, but I do not include them in the list for two reasons. First, a considerable number of works are suspected of Shakespeare’s authorship and it is difficult to define what the Shakespeare apocrypha are. Second, most of the copies of the Shakespeare apocrypha which I saw had no signature.

characters of the plays or place names, or bookplates whose owners are unidentified.<sup>13</sup> To avoid generalisation and note the individuality of each woman, in this section I will first document the characteristics of each copy and its user's background, and point out the similarities between the copies after describing all notable copies.

My results show that very few marks made before the Restoration period survive on Shakespeare's works in England. It is only possible to find a small number of signatures and bookplates, regardless of the user's gender. In many cases, users are unidentifiable or lived after the eighteenth century. I checked seventy-three copies of Shakespeare's works at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, but none of twenty-four pre-1660 copies can be associated with identified contemporary users.<sup>14</sup> The Senate House Library owns at least forty-seven copies of pre-1769 Shakespeare books, including the complete works, but no seventeenth-century female users are identified. The Meisei Collection owns ninety-one copies of Shakespeare's four editions of the Folio available in the reading room, and at least twenty-one of them are associated with women, but none of them belonged to identified Renaissance Englishwomen: copies were used by women after the nineteenth century, and most of the users of the other twelve copies are unidentified because the signatures lack dates or surnames, although some of them, such as Mary Chapman's copy of the First Folio (Meisei 9, Appendix 3-9), were perhaps signed before the early eighteenth century. These results show that it is extremely difficult to understand the ownership history of each book, particularly as many of the users of books in Renaissance England read playbooks anonymously, without leaving marks.

My research at the British Library also suggests that it was rare for female

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<sup>13</sup> For example, a copy of the Fourth Folio at the British Library (80.1.2., Appendix 1-163) is signed 'Joun Des Bouverie' in a difficult to read hand, and this 'Joun' may be Joan or John. If it was 'Joan', the signer was a woman, but this is uncertain. It might have been owned by a member of the Des Bouveries, a Huguenot family, but I could not identify the signer.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 2. I was not able to view the complete works of Shakespeare published in the eighteenth century because of cataloguing problems: the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust owns many volumes of each post-1700 edition of the complete works, and the catalogue descriptions are generally vague.



users in Renaissance England to attach bookplates or identifiable signatures to their copies, even though some of these were lost after the seventeenth century. The ownership histories of early printed playbooks of Shakespeare at the British Library are apparently not diverse, for apart from copies whose provenances are unknown, many of them came from major male collectors such as James Sheppard Scott, John Ashburner, David Garrick, Thomas Grenville, King George III, George Steevens, and J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps.<sup>15</sup> The British Library has at least 532 pre-1769 copies of works associated with Shakespeare as author (Appendix 1). However, this number is not definite, and I suspect that it owns more volumes for three reasons. First, some of the adaptations are not associated with Shakespeare's name by the cataloguers and do not come up in the catalogue. Second, some volumes, especially quarto volumes bound together with many other quartos and disbanded volumes, are not catalogued correctly and I have found several inaccurately catalogued copies which cannot be identified from the catalogue. Third, publication dates are sometimes uncertain, especially in the cases of made-up copies, copies with no dates and copies lacking title pages.<sup>16</sup> I saw 509 volumes, some of which are only available online or in microform.<sup>17</sup> I could not call up the other twenty-three volumes, as they were not available online and I was not permitted access to them because they are too fragile or were being exhibited at the time. Among the 509 copies which I checked, thirty-two (6.5%) are associated with about twenty-one female names. Among 120 copies published before 1660, only four have female users' marks: One is associated with the famous collector Frances Wolfreton, and three others are suspected to have been used by otherwise unknown seventeenth-century women, because they have old signatures of female names with no

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<sup>15</sup> For the collections at the British Library and its history in general, see Harris, *A History of the British Museum Library, 1753–1973*.

<sup>16</sup> In some copies, the publication dates are inconsistent even within the catalogues of the British Library. For example, as of September 2012, *Treasure in Full: Shakespeare in Quarto*, a digital image database of Shakespeare's quartos run by the British Library, records that *Hamlet* BL C.12.h.14 was published in 1622, while *Explore the British Library*, a standard online catalogue, says that it was published in 1636.

<sup>17</sup> Five copies of the First Folio are described in detail by Rasmussen and West's catalogue, and none of them were associated with women (pp. 47–66).

dates.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3 Female Owners of Large Libraries

At least three women owned large libraries which included Shakespeare's playbooks in the mid-seventeenth century: Frances Wolfreton, Elizabeth Puckering and Frances Egerton. Among them, the books owned by Elizabeth Puckering and Frances Egerton are now missing. Wolfreton's books were purchased by various major libraries, and she is the only identified mid-seventeenth-century Englishwoman who used a copy of Shakespeare's plays now at the British Library.

Frances Wolfreton is an idiosyncratic figure, for she is one of the few female book collectors in early modern England whose library became a major supplier for the British Library's collection.<sup>19</sup> She was born in 1607 in King's Norton as a daughter of George Middlemore of Hazelwell and Frances Stanford, and married Francis Wolfreton in 1631.<sup>20</sup> She collected about 240 books before the English Civil War, and when she died in 1677 in Tamworth, she owned about 400 books ranging from religious works to playbooks.<sup>21</sup> This shows that non-aristocratic women in rural areas were able to build up large libraries in the mid-seventeenth century if they were intelligently active enough, even during the politically unstable time of the English Civil War. Because book markets in the seventeenth-century Midlands were more prosperous than expected – although they cannot be compared to those in London (Morgan, 'Wolfreton', pp. 208–09) – Frances overcame disadvantages of class and geography by utilising local

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<sup>18</sup> C.34.k.17., Appendix 1-36; C.12.g.13., Appendix 1-58; and C.34.k.34., Appendix 1-83. C.34.k.34. is briefly described by Massai in 'Early Readers', p. 153. Appendix 1-58 is a so-called 'Pavier Quarto'; for Pavier Quartos, see Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of Editor*, pp. 106–35.

<sup>19</sup> Her collection has been mentioned in many works since the 1990s. Birrell, p. 167; Sherman, p. 18; Hackel, "Boasting of Silence": Women Readers in a Patriarchal State', p. 117 and 114; and Bell, pp. 445–446.

<sup>20</sup> For her life and collection, see Morgan, 'Frances Wolfreton and "Hor Bouks": A Seventeenth-Century Woman Book-Collector' (hereafter 'Wolfreton') and 'Correspondence: Frances Wolfreton'. The former article includes the list of her books identified as of 1989.

<sup>21</sup> Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, p. 45; and Selwyn and Selwyn, p. 503.

book markets. Her books now owned by the British Library have been described by Arnold Hunt.<sup>22</sup>

She wrote 'Frances Wolfreton hor bouk' on the 1655 copies of *King Lear* (C.34.k.64.), the 1625 copy of *Hamlet* at the Folger (STC 22278 Copy 2, A2r) and the only surviving copy of the 1593 first edition of *Venus and Adonis* at the Bodleian Library (Arch Ge.31).<sup>23</sup> According to the online catalogue Franklin, her 1655 copy of *Othello*, previously owned by Horace Howard Furness, is now in the University of Pennsylvania Library (EC Sh155 622oc). Her 1634 copy of *Richard II* was owned by the Britwell Library in 1916, but is now missing (Bartlett and Pollard 1916 *Census*, p. 709), and her 1616 copy of *Lucrece* is also missing. Although she essentially built up the collection by herself (Gerritsen, p. 272), she received some books as gifts from her relatives and friends: her 1550 copy of *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* at the Folger (STC 5074 copy 2) was given by her mother-in-law Mary (Wiggins, p. 23). This suggests that a woman's domestic reading community existed and contributed to nurturing her library. She was able to receive help from her female relatives to build up the collection, for Mary Wolfreton chose to present her book to the reliable female book collector instead of giving it to her own son. As demonstrated in other examples which I will introduce, such a formation of a domestic reading community was not uncommon among seventeenth-century women.

Elizabeth Puckering and her husband Henry's collection included playbooks of Shakespeare, Jonson, Lyly, Beaumont and Fletcher, Middleton and Davenant, although her Second Folio is now missing.<sup>24</sup> She was born around 1621 or 1622, a daughter of Thomas Murray, who tutored Prince Charles; she married royalist Henry Puckering

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<sup>22</sup> Hunt discusses Wolfreton's collection and gives a list of books she owned which are not mentioned in Morgan's list but are now in the British Library (pp. 372–74, and pp. 379–81).

<sup>23</sup> This copy is described in detail in the Bodleian Library's *William Shakespeare 1564–1964: A Catalogue of the Quatercentenary Exhibition in the Divinity School, Oxford* as No. 61 (p. 31). It was also exhibited from 19 July to 25 November 2012 at the British Museum as an exhibit for the 'Shakespeare: Staging the World' exhibition.

<sup>24</sup> For the Puckerings' library, I follow McKitterick.

(also known as Newton), third baronet, in about 1640.<sup>25</sup> Her family background provided her with plenty of opportunities to see theatrical performances. Her younger sister was Anne Halkett; Halkett's playgoing group, which I have already analysed, suggests that Elizabeth's collection of playbooks was partly a product of the female interpretive community in which she was raised in her girlhood.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, as I discussed in Chapter 1, Charles I and his sister Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia also owned copies of Shakespeare's Folios. This suggests that Shakespeare was included in the common knowledge shared by aristocratic people surrounding the Stuart court, including women.

The earliest precisely dated record of Shakespeare's playbooks admitted to ladies' libraries is the entry in the catalogue of Frances Egerton, Countess of Bridgewater. Unlike other female library owners who did not record the date of acquisition of Shakespeare's playbooks, her catalogue says that it was created on 27 October 1627, which shows that her large library was systematically managed with the help of her servants.<sup>27</sup> She was a daughter of Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange (later fifth Earl of Derby) and Alice Spencer, Countess of Derby, who was a library owner herself.<sup>28</sup> Her younger sister Elizabeth Hastings patronised the theatre with her mother.<sup>29</sup> Following her mother, Frances obtained a number of books, including *Diuers Playes by Shakespeare*; according to the catalogue, this book was published in quarto in 1602. In addition to Shakespeare's plays, she acquired the following playbooks in quarto: *A Booke of Diuerse Playes in Velum* published in 1601, *A Booke of Diuerse Playes in Leather* published in 1609 and *Diuers Playes in 5 thicke Volumes in Velum*, whose publication dates are unknown. Tom Lockwood speculates that it was

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<sup>25</sup> See Broadway's entry and Smuts' entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>26</sup> McKitterick believes that Elizabeth Puckering's taste in theatre was nurtured in playgoing with her sister (p. 376).

<sup>27</sup> The transcription of her catalogue is available on Hackel, 'The Countess of Bridgewater's London Library', pp. 147–54.

<sup>28</sup> See Knafla and O'Donnell's entries in *ODNB*.

<sup>29</sup> See Knowles's entry in *ODNB*.

unnecessary for her to specify each title of the plays in the catalogue because she could take any book from the open shelves any time she wanted (p. 97). Although her copies are now missing, her *Diuers Playes by Shakespeare* might have included at least one of three quartos published in 1602: the third quarto of *Richard III*, the so-called ‘bad quartos’ of *Henry V* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

The influence of Alice Spencer, a powerful patron of drama, should be considered over Frances Egerton’s collection. As F. R. Fogle states, it is even possible that Alice knew Shakespeare himself: she and her husband, Ferdinando Stanley, had patronised Lord Strange’s Men (later Derby’s Men and the Countess of Derby’s Men), a company vaguely but often associated with Shakespeare’s early career and later partly annexed to Lord Chamberlain’s Men, for which Shakespeare mainly worked (pp. 12–14). Judging from Frances’s acquisition of works by the writers who had connections with Alice, such as Edmund Spenser, Robert Greene, and Ben Jonson, her criteria for admission to the library were closely linked to her mother’s literary patronage.

Since all the three exceptionally large library owners – France Wolfreton, Elizabeth Puckering and Elizabeth Egerton – built up their collections under the influence of female members of their families, these family connections were one of the crucial elements in forming the literary and dramatic tastes of intellectually active women; female playgoers and readers influenced each other by creating small, domestic interpretive communities. Partly because their families situated them in comfortable cultural circumstances, they were able to collect many books despite their gender, in a period when women’s literacy was significantly lower than that of their male counterparts.

#### **1.4 Women’s Intellectual Activities and Shakespeare’s Books**

Other intellectually active women in Renaissance England also used Shakespeare’s books, although they did not own large libraries as Wolfreton, Puckering or Egerton

did. The Folger owns several copies associated with such women in this period. I was able to find two previously unidentified female users who were born in Renaissance England.<sup>30</sup> The first is Judith Killigrew. The title page of a copy of the Second Folio at the Folger (Fo.2 no.31, Appendix 5-31) was signed by ‘Judith Killigrew’ (πA2r) in a seventeenth-century hand. As far as I found, no studies have been done on this copy; a few corrections are made in a later hand, which looks different from the signature, and the note in the library catalogue identifies this ‘Judith Killigrew’ as a seventeenth-century woman who died in 1683. Perhaps this note is accurate, and the signer is the mother of a poet and painter Anne Killigrew.<sup>31</sup> Judith’s date of birth and birth name are unknown, but she married dramatist and Church of England clergyman Dr Henry Killigrew before the early 1650s, gave birth to Anne in 1660 and died on 2 February 1683.<sup>32</sup> Her husband Henry was a brother to two dramatists, William and Thomas Killigrew. Along with Davenant, Thomas was one of the most powerful impresarios in Restoration drama and his company had the rights to perform many of Shakespeare’s plays. Judith herself was a lady-in-waiting to Queen Catharine of Braganza and a skilled player of the lute, guitar and theorbo, which suggests that she was an educated woman who was familiar with the fashionable taste of court.<sup>33</sup> Her daughter Anne was a maid of honour to Mary of Modena and a well-known poet; Dryden dedicated an elegiac poem ‘To the Pious Memory of the Accomplisht Young Lady, Mrs Anne Killigrew, Excellent in the Two Sister-arts of Poesie and Painting’ when *Poems by Mrs Anne Killigrew* was posthumously published in 1685.

If this copy were used as a family copy of the Killigrews, a prominent family in Restoration literature and theatre, not only Judith but also Anne would have used it; it is possible that she was educated with her parents’ books before her death at the age of 25.

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<sup>30</sup> In citing the handwritten annotations, I follow the transcriptions of the library catalogues when they are available.

<sup>31</sup> For Anne Killigrew, see Hopkins’ entry in *ODNB*; and Andreadis pp. 111–23.

<sup>32</sup> See Motten’s entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>33</sup> Constantin Huygens mentions her talent for music in his letter to Moyse Charas on 14 May 1671 (Huygens, p. 57). See also Westrup, p. 51.

Judith Killigrew, who had links to both court and theatre, owned a copy of Shakespeare's Folio, which suggests that his plays continued to be read among intellectually influential people after his death. Furthermore, it is notable that Constantin Huygens, a Dutch composer who lived in England and an acquaintance of Judith, also owned a copy of the First Folio (Rasmussen and West, p. 531). I suspect that the trend to adapt Shakespeare into musical performances in the Restoration period, which I will discuss in Chapter 3, flourished partly because musicians in Renaissance England often read his plays in book form.

The second female user I have identified is Rachel Paule. A copy of the First Folio is inscribed 'Rachell Paule' (Fo.1 no.72, Appendix 5-22,<sup>π</sup>A1+1v) in a seventeenth-century hand, and according to the library catalogue, this woman was born in 1617, signed this copy around 1650 and died in 1679. This 'Rachell Paule' is perhaps a daughter of Sir Christopher Clitherow, Lord Mayor of London and governor of the East India Company, and the third wife of William Paule, a royal chaplain and later bishop of Oxford.<sup>34</sup> She had a son called George.<sup>35</sup> The date of her death in the library catalogue is perhaps inaccurate, for it is believed that she died around 1691.<sup>36</sup> Three of her portraits are catalogued in the National Portrait Gallery (NPGD30553; NPGD30554; NPGD30575), which suggests that she was an affluent and educated woman. Paule's copy shows that women classified as 'city wives' also used Shakespeare's playbooks, as well as aristocratic women.

While Judith Killigrew, Rachel Paule, Elizabeth Puckering and Frances Egerton could be associated with the royalist families – or people (vaguely) supporting the Stuarts – at least one notable parliamentarian family owned Shakespeare's works. According to a note by Captain Charles Hutchinson attached to a copy of the First Folio at the Folger (Fo.1 no.54, Appendix 5-20) in 1870, the volume was owned by female

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<sup>34</sup> See Thrush's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>35</sup> *The Fourth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, p. 47.

<sup>36</sup> See Larminie's entry in *ODNB*.

writer Lucy Hutchinson and regicide Colonel John Hutchinson.<sup>37</sup> Lucy was an exceptionally intelligent woman for this period; she translated Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* into English and wrote *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (hereafter *Memoirs*), as well as an epic poem, *Order and Disorder*. This copy is also signed by other female members of the Hutchinson family: 'Olivea Cotton' signed the copy around 1675 on the front-flyleaf (ʳA5+1r), 'Elizabeth Hutchinson' around 1680–1700 (b6r, Q5r, and perhaps Y5v) and 'Isabella' (2l3v). Olivea Cotton was a daughter of Charles Cotton and Isabella Hutchinson, and a half-sister to John Hutchinson; she married George Stanhope and died in 1707.<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth Hutchinson was a daughter of Charles Hutchinson, a half-brother to John Hutchinson, and Isabella Boteler. She first married John Kennedy, Lord Kennedy and second John Hamilton, first Earl of Ruglen; she died around 1733 or 1734. It is unknown whether 'Isabella' was Olivea's mother Isabella Hutchinson or Elizabeth's mother Isabella Boteler. This copy is annotated, and Sasha Roberts argues that late seventeenth-century annotations about '[s]cene locations, lists of dramatis personae, speech prefixes, stage directions and, where relevant, historical dates are supplied for a cluster of comedies and histories' are written by Elizabeth or Olivea (*Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, p. 58). The survival of this copy in the family and its annotations imply that the different generations of Hutchinsons and Cottons, especially the female members of the family, formed a small domestic interpretive community through one book.

The Hutchinsons' copy suggests that pious parliamentary intellectuals continued to use playbooks during the London theatre closure, even though Lucy dismissed her childish enthusiasm for popular entertainments in her girlhood, saying 'I thought it no sin to learn or hear witty songs and amorous sonnets or poems' but 'I had forgotten those extravagancies of my infancy'.<sup>39</sup> Religiously devoted readers often

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<sup>37</sup> For Lucy Hutchinson's life, see Seelig pp. 73–89.

<sup>38</sup> See Warner's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>39</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 15. Quotations from Hutchinson refer to the edition by N. H. Keeble.



avoided playbooks, and some even regarded luxurious folio editions of plays as more threatening than quarto editions during the 1620s and the early 1630s.<sup>40</sup> However, the Hutchinsons' ownership of the copy should be linked to their general preference for art. Linda Levy Peck points out that John Hutchinson was an active art collector and that Lucy did not regard it as inappropriate, which contradicts the stereotypical image of puritan parliamentarians: '[c]learly, for Hutchinson, the collecting of Venetian paintings, beloved by Charles I and the Earl of Arundel, not to mention Phillip II of Spain, posed no issue of luxury that he needed to reject' (Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, p. 269). If the Hutchinsons' intellectual and aesthetic curiosity allowed them to maintain a strong interest in luxurious Venetian paintings, they would not hesitate to own the copy of Shakespeare's First Folio.

A copy of the Second Folio (Fo.2 no.03, Appendix 5-26) at the Folger shows that women not only consumed Shakespeare as readers, but also sold his works as businesswomen. The copy has a note in a seventeenth-century hand by Sarah Jones: 'Sold the 14th = of February 1649; this booke, and I warrant it to be of the best addition, and perfectt; booke; sold by me SI Sarah Iones hir marke = widdow = at the whit = hors = book = seller in the littl = Britton, in london;' (<sup>r</sup>A1r). 'Sarah Jones' was not an ordinary reader, but rather a registered stationer. Her husband William Jones worked as a stationer from 1589 to 1618, and after his death, the widow inherited his business and 'Assigned ouer vnto' John Wright her rights of *The Schoole of Good Manners* and *Mucedorus* (Arber, iii, p. 632). As Helen Smith shows, it was not rare for widows to become printers in the place of their deceased husbands in the English Renaissance period, and some of them were actively engaged in the business (pp. 90–91). Although little is known about Sarah Jones, she had continued her business for about thirty years when she wrote this note, which implies that she was an experienced book merchant who could evaluate the conditions of books and sell them with her warranties.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> West, 'The Life of the First Folio in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', pp. 75–76.

<sup>41</sup> Her name cannot be found in *ESTC*, and not listed in 'Women Printers, Publishers and Booksellers' in

Since the 1640 copy of *Poems* (STC 22344 Copy 10, Appendix 5-41) at the Folger is a rare case with many signatures and annotations, Sasha Roberts analyses it in detail in *Reading Shakespeare's Poems*. It is signed by multiple unidentified users, including two seventeenth-century women and one eighteenth-century woman. Its signatures are those of 'John Welford 1799' (A2r), 'Hanah Welford' (A2v, eighteenth-century), 'Wm Burton' (C1r), 'Thomas' (D2v), 'Elizabeth Gyles' (I3v, seventeenth-century), 'Rose Meeks hir Book' (M1v, seventeenth-century), 'Rose Meaks' (M2r) and 'Robert Reed' (M1v). The ownership history of this copy is uncertain, but it was used by Meeks and Gyles in the seventeenth century, and became a family copy of the Welfords in the eighteenth century. Roberts points out Meeks' pun on her Christian name and Gyles' engagement with love poetry (*Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, p. 169). It seems that these two seventeenth-century women actively enjoyed reading as a pleasure-seeking activity.

Apart from these copies associated with identified female users, there are 'stray copies' associated with unidentified women. It is impossible to judge whether they were used by women in the English Renaissance period or the Restoration period. The Folger owns at least nine copies signed by unknown seventeenth-century women.<sup>42</sup> In some cases, the copies themselves are now missing. According to the 1916 census, the Huntington owned the 1615 copy of *Richard II* signed by 'An Bosvil' (Bartlett and Pollard 1916 *Census*, p. 701), but it was sold and is now missing (Bartlett and Pollard 1939 *Census*, p. 999). As West discusses, the earliest reference to the First Folio is a record in the Richard James Manuscript, which reported that 'a young Gentle Lady' read *Henry VI* in the First Folio around 1625, but there is no other information of this copy (*Census*, ii, pp. 297–98). These records of female users tell nothing about their social backgrounds, although they are pieces of evidence to prove that Shakespeare's

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Smith and Cardinale's *Women and the Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (pp. 313–14).

<sup>42</sup> STC 22296 Copy 2, Appendix 5-2; Fo.1 no.17, Appendix 5-9; Fo.1 no.27, Appendix 5-12; Fo.1 no.32, Appendix 5-13; Fo.1 no.38, Appendix 5-15; and Fo.1 no.45, Appendix 5-17; Fo.2 no.17, Appendix 5-29; Fo.2 no.54, Appendix 5-35; and STC 22287 Copy 4, Appendix 5-39.

contemporary women did read his works.

My survey of the female users of Shakespeare's books in Renaissance England shows that women were involved in every aspect of the consumption of Shakespeare in book form, although the number of the identified women is small. They not only read, purchased, signed and collected books, but also sold the books as marketers, as Sarah Jones did. The fact that his works were admitted to libraries owned by major female book collectors in Renaissance England, such as Frances Wolfreston, Elizabeth Puckering and Frances Egerton, suggests that they were received as usual components of intellectually active women's bookshelves along with other popular plays, poems, romances and religious works, even though Shakespeare was not particularly favoured by these female users of books.<sup>43</sup> The presence of these particularly active female book users led to the emergence of women's writing culture, as I will show in the next section.

## **Section 2: Shakespeare and Women Writers in Renaissance England**

Following my analysis of female users of Shakespeare's books, this subsection deals with the most visible active users of Shakespeare: women who wrote about Shakespeare in Renaissance England as his contemporaries. As far as I have discovered, only eight women – Frances Howard (whom I already discussed in the last chapter), Aemilia Lanyer, Mary Sidney Wroth, Ann Merricke, Dorothy (Dolly) Long, Dorothy Osborne, Elizabeth Egerton, and Jane Cheyne – directly or indirectly referred to Shakespeare's plays in their writings based on their playgoing or playreading experiences before the Restoration. They were far more intellectually active than average female playgoers in Renaissance England. Many women never wrote a word throughout their lives. Their

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<sup>43</sup> Of course, there are several large libraries which were owned by women but did not include Shakespeare's books, for the selection of the books largely depended on the taste of the owner. For example, Bowden points out that Mildred Cecil, Lady Burghley, was skilled in Latin and Greek, and that she had a large collection which included polyglot bibles and Greek tragedies, but was not very interested in contemporary playbooks.

writings are precious material regarding Shakespeare's contemporary reception. First, I discuss private writings by Dolly Long, Dorothy Osborne, and Ann Merricke; although this thesis focuses on drama, in relation to their writings, I also analyse Anne Southwell's reference to Shakespeare's poems and women's involvement in manuscript culture. Their writings show how theatre became a part of their daily lives.

Because there are substantial previous studies of the other women, I will first deal with a relatively unknown figure, Dorothy Long; analyse the others who left letters and commonplace books; and point out several similarities between these women's receptions of drama. Second, I will discuss Aemilia Lanyer's and Mary Wroth's knowledge of Shakespeare, arguing that they should be considered to be more self-conscious writers who targeted a wider audience through their publications than those who referred to Shakespeare in their private writings. I will deal with Elizabeth Egerton and Jane Cheyne in the next chapter, in which I discuss their writings in relation to Restoration writers, especially Margaret Cavendish.

## **2.1 Women's Private Letters and Shakespeare**

### **Dolly Long**

Lady Dorothy (Dolly) Long was a daughter of Sir Edward Leach (or Leich) of Chatsworth and wife of Sir James Long. To avoid confusion with Dorothy Osborne, I call her 'Dolly Long', the name adopted in *The Shakespeare Allusion-Book*. This book erroneously states that her letter mentioning Shakespeare's *Mistress Quickly* was written in 1660 (ii, p. 83), and Charles Whitney follows this date ('Like Richard the 3<sup>ds</sup> Ghosts', p. 21, n1); in fact, the date of this letter is 5 September 1650, which I confirmed at the Northamptonshire Record Office.<sup>44</sup> The recipient of her letter was Sir Justinian Isham, one of the former suitors to Dorothy Osborne. *The Isham Correspondences* show that Justinian and Dolly frequently exchanged letters and had a

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<sup>44</sup> Isham Correspondences (hereafter IC) 288.

close friendship. According to John Aubrey's *The Brief Lives*, she was 'a most elegant beauty and wit'.<sup>45</sup> Her letters show that she was an intellectually active woman. She loved to read Ovid (IC 288), had a fervour for education for her children (IC 4350), expressed her dissatisfaction with her husband's 'disaffection, & incapacity to Musicke' (IC 4350), and took interest in the current political situation surrounding the royals and Parliament (IC 494; IC 550; IC 553).

Since Dolly Long's letters are sprinkled with domestic allusions which were to be only understood by her friends, it is difficult to know to whom she refers in her letters, as in the following passage:

Dame quickly; would faine turne ~~Scotch~~ mercury to Coñunicate Scotch affaires, but for S<sup>r</sup> Cautelus in the Chimney Corner (whose amour to me, holds at the rate you knew it) She hath lately lost her fa: whom she is gon (for short season) to lament [...] (IC 288, transcription mine)

She was making fun of one of her family members or friends by likening her to Mistress Quickly. Although Shakespeare's playbooks used the title 'Mistress' instead of 'Dame' for Quickly, she was commonly known as Dame Quickly before 1650. Henry Bold's poem of 1648 uses the same title in mentioning the Falstaff plays: 'The Women, in such tiritts, and frights do goe, / Dame Quickly, near fear'd swagg'ring-Pistol so'.<sup>46</sup> Sayre N. Greenfield argues that Bold's poem is an example demonstrating the popularity of the Falstaff plays during the Interregnum (p. 512), and so is Dolly's allusion. Since I could find no character named 'Sir Cautelus' or 'Sir Cautelous' in plays or poems before 1650, I suspect that this nickname did not refer to a particular character in fiction, but rather

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<sup>45</sup> Aubrey, *The Brief Lives*, p. 192. See also Gyles Isham's two-part article 'Family Connections of Bishop Brian Duppa' and the letters which he edited, *The Correspondence of Bishop Brian Duppa and Sir Justinian Isham 1650–60* (hereafter *The Correspondence*).

<sup>46</sup> Henry Bold, 'On Oxford Visitors, Setting Up their Commissions on the Colledge Gates, &c. 1648', in *Poems Lyrique, Macaronique, Heroique, &c.*, p. 164.

that she came up with it to contrast with ‘Dame quickly’ in describing the characteristics of the otherwise unidentified man.<sup>47</sup> Since ‘S<sup>r</sup> Cautelus’ is given as a nickname of a man who favours Dolly, Dame Quickly is also a nickname of an otherwise unknown woman who was Dolly and Justinian’s mutual acquaintance.<sup>48</sup> Other letters sent before or after this letter never mention these two names.

Dolly’s short and somewhat vague allusion to Dame Quickly demonstrates that educated women in the Interregnum borrowed nicknames from popular plays to gossip about their acquaintances, using domestic codes only understood by their friends. Dolly’s references to Shakespeare’s characters recall Hamlet’s criticism of women’s behaviour: ‘You jig and amble and you lisp, you nickname God’s creatures and make your wantonness your ignorance’ (*Hamlet* 3.1.144–45). Hamlet’s comment perhaps satirised actual behaviours of female playgoers or readers, who used the names of dramatic characters to mock others.

### **Dorothy Osborne**

Unlike Frances Howard and Dolly Long, Dorothy Osborne, known as the author of *Letters to Sir William Temple*, has been an object of considerable research, and scholars have discovered that she knew at least three works by Shakespeare: *Richard III*, *Macbeth* and *1 Henry IV* (Whitney, *Early Responses*, pp. 233–40). She was born in 1627, a daughter of Sir Peter Osborne and his wife Dorothy Danvers, and married Sir William Temple, first Baronet at the end of 1654 after about seven years of courtship.<sup>49</sup> During the courtship, the Osbornes sought an economically more advantageous marriage for Dorothy. She rejected her suitors because she hoped to marry William,

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<sup>47</sup> The word ‘cautelous’ was commonly used in the mid-seventeenth century. Shakespeare used this adjective in *Coriolanus* (4.1.33) and *Julius Caesar* (2.1.129), and the noun ‘cautel’ in *Hamlet* (1.3.15). See also ‘Cautelous’ in *OED*.

<sup>48</sup> In the same letter, Dolly mentions Elizabeth Murray, Second Countess of Dysart, as ‘Our Lady’, but this cannot be the same person as ‘Dame quickly’, as her father William Murray, First Earl of Dysart was alive in 1650 but had died in 1655. See Isham, *The Correspondence*, p. 15, n4; Smuts’ entry in *ODNB*; and Rosalind Marshall’s entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>49</sup> See Kenneth Parker’s entry in *ODNB*.

which infuriated her brother Henry.

Among the references already studied by G. C. Moore Smith and Whitney, an allusion to *Richard III* is the most direct. When Henry accuses Dorothy of refusing marriage, she describes his truculent attitude by referring to the staging of *Richard III* in Letter 26 on 18–19 June 1653, which means that she saw the theatrical performance rather than reading the playtext:

It seem's he was, for when I had spoke freely my meaning, it wrought soe much with him as to fetch up all that lay upon his stommack, all the People that I have Ever in my life refused were brought againe upon the Stage, like Richard the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ghosts to reproach mee withal, and all the kindnesse his discovery's could make I had for you was Layed to my Charge, my best quality's (if I had any that are good) served but for aggravations of my fault, and I was allowed to have witt and understanding, & discretion in other thing, that it might appear I had none in this.<sup>50</sup>

Since she mentions the scene of the ghosts in *Richard III* as if reminding William of it, 'both may well have known the play as well as its publicity'.<sup>51</sup> Although Whitney thinks that she saw private performances of Shakespeare's plays ('Like Richard the 3<sup>ds</sup> Ghosts', p. 13), perhaps Dorothy began playgoing before the theatre closure when she was very young, like Halkett's group and the Boyle sisters. Whether she saw the play at a public playhouse or in a private performance, her allusion suggests that *Richard III* was well known and perhaps still in the repertory of playing companies in the 1630s or the early 1640s. Her reference to *Richard III* demonstrates that even during the theatre

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<sup>50</sup> Dorothy Osbornr, Letter 26, in *Letters to Sir William Temple*. Quotations from Dorothy Osborne refer to *Dorothy Osborne: Letters to Sir William Temple, 1652–54: Observations on Love, Literature, Politics, and Religion*, rev. ed., edited by Kenneth Parker, p. 107. All further quotations from Osborne will be from this edition.

<sup>51</sup> Whitney, *Early Responses*, p. 236. See also G. D. Moore Smith's footnote 3 at p. 237.

closure, theatre was part of everyday conversation among educated young people.

Dorothy's allusion to *Richard III* is perhaps the earliest example of interpreting Richard III as an attractive rebel with whom young audiences (who tend to consider themselves rebellious) could identify themselves. While criticising her brother's exaggerated accusation of her refusal to marry, she compares herself, a rebel against the patriarchal order of her family, to Richard III; not being blessed by his mother, the Duchess of York, Richard is also a rebel against his family (2.2.101–11). Whitney states that '[s]he gives his [Richard's] name to the role her brother has scripted for her, exorcising her anger and frustration, but also registers the similarities between herself and Richard', mentioning her 'treason against the family's patriarchal authority' (*Early Responses*, p. 238). Dorothy's writing style is characteristic in 'her conscious rebellion against the affectation of the gentlemanly style' (Lerch-Davis, p. 407), and this unexpected comparison between a young woman and a villainous politician can be regarded as an expression of her unconventional writing style.

As Manningham's anecdote regarding Richard Burbage implies, the fascination with Richard's charisma has often been noted in the history of the reception of *Richard III*.<sup>52</sup> This tendency culminated when John Lydon (also known as Johnny Rotten) of the Sex Pistols presented Richard III as a role model for a young rebel. He says, 'If I could caricature myself, the closest I've seen to it would be Laurence Olivier's Richard III', praising the character's 'fatally cruel sense of humour' (p. 17); film director Julien Temple used the footage from Olivier's film in *The Filth and the Fury* (2000), the documentary film about the band, to overlap Richard's image with that of Lydon. Scholars in popular culture tend to emphasise the originality (or eccentricity) of Lydon's interpretation: Mariangela Tempera states that this is caused by Lydon's 'misreading' (p. 74), and Noel Sloboda also says that '[i]t is difficult to imagine *this* Shakespeare [who

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<sup>52</sup> For example, an eighteenth-century critic William Richardson emphasises the audiences' pleasure in watching Richard's strong character, stating that 'the display of his [Richard's] enormities, and their progress to this completion, are the chief objects of our attention' (p. 200).



personifies the establishment in the English cultural imagination] in harmony with the Sex Pistols' (p. 142). However, Dorothy's attraction toward Richard III suggests that Lydon's interpretation of the play was not only a product of 'misreading' in the twentieth century, but was also partly sustained by the tradition of interpreting Richard as an attractive and potentially subversive young rebel on stage from the seventeenth century.

Dorothy's unconventional writing style, in which she utilises unexpected comparisons, is also found in Letter 57 of 4–5 February 1654. She mentions Falstaff and Lady Macbeth, two characters very different from the author, in defending herself against William's accusation of her melancholic and peevish attitude toward him, although these two references do not mention the names of the plays. In this letter, Dorothy explains the changes in herself after her visit to France:

[B]efore I knew you I was thought as well an humord Younge Person as most in England[,] Nothing displeased nothing troubled mee. When I cam out of France nobody knew mee againe, I was soe alterd, from a Cheerful humor that was always's alike, never over merry but always pleased, I was growne heavy, and sullen, forward and discomposd (Letter 57, p. 175).

The quotation is an allusion to *1 Henry IV*: 'Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing, and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked'.<sup>53</sup> It is part of a speech spoken by Falstaff, mockingly blaming Prince Hal for corrupting him. As Whitney points out, Dorothy compares William to Prince Hal, whom Falstaff claims is responsible for his change, and Falstaff, as Richard III, is 'a transgressive male character whose qualities Osborne appropriates' ('Like Richard the 3<sup>ds</sup> Ghosts', p. 19). In the next paragraph, she says, 'O my heart what a sigh was there' (Letter 57, p. 176),

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<sup>53</sup> *1 Henry IV*, I. 2. 92–95; and Whitney, 'Like Richard the 3<sup>ds</sup> Ghosts', p. 18.

which refers to the doctor's line about Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking: 'What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged'.<sup>54</sup> I would point out the alteration of the speaker: In *Macbeth*, the doctor explains Lady Macbeth's condition in the third person, but Dorothy comments on 'my heart' here. Dorothy transforms herself into the villainous heroine in *Macbeth*, and she expresses her symptoms of melancholy by herself, not making herself a woman to be represented by a male authority. In short, she figures herself as Lady Macbeth who maintains her strong voice in the illness. Dorothy's struggle against the forced marriage underlies the fact that she coherently links herself with powerful and potentially subversive characters in Shakespeare's plays.

Dorothy Osborne's attitude is relatively similar to that of Frances Howard, who criticises indulgence in love by using the 'no one dies for love' joke; both of them dramatise themselves through allusions to contemporary theatre but try to keep a detached attitude toward romance-like love. In this thesis, I use the word 'romance' broadly to refer to '[a] fictitious narrative, usually in prose, in which the settings or the events depicted are remote from everyday life, or in which sensational or exciting events or adventures form the central theme' (OED 3a) and also follow Barbara Fuchs's definition: citing the OED entry, she describes this broadly-used term as 'a concatenation of both narratological elements and literary topoi, including idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering, and obscured identity' (p. 9). While comparing herself with Richard III and sprinkling her letters with allusions to drama and romance, Dorothy looks objectively at her love with William in Letter 54 on 14 January 1654:

[C]an there be a more Romance Story then ours would make if the conclusion should prove happy [?] Ah I dare not hope it, something that I cannot describe draw's a cloude over all the light my fancy discovers somtimes, and leav's mee

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<sup>54</sup> *Macbeth*, V. 1. 55. G. C. Moore Smith first found this allusion (p. 273, n22), and Whitney and Kenneth Parker agree with him.

soe in the darke with all my fear's about mee that I tremble to think on't (Letter 54, p. 167).

Some scholars discuss Dorothy's ironic attitude toward romance, pointing out her desire to end the romance-like courtship with William.<sup>55</sup> These examples are not plentiful enough to permit generalisation, but it is notable that two of the women who made early possible references to Shakespeare show a similarly detached attitude toward romance. Some of the intellectual women in this period fostered an anti-romantic or anti-Petrarchan view of love, while they took much pleasure in romance novels and plays. They learned to objectify and even mock love through interpreting these fictional works. They made clear distinctions between the love which should be enjoyed in fiction and the love which they must face in their world, resisting the tendency to idealise love in literature.

### **Poetry and Anne Southwell**

Unlike plays, poems continued to be privately circulated in manuscript and transcribed in commonplace books even after the emergence of commercial print.<sup>56</sup> Some of the surviving commonplace books include records about Shakespeare's private consumption among female readers. At least three surviving manuscripts associated with Renaissance Englishwomen include Shakespeare's poems or Shakespeare apocrypha. Margaret Bellasis' collection of poems at the British Library (BL Add MS 10309) contains an alternative version of Shakespeare's Sonnet 2 and a poem praising him, 'An Epitaph upon Poet Shakespeare' (f.148).<sup>57</sup> A mid-seventeenth century manuscript (Folger MS V.a.162) used by Abraham Bassano, Stephen Wellden and

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<sup>55</sup> Whitney, *Early Responses*, p. 238; and Hintz, p. 55.

<sup>56</sup> Marotti, 'Shakespeare's Sonnets and the Manuscript Circulation of Texts in Early Modern England', p. 185; and Howard-Hill, p. 30.

<sup>57</sup> For Bellasis's identity, see Beal, ii, p. 452; Taylor, 'Some Manuscripts of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*', p. 222–3; Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, pp. 180–82; and Roberts, 'Women's Literary Capital in Early Modern England', p. 258.

Elizabeth Wellden contains Shakespeare's Sonnet 71 (f. 12v) and 32 (f. 26r).<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, the Cornwallis-Lysons manuscript (Folger MS V.a.89), a collection of poems signed by Lady Anne Cornwallis, includes Poem 18 of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, which was previously attributed to Shakespeare, but is now considered to have been written by an unidentified author.<sup>59</sup> Since all these manuscripts contain erotic or even misogynistic poems, Sasha Roberts argues that 'while women were in theory prohibited from reading "bawdy Geare" ... in practice women consumed wanton works alongside their male counterparts' (*Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, p. 179). They show female readers' active consumption of risqué poems in private spaces.

Lady Anne Southwell's criticism of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* in the Southwell-Sibthorpe Commonplace Book (Folger MS V.b.198.), her collection of letters and poems, is a product of this flourishing trend toward a reading culture among women. It demonstrates her detached attitude concerning love poetry; she is far more critical of its erotic nature than Frances or Dorothy. Anne Southwell, a poet, was born in 1574, a daughter of Sir Thomas Harris and Elizabeth Pomeroy, and was married twice – first to Thomas Southwell in 1594 and second to Captain Henry Sibthorpe in 1626.<sup>60</sup> Her commonplace book includes her message to Lady Ridgway, Cicely McWilliams (with no definite date but around 1626), in which she tries to defend poetry, while criticising *Venus and Adonis* and Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* as examples of love poetry which disturbs women's chaste minds. Along with the other commonplace books associated with women, Southwell's criticism shows that erotic poems such as these two works were widely read by educated women like Southwell and McWilliams:

I will take upon mee to knowe, what hath soe distasted your palate against

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<sup>58</sup> Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, p. 174; and Burke, 'Reading Friends', pp. 81–82.

<sup>59</sup> See Bond, p. 685; Burrow, p. 76; Marotti, 'The Cultural and Textual Importance of Folger MS V.a.89', p. 70; and Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558–1640*, p. 257–59.

<sup>60</sup> For her life and manuscript, see Burke, 'Medium and Meaning in the Manuscripts of Anne, Lady Southwell'.

this banquet of soules, devine Poesy. Some wanton Venus or Adonis hath bene cast before your chaste eares, whose euill affyre, disgracing this beautiful Nymph, hath vnworthy her in your opinion .... To heare a Hero & Leander or some such other busye nothing, might bee a meanes to skandalize this art.<sup>61</sup>

Anne Southwell is relative open-minded toward erotic literary works, despite her criticism. She seems to consider erotic poems vulgar, but her library catalogue includes several titles with sexual content. According to this list, perhaps made after her death in 1636 and recording 110 books, religious works represented about one-third of her collection, while she had also obtained *Orlando Furioso*, *The Faerie Queene* and works by George Chapman, Suetonius and Montaigne.<sup>62</sup> While she is not discouraged from owning or reading erotic literary works, she casts a critical eye over them. She reads broadly and forms her literary tastes through engagement with a wide variety of texts, including love poetry. This formation of literary tastes is a crucial process in canonisation.

Anne Southwell's criticism against *Venus and Adonis* is not only due to its eroticism, but also to the elaboration in the description of love poetry. Along with *Venus and Adonis*, she mentions *Hero and Leander* as an example of 'busye nothing'; here, 'busy' means 'elaborate, intricate' (*OED* 8-a) and 'nothing' means 'of no importance' (*OED* 3-a). Her contempt for the poem recalls Rosalind's 'no one dies for love' joke in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, although there is no evidence to suggest Southwell's familiarity with this play. Rosalind refers to Hero and Leander to explain that no one has ever died for love:

Leander, he would have liv'd many a fair year though Hero had turn'd nun, if it

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<sup>61</sup> Anne Southwell, *The Southwell-Sibthorpe Commonplace Book Folger MS. V. b. 198*, ed. Jean Klene, p. 5. Quotations from Southwell refer to this edition.

<sup>62</sup> Southwell, pp. 98–101: Cavanaugh; and Moulton, *Before Pornography*, p. 57.

had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont, and being taken with the cramp, was drown'd, and the foolish chroniclers of that age found it was Hero of Sestos. But these are all lies. (*As You Like It*, IV. 1. 91–97)

As Rosalind regards the story of Hero and Leander as a meaningless fabrication by 'the foolish chroniclers of that age', Southwell points out its artificial elaboration. Condemning the artificial quality of such poetry, Southwell emphasises that 'Poesye seemes to doe more for nature' (p. 4), which is also similar to Hamlet's argument for drama as 'the mirror up to Nature' (*Hamlet*, III. 2. 22), although there is no evidence to show her knowledge of this play either.<sup>63</sup> It is possible that Southwell criticises Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* by unwittingly using similar interpretive strategies to those proposed by Shakespeare's Rosalind and Hamlet without knowing his plays, which would suggest the popularisation of criticism of the artificial elaboration of romance and the appreciation of 'nature' in this period.<sup>64</sup>

### **Ann Merricke**

Ann Merricke's allusions to Renaissance drama are different from those of Frances Howard, Dorothy Osborne and Anne Southwell, who maintain a detached attitude toward Renaissance literary works; Merricke left one letter which documents women's pleasure in reading and playgoing more directly than the works of these writers. She stayed at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire, and sent a letter to her friend Mrs Lydall on 21 January 1638/9, making the following comments:

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<sup>63</sup> See also Caroline McManus's discussion on female readers (p. 85).

<sup>64</sup> There is no evidence to show that Anne Southwell read or saw Shakespeare's plays. However, perhaps she had in a sense attended 'performances' of Shakespeare and Marlowe's works. She said that *Venus and Adonis* was presented 'before your chast eares' and used the word 'heare' in mentioning *Hero and Leander*. I suspect that these erotic love poems were often read aloud, even when the audience members included women.

I cou'd wish my selfe with you, to ease you of this trouble, and with all to see the Alchymist, which I heare this tearme is reviv'd, and the newe playe a friend of mine sent to Sr John Sucklyn and Tom Carew (the best witts of the time) to correct. But for want of these gentile recreations, I must content my selfe here with the Studie of Shackspeare, and the historie of Woemen, all my Countrie Librarie.<sup>65</sup>

Although there is no detailed information available about this woman's identity other than in this letter, several scholars have speculated about her life. Because Suckling and Carew were patronised by Lady Elizabeth Grey (née Talbot), Countess of Kent, whose husband Henry, eighth Earl of Kent, owned a property in Wrest Park, Sasha Roberts thinks that Ann Merricke may have known the Greys and writers around them.<sup>66</sup>

Although she seems to have been wealthy enough to visit Wrest Park, she uses the title 'Madam' for herself in her letter, which implies that she was not entitled to use 'Lady'. Sir Thomas Button's letter to the King on 23 April 1633, included in the same collection of the State Papers, mentions 'my sister Anne Merrick gardian ... of Barbara Merrick'; this woman might be the same person as the author of the letter to Mrs Lydall, but there is no definite evidence (SP 16/237, f. 45).

Ann Merricke clearly considers playgoing as a process of pleasure seeking, which leads to the 'studie' of Shakespeare. Merricke seems to be an active woman. In this letter, playgoing is regarded as one of 'gentile recreations', and paralleled with fashion, a walk in the park or meeting people in social life – all of these are pleasurable

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<sup>65</sup> Quotations from Merricke's letter refer to Ethel Alec-Tweedie's transcription in *Hyde Park: Its History & Romance*, pp. 68–70. The original letter is available as microform in the National Archives, SP 16/409, ff. 327–328. See also *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I, 1638–1639*, edited by Bruce and Hamilton, p. 342.

<sup>66</sup> Sasha Roberts, 'Engendering the Female Reader', p. 45. In this article, she also speculates that "'studie" is arguably suggestive of a Folio edition' (p. 45), and Robert A. Gross agrees with her (p. 248). However, I am not sure of this speculation, for it was common in the seventeenth century to bind together many quartos of plays by one author in a single volume, and this 'studie' could refer to such a volume, in addition to the Folio edition.

activities which can be pursued in London. Asking Mrs Lydall to solicit 'my honourable lady' to let her go to London, she says, 'I feele in my selfe a strange desire to be satisfied whether I shall injoye my love this yeare or noe' (p. 68). She does not hesitate to talk frankly about what she likes or what she wants to do, and she is obviously attracted to London. Furthermore, she jokingly states that she is worried about the 'war with the Scotts' (p. 68), for if young gallants became soldiers, no one would bring ladies to 'that place of pleasure' (p. 68), or Hyde Park, which means that she also likes outside activities. Her wish to visit playhouses in London is an extension of such a 'strange desire' for pleasure. The pleasure of playgoing entices her to study Shakespeare in book form, and the word 'studie', which means 'attentive reading' (*OED* 6-a), connotes comparison, analysis and evaluation, essential elements in canonisation.

It is also notable that playgoing is a prime pleasure for Merricke, and playreading is considered as a substitute for 'want' of it when she is unable to attend playhouses because of geographical distance. As Hackel points out from Merricke's letter, gentlewomen in this period sometimes owned multiple libraries in London and the countryside, and Merricke was one of these wealthy women ('The Countess of Bridgewater's London Library', p. 144). Merricke's letter suggests that playbooks in country libraries, including those owned by women, had already functioned as substitutes for playgoing in public playhouses three years before the theatre closure. Perhaps playgoers in Renaissance England already used playbooks when no theatrical performances were available in rural areas, or when playhouses were temporarily closed due to plague in London. Such libraries would continue to provide theatre-loving people with knowledge of drama during the theatre closure, which led the popularity of Shakespeare and other English Renaissance dramatists to be maintained until the plays began to appear on the Restoration stage.

References to Shakespeare in women's private documents inform us that intellectually active women in Renaissance England often gained much knowledge of contemporary drama and poetry, including Shakespeare, and utilised characters and



speeches in the plays to galvanise conversation in everyday life based on the assumption that the recipients of their letters shared such knowledge with them. Dorothy Osborne, Anne Southwell, and Frances Howard, whom I discussed in the previous chapter, show a relatively detached attitude toward romance, while Ann Merricke more frankly depicts playgoing and playreading as a pleasure-seeking process. Dolly Long's nickname, Ann Merricke's reference to a country library, and Dorothy Osborne's references to Shakespeare during the theatre closure also demonstrate that such knowledge of drama was retained, even while the number of theatrical performances drastically declined during the Interregnum. This partly explains why Shakespeare's plays were revived soon after the reopening of playhouses in 1660.

## **2.2 'Professional' Women Writers before Cavendish and Behn**

This subsection deals with two female writers who published their works: Aemilia Lanyer and Lady Mary Sidney Wroth. Although their social backgrounds greatly differed, these two women were exceptionally intellectually active because they published their works, which was rare for women in Renaissance England. They also lived unconventional lives.<sup>67</sup> They wrote fictional works that were geared toward a wider audience than those written by the women discussed in the previous subsection. Both of them are suspected of having read or seen Shakespeare. Although I do not think that they were deeply influenced by Shakespeare, I analyse their knowledge of Shakespeare's drama before moving into the Restoration period because I would like to consider why no critical reviews of Shakespeare were written by female writers before Margaret Cavendish published the oldest surviving substantial review of Shakespeare in 1664 and Aphra Behn praised and utilised his plays in her works during the Restoration period. The female writers discussed in this subsection were no less intellectually active than their Restoration counterparts, but none of them wrote a substantial critical review

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<sup>67</sup> Lamb also points out these similarities between Lanyer and Wroth in *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (pp. 16–18).

of English Renaissance drama. In this subsection, I analyse these female professional writers in Renaissance England as predecessors of Cavendish and Behn.

### **Aemilia Lanyer**

Aemilia Lanyer was the first publishing English female poet to enjoy aristocratic patronage: in 1611, she published *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (hereafter *Salve Deus*), a long poem on the passion of Jesus, with the support of Lady Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland. In *Salve Deus*, the main poem is largely written from the female biblical characters' point of view; eleven shorter dedicative poems are attached to it as a prologue praising her female patrons, literary predecessors, and readers. Indebted to the previous studies of Lanyer, which speculate about Shakespeare's literary influence on this writer, I argue that she knew at least one of Shakespeare's plays, *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Lanyer and Shakespeare belonged to the same literary network in Renaissance England.<sup>68</sup> I do not follow the hypothesis that regards Lanyer as a candidate for the Dark Lady in Shakespeare's *The Sonnets*, but debates over the identity of the Dark Lady have aroused interest in the literary and theatrical network of people in Renaissance England, and the Dark Lady advocates have provided new information about the poets' lives and families.<sup>69</sup> Scholars who are not concerned with the identity of the Dark Lady, such as Susanne Woods, utilise the results of their research, and I will also be indebted to their studies of Lanyer's biographical information. Lanyer was born around 1569 to the Bassanos, a Venetian family of musicians, a background that enabled her to learn about music and stage performances. Lanyer was a mistress of Henry Carey, a patron of

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<sup>68</sup> For her life, see Hutson's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>69</sup> In 1973, A. L. Rowse proposed the hypothesis which regards Lanyer as the Dark Lady, while designating Henry Wriothesley as the dedicatee of *The Sonnets*, and continued to maintain this argument in *Shakespeare the Man* and *Shakespeare's Sonnets: The Problems Solved*. Several critics, including Roger Prior, Oxfordian scholar Stephanie Hopkins Hughes and Martin Green support his hypothesis. The Dark Lady hypothesis for Lanyer is criticised by many early modern scholars, such as Stanley Wells ('The Dark Lady'), Kenneth Muir (*Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 156–58), and David Bevington ('A. L. Rowse's Dark Lady').

the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which hints that she knew and was known among stage performers at Elizabeth's court. Dark Lady advocates Martin Green and Roger Prior believe that Shakespeare borrowed the name 'Bassanio' in *The Merchant of Venice* from the Bassano family. Although she is highly critical of Dark Lady advocates, Woods also thinks that Shakespeare encountered musicians from the Bassano family and admits the possibility of his borrowing the name from the Bassanos because both the Bassanos and the Lord Chamberlain's Men participated in court performances in the 1590s and later (*Lanyer*, pp. 181–82, n49).

Aemilia married Alfonso Lanyer, a court musician, in 1592. Woods thinks that her marriage kept her away from court, and 'there is no evidence that she attended public performances' (*Lanyer*, p. 73); however, I agree with Martin Green's analysis that her family relations would have guaranteed her access to court performances.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, Lady Anne Clifford, daughter of Margaret Clifford, was known for both her piety and her strong interest in art, drama, and literature.<sup>71</sup> She performed at court masques in her teens, often attended court performances, and recorded her playgoing in *The Diary of Anne Clifford* after her marriage, which means that Lanyer's acquaintances included at least one active and influential female playgoer.<sup>72</sup> Woods seems to underrate women's intellectual activities in Renaissance England and obscures the female poet's outgoingness. Lanyer was active enough to go out of her own will because it is reported that she visited an astrologer Simon Forman by herself.<sup>73</sup> Nothing would inhibit Lanyer's playgoing when she wanted to enjoy stage performances because many women attended playhouses in Renaissance England.

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<sup>70</sup> Green, p. 550, 'Emilia Lanier IS the Dark Lady of the Sonnets', n27. Although I do not agree with Green's Dark Lady hypothesis, his article contains many useful analyses of Lanyer's family and life.

<sup>71</sup> For her interest in arts and religion, see Barroll, 'Inventing the Stuart Masque', p. 142, n45; Spence, p. 8; Williams, 'The Literary Patronesses of Renaissance England', p. 365.

<sup>72</sup> Clifford, *The Diary of Anne Clifford*, pp. 39, 64, 65, 97, and 112. Lewalski explains the Cliffords' support for Lanyer in 'Re-writing Patriarchy and Patronage: Margaret Clifford, Anne Clifford, and Aemilia Lanyer'.

<sup>73</sup> See Simon Forman's Casebooks in The Casebooks Project. See also Woods' Introduction to *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judæorum*, p. xx. Quotations from Lanyer refer to this edition.

While underrating Lanyer's involvement in theatre culture, Woods places emphasis on Lanyer's access to Shakespeare's poems in book form: she believes that in the late 1590s, Alfonso and Aemilia Lanyer sought the patronage of Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton and the dedicatee of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and *Lucrece* in 1594 (*Lanyer*, p. 73). Lanyer's circle of acquaintances suggests that she had plenty of opportunities to become familiar with Shakespeare's works via stage performances or in book form.

Some scholars think that Lanyer read Shakespeare's *Lucrece* before writing *Salve Deus*. Woods supposes that Lanyer knew *Lucrece* because these two works highlight the danger caused by the heroine's beauty (*Lanyer*, pp. 74–85): Shakespeare's Tarquin says that 'Thy beauty hath ensnared thee' (*Lucrece*, 485), and Lanyer states that 'Twas Beautie made chaste Lucrece loose her life' (*Salve Deus*, 211). Barbara Bowen also argues that she knew *Lucrece*, analysing several similarities between their works. For example, Lanyer's line 'This sinne of yours, hath no excuse, nor end' (*Salve Deus*, 831) refers to a speech by Shakespeare's Tarquin, 'The shame and faults finds no excuse nor end' (*Lucrece*, 238), because the phrase 'no excuse nor end' was not found in other sources (p. 111).

I argue that Lanyer knew *Antony and Cleopatra* before writing the Cleopatra section of *Salve Deus*. *Salve Deus* deals with a number of historical and mythical women, one of whom is Cleopatra. It is difficult to discern the influences among literary works dealing with Cleopatra because she was a hugely popular subject for drama and poetry in Medieval and Renaissance England. Lanyer herself also implies that she was familiar with various previous works on Cleopatra by noting that other authors penned stories about her (*Salve Deus*, 1427–28). In addition to Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, there were several 'Cleopatra plays' available to Lanyer.<sup>74</sup> Mary Sidney Herbert's *Antonius*, which I mentioned in the last chapter, was the first of these plays,

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<sup>74</sup> This discussion is partly based on Kitamura, "Cleopatra literature" in the English Renaissance: Shakespeare's Cleopatra and Her Sisters'.

and because Lanyer dedicated *Salve Deus* to Mary Sidney, *Antonius* was one of her sources.<sup>75</sup> Samuel Daniel dedicated a closet play entitled *Cleopatra* to Sidney and a poem entitled 'Letter from Octavia' to Margaret Clifford.<sup>76</sup> *Cleopatra* was widely read and was revised in 1607. Because Margaret Clifford was also Lanyer's patron and Anne Clifford had a copy of this book, Lanyer knew Daniel's *Cleopatra* (Whitney, *Early Responses*, p. 207). Under the influence of Mary Sidney, Samuel Brandon published *The Virtuous Octavia* (hereafter *Octavia*) in 1598.<sup>77</sup> These three English plays were all closet dramas and were thus not intended to be performed; however, it is believed that *Antony and Cleopatra* was performed on stage between 1606 and 1607, shortly before the publication of *Salve Deus* in 1611.<sup>78</sup> Analysing similarities in the descriptions of Cleopatra's beauty and Octavia's suffering in *Salve Deus* and in the revised version of Daniel's *Cleopatra*, Woods supposes that Lanyer read Daniel, but she thinks that 'there is no obvious reason' to regard Shakespeare's play as Lanyer's source (*Lanyer*, p. 73). Whitney argues that Lanyer knew Sidney, Daniel, and Shakespeare, and Janel Mueller also believes that Lanyer knew *Antony and Cleopatra*; both of them, however, rely on the assumption that she attended playhouses as an active poet and point out general similarities in terms of motive. They do not analyse verbal parallels between Shakespeare and Lanyer in detail.<sup>79</sup> Considering Lanyer's patronage situation, I agree with Woods that Daniel was a major source for her. However, I point out several similarities in the expressions used by both Lanyer and Shakespeare, which hints at Lanyer's vast knowledge of drama. I do not think these allusions suggest that Shakespeare had a stronger influence on Lanyer than Daniel and Sidney. Instead, I would argue that she studied and utilised all the relevant sources available, including

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<sup>75</sup> According to Debra Rienstra, Lanyer was influenced by Mary Sidney. Rienstra, however, does not mention *Antonius*. Hall points out the similarity between *Antoiuns* and *Salve Deus* (p. 184).

<sup>76</sup> Quotations from Daniel refer to *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose*.

<sup>77</sup> Lamb, 'The Myth of the Countess Pembroke: The Dramatic Circle', p. 196.

<sup>78</sup> For the date of performance, see Barroll, *Politics, Plague, and Shakespeare's Theater*, pp. 117–52. See also Neill, p. 22; and Wilders, p. 74.

<sup>79</sup> Mueller, p. 105; and Whitney, *Early Responses*, pp. 207–208.

Shakespeare.

Before analysing parallels, I discuss the general popularity of *Antony and Cleopatra* in Shakespeare's time, especially among women, which would encourage Lanyer to devote several lines to Cleopatra in her work. The story of Cleopatra and the people around her was likely to attract female audiences. Educated women in Renaissance England shared an interest in the ancient Mediterranean world and its female historical figures. Mary Sidney's *Antonius* and Elizabeth Cary's *Mariam* are evidence of their interest in Cleopatra. Daniel dedicated his *Cleopatra* to Mary Sidney, and Brandon dedicated his *Octavia* to Lady Lucy Audley, wife of George, Earl of Cotlehaven (Bergeron, p. 80). Lady Anne Clifford read *Antiquities of the Jews*, one of the sources for *Antony and Cleopatra*.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, Yasmin Arshad suspects that Clifford is also dressed as Cleopatra in one of her portraits, which includes a quotation from the 1607 edition of Daniel's *Cleopatra*; if her hypothesis is correct, this suggests her interest in Cleopatra, and it is even possible that she played the role in a private performance of Daniel's closet drama (Arshad, pp. 34–35).

As the only play about Cleopatra performed on stage during the early seventeenth century, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* would offer motivation enough to entice female playgoers into theatres. Some scholars suppose that *Antony and Cleopatra* was unpopular because there is no precise record of stage performances before 1759, but I do not agree with this argument. For example, Michael Steppat assumes that '[t]he sparse criticism in this period [the first two centuries after the original production] may reflect the play's unpopularity in the theater' (p. 1). His reasoning, however, does not apply to the early seventeenth century, because there were no substantial critical reviews of Shakespeare at all before Margaret Cavendish's work of 1664, which I discuss in the next chapter. Roslyn Lander Knutson believes that Roman plays, including *Antony and Cleopatra*, were generally popular among

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<sup>80</sup> Clifford, p. 120. For various sources of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, see Bullough, vol. 5.

playgoers (p. 169) and points out that it is too rash of scholars to regard the plays as unpopular based on the number of contemporary allusions or printed editions because many of the records of stage performances in Renaissance England were lost (p. 173). On the other hand, the number of contemporary references to *Antony and Cleopatra* is not small; Samuel Daniel's revised version of *Cleopatra* in 1607, Barnabe Barnes' *The Devil's Charter* in 1607, the anonymous pamphlet *Bloudy Murther* in 1614, and Philip Massinger's *Maid of Honour* in the early 1620s all contain allusions to *Antony and Cleopatra*.<sup>81</sup> Fletcher and Massinger's *The False One* (1619–23) and Thomas May's *Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt* (1626) were written in response to *Antony and Cleopatra*, which means that the dramatists in Renaissance England considered 'Cleopatra plays' to be profitable. For Restoration theatre, John Dryden wrote *All for Love*, and Charles Sedley wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* under Shakespeare's influence.<sup>82</sup> This has caused some scholars to conclude that *Antony and Cleopatra* was relatively well-known; Michael Neill, for example, supposes that the 'King's men regarded *Anthony* as too valuable a property to let out of their hands' (p. 24), pointing out that it was not printed until the publication of the First Folio in 1623.

There are two allusions that hint at the consumption of *Antony and Cleopatra* by female playgoers: *The Philosophers Satyrs* in 1616 and *The English Gentlewoman* in 1626. John Wilders states that perhaps, *Antony and Cleopatra* was performed on stage more than once because these works refer to its stage performances, despite the lack of precise records (p. 11). It is likely that this play was performed at least once at Blackfriars, but some argue that the first performance was staged at the Globe, which supports Wilders's assumption.<sup>83</sup> Wilders, however, does not mention the gender of the

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<sup>81</sup> Rees, pp. 91–93; Barroll, 'The Chronology of Shakespeare's Jacobean Plays and the Dating of *Antony and Cleopatra*', pp. 138–49; and Saner. According to *The Shakespeare Allusion-Book*, Robert Armin's *The Historie of the Two Maids of More-clacke* in 1609 and Thomas Randolph's *The Jealous Lovers* in 1632 may also contain allusions to it.

<sup>82</sup> See also Nyquist, p. 103.

<sup>83</sup> Lord's Chamberlain's record in 1669, when Thomas Killigrew secured rights to the plays including *Antony and Cleopatra*, says that it was 'formerly acted at the Blackfriars', but as Richard Madelaine

audiences described in the records. Robert Anton's *The Philosophers Satyrs* attacked female playgoers, perhaps alluding to this play: 'Or why are women rather growne so mad, / That their immodest feete like planets gad / With such irregular motion to base Playes, Where all the deadly sinnes keepe hollidaies. / There shall they see the vices of the times, / Orestes incest, Cleopatres crimes'.<sup>84</sup> Anton regarded *Antony and Cleopatra* as a typical 'base play' that would please women. Richard Brathwait's *The English Gentlewoman* also referred to its performance: 'Loues enteruiew betwixt *Cleopatra* and *Marks Anthony*, promised to it selfe as much secure freedome as fading fancy could tender; yet the last Scene clozed all those Comicke passages with a Tragicke conclusion'.<sup>85</sup> Brathwait thought that his gentlewomen readers knew Shakespeare's play because this work referred to their manners and was dedicated to Lanyer's theatre-loving patron, Lady Anne Clifford.

Lanyer, like Brathwait, was able to take advantage of the image of Cleopatra as a tragic heroine, which was spread through reading and playgoing in order to spark the interest female readers. While Lanyer also read Sidney and Daniel's works and depended much upon Daniel, some of her descriptions of Cleopatra are influenced by Shakespeare. *Salve Deus* and *Antony and Cleopatra* depict Cleopatra's 'blackness', whilst paradoxically stating that Antony regards her as 'fair'.<sup>86</sup> Both works emphasise that her beauty is beyond description and that it strongly attracts Antony's eyes. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Enobarbus, describing Cleopatra's appearance when she first met Antony, says, 'For her own person, / It beggar'd all description' (II. 2. 197–198). He also says that Antony 'pays his heart / For what his eyes eat only' (II. 2. 225–26). In *Salve Deus*, Lanyer also says that Cleopatra is indescribable: 'thou wert as rich, as wise, as rare, / As any Pen could write, or Wit devise' (1427–28). Shakespeare's Cleopatra is

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states, this 'does not necessarily imply that it was performed there whilst Shakespeare was still alive' (p. 16).

<sup>84</sup> Anton, p. 46. *Antony and Cleopatra* was the only play on Cleopatra's affairs performed in this period.

<sup>85</sup> See Brathwait's revised version in 1631, pp. 96–97.

<sup>86</sup> The focus on race in both works are also mentioned by Whitney, *Early Responses*, p. 108.



dark-skinned: she has ‘a tawny front’ (I. 1. 6), and her skin is ‘black’ (I. 5. 28), although Antony thinks that ‘every passion fully strives / To make itself (in thee) fair and admir’d’ (I. 1. 50–51). According to Lanyer, ‘thou [Cleopatra] a blacke Egyptian do’st appeare’ (1431), but ‘thou [Cleopatra] wert as faire / As any Creature in Antonius eyes’ (1425–1426). Lanyer contrasts the difference between Cleopatra’s appearance and her image within Antony’s mind’s eye, just as Shakespeare does. In Sidney’s *Antonius*, Cleopatra’s skin is ‘fair alabaster’ (II. 428). In Daniel’s *Cleopatra*, although she is described as a beautiful woman (III. 1081–1089), there is no reference to her complexion. Brandon’s Cleopatra is ‘sunne-burnt’ (1341). Elizabeth Cary’s *Mariam* also calls Cleopatra ‘the brown Egyptian’.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps Lanyer knew other sunburnt Cleopatras, but Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* was the most likely source to offer her a picture of a black Cleopatra because *Antony and Cleopatra* is the only play before Lanyer that contrasts Cleopatra’s dark skin with the fairness that Antony perceives in her. This contrast would be even more conspicuous on stage. A boy actor wearing makeup and dresses would appear as ‘a blacke Egyptian’, but audience members could perceive Cleopatra’s ‘fairness’ through the player’s performance.

Shakespeare’s play and Lanyer’s poem both consider Cleopatra’s beauty and defects to be one in the same. A phrase in *Salve Deus*, ‘Great *Cleopatraes* Beautie and defects / Did worke *Octaviaes* wrongs, and his neglects’ (215–16), is similar to Enobarbus’ speech about Cleopatra’s first meeting with Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*: ‘she did make defect perfection’ (II. 2. 231). Given that no similar expression is found in Plutarch’s description of the couple’s first encounter, it is fairly said that this phrase is Shakespeare’s invention.<sup>88</sup> Lanyer’s intention, however, is the

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<sup>87</sup> *Mariam*, I. 2. 190. I do not think that Lanyer knew *Mariam*, for it was not officially published until 1613, although it was widely circulated in manuscript. In my view, if Lanyer had known Cary’s work, she would have dedicated *Salve Deus* to her, for she mentions a number of aristocratic women who influenced her as a writer or patron one by one in the dedicative poems, and there seems to be no reason to omit Cary.

<sup>88</sup> Spencer, ‘Antony and Cleopatra and the Paradoxical Metaphor’, p. 375. Adelman also points out Shakespeare’s intentional word choice, explaining the view of the body in Renaissance England: ‘Defect

opposite of Enobarbus's praise: she depicts Cleopatra's beauty and defects as a source of unhappiness.

In portraying Cleopatra, Lanyer adopts relatively elaborate rhetoric. To laud her patron Margaret Clifford, Lanyer praises Cleopatra's beauty but criticises her defects, and she exalts Lady Margaret's virtue over Cleopatra. I cannot agree with Mueller, who states that Lanyer only portrays Cleopatra as 'an egregious instance of a woman's loss of moral direction' (p. 105), because Lanyer's technique in elevating Margaret Clifford above Cleopatra is more subtle. Instead of severely condemning Cleopatra's inconstancy, Lanyer pities her with panegyric phrases such as 'great Cleopatra's love' (*Salve Deus*, 1410) and 'thy worthy death'.<sup>89</sup> Because both Sidney's heroine in *Antonius* and Daniel's heroine in *Cleopatra* are endowed with dignity, Lanyer could use these sources to portray her Cleopatra as a tragic heroine in love who arouses readers' sympathy.<sup>90</sup> She also emphasises that if Cleopatra had been more constant, she would have 'never needed' to die (1419) and could have combined 'Her force with his, to get the Victory' (1412–4). After impressing readers with Cleopatra's beauty and tragic fate, Lanyer begins to say that Margaret Clifford is far superior to Cleopatra. Lanyer compares a number of great women with her patron to emphasise her superiority 'in faithfulness, devotion, chastity, moral purity, and spiritual strength' (Krontiris, p. 106), and Cleopatra is a suitable comparison, one great enough to elevate Lady Margaret's 'inward virtues' (*Salve Deus*, 112). Lanyer writes, 'Yea for one touch of death which thou [Cleopatra] did'st trie, / A thousand deaths shee [Margaret Clifford] every day doth die' (1439–40). These lines mockingly echo Enobarbus's speech on Antony's leaving

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and perfection are neutral terms, particularly in descriptions of women' ('Making Defect Perfection: Shakespeare and the One-Sex Model', p. 23).

<sup>89</sup> *Salve Deus*, 1441. Lanyer uses the word 'worthy' with a double meaning here to pity and criticise Cleopatra at the same time: 'Deserving or meriting by fault or wrong-doing' (*OED*, 9) and 'Honourable' (*OED*, 4b). See also 'An Epitaph vpon the Right Honorable Sir Philip Sidney Knight: Lord Gouvernor of Flushing', a poem attributed to Walter Raleigh and included in *The Phoenix Nest* in 1593; it begins with the line 'TO praise thy life, or waile thy woorthie death' (p. 8).

<sup>90</sup> For the comparison between the heroines in *Antonius* and *Cleopatra*, see also Sasha Roberts, 'Reading Shakespeare's Tragedies of Love', p. 116.

Cleopatra: ‘Cleopatra, catching but the least noise of this, dies instantly. I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment’ (I. 2. 140–42). In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare’s Cleopatra figuratively – or falsely – ‘dies’ for a trifling reason every day, but becomes ‘marble-constant’ (V. 2. 240) to kill herself at last, pining for ‘The stroke of death’ (V. 2. 295). Lanyer implies that Margaret Clifford lives her life as resolutely and devotedly as Cleopatra does when she finally decides to die for her love; her patron does always ‘love and lives chaste as the Turtle dove’ (*Salve Deus*, 1437) and ‘sacrificeth to her deerest Love, / With flowers of Faith, and garlands of Good deeds’ (1434–35). Lanyer tries to present the patroness as the female ideal or an alternative female role model to Cleopatra, focusing on piety, constancy, and responsibility.

Lanyer, studying dramatic works by Sidney, Daniel, and Shakespeare, utilised the wide-spread image of Cleopatra as an attractive heroine in tragedy to spark the interest of readers. Although Lanyer’s major influences were Margaret Clifford’s patroness Daniel and a female poet named Sidney, Shakespeare’s play also contributed to Lanyer’s literary strategy to praise her patron’s virtue. Lanyer’s vast knowledge of drama lies beneath *Salve Deus*.

### **Mary Sidney Wroth**

Mary Sidney Wroth has recently been attracting much interest among scholars, and some suspect that she knew Shakespeare’s works before writing her major works, including an unfinished romance entitled *Urania*, a sonnet sequence entitled *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, and a play entitled *Love’s Victory*, ‘although it is difficult to trace specific examples of influence’ (Campbell, p. 103) because she was an exceptionally intellectual woman in her time and had a vast knowledge of literature in general.

Mary Wroth was born around 1587. She was a daughter of Robert Sidney, first Earl of Leicester and Viscount Lisle of Penshurst, and his wife Barbara.<sup>91</sup> She was

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<sup>91</sup> For her life, see Mary Ellen Lamb’s entry in *ODNB*.

niece to two famous poets, Sir Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, and married Sir Robert Wroth in 1604. After losing her husband, she had an extramarital relationship with her cousin William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, Mary Sidney's son – he is a dedicatee of Shakespeare's First Folio, along with his brother Philip, first Earl of Montgomery and fourth Earl of Pembroke, and is also one of the popular candidates for the 'Fair Youth' in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. Wroth had two illegitimate children with Herbert around 1624. Mary Wroth died around 1651–53.

Although there is no record to show that the Sidney circle patronised Shakespeare more generously than other writers, there are several pieces of evidence suggesting that the Sidneys, including Wroth, had many opportunities to encounter his works. As seen from Philip Sidney's discussion of drama in *An Apology for Poetry* – which was written before the beginning of Shakespeare's career – and Mary Sidney's *Antonius*, the Sidneys expressed a keen interest in contemporary drama. Wroth's lover William Herbert knew Richard Burbage and other members of the King's Men and his acquaintance with Shakespeare led to the posthumous dedication of the First Folio.<sup>92</sup> Wroth herself patronised Ben Jonson, one of Shakespeare's fellow playwrights, and he dedicated *The Alchemist* to her. Wroth had access to Shakespeare's works as a reader in her family libraries, although she began writing several years before the First and Second Folios were published. William Herbert and his brother Philip must have had their own copies of the First Folio as the dedicatees, although these copies are not now identifiable. According to the Sidney family's inventory, they owned a copy of Shakespeare's Second Folio (now unidentified), and some suspect that they also had a copy of the First Folio.<sup>93</sup> Perhaps Wroth was able to attend court performances of Shakespeare's plays when she was young because she waited upon Anne of Denmark

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<sup>92</sup> Barroll, *Politics, Plague, and Shakespeare's Theater*, p. 39; and Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, p. 111.

<sup>93</sup> For the Sidney family's copies of Shakespeare's Folios, see Warkentin and Hoare's explanation: the copy of the First Folio at the Morgan Library is suspected to have belonged to the Sidneys, but the arms of Sir Robert Sidney on this copy is often regarded as a fabrication. I agree with Warkentin and Hoare, and doubt that it was the Sidney family's copy.

and participated in several masques as a performer. She could also attend public performances at playhouses and private performances for aristocrats. Some scholars even point out the possibility that Wilton House, the residence of Mary Sidney, hosted a private performance of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.<sup>94</sup>

*Urania* includes several possible echoes of Shakespeare's works, but many of them are difficult to analyse. The complex textual history of *Urania* causes more problems. The first part was written between 1618 and 1620 and published in 1621, although the process of publication is unclear.<sup>95</sup> Wroth probably began to write the second part around 1623, and this was not published until 1999.<sup>96</sup> Because the second part is unfinished and left in manuscript form, it is impossible to know how Wroth was planning to resolve the entangled plotlines. Naomi J. Miller thinks that before depicting Amphilanthus's jealous complaints about Pamphilia's love in her bedroom, Wroth knew *Othello*.<sup>97</sup> Wroth chooses Cyprus as a setting for Pamphilia and Amphilanthus's love, and the island was 'associated at the time not only with Venus but also with Othello and Desdemona' (Miller, 'Engendering Discourse', p. 162). While Othello says, 'It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul' (*Othello*, V. 2.1), Pamphilia asks Amphilanthus, 'what is the cause [?]', and Amphilanthus asks her, 'Is itt soe, my onely soule?' after she promises her love to him.<sup>98</sup> Though the situations in these two scenes are rather different, considering its popularity, I agree with Miller that Wroth knew *Othello*; it was

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<sup>94</sup> There is an uncertified record of the private performance of *As You Like It* for James I on 2 December 1603 in Wilton House. According to William Cory, a nineteenth-century scholar, Mary Sidney's unpublished letter to William Herbert stated that 'We have the man Shakespeare with us' (p. 168), but this letter is now lost. Some scholars think that this performance took place and emphasise Mary Sidney and William Herbert's patronage for Shakespeare: see Barroll, *Politics, Plague, and Shakespeare's Theater*, p. 124. Others, such as Katherine Duncan-Jones, doubt the credibility of the letter (*Ungentle Shakespeare*, pp. 172–73).

<sup>95</sup> According to Josephine A. Roberts's Critical Introduction to *Urania 1*, even though Wroth stated that she never wanted to publish her work, 'she may have lent a manuscript copy of the first part of the *Urania* to friends in the hope that they would show it to publishers; such was one acceptable tactic for aristocratic authors who might mitigate the stigma of print by avoiding any direct involvement in the process' (p. cvi).

<sup>96</sup> *Urania 1*, i, p. xvii; and *Urania 2*, p. xxiii.

<sup>97</sup> *Urania 1*, p. xxxii; and Miller, 'Engendering Discourse', p. 162.

<sup>98</sup> *Urania 2*, 1.45.1–4. See also Kusunoki, 'Gender and Representations of Mixed-race Relationships in English Renaissance Literature', p. 21.

a popular play in Renaissance England, and as I will discuss in Chapter 3, it would be hugely popular among Restoration playgoers, especially female playwrights such as Aphra Behn and Mary Pix, who frequently reworked this play and explored its interracial relationships. Some minor allusions to Shakespeare's other plays found in *Urania* are also discussed. Josephine A. Roberts points out Wroth's knowledge of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *1 Henry IV* (*Urania 1*, p. xxxii); Wroth could then utilise the star-crossed lovers plot for the Cephalonian lady episode (*Urania 1*, 1.41–44), the relationship between the leading couple in *Antony and Cleopatra* in depicting the union of Amphilanthus as the symbol of the West and Pamphilia as that of the East (*Urania 1*, 4.568.18–19), and Falstaff's speech on counterfeiting in *1 Henry IV* (5.4.111–132) to comment on acting and performance (*Urania 1*, 3.364.18–19). However, compared to Miller's discussion of *Othello*, these allusions are too vague to say that Wroth knew these works of Shakespeare before writing *Urania*.

I suspect that Rodomandro's wooing of Pamphilia in *Urania* echoes *The Merchant of Venice*, although the basic plots of these two plays are very different. Campbell suggests that Wroth knew *The Merchant of Venice* before writing the plot of the young lovers' trial in *Love's Victory* around 1620, which leads me to argue that she knew the play before writing the second part of *Urania* (Campbell, p. 116). While Rodomandro's admission of his lack of verbal skill reminds one of Othello's explanation of his disposition, 'Rude am I in my speech' (*Othello* I. 3. 82), Rodomandro and the Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice* use a similar rhetoric to explain their love. Rodomandro complains that 'onely of Ladys favours, knowing our sunn-burnt faces can butt rarely attaine to faire ladys likings' (*Urania 2*, 2.271.28–29), which is similar to the Prince of Morocco's statement 'Mislike me not for my complexion, / The shadowed livery of the burnish'd sun' (*The Merchant of Venice*, II. 1. 1–2). Even though these two suitors think that their racial differences are obstacles to winning women's hearts, Rodomandro cannot help but be attracted 'nott onely to the fairest and lovliest, butt to the most machles and incomparable of any' (*Urania 2*,

2.271.30–31), or Pamphilia, and the Prince of Morocco loves ‘the fairest creature northward born’ (*The Merchant of Venice* II. 1. 4), or Portia. Both argue that their virtue compensates for their appearance: Rodomandro maintains that ‘Our harts are rich in truthe and loyalltie’ (*Urania* 2, 2.271.27), and the Prince of Morocco boasts of valiance, saying that his ‘blood is reddest’ (*The Merchant of Venice*, II. 1. 7). In *The Merchant of Venice* and *Urania*, the Prince of Morocco and Rodomandro are represented as courageous, royal, but unwelcome suitors of the heroine, who prefers a man with many faults. Portia is secretly attracted to Bassanio, a young Venetian with debt, before receiving the Prince’s visit (I. 2. 120–21), and Pamphilia is in love with Amphilanthus, a noble but capricious lover. I suggest that *Urania* explores the heroine’s unreasonable passion for her imperfect lover by featuring a racially different noble suitor, as in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Perhaps Wroth also read Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*, first published in 1609. Several verbal parallels between Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* and Wroth’s sonnet sequence *Pamphilia and Amphilanthus*, first published in 1621 as an attachment to the first part of *Urania*, are suggested by scholars.<sup>99</sup> However, the influence of Shakespeare on Wroth is not stronger than those of Philip Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* and Wroth’s father Sir Robert Sidney’s verses, which are major sources for her sonnet sequence. Unlike Shakespeare, who does not give names to the characters in his *Sonnets*, Wroth endows her characters with Greek-sounding names and constructs a more fictional frame, as Philip Sidney does.<sup>100</sup>

Similarities between the plots of Shakespeare’s plays and *Love’s Victory*, a manuscript play, are also discussed. Campbell points out that Wroth, knowing the basic plotline of the forced marriage and its resolution via magical power from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, emphasises criticism of the forced marriage in *Love’s Victory* (p. 116).

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<sup>99</sup> Dubrow, pp. 147–49; Waller, p. 9; Roberts, Introduction to *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, p. 43; Lilley, p. 133; and Kusunoki, *Mary Sidney Wroth*, p. 28.

<sup>100</sup> Roberts, Introduction to *The Poems*, pp. 46–47.

Larson also argues that Wroth knew *Love's Labour's Lost*, a conversational play focusing on female characters' leadership in courtship and mocking young men's disdain for love (Larson, pp. 166–67). The use of poison as a plot device is also found in *Romeo and Juliet*. In *Love's Victory*, Musella's mother forces her daughter to marry Rustic, and Musella and her lover Philisses attempt to commit suicide by taking a 'sweet potion' given by Silvesta, a maiden of Diana.<sup>101</sup> Although the use of poison as a plot device was common in romances and poems in Renaissance England and Wroth could have referred to other sources, *Romeo and Juliet* was influential among playgoers and playreaders from the late 1590s to the early 1620s, which makes scholars think that Wroth at least knew *Romeo and Juliet*.<sup>102</sup>

These various similarities between the works of Shakespeare and Wroth, however, are not very obvious. Among the possible allusions to Shakespeare discussed by scholars, verbal parallels were only found in two cases: *Othello* and *Urania 1*, as well as *The Sonnets* and *Pamphilia and Amphilanthus*. I would add that one can be detected between *The Merchant of Venice* and *Urania 2*, which I discussed above. All the other suggestions of parallels are made based on plot similarities, and it is possible that Wroth referred not to Shakespeare but to other popular sources. Although I suspect that she knew at least *The Sonnets*, *Othello*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, I point out that she was not strongly influenced by Shakespeare's plays and did not refer to them directly. Obviously, Wroth gained a vast knowledge of dramatic and literary works in her time, but she did not directly display it in her own writing.

Lanyer and Wroth's knowledge of Shakespeare suggests three things. First, they do not seem to consider him to be an influential writer within the literary tradition to

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<sup>101</sup> *Love's Victory* 5.4.61. Quotations from *Love's Victory* refer to the edition published in *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents*, edited by Cerasano and Wynne-Davies.

<sup>102</sup> Hannay thinks that Wroth knew Shakespeare's plays well and utilised *Romeo and Juliet* in her play (*Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, p. 213). This similarity in the plot between *Romeo and Juliet* and *Love's Victory* is also pointed out by Cerasano and Wynne-Davies' footnote to the play, p. 208, n48. See also Hackett, *A Short History of English Renaissance Drama*, p. 187. For the popularity of *Romeo and Juliet* in this period, see Bly, pp. 97–100; Whitney, 'Ante-aesthetics: Towards a Theory of Early Modern Audience Response', pp. 58–60.



which they belong. Their allusions to Shakespeare can be seen as relatively indirect when compared to those by the women who mention his works in their private writings. The influence of the Sidney circle is more visible in their works because their ‘canonised’ poet is Mary Sidney, their female predecessor. Lanyer dedicated *Salve Deus* to Mary Sidney, and Wroth is widely regarded as ‘Neece ... to the most excellent Lady Mary Countesse of Pembroke’, as the title page of the first part of *Urania* states.<sup>103</sup> No deliberate attempt to place Shakespeare’s works above others is found in these female writers’ works. These female writers knew Shakespeare’s works because they had a vast knowledge of literature and drama as parts of popular culture and were self-conscious as members of literary communities, which only suggests his general popularity among Renaissance playgoers and readers.

Second, although these two women came from different classes, both of them received exceptionally broad educations because of their family backgrounds. Considering that many female users of books shared the playbooks of Shakespeare, I argue that the family’s intellectual atmosphere was the most significant factor when it came to nurturing women’s interest in drama in Renaissance England, where women’s access to education was limited.

Third, compared to Restoration professional writers Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn, Lanyer and Wroth rarely tried to display their knowledge of literary and dramatic works or to locate themselves in the literary tradition mainly maintained by male predecessors. They were exceptionally intellectually active and studied various works, but they did not review male writers’ works, and they rarely referred to other writers’ works directly in their own writings, except for canonical and hugely popular works, such as the Bible and Ovid. Lanyer did not directly borrow expressions from her other two sources about Cleopatra, Sidney and Daniel, although her patronage relationship and dedications suggest their influence on her poem. Scholars argue that

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<sup>103</sup> For Mary Sidney’s influence on Lanyer, see Rienstra, p. 81. For Wroth and Mary Sidney, see Hannay, “‘Your Vertuous and Learned Aunt’: The Countess of Pembroke as a Mentor to Mary Wroth”, p. 30.

Wroth seems to have known various pastoral tragicomedies before finishing *Love's Victory*, but it is more difficult to find parallels in expressions between her play and her sources than to analyse vague similarities in terms of plot and atmosphere.<sup>104</sup> Their literary strategy of creating their own works, without displaying their vast knowledge ostentatiously, I suggest, inhibited them from mentioning other writers' expressions directly, which might partly explain why they did not write critical evaluations of male writers' works, unlike Cavendish and Behn. Both Wroth and Lanyer's works regarded modesty highly as a woman's virtue. As I discussed about boy actors in the last chapter, Wroth was critical of the ostentatiousness of women. Lanyer praised Margaret Clifford's modest and pious attitude. Such appreciation of female modesty in women writers would be a psychological barrier to displaying their knowledge, much less evaluating other writers' works. When Virginia Woolf first had to review a novel by a famous male writer, she was haunted by 'a certain phantom', the 'Angel of the House', who told her never to 'let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own' ('Professions for Women', p. 150). Although her essay was written in the 1930s, it illustrates the difficulty women involved in canonisation in general have faced. As Margaret Hannay argues, a female intellectual in the English Renaissance had to 'devote much of her energy to self-justification, defending her right to be learned and articulate' ('Introduction', p. 1). Even for women who are courageous enough to write fictional works, their internalised gender role discourages them from establishing their own critical criteria and applying them to other writers in a male-dominated literary world. Female writers in the English Renaissance period, such as Wroth and Lanyer, were knowledgeable enough to establish critical criteria for Shakespeare and any other male dramatists they knew, but they seemed hesitant to write and publish their critical opinions.

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<sup>104</sup> Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England*, pp. 91–95; Wynne-Davies, "'Here Is a Sport Will Well Befit This Time and Place": Allusion and Delusion in Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory*', p. 59; and Campbell, p. 104.

## **Conclusion**

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, Shakespeare's works were known among women interested in drama, and educated female readers and playgoers incorporated allusions to Shakespeare's plays into their daily writings. However, they did not consider him to be the most notable dramatist or poet in their time, nor did they attempt to establish his authority. He was only one of many popular writers working in vernacular drama, which was a far less prestigious genre than the classics and religious texts in this period.

Women who saw, read or wrote about Shakespeare at an early stage represented a small number of privileged users who were deeply involved in reading and writing culture for the purposes of pleasure seeking. They absorbed a vast amount of knowledge through playgoing and reading various genres of books (such as religion, philosophy, history, poetry and romance), and were engaged in diverse intellectual activities relating to the theatre, ranging from selling playbooks to reinterpreting their contemporary male dramatists' works. I use the term 'early adapters', borrowing the terminology of present-day technology marketing, to describe such women.<sup>105</sup> Henry Jenkins, in examining the media change in North America, points out that '[t]he rate of convergence will be uneven within a given culture, with those who are most affluent and most technologically literate becoming the early adapters and other segments of the population struggling to catch up' ('The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence', p. 35). Because of the low literacy rate among Renaissance Englishwomen, early female interpreters of Shakespeare were amongst the 'most affluent and most technologically literate' early adapters of media. Such 'early adapters' are few in number but can be

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<sup>105</sup> The term 'early adapter' is sometimes spelled as 'early adopter', but I follow Henry Jenkin's spelling, and I use this term to refer to those who adapt to new media or technology earlier than others.

influential, depending on the extent of their intellectual resources.

Among the eight identified female users of Shakespeare's books in Renaissance England, Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia was of the highest rank and the other female users were generally privileged in terms of class and wealth, although Sarah Jones and Frances Wolfreton were slightly anomalous – Jones was a businesswoman, and Wolfreton had no title and lived in the rural area. Women who wrote about Shakespeare were either wealthy or exceptionally educated because of their family backgrounds. These active female interpreters, with the knowledge and critical criteria to evaluate dramatic works, could participate in influential interpretive communities in the reception of drama and literature. The intellectual activities of these female early adapters would lead to the more visible literary and dramatic activities of Restoration women writers, who were greatly engaged in the process of the canonisation of Shakespeare, as I will argue in the next chapter.

### **Chapter 3: Women and Shakespeare after the Restoration**

This chapter focuses on female playgoers' and readers' engagement with Shakespeare in the Restoration period, from 1660 to 1714. Since it is difficult to separate Restoration theatre from eighteenth-century theatre, I chose the year of the beginning of the Hanoverian Dynasty as the end of the period covered in this chapter, following *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*. At the same time, I sometimes refer to women's cultural activities before and after the period to note the continuity of the reception of Shakespeare. I use the methods which I developed in the previous chapters, such as analysing women's references to Shakespeare and the copies of the books of Shakespeare's works associated with female users. The first section examines the reading and playgoing culture among women, and the second explores how female writers, ranging from professional playwrights to political pamphleteers, utilised Shakespeare, and demonstrates that new critical trends in Shakespeare appreciation emerged in the Restoration period, with women playing a key role in this process.

#### **Section 1: Restoration Women Reading and Watching Shakespeare**

The number of surviving records of Restoration female playgoers and book users outweigh those from the English Renaissance, although it is still difficult to analyse their social backgrounds in detail. In this section, I will first review the previous studies of female playgoing and playreading culture to understand the general tendency of female playgoers and the reception of Shakespeare during the Restoration, and I will then look at the miscellaneous references to Shakespeare made by women and the copies of Shakespeare's works associated with female users in the period. I aim to clarify the social status and other personal backgrounds of women who enjoyed Shakespeare as far as possible, to connect the identified female interpreters to other female readers and playgoers through families or acquaintances, and to point out the gradual popularisation of his works among women. Because the books used by women provide information about the reception of Shakespeare by female interpreters who

were involved in theatre culture as ‘lay’ spectators or readers, research on these women helps to draw wider pictures of interpretive communities in this period. This complements the analyses of influential women’s writings on Shakespeare which I will conduct later in the second section of this chapter.

### **1.1 Restoration Women and Drama**

The Restoration period is regarded by non-contemporary interpreters as the pivotal point of Shakespeare’s reception. Many of the major works on his canonisation, such as Gary Taylor’s *Reinventing Shakespeare* and Michael Dobson’s *Making of the National Poet* (hereinafter *Making*), begin in the period and refer to the writings by well-known female Restoration writers such as Aphra Behn and Margaret Cavendish. These studies show that Restoration playgoers expressed mixed attitudes toward Shakespeare; some of his plays, such as the Falstaff plays and *Othello*, were popular, and professional playwrights such as Dryden respected the dramatist himself; on the other hand, many of his other plays were considered old-fashioned, and heavily altered versions, mainly written by male playwrights, were often staged to make the original ones suitable for the taste of Restoration playgoers.<sup>1</sup> These adaptations, such as Nahum Tate’s 1681 *King Lear* (which has a happy ending), are not regarded as of performable quality now, except for Henry Purcell’s semi-opera *The Fairy Queen*.

Although this disregard for the original playtexts seems unusual, I note that the situation in Restoration England is not very different from that in twenty-first-century England, for audiences often see adapted versions as ‘Shakespeare’ now. Most of the theatrical performances of his plays are edited for their lengths or the performers’ convenience, and some of the film or TV versions are altered to suit Shakespeare’s plays to modern filmic conventions.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, our contemporary audiences

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<sup>1</sup> Dobson, *Making*, pp. 1–61; Vaughan, *Othello: A Contextual History*, pp. 93–112; and Marsden, *The Re-Imagined Text*, pp. 13–46.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Laurence Olivier’s 1955 film version of *Richard III* cuts the lines from the original texts and refers to the adaptations by Colley Cibber and David Garrick in making the script, but it is often regarded as a ‘faithful’ film version of Shakespeare’s play, especially in educational contexts. See Cahir, p. 159; and Su, p. 27.

sometimes behave like Restoration audiences watching *King Lear* with a happy ending. The original ending of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, a highly popular comedy since its debut in 1913, is the separation of the leading characters, Eliza and Higgins. However, it is often altered to a happy ending where the two are reunited, which audiences prefer.<sup>3</sup> The vogue of adaptations of classical works with altered happy endings is a common phase of the reception of popular works to appeal to a wider market which is not limited to Shakespeare.

The publication history of Shakespeare's plays shows the popularity of these adapted versions. Printers constantly published various types of books and pamphlets in this period, and literacy rates continued to increase; in Cressy's estimation, by 1714, about forty-five percent of men and about twenty-five percent of women in England were able to sign their names, which represented high literacy rates among European countries at that time (p. 176). Meanwhile, Houston thinks that the literacy rate among Englishwomen and Scotswomen was about nineteen percent (p. 57). The gap in the literacy rates between the sexes was low in urban areas, especially in London; Cressy states that about forty-eight percent of women in London were able to write in the 1690s (p. 129). However, the thriving print culture did not always mean that Shakespeare's playbooks were readily available. Publishers tended to print adapted versions of Shakespeare's plays in quarto, instead of reprinting his original playtexts. For example, no quarto edition of *Antony and Cleopatra* was produced during the seventeenth century, although Dryden's adaptation, *All for Love*, was first published in 1678 and reprinted at least once before 1700. Concerning *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, now popular as crowd-pleasers, neither the original playtexts nor adapted versions were printed in quarto form in the seventeenth century. It is not likely that ordinary readers could have had many opportunities to peruse the Folio editions, because they were expensive. The publication of Nicholas Rowe's *The Works of William Shakespear* (1709) made the original playtexts of Shakespeare more available, even though this edition was also

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<sup>3</sup> See Bernard Shaw's own comment in *Pygmalion*, in *Complete Plays with Prefaces*, i, p. 282.

expensive, costing 30 shillings.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of gender, only a small number of people, including John Dryden and Margaret Cavendish, knew Shakespeare's original works well. Because a variety of adaptations, ranging from Dryden and Davenant's *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island*, a play declaring that 'It was originally Shakespear's' in its preface in 1670, to John Crowne's *The Misery of Civil War* in 1680, in which the prologues claims that 'The Divine Shakespear did not lay one Stone', largely functioned as propagators of Shakespeare, I address adaptations in quarto as well as his original texts when analysing women's readership in the Restoration period.

In Restoration theatre studies, scholars have made female audiences more visible than their predecessors in English Renaissance, especially the influence of the 'ladies'.<sup>5</sup> The term 'ladies' is broadly used to mean 'the respectable female patrons of the theatre' (Smith, 'Shadwell, the Ladies, and the Change in Comedy', p. 24) and 'city-wives' to refer to women 'below the ranks of the aristocracy and above the class of "whore"' (Ritchie, 'The Merciful Construction', p. 71) in this period, although these definitions are not always rigid. John Harrington Smith's *The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy* (1948) ascribes the change of taste in late Restoration plays to ladies' demand for plays dealing with sincere marital love, picturing them as moralistic playgoers who preferred predictable romance to more edgy plays (pp. 108–40). David Roberts' *The Ladies: Female Patronage of Restoration Drama, 1660–1700* (1989) challenges this generally accepted opinion; documenting ladies' presence in theatre and rescuing them from moralist stereotypes, he downwardly revises the influence of women on the taste of Restoration drama. While this study has been influential, some scholars have criticised it because of its reserved estimation of the ladies' power over drama, the relative negligence of actresses and female playgoers who were not classified as 'the ladies' and the disregard for the accumulation of feminist criticism.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, p. 62; and Walsh, pp. 23–25.

<sup>5</sup> For example, see Scouten and Hume, p. 45; Love, p. 29; Avery, 'The Restoration Audience', p. 56. See also Nicoll's 1923 work, *A History of Restoration Drama*, p. 5. This book revised and republished as *A History of English Drama 1660–1900 Volume I: Restoration Drama 1660–1700* in 1952.

<sup>6</sup> Ritchie, 'The Merciful Construction', pp. 58–73; Ritchie, "'Jilting Jades?": Perceptions of Female Playgoers in the Restoration, 1660–1700', p. 131; Lowenthal, p. 219; and Nussbaum, p. 137.



I agree with Roberts' argument that sentimental comedies 'clearly sought not to satisfy the demands of a faction but to respond to concerns which were alive among the population at large' (*The Ladies*, p. 165), but his analysis seems to forget that 'the population at large' could also include women. If female playgoers had not exerted a great influence on the change in comedy as an interpretive community of 'the ladies', individual female playgoers could have been influential as a part of other interpretive communities. Judging from the increase in the number of records of women's playgoing in Restoration theatre, the presence of female playwrights and actresses was 'matched by presence of women in the audience' (Bush-Bailey, p. 36).

Because professional female playwrights were the most active and influential interpreters of Shakespeare, I will devote the next subsection of this chapter to them. Except for some actresses and ex-actresses whom I will deal with in the last chapter, I will not give a detailed discussion of actresses' roles in the popularisation of Shakespeare. Previous studies of Restoration and eighteenth-century actresses have already revealed the significant roles played by actresses. For example, Elizabeth Howe's *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660 - 1700* and Felicity Nussbaum's *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* were monographs dedicated to female performers' influence on the development of Restoration and eighteenth-century theatre, and both of them discuss the actresses' performances in Shakespeare's plays (Howe, p. 39; Nussbaum, pp. 172–73). Fiona Ritchie's 'The Merciful Construction' has already examined the actresses' contributions to Shakespeare's canonisation intensively, analysing how they developed female roles in his plays (including adaptations) and how their erotic charm and performance skills attracted audience members (pp. 97–134). Amateur performances also contributed to the propagation of Shakespeare, and Michael Dobson's *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance* (hereafter *Amateur Performance*) already discussed this topic, including non-professional actresses' involvement. I will focus on female viewers' empowerment, rather than the performers' empowerment, although it is difficult to separate the two. In general, performers can acquire the power

to control the gaze of audience members in return for making themselves objects of that gaze, while audience members can obtain the power to look at the performers in return for making themselves susceptible to the performers' sophisticated control.<sup>7</sup> I define this process both as a reciprocal exchange of pleasures and a subtle battle for power between the stage and the audience. Resisting the historical association of women with 'to-be-looked-at-ness' (Mulvey, p. 19), I attempt to analyse women's power as it derives from viewing, rather than their power gained from being looked at.

## 1.2 Female Book Users and Playgoers

Although in small numbers, Restoration women were engaged in publishing and selling Shakespeare's playbooks, especially the Third Folio. This was partly printed by a female printer, Alice Warren, along with two other male printers.<sup>8</sup> Like Sarah Jones, whom I discussed in the previous chapter, Warren was the widow of a printer: she was married to Thomas Warren.<sup>9</sup> Eleanor (also known as Ellen) Cotes, widow of Richard Cotes and one of the copyright holders of Shakespeare's plays, allowed Philip Chetwind to publish the Third Folio, although little is known about her role in its publication.<sup>10</sup> Chetwind himself became a publisher and gained some of the copyrights of Shakespeare's plays by marrying Mary Allott, widow of Robert Allott, one of the publishers of the Second Folio – although there were legal disputes over his claims to Mary's rights and there is no evidence to suggest that Mary herself was actively involved in the publication.<sup>11</sup> These women's presence suggests both widows' vigorous economic activities and their limitation. While they were able to participate in the project by utilising the business which they inherited from their husbands, male printers

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<sup>7</sup> In thinking about the empowerment of female performers and audiences in general, I am greatly indebted to Jacki Willson's work on the new burlesque (pp. 38–39).

<sup>8</sup> Other quires of the Third Folio were printed by Roger Daniel and either John Hayes or Thomas Ratcliffe (Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, p. 5). McManaway analyses the quires printed by these printers in 'A Miscalculation in the Printing of the Third Folio'.

<sup>9</sup> Spencer, 'The Printing of Sir George Croke's Reports', p. 246.

<sup>10</sup> Dawson, 'The Copyright of Shakespeare's Dramatic Works', p. 21. Farr does not think that Eleanor played a major role in publishing the Third Folio, except giving Chetwind the permission (pp. 159–60). Finkelstein believes that she exerted a greater influence on the selection of the plays in publishing the Third Folio (pp. 316–36).

<sup>11</sup> Farr, pp. 131–33; Dugas, p. 93; and King, p. 47.

seemed to take the initiative and the widows' names were not necessarily printed on the Third Folio.

Bookplates, signatures and other miscellaneous writings by women also prove the presence of female book users and playgoers. Since I was able to identify several users of relatively unknown copies of Shakespeare, I will devote more attention to these new findings than already described copies. In studying the copies associated with women and miscellaneous writings about women's playgoing, I will note the connections between reading culture and playgoing culture, placing them in a broader context. As in the previous chapter, my major concern is the individual characteristics of female playgoers and book users; I will discuss the similarities between them after analysing each record.

More copies are associated with women in the Restoration period than in the English Renaissance, but most of the female users are unidentified. Among the pre-1714 copies of Shakespeare's works at the Folger, at least six are associated with women during the Restoration period, but two of these are stray copies.<sup>12</sup> The British Library also owns at least two copies of small playbooks associated with otherwise unknown Restoration women.<sup>13</sup> A copy of the front flyleaf of the Fourth Folio at the Meisei Collection (MR3228, Appendix 3-80) has a handwritten bookplate of 'Nathaniel Saltier Bridgette Saltier 1709'. I was not able to identify these two people, but I suspect that these Saltiers are related to the owner of a bound-together volume at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SR80BEA7995-8002, Appendix 2-70), which includes Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late* from 1695, because the surname 'Saltier' is not very common: The flyleaf of this volume is signed by 'Emma Saltier', and a short letter to '1730 My deare Emma' is also bound with the volume. These copies suggest the existence of female book users, but they do not provide much information

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 5-21 (Fo.1 no.71) and Appendix 5-37 (Fo.2 no.58). The former is briefly mentioned in Sasha Roberts, 'Reading the Shakespearean Text in Early Modern England' (hereafter 'The Shakespearean Text'), p. 303.

<sup>13</sup> C.34.k.56., Appendix 1-66; and 1344-f-30, Appendix 1-139. Thomas Jolley, a prominent collector who owned a copy of the First Folio at Queen's College, Oxford (Sel. B. 203) and Second Folio at the Meisei University Shakespeare Folio Collection (MR1446, Appendix 3-26), is also associated with the latter copy. See Rasmussen and West, p. 238.

about their social backgrounds.

There are a number of women who used Shakespeare's books during the Restoration period whom I was able to identify. Several female playgoers have also been identified. I will divide identifiable female book users and playgoers who enjoyed Shakespeare into three categories: women in London, women outside London and women at court. I adopt these categories because they will help to understand both the geographical propagation of Shakespeare's works by women and his increasing popularity among culturally influential female patrons.

### **Women around London**

Restoration London was the centre of theatrical productions and the book trade, and most actresses and female playwrights worked in this area. There are several surviving records of 'city wife' types of playgoers and readers in London. Elizabeth Pepys, wife of Samuel Pepys, is a most famous of these. Since her theatre visits are well documented in Samuel Pepys' *Diary*, Elizabeth's frequent playgoing has already been analysed in detail by scholars. Elizabeth was born in 1640, and spent her girlhood in an unstable social milieu during the English Civil War with little access to public performances of English drama. She married Samuel Pepys in 1655, and died in 1669. The Pepyses were exceptionally active playgoers who seized every opportunity to enjoy theatrical performances in London. From 1660 to 1669, the Pepyses saw the plays of all the major playwrights in the English Renaissance and the Restoration, including all the known performances of Shakespeare's original plays or adaptations. *Macbeth* was their favourite; according to Samuel, 'we still like [the play] mightily' after seeing *Macbeth* seven times.<sup>14</sup> As Ritchie notes, Samuel Pepys often comments on the plays in his *Diary* using the pronoun 'we', 'including his wife's view in the judgement, even if he does not directly quote what she thought'.<sup>15</sup> The Pepyses formed a small domestic

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<sup>14</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, 6 November 1667. See also Ritchie, 'The Merciful Construction', pp. 79–85; and 'Women and Shakespeare in the Restoration and Eighteenth Century', p. 1159.

<sup>15</sup> 'The Merciful Construction', p. 85. 'We' sometimes means 'I' in formal English, but Samuel Pepys' *Diary* is not a formal document.

interpretive community as a couple, and shared a preference for *Macbeth*, which suggests the significance of the family connections in the formation of dramatic taste. However, at one time Elizabeth proposes an interpretive strategy which her husband cannot utilise: she expresses her dissatisfaction with Dryden's *An Evening's Love* in comparison with the original French romance, Scudery's *L'illustre Bassa*, which she had read before watching the play.<sup>16</sup> Romance had become popular among female readers by the mid-seventeenth century, and Elizabeth, who had lived in France, was able to read French romances.<sup>17</sup> Her comparison of the romance and the play shows that Restoration female readers had already begun comparative analyses of the original romances with the adapted plays; this is what Charlotte Lennox, an eighteenth-century female writer whom I will discuss in Chapter 4, would intensively do as a professional critic in her scholarly work *Shakespear Illustrated*. I suggest that critical analyses of the romances as the sources of English plays were largely conducted by educated female readers in the mid-seventeenth to mid-eighteenth centuries, for romance, especially romance focusing on love, was regarded as a genre distinctly targeting women, although male readers could read romance fictions (Newcomb, p. 206). This gendered reception of romance enabled female readers to move freely from romance to drama in convergence and to be engaged in source studies of Shakespeare.

One of Shakespeare's Folios was owned by a woman in London. A privately owned copy of the First Folio (Rasmussen and West no. 220) belonged to the Johnsons, the family of a merchant tailor in London, and at least three female members of the family were associated with it from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries. Because the copy is privately owned, I was not able to access it, but according to Rasmussen and West, an early owner – Martha Primatt – was related to the Johnsons, and Judith Duncombe Johnson inherited the copy from her husband, Thomas Johnson III, after 1698. Judith Duncombe Johnson passed it down to her grandchild Judith Johnson Wasterneys when she died in 1703 (p. 180). This is the third example of city wives' knowledge of Shakespeare in seventeenth-century London, along with Elizabeth

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<sup>16</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, 22 June 1668. See also Roberts, *The Ladies*, pp. 54–56.

<sup>17</sup> Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance*, p. 9.

Pepys and Rachel Paule, the female owners of the copy of the First Folio at the Folger, which I discussed in the previous chapter. It was not rare for women to inherit books from their female relatives in seventeenth-century England, because the Hutchinsons did the same thing, as discussed in the previous chapter. This further confirms the significance of family connections regarding women's reception of Shakespeare.

### **Women Outside London**

Several copies of Shakespeare's playbooks were used by Restoration women outside London. This hints at a rich reading culture in rural areas. As theatrical performances were less frequently accessible in rural areas than in London, playbooks were substitutes for theatrical performances for these women, as I showed in the case of Ann Merricke in the previous chapter.

The British Library has three bound-together volumes which include copies of Shakespeare's plays and which are associated with women from rural areas. The ownership history of Elizabeth Dolben's bound-together volume (841.c.3., Appendix 1-178~187) is complex. The front leaf of *Julius Caesar*, the first play in the volume, is signed 'Eliz. Dolben 1691', and has Eliza Dolben's bookplate. A similar bookplate is described by Brian North Lee's *British Bookplates* (p. 146), and is reproduced by John Blatchly; according to their descriptions, it belonged to Eliza Dolben, also known as Elizabeth Raynsford, wife of John Nicholls Raynsford of Brixworth, Northamptonshire; between 1735 and 1743, she etched bookplates for herself, her brother William and her second cousin's husband Robert Trefusis from Cornwall. Plaque A.12-1965 at the Victoria and Albert Museum says that Eliza Raynsford died in 1810 at the age of 88. She was born around 1722, or 31 years after the date of the signature on the playbook. I do not think that the owner of the bookplate, Eliza Dolben (hereafter the younger Elizabeth), is the signer of the front leaf Eliz Dolben, who was active in 1691. I argue that the signer is her great aunt Elizabeth Dolben (hereafter the elder Elizabeth), daughter of Tanfield Mulso of Finedon, Northamptonshire, who married John Dolben

before 1686 and died in 1736.<sup>18</sup> The mother of the owner of the bookplate is also called Elizabeth, but she cannot be the signer; she was ‘Elizabeth Digby’ in 1691, for she did not marry Elizabeth Raynsford’s father John until 1720.<sup>19</sup> Judging from the date of the bookplate, I argue that the younger Elizabeth inherited the copy from her great aunt the elder Elizabeth after her death in 1736 and attached her own bookplate to the volume.

The Dolben volume includes the following ten playbooks of Shakespeare, including six adaptations: *Julius Caesar* published in 1691, *Macbeth* (Davenant’s adaptation) in 1695, *Othello* in 1705, *The History of King Lear* (Tate’s adaptation) in 1702, *Henry IV* (Thomas Betterton’s adaptation) in 1700, *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found Too Late* (Dryden’s adaptation) in 1671, *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island* (Shadwell’s adaptation) in 1671, George Granville’s adaptation *The Jew of Venice* in 1701, the libretto of Purcell’s operatic adaptation *The Fairy Queen* in 1692 and *Hamlet* in 1703. Among these, only the first play, *Julius Caesar*, has the signature and the bookplate, but Pollard and Bartlett considered that all the copies in this volume had belonged to Dolben (1939 *Census*, pp. 15, 40, 87). Judging from the binding, I agree with them, and regard all the copies in this volume as Dolben’s. The selection of the bound plays summarises the tendency of Restoration playgoers and readers to make no distinction between Shakespeare’s original playtexts and the adaptations. Since she had at least ten quartos of Shakespeare, the elder Elizabeth paid much attention to his works but could not afford the heavy and expensive Folio editions. It was common for book users to bind quartos of drama together in one volume, and collecting smaller and cheaper quartos required less effort. The younger Elizabeth was obviously a book lover from her girlhood, for it was not very common for women with no aristocratic backgrounds to have their own bookplates. Dolbens generally placed importance on the pleasure of reading and owned a well-selected library in Northamptonshire.

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<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Raynsford’s father John Dolben was a son of Gilbert Dolben, and his brother John Dolben married Tanfield Mulso’s daughter Eliz Dolben, the signer of the book. According to Courtney and Baker, they married in the West Indies around 1686. If this assumption is correct, it would have been relatively difficult for Eliz Dolben to obtain the copy. However, the transcript of John’s brother Gilbert’s letter in *The House of Commons, 1690–1715* suggests that the couple lived in Britain until around 1691 (iii, p. 896); if the date estimation of the letter is accurate, she would have acquired the copy more easily.

<sup>19</sup> See Kilburn’s entry in *ODNB*.

A bound-together volume at the British Library (841.d.39, Appendix 1-153~154) is associated with Lady Elizabeth Ashley. It contains seven playbooks: John Dennis' *Rinaldo and Armida* published in 1699, George Powell's *Bonduca* (the adaptation of John Fletcher's plays of the same name) in 1698, Congreve's *The Mourning Bride* in 1697, Charles Hopkins' *Boadicea Queen of Britain* in 1697, Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet* in 1695, Dryden's *The Spanish Fryar* in 1695 and Tate's *The History of King Lear* in 1681. The title page of *King Lear* is also signed by an unidentified man, 'Charles Stanley'. The front flyleaf of the first play, *Rinaldo and Armida*, is inscribed 'Lady Elizabeth Ashley 1700', and written on the same leaf are quotations from Shadwell's *The Lancaster Witches* (Shadwell, v, p. 188), Thomas Stanley's summary of Diogenes of Sinope in *The History of Philosophy* (Stanley, 7.29), and two lines from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act 5, Scene 2: 'There's a Divinity, that shapes our ends, / Rough hew 'em how we will'. According to the analyses of Benno Leonhardt and Penelope Hicks, these quotations and the name were written by the same person, perhaps Lady Elizabeth Ashley herself.<sup>20</sup> The last leaf of *The History of the King Lear* has a handwritten index of the plays and a note, '7 plays In My Dearest Camillas Book'. Hicks suspects that 'Lady Elizabeth Ashley' was a daughter of Anthony Ashley Cooper, second Earl of Shaftesbury, and wife of James Harris of Salisbury (p. 8). Elizabeth Ashley was born in 1682, married James in 1707 and died in 1744; her son James Harris was a scholar, and helped Sarah Fielding to translate Xenophon.<sup>21</sup> Judging from the date estimation of the index on the last flyleaf, Hicks thinks that all seven plays belonged to Elizabeth (p. 9), and I agree with this notion because the quotation from *Hamlet* on the first flyleaf suggests that the signer was also interested in *Hamlet*, which is the fifth play of the volume.

The British Library has another copy of a bound-together volume (841.c.6., Appendix 1-155~156) associated with 'Elizabeth Ashley'. Although nothing is known about this volume, I suspect this is the same person as the signer of 841.d.39. There are ten books in 841.c.6.: Thomas Southerne's *The Fate of Capua* published in 1700,

<sup>20</sup> Leonhardt, p. 430; and Hicks, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> For Harris' life, see Dunhill's entry in *ODNB*.



Dennis' *Iphigenia* in 1700, Dennis' *Liberty Asserted* in 1704, Joseph Trapp's *Abra-mule* in 1704, Charles Hopkins' *Friendship Improv'd: or, the Female Warriour* in 1700, Otway's *Titus and Berenice* in 1701, Charles Gildon's *Measure for Measure: or, Beauty the Best Advocate* in 1700, Granville's *The Jew of Venice* in 1701, an anonymous woman writer's *She Ventures, and He Wins* in 1696 and Samuel Tuke's *The Adventure of Five Hours*. Among these, the last flyleaf of *The Adventure of Five Hours* is signed 'Elizabeth Ashley Feby the 27th 1705'. It also has a hand-written quotation from Delarivier Manley's *Almyna: Or, The Arabian Vow*. The decorative signature found in 841.d.39 and the simple signature on 841.c.6. are not similar, but both flyleaves have the signatures and the quotations, and all the books were published in the same period.

The Harris family was intellectually active regarding drama. James Harris, Elizabeth Ashley's son, was enthusiastic about Shakespeare, and his family members and their friends, including James's two daughters, Gertrude and Louisa, staged several plays, including *The Sheep-Shearing: Or, Florizel and Perdita*, Macnamara Morgan's 1754 adaptation of *The Winter's Tale*, as amateur productions between 1770 and 1782 in Salisbury (Dobson, *Amateur Performance*, p. 38). Not only James but also his wife Elizabeth were supportive of their daughters' theatrical performances and enjoyed them. In a letter to her son James Jr. on 28 November 1774, Elizabeth praised the production of *The Sheep-Shearing*: 'Miss Henschman ... acted the part of Frorizell, and was a most beautiful lover for Louisa, who was Perdita' (Burrows and Dunhill, p. 782). Although the Harris family's all-female amateur theatre was satirised and criticised by *The Bath Journal* as 'a potentially transgressive undertaking' (Dobson, *Amateur Performance*, p.44), the daughters' parents did not consider cross-dressing performances to be unsuitable for young women. After the production of *The Sheep-Shearing*, Louisa addressed a poem to Miss Henschman. It concluded: 'though our drama ends [,] / Lett the feign'd lovers still be real friends' (Burrow and Dunhill, p. 782). Miss Henschman also made an answer poem for Louisa (Burrow and Dunhill, 818), which shows that these two women were close friends.

The Harris family's dramatic activities illustrate two things. First, the theatrical

production functioned as a bonding process for the two young amateur performers, Louisa and Miss Henchman, who reinterpreted the heterosexual love between Florizel and Perdita as their same-sex friendship. As I discussed regarding female playgoing groups in Chapter 1 and will discuss further in Chapter 4, dramatic activities sometimes worked as an occasion to nurture friendships among female playgoers. Because the production of *The Sheep-Shearing* was planned by a small circle of people, one of the major aims of this amateur performance, I argue, was to allow the enjoyment of the company of family members and close friends through dramatic collaboration. The exchange of poems by the two women suggests that the experience of transformation on stage had a strong impact on their friendship. Second, the influence of Lady Elizabeth Ashley, their grandmother, is not negligible. If the two volumes I discussed above had belonged to Lady Elizabeth Ashley, she would have had a well-selected collection of playbooks, and her son James Harris would have been raised in an environment surrounded by his mother's library, including Shakespeare's plays. His mother's knowledge of theatre had an impact on her son's taste and nurtured an intellectually active and supportive atmosphere among the family members, which led to cross-dressing amateur theatre being performed by young women.

A copy of the First Folio at the Meisei Collection (Meisei10, Appendix 3-10) was owned by Sir Thomas Hervey, MP for Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, and his wife Isabella, daughter of Sir Humphrey May, who served Charles I (Rasmussen and West, p. 210). The copy was inscribed 'Tho: & Isabella' around 1660 (A2). Isabella died on 5 June 1686, and after Thomas' death in 1694 the copy was inherited by their son John Hervey, first Earl of Bristol.<sup>22</sup> There are several examples of joint signatures and bookplates belonging to married couples, such as that of Henry Phillips Williams and Elma Mennen (Meisei Second Folio MR1964, Appendix 3-79), but Thomas and Isabella's signatures are one of the earliest surviving joint signatures by the couple on Shakespeare's playbooks. This couple decided to co-manage the library even under the patriarchal legal restrictions on women's rights in the seventeenth century, and such a

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<sup>22</sup> Hervey, *Ickworth Parish Registers: Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1566 to 1890* (hereafter *Registers*), p. 72. See also Carter's entry in *ODNB*.

mark of co-ownership itself implies the existence of a domestic interpretive community created through collaboration. According to the nineteenth-century transcription of their son John's commonplace book and their descendants' notes, their courtship lasted ten years before their marriage in 1658, and they built a large collection of books with the joint signatures after the marriage, although many of them are currently missing.<sup>23</sup> On their tombstone, it says that they 'were most eminent examples of piety, charity, and conjugal affection' (Hervey, *Registers*, p. 72), which slightly romanticises the couple but also implies that their married life was rewarding. Thomas and Isabella's long courtship and their joint signatures on books remind us of Dorothy Osborne and William Temple's shared knowledge of contemporary drama. For these couples, building an interpretive community meant creating an emotional bond based on mutual affection through shared experiences of reading. Pleasure in reading, in these cases, was strongly associated with the pleasure of heterosexual love, in contrast to the other copies which I discussed in relation to female kinship and friendship ties.

A copy of the First Folio at the Folger (Fo.1 no.23, Appendix 5-11), which has William Brouckett's bookplate and was signed by unidentified woman 'Mary Child' in 1695 and by another woman, 'Elizabeth Brouckett', in 1702, is well described by scholars. This is because Elizabeth Brouckett wrote down a distinctly feminist anti-marriage poem by Lady Mary Chudleigh, 'To the Ladies', on the fourth front-flyleaf: 'Wife and seruant are the same, / And only differ in the Name', and advises women to 'shun that wretched state'. Elizabeth Brouckett, who was born in 1681 and died in 1759, was an unmarried aunt of William Brouckett who lived in London and Spains Hall, Essex (Hodgdon, p. 49, n1). It is unknown where and how Elizabeth Brouckett spent her life, but perhaps she lived with her family in Essex, as her nephew did. Since the First Folio contains *The Taming of the Shrew*, a play about wifely obedience, and *Much Ado about Nothing*, a play featuring the marriage of the confirmed bachelor Benedick and the confirmed bachelorette Beatrice, it is tempting to regard this note as Elizabeth Brouckett's personal view on the plays. As Sasha Roberts suggests, 'her

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<sup>23</sup> Hervey, 'Ickworth and the Family of Hervey', p. 391.

choice of verse ... raises the question of what range of responses she might have brought to plays addressing marriage and the status of women in the First Folio' ('The Shakespearean Text', p. 303). Although Chudleigh's poem is not very radical by the current standard, Elizabeth Brockett's note could be considered an expression of the independent spirit of the confirmed bachelorette in the early eighteenth century, and it implies that she took defiant pleasure in interpreting plays and poems in her private reading room.<sup>24</sup>

The ownership history of a copy of the First Folio at the Folger (Fo.1 no.33, Appendix 5-14) is complex: the title leaf of the Second Folio, signed by 'Anne Lady Crew' in a late seventeenth to early eighteenth-century hand, is bound together with the copy. It is unknown when and how this was bound with the copy of the First Folio. The most likely candidate for the signer is Lady Anne Crew (née Armine), the Countess of Torrington. As far as I can ascertain, no other woman was called 'Anne Lady Crew' in this period, and the Folger online catalogue Hamnet also indicates that the signer died around 1719, the same year of the countess' death. She was a daughter of Sir William Airmine, and first married Thomas Crew, second Baron Crew of Steane; after his death in 1699, she married Arthur Herbert, first Earl of Torrington in 1704. She died in 1719.<sup>25</sup> Lady Anne Crew lived in Hampstead after her first marriage, but she inherited her father's estate in Osgodby, Lincolnshire.<sup>26</sup> Her sister Susan Armine married Henry Bellasis and created Baroness Belasyse of Osgodby; Henry was distantly related to Margaret Bellasis, the owner of the manuscript which I referred to in Chapter 2. Privileged women like Anne Crew would have obtained the Folio editions relatively easily.

Another copy of the First Folio at the Folger (Fo.1 no.51, Appendix 5-19) is inscribed 'Mrs Mary Lewis her booke Aprill ye 27th 1685' (3b6v)'. In this copy, *Hamlet* and *Titus Andronicus* are annotated, although the annotator only marked lines and wrote

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<sup>24</sup> This copy is also cited in Kastan as an example of women's aggressive readings of drama ('Performances and Playbooks', p. 180).

<sup>25</sup> See Hattendorf's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>26</sup> See Elrington and others, pp. 15–33; and Lee and Kelsey's entry in *ODNB*.

down textual amendments rather than making critical comments. Sasha Roberts' detailed research shows that the textual amendments were written by Mary Lewis herself and that she had multiple quarto editions of these plays to compare the different texts ('The Shakespearean Text', pp. 303–04). Since 'Mary Lewis' is a common English name, neither Roberts nor I could identify this woman. I point out that some women in the Restoration period had already begun careful 'scholarly' readings of Shakespeare, such as comparing different texts, before the emergence of female scholars in the eighteenth century.

Some copies are associated with women in areas still more geographically distant from London. A copy of the Third Folio at the Meisei Collection (MR1571, Appendix 3-50) was purchased by a Cornish woman. On the first flyleaf of the copy, a handwritten bookplate is pasted, which reads 'Elisabeth Gregor her Book 1689 this I bought at second hand price (11)'. The same leaf has a printed nineteenth-century bookplate of G. W. F. Gregor, and is signed by 'Elizabeth H...' (A2r). This woman is Elizabeth Moyle Gregor, wife of John Gregor and mother of Francis Gregor. The Gregors lived in Trewarthenick, Cornwall, and owned a large library from the 1680s. According to Christine North, Elizabeth Moyle Gregor selected and annotated many books in the collection, although most of them are now missing (p. 13). She also owned at least one manuscript of poems, written in English and Latin, and signed it as 'Elisabeth Moyle' on the first flyleaf in 1684.<sup>27</sup> Elizabeth and John married on 8 July 1684 (Jewers, p. 70), and she changed her signature between 1684 and 1689 from Moyle to Gregor. Not only was Elizabeth Moyle Gregor a book collector: her granddaughter Elizabeth Gregor also engaged in this practice, and her bookplate is described by Brian North Lee (p. 140, n. 220). Elizabeth Moyle Gregor's mention of 'second hand price' shows that she was a diligent library manager who paid great attention to the cost when purchasing books. Along with Frances Wolfreston's collection, Elizabeth Moyle Gregor's library shows that non-aristocratic women in rural areas could build large libraries. Compared to the Midlands, where Wolfreston lived,

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<sup>27</sup> This manuscript is registered in Perdita as Beinecke Library MS pb 110, and described in Burke, 'Women's Verse Miscellany Manuscripts in the Perdita Project', pp. 147–48.

Cornwall has a distinctly different culture from other parts of England, especially London, but after the English Civil War the influence of English language and popular culture tended to dominate Cornwall (Ellis, pp. 78–80). Gregor’s library, which included Shakespeare’s playbooks, hints at the widening influence of English drama in areas culturally different from London.

A copy of the Fourth Folio at the Folger (Fo.4 no.19, Appendix 5-48) was owned by an Irishwoman and her female relatives. It has three women’s names in seventeenth-century hands: ‘Frances Lovett widow her Booke’ (front-flyleaf), ‘Rebeckah Ashe her Book given her by Frances Lovett’ (back flyleaf) and ‘Mary Lovett’ (back flyleaf). As the library catalogue suggests, this copy was originally owned by the Lovetts of Liscombe, and Frances, Mary and Rebecca were common female names in this family. However, I argue that ‘Frances Lovett widow’ is Frances O’Moore Lovett, wife of Christopher Lovett, Lord Mayor of Dublin, for she used the name ‘Frances Lovett, widow’ from her husband’s death around 1680 to her death in 1715.<sup>28</sup> It is said that she was a daughter of Pierce O’Moore of Raheen, and distantly related to poet Thomas Moore (Lovett, p. 56). Because she was related to famous rebel-chief Rory O’Moore, she was ‘much roned’ by society, to use her daughter-in-law Mary’s phrase.<sup>29</sup>

It is unknown how she obtained the copy, but the Lovetts had plenty of opportunities to obtain books from England, for her late husband Christopher was a successful merchant of fabric who had even travelled to Turkey. There were several Lovett women called ‘Mary’, but the signer ‘Mary Lovett’ was perhaps the daughter of Sir John Verney, first Viscount Fermanagh, who ultimately became the wife of Frances and Christopher’s son John Lovett. She was a playgoer in Dublin, and judging from the

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<sup>28</sup> One of Christopher and Frances’ daughters is also named as Frances, but she is not the signer. She was usually called ‘Fanny’ (Mary Lovett’s letter to Lady Fermanagh on 8 September 1703, *The Verney Letters*, i, p. 195), and she changed her surname after marrying Sir John Vanbrugh’s cousin Edward Pearce. After the death of her husband, she was called ‘Mrs. Pearce, the widow’ (William Butterfield’s letter to Lord Fermanagh on 19 May 1736, *The Verney Letters*, ii, p. 106). Quotations from the letters of the Lovetts and Verneys refer to *The Verney Letters in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Margaret Maria Verney.

<sup>29</sup> Mary Lovett’s letter to Lord Fermanagh on 15 November 1703. See also the editor’s note (*The Verney Letters* ii, p. 196–97).

Lovetts' letters, she was on good terms with her mother-in-law.<sup>30</sup> There are two candidates for 'Rebeckah Ashe'. Mary and John's son Robert Lovett married his cousin Rebecca Ashe and lived in Dromoyle and Tipperary. Mary and John's other son Christopher also had a daughter named Rebecca, and she married a man from the Ashe family. The ownership history of the Lovett family's luxurious Fourth Folio implies England's influence on Irish culture; a woman from the Irish nobility married the Englishman who would be Lord Mayor of Dublin, obtained a copy of Shakespeare's Fourth Folio, and passed it down to her daughter-in-law coming from England. It also signifies the wealth and prosperous intellectual activities of privileged merchants in Dublin.

Katherine Philips, or the 'matchless Orinda', is another important witness of the English influence on playgoing culture in Dublin. Although she is the first woman dramatist whose play was performed in English at public playhouses, I discuss Philips' writings in this subsection rather than in the later section on professional female playwrights to emphasise her critical comments on the performance of *Othello* as a viewer. Her record of her playgoing is the earliest document by women who watched Shakespeare outside England, while Shakespeare's direct influence on her works are relatively smaller than that on the other professional female playwrights' works. In her letter to 'Poliarchus', or Sir Charles Cotterel, Philips said that she had seen several plays including *Othello* at Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin. As an active playgoer, she expressed her own critical criteria to evaluate plays, implying good knowledge of English drama:

we have Plays here in the newest Mode, and not ill acted; only the other Day, when OTHELLO was play'd, the DOGE of VENICE and all his Senators came upon the Stage with Feathers in their Hats, which was like to

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<sup>30</sup> Mary and her family 'went to the Play' on the queen's birthday (Mary Lovett's letter to Lady Fermanagh on 26 March 1707, *The Verney Letters*, i. p. 200). Mary stated that Frances was 'mightily kind and fond of me' (Mary Lovett's letter to Lord Fermanagh on 15 November 1703, *The Verney Letters*, i, p. 196), and Frances sent a letter to Lord Fermanagh on 2 August 1708 to tell him that she was very happy to welcome Mary's sister Elizabeth Verney at her home in Ireland (*The Verney Letters*, i, p. 206).

have chang'd the Tragedy into a Comedy, but that the MOOR and DESDEMONA acted their Parts well. Judge then of the Humour I was in, by what happen'd once to your self, when we saw the Maid's Tragedy together (*Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*, in *The Collected Works*, ii, p. 63).

Her disappointment at the play's transformation from 'the Tragedy into a Comedy' and her satisfaction with the performances of the players who acted the leading couple suggest that she appreciated the play of *Othello* itself, but did not find the costume good enough for its tragic quality, because the grave noblemen in Venice looked like merry and fashionable gentlemen 'with Feathers in their Hats' in the Restoration period.

Scholars think that this production of *Othello* and the critical criteria expressed by her about it directly influenced the theatrical production of Philips' own work *Pompey*, the English translation of Corneille's *La Mort de Pompée*, performed at Smock Alley Theatre in the following year (Greene and Clack, p. 53). The Earl of Orrery, sponsor of the production, paid 'a hundred Pounds towards the Expense of buying Roman and Egyptian Habits' to make the production fit for tragedy (*Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*, ii, p. 75). I suspect that Philips and her circle had also read or watched *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar* or *The False One* before producing *Pompey*. The main reason why she translated it into English was the poetic parallel between Charles II and Pompey (Morash, p. 23), and the playtext itself suggests no direct verbal link to major preceding English plays, partly because *Pompey* was a translation. However, the popularity of these Roman plays could have motivated them to translate and stage Corneille's play, and these works could have been helpful in terms of the choice of costumes.

This letter clearly shows the popularisation of Shakespeare outside England. It suggests that modern-costume productions of English drama were available in Restoration Dublin and that the quality of these productions was high by Philips's standard, even though Smock Alley Theatre had just started its public theatrical



performances and *Othello* was among the first plays performed there. Shakespeare was imported from London to Dublin, and Philips's testimony is a notable mark of the propagation of Shakespeare beyond domestic consumption. Intellectuals like Katherine Philips, a London-born poet and active reader and playgoer living outside England, propagated English drama, including Shakespeare.

The fact that *Othello* was performed in Dublin also reminds us of one of the reasons why it was audiences' favourite among Shakespeare's plays performed throughout the Restoration period. As Jacqueline Pearson argues, *Othello* was highly popular among English playgoers, especially female writers, partly because the frequent exogamy among aristocrats and the image of the Stuarts of Scotland as ethnically different nobles aroused an interest in racial difference in Restoration drama.<sup>31</sup> *Othello* is the story of an interracial marriage between the governor of the colonial island Cyprus and a Venetian woman. Katherine Philips herself was married to an ethnically different man, Welsh politician James Philips, and lived in Dublin. Because many of the target audience members of Smock Alley Theatre came from the viceregal court surrounding the Duke of Ormond, its motif setting would attract much attention from those who immigrated to Dublin from England and the people surrounding them, such as Katherine Philips.

There is another hint of the popularity of *Othello* and its propagation by women beyond domestic consumption in England, although it is vaguer than the record of Katherine Philips. At court 6 February 1686, Peregrine Bertie wrote to his niece Catherine Manners, wife of John Manners, then the ninth Earl and later the first Duke of Rutland: 'To-day is [acted] Othello. The Jenkins ladies will be there'.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps the 'Jenkins ladies' are female relatives of Sir Leoline Jenkins, a diplomat from the Welsh family, who exchanged letters with the Earl of Rutland.<sup>33</sup> This means that both the ladies from Wales and Mary of Modena, wife of King James and the person directly

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<sup>31</sup> Pearson, 'Blacker Than Hell Creates; Pix Rewrites *Othello*', pp. 14–15.

<sup>32</sup> *The Manuscripts of His Grace, the Duke of Rutland*, p. 104. For the lives of John and Catherine Manners, see Morrin's entry in ODNB.

<sup>33</sup> *The Manuscripts of His Grace, the Duke of Rutland*, p. 79. 'The Jenkins ladies' does not refer to the wife or daughters of Leoline, for he did not marry. See Alan Marshall's entry in ODNB.

involved in the endogamy of the Stuarts, attended the court performance of *Othello* in England. This occasion suggests the huge popularity of the play and its relation to the political situation of the British Isles, in which people with various ethnic backgrounds were engaged with each other.

### **Women and Shakespeare at Court**

As I showed in the previous chapter, female playgoers and readers, especially women in royalist families, maintained a knowledge of English drama, including Shakespeare, during the English Civil War. After the reopening of public playhouses, there are several records concerning Shakespeare's reception among women at court, ranging from signatures on books to private letters. As I will discuss below, I was able to find a woman who read or saw Shakespeare's works at each queen's court from Catherine of Braganza to Queen Anne. These records suggest that his works gradually gained popularity among women at court. Furthermore, in the 1680s and 1690s, the reception of his works by women at court came to be inseparable from the influence of Baroque music.

The New York Public Library has a made-up copy of Shakespeare's Third Folio (KC+1663): this copy, previously in the Lennox Collection, is bound with several leaves from Lord Steward de Rothsay's copy of the Third Folio, which is now missing.<sup>34</sup> On the front-flyleaf supplied from the other copy, three names are written: 'Mrs. An: Howard', 'B. Grenville', and 'Anna Sylvius'. As far as I have found, no researcher has discussed this copy, and I have identified the female user. 'An: Howard' and 'Anna Sylvius' are the same woman: Ann (sometimes spelled as Anna) Sylvius was a daughter of William Howard, served Catherine of Braganza as a maid of honour, and married diplomat Sir Gabriel Sylvius around 1677 (Dearing, p. 359). Because Ann Sylvius had strong connections to major literary and political figures in the Restoration, she had many opportunities to familiarise herself with drama and literature. She was a prominent woman at court. Edward Lake implies that she diligently served royal women,

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<sup>34</sup> 'The Lennox Collection of Shakespeare Folios', p. 185.

and John Wilmot jokingly refers to her distinctive red hair in his poem ‘Signior Dildo’.<sup>35</sup> Her aunt, Elizabeth Howard, married John Dryden, and Ann frequently appears in John Evelyn’s *Diary* as one of his friends: he praises her as ‘so extraordinarily a virtuous & religious Lady’.<sup>36</sup> Her husband, Gabriel Sylvius, worked with William Temple and Leoline Jenkins. As I have already discussed, Dorothy Osborne, Temple’s lover, and Jenkins’s female relatives also saw or read Shakespeare’s works. Although there is no evidence to indicate that they formed a closely connected reading or playgoing circle, the social connections of these educated men and women suggest that a knowledge of English drama was shared by a large community of loosely linked privileged people surrounding the court in post-Interregnum London and that Shakespeare was incorporated into their shared cultural heritage.

Along with Ann Sylvius’s copy of the Third Folio, there are several records hinting at the popularity of Shakespeare’s works among court ladies. The female poet Anne Finch (née Kingsmill), Countess of Winchilsea, also knew his works. She, a daughter of William Kingsmill, was born in 1661; served Mary of Modena as a maid of honour; married Heneage Finch, later fifth Earl of Winchilsea, in 1684; and died in 1720.

One of Finch’s best-known poems, ‘A Nocturnal Reverie’, is influenced by Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. It is a country house poem with no date, and makes an allusion to the conversation between Jessica and Lorenzo in Portia’s country house in Belmont:

In such a night, when every louder wind  
Is to its distant cavern safe confined;  
And only gentle zephyr fans his wings,  
And lonely Philomel, still waking, sings;  
Or from some tree, famed for the owl’s delight,

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<sup>35</sup> Lake, ‘Diary of Dr. Edward Lake’, p. 13; Wilmot, ‘Signior Dildo’, p. 49 and David M. Vieth’s footnote to the line at p. 57.

<sup>36</sup> Evelyn, *Diary*, 30 October 1676. See also Hiscock, p. 86.

She, hollowing clear, directs the wanderer right;  
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,  
Or thinly veil the heav'ns mysterious face [.]<sup>37</sup>

Lorenzo. The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,  
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees  
And they did make no noise, in such a night  
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls  
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,  
Where Cressid lay that night.

Jessica. In such a night  
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew  
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself  
And ran dismay'd away. (*The Merchant of Venice* 5.1.5-9)

As some scholars have already noted, the initial (and repeated) phrase of the poem, 'In such a night', is borrowed from Lorenzo and Jessica's conversation describing nocturnal scenery, with a breeze shaking leaves to evoke 'the edgy romanticism of Jessica and Lorenzo'.<sup>38</sup> Finch's reworking of Shakespeare suggests that she interpreted Belmont in *The Merchant of Venice* in relation to country house poems; the genre was popular in seventeenth-century English literature.<sup>39</sup>

Scholars have gradually come to identify Anne Finch with the anonymous female author of the libretto of *Venus and Adonis*, an English operatic masque composed by John Blow and first performed at court around the end of 1683, because of similarities in characteristic rimes, vocabularies, and motifs in both *Venus and Adonis* and Finch's poems.<sup>40</sup> No direct literary parallels are found between the texts of Blow's

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<sup>37</sup> 'A Nocturnal Reverie', 1–8, in *Selected Poems*, edited by Denys Thompson (pp. 70–71).

<sup>38</sup> Pearson, 'An Emblem of Themselves, in Plum or Pear', p. 102. McGovern first pointed out of Shakespeare's influence on this poem (p. 80).

<sup>39</sup> For the vogue of country house poems in seventeenth-century England, see McClung, pp. 1–6.

<sup>40</sup> Before James A. Winn first proposed this hypothesis in 2007, Aphra Behn was a candidate. Bruce

*Venus and Adonis* and Shakespeare's poem, and the major sources of this libretto are Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and pastoral plays such as Tasso's *Aminta*, which was partially translated by Anne Finch. However, *Venus and Adonis* was the most frequently reprinted text among Shakespeare's works, surpassing his playbooks and other writers' works dealing with similar motifs in seventeenth-century England.<sup>41</sup> Blow and his co-workers knew the popularity of Shakespeare's poem, although the opera was not a direct adaptation.<sup>42</sup> If Anne Finch were the author, she must have at least read Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. Along with Judith Killigrew's *Second Folio*, Anne Finch's literary career suggests that some female intellectuals at court were interested in both music and drama and that their activities would prefigure women's engagement in musical performances at the Shakespeare Jubilee, which I will discuss in the last chapter.

*The Fairy Queen*, written by an anonymous librettist and composed by Henry Purcell, also offers evidence of court ladies' interest in musical adaptations of Shakespeare.<sup>43</sup> This adaptation is idiosyncratic in many respects, compared with other Restoration adaptations. This is the only Restoration adaptation of Shakespeare currently performed on stage.<sup>44</sup> It directly adopts many of Shakespeare's original lines from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as spoken lines for non-singing roles, although the lines are edited and some roles are cut; compared to other Restoration adaptations, such as John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot* and Tate's *The History of King Lear*, the basic framework of the play is relatively unchanged. Purcell does not compose music for Shakespeare's lines, but rather includes festive masques sung and danced by fairies and various allegorical personae. As a whole, this semi-opera resembles an edited version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a straight play demarcated by sumptuous musical

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Wood agrees with Winn in his Introduction to the critical edition of the libretto (p. x).

<sup>41</sup> Duncan-Jones, 'Much Ado with Red and White', p. 1593.

<sup>42</sup> Kolin succinctly summarises the popularity of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and its influence on drama, but he refers to Blow's opera as one of 'adaptations', which is slightly misleading (p. 54).

<sup>43</sup> There are several candidates for the librettists, including Thomas Betterton. For the basic information of *The Fairy Queen* and its relation to the performance history of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, see Griffiths' summary in the Cambridge edition of the play (pp. 12–14).

<sup>44</sup> English National Opera staged this work in 1995, and the Glyndebourne Festival added it to its repertoire in 2009.

entertainments figuratively related to the main play, rather than an operatic adaptation.

*The Fairy Queen* targeted aristocratic patrons at court, especially Mary II, as well as city audiences. This work was composed for the fifteenth wedding anniversary of William and Mary in 1692.<sup>45</sup> There is no surviving document on the first performance at court for the anniversary, but it is certain that Mary and her maids of honour saw the performance at Dorset Garden in February 1693.<sup>46</sup> William and Mary were not as interested in drama as their predecessors, but Mary ‘followed the Stuart tradition by patronizing the arts’ (Lowerre, p. 123). She preferred music and dance to straight plays, and performed the title role of John Crowne’s masque, *Calisto, or, The Chaste Nymph* in 1674.<sup>47</sup> *The Fairy Queen* was apparently influenced by the taste for court masques, and according to John Downs’ contemporary records, *Roscius Anglicanus*, ‘The Court and Town were wonderfully satisfy’d with it’ (p. 43). I argue that Purcell and his co-workers’ decision to adapt *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* into a semi-opera was partly a result of their intention to please Mary II and ladies at her court. William and Mary were sometimes connected to the preceding Protestant queen, Elizabeth I, and this association was stronger in the case of Mary II as a female monarch (Dunn, p. 249). Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, featuring the fairy queen Titania, is a suitable text to invoke Elizabeth’s reign and to link the past queen’s court to the present queen’s court. Furthermore, as the title shows, the focus of the semi-opera was shifted from the romantic entanglement of young lovers to the fairies’ dance and songs at Titania’s court; such reworking of Elizabethan drama would attract the attention of music-loving Mary II and people surrounding her.

Evidence of Shakespeare’s popularity can also be found in the next queen’s court. Queen Anne and women in the Churchill family, the house of the Duke of Marlborough, were familiar with Shakespeare’s plays, and his dramatic characters became household names among them. The letters written by Princess (later Queen)

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<sup>45</sup> Williams, *Our Moonlight Revels*, p. 43; and Muller and Muller, p. 670.

<sup>46</sup> Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660–1900*, i, p. 352. See also Zimmerman, *Henry Purcell 1659–1695*, p. 228.

<sup>47</sup> See Speck’s entry in *ODNB*.

Anne and Sarah Churchill (née Jenyns), Duchess of Marlborough, show how well-known his plays were among educated women. Princess Anne disliked William III and called him the 'Monster' or 'Caliban', after the character in *The Tempest*, in her conversation and letters with her subjects such as Sarah and Sidney Godolphin, first Earl of Godolphin. For example, in a letter to Sarah in 1692, Princess Anne mentioned William as 'that monster' with 'that Dutch abortive laugh'.<sup>48</sup> In another letter to Sidney Godolphin around 1700–1701, she stated: 'it is a very great satisfaction to me to find you agree with Mrs. Morley concerning the ill-natured, cruel proceedings of Mr. Caliban' (Brown, *The Letters*, p. 68). Since Princess Anne referred to herself 'Mrs. Morley' and Sarah as 'Mrs. Freeman' in her letters, all these nicknames were chosen for fear of interception (Cowles, p. 124), but later Sarah advised Anne to avoid mentioning William as Caliban because it would make the matter worse when interceptors could understand the actual meaning.<sup>49</sup> While it is unknown whether Princess Anne and her subjects had the original or its adapted versions, Caliban was well known and considered a synonym for an unpleasant person. Given Anne's hostility to William's Dutch background, 'Caliban' connotes Anne and her subjects' antagonism toward the powerful but ethnically different man.<sup>50</sup> Caliban, the racial other who tries to rape Miranda in the struggle for dominance in *The Tempest*, was easily associated with William, the man who obtained the crowns of England, Scotland and Ireland by marrying Mary.

The names of Shakespeare's dramatic characters are not only used negatively, but also positively. Sarah Churchill addressed her granddaughter Diana Spencer, Duchess of Bedford as 'Cordelia' in her letter of 5 June 1735. Unlike 'Caliban', 'Cordelia' was used as a synonym for a kind daughter: 'I thank you, my dear Cordelia, for yours of the 1st of June. That is the name I intend to call you, for the future, which I think is the name of King Lear's good child, and therefore a proper title for you, who

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<sup>48</sup> Brown, *The Letters and Diplomatic Instructions of Queen Anne* (hereafter *The Letters*), p. 60.

<sup>49</sup> Green, *Sarah Duchess of Marlborough*, p. 72; *Queen Anne*, p. 65.

<sup>50</sup> For anti-Dutch satires targeting William in general, see also Israel, pp. 85–86.

have been always good to me'.<sup>51</sup> Cordelia became Sarah's favourite term of endearment, for she used this name frequently in the latter half of 1735.<sup>52</sup> Sarah's assumption that her granddaughter knew *King Lear* and understood the connotation of the name Cordelia implies the Churchill family's shared knowledge of Shakespeare's plays and the incorporation of his works into the education for aristocratic women.

The Churchills formed a small domestic interpretive community, in which female family members and people surrounding them shared interest in Shakespeare. Sarah and John Churchill's daughter Henrietta Godolphin also showed interest in Shakespeare. Henrietta, second Duchess of Marlborough, owned a copy of Shakespeare's First Folio (Meisei 11, Appendix 3-11).<sup>53</sup> This was originally owned by Edward Bath (otherwise unidentified), Charles Killigrew – Master of the Revels, patentee of Drury Lane Theatre from 1688, and Anne Killigrew's cousin – and the playwright William Congreve. Henrietta Godolphin, who had an extramarital relationship with Congreve, inherited this copy from her lover, and gave it to Mary Osborne (née Godolphin), Duchess of Leeds, a daughter whom she had with Congreve in 1723 (West, *Census*, ii, p. 278). She patronised several writers, and her relationship with Congreve suggests that she was familiar with drama. Edward Young, in dedicating his play *The Brothers* to Henrietta Godolphin, mentions her preference for Shakespeare's works in his letter written around October 1724: 'Yr Graces exquisite relish for *Shakespeare*, is a Demonstration of yr Superior Tast in this kind of writing; Nor do I know any Exception to yr Graces refind Tast of real merit in every way, but Yr Partiality shown to me'.<sup>54</sup> Young, in flattering his patroness, considers that her 'relish' for Shakespeare is evidence of her 'Superior' literary taste, which means that Shakespeare's works had become increasingly valued among playwrights and their patrons.

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<sup>51</sup> *Letters of a Grandmother: 1732–1735*, p. 150. Most of the letters sent from Sarah Churchill to Diana Spencer are transcribed by Gladys Scott Thomson in this book.

<sup>52</sup> See the letters sent on 24 June, 2 July, 15 July, 30 July, 7 August, 16 August, 21 August, 25 August, 28 August in 1735, all transcribed in *Letters of a Grandmother*.

<sup>53</sup> For the lives of Henrietta Godolphin and her daughter Mary, see Sambrook's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>54</sup> 'The Dedication To Her Grace the Duchess of Marlborough', in *The Correspondence of Edward Young, 1683–1765*, p. 31



There is another piece of evidence to show that female members of the Churchill family were interested in dramatic activities. Around 1718, the Churchills and their friends staged Dryden's *All for Love*, a play based on *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Nicholas Rowe's *Tamerlane* at Blenheim Palace at least three times.<sup>55</sup> Three granddaughters of John and Sarah Churchill participated in this amateur production. Lady Anne Spencer played Octavia, and her younger sister Diana, later surnamed 'Cordelia' by Sarah, played one of Antony's children; they were daughters of Lady Anne Spencer, Countess of Sunderland, a daughter of John and Sarah. Anne was about sixteen years old, and Diana was about eight years old. Lady Anne Egerton also played one of Antony's children; she was a daughter of Lady Elizabeth Egerton, Countess of Bridgewater, another daughter of John and Sarah. Lady Charlotte Maccarthy, later Lady De La Warr, played Cleopatra. She was a daughter of Donough Maccarthy, Earl of Clancarty, and a cousin of the young Spencer sisters. Charlotte was close to Sarah Churchill, and later, she became a friend of Mary Wortley Montagu, a famous woman writer (Grundy, p. 191). While Antony and Ventidius were played by men, some male roles were played by women; Mary Cairns, later Lady Blayney, performed Serapion, and Marie La Vie, a Huguenot immigrant who was probably related to the Cairns family, played the eunuch Alexas (Coxe, p. 645; Grundy, pp. 190–91). The playtext was censored by Sarah Churchill for young women: '[t]he duchess scratched out some of the most amorous speeches, and no embrace allowed, &c' (Coxe, 3, p. 646). This amateur performance illustrates that Sarah's influence on her family members' dramatic tastes was strong and that she incorporated drama into her young granddaughters' education and leisure.

The Churchills' enjoyment of Shakespeare suggests that adaptations of Shakespeare's plays contributed to the infiltration of Shakespeare into the family's domestic interpretive community. *King Lear* and *The Tempest* were referred to in the records I discussed, and it is likely that Sarah Churchill and women surrounding her saw adapted versions of these two plays; the adaptations were more popular on stage during

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<sup>55</sup> Coxe, 333, p. 643–45. For the detail of this production, see Dobson, *Amateur Performance*, pp. 32–33.

this period than Shakespeare's original plays, although they had opportunities to obtain access to the original texts in book form, as Henrietta Godolphin's copy of the First Folio suggests. The Churchills' performance of *All for Love*, along with the Harris family's production of *The Sheep-Shearing*, shows that these adaptations of Shakespeare's plays also influenced amateur theatre.

## **Section 2. Interpreting Shakespeare: Women Writers in the Restoration Period**

This section discusses women writers, the most active and influential interpreters of Shakespeare in this thesis. Beginning with Aphra Behn, the first professional female playwright who worked for commercial theatre in London, many women of various social backgrounds wrote literary works in this period, and some of their works include their interpretations of Shakespeare. This section is divided into three subsections focusing on women who worked in the different literary genres. The first deals with the women in the Cavendish family, who were famous for closet drama. The second discusses the professional female playwrights working for commercial theatre in London. The third analyses feminist pamphlets and their relations to English drama.

### **2.1 Margaret Cavendish and Her Family as an Interpretive Community**

Shakespear's Wit and Eloquence was General, for, and upon all Subjects, he rather wanted Subjects for his Wit and Eloquence to Work on, for which he was Forced to take Some of his Plots out of History, where he only took the Bare Designs, the Wit and Language being all his Own[.] (Margaret Cavendish, *Sociable Letters*, Letter 123)

Letter 123 in *Sociable Letters*, written by Margaret Cavendish (née Lucas), Duchess of Newcastle, and published in 1664, is known as the first surviving substantial critical essay on Shakespeare. In this epistolary work, Cavendish attempts to exonerate him from the bitter criticism put forth by those who gave little credit to his plays because of

their coarse humour, epitomised by the abundance of ‘Clowns, Fools, Watchmen, and the like’ (Letter 123). Shakespeare’s influence on Margaret Cavendish is so evident not only in this essay but also in her other works that many scholars have discussed it; for example, Katherine Romack and James Fitzmaurice’s anthology *Cavendish and Shakespeare, Interconnections* is dedicated to Shakespeare’s literary influence on her, and shows that she incorporated her interpretations of Shakespeare’s works into her own plays, such as *Love’s Adventures* and *The Convent of Pleasure*.<sup>56</sup>

This subsection, greatly indebted to these previous studies, clarifies the correlations between Shakespeare, Margaret Cavendish and family members surrounding Margaret, or her husband William Cavendish and her stepdaughters, Jane Cheyne (née Cavendish) and Elizabeth Egerton (née Cavendish, sometimes called Elizabeth Brackley), Countess of Bridgewater. The Cavendishes all knew Shakespeare’s plays and referred to them in their literary works before Margaret wrote the essay.<sup>57</sup> Her essay is not a mere product of her personal taste but of the cultural context surrounding her, especially her family’s intellectual background.

Margaret Cavendish was born around 1623, a daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Lucas.<sup>58</sup> She served Henrietta Maria as a maid of honour from 1643, and went to Paris as a member of her exiled court in 1644. There she met a royalist exile and writer William Cavendish, first Duke of Newcastle upon Tyne, and married him in 1645. Margaret was the second wife of William, whose first wife Elizabeth Bassett had already died in 1643. William and Elizabeth had two sons and three daughters; among them were Jane (born around 1621) and Elizabeth (born in 1626).<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth married John Egerton, Viscount Brackley (later second Earl of Bridgewater) in 1641, but she did not live with the Egertons before the end of 1645, for she was very young. The Egertons were an intellectually active family; Elizabeth’s mother-in-law Frances Egerton was

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<sup>56</sup> Siegfried, ‘Dining at the Table of Sense’, p. 75; and Suzuki, ‘Gender, the Political Subject, and Dramatic Authorship’, pp. 104–05. See also Jankowski, p. 240; and Dash, p. 388.

<sup>57</sup> I use the first names of the family members of the Cavendishes (Margaret, William, Elizabeth and Jane) to avoid confusion.

<sup>58</sup> For Margaret’s life, see Fitzmaurice’s entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>59</sup> For these two women’s lives, see Humphreys and Kelsey’s entry and Travitsky’s entry in *ODNB*.

famous for owning a large library, and John Egerton owned a copy of the First Folio in the Bridgewater Library.<sup>60</sup> Jane married Charles Cheyne in 1654. Elizabeth and Jane wrote *The Concealed Fancies*, a closet drama for private performance, a masque called *A Pastorall* and poems between 1643 and 1645, and presented them to their father in 1645 (Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, p. 127). Several scholars surmise that Elizabeth and Jane satirised their stepmother-to-be Margaret as Lady Tranquillity in this play, but as Katie Whitaker argues, the first prologue of the play suggests that they conceived it before Margaret met William in 1645.<sup>61</sup> Margaret published many works ranging from drama to philosophical essays from 1653 to the late 1660s.

Margaret started writing after the marriage in 1645, which suggests her new family's literary influence over her intellectual life (Battigelli, p. 25). As she writes in *Sociable Letters*, her early education was not sophisticated enough for a woman with a passion for learning: she 'never went to School, but only Learn'd to Read and Write at Home, Taught by an Antient Decayed Gentlewoman' (Letter 175). Marriage with a man of higher rank, who was known as a patron of arts and a writer, enabled her to be acquainted with a literary circle surrounding William and his brother Charles (Raylor, pp. 93–94). In the Epistle Dedicatory to him in *Playes Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious and Excellent Princess, the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle* in 1662, she stated that she decided to write plays under her husband's influence: 'your [William's] Wit did Create a desire in my Mind to write Playes'.<sup>62</sup> I argue that Margaret also had *The Concealed Fancies* in mind when she expressed her hope for publishing plays. The same dedicatory epistle said that she wanted to 'send them [plays] forth to be printed, rather than keep them concealed in hopes to have them first Acted' (p. 253), and Margaret's use of the word 'conceal' reminds us of the title of Elizabeth and Jane's play. Emily Smith shows that *The Concealed Fancies* was not only performed privately, but also circulated in manuscript among the local people in and outside the household (pp.

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<sup>60</sup> The Huntington Library has the 'Bridgewater copy' of the First Folio.

<sup>61</sup> Whitaker, p. 377, n5. See also Starr, p. 837; and Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, p. 129.

<sup>62</sup> The Epistle Dedicatory to *Playes*, reprinted in *The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays*, p. 253. Quotations from the paratexts of Margaret's plays refer to this edition edited by Shaver.

89–93). The relationship between Margaret and her stepdaughters was not very friendly because of the financial tension in the family, and the fact that her kinswomen of similar age wrote plays and poems inspired rivalry toward Margaret.<sup>63</sup> The dedicatory epistle implies Margaret’s decision to stop concealing her fancies. Unlike her stepdaughters, she chose to publish her works, instead of circulating them in manuscript or performing them privately.

Several similarities between William’s and Margaret’s references to Shakespeare suggest that they share much knowledge of his works and interact with each other. William alluded to *2 Henry IV* in *The Country Captain*, a play published in 1649, before Margaret’s essay on Shakespeare. In *The Country Captain*, the leading character Captain Underwit says: ‘I must thinke, now, to provide me of warlike accoutrements, to accommodate, which coms of accommodo [:] Shakespeare the first & the first’ (A2v). This refers to Shallow’s speech in *2 Henry IV*: ‘It is well said, in faith sir, and it is well said indeed too. Better accommodated! It is good, yea indeed is it... Accomodated! It comes of accommodo, very good, a good phrase’.<sup>64</sup> William presumed that his audience knew *2 Henry IV*, and Margaret also presupposed the readers’ knowledge of Shakespeare’s Henriad in her essay: ‘Who would not think he had been such a man as his Sir John Falstaff? And who would not think he had been Harry the Fifth [?]’ (Letter 123). The Falstaff plays were popular both in Shakespeare’s time and in the Restoration period.<sup>65</sup>

The most striking similarity in the couple’s references to Shakespeare is their emphasis on wit. As the first quotation in this subsection demonstrates, Margaret’s essay highlights wit as his most notable talent. She mentions this quality thirteen times in the short letter.<sup>66</sup> According to Margaret, Shakespeare’s wit was universal: ‘’tis Harder, and

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<sup>63</sup> Grant, pp. 230–31; and Whitaker, pp. 328–39. See also Fitzmaurice’s explanation of Elizabeth’s letter to Jane in *Sociable Letters*, Appendix A-2, p. 307.

<sup>64</sup> *2 Henry IV* 3.2.67–77; and Pasupathi, p. 127.

<sup>65</sup> For the popularity of the Falstaff plays, see Moulton, ‘Fat Knight, or What You Will’, p. 235. *1 Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* were frequently performed in the Restoration period, but *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V* were less popular.

<sup>66</sup> Vickers’ heading for Margaret’s essay in *William Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage* is ‘Margaret Cavendish on Shakespeare’s wit’ (i, p. 42).

Requires more Wit to Express a Jester, than a Grave Statesman; yet Shakespear did not want Wit, to Express to the Life all Sorts of Persons, of what Quality, Profession, Degree, Breeding, or Birth soever; nor did he want Wit to Express the Divers, and Different Humours, or Natures, or Several Passions in Mankind' (Letter 123). William also focuses on Shakespeare's wit, although William is more satirical toward it. In *The Triumphant Widow*, a play posthumously published in 1677, thirteen years after *Sociable Letters*, Crambo – a writer in a slump – consults a doctor and is told to read Ben Jonson:

Codshead. Good Sir, try some English Poets, as Shakespear.

Doctor. You had as good give him preserv'd Apricocks, he has too much Wit for him, and then Fletcher and Beaumont have so much of the Spanish Perfume of Romances and Novels.

...

Doctor. The last Remedy, like Pigeons to the soles of the feet, must be to apply my dear Friend Mr. Johnson's Works, but they must be apply'd to his head.

Codshead. Oh, have a care, Doctor, he hates Ben Johnson, he has an Antipathy to him.

Crambo. Oh, I hate Johnson, oh oh, dull dull, oh oh no Wit.

(*The Triumphant Widow*, IV. pp. 60–61)

According to William, Shakespeare had 'too much Wit', but Jonson was 'the Honour of his Nation' (IV, p. 61). Margaret was more critical of Jonson.<sup>67</sup> She defined the differences between Jonson's plays and hers in 'To the Readers' in *Playes* in 1662: 'I believe none of my Playes are so long as *Ben. Jonson's* Fox, or Alchymist, which in truth, are somewhat too long' (Shaver, Appendix A, p. 255). Considering Margaret's praise of Shakespeare's wit and her less enthusiastic attitude toward Jonson, William's comment was an expression of flattery toward his wife. The particular emphasis on

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<sup>67</sup> Miller, 'Thou art a Monument, without a Tombe', p. 9.

Shakespeare's wit was a distinctive interpretive strategy shared by the couple, which was seemingly similar to the taste of the time but subtly differed from it. Margaret states that he had 'Wit to Express ... Natures' in Letter 123, and that 'a fluent Wit' enabled him to write plays 'by Natures light', implying that 'Natures' require the art of wit to be properly represented in poetry.<sup>68</sup> As Michael Dobson points out, it was common for Restoration playgoers to ascribe art to Jonson, nature to Shakespeare, and wit to Fletcher in the 1660s, while praising these three as 'the Triumvirate of wit' (*Making*, p. 30). Shakespeare was usually famous for his 'Nature' rather than 'Wit', and it was Fletcher whose main feature was wit, although William referred to romantic or exotic descriptions of love as his main feature. However, William and Margaret considered wit as Shakespeare's main feature, and Margaret closely linked 'Nature' with wit in appreciating Shakespeare. The couple forms a small interpretive community, adopting similar strategies in highlighting Shakespeare's wit.

While William and Margaret interact with each other as a couple in writing about Shakespeare, there are also similarities in the references to Shakespeare by Jane and Elizabeth and those by Margaret. Jane and Elizabeth allude to at least three of Shakespeare's plays in *The Concealed Fancies: Antony and Cleopatra, As You Like It* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Their references are significant pieces of evidence in considering the early reception of Shakespeare among women.

Among the allusions to Shakespeare in *The Concealed Fancies*, the ones to *The Taming of the Shrew* and *As You Like It* are not very obvious. Since '[t]he basic plot of the play [*The Concealed Fancies*] is a reversal of *The Taming of the Shrew*, where the women modify the men's unsuitable views on matrimonial relationships' (Ezell, p. 289), and Presumption's speech, 'I mean to follify her al I can / and let her know that garb, that doth best / become her, is most ill-favoured' (III. 3. 10–12) is similar to Petruchio's tactics, scholars think that Jane and Elizabeth knew the play.<sup>69</sup> Margaret also knew this play, but she did not mention it in her essay (Bennett, 'Testifying in the Court of Public Opinion', p. 96). Jane and Elizabeth's reworking of the taming plot and Margaret's

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<sup>68</sup> 'A General Prologue to all my Playes' in 1662, Shaver, Appendix A, p. 265.

<sup>69</sup> Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, p. 211, n20; and Warren, p. 155.

passing over of this play in her praise would support Lynda E. Boose's assumption that *The Taming of the Shrew* was controversial enough to arouse discomfort among the playgoers in Renaissance England and that *The Woman's Prize* is a result of it (p. 179).

The first prologue to *The Concealed Fancies* is also said to be influenced by Rosalind's Epilogue in *As You Like It* (Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, p. 209, n1):

Ladies, I beseech you blush not to see  
That I speak a prologue, being a she.  
(*The Concealed Fancies*, A prologue to the stage, 1–2)

It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue; but it is no more unhandsome than to see the lord the prologue. (*As You Like It*, Epilogue 1–3)

Since Margaret was influenced by *As You Like It*, it is highly possible that Jane and Elizabeth knew the play. However, as I discussed in my first chapter, there are a few more prologues and epilogues spoken by women, such as Flavia in *Every Woman in Her Humor* and the heroine of *The Bride*, and they are also similar to the prologue to *The Concealed Fancies* in various aspects: mentioning the rarity of prologues or epilogues spoken by women, addressing the audience in a friendly way and entreating their favour. This prologue can be placed in a broader tradition of paratexts in Renaissance drama rather than highlighting Shakespeare's influence.

The most striking similarity between the Cavendish ladies is their preference for *Antony and Cleopatra*. In *The Concealed Fancies*, a woman called 'Sh.' talks about her captivity in Ballamo, a besieged castle: 'How should I do otherwise, for I practised Cleopatra when she was in her captivity, and could they have thought me worthy to have adorned their triumphs. I would have performed his gallant tragedy and so have made myself glorious for time to come'.<sup>70</sup> This is an allusion to Shakespeare's *Cleopatra*, who is captured by Octavius for the triumph to Rome but kills herself at the

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<sup>70</sup> *The Concealed Fancies*, III. iv. 13–18. Quotations from this play refer to Cerasano and Wynne-Davies's edition.



end of the tragedy.<sup>71</sup> Since the authors, members of a royalist family, wrote this play after undergoing a siege in Welbeck Abbey by the parliamentary forces, and they possibly performed it by themselves, this speech reflects their concern about how noblewomen should behave in difficult political situations. To some extent, they superimpose Cleopatra, a female dramatic character proud and conscious of being ‘made herself glorious’ in captivity, on themselves. Sophie Tomlinson points out that Jane and Elizabeth considered Shakespeare’s Cleopatra ‘the exemplar of noble feminine action’ and they paid ‘tribute’ to Plutarch, Shakespeare and Mary Sidney’s *Antonius*.<sup>72</sup> This depiction implies that Jane and Elizabeth were pleased with Shakespeare’s portrayal of Cleopatra as a woman who self-consciously performs her roles in politics, and they did not regard her as sinful or lecherous, unlike antitheatrical writers such as Richard Braithwaite.

Margaret finds Shakespeare’s Cleopatra so well written a character that she ‘feminises’ the poet in praising his portrayal of her: ‘one would think that he had been Metamorphosed from a Man to a Woman, for who could Describe Cleopatra Better than he hath done, and many other Females of his Creating[?]’ (Letter 123). Her preference for Cleopatra was partly due to her interest in Roman history and Cleopatra as a historical character. In *The Worlds Olio* in 1655, she writes about figures in the Roman history, and perhaps influenced by Shakespeare, she defends Cleopatra against those who considered her as unchaste:

[T]hey call her a Dissembling Woman, because she did strive to win her Husbands Affections; shall we say those dissemble, that strive to please those they love? ... Some say she was Proud and Ambitious, because she loved those had most Power: She was a Great Person her self, and born to have Power, therefore it was natural to her to love Power; Besides, she might have got a worse Reputation, in being thought a base and unworthy spirited Woman, if she had loved any below her Worth (*The Worlds Olio*, p. 132).

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<sup>71</sup> Cerasano and Wynne-Davis, p. 211, n38.

<sup>72</sup> Tomlison, ‘Too Theatrical? Female Subjectivity in Caroline and Interregnum Drama’, p. 74.

She argues for conscious self-dramatisation in daily life, or performing the various roles required by society; Cleopatra had to perform as a good lover ‘to win her Husbands Affections’, as a capable stateswoman to ‘have Power’, and as a proud aristocrat to maintain her ‘Reputation’.<sup>73</sup> Margaret’s interest in Cleopatra’s self-conscious performance as a noblewoman coincides with that of Jane and Elizabeth, as represented in *The Concealed Fancies*. Considering that Margaret herself was regarded as a ‘celebrity, drawing a huge crowd wherever she went’ and seemed to enjoy her celebrity status (Whitaker, p. 300), I point out that such self-fashioning in public was personally significant subject matter for her. It is natural that she, as an ambitious writer who was willing to risk scorn by publishing her works in a male-dominated literary sphere, was interested in Cleopatra, a female celebrity who also challenged the expectation that women should modestly avoid becoming public figures.

Margaret, Jane and Elizabeth share such an interpretive strategy partly because of their personal experiences as royalist noblewomen. The Cavendish ladies were required to perform appropriate roles during the English Civil War. Margaret was a member of Henrietta Maria’s exiled court and the wife of a royalist soldier, and Jane and Elizabeth supported the king by sending information and had to endure the siege (Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, p. 127). It was natural for them to focus on Cleopatra’s efforts to save her kingdom and to maintain her honour. For royalist women like the Cavendishes, Shakespeare’s civil war play *Antony and Cleopatra* could be regarded as a work dealing with the problems facing them during the Interregnum.

Adopting these interpretive strategies of the Cavendishes, who formed a domestic interpretive community, Margaret praises Shakespeare in her essay as a critic. She also utilises and sometimes burlesques Shakespeare’s plays as a dramatist. Margaret’s dismemberment and satirical reworking of Shakespeare’s works in her plays demonstrate her analytical attitude toward the works of her predecessors, which is an essential element in creating a critical standard in the process of canonisation. Analysing

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<sup>73</sup> See also Romack, “‘I Wonder She Should Be So Infamous For a Whore?’: Cleopatra Restored”, p. 208.

Margaret's burlesquing of Shakespeare and criticising Romack's association of antifeminism with bardolatry, Suzuki Mihoko attempts to separate Margaret's use of the playwright from bardolatry: she states that 'Cavendish dismembers the Shakespearean canon'.<sup>74</sup> Suzuki takes Shakespeare's canonicity in the Restoration period for granted, although his canonical status was not yet fully established. Margaret's essay itself suggests that his authority was still in question. In such a situation, Suzuki's analysis, which regards Margaret's parodies of Shakespeare's plays as standing in 'stark opposition to ... an attitude of bardolatry' (p. 106), is slightly problematic. If his plays had already achieved firm canonical status, creating a parody of them could have been intended as an attack upon his authority. I doubt that such an attack could be effective when Shakespeare was placed in a much less canonical position than now. Furthermore, parodying his works could also be interpreted as an homage to the author's predecessors, the result of a complex sort of 'bardolatry'.

Taking these backgrounds into account, I reconsider the significance of Margaret's essay as the product of her domestic interpretive community in the on-going process of Shakespeare's canonisation. I argue that what underlies Margaret's praise of Shakespeare in *Sociable Letters* is her promotion of pleasure for the commonwealth, by reading her critical and fictional works together. Pleasure is one of Margaret's major concerns in writing, and she defines herself as a pleasure-seeker: 'my Retirement from the publick Concourse and Army of the World, and Regiments of Acquaintance, is neither through Constraint, nor Fantactick Humour, but through a Love to Peace, Ease, and Pleasure, all which you Enjoy' (*Sociable Letters*, Letter 29). She puts a low value on 'Constraint', regarding pleasure and love as a goal in everyday life, perhaps under the influence of Epicureanism (Sarasohn, pp. 179 and 239). This is clearly shown in her closet drama *The Convent of Pleasure*, a play about women's search for genuine pleasure: Lady Happy decides to 'live incloister'd with all the delights and pleasures that are allowable and lawful' against those who 'bar themselves from all other worldly Pleasures' (I.2. 119–220), but finds the necessity of the pleasure of love in the end.

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<sup>74</sup> Suzuki, 'Gender, the Political Subject, and Dramatic Authorship', p. 105. Romack, 'Margaret Cavendish, Shakespeare Critic', p. 25.

According to Margaret, literary activities are major sources of pleasure. In the first dedication to *Playes* in 1662, Margaret declares the importance of pleasure, or delight, in reading:

To Those that do delight in Scenes and wit,  
I dedicate my Book, for those I writ;  
Next to my own Delight, for I did take  
Much pleasure and delight these Played to make [.]  
(*The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays*, Appendix A, p. 253)

She argues for not only readers' pleasure but also the author's pleasure. Pleasure is the foremost motivation for her writing. This is partly because of her royalist and anti-puritan political tendencies; pleasure is often associated with cavalier culture, which is clearly expressed in plays by Restoration dramatists such as Behn and Etherege (Markley. Pp. 127–30; Braverman, p. 82).

Margaret regards pleasure as one of the criteria for evaluating literary works. According to *Sociable Letters*, a poem is worth reading when it is 'Pleasant' or 'Profitable' (Letter 127). Pleasure or delight in reading is derived from 'Probabilities', the touch of 'Truth' presented vividly and naturally as 'not beyond the Power of Men, nor Unusual to their Practice'.<sup>75</sup> Profit in reading is an educational quality of the work, or depends upon whether it can provide readers with the 'Actions' to be 'Practised' or 'Imitated' (Letter 127). In another letter, Margaret parallels 'Profit' with 'any Probability to Increase your Knowledge' and 'Pleasure' with 'any Probability ... to Inrich your Understanding' (Letter 131), which also suggests that she emphasises the readers' profit of gaining knowledge from literary works and the pleasure of activating their own imagination through reading.

Margaret's promotion of pleasure in poetry is linked to the benefit of the

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<sup>75</sup> Letter 127. 'Probability' in literature would be a significant critical criterion in the eighteenth-century novel, and some later critics such as Charlotte Lennox do not regard Shakespeare's plays as probable. See Molesworth, pp. 17–54.

commonwealth.<sup>76</sup> Influenced by Thomas Hobbes, she defines her commonwealth, or Britain, as an entity of people of various social backgrounds ranging from ‘Nobility’ to ‘Labourers’ under ‘The Contracts betwixt the King and people’.<sup>77</sup> In this commonwealth, ‘People shall have set times of Recreation, to ease them from their Labours, and to refresh their Spirits’ (*The Worlds Olio*, p. 209). In Letter 169 of *Sociable Letters*, Margaret parallels the art of war with the art of poetry and associates the poet’s work with nationalism, or defence of the commonwealth. Soldiers, who provide security with courage, and poets, who provide recreation by writing poems and plays to ‘Grace their Triumphs’ and to ‘Please their Eyes and Ears’, are the commonwealth’s two important components, but these two types of professionals are ill treated, ‘although a Commonwealth neither have Pleasure nor Security without them’ (p. 233). Margaret even argues that the ‘all Natural Poets shall be honored with Title, esteemed with Respect, or enriched for the Civilizing of a Nation ... by Soft Numbers, and pleasing Phansies’ (*The Worlds Olio*, p. 212).

In this context, she champions English as a language to provide pleasure for the nation. Although it is inappropriate to ‘condemn another Language’ (*The Worlds Olio*, p. 212), she maintains that ‘Our natural English Tongue was significant enough without the help of other Languages’ (*The Worlds Olio*, p. 115). *The Blazing World* (1666) also illustrates her nationalistic promotion of vernacular poetry in education. The leading character, the Duchess, tells the Emperor that she ‘shall endeavour to order your Majesty’s Theatre, to present such Playes as my Wit is capable to make’ because she desires ‘such a Theatre as may make wise Men’.<sup>78</sup> The fictional Duchess’ determination ‘to establish a new national theater’ in the *Blazing World*, an imagined realm, can be read as Margaret’s ‘focused critique of England’s (to be deplored) lack of quality imagination’.<sup>79</sup> *The Blazing World* also condemns the ‘Artificial Rules’ adopted

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<sup>76</sup> For Margaret’s nationalistic writings, see also Miller, ‘Thou art a Monument, without a Tombe’, p. 13; Pasupathi, p. 131; and Jagodzinski, p. 102.

<sup>77</sup> *The Worlds Olio*, pp. 205–06. See also Hutton, p. 422; Sarasohn, pp. 100–25.

<sup>78</sup> See *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World*, in Susan James’s anthology of Margaret Cavendish’s works, *Political Writings* (p. 106).

<sup>79</sup> Siegfried, ‘Anecdotal and Cabalistic Forms in Margaret Cavendish’s *Observations upon Experimental*

by contemporary dramatists: 'the natural Humours, Actions and Fortunes of Mankind, are not done by the Rules of Art' (p. 106). The reference to the 'Rules of Art' satirises the rules of three unities, which were imported from France and became popular in Restoration England. Margaret here caricatures the French influence on English drama.<sup>80</sup> The nationalistic promotion of drama in *The Blazing World* is greatly influenced by the Anglo-Dutch war of the mid-1660s. The descriptions of the female monarch in the text reflect 'Cavendish's imperial dreams concerning England's future role as world leader' (Jowitt, p. 393), and the dream of drama for the nation is part of it.

Margaret's effort to canonise Shakespeare in her essay is part of her intention to promote pleasure for the commonwealth. Britain as the commonwealth under the king needs 'Natural Poets' to provide the nation with pleasure, and Shakespeare is a suitable figure for her aim: 'he was a Natural Orator, as well as a Natural Poet' (*Sociable Letters*, Letter 123). In the interpretive community of the Cavendishes, who place emphasis on Shakespeare's wit, Margaret thinks that Shakespeare's widely acclaimed ability to express Nature makes him a leading candidate for the national poet. Her supposed commonwealth is composed of various kinds of people ranging from royals to peasants. Shakespeare is exceedingly good at portraying 'all Sorts of Persons' (*Sociable Letters*, Letter 123), or any member who belongs to the commonwealth. Many 'Clowns, Fools, Watchmen, and the like' appear in his plays (Letter 123), and he can also describe women of every social background: in addition to the Queen of Egypt, he creates 'Nan Page, Mrs. Page, Mrs. Ford, the Doctors Maid, Bettrice, Mrs Quickly, Doll Tearsheet, and others'.<sup>81</sup>

For Margaret, making Shakespeare a national poet is also helpful in justifying her status as a woman writer. As scholars point out, her praise of Shakespeare is partly the result of her literary strategy of refuting the criticism that her want of learning was caused by her gender; she parallels herself with him because both of them lack

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*Philosophy*', p. 77.

<sup>80</sup> According to Marsden, the three unities were referred to as the 'Rules' in the Restoration period ('Tragedy and Varieties in Serious Drama', p. 229).

<sup>81</sup> Letter 123, p. 177. For the popularity of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in the Restoration period, Crane's summary in Introduction to the New Cambridge edition (pp. 19–20).

knowledge of Latin, Greek, and military science, but actively write in English.<sup>82</sup> In Margaret's argument, the lack of knowledge of classical languages does not greatly matter, because English should be used in the commonwealth. The commonwealth that Margaret has in mind, whose national poet is Shakespeare, would acknowledge poets who entertained others in English, which could include women writers like her who only use the vernacular language. Furthermore, Shakespeare's historical status as a slightly old-fashioned Elizabethan dramatist also contributes to Margaret's recommendation of him as the national poet. William and Margaret tended to idealise the reign of Elizabeth I as a model for the reign of Charles II, and as *The Blazing World*, a Utopian novel featuring a female monarch, suggests, Margaret had feelings of nostalgia for the Elizabethan era.<sup>83</sup> Shakespeare, a dramatist who wrote vernacular plays under a powerful female monarch, can easily be incorporated into her nationalistic and pro-woman arguments.

The influence of Margaret Cavendish's essay on Shakespeare is not negligible. It is uncertain whether it was appreciated by her contemporary female readers. Her works were known among educated women, but she was considered to be an eccentric writer rather than a talented writer; for example, Dorothy Osborne and Mary Evelyn, wife of John Evelyn, regarded her as interesting but almost insane.<sup>84</sup> There is no evidence to show that her works were read by Aphra Behn, another Restoration woman writer who praised Shakespeare (Peacock, p. 87). However, her essay on Shakespeare has been relatively famous since the mid-eighteenth century. As Shakespeare's canonical status was strengthened, she became associated with him, partly because of her status as a self-proclaimed successor to the tradition of English literature, which is legitimised by her essay on Shakespeare. For example, the entry on 22 May 1755 in *The Connoisseur*, a periodical edited by George Colman and Bonnell Thornton – who also

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<sup>82</sup> Powers, p. 109; and Paspathi, p. 135.

<sup>83</sup> Jowitt, p. 393; and Siegfried, 'Bonum Theatrale: The Matter of Elizabeth I in Francis Bacon's *Of Tribute* and Margaret Cavendish's *Brazing World*', pp. 196–97. For William's Cavendish's portrayal of Elizabeth I, see Watkins, pp. 118–pp. 121. For the representations of Elizabeth I in the Restoration period, see Dobson and Watson, pp. 67–pp. 74.

<sup>84</sup> Osborne, Letter 17 and Letter 58; and Mary Evelyn, 'A Letter of Mary Evelyn to Ralph Bohun c.1667', in Margaret Cavendish, *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader*, pp. 91–93.

edited *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, a collection of poems by female writers that included Cavendish – describes ‘the Court of Apollo’, which holds discussions of whether ‘the English ladies’ should be elevated as high as male poets in a dream vision (p. 261) and chooses Margaret Cavendish as the first representative of English female poets, selecting Shakespeare and Milton as male counterparts: ‘When she [Margaret Cavendish] came to dismount [from Pegasus], Shakespeare and Milton very kindly offered their hand to help her down, which she accepted’ (pp. 262–63). Although it contains unfavourable satires of female poets, this entry, which features many women, including Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn, could also be read as a nationalistic praise of English poetry because it boasts of an abundance of talented poets of both sexes.<sup>85</sup> Even those who do not greatly appreciate Margaret’s original fictions or philosophical studies acknowledge her essay on Shakespeare. Edmond Malone, editor of *The Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare* in 1794, commends her essay in his Preface: ‘To the honour of Margaret Duchess of Newcastle be it remembered, that however fantastick in other respects, she had taste enough to be fully sensible of our poet’s merit, and was one of the first who after the Restoration published a very high eulogy on him’ (i, p. liii). Margaret’s ‘sensible’ taste for Shakespeare is worth mentioning, although Malone is critical of her ‘fantastick’ tendency. For Malone, she should be remembered not for her original plays or scientific works but for her essay on Shakespeare. In Malone’s work, it is not even obvious whether she canonised Shakespeare or Shakespeare canonised her. He seems to think that her fame is partly due to her essay on Shakespeare.

Margaret’s essay has not come out of nothing. Partly, it is a product of the strategies shared by the interpretive community, the Cavendishes. Furthermore, as I discussed in the last chapter, there were some women writers during the English Renaissance period who were highly intellectually active and knowledgeable enough about English drama. They paved the way for Margaret. Unlike her modest predecessors, however, her ‘fantastick’ temperament – to use Malone’s phrase – would push her one step further and allow her to write and publish her critical review of Shakespeare.

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<sup>85</sup> Regarding the co-existence of unfavourable satires and the efforts toward canonisation in this essay, see Terry, pp. 273–75.



## 2.2 Female Playwrights

This subsection aims to clarify the popularity of Shakespeare among female playwrights from the Restoration to the early eighteenth century. Many of the major female playwrights working in the commercial theatre in this period directly name Shakespeare as one of their influences or indirectly allude to his works in their plays. I will focus on how Aphra Behn, the first English professional female playwright working in the commercial theatre, utilised Shakespeare as a model, and how other female playwrights such as Mary Pix, Catherine Trotter Cockburn, Susanna Centlivre, and Delarivier Manley reworked his writings. Compared to major male Restoration playwrights and Behn, Shakespeare's influence on Behn's less famous female successors has not been studied thoroughly.

Many studies have already analysed Shakespeare's strong influence on Aphra Behn's works, as in the case of Margaret Cavendish, partly because she has been a popular subject of research since the beginning of feminist and postcolonial criticism. The similarities and differences between the representations of race in their works have been most frequently studied. *Othello*, a play very popular during the Restoration period, had a great influence on Behn's *Oroonoko*, and since many plot parallels – such as a noble African hero and runaway marriage – are evident, *Oroonoko* can even be read as a novel adaptation of *Othello* (Gruber, p. 99). The influence of *Othello* is also seen in Behn's other works, such as *Abdelazer, or the Moor's Revenge* and an epistolary novel *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (hereafter *Love-Letters*).<sup>86</sup> The reference to *Othello* in *Love-Letters* is most direct, for Philander, in wooing his sister-in-law Sylvia, describes his wife by using Othello's speech about Desdemona: 'I'll whistle her off, and let her down the Wind, as *Othello* says'.<sup>87</sup> Behn also makes use of Shakespeare's other plays, such as *Titus Andronicus*, *The Tempest* and the *Henriad*, in

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<sup>86</sup> For *Othello* and *Abdelazer*, see Thomas, 'This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine', p. 30; Vaughan, *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500–1800*, p. 135; and Daileader, pp. 14–49.

<sup>87</sup> Behn, *Love-Letters*, Part I. Shakespeare's original speech is slightly different: 'I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind' (*Othello* 3.3.279).

her writings.<sup>88</sup>

What is notable about Behn's reception of Shakespeare is that she not only borrows elements from his works in her plays, but also tries to canonise him as her predecessor. In the dedication to 'Good, Sweet, Honey, Sugar-candied Reader' in *The Dutch Lover*, a play published in 1673, she places Shakespeare above Jonson, mentioning his public popularity and easy-to-understand wit:

For waving [*sic*] the examination, why women having equal education with men, were not as capable of knowledge, of whatever sort as well as they: I'll only say as I have touch'd before, that Plays have no great room for that which is mens great advantage over women, that is Learning; We all well know that the immortal Shakespears Playes (who was not guilty of much more of this than often falls to womens share) have better pleas'd the World than Johnsons works, though by the way 'tis said that Benjamin was no such Rabbi neither, for I am inform'd his Learning was but Grammer high (sufficient indeed to rob poor Salust of his best Orations) and it hath been observ'd, that they are apt to admire him most confoundedly, who have just such a scantling of it as he had; and I have seen a man the most severe of Johnsons Sect, sit with his Hat remov'd less than a hairs breadth from one sullen posture for almost three hours at the Alchymist; who at that excellent Play of Harry the Fourth (which yet I hope is far enough from Farce) hath very hardly kept his Doublet whole (p. 162).

By praising Shakespeare's excellence in comedy and satirising Jonson, Behn implies that an author's learning does not necessarily make comedy amusing, and may even reduce potential for laughter. Her aim is to defend female playwrights by aligning them with Shakespeare: as Stephen Orgel argues, Behn suggests that 'since the uneducated Shakespeare wrote better plays than the learned Jonson, and since the only intellectual

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<sup>88</sup> Ferguson, 'Transmuting *Othello*', p. 24; Andrade, pp. 192–93; and Erickson, p. 105.

advantage men have over women derives from their education, women ought to be as good playwrights as Shakespeare'.<sup>89</sup> Behn's argument is similar to that of Margaret Cavendish, for both of them try to defend women's lack of education by associating themselves with Shakespeare.

Behn differs from Margaret Cavendish in that she refers to Shakespeare from the viewpoint of the professional playwright working in the commercial theatre. The dedication in *The Dutch Lover* shows that one of Behn's criteria in evaluating a play is whether it can bring audiences pleasure at public playhouses. Even a serious tragedy, 'far enough from Farce', should elicit laughs. This emphasis on laughter is partly due to the taste of the time, when Restoration comedy attracted large audiences. As a professional playwright, Behn seems to think that laughter is always necessary to create lively theatrical productions (even in the case of tragedy) which can entertain audience members. In this respect, she shares theatrical aesthetics with a twentieth-century German playwright, Bertolt Brecht: he states that 'a theatre that can't be laughed in is a theatre to be laughed at' (*The Messingkauf Dialogues*, p. 95).

In her Preface to *The Lucky Chance* in 1687, Behn lists the English plays which she believes are erotic but well written, to counter those who consider her play as indecent; she includes *Othello* in the list. Although its main aim is to prove her work a decent one in comparison with other popular plays, the list can also be regarded as Behn's catalogue of English canonical playwrights which she hopes to join. She refers to her contemporary playwrights John Dryden, John Crowne, Edward Ravenscroft, George Etherege and John Wilmot, and Renaissance playwrights Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, but (perhaps deliberately) excludes Jonson:

I say, after all these supervisors the ladies may be convinced they left nothing that could offend, and the men of their unjust reflections on so many judges of Wit and decencies. When it happens that I challenge any one, to point me out the least Expression of what some have made their discourse, they cry,

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<sup>89</sup> Orgel, 'The Renaissance Artist as Plagiarist', p. 483. See also Frank, p. 97.

that Mr. Leigh opens his night gown, when he comes into the bride-chamber; if he do, which is a jest of his own making, and which I never saw, I hope he has his clothes on underneath? And if so, where is the indecency? I have seen in that admirable play of *Oedipus*, the gown opened wide, and the man shown, in his drawers and waistcoat, and never thought it an offence before. Another cries, 'why, we know not what they mean, when the man takes a woman off the stage, and another is thereby cuckolded'; is that any more than you see in the most celebrated of your plays? as *The City Politics*, the Lady Mayoress, and the old lawyer's wife, who goes with a man she never saw before, and comes out again the joyfullest woman alive, for having made her husband a cuckold with such dexterity, and yet I see nothing unnatural nor obscene: 'tis proper for the characters. So in that lucky play of the *London Cuckolds*, not to recite particulars. And in that good comedy of *Sir Courtly Nice*, the tailor to the young lady; in the famed *Sir Fopling*. Dorimont and Bellinda, see the very words; in *Valentinian*, see the scene between the court bawds, and Valentinian all loose and ruffled a moment after the rape; and all this you see without scandal, and a thousand others. *The Moor of Venice* in many places. *The Maid's Tragedy*, see the Scene of undressing the bride, and between the king and Amintor, and after between the king and Evadne. All these I Name as some of the best plays I know[.] (p. 189)

The two English Renaissance tragedies mentioned here, *Othello* and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*, were among the first plays revived in 1660 after the London theatre closure, and the most popular legacies of English Renaissance theatre for Restoration playgoers.<sup>90</sup> Behn's choice of these two plays suggests that she is trying to place herself in the lineage of English drama and to justify her work as a legitimate successor of the theatrical tradition, which has embraced bawdiness and coarse humour as part of decent entertainments.

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<sup>90</sup> See Craik's Introduction to the Revels edition of *The Maid's Tragedy*, p. 26–32.

Behn thinks that this tradition has been ascribed to ‘masculine strokes’ (Preface to *The Lucky Chance*, p. 190). Female writers are rarely permitted to be endowed with them. However, she wants to be part of the tradition, and adopts a two-part approach to justify her position through establishing a complex multiple identity. One approach is to transform herself figuratively into a man, an active creator who gives pleasure to the audience community: ‘All I ask, is the privilege for my masculine part the poet in me (if any such you will allow me) to tread in those successful paths my predecessors have so long thrived in, to take those measure that both the ancient and modern writers have set me, and by which they have pleased the world so well’ (Preface to *The Lucky Chance*, p. 191). The other is to ‘feminise’ playgoing by emphasising the high critical standard of female audiences and readers who receive pleasure from her play:

Ladies, for its further justification to you, be pleased to know that the first copy of this play was read by several ladies of very great quality and unquestioned fame, and received their most favourable opinion, not one charging it with the crime that some have been pleased to find in the acting. Other ladies who saw it more than once, whose quality and virtue can sufficiently justify anything they design to favour, were pleased to say they found an entertainment in it very far from scandalous’ (Preface to *The Lucky Chance*, p. 190).

Female playgoers and readers have the power to accept and ‘justify’ the works as an interpretive community, instead of that of creating dramatic works themselves. Identifying herself as both an honorary male author and a member of the female interpretive community which takes pleasure in drama, Behn presents herself as a versatile and slightly gender-ambiguous giver/recipient of the pleasure of drama.<sup>91</sup>

As discussed above, Behn adopts two literary strategies to defend female playwrights in the commercial theatre, attempting to assume masculine qualities for

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<sup>91</sup> Behn’s attitude toward gender and drama is not coherent throughout her career, and it shifts from *Sir Patient Fancy* in 1678 to *The Lucky Chance* in 1687 (Runge, pp. 134–35).

herself and working to canonise Shakespeare as a playwright comparable to women in his lack of education. Along with Margaret Cavendish's essay in *Sociable Letters*, Behn's praise of Shakespeare became a basis for 'a tradition ... of associating him with women' (Dobson, *Making*, p. 147). This pro-Shakespearean tendency would be inherited by other female playwrights in the Restoration and early eighteenth century.

Delarivier Manley, a female playwright and novelist born around 1670, is interested in the exotic settings of some of Shakespeare's plays, for she intensively utilises *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Both of her two plays published in 1696, *The Lost Lover* and *The Royal Mischief*, refer to *Othello*. In *The Lost Lover*, a female character Belira refers to *Othello* as follows:

Wilmore. You are Peevish Belira; does your Love make you Jealous?

Belira. I have none, the Moor has taught me better; no longer doubting, away at once with Love and Jealousie. (*The Lost Lover*, p. 26)

As I will discuss in Chapter 4, the image of Othello as a symbol of jealousy would become common in the eighteenth century, and Manley's reference is one of many such examples. Manley also reworks *Othello* in the subplot of *The Royal Mischief*, in which Osman, a jealous husband, thinks that his young and faithful wife Bassima has extramarital relations and goes mad with anger (Tomlinson, 'Drama', p. 332).

*The Royal Mischief* is more influenced by *Antony and Cleopatra* (and perhaps its adaptation *All for Love*) than by *Othello*.<sup>92</sup> The heroine Homais, a young and beautiful wife who is confined in the Castle of Phasia by her jealous elderly husband the Prince of Libardian, is a 'sympathetically studied *femme fatale*', a successor of Shakespeare's Cleopatra in Restoration theatre.<sup>93</sup> Homais falls in love with the Prince of Libardian's nephew Levan and tries to kill her husband, as well as Levan's wife

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<sup>92</sup> Tomlinson thinks that this play is similar to *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and Cary's *Mariam* ('Drama', p. 332), but she does not analyse verbal parallels in these plays.

<sup>93</sup> Fidelis Morgan, ed., *The Female Wits: Women Playwrights on the London Stage 1660–1720*, p. 209. Quotations from *The Royal Mischief* refer to this edition.

Bassima, only to be found and killed by her husband. As Cleopatra hires the Eunuch Mardian, Homais makes the Eunuch Acmat her confidant. Homais' beauty is described in similar vocabulary to that found in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

Oh, much more beautiful than ever. This  
Year has brought a wonderful addition.  
Each day discloses something new. Though to  
Have seen the perfect charmer, one would have  
Thought long since 'twas an accomplished work, and  
Nature could not add another beauty.<sup>94</sup>

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale  
Her infinite variety (*Antony and Cleopatra*, II. 2. 234–35)

Like Shakespeare's Cleopatra, Homais is a constantly changing woman who obtains new beauty each day. Because the great emphasis on 'her infinite variety' is characteristic of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* but lacking in Dryden's *All for Love* or Charles Sedley's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Manley knew Shakespeare's original play, in addition to its heavily adapted versions of the Restoration period.

The scene in which Osman tells of the day when he first met Homais is similar to Enobarbus' speech about the first meeting between the leading couple in Shakespeare's play and the adapted scene in *All for Love*. Each speaker compares a beautiful royal woman to Venus, surrounded by her Nymph-like waiting women and cooling herself in the hot weather:

I'll pass the circumstance of war, and lead  
You to that scene where first we saw the Princess.  
Retired, according to the Abcan mode,

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<sup>94</sup> *The Royal Mischief*, II. 1. p. 225. This speech is delivered in prose, but I follow Morgan's modern edition and break lines.

To pass in tents the raging summer's heat,  
Far, as she thought, from the rude noise of war,  
Surrounded with a train of sixty ladies,  
All bright as stars, fit nymphs for such goddess,  
Herself, more than Diana, fair, than Venus, lovely,  
Dressed with such negligence as left her swelling  
Snowy breasts and her white arms all naked  
To the gazer's view. How often have I blessed  
That friendly planet, by whose officious heat  
Those dazzling beauties were revealed!

*(The Royal Mischief, II. 1., p. 223)*

For her own person,  
It beggar'd all description: she did lie  
In her pavilion – cloth of gold, of tissue –  
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see  
The fancy outwork nature. On each side her  
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,  
With divers-coloured fans, whose wind did seem  
To [glow] the delicate cheeks which they did cool,  
And what they undid did...  
Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,  
So many mermaids, tended her i'th' eyes,  
And made their bends adorning. *(Antony and Cleopatra. II. 2. 197–208)*

Here, Manley tries to evoke the image of Shakespeare's Cleopatra as a beautiful queen of the Orient to invest her heroine with exotic charm. However, Manley depicts her heroine as more susceptible to victimisation than Shakespeare's self-consciously theatrical one. Compared to Cleopatra, who is fully dressed up to amaze the Romans in



this scene, Homais unintentionally leaves her breast and arms ‘all naked / To the gazer’s view’ in dishabille. This symbolises Homais’ vulnerability, for she must obey her old husband whom she does not love in this play. Manley’s Homais is as charismatic as Shakespeare’s Cleopatra is, but she is far more disempowered than the queen of Egypt. As Rebecca Merrens argues, *The Royal Mischief* ‘consistently blames male characters and the oppressive demands of the patrilineal system for tragedy, even for the tragedy that Homais creates’ (p. 42), while elevating ‘the conventional “bad” woman to a position of glory’ (p. 45). In this context, Shakespeare’s Cleopatra functions as a suitable model for Manley in creating a charismatic ‘bad woman’ character, but to illustrate Homais’ suffering under male oppression, Manley downplays powerfulness and political autonomy, attributes with which Cleopatra is endowed in Shakespeare’s play.

Following the trend of Restoration drama, Mary Pix, a female playwright born in 1666, utilises *Othello* in her plays, as her predecessor Behn does. *The Innocent Mistress* of 1697 alludes to *Othello* with other popular plays in the Restoration period:

Lady Beauclair. Divertions! What Divertions? Yes, you had me to the Playhouse, and the first thing I saw was an ugly black Devil kills his Wife, for nothing; then you *Metridate* King o’ the *Potecaries*, your *Timon the Atheist*, the Man in the Moon, and all the rest – Nonsense, Stuff, I hate ’em.<sup>95</sup>

According to the ‘Names Represented’, Lady Beauclair is ‘an ill bred Woman’, and this speech mocks the uncultured character’s malapropism confusing Athens with Atheist. The first play mentioned is *Othello*; the second is Nathaniel Lee’s *Mithridates, King of Pontus*, a tragedy performed around 1678; the third is *The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-Hater*, Thomas Shadwell’s 1678 adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Timon of Athens*, and the last is Behn’s *The Emperor of the Moon* in 1687. This joke suggests that these

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<sup>95</sup> *The Innocent Mistress*, Act 3, p. 24. Quotations from Pix refer to the facsimile edition in Edna L. Steeves’ *The Plays of Mary Pix and Catherine Trotter*.

plays were popular at the end of the seventeenth century. Pix's *The False Friend, or, the Fate of Disobedience* (1699) also borrows several elements from *Othello*, such as the names of the characters, the plot of runaway marriage with a foreign lover, and an Iago-like character trying to tear the couple apart by arousing jealousy. Jacqueline Pearson finds many parallels between this play and Shakespeare's *Othello*, although these are drastically reworked from the original play ('Blacker Than Hell Creates', pp. 25–29).

Pix praises Shakespeare as one of her models in the Prologue to *Queen Catherine, or the Ruines of Love* in 1697. This Prologue is spoken by Thomas Betterton. Following the tradition of prologues and epilogues of English Renaissance drama, he appeals to female playgoers' favour, but this prologue is slightly twisted because a male player speaks for a female playwright. In this speech, the male player invites female playgoers' sympathy for the female playwright for commercial success, rather than their sympathy for the female characters in the play:

A heavy English Tale to day, we show  
As e'er was told by Hollingshed or Stow,  
Shakespear did oft his Countries worthies chuse,  
Nor did they by his Pen their Lustre lose.  
Hero's revive thro' him, and Hotspur's rage,  
Doubly adorns and animates the Stage:  
But how shall Woman after him succeed,  
And what excuse can her presumption plead.  
Who with enervate voice dares wake the mighty dead;  
To please your martial men she must despair,  
And therefore Courts the favour of the fair[.]

(Prologue to *Queen Catherine*)

Pix humbles herself as an 'enervate voice', comparing herself with great male writers

like Shakespeare (Luis-Martínez, p. 185). The female playwright's attempt to write a grand-scale history play for the Restoration stage, a genre traditionally ascribed to 'martial men', is an ambitious project. Pix's strategy of aligning Shakespeare with 'martial men' is different from that of Margaret Cavendish or Aphra Behn, who 'feminise' Shakespeare by claiming his lack of education, including military science. Instead, Pix superimposes herself, a bold candidate as a successor of Shakespeare, with a bold challenger to the king, referring to 'Hotspur's rage' in *1 Henry IV*. Pix obviously includes Hotspur in Shakespeare's 'Countries worthies'. Her question, 'how shall Woman after him succeed', also invokes Hotspur's doubts on Henry IV's legitimacy. Pix defends herself by suggesting that a rebellious and bold action against the tradition can be noble and worthy, even though it fails. Her challenging attitude toward the theatrical convention is showed again in 1701 in the prologue to *The Double Distress*, with a more nationalistic tone: 'Our Ancestors without Ragou's or Dance, / Fed on plain Beef, and bravely conquer'd France/ And Ben and Shakespear lasting Laurels made / With Wit alone, and scorn'd their wretched Aid'. Criticising the Francophone taste of the town, Pix and her co-workers declare that they will try to inherit the brave, plain, but witty tradition of English theatre represented by Jonson and Shakespeare.

Catherine Trotter Cockburn, a female playwright and poet born in 1679, praises Shakespeare in a poem, 'Calliope's Directions How to Deserve and Distinguish the Muses Inspirations'.<sup>96</sup> This was included in *The Works of Mrs. Catharine Cockburn* in 1751, which was published two years after her death as a collection of her works containing unpublished writings and Thomas Birch's biography. The preface to the poem states that it was written shortly after the publication of *The Nine Muses*, a collection of seven women poets' elegiac verses about John Dryden's death in 1700.<sup>97</sup> While severely criticising Elkanah Settle, Thomas D'Urfey and Richard Blackmore (ii, p. 560), she panegyrises Shakespeare, John Vanbrugh, Samuel Garth and Dryden:

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<sup>96</sup> For her life and works, I follow Kelly, *Catharine Trotter: An Early Modern Writer in the Vanguard of Feminism*.

<sup>97</sup> Catherine Trotter Cockburn, *The Works of Mrs. Catharine Cockburn*, i, p. 559.

Thus far depends on your care and art;  
A lifeless heap, without the Muses part.  
If Shakespeare's spirit, with transporting fire,  
The animated scene throughout inspire;  
If in the piercing wit of Vanbrugh drest,  
Each sees his darling folly made a jest;  
If Garth's and Dryden's genius, thro' each line,  
In artful praise, and well turn'd satire, shine;  
To us ascribe th' immortal sacred flame,  
And still invoke th' auspicious Muses name. (ii, p. 561)

This work explains how to write a good poem. Trotter seems to think that these poets have pedagogical values for aspiring writers; as Carol Barash argues, teaching not only aesthetic but also moral aspects of poetry is a major concern in this work (p. 257).

Unlike Behn, Trotter does not like 'to please, without instructing' (*The Works of Mrs. Catharine Cockburn*, ii, p. 559), which means that she does not place an emphasis on pleasure in evaluating poetical works.

Her list of canonical playwrights found in the dedication to Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax in *The Unhappy Penitent*, a play performed in 1701, is slightly different. Trotter lists Dryden, Thomas Otway, Nathaniel Lee and Shakespeare, omitting Vanbrugh and Garth, and states that all of them have advantages and disadvantages. For Trotter, Dryden is a most likely candidate for a national poet, or 'The most Universal Genius this Nations ever bred'. However, his poems are not flawless; he 'commands our Admiration of himself', but he 'little moves our concern for those he represents'.<sup>98</sup> Otway excels in tragedy, but does not attempt other genres. Lee writes 'more perfect Pieces', but 'he often carries us out of Nature'. She praises Shakespeare as almost perfect, except for a small shortcoming:

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<sup>98</sup> 'To the Right Honourable Charles, Lord Hallifax' (hereafter 'Lord Hallifax') in *The Unhappy Penitent*. Quotations from Trotter's plays refer to the facsimile edition in *The Plays of Mary Pix and Catherine Trotter*. See also Kelly, 'What a Pox Have the Women to do with the Muses?', p. 16.

The inimitable *Shakespear* seems alone secure on every side from an attack, (for I speak not here of Faults against the Rules of Poetry, but against the natural Genius) he had all the Images of nature present to him, Study'd her thoroughly, and boldly copy'd all her various Features, for tho' he has chiefly exerted himself on the more Masculine Passions, 'tis as the choice of his Judgement not the restraint of his Genius, and he seems to have design'd those few tender moving Scenes he has giv'n us, as a prooff he cou'd be every way equally Admirable.

Here, Trotter indirectly expresses dissatisfaction with Shakespeare's intensive focus on 'Masculine Passions' caused by 'his Judgement' and regrets the paucity of 'tender moving Scenes' despite his versatile talent to portray 'feminine' tenderness. Trotter thinks that Dryden is not good at describing 'the softer Passions', and appreciates a 'feminine' tenderness in drama, or scenes 'more lively, more tender, or more moving' ('Lord Hallifax') by a strict critical standard. Trotter's dissatisfaction is distinctly different from the opinions of other women writers, for Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn associate Shakespeare with 'female' talent to describe female characters and to command vernacular English, while Mary Pix praises Shakespeare as a dramatist who excels in masculine subject matters. As Marcie Frank argues, this is because Trotter regards Dryden's praise of Shakespeare's masculinity in his preface to *Troilus and Cressida* as an imaginary enemy (p. 111). She hints that Shakespeare is great not because he portrays 'Masculine Passions' well, but because he has a universal talent describing both masculinity and femininity beautifully. Since it is said that her most popular play, *The Fatal Friendship* of 1698, rejects conventional portrayals of women and presents female characters 'as vital and valued components of their refashioned "universe"' (Merrens, p. 49), in this dedication Trotter softly criticises the lack of effective portrayals of female tenderness in drama written by male playwrights. This is an indirect defence of female playwrights; for Trotter, drama sometimes needs 'the

softer Passions' to make the scenes come alive, and this can be the specialty of female playwrights. The lack of critical consensus about Shakespeare's talent in Trotter and other female playwrights suggests that various interpretive strategies were utilised to evaluate his works in the on-going process of his canonisation.

Susanna Centlivre, a female playwright known for her technique of pastiche, borrows so many elements from so many playwrights in any one work that scholars have found it difficult to ascertain to what extent she is indebted to other specific writers.<sup>99</sup> While it would be unfair to state that Shakespeare's influence on Centlivre is stronger than other playwrights, such as Jonson, Dryden, Shadwell, and Congreve, it is certain that she knew his plays.<sup>100</sup> Since scholars rarely analyse the parallels or stylistic similarities between Shakespeare and Centlivre in detail for the abovementioned reason, I will demonstrate several examples of Shakespeare's influence on her.

There are many minor similarities between Shakespeare's plays and those of Centlivre. The basic plot of *The Stolen Heiress*, a 1702 adaptation of Thomas May's *The Heir*, is similar to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, partly because the original play itself borrows many elements from Shakespeare.<sup>101</sup> In *The Stolen Heiress*, a Sicilian heiress Lucasia tries to elope with her lover Palante, for the Sicilian law does not allow an heiress to marry without her father's permission and Lucasia's father Gravello wants her to marry Count Pirro. In addition to the similarity between the scenes in which the lovers promise to meet each other in the wood for elopement, Centlivre changes Palante's real name from Lysandro in May's original play to Lysander, the same name as one of the leading characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.<sup>102</sup> The opening scene of *Bickerstaff's Burying*, a 1710 play loosely based on the story of Sinbad, is similar to that of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, but it is difficult to analyse which 'tempest' plays Centlivre had in mind, for perhaps she had access to Shakespeare's original play and

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<sup>99</sup> Lock, p. 110; and O'Brien, p. 170.

<sup>100</sup> For Centlivre's sources, see O'Brien, pp. 169–70; Chico, p. 39; and Davis, 'Dramatizing the Sexual Contract', p. 520.

<sup>101</sup> Bowyer, p. 50. See also Lock, pp. 40–42.

<sup>102</sup> See *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 1.1.156–79 and *The Stolen Heiress* 1.1. 9–10. Quotations from *The Stolen Heiress* refer to the 1703 edition.

Dryden and Davenant's *The Enchanted Island* in book form, and was also able to see stage performances of Shadwell's opera version.<sup>103</sup> It is also said that the plot of *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* of 1717, containing the story of Colonel Fainwell's audacious strategy to marry his lover Anne Lovely, is similar to that of *The Taming of the Shrew*.<sup>104</sup>

It is no wonder that among Centlivre's plays, Shakespeare's influence is most visible in *The Cruel Gift* (1716), a work written in collaboration with Nicholas Rowe, editor of *The Works of William Shakespear*, in 1709. Scholars think that this play was largely written by Centlivre and that Rowe was willing to help the female playwright to build a career in theatre partly because his feminist tendency prevented him from having a negative bias concerning women writers.<sup>105</sup> As the editor of the first modern edition of Shakespeare, Rowe had plenty of knowledge of his plays and was able to provide Centlivre with resources relating to Shakespeare's original works, instead of adapted versions.

*The Cruel Gift* is influenced by three of Shakespeare's popular tragedies: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.<sup>106</sup> This play has two plots, the Learchus-Antimora storyline and the Lorenzo-Leonora storyline. The former is a variation of *Romeo and Juliet*; both plays portray star-crossed lovers in Verona. The lovers' misfortune is expressed in a similar vocabulary: in Shakespeare's play, 'Two households ... From ancient grudge break to new mutiny' (*Romeo and Juliet*, The Prologue, 1–3), while Learchus explains to his friend Agonistus, 'Thou'rt well acquainted with that ancient Hate / Between *Lorenzo's* Family and mine'.<sup>107</sup> In meeting Romeo for the first time, Juliet states that 'My only love sprung from my only hate! ... I must love a loathed enemy' (*Romeo and Juliet*, I. 5. 138–41), and Antimora exclaims,

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<sup>103</sup> See also Watson, pp. 148–50; Bowyer, p. 137; and Burling, p. 49.

<sup>104</sup> Lock, p. 111; and O'Brien, p. 170.

<sup>105</sup> Herbert Sennett's *Nicholas Rowe and the Beginnings of Feminism on the London Stage* intensively argues Rowe's feminist tendency. For *The Cruel Gift*, see also Hinnant, p. 471; and Hammond, p. 384.

<sup>106</sup> Bowyer thinks that *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* are sources of *The Cruel Gift* (p. 212). Rubik also believes that this play is influenced by *Romeo and Juliet*, but that Boccaccio's influence is stronger (p. 96). Kreis-Schinck states that it is influenced by *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* (p. 247, n4). However, none of them analyse the literary parallels in detail.

<sup>107</sup> *The Cruel Gift*, I, p. 325. Quotations from *The Cruel Gift* refer to *The Dramatic Works of The Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre*.

‘Why was I born to love where I should hate?’ (*The Cruel Gift*, I, p. 331). The latter plot borrows elements from *Othello*. An ambitious subject, Antenor, attempts to tear Lorenzo and Leonora apart by agitating Leonora’s father the King of Lombardy. The structure of the scene of the conversation between Antenor and the King in the last section of Act I in *The Cruel Gift* is similar to that of Iago’s temptation of Othello in Act III, Scene 3 of *Othello*, for both Iago and Antenor pretend to be honest, give out information bit by bit, excite their masters’ feelings of curiosity, and confuse them. By imitating *Othello* in a slightly different situation, Centlivre and Rowe seem to imply that an angry father is akin to a jealous husband, for they both treat their female family members as their property and oppress them by asserting patriarchal privilege.

Like Manley’s *The Royal Mischief*, Act V of *The Cruel Gift* is heavily influenced by *Antony and Cleopatra*. However, unlike Manley, who focuses on Cleopatra as a bad woman character, Centlivre and Rowe break up the original play into small units, combine several speeches together, and arrange the components in a different order from the original play, making a pastiche. To demonstrate this, I will explain the progress of the last sequence of *The Cruel Gift*, comparing the heroine Leonora’s lines with the counterpart speeches in *Antony and Cleopatra*. In *The Cruel Gift*, Leonora, a Princess robbed of her bridegroom Lorenzo, is superimposed on Shakespeare’s Cleopatra as a noble lover. The scene in which Leonora receives the (false) report of Lorenzo’s death is a serious version of the similar scene in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

Learchus. Oh that it were not to be spoke by me.

Lorenzo is –

Leonora. Dead! There I help’d you forward – Why, ’tis well;

You see I faint not; then proceed, I pray. (*The Cruel Gift*, V. p. 370)

Messenger.                      Madam, madam –

Cleopatra. Antonio’s dead! If thou say so, villain,



Thou kill'st thy mistress. (*Antony and Cleopatra*, II. 5. 25–27)

In each of these scenes, the heroines interrupt the messengers, who they imagine are bringing the news of their partners' death. What makes Leonora different from Cleopatra is that Leonora continues to believe that Lorenzo is dead until later on the play, whereas in Cleopatra's case, she soon knows that Antony is alive and that it is only a misunderstanding caused by her capricious mood.

When Leonora decides to die, she says, 'My Husband chides me for this long Delay, / I come, my Love' (*The Cruel Gift*, V. p. 371). This recalls the following two speeches in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

Cleopatra. Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear

Antony call...

Husband, I come! (*Antony and Cleopatra*, V. 2. 283–87)

Cleopatra. This [to let Iras die prior to her] proves me base.

If she [Iras] meet the curled Antony,

He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss

Which is my heaven to have. (*Antony and Cleopatra*, V. 2. 300–303)

Both Cleopatra and Leonora imagine that their partners are waiting for them in the other world, and address their dead partners using terms of endearment. However, Leonora's speech is more condensed than Cleopatra's long speeches.

Leonora, after speaking with the King about the death of Lorenzo, declares she will never sleep, eat or kiss. Cleopatra also states that she will never eat, drink, sleep or moisten her lips. It seems that Cleopatra's two speeches about her resolution are combined into one in *The Cruel Gift*:

Leonora. No Sleep shall ever close these Eyes again,

Nor food sustain this hated Life I wear  
Nor aught profane the Kiss upon my Lips [...] (*The Cruel Gift*, V. p.376)

Cleopatra. Sir, I will eat no meat, I'll not drink, sir;  
If idle talk will once be necessary,  
I'll not sleep neither. (*Antony and Cleopatra*, V. 2. 49–51)

Cleopatra.                      Now no more  
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip.  
(*Antony and Cleopatra*, V. 2. 281–82)

Leonora and Cleopatra make the decision to follow their beloved husbands. While Cleopatra dies after these speeches, Leonora's life is saved because it turns out that Lorenzo survives. Furthermore, unlike Shakespeare's Cleopatra, Leonora is neither a stateswoman nor a seductress, but is a faithful wife throughout the play. Centlivre and Rowe borrow only the Egyptian queen's beautiful and dramatic image; they do not follow Shakespeare's plot.

As seen from this sketch of the scene, the speeches of Cleopatra and Leonora are rhetorically similar, but it is difficult to discern the allusions at first hearing, for the original speeches from Shakespeare's play are radically dismembered, combined and altered. Centlivre and Rowe (perhaps intentionally) avoid direct references to Shakespeare's original play, and hint at the similarities between the heroines only vaguely. For Centlivre and her co-author Rowe, Shakespeare and other popular playwrights are models to be imitated, decomposed, reconstructed; the way in which they edit many popular texts into one creation is so complex that it reminds twenty-first century readers of the intertextuality of postmodern literature.

In concluding my discussion of individual female playwrights, I summarise the general tendency of their reception of Shakespeare. The titles mentioned by female playwrights enable us to judge which plays by Shakespeare attracted Restoration

playgoers, and what elements of Shakespeare's plays interested female playwrights. *Othello*, referred to by Behn, Manley, Pix and Centlivre, was obviously popular on the Restoration stage. In particular, as Pearson argues, this play was regarded as 'symbolically feminized' among female playwrights and provided 'resonant self-images for women writers' because racial and gender differences were linked with each other through otherness in this period ('Blacker', p. 14–15). Although Pearson does not mention Manley or Centlivre, these two writers' use of *Othello* supports her argument. The Falstaff plays were also popular, and were mentioned by Behn, Pix and Margaret Cavendish, as shown in the previous subsection. Surprisingly, even though there is no record of performance or readily available quarto editions of the original play in this period – although the adaptations were frequently performed and published – *Antony and Cleopatra* was also frequently used by the female playwrights, such as Manley, Centlivre and the Cavendish ladies. Perhaps professional female playwrights had some opportunities to read the original text, as Dryden and Sedley did when they wrote their adapted versions. The female playwrights' preference for *Antony and Cleopatra* was partly due to their interest in racial difference, as in *Othello*, and the general tendency to adopt exotic settings in Restoration drama. The women's interest in the play, or in Cleopatra as a model of a noble tragic heroine, is closely linked to their gender-specific concern or self-consciousness as female playwrights. Cleopatra's 'infinite variety' in Shakespeare's play enables playwrights to interpret her in various ways. She could be 'sanitised' as a faithful and passionate lover as Leonora in *The Cruel Gift*, developed into a bad woman character as Homais in *The Royal Mischief*, or represented as a stateswoman in a political plight in the Cavendish ladies' works. Her character provides many channels through which female playwrights can represent themselves.

The female playwrights in this period were deeply involved in the early process of the canonisation of Shakespeare. Aphra Behn, Mary Pix and Catherine Trotter Cockburn praised his works as their models, and their evident promotion of Shakespeare was part of their efforts to locate themselves in a tradition of English drama, and to establish their status as professional playwrights. Among these female

playwrights, Behn, like Margaret Cavendish, aligns Shakespeare with women and draws him toward her as her predecessor; Pix regards Shakespeare as an essentially masculine playwright; and Trotter tactically follows a middle course. Although Shakespeare's masculinity was always their concern, many female interpreters, especially the Shakespeare Ladies Club in the eighteenth century, would adopt a 'feminising' strategy in the canonisation of Shakespeare, as I discuss in Chapter 4.

### 2.3 Judith Drake, Early English Feminism, and Theatrical Performance

I mean the many excellent Authors of our own Country, whose Works it were endless to recount. Where is Love, Honour and Bravery, more lively represented, than in our Tragedies? Who has given us nobler or juster Pictures of Nature, than Mr. *Shakespear*? Where is there a tenderer Passion, than in the Maid's Tragedy? Whose Grief is more awful and commanding, than Mr. *Otway*'s? Whose Descriptions more beautiful, or Thoughts more gallant, than Mr. *Dryden*'s? When I see any of their Plays acted, my Passions move by their Direction; my Indignation, my Compassion, my Grief, are all at their Beck. Nor is our Comedy at all inferior to our Tragedy; for, not to mention those already nam'd for the other Part of the Stage, who are all excellent in this too, Sir *George Etherege* and Sir *Charles Sedley*, for near Raillery and Gallantry, are without Rivals; Mr. *Wycherley* for strong Wit, pointed Satyr, sound and useful Observations, is beyond Imitation; Mr. *Congreve*, for sprightly genteel, easy Wit, falls short of no Man. These are the Masters of the Stage (Judith Drake, *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*, [pp. 42–43]).

It is unknown to what extent feminist women writers in the Restoration period were familiar with theatre. I use the term 'feminist women writers' to refer to women who were mainly engaged in writing essays on philosophical, political or religious issues to defend women's rights. While philosophical influences upon them have been relatively

well studied, it is difficult to analyse their non-philosophical sources, such as plays and romances, for they rarely mention secular fiction. However, Judith Drake's *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* (hereafter *An Essay*), a feminist pamphlet written as a woman's letter to another woman and first published in 1696, contains a considerable number of theatrical references, including a panegyric of Shakespeare, and clearly shows her preference for drama. Although her work has recently attracted scholars' interest, Drake's references to drama have never been studied thoroughly, except in passing mentions by a few scholars.<sup>108</sup> Drake's work will help us to understand one aspect of the relation between early English feminism and popular culture in the Restoration period. This subsection clarifies how Drake incorporated her theatrical interests into her feminist argument about women's education, and how she utilised Shakespeare to support her argument.

Little is known about Judith Drake's life, and it is only until recently that *An Essay* was ascribed to her. It was long considered to have been written by Mary Astell, author of *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (hereafter *A Serious Proposal*) and *Some Reflections upon Marriage*, and there has been much confusion about the author's identity since scholars began to cast doubts on Astell's authorship; it was in 2001 that Hannah Smith identified the author Judith Drake.<sup>109</sup> Judith's birth name and birth date

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<sup>108</sup> Sasha Roberts and Gary Taylor devote only a few lines to her work and do not discuss other references to drama in her work (*Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, p. 56; *Reinventing Shakespeare*, p. 92). Derek Hughes hints that David Roberts should have used Drake's *An Essay* in *The Ladies* (p. 573). Patricia Springborg, editor of Mary Astell's *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, sporadically mentions Drake's interest in drama in the introduction and footnotes, but her main concern is Astell's argument. Quotations from *A Serious Proposal* refer to this edition.

<sup>109</sup> A. H. Upham first cast doubts on Astell's authorship (pp. 273–74), and Florence Smith ascribed this work to James Drake's 'sister' Judith (pp. 173–82). For the confusion about Judith's identity, see also Harrison and Laslett, p. 76; Hill, *The First English Feminist*, p. 59, n56; Perry, p. 490, n25; and Uphaus and Foster, p. 23. EEBO ascribes *An Essay* to Mary Astell as of 1 December 2012. Johanna Devereaux, discussing co-authorship and collaboration among Judith, James and people around them, admits Judith's hand in *An Essay*. However, Devereaux's focus on James' contribution is problematic for two reasons. First, as Joanna Russ points out in *How to Suppress Women's Writing*, '[s]he wrote it, but she had help' (book cover) has been a common phrase used to depreciate a woman's talent for writing – especially that of a married woman with an educated husband (pp. 20–24) – and Devereaux seems to be oblivious to the possibility of repeating this rhetoric. Especially, in the case of *An Essay*, the Preface complains that readers try to attribute the work to a male author: 'THERE are some Men (I hear) who will not allow this Piece to be written by a Woman ... I see no Reason why our Sex should be robb'd of the Honour of it' (pp. ix–x). Since the author defies the suppression analysed by Russ, to put great emphasis on James' help

are unknown. As Hannah Smith notes, the registers of St Andrew's, Holborn recorded that Judith and James Drake, a doctor and political writer, had a daughter in 1700.<sup>110</sup> They may have married before Judith wrote *An Essay*, for it contains James's commendatory verse and letter to the author as the front matter. After James died on 2 March 1707, Judith edited and published his work *Anthropologia Nova, or, A New System of Anatomy* posthumously.<sup>111</sup> It is also known that she practised medicine after her husband's death, and defended herself against the accusation of unauthorised medical practice in 1723 (BL Sloane MS 4047, ff. 38–39). Hannah Smith gathers from her son's will that she died before 1736 (p. 727, n2). Like other women writers in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries in Britain, such as Astell, Judith read John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and René Descartes, although nothing is known about her educational background.<sup>112</sup> Scholars point out that while Astell was critical of Locke and preferred Descartes' idea about the rational soul, Judith inclined to utilise the Lockean concept of freedom.<sup>113</sup> Drake was more influenced by Francis Bacon's essays on education than Astell, for she calls him 'that wonderful Man, my Lord *Bacon*' (*An Essay*, p. 47).

Many of the female political writers who attempted to defend women's rights in seventeenth-century England were known to be pious and rarely interested in playgoing. *Women's Speaking Justified*, a pamphlet written by a Quaker leader Margaret Fell and published in 1666, defends women's right to preach in public, but never

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undermines the message of this Preface. Second, Devereaux overrates collaborative authorship in the Restoration period, although such collaboration in writing is not uncommon in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She states that 'manuscript circulation and the concurrent process of revision, correction, and addition by a number of authors and readers mean that to ascribe a text to a single author can be an anachronistic impulse' (p. 33), but 'manuscript circulation' with 'revision, correction, and addition' also frequently happens now in academic or fiction publishing, especially after the arrival of the Internet (see Moxley and Meehan). The situation surrounding literary collaboration in the Restoration period is less different from that in the twenty-first century than Devereaux thinks.

<sup>110</sup> Smith, p. 737, n65. Hereafter I will call them Judith and James to avoid confusion.

<sup>111</sup> See Hill, 'Drake, James' in *ODNB*.

<sup>112</sup> Harth, p. 241; Schochet, p. 145; and Wilkens, p. 59. See also Springborg's notes to *A Serious Proposal* and *An Essay* (p. 200, n1, p. 211, n2, and p. 248, n3).

<sup>113</sup> Springborg often discusses Astell and Judith's philosophical backgrounds; see her note to the excerpt from *An Essay*, attached to *A Serious Proposal* as Appendix A (p. 244n3), note to Astell's *Reflection upon Marriage in Political Writing* (p. 18, n20), and Introduction to *A Serious Proposal*, pp. 29–31. See also Goldie, p. 65; Haskins, p. 196; and Wilkens, p. 58–59.

mentions actresses' speeches on stage, which became authorised in 1662. Since another Quaker leader, George Fox – whom Margaret was going to marry in 1669 – opposed theatre, it is possible that Margaret was also influenced by Quaker antitheatricalism.<sup>114</sup> Bathsua Makin, a scholar who taught several noblewomen, including Charles I's daughter Princess Elizabeth, considers playgoing as an idle pastime in *An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen*, a 1673 pamphlet for the promotion of female education: 'persons of higher quality, for want of this Education, have nothing to employ themselves in, but are forced to Cards, Dice, Playes, and frothy Romances, meerly to drive away the time' (p. 26). Despite her antitheatrical tendency, Makin uses a *theatrum mundi* metaphor in mentioning God's creation: 'But the Earth, the Theatre on which we act, abideth forever' (p. 7). This illustrates how deeply theatre was involved in the culture of intellectual women in seventeenth-century England.

Mary Astell is no less critical of theatre than Makin. Ruth Perry states that '[s]he did not enjoy drama in an age when most educated people thought at least some plays or playwrights worthy of serious attention', pointing out that Astell alludes to only one play, George Villiers's *The Rehearsal*, in her works.<sup>115</sup> Not mentioning the titles of the plays, Astell repeatedly criticises theatre in general in her works as an example of the narrow range of female education:

And how can she possibly detect the fallacy, who has no better Notion of either than what she derives from Plays and Romances? (*A Serious Proposal* Part I, p. 64)

There is a sort of Learning indeed which is worse than the greatest Ignorance: A Woman may study Plays and Romances all her days, and be a great deal more knowing but never a jot wiser. Such a knowledge as this serves only to instruct and put her forward in the practice of the greatest Follies (*A Serious Proposal* Part

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<sup>114</sup> Fox, *The Works of George Fox* i, p. 413; and ii, p. 107.

<sup>115</sup> Parry, p. 73. Astell also makes a vague reference to Thomas Wright's *The Female Virtuoso's* (*A Serious Proposal* Part I, p. 78).

I, p. 81).

They [men] allow us Poetry, Plays, and Romances, to Divert us [women] and themselves.<sup>116</sup>

For Astell, popular fiction, including theatrical works, provides women with false knowledge and never helps them to achieve wisdom. According to her, if women try to improve themselves by ‘real Wisdom’, they will never ‘pursue those Follies’, but instead will understand the difference between ‘*true Love* and that *brutish Passion* which pretends to ape it’ (*A Serious Proposal* Part I, pp. 74–75). Astell’s view is influenced by the longstanding antitheatricalism, or fear of the power of the imitation or substitute for ‘reality’ or ‘truth’ in theatre, which I discussed in Chapter 1. Like Makin’s metaphor of theatre, Astell’s references to drama attest to the infiltration of theatre culture into the society of intellectuals in the Restoration period, including those with an antitheatrical tendency. However, Astell’s attitude toward drama is generally negative.<sup>117</sup>

Unlike these writers, one of the characteristics of Judith Drake’s writing is her intensive use of theatrical imagery, which suggests that she is an active female playgoer. She frequently compares her work to a stage performance, treating readers as if they were theatre audiences. Judith commences and ends her essay by using expressions which reminds readers of theatre. In her dedication to Princess (later Queen) Anne, she uses words related to theatre to praise her patron: ‘Madam, Tho’ the World may condemn my Performance, it must applaud my Choice in this Address’. Such addresses

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<sup>116</sup> Astell, *The Christian Religion, as Profess’d by a Daughter of the Church of England*, p. 292.

<sup>117</sup> Springborg states that the following phrase of Astell echoes the lyrics from Aerial’s song in *The Tempest*, ‘Where the bee sucks, there suck I’ (V. 1. 88): ‘Indeed this Living *Ex Tempore* which most of us are guilty of, our making no Reflections, our Gay Volatile Humour which transports us in an Instant from one thing to another, e’re we have with the Industrious Bee suck’d those Sweets it wou’d afford us, frequently renders his gracious Bounty ineffectual’ (*A Serious Proposal* Part II, p. 175). This is similar to the lyrics, but I cannot conclude that she knew *The Tempest* itself, for ‘Where the Bee sucks’, written by Robert Johnson, was a popular song reprinted in *Cheerfull Ayres or Ballads* in 1660, and perhaps sung independently of the context of the play. It is possible that Astell did not see or read the play, but still heard the song.



to literary patrons are relatively common in Restoration England.<sup>118</sup> In concert with this address at the beginning of this essay, she concludes with an excuse for her poor performance: ‘Which if I have in any measure satisfied, I have my Ambition, and shall bee nothing further, than that my ready Obedience may excuse the mean Performance of’ (p. 136). The structure of this essay is similar to seventeenth-century English plays. As I discussed in Chapter 1, prologues and epilogues in these plays often modestly beg audience members’ favour.

It seems that the term ‘performance’ is not necessarily related to theatre, but the beginning and the end of this essay should be connected to Judith’s preference for theatrical expressions. In fact, after this dedication, the preface continues to use strong theatrical imagery. This suggests that Judith was familiar with popular entertainments and targeted readers with some knowledge in this field:

Prefaces, to most Books, are like Prolocutors to Puppet-Shews; they come first to tell you what Figures are to be presented, and what Tricke they are to play.

According therefore to ancient and laudable Custom, I have thought fit to let you know by way of Preface, or Advertisement, (call it which you please) that there are many fine Figures within to be seen, as well worth your Curiosity as any in *Smithfield at Bartholomew-Tide*. I will not deny, Reader, but that you may have seen some of ’em already; to those that have, I have little more to say, than that, if they have a mind to see them again in Effigy, they may do it here. What is it you wou’d have? Here are *S. George’s*, *Bateman’s*, *John Dorie’s*, *Punchinello’s*, and the *Creation of the World* (The Preface).

As Ben Jonson writes in his play *Bartholomew Fair*, Bartholomew Tide was famous for puppet shows. Among the names mentioned in the last sentence, four are popular

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<sup>118</sup> For example, John Savage writes in his dedication to Thomas Coke in the translation of Carlo Moscheni’s *Brutes Turn’d Criticks, or Mankind Moraliz’d by Beasts* in 1695: ‘but even those that shall despise my Labour, and condemn my Performance, ’twill approve my choice in you’.

subject matters of puppet shows. ‘S. George’s’ refers to St. George plays.<sup>119</sup> ‘Bateman’s’ means *Bateman, or the Unhappy Marriage*, a puppet show perhaps based on William Sampson’s *The Vow Breaker* or an old ballad called ‘A Warning for Maidens, or Young Bateman’ and performed around September 1694 at the latest.<sup>120</sup> I could not find a puppet play called ‘John Dorie’, but it may have been based on the popular ballad ‘John Dory’ (The Child Ballads Index 284). Punchinello, a prototype of ‘Punch’, is a stock character in Italian puppet shows, which became popular after the 1660s in England.<sup>121</sup> The Creation of the World also became a common subject matter of puppet shows.<sup>122</sup> By sprinkling this preface with puppet-show titles popular in the Restoration period, Judith acts as a puppeteer speaking a prologue to win the audience’s attention.<sup>123</sup>

Throughout the essay, Judith compares everyday life to a stage, and understands people’s behaviours in society as role playing. One of the striking examples of her knowledge of theatre is her satire against beaux, men who give ‘particular, or excessive, attention to dress, mien, and social etiquette’ (*OED*), or ‘fops’, often used synonymously with beaux. She criticises those who act badly because of vanity, and states that ‘the first Rank of these is the *Beau*’:

So prevalent are our Vanity, and this apish Humour of imitation, that we persuade ourselves that we may practise with Applause, whatever we see another succeed in; tho’ as contrary to the Intent of our Nature, as Dancing to an Elephant. So some Men that talk well of serious Matters, are so mov’d at the Applause some

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<sup>119</sup> See also a puppeteer Peter Charlton’s explanation of the play.

<sup>120</sup> See Seaton’s transcription of Diary of Thura (p. 339) and Harbage, Schoenbaum, and Wagonheim’s *Annals of English Drama 975–1700* (p. 198).

<sup>121</sup> Samuel Pepys saw Italian puppet shows twice at Covent Garden in May 1662 and saw Punchinello at Moorefields on 22 August 1666. See Shershow, pp. 113–14.

<sup>122</sup> See Speaight, pp. 64 and 325; and Rogerson, p. 91. A song titled ‘Bartholomew Fair’, which includes a reference to ‘World’s Creation’, was printed in Philip Jenkins’ anthology of popular poems, *Wit and Drollery Jovial Poems: Corrected and Amended with New Additions* in 1682 (p. 304). This song was also printed in an additional appendix to John Playford’s *The Musical Companion* with Henry Purcell’s music (p. 4), and may have been printed around 1673, shortly after the main volumes were published.

<sup>123</sup> William Makepeace Thackeray read *An Essay* before writing *Vanity Fair* in 1848 and *The History of Henry Esmond* in 1852, and it is said that he was interested in Judith’s imagery of puppetry: see Grego, pp. 197–206; and Clarke, pp. 121–26.

merry Drolls gain, that they forget their Gravity, and aiming to be Wits, turn Buffoons. There are others, that are so taken with the Actions and Grimace of a good Mimick, that they fall presently to making awkward Faces and wry mouths, and are all their Lives after in a Vizor's Mask, tho' bare-fac'd (pp. 59–60).

This criticism against vanity suggests her familiarity with satires about 'fop' characters, which were caricatured for their excessive theatricality in various types of literary works and frequently staged as stock characters on the Restoration stage (Williams, 'The Centre of Attention', 8). The most famous example of fops on the Restoration stage are Sir Foppling Flutter in George Etherege's *The Man of Mode* (1676) and Sir Novelty Fashion in Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* (1696) and John Vanburgh's *The Relapse* (1696). There is a distinction between genuinely sophisticated men and fops or beaux in Restoration drama. In *The Relapse*, Berinthia ascribes intelligence, love for his lover, carefulness for reputation, decency and health to the former but states that fops have none of these attributes.<sup>124</sup> Judith's distinction between 'Wits' and 'Buffoons' recalls that of Berinthia, and she argues that people should carry out their appropriate roles in society. Those who 'talk well of serious Matters' should not imitate 'merry Drolls'.

When Judith finishes her analysis of beaux and moves on to the section about newsmongers, she relies on the traditional 'all the world's a stage' metaphor solely to state that she has already written enough about them in this essay, comparing it to a stage play and her targets of satire to theatrical characters: 'Not to call the *Beau* or *Poetaster* on the *Stage* again, whose whole Lives are one continued Scene of Folly and Impertinence' (p. 77). Her metaphor of life as a scene of folly must have reminded her contemporary readers of the humanist *theatrum mundi* concept exemplified by Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*, which was widely read in the Restoration period (Dodd, p. 234). White Kennet's 1683 English translation of *The Praise of Folly*, entitled *Witt against Wisdom*, states that 'the whole proceedings of the world are nothing but one continued

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<sup>124</sup> Vanburgh, *The Relapse*, II. i. 35–36 in *The Relapse and Other Plays*. See also Heilman, pp. 377–78.

Scene of Folly, all the Actors being equally fools, and mad-men' (pp. 32–33). However, differing slightly from Erasmus, who describes all people as fools, Judith chooses to mock foppish people in particular. She applies the Erasmian *theatrum mundi* concept to the context of a theatrical convention in Restoration comedy, which often caricatures fops' comical behaviour.

Another explanation of vanity not only attests to her understanding of general theatrical conventions in the seventeenth century, but also hints at her knowledge of Shakespeare's plays. She does not mention the titles of his particular plays, but in analysing vanity, Judith seems to echo *Hamlet*, a tragedy frequently performed after the Restoration:<sup>125</sup>

The other is mean-spirited and fearful, and seeks, by false Fire, to counterfeit a Heat that may pass for genuine, to conceal the Frost in his Blood, and, like an ill Actor, over-does his Part for want of understanding it ... Nature is our best Guide, and has fitted every Man for some things more particularly than others (*An Essay*, pp. 58–59).

Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to Nature (*Hamlet*, III. 2. 17–22).

As shown in the first quotation in this subsection, Judith praises Shakespeare's plays as examples of 'our Tragedies', especially his 'Pictures of Nature' (p. 42), and in the above quotation, she satirises 'an ill Actor' who overdoes his role to emphasise her argument that people should perform their appropriate roles following 'Nature'. These expressions suggest that she knew Hamlet's criticism against 'anything so overdone' and his focus on the importance of 'Nature', which was often quoted as a useful lesson

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<sup>125</sup> For the performance history of *Hamlet* in the Restoration period, see Murray, pp. 63–67.

for players by the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, her reference to ‘False fire’, I suspect, implies that she read *Hamlet* in folios or saw the performance based on them, for Hamlet depicts Claudius as ‘frighted with false fire’ in the scene of the play within a play soon after the ‘mirror up to Nature’ speech in folio texts, although many of the published texts in the Restoration period were based on quarto versions, which lack this line (with the exception of the first quarto).<sup>127</sup> Considering its popularity in the late seventeenth century, I argue that Judith included *Hamlet* in ‘our Tragedies’ by Shakespeare, and that her targeted readers also understood this.<sup>128</sup>

Judith’s intensive use of drama is due not only to her personal interest in the genre, but also to her nationalistic tendencies in the promotion of women’s education. Judith argues for the importance of English education, and often parallels English language and literature with ‘sense’. She is critical of xenophilia, especially a beau who is obsessed with French fashion: ‘His [a beau’s] Improvements are a nice Skill in the Mode, and a high Contempt of his own Country, and of Sense’ (p. 61). Furthermore, a man who neglects education ‘has such a Fear of Pedantry always before his Eyes, he thinks it a Scandal to his good Breeding and Gentility, to talk Sense, or write true *English*’ (p. 31). Judith believes that English-speaking people do not need to learn other languages such as Greek, Latin or French as part of a humanistic education, for English is a suitable language for ‘talking sense’ in every aspect of life:

Now I can’t see the Necessity of any other Tongue beside our own, to enable us to

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<sup>126</sup> For example, See Charles Gildon’s *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* in 1710 (p. 82) and Richard Steele’s article on 29 June 1709 in *The Tatler or Lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq* (i, p. 255). For the reception of Hamlet’s stage directions, see also Hirsh’s discussion.

<sup>127</sup> Compare the First Folio, III. 2. 257 with the First Quarto, 9. 174 in *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*, a supplementary volume of the Arden *Hamlet*. See also Thompson and Taylor’s main volume of the Arden *Hamlet*, Appendix 2.

<sup>128</sup> There is another possible reference to Shakespeare in *An Essay*. In analysing a bully, Judith states that ‘he fawns, like a Spaniel, most upon those that beat him’ (p. 56). This line is similar to Helena’s speech in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: ‘The more you beat me, I will fawn on you. / Use me but as your spaniel’ (II. 1. 204–05). However, the metaphor of the spaniel was too popular to say that Judith refers to the play specifically, for it was almost proverbial in the late sixteenth century, and other playwrights such as John Lyly and Thomas Dekker also used it. See Brooks’ footnote to the Arden edition (p. 40) and *OED* ‘spaniel, n.1’.

talk plausibly or judiciously upon any of these Topicks [such as Love, Honour, Gallantry, Morality, News, and Raillery]. Nay, I am very confident, that 'tis possible for an ingenious Person to make a very considerable Progress in most Parts of Learning, by the help of *English* only (pp. 36–37).

In summary, she states that English-speaking people have enough vocabulary and use sufficiently sophisticated rhetoric to discuss complex 'Topicks', and if those who read only English try to understand non-English culture, they can gain access to 'Translations for the Use of the Unlearned' (p. 37).

Judith's emphasis on English education is closely linked to the promotion of women's education, a main subject matter of *An Essay*. According to her, women are more skilled in English than men, who spend too much time studying Latin and Greek. Her argument is similar to that of Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn, but Judith places great emphasis on the pedagogical context. For her, women's ability to use English proves that they are not inferior to men when they are properly taught:

I have often thought, that the not teaching Women Latin and Greek, was an Advantage to them, if it were rightly consider'd, and might be improv'd to a great Height. For Girls, after they can read and write, (if they be of any Fashion) are taught such things as take not up their whole Time; and not being suffer'd to run about at liberty as Boys, are furnish'd, among other Toys, with Books, such as Romances, Novels, Plays and Poems; which though they read carelessly only for Diversion, yet, unawares to them, give 'em very early a considerable Command both of Words and Sense (p. 51).

It is notable that Judith recommends 'Romances, Novels, Plays, and Poems' for young women to improve their 'Words and Sense', for other feminist writers often condemned such popular fiction. Some Restoration male writers who were not very interested in women's education, such as Richard Flecknoe, Charles Gildon, John Dryden and John

Dennis, emphasised the value of English language and literature partly to counter the French influence, but as Jean I. Marsden summarises, they were '[o]ften fuelled by nationalism' and contrasted 'the "servile" nature of the French with the more "manly" British' ('Tragedy and Varieties in Serious Drama', p. 230). However, Judith does not discuss the presumed 'manliness' of English Restoration drama; rather, she relies on the presumed 'femininity' of English.

At this time, vernacular English was sometimes associated with the talent of women, who were excluded from formal higher education but actively wrote in English or translated non-English works (Russ, pp. 122–32). For example, Wentworth Dillon, 4th Earl of Roscommon, panegyrises Katherine Philips as a woman 'Whose Eloquence from such a Theme deters / All Tongues but English, and all Pens but Hers' in the first performance of her translation play *Pompey*, and he regarded Philips' achievement in English poetry as the success for all the 'Ladies', saying, 'By the just Fates your Sex is doubly blest, / You Conquer'd Caesar, and you praise him best'.<sup>129</sup> In Dillon's prologue, English is elevated above French, the original language of the play (and perhaps the Irish language, too), and the mastery of English as a national language is regarded as a skill shared by all the women in Britain, and not limited to Philips. Judith, with some help from her husband, also ascribes the mastery of English to women, and tries to impress her readers with the image of women as skilled vernacular users: she praises 'the deservedly celebrated Mrs. *Philips*' along with 'Incomparable Mrs. *Behn*' (p. 50), and her husband James refers to 'the fam'd Orinda's praise' in his dedicatory poem to *An Essay* (p. xii). Shakespeare, who lacked formal education but was skilled in vernacular English, was a suitable example for Judith to refer to in her feminist pamphlet.

In Judith's argument, plays, novels, poems and other critical works written in English are praised as fruits of the development of the English language. Drama is a popular genre among women. Through it and other popular fictions in English, women's linguistic skills are linked to Englishness. The first quotation in this subsection suggests

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<sup>129</sup> *Pompey: A Tragedy*, Prologue 4 in *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda*, iii, p. 4.

her efforts toward canon formation in English drama, for she makes a reading (or watching) list of the canonical playwrights for female learners: she states that English tragedies by Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher (authors of *The Maid's Tragedy*), Thomas Otway and Dryden describe 'Love, Honour and Bravery' most skilfully and evoke 'my Passions', or 'my Indignation, my Compassion, my Grief'. She suggests that English tragedies inspire sense; as for comedies, George Etherege, Charles Sedley, William Wycherley and William Congreve should be added to the list (pp. 42–43). After cataloguing these names, Judith states that 'there are others, who, though of an inferior Class, yet deserve Commendation' (p. 43), which means that she is aware of the significance of establishing evaluative standards and dividing dramatic works into first- and second-class ones in the process of canonisation of English drama.

Judith's list of canonical playwrights is similar to Behn's, for both of them include Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*, Etherege and Dryden, but lack Ben Jonson, although Behn's list contains other popular playwrights of her time. Judith focuses more on nationalistic and pedagogical values in women's education than Behn, who has to defend herself as a professional playwright. These two lists show that Shakespeare was regarded as an established member of dramatic canon by female playgoers, and that intellectually active women such as the Cavendish ladies, Behn and Judith, participated in the process of selecting canonical works and helped to propagate the lists of such plays to wider audiences.

## **Conclusion**

Women augmented their presence in the popularisation of Shakespeare's works to a greater extent in the Restoration period than in the English Renaissance period. Although most of the identified women who read or saw Shakespeare were privileged, their records of women's playgoing and playreading suggest that Shakespeare was relatively widely read or watched as part of women's pleasure-seeking activities, both at court and in areas distant from London. In particular, Katherine Philips' record of playgoing and the Lovetts' playbook hint at the increase of England's cultural influence.



Many of the studies of the reception of Shakespeare in Ireland focus on post-nineteenth-century Irish writers, but these records suggest that more research is necessary to understand the canonisation of Shakespeare by Irishwomen at an early stage; Elizabeth Griffith and Anna Brownell Jameson, major literary critics who played significant roles in the canonisation of Shakespeare from the late eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, were both Irish.<sup>130</sup> Some active and influential female interpreters in England, such as Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn, played key roles in the process of his canonisation in the Restoration period, when his authority was not yet extensively recognised. Praising Shakespeare's talent could allow justification of their status as female writers. These Restoration women's intellectual activities relating to Shakespeare would lead to women's more visible engagement in bardolatry in the eighteenth century, as I will discuss in Chapter 4.

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<sup>130</sup> Robin E. Bates' *Shakespeare and the Cultural Colonization of Ireland* and Janet Clare and Stephen O'Neill's *Shakespeare and the Irish Writer* discuss the reception of Shakespeare among Irish post-nineteenth-century writers.

## **Chapter 4: Eighteenth-century Women, Shakespeare and the Shakespeare Jubilee**

This chapter focuses on eighteenth-century women in Britain and their engagement with the process of canonisation of Shakespeare. As many scholars point out, the popularity of Shakespeare dramatically increased from the 1730s to 1760s, and he was both frequently praised and casually mentioned as a component of the shared knowledge of playgoers and readers in this period.<sup>1</sup> This process was marked by several significant political and cultural events, including the activities of the Shakespeare Ladies Club in the 1730s, the Licensing Act in 1737, David Garrick's rise to stardom after the 1740s, the growth of nationalism in Britain during the Seven Years War from 1756 to 1763, and the climax of the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769. As Michael Dobson points out, Shakespeare himself was so vehemently deified that his 'authority now exceed the texts from which it supposedly derived' after the Shakespeare Jubilee (*Making*, p. 185).

I cannot cover all aspects of women's intellectual activities in this period, for more and more women were involved in reading, writing, and playgoing. To document them effectively, I choose to focus on six types of activities in which the relationship between women and the canonisation of Shakespeare were most visible: reading and using books, conducting scholarly research, writing novels, playgoing, publishing and reading periodicals and participating in the Shakespeare Jubilee. The first section of this chapter covers the former three activities, or women's reading and writing activities concerning Shakespeare in general. The second deals with the influence of female playgoers and the propagation of Shakespeare through periodicals among women, and their participation in the Shakespeare Jubilee as a result of the flourishing playgoing and print cultures.

### **Section 1: Women, Reading, and Writing in the Eighteenth Century**

The present section focuses on women's reading and writing activities. The first subsection will describe women's use of books, by adopting the same method used in

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<sup>1</sup> Dobson, *Making*, pp. 88–222; Kramnick, *Making the English Canon*, pp. 107–36; and Scheil, *The Taste of the Town*, pp. 215–20.

the previous chapters, specifically the identification of female users of books. The second subsection will compare the scholarly activities of particular women, mainly Charlotte Lennox and Mary Lever, because research on Shakespeare played a considerable role in his canonisation and I would show women's participation in early Shakespeare studies. The third subsection will analyse the novel as an emerging and thriving genre among reading communities in eighteenth-century England, focusing on Sarah Fielding's works as a typical woman novelist who often reworked Shakespeare.

### **1.1 Reading for Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century**

Before analysing women's use of Shakespeare's playbooks in the eighteenth century, I define reading and other intellectual activities as part of pleasure seeking in the eighteenth century. One of the keywords which scholars commonly use to describe eighteenth-century culture in Britain is 'pleasure', along with 'politeness', 'commercialisation' or 'sincerity'.<sup>2</sup> In *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, John Brewer explains how actively (and sometimes anxiously) eighteenth-century people in Britain sought pleasures in various cultural activities, such as reading, playgoing, appreciating artworks and walking around pleasure gardens. While these cultural products, as commercial enterprises, came to be sustained by the general public rather than court and aristocratic patrons, 'the pleasures excited by art and literature were celebrated in the intimate language we today more usually associate with describing people's relations to their family and friends' (Brewer, p. 427). The popularisation of pleasure-seeking activities was sanctioned by the influence of the Enlightenment in Britain, which placed an emphasis on 'the formulation of new models of man and philosophical rationales for the right to individual happiness in consumer society' (Porter, p. 17). Partly in response to this trend of the Enlightenment, the literacy rate continued to increase in eighteenth-century

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Langford's *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783* chooses two keywords, politeness and commercialisation, to describe eighteenth-century England. Gerald Newman argues that 'sincerity' was one of the most favoured words used by English people to describe their characters in the context of nationalism in the eighteenth century (pp. 123–38).

Britain. According to Keith Thomas, the literacy rate among Englishmen was about sixty percent among men and forty percent among women in mid-eighteenth-century England (p. 102).

The social function of taste, which makes a distinction between vulgar pleasure and cultivated pleasure, was more consciously perceived by those who enjoyed pleasure-seeking activities. Class, wealth and education were regarded as significant factors in forming good taste among eighteenth-century interpreters of cultural products. In his article 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' in *The Spectator*, Addison states that '[a] man of polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures, that the vulgar are not capable of receiving' (411, June 21, 1712). There is a distinction between 'polite' pleasure seekers and vulgar pleasure seekers, and as Brewer comments, '[t]he prosperous were more likely to enjoy its pleasures than the poor' (p. 91).

Not only social backgrounds, but also innate talents for perceiving pleasures, were involved in this distinction. Mark Akenside's poem 'The Pleasures of the Imagination', first published in 1744 under Addison's influence, states, 'Such various bliss the well-turn'd heart enjoys, / Favour'd of heav'n! While plung'd in sordid cares, / Th' unfeeling vulgar mocks the boon divine' (437–39). Akenside highly praises 'the chosen genius' nurtured by 'Nature's kindling breath' (36–37), and his list of the people 'Favour'd of heav'n' includes Shakespeare (13). Although these arguments about pleasure differ in their details, each values the individual's ability to find pleasures, suggesting that skilled interpreters could perceive pleasures greater in number and more subtle in nature than ordinary people. This pleasure-focused approach to art and literature is often found in women's intellectual activities in this period. Many interpreters in eighteenth-century England formed their critical standards based upon the idea that the value of literary and dramatic works largely depend on the number and nature of pleasures which they provide for the interpreter, although the definitions of good and vulgar pleasures subtly differ among interpreters.

The availability of the original versions of Shakespeare's works greatly increased in the first half of the eighteenth century. Following Nicholas Rowe's 1709 edition,

several further multivolume complete works were published to satisfy the interest of educated readers and playgoers. Small and inexpensive editions of single plays were also consecutively printed in the 1730s. These single editions, portable and easy to handle, cost only about 1–4.5 pence, due to the price-cutting war between the two publishers Jacob Tonson and Robert Walker.<sup>3</sup> The publishing history of Shakespeare's works in this period shows how commercialisation ignited readers' motivation for pleasure seeking.

Although it is more difficult to systematically collect and catalogue mass-produced (and in some cases multivolume) eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare than to document Renaissance and Restoration editions, it is possible to find more traces of eighteenth-century female users in the copies of Shakespeare's playbooks than it is for the earlier periods.<sup>4</sup> Following female printers such as Sarah Jones and Alice Warren, at least one widow book merchant was involved in publishing Shakespeare's plays in this period, before the printing battle of Tonson and Walker heated up. Mary Wellington, the wife of printer Richard Wellington, inherited her husband's business after his death in 1715. She continued her business as Mary Poulson from her remarriage with John Poulson in 1721 to her death in 1725 (Dugas, p. 189). During this period, she published the 1718 edition of *Hamlet*, the 1723 edition of *King Lear* and the 1724 edition of *Othello*; Tonson could not publish these plays until 1748. Poulson also published other playbooks and advertised them in the last leaf of the 1723 edition of *Hamlet*, which was printed by John Darby for A. Bettsworth. To avoid legal disputes, Mary Poulson had made these two male booksellers and Francis Clay the trustees of her late husband's copyrights before her remarriage. According to Dugas, over 40 percent of Shakespeare's plays (including adaptations) dated from 1718 to 1724 were published by Poulson and William Rufus Chetwood (p. 183). Poulson, a female printer who published inexpensive editions of the three major tragedies in the early

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<sup>3</sup> Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, p. 108–09; and Stern, 'Shakespeare in Drama', p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> I have found more cataloguing errors in library records of eighteenth-century multivolume editions of Shakespeare than those of seventeenth-century editions in most libraries, and in some cases I could not call these editions to reading rooms because the errors made it difficult to identify the volumes in the library stores.

eighteenth century, can be regarded as an active agent of Shakespearean canonisation who propagated his plays for a wider reading community.

In some cases, as mentioned in the previous chapters, there are stray copies of Shakespeare's books associated with eighteenth-century women. Most of the British Library's eighteenth-century editions associated with women are such stray copies, and for at least eight of them, it is unknown whether the female signers used the copies in the eighteenth century or in the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Garrick's 1639 copy of *The Historie of Henry the Fourth* (C.34.k.11., Appendix 1-111) has both the name and date. It is inscribed 'Eliz. Mary Croussmaker | her Booke 1746' on the duplicate title page and 'Richard Hawkins' on the last page (K4v), and this woman is also unidentified, although the copy is more often described than the others.<sup>6</sup>

The only copy at the British Library whose eighteenth-century female user I was able to identify (to some extent) is the eight-volume edition of *The Works of Shakespear* (11713.a.2.1, Appendix 1-402), edited by Hugh Blair and published in 1753 in London. It has the bookplates of James Sheppard Scott (front flyleaf) and 'Peckham Williams of Chichester in Sussex' (front endpaper), and the title page is inscribed 'Eliz<sup>th</sup> Williams'. This Peckham Williams was a member of the Williams of Surrey family, which lived around Badshot Place in Farnham and Chichester; both his wife and his daughter were named Elizabeth, but little is known about their lives.<sup>7</sup> Young Elizabeth married Miles Poole Penfold of Farnham, and they died without children.<sup>8</sup> This copy was used by the Williamses as a family copy from the mid-eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century, which suggests that it remained common for eighteenth-century book users to inherit playbooks from their relatives.

The Folger owns many stray copies. At least five Folio editions are associated

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<sup>5</sup> 643.i.19.(5.), Appendix 1-209; 11775.c.54., Appendix 1-213; 11763.cc.15., Appendix 1-223; 011765.de.2.1, Appendix 1-265; 11774.aaa.19.(2.), Appendix 1-286; 11762.aa.5., Appendix 1-294; 11763.aa.9., Appendix 1-368; and 642.k.49.(3.), Appendix 1-411.

<sup>6</sup> Bartlet and Pollard 1939 *Census*, p. 22; and Massai, 'Early Readers', p. 153.

<sup>7</sup> Steer says that the birth name of this woman was Penfold (*The John Edes House West Street, Chichester*, p. 8), and according to Sadler, she married once before the marriage with Peckham and her surname was Suter at the time of remarriage (p. 581).

<sup>8</sup> Steer, *Minute Book of the Common Council of the City of Chichester 1783–1826*, p. 157.

with otherwise unidentified eighteenth-century female users.<sup>9</sup> As for more accessible editions of poems and plays, at least eight copies were signed by otherwise unidentified women before the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Several other copies associated with female users include more information, and I was able to identify some of the signers.

I was able to determine the female signer of a made-up copy of the First Folio at the Folger (Fo.1 no.78, Appendix 5-24). It is frequently mentioned in studies of eighteenth-century readers because it contains a woman's signature and several children's drawings ( $\pi$ A5r,  $\pi$ A5+1r,  $\pi$ A5+2r), although no one had as yet identified the female signer.<sup>11</sup> According to the bookplate, this copy was owned by the Hacketts of Moxhull, Warwickshire in the nineteenth century, perhaps obtained by John Hackett, Bishop of Lichfield in the seventeenth-century (Rasmussen and West, p. 543). It has inscriptions of 'Elizabeth Okell her 1729' ( $\pi$ A5v and  $\pi$ A5+1r) near the children's scribbles. Since they were written in the same period (Ferington, p. 157), several scholars think that the maker of the signature and drawings is the same person.<sup>12</sup> The signer is either Elizabeth Okell (hereinafter mother Elizabeth), wife of Benjamin Okell, or their daughter Elizabeth Okell, wife of Francis Benyon (hereafter young Elizabeth). Young Elizabeth was born around 1717 and died on 22 April 1770 at the age of 53, which means that she was twelve years old in 1729 (Berry, 'Pedigrees of Surrey Families', p. 11). She married Francis Benyon, and their daughter Elizabeth Anne Benyon became the wife of Andrew Hackett, a family member of the Hacketts (Salzman, p. 100–107). Either the mother or the daughter signed the copy, young Elizabeth drew

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<sup>9</sup> Fo.1 no.48, Appendix 5-18; Fo.1 no.75, Appendix 5-23; Fo.2 no.14, Appendix 5-28; Fo.2 no.49, Appendix 5-33; and Fo.4 no.07, Appendix 5-45. describes Fo.2 no.49, but he could not identify this woman (p. 10).

<sup>10</sup> STC 22344 Copy 6, Appendix 5-40; S2927 and S2942 Bd.w. L856 Copy 2, Appendix 5-49~50; S2942 Copy 3, Appendix 5-51; PR2752 1709a copy 3 Sh.Col., Appendix 5-52; PR2752 1709c copy 3 v. 6 Sh.Col., Appendix 5-53; PR2807 1718 copy 2 Sh.Col., Appendix 5-57; and PR2752 1752 copy 4 Sh.Col., Appendix 5-70. Apart from these copies, there are also at least seven eighteenth-century copies with undated women's signatures. Most of them are surmised to have lived in late eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, but nothing is known about them. See Appendix 5.

<sup>11</sup> This copy is briefly mentioned in West, 'The Life of the First Folio in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', p. 85.

<sup>12</sup> Mayers, 17. In the online description of the copy, Gail Kern Paster, director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, also suggests that the drawings were perhaps made by Elizabeth Okell, in 'First Folio No. 78: A Child's Shakespeare'.

scribbles on this copy, and they gave it to Elizabeth Anne Benyon and her husband. However, this hypothesis is not consistent with the library record, which says that the copy had been the Hacketts' family copy since John Hackett obtained it around 1630. There are three possible solutions to solve this problem: the Okells might be relatives or close friends of the Hacketts even before the marriage of Elizabeth Anne and Andrew; the Okells' copy and the Hacketts' copy were originally different, and this made-up volume contains leaves from both of them; or the library record contains some misdescription. Apart from the identity of the signer, this copy shows two things. First, it is another piece of evidence to show that it was common for women to inherit books from their female relatives. Second, the children's playful drawings and the woman's signature tell of the domestic consumption of drama – playbooks were enjoyed in private spaces for leisure.

A copy of the First Folio at the Folger (Fo.1 no.42, Appendix 5-16) is notable, because it belonged to a woman in a non-elite family in a rural area, although it is rarely described by scholars. This copy includes several handwritten notes, and some of them say that it was the Elden family's copy: 'This Book is my Aunt's Elden's of Systrand to be Sent to Mr. Benj. Elden a dyer in St. Michael's of Coslany Norwich' (inside upper cover) and 'John Elden his Book 1714' (rear free endpaper verso). According to the National Archives' online catalogue record for Diocese of Norwich Probate Inventories (DN/INV71–84) at the Norfolk Record Office, the Eldens lived in the area around Sidestrand and Norwich in Norfolk in the eighteenth century, and 'Benj. Elden', 'John Elden' and 'my Aunt's Elden' were members of this family. Perhaps this 'Benj. Elden' was born in 1697 and died in 1759; he was commemorated as 'a valuable member of this Society' by his wife Sarah in a memorial plaque (Farrer, iii, p. 135). Since Benjamin Elden was a dyer, the Eldens were craftspeople (or merchants) with no titles working in Norwich and rural areas surrounding it, although they were wealthy enough to enjoy reading in their leisure time and to build a memorial plaque of the family members in a church. Aunt Elden presented the copy to Benjamin, which suggests that non-elite women in rural areas also used books and passed them down to their relatives, as elite



women and women in urban areas did.

A copy of the Second Folio (Fo.2 no.57, Appendix 5-36) has some comments by an otherwise unknown female reader. It is inscribed 'Mary Elmer her book given by Mr. Thorold' (2i5v) in an eighteenth-century hand and 'John Thorold' (3a6v). 'John Thorold' and 'Mr. Thorold' are members of the Thorolds, a family which owned a large library including a copy of the First Folio at the Folger (Fo.1 no.07). I have not been able to identify Mary Elmer, although the note shows that Elmer knew family members of the Thorolds. Elmer writes on this Second Folio, 'See what joy tis to heare of his wifes death' on Anthony's response to Fulvia's death (2y5v), and 'Mary Elmer this loue is a strang[e] thing' beside Cleopatra's line, 'But let it be, I am quickly ill, and well, / So Anthony loves' (2y6r).<sup>13</sup> These comments suggest Elmer's surprise toward the passionate and inconstant nature of love between Antony and Cleopatra in the play, although they are too short to permit us to understand her interpretations in detail. The comical tone of the comments also implies her relaxed attitude toward reading; Elmer enjoyed reading playbooks as part of her pleasure-seeking activities.

A copy of the Fourth Folio (Fo.4 no.18, Appendix 5-47) was signed by many women: 'Elizabeth Grey' in a nineteenth-century hand (Y6r), 'Anne Grey Anna Grey' (2G3r) and 'the Gift of Constantia Grey to her daughter Anne Grey of Shoston May 19th 1766' (3O5r). 'Shoston' means 'Shoreston', and it belonged to the Greys (sometimes spelled as Grays) of Shoreston, a family which was prosperous in eighteenth-century Northumberland; I could not identify these female members of the family. 'Elizabeth Grey' might be Robert Grey's daughter Elizabeth, who married Raleigh Trevelyan in 1819, but it seems that 'Elizabeth' was often used as a female name in this family and it is possible that there were other women with this name.<sup>14</sup> What is certain about this copy is that it was passed down among the female members of the Grey family as a gift. This is another piece of evidence demonstrating female

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<sup>13</sup> This copy is briefly described by Mayer, although he could not identify the signer (42). I follow his transcription rather than the transcription in Hamnet.

<sup>14</sup> Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland* (hereafter *The Commoners*), ii, p. 329.

book users' kinship ties and the existence of small domestic interpretive communities.

Despite its uniqueness, a copy of the Fourth Folio (Fo.4 no.12, Appendix 5-46) has gathered much less attention from scholars compared to the First and Second Folios. Sarah Burnes, the female user of this book, repeatedly inscribed her name in this copy: 'Sarah Burnes Her Book' ( $\pi$ A1r,  $\pi$ A2r, A1r, \*3B5r) and 'Sarah Burnes' ( $\pi$ A4r and 3F5v) in the same eighteenth-century hand. I could not identify her because her name was common and the copy is partly cropped. She was obviously interested in Shakespeare as a writer, for she wrote down the four-line epitaph of Shakespeare's gravestone ( $\pi$ A3v). She was an active reader who cared about her library, for she boasted, 'I could have had ten pound for this Book, but would not take it. S. Burnes' ( $\pi$ A4r). Although it is impossible to estimate the exact price of this copy because the date of her handwritten note is unknown, 10 pounds was a considerable sum of money, for it cost about 10–12 pounds to educate a clergy orphan for a year in the eighteenth century (Picard, p. 297). This shows that the book trade was regarded as a prosperous market among eighteenth-century readers: Perhaps Sarah Burnes saw other readers gain money from selling their used books or luxurious old copies sold by book merchants. However, she refused to sell her copy. This is one of the proudest declarations of the eighteenth-century female readers' permanent love for Shakespeare's playbooks. It is rare for readers to inscribe such a strong will for preservation. The canonisation of Shakespeare was mainly promoted by such active readers, who not only took pleasure in reading his plays but also in knowing his background (such as his epitaph), and who tried to preserve his early editions as a precious cultural heritage.

A copy of the First Folio (Fo.1 no.02, Appendix 5-8) was associated with two Irish families, already identified by Rasmussen and West. It was a family copy of the Earl of Cranbrassil, which was later brought to the Jocelyns by a female user Lady Anne Hamilton, an author who wrote *The Diary of Anne, Countess Dowager of Roden* during the Irish Rebellion of 1798. As the arms suggest, this copy was first owned by James Hamilton, first Earl of Clanbrassil, or his son James Hamilton, second Earl of Clanbrassil. Anne was born in 1730, daughter of the first Earl of Clanbrassil, and

married Robert Jocelyn, first Earl of Roden on 11 December 1752.<sup>15</sup> Rasmussen and West's assumption about this copy is slightly vague. They say that Anne and her husband Robert received it after the death of her brother James, the second Earl of Clanbrasill (p. 267). Robert, however, did not outlive James. Robert died in 1797, James died in 1798, and Anne spent her last five years in Tollymore Park and died in 1802 (Reilly, p. 96). It is unknown whether the couple received the copy earlier in the mid-eighteenth century or whether Anne alone inherited it with other properties after her brother's death. It is certain that it remained the family copy of the Jocelyns in Ireland. Along with the Lovetts' copy of the Restoration period, this hints at the popularisation of Shakespeare among privileged Irish women.

A copy of the sixth volume of the 1747 edition of Hanmer's Shakespeare (PR2752 1747c2 copy 3 v. 6 Sh.Col., Appendix 5-67) was owned by a Welsh family. Its front flyleaf is inscribed 'The gift of Watkin Wynne Esqr., to Anna Maria Griffiths, 1748'. Although 'Watkin' was a common male name among the Wynnes of Wales in the eighteenth century, this Watkin Wynne was perhaps a son of Cadwaladr Wynne, husband of Jane Griffith, and Anna Maria Griffith was a daughter of Jane's brother John Griffith.<sup>16</sup> It is unknown whether Watkin Wynne and Anna Maria Griffith were related to the Welsh female signer who inscribed 'Catherine Wynne her Book 1712' on the front flyleaf and title page of the 1710 copy of Davenant's adaptation of *Macbeth* at the British Library (11763.cc.15., Appendix 1-223). It appears that Watkin Wynne and Anna Maria Griffith were on such good terms that they exchanged gifts, including the works of Shakespeare, although Cadwaladr Wynne and John Griffith had legal problems with one another in the late seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup> This also suggests the strength of their kinship ties.<sup>18</sup>

The female owner of another copy of the same edition (PR2752 1747c2 copy 2

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<sup>15</sup> See Powell's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>16</sup> Burke, *A Genealogy and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire* (hereafter *The Peerage*), pp. 1093–94; and Glenn, p. 128.

<sup>17</sup> The National Library of Wales, *Annual Report 1955–1956*, p. 30.

<sup>18</sup> They might be related to Sir Watkin William Wynn (sometimes spelled Wynne), a notable patron of the arts who organised private performances in Wales from 1770 to 1787, but I could not find the exact information about the family tree. For Watkin William Wynn, see Heard, p. 18.

Sh.Col, Appendix 5-66), has already been identified. The list of the owners is written behind the title leaf of the first volume, perhaps by the later owner: 'Ashley Cowper 1748, Lady Hesketh 1751, Willm. Cowper 1797, John Handy 1802' (A1v). Ashley Cowper passed this copy on to his daughter Lady Harriet Hesketh, who was born in 1733 and died in 1807.<sup>19</sup> However, since she married Thomas Hesketh around 1754, when she received the book from her father in 1751, she was still Harriet Cowper. She presented it to her favourite cousin and well-known writer William Cowper, and he may have kept it until his death in 1800.<sup>20</sup> Mary Cowper, a member of the Shakespeare Ladies Club, was another cousin of hers. Harriet Hesketh was known among social circles, including literary figures comprising Cowper and Frances Burney: Burney states that Hesketh 'appeared to much advantage, with respect to conversation, abilities, and good breeding' (i, p. 445). Shakespeare was a familiar name to her, for she mentioned him in her letter to John Johnson on 10 July 1798, jokingly comparing Shakespeare to her cousin: 'if he inclines to hear his own heavenly lines immediately, you will doubtless let Shakespeare wait' (Hesketh, p. 64). This expression shows that Shakespeare had already achieved his canonical status among educated people in late eighteenth-century England.

The Folger owns several copies used by famous women. Among these, two were used by famous female writers active in the mid-eighteenth century and eight were used by women who achieved notable literary activities in the field of editing of Shakespeare. Here, I will introduce the two women writers who have already been identified by the library catalogue. Concerning the other eight copies, I will discuss their copies in the next subsection on the scholarly activities of women.

The endpaper of the 1737 copy of *Hamlet* (PR2807 1737 copy 1 Sh.Col., Appendix 5-62) is inscribed 'Elibris Eliza. Tollet, 1737' and 'Charles Tollet'. The female signer is the poet Elizabeth Tollet, who was born in 1694 and died in 1754.<sup>21</sup> She was a highly educated woman, skilled in multiple languages and acquainted with

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<sup>19</sup> See Kelly, 'Hesketh, Harriet', *ODNB*.

<sup>20</sup> See Baird's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>21</sup> Londry, 'Tollet, Elizabeth', *ODNB*.

many prominent intellectuals, including Isaac Newton. Before signing this copy, she anonymously published *Poems on Several Occasions* in 1724, and her poems were also circulated in manuscript. 'Charles Tollet' is one of her nephews, a younger brother of George Tollet.<sup>22</sup> George was a Shakespearean who made a great contribution to Johnson and Steevens' edition.<sup>23</sup> Since the two brothers inherited most of their aunt's library, George Tollet benefited from Elizabeth's library containing Shakespeare.

A copy of the Second Folio (Fo.2 no.13, Appendix 5-27) was used by Clara Reeve, a Gothic novelist. She was born in 1729 and died in 1807.<sup>24</sup> The Reeves' family copy has two signatures of 'Willm Reeve' (Z6r), which was written by Clara's father William Reeve. According to Clara's long, handwritten note on the front flyleaf, her grandfather Thomas Reeve obtained it, and after William's death in 1755, her aunt Maria owned this copy, and presented it to Clara:

This Book has been in the Reeve family about one hundred years. – my grandfather, Mr. Rev'd Thos Reeve of Ipswich set a very high Value upon it. – my Father, Mre Revd Wm Reeve, was a great admirer of Shakespeare, but preferred the modern Edition. – The Book remained in the hands of his sister; - where it suffered by being lent about to Those who abused it. – it was torn & dirtied, & some few of the plays were lost, & unfortunately the Title page, which makes it difficult to ascertain the Edition; but by comparing circumstances, I believe it to be third. in the year 1773, my aunt Maria Reeve gave it to me. I hope it will never go out of the family. It was formerly believed there were but three Folio editions but the indefatigable care & attention of the late Editions, Johnson & Steevens formd out four – they stemd as follows.

1st. – Printed by Isaac Jaaggard & Ed: Blount 1623

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<sup>22</sup> Londry, 'Tollet, George', *ODNB*.

<sup>23</sup> See Sherbo's discussion in 'The Library of George Tollet, Neglected Shakespearean'.

<sup>24</sup> See Kelly, 'Reeve, Clara', *ODNB*.

2d – by Thos Cotes, for Robt Allot – 1632

3d – for P: C: (i.e. Philip Chetwynd) – 1664

4th – for H: Herringman: E. Brewster, & R: Bentley – 1685

Dr Johnson gives the following judgment of them. –

“The truth is that the first Folio edition is equivalent to

“all the rest, & the rest only deviate from it, by the

“printers negligence. – whoever has any one of the

“Folios has all; excepting those diversities which mere

“reiteration – of editions will produce.

Clara Reeve

1773

Here, she begins by reminding herself of her father as ‘a great admirer of Shakespeare’, blames abusers of this copy, declares the importance of the preservation of the family copy and refers to scholarly works on Shakespeare.

Unlike Sarah Burnes, who wanted to preserve her book as an independent individual, Reeve connects the pleasure of using books to the bond of the domestic interpretive community, excluding the abusers of the book. Her reception of Shakespeare is also opened to a public space, where academic studies of Shakespeare are published by Johnson and Steevens. This note vividly shows her complex desires for cultural heritage – she tries to assume her family’s heritage through understanding and preserving Shakespeare’s works, but needs to refer to scholarly discourses concerning Shakespeare and to invoke a wider reading community to justify this. This intersection of private pleasure and the critical criteria shared by the public clearly illustrates how the canonisation of literary works proceeded in the eighteenth century. In this period, critical analyses of Shakespeare were widely circulated through various types of publications, ranging from multivolume works to short reviews in magazines; in reading such discourses, readers were able to develop their individual (and sometimes very

personal) pleasures derived from reading to more complex critical criteria shared in larger interpretive communities.

There are some notable copies associated with women in other libraries. A copy of the Third Folio at the Meisei Collection (MR4354, Appendix 3-62) was used by the women in the house of Baron Abergavenny in the eighteenth century, for there is a handwritten note on its bookplate: 'Nevillia Thomas The Gift of her Dear Mother Charlotte Senior'. This 'Charlotte Senior' is Charlotte Senior (née Walter), Baroness Abergavenny, who was born in 1736, married Ascanius William Senior in 1768 and died in 1811; 'Nevillia Thomas' is her daughter Nevillia, who was born in 1769, married William Thomas of Winkfield in 1792 and died in 1842.<sup>25</sup> The bookplate implies that this copy was a token of remembrance of a friendly mother-daughter relationship. The second flyleaf of this copy has another note: 'In affectionate remembrance of the attachment and esteem of a departed friend; This Volume is presented to Sir T. D. Acland Bart; as a sincere, tho' inadequate expressions, of the deep sense of gratitude and respect, entertained for him by her surviving Relations. January 1843'. This suggests that after Nevillia Thomas died, her family members sent the copy to her friend Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, tenth Baronet.<sup>26</sup> The second note suggests that the Third Folio was not regarded as so expensive a rare book as we think today, for it was a 'sincere, tho' inadequate' gift for the close friend. As another piece of evidence that women often inherited books from their female relatives, this copy shows that deceased women's remembrances were sometimes shared by their friends of both sexes, not limited to their family members.

Among the five copies of Shakespeare's Folios which are available in the rare books reading room in Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, the copy of the Fourth Folio (Res YK32) is associated with a woman's name in the last half of the eighteenth century. There is a hand-written note on the front-flyleaf: 'Lewis Barton Buckle given by Mrs. Catherine Barton Widow of Prior's Court'. According to the National Archives'

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<sup>25</sup> See Cracroft's Peerage, '(A)bergavenny, Baron (E, 1695 - abeyant 1811)', <  
<http://www.cracroftspeerage.co.uk/online/content/Abergavenny1695.htm>>, accessed 15 August 2012.

<sup>26</sup> See Courtney and Matthew's entry in *ODNB*.

online catalogue record for the Buckle Papers at the West Sussex Record Office, this 'Lewis Barton Buckle' is a son of Lewis Buckle and his wife Frances Bachelor, a daughter of Thomas Bachelor of Prior Court House, Berkshire; he was born in 1786 and died in 1819. I was not able to identify 'Mrs. Catherine Barton', but it is certain that she is an older female member of his family. Frances Bachelor's mother was a sister to Rev. Dr Henry Barton, Warden of Merton College Oxford.<sup>27</sup> It is said that he was not only a learned scholar but also a 'man of humour, and of a cheerful disposition', who was interested in puns, and it is no wonder that he and his family members owned playbooks, including comedies.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps Catherine Barton was one of the Bartons living in Prior Court House, and passed her copy to Lewis Barton Buckle as a gift. As in the case of Elizabeth Brockett's Second Folio (Fo.1 no.23, Appendix 5-11), here the aunt gave the book to her (perhaps favourite) nephew. Although it seems more common for female book users to pass down their playbooks to their female relatives, some, especially women with no issue, seemed to bequeath their books to their younger male relatives. It suggests that some older widows and single women had their own presence in their households and enjoyed their intellectual activities without help from their husbands or children.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon owns a copy of the Fourth Folio (SROS37, Appendix 2-36). The title page has three signatures by otherwise unidentified users: 'Robt Cawdron', 'Anna Maria Maydwell' and 'Jo Rustel'. This 'Anna Maria Maydwell' may be the same person as the signer of Stanford University's copy of Edward Hyde Clarendon's *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641*, printed around 1731 and 1732 (N7606 Stanford copy 1), for its title page is also signed by 'Anna Maria Maydwell' in an eighteenth-century hand. I suspect that this copy was circulated in Lincolnshire, for Cawdron and Maydwell were both common surnames in the Parts of Kesteven in this period.<sup>29</sup> If my

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<sup>27</sup> Lysons, i, p. 259; and Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain & Ireland*, i, 206–07.

<sup>28</sup> 'Obituary of Considerable Persons; With Biographical Anecdotes', *The Gentlemen's Magazine* 60.2, p. 672. See also Martin and Highfield, 237, n7.

<sup>29</sup> A man named Robert Cawdron died in 1712 in Great Hale (Monson, p. 165), and a woman called Anna



assumptions are correct, Maydwell would have been a non-aristocratic woman who owned her own book collection outside London.

There is another copy signed by a notable female user, which is now missing. Thomas Mason describes a copy of the Second Folio signed by Janet, Countess of Kincardine, and this was owned by James Wyllie Guild's Library in Glasgow in the late nineteenth century (p. 238). She was a daughter of James Robertson, married William Bruce, eighth Earl of Kincardine in 1726 and died in 1772 (Ramsey, p. 24). Since there is no census of the Second, Third and Fourth Folios, there are more copies with women's ownership marks in existence, although they may be missing or not properly catalogued.

These marks of women's reading of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century suggest that women of various backgrounds used his books. I have argued that Shakespeare was more broadly read among 'ordinary' female readers, not limited to exceptionally educated women as early adapters. I have emphasised that, as demonstrated in the copies of Clare Reeve and Sarah Burnes, some of the eighteenth-century female book users articulated their desire to preserve Shakespeare as cultural heritage. This preservation drive demonstrates that they were trying to canonise Shakespeare more consciously than Restoration playgoers and readers, and that female interpreters were actively engaged with the preservation of Shakespeare. They often passed their copies down to their relatives and friends, especially female relatives. This suggests that the givers and recipients formed domestic interpretive communities, in which books were treated as the family heritage. This heritage, as Reeve's copy suggests, was also connected to wider interpretive communities through reading not only Shakespeare's own texts, but also criticisms and scholarly works on him. As his texts were being transformed into national heritage by such critical comments on his works circulated in public spaces, physical copies of his early playbooks were treated as family heritage, and carefully kept in private spheres. As the next subsection of this chapter reveals, some female readers of Shakespeare were more deeply involved in his

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Maria Maydwell, wife of Lawrence Maydwell, died in 1803 at the age of 82 in Market Deeping (Monson, p. 106).

canonisation through conducting scholarly research on his life and works.

## 1.2 Women's Scholarly Engagement with Shakespeare's Works

It is difficult to define the word 'scholarly', but in an eighteenth-century context, I will use it to refer to studies of Shakespeare which required special or professional knowledge of texts and should be separated from other creative or intellectual activities, such as adapting his plays or writing dramatic criticisms. Scholarly research includes source studies, editing, anthologising, and analyses based on these professional activities. Since eighteenth-century women had no access to formal university education, it may appear strange to define their 'scholarly' activities. However, considering the intellectual backgrounds of eighteenth-century scholars broadly, university education was not always necessary. Nicholas Rowe was a student of law, and Samuel Johnson did not obtain any university degree until completing *A Dictionary of the English Language*. Although the unavailability of formal university education was a serious disadvantage for women, especially a lack of education in the classics as Charlotte Ramsey Lennox confessed, some of them were nonetheless engaged in scholarly activities.<sup>30</sup>

In this subsection, I focus on Charlotte Ramsey Lennox's source studies in *Shakespear Illustrated: Or, The Novels and Histories, on which the Plays of Shakespear Are Founded, Collected and Translated, from the Original Authors* (hereinafter *Shakespear Illustrated*) and Mary Lever's editing of the second edition of Thomas Hanmer's *The Works of Shakespear*. Although these two women share several similarities, their contributions to Shakespeare studies are different. While there are many studies of Lennox and other women critics who published their works, no studies have been done on Mary Lever.<sup>31</sup> I will devote more pages to Lever to explain my new findings about her collaboration with her husband Thomas Hawkins in editing Shakespeare's works. In relation to her activities, I mention several other minor female

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<sup>30</sup> Lennox, *Shakespear Illustrated: Or, The Novels and Histories, on which the Plays of Shakespear Are Founded, Collected and Translated, from the Original Authors* (London, 1753), ii, p. 219. Quotations from *Shakespear Illustrated* refer to the first edition.

<sup>31</sup> For late eighteenth-century female critics whom this thesis does not cover, see Carson, pp. 63–92 and 129–189; Ritchie, 'The Merciful Construction', pp. 181–209; and Eger.

figures who helped early editors of Shakespeare.

It is believed that Charlotte Ramsey Lennox was born in Gibraltar around 1730 of parents of Scottish and Irish origin, and that she lived in New York City and Albany until she was about fifteen.<sup>32</sup> What kind of education she received is unclear. After moving to England in the mid-1740s, she became a successful novelist; *The Female Quixote, or, The Adventures of Arabella* of 1752 sold well, and *Shakespear Illustrated* was published in three volumes from 1753 to 1754.

*Shakespear Illustrated* obviously contributed to the canonisation of Shakespeare in terms of the development of textual and bibliographical criticism, since it includes translations of Shakespeare's sources and detailed comparisons between the plots of his plays and their sources. It is the first example of the tradition of the reference books collecting and analysing Shakespeare's sources, such as Geoffrey Bullough's *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. Samuel Johnson utilised *Shakespear Illustrated* in editing *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, published eleven years after its last volume came out.<sup>33</sup> It is also the first book-length criticism of Shakespeare written by a woman, preceding Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Griffith. However, unlike her contemporary bardolators, Lennox sharply criticises Shakespeare and never places him in the position of national poet. As Ritchie states, she completely 'refuses to succumb to out-and-out Bardolatry and does not mindlessly excuse Shakespeare's faults, as some critics did, in order to further establish his pre-eminent place in English literary culture' ('The Merciful Construction', p. 138).

One of the major characteristics of Lennox's analysis is her distinctly reader-centred approach. I argue that dramatic criticism is different from other criticisms because it must help people working in theatre to create more interesting theatrical productions and provide clues for contemporary audiences to analyse how actual theatrical productions can exploit the potential of playtexts. However, Lennox treats Shakespeare's plays as reading materials rather than blueprints for theatrical

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<sup>32</sup> For Lennox's life, see Amory's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>33</sup> Concerning Johnson's use of Lennox and their acquaintance, see Small, 'The Source of a Note in Johnson's Edition of *Macbeth*'; and Ritchie, 'The Merciful Construction', pp. 143–45.

performances.<sup>34</sup> Only a few times does she assume the spectator's point of view in this work: She mentions the 'Spectators', 'the Action of the Play' and 'Audience' of *The Comedy of Errors* (ii, pp. 225 and 228); 'Audience' of *Richard III* (iii, p. 168); and 'the meanest and least intelligent Reader or Spectator' of *I Henry VI* (iii, p. 144). Her analysis of *Othello* is the most audience centred, for she thinks that the characterisation in Cinthio's original novella will not work on stage as if it does in a book; 'Such a Character [Cinthio's Moor] married to the fair Desdemona must have given Disgust on the stage; the Audience would have been his enemies' (i, p. 134). However, she more frequently treats presumed interpreters of Shakespeare as those who closely read his texts in book form, not as audience members at playhouses, mentioning 'Reader(s)' of his plays in analysing *Measure for Measure* (i, p. 35), *Twelfth Night* (i, p. 238), *The Winter's Tale* (ii, p. 86), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (iii, p. 24-25), *Henry VIII* (iii, p. 226) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (iii, p. 269). Lennox not only addresses readers in the eighteenth century, but also – consciously or unconsciously – assumes that Shakespeare himself mainly targeted his contemporary readers when he wrote his plays: she states that 'Shakespear no doubts foresaw his Readers ask this Question [about the plot of *Cymbeline*] if the Princess did not, but though he found it an easy Matter to make Pisanio satisfy her as to that Particular, the Reader is not so easily answered' (i, p. 162) and that 'We must reasonably suppose that the Poet himself was as much at a Loss here as his Readers [of *Much Ado About Nothing*]' (iii, p. 263).

I suggest that Lennox's career influenced her interpretive strategies. She spent her teens in North America, where theatrical performances were far fewer than in England in the first half of eighteenth century. The oldest surviving record of major theatrical performances of Shakespeare's plays in North America is an advertisement for *Romeo and Juliet* by an amateur company in New York in 1730, and the second oldest is dated 1750; on the other hand, playbooks were more easily accessible.<sup>35</sup> Lennox

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<sup>34</sup> The shortcomings of *Shakespeare Illustrated* have been pointed out by many performers and critics. For example, David Garrick criticised Lennox's 'greater desire of Exposing his Errors' in 1753 (Isles, 'The Lennox Collection', 19.41). See also Kramnick, 'Reading Shakespeare's Novels', p. 432.

<sup>35</sup> Vaughan and Vaughan, *Shakespeare in America*, pp. 11–16.

could not frequently enjoy theatrical performances of Shakespeare as could contemporary women in London when she was young, and it is more likely that she read Shakespeare's plays in her childhood. After moving to England, she became an actress, but her theatrical career was unsuccessful (Walpole, ix, p. 74). However, she was successful as a writer. Her personal education in North America and the failure of her career in theatre partly explain her relative indifference toward theatre and passion for reader-centred criticism.

I also suggest that Lennox regarded herself as a female expert on the genre broadly classified as 'romances', or 'the chaotic negative space outside the novel that determined the outlines of the novel's form' in the eighteenth century (Langbauer, p. 29). As I discussed in the previous sections about Elizabeth Pepys and Dorothy Osborne, the romance was regarded as a distinctly gendered genre. Lennox's novel *The Female Quixote*, which featured a heroine with a vast knowledge of romances, describes the romance as a genre sustained by female readers – its attitude toward romance is ambiguous because it satirises but does not simply condemn women reading romances (Palo, p. 214). By assuming a female romance-reader's viewpoint, Lennox revealed that Shakespeare had used classical and contemporary sources extensively, including old vernacular romances and ballads, implying that he was not as original as might have been assumed by Lennox's male intellectual contemporaries, who were not very favourable toward or familiar with romances. Lennox, worrying about the decline of the romance as a form of women's cultural heritage, showed 'that the English author now thought of as most admirable had dealt in what was most (unjustly) despised in the new age' by arguing that 'Shakespeare read romances and novels' (Doody, pp. 298–302). I suspect that female intellectuals like Lennox had advantages over male writers in terms of completing such an extensive work on source studies at this early stage of Shakespeare studies because male readers were relatively underprivileged in terms of their knowledge of the romance, as Judith Drake satirised in the late seventeenth century in *An Essay. Shakespear Illustrated* was the most visible example of women's contribution to the canonisation of Shakespeare as a result of this gender-specific

concern.

In comparison to that of Charlotte Lennox, the name Mary Lever (sometimes spelled as Leaver) is almost completely unknown among Shakespeareans. She was the wife of the Reverend Thomas Hawkins, editor of *The Origin of the English Drama* and supervisor of the second edition of Thomas Hanmer's *The Works of Shakespear*.<sup>36</sup> Details of Mary's life are unclear; she was a daughter of Thomas Leaver, and married her cousin Thomas at Holywell Church on 12 August 1766.<sup>37</sup> Thomas Hawkins was born in 1728; he obtained the degree of Master of Arts, worked as a chaplain in New College and Magdalen College at the University of Oxford and died on 23 October 1772.<sup>38</sup>

Almost no studies have been done on the second edition of Thomas Hanmer's *The Works of Shakespear*, supervised by Thomas Hawkins and published from 1770 to 1771, while *The Origin of the English Drama*, posthumously published in 1773, is sometimes mentioned as a pioneering anthology of pre-Shakespearean drama in the eighteenth-century Elizabethan revival.<sup>39</sup> Although the second edition of *The Works of Shakespear* contributed to the canonisation of Shakespeare in the light of its commercial success (Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, p. 7), other scholars have assumed that it does not merit analysing in detail because it is not very different from the first edition, except for small changes in the layout design and minor corrections. As far as I have found, Arthur Sherbo's *The Birth of Shakespeare Studies*, which devotes twelve pages to this edition in discussing the history of early Shakespeare studies and points out the help given to Thomas Hawkins by Thomas Percy, Thomas Warton and John Hawkins, is the only substantial study mentioning Hawkins' second edition; Sherbo never mentions Mary Lever.

Three of the seemingly small changes in Hawkins' second edition show that

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<sup>36</sup> For the second edition of Hanmer, see also Carter, *A History of The University of Oxford Press*, i, p. 408; and Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print*, pp. 7 and 115.

<sup>37</sup> Burke, *The Commoners*, ii, p. 215; and *Oxford St. Cross C. M. B. 1653–1852* (MS. Top. Oxon c.917).

<sup>38</sup> Bloxam, ii, pp. 175–76; and Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Colonial Gentry*, i, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> Wasserman, p. 243; and Vickers v, pp. 552–54. See also Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*, pp. 91–94.

Hawkins and his co-workers attempted to make this edition suit the taste of the time. First, a list of ‘Various Readings of Mr Theobald and Mr Capell’ is attached to the end of each volume, which suggests the development of Shakespeare studies after the publication of the first edition. Second, the revised 29-page glossary, which is more than twice the length of the original 13-page one, implies both the rise of the interest in lexicographical studies after the publication of Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* in 1755 and mid-eighteenth-century readers’ increasing difficulty in reading old texts. Third, the decrease in the nouns and interjections beginning with capital letters is a result of the change in English orthography in the 1760s, after which time the use of capitalisation became outdated (Osselton, p. 50).

What is most notable about this second edition is the collaborative process of editing, rather than the textual changes. It shows how eighteenth-century male and female readers collaborated in proofreading. By looking at the copy of the Third Folio owned by the Auckland City Library, I have found a new piece of evidence which suggests that the second edition of Hanmer’s *The Works of Shakespear* is a product of the collaboration of Thomas and Mary. This is one of the books owned by Thomas and Mary, and passed to their son Henry and daughter Charlotte Hawkins, Lady Taunton. Henry’s daughter Blanche inherited the family’s books, including her aunt’s copy of the second edition of *The Works of Shakespear*. Blanche married the Reverend Vicesimus Lush in England in 1842, and emigrated to Auckland in 1850, bringing the Hawkins’ books with them. The Lushes’ books are now in the possession of Ewelme Cottage, a kauri cottage previously owned by the family, and now placed under the control of New Zealand Historic Places Trust, except the copy of the Third Folio held by the Auckland City Library (hereafter Auckland Third Folio).<sup>40</sup>

The Auckland Third Folio has a bookplate of Thomas Hawkins and is thoroughly collated with the First and Second Folios; the marginal notes were largely written by Mary Lever rather than her husband Thomas. A typed library note is attached

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<sup>40</sup> About Vicesimus and Blanche Lush, see *The Auckland Journals of Vicesimus Lush, 1850–63*. See also New Zealand Historic Places Trust, ‘Ewelme Cottage and its Books’; Webster, *Ewelme Cottage*; and Webster, *A Suitable Clergyman*.

to the copy, stating that ‘He with his wife as amanuensis collated a 3rd edition Folio of Shakespeare with the first and second, the variant readings being written in the margin of the copy in her handwriting and marked 1 or 2, or both’. It also includes the transcript of a letter written by the Reverend W. Edward Lush, Blanche’s son, to his nephew A. Lush on 31 January 1948: ‘At the date of writing this the third folio copy is on loan at the Auckland Public library. I do not praise their methods of keeping books; it is to be yours; it has, as you know, handwriting marginal notes of Mary Lever’s handwriting. We always call her Mary Lever: she was the wife of Rev. Thomas Hawkins, my Mother’s Grandmother’. According to John Webster, curator of Ewelme Cottage, the Lushes’ family tradition tells of Mary’s helping her husband in proofreading the edition. Most collation notes, mainly in black, are written in the side margins, although some are written in the lower margins. Mary’s educational background is unclear, but it is certain that she was engaged in editing the second edition of Hanmer as the supervisor’s wife.

Among the books which Thomas and Mary used to proofread the second edition of Hanmer, the copies of Shakespeare’s Second, Third and Fourth Folios and the 1752 edition of Lewis Theobald’s eight-volume *The Works of Shakespeare* survive; since these copies provide much information about the editing process, I explore the details of these copies. The Folger owns Theobald’s *The Works of Shakespeare* (PR2752 1752 copy 1 Sh. Col., hereafter Hawkins-Theobald Works).<sup>41</sup> The Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford has the Second Folio (Percy 90/Arch. G c.15, hereafter Percy Second Folio). Finally, the British Library owns the Fourth Folio (C.39.k.17., Appendix 1-166, hereafter BL-Hawkins Fourth Folio). Although the copies rarely include notes about annotators’ opinions, the annotations found in these copies of Shakespeare’s editions have different characteristics.

The Hawkins-Theobald Works, with Thomas’ bookplates in good condition remaining in the third and seventh volumes, is apparently a copy for daily use. The front flyleaf of the first volume was signed by Thomas on 10 June 1756, which suggests that

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<sup>41</sup> Folger First Folio 49 has an inscription of ‘Thomas Hawkins 1724’ (2C2 verso), but the date of the signature shows that it is not the editor of the second edition of Hanmer. According to Hamnet, it might be owned by Thomas Hawkins of Essex County, Virginia.



he obtained the volumes about ten years before he married Mary and annotated them by himself. All the volumes are thoroughly annotated; the indices of passages are written in the first page of each play, and glossaries are attached to the end of each volume. Most of the annotations are taken from the commentaries of other editors or critics, such as Hanmer, Johnson, and Pope, except a few short notes on Shakespeare's sources or proverbial phrases. Although he extensively quoted other critics' discussions concerning aesthetic qualities of Shakespeare, Thomas Hawkins seldom expressed his opinions about Shakespeare in these notes, and mainly focused on textual scholarship.

The Percy Second Folio was owned by Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dromore, a friend of Thomas Hawkins.<sup>42</sup> According to the library note, it was annotated by Thomas himself. Two short letters from Hawkins to Percy, one on 12 January 1770 and the other on 23 February 1770, are attached to the end of this copy. These letters tell that Hawkins sent his revised glossary to the second edition to have it checked by Percy with some help from his friends 'Mr. Prince' and 'Dr. Kent', which implies that Hawkins asked advice not only from his wife, but also from his friends. The annotation style of this copy is different from that of the Auckland Third Folio. As the note on the front flyleaf says, 'The Various Readings of the first Edition are written in Red Ink: Those of the third in Black Ink'. This copy is also thoroughly annotated, and the collation notes are mostly written in the lower margins. The ways of writing 'Exit', 'Exeunt', and 'omitted' are also slightly different from those in the Auckland Third Folio, especially the lower case e. Considering the differences in the annotation styles and the library notes, I argue that this copy was largely annotated by Thomas.

According to the notes in the front flyleaves, the BL-Hawkins Fourth Folio was 'Given by T. Hawkins to T. Warton, Mar 28 1771', and 'collated by M<sup>r</sup> T. Hawkins, (editor of the second Edition of Hammers' Shakespeare 1771,) with the two first folio editions, in 1623, and 1632'.<sup>43</sup> The annotation style and handwriting are more similar to that of the Auckland Third Folio than that of the Percy Second Folio; the collation

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<sup>42</sup> This copy is briefly described in Hanson, p. 85, and registered as a manuscript PeT 680 in *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, 3, ii, p. 335.

<sup>43</sup> This copy is briefly described by Tillotson in footnote 30 in *The Percy Letters*, p. 23.

notes in BL-Hawkins Fourth Folio are mostly in black in the side margins, although there are some notes in the lower margins and a few handwritten notes similar to those in the Percy Second Folio. However, it is difficult for non-graphologists to judge whether these notes were mainly written by Thomas or Mary. If the notes in the flyleaves are right, they were mainly written by Thomas, but it is also possible that some notes in the side margins are written by Mary, for the Auckland Third Folio – the copy mainly annotated by Mary – contains similar notes in the side margins.

The comparison between the Hawkins' copies of Shakespeare's different editions suggests three things. First, it appears that Mary's major contribution to the second edition of Hanmer's Shakespeare was collating, while Thomas also conducted research on Shakespeare's vocabulary and other critics' commentaries on his works along with collating. There appears to be a division of labour by gender here. Second, the couple devoted much time to this editorial work, although the changes in the second edition are not very conspicuous and their names did not appear on the title page. The husband and the wife focused on different editions by themselves, and synthesised their results to proofread one book, with help from their friends. Third, Mary's efforts to edit Shakespeare's works were proudly commemorated by her descendants. Only the Auckland Third Folio, the copy with Mary's annotations, was kept in the hands of the Hawkins and the Lushes with the family tradition; although the copy of the First Folio was lost, the Second Folio was held by Percy, and the Fourth Folio was presented to Warton. I argue that the Hawkins family retained the Auckland Third Folio as a relic of Thomas and Mary's editorial efforts. Furthermore, their descendants in New Zealand considered this as a remembrance of their grandmother's intellectual abilities and her contribution to English literary culture, or the culture of their colonial power, as W. Edward Lush treated the volume as a family treasure and placed emphasis on Mary's activities.

I would situate Mary Lever's work in relation to two women's intellectual activities in the nineteenth century. First, her editing precedes Henrietta Maria (known as Harriet) Bowdler's *The Family Shakespeare* in 1807. Although Harriet was largely

responsible for editing, her brother Thomas was credited as editor of the volume to maintain his sister's honour, and it was not until the late 1960s that she was acknowledged as the main editor (Perrin, p. 63). Mary's activities show that women had already begun editing Shakespeare about forty years before Harriet Bowdler. Both Harriet and Mary remained obscure in the history of the reception of Shakespeare, which suggests that women's scholarly activities were often shadowed by their kinsmen's activities. Second, Mary's work suggests that it was common for young and intelligent wives to help their husbands anonymously to complete their scholarly work in the late 1760s. The Hawkins' collaboration reminds us of the relationship between Dorothea and Casaubon in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, a novel written from the late 1860s to the early 1870s and dealing with the social changes in the 1830s. I suspect that Eliot satirised a hundred-year tradition of wives' shadow work in academia.

I also point out a notable similarity between the seemingly different scholarly activities of Lennox and Lever. Although their works have no obvious relation to nationalism and seem purely academic, they are both closely linked to the expansion of the British Empire and the popularisation of Shakespeare outside the British Isles. Lennox was raised in North America, and Lever's descendants emigrated to New Zealand. In the former case, perhaps the author herself read Shakespeare in New York in her childhood, and in the latter case, the annotator's Third Folio was brought to Auckland by her granddaughter. Their scholarly activities were deeply involved in the process of the canonisation of Shakespeare not only as the national poet of Britain but also as a canonical author of all the English-speaking countries.

While Charlotte Lennox and Mary Lever's scholarly activities are striking examples, there are two more pieces of evidence of unnoticed women's work in scholarly activities concerning Shakespeare that I wish to draw attention to here. The first shows the presence of women surrounding William Warburton in the literary community, although these women did not directly participate in editing. The second is concerned with Thomas Percy's literary network, to which Thomas Hawkins and Mary Lever were also linked, and provides more information about women's involvement in

editing.

The Folger's 1747 copy of *The Works of Shakespear*, edited by Warburton (PR2752 1747a copy 5 Sh.Col., Appendix 5-65), documents women in scholarly communities and their relation to the formation of taste. The ownership history of this copy is complex. According to a handwritten note in the first volume, 'This copy of Warburton's Shakespear was given to Eleanor Newton by the widow of the Revd. Martin Stafford Smith whose first wife was Bp. Warburton's widow'. While this note was perhaps written by the otherwise unknown 'Eleanor Newton', the other note criticising Edward Capell's editing was written by Warburton himself (Bennet, 'Warburton's "Shakespear"', p. 141). 'Bp. Warburton's widow' is Gertrude Tucker, a daughter of William Tucker of St. Blazey, Cornwall (Boyce, p. 165).

Gertrude Tucker and William Warburton married on 5 September 1745. Gertrude was 'the clever, accomplished, and favourite niece' of Warburton's friend Ralph Allen, known as 'the man of Bath' (Kilvert, p. 371). Prior Park, the estate of the Allens – which Gertrude would later inherit – was a gathering place in Bath for intellectuals, and Gertrude was regarded as a sociable and educated young woman by Allen's acquaintances (Boyce, p. 165). When she was not engaged in social life, she spent much time on books: 'I take great delight in reading, w<sup>ch</sup> makes my confining myself (more than I used to do) a pleasure to me'.<sup>44</sup> Warburton highly appreciated his wife, for according to the transcription of his letter to William Bowyer of 20 January 1746, he says that 'To offer up my freedom to one of the finest women in England, is being more than free' (Nichols, p. 189). Warburton died in 1779, and Gertrude married Martin Stafford Smith in 1781: Martin had been a fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and worked with Warburton as a chaplain (Kilvert, p. 371). I doubt that Gertrude helped Warburton to edit or write critical works, for the fact that she sold most of her late husband's books and papers to Richard Hurd, owner of a large library in Hartlebury Castle and editor of Warburton's works posthumously published in 1788 (Nichol, p. 158), suggests that she could not maintain her husband's whole library. It

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<sup>44</sup> Gertrude Warburton's letter to Catherine Malet on 11 November 1774, The British Library Additional MS 41580 f.6.

was natural for her to choose Hurd as the new owner of her late husband's collection because he knew the Warburtons well.<sup>45</sup> However, Gertrude continued to own the copy of Shakespeare's works edited by her husband as a remembrance. In collecting anecdotes and gossips about Bath, George Monkland reports that Martin was regarded as 'a man of classical acquirements and literary taste', and that he and Gertrude were the prominent couple in the circles of literary figures in Bath 'with graceful manners and elegant hospitality' (p. 65). Gertrude died in 1796; the next year, Martin married Mary Elizabeth Plaisted, 'the amiable and excellent friend of his first wife' (Kilvert, p. 371). She was the daughter of Edward Playsted and Joyce Wolferstan, a granddaughter of Frances Wolfreton, whom I discussed in Chapter 2.<sup>46</sup> I could not identify Eleanor Newton because it is a common female name, but she may have been Mary Elizabeth's relative or friend.

This copy implies three things. First, the marriage between a scholar, Martin Stafford Smith, and Mary Elizabeth Plaisted, a descendant of Frances Wolfreton, shows that the Wolfrestons (or Wolferstans) continued to produce educated female users of books. In this case, the general interest in reading, as the family's cultural heritage, was preserved and passed down to later generations. We can observe the inheritance of cultural interest and taste as a significant factor in the process of canon formation on a small scale in this domestic interpretive community. Second, this copy records the friendship of three women: Gertrude's copy was posthumously passed to her friend and her husband's second wife, Mary Elizabeth, and she presented it to Eleanor Newton, a woman who knew the ownership history well.

My third point is most helpful in understanding the taste and manners of educated people in the eighteenth century. Warburton's works, ranging from religious controversy to the editing of Shakespeare, were well connected to the fashionable society of Bath as one of the centres of pleasure-seeking activities in eighteenth-century

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<sup>45</sup> Egerton MS 1958 at the British Library contains Hurd's letters to Gertrude from 1773 to 1781, which shows that they frequently exchanged letters (ff. 5–86).

<sup>46</sup> Frances and her husband Francis Wolfreton had a son called Stanford, and he married Sarah Bowyer and had a daughter Joyce. The Wolfreton family changed the spelling of their name from 'Wolfreton' to 'Wolferstan' after 1667. See Burke, *The Commoners*, i, pp. 187–88.

England. Editing and writing criticism are largely regarded as academic activities and appreciated by a limited number of people in the twenty-first century, but Warburton's work (and possibly other eighteenth-century editors' works) had more opportunities to be known among non-academic interpreters through social interaction, led by prominent society figures like Ralph Allen and Gertrude Tucker. The frequent and vivid interaction between fashionable society and scholarly society sometimes generated dissonance. While it appears that Gertrude and William Warburton were usually on good terms, sometimes their opinions about social manners differed: in her letter to Charles Yorke on 4 May 1767, she said, 'I really wish to say some thing handsome to M<sup>rs</sup> Yorke, but the Bishop, tho the subject be so agreeable to him, I cannot persuade to help me out. He says that the best way of shewing the sincerity of our regards for you both, is to make out Compliments in the honest plain stile of our Ancestors' (The British Library Add Ms 35638 f. 81).

It is notable that Warburton, editor of Shakespeare, used the word 'sincerity' as a national virtue of 'our Ancestors'. I argue that 'the honest plain stile' referred to that of Shakespeare and other English writers whom he was familiar with, and as Gerald Newman argues, 'sincerity' was regarded as a typical virtue of English people in the eighteenth century (pp. 123–38). However, Gertrude, as a sociable hostess rather than as a scholar's wife, preferred the 'handsome' style. William Warburton's own note on the copy, mocking 'all the idiots ... who have scribbled upon Shakespear', also reports that editing in a wider sense was incorporated into ordinary readers' pleasure-seeking activities and troubled scholars. As I discussed in the previous subsection, Shakespeare's playbooks were more readily available thanks to cheap editions, and more and more readers – including women – knew his original plays through reading. The Warburtons' letters demonstrate the attempts by intellectuals to distinguish simple, sincere and distinctly 'English' taste from the vulgar taste widely accepted by ordinary readers.

There is another piece of evidence to show a woman's support for the editing community. Five of the Pavier quartos at the Folger are associated with Miss Orlebar, an

eighteenth-century woman, and she was a friend and helper of male collectors, including Percy. The front flyleaf of the 1619 copy of *The Whole Contention Betweene the Two Famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke* (STC 26101 copy 2, Appendix 5-7) has a handwritten note by Percy: ‘Miss Orlebars made me a present of this book with a view that I shd. give it to my friend Mr. Garmer, who was collecting Quarto Editions of Shakespeare plays. I accordingly sent it [down to] him at Cambridge,...he was already possessed of every play in it except King Lear, which he therefore took out...May 8. 1763. G. P.’ Miss Orlebar was a member of the Orlebar family who lived in Hinwick Hall, Bedfordshire in the eighteenth century (Burke, *The Commoners*, i, p. 246). Percy knew John Orlebar’s children well, and this ‘Miss Orlebars’ must be one of them – Mary (1730–1821), Elizabeth (1732–1810) or Constantia (1739–1808).<sup>47</sup> Mary, the eldest sister, is the most likely candidate, although I cannot conclude this definitely.<sup>48</sup>

The library catalogue states that Miss Orlebar also owned the 1619 copies of *Henry V* (STC 22291 Copy 7, Appendix 5-3), *The Merchant of Venice* (STC 22297 Copy 4, Appendix 5-4), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (STC 22300 Copy 7, Appendix 5-5), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (STC 22303 Copy 6, Appendix 5-6) and *Sir John Oldcastle*, a play misattributed to Shakespeare (STC 18796 Copy 3), and sent them to Percy. The female members of the Orlebar family left many private writings, including letters and Mary’s poems, which suggests that they were educated women with an active literary interest.<sup>49</sup> Along with Mary Lever’s annotations, the records of the Orlebars show that multiple female users of books were involved in the literary network surrounding Thomas Percy and helped them to promote the canonisation of Shakespeare.

These examples illustrate that intellectually active women studied Shakespeare at an early stage as members of research communities, although their activities are often

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<sup>47</sup> For Percy and the Orlebars, see Davis, *Thomas Percy*, pp. 151–52.

<sup>48</sup> All the sisters were unmarried in 1763 (Manley, ‘Constantia Orlebar’s Weather Book, 1786–1808,’ p. 622). According to ‘Miss’ 2-a in *OED*, the usage of ‘Miss’ as a title for the unmarried eldest daughter of the family was established in the nineteenth century.

<sup>49</sup> The documents related the Orlebars are listed in ‘Sources for Women’s History’ by Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service. For Mary Orlebar’s poems, see Collett-White.

undocumented. Such activities were regarded as non-professional: only Charlotte Lennox was a professional writer. While these women's nonprofessional literary contributions prove the presence of female interpreters' active pleasure seeking, they also lead to reconsideration of the exploitation of free labour and shadow work of women, problems always present but easily forgotten in the cultural sphere.<sup>50</sup>

### 1.3 The Novel and Sarah Fielding

The development of Shakespearean criticism in the eighteenth century, which I discussed in the previous subsection, attracted much interest from contemporary novelists. Robert Gale Noyes analyses a vast number of references to Shakespeare in eighteenth-century novels in *The Thespian Mirror: Shakespeare in the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, and argues that the novelists in this period tended to duplicate 'non-fictional criticism, academic or journalistic, of their times' rather than provide original analyses of his plays (p. 14). Female novelists were no exception to this trend.<sup>51</sup> Noyes cites references to Shakespeare made by at least fifteen female writers. I have found two more female novelists who alluded to Shakespeare: Anglo-Irish writer Frances Chamberlain Sheridan and Scottish aristocratic woman Mary Walker (also known as Hamilton).<sup>52</sup> However, most of the references are short and formulaic. For instance, *Othello* was a popular source for novelists, and female writers frequently referred to this play just to describe male jealousy.<sup>53</sup> As Kate Rumbold states, 'Shakespeare is so widely quoted in the eighteenth-century novel that the practice seems

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<sup>50</sup> For free labour and cultural products, see Terranova, p. 33; and Andrejevic, p. 416.

<sup>51</sup> He discusses Jane Collier (p. 27), Sarah Fielding (p. 27), Elizabeth Bonhote (p. 36), Frances Brooke (pp. 44–47), Mrs. M. Austin (p. 55), Elizabeth Inchbald (p. 80), Miss Smythies (p. 102), Eliza Haywood (p. 105), Margaret Minifie (p. 111), Susannah Minifie (also known as Gunning, p. 111), Charlotte Palmer (p. 133), Ann Catley (p. 179), Charlotte Charke (p. 184) and Sarah Robinson Scott, Elizabeth Montagu's sister in Wales (p. 185). He also quotes passages from an unknown female writer's work, *The History of Miss Pittborough* of 1767 (p. 74–75); this novel is now attributed to Phoebe Gibbes. Gibbes alludes to Shakespeare in another of her novels, *The History of Miss Sommerville* in 1769 (ii, p. 173). Noyes refers to *The Secret History of Mack-beth King of Scotland* (1708), which was attributed to Madame d'Aulnoy, but this authorship attribution is uncertain.

<sup>52</sup> Sheridan, *Conclusion of the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, v, p. 203; and Walker, *Letters from the Duchess de Crui and Others*, iii, p. 69.

<sup>53</sup> Walker, iii, p. 69; and Sarah Robinson Scott, *A Journey through Every Stage of Life*, in *Bluestocking Feminism*, v, p. 65. See also Gary Kelly's note to the novel, p. 366, n63.



almost innocuous'.<sup>54</sup>

The allusions to Shakespeare made by Sarah Fielding are different from these seemingly 'innocuous' references; her interpretations of Shakespeare remain suitable samples when it comes to discussing the infiltration of Shakespeare into women's reading culture, as her novels were successful among eighteenth-century readers. Sarah and her brother Henry were both heavily influenced by Shakespeare, and Sarah especially referred to his works in all of her novels, reinterpreting from them in relatively complex ways.<sup>55</sup> However, no previous studies have thoroughly focused on her references to Shakespeare. In this subsection, I will show how she utilised Shakespeare's works to address her readers, as Sarah Fielding was one of the earliest female writers who extensively reworked him as a 'canonical' author in English literature. I will focus on three points: first, I clarify her opinion about readership; second, I discuss her use of Shakespeare in relation to her readers; third, I point out the similarities in Sarah and her brother Henry's use of Shakespeare.

Sarah Fielding was born in 1710, three years after Henry.<sup>56</sup> It is believed that her first published work was Anne Boleyn's biography in Henry's *A Journey from this World to the Next*, printed as part of *Miscellanies* in 1743.<sup>57</sup> Although this biography does not have a direct link to Shakespeare, her choice of the subject matter implies that she had known *Henry VIII*, and her distinct method of post-mortem first person narrative, which would be fully developed in *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (hereafter *Cleopatra and Octavia*), a historical novel of 1757, had already appeared in it. In 1744 she published her first novel *The Adventures of David Simple* (hereinafter *David Simple*). In 1749, she published her second novel *The Governess: Or, The Little Female Academy* (hereinafter *The Governess*), one of the earliest substantial novels written for

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<sup>54</sup> Rumbold, "'Alas, Poor Yorick": Quoting Shakespeare in the Mid-Eighteenth-Century Novel', 'Abstract'. Since this paper is published in an electronic journal *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 11.2 (2006), it has no page number.

<sup>55</sup> In this subsection, I use the first names of the Fieldings to avoid confusion.

<sup>56</sup> For the biographical information of Sarah Fielding, I follow Bree's biography and Probyn's entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>57</sup> Henry Fielding, *Miscellanies*, ii, Book 19, Ch. 7. For Sarah's authorship in this biography, see Burrows and Hassall's discussion.

young girls in English literature.

After writing complementary stories about *David Simple* and several short works, she collaborated with Jane Collier to publish *The Cry: A New Dramatic Fable* (hereafter *The Cry*) in 1754, a cross-genre work combining the forms of drama, novel, and critical review. She published two proto-Gothic novels *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn* (hereafter *Dellwyn*) in 1759 and *The History of Ophelia* (hereinafter *Ophelia*) in 1760. It is suspected that *Ophelia* was largely written by Henry, but I agree with Peter Sabor's analysis in arguing for Sarah's authorship, judging from the advertisement to this novel written by Sarah (although the drastic changes in writing style in this novel might be caused by Henry's intervention).<sup>58</sup> All five of her novels referred to Shakespeare. She borrows lines from Shakespeare to explain characters' actions or feelings almost whenever she can, and this tendency is conspicuous in *The Cry*, *David Simple* and *Dellwyn*. *Cleopatra and Octavia* and *Ophelia* contain fewer direct quotations from his works, but as the titles suggest, both of them utilise Shakespeare's plays as one of their sources, although the latter novel's relation to *Hamlet* is problematic. The title page of *The Governess* quotes lines from Shakespeare as the epigraph.

Sarah clearly paid a great deal of attention to her targeted reading community. She believed in the rule of the 'Author's Intention' over readers, a phrase twice mentioned in her critical work *Remarks on Clarissa*.<sup>59</sup> As Suzuki Mika and Emily C. Friedman argue, Sarah, fearing that her readers might misunderstand or distort her intentions as expressed in her works, tried to control readers' interpretive strategies.<sup>60</sup> By applying her belief in the 'Author's Intention' to Shakespeare, she takes for granted that Shakespeare had his own 'Opinion' and expressed it in his plays:

But to peruse, with Pleasure, true Pictures of Nature, requires either a clear or

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<sup>58</sup> See Sabor's Introduction to *The History of Ophelia*, pp. 14–15.

<sup>59</sup> *Remarks on Clarissa*, pp. 8 and 18. Quotations from *Remarks on Clarissa* refer to the 1749 edition.

<sup>60</sup> See Suzuki, 'The "True Use of Reading": Sarah Fielding and Mid Eighteenth-Century Literary Strategies' (hereafter 'The True Use'), p. 81; and Friedman, 'To Such as Are Willing to Understand', p. 183.

a hardened Conscience; which Shakespeare has manifested to be his Opinion, by Hamlet's Method of discovering whether the Ghost of his Father had related the Truth concerning being murdered by his Uncle.<sup>61</sup>

Although such a tendency to identify the dramatic character's action or speech with the playwright's opinion was to be criticised as naive by critics like Oscar Wilde in the late nineteenth century, Sarah did not find it inappropriate, partly because she wrote in eighteenth-century England, where the novel functioned as criticism.<sup>62</sup> In Sarah's model, readers should follow the interpretive strategy hinted at by the author – they are not allowed to choose from a wide variety of interpretations.

Sarah's attempts to control readers' interpretive strategies as author are closely associated with the moralistic nature of her works. By borrowing the mouth of David Simple as 'a model reader of moral literature' (Goring, p. 158), Sarah expresses her opinion about the purpose of literary works and the role of readers:

[T]he only Way of writing well was to draw all the Characters from Nature, and to affect the Passions in such a manner, as that the Distresses of the Good should move Compassion, and the Amiableness of their Actions incite Men to imitate them; and the Vices of the Bad stir up Indignation and Rage, and make Men fly their Foot-steps.<sup>63</sup>

For Sarah, the main critical standard by which to evaluate literary works was to consider whether they conveyed their moral messages properly by moving readers' emotions effectively with vivid descriptions. She required her readers to perceive moral implications in literary works. In *The Governess*, a work written for educational purposes, Mrs Teachum teaches her students how to be good readers with 'the proper

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<sup>61</sup> *Dellwyn*, i, pp. 102–03. Quotations from *The Countess of Dellwyn* refer to the two-volume edition in 1759.

<sup>62</sup> Wilde, *The Decay of Lying*, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, pp. 981–2.

<sup>63</sup> *David Simple*, p. 68. Quotations from *David Simple* refer to the 1998 edition edited by Sabor.

Attention’: ‘you will neglect and despise what is light and useless, whilst you’ll imprint on your Minds every useful Lesson that is to be drawn from them [plays]’.<sup>64</sup> The relationship between Mrs Teachum and her female students could be likened to that between the author Sarah Fielding and her readers – the writer is a mentor figure with paternalistic authority, guiding students/readers to morals. Sarah’s use of Shakespeare should be considered in the context of this strong emphasis on the author’s intention and proper readership.

Sarah treats Shakespeare as an author whose canonical status is already established, taking her readers’ knowledge of his works for granted. *David Simple* praises Shakespeare as a role model for writers: ‘In short, to describe this Scene, and all the Grief which the poor old Gentlemen ... and his Children felt, requires a *Shakespear’s Pen*’ (p. 229). In *Dellwyn*, she adds a footnote to her story and says that ‘Shakespear ... is the most remarkable of all Writers of his kind’ (i, p. 259). Unlike her female predecessors in the Restoration period, it is unnecessary for her to devote pages to establishing Shakespeare’s authority, because it is far more widely accepted by her targeted reading community.

Sarah regards Shakespeare as part of the basis of education for her readers, especially young women. *The Cry* introduces Milton and Shakespeare as two typical authors whom ‘every pert boy and girl’ would study.<sup>65</sup> A wide recognition of his canonicity among her targeted women readers is depicted in *Ophelia* and *David Simple*. *Ophelia* implies that Shakespeare should be utilised as educational material for young women; to cultivate the heroine Ophelia, the leading male character Lord Dorchester teaches her Shakespeare at an early stage of her education, and takes her out to see *Macbeth*, perhaps in the adaptation by Davenant (*Ophelia*, pp. 111–12). Sarah also describes a discussion about Shakespeare and other writers by ladies in *David Simple* to satirise those who ‘swim on the *Surface of Criticism*’; the leading character David finds

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<sup>64</sup> Sarah Fielding, *The Governess: Or, the Little Female Academy*, edited by Candace Ward, p. 150. Quotations from *The Governess* refer to this edition.

<sup>65</sup> *The Cry* iii, p. 10. Quotations from *The Cry* refer to the facsimile edition of the 1754 edition, published in 1986.

it pedantic and fruitless (p. 67). She also lists Addison, Matthew Prior, Otway, Congreve, Dryden, Pope, and Thomas D'Urfey along with Shakespeare in this discussion (p. 67), which suggests that these writers are considered as canonical among her targeted readers, although this list contains some writers who are no longer famous among twenty-first-century readers; Sarah's reading list in *David Simple* hints at the change in readers' taste over time.

Relying on Shakespeare's authority, Sarah often uses his works to express her idea about proper readership, most strikingly in *Dellwyn*. While describing the heroine as an energetic reader in her youth, *Dellwyn* satirises her husband Lord Dellwyn's indifference toward Shakespeare: 'The noble Peer had never condescended to read any thing so trifling as *Shakespeare's* Plays; and, if he had perused them, there was no manner of Danger that he should know the Characters again in real Life' (ii, p. 117). However, Lord Dellwyn is deceived by an Iago-like character, Lord Drummond, who 'is endeavouring to impose himself as an honest Man, and a faithful Friend, on *Othello*' (ii, p. 118), because Lord Dellwyn does not know *Othello* and cannot extract lessons from the play. As Suzuki points out, this story contrasts two bad examples of readership: one is Lady Dellwyn's infatuation, only taking pleasures in superficial elements with no deeper understanding of the contents and avoiding strict moral lessons expressed in the books; the other is Lord Dellwyn's complete ignorance of books, which leads to the lack of imagination about problems in real life ('Sarah Fielding and Reading', pp. 106–08). Referring to Shakespeare's authority, Sarah implies that what makes literary works canonical is their moral lessons for everyday life, and that people should study these works properly to train their imagination. Furthermore, the caricature of 'The noble Peer' Lord Dellwyn's lack of knowledge of drama hints at Sarah's assumption that the middling-sort consumers are more active readers/playgoers and more actively engaged in Shakespeare's canonisation in her time than aristocratic patrons.

In her preface to *Dellwyn*, Sarah also takes further steps toward making a clear distinction between proper and improper reading pleasures, mentioning Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*. This preface, written 'for the Purpose of introducing the Author to the

Acquaintance of the Reader' (i, p.iii), directly expresses the author's critical opinion than the main text of the novel. I regard this passage as an example of Bourdieu's distinction between vulgar and cultivated pleasures (*Distinction*, pp. 500–501), as I have already pointed out in my Introduction:

But when we stop at those outward Circumstances, and perceive not the farther Intention, we read as Children see Tragedies, who place their chief Delight in the Noise of the Kettle-drums and Trumpets; or as the Multitude in Holiday-time throng to see *Shakespeare's* Play of *Harry the Eighth*, and attend only to the Show of the Coronation, passing over all the beautiful Strokes therein contained, as little worthy of their Notice (*Dellwyn*, i, p. xxxiii).

Presupposing the playwright's canonical status, Sarah differentiates between interpreters who can perceive 'all the beautiful Strokes' of Shakespeare and childish interpreters who prefer showy presentations; it is not enough to know Shakespeare, but it is necessary to understand the genuine pleasure which his plays provide. This distinction between the two pleasures is a recurring subject matter throughout her novels. In *The Cry*, pleasure seeking by Cylinda, who 'embraced that canon of Epicurus' (iii, pp. 22–23), is satirised as the pursuit of superficial pleasure only to bring confusion in life. In contrast, genuine pleasure is caused by deeper understanding of literary works, as that which Aristotle gained from reading Homer and which drove him to write *The Poetics* (ii, p. 12) is considered the source of intellectual activities.<sup>66</sup> This kind of genuine pleasure in life is increased by sharing through female friendship in the community (*The Cry*, i, p. 38).<sup>67</sup> The reference to Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, a play famous for its depiction of the coronation, is a persuasive piece for Sarah to explain the difference between the pleasures gained from showy pageantry and from understanding

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<sup>66</sup> For Cylinda's use of knowledge, see also Hunter, pp. 234–37.

<sup>67</sup> For Sarah's emphasis on genuine pleasures shared among women in *The Governess*, see also Gadeken, 'A Method of Being Perfectly Happy', p. 217.

of the 'author's intention'.

While utilising Shakespeare's authority to enrich her reflections, Sarah also radically reworks his plays. She extracts several aspects from his plays, combines them with the works of other writers and creates her own works in *Cleopatra and Octavia* and *Ophelia*. She also uses Shakespeare in a more elaborate manner in *The Governess*. These three novels present Sarah's complex relation to the canonical playwright. *Cleopatra and Octavia* does not mention Shakespeare's name, but it is certain that Sarah reworks many sources ranging from Plutarch to Shakespeare.<sup>68</sup> Among Sarah's novels, this conveys the 'author's intention' most clearly: she clarifies her moral intention in the preface:

Thus the famous Amours of *Anthony* and *Cleopatra*, having a true Foundation, will more effectually impress the fatal Consequences of a mad intoxicated Love, and a false insinuating Woman, than may be expected from the most admired or accomplished Novels; and the Distresses of a virtuous *Octavia* will excite a more lasting Sensibility of Pity or Relentment, than can be indulged from the most pathetic Descriptions of Romance.... the Reader may at least expect a more impartial, distinct, and exact Narrative of their several Adventures, and of the Motives they were influenced by; unless he is so inveterately prejudiced in Disfavour of the Fair-sex, as to presume, with the ill-natured Satyrist, That a Woman is not to be credited, any more than trusted, tho' dead (*Cleopatra and Octavia*, p. 55).

As scholars point out, this novel contrasts Cleopatra's public and seductive femininity and Octavia's private and domestic femininity to symbolise vicious foreign influence and English morality respectively in the context of anxiety concerning the influence of

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<sup>68</sup> About Sarah's sources and other basic information of this novel, see Introduction and footnotes in *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia*, edited by Christopher D. Johnson. Quotations from this novel refer to this 1994 edition.

French culture on English national identity during the Seven Years' War.<sup>69</sup> Although Sarah declares that she will provide 'a more impartial' descriptions of the two women's lives and she often claims that readers must not distort the author's intention, in this novel she strategically neglects the complex descriptions of virtues and shortcomings mingled in one character in Shakespeare's play to make her points clear.

As Christopher D. Johnson argues in his study on Sarah's use of genre, while referring to Act II, Scene 5 of *Antony and Cleopatra* – in which a messenger brings the news of Antony's remarriage – Sarah omits Cleopatra's expression of love for Antony and places an emphasis on her violent action toward the messenger (p. 189). Sarah's reworking of *Antony and Cleopatra* is similar to that of Aemilia Lanyer, whom I discussed in Chapter 2, for both of them criticise Cleopatra to defend women's virtue against misogynistic attacks. However, compared to Lanyer's pitiful portrayal of the heroine in *Salve Deus*, Sarah condemns Cleopatra as an ambitious, skilful performer who always sails under false colours. She never loves Antony, but to 'attain Glory' continues to pretend to love him after his death: 'I resolved, in Appearance at least, to die for Anthony' (pp. 124–25). Instead of repeating Shakespeare's Cleopatra without distortion, she selectively borrows particular elements from *Antony and Cleopatra* to simplify the contrast between the two heroines.

*Ophelia's* relationship to Shakespeare is puzzling. Although the heroine's name is borrowed from *Hamlet*, the novel's plot is apparently unrelated to the play, and it contains only a few references to Shakespeare. Scholars have regarded this name as suggestive or mysterious (Paul, p. 122). For example, in analysing the influence of Richardson's *Pamela* on *Ophelia*, Oliver has difficulty in interpreting the heroine's name and points out two possibilities: the name 'Ophelia' may be used as 'a feint or a red herring' to blur the heavy influence of *Pamela*, or it may be 'an elision or variant of Philopamela "lover of Pamela," or even of Philoclea, the name of Pamela's younger

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<sup>69</sup> Gadeken, 'Gender, Empire, and Nation in Sarah Fielding's "Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia"', p. 530; and Oliver, 'Sarah Fielding's *Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* and the British Historical Novel', p. 100–03.



sister in Sidney's *Arcadia*'.<sup>70</sup> However, it is unnecessary to interpret the name Ophelia in relation to Pamela, even though the Fieldings were heavily influenced by Richardson, for it is a multifaceted novel incorporating allusions from various works. I would rather agree with Susan Lamb's analysis of the widespread image of Ophelia as a virtuous woman with heterosexual desire in the eighteenth century: 'Shakespeare's Ophelia had licence to show longings and affections not usually sanctioned in a woman who wanted to be understood as virtuous, and Fielding built her novel on that foundation' (p. 116). If her argument is right, Sarah (and possibly Henry) gives the heroine the name to guarantee the virtue of the young woman in a morally problematic situation. Ophelia is abducted by Lord Dorchester, lives together with him under his protection and falls in love with him. However, she does not become his concubine and wins marriage to her lover. Like Ophelia in *Hamlet*, the heroine of *Ophelia* is a beautiful and good-natured young woman in a plight, but the Fieldings prepare a happy ending for her, placing an emphasis on the heroine's constant love and struggle for marriage.

One of the notable examples of Sarah's reworking of Shakespeare is found in the title-page epigraph of *The Governess*: a quotation from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Title-page epigraphs were enormously popular in eighteenth-century England (Genette pp. 144–63), although less popular in novels than in other genres (Barchas, p. 85). They were fashionable among Sarah's writing community in the late 1740s to the 1750s: Henry's *Tom Jones*, published in the same year as *The Governess*, has a Latin quotation from Horace's *Ars Poetica* on the title page; Jane Collier's *The Art of Tormenting* in 1753 quotes a line from *Hamlet*; and *The Cry* contains the title-page epigraph from Martial's *Epigrams*.<sup>71</sup> Many title-page epigraphs were taken from texts considered canonical by eighteenth-century readers, and used as the signs of 'the book industry's rhetorical strategies to authorize and gentrify print' (Barchas, p. 85).

It is no wonder that *The Governess*, a novel meant for education, contains such an epigraph. Its title page says that it is 'Calculated For the Entertainment and Instruction of Young Ladies in their Education', and quotes the following speech by

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<sup>70</sup> Oliver, 'Over the Garden Wall: Sarah Fielding's *Ophelia* as Critique of Pamela', pp. 126–28.

<sup>71</sup> Woodward, p. 264; and Barchas, p. 86.

Helena from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

Shall we forget the Counsel we have shar'd,  
The Sisters Vows, the Hours that we have spent,  
When we have chid the hasty-footed Time  
For parting Us? O! and is all forgot?  
All School-Days Friendship, Childhood Innocence?  
We, Hermia, like two Artificial Gods,  
Created with our Needles both one Flower  
Both on one Sampler, sitting on one Cushion;  
Both warbling of one Song, both in one Key,  
As if our Hands, our Sides, Voices and Minds,  
Had been Incorp'rate? So we grew together,  
Like to a double Cherry, seeming parted,  
But yet an Union in Partition.

While Sarah and her co-workers who printed and sold this work try to 'ladify' (rather than 'gentrify') the text by borrowing the authority of Shakespeare, this epigraph daringly transforms the original context of the speech. In Shakespeare's play, furious Helena, believing that her friend Hermia is mocking her and blaming her for betraying friendship, speaks these lines. This speech comically signifies the breach of sisterhood. However, Sarah 'distorts' the original intention of the speech to panegyrisse the strong female bond nurtured in education, although she argues for the need to respect the author's intention elsewhere.

Sarah separates Helena's speech from the original context of the play and adds a nostalgic tone to it. In contrast to Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, the most popular adaptation of Shakespeare for children in the nineteenth century – which downplayed female friendship to illustrate marriage (Ehenn pp. 329–31) – Sarah is more interested in commercially appealing to her targeted female reading community. Because this

novel was dedicated to Anna Maria Poyntz, a mother of then twelve-year-old Georgiana (later Countess Spencer) and the most likely candidate for the author of *Je Ne Sçai Quoi: Or, a Collection of Letters, Odes, &c* (1769), which refers to *Othello* three times, Sarah tries to please educated mothers like her patron, who went to school or read books with their female friends in the past and now had a great influence on the choice of their daughters' reading materials.<sup>72</sup> This reworking suggests that Sarah is not only an obedient reader/writer who picks up the author's original intention, but is also a textual poacher.

Sarah and her brother Henry form a small domestic interpretive community in which interpretive strategies related to Shakespeare are shared and utilised to appeal to a wider interpretive community of women as their targeted readers. Both of them quote lines from Shakespeare frequently, directly mentioning the name of the author or his characters. They are involved in the development of the canonisation of English literature as a latent process which is different from more visible efforts to promote certain authors by making standard editions or advertising overtly. By being repeatedly mentioned in everyday reading material, such works could become accepted as household commodities reaching wider audiences.

In this process of canon formation, Henry fully recognises Shakespeare's popularity among women, and utilises the writings in his works as Sarah does. Act III of *The Historical Register for the Year 1736* (hereafter *The Historical Register*), a satire first performed in March 1737, just before the Licensing Act, begins with a discussion about the revival of *King John*, and a character Medley says, 'as Shakespeare is already good enough for people of taste, he must be altered to the palates of those who have none'.<sup>73</sup> As Emmet L. Avery first points out, this is a satirical reference to Colley Cibber's heavily adapted version of *King John*, performed with a prologue including an 'Address to the Ladies of the Shakespeare's Club' on 4 March.<sup>74</sup> Knowing this, Henry

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<sup>72</sup> *Je Ne Sçai Quoi*, pp. 11, 40, and 100. The ESTC's author attribution, 'Anne B. Poyntz', is perhaps misspelled (Suzuki, 'The True Use', p. 123).

<sup>73</sup> *The Historical Register*, III.129-31. Quotations from this play refer to the 1967 edition.

<sup>74</sup> Avery, 'Fielding's Last Season with the Haymarket Theatre', p. 286.

addresses the Shakespeare Ladies Club in the epilogue of *The Historical Register*: ‘and you, ladies, whether you be Shakespeare’s ladies or Beaumont and Fletcher’s ladies, I hope you will make allowances for a rehearsal’ (III. 287–90). The address in *The Historical Register* seems to teasingly invite the ladies to support Henry’s play rather than Cibber’s, for both Henry and the Shakespeare Ladies Club preferred the original plays of Shakespeare.<sup>75</sup> Sarah and Henry, as writers who are keen to popularise their works, utilised Shakespeare’s works as a device to ingratiate themselves with their targeted readers/audiences, especially female ones.

Various intellectual activities of women dealt with in this section show that women were involved in every phase of Shakespeare’s canonisation through reading and writing, although their types of contributions were different. While more and more women read Shakespeare and widely shared knowledge of his works, some intellectually active women, such as Charlotte Lennox and Mary Lever, participated in scholarly research on his texts in the time of the birth of Shakespeare studies. Eighteenth-century novels are influenced by scholarly works and criticisms, and the novelist Sarah Fielding presumed her targeted readers’ knowledge of Shakespeare, which suggests that his canonical status was mostly established.

## **Section 2: Female Playgoers, Periodicals, and the Shakespeare Jubilee**

This section covers female playgoers’ activities and convergence between theatre and print before and after the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769. The Shakespeare Jubilee was held from 6 to 8 September 1769 at Stratford-upon-Avon by David Garrick, although the third day was ruined by rain. The Shakespeare Jubilee and Garrick’s subsequent theatrical performances in London have been regarded as a pivotal event in the canonisation of Shakespeare by scholars, despite the criticisms which it incurred because of the lack of performances of Shakespeare’s original lines.<sup>76</sup> Since women’s

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<sup>75</sup> Ross, pp. 232–33; and Ritchie, ‘The Influence of the Female Audience on the Shakespeare Revival of 1736–1738: The Case of the Shakespeare Ladies Club’ (hereafter ‘The Influence’), p. 65.

<sup>76</sup> In 1769, Stratford-upon-Avon did not have suitable facilities to perform Shakespeare’s plays in their original form (Cunningham, pp. 107–11).

playgoing and periodical cultures were influential but relatively unnoticed factors which paved the way for the Shakespeare Jubilee, the first two subsections will discuss female playgoers' influence on eighteenth-century drama and the propagation of Shakespeare through periodicals targeting women before 1769. The last subsection will analyse how women participated in the Shakespeare Jubilee.

### **2.1 Eighteenth-century Female Playgoers**

In eighteenth-century playhouses, the distinction between vulgar pleasure and cultivated pleasure was made clearly visible. Harry William Pedicord's analysis of primary materials suggests that eighteenth-century audiences consisted of people with diverse social backgrounds, ranging from servants in the upper gallery to aristocratic people in the boxes, and they generally 'went to the theatre for *amusement*' (p. 251); the composition of audiences changed and broadened over the course of time. Some playgoers tried to make a distinction in terms of behaviour and clothes as part of social life rather than making critical comments on the content of plays, while others were more interested in the evaluation of pleasures provided in theatrical entertainments.<sup>77</sup> The changes in playgoers irritated John Dennis in as early as 1702: compared to playgoers in Charles II's reign, or 'an age of Pleasure, and not of Business', some of Dennis' audiences 'had no education at all' for various reasons, including class, wealth and birthplace; some were too busy with business 'to receive due impressions'; and others only judged plays through factional biases, not by pleasure-focused critical standards.<sup>78</sup> While idealising Charles II's court as a place filled with good taste for pleasures, Dennis makes a distinction between playgoers with good interpretive skills and poor ones when it comes to finding pleasures. Eighteenth-century playgoers were encouraged to become consciously engaged in the critical evaluation of pleasures in commercial English drama.

Eighteenth-century theatre audiences, especially London playgoers, are now regarded as powerful consumers. Scholars agree that theatre companies, which no

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<sup>77</sup> Hughes, *The Drama's Patrons*, p. 62.

<sup>78</sup> *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, i, pp. 293–94.

longer vehemently sought aristocratic patronage, were greatly influenced by ‘the taste of the town’, or new patrons in the emerging commercial society, although the royals and aristocrats still actively participated in various dramatic activities ranging from attending theatrical productions to staging amateur productions by themselves.<sup>79</sup> As Samuel Johnson’s frequently quoted verse says, in eighteenth-century playhouses, ‘The drama’s laws the drama’s patrons give’ (*Poems*, p. 89, 53), although it tries to curry favour with the patrons by exaggerating their power.

Women’s presence in eighteenth-century playhouses, and especially the influence of the ‘ladies’, is often referred to in previous research. As Susan Cannon Harris notes, the word ‘ladies’ generally referred to ‘the group of upper-class women for whom special accommodations were made in the theater’ in eighteenth-century playhouses, although on some occasions its definition was far more vague, and many other female playgoers who were not typically classified as ‘ladies’, such as city wives, prostitutes and servants, also attended playhouses.<sup>80</sup> In 1953, James J. Lynch documented the ladies’ attendance at playhouses (pp. 199–207), and Leo Hughes’ *The Drama’s Patrons: A Study of the Eighteenth-Century London Audience*, a comprehensive study of playgoers in eighteenth-century London, reveals that various types of ‘ladies’ attended theatre: some fashionable ladies were satirised because they were not very interested in the plays themselves, but were absorbed in social interaction with other playgoers (p. 62); some ladies who had relatively conservative standards were not pleased with explicit expressions in plays and wanted more moral values and good manners on stage (p. 127); and other ladies did not like overly sentimental plays and were not easily reduced to tears, contrary to the expectation of those working for theatre (pp. 135–36). Pierre Danchin’s analysis of eighteenth-century prologues and epilogues shows that while theatre tended to consider ‘the ladies’ as ‘the natural upholders of theatrical

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<sup>79</sup> Hughes, *The Drama’s Patrons*, p. 10; and Fisher, ‘Audience Participation in the Eighteenth-Century London Theatre’, pp. 55–56. For amateur productions by the royals including Princess Augusta and Elizabeth, see Dobson, *Amateur Performance*, p. 35.

<sup>80</sup> Harris, ‘Clearing the Stage: Gender, Class, and the Freedom of the Scenes in Eighteenth-Century Dublin’ (hereafter ‘Clearing the Stage’), p. 1277. Harris mainly deals with Irish theatre, but the usage of the word ‘ladies’ was not very different between Dublin and London. For the vague definition of ‘ladies’ in printed books, see also Shevelow, p. 23.

morality’, sometimes actresses and female playwrights – in appealing to female playgoers as their own sex and hiding their revolt subtly under joking tones – criticised male-dominated social customs.<sup>81</sup> These eighteenth-century women in theatre, as powerful ‘desiring subjects’, were sometimes considered potentially dangerous agents by male writers, like their English Renaissance counterparts had been.<sup>82</sup>

The Shakespeare Ladies Club illustrates the ladies’ influence over theatre and women’s presence in the process of canon formation. According to Thomas Davies’ account in 1780, they were ‘ladies, who formed themselves into a society under the title of the Shakespeare Club. They bespoke, every week, some favourite play of this great writer’ (1.20). As a playgoing group composed of several educated women, they actively requested performances of Shakespeare during the period of around 1736–38.<sup>83</sup> Although the Licensing Act of 1737, which made it more difficult for creators to produce new plays than before, was also a significant factor, the Shakespeare Ladies Club’s influence on contemporary theatre is undoubtable: scholars believe that the increase in the number of Shakespeare’s plays, especially historical plays in London in this period, is partly due to their activities.<sup>84</sup> Among forty-eight Shakespeare productions at Drury Lane between December 1736 and the end of the season, thirty were advertised as performances ‘At the (particular) Desire of several Ladies of Quality’ (Ritchie, ‘The Influence’, p. 61). Beyond persuading people working in theatre to stage more Shakespeare plays, they also raised funds to build Shakespeare’s statue in Westminster Abbey in 1741 (Ritchie, ‘The Influence’, p. 66).

While they were active in this period, only four members of the Shakespeare Ladies Club have been identified so far: Susanna Ashley-Cooper, Mary Churchill, Mary Cowper and Elizabeth Boyd.<sup>85</sup> Susanna Ashley-Cooper, Countess of Shaftesbury, was

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<sup>81</sup> Danchin, ed., *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century*, 1.1., p. xxxi.

<sup>82</sup> Marsden, ‘Female Spectatorship, Jeremy Collier and the Anti-Theatrical Debate’ (p. 894). Marsden’s analysis in this work is similar to that of Jean Howard’s ‘Scripts’, which I discussed in Chapter 1, although Marsden does not seem to refer to Howard’s work.

<sup>83</sup> Ritchie, ‘The Influence’, p. 61. For the basic information, I follow Avery’s pioneering study, ‘The Shakespeare Ladies Club’.

<sup>84</sup> Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660–1900*, ii, pp. 68–69; and Scouten, p. 198.

<sup>85</sup> Dobson, *Making*, pp. 148–53; Nussbaum, p. 143. Katherine West Scheil suspects that Eliza Haywood

the leader of the club, and known for her beauty and intelligence in the fashionable society of London (Dobson, *Making*, pp. 148–49). Her husband Anthony Ashley-Cooper, fourth Earl of Shaftesbury, was a son of Anthony, third Earl of Shaftesbury, a philosopher, and a nephew to Lady Elizabeth Ashley, whom I discussed in the previous chapter. In such a family, there is no wonder that a female family member would get involved in dramatic and literary activities as part of social life. Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montagu was praised as one of ‘the Illustrious Ladies of the Shakespear’s Club’ by Francis Hawling.<sup>86</sup> She was a daughter of John and Sarah Churchill and a sister to Henrietta Godolphin, whom I discussed in the previous chapter. This shows that most of the major female family members of the Churchills were involved in the popularisation of Shakespeare from the late seventeenth to mid-eighteenth centuries. Mary Cowper was a daughter of William Cowper, MP, and had some literary connections, too – she was a cousin to the poet William Cowper and Lady Harriet Hesketh. She herself wrote a poem, ‘On the Revival of Shakespear’s Plays by the Ladies in 1738’.<sup>87</sup> Finally, Elizabeth Boyd was a writer of Irish descent who was active in London around the 1730s, and praised Shakespeare and the ladies’ support for him in an attached prologue to her play *Don Sancho: Or, the Students Whim, a Ballad Opera of Two Acts, with Minerva’s Triumph* in 1739.<sup>88</sup>

The members of the Shakespeare Ladies Club expressed their gender-specific concern with Shakespeare’s works, connecting their patriotic mood and the supposedly ‘female’ qualities of Shakespeare. Their promotion of Shakespeare was closely related to antipathy toward non-English influence on stage (Ritchie, ‘The Merciful Construction’, p. 88). The works by Elizabeth Boyd and Mary Cowper endow Shakespeare with Britishness/Englishness, while placing him on women’s side. Boyd

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was also a member, but she admits that there is no concrete evidence of this, although Haywood obviously knew the activities of the club (“‘Rouz’d by a Woman’s Pen’: The Shakespeare Ladies’ Club and Reading Habits of Early Modern Women”, hereafter ‘Rouz’d’, p. 27).

<sup>86</sup> Francis Hawling, ‘An Ode to her Grace the Duchess of Montagu, and the Rest of the Illustrious Ladies of Shakespear’s Club’, in *A Miscellany of Original Poems on Various Subjects*, p. 112. See also Nussbaum, p. 143.

<sup>87</sup> British Library Add MS 28101, 93v and 94v.

<sup>88</sup> For her life, see O’Donoghue, p. 33; and Loeber, Loeber and Burnham, p. 169.



focuses on morality: Emphasising ‘*Englands Pride*’, she likens Shakespeare to a ‘Soul-Soothing Shade, rouz’d by a Woman’s Pen / To Check the impious Rage of lawless Men’ (Prologue). Here, Boyd ‘feminises’ Shakespeare by ascribing ‘Soul-Soothing’ tenderness, a purportedly ‘female’ virtue, to his plays, and hinting that women are more temperate and morally well balanced than men, and therefore Shakespeare is their favourite dramatist. Cowper is more inclined toward pleasure seeking: She asks her readers to ‘See happy *Britain* raise her drooping *Head* / Supported by the *Fair Ones* friendly *Aid*’, saying that the revival of Shakespeare has brought them ‘a real, solid *Pleasure*’.<sup>89</sup> These women’s works reveal the intensive, triumphant pleasure which they obtained from their feeling of empowerment. Their power to control the gaze as viewers, connected to their patriotic mood widely recognised by the public, is authorised and reinforced with excitement.

The ladies’ influence on drama was not limited to London. In Dublin, theatrical performances of certain plays were also requested by ‘several Ladies of Quality’ from 1720 to 1745: the plays performed as a result of their demands included those of Shakespeare, along with other popular dramatists such as Ben Jonson and Susanna Centlivre.<sup>90</sup> Ladies in eighteenth-century Dublin were generally a powerful audience, and playhouses often tried to curry favour with them.<sup>91</sup> Elizabeth Boyd was also a woman of Irish descent, and privileged women in Ireland, such as Katherine Philips, Lady Anne Hamilton, and the female members of the Lovett family, were familiar with Shakespeare’s works; educated women in Dublin were as active as their counterparts in London in the popularisation of Shakespeare. It is notable that there are more surviving pieces of evidence to suggest female playgoers’ knowledge of Shakespeare in Dublin than there are to suggest this of women in Edinburgh, where the establishment of public playhouses was not legally permitted before the mid-eighteenth century because of

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<sup>89</sup> BL Add MS 28101 93v. For the transcription, I follow Dobson, *Making*, p. 150.

<sup>90</sup> Nussbaum, p. 143. Green and Clarke list the known theatrical performances in Dublin in this period (pp. 93–402).

<sup>91</sup> Susan Cannon Harris works on this field intensively and demonstrates women’s influence on the Dublin stage in her two studies, ‘Clearing the Stage’ and ‘Outside the Box: The Female Spectator, “The Fair Penitent”, and the Kelly Riots of 1747’.

Presbyterian influence, although this was the capital of ‘one of the best educated countries in Europe’.<sup>92</sup> Even though female playgoers in Edinburgh did request theatrical performances of certain plays, including *Richard III* in 1743, I could not find as many documents about Scotswomen’s engagement in the canonisation of Shakespeare as I could about of English and Irish women, especially in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>93</sup> I suspect that the relative prosperity of the theatre culture in Dublin led to the more visible propagation of the dramatist among women in this city than in Edinburgh.

## 2.2 Periodicals, Women, and Shakespeare

The eighteenth century witnessed ‘the rise of the periodical’ (Italia, p. 1). Magazines covered various subjects, and drama and literature were major interests of these periodicals. As Manushag N. Powell argues, periodicals in eighteenth-century England ‘virtually originated theater criticism’ (p. 43). Periodicals targeting female readers also published articles on theatre, such as the one featuring Susanna Centlivre that appeared in *The Female Tatler* 69 on 12–14 December 1709.

Periodicals published articles not only about commercial playhouses but also on amateur performances and other types of domestic entertainments. Amateur performances were fashionable entertainments, especially in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and they were often covered by periodicals; as I mentioned in the previous chapter, the Harris family’s private productions and their coverage by *Bath Journal* were appropriate examples of this trend.<sup>94</sup> As Michael Dobson points out, even the royals organised amateur theatre; Frederick, Prince of Wales’ children participated in Addison’s *Cato* and Rowe’s *Lady Jane Grey*, and the prologue to *Cato* written for Prince George (later George III) and the epilogue written for Princess Augusta and Prince Edward were published in the *London Magazine* in January of 1749 (*Amateur*

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<sup>92</sup> Stone, ‘Literacy and Education in England 1640–1900’, p. 135.

<sup>93</sup> Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080–1980*, p. 171; and Glover, pp. 98–99.

<sup>94</sup> See also Motter, pp. 63 and 72–75.

*Performance*, pp. 35–36). Eighteenth-century privileged women were actively involved in balls, masquerades, and amateur theatre ‘because of the authority they traditionally exercised as managers of households’ (Russell, p. 192). As I will discuss later in this chapter, women’s active participation in such domestic entertainments and the coverage of this by periodicals would be scaled up at the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769.

In the development of periodicals, Shakespeare became a common name among readers; as George Winchester Stone argues, the references to Shakespeare in periodicals generally increased during the period from 1700 to 1740, which gives evidence of his popularity.<sup>95</sup> Female playgoers’ responses to Shakespeare were sometimes widely shared as dramatic criticisms printed in these new publications, which was an unprecedented phenomenon. Two notable female critics, Eliza Haywood and Frances Brooke, wrote articles praising Shakespeare in the magazines which they created as editors. Their writings are useful documents to understand female playgoers’ active promotion of Shakespeare in literary journalism.

Eliza Haywood, a novelist, promoted Shakespeare in her magazine *The Female Spectator*. She was born around 1693 in Shropshire, and worked as an actress in Dublin before becoming a novelist.<sup>96</sup> She often referred to Shakespeare in novels such as *The History of Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy* of 1753 (ii, p. 233; iii, p. 371) and *The Invisible Spy* of 1755 (ii, p. 153), as well as a conduct book, *The Husband: In Answer to the Wife* of 1756 (p. 143). More significantly, she panegyricised the Shakespeare Ladies Club as a model for women’s intellectual activities, and described the canonisation of Shakespeare as women’s duty in one of the earliest English magazines for and by women. Since *The Female Spectator* lasted longer than other ordinary eighteenth-century magazines and was reprinted, it was relatively successful: her article reached a considerable number of readers, including women.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Stone extensively analyses references to Shakespeare in eighteenth-century magazines in ‘Shakespeare in the Periodicals, 1700–1740: A Study of the Growth of a Knowledge of the Dramatist in the Eighteenth Century’, published as two parts in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 2 and 3.

<sup>96</sup> See Backscheider’s entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>97</sup> For the publication history, reprints and the popularity of *the Female Spectator*, see Spedding, pp. 194–95.

SOME ladies indeed have shewn a truly public spirit in rescuing the admirable, yet almost forgotten Shakespear, from being totally sunk in oblivion: - they have generously contributed to raise a monument to his memory, and frequently honoured his works with their presence on the stage: - an action, which deserves the highest encomiums, and will be attended with an adequate reward; since, in preserving the fame of the dead bard, they add a brightness to their own, which will shine to late posterity.<sup>98</sup>

Haywood utilises Shakespeare's authority to prove women's 'brightness', and defines women's intellectual activities based on good taste and critical criteria as responsible actions for public good – this could be associated with her own feminist tendency.<sup>99</sup> Although Haywood liked 'inimitable' Shakespeare (*The Female Spectator*, iii, p. 122, and iv, p. 113-14), especially his original portrayals of fools, she was pleased with adapted versions: because his plays were 'fine gardens full of beautiful flowers, but choked up with weeds through the too great richness of the soil', it was natural that writers like Cibber tried to alter his plays (ii, p. 78). Haywood's critical standard concerning Shakespeare inherited the Shakespeare Ladies Club's legacy and predated the trends shaped in the Shakespeare Jubilee, in which none of Shakespeare's original plays were performed. While encouraging women to participate in the process of his canonisation, she promoted Shakespeare through journalism, and was also willing to enjoy adapted versions of his plays.

Frances Brooke, a novelist and editor of *The Old Maid*, also defended Shakespeare in her magazine as an active playgoer and critic. Brooke, born around 1724 in Lincolnshire, had a distinctive literary career, for she lived in Quebec from 1763 to

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<sup>98</sup> *The Female Spectator* i, pp. 265–66. Quotations from *The Female Spectator* refer to the fifth edition in 1755.

<sup>99</sup> Like Aemilia Lanyer's case in the English Renaissance period, which I already discussed, whether Eliza Haywood was 'feminist' or not has been debated; Merritt, summarising the debates about Haywood's feminism, discusses her feminist tendency (pp. 20–22). I agree with her that the term 'feminism' is not necessarily associated with systematic or dogmatic views on women and politics, but can rather be linked to broader activities related to empowerment.

1767.<sup>100</sup> Her *The History of Emily Montague*, published in 1769 in England, was the ‘first novel written in North America’ (Nischik, Introduction, p. 11), and her works are often discussed in the context of the history of Canadian colonial literature (Cuder-Domínguez, pp. 119-23). Like Haywood, she often referred to Shakespeare. Her first novel, *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* of 1763, was heavily influenced by *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet*; the plot of star-crossed lovers is similar to that of *Romeo and Juliet*, and the heroine Julia compares herself to Juliet after watching the theatrical performance of the play.<sup>101</sup> Brooke also refers to Shakespeare, Spencer, Sydney, Jonson and Fletcher to commemorate Elizabeth I’s reign in ‘Ode IX’ in *Virginia A tragedy, with Odes, Pastorals, and Translations* of 1756 (p. 154).

Brooke’s most notable engagement in Shakespeare’s canonisation is found in her woman’s periodical *The Old Maid*, issued from 15 November 1755 to 24 July 1756 under the pen name ‘Mary Singleton, Spinster’. This magazine, published under the influence of *The Female Spectator*, was short lived but relatively popular among readers, as shown by the fact that the revised version was published in 1764, the year she temporarily returned to England from Canada.<sup>102</sup> In the dramatic criticism first published on 13 March 1756 and revised in 1764, she criticises Tate’s adaptation of *King Lear*, after having watched Spranger Barry play the title role:

It has always been matter of great astonishment to me that both the houses have given *Tate*’s alteration of *King Lear* the preference to *Shakespeare*’s excellent original, which *Mr Addison*, the most candid as well as judicious of critics, thinks so infinitely preferable as to bear no degree of comparison; and one cannot help remarking particularly, and with some surprize, that *Mr Garrick*, who professes himself so warm an idolater of this inimitable poet and who is

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<sup>100</sup> See Edwards’ entry in *ODNB* and Needham’s short article on her career as a critic.

<sup>101</sup> Frances Brooke, *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*, p. 81. In this novel, Harry first loves the Countess, but realises that his love for Julia is far stronger, which reminds readers of Romeo’s transition from Rosaline to Juliet. Brooke also utilises the misdelivery of letters as a plot device, as *Romeo and Juliet* does. As Steiner points out, the name ‘Belmont’, a place where Julia and her father Lord Belmont lives, is borrowed from *The Merchant of Venice* (Introduction, p. xiii).

<sup>102</sup> See also McMullen, ‘Frances Brooke’s Early Fiction’, p. 37.

determined, if I may use his own words, in the prologue to the *Winter's Tale*,  
*To lose no drop of this immortal man,*  
should yet prefer the adulterated cup of *Tate* to the pure genuine draught offered  
him by the master he avows to serve with such fervency of devotion.<sup>103</sup>

Using a similar expression to Haywood's, Brooke praises Shakespeare as 'this inimitable poet'. On the other hand, her viewpoint differs from that of Haywood: she does not accept altered versions of Shakespeare, and argues that people working for theatre should perform the original tragic version of *King Lear*. She did not support Garrick, and Garrick did not like her play *Virginia*, either (*The Letters of David Garrick*, ii, p. 462) – they apparently belonged to competing interpretive communities.

At the same time, Brooke was not necessarily partial to Barry. In another dramatic criticism first published on 8 May in the same year, she made harsh comments on Barry's *Henry VIII*. While she paid much attention to the ambassador of Morocco, who also attended theatre, she never averted her glance from Barry's unsatisfactory performance: 'the character is most ridiculously burlesqued in the representation, and ... *Shakespeare* and the monarch are very inhumanly sacrificed to the polite taste and elegant distinction of the upper gallery' (*The Old Maid* 26, pp. 221–22). She thought that 'his [Henry VIII's] character is drawn by *Shakespear* very nearly as it stands in history, and in colours far different from farcical ones, in which it is the present fashion to represent it' (p. 222). Brooke's critical standard is rigorous, and she condemns not only the altered versions, but also the contemporary theatrical fashion of emphasising comical aspects of the monarch, because this was not true to Shakespeare's original texts. She looks forward to 'receiving pleasure' (p. 222) from theatrical performances, but 'many abuses of like nature' (p. 222) have greatly reduced her pleasure from contemporary theatre. Establishing critical criteria, Brooke was both an active pleasure seeker in theatre and influential judge of taste in drama.

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<sup>103</sup> Frances Brooke, *The Old Maid* 18, p. 149. Quotations from *The Old Maid* refer to the revised edition of 1764. The first version of 1756 was slightly acrimonious: see McMullen, *An Odd Attempt in a Woman*, p. 21.

These articles show that targeted readers of these female magazines, or female playgoers, had multiple opportunities to access the various opinions of other female playgoers and their different critical criteria concerning Shakespeare's theatrical productions through reading: Haywood recognises adaptations, while Brooke does not. Although both of them try to canonise Shakespeare as active and influential playgoers, they represent two different interpretive communities, and attempt to inform female reading communities adopting their interpretive strategies through periodicals. In the process of the canonisation of Shakespeare, such a literary conflict between interpretive communities plays a significant part in establishing sophisticated critical criteria related to theatre. The presence of the critical conflict itself proves Shakespeare's authority – both interpretive communities approve of his canonicity, and the core of the debate is how to stage his plays. Furthermore, the two writers' social backgrounds are notable: Haywood worked in Dublin as an actress, and Brooke lived in Quebec. This hints at how educated readers brought the knowledge of English literature to local and colonial cultures in the middle of the process of canonisation, and propagated critical criteria to evaluate dramatic and literary works outside England – as periodicals were widely circulated all over the British Isles, people also moved with this knowledge.

Along with these women's articles to promote Shakespeare, miscellaneous reading materials targeting women often made minor references to the dramatist. Even *The Ladies Diary, or the Woman's Almanack* mentioned Shakespeare in 1721, although its main subject matter was not drama or literature but mathematics (Stone, 'Shakespeare in the Periodicals', Part 1, pp. 313–14). *The Ladies Magazine, or, the Universal Entertainer*, a magazine targeting female readers and edited by Jasper Goodwill, published an anonymous parody poem titled 'Socrates on Death: Translated from Plato's Apology in Shakespeare's Manner'. This begins with the first line of Hamlet's soliloquy, 'TO be or not to be, that is the Question!', and relates Socrates' philosophical thought.<sup>104</sup> This presupposes a certain amount of knowledge of

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<sup>104</sup> *The Ladies Magazine* 3.6, February 1752, pp. 91–92. The poem was also printed in *The Newcastle General Magazine* 12, December 1751, p. 648 and *The Scots Magazine* 13, December 1751, pp. 583–584. See also Trillini and Basel.

Shakespeare's Hamlet and Socrates – creators of *The Ladies Magazine* thought that their targeted female readers shared such knowledge. Other types of cheap print, especially educational books for women, also mentioned Shakespeare. *Female Empire: Or, Winter Celebrated at London*, a short collection of verses published in 1746 and attributed to William Hawkins, alludes to *Othello* along with other plays which were popular in this period (p. 15). *The Ladies Complete Letter-writer*, published in 1763, quotes Queen Catherine's speech in Henry VIII and Portia's speech in *The Merchant of Venice* as good rhetorical examples of expressing wives' virtue.<sup>105</sup> *The Polite Arts, Dedicated to the Ladies*, a book on visual art written by otherwise unknown writer 'Cosmetti' in 1767, also cites Shakespeare along with Milton, praising his talent in describing 'the sublime image of glory' (p. 38). The most interesting reference to Shakespeare in educational books for women is found in Francesco Algarotti's *Il Newtonianismo per la Dame*, published in Italian in Naples in 1737. This book on Newton's theory, purportedly targeting (but not limited to) female readers, mentions English poets such as Addison, Dryden and Shakespeare, reflecting Algarotti's anglophile taste.<sup>106</sup> Elizabeth Carter translated this into English in 1739. The allusion to Shakespeare in this book suggests that he was regarded as a poet well known among educated female readers in and outside the British Isles, and was likely to attract their interest. These minor references to Shakespeare show that women who read periodicals and conduct books, as well as women who read novels or plays, had become relatively familiar with Shakespeare by the 1760s.

### 2.3 Women at the Shakespeare Jubilee

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<sup>105</sup> *The Ladies Complete Letter-writer*, pp. 99–100. The author of this work is unknown, but Edward Kimber, one of the publishers of *The London Magazine*, is the most likely candidate: see Sidney A. Kimber, p. 92; and Hayes, pp. 162–63, n57. This book was relatively successful, for it was reprinted several times (Kerhervé, p. xix).

<sup>106</sup> Algarotti, *Il Newtonianismo per le Dame*, p. 4. According to Mazzotti, Algarotti was famous for his fashionable anglophile taste, which makes historians to pay less attention to this work (p. 121). Algarotti had many female acquaintances in England, including bluestocking intellectual Mary Watley Montagu (Needleman, p. 33n7).



It was you, Ladies, that restored Shakespeare to the Stage! You formed yourselves into a Society to protect his Fame!<sup>107</sup>

According to an eighteenth-century theatre manager Benjamin Victor, David Garrick, the director of the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769, praised the ladies' efforts to canonise Shakespeare on the second day of the Jubilee. Following the theatrical conventions, Garrick and his co-workers expected many female participants at the event. Considering the ladies' passion for fun and their fatigue, he wondered if he should not hold a masquerade ball on the second night in the planned program.<sup>108</sup> The program says that there are ordinaries for 'Ladies and Gentlemen' on the first and second days, and that on the third night 'By the request of the LADIES, was a BALL'.<sup>109</sup>

Major studies of the event, such as those by Christian Deelman and Johanne Magdalene Stochholm, approach it from the viewpoint of the impresario's career and people surrounding him. As the titles of Martha Winburn England's book suggests, it was regarded as 'Garrick's Jubilee'.<sup>110</sup> I am deeply indebted to these previous studies in this section, but although the records suggest the substantial presence of women at the Shakespeare Jubilee, their participation has not yet been fully studied. I focus on the 'audience's Jubilee' aspect of the event to illustrate women's roles in it, rather than repeating similar explanations or analyses already provided by previous studies. I will accomplish this by documenting the activities of female participants in the Shakespeare Jubilee and their complex relationship with David Garrick, the powerful male organiser of the event.

Scholars agree that the Shakespeare Jubilee had a great impact on the popularisation of the poet. To use Deelman's phrase, '[i]t marks the point at which

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<sup>107</sup> The transcription of David Garrick's speech for the Shakespeare Jubilee in Benjamin Victor, *The History of the Theatres of London and Dublin*, iii, p. 222.

<sup>108</sup> *The Letters of David Garrick*, ii, facing p. 699.

<sup>109</sup> The program of the whole three days, titled 'Shakespeare Jubilee', is included in the British Library's ephemera collection (C.61.e.2., f.97).

<sup>110</sup> England's study is useful, but it confuses dates. She states that the Shakespeare Jubilee began on 5 September Wednesday (p. 43) and ended on 7 September (p. 62), but 5 September 1769 was Tuesday and the program of the first day says that the event began on Wednesday, 6 September. This program is reproduced in Deelman (p. 192). Patricia Pierce, perhaps following England, uses wrong dates (p. 7).

Shakespeare stopped being regarded as an increasingly popular and admirable dramatist, and became a god' (p. 7). Many people gathered in Stratford-upon-Avon for this three-day festival dedicated to the poet; the exact number of participants is uncertain, but about 1000–1500 participants attended the festival on 7 September only (Mann, p. 133). Since then, Stratford-upon-Avon has become 'Shakespeare country', one of the major tourist attractions in England. The event was so extensively covered by media that people outside the British Isles, such as in France and Germany, gained much information about it and knew Shakespeare's 'national poet' status (England, pp. 217–41).

The presence of female participants at the Shakespeare Jubilee is relatively well documented. Among 204 attendants (including families) identified by England, 46 were women (pp. 245–49). Women with various social backgrounds, ranging from local women to non-English women, attended the Shakespeare Jubilee; while female residents in Stratford-upon-Avon, such as Ann Sharp, Mrs. Evetts and Mrs. Hatton, temporarily became landladies and welcomed visitors (England, p. 31), Boswell was fascinated with Margaret Sheldon, the Irish wife of Thomas Sheldon.<sup>111</sup>

England's list, however, is sometimes vague, containing no references to primary materials. She could not cover all the female participants. For example, it does not include Mary Dewes, a niece of a bluestocking artist, Mary Delany, who lived in Bulstrode at that time. According to Delany's letter to Dewes on 3 September 1769, Dewes stayed in Stratford-upon-Avon.<sup>112</sup> On 17 September 1769, Delany asked her niece to send her 'some *Shakespeare ribbon*', a popular souvenir from the Jubilee (2.i. p. 214), and stated that if Garrick visited her patron Margaret Bentinck, Duchess of Portland, to perform 'his ode' at the Jubilee, 'it would be probably my only opportunity of hearing him speak again' (2.i. p. 242). Mary Dewes, perhaps with some family members or friends, attended the Jubilee. Delany was a pleasure-loving playgoer; when she was younger, she attended an amateur performance of *Julius Caesar* performed by

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<sup>111</sup> Boswell in *Search of a Wife 1766–1769*, p. 281; and Montgomery-Massingberd, p. 140.

<sup>112</sup> Delany, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville*, 2.i, p. 237. Quotations from Delany refer to this edition.

the students of Westminster School twice and described Lord Middlesex, who played Cassius, as ‘a handsome creature’.<sup>113</sup> Delany’s request suggests that her pleasure-loving nature encouraged her to share the atmosphere of the Jubilee in some way, though she could not attend it.

I suspect that some of the women whom England identifies did not in fact attend the event despite their intentions to visit Stratford-upon-Avon. England thinks that two bluestocking intellectuals, Catharine Macaulay, a historian, and Elizabeth Carter, a translator, participated in the Shakespeare Jubilee, but gives no detailed references to her sources.<sup>114</sup> In fact, as Bridget Hill argues, Macaulay was too ill to attend, although she was invited with Carter and other female intellectuals.<sup>115</sup> I also doubt Carter’s participation. She was obviously interested in Shakespeare, for she often referred to his works in her letters.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, many of her bluestocking friends, such as Macaulay, Elizabeth Montagu, Catherine Talbot, were unavailable as travelling companions during the event. Talbot sent a letter to Carter on 9 September in 1769 and says that ‘But, perhaps, by this time she [Elizabeth Montagu] may be well enough to have prescribed herself a trip to the Jubilee. – Would she were well enough to be able!’.<sup>117</sup> Montagu had a health problem in the first weeks of September and could not visit Stratford-upon-Avon, although she had wanted to attend. She saw a subsequent London performance of *The Jubilee* at Drury Lane Theatre (Blunt, i, p. 227). Talbot never mentions Carter’s plan to visit the Shakespeare Jubilee in this letter. Carter also received a letter from Montagu on September 29 which explains Montagu’s

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<sup>113</sup> Delany, 1.i. p. 158. See also Dobson, *Amateur Performance*, p. 35.

<sup>114</sup> Pat Rogers’ *The Samuel Johnson Encyclopedia* follows England with no references to primary materials (p. 383).

<sup>115</sup> Bridget Hill says that she was invited to the Shakespeare Jubilee with ‘several other Literary Ladies’, but does not provide accurate bibliographical information on the primary source (*The Republican Virago*, p. 23). However, an untitled poem in *The London Chronicle* (October 10–12, 1769) published one month after the Shakespeare Jubilee, states that Macaulay’s health was restored after a period of recuperation. It is unlikely that Macaulay was able to attend the event in the face of her health problem.

<sup>116</sup> She refers to *Hamlet* in her letter to Hannah Underdown of 3 January 1741 and *Macbeth* in her letter to Hannah Underdown of 26 February 1742. She saw *The Merchant of Venice* and praised Charles Macklin’s performance of Shylock in February 1741. See Carter, *Elizabeth Carter, 1717–1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters*, pp. 103, 110–11, and 123.

<sup>117</sup> Carter, Elizabeth, Catherine Talbot, and Elizabeth Vesey, *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, from the Year 1741 to 1770*, ii, p. 191.

communication with Garrick about the Shakespeare Jubilee (Blunt, i, 354). The description of the festival in this letter seems too detailed to be sent to a person who had attended the actual event.

Ironically, the woman whose presence was most notable at the Shakespeare Jubilee was Elizabeth Montagu, who was physically absent. Her book *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare, Compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets: With Some Remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Mons. de Voltaire* (hereafter *Shakespeare*) was published in 1769, just before the Shakespeare Jubilee. This work, widely circulated among her contemporary readers, including non-English speakers, was granted an exceptional recognition by Garrick and recommended at the Shakespeare Jubilee; Montagu said she was pleased with this in her letters to Lord Lyttleton in October.<sup>118</sup> The book is a product of conscious and deliberate efforts to canonise Shakespeare as an English national poet. As many scholars have already argued, it is overtly nationalist and especially anti-French, praising ‘the genius of our great Poet’ (*Shakespeare*, p. 111) above ‘the rules of art’ (p. 30) regulating French theatre, and criticising Voltaire’s analyses of Shakespeare as the title suggests.<sup>119</sup>

This work tries to establish critical criteria for evaluating drama, which is a crucial element in the process of canon formation. Montagu emphasises the moral qualities of drama as the first and foremost critical standard: ‘The general object of Poetry, among the ancients, was the instruction of mankind, in religion, morals, philosophy, &c’ (p. 9). For aesthetic qualities, she highly appreciates Burckian sublimity. In a section named ‘On the Præternatural Beings’, which is devoted to the analysis of supernatural beings in his works, Montagu defines Shakespeare as a poet nourished by ‘popular superstitions’ (p. 51), or the imagination of supernatural beings rooted in Britain: ‘Ghost, fairies, goblins, elves, were as propitious, were as assistant to Shakespear, and gave as much of the sublime, and of the marvellous, to his fictions’.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Blunt, i, p. 224. See also Ritchie, ‘Elizabeth Montagu: “Shakespear’s Poor Little Critic”’, p. 76. Quotations from *The Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* refer to *Bluestocking Feminism: Writings on the Bluestocking Circle, 1738–1785 Volume 1 Elizabeth Montagu*.

<sup>119</sup> Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare*, pp. 164–65; Gevirtz, p. 67; and Ritchie, ‘Elizabeth Montagu’, p. 73.

<sup>120</sup> *Shakespeare*, p. 51. Montagu, in her letter to Elizabeth Carter on 24 November 1759, states that she

Montagu's nationalistic praise of Shakespeare, with its analyses of critical criteria, neatly suited Garrick's aim to promote Shakespeare as the national poet. Garrick's appreciation of Montagu at the event and the invitations extended to Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Macaulay suggest the influence of the bluestocking circle as an interpretive community in the eighteenth century.

The active participation of women in the event shows how female kinship and friendship functioned to reinforce pleasure in the festive atmosphere. Georgiana, Countess Spencer, attended it; she was a daughter of Sarah Fielding's patron Anna Maria Poyntz, wife of John, first Earl of Spencer (a great-grandson of John and Sarah Churchill), and the mother of Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire. Countess Spencer was famous as a highly intelligent woman and philanthropist, and one of the most active supporters of Garrick.<sup>121</sup> Young female participants – who were perhaps accustomed to masquerading and other domestic entertainments – actively created a festive atmosphere. George Colman described three women's notable masquerading on 7 September:

Behold the Witches Three!  
Who's She? —Who's She ?— Who's She?  
'Tis Pembroke, Payne, and Crewe.  
In ev'ry breast they raise strange storms,  
More real sorc'ry in those forms,  
Than any Shakespeare drew !<sup>122</sup>

Among the women disguised as three witches of *Macbeth*, Elizabeth Herbert, Countess

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will send Carter a copy of *On the Sublime and Beautiful*. In her letter to Carter in December 1759, Montagu also says that she received a visit from Burke. For these two letters, see *Bluestocking Feminism: Writings on the Bluestocking Circle, 1738–1785 Volume 1 Elizabeth Montagu*, pp. 150–55. For Burke and Shakespeare in general, see Oya, pp. 108–21.

<sup>121</sup> Their correspondence is compiled in *Letters of David Garrick and Georgiana Countess Spencer 1759–1779*. See also Parsons, p. 265.

<sup>122</sup> George Colman the elder, 'The Three Witches at the Jubilee Masquerade', in *Prose on Several Occasions, Accompanied with Some Pieces in Verse*, ii, p. 318.

of Pembroke and Montgomery, was a great-granddaughter of John and Sarah Churchill.<sup>123</sup> She was distantly related to the Spencers, and well connected to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and Eva Maria Garrick.<sup>124</sup> ‘Payne’ is Frances Lambertine Christiana Charlotte Harriet Theresa, wife of Ralph Payne, Baron Lavington. She was a German noblewoman, a daughter of Baron Kolbel of Saxony and was close to Queen Charlotte, wife of George III.<sup>125</sup> ‘Crewe’ is Frances Anne Crewe, daughter of female Irish poet Frances Greville and wife of John, first Baron Crewe.<sup>126</sup> Frances Anne Crewe was regarded as ‘one of the best-known of the whig hostesses’.<sup>127</sup> Colman’s poem implies that these fashionable women displayed their ‘real sorc’ry’, or their erotic power connected with social and political influence, and took pleasures in performing Shakespeare’s theatrical characters as fictional identities, on the pretext of praising him.<sup>128</sup>

According to an untitled article by a man from London in *The Gentlemen’s Magazine*, ‘Mrs. Bouverie’ was also disguised as a witch in *Macbeth* with Payne and Crewe, and the author ‘had much conversation with the three weird sisters ... the three handsomest faces in England’.<sup>129</sup> This ‘Mrs. Bouverie’ was Henrietta (also known as Harriet) Bouverie, daughter of Everard Fawkner (also spelled Fawkener) and wife of Edward Bouverie.<sup>130</sup> Harriet Bouverie and Frances Anne Crewe were closely united ‘by a romantic friendship’, and Joshua Reynolds created a double portrait of these two women in the same period as the Shakespeare Jubilee (Leslie and Taylor, i, p. 324). Harriet Bouverie was later associated with Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire’s circle (Foreman, pp. 48 and 142). For these women, the Shakespeare Jubilee offered a good

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<sup>123</sup> See Lisa Hartshell Jackson’s entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>124</sup> See Elizabeth Herbert’s letter to her son George on 24 October 1780 and her husband’s letter to George on 1 May 1781 (*Pembroke Papers*, pp. 54 and 120).

<sup>125</sup> See Courtney and O’Shaughnessy’s entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>126</sup> England misidentified Crewe as ‘Member of Parliament from Chester’ (p. 248), but there is no MP from Chester called ‘Crewe’ in this period, and John Crewe represented Cheshire. See R. W. Davis’s entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>127</sup> See Salmon’s entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>128</sup> According to the *OED*, the word ‘witch’ was already used to refer to ‘[a] young woman or girl of bewitching aspect or manner’ in 1740 (3b).

<sup>129</sup> *The Gentlemen’s Magazine*, 39 (September 1769), p. 423.

<sup>130</sup> *The Peerage of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, i, p. 301.

opportunity to reinforce their ties by kinship and friendship.

Scotswoman Christian Carstairs' relatively unknown poem is a rare account of the festive atmosphere of the Shakespeare Jubilee by a female participant, although England's list of participants does not include her. Not much is known about her, but it is believed that she was a member of the Carstairs of Kinross, Fife, and died around 1786.<sup>131</sup> She was a well-educated but not wealthy woman, and perhaps worked as a governess. In 1786, a small book of poetry, *Original Poems. By a Lady, Dedicated to Miss Ann Henderson. A Tribute to Gratitude and Friendship* was published in Edinburgh, and this 'Lady' is Carstairs. This book contains a small poem titled 'A Lady in the Character of a Nymph, To the Corsican Warrior at Shakespeare's Jubilee' (p. 57), a first-person narrative poem describing Boswell as a Corsican man at the ball: Boswell, her fellow countryman, supported the independence of Corsica at that time:

O Warrior! whence thy rustic and dress?  
An exile ah! and Corsica thy place:  
Yes, stay, and on these flow'ry banks to dwell,  
With Shakespeare's soul, who freedom lov'd so well.  
Though I have nought but tears I can give thee,  
Yet Soon I hope thou better days shalt see.  
Yes; sure a time when Briton's sons shall rise,  
See their white canvas spreading o'er thy seas;  
When they shall boldly soon thy right assert.  
But here, in peace, O! Warrior, end the night!  
I shrink at war! how many heroes slain,  
Of friends and kindred, on some distant plain!  
I shrink at war! how many nymphs like me,  
To soothe their grief by moon-light night you'll see  
By Avon's stream, and as it silent glides,

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<sup>131</sup> For her biographical background, see Lonsdale, p. 267. For her poems, see also Keith, *Poetry And The Feminine From Behn To Cowper*, pp. 150–151 and 'Poetry, Sentiment, and Sensibility', p 133.

Bathe their white bosoms, or to hide their heads!  
But let no tear the gen'ral joy, to night,  
No, not a sigh, the general joy to blight.

As Pam Perkins notes, this poem sets between 'the claims of British interest in supporting the Corsican independence movement against reluctance to see Britons fighting overseas' (p. 4). By coming to the ball in the Corsican attire, Boswell reminds Carstairs of the political problem in the world outside the party, although the festive atmosphere appears to separate the participants who assume fictional identities from earthly problems. The setting of the Shakespeare Jubilee also inspires nationalism in her mind: in this poem the works of Shakespeare, 'who freedom lov'd so well', signify Britons' free spirit, which should liberate the Corsicans. However, while praising the courage of 'heroes', Carstairs imports a distinctly gendered viewpoint of mourning women, or 'many nymphs like me', who miss dead soldiers. This gendered anxiety leads to the immediate desire to 'end the night' peacefully, or forget earthly problems temporarily and prolong the pleasure of the ball. This poem captures a female participant's craving for the evanescent pleasure provided by this national festival.

These women's enjoyment of the Shakespeare Jubilee illustrates the role of festive pleasures in the formation of fandom. As Deidra Shauna Lynch states about the Janeites, despite the 'unbecoming levity, sentimentality, a determination to integrate fiction into life or a conservative nostalgia' of fandom, which are often censured by academics, asserting enthusiasm through costuming or pilgrimage to related places can greatly cultivate the imagination and pleasures of interpreters ('Cult of Jane Austen', pp. 117–18). Scholars such as Stochholm criticise these entertainments at the Shakespeare Jubilee as obstacles to 'the serious purpose of the festival' (p. 173). However, it was partly because Shakespeare was transformed into a device to provide festive pleasures through these entertainments that the Shakespeare Jubilee became a pivotal point of his canonisation. Even though the participants did not know much about Shakespeare's plays, they were able to experience Shakespeare with ease. Such an event would help to



propagate Shakespeare among casual users of drama and literature by impressing them with festive memories and making them feel a sense of an embodied interpretive community. Since its focus was on pleasure seeking, the Shakespeare Jubilee was not only the first memorial event for Shakespeare, but also one of the predecessors of modern fan conventions, or ‘cons’.<sup>132</sup> In many of recent fan conventions, including academic conferences on Jane Austen, fancy balls or pageants for ‘cosplay’, or masquerading as fictional characters by assuming specific costumes and attributes, are common practices, and female fans in these events are often regarded as highly active participants.<sup>133</sup> David Garrick and his co-workers, like Janeite organisers and modern cosplay communities, understood how such masquerade pageants could create a festive public space which was separate from ordinary life and could trigger social interaction with the help of the theatrical and somewhat fictional identities assumed by the participants.

Along with audience members, at least fourteen women participated in the event as actresses, dancers, musicians and family members of those working for theatre. Many of them came to Stratford-upon-Avon to work as professionals. Eva Maria Garrick was an ‘indefatigable’ assistant of her husband.<sup>134</sup> She went to Stratford-upon-Avon in June for the preparation of the event with David and his brother George, and, along with singer Sophia Baddeley, decorated Shakespeare’s tomb. She cared for her husband when he was in a bad mood due to a shaving injury by using folk medicine.<sup>135</sup> When problems occurred, she diligently worked to solve them: she danced by demand of the participants and delighted them when no other entertainments were available. She lent money to Boswell, who had no transportation to leave the town at the end of the Jubilee, for her husband could not provide Boswell with sufficient money.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> It is said that the first modern fan convention was held in 1936 by science fiction fans in Philadelphia (Coppa, p. 43). See also Bogstad, pp. 210–13.

<sup>133</sup> For the culture of the Janeites, see Johnson, ‘Austen Cults and Cultures’. Okabe describes women’s activities in cosplay communities in Japan.

<sup>134</sup> Deelman, p. 208. Eva Maria inherited her husband’s copy of the Second Folio after his death in 1779 (Fo.2 no.52, Appendix 5-38).

<sup>135</sup> England pp. 26, 50; and Deelman, p. 192.

<sup>136</sup> Deelman, p. 257; and England, p. 63.

Sophia Baddeley, who was praised as ‘that beautiful insinuating creature’ by Boswell, sang ‘Sweet Willy O’, which became a hit song.<sup>137</sup> ‘Sweet Willy O’ was a tribute to Shakespeare, and according to its lyrics, ‘[h]e melted each maid’ by his artistic talent. Sung by a popular female singer like Baddeley, this line superimposed contemporary female audiences’ support for Shakespeare on eighteenth-century audiences’ biographical speculation over his somewhat fictional ‘ladies’ man’ character.<sup>138</sup> Maria Barthélemon, then ‘a young Lady pupil to Dr. Arne’ but later a successful professional singer and composer, sang with Baddeley and other male musicians.<sup>139</sup> Because Anne Barry was too ill to attend the Shakespeare Jubilee, Mary Ann Yates played the role of the tragic Muse.<sup>140</sup> Although she retired several months before, Kitty Clive, an actress, also attended the event.<sup>141</sup>

That David Garrick needed these popular female performers to hold the big theatrical festival implies that the male-dominated mid-eighteenth-century theatre faced a paradoxical situation. Garrick himself tried to ‘masculinize, professionalize, and legitimize’ theatre by effacing the promiscuous image associated with drama, and Shakespeare was an essential part of this project (Conaway, p. 22). Garrick placed great emphasis on masculinity in Shakespeare’s plays, and praised male supremacy and women’s obedience in marriage in *Catharine and Petruchio*, an adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*.<sup>142</sup> However, as Boswell’s comment on Baddeley suggests, ‘feminine’ beauty and performances apparently attracted audiences to the celebration of Shakespeare, along with Garrick’s own performances. The celebrity status of eighteenth-century actresses has often been discussed, and it is widely believed that their erotic charm was one of the major attractions for audiences, particularly wealthy

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<sup>137</sup> *Boswell in Search of a Wife, 1766–1769*, p. 281; England, p. 47; and Balwin and Wilson.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Sweet Willy O’, in David Garrick et al. *Shakespeare’s Garland*, p. 5.

<sup>139</sup> ‘Postscript’, *The London Chronicle*, 7–9 September 1769.

<sup>140</sup> ‘Intelligence from Stratford’, *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, 6–8 September 1769. In the 1785 revival of Garrick’s Shakespeare Jubilee in London, Sarah Siddons played the role of the tragic Muse (Shearer West, p. 114).

<sup>141</sup> England, p. 34. For Clive’s life, see also Crouch’s entry in *ODNB*.

<sup>142</sup> Conaway, p. 22; and Dobson, *Making*, pp. 197–98.

male playgoers.<sup>143</sup> At the Shakespeare Jubilee, the male impresario made two kinds of efforts – one to domesticate female performers’ sexualities and the other to entertain audiences in the process of the popularisation of Shakespeare – which coexisted ambiguously and uncomfortably. It can be said that he ‘controlled’ their sexualities by exploiting them to appeal to the participants, but he could not ‘domesticate’ them because he propagated Shakespeare by utilising their erotic power in a festive public space. Various tasks allotted to Eva Maria Garrick, ranging from nursing her husband to displaying her feminine charm in dancing, reveal that Garrick himself recognised the limitation of the domestication of women in show business. Furthermore, unlike the productions of plays in theatre, which could mostly be supervised by Garrick, the large-scale festival required improvisation of female professionals out of his reach. Their tasks were not limited to showing their charm, but rather included managerial duties. These female professionals’ cooperation at the Shakespeare Jubilee informs us of the power dynamics between male and female performers in eighteenth-century theatre as well as women’s involvement in Shakespeare’s canonisation.

Garrick’s speech for the ladies at the Shakespeare Jubilee on 7 September, transcribed by Benjamin Victor, fluctuates between his two attempts to masculinise Shakespeare and to seek support for women, and ends by making a nationalist cause for canonisation.<sup>144</sup> As the first quotation in this subsection suggests, it begins with panegyric comments on the ladies, and reminds the audiences of the Shakespeare Ladies Club’s promotion to build Shakespeare’s monument in Westminster Abbey.<sup>145</sup> In stating that women and Shakespeare ‘have mutually admired, and defended each other’ (Victor, p. 223), he completely separates his male-centred reinterpretation of *The Taming of the Shrew* from his hope for female playgoers’ eloquent defence of Shakespeare against attacks on the poet. After this prose address, in the rhyming address titled as ‘To the Ladies’, he emphasises the masculine ‘ladies’ man’ quality of Shakespeare, as Baddeley

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<sup>143</sup> Straub, p. 92. For eighteenth-century actresses as celebrities, see Nussbaum, pp. 31–60.

<sup>144</sup> Thomas Davies’ *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick, Esq.* also quotes this epilogue and explains its backgrounds (ii, pp. 226–30).

<sup>145</sup> Victor, p. 222; and England, p. 54.

sings in 'Sweet Willy O': 'He lov'd the Sex – not like your Men of Prose' (Victor, p. 223). Furthermore, Garrick classifies power and evil as male qualities, and tenderness and weakness as female qualities: while Shakespeare's evil female characters, such as witches, are 'almost Men', the poet ascribes 'specious Motives' such as 'Tenderness of Heart' to 'the Foibles of the Fair' (Victor, p. 224). Garrick soon proceeds to a nationalist and racist implication, saying that 'English Ladies' are not moved by 'a warmer Air' of Venice as Desdemona is.<sup>146</sup> Shakespeare is again endowed with power as a masculine attribute and women are defined as successors of national cultural heritage: 'Your Daughters Daughters shall confess his Pow'r' (Victor, p. 226). Garrick clearly allots the roles of canonisers of Shakespeare to female playgoers, and according to Victor, the participants greatly enjoyed his speech.<sup>147</sup>

Although the tension between 'masculinised' Shakespeare and women's Shakespeare remains unresolved, female participants are willing to undertake the roles scripted by Garrick. For example, *The Correspondents*, a novel anonymously written by Apphia Peach in 1775, praises the Bard, mentioning the Shakespeare Jubilee. One letter in this epistolary novel portrays Shakespeare as 'the only poet (that I know of) who has delineated to the perfection of a female friend' (p. 27) and panegyrises the female friendship of Rosalind and Celia (p. 28). A poem in this novel urges 'Daughters of Britannia's Isle' to 'haste to the Shakespeare Jubilee' (p. 175), praising the portrayals of various female characters in Shakespeare's plays, such as Celia, Rosalind, Desdemona, and Ophelia (p. 179). As Dobson argues, Apphia Peach highlights female friendship in Shakespeare's plays as 'an eloquent heir of Shakespeare's Ladies'.<sup>148</sup> I doubt that Peach attended the Shakespeare Jubilee at Stratford-upon-Avon by herself because her late husband, Colonel Joseph Peach, Governor of Calcutta, lived in India after 1764 and

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<sup>146</sup> Victor, p. 224. Similar rhetoric is used in the anonymous prologue to *Othello* on 6 December 1725: see Danchin, *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century: A Complete Edition* ii, 3. pp. 192–93, 27–30.

<sup>147</sup> Ironically, Victor states that the response those who had just listened to the address apparently targeting women was 'Every Friend congratulating each other on the Pleasure he had received' (p. 226). The universal usage of 'he' was common in this period.

<sup>148</sup> Dobson, *Making*, p. 224. See also Dobson, *Amateur Performance*, p. 43.

died in Bengal in 1770. Perhaps, his wife Apphia lived with him during this period.<sup>149</sup> However, her novel suggests that the Jubilee inspired women's patriotic passion and encouraged them to participate in the process of Shakespeare's canonisation.

What made the Shakespeare Jubilee a special event in the history of Shakespeare's canonisation was not only that it attracted many participants, but also that it was extensively and intensively covered by magazines, newspapers and other types of cheap print. It was in the spotlight about three months before it started (Cocco, p. 8). *The Public Advertiser* on 2 September 1769 published 'For the Public Advertiser. Intelligence for Stratford August 29', and *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty* on 2–5 September 1769 reported that 'a great number of nobility of both sexes set out for Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, in order to present at the Jubilee' in an article titled 'Monday, September 4. London'. *Lloyd's Evening Post* and *the London Chronicle* each published about fifty articles on the Shakespeare Jubilee in the last half of 1769, and other periodicals also frequently wrote about it (England, p. 23). The wide coverage which the Shakespeare Jubilee received provided detailed information about the event for those who were not present at the festival. Here, two methods of propaganda are successfully combined in convergence. As I discussed in my Introduction, printed publications can enjoy wide dissemination and propagate the idea of national identity by connecting those who live distantly from each other, although the reading community created in the process is not very homogeneous. Drama can trigger a more unified response from an audience, but on the other hand, it cannot reach people outside playhouses. The Shakespeare Jubilee enjoyed both types of distribution, and its impact on those present as well as absent was enormous in the process of Shakespeare's canonisation.

As I maintained in the previous subsection, such propagation of Shakespeare through periodicals was not at all new for female readers, and in 1769, not only the presence of female participants at the Shakespeare Jubilee, but also that of female

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<sup>149</sup> Burke, *The Peerage*, ii, p. 115; and *Report on the Palk Manuscripts in the Possession of Mrs. Bannatyne, of Haldon, Devon* p. 68. According to the transcription of an anonymous manuscript, Apphia Peach had 'just arrived from India' as of 18 October 1771 (H. S. G., p. 289).

readers absent at the event but present in reading communities, was recognised by periodicals and other types of books for daily use. Female readers were among the targeted consumers of Shakespeare. As I discussed above, women's participation was documented by major periodicals such as *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, *The London Chronicle* and *Lloyd's Evening Post*, and reading communities in the British Isles were informed of this. In *The London Magazine*, Boswell reports how Garrick welcomed his female patrons: 'His epilogue to the ladies was very lively, and very well expressed. I hope he will favour us with it in print' ('A Letter from James Boswell, Esq', pp. 452–53). According to England, Garrick did 'favour' reading communities with print, for *The British Ladies' Complete Pocket Memorandum Book* in 1769, an annual targeting women, published it with songs at the Shakespeare Jubilee and its account, although this epilogue was not included in *Shakespeare's Garland*, a standard collection of the songs at the Shakespeare Jubilee (p. 161). This suggests that female readers were able to learn of Garrick's attempt to find patronage from women at the Shakespeare Jubilee, even if they did not attend it. England also finds that *The Ladies' Complete Pocketbook* and *The Ladies' Polite Songster, Or Harmony for the Fair Sex* also included songs from the Shakespeare Jubilee, although they did not print the epilogue for the ladies.<sup>150</sup> The Shakespeare Jubilee was reported on for women outside England: *The Ladies Miscellany: A New Work*, issued in Dublin in 1770, published a comical dialogue about the Shakespeare Jubilee (ii, pp. 281-87). The number of publications targeting women implies that publishers regarded female readers, who had already become familiar with Shakespeare through reading periodicals and other types of inexpensive books, as prospective consumers of Shakespeare in the convergence of theatre and print.

These publications must have greatly helped readers to share the festive experiences with participants through reading, and to create an imagined community in which readers and participants were united by shared knowledge. The articles in these

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<sup>150</sup> England, p. 161. The 1769 editions of *The British Ladies' Complete Pocket Memorandum Book* and *The Ladies' Complete Pocketbook* are extremely rare, and I could not look at any copies. It is unknown which copies of these books England used or where she found them at the time of her research. England did not specify the edition of *The Ladies' Polite Songster*, but I have found that the versions published in 1772 and 1775 included songs from the Shakespeare Jubilee.

magazines and printed songs do not necessarily contain his original verses, but these derivative works did inscribe Shakespeare's name on people's minds as *the* canonical author of English drama, by providing pleasures for casual users of Shakespeare including women.

### **Conclusion**

In the eighteenth century, Shakespeare's status as an English canonical dramatist was established: after the Shakespeare Jubilee, his works and his persona were regarded an essential and inevitable part of social life for English society, and his name also became widely known outside of it. The historical developments of two types of media – theatrical entertainments and print publications – played essential and convergent roles in this climax of bardolatry, and women were deeply involved in the propagation of Shakespeare through these two media. Female reading communities recognised Shakespeare as their favourite dramatist, and some intellectually active female readers began conducting scholarly research and writing criticisms on Shakespeare. Female playgoers, such as the members of the Shakespeare Ladies Club, also promoted Shakespeare in theatre. David Garrick, understanding these women's influence, recognised them as powerful agents in the canonisation of Shakespeare, and women had their own presence at the Shakespeare Jubilee.

### **Conclusion: Preserving the Past, Defining Ourselves**

This thesis has illustrated female playgoers and readers' considerable presence in the reception of Shakespeare from his time to the mid-eighteenth century, mainly through reading women's writings about Shakespeare and conducting a survey of Shakespeare's playbooks associated with women. In the English Renaissance period, only exceptionally active women saw, read or wrote about Shakespeare's works. Although they were small in number, however, some of these female interpreters already incorporated Shakespeare's works into their writings for their self-expression, which shows that Shakespeare was recognised among early female adapters. However, he was just one of many popular dramatists in this period, not the literary figure to be canonised as the national poet.

These early female adapters' reception of Shakespeare led to more visible evaluation by several influential female interpreters. Female playwrights reworked his plays in their dramatic and poetical works, and Margaret Cavendish became the author of the oldest surviving substantial review of his plays, thereby anticipating her male contemporaries in the field of criticism. The eighteenth century witnessed the rapid popularisation of Shakespeare through both theatrical entertainments and print media, and more and more women came to know his works and to recognise his status as an established poet. Among those who had an enormous impact on the propagation of his works were renowned female interpreters such as the members of the Shakespeare Ladies Club, Charlotte Lennox and Elizabeth Montagu. Compared with their male counterparts, the activities of these women have attracted less attention from scholars, but it has been found that their presence and contribution is far from negligible in the history of the reception of Shakespeare.

Female interpreters' attitudes toward Shakespeare are so varied that it is impossible to generalise about their diverse interests and pleasures in the poet. Class, wealth, education, place of residence, religious faith, political opinions, access to theatrical performances and other personal preferences had a considerable influence on their interpretations. For example, the surviving evidence about reading and playgoing



of Shakespeare by Parliamentary women and Scotswomen is rarer than that by Royalist women and Irish women, partly because of the former's religious antitheatricalism. Interests in nationalism, morality and the distinction between 'vulgar' and 'cultivated' pleasures were often shared by women in the canonisation of Shakespeare during the eighteenth century, but they were also broadly found both among males and outside Shakespeare criticism.<sup>1</sup>

Given the above considerations, I point out a few gender-specific interpretive strategies broadly shared by female interpreters through this period. Many of the female interpreters endowed Shakespeare with several types of 'feminine' qualities. His lack of formal education and mastery of vernacular English made it exceptionally easy to 'feminise' the poet and thus make him highly respected by women writers with no formal education, such as Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn and Judith Drake. Cavendish and Behn were also driven by nostalgia for Elizabeth I as a powerful female monarch, which helped them to canonise Shakespeare. Elizabeth Boyd of the Shakespeare Ladies Club argued for his skill in expressing tenderness, a quality traditionally ascribed to women. The most straightforward association between Shakespeare and femininity lies in the interest in his skill in portraying women, beginning with Margaret Cavendish's praise of his understanding of women's minds.<sup>2</sup> Among Shakespeare's female characters, Cleopatra attracted a great deal of attention from female interpreters. She was the favourite character of the Cavendish ladies, and Delarivier Manley partly based her heroine Homais on her. Even Aemilia Lanyer and Sarah Fielding's moral criticisms of Cleopatra were triggered by their interest in the impact of this 'bad woman' character. Sarah Fielding was also interested in Ophelia's troublesome situation in *Hamlet* and female friendship between Helena and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. To the contrary, some female playwrights, such as Mary Pix

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<sup>1</sup> Dobson, *Making*, pp. 198–99; and Gollapudi, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> For character criticism and women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Ritchie, 'The Merciful Construction', p. 211. Character criticism was long regarded as naïve, but recently 'has made a comeback' (Yachnin and Slights, Introduction, p. 1), partly as a result of the development of theatre-focused analyses of Shakespeare's plays. Following Yachnin and Slights, I argue that character criticism should be re-evaluated, for it is no wonder that playgoers focus on dramatic characters embodied by players (often stars) on stage.

and Catherine Trotter Cockburn, focused on Shakespeare's 'masculine' talent in drama; Pix referred to him as a martial man, and Trotter complained that he did not fully utilise his versatile skill in portraying feminine tenderness. The 'infinite variety' (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 2.2.246) of Shakespeare's drama, a phrase often used to describe not only Cleopatra but also Shakespeare's works themselves, allured female interpreters, for the ambiguity of his texts allows contradictory interpretations.<sup>3</sup> As William Empson puts it, in ambiguous works of poetry, 'alternative views might be taken without sheer misreading' (p. x), and ambiguity is a significant aesthetic factor which attracts readers by puzzling them. To use Falstaff's line, Shakespeare was 'the cause that wit is in other men' (*2 Henry IV*, 1.2.9) and in other women, too; the ambiguity of his works enabled female interpreters to discuss both the feminine and masculine qualities of his works depending on the interpreters' strategies.

Another notable interpretive strategy shared by the women surveyed in my study is their interest in rebellious characters. As I stated above, Cleopatra's 'bad woman' character attracted many female interpreters. Dorothy Osborne coherently identified herself with subversive characters in Shakespeare's plays such as Richard III, Lady Macbeth and Falstaff. Mary Pix's reference to 'Hotspur's rage' tries to align her position as an audacious woman writer with that of the bold rebel against the king. The female interpreters' tendency to prefer potentially subversive characters in Shakespeare's plays is caused by both a characteristic inherent in his drama and an external factor which influenced the reception of a wide variety of literary and dramatic works as well as those of Shakespeare. First, the ambiguity of Shakespeare's drama does not provide one definite interpretation of characters and leaves room for various readings for even seemingly villainous characters. Second, female playgoers and readers were denied the freedom which their contemporary male counterparts enjoyed in public spaces, but both public playhouses and private reading rooms allowed them to fantasise about subverting the traditional gender roles as desiring subjects through watching plays and reading books. Subversive characters might have provided such female interpreters

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<sup>3</sup> Adelman, *The Common Liar*, pp. 14–52; and Mooney, p. 171. See also Williamson; and Ferington.

with the pleasure of temporal liberation from the social norm.

Family background was the most significant factor enabling women to become engaged in the canonisation of Shakespeare. Most of the female users of Shakespeare's playbooks and female writers identified in this thesis had intellectually active (often female) relatives or friends. When women could not receive formal higher education, the family was a significant channel for providing girls with knowledge, and it was even more so before the development of media in the eighteenth century. Aemilia Lanyer and Mary Sidney Wroth, contemporaries of Shakespeare who wrote about him in their published works, came from families of different social classes with deep involvement with theatrical performances. In the Restoration period, the Cavendishes shared their interest in Shakespeare throughout the family. Even after the rise of the novel and the newspaper in the eighteenth century, which created a large 'imagined community' through nationwide communications and increased opportunities for gaining knowledge from these publications (Anderson, p. 25), the family remained one of the smallest social units holding sway over girls' education. For instance, the names of the educated women in the Churchills are frequently found in the history of the reception of Shakespeare from the Restoration period to the Shakespeare Jubilee. Frances Wolfreton's descendant Mary Elizabeth Plaisted inherited Shakespeare's works from Gertrude Tucker, wife of William Warburton. The family functioned as a small but essential interpretive community, in which girls (and boys) were raised and often encouraged to keep up their family tradition.

Playbooks, as physical objects, mattered in this context, because they could be passed down to descendants within such domestic interpretive communities. While playtexts and interpretations of them are abstract, books can represent playtexts as concrete entities. Unlike evanescent theatrical performances, books could carry the cultural memory of the family and fulfil the 'preservation drive' in the canonisation of literary works, which I discussed in my introduction. This thesis showed that many of the copies of Shakespeare's playbooks were given and received between female relatives and friends: the copies owned by the Hutchinsons, the circle of Queen

Elizabeth of Bohemia, the descendants of Martha Primatt in London, the Dolbens, the Lovetts in Dublin, the Hacketts of Moxhull, and the Greys of Shoreston, only to name a few. They show that Shakespeare's playbooks functioned as gifts to reinforce the ties in small female interpretive communities.<sup>4</sup> Cementing ties through books was by no means limited to female communities: the copies held by the Brocketts, the Williams in Surrey, the Eldens in Norfolk, the Thorolds and Mary Elmer, the Jocelyns in Ireland, the Wynnes of Wales, the Cowpers and the Tollets were exchanged between men and women. In some copies, the ownership histories illustrate users' desire for the preservation of Shakespeare plays both as national heritage and a family inheritance. For the Lushes in New Zealand, Thomas Hawkins and Mary Lever's Third Folio signified English culture and their ancestors' contributions to it. Clare Reeve's Second Folio demonstrates her craving for preservation, both of the book as her family heritage in a private domestic community and of the text as national heritage in public spaces. The fact that these copies were used by women suggests how Shakespeare's playbooks, especially luxurious Folios, achieved iconic status. They became not only the proof of the national poet's talent, but also the historical record of inheritance from the past users to the next ones.

As part of my own 'preservation drive', I consider my research as an attempt to provide new insights into the canonisation of Shakespeare by unearthing records of the early female fans of Shakespeare, situating the individual female interpreters in their social contexts, and weaving them into interpretive communities. Nova Myhill and Jennifer A. Low point out the most troublesome weakness in audience studies in their Introduction to *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558–1642*: 'Implicit in the distinction we draw is the notion of "the audience" as a collective entity that is brought into existence by the theatrical venue itself and "audiences" as individuals who never cease to function distinctly and who never leave behind particularities that will shape their responses as much as anything they see on the stage' (p. 2). This weakness is more conspicuous in research on past audiences than contemporary ones, for the

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<sup>4</sup> For the bonding function of gifts, see Hyde, p. xvii.

number of records available for historical research is limited. In this thesis, I have struggled to bridge ‘the audience’ as a mysterious collective entity and individual ‘audiences’, although I have also included book users, for the concept of the convergence of theatre and print brings a deeper understanding of interpretive communities concerning theatre; to overcome this weakness, I have tried to describe both influential female interpreters who propagated their interpretations through publications and ‘ordinary’ female playgoers and book users who domestically consumed Shakespeare without being known by later generations. Moreover, I have attempted to trap the moments when individual ‘audiences’ were connected to collective interpretive communities through social networks generated by knowing others’ opinions.

Looking at the interpretations of Shakespeare by female playgoers and readers in the past in this way leads not only to understanding the process of the canonisation of Shakespeare or of the history of women’s cultural activities, but also to understanding *our* identities (i.e. how Shakespeareans and/or bardolators define themselves in Shakespeare fandom), by grafting ourselves on to the social construct developed in the long history of the reception of his works. As I have pointed out in this thesis, even scholars sometimes take Shakespeare’s authority for granted, and forget that Shakespeare was not a canonical poet in the seventeenth century; thus, it is necessary to look back on the history behind us. Academics study Shakespeare and playgoers flock to West End because these women’s (often seemingly minor) intellectual activities in the past – from chasing Richard Burbage to exchanging playbooks and alluding to his plays in their writings – paved the way for us. In this context, I have much shared interest with scholars of fandom studies, who often regard themselves as ‘Aca/Fans’ and are struggling to balance detached objectivity and enthusiastic love as a member of fan communities.<sup>5</sup> I hope that this research will contribute to fan studies and women’s history as well as Shakespeare studies, because it tries to reclaim the untold history of female fans. Although much research has been done on contemporary female fans in

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<sup>5</sup> Jenkins discusses this self-definition in ‘Introduction: Confessions of an Aca/Fan’ in *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers* (pp. 1–6). Mat Hills also analyses this problem (pp. i–xv).

fandom studies and women's cultural activities in the past in studies of women's history, these two fields are relatively separate; fan studies rarely look at the long history before them, and studies of women's history rarely place an emphasis of the continuity between the past and present. However, the recent development of Janeite studies is a significant shift.<sup>6</sup> By connecting the past fans of Jane Austen and those who read her novels or watch her films at this moment, Janeite studies modernise the past and historicise the present, paying close attention to both gender and the history of English literature. In this thesis, I have tried to point out similarities between the past and present fandoms by adopting concepts from current fandom studies. Through this process, my standpoint – as a female Shakespearean who calls 'Shakespeare Our Contemporary' – has itself been historicised, and I hope that my research helps other Shakespeareans and female fans of various cultural contexts to recognise the history behind their eyes. At the end of this thesis, I find myself too at a new end of the long history of reading and watching Shakespeare, as well as of another long, untold history of female fans.

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<sup>6</sup> Deidre Shauna's anthology *Janeites* (2000) widely deals with Janeites through time. Tiffany Potter's anthology *Women, Popular Culture, and the Eighteenth Century* in 2012 also includes various studies of Jane Austen's works and her reception in her time and in the present.

Appendix 1: List of pre-1769 copies of Shakespeare's works in the British Library, including adaptations and anthologies						
Number	Female users	Evidence	Title	Year	Shelfmark	Note
1			Edward III	1596	C.21.c.50	
2			Romeo and Juliet	1597	C.34.k.55.	
3			Richard III	1597	Huth46.	
4			Richard III	1597	Huth47.	
5			Richard II	1598	C.34.k.42.	
6			Richard III	1598	C.34.k.46.	
7			Richard III	1598	C.34.k.47.	
8			Hamlet	1598	C.34.k.5*	
9			Love's Labour Lost	1598	C.34.l.14.	
10			Romeo and Juliet	1599	C.12.g.18.	
11			Edward III	1599	C.21.b.40(3)	
12			1 Henry IV	1599	C.34.k.6	
13			The Merchant of Venice	1600	C.12.g.11.	
14			2 Henry IV	1600	C.12.g.20	
15			Henry V	1600	C.12.g.22.	
16			Much Ado about Nothing	1600	C.12.g.29.	
17			A Midsummer Night's Dream	1600	C.12.g.30	
18			The Merchant of Venice	1600	C.12.g.31	
19			The Merchant of Venice	1600	C.12.g.32.	
20			3 Henry VI	1600	C.12.h.9	
21			2 Henry IV	1600	C.34.k.12.	
22			2 Henry IV	1600	C.34.k.13.	
23			The Merchant of Venice	1600	C.34.k.22.	
24			A Midsummer Night's Dream	1600	C.34.k.30	
25			Much Ado about Nothing	1600	C.34.k.31.	
26			Much Ado about Nothing	1600	C12.g.29	
27			Richard III	1602	C.34.k.48	
28			The Merry Wives of Windsor	1602	Huth48.	
29			Hamlet	1603	C.34.k.1.	
30			Hamlet	1605	C.34.k.2.	
31			Richard III	1605	C.34.k.49.	
32			Richard III	1605	C.12.h.10.	
33			King Lear	1608	C.12.g.27.	
34			Henry V	1608	C.12.g.33.	

35			Henry V	1608	C.34.k.14.	
36	Mary	Signature	King Lear	1608	C.34.k.17.	
37			King Lear	1608	C.34.k.18.	
38			King Lear	1608	C.34.k.19.	
39			King Lear	1608	C.34.k.20.	
40			Richard II	1608	C.34.k.43.	
41			I Henry IV	1608	C.34.k.7.	
42			Troilus and Cressida	1609	163.i.12.	
43			Troilus and Cressida	1609	163.i.13	
44			Pericles	1609	C.12.h.5.	
45			Pericles	1609	C.34.k.36.	
46			Romeo and Juliet	1609	C.34.k.57.	
47			Troilus and Cressida	1609	C.34.k.61.	
48			Trius Andronicus	1611	C.12.g.16.	
49			Hamlet	1611	C.34.k.4.	
50			Pericles	1611	C.34.18.	
51			Hamlet	1611	C.71.b.2.	
52			Pericles	1611	C34.k.37	
53			Trius Andronicus	1613	C.34.k.60.	
54			I Henry IV	1613	C.34.k.8.	
55			I Henry IV	1613	C.34.k.9.	
56			Richard II	1615	C.34.k.44.	
57			Lucrece	1616	C.34.a.44.	
58	Mary C..... Mary de ...	Signature	2 & 3 Henri VI	1619	C.12.g.13.	Cropped
59			The Merry Wives of Windsor	1619	C.12.g.24.	
60			The Merry Wives of Windsor	1619	C.12.g.24.	
61			Pericles	1619	C.12.h.6.	
62			The Merchant of Venice	1619	C.34.k.23	
63			Merry Wives of Windsor	1619	C.34.k.27.	
64			2 & 3 Henri VI	1619	C.34.k.38.(1)	
65			Pericles	1619	C.34.k.38.	Not properly catalogued: bound with the above copy
66	Sarah Downes (Searca Downes)	Signatures in 1678 and 1709	Romeo and Juliet	1620	C.34.k.56.	Perhaps a 1622 quarto, although the British Library says it is published around 1620
67			Richard III	1622	C.12.g.14.	
68			I Henry IV	1622	C.12.g.21.	
69			Hamlet	1622	C.34.k.3	



70		Othello	1622	C.34.k.33.	
71		Richard III	1622	C.34.k.50.	
72		Richard III	1622	C.34.k.51.	
73		The First Folio	1623	G.11631.	
74		The First Folio	1623	C.39.k.15.	
75		The First Folio	1623	C.21.e.16.	
76		The First Folio	1623	C.39.i.12.	
77		The First Folio	1623	C.7.c.14.	
78		Lucece	1624	C.39.a.37.(2.)	
79		Lucece	1624	G.11179.	
80		Richard III	1629	C.34.k.52.	
81		Othello	1630	C.12.g.28.	
82		Merry Wives of Windsor	1630	C.34.k.28	
83	Elizabeth Smith	Othello	1630	C.34.k.34.	
84		Pericles	1630	C.34.k.39.	
85		Pericles	1630	C.34.k.40.	
86		The Taming of the Shrew	1631	C.12.g.25.	
87		Love's Labour Lost	1631	C.12.h.11.	
88		Love's Labour Lost	1631	C.34.k.21.	
89		The Taming of the Shrew	1631	C.34.k.59.	
90		Second Folio	1632	C.39.i.13.	
91		Second Folio	1632	791.5.	
92		Second Folio	1632	C.122.g.2.	
93		Second Folio	1632	C.132.h.48.	
94		Second Folio	1632	C.39.k.12.	
95		Second Folio	1632	G.11632.	
96		I Henry IV	1632	C.34.k.10	
97		I Henry IV	1632	C.34.k.10	
98		Richard II	1634	C.12.g.19.	
99		The Two Noble Kinsmen	1634	C.34.g.23	
100		The Two Noble Kinsmen	1634	Ashley 85	
101		Richard II	1634	C.34.k.45.	
102		Richard III	1634	C.34.k.62.	
103		Richard III	1634	C.34.k.63.	
104		Two Noble Kinsmen	1634	C.117.b.51	
105		Pericles	1635	C.34.k.41.	

106		Hamlet	1636	C.12.h.14.	
107		Hamlet	1636	C.34.k.3.	
108		The Merchant of Venice	1637	C.34.k.24.	
109		Hamlet	1637	C.34.k.5.	
110		The most excellent and Lamentable Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet	1637	C.34.k.58.	
111	<b>Eliz Mary Croussmaker</b>	<b>I Henry IV</b>	<b>1639</b>	<b>C.34.k.11.</b>	
112		Poems	1640	C.39.a.40.	
113		Poems	1640	G.11183.	
114		The Merchant of Venice	1652	C.34.k.25.	
115		The Merchant of Venice	1652	C.34.k.26.	
116		Othello	1655	C.12.h.13.	
117		Lucrece	1655	C.34.a.45.	
118		Othello	1655	C.34.k.35.	
119	<b>Frances Wolfreston</b>	<b>King Lear</b>	<b>1655</b>	<b>C.34.k.64.</b>	
120		Lucrece	1655	G.11432.	
121		Bottom the Weaver	1661	643.c.6.	
122		Third Folio	1664	801.3.	
123		Third Folio	1664	C.122.g.3.	
124		Third Folio	1664	C.391.20.	
125		Third Folio	1664	C.39.k.13.	
126		Third Folio	1664	G.11633.	
127		The Rivals	1668	643.d.57.	
128		The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island	1670	11762.bbb.11.	
129		The Wits, or Sport upon Sport	1673	1076.d.41.	
130		The Wits, or Sport upon Sport	1673	C.71.h.23.	
131		The Wits, or Sport upon Sport	1673	G.11163.	
132		Macbeth	1673	C.57.14.	
133		Macbeth	1674	644.i.45.	
134		The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island	1674	C.34.g.18.	
135		The Mock Tempest; or, the Enchanted Castle	1675	161.i.44.	
136		The Mock Tempest; or, the Enchanted Castle	1675	644.h.5.	
137		The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island	1676	11762.e.14.	
138		Hamlet	1676	1344.f.25.	
139	<b>Mary Griffith</b>	<b>Hamlet</b>	<b>1676</b>	<b>1344.f.30</b>	
140		The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater	1678	11763.e.32.	
141		All for Love	1678	644.g.68.	

142		All for Love	1678	T.1945.(4.)	
143		Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late	1679	643.h.18.(1.)	
144		The Misery of Civil-War	1680	644.g.44.	
145		1 Henry VI	1681	161.h.47.	
146		2 Henry VI	1681	161.h.48.	
147		Richard II	1681	644.f.67.	
148		Richard II	1681	644.i.60.	
149		1 Henry VI	1681	81.d.22.(4.)	
150		1 Henry VI	1681	81.d.22.(5.)	
151		Richard II	1681	83.b.11.(3.)	
152		The History of King Lear	1681	83.b.11.(8.)	
153	Lady Elizabeth Ashley	Signature in 1700	1695	841.d.39.(5.)	
154	Lady Elizabeth Ashley	Signature in 1700	1681	841.d.39.(7.)	
155	Elizabeth Ashley	Signature	1700	841.c.6.(7.)	
156	Elizabeth Ashley	Signature	1701	841.c.6.(8.)	
157		The Ingratitude of a Common-Wealth	1682	644.f.66.	
158		The Injured Princess; or, the Fatal Wager	1682	644.h.14.	
159		The Injured Princess; or, the Fatal Wager	1682	81.c.4.(4.)	
160		The Ingratitude of a Common-Wealth	1682	83.b.11.(4.)	
161		Hamlet	1683	11762.f.4.	
162		Julius Caesar.	1684	11763.e.21.	
163		Fourth Folio	1685	801.2.	Joan. Joun, or John Des Bouverie's signature
164		Fourth Folio	1685	C.122.g.4.	
165		Fourth Folio	1685	C.39.k.16.	
166		Fourth Folio	1685	C.39.k.17.	Thomas Hawkins' copy
167		Fourth Folio	1685	G.11634.	
168		Titus Andronicus, or the Rape of Lavinia	1687	1344.f.26.	
169		Macbeth	1687	642.e.18.(5.)	
170		Titus Andronicus; or the Rape of Lavinia	1687	644.f.50.	
171		Titus Andronicus; or the Rape of Lavinia	1687	81.c.16.(3.)	
172		Othello	1687	841.c.22.(1.)	
173		The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater	1688	11763.e.33.	
174		The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater	1688	11774.e.21.	
175		The History of King Lear	1689	C.175.ff.9.	
176		Julius Caesar	1690	642.e.18.(1.)	
177		The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island	1690	644.g.70.	

178	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	Julius Caesar	1691	841.c.3.(1.)	
179	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	Macbeth	1695	841.c.3.(2.)	
180	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	Othello	1705	841.c.3.(3.)	
181	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	The History of King Lear	1702	841.c.3.(4.)	
182	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	I Henry IV	1700	841.c.3.(5.)	
183	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late. A Tragedy As it is Acted at the Dukes Theatre.	1695	841.c.3.(6.)	
184	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island	1671	841.c.3.(7.)	
185	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	The Jew of Venice	1701	841.c.3.(8.)	
186	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	The Fairy-Queen:	1692	841.c.3.(9.)	
187	Eliz Doiben	Signature and bookplate in 1691	Hamlet	1703	841.c.3.(10.)	
188			Julius Caesar	1691	C.131.c.14.	
189			The Fairy-Queen	1692	163.h.66.	
190			The Fairy-Queen	1692	643.d.52.	
191			The Fairy-Queen:	1692	C.124.e.4.	
192			The Fairy-Queen:	1693	1346.e.5.	
193			Hamlet	1695	11392.aa.64.	
194			Macbeth	1695	642.e.18.(6.)	
195			Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late	1695	644.g.78.	
196			Hamlet	1695	644.i.46.	
197			The First Volume of Works of Mr. John Dryden	1695	839.k.29.1	
198			Othello	1695	841.c.8.(6.)	
199			The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater	1696	841.c.8.(8.)	
200			The History of King Lear	1699	1344.f.31.	
201			The History of King Lear	1699	644.i.47.	
202			Richard III	1700	11764.f.7.	
203			I Henry IV	1700	163.h.69.	
204			Measure for Measure, or, Beauty the Best Advocate	1700	163.i.2.	
205			I Henry IV	1700	644.f.51.	
206			Measure for Measure, or, Beauty the Best Advocate	1700	644.f.52.	
207			The Jew of Venice	1701	643.i.20.(12.)	
208			The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island	1701	644.g.80.	
209	Elizabeth Hood	Signature	The Comical Gallant	1702	643.i.19.(5.)	
210			The History of King Lear	1702	644.f.65.	
211			The Comical Gallant	1702	83.b.12.(7.)	
212			All for Love	1703	644.g.81.	

213		The History of Timon of Athens, the man-hater ... Made into a play [in five acts. chi]	1703	644.i.48.	
214		All for Love	1703	841.c.8.(9.)	
215		Poems on Affairs of State. vol. IV.	1707	1077.1.19.	
216		Sauny the Scot	1708	644.h.45	
217		The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare	1708	C.175.m.1.	
218		A Collection of Poems, in Two Volumes	1709	1162.e.42.	
219		A Collection of Poems, in Two Volumes	1709	1162.f.38.	
220		A Collection of Poems, in Two Volumes	1709	1162.f.39.	
221		A Collection of Poems, in Two Volumes	1709	1163.b.42.	
222		A Collection of Poems, in Two Volumes	1709	G.18557.	
223	Catherine Wymne	Signature	1710	11763.cc.15.	
224		I Henry IV	1710	11765.a.23.	
225		The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater	1710	11773.aaa.3.(5.)	
226		The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare	1710	81.g.22.	
227		Miscellany Poems	1710	C.123.fff.3.	
228		Julius Caesar	1711	11762.de.21.	
229		The Jew of Venice	1711	1607/1760.	
230		The Collection of the English Best Plays	1712	1345.b.17.	
231	Ann Maria Morrison	Signature	1713	11775.c.54.	
232		The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare	1714	11763.aa.19-1	
233		Sauny the Scot	1714	1607/1776.	
234		All's Well That Ends Well	1714	642.b.28.(1.)	
235		The Cobler of Preston	1716	11775.d.25.	
236		The Cobler of Preston	1716	162.c.25.	
237		The Cobler of Preston	1716	162.i.12.	
238		The Comick Masque of Pyramus and Thisbe	1716	163.i.4.	
239		Hamlet	1718	11784.a.41.(2.)	
240		A Collection of Plays Vol. 1	1718	642.b.1.	
241		2 Henry IV	1719	163.h.70.	
242		Macbeth	1720	11768.d.20.	
243		Othello	1720	11768.d.21.	
244		The Half-Pay Officers	1720	11775.b.42.	
245		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1720	1487.a.18.(3.)	
246		Hamlet	1720	1507/787	
247		Richard II	1720	163.i.6.	
248		Richard II	1720	642.d.27.(2.)	

249		Measure for Measure	1722	11768.d.10.	
250		An Historical Tragedy of the Civil Wars in the Reign of King Henry VI	1722	11777.b.5.(2.)	
251		An Historical Tragedy of the Civil Wars in the Reign of King Henry VI	1722	1578.3463.(2.)	
252		Love in a Forest.	1723	11763.a.17.	
253		King Henry the Fifth: Or: the Conquest of France by the English	1723	11765.aaa.30.(1.)	
254		Hamlet	1723	11768.d.4.	
255		King Henry the Fifth: Or: the Conquest of France by the English	1723	1578.3463.(1.)	
256		Love in a Forest.	1723	162.i.17.	
257		King Lear	1723	639.d.42.(2.)	
258		Othello	1724	1344.d.2.	
259		An Historical Tragedy of the Civil Wars in the Reign of King Henry VI	1724	163.h.71.	
260		Othello	1724	RB.23.a.11247.(4.)	
261		The Tempest	1725	011768.a.16.	
262		Venus and Adonis; Targuin and Lucrece, and Mr. Shakespear's Miscellany Poems	1725	78.1.13.	
263		The Works of Shakespear	1725	78.1.7	
264		Othello	1725	C.115.n.37.	
265	Elitz Dance	The Works of Shakespear ... Collated and corrected by the former editions, by Mr. Pope. (Vol. VIII. revis'd ... by Dr. Sewell.).	1726	011765.de.2.1	
266		Shakespeare Restored	1726	644.1.8.	
267		Shakespeare Restored	1726	79.1.16.	
268		The Tragedy of Julius Cesar	1726	Cup.404.a.30.(2.)	
269		The Tragedy of Marcus Brutus	1726	Cup.404.a.30.(3.)	
270		The Works of Shakespear	1728	11761.b.1	
271		The Works of Shakespear	1728	641.b.37.(3.)	
272		Antony and Cleopatra	1728	C.45.b.11.	
273		Macbeth	1729	11764.aa.23.	
274		Julius Cesar	1729	11768.d.15.	
275		The History of King Lear	1729	639.d.42.(1.)	
276		Macbeth	1729	RB.23.a.11247.(2.)	
277		The History of King Lear	1729	RB.23.a.11247.(3.)	
278		The Life of Henry V	1730	640.h.29.(3.)	
279		I Henry IV	1731	11763.a.5.	
280		Hamlet	1731	11768.d.23.	
281		Saunty the Scot	1731	RB.23.a.18929	
282		A Midsummer Night's Dream	1732	11763.ppp.69.	
283		I Henry IV	1732	11768.d.11.	

284		The Life of Henry VIII	1732	11768.d.17.	
285		Four Plays	1732	11771.a.15.	
286	Jane Worth	The Cobler of Preston	1732	11774.aaa.19.(2.)	
287		2 Henry IV	1733	11768.d.13.	
288		The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island	1733	11768.d.18.	
289		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1733	11768.d.3.	
290		The History of King Lear	1733	11774.aaa.13.(2.)	
291		The Works of Shakespeare	1733	1344.e.4	
292		The Works of Shakespeare	1733	80.f.1	
293		The Works of Shakespeare	1733	G.18640.1	
294	Sarah Welles	The Dramatick Works of William Shakespear	1734	11762.aa.5.-1	
295		As You Like It	1734	11763.ppp.32.	
296		Measure for Measure	1734	11763.ppp.33.	
297		The Two Gentlemen of Verona	1734	11763.ppp.34	
298		The Taming of the Shrew	1734	11763.ppp.36.	
299		The Merchant of Venice	1734	11763.ppp.41.	
300		Timon of Athens	1734	11763.ppp.42.	
301		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1734	11763.ppp.43.	
302		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1734	11763.ppp.44.	
303		Othello	1734	11763.ppp.50.	
304		All's Well That Ends Well	1734	11763.ppp.51.	
305		Hamlet	1734	11763.ppp.52.	
306		The Comedy of Errors.	1734	11763.ppp.53.	
307		Much Ado about Nothing.	1734	11763.ppp.54.	
308		Julius Caesar	1734	11763.ppp.55.	
309		Coriolanus	1734	11763.ppp.56.	
310		Titus Andronicus	1734	11763.ppp.57.	
311		Troilus and Cressida.	1734	11763.ppp.58.	
312		King John	1734	11763.ppp.59.	
313		Richard II	1734	11763.ppp.60.	
314		Twelfth Night	1734	11763.ppp.63.	
315		Cymbeline	1734	11763.ppp.73.	
316		King Lear	1734	11763.ppp.74.	
317		1 Henry VI	1734	11763.ppp.79.	
318		2 Henry VI	1734	11763.ppp.76.	
319		3 Henry VI	1734	11763.ppp.77.	

320		The Tempest	1734	11763.ppp.80.	
321		Henry V	1734	11763.ppp.81.	
322		2 Henry IV	1734	11763.ppp.82.	
323		Richard III	1734	11763.ppp.85.	
324		Henry VIII	1734	11763.ppp.86.	
325		Pericles	1734	11764.bb.45.(1)	
326		1 Henry VI	1734	11765.aa.40.(1)	
327		2 Henry VI	1734	11765.aa.40.(2)	
328		3 Henry VI	1734	11765.aa.40.(3)	
329		Richard III	1734	11765.aa.40.(4)	
330		Henry VIII	1734	11765.aa.40.(5)	
331		King John	1734	11765.aa.41.(1)	
332		Richard II	1734	11765.aa.41.(2)	
333		1 Henry IV	1734	11765.aa.41.(3)	
334		2 Henry IV	1734	11765.aa.41.(4)	
335		Henry V	1734	11765.aa.41.(5)	
336		Much Ado about Nothing	1734	11778.aa.30.(5.)	
337		Othello	1734	20098.b.16.(1.)	
338		King John	1734	20098.b.16.(3.)	
339		Romeo and Juliet	1734	20098.b.16.(4.)	
340		King Lear	1734	20098.b.16.(5.)	
341		Cymbeline	1734	20098.b.16.(6.)	
342		Measure for Measure.	1734	C.45.b.11.	
343		The Two Gentlemen of Verona	1734	RB.23.a.17700.	
344		Much Ado about Nothing.	1734	RB.23.a.17701.	
345		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1734	RB.23.a.17702	
346		Twelfth Night	1734	RB.23.a.20536.(8.)	
347		Measure for Measure	1734	RB.23.a.4647.	
348		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1734	RB.23.a.8364	
349		Love's Labour Lost	1735	11763.ppp.35.	
350		The Winter's Tale	1735	11763.ppp.62.	
351		1 Henry VI.	1735	11763.ppp.75.	
352		The Tragical History of King Richard III	1735	1607/3276.	
353		A Cure for a Scold	1735	163.i.7.	
354		The Tragical History of King Richard III	1735	RB.23.a.6288(5)	
355		Saunty the Scott	1736	11763.ppp.39.	



366		The History of King Lear	1736	1607/2963.	
367		British Theatre in Ten Volumes	1736	RB.23.a.10086(1)	
368		Hamlet	1736	RB.23.a.9143	
369		Hamlet	1737	11768.d.1.(1)	
360		Marina	1738	11763.e.28.	
361		A Cure for a Scold	1738	163.i.8.	
362		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1739	11774.aaa.23.(2.)	
363		The History of King Lear	1739	1607/3187.	
364		The Modern Receipt; or, a Cure for Love.	1739	238.c.23.	
365		The Works of Shakespeare	1739	Cup.403.1.18.1	
366		The Works of Shakespeare	1740	11762.b.1	
367		The History of Timon of Athens	1740	1485.w.25.(2.)	
368	Ann <sup>???</sup> wn	<b>Julius Caesar</b>	1741	11763.aa.9.	
369		As You Like It	1741	11768.d.16.	
370		Hamlet	1743	1607/5728.(1)	
371		The Works of Shakespeare	1744	79.1.6	
372		Pyramus and Thisbe	1745	011768.n.13.	
373		The Tragedy of Macbeth	1745	11763.ppp.29.	
374		The Works of Shakespear	1745	11766.f.32.1	
375		King Lear	1745	11778.aa.30.(6.)	
376		The Merchant of Venice.	1745	RB.23.a.8204	
377		The Works of Shakespear	1747	11764.a.13.	
378		Romeo and Juliet	1747	1508.803.	
379		Othello	1747	1607/4694.(6.)	
380		The Works of Shakespear	1747	640.h.19.	
381		The Works of Shakespear	1748	11761.a.2.1	
382		Romeo and Juliet	1748	11763.bbb.13.	
383		Othello	1748	1507/791.	
384		The History of King Lear	1748	1607/4049	
385		Henry VIII	1748	1607/5243.(3)	
386		The Merchant of Venice.	1750	11763.ppp.24.	
387		Julius Caesar	1750	1476.a.15.	
388		Hamlet	1750	1491.d.3.(2.)	
389		Othello	1750	1491.d.3.(3.)	
390		Hamlet	1750	640.h.28.(1.)	
391		Romeo and Juliet	1750	643.i.3(4)	

392		The Works	1750	RB.23.a.19460.1	
393		Much Ado about Nothing.	1750	RB.23.a.33269(3 -)	
394		The Tragedy of Macbeth.	1750	RB.23.a.34801	
395		Othello	1751	011768.n.12.	
396		I Henry IV	1751	11768.d.12.	
397		Julius Caesar	1751	RB23.a.9325	
398		The Beauties of Shakespear	1752	11766.aaa.20.1	
399		Romeo and Juliet	1752	1507/606.	
400		The Works of Shakespear	1752	200998.b.15.1	
401		The Works of Shakespear	1752	642.c.1.	
402	<a href="#">Elizabeth Williams</a>	<a href="#">Signature</a> <a href="#">The Works of Shakespear.</a>	1753	<a href="#">11713.a.2.1</a>	
403		The Historical Tragedy of Macbeth	1753	1344.f.36.	
404		Romeo and Juliet.	1753	1507/605.	
405		King John	1754	11763.ppp.38.	
406		The Tragical History of King Richard III	1754	162.b.16.	
407		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1754	RB.23.a.8148(5)	
408		The Fairies.	1755	11763.e.26	
409		I Henry IV	1755	1568/2018.(2.)	
410		Cymbeliments. by Charles Marsh	1755	1578/8100	
411	<a href="#">Sealy, ????an Fankes</a>	<a href="#">Signature: '???an Fankes(?) her book'</a> <a href="#">As You Like It</a>	1755	<a href="#">642.k.49.(3.)</a>	
412		Coriolanus; or, the Roman Matron	1755	643.i.17.(1.)	
413		The Fairies	1755	643.i.3(6)	
414		Songs in the New English Opera Call'd The Fairies	1755	G.240.e.	
415		Othello	1755	RB.23.a.17380(3)	
416		The Fairies.	1755	RB.23.a.32328(2)	
417		The Winter's Tale	1756	11763.e.34.	
418		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1756	11763.ppp.66.	
419		The Tragical History of King Richard III	1756	1508/806.	
420		The Winter's Tale	1756	163.i.13.	
421		The Works of Shakespear	1756	640.h.20.	
422		The Tempest. An Opera.	1756	643.i.3(7)	
423		The Merchant of Venice.	1756	RB.23.a.17380(4)	
424	<a href="#">Margaret C..</a>	<a href="#">Signature: Margaret C.. 1946</a> <a href="#">Hamlet</a>	1756	<a href="#">RB.23.a.30775</a>	
425		The Tempest	1756	RB.23.a.32328(1)	
426		The Tempest. An Opera.	1756	RB.23.a.5866	
427		The Beauties of Shakespear	1757	11763.aaa.17 vol.2	

428		Much Ado about Nothing.	1757	11763.ppp.31.	
429		The Works	1757	RB.23.a.18737	
430		The Beauties of Shakespear	1757	11763.aaa.17.vol.1	
431		Cymbeline	1758	11763.e.19.	
432		Macbeth	1758	1507/785.	
433		Antony and Cleopatra	1758	162.d.69.	
434		Antony and Cleopatra	1758	642.d.1.	
435		The Life of Henry VIII	1758	642.e.19.(1)	
436		Florizel and Perdita	1758	643.i.3(8)	
437		Henry V	1759	11763.ppp.37.	
438		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1759	1507/788.	
439		K. Henry V. Or, The Conquest of France by the English	1759	1607/5619.(1)	
440		All for Love	1759	1607/5619.(2)	
441		The Life of Henry VIII	1759	163.h.72.	
442		Antony and Cleopatra	1759	640.h.29.(7.)	
443		The History of King Lear	1759	642.e.19.(2.)	
444		Poems on Several Occasions	1760	11762.aaa.12.	
445		Poems on Several Occasions	1760	2300.b.12.	
446		Falstaff's Wedding	1760	642.d.6.(1.)	
447		Capell's Proflusions	1760	678.b.20.	
448		Othello	1760	RB.23.b.1587	
449		The Tempest	1761	11763.ppp.25.	
450		Othello	1761	11763.ppp.26.	
451		Hamlet, Prince of Denmark ... As it is now acted by His Majesty's Servants.	1761	1508/1155.	
452		The History of King Lear	1761	1607/5455.(3)	
453		The Historical Tragedy of Macbeth	1761	1607/5455.(5)	
454		Measure for Measure	1761	640.h.13.(2.)	
455		King Lear	1761	640.h.28.(4)	
456		King Henry the Eighth	1762	011768.n.11.	
457		Hamlet	1762	11763.ppp.87.	
458		The Works of Shakespeare	1762	11764.c.22	
459		Coriolanus	1762	11768.d.14.	
460		The Students	1762	1344.f.28.	
461		The Tragical History of King Richard III	1762	1607/5455.(4)	
462		The Students	1762	161.d.13.	
463		The Works of Shakespeare	1762	20098.aa.3.	

464		The Merchant of Venice	1762	640.h.28.(5.)	
465		Cymbeline	1762	640.h.29.(8.)	
466		Romeo and Juliet	1763	11763.ppp.49	
467		The Three Conjurors	1763	12315.k.35.	
468		The Two Gentlemen of Verona	1763	163.h.68.	
469		Two Gentlemen of Verona	1763	642.e.19.(3)	
470		A Midsummer Night's Dream	1763	642.e.19.(4)	
471		The Merchant of Venice.	1764	11763.ppp.64.	
472		The Merchant of Venice.	1764	640.h.13.(3.)	
473		Othello	1765	1344.f.18.	
474		King Henry the Fifth	1765	642.k.44.(1.)	
475	<b>Orlow Austen</b>	<b>The Plays of William Shakespeare</b>	<b>1765</b>	<b>Cup.408 s.27</b>	
476		Othello	1765	RB.23.a.33964	
477		Hamlet	1765	RB.23.a.8148(4)	
478		Hamlet	1765	RB.23.a.17380(1)	
479		The Tragical History of King Richard III	1766	011768.a.17.(1.-)	
480		As You Like It	1766	11763.ppp.65.	
481		Julius Caesar	1766	11770.b.1.(1.)	
482		Romeo and Juliet	1766	1507.603.	
483		The Merchant of Venice	1766	1607/5537.(4)	
484		Falstaff's Wedding	1766	642.d.27.(10.)	
485		The Merry Wives of Windsor	1766	RB.23.a.992	With an unknown bookplate, written in neither roman alphabets nor east Asian languages
486		The Sheep Shearing: or, Florizel and Perdita.	1767	11763.e.35.	
487		The Cobler of Preston	1767	11775.b.47.	
488		The Cobler of Preston	1767	11777.a.19.	
489		Cymbeline	1767	11783.de.42.(4)	
490		The Cobler of Preston	1767	1607/5006.(8.)	
491		The Cobler of Preston	1767	640.h.26.(10.)	
492		The Sheep Shearing: or, Florizel and Perdita.	1767	640.h.26.(11)	
493		Othello	1767	640.h.28.(2)	
494		Timon of Athens	1768	11763.e.31.	
495		Machebeth	1768	11765.a.25.	
496		The History of King Lear.	1768	11765.bb.61.	
497		The Taming of the Shrew.	1768	11767.a.66.	
498		Richard III.	1768	11778.aaa.32.(1.)	



531		The Works of Shakespear	1728	K1/5942 DSC	
532		A Serenata (in Three Interludes) Call'd Love and Folly	1739	MSS.25484.	

Appendix 2: List of pre-1769 copies of Shakespeare's works in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, including adaptations, excluding complete works

Number	Female users	Evidence	Title	Year	Shelfmark	Call Number	Note
1			Venus and Adonis	1594	SRp 35.44	2559234	
2			2 & 3 Henry VI	1609	SR 35.26	2562608	
3			The Merry Wives of Windsor	1619	SR 35.22	2562611	
4			The Merry Wives of Windsor	1619	SR 35.22	2677119	
5			The Merchant of Venice	1619	SR 35.21	2559249	
6			The Merchant of Venice	1619	SR 35.21	2677065	
7			A Midsummer Night's Dream	1619	SR 35.23	2562606	
8			King Lear	1619	SR 35.17	2562605	
9	Miss Anne Wheeler	Library Catalogue: donated in 1862	The First Folio	1623	SR OS 37	2559457	
10			The First Folio	1623	SR OS 37	2675479	
11			The First Folio	1623	SR OS 37	2675488	
12	Mrs SB Davies	Library Catalogue: donated on 28th November 1945	Love's Labour's Lost	1631	SR 35.18	2562607	
13			The Second Folio	1632	SRp 37 (1632)	2559250	
14	Helena Faucit	MS note	The Second Folio	1632	SR OS 37	2559458	The only copy used by the identified Restoration readers in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Nicholas Smyth of Nibley and his nephew Thomas (bookplate, around 1670).
15			The Second Folio	1632	SRp 37 (1632)	2676231	
16	Miss Anne Wheeler	Library Catalogue	The Second Folio	1632	SR OS 37	2676258	
17			The Second Folio	1632	SR OS 37	2676269	
18	Miss Bevan	Library Catalogue: donated in 1932	The Second Folio	1632	SR OS 37	2676274/Copy 4	
19			The Second Folio	1632	SR OS 37	2676283	
20			The Two Noble Kinsmen	1634	SR 51.13	2562552	
21			The Two Noble Kinsmen	1634	SR 51.13	2677599	
22			The Merchant of Venice	1637	SR 35.21	2562609	
23	Estelle Doheny	Bookplate	Poems	1640	SR 50.40	2562555	
24			The Merchant of Venice	1652	SR 50.21	2562313	
25			The Third Folio	1663?	SR OS 37 (1664)	2577069	
26			The Third Folio	1664	SR OS 37	2577062	
27	Miss Anne Wheeler	Library Catalogue: donated in 1862	The Third Folio	1664	SR OS 37	2676401	
28			The Third Folio	1664	SR OS 37	2676402	
29			Julius Caesar	1684	SR 50.15	2577056	
30			The Fourth Folio	1684	SR OS 37	2577058	
31			The Fourth Folio	1684	SR OS 37/1685	2685696	
32			The Fourth Folio	1684	SR OS 37/1685	2697971	
33			The Fourth Folio	1685	SR OS 37	2577058	
34			The Fourth Folio	1685	SR OS 37/1685	2685696	
35			The Fourth Folio	1685	SR OS 37/1685	2697971	

36	<a href="#">Anna Maria Maydwell</a>	<a href="#">Signature</a>	<a href="#">The Fourth Folio</a>	<a href="#">1685</a> <a href="#">SR OS 37</a>	<a href="#">2577059</a>	
37			Ohello	1687 <a href="#">SR 50.25</a>	<a href="#">2562339</a>	
38			Julius Caesar	1689? <a href="#">SR 50.15</a>	<a href="#">2562687</a>	
39			Julius Caesar	1680? <a href="#">SR 50.15</a>	<a href="#">2562493</a>	
40			Julius Caesar	1691 <a href="#">SR 50.15</a>		
41			Julius Caesar	1691 <a href="#">SR 50.15</a>		
42			Ohello	1695 <a href="#">SR 50.25</a>	<a href="#">2562340</a>	
43			Hamlet	1695 <a href="#">SR 50.07</a>	<a href="#">2562486</a>	
44			The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater	1688 <a href="#">SR 50.02</a>	<a href="#">2562336</a>	
45			The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater	1688 <a href="#">SR 50.32</a>	<a href="#">2562410</a>	
46			All for Love	1692 <a href="#">SR 50.02</a>	<a href="#">2562447</a>	
47			The History and Fall of Caius Marius	1692 <a href="#">SR 50.02</a>	<a href="#">2676469</a>	
48			Macbeth	1674 <a href="#">SR 50.19</a> versions 16	<a href="#">2562325</a>	
49			The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island	1676 <a href="#">SR 50.31</a>	<a href="#">2562363</a>	
50			All for Love	1678 <a href="#">SR 50.02</a>	<a href="#">2562326</a>	
51	<a href="#">Isabella Marida Jayner, Susanna Powell River</a>	<a href="#">Signatures</a>	<a href="#">The History and Fall of Caius Marius</a>	<a href="#">1680</a> <a href="#">SR 50.29</a>	<a href="#">2562275</a>	
52			The Misery of Civil-war	1680 <a href="#">SR 82.1</a>	<a href="#">2562301</a>	
53			1 Henry VI	1681 <a href="#">SR 82.1</a>	<a href="#">2562395</a>	
54	<a href="#">Mrs Edith Parkin</a>	<a href="#">Library Catalogue</a>	<a href="#">2 Henry VI</a>	<a href="#">1681</a> <a href="#">SR 82.1</a>	<a href="#">2562459</a>	
55			Richard II	1681 <a href="#">SR 50.27</a>	<a href="#">2562321</a>	
56			Richard II	1681 <a href="#">SR 50.27</a>	<a href="#">2694112</a>	
57			The Ingratitude of a Common-wealth	1682 <a href="#">SR 50.05</a>	<a href="#">2562417</a>	
58			The Ingratitude of a Common-wealth	1682 <a href="#">SR 50.05</a>	<a href="#">2676490</a>	
59			The Ingratitude of a Common-wealth	1682 <a href="#">SR 50.05</a>	<a href="#">2676493</a>	
60			Hamlet	1683 <a href="#">SR 50.07</a>	<a href="#">2562344</a>	
61			Macbeth	1687 <a href="#">SR 50.19</a>	<a href="#">2562374</a>	
62	<a href="#">Mrs Edith Parkin</a>	<a href="#">Library Catalogue</a>	<a href="#">The History of King Lear</a>	<a href="#">1689</a> <a href="#">SR 50.17</a> versions 16	<a href="#">2562315</a>	
63			The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island	1690 <a href="#">SR 50.31</a>	<a href="#">2562310</a>	
64			The Fairy-queen	1692 <a href="#">SR 50.23</a> versions 16	<a href="#">2562494</a>	
65			The History and Fall of Caius Marius	1692 <a href="#">SR 50.29</a>	<a href="#">2562503</a>	
66			The History and Fall of Caius Marius	1696 <a href="#">SR 50.29</a>	<a href="#">2562434</a>	
67			Saunty the Scott	1698 <a href="#">SR 50.30</a>	<a href="#">2577065</a>	
68			The History of King Lear	1699 <a href="#">SR 50.17</a> versions 16	<a href="#">2562316</a>	
69			Measure for Measure	1700 <a href="#">SR 50.20</a> versions 17	<a href="#">2562327</a>	
70	<a href="#">Emma Saltier</a>	<a href="#">Signature</a>	<a href="#">Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found Too Late</a>	<a href="#">1695</a> <a href="#">SR 80BEA(7996)</a>	<a href="#">2562423</a>	
71			Troilus and Cressida	1766 <a href="#">SR 50.29</a> /texts 1766	<a href="#">2731866</a>	
72			Romeo and Juliet	1766 <a href="#">SR 50.29</a> texts/1766	<a href="#">2731860</a>	
73			Love's Labour's Lost	1766 <a href="#">SR at 50.29</a> texts /176	<a href="#">2731881</a>	



Appendix 3: List of Shakespeare's Folios in Meisei Shakespeare Folio Collection						
Number	Female users	Evidence	Title	Year	Shelfmark	Note
1			The First Folio	1623	Meisei 1	
2			The First Folio	1623	Meisei 2	
3			The First Folio	1623	Meisei 3	
4			The First Folio	1623	Meisei 4	
5			The First Folio	1623	Meisei 5	
6			The First Folio	1623	Meisei 6	
7			The First Folio	1623	Meisei 7	
8			The First Folio	1623	Meisei 8	
9	Mary Chapman	Signature	The First Folio	1623	Meisei 9	
10	Thomas and Isabella Harvey	Signature	The First Folio	1623	Meisei 10	
11	Henrietta Godolphin	The Godolphins Family Copy	The First Folio	1623	Meisei 11	
12			The First Folio	1623	Meisei 12	
13			The Second Folio	1632	MR 0668	
14	Susanna Sollingfbet or Sollinghlet	Signature	The Second Folio	1632	MR 0921	
15			The Second Folio	1632	MR 3199	
16			The Second Folio	1632	MR00922-3	
17			The Second Folio	1632	MR0121	
18			The Second Folio	1632	MR0660	
19			The Second Folio	1632	MR0782	
20			The Second Folio	1632	MR0783	
21	Lady Constance Mary Lascelles	Signature in 1872	The Second Folio	1632	MR0792	
22			The Second Folio	1632	MR0887	
23			The Second Folio	1632	MR0906	
24			The Second Folio	1632	MR0922-1	
25			The Second Folio	1632	MR0922-2	
26			The Second Folio	1632	MR1445	
27			The Second Folio	1632	MR1446	Owened by Thomas Jolley
28			The Second Folio	1632	MR1917	
29			The Second Folio	1632	MR1937	
30			The Second Folio	1632	MR1941	
31	Henry Philipps William, and Elma Mennen, Katherine Welles her book, Katherine Durverville	Bookplate and Signatures	The Second Folio	1632	MR1964	
32			The Second Folio	1632	MR3232	
33			The Second Folio	1632	MR3383	

34			The Second Folio	1632	MR3485	
35			The Second Folio	1632	MR3571	
36			The Second Folio	1632	MR3601	
37			The Second Folio	1632	MR3606	
38	Mrs Anne Foster	Signature	The Second Folio	1632	MR3833	
39			The Second Folio	1632	MR3854	
40			The Second Folio	1632	MR4355	
41	Jane Waldo	Signature	The Third Folio	1663	MR0788	
42			The Third Folio	1663	MR0838	
43			The Third Folio	1663	MR0923	
44	Anne K?ne	Signature	The Third Folio	1664	MR0318	
45			The Third Folio	1664	MR0604	
46	Miss Gwynnis Sal...	Signature	The Third Folio	1664	MR0733	
47			The Third Folio	1664	MR0888	
48			The Third Folio	1664	MR0924	
49			The Third Folio	1664	MR0925	
50	Elisabeth Gregor, Elizabeth H...	Handwritten bookplate	The Third Folio	1664	MR1571	
51			The Third Folio	1664	MR1921	
52			The Third Folio	1664	MR1938	
53			The Third Folio	1663-4	MR1942	
54	Henry Philipps William, and Elma Mennen Williams	Bookplate	The Third Folio	1664	MR1965	
55			The Third Folio	1664	MR3233	
56	Madam...	Sent to unknown 'Madam'	The Third Folio	1664	MR3386	
57			The Third Folio	1664	MR3572	
58			The Third Folio	1664	MR3602	
59	Mildred Potter Lissauer	Bookplate	The Third Folio	1664	MR3604	
60			The Third Folio	1664	MR3605	
61			The Third Folio	1664	MR3607	
62	Nevillia Thomas	Handwritten bookplate	The Third Folio	1664	MR4354	
63			The Third Folio	1664	MR4356	
64			The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0228	
65			The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0605	
66			The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0734	
67			The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0789	
68			The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0793	
69			The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0839	
70			The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0889	

71				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0926	
72				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0927	
73				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR0928	
74				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR1444	
75				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR1460	
76				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR1570	
77				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR1939	
78				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR1943	
79	Henry Phillips Williams and Alma Mennen Williams	Bookplate		The Fourth Folio	1685	MR1966	
80	Nathaniel and Bridgette Salter	Handwritten bookplate in 1709		The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3228	
81				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3486	
82				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3573	
83				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3603	
84				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3608	
85	Helen Elizabeth Pease	Bookplate		The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3609	
86				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3610	
87	J. Vernon and Elizabeth Grace (perhaps the nineteenth-century couple)	Signature		The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3645	
88				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3647	
89				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3784	
90				The Fourth Folio	1685	MR3823	
91	Lady Charlotte Denys			The Fourth Folio	1685	MR4357	

Appendix 4: List of pre-1769 copies of Shakespeare's works in the Senate House Library, including adaptations and anthologies

Number	Female users	Evidence	Title	Year	Shelfmark	Note
1			Perciles	1609	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1609] (SFL)	
2			King Lear	1619	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1608] (SFL)	
3			The First Folio	1623	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shakespeare - 1623] fol. (SFU)	
4	Mary Edgumbe Blatchford	Bookplate	The First Folio	1623	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1623] fol. (SFU)	
5			Othello	1630	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1630] (SFL)	
6	Mary Edgumbe Blatchford	Bookplate	The Second Folio	1632	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1632] fol. (SFL)	
7			The Second Folio	1632	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1632] fol. (SFL)	The only copy used by the identified seventeenth-century reader in this library, Ferdinando Marsham, a member of the Marsham family, and a relative of a famous antiquary Sir John Marsham, signed it. See Pegge (pp. 19-23).
8			The Second Folio	1632	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shakespeare - 1632] fol. (SFU)	
9			The Third Folio	1664	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shakespeare - 1664] fol. (SFU)	
10	Mary Edgumbe Blatchford	Bookplate	The Third Folio	1664	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1664] fol. (SFL)	
11			The Third Folio	1664	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1664] fol. (SFL)	
12			Macbeth	1674	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shakespeare - Macbeth]	
13			Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late	1679	[S.L.] I [Dryden - 1672]-3	
14			All for Love	1678	[S.L.] I [Dryden - 1672]-10	
15			Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late	1679	[S.L.] I [Dryden - 1679]	
16			The Misery of Civil-war	1680	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Crownel]	
17			The History of King Richard the Second	1681	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shakespeare - King Richard III]	
18			The Ingratitude of a Common-wealth	1682	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Tate]	
19			Hamlet	1683	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shakespeare - Hamlet - 1683]	
20			The Fourth Folio	1685	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shakespeare - 1685] fol. (SFU)	
21			The Fourth Folio	1685	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1685] fol. (SFL)	
22	Mary Edgumbe Blatchford	Bookplate	The Fourth Folio	1685	[S.L.] I [Shakespeare - 1685] fol. (SFL)	
23			The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater	1688	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shadwell]	
24			The History of Timon of Athens, the Man-hater	1696	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shadwell]	
25			The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare	1709	[Shakespeare - 1709] Vol. 1	
26			The History of King Lear	1712	[D.-L.L.] (XVII) Bc [Shakespeare - King Lear - 1712]	
27			Hamlet	1720	YHEN 720	
28			Hamlet	1723	YHEN 723	
29			The Life of Henry VIII.	1732	[B.L.] 1732 [Theatre II]	
30			Romeo and Juliet	1752	[B.L.] 1732 [Theatre II] 2nd item	
31			Titus Andronicus	1734	B.S. 980	
32			Perciles, prince of Tyre	1734	B.S. 980	
33			Julius Caesar	1734	[B.L.] 1732 [Theatre VI] 4th item	
34			All for Love	1735	[B.L.] 1732 [Theatre III] 1st item	
35			2 Henry IV	1734	YHEW 734	
36			Hamlet	1734	YHEW 734	
37			Cymbeline	1734	YHEW 734	

38	The Comedy of Errors	1734	YHEW 734	
39	Antony and Cleopatra	1734	YHEW 734	
40	The Works of Shakespeare	1740	Porteus Library YH/740 Reference only	
41	The Works of Shakespeare	1747	* YH 747 Vol. 1	
42	The Works of Shakespeare	1752	B.S. 873 Vol. 1	
43	The Tragical History of King Richard III	1753	Porteus Library 12mo B.P.VII	
44	Much Ado about Nothing	1750	Porteus Library 12mo B.P.VII	
45	Cymbeline	1759	YHEL 759	
46	Hamlet	1763	* YHEN 763	
47	The Plays of William Shakespeare	1765	* YH 765 Vol. 1	

Appendix 5: List of the pre-1769 copies of Shakespeare's works associated with women before the nineteenth century in the Folger Shakespeare Library

Number	Owner	Evidence	Title	Year of acquisition	Year of Call Number	Note
1	Anne Campbell, Countess of Argyll		Leaves from a Poetical Miscellany of Anne Campbell, Countess of Argyll	Around 1600	V.a.89	The Cornwallis-Lysson Manuscript
2	Sarah Wharney	Signature	The Merchant of Venice	18th century	1600 STC 22296 Copy 2	The Orlebar sisters in Hinwick Hall
3	Miss Orlebar	MS note and Library catalogue	Henry V	18th century	1619 STC 22291 Copy 7	The Orlebar sisters in Hinwick Hall
4	Miss Orlebar	MS note and Library catalogue	The Merchant of Venice	18th century	1619 STC 22297 Copy 4	The Orlebar sisters in Hinwick Hall
5	Miss Orlebar	MS note and Library catalogue	The Merry Wives of Windsor	18th century	1619 STC 22300 Copy 7	The Orlebar sisters in Hinwick Hall
6	Miss Orlebar	MS note and Library catalogue	A Midsummer Night's Dream	18th century	1619 STC 22303 Copy 6	The Orlebar sisters in Hinwick Hall
7	Miss Orlebar	MS note	2 and 3 Henry VI	18th century	1619 STC 26101 copy 2	The Orlebar sisters in Hinwick Hall
8	Lady Anne Hamilton	Library catalogue	The First Folio	18th century	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 02	The family copy of the Jocelyns in Ireland
9	Elizabeth Behm...	Signature	The First Folio		1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 17	
10	Anne Damer	Bookplate	The First Folio	1793	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 16	
11	Mary Child, Elizabeth Brocket	Signature	The First Folio	1681-1758	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 23	
12	Philippa Smith	Signature	The First Folio		1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 27	
13	Margaret By	Signature	The First Folio		1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 32	
14	Lady Anne Crew	Signature	The First Folio	Before 1719	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 33	Countess of Torrington
15	Jane Kathern	Signature	The First Folio		1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 38	
16	rev Aunt's Elden	MS note	The First Folio	18th century	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 42	The Eldens around Sidestrand and Norwich in Norfolk
17	Elizabeth Dageet	Signature	The First Folio		1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 45	
18	Alice Stevenson	Signature	The First Folio	1723	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 48	
19	Mrs Mary Lewis	Signature	The First Folio	1685	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 51	
20	Lucy Hutchinson, Elizabeth Hutchinson, Olivia Cotton, Isabella	Signature and Library records	The First Folio	17th century	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 54	The family of Colonel John Hutchinson
21	Mary Warkir?	Signature	The First Folio	1695	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 71	
22	Rachell Paule	Signature	The First Folio	Around 1650	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 72	A daughter of Sir Christopher Clitherow, Lord mayor of London
23	Miss Stodart, Anne (Trotter) Lindsay, Lady Warrage	Signature	The First Folio	1761	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 75	
24	Elizabeth Okell	Signature	The First Folio	1729	1623 STC 22273 Fo. 1 no. 78	The family of Benjamin Okell, the first citizen to obtain the patent for a medicine in England
25	Frances Wolfreston	Signature	Hamlet	17th century	1625 STC 22278 Copy 2	A large library owner in Stafford
26	Sarah Jones	Signature	The Second Folio	1649	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 03	A bookseller
27	Clare Reeve, Maria Reeve	Signature and MS note	The Second Folio	before 1773	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 13	The family of Clara Reeve, a novelist
28	Alice Williamson, Mary Bealy	Signatures	The Second Folio	18th century	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 14	
29	Miss Molly Smith	Signature	The Second Folio	17th century	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 17	
30	Elizabeth (Queen of Bohemia), the Countess of Angus, the Countess of Veerhooven, Lady Aubrey, Lady Hewit, Lady Lister, Sarah King	MS note	The Second Folio	17th century	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 22	Queen of Bohemia and aristocratic women surrounding her
31	Judith Kilgrew	Signature	The Second Folio	17th century	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 31	
32	Lady Hester Stanhope, Eliza Williams	MS note	The Second Folio	late 18th-19th centuries	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 44	
33	Anne Clarke	Signature	The Second Folio	18th century	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 49	
34	Catherine Hutton	Signature	The Second Folio	1788	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 51	A writer
35	Jane Pyce	Signature	The Second Folio	17th century	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 54	
36	Mary Elmer	Signature	The Second Folio	18th century	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 57	
37	Mary Savage, Eleanor Breaket	Signature	The Second Folio	1690	1632 STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 58	

38	Eva Maria Garrick	MS note	The Second Folio	18th century	1632	PRC zzzz74 10.2 no.2	An actress, wife of David Garrick
39	Elizabeth Lawr <sup>?</sup> ill	Signature	1 Henry IV		1639	STC 22287 Copy 4	
40	Sarah Rodwell, Hannah Mary Jenkins	Signature	Poems	1767	1640	STC 22344 Copy 6	
41	Hannah Welford, Elizabeth Gyles, Rose Meeks	Signature	Poems	17th-18th centuries	1640	STC 22344 Copy 10	
42	Elizabeth Weiden	Signature	Poetical Miscellany	17th century	1650	V.a.162	
43	Anna Doudsworth Jackson	MS note	The Third Folio	18th century	1664	S2914 Fo.3 no.01	
44	Eliz. Clare	Signature	Julius Caesar		1684	S2922 Bd.w. D2325	
45	Mary Athawes	Signature	The Fourth Folio	18th century	1685	S2915 Fo.4 no.07	
46	Sarah Burnes	Signature	The Fourth Folio	18th century	1685	S2915 Fo.4 no.12	
47	Elizabeth Grey, Anne Grey, Constantia Grey	Signatures	The Fourth Folio	1766	1685	S2915 Fo.4 no.18	
48	Frances Lovett, Mary Lovett, Rebeckah Ashe	Signatures	The Fourth Folio	17th century	1685	S2915 Fo.4 no.19	The family of Christopher Lovett, Lord Mayor of Dublin
49	Elizabeth Young, Grandmother Bathwist	Signature	Julius Caesar	1728	1691	S2927 Bd.w. L856 Copy 2	
50	Elizabeth Young, Grandmother Bathwist	Signature	Ohello	1728	1695	S2942 Bd.w. L856 Copy 2	
51	Mary Smyth of Dublin	Signature	Ohello		1695	S2942 Copy 3	
52	Elizabeth Colman	Signature	The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare	1755	1709	PR2752 1709a copy 3 Sh.Col.Vol.1	
53	Elizabeth Kelly, Ann Webb	Signatures	The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare	18th century	1709	PR2752 1709c copy 3 v. 6 Sh.Col.	
54	Miss Nelly Clu <sup>?</sup> inegy	Signature	Hamlet		1710	PR2807 1710 copy 4 Sh. Col.	
55	Anne Milborne	Signature	The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare		1714	PR2752 1714b Sh.Col.Vol.1	
56	Eliza Hiley <sup>?</sup>	Signature	The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare		1714	PR2752 1714c copy 1 Sh.Col.Vol.1	
57	Catharine Mitchell	Signature	Hamlet	18th century	1718	PR2807 1718 copy 2 Sh.Col.	
58	Louisa Grace, Dorothy Honor	Signature	The Works of Shakespeare		1726	PR2752 1726 copy 1 Sh.Col.Vol.1	
59	Charlotte Pierce	Signature	The Works of Shakespeare		1728	PR2752 1728a copy 2 Sh.Col.	A wealthy woman in Ippleton. See Cresswell, p. 58 and the National Archives' online catalogue note to 'Lawrence Family of Launceston' (LR) at Cornwall Record Office.
60	Mary Lamb, Mrs. Parson	Signature and MS note	The Works of Shakespeare		1733	PR2752 1733 copy 7 Sh.Col.Vol.1	A writer
61	Eliza	Signature	The Works of Shakespeare		1735	PR2752 1734-58b copy 12 v.7 Sh.Col.	
62	Elizabeth Toller	Signature	Hamlet	1737	1737	PR2807 1737 copy 1 Sh.Col.	A poet
63	Jane Anne Loftus	Signature	The Works of Shakespeare	1794	1739	PR2752 1739 Sh.Col.	
64	Mary Anne Sanders, Anne Eliza Darwin	Signature	The works of Shakespeare	18th century	1745	PR2752 1745 copy 2 Sh.Col.	Perhaps Mary Anne Sanders is a wife of Reginald Darwin, cousin of Charles Darwin, and Anne Eliza Darwin is one of Charles's daughter Anne Elizabeth, who was about eight years old when the signature was written
65	Eleanor Newton, Gertrude Tucker, Mary Elizabeth Plaisted	Signatures and MS note	The Works of Shakespeare	18th-19th centuries	1747	PR2752 1747a copy 5 Sh.Col.Vol.1	Mary Elizabeth Plaisted is a descendant of Frances Wolffeston
66	Lady Harriet Hesketh	MS note	The Works of Shakespeare	1751	1747	PR2752 1747d2 copy 2 Sh.Col.Vol.1	A cousin of the poet William Cowper and Mary Cowper, a member of the Shakespeare Ladies Club
67	Anna Maria Griffiths	Signature	The Works of Shakespeare	1748	1747	PR2752 1747e2 copy 3 v.6 Sh.Col.	
68	Laura Martha Sealy	Bookplate	The Works of Shakespeare		1747	PR2752 1747f3 copy 1 Sh.Col.Vol.1	
69	Mary [Mackay or Mackey]	Signature	Hamlet		1750	PR2807 1750b copy 4 Sh.Col.	
70	Jane M. Ward	Signature	The Works of Shakespeare	18th century	1752	PR2752 1752 copy 4 Sh.Col.Vol.1	
71	Catherine Ann Egan Achmet	Signature	Romeo and Juliet	18th-19th centuries	1761	Bd.w. PROMPT Cymb. 14	An Irish actress
72	Catherine Ann Egan Achmet	Signature	Cymbeline	18th-19th centuries	1762	PROMPT Cymb. 14	An Irish actress
73	Catherine Ann Egan Achmet	Signature	The History of King Lear	18th-19th centuries	1768	Bd.w. PROMPT Cymb. 14	An Irish actress
74	Joanna Baillie	Signature	The Works of Shakespeare	18th-19th centuries	1766	PR2752 1766a1 copy 2 Sh.Col.	A Scottish writer

Appendix 6: List of the plays dedicated to women from 1570 to 1642				
Dedicator	Title	Dedicatee(s)	Year	Type
Henry Cheke	<i>Translation of Free Will, Francesco Negri's Tragedy</i>	Lady Jane Cheyne, wife of Henry, earl of Toddington	1573	Closet
Robert Wilmot	<i>Tancred and Gismund</i>	Lady Mary Petre, wife of John, Baron Peter Lady Anne Gray, wife of Baron Gray of Groby	1591	Academic
Abraham Fraunce	<i>Amyntas Pastoral</i>	Lady Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke	1591	Closet
William Gager	<i>Ulysses Redux</i>	Lady Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke	1592	Academic
Thomas Kyd	<i>Translation of Cornelia, Robert Garnier's Tragedy</i>	Lady Bridget Radcliff, Countess of Sussex	1594	Closet
Samuel Daniel	<i>Cleopatra</i>	Lady Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke	1594	Closet
Philip Sidney	<i>The Lady of May</i>	Lady Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke	1598	Court entertainment
Samuel Brandon	<i>The Virtuous Octavia</i>	Lady Lucia Audley, wife of George, Earl of Catlehaven	1598	Closet
Ben Jonson	<i>Cynthia's Revels</i>	Lady Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford William Campden	1601	Commercial (for boy actors)
Samuel Daniel	<i>The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses</i>	Lady Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford	1604	Court entertainment
Samuel Daniel	<i>The Queen's Arcadia</i>	Anna of Denmark	1606	Court entertainment
Thomas Campion	<i>Lord Hay's Masque</i>	James Hay, earl of Carlisle Lady Honora Hay (James' bride)	1607	Court entertainment
Nathan Field	<i>A Woman Is a Weathercocke</i>	'to any lady or woman, that dares say she hath beene no weather-Cocke'	1612	Commercial (for boy actors)
Ben Jonson	<i>The Alchemist</i>	Lady Mary Sidney Wroth	1612	Commercial
Elizabeth Cary	<i>The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry</i>	Lady Elizabeth Bland Cary, wife of Philip Cary (the author's sister-in-law)	1613	Closet
Thomas Middleton	<i>The World Tossed at Tennis</i>	Lady Mary Howard Charles Howard, Baron of Effingham (Mary's husband)	1620	Commercial
Philip Massinger	<i>The Duke of Milan</i>	Lady Katherine Stanhope, Countess of Chesterfield	1623	Commercial
James Shirley	<i>Changes, or Love in Maze</i>	Lady Dorothy Shirley	1632	Commercial
William Sheares	<i>The Works of Mr. John Marston</i>	Lady Elizabeth Cary (author of Mariam)	1633	Commercial
Anonymous	<i>The King and Queenes Entertainment at Richmond</i>	Henrietta Maria	1636	Court entertainment
William Sampson	<i>The Vow Breaker</i>	Lady Ann Willoughby	1636	Commercial
John Ford	<i>The Lady's Trial</i>	Mary Wyrley John Wyrley (Mary's husband)	1639	Commercial (for boy actors)
Joseph Rutter	<i>The second part of the translation of The Cid, Corneille's tragedy</i>	Lady Theophilia Cooke, wife of Sir Robert Cooke	1640	Commercial (for boy actors)
This list is based on Virgil B. Heltzel, 'The Dedication of Tudor and Stuart Plays'; David Bergeron, 'Women as Patrons of English Renaissance Drama'; and <i>Textual Patronage in English Drama, 1570–1640</i> .				



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