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‘Of Scotch Extraction’:
Literary and Dramatic Dimensions of the Writing of Catharine Trotter Cockburn (?1674-1749)

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Scottish Literature

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Abstract

Catharine Trotter Cockburn (?1674-1749) is best known as a playwright and philosopher who produced five plays for the London stage from 1698-1706, and a number of philosophical and theological writings in her later life. She also wrote an epistolary novella, a number of poems, and corresponded with friends and family members, some of whom were important public figures, playwrights, and literary patrons. Although she was born in London and spent much of her life there, Trotter has a number of links to Scotland. She was the daughter of Scottish parents – who had familial connections with the Maitland family (Earls of Lauderdale), Drummond family (Earls of Perth) and the Bellenden family – and married a Scottish clergyman, Patrick Cockburn. After her marriage she lived in Aberdeen for eleven years from 1726-1737. Although these links are acknowledged as part of Trotter's biography, scholars of Trotter's work have generally taken an Anglo-centric approach to her writing, omitting the relevance of these Scottish dimensions to her work.

This thesis seeks to re-evaluate Trotter's dramatic and literary work, paying particular attention to her Scottish dimensions, by analysing the ways in which a Scottish literary perspective enlarges the themes within Trotter's literary writing and enhances her profile as a writer. The first four chapters identify areas in which Trotter was at home within an English literary tradition but draw attention to how her work differs from that of English contemporary writers. These chapters take a new historicist approach - incorporating Scottish cultural and historical reference points such as contemporary Scottish plays, theatrical and cultural traditions, and political and social contexts, to illustrate how Trotter's Scottish literary and cultural heritage may help explain the divergencies between Trotter's writing and English literary tradition. The final chapter takes a more holistic approach to Trotter, addressing in more detail her own literary, philosophical, and theological awareness within a Scottish context creating a correlation between Trotter and a number of other Scottish learned women who used their education to contribute to, and engage with, public debate. In doing so, Trotter is situated as a cultural intermediary figure between seventeenth-century Scotland and the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

This broader approach to Trotter and her work provides a more detailed critical context with which to understand her, but it also creates a framework for the study of other writers who have a cultural connection or debt to Scotland but are often excluded from the Scottish literary canon.

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Note on Primary Texts

Other than the replacement of the long ‘S’ with the standard ‘s’ and expansion of commonly abbreviated words in manuscripts (e.g., expanding ‘the’ and ‘which’ where they have been shortened) quotations from all primary sources (including handwritten and facsimile reproductions of texts) are reproduced with original spelling and grammar. I have removed any italicisation within primary quotations which is not used to denote emphasis, or a title. Stage directions from plays are presented in italics within braces i.e. {*draws sword*}. In some instances, to aid clarity, I have moved the stage directions to the part of the quotation to which they are relevant (e.g., placing {*aside*} before the text which should be spoken as an aside).

Abbreviations

BL *British Library*

CUP *Cambridge University Press*

EUP *Edinburgh University Press*

NLS *National Library of Scotland*

ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

OUP *Oxford University Press*

Introduction:
Exploring Scottish dimensions of Catharine Trotter Cockburn's literary writing

The name 'Catharine Trotter Cockburn' provokes a varied response among those who know of her. Kendall observes:

> Depending upon whose description one reads, she was: a dainty coquette, a withered pride, a literary genius, a religious hypocrite, a woman of deep moral conscience, a child prodigy, a septuagenarian drone, a brilliant moral philosopher, a pretentious flirt, a lesbian, a dutiful minister's wife and devoted mother, a tormented intellectual, a tease.[1]

These differing perspectives are influenced by an assortment of accounts of her life and work from direct contemporaries, and scholars in the immediate aftermath of her death through to readers in the present day. What would have been considered the more salacious aspects of her character are now generally accepted to be the result of petty rumours established by those who took a dislike to Trotter, such as fellow writer Delarivier Manley,[2] while the focus on her learned, moral, and philosophical persona has evolved from the early eighteenth century onwards.

These readings of Trotter emphasise the fact that as both a writer and a woman she is multi-dimensional. Many of these dimensions have been considered at length, such as her moral philosophy by Patricia Sheridan;[3] her learnedness and education, addressed by Melanie Bigold and Norma Clarke;[4] and the different perspectives that have often shown her to be a key figure for the English stage through her contribution to the development of tragedy.[5] The late twentieth century also saw the feminocentric dimensions of Trotter's writing heralded as a form of proto-feminism.[6] But one dimension of Trotter and her writing has been consistently forgotten or ignored in her literary afterlife – her links to Scotland. As the daughter of Scottish parents, wife of a Scottish clergyman and resident of Scotland during part of her adult life, Trotter deserves to at least be considered from a Scottish literary perspective. When her work is situated within early modern Scottish writing, thematic similarities are evident, foregrounding those Scottish dimensions of her work. This thesis draws attention to this often-overlooked aspect of Trotter's writing to

[1] Kendall [Kathryn M.], 'Catharine Trotter', in *Love and Thunder: Plays by Women in the Age of Queen Anne* (London: Methuen, 1988), pp.64-68 (p.64).
[2] See Chapter 5.
[3] Sheridan (2006, 2007, 2018).
[4] Clarke (2004), Bigold (2013).
[5] Wheatley (2000), Canfield (2000).
[6] Kendall (1988), Greer (1988).

highlight that the Scottish elements of her work contribute to a clearer understanding of this fascinating writer.

Biography and timeline

The most comprehensive biographies of Catharine Trotter Cockburn are Anne Kelley's entry for Trotter in the *ODNB* (2004), and her book *Catharine Trotter: an early modern writer in the vanguard of feminism* (2002). Prior to this, the only contemporary biography was by historical compiler and collector Thomas Birch[7] in his introduction to *The Works of Mrs Catharine Cockburn: Theological, Moral, Dramatic and Poetical*, which was published by subscription, three years after her death, in 1751. Birch started collecting her work for publication while she was still living, and a letter to Birch from her husband, Patrick Cockburn, shows that she was both pleased by and involved in the project:

> My wife thinks her self much obliged to that generous person who is so zealous to promote her credits & her interests for which she returns him her respectful acknowledgments, & will be ready to submit to his & Mr Warburton's judgement.[8]

After Trotter's death, her son, John Cockburn, maintained correspondence with Birch, indicating the family's continued involvement in the publication of her final collected works,[9] and providing legitimacy to the biographical information outlined there.

Catharine Trotter was born in London to Scottish parents, the youngest of two daughters of Captain David Trotter, a naval Captain serving under Charles II, and his wife, Sarah Bellenden. Birch states that her date of birth was 16 August 1679,[10] which is corroborated by the statement on her gravestone that she died 'in the 70 year of her age.' However, Anne Kelley's discovery of a Katherine Trotters, daughter of David and Sarah Trotters, in the church baptismal records of St Andrew, Holborn from 29 August 1674,[11] suggests that Birch's account could be incorrect. Trotter's dates are now generally depicted as ?1674-1749 and Kelley's assertion that this earlier baptismal record is indeed referring to Trotter is accepted by most. While this is mostly insignificant, the five-year difference in

[7] David Philip Miller, 'Birch, Thomas (1705-1766)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/2436> [accessed May 2021].
[8] Patrick Cockburn to Thomas Birch, BL Add. MS 4265, ff.108-109, f.108.
[9] John Cockburn's correspondence with Birch regarding his mother's work can be found in BL Add. MS 4302, ff.290-298. Accessing this for use within the thesis was prevented by unavailability, and later, Covid19 lockdown measures. Other manuscript references which are available but have not been accessed personally for this reason are marked throughout by *.
[10] Thomas Birch, *The Works of Catharine Cockburn: Theological, Moral, Dramatic and Poetical*, 2 Vols (London: J and P Knapton, 1751), Vol.1, p.iv. Referred to throughout as '*Works*, Vol.1 or 2'.
[11] Anne Kelley, *Catharine Trotter: an early modern writer in the vanguard of feminism* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2002), p.1.

Trotter's dates does challenge the view that she was some kind of child prodigy, as Birch made pains to emphasise when he referred to her 'early marks of her genius' through her early literary activity,[12] and aging her as fourteen when she wrote her first poem.[13] Kelley's revised date instead presents her as an educated young woman entering the public sphere by means of her writing.

Trotter's parents are referred to as Scottish in Birch's biography, and he also states that through her mother, Sarah Bellenden, they 'had the honour of being nearly related to the noble Lord of that name, and to the illustrious families of Maitland, Duke of Lauderdale, and Drummond, earl of Perth.'[14] It is easy to establish the connections between these families in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,[15] but there is as yet no information to explain exactly how Sarah Bellenden was related to them. The family connection is acknowledged, however, in letters from the Earl of Perth to Sarah Trotter which make mention of the fact.[16] David Trotter's position as Naval Commander for Charles II is confirmed by the probate for his will which is held within Maritime Records, mentioning his wife and daughters, Anne and Catharine, by name.[17] Captain Trotter died of illness, abroad in Iskenderun in 1684.[18] Having lost all his effects, the family were left with little support and in a degree of poverty. They were provided with a small pension from Charles II, which stopped after the King's death in 1685. The pension was not reinstated until 1702 when Queen Anne came to the throne.[19]

As a young woman, Trotter was largely self-educated:

> She both learned to write and made herself mistress of the French language, by her own application and diligence, without any instructor. But she had some assistance in the study of Latin grammar and Logic, upon which latter she drew up an abstract for her own use.[20]

[12] *Works*, Vol.1, p.iv.
[13] *Works*, Vol.1, p.v.
[14] *Works*, Vol.1, p.ii.
[15] Nicholas Francis, *The Scots Compendium, or Rudiments of Honour* (London, 1752), *passim.*
[16] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.3. The letters themselves can be found in *BL Add. MS 4265, f.188 and ff.189-90.
[17] The National Archives Website: Discovery: PROB 11/375/173 Will of David Trotter, 9 February 1684.
[18] *Works*, Vol.1, p.iii.
[19] Anne Kelley, 'Trotter [*married name* Cockburn], Catharine (?1674-1749)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2008) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/5768> [accessed 24th March 2021].
[20] *Works*, Vol.1, pp.iv-v.

As part of her education, but also for enjoyment, Trotter seemed to spend time writing, and Birch gives an account of her presenting a poem to family and friends, suggesting she had done this from a young age.[21]

In 1693, Trotter composed 'Verses sent to Mr Bevil Higgons[22] on his sickness and recovery from Small pox', which, although not published until 1751 in *Works*, is the earliest poem which can be attributed to Trotter. In that same year, Samuel Briscoe published *Letters of Love and Gallantry and Several Other Subjects, All Written by Ladies* in which the centrepiece was an early form of an epistolary novella, titled *The Adventures of a Young Lady, written by her self, in several Letters to a Gentleman of the Country*, which tells the experiences of Olinda, a young woman reluctant to marry. Although the text was initially anonymous, it was republished in 1718 in another of Briscoe's volumes, this time under the name of *Olinda's Adventures*, and attributed to 'Mrs. Trotter.'

From 1695 to1706, Trotter's main focus was on writing for the London stage.[23] Her debut play was *Agnes de Castro,* a tragedy performed in 1695 and an adaptation of Aphra Behn's novel of the same name. As with *Olinda*, the play was initially presented anonymously, with the title page stating that it was 'Written by a Young Lady.' Her second tragedy was an original piece, *Fatal Friendship,* staged in 1698. This time, the dedication was signed by the author, Catharine Trotter. In 1700, Trotter's only comedy, *Love at a Loss, or, Most Votes Carry It* was staged. In that same year, she published a poem, 'Calliope: The Heroic Muse', in a collection of poems called *The Nine Muses: or, Poems Upon the Death of the late Famous John Dryden*, written by female writers of the time, many of whom Trotter was personally acquainted with. Trotter returned to tragedy in 1701 with *The Unhappy Penitent*. In 1702, Trotter published *A Defence of Mr Locke's 'Essay of Human Understanding'*, in which she addressed some of the attacks and objections that John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) had been faced with. The *Defence* was praised by many, and despite the fact that she had published it anonymously, Locke was made aware of Trotter's identity by Elizabeth Burnet, wife of Bishop Gilbert Burnet who was a family friend of Trotter, and a friend of Locke.[24] He was so pleased with the *Defence* that he sent Trotter a gift of books and a letter of thanks:

> Give me leave therefore to assure you, that as the rest of the world take notice of the strength and clearness of your reasoning, so I cannot but be

[21] *Works*, Vol. 1, p.iv.
[22] See Chapter 5 for further discussion of Higgons.
[23] Plot summaries and performance details for Trotter's plays are found in Appendix 1.
[24] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter,* p.15.

> extremely sensible, that it was employed in my defence. You have herein not only vanquished my adversary, but reduced me also absolutely under your power.[25]

Following her defence of Locke, Trotter wrote her final known play, *The Revolution of Sweden*, which was staged in 1706 and marked the end of her playwrighting career, and the majority of her literary writing. Her next work was the philosophical and theological *A discourse concerning a guide in Controversies; in two Letters: Written to one of the Church of Rome, by a person lately converted from that Communion* (1707). An anonymous account of Trotter's life written for Birch and contained within his collected source material for the *Works* explains Trotter's theological background:

> Mrs Trotter was bred a Protestant but being intimate w[i]th several of the R. Church was brought to have great doubts about Religion & had several consultations with some of the learned men of the first rank of the Church of England, but as she was not then satisfied w[i]th their resolution of her doubts she embraced the R. Persuasion about the age of [*blank*]. She continued in that church until the year 1706 or 7, but still not without great doubts.[26]

Birch describes this soul searching and debate as one which she engaged with over a number of years:

> In the latter end of that year [1706], or the beginning of the following, her doubts about the Romish religion, which she had so many years professed, having led her to a thorough examination of the grounds of it, by consulting the best books on both sides of the question, and advising with men of the best judgement, the result of it was a conviction of the falseness of the pretensions of that church and a return to that of England, to which she adhered during the rest of her life.[27]

Although *A Discourse concerning a guide in Controversies* marked her return to Protestantism, Trotter often noted the similarities between the two expressions of Christianity. While she was still identifying herself with the Catholic church, she corresponded with Thomas Burnet of Kemnay, a relative of Gilbert Burnet,[28] who had often tried to convince her to return to the Church of England. She admitted:

> To say the truth, I have of late almost forgot all distinction of churches; for having had some occasion of observing more than before the great

[25] *Works*, p.xx. A copy of the letter is in BL Add. MS 4265, f.16.
[26] BL Add. MS 4265, ff.44v-45.
[27] *Works*, Vol. 1, pp.xxix-xxx.
[28] Thomas Burnet of Kemnay's father was a cousin of Bishop Gilbert Burnet, see James Allardyce (ed.), *The Family of Burnett of Leys* (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, 1901). It should also be noted that in Trotter's *Works*, Birch mistakenly refers to Thomas Burnet of Kemnay as 'George Burnet', see Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.4n13.

> growth of infidelity; that there are many who disbelieve, and more, who doubt, that there ever was any divine revelation, I have employed myself much in considering the proofs, and defending the truth of the Christian religion; which has so entirely engaged my concern, that when I am with those, who sincerely submit to the authority of Jesus Christ, what sense soever they may understand him in, I am satisfied, and really think my self with one of my own communion. Thus you see, Sir, there will be no obstacle on my part to that satisfaction, which an agreement in matters of religion gives; and I hope the sincere love I have for truth, and charity for those, who differ from me, will atone with you for the errors of my understanding.[29]

Although Trotter remained faithful to the Anglican and Episcopalian tradition after her reconversion, she remained sympathetic to Catholicism.[30]

Trotter's early life took place against the backdrop of the 'Glorious' Revolution. Charles II died in 1685 and his brother became King James II and VIII of England and Scotland, only to be replaced in 1688 by his daughter Mary and her husband, William of Orange, who were invited to invade and take over by the English nobility.[31] By the time Trotter was writing for the stage, the 1707 Union of Parliament was approaching and while there were political undertones in her plays, which are discussed later in this thesis, none of this seems to have impacted Trotter in an obvious way. She did however move in circles with powerful, political figures such as the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough and was a supporter of their family. During her early writing career, she wrote two poems in praise of the Duke: 'On his Grace the Duke of Marlborough's return from his expedition to Germany, after the Battle of Blenheim, 1704' and 'On his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, after his victory at Ramillies, 1706', both of which indicate her loyalty and similar political leanings to the Marlboroughs.[32] However, after her marriage to Scottish clergyman, Patrick Cockburn in 1708, Trotter's personal life became slightly more involved in political controversy as her husband's religious and political views had an impact on their family life. After their marriage, the couple moved to Nayland, Suffolk, where Cockburn was a Curate. A record of Patrick is found in the Parish registers from April 1712, recording the baptism of 'Mary, daughter of Patrick Cockburn, curate, and Catharine, his wife.'[33] In 1713, Patrick was given a church in St Dunstan-in-the-West. Baptismal records show that their son, John was born and baptised that same year. In 1714, Patrick Cockburn found

[29] Trotter to Thomas Burnet, 2 Feb 1703/4, *Works*, Vol. 2 pp.167-168
[30] See Chapter 6.
[31] Discussed further in Chapter 4.
[32] See Chapter 4.
[33] Quoted in Rowan Strong, 'Cockburn, Patrick, (1678-1749)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/5775> [accessed March 2021].

himself unable to take the Oath of Abjuration that was required from all clergy to renounce the Stuart claim to the throne, and subsequently gave up his position. He tutored in Latin to try and support the family, but they struggled with poverty.[34] Although Patrick was no longer in the position of clergyman, the family seems to have stayed in the area, as the Parish records for St Dunstan-in-the-West show the birth and baptism of Catharine (Kitty) Cockburn in August 1715. It is worth noting that it was during this period of financial difficulty, in 1718, that Trotter's first fictional work, *Olinda's Adventures*, was republished, this time bearing her name. Perhaps it was a good time to remind people of her literary reputation and provide more writing opportunities that might bring income for the family. However, during this period of family life, Trotter is not known to have written and published any plays or philosophical work for public consumption, and the general assumption is that she was not actively writing during the early years of her marriage and motherhood.

Around 1720, Catharine gave birth to her youngest daughter, Grissel,[35] and in 1726, Patrick was persuaded to take the Oath, and was given the charge of St Paul's Episcopal Chapel in Aberdeen. It was also in 1726 that Trotter wrote to Dr Winch Holdsworth addressing some of his concerns about John Locke that he had raised in a sermon. At his urging, she published it as *A Letter to Dr Holdsworth, Occasioned by His Sermon Preached before the University of Oxford* so that he might also publish his reply.[36] Trotter then wrote another piece, *A Vindication of Mr Locke's Christian Principles from the Injurious Imputations of Dr Holdsworth* around the same time, but was unable to find a bookseller to publish it, leaving it to become part of her *Works* in 1751.[37] Shortly after the family relocated to Scotland, Patrick was given a second charge at Longhorsley, a small village near Morpeth. He was able to leave the Longhorsley living in the hands of other clergy while he remained in Aberdeen, and it was there that Trotter began to return to her literary writing:

> she had a design of revising the four tragedies, which she had written, as she actually did her comedy, with a view, not only of correcting them, but likewise improving the versification, and raising the diction; being sensible, that from a just distaste of the bombast and false sublime of many of the writers of tragedy in the last age, she had sunk too much into

[34] Strong, *ODNB*; Kelley (2002), (2008).
[35] Grissel's year of birth has been ascertained from the information on her headstone in Longhorsley, which states that she died in 1742, aged 22.
[36] *Works*, Vol.1, pp.xxxv-xxxvii.
[37] *Works*, Vol.1, pp.xxxvi; Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau, *Literature Criticism from 1400-1800*, Vol. 165, (Michigan: Gale, 2009), pp.270-381 (p.271), in *The Internet Archive* <http://www.archive.org/details/isbn_9781414434827> [accessed July 2021].

> the contrary extreme of too great a simplicity of style, unequal to the dignity of that species of poetry.[38]

Trotter's change in focus, away from literary writing, and eventually on to philosophical and religious works would have naturally changed her view of her earlier plays. Birch implies that the changes to the plays were structural and stylistic, and that she wanted to update her work. Unfortunately, none of these re-workings have survived and there is no information about how she wished to change her tragedies, but she did decide to rename her comedy *Love at a Loss* to *The Honourable Deceivers; or All Right at the Last*. Trotter's intentions to restage it never came to fruition.[39]

The editing process undertaken by Trotter in Aberdeen shows that despite not publishing texts, she was still engaged with the literary world while in Scotland, and perhaps more so than she had been in the early years of her marriage. Her writing of a poem in 1732 in response to Queen Caroline placing statues in her garden to commemorate great writers and philosophers shows that she was thinking about such things even far away from the London scene from which she had launched her career. The 'Poem occasioned by the busts set up in the Queen's Hermitage' was intended to be delivered to the Queen with a copy of Trotter's *Defence of Mr Locke's Essay*; however, the poem never reached Caroline.[40] The poem was later published in 1737 in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, with significant editorial interference.[41] It was not until the publication of *Works* in 1751 that the original was made public.

A number of essays and papers, philosophical in nature, appear for the first time in Birch's *Works* and it is unclear when some of these were written, but throughout her adult life, Trotter was engaging with philosophical ideas and seemingly writing poetry. Throughout her time in Aberdeen, Trotter kept an active correspondence with her niece, Ann Arbuthnot in Peterhead, and their conversations included everything from family life to discussions of reading material, again indicating that while she was not necessarily publishing much, Trotter remained occupied with literature, philosophy, and writing. In 1737, Trotter and her family were again required to relocate. A difficult situation had arisen in Longhorsley; Patrick was no longer able to allow another clergyman to oversee the congregation and the Bishop of Durham insisted that Patrick return.[42] Because the

[38] *Works*, Vol.1 p.xxxvii.
[39] *Works*, Vol.1, p.ix.
[40] *Works*, Vol.1, p.xxxvii.
[41] *Works*, Vol.1, p.xxxvii.
[42] Strong, *ODNB; Works*, Vol.1, p.xxxiv.

Aberdeen living had to be given up, the family were again struggling financially as they moved south.[43]

After settling in Longhorsley, Trotter continued to correspond with her niece, but her other writing seems to have slowed. In many of her letters she complains of failing eyesight, bad health and headaches which often made it difficult to write. With such decline in health, it would have been hard to produce the large-scale papers and essays that she had done previously. In 1742, the Cockburn family lost their youngest daughter, Grissel, at the age of twenty-two. Trotter's last published piece of writing in her lifetime was *Remarks upon the principles and reasonings of Dr. Rutherforth's Essay on the nature and obligations of virtue: in vindication of the contrary principles and reasonings, inforced in the writings of the late Dr. Samuel Clarke,* which was published in 1747. In January 1749, Patrick Cockburn died, followed by Catharine four months later in May. They were buried in Longhorsley alongside their daughter. Patrick Cockburn's will left the majority of his worldly goods to his wife. He also left her 'all the Books which are properly called hers'[44] which pointed to her ownership of books, and lifetime of learning and reading. Trotter left her son John all her books and correspondence, while her daughter, Catharine, received 'all my Works and copies of my Works that are now design'd to be printed or that may hereafter be printed, with the whole Profits arising from the same.'[45] Trotter had high hopes for her work being published, and perhaps was aware that Birch's gathering and publishing of her *Works* would be her lasting legacy of her reading, writing and learning.

Contemporary reception and later scholarship

Trotter's relationship with her contemporary writers is considered in detail within this thesis, but in general, they respected her as a person and as a writer. She is known to have corresponded with George Farquhar and William Congreve[46] and been in contact with William Wycherley, who wrote the prologue to Trotter's first play at her request.[47] *Fatal Friendship* has four poems written for Trotter by other writers, showing that she had a working relationship with many around her. Not only did she combine forces with other female writers to contribute to *The Nine Muses* in 1700, but she and some of these women

[43] *Works*, Vol.1, p.xxxv.
[44] Last Will and Testament of Rev. Patrick Cockburn, reproduced in Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.271.
[45] Last Will and Testament of Catharine Cockburn, reproduced in Kelley, *Catharine Trotter,* pp.269-270 (p.269).
[46] BL Add MS 4264 f.102 (Farquhar) and ff.335-336 (Congreve).
[47] See the prologue to *Agnes de Castro.*

writers wrote dedicatory poems, prologues, and epilogues for one another's plays.[48] Trotter's talent was recognised not only by fellow writers but also by critics of the time. She was praised as

> admirable for two things rarely found together, Wit and Beauty […] She discovers in her Conversation, a Fineness and Nicety of Reasoning on the highest Metaphysical Subjects; nor is she less entertaining on the more Gay and Conversible. She has already given us two Plays, which challenge our Admiration, we like the first, but are transported with the last; there is the Chastity of her Person, and the Tenderness of her Mind in both.[49]

This idea that Trotter's plays stretched the mind, giving food for thought, while also remaining appropriate for the stage was held by more than just Gildon and contemporary playwrights. She is referred to by an anonymous author who was responding to William Congreve's objections to Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Prophaneness of the English Stage* as being able to do this too:

> A celebrated Female in use, has lately convinc'd you, in her *fatal Friendship*, that 'tis possible to entertain, with all the Judgement, Wit and Beauty of Poetry; without *shocking our senses,* with intolerable prophaneness or obscenity.[50]

Trotter had only seen two of her plays staged by the time, but her reputation was building.

Not everyone agreed with this positive presentation of Trotter. Sometime during the 1696/7 season,[51] *The Female Wits: or, The Triumvirate of Poets at Rehearsal* was performed at Drury Lane and made a mockery of three female playwrights of the period, Mary Delarivier Manley, Mary Pix and Catharine Trotter. Trotter was mocked in the play as 'a lady that pretends the learned languages and assumes to herself the name of critic'.[52] Later, Manley and Trotter's relationship seems to have soured, and Manley went on to write *The New Atalantis* (1709), a scandalous novel that implicated a number of well-known public figures in illicit affairs and corrupt behaviour. Manley used the novella to suggest that Trotter was guilty of moral hypocrisy, presenting a public persona of piousness, while in secret conducting love affairs with the Duke of Marlborough and with

[48] See Chapter 6. A full list of these poems is in Appendix 2.
[49] Charles Gildon, *The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets […] begun by G. Langbain* (London: Nicholas Cox and William Turner, 1699), p.179.
[50] Anon., *A Letter to Mr Congreve on His Pretended Amendments of Mr Colliers Short View of the Immorality and Prophaneness of the English Stage* (London: Samuel Keble, 1698), pp.36-37.
[51] Fidelis Morgan states that the play was performed 'c.1697' (see Morgan, 1981) while the Augustan Reprint Society version of the text and the London Stage Database estimate that it was performed in late 1696.
[52] Anon, *The Female Wits: or, The Triumvirate of Poets at Rehearsal*, in *The Female Wits: Women Playwrights of the Restoration*, ed. Fidelis Morgan (London, Virago, 1981) pp.390-433.

her friend, Lady Sarah Piers. Other suggestions of immorality on Trotter's part followed in Manley's apparently semi-autobiographical novella *The Adventures of Rivella* in 1714. Manley's character attack on Trotter is discussed further in Chapter 5 of this thesis, but it does not seem to have had too much of a negative impact on her immediate reception.

After Trotter's death, the emphasis on her work and writing by other commentators focused on her virtuous nature, and her intellectual capabilities as a woman, which were considered a rarity. Gildon noted that, during Trotter's lifetime, her wit and beauty brought 'a Penetration very uncommon in the Sex.'[53] This was further commented on in the years after her death and publication of *Works.* She was noted for 'a great and philosophic turn of mind […] no less celebrated for her beauty in her younger years, than for the genius and fine accomplishments',[54] and as having 'displayed very considerable metaphysical abilities, though this has been supposed to be a branch of study not very congenial to female understandings.'[55] This idea of Trotter focusing more on philosophical thinking and writing than on her drama has perhaps been contributed to by the fact that the *Works* collected and published by Birch only include one of her plays, *Fatal Friendship,* a small number of poems and leaves *Olinda's Adventures* entirely out of the collection. While this may have been a result of financial restraints on the project,[56] it has contributed to the sharper focus on Trotter's philosophical writing, as opposed to her literary work. But, as can be seen from these early descriptions of Trotter and her work, this philosophical, learned persona was already being presented in Trotter's lifetime.

As a result, in the early twentieth century, some of the value of Trotter's literary writing was lost on critics such as Edmund Gosse and Alison Fleming. Fleming considers the verse in her plays to be 'totally devoid of poetic insight,'[57] and Gosse's opinion of her plays ranges from 'a bad play'[58] (*Agnes de Castro*) to 'very long, very dull, and very wordy, and we could scarcely find a more deadly specimen of virtuous and didactic tragedy' (on *The Revolution of Sweden*).[59] Both Gosse and Fleming consider Trotter's talents to have been hampered by her financial struggles and position as a married mother,

[53] Gildon, p.179.
[54] Anon. *Biographium Faemineum: The Female Worthies: Or, Memoirs of the Most Illustrious Ladies, of all Ages and Nations* (London: Printed for S. Crowder and others, 1766), pp.148-150.
[55] Anon, *Dialogues Concerning the Ladies to which is added an Essay on the Antient Amazons* (London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1785), p.32.
[56] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.2.
[57] Alison Fleming, 'On the Fringes of Fame: VIII. Catharine Trotter – "The Scots Sappho"', *The Scots Magazine*, 33 (194), 305-314, 305.
[58] Edmund Gosse, 'Catharine Trotter, the First of the Bluestockings', *Fortnightly Review*, 99 (1916), 1033-1048, 1037.
[59] Gosse, p.1045.

but both acknowledge her as an impressive, philosophical, and intellectual mind in her later life. In 1988, Kendall edited an edition of plays by women who were writing in the time of Queen Anne and included Trotter's *Love at a Loss.*[60] Kendall noted the close relationship between Trotter and Lady Sarah Piers, and argued that this friendship was actually more akin to a romantic relationship.[61] She highlighted the relationship between the Princess and Agnes in Trotter's first play, suggesting that this friendship was 'pulsing, devoted and unmistakably erotic'.[62] She later commented that 'I thought I had found the birthplace of lesbian theatre – among white people.'[63] This marked a change in scholarship focusing on Trotter, as scholars of the 1980s and 1990s began to underline the proto-feminist tendencies of Trotter and her writing, and emphasis on modern feminism brought new attention to her. This culminated in Anne Kelley's *Catharine Trotter: an early modern writer in the vanguard of feminism*, which almost two decades later, remains the only monograph dedicated to Trotter and her full body of work.

Kelley's work is so influential because she addresses both the literary and philosophical writings of Trotter, in addition to her correspondence. Kelley interprets the contemporary comments on Trotter's intellectualism as painting her as reserved and prudish, and challenges this by drawing attention to ways in which Trotter's work, especially her earlier, literary writing, could be seen as 'feminocentric', in other words, radically repositioning women as reasonable thinkers, politically involved and with individual agency. Kelley's work is extremely valuable as it opens up Trotter's work to new interpretations and brings attention to Trotter's strengths in how she wrote women. However, Kelley's focus on the proto-feminist aspects of Trotter's writing, and her disapproval of Trotter's reputation for austerity is somewhat limiting. Melanie Bigold notes that

> Catharine Trotter *was* a rather austere, learned lady, and the fact that she wrote from a fundamentally religious and philosophical perspective need not be equated with being unfeminist. Indeed, the fact that she was being held up as an eminently qualified philosophical polemicist suggests that

[60] Kendall, *Love and Thunder*, pp.64-68.
[61] Kendall [Kathryn M.], 'Catharine Cockburn and Me: A Duography', in *The Intimate Critque: Autobiographical Literary Criticism*, ed. Diane P.Freedman, Olivia Frey and Frances Murphy Zauhar (Duram N.C: Duke University Press, 1993), pp.273-282, sourced from Schoenberg and Trudeau, *Literature Criticism*, pp.314-319 (p.316).
[62] Kendall, 'Cockburn and Me', p.315.
[63] Kendall [Kathryn M.], 'Finding the Good Parts: Sexuality in Women's Tragedies in the Time of Queen Anne', in *Curtain Calls: British and American Women and the Theater, 1660-1820*, ed. by Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991), pp.165-176 (p.166).

> her male encomiasts were actively supporting 'feminist' claims to learned equality.[64]

Bigold's research builds upon the strengths of Kelley's research, as both bring in Trotter's unpublished writing to build a better picture of her life, work, and perspectives. But Bigold also incorporates the pious, prim aspects of Trotter's reputation into Kelley's understanding of Trotter as an early example of a feminist writer. Bigold's approach emphasises the difficulty that earlier feminist scholars faced when considering Trotter's writing, as her focus on reason and knowledge championed the abilities of women as capable participants in these debates, but her general stance could at times be quite socially conservative by modern standards. Despite her initial eagerness to expose these more liberal dimensions of Trotter's writing, Kendall eventually observed that the desire to emphasise feminist elements of Trotter's work and that of other female authors sometimes resulted in a lack of nuance, particularly regarding the expression of women's sexuality. Kendall argued that later understandings of sex and sexuality when applied to the writings of Trotter and her contemporaries were confining their works to modern understandings and labels that did not always accurately reflect the fact that fluidity and flexibility were key characteristics of writing and sexual identity at the time.[65] This recognition has been gradually changing the approach of studies in Trotter's writing, focusing more on a holistic method, rather than trying to define her feminocentrism by present-day understandings of the term. This observation also needs to be remembered in relation to other dimensions of Trotter's writing too. Labels from historical time periods that are commonly used now, such as 'Restoration period' or genre labels such as 'Tragedy' or 'Comedy', hold more expansive meanings for present-day readers, as too, do terms that intend to capture national identity.

Acknowledging Trotter's Scottish dimensions

The need to hold terms more loosely is important when considering Trotter and especially her proto feminist and Scottish dimensions, which are focused on throughout this thesis. Kelley and Bigold are two examples of a more recent approach to studies of Trotter's work, one which brings together both the philosophical ideals of her later writing, finding their roots in her earlier literary work. In recent years, attention has returned to her plays, and rather than writing them off as insignificant or of poor quality, scholars such as

[64] Melanie Bigold, *Women of Letters, Manuscript Circulation, and Print Afterlives in the Eighteenth Century: Elizabeth Rowe, Catharine Cockburn, and Elizabeth Carter* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.93.
[65] Kendall, 'Good parts', p.166.

Heather King, Laura Linker, and Mihoko Suzuki[66] have been able to place Trotter in the context of the changing nature of the London theatrical scene in which she wrote and proved her worthiness of inclusion among her fellow contemporary playwrights. One notable thing about all of these commentators on Trotter, whether her contemporaries, or those commenting upon her life and work in the years immediately following her death, all the way through to present-day scholars, is that the majority of them acknowledge Trotter's Scottish parentage, marriage to a Scottish clergyman and time spent living in Scotland, without giving any thought as to the significance of this to her work, or to the literary traditions of Scotland. Birch recounts a letter from Thomas Burnet of Kemnay to Trotter in which he describes the reaction of Sophia Charlotte of Prussia to Trotter's writing – declaring her 'the new Scots Sappho',[67] and her entry in *The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets* describes her as 'of Scotch Extraction, tho' born and bred in England.'[68]

This acknowledgement of Trotter's Scottish connections has occurred in recent studies in Scottish literature too, especially in regard to studies in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scottish theatre. Both Ian Brown and Adrienne Scullion include Catharine Trotter in their accounts of early Scottish drama from this period, highlighting her, among others, as an 'Anglo-Scot.'[69] Her presence in these surveys of Scottish drama signifies that she is considered connected enough to Scotland to be relevant, but as she is mentioned in passing or as a footnote, there is not enough detail to fully justify, or explain, her place there. There is also a danger that a figure like Trotter could be forced into the Scottish canon. Douglas Gifford and Dorothy Macmillan include her in their introduction to their *History of Scottish Women Writers*, but decide against incorporating her into the actual work itself:

> In one sense it would be pleasing to begin a consideration of eighteenth-century Scottish women's writing with Catharine Cockburn especially since there was little that she did not dare: she was certainly an early woman of letters. Yet from another perspective it is perhaps proper to exclude her as insufficiently Scottish in the concerns of her writing and as already appropriated by the English tradition which groups her with London Restoration writers.[70]

[66] King (2003), (2010), Linker (2010), Suzuki (2011).
[67] *Works*, Vol.1, p.xxv.
[68] Gildon, p.179.
[69] Brown (2016), Scullion, 'Forget Scotland' (1997).
[70] Douglas Gifford and Dorothy MacMillan, 'Introduction', in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2005), pp.ix-xxiii (p.xi).

Gifford and Macmillan recognise the problem of trying to include Trotter as a 'Scottish' writer, in the sense that her English connections are too strong to allow her to be fully included in a Scottish context. However, the very fact that her comfortable fit in the English context excludes her completely from a collection of Scottish women writers indicates how rigid categories can become for literary scholarship, especially regarding 'Englishness' and 'Scottishness', or even, to an extent 'Britishness'. Bigold suggests that there can be benefit from considering the Scottish dimensions of Trotter as a writer:

> In her own day Cockburn was often regionalised as the 'Scots Sappho' […] rather than a specifically English writer. True, she had considerable Scottish connections […] so it would seem fitting if Cockburn could be heralded as the leading female light in the widely regarded and more advanced Scottish Enlightenment. And, to an extent, this is possible. The esteem in which she was held in the 1740s was a reflection of the growing recognition and respect being accorded intellectuals from the northern universities. It also explains the trajectory of some [of] her interests. Compare Cockburn's works with those of her Scottish contemporaries (many of whom are now heralded as significant contributors to the moral-sense, or common sense, school of Scottish philosophy) and she fits right in.[71]

Bigold begins to outline some of the ways in which Trotter and famous Scottish philosophers such as George Turnbull and Francis Hutcheson[72] are aligned, but this is more in summary form. This approach, while begun by Bigold for Trotter's philosophical writing, has never been attempted with regard to Trotter's literary work, which is what this thesis intends to do.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such restrictive definitions are unhelpful when trying to consider writers who straddle more than one category. Figures like Trotter, who are connected to Scotland, as well as a number of intersecting contexts into which they fit (in Trotter's case the London stage and philosophical and religious issues that were relevant in more than just Scotland) are excluded. While Trotter's Scottish connections are acknowledged, they have never been investigated. Exploring the Scottish dimensions of Trotter's work allows for her to be examined from the position of Scottish literary and theatrical tradition in order to establish ways in which Scottish contexts of her time are reflected in her work, without forcing her into the Scottish canon, or claiming her

[71] Bigold, pp.159-160.
[72] Frances Hutcheson's birth in Northern Ireland, to a Scottish family, and subsequent connection to Scotland throughout his life and work make him a similar figure to Trotter in this regard. See James Moore, 'Hutcheson, Francis (1694-1746)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2008) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/14273> [accessed September 2021].

as a Scottish author. It also recognises the need for fluid boundaries and an intersectional approach when considering writers who themselves were not confined by scholarly labels and categorisations. This thesis aims to show that approaching Trotter's work from the perspective of Scottish literary studies adds further understanding to what we already know about Trotter. It also provides an approach that can be used for other authors of similar complexity – whose connections to Scotland are only one aspect of their context.

Framework and Definitions

What follows, then, is an intersectional study of Trotter and her writing. The lines of inquiry followed as part of this project encompass a number of categories including politics, gender, nationality, moral virtue and personal responsibility, both in Trotter's writing and her own lived experience. An intersectional approach allows for these to interact with one another as Trotter's writing is examined. For example, it is not possible to consider the themes of moral virtue without also acknowledging the role that gender, and in particular, the female experience, play within Trotter's portrayal of it. It is also difficult to consider Trotter's writing without also incorporating her own deeply held religious beliefs.

It is evident that the fluid boundaries mentioned above are only possible because of the way that each of these intersect with the other themes across Trotter's work, linking them with one another. This thesis addresses Trotter's work thematically, rather than chronologically, in order to highlight the ways in which certain themes appear consistently across her work. While time and space prevent the detailed examination of every single one of Trotter's writings, the focus on her plays and novella allow for the revelation of these things across the largest part of her literary writing.

The terms 'literary' and 'fictional' writing, are used in this thesis to refer to her novella, plays and poetry, differentiating these from her philosophical work. This approach also highlights the ways in which these categories and themes are also present within plays of the Scottish and English literary traditions Trotter is part of. By acknowledging this, and in keeping with an intersectional framework, Trotter's philosophical writing, religious pamphlets, and letters are utilised when they address the themes of her literary writing, to enhance our understanding of it, rather than focusing on detailed analysis of them as individual texts. In combination with a new historicist approach, this allows the significance of historical and political events within Trotter's lifetime to be incorporated into an analysis of her writing, and for the inclusion of her own personal context within

discussions. While this provides opportunity for a deeper understanding of Trotter's writing, it also contextualises her within British, English and Scottish literary histories.

As mentioned above, because there is a fluidity of definitions for many aspects of the seventeenth century, establishing the definitions used within the parameters of this thesis is important. Firstly, Catharine Trotter Cockburn is referred to throughout by her maiden name. This is simply because the majority of her literary work was first published under this name, while her philosophical work generally entered the public sphere under her married name, Cockburn. While philosophers and those who referred to her work in the years immediately following her death tend to refer to her as Mrs Cockburn, literary scholars and those who have studied her plays have generally referred to her as Catharine Trotter. I have chosen to continue this as one way of maintaining the focus on her literary writing.

Another difficult aspect of research are the terms 'Restoration' and 'Revolution', especially in relation to the theatre, as what constitutes 'Restoration drama' is not always defined by time period, but rather thematic and stylistic content. When referring to historical time periods in this thesis, the term 'Restoration' applies to the years 1660-1688 – from the return of Charles II to the throne until James II and VIII was removed from his position. 'Glorious' Revolution is used to refer to the events of 1688-1689 when William III and Mary II were invited to take the throne after the deposition of James. 'Post-Revolution' is used to refer to William III's reign from 1689-1702,while 'early eighteenth century' refers to the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714) and the years following until the 1730s.

Challenges and caveats

While undertaking this project, decisions have been made in the interest of space and time and as a result of broader circumstances to make this thesis a targeted study of key moments and texts of Trotter's literary writing career as opposed to complete study of her whole body of work. The main challenge of this project has been accessing materials. Only a few of Trotter's plays and her novella, *Olinda,* exist in printed, edited editions. The majority of her works exist in facsimile editions or can be found in online versions of their original print run. As a result, the benefit of edited editions, such as critical material, has not always been available. In terms of secondary sources, Anne Kelley's book provides the most up-to-date bibliography of material in Trotter studies which means that there is no

comprehensive record of primary and secondary sources relating to Trotter from after 2002.

Trotter's unpublished writing is found in the British Library as part of Thomas Birch's collection, and the manuscripts contain unedited letters, poetry and some other bits of writing not contained in *Works*. Due to the national lockdowns and travel restrictions caused by the Covid19 pandemic from 2020 onwards, access to this archive was impossible in the latter half of this PhD project, and the opportunity to revisit parts of the archive, and check quotations was lost. As a result, some materials found within the archive have not been considered in this thesis. This includes eight poems credited to Trotter in Birch's collection,[73] but which were not published in *Works*. Two of these are versions of Epilogues for *Agnes de Castro* and *Love at a Loss,* and one or two bear similarities to other published versions of Trotter's poems, making her authorship of them likely. However, with the challenges of accessing the archives, these poems have not been referenced here, in order to avoid preventable inaccuracies in their reading and interpretation.

The targeted nature of this thesis in keeping the emphasis on Trotter's plays and novella means that, as previously mentioned, Trotter's philosophical writing and correspondence are used to inform the intersectional aspects of her novella and her plays, rather than examined in great detail themselves. While some of her poetry is referred to throughout the thesis, the decision has been made not to give it the same dedicated attention as *Olinda* and the plays. There are a number of reasons for this. First, while some of Trotter's poems were published in *Works,* only one, 'Poem occasioned by the busts set up in the Queen's Hermitage' was published in Trotter's lifetime. Additionally, Birch's collection in the British Library contains a number of unidentified poems and letters[74] which could have been written by Trotter but are impossible to verify and have therefore been excluded from consideration within this project. The poems that are included in this thesis are used, like Trotter's correspondence and philosophical writing, as tools which help us understand Trotter, her novella, and her plays, rather than a direct focus themselves.

[73] BL Add MS 4265 ff.74-83.
[74] These unidentified works are not included in the Library's contents of Trotter's material: the catalogue entry for BL Add MS 4264 leaves a gap between f.239b and f.279, and BL Add MS 4265 leaves a gap between f.86 and f.110.

Every effort has been made to avoid the repetition of discussion and material within this thesis. However, the intersectionality of her work, and the framework for this thesis, alongside the relatively short supply of secondary criticism of Trotter's writing, has occasionally meant that literary passages are revisited across different chapters in the thesis, and explored from different angles. This is to ensure that the most comprehensive picture of Trotter's literary writing is provided.

The first chapter of this thesis considers Trotter's first published work, *The Adventures of a Young Lady*, and lays the groundwork for the exploration of her plays in their Scottish and English contexts in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 4 considers the unique aspects of Trotter's portrayals of female characters, drawing attention to ways in which a Scottish dimension adds to our appreciation of her approach to women as capable of reasoning and creating a framework for personal moral virtue, before Chapter 5 considers Trotter's Scottish dimensions in relation to her lived experience as a learned woman who used her knowledge and abilities to enter the public sphere. In doing so, this thesis aims to increase our appreciation of Catharine Trotter Cockburn, not only as a forgotten or overlooked literary writer, but one whose relevance to Scotland is worth reiterating and celebrating.

Chapter 1
The adventures of a young writer: Trotter's role in the evolution of the epistolary novel

In 1693, *The Adventures of a Young Lady* was published anonymously as part of a collection titled *Letters of Love and Gallantry and Several Other Subjects; all written by Ladies*, printed by Samuel Briscoe. It would later appear in Briscoe's 1718 two volume collection *Familiar Letters of Love, Gallantry and Several Other Occasions* under the title *Olinda's Adventures: or, The Adventures of a Young Lady*,[1] this time accompanied by the author's name – Mrs. Trotter. Aside from being her first published piece of writing, the significance of the work is enhanced by the fact that the epistolary novella had yet to be established in a form recognisable today. Robert Adams Day describes *Olinda* as

> a minor but convincing demonstration of the theory that a literary form such as the novel develops irregularly, by fits and starts, and of the truism that a superior mind can produce superior results with the most seemingly ungrateful material. Of Defoe, *Olinda's Adventures* must appear a modest precursor indeed; but measured, as a realistic-domestic novel against the English fiction of its day, it is surprisingly mature.[2]

Day effectively captures the sense of the advanced, mature nature of the text, as well as noting the importance of *Olinda* as an intermediary point between the earliest examples of the epistolary novel and the established form it would take. By exploring the development of epistolary style through literary history, the realism of the text, and Trotter's use and subversion of the form to achieve her own means, this chapter makes the case for *Olinda's* importance in the evolution of the epistolary novel as well as its significance in establishing her own writing career.

The development of the epistolary novel

Letters were a primary mode of communication in medieval and early modern society. The letter was key in the dissemination of news, the passing of information, and maintaining political and personal relationships and, due to the nature of circulation, quite often involved third-party access too.[3] It was only a matter of time before such an integral element of early modern society found its way into the literary sphere.

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[1] To differentiate between both versions of the text I refer to the 1693 version as *The Adventures of a Young Lady* and the 1718 text as *Olinda's Adventures.* When referring to the plot, or novella more generally I refer to it as *Olinda.*

[2] Robert Adams Day, 'Introduction', in *Olinda's Adventures; or, The Amours of a Young Lady* (1718) (Los Angeles: Augustan Reprint Society No.138, 1969), p.[i].

[3] Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), p.27.

The earliest epistolary novel according to R.W. Maslen is the anonymous *The Image of Idleness*, published by William Seres in 1556. The work is split into two halves – the first comprised of letters from Bawdin Bachelor to his friend, Walter Wedlock, in which he recounts his numerous failures to woo eligible women, while the second half imparts Bachelor's wisdom to married men like Wedlock.[4] The epistolary sections of the book are interspersed with 'merry tales', and while works contemporary to *The Image of Idleness* did not adopt the epistolary style, the merry tales are noted influences on Elizabethan works such as George Gascoigne's *Adventures of Master FJ* (1573), the anonymous *A Ballad of Malmerophus and Sillera* (1582) and *The Cobbler of Caunterburie* (1590),[5] in addition to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.[6] Maslen argues that the use of *The Image of Idleness* as inspiration for these works showed that their writers 'make use of the *Image* [to] advertise their preoccupation with English history and English culture, and with weighting those against the literature and history of continental Europe.'[7] While the letter form had not been adopted by other writers, this epistolary work still had a degree of influence on other contemporary fiction of the time.

Before Maslen's suggestion that the first English epistolary novel is *The Image of Idleness*, Judith Kegan Gardiner considered it to be Aphra Behn's *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister*, which was published in three parts between 1684 and 1687,[8] and recounts the love affair between Philander and his wife's sister, Sylvia. The lovers become disenchanted with one another after a time of separation and are unfaithful to each other before eventually parting for good. This is a much lengthier work than *Image* and one of its main features are the passionate letters between Philander and Sylvia. The novel at times parallels the real-life events of 1682, when Ford, Lord Grey of Werke, seduced his sister-in-law, Lady Henrietta of Berkeley, which in seventeenth-century law was an incestuous relationship.[9] *Love Letters* is more recognisable as a novel to present-day readers than *Image*, but it is important to note that both works are epistolary in nature, which is, as will be instanced below, a vital component in the early development of the novel. Significant works recognised as early novels, including Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719),

[4] R.W. Maslen, 'The *Image of Idleness* in the Reign of Elizabeth I', *English Language Notes*, 43:1 (2004), 11-23.
[5] Maslen, '*Image* in the Reign of Elizabeth', pp.12-19.
[6] R.W. Maslen, '*The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Image of Idleness*', Notes and Queries, 50:1 (2003), 25-27.
[7] Maslen, '*Image* in the Reign of Elizabeth', p.19.
[8] Judith Kegan Gardiner, 'The First English Novel: Aphra Behn's *Love Letters*, The Canon, and Women's Tastes', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 8:2 (1989), 201-222.
[9] Maureen Duffy, 'Introduction' in *Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* by Aphra Behn, ed. Maureen Duffy (London: Virago Press, 1987), pp.v-xvii (p.vi).

Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and *Clarissa; or The History of a Young Lady* (1748) and Tobias Smollett's *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), are all epistolary or at least contain epistolary sections. One of the most important things to notice about these key texts in the development of the novel and epistolary novel as forms is the large gap in time between *Love Letters* and the later, foundational texts. *Olinda* comes to the fore as a principal, but at times overlooked text in the development of the form, occupying some of the space left between Behn's text and the later, foundational texts in the development of the novel.

The novella is comprised of seven letters[10] written by Olinda, a young woman who lives with her mother after the death of her father. Olinda writes to her friend, Cleander, and recounts to him her mother's many attempts to marry her to rich suitors, and her own determination to avoid marriage, despite the desperately needed financial security it would bring. She falls in love with Cloridon, a wealthy, but married man. Her letters detail their encounters and Olinda's attempts to keep the relationship as a friendship rather allow herself to enter an extramarital affair. In her determination not to become Cloridon's mistress, Olinda eventually accepts Cloridon's financial support on the condition that she will not marry anyone. They agree to remain separated from one another, until such a time as Cloridon's sickly wife dies, which would allow Olinda and Cloridon to marry.

Olinda shares a number of the defining features of epistolary fiction, alongside the later, more famous epistolary novels mentioned above, which justifies the text's inclusion within the genre. One of these common elements is the way that these texts narrow the distinction between fiction and reality, demonstrated in the way that fictional letter collections were often presented to their readers as real, as the next section details.

The realism of the text

Letter-writing was a vital part of early modern society and there were inevitable hazards that came with this. Collections of letters were found in manuscript form, commonplace books and published in volumes,[11] and while many of these were published willingly and deliberately, epistolary exchanges could sometimes unintentionally find themselves published in collections for the general reader.[12] As noted by Schneider above, sending a

[10] The first version of *Olinda* contains an eighth and ninth letter from Olinda to Cloridon, but it is generally accepted that these are not written by Trotter. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

[11] Schneider, p.23.
[12] Paul Trolander, *Literary Sociability in Early Modern England: The Epistolary Record* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014), p.18.

letter always involved an element of third-party involvement during the process of delivery. There was always the possibility of letters being redirected or lost, intercepted, or read by the wrong recipient. Even when the letter reached its intended audience, there was no guarantee that the writing would be interpreted as the author had hoped. Confidentiality was not easily maintained in letter form, and this is reflected in the way that letters were often published.[13] The publication of 'found' letters was widely accepted in early modern society, and so when it came to the publication of fictional letters, there was an effort to imply that these were reproductions of real letters.

The use of such epistolary narrative adds to the realism of the texts. Watt notes that realism in fiction comes from the way in which lived human experience is portrayed.[14] Within the wider development of the novel, fictional accounts provided private experience and details of personal relationships in a way that had not been done previously.[15] The epistolary form allows for intimate and emotional accounts of characters experiences, narrated in first-person. In a discussion of narrator (author of the letter) and narratee (receiver of the narrative), Bayer notes that 'the implicit inclusion of the narratee significantly shapes the tone of the letter.'[16] This automatically implies a level of intimacy and shared honesty between narrator and narratee. However, there is also an additional intimacy between the two people that the letter 'unites in the act of reading.'[17] There are two narratees in an epistolary novel – the intended recipient of the letter, and the reader of the novel as a whole. Duyfhuizen refers to this as a 'double narrative' which is 'produced within a textual society created for the reader by the private correspondence of its members.'[18] While the reader can be relied upon to distinguish between fact and fiction, the *sense* of realism is added to through the intimacy of the letter form, and the efforts made in many cases use paratextual elements to emphasise the 'truthfulness' of the letters the reader will engage with.

This impression is given in many epistolary novels through an introduction from the editor or publisher, in which an explanation of the discovery of the letters is provided. *Image* is prefaced by the Translator who addresses himself to Oliver Oldwanton and Lady

[13] Schneider, p.26.
[14] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (London: Hogarth Press, 1987), p.11
[15] Watt, p.206.
[16] Gerd Bayer, 'Deceptive Narratives: On Truth and the Epistolary Voice' Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik, 39:2 (2017), 174-187, 176. .
[17] Bayer p.176.
[18] Bernard Duyfhuizen, 'Epistolary Narratives of Transmission and Transgression', *Comparative Literature* 37:1 (1985), 1-26, 1.

Lust, whose names match the sexual nature of the tales within and create ambiguity as to whether these are fictional recipients or existing people using pseudonyms. The preface tells of the Translator's attempts to avoid boredom by taking a Cornish book he had discovered and making it available in English,[19] rather than presenting it as a collection specifically written by him. There is no evidence either way to suggest whether the original text did exist in Cornish or whether this was simply another fictional element of a tale, added by the author.

Aphra Behn's *Love Letters* opens with a short 'Argument' which provides some background to the affair between Philander and Sylvia:

> After their flight these letters were found in cabinets, at their house at St Denis, where they both lived together, for the space of a year; and they are as exactly as possible placed in the order they were sent, and were those supposed to be written towards the latter end of their amours.[20]

The effort to preserve the accuracy of the letters is noted clearly within the introduction to legitimise the letters as a way of serving a moral lesson to the reader. Ruth Perry notes that 'because of the residual Puritan distaste for "falsehood", as well as the new craze for scientific objectivity, the contemporary preference for stories of "real people" dictated that much fiction be framed as first-person writing'.[21] The realism of the narrative creates the sense that Philander and Sylvia were real people, facing real consequences for their actions and emphasises to the reader that they are not to be imitated.

Samuel Richardson's epistolary novels take a slightly different approach. Richardson's books are often considered to be the first established epistolary works and share many of the recognisable features of a present-day epistolary form.[22] However they still contain the communication from 'the editor' to the reader, presenting the letters as real as opposed to fictional. The editor of *Pamela* also explains the purpose of the book:

> If to divert and entertain, and at the same time to instruct and improve the minds of the YOUTH of both sexes;
> If to inculcate religion and morality in so easy and agreeable a manner, as shall render them equally delightful and profitable […]
> If these be laudable or worthy recommendations, the Editor of the

[19] Anon. *A Little Treatise Called The Image of Idleness*, edited and introduced by Michael Flachmann, *Studies in Philology*, 87:1 (1990), p.18.
[20] Aphra Behn, *Love Letters*, p.2.
[21] Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters and the Novel* (New York: AMS Press, 1980), pp.x-xi.
[22] Robert Adams Day, *Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction before Richardson* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), p.9.

> following Letters, which have their foundation both in Truth and Nature, ventures to assert, that all these ends are obtained here, together.[23]

The editor offers no apology for the letters, believing that they are both entertaining and instructive. The 'Preface' to *Clarissa* also provides an explanation as to the purpose of publishing the correspondence:

> To warn the Inconsiderate and Thoughtless of the one Sex, against the base arts and designs of specious Contrivers of the other — To caution Parents against the undue exercise of their natural authority over their Children in the great article of Marriage — To warn Children against preferring a Man of Pleasure to a Man of Probity, upon that dangerous but too commonly-received notion, That a reformed Rake makes the best Husband — But above all, To investigate the highest and most important Doctrines not only of Morality, but of Christianity, by shewing the unworthy, who set those Doctrines at defiance, are condignly, and, as may be said, consequentially, punished.[24]

Although realism is not as strongly emphasised here, the lessons in moral virtue that can be learned from the letters is evident.

Tobias Smollett continued this tradition in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* in 1771. A letter to the bookseller opens the volume, referring to characters within the novella and considering the ethics of 'printing the private correspondence of persons still living.'[25] The bookseller's reply comments on the availability of volumes of travel letters by other writers and names real authors, including Smollett himself,[26] adding realism to the fictional accounts that follow. The justification for publishing the letters that comprise *Humphry Clinker* again follows the trajectory of allowing them to be used for the education and betterment of the public:

> the Letters in question were not written and sent under the seal of secrecy; that they have no tendency to the *mala forma*, or prejudice of any person whatsoever; but rather to the information and edification of mankind: so that it becometh a sort of duty to promulgate them *in usum publicum.* [27]

This shows that after the epistolary form was well established, the common denominator remained the effort of the authors, editors, or booksellers to create the sense that the letters

[23] Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded*, ed. Peter Sabor (London: Penguin, 1988), p.31.
[24] Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa; or The History of a Young Lady* (abridged edition), ed. Toni Bowers and John Richetti (Ontario: Broadview Editions, 2011), p.30.
[25] Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, ed. Lewis M, Knapp, rev. by Paul-Gabriel Boucé (Oxford: OUP, 2009), p.1.
[26] Smollett, p.2.
[27] Smollett, p.1.

in the collections are written by real people. When editors and writers address the readers through paratexts, their communication builds a bridge between the reality in which both the writer and reader are present, and the fictional world in which the narrative of the letters take place. Trotter's 1693 version of *The Adventures of a Young Lady* is an excellent example of this in the way that the paratexts describe the publication process of Olinda's letters.

Samuel Briscoe prefaces the full volume of *Letters of Love and Gallantry* with a reference to *Olinda* specifically. His decision to publish Olinda's letters has inspired other women to send their letters to him for publication, and even, according to him, prompted the need to begin work on a second volume of letters.[28] This note, titled 'From the Bookseller to the Reader', is followed by another, 'From Cleander to the Reader', in which Cleander, the recipient of Olinda's letters explains his reasons for making them public:

> When I Received Olinda's Letters, I thought 'em very agreeable, and being of a Humour to love to Communicate every thing that pleases me, I have sent 'em into the world, to try if they can meet with many of the same Tast. You have 'em as they were sent me without any Alteration but the Names […] As for the rest, I can tell you no more of 'em, but that they were sent me in unknown Hands, by the Penny Post, and I thought fit to give you that which was Directed to me with 'em, that you might know as much about them as I do.[29]

Cleander also notes that his decision to publish was also governed by the fact that 'Letters are so much in Vogue' (p.[8]), a statement that echoes Briscoe in his communication with the reader, signalling that they are capitalising on the popularity of letter collections. As in the other prefaces considered here, mention is made of the care taken to preserve the accuracy of the letters and explanation is given as to how they were discovered. Both create a sense of realism, aided by Briscoe's references to Olinda and Cleander as real people, and Cleander's own direct communication with the reader. Although Olinda is silent in this process. Cleander makes it clear that it is better for her to be unknown: 'I need not take much pains to Court you, since the good Natur'd will be so without Entreaty and the ill Natur'd Critick will lose his Aim here, where neither the Author, nor the Publisher are known.'[30] The practice of female writers avoiding using their names and instead

[28] *Letters of Love and Gallantry and Several Other Subjects, All Written by Ladies*, Vol. 1 (London: Samuel Briscoe, 1693), p.[3].
[29] *Love and Gallantry*, pp.[5]-[7].
[30] *Love and Gallantry*, pp.[5]-[6].

publishing under the guise of 'A Young Lady' or 'A Lady of Quality' was a trope to avoid the censure and criticism of those who disapproved of their writing.[31]

There are two final letters in the first iteration of *Letters of Love and Gallantry.* These are from Olinda and addressed to Cloridon. It is thought that Trotter is not the author of these final two letters due to their difference in tone, and the fact that they do not appear in any other version of the text.[32] They are referred to in Cleander's preface to the collection, where he states that he persuaded her to give them to him 'to satisfie those who might have the Curiosity to know how she Write to her Lover, since she treats her Friend with so much Tenderness.'[33] Their presence in this part of the collection implies that they are an addition, perhaps even by the same hand that penned the introductory section. Their presence in this context, even though their authorship is uncertain, furthers the paratextual narrative which adds to the realism of Olinda and Cleander. On the other hand, Olinda's absence in the paratextual material prefacing the collection, and across the publication process contributes to the ambiguity of her existence raising the question as to whether Olinda truly exists, or whether she is the product of an author. Further uncertainties are added at the close of *The Adventures of a Young Lady* by the note addressed to Cleander and 'sent with the following letters' that make up the collection. The note is from a group of anonymous women, claiming that having heard about the proposed publication of Olinda's letters, they decided to send their own so that there will be enough material to create the volume:

> We […] have sent you these enclos'd to help to fill up the Volume, for as one says
> *'Tis not how well a Writer Says?*
> *But 'tis how much that gathers Praise:*
> *T—n who is himself a Wit,*
> *Counts Authors Merits by the Sheet*
> which we having duly consider'd, and being a Mighty good Natur'd Crew, had rather expose our Follies, than let your Friends Wit be damn'd for want of Paper […]If Olinda has any more Adventures, we can furnish you with enough Scrible to help out the Volume.[34]

Robert Adams Day believes that the reference to word getting about that Olinda's letters were to be published indicates that the novella was circulating in manuscript form and had

[31] Jeslyn Medoff, 'The Daughters of Behn and the Problem of Reputation', in *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London: Batsford, 1992), pp.33-54, p.37.
[32] Kelley, pp.56-57.
[33] *Love and Gallantry,* p.[6]
[34] *Love and Gallantry,* pp.142-144.

an existing reputation.[35] However, the communications written by Briscoe, 'Cleander' and the Ladies seem to correspond to one another too conveniently to have been written independently of one another. Briscoe's and Cleander's notes both use the exact phrase mentioned previously about letters being 'in Vogue' and share similar wording when describing how the other letters came to Cleander through the post. The Ladies note directly Cleander's desire to remain anonymous and to protect Olinda's identity too:

> Know then, that none of us can guess who Olinda is, and but two of us have the Honour to know you, and for the Glory of our Sex are Resolv'd to show the World that 'tis in the Power of two Women to keep a secret.[36]

This desire to keep everyone's identity safe corresponds with Cleander's own note to the Reader, and the Ladies' knowledge and recognition of it seems too convenient for the letter to have been written independently and sent to Cleander by coincidence. These paratextual letters on either side of *The Adventures of a Young Lady*, are written with the same motive. They emphasise the reliability of Olinda as a woman of wisdom and virtue, not only giving a sense of realism to her letters, but also encouraging readers to believe they are worth reading.

When the paratexts are read this way, *The Adventures of a Young Lady* becomes the main feature of the collection, holding it all together. These other letters have only been included in order to make sure that that work can be published. Furthermore, a final note is given in the Ladies' letter to Cleander explaining:

> You may inform the Judicious Readers, that if they please to have Recourse to a Book Entitled, *Letters and Poems, Amorous and Gallant*, they will understand some of these the better, which are Answers that were sent to the Author of them.[37]

Letters and Poems, Amorous and Gallant was published in 1692 and printed by Jacob Tonson, and the fact that some of the letters in Briscoe's *Letters of Love and Gallantry* are in response to those is noteworthy and brings another angle to the realism created by epistolary writing. This raises the question as to whether a letter written in reply to one in the public domain could be considered fictional, and also raises the possibility that Tonson's collection was comprised of fictional letters. These questions serve to underline the complex relationships between fiction and reality in epistolary formats.

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[35] Day, 'Introduction', p.[5].
[36] *Love and Gallantry*, pp.143-144.
[37] *Love and Gallantry*, p.145.

With regards to *Letters of Love and Gallantry* as a whole, the structure of *The Adventures of a Young Lady* is completely different to the other texts within the collection, adding to the uncertainty of the reality of the text. In her letters to Cleander, Olinda narrates the previous events of her life, and recounts how she comes to meet Cloridon and fall in love with him. In comparison to the other letters in the collection, Olinda's letters are much longer, more detailed and provide large amounts of plot and personal reflection. The remaining letters are shorter, some are comical letters of instruction from women to their lovers, others are short replies in response to events in their courtships and there is no overall narrative. Another short collection within *Letters of Love and Gallantry* is titled 'Billets from a Young Lady to her Lover', but these are again short and written on several separate and seemingly unrelated occasions, rather than maintaining an overarching narrative as Olinda's letters to Cleander do. *The Adventures of a Young Lady* is also very different in comparison to Volume II of *Letters of Love and Gallantry*, which was published by Samuel Briscoe in 1694. The second volume mixed letters by male and female authors and included a 'Dialogue Between Love and Reason' as part of the collection, as opposed to being comprised entirely of letters. There are two significant things to note from this. The first is that because of the stark difference between *The Adventures of a Young Lady* and the surrounding letters in both collections, this contributes to the confusion as to whether the text is a fictional tale or an account of true events. Secondly, *The Adventures of a Young Lady* holds together as a narrative account of Olinda's life with continuity of plot across all the letters. These paratextual elements of *The Adventures of a Young Lady* contribute to the text being considered an early form of the epistolary novel. They emphasise the way in which *Olinda* fits into a genre that was developing at the time and is one of the ways that it can be legitimised as an epistolary novel. The importance of the text to the developing tradition of the novel, and the epistolary novel in particular can be shown in how Trotter engaged with the genre, particularly in regard to amatory fiction, and the emphasis on moral virtue, which would become a key feature of her later writing too.

The realism of *The Adventures of a Young Lady*, and the questions of truth surrounding the paratextual elements would ultimately be answered in 1718 when the text reappeared in *Familiar Letters of Love and Gallantry* with Trotter acknowledged as the author of *Olinda's Adventures; or The Adventures of a Young Lady*. One of the biggest pieces of evidence that the paratextual elements were created to give the illusion of reality within the collection is that they do not exist in the 1718 edition. Nor does *Olinda's*

Adventures appear central to the collection, instead being tucked away in the middle of the second volume. It would seem that once the realism provided in the first edition was no longer required, the text was left to speak for itself. The nature of the letter as a literary format and whether it can be interpreted as fact or fiction is explored by Trotter within the plot of *Olinda.* Olinda recounts to Cleander a conversation with her friend Licydon, in which she expresses the view that a man would be unable to refuse the advances of a woman who declared her love to him. To show her that he believes she is wrong, Licydon proposes an experiment:

> He told me if I wou'd Write a Declaration of Love to him, he wou'd shew me how it might be Answer'd with a great deal of Respect, without any Love. I consented to do it, and accordingly did the next day, and he return'd me an Answer which satisfied me.[38]

The letters written by Olinda and Licydon are fictional as the sentiments of love and refusal expressed in them are both imaginary, rather than real feelings. Both Licydon and Olinda are clear on this matter, and Olinda herself makes it explicit in her letter to Cleander that the relationship is a platonic one. The problem is that this false letter is convincing for a servant who finds it and shows it to Berontus, a man who has proposed to Olinda several times, despite her constant refusals. Berontus has no reason to disbelieve the letter and wants to challenge Licydon to a duel. Olinda shows Berontus Licydon's letter in which he refuses to accept the declaration of love in order to at least prove his innocence, but Licydon's letter also includes some context which allows Olinda to prove her innocence too:

> Read this [Licydon's reply], said I, and you'll see whether it be true, that I Writ to Licydon in earnest: You have nothing to accuse him of. After he had read it, he cry'd out in a violent manner, I have wrong'd the innocent Olinda, and I deserve to be hated by her forever […] The Postscript fully clears you […] Upon which I took it, and read these Words, which I had quite forgot. *I did not think one cou'd write so prettily of Love, and be so insensible of it.' How happy wou'd that Man be, that shou'd receive such a one dictated by your Heart, as well as hand.* (*Adventures*, p.18)

The presence of the postscript confirms that the letters were fictional. Without such an addition in Licydon's reply there would have been no evidence to show that Olinda's love letter was not a genuine one. Epistolary fiction is the perfect environment to create this tension between fiction and reality, as well as providing a format within which the very nature of fiction (and truth) can be dramatized, and Trotter certainly uses the form to

[38] Catharine Trotter, *The Amours of a Young Lady*, in *Letters of Love and Gallantry*, p.5.

explore this. Alongside paratextual aspects of the first version of *Olinda* within *Letters of Love and Gallantry*, this metafictional episode shows that Trotter is fully aware of these boundaries.

Trotter revisits the idea of deceptive narration in letter forms in nearly all of her plays. Elvira forges a letter in *Agnes de Castro*, in which Agnes admits her love for the Prince, to convince his wife, Constantia, of Agnes's betrayal. *Love at a Loss* opens with Lucilia and Lysetta composing letters to Cleon in which Lucilia is encouraging his love for her, with no intention of actually returning it. Margarite is forced to try and clear her name after the Duke of Britanie forges a letter claiming she loves the King rather than her new husband, the Duke of Lorrain. All of these plots take similar trajectories – a woman is accused of being a deceptive or false lover, and the consequences form the remainder of each play. This is similar to *Olinda*, in which she is accused of loving Cleander when their false letters are discovered, although in this instance, the truth is easily uncovered. The use of the deceptive narrative alters within *The Revolution of Sweden*. Arwide, a General for Gustavus and the rebellion against the Danish invasion of Sweden, is tricked into signing a statement which betrays his commander and his cause. Arwide believes he is signing an agreement which sees Swedish rebel prisoners released and the Danish retreat, but in actual fact, the statement he signs is once which says he will join the Danish side and help find them supplies.

Trotter's repeated use of the letter to help employ deception within her plots speaks to the effectiveness of the epistolary form in helping create false narratives. It exploits the relationship and intimacy between narrator and narratee through the fact that the narratee has no reason to think that narrator is anyone other than the person who has signed the letter, when in actual fact, in all of these cases, the implied narrator and the actual narrator are different people. Trotter uses the realism created by the epistolary form before it was firmly established within the developing novel and her continued engagement with these ideas in her later writing emphasise her ability to explore different ways it could be utilised.

Subverting expectations of genre

The end of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century there was the beginning of a mass market for fiction.[39] Within this, the production of amatory fiction

[39] Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), pp.35-36.

utilised epistolary writing within the genre, and the two are inextricably linked. Ros Ballaster notes that the letter 'appears as a fictional device in virtually every amatory narrative in Britain in the period 1680-1740.'[40] Behn's *Love Letters* is one example, as is *Letters of a Portuguese Nun* (1669), attributed to Gabriel-Joseph de Lavergne, comte de Guilleragues, which feature letters between or addressed to lovers. Many epistolary works have mixed narrative voices due to the presence of letters from different characters; however, *Olinda*, like *Letters of a Portuguese Nun*, contains only the letters written by the protagonist, with no replies, therefore giving a totally female perspective. This is noteworthy in the sense that these are two early examples of the epistolary novel, and the additions of other characters' voices within epistolary novels seems to be a product of the continued evolution of the form in the eighteenth century.

One of the restrictions of epistolary writing is that whether the work is fully or only partly epistolary, the narrative and plot development is naturally slow due to the small timescale a letter covers. Events are often relayed chronologically, but between the events themselves, the narrators account or summary of them, and the narratees reading of the summary, large amounts of time can have passed. Narrative accounts can be extremely detailed, meaning that the time taken to read the detailed descriptions can be longer than the brief events themselves, or alternatively, brief summaries can condense events that occurred over longer periods.[41] This can result in *Olinda*, and other epistolary works, seeming stilted at times. But, as Janet Altman recognises, this gives lovers a more 'aggressive'[42] role in the romance element of the plots, focusing more on the psychological toll of events and their impact on the ethical views and behaviour of the characters, rather than the actual events themselves.[43] The epistolary form is particularly suited to the love plot, providing the characters' own perspectives in a way that other literary forms cannot. However, Trotter subverts the expected elements of the traditional love plot through the way that Olinda both thinks and acts with regard to marriage and courtship. The purpose of Olinda's letters to Cleander is to acquaint her friend with the varying ways in which she attempts to avoid marriage, despite her mother's best efforts. Even though Olinda eventually falls in love with Cloridon, making this a love plot to some extent, their inability to marry, and their eventual financial settlement, which ensures that Olinda will

[40] Ballaster, p.61.
[41] See Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp.86-112.
[42] Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1964), p.20.
[43] Altman, pp.20-21.

not need to marry anyone else while Cloridon's wife remains alive, is an unexpected conclusion.

As a young woman with no father to provide income for the family, Olinda and her mother are left in poverty. Her mother is eager for Olinda to marry to ensure her financial security and social position. Despite this, Olinda is in no rush to get married and actively discourages those in pursuit of her, often outsmarting them or humiliating them with her sharp wit and taking pleasure in doing so. In one of her accounts, she tells Cleander of an older Colonel who shows an interest in Olinda, despite having a mistress already. Rather than dissuading the Colonel from his advances, Olinda uses the opportunity to make the mistress jealous and accepts the attention given to her by the Colonel in order to entertain herself:

> and I […] receiv'd all his Addresses with a great deal of complaisance […] tho he was ugliness in perfection; (if that ben't Nonsense) and t'was the best Jest in the World to me, to see him squint in an Amorous Glance upon me, with one Eye, whilst t'other was watching whether she took notice of him; for we lodg'd in one House together […] I took a malicious pleasure in Laughing at their follies. Since there's nothing so ridiculous as an Antiquated Lover, who has the Vanity to believe he is belov'd, and a Jealous Woman, who has not Discretion enough to hide it. (*Adventures,* pp.22-23)

Olinda finds joy in mocking those who take themselves too seriously. She justifies her treatment of the couple because she thinks it is ridiculous that the Colonel could consider himself a legitimate match for her. However, after an argument between him and his mistress, resulting in her leaving him, Olinda sees that the stakes have heightened, and her encouragement of the Colonel is going to cause problems if she continues to let him enthusiastically pursue her. When he is summoned to Flanders and informs Olinda that he intends to take her with him, she seizes the opportunity to be rid of the Colonel for good:

> I said I wou'd go with all my heart on condition his Son should always be with us: The Old Man started, My Son Child, what wou'd you do with him? I think he is fitter company for me than you, says I, and so I left him; so asham'd that he shun'd seeing me ever after. (*Adventures*, p.25)

Although the episode can be read as comical, it also subverts the idea of romance within the novella. Olinda is an attractive and eligible young woman who receives the interest of many men, while her treatment of them varies. She either rejects them outright or toys with them. More than one suitor sees her rejection as a challenge and so she is often repeatedly discouraging the same men. It would be expected that the female protagonist of a love plot

would eventually marry. Although Olinda has fallen in love with Cloridon by the end of the novella, she cannot marry him because he is already married.

When Olinda then finds herself courted by Orontes, despite her frequent attempts to spurn his interest, she is under pressure from her mother to accept his proposal:

> What do you mean Child, to receive with equal indifference all the proposals are made to you? Do you Resolve to lead a single Life? I shou'd approve the choice in one of a better Fortune; but you must conform yourself to yours, and consider that I am not able to maintain you. (*Adventures*, p.117)

As a young woman with no family financial security, Olinda is in the unfortunate position of needing to marry in order to secure her future. Her response to her mother is ultimately one of acceptance:

> I had no Aversion for [Orontes], and since my circumstances wou'd oblige me to Marry and that I knew I could never Love any man; I thought it might as well be he as any other. (*Adventures*, p.118)

Olinda accepts the proposal with resignation rather than being won over by Orontes's relentless pursuit of her. Cloridon's actions to prevent the marriage by providing financially for Olinda are a grand romantic gesture, but ultimately, his wife is still alive. Throughout the novella, Olinda makes it exceptionally clear that their relationship will be unconsummated and refuses any possibility of them being together Cloridon is horrified that any woman he loves should be with another man, and since he cannot marry Olinda, he makes a financial arrangement with Olinda's mother that enables them both to be financially secure, without Olinda having to be married. Olinda is delighted, 'for tho I was never an Enemy to Marriage, yet I always preferred the single life to it' (*Adventures*, p.123). Orontes is then arrested under suspicion of being a spy, which gives Olinda a more publicly acceptable reason for breaking their engagement. Olinda's active avoidance of marriage, while also being in love with a married man, and her unkind behaviour towards the men who show an interest in her implies that she was actually an 'enemy to marriage'.

To the present-day reader, this attitude to marriage seems unusual, but in the context of seventeenth-and eighteenth-century British society, it underscores the nature of marriage and courtship in that period. Katie Barclay points out that in the present day there is often an assumption that early modern marriages were loveless and motivated more by factors

such as finance and social status.[44] However, what is often missed is the assumption in society that while love was not always present when entering marriage, the expectation was that it would follow afterwards.[45] In a patriarchal society like those in early modern England and Scotland, there was the understanding that marriage involved the male head of the household being responsible for everyone under him, including his wife, children and household servants and workers, not just the nuclear family unit,[46] and that some form of love played an essential part in keeping a balanced household. However, the presentation of marriage in literature when Trotter was writing shows that there was a change occurring in terms of love and its purposes in marriage:

> Happy marriage required male authority to be curbed […] Love provided a solution to this tension […] While love was always required within marriage, literature increasingly promoted love as a requirement for marriage. In the seventeenth century, love did not feature when discussing the properties necessary for a happy match. Men and women were advised to look to the external qualities and circumstances of a partner, selecting a spouse of similar social background and values and with a secure financial standing.[47]

In addition to when and how love entered a marriage, there were also the family obligations to be considered. Young people were encouraged to listen to the opinions of their families when considering potential marriages to preserve good familial relationships,[48] but financial security was not encouraged as the sole reason for choosing a match.[49] Although love in marriage was expected to develop within married life, there were other elements to consider as well. Marrying required the establishment of an independent household, and so individuals needed to be in a position where this was possible.

On the other hand, Olinda's determination to maintain her virtue, and her insistence that she would not consummate a relationship with Cloridon while his wife is living at the same time indicates that she has a strong sense of moral virtue and a personal code of conduct which she will not compromise. This is a trait that she shares with Trotter's other

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[44] Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p.3, p.10.
[45] Katie Barclay, 'Love and Courtship in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', in *Women in Eighteenth-Century Scotland: Intimate, Intellectual and Public Lives*, ed. Katie Barclay and Deborah Simonton (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), pp.37-54 (p.39).
[46] Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, Power*, p.41
[47] Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, Power*, p.61.
[48] Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.29-30.
[49] Charlton, p.30.

female protagonists. While she herself does not want to enter into it without love, she does consider marriage to Orontes for the sake of her financial security.

In the late seventeenth century, large numbers of the population were not in marriages. High mortality rates meant that it was likely that individuals would be married more than once over their lifetimes. [50] At any given time, unmarried women (either never married or widowed) made up around half of the female population, and about twenty per cent of these were never married at all.[51] These snippets of life in seventeenth-and eighteenth-century Britain show that there were a number of reasons and motivations behind marriage and relationships, and through the character of Olinda, Trotter manages to capture some of them. As Gowing notes, 'the most eloquent sources for the emotional relations between women and men remain those of the literate elites: letters and diaries in this period begin to talk eloquently about the texture of marital relations.'[52] This does result in our present day understanding of marriage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries being skewed towards the experience of upper class, literate individuals, but it does also highlight the importance of the letter as a form of recording emotional responses to circumstances and experiences – something which Olinda does in her letters to Cleander.

One example of Olinda's emotional response can be found in her account to Cleander of Cloridon's absence and expected return. The complexity of her feelings about being in love with him, while determined not to act upon it are revealed when she says: 'I longed for Cloridon's Return, and yet I Resolve'd not to see him, tho when I thought that perhaps he would not desire it, I almost dyed with fear'. (*Adventures*, p.68). Through her writing, Olinda is able to identify the complexity of her situation. Although she is determined never to see Cloridon again, when she realises he might not want to see her, she has an extreme emotional reaction. This points to the depth of her feeling for him, but also to the desire she has to be in control of her situation. Olinda is willing to follow her own standard of moral virtue and impose it on Cloridon by refusing to see him. Cloridon's not wanting to see Olinda would imply either that he did not love her, or that he was also imposing this standard upon himself. In either case, it takes the control away from Olinda, who does not respond well.

[50] Laura Gowing, *Gender relations in early modern England* (Harlow: Pearson, 2012), p.31.
[51] Gowing, p.31.
[52] Gowing, p.30.

Ros Ballaster notes that the early eighteenth century saw two types of amatory fiction – the 'pious and didactic love fiction' which stressed 'chastity or sentimental marriage' or 'erotic fiction by women'.[53] She also notes that in the case of epistolary fiction, a man encouraging a woman into a correspondence was the equivalent of a seduction.[54] By creating a completely platonic friendship between Olinda and Cleander, Trotter avoids this seduction. Although the intimacy of the epistolary narrative is still present, the lack of amatory love creates room for Olinda to speak freely to Cleander about her lived experiences of romance, or lack thereof. She not only recounts her experiences emotionally, but she has the space to consider them in a way that allows her to express her own moral judgements in given situations. In this way, *Olinda* meets the expectations of the didactic version of amatory fiction, as well as in her desire to avoid a romantic relationship with Cloridon which emphasises chastity, but as will be discussed further below, Trotter avoids the presentation of sentimental marriage, and offers a more realistic view of the institution.

Olinda's response to marriage, when taken in this context, captures the complex nature of it in her society. While desiring to be matched for love, preferring to remain single than married for financial security, Olinda's behaviour towards the suitors she rejects makes more sense. On the other hand, her decision to accept Orontes as her husband points to the pressure from her mother, as well as her own financial need that eventually becomes too much to ignore. Trotter's inclusion of the theme of love and marriage are central to the novella, but she explores it in the context of the society around her - particularly in a family with no father's income, something she had personal experience of after the death of her own father - rather than simply clinging to the conventions of a love plot. Instead of concluding with the honourable, convenient death of Cloridon's wife, which would enable a marriage between Olinda and Cloridon, Trotter instead chooses to allow Olinda to conclude her 'Adventures' as she began, enjoying a degree of independence, and without having to worry about marrying to protect her financial or social position. Had the novella ended with Olinda's marriage, it would have been easy to read the text as an argument for amorous love as a prerequisite for marrying. The eighteenth-century approach to amatory love in the development of the novel would encourage this approach; with the traditions of courtly love being incorporated with the realism of human experience. Love in marriage was important, but could still face

[53] Ballaster, p.33.
[54] Ballaster, p.62.

problems.[55] Amatory love within a marriage required a degree of choice for the woman too, another key aspect in which the developing novel form required for this style of plot to function.[56] *Olinda* displays these elements of amatory fiction through the fact that the amatory love between her and Cloridon faces difficulty. However, in emphasising the free choice of her female protagonist, Trotter subverts the expectation by avoiding the convenient ending, and instead presenting an alternative option. Trotter gives Olinda the opportunity to exercise personal autonomy and to make a decision within her own personal moral framework. It is significant that while love clearly is a motivating factor for Olinda, the ideal scenario for her is singleness with financial independence, and Trotter seems to present this as preferable when a marriage for love cannot occur. In a tale that reflects issues common in its contemporary society, such as the fragile financial position of single women, and what constitutes an acceptable marriage, Trotter creates a solution within her novella that advocates for love and choice in marriage, but also displays the desirability of financial independence and autonomy outside of marriage too. By using the epistolary novel as the means to do so, Trotter takes a relatively new way of writing and uses it to subvert the expectations of her readers.

Trotter's place in the evolution of the epistolary form

Olinda does not always play around with the expectations of the reader in terms of epistolary writing. Elements of the text are very good examples of common features of the form, and this is crucial when making the argument that *Olinda* is a valuable text in the history of the epistolary novel. Olinda expresses her most secret thoughts and feelings to Cleander in the novella, and the implication is that he is the only person who receives such honest accounts. Olinda also represents the two selves that Bray identifies in epistolary writing: the 'experiencing self' and the 'narrating self'.[57] The distinguishable difference between the two is that the narrating self is detailing what has happened in the past, and the version of themselves that is referred to within the letter is the experiencing self, present when the events occurred. In epistolary writing, 'the letter is often associated solely with the narrating self, as it is assumed that the letter-writing communicates only those thoughts that he or she has at the time of writing, thinking "out loud" in "a stream of consciousness."'[58] Bray argues that it is possible that the narrating and experiencing selves can both be the hero of the same story, just with differing perspectives of each event. The

[55] Watt, p.137.
[56] Watt, p.138.
[57] Joe Bray, *The Epistolary Novel: Representations of Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.16-19.
[58] Bray, p.19.

narrating self not only has access to the thoughts and emotions of the experiencing self at the time of any particular event, but also the benefit of hindsight. *Olinda* serves as an example of this; the first few letters to Cleander at the beginning of the novella outline her early life, as well as her first experiences of courtship and proposals of marriage. She tells Cleander of these experiences while often reflecting on the behaviour of the men and her own actions. In one account she explains to Cleander:

> I was well enough pleas'd with the Love, tho' not the Lover; for 'tis natural at that unthinking Age to covet a croud of Admirers, tho' we despise them; But I believe I need not confine that Vanity to Youth, many of our Sex are troubled with it, when one wou'd think they were Old enough to be sensible of the Folly, and inconvenience of being continually Courted, and haunted by Men they have an indifference, or perhaps an aversion for. For my Part, I think there is no greater torment; but I was of another Opinion then, and therefore Rally'd at the Love. (*Adventures*, pp.6-7)

It is evident here that 'narrator Olinda' has some distance from her younger self, and, although sympathetic to this 'experiencing Olinda' and her emotions, at the same time, she acknowledges that her views have changed and, looking back, would have altered her behaviour to reflect the lack of enthusiasm she felt about being courted. Genette notes that in this type of narrative 'the narrator is at one and the same time still the hero and already someone else.'[59] As she recounts these events, Olinda is the hero of her own story, and yet her experience has had an impact. Her acknowledgement that she would behave differently in the situation indicates that the experience has changed her. As the novella progresses, the events of the letters catch up with Olinda in real time, and as the distance between 'experiencing Olinda' and 'narrating Olinda' decreases, her narrative becomes much less reflective. Aspects of melodrama become more common in the later stages of Olinda's account, such as the scene where she hides Cloridon in the wardrobe to avoid Antonio in Letter V, and the rumours Antonio spreads about Cloridon to try and turn Olinda against him in Letters VI and VII. Because the time between her experiences and her relaying those to Cleander has lessened, her letters are showing initial reactions to events, rather than reflective ones.

This immediate, emotional response is a common feature in epistolary novels that followed *Olinda*. Richardson's *Pamela* relays her concerns about the behaviour of Mr B. to her parents shortly after they occur. Her journals and letters reflect her feelings in any given moment, and her change in attitude towards Mr B. can be tracked through her

[59]Genette, p.218.

writing. By the end of the novel, Pamela is both experiencing, but also reflecting on her earlier experiences, which is in a sense, a reversal of what occurs for *Olinda*. In *Humphry Clinker*, not only do we see individual characters' responses to things, but the letters from different characters create multiple perspectives of the same event. This is illustrated through the responses of the characters to the discovery that Humphry Clinker is in fact the son of Sir Matthew Bramble, the Knight he has been serving. Jery Melford recounts the moment of discovery when Matthew Bramble acknowledges Clinker as his son:

> Then, laying his hand on Clinker's head, he added, 'Stand forth, Matthew Lloyd – You see, gentlemen, how the sins of my youth rise up in judgement against me' […] The company were not a little surprised at this discovery, upon which Mr. Dennison facetiously congratulated both the father and the son: for my part, I shook my new-found cousin heartily by the hand, and Lismahago complimented him with the tears in his eyes, for he had been hopping about the room, swearing in broad Scotch, and bellowing with the pain occasioned by the fall of the coal-scuttle upon his foot.[60]

Jery's account provides the details of the actual discovery, and some of the other humorous aspects surrounding the moment. Other characters express the news in typical fashion. Matthew Bramble explains it in basic terms:

> My life was saved with the utmost difficulty, by the courage, activity, and presence of mind of my servant Humphry Clinker – But this is not the most surprising circumstance of the adventure – The said Humphry Clinker proves to be Matthew Loyd, natural son of one Matthew Loyd [Bramble] of Glamorgan, if you know any such person.[61]

His niece, Lydia, mentions the news briefly – 'O Letty, it was discovered that Humphry Clinker was my uncle's natural son'[62] – before swiftly moving on to discuss her upcoming marriage, while a fellow servant, Win, notes that the change of circumstances affects Clinker's standing as a servant, and her suitor:

> Mr Clinker is found to be a pye-blow of our own 'squire, and his rite naam is Mr. Mattew Loyd (thof God he nose how that can be); and he is now out of livery, and wares ruffles – but I new him when he was out at elbows, and had not a rag to kiver his pistereroes; so he need not hold his head so high – He is for sartain very umble and compleasant, and purtests as how he has the same regard as before; but that he is no longer his own master, and cannot portend to marry without the 'squire's consent.[63]

[60] Smollett, p.318.
[61] Smollett, p.320.
[62] Smollett, p.334.
[63] Smollett, p.338.

We see from this example the difference in how each character experiences the event. Epistolary fiction allows for these immediate reactions to be explored from each character's perspective. In this sense, the characters are all experiencing, but the reflection of the event, while perhaps missing from their accounts, is available for the reader, due to the number of versions of the same tale. The development of the epistolary form shows that by the time the form was established, letter fiction was a way to portray reactions and responses of the characters. This feature had begun to show itself in Trotter's *Olinda*, but its growth in sophistication in later epistolary novels shows how central this feature became and highlights *Olinda*'s place and prominence in this literary evolution, and Trotter's literary innovativeness so early in her career.

Another crucial feature of epistolary fiction is that characters can explain or justify their motivations in their own words, seemingly without the input of an omniscient narrator, allowing for the narrative to be coloured by the personalities and perspectives of individual characters. This creates a sense of immediacy and intimacy within the plot. If a character is interrupted while writing a letter, so is the narrative, which cannot be resumed until the character picks up their pen again, as opposed to a third person narrative, where a continuous account of events is possible, making this a unique aspect of the epistolary form.[64] This, along with the way characters experience and reflect on events, as outlined previously, 'tend in the same direction – towards vivifying the static, formal nature of composed, objective third-person narrative in the past tense and bringing it into close contact with the reader.'[65] This intimacy and closeness created between reader and narrator brings the moral element of epistolary fiction, and that of *Olinda* particularly, to the fore. Robert Adams Day identifies *Olinda*, as well as *The Perfidious P—* (1702); *Lindamira* (1702) and *Familiar Letters betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady* (1725) as novels which 'represent the highest development of letter fiction before Richardson,'[66] and produce realistic plots through their effective epistolary technique.[67] In addition, they all generally retain a moralistic tone, particularly *Olinda*.[68]

Throughout her own account of her life, Olinda is always concerned about maintaining her virtue and her reputation, and despite the way she can sometimes treat men who show an interest in her, compromising herself by allowing men to sleep with her is a

[64] Day, *Told in Letters*, pp.7-8.
[65] Day, *Told in Letters*, p.8.
[66] Day, *Told in Letters*, p.177.
[67] Day, *Told in Letters*, p.177.
[68] Day, *Told in Letters*, p.177.

line she absolutely refuses to cross. This serves to show that Trotter presents Olinda as having a highly ethical standard for her relationships – she considers it often throughout her letters. The morality of letter fiction, like many literary forms, is found through the portrayal of characters who should and should not be imitated. What makes epistolary fiction unique is that there is often more insight into the characters' motivations for moral or immoral behaviour when letters are written in their voice. There are plenty of examples within epistolary fiction that would be unedifying to the genteel reader. *Image,* for example, contains the sexual exploits of Bawdin Bachelor, while in *Love Letters,* Aphra Behn includes long passages which describe in detail the passionate encounters between the lovers:

> I saw the ravishing maid as much inflamed as I; she burnt with equal fire, with equal languishment: not all her care could keep the sparks concealed, but it broke out in every work and look; her trembling tongue, her feeble fainting voice betrayed it all; sighs interrupting every syllable; a languishment I never saw till then dwelt in her charming eyes that contradicted all her little vows; her short and double breathings heaved her breast.[69]

The language of this particular encounter is vivid, and even though it ends with Philander being struck with sudden impotence, the 'incestuous' nature of the relationship adds a further sense of scandal to the descriptions. The novel progresses through Philander's unfaithfulness and Sylvia's attempts at revenge through sexual relationships with other men, Behn depicts a complete disintegration of the relationship and presents the reader with characters who are not to be imitated, especially as they recognise the immorality of their actions, and choose to continue anyway.

Unlike Philander and Sylvia, Olinda is determined to avoid scandal and immoral behaviour, protecting her reputation at all costs. At the beginning of her first letter to Cleander, she admits that she has not always behaved appropriately towards men who show interest in her: 'For tho perhaps I have not always been so nicely cautious as a Woman in strictness ought, I have never gone beyond the bounds of solid Virtue' (*Adventures*, p.2). Despite the fact that Olinda does encourage the advances of men, as soon as her virtue or reputation is at risk, she withdraws in order to protect it. She reveals that she was courted by an army officer and had no strong feelings about him until she discovered that 'his designs were not very Honourable; and I thought it time to alter my Behaviour: I forbid him to see me' (*Adventures*, p.28). This bid to protect her reputation

[69] Behn, *Love Letters,* p.53.

actually results in its damage however, as after being jilted, the officer spreads rumours about her being promiscuous. Olinda reflects on the incident to Cleander saying:

> Observe my Friend, how unhappy Women are, who are thus expos'd to lose either their Virtue, or their Honour; if I had comply'd with him, perhaps none would have been more careful of my Fame than he: But how much my choice is to be preferr'd, none but those who have experienced the inexpressible satisfaction it gives can know. (*Adventures*, pp.28-29)

Although Olinda occupies the moral high ground, taking comfort in the fact that she knows the truth about what transpired, and that her virtue is not ruined even if her reputation has been harmed, there is a sense that she has been stung by events, and that she will learn from her mistake. The 'experiencing Olinda' outlines her emotional response for Cleander, while 'narrator Olinda' uses it to respond to future events, benefitting from the addition of hindsight. She does not readily accept her next suitor, a Frenchman who insists she is the only woman he could ever love, and instead tests his loyalty by sending him a letter, pretending to be an anonymous lady who admires him. His reply is eager, and he does not mention the existence of Olinda, his supposed great love. Having prevented herself from becoming too emotionally involved, Olinda is not harmed by his disloyalty, and she also manages to protect her reputation. It is not until the introduction of Cloridon that Olinda's resolve to maintain her moral principles are tested.

Having met Cloridon while carrying out some family business on behalf of her mother, Olinda is not suspicious of his desire to be in her company. His requests to spend time with her are, he claims, so that she can be a true friend to him:

> I see all that Sincerity and Ingenuity that is requisite for a friend and I should think my self very Happy […] if you wou'd tell me of my faults and what the World says of me. (*Adventures,* p.43)

This request and the suggestion that they keep their meetings secret cause some reservations for Olinda, but she is able to justify their meeting because she is confident in Cloridon's platonic friendship:

> I consider'd, that there was no danger in seeing a Man, that was so great a Love of his Lady; and that profess'd only a friendship for me: That if ever he shou'd change, I cou'd easily forbear it, and that whatever happen'd, my Virtue was a sufficient Guard. (*Adventures,* p.45)

Her confidence in Cloridon's honour, but also her own virtue, is striking. Olinda believes this will be enough to maintain an appropriate relationship with Cloridon, but by the next

letter to Cleander, Cloridon has declared his love to her. This prompts self-examination for Olinda: 'In fine, I discover'd that what I had call'd Esteem and Gratitude was Love, and I was as much asham'd of the discovery, as if it had been known to all the World' (*Adventures*, p.66). Olinda is able to acknowledge that she has grown to love Cloridon, something she has not done with any of the other men she has encountered, but this simultaneously horrifies her, because Cloridon is married. Although she does declare her love to Cloridon, she is determined that there will be no relationship between them, saying, 'I find by experience 'tis but bravely, heartily, and thoroughly Resolving upon a thing and 'tis half done: There's no passion, no Temptation so strong, but Resolution can overcome' (*Adventures*, p.103). This resolution serves Olinda well – she makes every effort to refrain from seeing him, even though he constantly tries to find ways around this. By the close of the novella, her resolve to stay away from Cloridon is still in place – she removes herself to the countryside to live, supported by him financially, without seeing him.

This moral resolve is a trademark personality trait for many of Trotter's female characters throughout her fictional work. Kelley notes that it contains passages which 'clearly illustrate the moral didacticism embodied in this text, a morality which is observable in all of Trotter's work.'[70] Trotter's unwillingness to allow Olinda as the main character to stray from her principles of honour and virtue give the text a moral centre. But, as will also become apparent in Trotter's other female characters, Olinda's presentation of moral virtue is not unproblematic. Her delight in tormenting the Colonel at the beginning of the novella, and her desire to deceive young men who attempt to woo her shows a mischievous and selfish streak within her personality. She allows her mother to dictate her replies to letters from Berontus, meaning that he receives love letters from Olinda, but in person is treated with coldness:

> She [Olinda's mother] gave me a Copy of [a letter], that without saying anything that was kind, gave him cause enough not to despair; but I could not dissemble my Looks and Actions, in which he observed so much Coldness, that tho' several Letters past between us, that wou'd have given hopes to a Man the least apt to presume; he was often half an hour with me alone, without speaking one Word to me. (*Adventures*, p.8)

After Berontus asks permission from her mother to seek Olinda's hand in marriage, she seizes the opportunity and scolds him for attempting to woo her that way:

> Berontus, I don't know what advantage you think you have more than before; but I'm sure a Lover wou'd have found another way of courting

[70] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.61.

> his Mistress, than by her Mother, and it may be you'll find your self never the nearer my heart for having gain'd her: I hate a Man that will depend upon any other for my favour than my self. (*Adventures,* p.10)

Olinda has allowed Berontus to be encouraged by her false love letters and by her mother, rather than letting her behaviour towards him speak for itself, and she does so simply for her own amusement. Another potential suitor, Antonio, is tricked by Olinda when she poses as a masked woman and allows him to fall in love with her personality and wit, while allowing her friends to tell Antonio that he will forget this mystery woman when he sees Olinda for the first time. However, when Olinda and Antonio meet face to face, she explains to Cleander that 'I entertained him with the greatest simplicity imaginable: For you must know I had an Aversion for him which I could give no reason for […] and therefore I was pleas'd he shou'd think me a Fool, that he might not desire to see me again' (*Adventures,* p.54). While her mockery and deception of her suitors mellows towards the end of the novella, there is the bigger issue of her relationship with Cloridon to contend with. While her actions on the surface are moral and appear virtuous, and she believes 'it must be a crime to grieve for the loss of that, which twas a Crime to Love' (*Adventures,* p.54), her ultimate decision is to accept financial help from Cloridon in return for never marrying another man, ultimately legitimising the love they have for one another, even though it is adulterous.

Trotter's characters' ethical principles often come with a share of complexity, and the beginnings of this trend are evident in Olinda and continue to evolve through the characters in her plays. But the questionable morality of *Olinda* is also an indication that the epistolary novel was developing a moral trajectory too, and that *The Adventures of a Young Lady* was beginning to push this agenda, as would become evident in later, well-established epistolary novels such as Richardson's *Pamela*, whose subtitle *Virtue Rewarded* signifies how imperative the character's unwillingness to compromise her morality is to her social improvement and advantageous marriage. Trotter's preliminary epistolary novella marks part of a trend towards morality within epistolary writing, and her own work.[71]

Epistolary fiction in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was an emerging literary form in which Trotter's *Olinda* comfortably sits. While *Olinda* shares many common features with other contemporary epistolary novels, Trotter manages to add her own unique elements within the work. The difference between fiction and reality which

[71] This is discussed in further chapters.

is so often difficult to ascertain in epistolary writing through the way letters are presented, is explored directly by Trotter through Olinda's experience with her own fictional letters. This is further underlined by the publication process of the text within *Letters of Love and Gallantry*, and the inclusion of communication from characters within the novella to the reader. Trotter also takes the expected elements of a love plot, so often used in this form, to create her own perspective on marriage and singleness and present an ideal outcome that shows financial independence and singleness as a legitimate alternative for when marriage for love is not an option.

In the depiction of a character with a moral framework, although somewhat complicated, Trotter takes the development of the epistolary genre further towards the virtuous characteristics it was later known for. The reach of *Olinda* was furthered two years later in 1695 when the text was translated into French, with some minor additions, such as a moral essay by Madame de Houlieres,[72] under the title *Les Amours d'une Belle Anglaise, ou la Vie et les avantures de lae jeune Olinde, Ecrites par elle mesme en for[me] de letter a un chevalier de ses amis* (published in Cologne). There is no information as to how the text came into the hands of a French publisher, and no indication of who the translator was; nor is there any sense of the level of popularity the text had in France. However, there was clearly a reach beyond an English audience for *Olinda*, and this makes its significance as an important player in the growth of the epistolary novel as a literary genre even more distinct.

Trotter's place in the development of the epistolary novel also indirectly contributes to the evolution of the novel in Scotland. Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* is one of the earliest novels considered as part of Scottish literary history,[73] and its epistolary nature owes a debt to the foundational works that contributed to the development of this form, including *Olinda.* The circumstantial nature of this influence stresses that there are limits as to how far Trotter's Scottish links can be pushed within Scottish literary tradition. Her involvement in the development of the epistolary novel links her more to an English context than to a Scottish one. However, her novella gives an early voice to her views on sexual and domestic relationships and rational ethics which are expanded upon in her later plays, and which foreground her philosophical views too. These are enlarged in her later writings, particularly her plays and philosophical essays, and are harbingers for her public

[72]'Antoinette du Ligier de la Garde Deshoulières.', in *Britannica Academic*, Encyclopædia Britannica (July, 1998) <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/levels/collegiate/article/Antoinette-du-Ligier-de-la-Garde-Deshouli%C3%A8res/30062> [accessed September 2021].
[73] Robert Crawford, *Scotland's Books: A History of Scottish Literature* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), p.172.

engagement with ideas that would contribute to the Enlightenment and link her to a number of Scottish learned women,[74] which adds to the importance of this novel in relation to Trotter's flexing her literary writing muscles and enhancing her own skill as a writer. Day acknowledges that Trotter was aware of the 'fictional mechanics' of the epistolary format at a level 'that is far from elementary'[75] and that *Olinda*'s best qualities are a restraint and control which is in contrast to the fiction of the time. This becomes further evidenced through Trotter's later writing as the themes found in *Olinda* become evident in her plays and philosophical writing. The agency of women, the importance of reasoned, principled behaviour and the importance of reason are all key characteristics of Trotter's writing.

However, in her later work, Trotter leaves behind some of the techniques she had used in *Olinda*, such as her autobiographical influences. It is not hard to find biographical similarities between Trotter's and Olinda's lives. Both lose their fathers at a young age, and are left in genteel poverty with their mothers, relying on social connections for their living and their reputations. This autobiographical element is only found in *Olinda*, as is the use of letter fiction, with this text being the only epistolary work that can be definitely attributed to Trotter.[76] The relevance of the epistolary genre to literary history is as an early form of writing that would become a significant step in the emergence of the modern novel; while its importance to Trotter's own corpus is in the introduction of major themes that are present across all her literary writing and solidifies her place in British literary history. In terms of this thesis, it also provides a deeper understanding of Trotter's early writing and makes the case for further study of this often-overlooked literary talent.

[74] See Chapter 5.
[75] Day, 'Introduction', p.7.
[76] While *Olinda* was attributed to Trotter in her own lifetime, within the British Library manuscripts there are also unpublished letters identified as 'Letters of Aspasia/Camilla/Serena' by Birch. Melanie Bigold discusses the authorship and content of these letters (see Bigold, pp. 98, 132-4) and Birch's acknowledgement of these as being Trotter's while also recognising that it is not completely certain they are Trotter's due to the handwriting and difference in tone of her usual work. These letters are found within the sections of the manuscript (BL Add MS 4264, ff.140-278) that are not catalogued as Trotter's work by the British library as identified in my introduction (p.24, n.74). Due to lack of access to these materials, I have been unable to revisit these letters to draw my own conclusions, or read them in enough detail to include them in the discussions within this thesis.

Chapter 2
Moral and Polemic frameworks: Scottish dimensions of Trotter's drama

Exploring the Scottish dimensions of Catharine Trotter's plays must be done while still accounting for the English theatrical context in which she was writing. Throughout the following chapters, some differences between Trotter's work and her English contemporaries' can be understood as demonstrative of a dormant influence of Scottish cultural traditions. These expose features of her writing that connect her to a different performative tradition than the one with which she is normally associated, thus expanding her profile as a dramatist.

The aftermath of the Union of Crowns in 1603 and the build-up to and implementation of the Act of Union in 1707 had a significant impact on the religion, politics, and culture of Scotland and England in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In Scotland this created a fascinating and complex dramatic landscape, with developments in playwriting bringing formal theatrical productions to Restoration Scotland from a tradition that had been more pageant-based. Later the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689 saw shifts in style and taste on both sides of the border as the Enlightenment period approached. When considering the Scottish dimensions of Catharine Trotter's plays, the narrow window of time within which they were written and performed (1696-1706) can be problematic as there are few direct Scottish contemporaries with which her work can be directly compared. Additional issues arise from the fact that Scottish drama is not simply defined by geographical location. As will be demonstrated, what survives of Scottish plays from this period often exhibit an English focus, with most of the plays addressed in the next two chapters premiering in London as opposed to Edinburgh, and others having never been performed at all. Instead, these plays are linked by their common characteristics, which can be traced back to Scottish performative and theatrical traditions of previous centuries. Viewing Trotter's work from within the purview of early modern Scottish drama reveals that her plays also have these dimensions.

An examination of Scottish theatrical tradition up to and including the Restoration period in the 1660s will help identify common characteristics that define the Scottish drama of the early modern period and underscore the ways in which these are found within Trotter's writing. In particular, the dominance of her calls for positive personal action impacts our interpretation of the way she argues for dutiful, virtuous lifestyles and her portrayals of marriage. This will lay the foundations for the following chapter in which a closer examination of Trotter's plays in their immediate context, after the 'Glorious'

Revolution, shows how the nature of Trotter's achievements can be better understood and thus analysed when the Scottish dimensions of her work are considered.

Scottish drama before 1660

In the years before the Restoration, London saw the development of formal drama, which took place in theatres with sets, scenery, and stages. Such structured drama did not have a home in Scotland until the opening of the Tennis Court Theatre in Edinburgh, after the Restoration,[77] and even then, its offerings were 'erratic and irregular.'[78] Sarah Carpenter, John McGavin, Bill Findlay, and Ian Brown have undertaken vital work in mapping the development of Scottish theatrical traditions to demonstrate that 'dramatic performance flourished but was generally embedded in the cultural institutions and social interactions of everyday life,'[79] as opposed to occurring on an established stage. Public entertainment drew communities together around special festivals and celebrations: May Day games, Robin Hood plays, and pageant style acts were rooted in Scottish society. McGavin's work with written sources recording daily life in Early Modern Scotland shows that as well as organised events, aspects of day-to-day life contained performative elements too, creating the opportunity for readers to visualise what was described. [80] McGavin argues that these simple narratives recounting simple events such as court hearings or church services could contain embellishments and biases, all of which contribute to their theatricality and performativity.[81] Carpenter and McGavin, among others, show that degrees of performativity existed throughout Scotland, emphasising the vibrancy of early modern Scottish culture, despite the absence of formal theatre.

There are no extant written scripts of these kind of cultural episodes and performances; the existing evidence of them are the written records such as those investigated by McGavin. Published versions of formal plays, some of which survive, are only likely to have been produced as a result of the financial investment of court.[82] As the 1500s approached, the function and development of performance evolved into something

[77] Bill Findlay, 'Beginnings to 1700' in *A History of Scottish Theatre,* ed. by Bill Findlay (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998), pp.1-79 (p.63).
[78] Adrienne Scullion, 'The Eighteenth Century' in *A History of Scottish Theatre,* ed. by Bill Findlay (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998), pp.80-136 (p.80).
[79] Sarah Carpenter, 'Scottish Drama Until 1650', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Drama,* ed. by Ian Brown (Edinburgh: EUP, 2011), pp.6-21 (p.6). For further reading, see: Lawson (1917), Mill (1927), Findlay (1998), Scullion 'Forget Scotland' (1997), McGavin (2007), Brown (2011).
[80] John J. McGavin, *Theatricality and Narrative in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), p.1.
[81] McGavin, p.11.
[82] Carpenter, p.14.

recognisable as 'drama' to the twenty-first century eye. These early texts, while obviously plays, were still rooted in the pageant and court culture of Scotland from which they originated. The first and best-known of these is David Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis.* An early version, or 'Interlude' was performed in Linlithgow, before James V, in 1540.[83] The surviving version of the play is an extended version which was performed in Cupar in 1552 and Edinburgh in 1554.[84] Originally performed outdoors, the audience would have come and gone throughout the performances which lasted five and a half hours, and included an interlude filled with short comic sketches reminiscent of the games and episodic nature of performances that the Scottish court audience would be familiar with. The longer nature of the play, alongside the long speeches entirely in verse, contrasts with the dialogue style and shorter runtime of Scottish plays of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, emphasising the way in which *Ane Satyre* draws from the performative traditions of Scottish medieval culture.

Similarly, the renaissance comedy, *Philotus*, at first glance, takes the form of a dramatic poem rather than a play due to the lack of stage directions that accompany the text. Although first published in 1603, this 'little jewel of European Renaissance theatre'[85] is generally thought to have been written shortly after the publication of Barnaby Riche's novella 'Of Phylotus and Emelia', which has often been accepted as the source material for the play.[86] Jamie Reid-Baxter, however, has identified European sources for the play, including *Gl'Ingannati* (1532), an Italian play,[87] and has noted that some of the play's features were not common in the court of James VI (r.1567-1625), but more so in the time of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots (r.1542-1567). These findings suggest that *Philotus* could even have found its beginning in the 1560s, inspired by the rocky relationship between Mary and her husband, Lord Darnley.[88] Although it is unclear as to whether *Philotus* was ever performed at the time,[89] the play shares the farcical nature of the pageants and games in the earlier centuries in a similar way that *Ane Satyre* does, giving ground to the sense that these theatrical characteristics are particularly Scottish features of

[83] Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.117. See also Roderick Lyall, 'Introduction', in *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* by Sir David Lindsay, ed. Roderick Lyall (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994) pp.vii-xliii.
[84] Walker, p.117.
[85] Jamie Reid Baxter, '*Philotus*: The Transmission of a Delectable Treatise', in *Literature, Letters and the Canonical in Early Modern Scotland,* ed. by Theo van Heijnsbergen and Nicola Royan (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2002), pp.52-68 (p.52).
[86] Reid Baxter, p.52.
[87] Reid Baxter, p.53.
[88] Reid Baxter, pp.60-62.
[89] M.P McDairmid, '*Philotus*: A Play of the Scottish Renaissance', *Forum for Modern Language Studies,* 3:3 (1967), 223-235, 224.

early drama, which experimented with genre, influences and source materials that other traditions, including England, had in part already deviated from.

These dramatic forms were not solely for entertainment purposes in early modern Scotland. School pupils (generally boys) performed plays as a means of improving their oratory skills and developing their Latin, a tradition that carried on into the eighteenth century. In the 1540s, George Buchanan wrote his Latin tragedies *Jephthes* (later published in 1554) and *Baptistes* (published in 1577) with this function in mind, and the recounting of the biblical tales of Jephtha and John the Baptist provided polemical elements too. The plays warn against religious idolatry and tyranny, and note the duties of a good monarch,[90] sharing the concerns of *Ane Satyre.*[91] Alongside these performances of school drama and the informal activities at community events and celebrations, an active court culture, patronised by James VI, was the optimal environment for the advancement of theatrical practice, music composition and poetry writing. After the Union of Crowns in 1603, James VI's removal to London had an impact on these developments within Scotland. The absence of court reduced the number of occasions at which such activity was required and created a financial impact, which seems to have contributed to the deficit of formal plays produced in Scotland in the seventeenth century. When Oliver Cromwell closed the English theatres in 1642, there was no theatre to shut in Scotland. Terence Tobin has also observed that the power of the Presbyterian church was a contributing factor to the dearth of theatrical production,[92] as their approval of dramatic performance extended only to the school plays which in their minds, held moral value.[93] Not until after the Restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660 did Scotland produce plays that resembled what was staged in London.

One name to mention at this juncture is Lodowick Carlell (1602-1675). Born and raised in Scotland, before becoming a courtier to Charles I and Charles II in London,[94]

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[90] Findlay, p.23.
[91] Buchanan wrote his Latin plays for his students in Bordeaux, and his expert knowledge and teaching of Seneca and other classical authors made them valuable not only for his students in Latin language, but in the creating and reviving of Classical tragedies. The plays were performed and published throughout Europe and were extremely popular. Buchanan's work intersects Scottish and European traditions, moral and educational frameworks and also classical cultural revival, emphasising the importance of Buchanan as a writer, but also illustrating the ways in which Scottish theatrical culture had long-reaching influence. For further discussion of Buchanan's use of the classical in his writing, and the importance of its influence, see Lucy Jackson's two recent articles: 'Proximate Translation: George Buchanan's *Baptistes*, Sophocles' *Antigone* and Early Modern English Drama', *Translation and Literature* 29 (2020), 85-100, and '*Introite, pueri!* The School-Room Performance of George Buchanan's Latin *Medea* in Bordeaux', *JOLCEL* 3 (2020), 43-61.
[92] Terence Tobin, *Plays by Scots, 1660-1800* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1974), pp.9-10.
[93] Findlay, p.62; Anna J. Mill, *Medieval Plays in Scotland* (London: Benjamin Bloom, 1969), p.90.
[94] Charles H. Gray, *Lodowick Carlell: His Life, a Discussion of the Plays and 'The Deserving Favourite'* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905), p.23.

Carlell produced court plays on either side of the Restoration, all eight were published between 1629 and 1664.[95] They seem to have premiered before the king at court before making their way onto the London stage.[96] He is one of a number of Scottish playwrights who turned their attention to the English court and the London stage as the lack of opportunities in Scotland became evident. Like his Scottish predecessors, he made use of European sources,[97] and while in London, he maintained good relationships with well-known Scottish nobles, indicating a desire to maintain a Scottish connection, even while away. [98] Carlell's plays were generally tragicomedies,[99] and they have received almost no critical attention, but this forgotten playwright is the precursor to the later Restoration dramatists that would come from Scotland to London to seize opportunities that were not available north of the border.

Scottish Restoration Drama

The return of the monarchy in 1660 saw Charles II take the Scottish and English thrones. Theatres in England reopened, resulting in an explosion of dramatic production and development in style and taste. In Scotland there was no formal theatre to restore and no upsurge in playwriting or performance, but there remained a strong moral and religious emphasis on cultural expression. As in the case of Carlell, Scottish playwrights in this period had two options – move south to immerse themselves in London theatre culture, or remain in Scotland where, despite the fact that professional theatre was actively opposed by the religious authorities, some headway was being made.[100] The development of confidence in professional theatre in Scotland was not exponential but was instead a slow process that began in the immediate aftermath of the Restoration and was not fully established until well into the eighteenth century.

The earliest Scottish play to come after the Restoration was *Marciano; or The Discovery* (1663) written by lawyer William Clerk. It was written and performed to commemorate the visit to Edinburgh of John Leslie, seventh Earl of Rothes, the King's High Commissioner to Scotland;[101] the enactment took place in the Abbey of Holyrood House, performed by 'a company of Gentlemen.'[102] It is unclear as to whether this group

[95] Gray, p.46.
[96] Gray, p.34.
[97] Gray, p.27.
[98] Gray, p.23.
[99] Gray, p.47.
[100] Ian Brown, *History as Theatrical Metaphor: History, Mythology and National Identities in Modern Scottish Drama* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp.1-2.
[101] Finlay, p.63.
[102]William Clerk, *Marciano; or, The Discovery* (Edinburgh, 1663).

were local actors or if they had accompanied the Commissioner from London. Although a lack of court culture in Scotland had contributed to the decline of theatrical production (other than school plays or clerically sanctioned performance), the return of important visitors to Edinburgh from the King's court was enough to occasion a play, signifying the close relationship between drama and court culture in Scotland, and continuance in the tradition of using performance to commemorate significant events. *Marciano* was followed by *Tarugo's Wiles; or, The Coffeehouse*, which was performed in Edinburgh at the Tennis Court Theatre in 1668,[103] having opened in Lincoln's Inn Fields the previous year, making it the first play by a Scottish playwright to debut on the London stage.[104] The author, Thomas St Serf, was the son of the Bishop of Galloway[105] and like Carlell, and later David Crawford, was another Scot writing plays for the London stage, aiming to win over the English audience.[106] After *Tarugo's Wiles* was performed in Scotland, he remained in Edinburgh and managed a theatre company in the Canongate.[107] His tenure was short-lived (it is thought that St Serf died sometime in 1669),[108] but this theatre company, along with the presence of the Tennis Court Theatre itself, were further steps toward the establishment of a professional theatre in early modern Scotland. In the years following, the Tennis Court Theatre saw a number of performances of plays within Edinburgh, as Sir John Foulis of Ravelston makes reference to his visits there from 1669-1672.[109] Although the levels of professional theatrical activity were not on the same scale in Edinburgh as they were in London during this period, the presence of an established theatre in the city at this time indicates an appetite for plays and playgoing, at the very least among the socially elite. The evolving theatrical ventures in Scotland were not universally approved of. Tobin believes the responsibility for the lack of theatrical production in Scotland after *Marciano* and *Tarugo's Wiles* lies solely with the Presbyterian Kirk who were worried about the impact of drama being used to attack them.[110]

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[103] Tobin, *Plays by Scots*, p.12.
[104] Unlike Carlell, whose plays had their first performances at court before appearing on the stage.
[105] Jessica Reid, 'L'Écosse à l'envers: Scotland's Restoration Pamphleteer Thomas St Serfe', *Scottish Literary Review*, 12:1 (2020), 109-122, 109.
[106] Adrienne Scullion, '"Forget Scotland": Plays by Scots on the London Stage 1667-1715', *Comparative Drama*, 31:1 (1997), 105-128.
[107] Jack McKenzie, 'A Study of Eighteenth-Century Drama in Scotland (1660-1760)' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of St Andrews, 1956), p.372.
[108] McKenzie, p.373. Jessica Reid's makes the same conclusion in her forthcoming article for *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research* and in her forthcoming PhD thesis from the University of Glasgow. I am very grateful to Jessica for providing me access to her research.
[109] Findlay, p.72. This is discussed further in the following chapter of this thesis, in addition to the contribution to theatrical performances of plays that James Duke of York brought to Edinburgh before he took the throne.
[110] Terence Tobin, 'Introduction', in *The Assembly* (Lafayette: Purdue University Studies, 1972), pp.1-19 (p.4).

Despite approving of drama as a teaching tool for education, the Kirk was wary of professional theatre as a means of entertainment. But there is more nuance than Tobin's argument suggests; the objection of the church was an influential factor in squashing Scottish drama production, however, the absence of court culture also had an important impact. Bill Findlay highlights that James VI was a significant figure for dramatists thanks to his resistance against those wishing to morally reform the medium. His decision to move the court to London resulted in the loss of an ally for Scottish theatre makers, giving opposition to drama a stronger foothold.[111] This is emphasised by the return of theatre production and events when court culture was present in Edinburgh, such as the Commissioner's visit in 1663 and the residence of James, Duke of York in the 1680s.[112] In the absence of the court, the church increased its authority within Scottish society as the Commonwealth came into being in the 1640s, all of which contributed to the lack of plays produced in early modern Scotland.

The London theatre context

Meanwhile in London, when theatres reopened in 1660, there followed a great deal of development in the style and form of plays and playwriting. One of the biggest changes after the 1660 Restoration was the introduction of actresses taking female roles in plays, which had previously been filled by young boys. By the time of the Revolution in 1688, the presence of actresses was well-established.[113] From 1660 there were two licensed theatre companies in London, The King's Company and The Duke's Company, and these combined in 1682 to form The United Company under the lawyer Christopher Rich,[114] resulting in a monopoly of the London theatre scene, before a number of actors, dissatisfied with their treatment and salaries under Rich, formed a breakaway theatre company of their own in 1695.[115] This created a healthy competition between Rich's company, based in Drury Lane and in Dorset Garden, and Thomas Betterton's at Lincoln's Inn Fields, as demand for plays to fill all three theatres increased.[116]

Restoration theatre has the reputation of revelling in impropriety and scandalous plays, production of which surged in the years after 1660. Reformers began to express

[111] Findlay, p.37.
[112] Discussed in Chapter 3.
[113] Jean I. Marsden, *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660-1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), p.1.
[114] Robert D. Hume, *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp.360-361.
[115] Hume, *Development of Drama*, pp.406-411.
[116] Derek Hughes, *English Drama, 1660-1700* (Oxford: OUP, 1996), p.377.

discontent with the subject matter of plays – the most notable among these being Jeremy Collier, whose pamphlet *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1696) rejected the explicit and immoral content of Restoration theatre, although he did not actually believe that theatre itself was evil.[117] Collier's main objections were that playwrights wrote material that made 'women speak smuttily',[118] and that this 'smut is still more insufferable with respect to Religion'[119] as:

> Christian Religion is quite of an other Complexion. Both its precepts, and Authorities, are the highest discouragement to Licentiousness. It forbids the remotest Tendencies to Evil, Banishes the Follies of Conversation, and Obliges up to Sobriety of Thought. That which might pass for Raillery, and Entertainment in Heathenism, is detestable in Christianity.[120]

Collier felt that in general Classical plays from the Greek and Roman theatres had less of the questionable moral behaviour and speech shown on the stage than the Restoration plays of London. This was problematic for him because the Christian principles that his society was supposed to live by were then being directly contradicted on stage, while a 'pagan' society had in the past presented more acceptable material,[121] highlighting what Collier and other reformers felt to be a move away from appropriate standards. His other concern was the effect that the use of coarse language was having on theatre audiences, particularly the women:

> Swearing in the Playhouse is an ungentlemanly, as well as an unchristian Practice. The Ladies make a considerable part of the Audience. Now Swearing before Women is reckon'd a Breach of good Behaviour, and therefore a civil Atheist will forbear it. The custom seems to go upon this Presumption; that the Impressions of Religion are strongest in Women, and more generally spread. And that it must be very disagreeable to them to hear the Majesty of God treated with so little respect.[122]

Collier also goes on to address the representation of the Clergy on the stage, as well as the views of the church on how the stage should be used. These views were not just held by religious ministers like Collier: 'Outside the clergy and the religious societies there was widespread anxiety about profane speech and scandalous behaviour, which included

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[117] Marsden, p.23.
[118] Jeremy Collier, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (London: Printed for S. Keble, S. Rare, and H. Hindmarsh, 1698), p.8.
[119] Collier, p.14.
[120] Collier, p.14.
[121] Collier, pp.14-15.
[122] Collier, pp.59-60.

criticism of the stage for providing examples of immoral conduct.'[123] Collier's *Short View* is one of the best-known writings of those who wished for theatre reform. Brian Corman argues that it set the tone for critical responses to Restoration theatre for the next two hundred and fifty years,[124] giving the impression that all Restoration theatre was of this scandalous ilk. Collier and the reformers did gain a significant audience, there are a number of written responses to the reform movement from major playwrights, defending the theatre. Examples include John Dennis's *The Usefulness of the Stage* (1698) and William Congreve's *Amendments of Mr Collier's False and Imperfect Citations* (1698), to which Collier replied with *A Defence of the Short View* in 1699. There was an active dialogue within the London theatrical community about the uses of theatre as moral instruction or as entertainment and the debate surrounding these issues.

In the context of this debate, Catharine Trotter's first play, *Agnes de Castro* was performed in 1695, followed in 1698 by *Fatal Friendship*, making her a direct contemporary of Collier and the playwrights he was criticising, including William Wycherley and William Congreve. Evidence that Trotter inserted herself into this debate can be found in the various prologues of her plays, including *Fatal Friendship*, which was performed in the same year that Collier's *Short View* was published. One of the anonymous addresses to Trotter on the publication of her play praises her moral stance:

> More just Applause is yours who check the Rage,
> Of Reigning Vice, that has debauch'd the Stage,
> And dare shew Vertue in a vicious Age.[125]

This suggestion that Trotter is deserving of recognition for her depiction of virtue on the stage in a period when the speaker feels this is not always the case, indicates that Trotter had a reputation as a stage reformer. She adds to this herself in her own preface to *The Revolution of Sweden* (1706), in which she states:

> I am willing to believe that the distastes of Plays which the Town is fall'n into (tho' encreas'd since some care has been taken to Reform them) was at first produc'd by the just Complaints that have been Publickly made on the Abuses of the Stage, which might incline the Ladies especially, to

[123] Eric Salmon, 'Jeremy Collier (1650-1726), anti-theatrical polemicist and bishop of the non-juring Church of England,' *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/5917> [Accessed March 2019].
[124] Brian Corman, 'Restoration Drama after the Restoration: The Critics, the Repertory and the Canon,' in *A Companion to Restoration Drama*, ed Susan J. Owen (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp.177-192 (p.178).
[125] Anonymous, 'To the Author of Fatal Friendship', in Catharine Trotter, *Fatal Friendship* (London: Printed for Francis Saunders, 1698), p.A4v.

> seek in Musick, fine Scenes and Dancing, a Diversion that wou'd at least be harmless.[126]

It is possible, then, to directly link Trotter's statements with a number of Collier's views represented in *A Short View*. She outlines a fall in popularity of plays in London, which she attributes in part to the 'Abuses of the Stage', referring to the public complaints against these abuses as 'just.' The implication is that she agrees with those calling for stage reform and she commends the reforms that have already been made by suggesting that the distaste has waned slightly through their adoption. Although she echoes Collier's concerns about the effect of the immorality of the stage upon women, Trotter's worries are slightly different. While Collier was concerned for the corruption of female minds, Trotter suggests that women would refuse to allow themselves to be corrupted, and instead would take themselves away from theatres and seek alternative entertainment. Trotter's position advocates for the personal autonomy of women in their ethical decision making – a trademark of her writing. In the preface to *The Revolution of Sweden,* she further outlines her belief in the need to reform the stage and the role she can play in it:

> I cannot but think an Author wou'd very ill employ the much longer [running time of a play], and greater application he must use, in contriving an Entertainment for no other end but to divert, and cou'd never allow my self to think of any Subject that cou'd not serve either to incite some useful Virtue, or check some dangerous Passion. With this design I thought writing for the Stage, a Work not unworthy [of] those who wou'd not trifle their time away, and had so fix'd my Mind on contributing my part towards reforming the Corruptions of it, that no doubt I have too little consider'd the present tast of the Town. (*Revolution*, p.A3v)

Trotter admits that her desire to reform the stage and to produce a work that is morally useful has perhaps dampened what might be the more entertaining parts of the play. This serves to emphasise how important it was to her that her plays emphasised an example of moral virtue to audiences who saw them. The presence of such elements in her work and in her own words positions her as a sympathetic supporter of stage reform in the London theatrical environment.

Trotter's reception among contemporary English writers only seems to have been slightly affected in a negative way by her reforming position. The scathing satires of Delarivier Manley, including *The New Atalantis* (1709), painted Trotter as a sexually promiscuous woman who projected a virtuous public persona and was therefore entirely

[126] Catharine Trotter, 'The Preface', *The Revolution of Sweden* (London, Printed for James Knapton and George Strahan, 1706), p.A3v.

hypocritical. Manley suggested Trotter had an 'air of *virtue pretended*',[127] presenting herself as pious while also conducting extramarital affairs.[128] Prior to Manley's attack on Trotter, the two had a generally friendly relationship and along with Mary Pix, were satirised in the 1696 anonymous *The Female Wits*, which portrayed Trotter as a woman who pretended to have more learning than she actually had. These depictions of Trotter seem to have been inspired by the impression of her virtuous persona, while at the same time suggesting that this was a performative front. These do not seem to be contributing factors to the later eighteenth-century view that Trotter had strong principles and high intellect, for which she was praised,[129] but there is a sense that some twentieth-century readings of Trotter have been influenced by the suggestion that she had some secret, immoral lifestyle.[130] Generally, although she faced some satire and mocking for her reforming attitude towards the stage, she was not rejected outright by the majority of her English contemporaries. Instead, she appears to have had good working relationships with contemporary playwrights and was generally well received by them.

One such example is that of William Congreve. After Trotter sent him verses in response to his play, *The Mourning Bride* (1697), Congreve wrote to her in response. [131] She also sent him a copy of *The Revolution of Sweden* and asked him for his opinion. The fact that Congreve's reply is dated three years before the play was staged shows that Trotter was working on this play for some time before bringing it to the stage. Congreve, evidently touched that Trotter asked him for guidance, provided a warm and constructive response:

> In the fourth act, it does not seem to me to be clear enough, how Constantia comes to be made free, and return to Gustavus; the third act intimating so strongly why we might expect to have her continued in the viceroy's power. […] I approve extremely of your killing Fredage and Beron. Poetical justice requires him; and for her you may easily drop a word, to intimate her delivering of Gustavus to have proceeded from some spark of love, which afterwards she may repent of, and her character remain as perfect as nature need require […] I wish you success, which you can wish and that, I think, will hardly be so much as you deserve, in whatever you undertake.[132]

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[127] Delarivier Manley, *The New Atalantis*, ed. by Ros Ballaster (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1991), p.160.
[128] Delarivier Manley, *The Adventures of Rivella*, ed. by Katherine Zelinsky (Hertfordshire: Broadview, 1999), pp.102-103. Manley's attacks on Trotter are discussed further in Chapter 5.
[129] For example, see *Biographium Faemineum* (1766), *Dialogues Concerning the Ladies* (1785) and others outlined in the introduction.
[130] See Maison (1978); Kendall (1988), Ezell (1987). Anne Kelley discusses this portrayal and the various twentieth-century interpretations of Trotter's biography in her book, *Catharine Trotter*, pp.35-45.
[131] *Works* Vol 1, p.vi.
[132] William Congreve to Catharine Trotter, London, November 2, 1703, BL Add MS 4264 ff.19-20.

Trotter does not seem to have applied any of Congreve's suggested changes to *Revolution*, but the respect she had for him is clear through her decision to send him the play in the first place. Although Trotter had aligned herself with the stage reformers to whom Congreve had objected, he does not seem to hold this against her. And rather than viewing Congreve and his work as completely immoral, Trotter evidently admired him. Her verses in praise of *The Mourning Bride* compare him with John Dryden, presenting Congreve as 'his greatest darling son',[133] and concluding that Congreve's talents surpass his great predecessor's:

> Tho' even [Dryden] gain'd not thy height so soon,
> […]
> But he by others aid his conquests gain'd,
> By others too the fame of them remain'd;
> Though sov'reign o'er the vast poetic land,
> Unaided, as unrival'd, do'st command,
> And not oblig'd for fame, which records give,
> in thy own works thou shalt forever live.[134]

Trotter's praise for Congreve indicates her respect for a fellow writer, and along with verses she wrote for other dramatists including Delarivier Manley and Mary Pix, underlines her belonging in the London community of playwrights – something that benefitted her as fellow writers returned the favour of writing verses.[135]

These initial explorations of Trotter's place within London's literary and theatrical sphere show that she was generally respected by other writers throughout her career. The indication that she was aligning herself with stage reformers prefaces her later philosophical and moral writing, as well as explaining the moralistic nature of her drama – further emphasised by her choice of tragedy 'as a fit instrument to instruct people, […] seeking to elevate the moral tone of the tragedy of her times.'[136] Trotter's relationship with the morality of drama is even more visible when the Scottish dimensions of her writing are explored. Previous research has argued that, although the plays coming from Scotland in the Restoration period are few in number, they link back to the theatrical and cultural traditions of the pre-Restoration period in Scotland through shared polemical

[133] Catharine Trotter, 'To Mr Congreve, on his Tragedy, the *Mourning Bride*', in *Works*, Vol 2., pp.564-565 (p.565).
[134] *Works*, Vol 2., p.565.
[135] A list of poems written in praise of Trotter, and those she wrote for others, is found in Appendix 2.
[136] Pilar Cuder-Dominguez, *Stuart Women Playwrights 1613-1713* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p.105.

characteristics and themes and reflections of performative folk culture.[137] The presence of these commonalities across these plays which span such a long time period makes the case for these to be accepted as features of early modern Scottish drama as a whole. Although Trotter is undoubtedly part of English dramatic tradition and culture, a number of dimensions within her plays can integrate her into Scottish theatrical tradition both from the Restoration and post-Revolution eras. Her treatment of moral virtue, especially regarding the idea of duty and of marriage, as discussed below, illustrates this in the context of Scottish Restoration drama.

Morality and polemics

It would be careless to say that English plays were never used to import moral wisdom and lessons to the audience in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but in general 'a great many [London plays] were written purely as entertainment.'[138] On the other hand, we have already seen the rich tradition of Scottish plays throughout history being used polemically to challenge the established frameworks and standards of society. Tobin views plays produced in Scotland as being 'without exception didactic'[139], while Ian Brown reflects on the nuance of this, remarking that in Scotland, theatricality was seen as a means of protesting the status quo and encouraging establishments to change.[140]

Drama as a means of challenging the establishment is best seen in early Scottish drama through *Ane Satyre*, which comments on the need for church and government reform in order to establish a fairer society. Led astray by three vices, Falset, Dissait and Flatterie, King Humanitie ignores Gude Counsall and Divyne Correctioun. Virtue, Spiritualitie, and Temporalitie are mocked and placed in the stocks. John the Commonweil, representative of the good citizen, has to call for reform among the three Estates – the Church, the Courts and aristocracy, and the Merchants. Each character's name is an obvious indicator of who or what they are designed to represent; the adoption of stock characters leaves no room for misinterpretation, and as the play concludes with a plan for

[137] Heather Wells, '"A Play in Our Nation?": Can the drama of late seventeenth-century Scotland be considered as Restoration Comedy, and are these Comedies successful? (unpublished MPhil Dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2018). See also Brown, 'Introduction: A Lively Tradition and Creative Amnesia' (2011) and Findlay, 'Beginnings to 1700' (1998).
[138] Robert D. Hume, 'Theatre History, 1660-1800: Aims, Materials, Methodology', in *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1600-1800*, ed. by Michael Cordner and Peter Holland (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.9-44 (p.30).
[139] Terence Tobin, 'Popular Entertainment in Seventeenth Century Scotland', *Theatre Notebook*, 23:1 (1968), 46-54, 47.
[140] Ian Brown, *Scottish Theatre: Diversity Language, Continuity* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, B.V., 2013), p.83. eBook.

the reformation of society, the implication is that these changes should be established in reality.

George Buchanan's classroom plays are similar; however, there is a multi-faceted element to the way in which they are used to impart moral lessons from biblical subject matter, while also being used as a tool to develop language and oratory skills among schoolboys. In *Jephthes*, Jephtha[141] returns from battle promising that, in thanks for his victory, he will sacrifice 'Whatever first/ Shall run to meet me, safe returned home'[142] to God. To his horror, instead of the expected livestock, he meets his daughter. Buchanan creates scenes within his play where characters try to dissuade him from his vow,[143] questioning the validity of a promise which causes the death of an innocent young woman. But Jephtha stubbornly chooses to keep his word and sacrifices the girl. The play is a warning against foolish promises and rash decisions. Trotter's play, *Fatal Friendship,* shares this warning.

The play reveals that Felicia has secretly married Gramont, against the wishes of her brother, and head of the family, Bellgard. Gramont is not a suitable match because he has been cut off from his family and has no wealth. Bellgard is unaware of his sister's marriage and tries to persuade her to marry Count Roquelaure, Gramont's father. Roquelaure and Bellgard pressure Gramont to marry Lamira, a young widow, who has inherited her first husband's fortune. Felicia and Gramont's young son has been kidnapped and is being held to ransom, so Gramont agrees to marry Lamira, in secret, in the hope that he can use her money to pay the ransom for his son, and also pay the bail for his friend Castalio, who is in prison thanks to Gramont's actions. Upon the revelation that Gramont has two wives in secret, Lamira decides to take herself to a convent and Felicia must decide whether she will remain with her husband or take up Lamira's offer of financial security on the provision that she leaves Gramont. The complex nature of events becomes too much for Gramont, who kills himself, leaving Felicia recognised as his rightful heir and looked after by Count Roquelaure, who accepts her as his daughter-in-law.

[141] The biblical version of Jephtha's story is found in Judges 11.
[142] George Buchanan, *The Jephtha and Baptist*, trans. Alexander Gibb (Edinburgh: J.M. Miller, 1870), p.46. 'Whatever' or 'the first thing' are used in most common English translations of the Bible in Judges 11:31 in the wording of Jephtha's vow. (New International Version, King James Version, English Standard Version)
[143] Scene 8 describes Symmachus' attempts to dissuade Jephtha from his vow, while Scene 10 portrays a priest's attempts to show Jephtha that his vow is unholy and against the laws of nature and God, meaning he should renounce it.

Gramont and Felicia's decision to marry in secret against the wishes of their families is a decision that sets spiralling consequences into motion. Gramont's second rash decision, to marry Lamira, also in secret, to provide financially for his son and for his imprisoned friend eventually results in his own death. Both of these outcomes are the result of decisions made without proper forethought. Margarite and Lorrain's marriage in *The Unhappy Penitent* is also the result of a quick decision. Margarite and the King have been betrothed since childhood, but he is delaying the wedding because he is in love with Ann. The political benefit of the King and Margarite's marriage no longer exist. Margarite is in love with the Duke of Lorrain, who tries to persuade her to elope with him. Ann does everything within her power to persuade Margarite to remain betrothed to the King and either marry him as agreed or wait until the King breaks the contract himself. She also tries to persuade the King to keep his end of the contract. Margarite agrees to elope with Lorrain and marries him in secret. The Duke of Britanie (Ann's father) had wished to marry Margarite himself and forges a letter which implies that the King and Margarite are in love. This letter is given to Lorrain, who believes he has been betrayed. The Duke of Britanie blackmails Margarite, threatening to kill Lorrain if she reveals the truth about the letter. Margarite makes a vow to God that if he will restore her reputation and at the same time, allow Lorrain to live, she will give up her relationship with Lorrain and join a convent. With the help of Ann, Margarite's name is cleared, and Margarite keeps her vow. She joins the convent, leaving a distraught Lorrain behind. In making such a rash decision, without the appropriate forethought, Margarite, pays the price for upsetting the social structure. All of these plays highlight the danger that rashly made promises or decisions can pose to peace and prosperity; their emphasis on vows and promises also subtly addresses the notion of moral duty, which is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Here though, we can see the obvious call for moral virtue, where the behaviour of the individual should be impacted by the idea of the greater moral good. This builds on the polemic emphasis of early plays such as *Ane Satyre*, which emphasise the need for such behaviour from those individuals in positions of authority. Trotter expands this by emphasising the importance of this behaviour in the life of any individual.

Polemical elements are also present in more subtle ways across Scottish plays. *Philotus* shows its eighty-year-old eponymous character seeking to marry Emilia, who is only fourteen, and illustrates his complete humiliation at the hands of Emilia's brother, Philerno. This play is advocates for marriages of love and equality as opposed to those motivated by the lust of people with financial power and authority. By the seventeenth

century, *Marciano* and *Tarugo's Wiles* were also exhibiting moral elements, with the audience expected to note and act upon what was presented on stage. Not only are they detected within the plays, but the authors themselves had expectations that drama should be used for the audience's moral benefit. William Clerk explains in his preface to *Marciano*:

> The use of which may be reaped of playes is so evident, that unless a man mistrust his very senses, he cannot but confesse that to see, in a well acted Tragedy, the fatal ends of such as commit notorious murders, rapins and other licentious vices represented, would terrifie any man whatsoever from attempting the like. In a Comedy, where ordinarily the paltry vice of the age, such as the Court-vanity and prodigality, the City covetousness, or the Country-simplicity &c. are extraordinarily taxed, many are deterred from what formerly they hugg'd feeling their darling crimes exposed upon a publick Stage to the mockerie of the world.[144]

Clerk's asserts that the audience will benefit from watching a play because they will see examples of behaviour to imitate and to avoid, which speaks to an expectation that this is how the play will be interpreted. As discussed above, Trotter's own views on the use of plays for moral purposes are expressed in the dedication to *Revolution*, where she aligns herself with the stage reformers. However, these views are also evident in *Unhappy Penitent,* where in the dedication she indicates where she thinks her play has failed:

> I have ventured to propose a Doubt whether Love be a proper Subject for [this play]; seems to me not Noble, not Solemn enough for Tragedy, […] On these Reflections I compos'd this Tragedy, in which the principle Characters are indeed doting Lovers, but hurry'd by their Passion into Fault of which their immediate punishment makes them conscious, and at once deserve their Sufferings and our Pitty. This (I cannot forbear taking notice by the way) tho' giv'n by our great Master as an inviolable Law in this sort of Poem, is yet observ'd by few without which tho' they may give Delight they can rarely attain that End to which the other shou'd only be Subservient of forming an Instructive Moral.[145]

Trotter's concern is that by making love a central focus, some audience members will be overly distracted by their pity for the characters affected, rather than being brought to consider the overriding message of the play. That Trotter perceives this as a flaw in her work suggests that, for her, what is to be learned from the play is of higher importance than the audience's emotional response.

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[144] William Clerk, 'To all Humours', in *Marciano; or The Discovery* (Edinburgh: 1663), pp.(3)-(7), p.(4).
[145] Catharine Trotter, 'To the Right Honourable Charles, Lord Hallifax', in *The Unhappy Penitent,* (London: Printed for William Turner, 1701), pp.A3v-A4, in *The Plays of Mary Pix and Catharine Trotter: Volume II,* ed. by Edna L. Steeves (London: Garland, 1982).

Not all Scottish plays contain such direct addresses from the author to the audience. However, in the dedication of *Tarugo's Wiles* to George, Marquis of Huntly, Earl of Enzie and Lord Strathbogy,[146] St Serf says that 'like most other Plays, [it] has its useful moralities.'[147] The conclusion of the play emphasises the expectation that the audience should be influenced by it in their everyday lives. Patricio's initial idea that he can restrain his sister and force her to accept his will is convincingly contradicted (*TW* 5.2). Horatio applies this conclusion to the audience in the closing address:

> HORATIO In this there's nothing new, onely you see a fresh experience of the impossibility of restraining a Woman's Will' (*TW* 5.2, p.54)

Positioning this discussion at the end of the play, a place of prominence, ensures that this is the last thing heard by the audience. Horatio's use of the phrase 'fresh experience' indicates that this is a reminder for those listening, rather than new information, and the audience should have some knowledge of this experience already – in this case, the difficulty of restraining a woman's will. Although there are no direct instructions for the audience regarding how they must act, this conclusion actively directs the audience's attention to the treatment of the women, and the argument that once a woman's mind is made up, she should not be forced to change it. The conclusion could have highlighted other themes from throughout the play, such as the preference for companionable marriages rather than matches made for money or power; or the idea that pride and stubbornness will eventually lead to humiliation and failure. The emphasis of one argument over others indicates a deliberate decision on the part of the playwright to direct the audience's focus to a particular way of behaviour.

The same approach can be taken to Trotter's drama; her plays are designed to make the audience think about particular ethical dilemmas. In her dedication of *Fatal Friendship* to Princess Anne, Trotter echoes the sentiments of William Clerk quoted above, as she declares '[the play's] End is the most noble to discourage Vice; and recommend a firm unshaken Virtue.'[148] Trotter's belief that her play has the authority to recommend particular behaviours to her audience did not go unnoticed by her fellow writers. In printed

[146] B.L.H. Horn, 'Gordon, George, first duke of Gordon (b. in or before 1649, d.1716)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2013) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/11038> [accessed July 2021].
[147] Thomas St Serf, *Tarugo's Wiles; or, the Coffeehouse* (London: Henry Herringman, 1668), p.[ii].
[148] Catharine Trotter, 'To Her Royal Highness The Princess,' in *Fatal Friendship* (London: Francis Saunders, 1698), p.A2v.

form, *Fatal Friendship* is preceded by four addresses to the author. The first, written by a P. Harman declares:

> With you the Empire of the Stage maintain,
> Nor suffer Fools so oft t'usurp your reign;
> Then perfect Plays would perfect joys inspire,
> Touch to the Soul, and waken dead desire;
> Deny each chatt'ring Ape his fancy'd part,
> And teach us to revere your Sacred Art.[149]

Harman's commendation alludes to Trotter as a finely skilled writer with the ability to produce plays that affect her audience. The reference to her art as 'Sacred' and the praise of her talent both confer an authority of sorts upon her. This idea of Trotter as a moral authority is expanded upon by the other addresses:

> For we at once both profit, and are pleas'd;
> And you may boast, that by your skilful Hand,
> You've done what Senates did in Vain Command:
> For such Examples bear a mighty sway,
> Since none in vicious Paths will chuse to stray,
> When Wit, and Beauty Join to lead in Virtues way.
> (*FF*, p.A4v)

Trotter is described as making a stand against the apparent immorality of theatre culture, swaying her audience in the direction of a virtuous path, using her sharp wit to exercise influence. The fourth address to Trotter was published without a name, but is attributed by Birch to poet and playwright, John Hughes,[150] which reads:

> You stand the first of Stage-Reformers too
> No Vicious Stains pollute your moral Scene;
> Chast are your Thoughts, and your Expression clean
> […]
> Your Virgin Voice offends no Virgin Ear.[151]

This poem addresses Trotter's own moral virtue – pronouncing her pure and chaste – and aligns her with the stage reform movement, who campaigned for an overhaul of the theatre so that plays were both entertaining and edifying to their audiences. Hughes himself felt incredibly strongly that there was a need for a clear presentation of moral virtue within literary writing and would have aligned with Trotter in these views.[152] The recognition of

[149] P.Harman, 'To the Author on her Tragedy, call'd Fatal Friendship', in *Fatal Friendship*, p.A3v.
[150] See *Works* Vol. 1, p.viii; and Vol.2, p.470.
[151] Anon., 'To the Ingenious Author on her Tragedy, call'd Fatal Friendship, Sent by an Unknown Hand,' in *Fatal Friendship*, p.A5v.
[152] Thomas N. McGeary, 'Hughes, John (1678?–1720)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2006) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/14077> [accessed June 2021].

her virtuous stance by all of these contemporary writers is noteworthy as it shows an acceptance of Trotter as a virtuous and ethical influence, at the very least among her friends if not wider contemporary circle. The choice of writers to present such poems as paratexts for the printed version of this play may point to an aspect of (self) justification on Trotter's part, demonstrating that her personal, moral framework was appreciated by others.

As highlighted by Brown and Tobin, the nature of Scottish drama at the time, while generally comedic, also implies that audiences expected content that encouraged behaviour within a generally accepted moral framework. This is not to suggest that these emphases did not exist within contemporary English drama, but instead to highlight that across the limited corpus of Scottish drama, the moral and polemic are a predominant focus and therefore a notable feature. In comparison to her English contemporaries, Trotter's moralism seems more culturally aligned with that of the Scottish plays of the early modern period. In addition to the critics quoted above, Anne Kelley and Paula Backscheider specifically refer to the moral nature of Trotter's literary writing.[153] The best example of this is Olinda's reference to the benefit that can be gained from platonic friendship between men and women. She writes to Cleander that

> both sexes will find their Advantages by it. Yours is more capable to instruct and form our Minds, than the wisest of our own, and ours will be more apt to curb that Licentiousness, which Men usually encourage one another in: And what happiness will it be for us, to see ourselves the instruments of all the Mens becoming Good and all the Women Wise? (*Adventures,* p.130)

Olinda addresses her friendship with Cleander specifically in her last letter to him. Her final words to Cleander indicate that she wishes them to be a good example of friendship:

> Let our Friendships then be so exemplary, that all may emulate, and wish to live like us; and by endeavouring, find that there's Purer and more Solid satisfaction one moment with a Friend, than Ages thrown away upon the Gallantries, which so take up the Hearts, and steal the Hours of our Youth. (*Adventures*, p.130)

Olinda, and by extension, Trotter, wants to show strong friendships between men and women and implies that her readership should be seeking to learn from this example of good friendship. The importance of friendship is frequently referenced in Trotter's writing, and the undertones of reasoned principles within the writing are evident, as is the

[153] Backscheider, p.445-447, Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.61.

expectation that readers will take the moral elements as indicative of an acceptable standard of personal behaviour.

When it comes to Trotter's plays, Backscheider's discussion of *Love at a Loss* underlines that 'the play is extremely didactic – not because of long, hortatory speeches, but through the choice of which characters are mouthpieces for opinions and because of the conclusion.'[154] *Love at a Loss* is a good comparison point for Trotter's work and Scottish plays of the early modern period because they are all comedic in nature. At times, the humour of the Scottish plays can mask the polemic elements, however Trotter's moralism is much more obvious. Trotter's comedy also differs from that of her London contemporaries, such as Susanna Centlivre and George Farquhar, in this sense too. As Backscheider stated, the characters used as mouthpieces for opinions within Trotter's play are indications of its moral nature, which can be illustrated through her portrayal of characters living in line with personal, moral duty and in her portrayal of marriage.

Personal and moral duty

The concept of duty in early modern drama is often tied into the political sense of the word, with the duty of monarchs or governments being the direct subject or the target of the message of the play; this will be addressed further in the next chapter. Here, however, we consider the ways in which Trotter's plays also seem to advocate a life based on rational, ethical principles that incorporates everyday duties – such as loyalty to family and friends, personal roles. This is particularly noteworthy due to the fact that when Trotter was writing her plays, early modern society had become preoccupied with living properly within a new type of society, and Societies for the Reformation of Manners were cropping up all over Britain.[155] As this chapter establishes, the Scottish dramatic tradition was polemic, and politically involved. They provide contemporary society with new reference points, a challenge that Scottish literary writing had learned to embrace as a standard literary attribute. Trotter's plays share this function, linking her to this Scottish literary tradition.

Love at a Loss and *Unhappy Penitent* are two of Trotter's plays which are most celebrated for their portrayal of women who challenge one another to live within an

[154] Paula Backscheider, 'Stretching the Form: Catharine Trotter Cockburn and Other Failures', *Theatre Journal*, 47:4 (1995), 443-458, 447.
[155] Thomas Ahnert, *The Moral Culture of the Scottish Enlightenment 1690-1805* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), p.7.

acceptable moral framework.[156] Women who try to change their situations by morally questionable means are presented by Trotter as becoming stuck in their original circumstances, or at least recognising that they must take responsibility for their actions. *Love at a Loss* introduces three engaged couples. Lucilia is due to marry Phillabell but has been persuaded to encourage the attention of Cleon, by her maid Lysetta. Her false love letters to Cleon are discovered and place her relationship with Phillabell in jeopardy. Lesbia and Beaumine's wedding is delayed by Beaumine's reluctance to make any commitment to her. Lesbia finds herself regretting the fact that she turned down Grandfoy's proposal, when she mistakenly believed he had been unfaithful. Lesbia has already had sex with Beaumine, and she is torn between marrying Beaumine, which would be the socially and ethically acceptable solution, or marrying Grandfoy, who has said he will marry her anyway. For Miranda and Constant, it is Miranda who is attempting to delay the union, and who encourages Beaumine's flirtation with her. Constant is driven to speak for himself, enraged by Miranda's behaviour, and the two resolve their differences. Lucilia and Lysetta convince Phillabell that the letters are forgeries and their relationship is rescued. Lesbia gives the other characters in the play a vote as to which man she should marry. The vote is tied and Miranda has the casting vote, choosing Beaumine for Lesbia.

The characters of Lucilia and Lysetta in *Love at a Loss* are a very subtle example of this, and their actions are a depiction of how not to behave. Lysetta's advice to Lucilia, who is faced with unwanted attention from Cleon, is to return the attention until she has married Phillabell:

> LUCILIA [Cleon] never pleas'd me, which you knew; and therefore to move my pity, made my credulous ignorance believe, that if I wou'd not give him some hopes, he must infallibly die for me; the poor innocent thought she was oblig'd in Conscience to save a Man's life!
> […]
>
> LYSETTA You must by no means undeceive Cleon till you are marry'd; persuade him that you love him still, and only marry Phillabell in obedience to your Father; give him some hopes of making him Happy afterwards. […] Is there any Man that would not rather have another Man's wife than make her his own?[157]

[156] Heather King, '"Be Mistress of Your Self and Firm to Virtue": Female Friendship in Catharine Trotter's *The Unhappy Penitent*', in Linda V. Troost (ed.) *Eighteenth Century Women: Studies in their Lives, Work, and Culture* Vol.3 (New York: AMS Press, 2003), pp.1-24.
[157] Catharine Trotter, *Love at a Loss; or, Most Votes Carry It* (London: William Turner, 1701), pp.1-2.

Lysetta's advice to Lucilia is flawed as it persuades her that it is better for everyone that this deception should continue, and she tells Lucilia that if Cleon comes to harm, it will be because Lucilia has driven him to it. Placing this sort of responsibility on Lucilia appeals to her sense of moral duty. Despite her increasing unease at the situation, she is convinced by Lysetta that her behaviour towards Cleon is what will ultimately lead him to appropriate or inappropriate action. The inadvisability of Lysetta's advice is proven when Lucilia's letters to Cleon are discovered and prompt Phillabell to call off his marriage to Lucilia. Lysetta is forced to acknowledge that her advice was poorly judged:

> LUCILIA — This comes of taking your pernicious Counsels, they have always been fatal to me.
>
> LYSETTA — […] I know I have been the cause of this Misfortune, and therefore I would fain do you some Service, that may recompence it. […] I engage to return [Phillabell] to you, the most Satisfy'd, humble thing, begging pardon, calling himself a jealous pated Coxcomb, and you the most innocent injur'd. (*LL* 5.1, pp.45-46).

Lysetta admits that without her influence, Lucilia would not have chosen to deceive Cleon. Lysetta's decision to tell Phillabell that she forged these letters out of jealousy of Lucilia, and without Lucilia's knowledge, means that only Lysetta takes the blame for the letter.

In taking full responsibility, Lysetta seeks to remedy the situation, and this seems to be her attempt to make amends for the problems her advice has caused Lucilia. This is an act of self-sacrifice to an extent, because describing her actions as motivated by jealousy makes it seem like Lysetta has been reduced to a petty, envious troublemaker. Although Lucilia is not innocent in the deception from an audience perspective, in her own view, and that of Lysetta, she is blameless because she acted on the advice of someone else and was motivated by loyalty to her future husband. The women see this as something which cancels out any moral questionability of her actions:

> LUCILIA — Who can condemn this harmless Artifice? The main point's that I love Phillabell, and despise Cleon, are Truths, where then wou'd be the Vertue or Wisdom to let him know some disagreeable Circumstances, which wou'd make us both really uneasy, tho' there were only an imaginary reason for it. (*LL* 5.2, p.48)

Lucilia's love for Phillabell and her hatred for Cleon are 'truths' and any action to preserve these truths are, in her mind, justifiable. Lysetta and Lucilia's behaviour also raises questions as to the worthiness of lies. Lucilia's lies, first to Cleon by indicating she loves

him and then to Phillabell through pretending that she knew nothing of the letters, are motivated by her desire to remain with Phillabell. The reconciliation between them brings them back to their original position – in love and awaiting their wedding. But the consequences of preserving this relationship are that Lysetta has to take the entirety of the blame and present herself as vengeful and jealous to explain the actions she has taken. While neither woman believes their actions have caused great harm, there are still consequences for their lies when the play is read from this perspective.

As so often happens in Trotter's writing, her characters have to make ethical decisions that do not provide quick fixes to their dilemmas, giving her plays a pragmatic and realistic tone. She presents her characters with difficult choices and portrays them deciding how to react. These choices always have consequences, either implied, as in this instance, or directly emphasised in the conclusion of her plays. Lysetta and Lucilia are made to face the realities of their decisions and actions. Their chosen course of action is questionable, the consequences for Lysetta's admission of guilt are not fully addressed and Lucilia experiences no consequences, instead generally benefitting from Lysetta's decision to take the blame. However, the depiction of them seeking to rectify their situation signifies that Trotter allows her characters the chance to work out their own resolutions to the problems they find themselves in. By trying to fix their situation, Lysetta and Lucilia are taking responsibility for avoiding a scandal they have inadvertently caused, which if left alone would upset their social group. Patricia Sheridan's reading of Catharine Trotter's writing and philosophy indicates that Trotter subscribed to the idea that 'moral error amounts to a kind of inattentiveness to the proper expression of one's benevolent affections. With attentive self-knowledge, the fundamental value of our social relationships becomes clear.'[158] The growing self-awareness of Lysetta and Lucilia that they have caused difficulty for themselves leads to action to resolve the situation in order that they can continue to function within the moral framework of their society; without action, Lucilia's reputation would be damaged.

Love at a Loss shows its characters trying to live within the moral structures of their society in other ways too. Heather King notes that 'instead of showing selfish individual schemers or helpless figures of virtue in distress, Trotter shows women helping one

[158] Patricia Sheridan, 'Virtue, affection and the social good: The moral philosophy of Catharine Trotter Cockburn and the Bluestockings', *Philosophy Compass*, 13:3 (2018), p.6.

another and actively practicing piety.'[159] She reads the play as depicting women who are trying to function well within society's moral standard and support and guide one another in their attempts.[160] In this reading, the morality of the female characters is defined by their reasoned, deliberate decisions, within their own control, so that the marriages at the conclusion of the play are the conscious choices of the women involved.

On the other hand, Paula Backscheider argues that the play allows women to fail and presents them as flawed, and the outcome of *Love at a Loss* indicates a change in playwriting and society of the time. She sees Trotter and her fellow female playwrights creating women characters who reflect their struggles, while also attempting to define what sort of women they could be in reality.[161] This is a slightly different emphasis from King's, as Backscheider implies a conscious choice made by female writers of the period to challenge how things were done by and for women at the end of the seventeenth century. Trotter's portrayal of her characters wrestling with their morality, exploring complex decisions, and the general increased depth of female characters created by women playwrights for the stage creates a sense of realism that had not generally been present in traditional plays. In the majority of her plays, Trotter allows female characters to question and challenge one another and in doing so, her characters are given the opportunity to explore and act within their own personal moral framework. The intersectionality of gender and virtue also come the fore in Trotter's portrayal of these women. While they wrestle with personal ethics and moral virtue, they also face the lived experience of being women in a society that requires them to marry in order to maintain their security and positions in society. Trotter suggests that the former is the more important here, and this sense of personal responsibility fits with Trotter's own philosophical ideas of moral virtue and individual responsibility that would evidence themselves in her later writing: 'But let no complaisance engage you in actions which your own conscience condemns, or induce you to be ashamed of virtue, or truth, much less to join in the laugh against them'[162] she advises her son, showing the responsibility she expects him to take for his own behaviour. Patricia Sheridan notes that there is an element of Trotter's philosophy of moral virtue that shows that she subscribed to a 'vision of morality [that was] grounded in purely natural and prosaic feelings of concern for the well-being of others.'[163] This provides some

[159] Heather King, '"Nay then, 'tis past Jesting": Piety and Female Friendship in Catharine Trotter's *Love at a Loss*', in Andrea Radasanu (ed.), *The Pious Sex: Essays on Women and Religion in the History of Political Thoughts* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), pp.127-148, p.128.
[160] King, 'past Jesting', p.144.
[161] Backscheider, p.458.
[162] Catharine Trotter 'Letter of Advice to her Son', *Works* Vol 2., pp.111-121, p.113.
[163] Sheridan, p.6.

explanation for why in the majority of Trotter's plays, her characters take an active interest in the moral virtue of others which is especially evident in *The Unhappy Penitent* and in *Love at a Loss*.

A strong example of this from *Love at a Loss* is shown through Lesbia and Lucilia's confrontation of Miranda over her treatment of Constant. Miranda's behaviour draws the attention of Lucilia and Lesbia, as she frequently encourages the attentions of Beaumine in order to vex Constant:

> LUCILIA Nay I protest you're to blame, Miranda, to use a Man thus, that dotes upon you.
>
> MIRANDA If he does not like the Humour, what makes him dote on me? We're both pleased with one another, only have different ways of shewing it; he's fond of my Gaiety, I laugh at his Gravity; he whines, I sing; he takes care to shew his Fidelity, I to make him jealous; that's his way, this is mine, we take several Roads, but I fear both lead to the same dreadful End, we shall e'en meet at last in Matrimony, tho I am for going the farthest way about. (*LL* 2.2, pp.13-14)

Miranda justifies her actions by claiming that she sees it as her role to make Constant jealous, as well as admitting that she is trying to avoid marriage for as long as possible. When Lesbia tries to warn her against encouraging Beaumine, Miranda reveals more insight into her motivations:

> LESBIA As a Friend, Miranda, I advise you, not to rely too much upon what [Beaumine] tells you; for to my knowledge, you are not the only person he makes addresses to.
>
> MIRANDA Nor is he the only I'll receive Addresses from […] We shall have the more Adventures to entertain one another with; so be diverting always, always new, and I'll engage to secure him the more, by not endeavouring to confine him.
>
> LESBIA Secure him! Sure you forget you're engag'd to Constant.
>
> MIRANDA No, but I'm in hopes very soon to torment him out of his Love or his Sense, that I may have my Liberty.
> […]
> The D—'s in me, I think, I'm so possest with this giddy Humour, it gives a Tincture to my most weighty Affairs'. (*LL* 4.1, p.34)

While determined to delay marriage, Miranda is also attracted to Beaumine for the way in which he refuses to be tied down. This resonates with her desire to maintain her

independence. Her suggestion that the devil is in her also insinuates a refusal to take full responsibility for her actions, and instead places the blame on this devilish influence. Lucilia and Lesbia both challenge Miranda's behaviour on the grounds of socially accepted moral standards. She refuses to behave in an acceptable way for a woman within society who is engaged to be married. Lesbia and Lucilia's opposition to her behaviour, and Constant's decision to advocate for himself by ending the relationship, is enough to bring Miranda to a point of realisation about her feelings for him. Although there is no direct acknowledgement of exactly how responsible Lucilia and Lesbia are for Miranda's change of heart, Trotter provides the setting in which women confront one another on issues of morality, and whereby working in partnership they can achieve outcomes and motivations that give considerable rein to female dilemmas and agency and yet also that would be morally acceptable to society.[164]

The portrayal of characters reforming one another in *Love at a Loss* is not confined to women challenging women. Although Beaumine sets them up as rivals, Miranda and Lesbia combine forces as friends and deceive him in return for his deception of them. When he complains, they highlight his hypocrisy:

> BEAUMINE Is it not my turn to complain now, Madam? --- Well, there is no Confiding in you Women, your Vanity, or Jealousy is sure to betray us; but if ever I trust two that know one another, with the same Secret again --- You are the strangest Incontinent Creatures.
>
> MIRANDA And have you the Impudence to complain of us, that you were endeavouring to deceve? [sic].
> (*LL* 4.1, p.39)

Miranda and Lesbia are unwilling to conform to the petty rivalry Beaumine tried to cultivate between them for his own entertainment. This displays strong female agency and contributes to Beaumine's eventual understanding that he has treated Lesbia wrongly.

These instances within *Love at a Loss* display women coming together to achieve a 'good' outcome. Lesbia and Lucilia encourage Miranda to re-evaluate her treatment of Constant. In working to deceive Beaumine, Miranda and Lesbia bring him to the realisation of his poor treatment of Lesbia. Although he never repents of the behaviour as such, he does begrudgingly make himself available to marry her, which is an act of taking responsibility for his part in Lesbia's moral 'failure.' When he is chosen as her husband, he

[164] King, '"Be Mistress"', p.8.

does promise to keep his marriage vows. Even the actions of Lucilia and Lysetta, although built on numerous lies to Phillabell and Cleon, are motivated by the desire that Lucilia and Phillabell's entirely appropriate marriage can go ahead without interference. In all of these situations, the institution of marriage is upheld, even by the characters who were initially desperate to avoid it. This presents two aspects of Trotter's writing. She is a champion of marriage, and to an extent, freedom of choice in whom one should marry. But she also knows that keeping one's word and upholding one's personal ethical principles is vitally important. These two ideologies cannot be held without tension.

This tension is illustrated by the voting scene of *Love at a Loss* when each character explains the logic behind their vote for who Lesbia should marry. Miranda observes that Lesbia is 'Divided betwixt Love and Honour' (*LL* 5.3, p.54) when it comes to choosing a spouse, and this is why Lesbia allows her fellow characters to choose her husband by vote:

CLEON	Since there is so good a Relief, for him that will soonest be weary of her.
GRANDFOY	That I grant, is on Beaumine's side.
MIRANDA	What say you, Constant?
CONSTANT	I am for him that loves her best.
GRANDFOY	That favours me.
BONSOT	I am for him that won't quarrel with her.
BEAUMINE	That's likely to be me, for I shall be least with her.
LUCILIA	I am for him that can plead most right in her.
BEAUMINE	Ah the Devil! that's me again
PHILLABELL	I am for him that she loves best.
MIRANDA	And I for him that she loves least.
BEAUMINE	That has undone me; 'twas pure Malice, Miranda.
LESBIA	The odds are on Beaumine side, whether I declare I love him least, or best, there's a Vote for him; his right is indisputable, he says he shan't quarrel with me, and he's weary of me already; so there can be but two against him. (*LL* 5.3, p.55)

Lesbia loves Grandfoy, who returns her love and wants to marry her despite the fact that she has previously consummated her relationship with Beaumine. Before she slept with

him, Lesbia and Beaumine made vows and signed a contract that promised they would marry, which would be considered a binding agreement in early modern society.[165] This makes Lesbia's actions a question of personal ethics. Trotter accentuates the moral questionability of Lesbia's behaviour without depicting Lesbia as challenged or ostracised from society as a result. King notes that Trotter's emphasis on Lesbia and Beaumine's vows indicates that Lesbia has not fully transgressed as she intended to marry Beaumine, and it is his failure to keep the contract that has prevented their marriage.[166] But because the events of the play cause Lesbia to doubt whether she wants to marry Beaumine at all, the issue of their having already slept together then becomes a matter of importance. As Laura Gowing notes, in early modern society, 'sex continued to be the one binding event that made a conditional contract firm.'[167] Each character's choice of husband for Lesbia is explained when they make their vote. Constant and Phillabell vote on the principles of loving and being loved, which is notable as both these men were inclined towards marriage from the beginning of the play. Bonsot's choice indicates a preference for companionable marriage, too, rather than a duty-bound one; however, his vote goes in favour of Beaumine as opposed to Grandfoy due to Beaumine's assertion that, as an absent husband, he will be unable to quarrel with his wife. This unexpectedly subverts the view that companionable marriage results in fewer quarrels. Cleon's vote is not in keeping with a view on marriage, but is made in spite, which fits his character given the difficulty he creates for Lucilia and Phillabell throughout the play.

When it comes to the female characters, however, whether Lesbia marries Beaumine or Grandfoy becomes the key factor. Lucilia chooses Beaumine because of his 'right in [Lesbia]', underlining the importance of sex as an indicator of marriage in this society; according to the accepted moral framework of their society, Beaumine and Lesbia are as good as married already. Miranda's vote is more complicated – King notes that her vote for the man Lesbia 'loves least' cancels out Phillabell's vote for the one 'she loves best.' In doing so, she also ensures that Lucilia's vote is the deciding one, and so 'a moral female voice decides the contest.'[168] The initial contracts that were made by the characters at the beginning of the play are the ones which are upheld. For the most part, this includes characters then having their preferred choice in marriage. But in those instances where it is not – such as Lesbia's marriage to Beaumine over Grandfoy, despite the latter being her

[165] King, 'past Jesting', p.135.
[166] King, 'past Jesting', p.135
[167] Gowing, p.35.
[168] King, 'past Jesting', p.142.

preferred option – it is clear that the contract is the overriding factor. This implication is in keeping with earlier Scottish texts, including Barbour's *Bruce* and within plays such as Buchanan's *Jephthes*. Bearing in mind the weight Trotter's plays place on personal morality, and in the polemic elements of the Scottish theatrical tradition of the seventeenth century, such as *Tarugo's Wiles*, this emphasis on keeping vows is notable as a contractual standard for audiences to maintain. The prominence of the vow also foregrounds Trotter's later philosophical writing in the sense that her focus was predominantly on moral virtue.

Love at a Loss is not the only one of Trotter's works where keeping vows is important. Upholding one's word and maintaining moral principles are prevalent themes throughout all of her plays. In *The Unhappy Penitent*, the main focus of the play is the effort Ann makes to persuade Margarite to keep her original promise to marry the King, or to let him release her.[169]

In *Fatal Friendship*, Felicia's determination to keep her marriage vows, despite Gramont's breaking them, means that she is sacrificing the financial security offered to her because never seeing Gramont again is unfathomable to her. In both of these instances there is an added sense of moral duty. Trotter's focus on the moral duty of her characters ranges from these women in the domestic sphere who are encouraged to keep vows in marriage or to promise themselves in future marriage, to those in authority and their duty to govern well. *Agnes de Castro* introduces the titular character as the friend and companion of Constantia, the wife of the Prince of Portugal. Jealous of the Princess's love for Agnes, her fellow courtier, Elvira, spreads misinformation that the Prince is in love with Agnes, and that the two are having an affair. A series of unfortunate events leads to Elvira accidentally murdering Princess Constantia and framing Agnes. Agnes is kidnapped by Alvaro, Elvira's brother, who wanted to marry Agnes, and is enraged at her rejection of him. The Prince recues Agnes, but as her name is cleared of the murder of Constantia, she is accidentally killed during a swordfight between the Prince and Alvaro. In the tragedy of the moment, the Prince is determined to give up on his own life, but the King challenges him by appealing to his sense of duty:

KING How were you going by so mean an Action
To blot out all the Great Ones of your Life?
Your Valour never made you do before,
But what a Coward sometimes does for fear,
'Tis in these Wars, the Combats of the Mind,
Where your Courage from False Brav'ry is distinguish'd

[169] The complexity of this is discussed in Chapter 4.

> And if you fly from them to Death, 'twill show,
> There was danger, which you durst not meet. (*AdC* 5.1, p.47)

The King suggests that the Prince should not take his life as it would be considered an act of cowardice as opposed to facing the hardship of losing Agnes head on. His assertion is that the Prince has a duty to face his circumstances bravely, the undertone being that the Prince will one day take the crown. Trotter's examination of duty in her plays in a political sense will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, but it is noteworthy here in a consideration of a Scottish context because the idea of duty, although present in other literatures, is so prevalent in the early modern Scottish plays of the Restoration and before. The whole premise of Lindsay's *Ane Satyre* is to protest authority figures who are not carrying out the duties required by their roles.

In early modern society, the value of a promise was high. J. Douglas Canfield notes that 'literature portrays society as based upon a gentleman's or a gentlewoman's word, which was itself underwritten by the Word of God. And it portrays this code of conduct as continually threatened by antithetical or disintegrating forces.'[170] This further explains the value that the majority of Trotter's characters place on their word. We see the promises given by individuals reflected in differing ways across Trotter's plays and across the plays of early modern Scotland. In a society where a verbal vow was inherently valuable, it makes sense that when characters are careless about what they promise, they find themselves in difficulty. George Buchanan's *Jephthes; si ve votum* (Jephtha: or, The Vow) is an obvious example within the early modern drama tradition, but even in the later, Restoration plays, promise-keeping is emphasised more prominently in Scottish plays.

In Thomas St Serf's *Tarugo's Wiles*, Sophronia is 'resolv'd against marriage' (1.2, p.4) to Patricio until such a time as Liviana is free from his restrictions on her life. Sophronia keeps her word throughout. Patricio's own stubbornness in keeping Liviana locked away until she is married could arguably stem from the emphasis on keeping one's word. By the end of the play, it is Patricio, whose promise to keep Liviana hidden from society was the wrong one, who finds himself corrected, while Sophronia is able to prove herself right. Although *Marciano* does not expressly place weight on promise keeping in the same way, the loyalty shown by Marciano to the Duke and the national cause and shown by Arabella towards Marciano indicate that these characters hold principles by

[170] J. Douglas Canfield, *Word as Bond in English Literature from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1989), p.xi.

which they intend to live their lives. Marciano and Arabella both make their decisions based on the framework of where they have decided to place their loyalties.

Loyalty and duty are obvious themes within *Ane Satyre* too, as the allegory of the play makes a stand against characters who have shunned their moral obligations to the people and have instead allowed themselves to be distracted. The King is led astray by the three vices and has to be reminded of his duty to the people by Divine Correctioun who 'is that without which no king can function. Yet he is also a figure that represents God's vengeance against those kings who fail to fulfil the duties which their divine office entails.'[171] As the play condemns its characters within the Three Estates for not meeting the moral framework they should be submitting to, the blurred lines between the audience and the stage actors, such as the moment when John the Commonweil enters the play from among the audience, and the constant breaking of the fourth wall, means that the distinction between what is real and what is not is difficult to establish.[172] This makes it much easier to interpret the play not only as a moral lesson for the audience, but also as a comment on the actual political realities of the time. Lindsay notes the failure of the real Three Estates in Scotland to live up to the obligations they have to the people.

Within all of these plays, the characters are following the moral frameworks established around them or are trying to establish their own. This is not unique to Scottish plays, nor is it unique to Trotter's work. Every character in any play can arguably be shown to do this. However, with the polemic nature of the Scottish plays well established, once more we see the case for Scottish plays pointing audiences to examine, and act upon, their own moral frameworks. Reading Trotter's plays from this Scottish perspective means that the same conclusion can be drawn about these elements of her work. In showing her characters developing their own framework of rational ethics or trying to establish ways in which they can live dutifully within the moral standards set around them, Trotter encourages her audiences to do the same, and as has already been touched upon in this section, one of the ways she does this is through her treatment of marriage.

Virtue and marriage

Marriage is a theme that is constantly addressed in Trotter's work, which frequently intersects with the themes of moral virtue rather than simply functioning as a plot device.

[171] Doyeeta Majumder, 'Counselling the Counsellors: Sir David Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*', *Scottish Literary Review*, 8:2 (2016), 1-18, 4.
[172] John McGavin and Greg Walker, *Imagining Spectatorship: From the Mysteries to the Shakespearean Stage* (Oxford: OUP, 2016), p.62.

Love at a Loss is considered by Laura Linker as depicting women who wish to escape the necessity of marriage. She asserts that the play 'examines the social alternatives available to unmarried women, [and] was not popular with audiences perhaps because it presents several heroines who resist traditional roles before acknowledging that they must marry.'[173] Some of the women in the play do resist the idea of marriage, which is indeed a traditional role. But this resistance is not necessarily due to a desire to explore a different role in society, but rather a way of questioning what marriage is and why it should be entered into. Trotter's own views on marriage are indicated in her letters to Patrick Cockburn from before they married. In them, she seems to address his concerns that the pleasure derived from marriage can distract from other matters:

> I agree with you, that there is a kind, or degree, or rather a circumstance of pleasure, that unhinges the mind, by putting it in too great an agitation; but that I believe always proceeds from something new and unexpected, or the continuance of which is uncertain: And when all those circumstances are over, though the pleasure does not cease, yet it leaves the mind firm and composed, and capable of turning immediately to the most serious reflections, which is an observation I have made in all those (who are but few indeed) that, in that state where they may be most secure of each others affection, have retained the tender softest part of it, whose minds are never discomposed by it, or unfitted for any duty that requires the most attentive frame. And therefore I think you should not absolutely resolve against pleasure […] you may some time or other meet with one to pass your life with, whose conversation would at once unbend, and strengthen your mind, and whose tenderness would endear the little services, and sweeten your cares, without any danger of transporting you from yourself.[174]

There are two elements of Trotter's views on marriage outlined here. First, there should be an affection and fondness between the two parties that is secure and unchanging. But she also notes that the correct marriage will bring an intellectual stimulation to the couple and that each will strengthen the other's knowledge and encourage a pursuit of other, honourable activity. Although his own letters are not extant and therefore there is no confirmation about what exactly his concerns were, it could be due to Cockburn's role as a clergyman that he worried the quality of his religious service might suffer if he were to marry. Trotter does not mock or dismiss the concerns, but instead, over a series of letters, challenges these assumptions.[175] Ultimately, she suggests that the right partner can provide

[173] Laura Linker, 'Catharine Trotter and the Humane Libertine', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 50:3 (2010), 582-599, p.584.
[174] Catharine Trotter to Patrick Cockburn in *Works*, Vol 2, pp.218-219.
[175] This correspondence is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

an opportunity for love, but also the betterment of both parties, and, evidently, she succeeded in convincing him.

For the majority of the characters in *Love at a Loss*, these marriages are made of companionable couples who will improve one another. This parallels many of the early modern Scottish plays considered in this chapter, where the main female characters of *Philotus*, *Marciano* and *Tarugo's Wiles* do not reject the principles of marriage, merely the notion of having a marriage partner chosen for them. As a result, the existing conventions and family structures are not heavily disrupted in these plays; they remain socially conservative. This approach to marriage displayed in the plays reflects what was occurring in Scottish and English society at the time. In England, post-Reformation church involvement in marriages did argue for parental and priestly oversight, but marrying for financial security alone was generally discouraged, and there was the expectation that parties would enter into marriage freely with a chosen partner.[176] Arranged marriages therefore had mixed results,[177] as while marriage was encouraged upon choice and companionship, romantic feelings of love were generally expected to follow in the years after the wedding.[178] Plays in which romantic love is the motivating factor for couples are therefore not necessarily reflective of the views and behaviours of early modern society as a whole, despite their strong arguments for freedom of choice. Trotter's portrayal of marriage – although at times seemingly unfeeling and pragmatic (as in the case of Constant and Miranda when they first appear in *Love at a Loss*) – is perhaps more indicative of her own views and that of society as to the purpose of marriage, rather than having her characters display extreme expressions of amorous love.

The major presence of marriage as a theme in Trotter's plays, and in the plays of the Scottish Restoration, needs to be considered in relation to their moral nature, too. Trotter's plays frequently underscore the duty of spouses to be faithful in marriage and her focus is on vows and promises, implying that one's choice of partner, or not to marry, can have an impact on one's personal virtue. The Scottish plays of the 1660s focus on marriage too and make the case for companionable matches as opposed to political or financial unions. The key plot element of *Tarugo's Wiles* around which the action takes place is the need to free Liviana from her brother's choice of husband for her, and enabling her to marry her own choice, Horatio. As discussed above, Sophronia's decision not to marry

[176] Charlton, pp.29-30.
[177] Charlton, p.32.
[178] Gowing, pp.34-36.

Patricio until he has realised the way he is mistreating his sister is also a display of exercising free choice about marriage, when to enter into it, and who to marry. Sophronia's concerns are that her own freedom will be compromised if she marries Patricio, her own choice, under current circumstances. She will not actively choose Patricio as her husband, and instead decides to remain unmarried, until circumstances change. This is a slightly different situation from Liviana, and also from those detailed in Trotter's plays; however, Sophronia's advocation for herself is still an exercise of choice and free will, motivated by the desire for a happy companionable marriage.

William Clerk's *Marciano* illustrates the case for companionable marriage over practical marriage. Marionetta and Chrysolina have free choice in who they marry, and the play follows their journey from seeking matches that will give them social and financial advantage and instead choosing men they can respect. When the sisters are first introduced, they are experiencing pressure from their friends to marry Becabunga and Pantaloni, two rich but foolish suitors who are courting them, despite the fact that Cassio and Leonardo have also caught their attention:

CHRYSOLINA	But I hope they did not know us, Sister, 'tis not fit we entertain them, they are not matches for us.
MARIONETTA	But I warrand you, they'l render us a visit.
CHRYSOLINA	I should rather wish they abstain, Sister, you know our friends will not rellish it well; I should be very well content of this Signor Pantaloni for my husband; I hope no body hears us.
MARIONETTA	True, for although the others may be Gentlemen of good parts, yet I know we are design'd for them Signiors; so the Lady Saromanca told me last day. (*Marc*. 1.4, p.8)

Leonardo and Cassio are considered men of good character, but the suitability of Becabunga and Pantaloni as husbands is emphasised by their friends because they are the wealthier men. Cassio and Leonardo persist in their pursuit of the sisters however, while Becabunga and Pantaloni appear increasingly clownish, to the extent that Marionetta and Chrysolina are left talking themselves into believing their superiority as potential husbands. In contrast, Act 2, scenes 4 and 8 are key scenes which show that the women are more comfortable and at ease with Cassio and Leonardo, and less so with the men they actually intend to marry. The presence of Becabunga and Pantaloni as foils for Cassio and Leonardo indicate that such pairings are a deliberate decision to draw out the qualities of these men and suggest what sort of husbands they would be. In doing so, Clerk makes

marriage the central theme of this particular plot of *Marciano*, bringing it to the forefront of the audience's mind.

Decisive action is needed on the part of Cassio and Leonardo to convince the women they are making wrong choices. Their deception of Pantaloni and Becabunga reveals the true cowardice of the rich men as they renounce their love for Marionetta and Chrysolina in order to avoid the possibility of a duel. When the sisters reject their attempts to make amends, the language of the spurned men uncovers their true feelings about marriage:

PANTALONI	Mistris, shall I tell you, there are more Ladies in Florence then you that will be blyth of me yet; and so long as I have money in store, I am sure to have Mistresses in store.
	[…]
CHRYSOLINA	You are a prating fool.
PANTALONI	I am no more prating then your self, Mistris, but if there be justice to be had of you, I'l have it.
	[…]
BECABUNGA	I protest, Pantaloni, I am very sorry for the loss of this bony Lady though. O! how my father will chide me now: for he had given Manduco orders to provide my Wedding cloaths, and now all's blown up. (*Marc.* 5.2, p.60)

Pantaloni's lack of concern about losing his potential wife stems from his confidence that there are plenty of other women who will accept him due to his large fortune. Becabunga is more disappointed over the inconvenience and annoyance experienced by his father at the expense of buying now unnecessary wedding clothes. Like Chrysolina and Marionetta at the beginning of the play, these men view marriage as a contract of social convenience, contributing towards a respectable position in society and the satisfaction of friends and family, as opposed to a choice made by individuals with mutual affection for one another. *Marciano* contradicts this view by ensuring that the sisters are matched with men who are equal to them in character and intellect. The marriage of Arabella and Marciano also contributes to this argument – for while they are social equals as far as can be ascertained from the play, they are also in love. These successful love matches do leave the underlying question of whether the couples would have been so well suited if the social distance between them was greater. The emphasis seems to be on freedom of choice but remaining

within some form of social construct. This is something that none of the Scottish plays mentioned in this chapter, nor those by Catharine Trotter, choose to address.

Marciano and *Tarugo's Wiles* both advocate for companionable marriage, chosen freely. This is also a feature of earlier Scottish plays – in *Philotus*, young Emilia reacts against the marriage her father has chosen for her. In Archibald Pitcairne's *The Assembly* (1691),[179] Laura and Violetta are inspired to find husbands to free them from the oppressive religious household they live in. Although early modern English and Scottish society both reflected a preference for companionable marriage, there was a difference in marriage laws between the two countries, which might account for the Scottish plays making the case for companionable marriages and advocating for free choice, against family wishes, in a stronger way.

This difference in law was partly due to the variance in belief and teaching between the Anglican Church in England and the Presbyterian Kirk in Scotland, which also had a 'more significant level of social control than its southern counterpart'.[180] Developments in how men and women related to one another during this period, especially within marriage, also contributed to deviation between the two nations' marriage traditions. In early modern society, 'the analogy of the household as state provided everyone with a clear and comprehensible model of the contractual relations of obedience, and the relationship between husband and wife provided the model of female subordination to male authority.'[181] That being said, Scottish wives were not subject to their husbands in the same way that they were in England. Coverture, whereby under law a woman and her property were under the authority and protection of her husband, was a significant part of the English marriage process, while Scottish wives were not affected by it.[182] Katie Barclay points out that the treatment of women as their own legal entity did not completely release them from the power of their husbands, who could still have curacy over their legal properties and whose permission was still needed for a woman to partake in her own business, for example.[183] But the absence of coverture, with Scottish women retaining some of their legal rights after marriage, as well as the tradition of married women keeping their maiden surnames as opposed to taking their husbands' names all emphasised the fact that under Scottish law, a woman and her husband were two separate legal entities.[184]

[179] Further discussed in Chapter 3.
[180] Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, Power,* p.2.
[181] Gowing, pp.33-34.
[182] Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, Power,* p.51.
[183] Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, Power,* pp.50-51.
[184] Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, Power,* p.72.

Scotland famously did not require parental permission for persons to marry, but there was still a societal expectation that the majority of young people in Scotland and England would heed the advice of their families and seek a match that would be advantageous to all parties involved[185] and pursuing an inappropriate match, either through the ignorance of family wishes or even elopement, did bring negative consequences.[186]

These marriage politics are evident in the behaviour of the characters in each of these plays. All of the characters in the main marriage plots of *Philotus*, *Marciano*, *Tarugo's Wiles* and later, *The Assembly*, are affected by the familial pressure to marry well and decide between obedience to expectations or rebellion in the form of a freely chosen love match. Ultimately in the Scottish plays, the 'correct' matches are ones made for love, evidenced by the fact that those against such marriages, such as Emilia's father in *Philotus* and Patricio in *Tarugo's Wiles* are forced to admit their error in judgement. Considering the polemic tradition of early modern Scottish drama, where it being used to make a point, the portrayal of marriage in these plays is arguably a prompt for audiences to consider their own expectations of marriage and how matches should be made.

As with the Scottish plays, Trotter generally makes the case for companionable marriage within her work. However, when we look at characters such as Lesbia, whose marriage fate is ultimately decided by whom she has initially consummated the relationship with, rather than the man she actually loves, we see that Trotter is aware of a need to consider living within the moral framework of society. The betterment of both parties is a motivating factor for Trotter in marriage, but ultimately, she sees her female characters as women who are 'above all, citizens of their country, who must always put public duty before any other'[187] and wants to discourage her audience from seeing love as the only motivation for behaviour.[188] This is a slightly different approach to marriage and amorous love than that which is taken by the Scottish plays of the Restoration period. Trotter presents it as more complicated than a matter of companionship and love, but still advocates for freedom of choice. Even Lesbia, whose husband is chosen by her peers, willingly grants them the authority to make that choice. The Scottish dimensions of Trotter's plays place a strong emphasis on the virtuous aspects of Trotter's portrayal of

[185] Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, Power,* pp.71-72.
[186] Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, Power,* p.76.
[187] Cuder-Dominguez, p.114.
[188] Cuder-Dominguez, p.105.

marriage. As a result, these depictions can be read as a challenge to her audience to see the complicated aspects of marriage, as well as the positive and negative aspects of it.

Scottish plays of the late seventeenth century reflected a long tradition of polemic material, and this allows us to see that these dimensions are also present within Trotter's plays. Their common emphases on moral behaviour changes the way in which we then approach her work; her emphasis on rational ethics, particularly through the themes of virtuous living, duty, and marriage are emphasised when read from this perspective. Trotter's treatment of all of these themes has a political edge, which will be explored more explicitly in the following chapter, but in considering these themes in comparison to early Scottish plays, the campaign for moral virtue within of her work is established. This gives us a reading strategy that can be used to develop our understanding of her plays in their immediate context of the post-Restoration and Revolution era.

Chapter 3
Bridging the gap: Trotter's place in Scottish literary traditions.

Comparing the work of Catharine Trotter with that of Restoration Scottish drama provides a context for her work that aligns with the polemic, moral emphases within Scottish writing. This suggests that these Scottish dimensions, in particular her family connections and early patronages might explain her methods and motivations. Having established her credentials as a writer in this way, these Scottish dimensions allow us to see her work in line with the major, moral themes of early modern Scottish drama.

Moving beyond the Restoration period and into the years following the 'Glorious' Revolution of 1688-9, Trotter's position as a politically engaged, moral playwright becomes increasingly relevant in a Scottish context, because of the lack of direct output of Scottish theatre in this period, a problem which is recognised by Ian Brown and Adrienne Scullion among others.[1] However, these readings of Trotter's Scottish literary and cultural position also enrich the readings of Trotter by scholars such as Anne Kelley and Melanie Bigold that encompass all aspects of her writing, but do not incorporate its Scottish dimensions, making their focus automatically Anglo-centric.

As the eighteenth century progressed, formal theatre in Scotland was established; permanent theatres were opened and plays were produced for performance in Edinburgh.[2] But at the end of the seventeenth century, this establishment of formal theatre was still some time off. Theatrical activity was occurring; plays were written for closet performance or manuscript circulation,[3] and masques and plays were performed for the entertainment of those in the company of James Duke of York during his residency in Edinburgh.[4] To maintain the traceability of a thread of Scottish theatrical tradition in this period, it is necessary to focus on the smaller, less structured forms of theatre present. One way to do this is to read Trotter's plays from a Scottish perspective, especially through her engagement with tragedy, comedy, and the political elements of her plays. From this angle, Trotter is a figure who can bridge the gap between Scottish and English drama, and between the traditions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during a time of change and development.

[1] For further reading, see: Tobin (1970), (1974), Cameron (1987), Scullion 'Forget Scotland' (1997), Findlay (1998) and Brown (2011), (2013).
[2] Scullion, 'The Eighteenth Century', pp.80-136.
[3] Brown, 'Public and Private performance', p.23.
[4] Findlay, pp.72-73.

Scottish theatre, the Revolution, and the eighteenth century

As with pre-Restoration Scotland, the lack of interest in less formal kinds of dramatic activity taking place in post-Revolution Scotland has been reversed in recent years, challenging the perception that there were no theatrical events in Scotland at the time. As Ian Brown notes, 'regular attempts by authorities, religious and secular, to control drama, indicate dramatic forms' perceived prevalence and potency.'[5] The presence of strong opposition to drama is a sure indication of the presence of dramatic activity, and Archibald Pitcairne's *The Assembly* is one example. Written in 1691, although not published until 1722, the play circulated in manuscript form, where it could also have taken the form of private performances. The play satirises the Presbyterian models of church governance, pointing to the hypocrisy of those within the church structure living outwardly pious lives while privately living the lifestyles they condemned. Pitcairne even suggests that the characters in the play were modelled after well-known Presbyterians in the community.[6] This circulation of plays in written form for private reading and performances indicates that this literary mode was still effective in the presentation and dissemination of ideas. Murray Pittock notes other examples of theatrical activity, including plays performed in Edinburgh between 1669 and 1672,[7] and the account books of John Foulis of Ravelston record trips to the theatre with his family,[8] demonstrating that this was an activity that at least people with wealth participated in during this period.

From 1679-1682, James, Duke of York, was resident in Edinburgh which contributed to an increasing occurrence of theatrical performances. His daughter, Princess Anne, who would later become Queen, is recorded as having performed in *Mithridates, King of Pontus* in 1681,[9] when acting was considered 'a fashionable pastime with the ladies of the Court.'[10] The existence of *The Assembly* as early as 1691 and the evidence of dramatic performance while the Duke of York lived in Edinburgh is indicative of the fact that even in a hostile environment, Scottish drama was in production, even if not always in an entirely public format. It also suggests that there was a cultural impact of the Duke of York's presence in Edinburgh. Before he became king, his residence in Scotland was an

[5] Brown, 'Public and Private Performance', p.26.
[6] Archibald Pitcairne, 'Preface', *The Phanaticks,* ed. John MacQueen (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 2012), pp.224-229. (MacQueen has retitled the play *The Phanaticks* for his edition).
[7] Murray Pittock, *Enlightenment in a Smart City: Edinburgh's Civic Development, 1660-1750* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2019), p.155. eBook.
[8] A.W. Cornelius Hallen (ed.), *The Account Book of Sir John Foulis of Ravelston, 1671-1707* (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1894). p.xxviii provides a summary of all Foulis's references to visiting theatres or viewing plays.
[9] Pittock, p.156; Brown, 'Public and Private performance', p.27.
[10] Robb Lawson, *The Story of the Scots Stage* (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1971), p.98.

opportunity to gain support from Scottish political heavyweights and as part of his efforts, he funded significant projects – including the Advocates Library in 1680 and the Royal College of Physicians (1681)[11] – which shows his willingness to engage in Edinburgh's cultural environment at the time. With regard to the arts, he was known to have encouraged the performances of masques and plays,[12] even bringing over a company of thirty actors from Ireland in 1681, who arrived with detailed and elaborate costumes.[13] Such a large number of individuals, arriving well prepared, suggests that there was a good appetite for theatrical entertainment while James was in Edinburgh, and while there was some form of court culture in Scotland, there was a fertile environment in which theatrical activity could occur. The importance of court culture to the development of the arts in seventeenth-century Scotland is underlined by the decrease in performances and activity that followed the Duke of York's return to England.

The political environment in Scotland was also a contributing factor to the lack of established theatrical events there. After the Duke of York had been crowned James II and VII of England and Scotland, there was a period of uncertainty and dissatisfaction, culminating in the Revolution of 1688-9, but in which Scotland played a complicated role. When William of Orange was invited to bring his army to usurp the King, the only Scottish involvement had been from individuals in exile or who had already lost favour with James,[14] meaning that those in leadership in Scotland had been left uninformed. Although in general 'the Scots had no gripes with the traditional monarchy in Scotland,'[15] and were loyal to James, there were undoubtedly issues with his Catholicism in a largely Protestant nation. A greater problem was his decision to pursue a more aggressive version of absolute royal authority,[16] and another was that after harnessing 10,000 Scottish men to fight against William,[17] James then abandoned Scotland and fled abroad. This left Scotland again ruled by an absentee monarch, a contentious issue since the Union of Crowns in 1603. Eventually, Scottish leaders decided that their loyalty was no longer due to the exiled King and considered William III as able to offer more for Scotland than James II had done.[18] Swift changes in monarchy and political allegiances, as well as the turbulent nature

[11] Alasdair Raffe, *Scotland in Revolution 1685-1690* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2018), p.13.
[12] Brown 'Public and Private Performance', p.27.
[13] Lawson, p.99.
[14] Robert Paul Barnes, 'Scotland and the Glorious Revolution of 1688', *Albion Quarterly*, 3:3 (1971), 116-127, 117.
[15] Tim Harris, 'The People, the Law, and the Constitution in Scotland and England: A Comparative Approach to the Glorious Revolution', *Journal of British Studies*, 38:1 (1999), 25-58, 30.
[16] Raffe, p.14
[17] Barnes, p.121.
[18] Barnes, p.125.

of the Revolution in Scotland[19] created a lack of court culture in Scotland, that combined with the obstacles outlined below, made it difficult for theatre production and performance to flourish.

As William III and Mary II came to the throne, an adjustment to a new monarchy could have contributed to quieter years for Scottish playwriting. While William and Mary did not oversee a great revival in playwriting and production in the same sense that Charles II had done, there was a change in fashion and taste inspired by the new era.[20] However, this took place largely in London, and the Scottish plays that do appear in this period were few and far between, tending to be those which Adrienne Scullion refers to as 'Anglocentric'[21] – written for a London stage and an English audience. There was little other option for a Scottish playwright – religious opposition and the absence of court culture restricted popular entertainment in Scotland.[22] Terence Tobin also notes this London focus from 'Scots playwrights [who] almost invariably tried to have their plays staged in London and settled for a Scottish opening as a last resort.'[23] This is true to the extent that London was the primary location for presenting the work of Scottish playwrights; however, a Scottish debut for plays was often an impossibility due to a lack of performances and venues. During this period, Tobin asserts that there are no distinctive differences between plays produced in England and Scotland, and therefore there is no need for the label of 'Scottish drama' – instead he suggests that drama from this period is 'British in form, and frequently British in feeling.'[24] Tobin's belief that these plays were 'British' might be more accurate in reference to plays from the mid-1700s and beyond. But, with regard to the seventeenth-century plays considered in this chapter, it is a debatable term, since Britain did not formally exist; and, even after the Union of 1707, the idea of Britishness was still a distant thought. It is well-established that Scottish plays from the late seventeenth century were targeted towards London audiences, however this does not make them less Scottish. David Crawford's *Courtship-a-la-mode* (1700) premiered at Drury Lane, while his second play, *Love at First Sight* premiered at Lincoln's Inn Fields in

[19] More detail and analysis on the complexity of Scotland's place in the Revolution can be found in Harris (1999), (2006), Raffe (2018), and Barnes (1971).
[20] María José Mora and Manuel J. Gómez-Lara, 'Revolution and the Moral Reform of the Stage: The Case of Durfey's *The Marriage-hater Matched* (1692)', in *Theatre and Culture in Early Modern England, 1650-1737: From Leviathan to the Licensing Act*, ed. Catie Gil (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), pp.145-156 (p.148).
[21] Scullion, 'Forget Scotland', p.105.
[22] Scullion, 'Forget Scotland', p.105.
[23] Terence Tobin, 'A List of Plays and Entertainments by Scottish Dramatists, 1660-1800', *Studies in Bibliography*, 23 (1970), 103-117, 103.
[24] Tobin, 'Plays and Entertainments', p.103.

1704,[25] following the trend set by Thomas St Serf in 1667 when *Tarugo's Wiles* appeared on the London stage. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, despite a clear London focus, the scholarship of Ian Brown[26] and Bill Findlay[27] has shown that by considering Scotland's theatrical culture, and not just established formal drama performances, these plays did have a distinctly Scottish flavour and shared this with performative theatrical activity that occurred north of the border.

As the eighteenth century progressed, there was a return to Scotland-based productions; Allan Ramsay's *The Gentle Shepherd*, a pastoral comedy, was performed in Taylors Hall in Edinburgh in 1729.[28] Ramsay was manager of the 'Edinburgh Company of Comedians at the Tailor's Hall' from 1733-35 and founded the theatre at Carrubber's Close, which opened in November 1736.[29] Evidence of Ramsay's engagement with Scottish theatrical tradition from previous centuries is found in his transcripts of parts of David Lindsay's *Interludes or Allegorical Plays*, which Ramsay worked on while he had possession of the Bannatyne Manuscript,[30] and his writing also includes masques, epilogues and prologues all for the stage. The existence of such work again signifies the respect and connection to older models of drama that informed the newer developments in theatrical activity in Scotland. From this point in history, 'the first great wave of Scottish playwriting'[31] began as more plays came from within Scotland or were produced by Scottish writers. Plays on the London stage from Scottish playwrights included David Mallet/Malloch's *Eurydice* (Drury Lane, 1731) and *Mustapha* (also Drury Lane, 1738). Tobias Smollett's *The Regicide; or, James the First of Scotland* (1749) was written with the London stage in mind but was rejected for performance by the theatres, leading Smollett to publish it himself;[32] John Murdoch's *The Double Disguise* (1738) was written for a private performance in the city. Though this is a relatively short list of plays, such examples nevertheless show that Scottish playwrights were an active part of many aspects of theatre production in London, not just the public performance of formal plays.

[25] Scullion, 'Forget Scotland', p.110.
[26] Brown, 'Lively Tradition and Creative Amnesia'.
[27] Findlay, 'Beginnings to 1700'.
[28] Tobin, 'Plays and Entertainments', p.113.
[29] Murray Pittock, 'Ramsay, Allan (1684-1758)' *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2010) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/23072> [accessed 1 August 2019].
[30] George Neilson, 'A Bundle of Ballads', *Essays and Studies*, 7 (1921), 108-142, 135. The manuscript in question is found in The Mitchell Library, Glasgow (MS 308889).
[31] Brown, *History as Theatrical Metaphor*, p.1.
[32] Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, *The Publication of Plays in London 1600-1800: Playwrights, Publishers and the Market* (London: The British Library, 2015), p.187.

Productions were also returning to Edinburgh, with plays such as William Lyon's *The Wrangling Lovers; or, Like Master Like Man* (Canongate, 1745) and Jane Marshall's *Sir Harry Gaylove, or, Comedy in Embryo* (1772) which helped to establish the professional theatre that had so long been missing in Scotland. Although Edinburgh remained the centre of Scottish drama production, by the end of the eighteenth century, theatres had opened in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Arbroath, and Dundee, while performances were produced in smaller areas around these larger cities and towns.[33] There were of course performances of English plays occurring in the Scottish theatres too.[34] By the end of the eighteenth century, playwrights like Joanna Ballie saw their plays published and performed on both sides of the border. This context provides two ways in which Trotter should be considered in the post-Revolution context in which she was writing. Firstly, all Scottish playwrights of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote for the London stage, with Scottish performances not always an option or priority. Writing in a London-centred medium therefore does not negate the Scottish sensibilities of Catharine Trotter's writing. This becomes increasingly important given the fact that Trotter's years of playwriting occurred in what was the quietest period of Scottish theatrical production before the growth in the early eighteenth century onwards, and this allows us to consider her as a figure who could bridge this gap between centuries when considered from a Scottish literary perspective.

Tragedy and English theatrical development

In order to explore Trotter fully as a 'between' figure of Scottish and English theatrical tradition, some more contextualising of Trotter in the London theatrical world is necessary to demonstrate her active role within an English playwriting context. Considering a snapshot of the part Trotter's work plays in the development of tragedy as a form of drama during the post-Revolution period does this effectively.

One of the challenges of considering tragedy within the late Restoration period and into the years following the 'Glorious' Revolution is that 'tragedy' did not conform to one easy definition. Christopher J. Wheatley observes that some plays termed as tragedies had happy endings, some heroes faced difficulty through no fault or failing of their own and that there was a large variety of character motivation and dialogue within plays, both of

[33] Tobin, 'Plays and Entertainments', p.103.
[34] Terence Tobin, 'Plays Presented in Scotland 1660-1700', *Restoration and Eighteenth Century Theatre Research,* 12:1 (1973), 51-53 & 59.

which also suffered at times from over-simplification.[35] This fluidity in form makes it difficult to use a straightforward definition of 'tragedy' in the Restoration period, as opposed to drama for earlier periods, where present day audiences might consider them 'Classical' through the presence of Aristotelian principles of events arousing an emotional response; or seeing a debt to Senecan drama in the structure, style or use of mythological characters. Even the heroic tragedy of the early Restoration period, where the focus was on grand, emotional, and epic events, influenced by French drama, was changing by the late seventeenth century.[36] Robert D. Hume argues there cannot be a straightforward 'Theory of Restoration Tragedy' due to the mixing and development of so many types in this period.[37] Instead, Hume terms plays from this period 'serious drama', and notes that there were some commonalities between them, the first and foremost being the aim to have the audience emotionally respond to what was occurring on stage. Forcing an emotional reaction from the audience and the ways in which the playwrights tried to do this is what Hume believes brings the variety to serious drama of the period. [38]

There is a shift in focus even from the early Restoration to the tragedy produced in the period post-Revolution, and tragedy after the Revolution also had less of an emphasis on Classical tragedy that had been present during early periods of the Restoration era. Pilar Cuder-Dominguez sees the period post-Revolution as one of transition for tragedy in the London theatres, outlining three developmental stages: popular heroic tragedies from 1660-1677, a period of transition from 1677-1707 which saw the introduction of affective, emotive tragedy and a move away from heroic tragedy, before the arrival of tragedy in which moral action was the focus from 1700-1760.[39] Trotter's drama falls between the second and third transitional stages outlined here, arguably making her plays a bridge between the two. Wheatley also recognises the transitional nature of the tragic form during this time and highlights two strands of tragedy that were developing differently as time went on, one which focused on Horatian criteria and moral instruction, while the other focused on Aristotelian principles and sought to draw out an emotional audience response.[40] This second strand, focusing on the idea of affective tragedy, is what developed in the post-Revolution era to become 'private tragedy.'[41] Generally, English tragedy until

[35] Christopher J. Wheatley, 'Tragedy', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre,* ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp.70-85 (p.71).
[36] Wheatley, p.70.
[37] Hume, *Development of Drama,* p.149.
[38] Hume, *Development of Drama,* p.175.
[39] Cuder-Dominguez, p.5.
[40] Wheatley, p.75.
[41] Wheatley, p.75.

this point had concerned itself with affairs of state – not only would the fatal flaw of the protagonist result in their own death and perhaps that of others, but often the tragic outcome of the play also had a national significance.[42] Susan J. Owen marks the 1670s as the beginning of a shift away from heroic plays.[43] John Dryden's *All for Love; or The World Well Lost* (1677) can be considered as an example of one of the later heroic tragedies, due to the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra being of national importance.

Catharine Trotter's *Agnes de Castro* (1695) takes a step in this direction by combining elements of the national and personal tragedy. Trotter succeeds in creating the perfect villain in the form of Elvira – a woman who revels in her jealousy and allows it to completely distort her character. Her brother, Alvaro, takes the role of a secondary villain, and is as complex as Elvira. His hatred of the Prince stems not only from the Prince's poor treatment of his sister, but also from the fact that the Prince loves Agnes, who Alvaro himself claims to love. Alvaro's language in reference to Agnes is contradictory. He talks of being helpless with love for her, despite her many refusals, while at other times his lust for her develops into hatred. He uses this mix of emotions as a means to try and justify his desire to rape her:

> ALVARO I cannot thoroughly wish she may consent,
> Revenge wou'd then remain unsatisfy'd,
> I love, and hate her, both with Violence,
> And both the Passions equally wou'd please,
> T'enjoy her were for love a happy Fate,
> But 'tis the Rape, wou'd satisfy my hate.
> (*AdC* 2.1, p.17)

While Agnes's life is in danger as a result of her conviction of murdering the Princess, she is also at risk from the hatred of Alvaro. The circumstances that inspire the evil actions of Elvira and Alvaro are personal; they are responding to situations that affect them directly, rather than having a larger significance. However, Trotter does not abandon the national elements of tragedy entirely. Although the King is the main authority figure within the play, he chooses to take his advice from Alvaro, and gives him more power than even the Prince. Because the King is misled by a corrupt influence, his sovereignty is tainted, and the quality of his leadership becomes questionable. Alvaro and Elvira are two of the most powerful characters in *Agnes* and are able to wreak havoc among the other characters, manipulating the truth to endanger people who get in their way. Because Alvaro and

[42] Wheatley, p.74.
[43] Susan J. Owen, *Perspectives on Restoration Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p.85.

Elvira's manipulation involves political figureheads, the consequences of their actions do have an effect upon the political well-being of Portugal.

The initial cause of tension between the primary characters of *Agnes* also has a national undercurrent because Agnes and the Princess are Spanish women in the Portuguese court. Elvira stresses her dislike of Agnes and the Princess because of their mutual, deep friendship, and the perceived lack of effort on the part of the Princess to adapt to Portuguese customs:

> ELVIRA She came to wear the Crown of Portugal,
> And then, shou'd have renounc'd all other Claims:
> She has now, new Friends, new Country, new Relations,
> And shou'd forget the Old; not be a Spaniard here.
> (*AdC* 1.1, p.1)

This dissatisfaction with a Spanish influence on the court, and on how things are done, is further emphasised by Elvira's assertion that 'The Spanish Fugitive, is Sovereign here' (*AdC* 3.1, p.18). Within the overall play, these hostile references to the Princess are a subtle indication that there is tension on a national level between Spain and Portugal, reflecting what would have been recent history when Trotter was writing.[44] This tension is furthered by the Prince's pleading with Agnes to think about how Portugal's reputation will be affected should she return to Spain after she has been falsely convicted of murdering the Princess:

> PRINCE Where e're you take your flight, it will proclaim
> The Strange Barbarity of Portugal;
> We shall become a Proverb to our Neighbours,
> T'express the most unhospitable Usage,
> But 'tis no matter, this ungrateful Court
> Is most worthy [of] your Consideration (*AdC* 5.1, p.43.)

Although the political undertones point to national significance of the tragedy, reflecting the 'national tragedy' tradition of Restoration tragedy, they are only ever hinted at. The emphasis remains on the private lives of the characters, with the immediate circumstances

[44] The war to establish Portugal's independence from Spain began in 1640, but Spain only officially recognised the republic of Portugal in 1668. While these events would not be in living memory for Trotter, the significance of a frosty relationship between neighbouring countries in recent history is marked. The choice of the Ines de Castro story is also important in this context as it reflects a period of Portuguese history before the union of Spain and Portugal. The parallels between Spanish-Portuguese relations and the approaching 1707 Anglo-Scottish Union are striking. For further information, see 'Portugal', in *Britannica Academic*, Encyclopaedia Britannica (August 2019) <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/levels/collegiate/article/Portugal/105994> and 'Ines de Castro', also in *Britannica Academic* (July 1998) <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/levels/collegiate/article/In%C3%AAs-de-Castro/20737>.

of the tragic events affecting their personal lives. Relationships are ultimately broken through jealousy and a desire for revenge, and the characters' main concerns are for their individual circumstances. Agnes's own death is less of a politically significant event; instead, the tragedy is found in the unfair death of a kind and virtuous character who has just been exonerated of false accusations and was preparing for a fresh start.

This transitionary period for tragedy is also evident through the plays of Mary Pix. Her historical play, *Queen Catharine; or the Ruines of Love*, which was performed in 1698, shares more features of national tragedy, as the outcome of the plot holds political ramifications for the characters. The epilogue for this play was written by Trotter, making it certain that she was familiar with it. Queen Catharine is at war with King Edward IV. Because she rejected the King's declaration of love when they were young, Edward intends to have revenge and ultimately achieves this by murdering her lover, Owen Tudor. Edward's actions also result in the death of Catharine's ward, Isabella, making the tragedy personal for Queen Catharine. Yet on a national scale there are clear consequences. After Edward's significant victory, Catharine's defeatist attitude is evidenced by her reaction to seeing her children:

> CATHARINE Now I do remember, Tudor's last words, his last
> desire that I shou'd live for them, raise 'em
> From Earth, their tender knees will ake; no,
> Let 'em kneel on, they are born slaves, and
> Must, perhaps, be much longer compell'd to
> Do their duty.[45]

Although Owen Tudor wanted her to look after the well-being of her children and raise them honourably, Catharine's language suggests that she does not have the motivation to do so. Since she has been defeated by Edward, she recognises that her children are technically now under his power, which makes them as good as slaves. The sight of her children does not inspire her to continue the battle for their sake, she leaves for safety, but as a defeated Queen. The opportunity for Edward to take the throne has national and political significance.

Pix's first play, *Ibrahim, the Thirteenth Emperor of the Turks* (1696) also has elements of national and personal tragedy. The play accentuates the dictatorship of Ibrahim, who lives without regard for the usual customs and rules of his society, to the point that he attempts to seduce the Mufti's daughter, Morena, who is betrothed to his

[45] Mary Pix, *Queen Catharine; or, The Ruines of Love* 5.1, (London: William Turner, 1698), p.51, in Steeves Vol.1.

General, Amurat. After refusing Ibrahim, Morena is captured by him and raped. The horrifying ordeal leaves Morena traumatised to the point of believing that she is no longer an appropriate wife for Amurat. Poetic justice is brought at the close of the play through the death of Ibrahim at the hands of Amurat's loyal soldiers; however, Morena poisons herself in despair before realising that Amurat had still intended to marry her. Mary Pix combines these two types of tragedy in *Queen Catharine* and *Ibrahim* by bringing personal tragedy into the lives of politically significant figures, with national consequences. These plays highlight the national tragedy more obviously than *Agnes*, which subtly implies national elements of the tragic outcomes of the personal circumstances of the characters. The aspects of both national and personal tragedy emphasise the transitional period that tragedy was undergoing at this time, and the presence of these elements in Trotter's *Agnes* shows that her own writing was being influenced by these changes.

During a period when style and form are changing, there are naturally elements of continuity alongside vehicles of change. William Congreve's *The Mourning Bride* (1697), contemporary to Trotter, contains more elements of the heroic tragedy than the personal, private tragedy that was gaining hold. Congreve's themes – love and revenge – are inspired by more than just personal and domestic events. King Manuel of Granada's anger at discovering his daughter Almeria's secret marriage to Alphonso is because he is the son of Manuel's sworn enemy, the King of Valencia. His desire to get revenge leads him to order the execution of Alphonso and to disguise himself as Alphonso in order to mock Almeria when she discovers that her father is posing as her lover. The play concludes with the death of Manuel, who is killed by those who think he is actually Alphonso, while the real Alphonso helps to overthrow the government and be reunited with Almeria. The play is complex – further tragic events include the death of Manuel's captive prisoner, Zara, who has been in love with Alphonso, but allowed Manuel to believe she is in love with him in an attempt to gain freedom for her and Alphonso. Ultimately, she commits suicide when she believes the body of Manuel to be that of Alphonso. Although these two deaths are shocking within the play, there is a happy ending through the restoration of Almeria and Alphonso to one another, while the evil of King Manuel is rewarded with poetic justice in his death. Although the play's focus is on love, marriage, and revenge, they are expressed with relevance to larger, national themes and the play is largely melodramatic; the tragic events occur in an almost domino effect, with each act of revenge triggering another. The high-born nature and national significance of the characters, the increasingly tragic events and the presence of poetic justice, all show Congreve paying tribute to the heroic and

classical tragedy that had been prevalent in the earlier seventeenth century and in previous theatre traditions, including Elizabethan tragedies.

Meanwhile, Trotter's second play, *Fatal Friendship* (1698), takes the development of private tragedy further. The characters of this play are of no national significance, and the tragedy occurs entirely in the domestic sphere. The most obvious of these is that none of the events of the play would have occurred without the expectations placed upon the characters of Felicia and Lamira in relation to their marriages by their families, and to an extent, their society. Felicia is expected by her brother, Bellgard, to marry for financial security, not love, and Lamira's first marriage was one of convenience to a rich, older man, leaving her widowed at a young age. Ironically, although he insists his sister's marriage should be controlled by him, Bellgard believes that for Lamira, her second choice in marriage should not be so financially motivated, because if she keeps her marriage secret, she will be able to maintain her husband's fortune:

> BELLGARD You've reason now, delivered from the tyrant
> Your parents forced upon your tender years
> To let your heart direct your second choice.
> (*FF* 1.2, p.6)

In the first instance, neither woman is given permission to make her own choice about marriage. Lamira only makes a choice with regard to her second marriage after Bellgard encourages her to ignore her initial reluctance towards remarriage, while Felicia chooses to marry Gramont in secret to avoid the disapproval she would be met with from her brother, as well as the withdrawal of his financial support. Lamira's persuasion of Gramont to marry her, and to which he agrees, despite being married in secret to Felicia already, is a sure guarantee of disaster. The overarching message of the play and its conclusion is that 'the social system of marriage, where affection is secondary to advantage, is the underlying cause of the tragedy.'[46] The familial pressure on Gramont and Felicia not to marry forces them into doing so in secret, and had their marriage been public, Gramont would not have been pressured into marrying Lamira. The responsibility for two secret marriages to different women, however, lies solely with Gramont; motivated by his desire to fix his mistakes regarding his friend, Castalio, it is his behaviour that brings about the tragic conclusion of the play. Despite these social aspects of the tragedy, what defines the play as

[46] Wheatley, p.79.

private tragedy is that the outcomes affect the individuals alone, rather than the whole of society.[47]

Although *Fatal Friendship* can be considered a prime example of private tragedy of the time, it does not reject other recognisable elements of tragedy, such as the flawed tragic hero and unity of place found in the classical forms, or the moral lessons of heroic tragedy. If Gramont is considered the protagonist of the play, he takes the form of the traditional Aristotelian tragic hero, whose fatal flaw affects his judgement. Gramont's desire to resolve every problem he finds himself facing is what leads to the tragic end of *Fatal Friendship* – his own death and the suffering of his wife. Castalio dies with his honour restored, but Gramont dies with the knowledge that his rash actions have caused these events. Had he waited longer before marrying Lamira, which was ultimately an act to save Castalio and his own infant son, he would have received his pardon in due course, returned to working for the army and to Felicia as his wife, ending their financial woes. Canfield reads the message of the play as being a warning to audience members to

> keep strict, neostoical resolve in the face of financial ruin, for […] something will turn up […] Gramont and Felicia represent the 'necessity' (read *social desideratum*) for those without money and power – the lower classes and the lower gender – to endure.[48]

Canfield's interpretation sees Felicia and Gramont as an example to the audience of how not to behave. Their relationship, while presented as the preferred one due to their love for one another, is also unsustainable without the financial security of his income. There is the indication that they should be content with their lot and wait for their circumstances to change, as opposed to Gramont's attempts to take matters into his own hands. This emphasises the preservation of social order that is an important theme in Restoration drama,[49] and implies that this was still a relevant aspect of plays post-Revolution. Gramont's death and the recognition of Felicia as Gramont's wife is a socially acceptable solution and returns things to their natural order.

While both Felicia and Lamira are affected by Gramont's actions, after his death, Felicia is well provided for as his father recognises her officially as his daughter-in-law:

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[47] Wheatley, p.79.
[48] J. Douglas Canfield, *Heroes and States: On the Ideology of Restoration Tragedy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), p.171.
[49] J. Douglas Canfield, *Tricksters and Estates: On the Ideology of Restoration Comedy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

ROQUELAURE [To Gramont] I'll take [your son] to my care.
I've been to blame in using thee so harshly;
But all that's thine shall find my kindness doubled;
Felicia's now my Daughter, as thy Wife,
She shall be dearest to me.

GRAMONT Then all my cares are ended. Be happy my Felicia,
If thou'dst have thy Husband's spirit rest.
(*FF* 5.1, p.56)

Roquelaure's recognition of Felicia ensures financial provision for her and her son, but it also legitimises her marriage to Gramont, giving her social standing as Gramont's widow. While it would be hard to argue that this is incorrect in legal or moral terms, it does leave Lamira literally un-married twice – once through death and the second time through Gramont's deception – neither of which were her fault. Felicia arguably holds some responsibility for the outcome of the play due to her unwavering loyalty to Gramont and her willingness to marry him despite the concerns of their families. Her determination to be a faithful wife to Gramont is unwavering, and even in a moment when she wonders whether to forgive him for what he has done to her, she soon realises that it is what she wants to do.

FELICIA Is it a fault to love him? If it be,
In punishing impute his crime to me.
I'll pay for both a double penalty,
However cruel Heaven intends his share
Beyond what life, all, all that love can bear.
(*FF* 4.1, p.35)

When Lamira offers Felicia financial security in return for neither woman seeing Gramont again, Felicia decides that her loyalty to her husband is of more importance to her:

FELICIA The marriage vows are not conditional,
The tie's as strong. My duty still the same,
Howe'er he fail in his.
[…]
Yes, madam, I must share my husband's fate,
However wretched.
(*FF* 5.1, p.42)

Felicia's choice of Gramont over Lamira is both a gesture of love and forgiveness towards Gramont and breaks any final connection Lamira has with her own society, as her withdrawal to a convent completely isolates her, while Felicia is welcomed back into society despite blatantly rejecting the standards it held through her choice to marry Gramont. This is in direct contrast to Lamira – who adhered to society's expectations in

allowing her parents to arrange her marriage for financial security. Lamira personifies the shift in focus to personal tragedy more than any other character in the play, as the tragic events profoundly affect her own private life, as opposed to having an impact on society. In this sense, Trotter's play can be considered as representative of 'the completed movement to private tragedy' that was evident on the post-Revolution stage.[50] This places Trotter as a young writer playing an active part in the vibrant theatrical world around her and exploring and developing the changing forms of drama alongside her fellow authors.

Trotter returned to national tragedy however, by adopting political tragedy in *The Revolution of Sweden*. Canfield defines as a key feature of political tragedy a plot spine in which 'the ambitious statesman is finally sent to execution, but it is the agonizing death of the innocent general that the audience witnesses as the sacrifice to the system.'[51] The play centres on the Swedish revolution against the rule of Denmark, and all of the central characters are actively involved in the revolution. The tragedy is instigated when Arwide, general to Gustavus, allows his wife Constantia's capture by the Danes to cloud his judgement. When he abandons Gustavus and the other rebels to try and make a deal for Constantia's freedom, he is misled into thinking he is making a deal with the Danes that will actually be better for the Swedish cause. Constantia believes that Arwide has committed treason, and when she is released, reveals this to Gustavus. In the meantime, their friend Christiana, despite being married to Beron, who tried to betray Gustavus, has joined the rebel cause. She poses as Fredage, a young page boy, in Beron's camp and gathers key information, including that of Arwide's innocence. In this, Trotter's most political play, the national interest is never really at risk, with Gustavus, Constantia and a fellow member of the rebellion, Christina, all united around the national cause. The dramatic tension of this tragedy is not the question of whether evil will triumph over good, but whether or not Arwide, who is ultimately honourable and has been misled, will be branded a traitor or not. This is the root of the plot, and ultimately, Christina is the innocent victim, dying in her attempt to clear Arwide's name. While posing as Fredage, she revives from her fatal injury just long enough to reveal the truth that her husband, Beron, had attempted to frame Arwide:

GUSTAVUS Again Christina is my Life's Preserver!
This Ladies prov'd Affection to her Country,
Leaves no room to doubt what she asserts.

[50] Wheatley, p.79.
[51] Canfield, *Heroes and Estates*, p.54.

1ST SENATOR Count Arwide is acquitted —For that Villain [Beron]
A speedy Death's too mild a Punishment;
Secure him till our Justice have prepar'd
Tortures most exquisite, a Doom that fits his Crimes.

GUSTAVUS Again my Arwide is retriev'd from Death
To Honour, and his Friend, to these fond Arms.

ARWIDE This is indeed to Live, restor'd to Fame,
And to my King's Affection. How shall I pay
My Gratitude to Generous Christina?

GUSTAVUS What care can be sufficient of her Life,
To whom we owe our all? — Too long we have defer'd
it.

CHRISTINA T'wou'd be vain, I feel th'Assaults of Death.
The Providence tha governs all Events
Of Human Actions, is too good to let
A Wretch appointed to so sad a Part,
Survive th'unhappy Justice: the great important Ends
Are serv'd, for which my Miseries were Destin'd;
And not 'tis giv'n me to Rest.
(*Revolution* 5.1, p.70)

Poetic justice comes in the form of Arwide's name cleared and punishment for Christina's husband Beron, who not only betrayed the nation, but Arwide too. The tragedy of the play comes to the fore as the innocent Christina pays for her loyalty to the Swedish cause with her life, despite the fact that Arwide and Beron whose disloyalty cause the chain of events.. Even in this political tragedy, while the cause is safe, the death of Christina is more of a personal one for her friends and is similar to the private tragedy of Trotter's other plays. In this way, Trotter shows her plays moving in the common trajectory of theatre at the time, away from the Classical tragedy of flawed heroes and national consequences, and towards the emotional and personal aspects of tragedy within the private domestic sphere, but also the political environment.

Revolution is also a good example of the way in which Trotter's work could deviate from that of her contemporaries. Karen Overbye notes that Trotter, alongside Pix and Manley, gave the female characters of her tragedies more complex motivations for their behaviour other than simply love for a male character, and this was in direct contrast to their male counterparts.[52] This can be seen in Congreve's letter to Trotter,[53] where he

[52] Karen Overbye, 'From "Hell in the shape of Heav'n" to the "Spotless Soul": Female characters in Six Tragedies of the 1695-1696 London Season', *Restoration Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, 17:2 (1993), 104-110, 110.
[53] See p.60 for extract from the letter.

suggests that she have Christina confess a degree of love for Gustavus at the end of the play. Significantly, Trotter does not include this in her final version, and Christina's motivation for helping Gustavus remains solely that she is loyal to the Swedish cause. But Trotter's writing foregrounds a further aspect of rational ethics in comparison to her female colleagues. While Pix actually allows Morena to be raped in *Ibrahim*, Trotter's Agnes escapes this fate, and therefore there is no traumatic depiction of the rape or the aftermath on stage. Her female characters are often praised for their propriety, once more indicating that Trotter's rational principles were rooted within her work.

Trotter's engagement with tragedy and the place of her plays within the development of the form during the post-Revolution era in London serves to contextualise her as a writer who was aware of the theatrical environment around her and whose own writing was influenced by changing trends. In the preface to *Revolution*, she addresses some criticism of her depiction of events:

> Some who had read the History [of the Swedish revolution], expected to find all the remarkable Passages of it in the Play, and particularly hop'd to see Gustavus labouring in the mines, not knowing, or not considering the Rules of the Drama, that Tragedy is confin'd to represent only such incidents as immediately conduce to the effecting the one great Action it proposes, all which must be suppos'd to happen in a small space of Time. (*Revolution,* p.A4)

Here Trotter refers to the Aristotelian rule of tragedy of unity in time and place, where all of the action must be consistent with the time period in which the action occurs, preferably to the point where the events could realistically occur over the space of the play's running time. As a result, Trotter had to choose key events of the actual Revolution, and by her own admission, take creative licence. This displays an understanding of the genre, rules, and expectations she adhered to, underpinning her tragedies as in line with the traditions of the genre, as well as its development. Trotter's firm place within the English theatrical environment is crucial to recognise when presenting her as a bridge between English and Scottish literary traditions of the time, because she has to be relevant to both. Having further situated her within an English context, the Scottish dimensions of her work provide explanation for the ways in which she fills the gap between the traditions.

Political theatre

The political aspects of Trotter's plays are one way in which the Scottish dimensions of her writing come to the fore. Trotter does not seem to have been an overtly political writer; nor, as far as can be ascertained from her personal correspondence, was she particularly

vocal about her political leanings in her private life, despite living through two of British history's most significant political events - the Revolution of 1688-9 and the 1707 Act of Union – as well as the later Jacobite Rebellions in 1715 and 1745. However, scholars[54] paying close attention to her work have traced a political undercurrent in her first three plays, which eventually comes to the fore in her final two, *The Unhappy Penitent* (1701) and *The Revolution of Sweden* (1706). While there is no political essay, poem, or play in which Trotter clearly identifies her exact political ideology, evaluating her writing as well as her friendships and social circles provides enough evidence to indicate her Whig leanings.[55]

During Trotter's lifetime, the term 'Whig' incorporated those who were against absolute monarchy and who were also against the accession of James VII and II to the throne because of his Roman Catholicism.[56] Trotter was closely associated with a number of Whig figures whom Anne Kelley terms 'the Marlborough circle',[57] those who were connected to John and Sarah Churchill, Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. All of her plays are dedicated to key Whigs within this circle, including close relatives of the Marlboroughs. *Agnes de Castro* is dedicated to Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex, Lord Chamberlain of the King's Household, who was himself a mentor to Charles Montagu, the later Earl of Halifax,[58] a key member of the Whig Junto,[59] and the recipient of the dedication of *The Unhappy Penitent.* Trotter's dear friend, Lady Sarah Piers, received the dedication to *Love at a Loss* and given that her husband was an army officer alongside the Duke of Marlborough, and that one of her poems, 'George for Britain' (1714), warns of the dangers of republicanism, it can safely be assumed that Piers was a royalist,[60] and maybe even of a similar political leaning to Trotter. Princess Anne is the dedicatee of *Fatal Friendship,* while *The Revolution of Sweden* is dedicated to the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, Lady Harriet Godolphin. The significance of the Duchess of Marlborough as a confidante to Princess Anne, even after

[54] See Merrens (1996), King (2010), Wilson (2012) and Green (2015).
[55] Mihoko Suzuki 'Recognizing Women's Dramas as Political Writing: The Plays of 1701 by Wiseman, Pix and Trotter,' *Women's Writing,* 18:4 (2011), 547-564.
[56] Dan Bogart, 'Political Party Representation and Electoral Politics in England and Wales, 1690-1747,' *Social Science History*, 40:2 (2016), 271-303, 271.
[57] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.21.
[58] Harold Love, 'Sackville, Charles sixth earl of Dorset and first Earl of Middlesex (1643-1706)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2008) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/24442> [accessed 4th February 2020].
[59] Stuart Handley, 'Whig Junto (act. c.1694-c.1716)' *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2005) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/92792> [accessed 4th February 2020].
[60] Holly Faith Nelson, 'Piers [*née* Roydon], Sarah, Lady Piers (d.1719)' *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

the latter became Queen, is well documented.[61] Trotter's decision to dedicate *Fatal Friendship* to Princess Anne indicates a hope to curry favour with the Princess, and perhaps an expectation that the Duchess would encourage Anne to look favourably upon the young playwright.

Trotter's links with the Marlboroughs are noted to have come about through her brother-in-law, a Dr Inglis,[62] who was in Marlborough's service,[63] but they would also have been furthered by the Trotter family's longstanding friendship with Gilbert Burnet, the Bishop of Salisbury, who spent time in the royal courts alongside the Marlboroughs, Godolphins and Montagus.[64] As a young man, Burnet's relationship with the Duke of Lauderdale (a relative of Trotter's) gave him a prominent role in religious matters in Scotland. His close ties with William III and Mary II gave him political significance in England, while his time as a statesman in Europe gave his writing a reputation that reached beyond Britain.[65] These were politically significant figures with whom Trotter had relationships. There was an even more personal element to Trotter's connection to the Marlboroughs; when Trotter's mother, Sarah, lost her widow's pension after the death of Charles II,

> Queen Anne, upon her accession to the throne, granted [Sarah Trotter] an annual pension of twenty pounds, which was constantly paid by the duchess of Marlborough into the hands of Dr. Burnet, bishop of Salisbury, till the removal of her grace from court; when upon the widow's renewing her application, her majesty continued it as before.[66]

Since the Duchess and Bishop Burnet were personally responsible for making sure the money was received by Sarah Trotter, they would have been known to the young Catharine, and would have been aware of her, if not also acquainted with her. By the time Anne came to the throne in 1702, Catharine Trotter had brought four of her plays to the stage, and through these personal links, it is not unlikely that she would have come to the attention of the Queen. Trotter went on to write two poems for the Duke of Marlborough:

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[61] James Falkner, 'Churchill [*née* Jenyns], Sarah, duchess of Marlborough (1660-1744)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2008) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/5405> [accessed 4 February 2020].
[62] Very little information is known about Dr Inglis, husband of Trotter's sister. Trotter refers to 'my brother Inglis' in a letter to Thomas Burnet, 2 February 1703/4, *Works*, Vol.2 p.165, while Birch notes that he was 'physician general to the army' in his biography of Trotter, stating that one of his two sons went on to become a Vicar in Lewisham, while the other was chaplain to Governor Trelawny in Jamaica. See *Works*, Vol.1, p.iv.
[63] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.21.
[64] Martin Greig, 'Burnet, Gilbert (1643-1715)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2013) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/4061> [accessed 4 February 2020].
[65] Greig, *ODNB.*
[66] *Works*, Vol.1, p.iv.

‘On his Grace the Duke of Marlborough’s return from his expedition into Germany, after the battle of Blenheim, 1704’ and ‘On his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, after his victory at Ramellies, 1706.’ Both praise the Duke’s abilities in battle and his credit to Britain and to Queen Anne, who is also praised in the poems.

As she established her rule, Anne did not appreciate the Bishop of Salisbury’s theological views on ecclesiastical issues, and after the death of William III in 1702, the ‘staunchly high church Queen Anne publicly displayed her abhorrence for Burnet by ejecting him from his lodgings at St James’s Palace’.[67] By 1710, the Marlboroughs’ relationship with the Queen had also soured,[68] leading to a self-imposed political exile for the couple in Europe, where Marlborough began building up favour with the Hanover regime.[69] Trotter seems to have associated with the Marlboroughs and their inner circle while they were still politically significant and powerful. Had she come into her own as a playwright any later, her connections with a less powerful Marlborough circle might have served to disadvantage her progress. The fall from grace of the Marlboroughs and Gilbert Burnet’s removal from royal service occurred in the years following Trotter’s marriage to Patrick Cockburn in 1708, coinciding with her break from writing. Although the full explanation for Trotter’s hiatus will never likely be known, it is worth considering that raising her family was not the only reason she did not bring forward any plays during this period. Close associations with the exiled Marlboroughs and evicted Burnet might have prevented her from producing plays, which relied heavily on the goodwill and generous patronage of playgoers and socially or politically significant figures. As a member of the Marlborough Circle, writing for publication and performance in that fragile political climate might have been too great a risk for Trotter if she wished to retain the favour of the monarch.

In aligning herself with such obvious Whig figures, Trotter did not necessarily need to publicly declare her political views; her dedicatees were all visibly loyal to William III, Mary II and Anne rather than to James VII and II at the time she was writing. Although Marlborough was initially loyal to James while he was Duke of York, his eventual switch of allegiance to the Protestant William of Orange implies that the brand of royalism he and those close to him practiced was politically motivated. This indicates that royalism, perhaps even Trotter’s own, was based on what made rational, political sense at the time,

[67] Greig, *ODNB*.
[68] John B. Hattendorf, ‘Churchill, John, first duke of Marlborough (1650-1722)’, *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2014) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/5401> [accessed 3 February 2020].
[69] Edward Gregg, ‘Marlborough in Exile, 1712-1714’, *The Historical Journal*, 15:4 (1972), 593-618.

as opposed to blind loyalty to a single monarch. In her dedication of *The Revolution of Sweden* to Lady Godolphin, Trotter praises the Marlboroughs, talking of 'the Honour [that] was publickly done me by the Dutchess of Marlborough, and all her Beauteous Family' (*Revolution*, p.A2), inferring that these connections were accepted by both sides. Such a commitment to these weighty political figures indicates Trotter's own political loyalties. Anne Kelley notes that such links prove the existence of support and patronage networks within the literary world and the evidence of a political element within these. Patronising good writers was a politically shrewd move for figures who needed public endorsement, and therefore such links had benefit to both writers and patrons.[70] In addition, the Whigs were believers in contractual government, and against absolute monarchy – both of which are prominent features of John Locke's philosophy. Locke's strong advocacy for contractual government, where a free and equal society consensually gives some freedoms to a central power in order to protect the general freedom of society as a whole, stemmed from his belief that all men were equal and therefore it did not make sense to subject to a divinely appointed, absolute monarch.[71] Locke's main political ideas of contractual government were outlined in his *Two Treatises of Government* which he wrote during the Exclusion Crisis of the 1680s.[72] The *Treatises* argue the need for structured government, and Hampsher-Monk notes that at this point in his writing, Locke was not concerned about what type of government was in charge, whether that be monarchy, democracy or something else. Instead, the crucial element was that the degree to which such government had over individuals, and the possibility of its removal.[73]

While Locke did not advocate for absolute monarchy, he had no problem with accepting it as a legitimate form of government within restrictions. Locke's main concern was that if the central authority (government) did not keep their part of the contract, abused its power, and exploited the freedoms of the people, this warranted a rebellion and the removal of that authority.[74] These sorts of measures are seen in Trotter's *Revolution of Sweden* where the uprising of Swedish rebels against the occupying Denmark is in response to the injustices inflicted on them. As already noted, in some of her other plays, the importance of the contract is also emphasised, particularly in *The Unhappy Penitent* in

[70] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.89.
[71] Alex Tuckness, 'Locke's Political Philosophy', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition) <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/locke-political/> [accessed 16 April 2020].
[72] Iain Hampsher-Monk, *A History of Modern Political Thought: Major Political Thinkers from Hobbes to Marx* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p.72.
[73] Hampsher-Monk, p.103.
[74] Tuckness, 'Locke's Political Philosophy'.

the characters of Ann and Margarite. These Lockean principles found within Trotter's work indicate that she was aware of his work and subscribed to his ideals, and her *Defence of Locke* published in 1702 also establishes that she was familiar and in agreement with his principles in this too, not just his political thought.

Trotter's political stance links her to Scotland in some ways too. Her well-documented friendship with the Burnets, an eminent Scottish family, links her both to the nation and to the Marlboroughs. The Marlboroughs also spent significant portions of their time in Scotland while the Duke was an advisor and key member of the Scottish household of the Duke of York.[75] Although it is unknown whether Trotter spent any time in Scotland with her family or friends before she moved there with her husband in 1726, these associations do indicate that her Scottish connections were not lost in her early life. There was certainly some attempt to link Trotter to Scotland on Thomas Burnet's part. Thomas Burnet of Kemnay was a cousin of Gilbert Burnet and maintained a friendly correspondence with Trotter until shortly after her marriage. As noted in the introduction, Burnet's letters to Trotter reveal that Sophia Charlotte of Prussia, great-granddaughter of James VI of Scotland, pronounced Trotter 'the new Scots Sappho',[76] indicating that Burnet had presented her as a Scottish writer. This is significant in showing that there were contemporary references to Trotter as having Scottish ties, and that it was considered a mark of her identity in a cultural context. Sophia Charlotte's relationship to the British Royal family (her mother, Sophia of Hanover, was the daughter of James VI and I and was heir presumptive of Anne before she died in 1698)[77], meant that she held some political significance herself, and her awareness of Trotter would certainly have been seen as beneficial to the young writer.

Taking Trotter's political context into consideration when reading her plays gives them more of a political edge than may initially appear, especially in the earliest three plays, which on first reading seem to be distant from the political climate. In *Agnes de Castro*, neighbouring Spain and Portugal are politically affiliated through the marriage of the Spanish Princess Constantia and the Portuguese Prince.[78] It cannot go unnoticed that the 1695 performance of this play took place just under a decade after the 'Glorious' Revolution and just over a decade before the Act of Union in 1707. The period in which

[75] Hattendorf, *ODNB.*
[76] *Works*, Vol.1, p.xxv.
[77] Jeremy Black, 'Sophia, princess palatine of the Rhine (1630-1714)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/5401> [accessed 21st September 2022].
[78] See Chapter 2 for further discussion of this.

Agnes premiered was undoubtedly a time of friction between the two nations of Scotland and England as political, theological, and royal allegiances differed on either side of the border.[79] Trotter's play does not move beyond anything more than suggesting a frosty relationship between two neighbouring nations in her play, and 'perhaps at this time – just before and after the 1707 Treaty of the Union as the two branches of the Stuarts were still claiming the British throne – political caution seemed advisable.'[80] The realities of a potential Union were likely discussed in many circles across society at the time.

The political nature of *Fatal Friendship* is not immediately evident, but Trotter's decision to dedicate it to Princess Anne means the play takes on a more political tone. The play 'celebrate[s] female characters who embody sexual and political prowess'[81] and is among those plays written by women who began to see Princess Anne as embodying the ideal female monarch, despite the fact she had yet to take the throne.[82] *Fatal Friendship* shows Lamira and Felicia using their own agency with varying degrees of success. However, when placed in its political context, Lamira and Felicia can be read as women who take control of their own circumstances: capable of reason, decision-making, and in Lamira's case, leadership. Lamira attempts to shape events by offering Felicia a solution to their mutual problem. Felicia is given the agency to choose and ultimately reject Lamira's offer. *Fatal Friendship* indicates the readiness of female writers like Trotter to accept a female monarch and paved the way for plays like *The Revolution of Sweden* that would praise female leadership after Anne was crowned.[83]

When *Love at a Loss* was produced in 1700, the play 'expresse[d] a widespread anxiety about the changing nature of oaths, and [gave] valuable insight into what such abstract political upheavals mean[t] for everyday men and women.'[84] Issues of the day included the rights of women to be considered as legal individuals in England,[85] and the link between political power and gender.[86] Shifting royal allegiances occurred as each monarch came to the throne and significantly contrasted with their predecessors.[87] In

[79] Eveline Cruikshanks, *The Glorious Revolution* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p.50.
[80] Brown, *History as Theatrical Metaphor*, pp.3-4.
[81] Rebecca Merrens, 'Unmanned with Thy Words: Regendering Tragedy in Manley and Trotter' in *Broken Boundaries: Women and Feminism in Restoration Drama*, ed. Katherine M. Quinsey (Lexington KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), pp.31-53 (p.41).
[82] Suzuki, p.547.
[83] Suzuki, p.560.
[84] King, 'past Jesting', pp.127-128.
[85] King, 'past Jesting', p.128
[86] Carol Barash, '"The Native Liberty…of the Subject": Configurations of gender and authority in the words of Mary Chudleigh, Sarah Fyge Egerton, and Mary Astell', in *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740*, ed. Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (Batsford: London, 1992), p.58.
[87] King 'past Jesting', p.133.

addition, theological differences creating both a political and ecclesiastical issue thanks to non-juring clergy (including Trotter's husband Patrick) refusing to swear the oath of abjuration,[88] would all have had an impact on the day to day lives of those living in this period, affected who and how they married, who took charge of church congregations and who local authorities were loyal to. This is reflected in the general restlessness of the characters within *Love at a Loss,* which is particularly evident in Lesbia's initial pursuit of Beaumine as a means to seek revenge upon Grandfoy; Beaumine and Lesbia's own desire to actually avoid marriage, and Miranda's flirtatious behaviour towards Beaumine despite the torture it gives Constant. In all three circumstances, the characters reveal themselves as unsettled in their circumstances, which can be read as still being unresolved by the close of the play.[89] Laura Linker points out that this unsettledness can be problematic when other readings consider the conclusion of *Love at a Loss* as a happy result of women pulling together to create a moral community.[90] These readings do not necessarily have to sit in opposition to one another. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, Trotter often emphasises ethical grey areas into which her characters do not entirely fit. *Love at a Loss* can therefore display women challenging one another in terms of moral virtue, while also creating a conclusion that is not entirely certain in terms of its moral outcome. This itself adds to the unsettledness and can reflect the political atmosphere as the uncertainty of the characters' conclusions might also indicate the uncertainty felt by society at the time.[91]

Trotter's first three plays indicate the changing nature of the political landscape in Britain as William III's reign gave way to Queen Anne's. Such change naturally brought political implications; those favoured by one monarch were not guaranteed the same privileges under a new one. On the other hand, those loyal to Anne in the years preceding 1702 would have hoped to benefit when she came to the throne. In Trotter's case, the potential improvement of the Marlboroughs' circumstances that could be gained by their close relationship with Anne must have been in Trotter's mind. There is a cautious optimism present at the conclusion of each of Trotter's first three plays, despite *Agnes de Castro* and *Fatal Friendship* being tragedies. The Prince, although mourning the loss of Agnes, is encouraged by the King at the close of *Agnes* to grieve and then move forward, indicating that the call of duty should be bigger than his sorrow, which will eventually fade.[92] In *Fatal Friendship*, Felicia's restoration to her father-in-law's household ensures

[88] King, 'past Jesting', p.134.
[89] Linker, p.584.
[90] Linker, p.584. See Backscheider (1995) and King (2010) for these alternative readings.
[91] Karin Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion and the Anglo-Scottish Union* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2007).
[92] See Chapter 3.

her social and financial stability and legitimises her son as Gramont's, which is more hopeful than the other tragic outcomes for Lamira and Gramont. And despite the potential uncertainty of the permanence of the marriages in *Love at a Loss*, the play does close by presenting the three newlywed couples promising to keep their marriage vows. The glimmers of hope in these plays are reflective of the optimism Trotter might have felt at the good fortune of those she sought to associate herself with.

By the time Anne became queen in 1702, Trotter was an established playwright with a good reputation and a writing community around her. This is perhaps one of the reasons that *The Unhappy Penitent* (1701) and *The Revolution of Sweden* (1706) were more explicitly political than her previous plays. The approaching 1707 Act of Union could also be a reason for the increased political nature of Trotter's writing, as the political significance of this entered the public discourse. In these two plays the behaviour and expectations of the characters regarding oaths and promises suggests that Trotter agreed with the principles of what is now considered Social Contract Theory, an emphasis that is evident within Trotter's own writings on Locke at this time.[93] The debate between Ann and Margarite in *Unhappy Penitent* revolves around the nature of vows and if backing out of them is possible, while in *Revolution*, Gustavus and his allies act against a tyrannical government – a justifiable response according to the rules of a government ruling by social contract, as outlined earlier in this chapter. In addition to this, the catalyst for the plot action of *Unhappy Penitent* is a political manoeuvre, in which Margarite and the King are promised to one another in marriage as children, without any say themselves. This move causes the difficulty in which the play finds the King and Margarite – engaged to one another while both wishing to marry someone else. The play becomes about whether the characters will keep the original contracts they are party to.

Ann becomes the moral voice of *Unhappy Penitent* through her efforts to persuade Margarite to keep her contract with the King. She speaks to both of them and emphasises the importance of the contract that has been made. For her, upholding the oath is a question of honour, but her eagerness to ensure that the King and Margarite keep their obligations has political ramifications. The King is told by his advisors that it would be politically wise to cancel his engagement to Margarite, and marry Ann instead:

DU LAW Much, Sir, you've heard
Of the Disturbances which Britannie
Gave to your father's life, so will it you

[93] King, 'past Jesting', pp.127-128.

If not secur'd in peace by marrying
The Heiress of that Provence

KING And so involve my self in a guilty War,
Unjustly to defend a Breach of Faith

DU LAW There is not, Sir, on that side any danger;
The King of the Romans is too weak t'attempt
Ought against you.
(*UP* 1.1, p.3)

The King acknowledges that to break his engagement with Margarite in favour of Ann would be an affront to Margarite's family, and perhaps prompt them to declare war. His advisors note, though, that as he had no part in the formation of the contract, the King is not technically breaking it (1.1, p.3), he was merely a pawn in his father's political plans. The King is challenged about his treatment of Margarite by her brother, the Duke of Austria. His annoyance at Austria's interference is evident as he wishes Austria would allow him to 'govern [his] own actions' (1.1, p.5), but he also shows hesitancy to break his marriage contract due to Ann's insistence that he keep it. The King's ill-treatment of Margarite, blatantly ignoring her at court, accompanied by his refusal to cancel the marriage agreement indicates his inability to make his own political decisions and reflects anxiety over the varying and contradictory advice he receives. His weaknesses as a leader result in him becoming overwhelmed by the issue rather than overcoming it.

Trotter repeatedly shows in her plays that those who make decisions, even when the outcome is unsuccessful or disagreeable to the audience, are stronger characters due to their ability to use their reason and personal principles to justify themselves. Trotter's portrayal of the King unable to make a solid decision, in contrast with Margarite who tries to resolve her own difficult situation, is a noteworthy distinction in a political context as it stresses the importance of reason and decision-making in leadership. Trotter's emphasis is therefore on individual responsibility – those who make rational, ethical decisions for themselves are the characters who should be emulated. Good leaders are those who can take personal responsibility for their own actions, which in turn lead to good outcomes for those they lead.

Trotter knows that the ability to make decisions is the only requirement of a strong leader. Her portrayal of Lorrain's deliberate decision to break his promise to the people of Naples shows his disappointing rejection of duty. Although the Lords of Naples arrive and specifically ask him why he has yet to help them overthrow their tyrannic government,

Lorrain is unwilling to help until he knows whether Margarite will ask to be released from her engagement to the King:

BRITTANY Why seems the Great Lorrain this irresolv'd
And pensive? When his ripe Fate tempts him to pluck,
And bending his Hand courts him to action;
Does it become a Man Elected
By the general Voice a glorious King,
The Scourge of Tyranny.

LORRAIN No Brittannie,
But it becomes a slave such as Lorrain;
Honour, Revenge, Ambition, all my Passions
Obey a Stronger power, or rather I
Am all one passion, in which the rest, like weaker
Flames/ Attracted by a raging Fire, are lost,
And undistinguish'd burn but to increase
Their wild Devourer.
(*UP* 2.1, p.9)

Lorrain prioritises his love for Margarite over his political duty to Naples. Similarly, to the King, Lorrain delays keeping his promise. The difference here is that Lorrain enthusiastically persuades Margarite to act and renounce her contract with the King, as opposed to the King who remains passive and inactive. Lorrain's decision still has drastic consequences, and as the relationship between Margarite and Lorrain unravels, his decision to remain away from Naples comes back to haunt him, as the Lords return to inform him that without his leadership they have succumbed to defeat:

LORRAIN So I've only a Wife to govern
That's work enough. Tell Ferrand I may visit him
Perhaps, to learn the art of Tyrannizing.

LORD 2 Sure he's not himself

BRITTANY Somewhat disturbs him

LORD 2 It seems some raging passion

LORD 1 And I fear has long posess'd him, hounded
His aspiring thoughts, whose Soul was form'd
To check the ambition of usurping Kings.
(*UP* 5.1, p.38)

Lorrain does not show remorse; he is entirely consumed by the problems with his marriage to Margarite to the point that the Lords and Brittany note a change in his personality. For them, losing Lorrain means losing their ally against their oppression. Trotter portrays

Lorrain as shirking his duty and paying for it by losing the opportunity to help Naples and through permanent separation from Margarite.

The King's eventual release of Margarite from the marriage contract comes too late. Her decision to marry Lorrain causes difficulty for her reputation and her vow never to reunite with Lorrain if her name is cleared of the accusations against her must be kept. Having seen the damage that breaking a promise can do, she is unable to go back on this new vow and so must remove herself from Lorrain forever. This act of penitence becomes a redemptive arc for Margarite, despite the sadness of leaving Lorrain behind. The lateness of the King's actions continues to show his weakness as a leader – in holding off his decision, he has done more harm than good. All of these circumstances bring about political consequences within the play. Naples is now under the rule of a tyrant thanks to Lorrain's refusal to help. While the King's decision was poorly timed for Margarite and Lorrain, he himself is now free of a politically disadvantageous marriage that would have affected the nation, and although the play does not confirm whether the King and Ann do ever marry, should they decide to do so, it also brings political benefit. The whole undercurrent of *The Unhappy Penitent* is the politically motivated, historical deal between the King and Margarite's families. The request of help from Naples to Lorrain echoes the invitation from English nobles to William of Orange to come and usurp James II and VII. The play was performed towards the end of William III's reign in Britain, as Princess Anne was about to take the throne. Suzuki notes that 'just as Trotter's Ann renounces her evil father, the Duke of Brittany, so Anne had renounced her father, James II.'[94] This political parallel is noteworthy, but while Queen Anne's renunciation of James II was a political manoeuvre to protect her own political interest, Ann of Britanny rejects her father in response to his immoral behaviour, which does not align with her ideals. Trotter presents Ann and Margarite as victims of their political circumstances, but it is their moral response to their situation that receives the main attention of the play.

Combined with Locke's ideas of social contract theory, where poor leadership justifies rebellion by those under that leadership, it is clear that strong leadership and an understanding of personal and moral duty are key political points in this play, perhaps reflecting the changing nature of royal leadership at the time.[95] The King has a duty and

[94] Suzuki, p.557.
[95] Locke himself was involved in the debate about the authority of monarchy, and what constituted good leadership to the extent that he had to flee England during the exclusion crisis, not returning until after the Revolution in 1688, suggesting that Locke's ideas were being formed from experience. See Hampsher-Monk (1992) for more detail.

moral obligation to be a strong leader. In *Unhappy Penitent*, his position is complicated by his promise to Margarite. Ann makes it clear that she expects him to keep his word, because this would ensure the man she loves is honourable:

> ANN Is it cruel, Sir, to be Sollicitous
> For your Glory? It speaks a Value for you
> Else I had seen your Actions with indifference
> (*UP* 3.1, p.16)

Her insistence that the King behaves 'honourably' by keeping his promise to marry Margarite is more to do with Ann's expectations of him than either of their feelings. Ann believes that not reproaching him for his behaviour towards Margarite would indicate a lack of love and concern for him. This constant placing of moral duty before self is not surprising for one of Trotter's characters. However, Ann's lack of compassion throughout the play is noteworthy; although Trotter is not problematising this idea of principles before self, she is suggesting that Ann's rigid approach is not ideal either. Ann believes that someone worthy of her love should behave in a certain way and so the King's rejection of Margarite in pursuit of Ann is a rejection of the virtues she hopes he would have:

> ANN Oh, Sir, let not what I have express'd seduce
> Your Vertue, cou'd you be tempted from your Faith
> To Heav'n and Margarite, not all the shining Glories
> Of your Crown, nor soft Insinuations
> Of your Love, shou'd bribe me from my just Disdain
> Of a dishonourable and impious
> Alliance, and undeserving my Esteem;
> Were my Affection rooted with Life inseparable,
> I'd tear 'em up together.
> (*UP* 3.1, p.17)

Despite this insistence that she could not accept the King if he was to deliberately break the betrothal, Ann's persuasion of Margarite to ask the King for freedom from the promise indicates that she would be happy for the King to end the engagement, *if asked*, because this would allow him to do so without relinquishing his own promise, as giving Margarite her desired freedom would be an honourable response.[96] Ann's certainty of her views, and even Margarite's own decisions to take matters into her own hands (albeit with unfortunate consequences) contrast with the King's indecision. Although the indecisiveness of the King is in relation to personal matters, this translates into a subtle concern for his ability to make decisions of national importance. These personal circumstances are noted to be of political significance too, and the King's inability to recognise their importance feeds the

[96] The complexity of Ann's behaviour and motivations are discussed further in Chapter 5.

idea of his ineptitude as a monarch. In the wider context of 1701, the fact that the stronger characters in the play are women can be read in the political context as an anticipation of Princess Anne as future Queen.[97]

Trotter's most obviously political play is *The Revolution of Sweden*, as the political undercurrents found within *The Unhappy Penitent* come to the fore of her final play. Gustavus of Sweden is the opposite of the King of *Unhappy Penitent* – he is respected, honourable, decisive and a strong leader. He champions those facing injustice and is compassionate to his men, all of which is exemplified in the opening scene, where Gustavus supports the idea of his men returning home to participate in the harvest:

> GUSTAVUS Wherefore is't unfit
> That these who give their voluntary service
> To the Common Cause, shou'd be allow'd
> Their share in Nature's bounty.
> (*Revolution* 1.1, p.3)

Trotter's plays generally contain at least one strong rational voice; in *Revolution* there are two such characters – Gustavus and Constantia. Gustavus is able to make difficult decisions for the good of the nation as a whole, and his reluctance to take on more powerful positions also make him a good candidate for King. He is set up from the beginning of the play as the ideal leader in difficult circumstances as he leads the Swedish rebellion against Denmark's rule. In 1706, a year before the political union between England and Scotland, it is noteworthy to see a play depict tension between neighbouring countries.[98] There is no way of knowing for certain whether Trotter was deliberately playing on these parallels, or whether they were an unintentional consequence of writing for the London stage at a politically fragile moment in history. However, some of her contemporaries, and successors also produced plays that reflected the political situation. Susanna Centlivre's *The Wonder: or a Woman Keeps a Secret* (1714) was staged as George I came to the throne, and the concept of Britain and Britishness began to evolve.[99]

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[97] Suzuki, pp.558-559.

[98] The use of Scandinavian countries to reflect political upset and unrest in British countries is not unusual in playwriting. On St Patrick's day 1640, in Dublin, *Landgartha*, by Henry Burnell, was performed at Werburgh Street Theatre. The play depicts the tale of a Norwegian Amazon, Landgartha, who persuades the King of Denmark to help rid her country of Swedish occupation and agrees to marry him in return, only for him to be unfaithful. It is tempting to read the troubled relationship between Norway, Denmark and Sweden as anticipating the approaching trouble between Ireland, Scotland, and England in the 1640s. Catharine Trotter was adding her own, moralistic twist on a well-used method of playwriting allegory. For more information on *Landgartha*, see Henry Burnell, *Landgartha*, ed. and introduced by Deanna Rankin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013).

[99] Misty G. Anderson, 'The Scottish Play: Nationalism, Masculinity, and the Georgian Afterlife of *The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 27:3 (2015), 451-478.

In particular, her portrayal of Colonel Britton as a Brit, rather than a Scot shows that there was a changing perception of nationality at this time.[100] Misty G. Anderson also notes that other playwrights revealed their Whig politics through their plays, including George Farquhar with *The Constant Couple* (1699) and *The Recruiting Officer* (1706).[101] This serves as evidence that the London theatrical scene was reflecting the issues within real society. What marks Trotter out as unique in this environment is the heavy emphasis she places on the importance of civic duty as part of moral virtue.

Christina and Constantia are both key players in the plot of *Revolution* and contribute to the success of the rebellion against Denmark. Christina finds herself on the side of the rebels, despite being married to Beron, one of the Swedish enforcers of the Denmark occupation. Rather than quietly remaining uninvolved so as not to incite her husband against her, Christina disguises herself as her husband's nephew 'Fredage' and becomes involved in the battle. By pretending to act as a double agent, she gains the trust of Beron, who tells 'Fredage' of his wife's role in helping Gustavus start the rebellion:

BERON Hast thou not heard of her disloyalty?

CHR./FRED That she discover'd to Gustavus your design
Of Seizing him, and aided his escape
I've heard; but knew not she had injur'd you
So vilely.

BERON What other motive cou'd she have
To Sacrifice her Int'rest for Gustavus
But that he was a Youth, Handsome and Amorous,
Form'd to her wanton Wishes?
(*Revolution* 3.1, p.31)

Beron cannot conceive that Christina would have had any other motivation for aiding Gustavus other than adultery. There is no evidence in the play of anything other than platonic friendship between Gustavus and Christina. But Trotter ensures that Christina becomes the sole means of proving Arwide's innocence at the close of the play, paying for this with her life. Her involvement in the revolution ensures its victory. Everything she does is ruled by her loyalty to the political cause, which is prioritised over her loyalty to her husband who stands against every one of her values.

Constantia also places loyalty to the political security of her country over her marriage. As the wife of Gustavus's general, Arwide, she is faced with difficulty when it

[100] Anderson, p.466.
[101] Anderson, p.468.

seems that he has switched sides and joined Beron and the Danes against Gustavus and the rebellion. When she is captured by Beron, Constantia expects Arwide and Gustavus to prioritise the wider cause over her individual liberty and safety:

> CONSTANTIA The Sacred Pow'r forbid
> That my poor Country be for my Redemption
> Depriv'd of the least Aid against our Tyrants.
> Oh rather let me fall a Sacrifice
> to their Inhuman Vengeance.
> (*Revolution* 2.1, p.19)

Constantia would rather allow her own life to be sacrificed in order to save the rebellion from having to focus on her instead of their uprising. She also expresses her belief that rising against unfair rule is an appropriate course of action:

> CONSTANTIA Wou'd Princes govern as if they themselves
> Believ'd they were accountable to Heav'n
> There had been no occasion to contest
> Whether their Pow'r be of Divine, or Humane
> Institution; But when such impious Cruelties
> Are practis'd, as our Sweden long has been
> The Scene of (under this too justly stil'd
> The Northern Nero) strong necessity,
> Becomes the Peoples Casuist, proves that Piety
> And Justice must allow that self-defence, to which
> Nature so universally incites.
> (*Revolution*, 2.1, pp.19-20)

The character of Constantia can be considered a mouthpiece for Trotter's political views. As an advocate for standing up for rational and ethical principles rather than following the majority, Constantia shares Trotter's worldview. As her later writings show, power should be awarded shrewdly to those who can be trusted with it, especially regarding self-defence. In answering a question in *The Gentleman's Magazine* about suicide and self-preservation, she writes:

> If self-preservation be the prime law of nature, it must follow, that every man has a right to *defend his own life* against any other, who attacks it, even at the expence [sic] of the life of that other, if he can no way else secure himself. This then is that right (the right of self-defence) which every man in society has given up to the magistrate, excepting cases of extreme exigence, where recourse cannot be had to public authority.
>
> If the people had a right (for I chuse to use that word rather than power) over their own lives, and upon entering into society had resigned that right, it would follow, that the supreme magistrate might take away every man's life at pleasure. But as the people never could have any such right, all the right they can give, and all the magistrate can derive from them, is,

> a right of defending the innocent against the injurious; which can only extend to the life of the subject, so far as necessary for the security of the society, a reason which will in no case justify suicide.[102]

The letter addresses a complex theological and moral issue. However, in her answer, Trotter reveals her subscription to social contract theory and Lockean principles in the sense that she acknowledges that in order to function in society, people must assign some of their own power and self-governing authority over to a central power.[103] At the end of the quotation, she highlights that those in the central authority have a duty to defend innocent people against injustice. In *Revolution*, the characters recognise that this is a key characteristic from a strong leader, explaining their respect for Gustavus. In her other plays, leaders that do not uphold this principle are generally seen as self-absorbed. The King in *Unhappy Penitent* is so concerned with his own happiness that his mistreatment of Margarite leads her to make the decision to marry Lorrain, triggering a number of difficulties. And although a minor character, the King of *Agnes* prefers the advice of Alvaro to discussing matters with his own son, showing an inability to discern Alvaro's selfish and power-hungry motives. Rather than explicitly signposting their leadership styles, Trotter shows how these characters are more concerned with their own circumstances, and how this moral failing subtly influences their leadership.

Constantia continues to personify the principles of putting the greater good first in *Revolution.* When she believes that Arwide has switched sides in the fight for Sweden, she prioritises the national and political cause over her husband, but still hopes to find proof of his innocence. As the evidence stacks against Arwide, Constantia and Gustavus have to make difficult decisions in favour of the cause. In contrast, Arwide's momentary lapse in focus from political and national priorities is caused by Constantia's capture. In his desire to help his wife, he finds himself tricked into unknowingly joining forces with the Danes. The debate between Gustavus and Arwide at the beginning of the play introduces the question of duty and the extent to which an individual is bound to it in the context of their personal life and commitments:

> GUSTAVUS These are the Sallies
> Of unbridled Passion; But recollect
> Your Vertue, remember you're devoted to
> The Publick, think on your glorious Cause,
> On what you owe your Country: Had I laid down my
> Arms

[102] Catharine Trotter, 'Answer to a question in the Gentleman's Magazine', *Works* Vol.2, pp.139-142 (p.140).
[103] John Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of the 'Two Treatises of Government'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp.120-147.

To save a Mother and a Sister's Life,
How wou'd you have condemn'd me of Weakness and Injustice?

ARWIDE You, who are the Head, the Soul of our
Great Enterprize, shou'd own no private Tyes;
I'm not of such Importance, nor can my
Country exact more from me than I pay;
I have not left her Service but with Life,
nor Life, 'till it was one with Misery,
'Till I no longer could support it.
(*Revolution* 2.1, p.27)

Although Gustavus believes duty should always come first, Arwide argues that this is because Gustavus, as leader, should be held to a higher standard. As a lesser figure in the rebellion, Arwide feels he should be allowed some leeway in terms of how far his duty extends to the country, raising the question for the audience as to whether loyalty should have limits. Arwide's lack of conviction is in direct contrast to Gustavus and Constantia. When she discovers that her husband has come to plead for her freedom, Constantia is horrified: 'Oh insupportable! My Arwide, why,/Why has't thou ta'n this fatal Resolution?' (*Revolution* 3.1, p.35). Naturally, Arwide's attempt to secure Constantia's freedom fails and he too is taken prisoner by the enemy. When he attempts to remedy his action by striking a deal with Beron, he is tricked into thinking that it is in Gustavus's best interests, but in reality, it is betraying the cause further. It becomes evident very quickly that, had Arwide heeded the advice of Gustavus and kept his focus on the cause, as his wife had done, there would be fewer problems for the rebellion.

The play, although a tragedy, ultimately ends well for most characters and the nation. While Fredage/Christina is killed in the closing scene, her dying breath confirms Arwide's innocence and her dedication to the cause over everything else is rewarded, 'her exemplary act[s] - imitable by men as well as women, Trotter insists - protects the national interest and eventually reinforces her marriage.'[104] Gustavus is chosen to be King of Sweden, making the case for the idea of elected government and even Beron receives appropriate retribution for his role. This further indicates the value that Trotter places on the moral duty to uphold the greater good. In the political context of the play, the Swedes are justified in the rebellion because those in authority, the Danes, are not enacting their duty of care for the people. The honourable characters are, by contrast, driven by a love of

[104] Brett D. Wilson, *A Race of Female Patriots: Women and Public Spirit on the British Stage 1688-1745* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012), p.xi.

their people and country above even personal loyalties. One key conflict within the play is Arwide's inability to maintain this ideal, and the conclusion sees him come to understand the error of his thinking. Trotter never presents herself as a fiery political or nationalistic voice in her writing, but instead, as is shown through *Revolution*, she gently emphasises the importance of daily civic duty for men and women.

The political edge to Trotter's plays is in line with the political elements of the drama of early modern Scotland that preceded her. Aside from David Crawford, who is Trotter's only direct Scottish contemporary, and who will be considered below in relation to Trotter and Scottish comedy, the early modern Scottish plays predate the 'Glorious' Revolution, and when Trotter herself was writing. However, the political aspects are still worth considering in this context, especially in the absence of closer Scottish contemporaries. The most obvious example of an early modern Scottish political play is David Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre* which has been described, and widely accepted as a 'theatrical analysis of the state of Scotland.'[105] The role of Divine Correctioun brings together the reformation of the three estates in Scotland, and David Reid notes that 'the morality design of the play diagnoses the ills of the country'[106] and this is what makes the play both moral and inherently political. As with Trotter's *Revolution*, the focus is on those in authority having to enact change within their society and accentuates the characteristics of good leaders as opposed to failing ones, which is obvious in *Revolution*, as well as a secondary focus of *Unhappy Penitent.*

William Clerk's *Marciano* is political in nature due to its being a Restoration comedy, one of the key features of which is that the return of order and the rightful ruler at the conclusion is symbolic of the return to power of Charles II in 1660 and the celebration of the political ideals of legitimate monarchy. Monarchy as the key to political stability and security is a central idea of the play. The events of *Marciano* take place against the backdrop of a civil war, with the removal of the legitimate ruler. Marciano comments on the problems that this can cause for a society:

MARCIANO This unnatural victory over thy lawful Prince
Will quickly make thee sensible of unnatural
And intolerable Tyranny […]
So that when Private Subjects covet honour
And power, their lawfull Prince must quit his Throne,
No matter for what reason, since they mean

[105] Carpenter, p.19.
[106] David Reid, 'Rule and Misrule in Lindsay's *Thrie Estaitis* and Pitcairne's *Assembly*', *Scottish Literary Journal*, 11:2 (1984), 5-24, 14.

Some Reformation, as if Private preferment
Were inconsistent with all Monarchy.
(*Marc.* 1.3, pp.3-4)

Marciano notes the disruption of what he considers the natural order of society where the people become subject to the tyranny of the new regime. His view of the importance of monarchy, and the role of the people in accepting this comes to the fore when he considers how the civil war has come about:

MARCIANO When men begin to quarrel with their Prince;
No wonder they crush their fellow subjects
We are eye-sores to th'State: their black designes
Are cross'd by us; and therefore we march off —
[…]
I have considered, that love to my Prince
Should over-sway all others: have chosen
Rather t'endure one stroke, and dye, then live
And undergo the censure (Of all crymes
The most detestable) *Disloyalty*.
(*Marc.* 3.6, pp.41-42)

The themes of loyalty and duty are clear – Marciano is motivated by his sense of duty to the Prince and would rather die than be considered disloyal. In the context of Restoration Scotland, loyalty to the Crown or to rebels would have outlined an individual's political views on monarchy and governance of a country. Arabella's loyalty is shown through her role in the victory of the Prince and his restoration to power through ensuring that Marciano is freed and able to return to the battle. Her motivation is rooted in her love for Marciano and her desire to help him; however, it is also evident that she understands the importance of the cause:

ARABELLA Now frail woman,
Has thou no eyes? Art thou not sensible
Already of our Slavery? — Barbaro,
A Florentine, a profess'd enemy
To all Siennois, will become our Master.
(*Marc.* 1.6, p.11)

As the play progresses, Arabella becomes increasingly embroiled in the events of the rebellion, but her motivation is more to do with her love for Marciano and concern for him, rather than his cause. Hearing that Marciano is to be executed, she asks Strenuo to 'invent some meanes/ How we [Marciano and Arabella] may dye together, like true lovers' (*Marc.* 3.1, p.31). Arabella is ready to give up on her life if she is unable to share it with Marciano. It falls to Strenuo to talk her into seeing that it would be better to work together to rescue Marciano. Once this seems like an achievable possibility, Arabella is again motivated to

help, and by the time she has to persuade Marciano to agree to the escape plan, is able to point Marciano to the bigger picture – his important role in achieving the restoration of the Duke:

> ARABELLA Must a woman
> Become your Trumpeter, and stir your spirits
> Since 'tis but death at all hands.
> (*Marc*. 4.2, p.45)

Arabella appeals to Marciano's sense of duty and loyalty to his family and country to help him understand the importance his escape holds for the cause of restoring their deposed leader. When Cleon, Duke of Florence, is returned to his position at the end of the play, Marciano is honoured as his loyal general, and Arabella is praised for her part in the rebellion:

> CLEON —As for this Lady, whom thy gentler fates
> Have still reserved for your chast embraces,
> We still will honour her, as having seen
> Evident signs of her affection
> And loyalty to us—
> (*Marc*. 5.7, p.70)

These political aspects of *Marciano* can be easily missed due to the play's composition of two almost completely unrelated plots, but they do make up a significant portion of Marciano and Arabella's storyline, and the final scene brings the characters of both plots together for a happy ending with restored governance and happy marriages between all the 'appropriate' characters. This is typical of a Restoration comedy, again aiming to be symbolic of the Restoration of Charles II and the return of monarchical rule to Scotland and England in 1660. Richard Gale states that *Marciano* can be seen as a 'manifestation of a variety of artistic, historical, political, religious and social environments prevalent during the first half of the reign of Charles II.'[107] Arabella's role in the outcome of the play is commended too, but she is not always so nationally minded. At best, Arabella can be considered as being jointly motivated by wanting Marciano to be safe because of her love for him, but also because of his national and political importance:

> ARABELLA […]Sir, I have done
> What I intended; shee's [sic] a cowardly Girle,
> Who cann't endure one stroke for him, whose safety
> Is so dear to his prince and country, vex not
> Your self for my misfortunes; nothing can

[107] Richard Gale, 'William Clerk's *Marciano* and Restoration Scotland', *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research*, 8:2, (1993), 57-72, 57.

Affright my resolutions —
(*Marc* 4.7, p.53)

This is in contrast to Trotter's female characters, especially Christina and Constantia, and to an extent Ann, who prioritise personal ethics or national duty over their emotional loyalties. They therefore have a level of autonomy and reason that Arabella does not. Arabella's role within *Marciano* is to serve the political message of the plot. In contrast, the political dimensions of Trotter's plays are an undercurrent which allows her characters, particularly the women, to practice their reason and autonomy to develop their civic responsibilities *as individuals*, as opposed to function within a politically involved play with. This emphasises just how much Trotter elevates the importance of individual autonomy and foreshadows what would come in her later philosophical and religious work.

Because of the complete, tidy nature of the conclusions of Restoration dramas, they often carry this political undertone and reflection of the political context of the Restoration even if they are not particularly political in any other way. This can be said of *Tarugo's Wiles* by Thomas St Serfe which does not seem to reflect the political landscape of Scotland explicitly. However, there are aspects of the play which reflect issues of cultural importance. The third act of the play is described by Bill Findlay as 'an entirely irrelevant central act'[108] which is 'gratuitous and serve[s] as [a] distraction to the smooth progress of the plot.'[109] If read solely in relation to the idea of Restoration comedy, this certainly seems to be the case. But the coffeehouse scene is designed to be reminiscent of the coffeehouse culture in London, where customers would gather to discuss philosophical, political, and cultural matters of the day.[110] The busy, comical combination of characters on the stage can distract from the fact that the scene brings a number of characters together in an environment where daily life is engaged with and discussed. Kirsten Sandrock notes that in real life coffeehouse culture was also a vehicle for social change, where discussions would take place involving both social reform or maintaining social hierarchies within the global colonial trade network.[111] Coffeehouse culture was an example of Britain taking part in the trade and consumption of global goods.[112] This is emphasised in St Serf's vision of the coffeehouse, customers discuss the merits of coffee over drinking chocolate – both elements of the transatlantic trade. Other highlighted conversations include a discussion

[108] Findlay, p.70.
[109] Findlay, p.69.
[110] Kirsten Sandrock, *Scottish Colonial Literature: Writing the Atlantic, 1603-1707* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2021), p.87.
[111] Sandrock, p.87
[112] Sandrock, p.87.

about blood transfusion, the contents of a painting, Classical literature and even whether political conversations are enhanced with the addition of coffee:

> BARBER Neighbour, do you find the Polliticks grow upon you since your drinking of Coffee.
>
> BAKER So far from the hopes of being a Counsellour of State, that I now despair the preferment of a Constable.
>
> 8TH CUSTOMER Friends, you are both mistaken, if you think the *Spanish Coffee* perfects any man in the Polliticks; 'tis onely in England where the advantage of the Air with a particular way of preparation improves the *Coffee* drinkers in these Misteries.
> (*TW* 3.1, p.23)

This reference to political engagement and conversation emphasises the role of the coffeehouse in allowing people to gather and address relevant news and current issues of the day. It also showcases the variety of social class which gathered within these coffee-houses and emphasises the opportunity this brought for all types of people to gather and express their views and opinions and creating a sense of social mobility and involvement – although whether this should be interpreted as a positive portrayal is debatable.

The customer's observation of the superiority of English coffeehouses is humorous, but it underpins the Anglo-centricity of St Serf's writing. Even while the play is set in Spain, he brings comments such as this to the attention of the audience. The engagement with culture and society within the coffeehouse, the references to England and the nicely resolved, Restoration ending of *Tarugo's Wiles* all contribute to the relevance of the play to the post-Restoration period in Scotland and England. St Serf himself was far from politically unengaged as his time serving under the Marquess of Montrose to fight for Charles I during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms marked him as a royalist.[113] He founded *Mercurius Caledonius*, a newspaper that ran from 1660-1661 in Scotland; Jessica Reid notes that 'St Serf's overall concern [was] with documenting the glory and harmony occasioned by the Restoration in Scotland.'[114] *Mercurius Caledonius* included contributions from Scotland, England and Ireland, and its incorporation of news from further abroad became increasingly common and may have been a way to encourage readers to imagine Scotland as having an active part in global trade.[115] After only twelve issues, the paper was closed, seemingly due to interference from the authorities.[116] Such

[113] Jessica Reid, pp.109-110.
[114] Jessica Reid, p.110.
[115] Jessica Reid, p.113.
[116] Jessica Reid, p.113.

opposition to the paper indicates controversy in what were politically delicate circumstances, and signifies St Serf's political involvement in his society. As Reid and Sandrock highlight in their readings of *Tarugo's Wiles*, what initially appears as an awkward interlude in the middle of the play, actually reveals Scotland's interests in cultural and social aspects beyond its own borders. The presence of the coffeehouse could also be read as an attempt by a Scottish author to add recognisable elements of London life for his English audience. Alongside St Serf's own personal interests and political views, which underpins the Restoration message of stability and order, these highlight the political undertones of *Tarugo's Wiles* from a general royalist and Restoration perspective, but also in the presentation of Scotland and a Scottish author as outward-looking in terms of political and cultural engagement.

Scotland's only known play to have come from the Revolution period is Archibald Pitcairne's *The Assembly* (1691). In terms of its political nature, it addresses the events that Catharine Trotter engaged with in her plays. Pitcairne was writing immediately after the Revolution of 1688-9, while Trotter was active almost a decade later. *The Assembly* is an overtly Episcopalian play, anti-clerical, and anti-Presbyterian in the strongest terms. As has previously been noted, religion and politics cannot be held as separate entities in early modern society. The text of *The Assembly* is political through the disgust that the Presbyterian characters feel towards King William III, but the most political edge of the play comes from the preface written by Pitcairne which addresses the state of drama and politics in Scotland at the time. While discussing the Presbyterian characters of the play, which he signifies are based on real-life examples from the community,[117] Pitcairne says:

> It may Likeways be Considered that the Presbyterians are Enemies to Monarchy, for this is the third time that Presbyterians have been Established in Scotland and still upon the death and banishment of some of their lawfull Sovereigns. Also It Cannot be deneyed but the present Presbyterian Ministers have alse much fury and alse little wit, as in the time of Cromwell then the[y] sate without ane order from the state and acted Independentlie on it, till Colnell Coterall was sent with a Regiment to Raise them.[118]

[117] Pitcairne, 'Preface', p.224.
[118] Pitcairne, p.231.

Pitcairne's deliberate implication here is that the Presbyterian stronghold in Scotland has been established at times when there is not a lawful monarch. He, along with his fellow authors,[119] outlines the purpose of the play and their preface:

> Our designe in this Essay is fully to Represent the Vilanie and follie of the Phanaticks soe when they are in Sober mood They may seriously reflect on them and Repent for what is past and make ane mends for the future if it be possible. Or else that the Civill Government may be awakened and Roused to ridd us of the impertinencie and Tyrannie of this Gang who Inguriously treat all good and learned men and are enemies to Humane Society itself.[120]

Even before the first act, there is the expectation that the anti-Presbyterian sentiment is directly linked to the political views held by Pitcairne. In addition to this, the idea that the play may bring people to realise the implications of the effects of Presbyterianism on society indicates that the play has a moral message that should be acted upon; either that the Presbyterians become convinced of their need to repent for their behaviour and views; or that those in power will change the level of influence that Presbyterianism holds in their society.

This anti-Presbyterianism is particularly highlighted through many portrayals of hypocrisy displayed by the staunchly Presbyterian figures in the play. Rachel, the pious daughter of the Old Ladie, is revealed to be secretly carrying the child of Presbyterian minister Mr Wordie, and yet still sees fit to refer to her cousins, Violetta and Laura, as 'wanton' (*TA* 1.2, p.14) for their unwillingness to live under the Presbyterianism and strict rules of the Old Ladie's household. When Violetta and Will are introduced in the church yard, Rachel recognises that Will is not actually Presbyterian, and warns her mother that the young soldier 'will debouch your neice' (*TA* 2.2, p.24). Rachel's concern that this outsider will morally damage her cousin is hypocritical due to the fact that she herself has been morally compromised, and by one of their own. Further hypocrisy can be seen in the behaviour of the Old Ladie who honours and reveres Presbyterian preachers, while refusing to meet the needs of the local community. When Will and his friend Frank arrive at her household, posing as young Presbyterian lay preachers in order to gain access to

[119] John MacQueen's introduction to *The Assembly/Phanaticks* argues that Pitcairne wrote the play with David Gregorie and Sir Bertram Stott, which explains why the Preface to the play is written in such a way that implies multiple authors. See John MacQueen, 'Introduction', in *The Phanaticks* (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 2012), pp.ix-lxxxii.
[120] Pitcairne, p.231.

Violetta and Laura, she welcomes them with open arms, but inadvertently reveals her true colours:

> OLD LADIE — How could you be so long in toune & never ask for me? Tho' I say it myself, I have fedd many of the prophets of God in the days of tribulatne. Look you, in this press were three or 4, in this Closett honest Mr Covenant & Mr Solomon.
> […]
>
> MAID — There's a poor man, Madam, says he lost his means by the west cuntrie rable.
>
> OLD LADIE — Cam you to tell me that, you baggag? Beat him doune stairs – But Mr Samuel, It's a troublesome, beggarlie, officious world.
> (*TA* 5.2, p.62)

In her desire to appear holy and pious, the Old Ladie not only ignores the needs of the beggar on her doorstep but is too taken with theological discussion and outward acts of piety – missing therefore the secret coded language between Rachel and Wordie (Act 1.2) and Will and Violetta (2.2) where the couples use theological discussion, including biblical quotations, to speak in double entendre. This focus on the outward performative aspects of faith and practice leads to the Old Ladie's failure to recognise the true nature of her daughter, nieces, and other Presbyterian leaders.

In one particularly uncomfortable scene, Mr Solomon Cherrytrees is asked by the Old Ladie to correct Laura's views on communion, and he therefore visits her in her bedroom, even though she is in the middle of getting dressed, where the conversation does not involve communion, but Laura's breasts:

> MR SOLOMON — I'm resolved to be Impudent for once. Madam, tho' ye wolld be ne're so obstinat, these two fair breasts of yours [*handls her brests*] evidentlie prove a paritie in Church members. Look you know, does the one of these insult or tirranize over the other, thus or thus? […]
> But this leads me to discours of bear breasts [*handling her breasts*] and Gaudie apperrel. O what a hydeous thing this is for a protestant Woman to have her breasts strowting out thus [*still handling*]. Some will discover them thus farr to ther eternall shame [*thrusting his hand doune her breast*].
>
> LAURA — Men of such mettall as you cannot endure it, but however me thinks you are a little too familiar. I'm sure you never use to handle your text so closlie.
> […]

> I'le pardon quhat's past, but in tyme coming if I hear on word of beds, bear brests and sweets of Love & such Gibberish […] I'le reveal all and Spoyle your trade. (*TA* 3.2, pp.37-38)

Mr Solomon only agrees to leave Laura alone when she has threatened to expose his behaviour in public, portraying the immorality and hypocrisy of the Presbyterians within the play, particularly those who are in positions of authority. However, Pitcairne goes further, not only does he go to great lengths to expose the hypocrisy of the Presbyterians, but he also uses the plot to humiliate them:

> As for the domestic plot strand [of the play], two young men about Edinburgh succeed in carrying off two rich girls from the household of their Presbyterian aunt to a secret marriage, while the daughter of the house, six months pregnant, has to make a socially undesirable marriage with the Presbyterian chaplain. The point of these marriages is the humiliation of the Presbyterians: nice girls don't marry Whigs.[121]

The marriages of Violetta and Laura to Frank and Will bring about humiliation of the Presbyterian characters who have been the most vocal about their religion. The end of the play also shows the disarray of the Presbyterian church upon the suspension of their Assembly,[122] and accentuates the political and religious contempt between the parties that was present in reality, as well as in the play.

The Assembly is a unique play within seventeenth-century Scottish drama. While the others referred to in this thesis are of similar form to Restoration comedies, Pitcairne's offering is a far more barbed, political satire. As a result, it is hard to include it in any detailed comparison with its contemporary Scottish drama or with Trotter's own plays in a great amount of detail. However, when compared with Lindsay's *Ane Satyre,* there is what David Reid refers to as 'a certain ideological continuity' between the two plays.[123] Both function as a comment on the state of the nation; Lindsay calls for moral reform in the governance of the country, while Pitcairne's play is a comment on the Presbyterian influences in society, as he perceives them. Both playwrights use extreme versions of their characters to highlight the best and worst of society. Lindsay uses allegory with characters such as John the Commonweil representing the common man, and Rex Humanitas the general monarchy. He personifies the virtues and the vices of his everyday society. On the other hand, Pitcairne utilises caricatures of known personalities in the community, and of

[121] David Reid, p.15.
[122] David Reid, p.15.
[123] David Reid, p.5.

general Presbyterian practices and positions to create a mockery of the church, and King William.

Greg Walker notes that characters within *Ane Satyre* are open in their criticism of the government and the laws of the land.[124] He discusses the ways in which John the Commonweil and the Pauper are voices of the people, protesting the way they have been treated by those in authority over them.[125] The Pauper decries the ruin of his domestic life thanks to the system in which he is exploited while trying to look after his family, including his elderly parents. Upon the death of his father, he loses his mare to the laird, who takes it as a mortuary tax. The Vicar takes payment in the shape of one of the Pauper's three cows. When his mother dies, the Vicar takes a second cow, and when his wife dies of grief, the vicar gets the final cow.[126] He relates his woes to Diligence:

PAUPER Sir, be quaht law, tell me, quhairfoir or quhy
That ane Vickar sould tak fra me thrie ky?

DILIGENCE Thay have na law, exceptand consuetude,
Quhil law to them is sufficient and gude.

PAUPER Ane consuetude against the common weill
Sould be na law, I think, be sweit Sanct Geill!
Quhair will ye find that law, tell gif ye can,
To tak thrie ky fra ane pure husband-man?
Ane for my father, and for my wyfe an uther,
And the thrid cow he tuke [for] Mald my mother.
(ll.2018-2027)

The Pauper openly questions the justice of the law, but also draws attention to the fact that the person gaining from the injustice is the Vicar, the very person who should be standing against it. As the play moves towards its conclusion, there is a sense that these wrongs will be righted. The reform of all three estates within the play also brings attention to the place that God has in *Ane Satyre*. God is explicitly referenced in the play, and the reforms put in place suggest that by the end, the church is returning to a better sense and enactment of its own teachings.

This position of approaching reform and resolution, brought about in part by the fact that characters are willing to speak out against it, is where *Ane Satyre* and *The Assembly* part ways. While *Ane Satyre* ends on the note of hope, when characters in *The*

[124] Greg Walker, 'The popular voice in Sir David Lyndsay's Satire of the Thrie Estaitis', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 40:1 (2014), 39-54, 48.
[125] Walker, 'The popular voice', pp.40-47.
[126] Sir David Lyndsay, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis,*ll.1986-2001 ed. Roderick Lyall (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994), pp.71-72.

Assembly speak against the authority figures in the play, it is in satirical form. The characters who speak against the King and the government are the members for the Presbyterian Kirk, who themselves are the subject of the play's satire. The moral failures of the Presbyterian characters within the play cheapens the frustration they feel against King William. Those who rage the most are the characters who are to be the most ridiculed. This is illustrated by the final moments of the play, when King William writes to dissolve the General Assembly:

CAPTAIN I have brought the King's letter, which must be instantlie reade and obeyed.

MODERATOR We are about his owne work

CAPTAIN Sir, You'r about your owne business & making for your owne interest and nothing at all concerned with the King's affairs.

MODERATOR Sir, you mistaik us. I saw we ar about J.C. his owne wark in purgeing out the Curats and when we have done with God's work, we shall then doe his Majestie's grace's work, for better obey God then man.

[…]

Bretheren, What think ye of this letter?

SALATHIEL: We sitt by a Commission under the broad seal of heavne. The K's right ys only accumulative and not objectivelie privative. I think we should sitt and doe our duity & no be afraid quhat man can doe to us.

[…]

TURBULENT He pretends to defend the protestant religion but Joyns with the enimies of it, As, the Pope, the Imperor & K of Spaine etc. and if the house be new built, I'm sur ther's many a foul finger about it.

COVENANT That tyrant sais lykways that he has secured libertie & propertie. It's true – they'r so secured that non can call his fortoun or his head his owne, for there's a man that's both true to God & his K. in his own fassion, he's clapt up in prision, ther's a man treacherous to both and he goes frie.

[…]

TURBULENT The Scriptur sais expreslie that the kings of the earth ar sett against Christ and his Laws. We should then observe this following verse, *Lett us brack ther bonds asunder and cast ther cords from us,* that is to say the Oaths of Allegiance and Assurance, and let us steir up our bretheren in the west cuntrie to shake the tyrant's throne and let our Assemblie be called in

Glasgow by the Authoritie of Jesus Christ alone, Our Sprittuall pouer being intrinsicall to us from J.C. & extrinsick to all kings and potentats of earth.

[…]

MODERATOR Let us sing a verse to God out of the 109 psalme.
{Exeunt omnes in confusion singing}
(*TA* 5.3, pp.73-75)

The arrival of the King's letter, and the Committee's assertion that they are about the business of 'The King' (meaning Jesus Christ) is a comical, and again, barbed satirical comment upon the fact that we have watched many of these characters behave horrendously throughout the play. This is then followed by the audible rage the group feel towards King William, his decisions about ruling the country, and the place of religion within the political landscape. In light of their own immorality and hypocrisy, the audience's sympathy is not granted to these characters. Their anger against the King is selfish indignance, in contrast to the characters of *Ane Satyre* who are vulnerable and exploited by a morally broken system. The close of *The Assembly* sees the Committee disperse, cursing King William. The final note is of self-righteous importance.

While *Ane Satyre* concludes with the promise of large-scale reform, *The Assembly* concludes with a sense of relief that these characters have had their power checked, but there is no overarching sense that this will change the nature of Scotland as a whole. The use of religion in this play is also a way of highlighting how inherently political it had become by this point in history. When God is mentioned, it is in reference to the structures of the church and for making political comments, rather than actually considering any divine involvement or influence. Despite the change in tone between these two plays, the similarities that do exist emphasise the political nature of Scottish drama within the early modern period. Both plays highlight the involved nature of Scottish theatrical tradition. They make comment on key influences in society, and while *The Assembly* is satirical at its core, its circulation around Edinburgh reflects its contribution to the public sphere. It is likely that it would provoke discussion among its readers, underscoring the polemic elements that it shares with *Ane Satyre*.

In each of these examples of Restoration and post-Revolution Scottish drama, there remains a moral implication and therefore an expectation that something will be imparted to the audience which they will take on board. This brings added importance to the political undertones (or overtones) of each play, including Trotter's, as they too share the moral and polemic nature of their Scottish counterparts. While many English plays reflect

and comment on the political context around them, in portraying the themes of duty and loyalty, aspects of good and bad leadership, or simply reflecting the societal and cultural norms of society within a political context, these Scottish plays add elements of moral application that are a particularly strong feature of this tradition. This Scottish perspective then adds further depth to Trotter's plays that can be misunderstood when they are not seen from within the framework of morally and politically involved elements of Scottish plays. Through her work, Trotter encourages her audiences to act for the common good, in line with their individual, rational ethics and political duty.

Trotter's engagement with the political elements of society and current events at the time instances a level of interest in what was happening around her politically. *Agnes* and *Revolution* are centred around tensions between neighbouring countries, reflective of the changing relationship between Scotland and England in the years preceding the Union in 1707. The emphasis on vows and promises in *Unhappy Penitent*, and to an extent, Felicia's dedication to her marriage vows in *Fatal Friendship*, as well as Trotter's depiction of a strong political leader in Gustavus, contrasting with the weaker Kings of *Agnes* and *Unhappy Penitent* all contribute evidence of her agreement with Lockean principles of contractual government at a time when the monarchy in England and Scotland had undergone significant upheaval thanks to the Exclusion Crisis and 'Glorious' Revolution. Her continued reflection of key themes and features of Scottish drama and her engagement with the political context of England makes her an appropriate cultural intermediary for both literary traditions because she brings these elements together in her own work and is therefore relevant to both Scottish and English theatre of the late seventeenth century, moving towards the eighteenth century.

Comedy

Even though Trotter only authored one comedy, her engagement with it as a genre must be discussed within a Scottish dimension because her contemporary or near-contemporary Scottish plays are all comedies. However, Trotter's relationship with comedy, particularly from a Scottish literary perspective, is complicated. This section offers a few targeted observations about Trotter's comedy and Scottish comedy theatre which underline Trotter's position as a liminal figure in Scottish and English theatrical traditions. These are intended to point towards other avenues for future research, rather than form definitive conclusions about Trotter, Scotland, and comedy.

From 1660-1710, which incorporates the years Trotter was actively writing plays, the focus of playwrights in Scotland (St Serf, Clerk, Crawford) was generally on London, or an English audience. Theatre was adapting and plays in the style of the Restoration sex comedy were giving way to the rising popularity of the Sentimental Comedy establishing itself in the 1710-20s.[127] In the years between the Restoration and eighteenth century, there was a vast and complex variety of comedy plays produced.[128] This shift in style was partly due to the changing tastes of the audience, which occurred after the death of Mary II. As court interest in drama dwindled and theatres and dramatists had to change tactic to keep audiences engaged. The growing distaste for sex comedy indicated a change in society's standards and suggesting a desire for content that promoted moral virtue.[129]

Less court interest in plays resulted in less income from royal patronage, and the priority for playwrights and theatre managers was maintaining the interest of the playgoers. This change was not necessarily sudden or stark, and a better way to consider this time of change would be as one of transition rather than shift. Not only did the plays, particularly comedies, have to stay in line with the tastes of the audience, but they had to 'accommodate the new ideas on stage […] without wholly relinquishing dramatic models and practices that had proved successful over the previous 30 years.'[130] This difficult period for genre and style has been identified by Shirley Strum Kenney as the years between 1696 and 1707 in particular, as a time when plays moved away from the Comedy of Manners style but had yet to fully develop into the Sentimental Comedy that would characterise the later eighteenth century. She terms plays from this interim period as 'Humane Comedy', arguing that although the move away from Restoration comedy has been generally seen as a decline in quality, it created the opportunity for a new kind of comedy which emphasised characterisation and comedy of situation as opposed to relying on satirical laughter and stock characters such as fools.[131] Its increased focus on character over the satire and outright mockery found in Restoration comedy does not make Humane Comedy less effective in reflecting the culture of the time. Eric Weitz notes that 'comedy hinges upon the rules of social and cultural behaviour in force at a given time and place'[132] and so the changing nature of comedy at this time could also be reflective of the cultural, political, and social change that was being brought about by the Revolution of 1688-9.

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[127] Shirley Strum Kenny, 'Humane Comedy', *Modern Philology*, 75:1 (1977), 29-43, 29.
[128] Brian Corman, *Genre and Generic Change in English Comedy 1660-1710* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp.3-20.
[129] Hume, *Development of Drama*, p.381.
[130] José Mora and Gómez-Lara, p.148.
[131] Strum Kenny, pp.40-42.
[132] Weitz, p.15.

Defining Humane Comedy is useful when understanding the work of Catharine Trotter because the years in which this form featured are directly in line with Trotter's active playwriting period.

There are features of *Love at a Loss* which reflect the characteristics of Humane Comedy – particularly the ways in which humour is deployed through focusing on characters. The most obvious way in which the characters of *Love at a Loss* are used to develop the humour within the play is through the expression of Beaumine's anti-marriage stance. The conversation between Beaumine and Phillabell allows this aspect of Beaumine's character to be revealed through his conversational wit as he jokes with Phillabell, as opposed to having him or another character simply state that he is against marriage:

> PHILLABELL Beaumine! What sudden dearth of Wine, or kind Women, has reduc'd thee to thinking?
>
> BEAUMINE Only a sense of my friend's misfortune, I came to condole with you; Faith Phillabell, I am heartily sorry for thee.
>
> PHILLABELL For me! Why, what's the matter? I know no cause you have, I was never so satisfied, so easy, so full of Joy, as in this minute.
>
> BEAUMINE Why, is your marriage broke off?
> (*LL* 1.2, p.6)

This conversation comes after Lesbia has voiced her concern that Beaumine keeps delaying their wedding, so this humorous exchange provides an explanation for his behaviour. The humour derives from Beaumine's witty responses to Phillabell as opposed to making him the butt of the joke in the way a Restoration stock character such as a fop or a rake might be.

In Act 4, the humour is also rooted in the characters present and their reactions to the situation, instead of slapstick comedy. Bonsot can be considered the play's people pleaser: 'I love to see People merry […] I never leave People till I have argu'd, or teas'd, 'em out of their anger' (*LL* 4.1, p.42). When Beaumine comes to visit Miranda, while Lesbia and Bonsot are there, Lesbia hides herself away and tells Bonsot not to give away that she is there – the plan being that Miranda can quiz Beaumine about his feelings for Lesbia. Bonsot assures Miranda and Lesbia that he would 'never discover a secret, unless it should happen to be something I don't know' (*LL* 4.1, p.36) signalling the incompetence that is about to follow. Miranda tries to get Beaumine to admit his feelings for Lesbia, but in

doing so continues to act as if she does not want to be married to Constant in order to keep Beaumine confused about his feelings for the two women in an attempt to get the truth out of him. Unfortunately, Constant hears what Miranda has said and confronts her, which makes it difficult to maintain the deception. Lesbia reveals herself unexpectedly, in order to try and help Miranda but Bonsot is caught off guard and continues to play ignorance:

BEAUMINE	Lesbia here! then I am afraid, 'tis I have been fool'd.
BONSOT	Lord, that she should discover her self? But do what she will, I am resolved not to betray my Trust. […]
LESBIA	[to Constant] I dare affirm [Miranda] had not now a Thought of wronging you, for twas at my Request, to try Beaumine's Truth, she gave him this obliging Reception, Bonsot can witness---
BONSOT	I scorn to betray my Trust, Madam --- As for me, Sir, I can't say Lesbia was here before, but I can affirm this to my knowledge, that Miranda had no design of quarrelling with you, but you not being here, d'e [sic] see, and this Gentleman a very engaging Person, she could not be so hard-hearted, you must think, to put him quite in dispair. […]
CONSTANT	You'll Pardon me if I believe her self, she has not offer'd to deny but Justifies her Infidelity.
LESBIA	That was, I suppose, her too scrupulous Care to conceal what I Entrusted her with; but I saw there could be no other proof of her Innocence, but my appearing […] You need not conceal it now, Bonsot.
BONSOT	Nay, nay, don't think to draw me in so, I know better things, this is all to make a difference betwixt you and Miranda […]
CONSTANT	Your Witness is not well enough Instructed. (*LL* 4.1, pp.38-39)

Bonsot's determination to keep his promise confuses the matter for everyone and makes it harder for Constant to understand that Miranda was acting on Lesbia's behalf rather than actually rejecting him. Bonsot tries to convince Constant of Miranda's innocence without revealing Lesbia's part, and the humour is drawn from the fact that the obvious course of action for Bonsot would have been to tell the truth initially. As with the first example, the humour within this comedy comes from the characters' personalities, and the style and structure of the conversation. Although Bonsot is the focus of the comedy, and the

audience are meant to laugh at him, the humour of humane comedy is 'much more tolerant, less critical'[133] of the characters who are laughed at. Compare this, for example, with the scathing satire, *The Assembly*, where the mocking of the characters is necessary in order to reflect criticisms of the principles of Presbyterian ideals.

The fact that *Love at a Loss* contains very few examples of outright humour is consistent with Trotter's emphasis on rational ethics and moral virtue within her drama, and with the elements of humane comedy. The play's conclusion can be considered a standard Restoration comedy ending as each of the play's central couples is paired off in appropriate marriages, but as is so often highlighted by those reading the play, the voting scene by which the marriage of Lesbia and Beaumine comes about is highly unusual. This has elements of humane comedy because each character votes in line with their personality, which adds to what Kendall describes as the 'comical intensity'[134] of the moment as each character explains their reasoning, and Beaumine comes to the realisation that he is to be entered into a marriage he has spent the whole play trying to avoid. As considered above, the resolution of the play is undercut with the potential for adultery within the final marriages beyond the conclusion of the play. The nature of the voting scene contributes to a sense of unsettledness, particularly between Lesbia and Beaumine as they agree to their marriage. J. Karen Ray notes that 'this resolution by irresolution is distinctly different from the conversion to commitment and marriage of the cynical lovers of Restoration Comedy and distinctly different from the virtuous and sentimental couplings which end most eighteenth-century comedies.'[135] The transitional nature of drama in this period, and in particular, comedy, makes the play difficult to categorise into any particular type. However, its position as a 'comedy located uneasily between two comedic paradigms [Restoration Comedy and Sentimental Comedy], between two centuries and between two radically different social visions'[136] reflects the London context at the end of the seventeenth century, as the Union approached, and the quick succession of monarchs brought different ideologies with each reign. This complex discomfort created by *Love at a Loss*, reflecting the transitions in comic development, is in keeping with the genre of comedy in general:

[133] Hume, *Development of Drama*, p.382.
[134] Kendall, *Love and Thunder,* p.66.
[135] J. Karen Ray, 'Friendly Fire: The Oxymoron of Authority in Catharine Trotter's *Love at a Loss*', *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research*, 14:1 (1999), 74-82, 78.
[136] Ray, p.81.

> The comic form itself may be seen to exhibit a certain unease within its own skin, with laughter, provocation and happy endings representing contradictory impulses.[137]

As Weitz notes here, the importance of the happy ending or laughter inspired by the comedy can at times present the feeling that all is well on the surface level only. This further adds to the difficulty of comedy as a genre for playwrights and indicates why such transitions occur within the form. Trotter was writing and communicating with other playwrights in London, including Manley, Pix, Wycherley and Congreve, so it is natural that her work would have reflected these changes that were present within their plays too.

The difficult nature of comedy, particularly in regard to moral virtue, might provide some explanation as to why Trotter remained known predominantly as a tragic playwright. She recognised this herself in the dedicatory letter of *Love at a Loss*, addressed to Sarah Piers:

> I never thought of making any pretence to Talent for Comedy, but writ this [*Love at a Loss*] when the Town had been little pleas'd with Tragedy entire, mingled with one of mine, which since the tast is mended, appear'd alone; and this lay by me a considerable time, till Idleness reminded me of filling it up, thus it was piec'd with little Care of Concern for the success; not intending my Fame upon it, till some of my Friends assuring me that I need not apprehend losing any by it. (*LL*, p.[1])

Love at a Loss started out life as a comical interlude within a tragedy because Trotter felt that audience taste required the incorporation of light-hearted elements within tragic plays. Noting that tastes changed again to allow for pure tragedy, she removed the comic sections. Her decision to finish *Love at a Loss* as a play in its own right seems to have come from a desire not to waste time nor what she had already written. The original design of *Love at a Loss* to be part of another play explains its episodic nature, and perhaps also gives a reason for the complexity of the plot, which would have had to have been expanded upon. Although the writing of a comedy seems to have been an unintentional result of Trotter's other plays, *Love at a Loss* itself, written and performed at a time when the genre was growing and developing shows that Trotter was not necessarily out of the ordinary when it came to writing comedy, nor was she trying to be particularly experimental. Instead, she was trying to cater for the changing tastes of the audiences that influenced the development of the genre.

[137] Weitz, p.12.

As has been demonstrated in these chapters, Trotter viewed drama as a means to promote personal virtue and ethics, and her struggles as a comic writer may have been in part related to this. In a letter to her niece in later life, Trotter recommended Moliere's plays because:

> Many of his pieces answer *the true design of comedy*, which is to expose the vices and follies of men by an agreeable ridicule; or to make virtue appear lovely, and vice infamous. And it were to be wished, that none were read, or allowed to be acted, which are not writ with those views.[138] [Emphasis mine]

Here we see Trotter express her strong preferences for the moral end of comedy. Not only should it inspire the imitation of what is good and the rejection of what is not, but in Trotter's view, plays which do not adhere to this ideal should not be engaged with at all. This is a very restricted view of the general purpose of comedy. Weitz notes that while we can identify specific types of comedy, such as Elizabethan, Restoration, or Sentimental Comedy, they all exhibit specific traits which mark them out as comic texts.[139] The plays of seventeenth-century Scotland achieve this through the expected polemics that can be traced from the earliest examples of theatrical activity. As already addressed in this thesis, the general expectation of drama during this period in the English context trended towards entertainment rather than moral instruction.[140]*Love at a Loss* is highly instructive and less entertaining than the Scottish plays, and indicates that her own views, as well as the changing nature of the comic genre at this time, contributed to her weakness in this area.

Although generally polemic with a political edge, the nature of Scottish comedy in this period was also fluid. From the Restoration onwards Scottish comedy written by the likes of St Serf and Crawford, with its London-centric focus, shares plenty of common features with its English contemporaries, making it safe to include in the category of Restoration comedy, while still maintaining its Scottish heritage and features through the constant foregrounding of moral elements. In terms of Scottish drama produced in the period directly following the 'Glorious' Revolution, Trotter's only direct Scottish contemporary is David Crawford, who produced two plays, *Courtship-a-la-mode* (1700) and *Love at First Sight* (1704), for the London stage. Unlike Trotter's comedy, Crawford's plays 'maintained many devices of the Restoration idiom'[141] and can be linked to his Restoration predecessors by the use of stock characters and plot devices. For example,

[138] Catharine Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 6 December 1731, *Works* Vol.2, p.258.
[139] Weitz, p.63.
[140] Hume, 'Theatre History, 1660-1800', p.30.
[141] Scullion, 'Forget Scotland', p.110.

Courtship-a-la-mode introduces Sir Anthony who wishes to control the lives of his children – he keeps his daughter, Flora, away from society and tries to dictate the marriages of his other children, Melinthia and Dick. This echoes a number of early modern plays, including *Tarugo's Wiles*, where Patricio keeps Liviana sequestered from her friends. Another parallel between *Courtship-a-la-mode* and *Tarugo's Wiles* is the use of the trickster character – which is a common Restoration comedy feature. In *Courtship,* Decoy is enlisted by a number of the characters to help them bring about marriage to the person of their choosing, again similar to St Serf's depiction of Tarugo. The conclusion of *Courtship-a-la-mode* is appropriately comic, as Decoy helps all sets of lovers marry, before Sir Anthony's children present themselves to him:

> MELINTHIA Thus low I kneel to beg your Blessing; this Gentleman is your Son and my Husband.
> […]
>
> SIR ANTHONY Boy o'me, the young Woman has out-witted me: but since she's married to a Knight's Son, I forgive her […] Rise, Daughter; prove an obedient Wife, and my Blessing shall never be wanting.
> […]
> I begin to think that I am no better us'd than I shou'd be.[142]

Sir Anthony realises that not only have his children outwitted him, but they have made good choices in spouses. The play closes with the revelation of the secretly married couples, Sir Anthony admitting his error and giving his blessing, bringing about the expected Restoration ending of good order and happiness. Crawford himself pokes fun at this standard ending in *Love at First Sight*, when Lovewell observes 'When Marry'd People appear, every Body knows the Comedy's at an end.'[143]

Love at First Sight has a similar tone to that of *Courtship-a-la-mode*. Courtly is in love with Fidelia, but eventually falls for and wins the heart of Mellissa, meanwhile Fidelia is married to Lovewell, and both women avoid unwanted matches with Sir Nicholas Empty and Mr Gripeall. Crawford's play has a more moralistic tone in the way it 'celebrates virtue and true love over vice and fashionable posturings.'[144] References are often made to the virtue of characters. Courtly observes that 'Fidelia is a Virtue unknown to Villains, nay even to Vice itself' (*LFS* 5.1, p.57) and other such observations and discussions

[142] David Crawford, *Courtship-a-la-mode* 5.2 (London: J. Barnes and E. Rumbal, 1700), pp.48-49
[143] David Crawford, *Love at First Sight* 1.1(London: printed for R. Basset, William Turner and John Chantry, 1704), p.6
[144] Scullion, 'Forget Scotland', p.115.

surrounding virtue appear in the play. This is perhaps a reflection of the changes in taste that have already been noted as occurring in the late seventeenth century. Crawford acknowledged these changes in a note to the reader at the beginning of the published edition of *Love at First Sight*, where he informs them that that some time has passed between his writing the play and its coming to the stage:

> To please my Bookseller, who will have me plead something or other in behalf of a distressed Play, of which the heat of Youth made me the Father, I give the Reader, rather this short Advertisement than a formal Preface […] Since that time the Humour of the Town is chang'd, and mine too perhaps, and as Men of Twenty, rarely approve of what they did in Fifteen, so I shall hardly be persuaded to defend in this Centry [sic] what I writ in the last. (*LFS*, p.[iii])

Into this changed atmosphere, notably no longer in royal court, Crawford brought his two plays, and like any playwright would, tried to appeal to the changing tastes of the audiences.

Crawford utilises the stock character of the 'Stage Scot' in *Courtship-a-la-mode.* The character of Willie the servant speaks in broad Scots on the London stage. One of the best-known Stage Scots is found in John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot* (1667), an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.[145] J.O. Batley also outlines other plays in which Scots appear as stock characters upon the stage, including a number of Aphra Behn's plays such as *The Roundheads* (1681), *City Heiress* (1682), and *Widow Ranter* (1689).[146] 'Scottishness' as a defining trait can vary across plays in which the Stage Scot appears and there is also variation in how much characters actually use Scots.[147] When it comes to Willie Beetlehead in Crawford's *Courtship*, Willie speaks in broad Scots, with no translation, but there are a few occasions where characters struggle to understand him. Betty requests 'pray thee speak English, else 'tis impossible to comprehend thy meaning' (*Courtship* 3.2, p.35). As a servant, Willie is often mistreated:

FREELOVE	Gentlemen, you are busie, and I have already told you how I am to be employ'd — Come along, Sirrah.
WILLIE	Sirrau me near Sirraus, Sir; the Minister bauptized me Wullie Beetlhead, a Scotlaund-Man.

[145] J.O Bartley, 'The Development of a Stock Character: II. The Stage Scotsman; III. The Stage Welshman (to 1800)', *The Modern Language Review*, 38 (1943), 279-288.
[146] Bartley, p.282.
[147] Bartley provides an overview of this within their article.

FREELOVE	You Rogue, did the Parson give you all these Names? Willie, honest Willie, come along Willie.
WILLIE	Aye Sir, Whaun I hea tasted the Wine, aun drunken tea yer good health. {*Drinks*}
FREELOVE	This is insufferable Ignorance. {*kicks him*} (*Courtship* 3.1, p.25)

Willie objects to Freelove's use of the term 'Sirrah' to refer to him, and Freelove kicks him in frustration. The barrier between the two does not seem to be language, but rather position and society. The portrayal of Willie as a servant character, and a ridiculed one at that, can be read as political – the position of Scotland in the approaching 1707 Union was not one of strength. While Willie brings attention to Scots as a language, his inferior position and treatment by other characters does make uncomfortable reading.

Crawford's career as royal Historiographer for Scotland under Queen Anne from 1704[148] shows that he continued to utilise his Scottish connections, despite a London focus for his plays. Unlike Trotter, Crawford seems to actively have maintained his Scottish links to benefit his career. This is likely due to his being born in Scotland while Trotter was born in London to Scottish parents and did not live in Scotland until adulthood. Crawford was certainly more blatant with his Scottish identity through the use of Scots on the stage and his later career which brought him north of the border.

Both Trotter and Crawford were writing comedy as the genre was changing and still difficult to broadly define. It is hard to make any concrete claims about Trotter or Crawford in a Scottish comedy context. What can be established is that both writers had a London-centric focus, and the Scottish elements of their writing mark them as unusual. A Scottish perspective on Trotter's comedy alone is difficult to achieve for these reasons, but broadly speaking, the themes of marriage, female relationship and personal ethical frameworks within *Love at a Loss* are in line with all of her other plays. Thematically speaking, the Scottish dimensions of *Love at a Loss* allow for similar conclusions when the play is considered in the wider context of Trotter's body of work. While Crawford addresses the Scots language in *Courtship-a-la-mode* and adopts similar themes of love and marriage as earlier Scottish comedies did, his literary output as a whole also needs more scholarly focus, incorporating the epistolary novels that followed his plays[149] and his

[148] David Allan, 'Crawford, David (1665-1726)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/6638> [accessed May 2021].
[149] Scullion, 'Forget Scotland', p.116.

writing as Scotland's historiographer (*Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland*, published 1706)[150] to gain a fuller picture of his relationship with Scotland.

More thought must also be given to the fact that in the years between 1660 and 1725 the predominant genre of theatrical material produced by Scottish playwrights was comedy. Because of the lack of theatrical output from Scotland in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in comparison to English theatre, it is harder to establish what the trajectory of comedy in Scotland might have been had there been more plays written by Scottish or Anglo-Scottish playwrights. While Crawford seems to have maintained the Restoration comedy tradition followed by his Scottish predecessors (St Serf and Clerk in particular), Allan Ramsay's *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725) showed that Scottish comedy was moving beyond this form. Trotter's reflection of Humane Comedy in *Love at a Loss* is likely to have been impacted by her career in the London theatrical environment, rather than any Scottish influence on the genre. This means that there is no clarity about the development of Scottish comedy in the late seventeenth century. The presence of Crawford and Trotter in this period needs to be considered in more detail as their lone presence in this interim period between 1690-1725 adds to their significance to the Scottish theatrical and literary tradition.

The benefit of studying the Scottish dimensions of Trotter's drama

Arguing a case for the complete inclusion of writers such as Crawford and Trotter within the Scottish literary canon would be overambitious and very difficult due to their existing place within English literary tradition. A more thought-provoking and enticing approach to such writers is examining their work under a Scottish lens and observing the ways that this opens up new facets of their work. For a writer such as Trotter, this approach allows the traces of Scottish cultural literary tradition to be understood without over-emphasising them. In the context of English contemporary literature, Catharine Trotter's moralism stands out; but when placed in the long theatrical tradition of polemic, politically involved theatre in Scotland, her writing is much more typical. The political elements of her plays connect with their presentation of moral theory by bringing out themes of duty, promise-keeping and civic responsibility and highlighting the importance of strong, moral leadership which in the aftermath of the 'Glorious' Revolution, had been key issues for both countries to consider.

[150] Allan, *ODNB*.

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in particular, theatrical traditions between Scotland and England merged as the Unions of Crowns and Parliaments brought the artistic focus from both countries to London. While Scottish plays kept their Scottish 'flavour' by maintaining their connection to the pageant traditions of earlier Scottish drama, the London focus naturally would have brought the Scottish tradition more in line with what was happening on the English stage. Other areas of literature also need to be considered to discover how, and if, literary traditions began to merge. Because during this period Scotland and England had joined in a political union, but the idea of formal 'British' identity did not yet exist within the arts and culture, teasing out additional aspects of Trotter's work through considering it from a Scottish literary perspective, is a useful approach that can be applied to similar authors. Writers who are born outside of Scotland but linked to its cultural legacies, or Scottish-born writers who moved away from Scotland to work and write can be considered from this angle. Examples argued above include Lodowick Carlell, David Crawford and Newburgh Hamilton,[151] who are all often brushed aside and forgotten because they do not always fit existing British, English, or even Scottish categories of literary study in a binary sense.

The first chapters of this thesis have focused on Scottish dimensions of Trotter's work, particularly her novella and her plays. The remaining chapters build on this by drawing attention to a Scottish perspective of Trotter in a more holistic sense, pulling together strands of her writing and themes within it that have often been kept separate by scholars, with the exception of Anne Kelley. This is achieved first by considering Trotter's portrayal of female characters, which adds a Scottish perspective to much of the attention and scholarship that has previously been given over to Trotter's proto feminist tendencies, before considering what the Scottish dimensions of her life and work add to our understanding of Trotter herself as an individual, learned woman.

[151] Newburgh Hamilton (c.1691-1761) is included in discussions of early Scottish drama by Tobin (1974) and Scullion 'Forget Scotland' (1997), although his entry in *Hamilton Memoirs* notes that he was born and educated in Ireland. He authored two plays for the London stage: *The Petticoat Plotter* (1712) and *The Doating Lovers* (1715) and was an accomplished librettist, working closely with George Frederick Handel. Hamilton is another example of a writer who approached their work from a London-centric lens and as a result is given little attention in their home culture nor as part of English literary criticism. For more detail, see Everard Hamilton, *Hamilton Memoirs: Historical and genealogical notices of that family which settled in Ireland in reign of King James I*, reproduced online by Colin Fendall Butler Hamilton (2003) <stirnet.com/articles/selectfams/HamiltonMemoirs>.

Chapter 4
Trotter's portrayal of female characters

Much of the existing scholarship of Trotter's life and work positions her in the 'vanguard of feminism'[1] through her efforts to portray women as capable of reason, intelligence, and moral agency. These aspects of Trotter's writing have generally been considered in great detail.[2] But exploring the Scottish dimensions within them more forcefully underlines the emphasis on the capability of women to exercise their own agency, and further demonstrates just how well Trotter was able to portray it. Taking what has already been observed about Trotter in this area of her writing and comparing her female characters to those of her English and Scottish contemporary writers, it becomes evident that Trotter is innovative in her portrayal of women. This thesis does not claim that Trotter was overtly influenced by Scottish traditions and writers, however, incorporating a Scottish literary perspective adds a freshness and depth and a more fully historicised literary-cultural perspective to viewpoints already existing within Trotter studies. By examining Trotter's portrayal of female friendship, female agency and the complexity of female characters, this chapter highlights some of the unique aspects of Trotter's portrayal of women in her fictional work.

Female friendship

In recent years, a change of focus among scholars who consider how female friendship was depicted in early modern literature[3] has led to a wider understanding of how it is presented. Heather King states that in the period Trotter was writing, male friendships were the norm on stage, while female/male friendships occurred when the common trope of cross-dressing female characters allowed women to be in the presence of men and gain their confidence. As a result of these portrayals, 'women's friendships were not thought to be built on the sort of rational foundation that characterized male friendships'[4] and were shown as being based solely on emotion, or simply remained undeveloped. One such example is found in Mary Pix's *The Innocent Mistress* (1697). In the opening act, Bellinda, mistress of Sir Charles, lodges with his niece, Mrs Beauclair, and they reflect on the unlikeliness of their friendship:

[1] The phrase is taken from Anne Kelley's *Catharine Trotter*.
[2] See for example Linker (2010) and Backscheider (1995).
[3] Hariette Andreadis, 'Re-Configuring Early Modern Friendship: Katherine Phillips and Homoerotic Desire,' *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 46:3 (2006). 523-542.
[4] King, 'Be Mistress', p.5.

MRS BEAU. I must confess, tho I am wild to the very verge that Innocence allows, yet when my Uncle, that dear good man, told me, if e'er I meant to oblige him I must be a Companion, Friend, and Lover of his Mistress. The proposition startled me, but then I did not think there had been such a Mistress as my Bellinda, nor Platonick Love in real practice.

BELLINDA True, my dear Friend, our Love is to the Modern Age, unpractic'd and unknown; yet so strict and so severe, are rigid Honour's Laws, that tho not grossly, yet we still offend: had not Fate fixt a bar unpassable between us, how shou'd I have blest the accident that brought us first acquainted.[5]

The women are surprised by the strength of their friendship. The emphasis on their companionship and love indicates that they are experiencing a deep bond previously unknown to them. Despite this early acknowledgement of such an intimate friendship, there is little by way of further development, and their relationship moves out of focus as other characters and the plot come to the fore.

In direct contrast, most of Trotter's plays place considerable importance on female friendship. The pairings of Agnes and Princess Constantia in *Agnes de Castro*, and Ann and Margarite of *The Unhappy Penitent* portray the kind of female friendship that Heather King commends – based on rationalism and deep connection as opposed to fickle emotions.[6] The bond between Agnes and Constantia is what powers the plot of *Agnes de Castro*, in contrast to Aphra Behn's version of *Agnes,* which Trotter adapted for her play. Trotter shows the two women prioritising their friendship and using it as the motivating factor for many of their key decisions. In Trotter's play, it is the friendship between Agnes and the Princess that initially sparks the jealousy of Elvira and Bianca, inspiring the actions that eventually lead to them becoming murderers:

ELVIRA It must be good: That Poison Jealousie
Destroys the strongest Bonds of Blood, or Friendship;
[…]
Distrust, coldness, Rival-ship will breed,
Which Agnes is too haughty to endure,
And though not sent, will soon return to Spain.

BIANCA That will be pleasing news to all the Ladies,

[5] Mary Pix, *The Innocent Mistress* 1.1, (London: Printed by J. Orme for R. Basset and F. Cogan, 1697), pp.4-5, in Steeves Vol 1.
[6] King, 'past Jesting', p.128, 131, and 'Be Mistress', p.2.

Who envy her the Princesses Affection.
(*AdC* 1.1, p.1)

The exclusiveness of the friendship between Agnes and the Princess is a feature of discussion even before either woman appears on stage, and Elvira's objections to their closeness and the Princess's preference for Agnes over Portuguese courtiers further underline this.[7] Trotter also subtly displays the relationship between Elvira and Bianca: Elvira is the villain of the play and Bianca acts as co-conspirator. Although their friendship is less intense than that of Agnes and the Princess, each holds the other's confidence. Elvira's plans to ruin the friendship between Agnes and Constantia initially fail due to the strength of their relationship. Having discovered, thanks to Elvira, that the Prince is in love with Agnes, the Princess is still able to acknowledge that Agnes is 'less my Rival than my Friend' (*AdC* 1.2, p.8). The friendship is only jeopardised when Constantia is presented with what seems to be solid evidence of an affair, which shatters the trust and loyalty that was the foundation of their friendship. Despite this, the allegiance the Princess has to Agnes still allows for doubt of her guilt:

PRINCESS But why should [Agnes] be sad?
Can Guilt and Innocence, have like Desires?
This Melancholly Fancy pleases me.
[…]
'Twere most unjust to punish her unheard,
Thus far I owe, to one that was my Friend,
To one, who tho ungrateful still I love.
Something methinks, pleads strongly for her Truth,
Tell me she may be wrong'd and innocent.
(*AdC* 3.2, p.24)

The Princess demonstrates personal reasoning through her consideration of what she knows of Agnes and their friendship in contrast with what she has been told. She gives Agnes the opportunity to explain her innocence, demonstrating the depth of their friendship.

There are numerous versions of Inêz de Castro established in European history and legend through many art forms since the 1300s.[8] However, Trotter's version is widely accepted as

[7] This is in addition to the political elements of Elvira's dislike and jealousy of the Princess and Agnes which has been discussed in previous chapters.
[8] Martin Nozick, 'The Inez de Castro Theme in European Literature', *Comparative Literature*, 3 (1951), 330-341. See also 'Inez de Castro', *Reynold's Miscellany of romance, general literature, science, and art*, 1:8 (1848), 125-126; C.A.W, 'Inez de Castro', *Belgravia: A London Magazine*, 51:204 (1883), 448-455; W.H. Swift, 'Inez de Castro', *Notes and Queries*, 6:137 (1894), 109 for some summaries of the legend and ways in which it appears in academic circles, as well as a poem by Margaret Gibson, 'Inez de Castro: The Dead Queen, Coronation', *The Sewanee Review,* 79:4 (1971), 612-613 and the play *Inez de Castro* by Mary Russell Mitford (1854) for other interpretations of the story.

being an adaptation of Aphra Behn's novella, and so it can be useful to acknowledge the differentiation between these two versions. One key difference is that the above episode of reason exercised by Constantia is not present in Behn's version:

> The next day Constantia appeared, but so altered, that it was not difficult to imagine what she had suffered. Agnes was the most impatient to approach her, and the Princess could not forbear weeping. They were both silent for some time, and Constantia attributed this silence of Agnes to some remorse which she felt: and this unhappy maid being able to hold no longer, 'Is it possible, madam,' said she, 'that two days should have taken me from all the goodness you had for me? What have I done? And for what do you punish me?' The Princess regarded her with a languishing look, and returned her no answer but sighs. Agnes, offended with this reserve, went out with very great dissatisfaction and anger; which contributed to her being thought criminal.[9]

Behn's Princess assumes Agnes's guilt without investigation, even when given the opportunity to express her suspicions. Trotter's removal of this scene allows Constantia to process her thoughts on the matter before deciding that Agnes should be given a chance to speak. In the moments she is convinced the affair is real, her love and loyalty towards both Agnes and the Prince produces a genuine desire for their happiness and wishing to be out of their way. Her own death, she believes, would prevent the scandal of an affair. This traditional element of a woman killing herself so as to avoid bringing shame to her husband is also evidenced through the actions of Morena in Pix's *Ibrahim, the thirteenth Emperor of the Turks*. Both women feel that their own circumstances are causing shame. But Trotter takes this one stage further than Pix, in that the Princess plays no part in the scandal, whereas Morena's suicide is the tragic aftermath of her rape. Agnes (although innocent) and the Prince are the parties involved, but Constantia's behaviour and circumstances are unchanged. The Princess's prioritisation of her husband's marital happiness over her own marriage and the loyalty she is due indicates not only her dedication to her husband, but also to her friendship with Agnes. Although the Princess is fatally stabbed by Elvira, Trotter uses her dying moments as an opportunity for reconciliation with Agnes. Her final request of Agnes is 'I charge thee love the Prince, I charge thee marry him' (*AdC* 2.2, p.26), displaying the trust she has that Agnes can look after the Prince, and marking the restoration of their friendship.

While the death of Constantia ends the friendship between the two women in a physical sense, their reconciliation maintains the crucial impact of their friendship and

[9] Aphra Behn, *The History of Agnes de Castro,* in *The Novels of Aphra Behn,* ed. by Ernest A. Baker (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1969), pp.159-202 (p.189).

continues to power the plot. The knowledge that the Princess believed in her innocence is Agnes's motivation to bear her false accusation:

AGNES Perhaps to Death, and ignominious Death;
But I shall meet my Princess where I go,
And our unspotted souls, in Bliss above,
Will know each other, and again will love.
(*AdC* 4.1, p.34)

Her reference to their 'unspotted souls' recognises the innocence of both the Princess and Agnes. Their reconciliation gives Agnes hope of a renewed friendship beyond the grave, where they 'again will love'. Her love for Constantia motivates all her actions, especially at the close of the play, when her name is cleared, and the Prince asks for her hand in marriage:

AGNES [*to the Prince*] I'm not ingrateful, nor insensible,
My Heart resented deeply all you felt,
You pieced my Soul, with your Complaints and Sighs;
[…]
I reverence my dear dead Princess more,
Than yet to think of ought that looks like Joy
Of Marriage, Love or any thing but Grief;
To her I'll consecrate my tender Thoughts,
Nor dare to think of you, but for her sake.
(*AdC* 5.1, p.45)

Marrying the Prince would honour Constantia's dying request, but it would also confirm the rumours of an affair between Agnes and the Prince. She is worried for her own reputation and the damage to the memory of the Princess, while feeling indebted to the Prince for his part in gaining her pardon and rescuing her from Alvaro. Her decision to remain in Portugal, but not to marry the Prince, is driven by her need to preserve and honour the memory of her friend. This decision is ultimately taken away from her through her accidental death, but her dying words indicate that there was perhaps a change of heart:

AGNES How have you Charm'd my fleeting Spirits back!
I felt unusual Glowings at my Heart,
It warm'd, and kindled into Life again,
But Death extinguishes the new-born Fire,
Ah lovely Prince Must I for ever lose you.
(*AdC* 5.1, p.46)

The confession can be read two ways, and in both, Agnes prioritises and honours her friendship with Constantia. If she really has had a change of heart and would consider marrying the Prince after all, her death prevents the inner turmoil and debate she undoubtedly would endure. If she had always harboured a secret love for the Prince, her

determination to deny it until the moment she is unable to act upon it displays the extent of her loyalty to the Princess. Both women prioritise the happiness and wellbeing of the other over their own and display a deep love for each other. Ironically, the 'poison of jealousy' that Elvira wished to use to ruin the bond between them does not manifest itself in the destruction of Agnes and Constantia's friendship, but in Elvira's own deteriorating sanity. After her unsuccessful attempt to murder Agnes, which actually resulted in the death of Constantia, Elvira falls prey to a gradual decline in her mental state which concludes with her removal from society.

Anne Kelley notes that Trotter's version of *Agnes* uses the traditional, tragic story of Portuguese culture and history to spotlight female solidarity over sexual love.[10] It is obvious that Agnes and Constantia are committed to their friendship; even when threats of death or accusations of scandal loom, both women are concerned for the wellbeing of one another. The changes Trotter makes to the Agnes plot make this clear. In the afore-mentioned meeting between the two women in Behn's version, Constantia's presumption of Agnes's guilt places the responsibility for the confusion into the Princess's hands and does not allow for a correction of the misunderstanding. Behn's Princess betrays her friendship with Agnes through her failure to consider their existing relationship as proof of Agnes's loyalty. Trotter's Constantia is capable of controlling her emotional response and considering Agnes's loyalty as evidence that there has been a misunderstanding. Her decision to have Agnes defend herself speaks more to their friendship than Behn's version does. Aphra Behn allows Constantia to die of a broken heart at the thought of her husband and Agnes being together, and her version of Agnes has always harboured a secret love for the Prince. After the death of Constantia, though wracked with guilt at causing her friend pain, Behn's Agnes is still persuaded to marry the Prince in secret. In both instances, the motivation of each woman comes from their relationship with the Prince, as opposed to their friendship with one another. Trotter's telling of the story marks a move away from sexually motivated women and places emphasis on their friendships and moral reasoning. Agnes and the Princess still experience their emotional reactions, but their strength of character stems from their ability to rationalise their behaviour.

Trotter's *Unhappy Penitent* also uses the friendship between two female protagonists to dictate the events. As with Agnes and Constantia, Ann and Margarite's friendship is established before the characters are seen by the audience, when Brisson

[10] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.90.

refers to their 'strict Friendship' (*UP* 1.1, p.2). The friendship has the potential to be threatened by the King of France's love for Ann, despite his politically arranged childhood engagement to Margarite. Despite the circumstances, there is no rivalry between the women. The question posed to the audience is not which of the women will marry the king, but how the two women can marry the men they love, and their introduction to the audience suggests this will not be straightforward. Ann's response to Margarite's marriage plans is surprising, since they would provide a way for Ann to marry the king should they go ahead:

ANN We owe our care first to be justify'd
To our own Thoughts, next to the Worlds;
I wou'd not have my Friend give an occasion
For Malice to reproach her, may not the King
T'excuse himself lay the first Breach on you?
[…]

MARGARITE To what wou'd you direct me? Thou best guide,
And Pattern of Perfection, which I wou'd follow,
But with Passion blinded, may need your aid
To lead me, more than the Bright Example.
(*UP* 2.1, pp.13-14)

Ann's priorities are clear conscience and ethical actions. Her unnerved reaction stems from the fact that Margarite has arranged her marriage to Lorrain without asking the King to release her from their initial contract. Ann's assertion that she will not allow her friend to behave in a way that could result in accusations of dishonourable behaviour strikes a chord with Margarite, who requests Ann's advice. Margarite's description of Ann as a 'pattern of perfection' and 'Bright Example' signifies her view of Ann as a morally steadfast person. Ann advises Margarite to ask the King to end the betrothal, which with his agreement, would release Margarite from any obligations to the King. Ann also believes it will shame the King into acknowledging how bad his behaviour towards Margarite has been. There are two potential ways of reading Ann's opinion. The first is that in Ann's view, the King should be given the opportunity to come good on his promise and marry Margarite after all. Should he break this promise, Ann would be grieved, as she acknowledges that her love for him is inspired partly by his honour and trustworthiness, and she cannot love anyone who cannot maintain these traits:

ANN I wou'd not have chose him from the rest of Princes,
How e'er in Power, or Dignity, Superiour,
But cannot love what I must cease to value.
(*UP* 3.1, p.14)

She reiterates this when she confronts him about his behaviour, noting that his delaying the marriage is inciting gossip and a negative opinion of him in amongst courtiers, who are fond of Margarite:

> ANN A noble heart dreads nothing more than finding
> The choice it made unworthy, and sees with pleasure
> It's inclination justify'd by merit,
> Tho' to the loss of what was dearest to it.
> (*UP* 3.1, p.16)

Ann wishes to attach herself to a candidate she deems worthy. In mistreating Margarite, at this point still the future Queen, the King proves himself undeserving of Ann's love. In Ann's mind, the King must honour his longstanding betrothal in order to maintain the moral high ground Ann wishes him to keep, even if she would be unable to marry him. This is a similar motivation for the second reading of Ann's encouragement of Margarite to ask the King to break the engagement. There is the possibility that Ann can accept the King breaking the engagement at Margarite's request as he would be free from the responsibility of reversing his promise without reasonable grounds. In both instances, Ann prioritises a virtuous choice above personal benefit, hoping that people will behave as they ought to.

Ann's treatment of Margarite and the King underlines that her moral principles are of more value to her than personal success or happiness, including that of others. She believes in a duty of friendship towards Margarite and advises her to behave correctly, but she lacks the genuine compassion and concern that would be expected as a natural part of friendship. Duty is a strong element of all Trotter's plays and the majority of the characters who uphold this idea of duty are female, with the exception of Gustavus in *Revolution*. But Ann also believes that the man she loves must do his duty in order to be worthy of her love for him. When the King decides to listen to Ann's advice by not breaking the engagement with Margarite, the two women face conflicting emotions:

> ANN I wish the King wou'd have consented to release you,
> That both might so acquit your selves with honour
> But scorn the baseness of the thought you mention,
> You know not how to prize a real friend.
> (*UP* 3.1, p.19)

Margarite feels Ann has been cruel. Ann admits that she pities Margarite, and 'half repent[s] the counsel that occasion'd/ Your misfortune' (*UP* 3.1, p.20) taking responsibility for giving advice that is contributing to Margarite's situation. But Margarite also

acknowledges that Ann 'did the duty of a Friend' (*UP* 3.1, p.20), believing that Ann acted with Margarite's moral interests at heart. Margarite's initial accusation of cruelty is fair, as Ann's expression of hope that the King would have freed Margarite from their contract is contradicted by the strong hints she gives the King about it:

> ANN Oh, Sir, let not what I have express'd seduce
> Your Vertue, cou'd you be tempted from your Faith
> To Heav'n and Marg'rite, not all the shining Glories
> Of your Crown, nor soft Insinuations
> Of your Love, shou'd bribe me from my just Disdain,
> Of a dishonourable and impious
> Alliance, and undeserving my Esteem;
> Were my Affection rooted with Life inseparable,
> I'd rear 'em up together. (*UP* 3.1, p.17)

Ann's priority is that she, the King and Margarite all maintain integrity and honour. Her desire for Margarite's happiness and the King's freedom is in conflict with this priority. Advising the King against breaking his betrothal is cruelty towards Margarite, who has voiced her unhappiness on many occasions. It is also narrow-minded, as Ann sees only one way to maintain the integrity of all parties, rather than acknowledging that a different response to the circumstances might also be ethically correct. Ann does ask Margarite for forgiveness, and Margarite's willingness to offer it, signifies her conflicting emotions. She believes Ann's motivation has come from a place of care but is angry at Ann's advice to the King. Trotter presents the question of whether it is right to give advice to friends that will encourage virtuous behaviour and an adherence to duty, at the cost of a friend's happiness – underlining that the two do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. As will be discussed shortly, this also outlines problematic aspects of Ann's character due to her inability to recognise that there may be more than one way to practice moral propriety.

This confused sense of morality and principle is reflected in some of the Scottish plays of the early modern period too. *Jephthes* focuses on Jephtha's determination to keep his vow to God, even though it would result in the death of his daughter. He cannot see that allowing his daughter to live would be upholding his moral duty as a father, as opposed to keeping his promise to God, which is motivated more by his pride as he avoids the counsel of those around him who tell him to back down. Sophronia finds herself fighting against Patricio's misplaced sense of duty in *Tarugo's Wiles* as she attempts to dissuade him that the best way to protect his sister's reputation is to lock her away. While he believes he is motivated by his principle, Patricio's refusal to consider another alternative is reflective of his stubbornness, rather than any personal ethical code. It is telling that in both of these

instances, the character with a clouded idea of morality is left with the consequences of their actions. Jephtha loses his daughter, and Patricio is publicly proved wrong. Elements of this are also present in the satire of *The Assembly*, as the immoveable Old Ladie is humiliated by the secret marriages of her nieces, and the scandalous pregnancy of her daughter, hastily covered by her fast marriage. What Trotter does differently, however, is present Ann and Margarite as two characters who have different ideas of how their principles and morality should be enacted, without suggesting that either is clearly wrong. Ann's resolution to Margarite's predicament lacks compassion, but Margarite's lacks appropriate forethought of the consequences she might reap.

Only when things begin to go wrong for her does Margarite actively seek Ann's advice with the intention of acting upon it. When her secret marriage to Lorrain is in trouble, Margarite considers that she should have listened to Ann previously:

MARGARITE Ruinous indeed! For it has lost me
All I had of worth, my Love, my Fame,
My Friend! I have assisted to my wretched Fate,
But was inevitably doom'd unhappy.

ANN No Madam, had you chose to bear th'uneasyness
— Your Duty pointed to, Heav'n had been
Engag'd your protection.
(*UP* 4.1, pp.35-36)

Ann is sympathetic but believes that if Margarite had paid attention to her earlier, her virtuous behaviour would have prevented what is now the potential ruin of her reputation. Margarite vows that if her name is cleared, she will sacrifice her 'dearest Inclination' (p.36) and commit her life to service in the Church, never seeing Lorrain again. Margarite concedes that she has made an error, so Ann becomes willing to step in:

MARGARITE The calm of Innocence gives sweet refreshments
By it's [sic] own delights, and future promises;
O I have lost it! And with it the best aid
To my weak virtue, since I'm now unworthy
Of your Friendship

ANN Your quick return regains your Title to it,
Your sufferings to my pitty, and assistance;
By power undaunted I'll proclaim your Wrongs,
And through this thickning Mist shew the King's
Malice,
The black obstructing Cloud, from which it fell,
Whilst your bright Honour kept it's purest luster;
This be my care to clear, your Task is more,

> Unstain'd preserve, the Glory I restore.
> (*UP* 4.1, pp.36-37)

The exchange shows that Margarite has been unable to maintain the standard that Ann requires of her friends. Ann as good as accepts this interpretation in her agreement with Margarite's form of repentance, which becomes the way that Margarite 'regains' Ann's friendship. Ann is immovable in her view that her love should only be bestowed on those who are 'worthy', making her friendship entirely conditional. This is challenging for readings which laud Trotter for portraying a positive female friendship between Margarite and Ann. King notes that through Ann's advice and friendship, Margarite is able to form her own moral agency, and make choices for herself,[11] and generally views all of the central female friendships portrayed in Trotter's plays as a means by which to encourage the moral agency of women:

> The morally empowering image of women's friendship is an important element of representation of piety in Catharine Trotter's plays, especially since her depiction of it complicates the representation of women's roles in rapidly evolving dramatic genres and advice literature traditions. Instead of showing selfish individual schemers or helpless figures of virtue in distress, Trotter shows women helping one another and actively practicing piety.[12]

Trotter avoids portraying her central female characters as distressed and helpless, and in addition to King's observation, Suzuki notes that in *The Unhappy Penitent*, Trotter 'emphasizes friendship – though between women, rather than between men – as a corrective to contract-breaking monarchs and tyrannical husbands.'[13] Both Suzuki and King see the friendships between Trotter's female characters, particularly that of Ann and Margarite, as achieving a moral standard that cannot exist without mutual support between women. This is true to an extent, but despite these positive aspects of the friendship, the relationship between Ann and Margarite can be considered an example of what Janet Todd refers to as 'manipulative friendship' describing an ambitious woman who is isolated within her social situation and turns her friendship with other women into a manipulative one, rather than offering alliance and support.[14] Todd uses the language of 'prey and predator'[15] which is too strong in the case of *Unhappy Penitent*, and too much could be read into considering Ann as the controlling party within a manipulative friendship.

[11] King, 'Be Mistress', p.10.
[12] King, 'past Jesting', p.128.
[13] Suzuki, p.549.
[14] Janet Todd, *Women's Friendship in Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p.340.
[15] Todd, p.340.

However, in her relentless pursuit of virtue, Ann is often isolated from those around her who do not prioritise this to the same extent.[16] Other characters recognise the political advantages that come from the King marrying Ann instead of Margarite and advise him accordingly. The King and Margarite would like to be free from their contract, and so Ann's moral stance brings her a degree of loneliness. Her moral voice only has effect over Margarite, eventually becoming manipulative. As quoted above, Ann's declaration that 'I would not have my Friend give an occasion/ For malice to reproach her', alongside her insistence that the King adhere to *her* expectations of him, emphasises that those on whom Ann bestows her love must keep her high moral standards, otherwise she must withdraw that affection.

Although Ann's personal, rational ethics can be interpreted as Trotter enabling female characters to support one another as they take responsibility for their own actions, it should not be ignored that Ann tries to enforce her own moral ideals upon those closest to her and is 'less a companionable supporter of her friend than a stern monitor who arrives on stage to reroute her straying passions by appealing to the blinding force of vows.'[17] This indeed makes Ann's friendship manipulative, and therefore the relationship between the two women is not based on the mutual trust and affection of Agnes and Constantia in *Agnes de Castro*. The friendships of both sets of women function differently within her plays, but Trotter holds them up for the audience to see the complexities of female relationships, and as will be discussed later in this chapter, the complexities of female characters too.

These intricately detailed relationships portrayed by Trotter in her plays can be compared with contemporary plays from England and from Scotland. *Tarugo's Wiles*, *Marciano,* and *The Assembly* all present female pairings or groupings who are central to the plot, but only *Tarugo's Wiles* presents a pairing of women who are friends and not sisters. The relationship between Sophronia and Liviana is underdeveloped in comparison to the friendships between Trotter's characters. At the opening of *Tarugo's Wiles*, the friendship between the women is made known by the way they talk about one another. Sophronia is engaged to Liviana's brother, Patricio, and Liviana is introduced to the audience as she discusses her brother's upcoming wedding:

[16] King, 'Be Mistress', p.15.
[17] Joanne E. Myers, 'Catharine Trotter and the Claims of Conscience', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature,* 31:1-2 (2012), 53-75, 59.

LIVIANA I wonder what can be the occasion that my Brother's Nuptials with The Lady Sophronia is retarded, the report being all about the Town that they are already marry'd.

LOCURA Madam, all I can learn from his man Alberto is, that since you have been so strictly confin'd, the Lady Sophronia has not received your Brother's Visits with her wonted cheerfulness: For my part, I believe this suddain restraint upon you hath rais'd dislike in her against so jealous and peevish a disposition.
(*TW* 1.2, p.2)

Liviana's confinement at the hands of her brother, Patricio, who believes the best way to preserve a woman's honour is to keep her away from any outside influences, has resulted in her complete removal from society. Her response to the news of Sophronia's actions ('if I were in her place I would do the same': *TW* 1.2, p.2) suggests existing solidarity between them. When Horatio tells Sophronia that he believes his love for Liviana is returned, Sophronia is in a position to confirm it: 'Be perswaded they were, and she has signifi'd so much to my self that you are the onely person she affects' (*TW* 1.2, p.3), showing that the two women are in each other's confidence. Sophronia's desire to help Liviana has led to her refusing to marry Patricio until he recognises that he is practicing 'barbarous jealousie against his Sister, who among all the Ladies in the Town is reputed the great example of Virtue' (*TW* 1.2, pp.3-4). Sophronia naturally is concerned for herself too: 'If Vertuous Liviana thus be us'd, [Patricio's] wife must needs expect to be abus'd' (*TW* 2.1, p.8), but the language she uses to describe Liviana shows respect and care.

The main thrust of the play is Sophronia's attempts to release Liviana from the hold of Patricio, therefore the existing friendship between the two women needs to be convincing. Despite the foundations laid by St Serf that imply a close friendship between the two women, the audience are given very little opportunity to see them together on stage. The first time they are together occurs in Act 5 at the climax of the play, when Sophronia and Tarugo's carefully planned rescue attempt of Liviana has gone awry. The conversation is functional in giving Sophronia the opportunity to create a solution to the problem, as opposed to providing a more detailed picture of their friendship. Unlike Trotter, St Serfe's portrayal of female friendship is established by what the characters say about one another, rather than the conversations they have between themselves. This is just enough to convince the audience of the friendship between Liviana and Sophronia, and it would be harder to show why Sophronia wished to help Liviana without indicating this friendship. Despite this, the friendship between the women is not central to the plot, as in

Trotter's plays, and it functions as a device by which Liviana and Sophronia have reason to speak to one another, keeping the play moving.

A similar instance of female friendship on the stage from the same period is found in George Farquhar's[18] *The Beaux Stratagem*, where Mrs Sullen and Dorinda are seen to rely on one another to some extent, without this being explored in great detail. In their first appearance together on stage, Dorinda and Mrs Sullen, who are sisters-in-law, are discussing Mrs Sullen's unhappy marriage:

> MRS SULLEN Anywhere to pray, for Heaven alone can help me. But I think, Dorinda, there's no form of prayer in the liturgy against bad husbands.
>
> DORINDA But there's a form of law in Doctors' Commons, and I swear, sister Sullen, rather than see you thus continually discontented, I would advise you to apply to that. For besides the part that I bear in your vexatious broils, as being sister to the husband and friend to the wife, your example gives me such an impression of matrimony, that I shall be apt to condemn my person to a long vacation all its life.[19]

The women openly talk about how unhappy Mrs Sullen is, and Dorinda even encourages her to look for a way out. The frankness of the open conversation between them is evident throughout this act, and Mrs Sullen calls attention to their friendship when asking Dorinda for her help, saying 'He's but half a brother, and I'm your entire friend' (*TBS* 2.2, p.31). Both women work together to help Dorinda discover more about Aimwell, who has shown an interest in her. Farquhar lays these foundations of friendship between the women, like Trotter, by showing them on stage together and by portraying them sympathetically.[20] However, unlike Trotter, the friendship between his female characters, while important to them, is not the main relationship within the play. While she confides in Dorinda, and asks for her loyalty, the two women cannot help but compete for who has the better lover, and it is not Dorinda, but her brother who Mrs Sullen pins her hopes on helping her escape her situation:

> MRS SULLEN But I'll lay you a guinea that I had finer things said to me than you had.
>
> DORINDA Done. – What did your fellow say to ye?

[18] Farquhar's relationship with Trotter is discussed further in Chapter 5.
[19] George Farquhar, *The Beaux Stratagem* 2.1, ed. by Ann Blake (London: A&C Black, 2006), pp.24-25.
[20] Linker, p.587.

MRS SULLEN My fellow took the picture of Venus for mine.

DORINDA But my lover took me for Venus herself.

MRS SULLEN Common cant! Had my spark called me a Venus directly, I should have believed him a footman in good earnest.
[…]

DORINDA Come, my dear, we'll talk of something else.

MRS SULLEN O, Dorinda, I own myself a woman, full of my sex, a gentle, generous soul, - easy and yielding to soft desires, a spacious heart, where love and all his train might lodge. And must the fair apartment of my breast be made a stable for a brute to lie in?

DORINDA Meaning your husband, I suppose?

MRS SULLEN Husband! No – even husband is too soft a name for him. – But come, I expect my brother here tonight or tomorrow. He was abroad when my father married me; perhaps he'll find a way to make me easy.
(*TBS* 4.1, pp.92-93)

Although the discussion of their lovers does not cause any lasting damage to the friendship in Farquhar's play, its presence shows the way in which female friends were often pitted against one another, as their 'dependence on men left them little option but to be rivals for male attention.'[21] Although Dorinda and Mrs Sullen are not competing for the attention of the same man, they are ultimately driven by their relation to the men around them. Dorinda wishes to be married to Aimwell, while Mrs Sullen wishes to be free from her terrible husband and marry Archer. The conclusion sees a happy ending for both women, and Farquhar's play is evidence that such female pairings and agency can function within the comic genre as well as the highly charged tragedy that Trotter was writing. However, neither Dorinda nor Mrs Sullen are given the opportunity to use their agency to the same extent that Trotter's female characters are, and their friendship becomes less and less significant to the plot. Trotter's women are able to use their own agency, partly due to the strong relationships between women which directly affects the outcomes of her plays.

Female agency

Trotter's work is lauded for her portrayal of women who are capable of reason and taking decisive action which affects their circumstances, even if the results are varied. The central female characters of *Fatal Friendship*, Lamira and Felicia, practice their own agency with

[21] King, 'Be Mistress', p.4.

different outcomes. J. Douglas Canfield notes that female characters acting with independent agency are rare in Restoration drama, arguing that Felicia's decision to secretly marry Gramont before the beginning of the play is an example of such agency with tragic consequences – her choice of husband is not appropriate by society's standards and she suffers for it.[22] The decision of Felicia and Gramont to marry without the permission of their families is the catalyst for the play's events, while Lamira's act of self-preservation, contributes to its outcome. Even though her plan is rejected by Felicia, Lamira is successful in her primary objective – to protect herself and her reputation. Mortified by being unintentionally caught up in bigamy, she removes herself from the gossip and judgement of society – and works her revenge upon Gramont for his treatment of her. Her first course of action is to offer Felicia her fortune:

LAMIRA You are innocent to me, as I to you,
Tho both each others chief unhappiness;
But there's another guilty cause of that;
Him only we should hate, let us be Friends;
[…]
My Gift is only charg'd with one Condition,
The same I have impos'd upon my self,
That you shall never see Gramont again,
In which I have consulted both our Honours.
(*FF* 5.1, p.41)

Lamira's offer of her fortune creates the financial security that Felicia has always desperately needed. It is a recognition that they have both been wronged and are innocent of any crime, especially towards one another. Lamira's condition that neither of them sees Gramont again allows her to enact her revenge upon Gramont by making sure he can never see Felicia, his true love. Unlike Felicia, who has her brother Bellgard to protect her honour and act as a guardian, Lamira is a young widow, with no surviving parents. Rather than despairing that she has been left to fend for herself, she does what she can to maintain the dignity and reputation she has. She takes the prerogative to create revenge, which ensures that although she withdraws from society, she does not simply fade into oblivion. At the conclusion of the play, Lamira's aloneness is exceedingly obvious. Felicia is recognised as Gramont's rightful widow, but, because Lamira and Gramont's marriage was a sham, she has no legal protection. Lamira decides to keep her initial plan to leave for a convent:

ROQUELAURE What Reparation can be made, Lamira?

[22] Canfield, *Heroes and States*, p.150.

LAMIRA The world can make me none; there's nothing here
But a Vissicitude [sic] of Miseries:
If there is any Joy that's permanent,
It must be in that calm, that heavenly State
To which my future days are dedicated.
(FF 5.1, p.56)

Lamira's opportunity to take action to resolve her situation is rewarded in the sense that she is able to follow through with her plan. The two tragic events of *Fatal Friendship* are the death of Gramont, but also the loneliness of Lamira. This does not lessen the success of Lamira using her agency to preserve her own sanity and reputation, even in emotionally painful circumstances.

In comparison, Felicia's independent agency is unsuccessful as her marriage to Gramont creates endless problems for them, but she is given another chance to exercise agency and her judgement when deciding whether to accept Lamira's offer or not. Felicia's choice to stay married to Gramont (*FF* 5.1, pp.41-42), despite his unfaithfulness, is not portrayed as a naïve, romantic gesture, as she has taken the opportunity to confront him about his behaviour in an earlier scene. Instead, she recognises the seriousness of her marriage vows to him and refuses to take another route out. This choice is hers alone to take, and although her first decision to marry Gramont, and the one to stay with him cause her great difficulty, her loyalty is rewarded after his death, when she is afforded the privileges and protection of his father's family. In positions that are far from ideal for either woman, Trotter portrays Felicia and Lamira as decision-makers who are ultimately accountable for their own actions and responses.

Evidence from Scottish plays of female characters using their own agency to change their circumstances is also found in William Clerk's *Marciano*, where Arabella's willingness to change her own situation is instrumental to the events. *Marciano* contains two distinct plots; Arabella features prominently in the 'tragic' plot, while Marionetta and Chrysolina are the main focus of the comic plot. Because Arabella does not have the chance to interact with the other two women, as she would presumably have done if Trotter had authored this play, she is left to her own devices. On hearing that the Duke's army has been defeated by rebels, Arabella's first thought is for Marciano. Having refused his advances and declarations of love in the past, she realises that she now returns his love and worries that he is in danger of death, and she has never acted upon her feelings:

ARABELLA —But hold— imagine the brave Marciano,
As gods know, and I fear, a prisoner.

Consequently, thy heart in quarter with him,
— Pray, what wouldst do? Resolve, poor Arabella
Would'st not go search him? Or would'st rather stay
Thou at Siena here, he, God knows where.
Love prompts the first, honour perswades the last.
(*Marc.* 1.6, p.11)

Her decision to find and help Marciano demonstrates an unwillingness to wait and see if Marciano can resolve the situation on his own. After locating him and being arrested herself, Arabella, with the help of Strenuo, proves resourceful, using the romantic intentions of the rebel leader, Borasco, to their advantage. Borasco's obvious attraction to Arabella allows her to accept enough of his attention to give her extra freedoms. Arabella becomes a go-between for Marciano and Strenuo, smuggling equipment to break Marciano out of prison. She becomes increasingly important to the escape plan, having to persuade Marciano to go when he refuses to leave without her:

ARABELLA Cannot the tears of innocence prevaile.
Where is your courage now? what? are you cool?
Is all that noble blood, that formerly
Run in your veines exhausted? Must a woman
Become your Trumpeter, and stir your spirits
Since 'tis but death at all hands?
(*Marc*. 4.2, p.45)

Arabella's challenge to have courage, gives him the confidence to escape. Arabella starts as a smuggler and messenger and develops into a full conspirator in the escape plan, without whom the plan would fail. This motivational speech is a moment of Arabella's making alone, and it works. Marciano's successful escape provides a second opportunity for the Duke's army to gain victory over the rebellion. Arabella is willing to face execution because of the hope brought by the success of Marciano and the Duke, to which she has contributed through facilitating Marciano's escape. Arabella is given the option to accept Borasco's advances towards her in exchange for a pardon and release (*Marc.* 4.7, p.53) but asserts that she would rather 'undergo a thousand tortures' (*Marc.* 4.7, p.54) than accept his help. This is not only evidence of her loyalty to the Duke and Marciano but also her refusal to be beholden to Borasco.

That the details of Arabella's escape are unknown to the audience and the characters indicates that she achieves this unaided having 'Escap'd, no man knows how; gone, God knows whether' (*Marc.* 4.7, p.58). Arabella is arguably a minor character in *Marciano* and receives the least stage time of the three female characters. Her own fate is

also portrayed as being of secondary importance to that of both Marciano and the state of the nation. This makes sense as the restoration of good order and the return of a rightful ruler from being deposed is a key characteristic of a Restoration dramatic plot.[23] Nevertheless, when she is on stage, Arabella's actions propel the plot forward. Although she is portrayed as a generally two-dimensional character - her complete dedication to the fate of Marciano and the Duke forms her motivation for everything - her resourcefulness and decision-making do allow her to achieve the best outcomes for both and demonstrates her as a woman of personal agency.

In the same way that Arabella takes control of her own situation in *Marciano*, in *Tarugo's Wiles* as things begin to founder with their original rescue plan, Sophronia is the one who is able to improvise and create a solution. She informs Horatio and Tarugo of a change in plan and enables Horatio and Liviana to be married in secret, before summoning Patricio to her, that she might confront him about the treatment of his sister. The exchange between the two shows Sophronia both debate and ultimately outsmart Patricio:

SOPHRONIA	Do you continue in the same opinion, of the facility in keeping a Woman from her humour?
PATRICIO	As yet I know nothing to convince me.
SOPHRONIA	Will no less then a demonstration of the contrary satisfie you?
PATRICIO	No Madam.
SOPHRONIA	I warrant you, you think your self Cock-sure of Liviana's being at home?
PATRICIO	What else?
SOPHRONIA	Come out; Advance my new marry'd Couple {*Enter Hor., Liv. from the Closet*} if you be not now fitted with a demonstration, I'le trouble my self no more to find one. […] What say you? Can a Womans will be fetter'd?
PATRICIO	I acknowledge my errour. (*TW* 5.1, pp.53-54)

Sophronia builds her argument against Patricio, leading him to reveal what it would take for him to acknowledge he is wrong, before presenting him with that exact evidence. Patricio has no choice but to accept defeat, and the play concludes with a triumph for the freedom of woman's will. Sophronia is portrayed as a woman of superior mind (she is

[23] Canfield, *Tricksters and Estates*.

complimented for her 'masculine learning' in 1.1, p.1) and independent agency, due to her own education - it gains her the respect of Tarugo and Horatio, who are willing to take on the plan she has suggested, and although Tarugo is credited as the brain behind the actual mechanics of the plot, Sophronia's part in the plan ensures its success.

It is evident so far that although female agency is present in seventeenth-century Scottish drama, Trotter manages to explore it further than her Scottish contemporary playwrights. One of the best examples of female agency in Trotter's plays is Christina, in *The Revolution of Sweden*. Although married to Beron, who opposes the Swedish rebellion, Christina is loyal to the rebel cause and instrumental in helping Gustavus start the movement. Her loyalty drives her actions within the play. Her initiative and agency are most obvious through her use of the same disguise to join the rebellion, as well as fooling Beron. Christina and her companion, Laura, adopt male dress to pose as young men wishing to join the rebellion. So-called 'breeches roles' were a common trope on the early modern stage. In the pre-Restoration era, where female characters were played by young men, the act of a young man, playing a young woman, who is acting as a young man, added a degree of comedy to plays. After 1660 when female characters were played by women, this trope continued. As many scholars and critics point out, once women were playing female characters, the breeches role became yet another way in which the female body could be sexualised through the increased visibility of their figures due to wearing trousers as opposed to dresses.[24] In regard to *Revolution*, this trope functions as an opportunity for increased female agency as opposed to sexualising her female characters, particularly because Trotter does not emphasise sex as a motive for any of her characters in this play. This lack of embodied female sexuality in Trotter's plays is another way in which they align with the tradition found in early modern Scottish plays such as *Philotus*, *Tarugo's Wiles* and *Marciano.*

In Act 4, the fatally injured Christina is able to finally confirm the true pattern of events and restore justice and truth to the plot, saving Arwide from execution:

> CHRISTINA [as Fredage] Count Arwide was deceiv'd by Beron's Treachery,
> By whom he had been shewn a Writing, that
> Contain'd most Honourable Articles;
> Which when he'ad well consider'd and assented to,
> This Beron unsuspected, in its stead,

[24] John O'Brien, 'Drama: Genre, Gender, Theatre', in *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cynthia Wall (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp.183-201 (p.194).

Shifted that other, like in Form, to which
The artless Arwide freely set his Hand,
Not doubting it the same he had perus'd.

1ST SENATOR How know you this?

CHRISTINA By Beron's own Confession.
Who thought me of his Party, and t'engage me
In his Design t'embroil th'unsettled Nation,
Imparted to me what I have related;
But when he found me startled at the Treason,
Earnestly disswading him from the Pursuit of it;
In fear I shou'd betray the guilty Secret,
He resolv'd my Death, and added to
His other Crimes, the Murther of his Wife.
(*Rev* 5.1, p.70)

Thanks to Christina, Arwide's name is fully cleared, and Beron is brought to justice. Although Christina is the victim of this tragedy, dying shortly after her revelation, her ability to exercise her own agency for the cause she believes in saves another's life and brings about peace and stability in her nation.

Arwide's wife, Constantia, is also a key female figure in *Revolution*, who, like Christina, exercises her agency in choosing loyalty to her country over loyalty to her husband. She is so loyal to the Swedish rebellion that she does not only angrily confront Arwide about his treachery, but she turns him in to Gustavus. Her conviction that Arwide has abandoned the Swedish rebellion makes her instrumental in his conviction. However, when she discovers his innocence, she is his biggest advocate. Both Constantia and Christina are women who have very clear political loyalties, and a desire to prioritise the greater good, rather than remedy their own personal circumstances. Brett D. Wilson discusses these women in the following terms:

> Trotter gives women cogent public and political voices. What gives that female political agency a particular punch here is that Trotter is not reflecting an extant difference between public and private, but working to *articulate* that difference by focusing on a case in which acting to benefit the public good is costly – yet nonetheless necessary.[25]

This is important in the discussion of women's agency in Trotter's plays. Christina and Constantia are in difficult situations, and they use their own agency to make decisions and to alter their circumstances, either for themselves, or for the sake of a greater cause. Trotter's female characters use their agency to navigate their circumstances in a way that is more detailed than some of the other female characters considered in this chapter. While

[25] Wilson, p.96.

Arabella makes decisions for the greater good in *Marciano,* she remains a side-lined character, as opposed to Christina and Constantia who are protagonists. Sophronia uses her own agency to help rescue Liviana, but it is Tarugo who is given the credit in the play. Trotter's other characters, Felicia, Lamira, Margarite, Ann, Agnes, and the Princess, and even the women of *Love at a Loss*, who have yet to be discussed in great detail here, have all been given centre stage in Trotter's works, and their decisions and actions often become the driving forces of the plays.

As shown in this chapter, Trotter's portrayal of female agency and female friendship in comparison to her Scottish contemporaries is where her writing differentiates itself as more advanced. However, the prominence of moral virtue that can be found within Trotter's writing and emphasised by her Scottish dimensions brings new meaning to these portrayals of female characters. Because her plays are intended to instruct, this presentation of women interacting with one another and making their own decisions within their own moral framework becomes a model that can be followed. Trotter is showing that not only are her female characters capable of such things, but so are women in reality. As demonstrated through the characters of Ann and Margarite, however, Trotter does not present a black and white morality, as other playwrights from Scotland do. While in *Tarugo's Wiles*, *Philotus*, *Jephtha*, *Ane Satyre*, or even *The Assembly* there is a clear distinction between characters the audience should imitate and those they should not, Trotter presents characters whose motivations are as complicated as their ideas of moral virtue or ethical frameworks; she puts her women in impossible circumstances, thus creating layered characters.

The complexity of Trotter's female characters

Within the arc of contemporary play texts from Scotland and England, Trotter sits at the leading end of a spectrum where the portrayal of female friendship and agency was developing. Her characters are resourceful, clever, and capable of controlling their own circumstances, even if the outcomes are varied in their success. Trotter's female characters are not often motivated by amorous love and as will be further illustrated in this section, are often multi-layered and complex in their personalities and motivations.

One of the prime examples of a multi-faceted female character created by Trotter is the villainous Elvira in *Agnes de Castro*. In Aphra Behn's version of the story, Elvira's motivation to harm Agnes stems from her jealousy of the fact that the Prince has fallen in

love with Agnes, when he had initially intended to marry Elvira.[26] But Trotter removes this as Elvira's primary motivation, and instead, roots Elvira's jealousy in the close friendship between the Princess and Agnes. Although there is also a hint in Trotter's version that the Prince had shown some interest in marrying Elvira in the past, her feelings against the Princess and Prince do not stem from unrequited, jealous love, but instead that through the Prince's rejection, Elvira was humiliated:

> ELVIRA Ye Gods! Was I a Trifle to be plaid with,
> Fit but to entertain his leisure hours;
> But I've recall'd the Heart he Fool'd away
> And now 'tis fill'd with Fury and Revenge,
> He'll find Elvira can do more, more than amuse him.
> (*AdC* 1.1, p.2)

Elvira is no longer in love with the Prince, but her anger at his treatment of her still remains. Trotter's creation of the character of Lorenzo emphasises Elvira's indifference to the Prince in terms of amorous love. Although Lorenzo and Elvira have little interaction in the play, the two clearly have a form of relationship. Lorenzo tells Alvaro 'You know I love your sister' (*AdC* 3.2, p.28), and Elvira notes that, should she need help avoiding conviction for her crimes, 'My Brother, and Lorenzo both have Interest,/ And both Concern enough, to gain my Pardon' (3.1, p.22). While this does not assert that Elvira loves Lorenzo as he loves her (he expresses his love again in 4.1 when he tries to defend her actions to Agnes), it is clear that she recognises and acknowledges his love.

The introduction of Lorenzo's character paints Elvira in a different light. Not only does it imply that this evil woman actually has qualities that attract love, but her revenge is not motivated by loneliness after being spurned by a man. She can, if she chooses, have a lover, and her need for revenge is inspired out of a desire for justice over her treatment. Elvira is also given a more significant role in Trotter's version of *Agnes*.[27] In Behn's account, Elvira is overcome with grief when she discovers that her forging of the letter from Agnes to the Prince has caused the death of a broken-hearted Constantia. She takes responsibility for her actions, promising 'never to pardon herself',[28] and other than a briefly mentioned, unsuccessful attempt to win the Prince over once more, Elvira does not feature in the remainder of Behn's narrative. In contrast, Trotter ensures Elvira is directly responsible for Constantia's death. Not only this, but Elvira's language throughout the play constantly emphasises the pleasure she finds in revenge: 'Such joys I find in others'

[26] Behn, *History of Agnes*, p.163.
[27] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.114.
[28] Behn, *History of Agnes*, p.194

misery,/ If all were damn'd, Hell wou'd Heav'n be to me' (*AdC* 2.1, p.15). Trotter expands the villainous, revenge-hungry elements of Elvira's character by adding her jealousy of the friendship between the Princess and Agnes and her dissatisfaction with the Spanish influence at court to the pain from the Prince's rejection, which is found in Behn's version. Trotter further develops Elvira's character, marking her journey from vengeful manipulator to tortured soul, as the impact of the murder of Constantia takes its toll:

> ELVIRA Thus far has Fortune waited on my wish;
> What does my discontented Heart desire?
> I know not what I fear, and yet methinks,
> I tremble ev'ry little noise I fear,
> And still silence fills my Soul with horror.
> (*AdC* 4.1, p.34)

Elvira's guilt grips her, causing her to become paranoid and regretful of her actions. Trotter makes another addition to the text by introducing the ghost of Constantia, who warns Elvira that the truth will come out:

> GHOST Thou think'st thy Crimes secure, because unknown;
> But, wretched Woman, thou thyself art Witness,
> And unsuspected shall accuse thyself.
> (*AdC*, 4.1, p.34)

Instead of gaining her satisfaction and power, Elvira's fear of being discovered as the guilty party causes her to lose her mind. The sight of the princess drives her to resolve to kill Agnes in order to remove evidence of her crimes, but her debilitation prevents this, and Elvira eventually does reveal her own guilt in Act 5. Although Elvira's villainous actions are never justified by Trotter, her reasoning and motivation for revenge are clearly explained to the audience, and there is no doubt as to the complexity of them. Elvira is never presented simply as the spurned lover, but instead as calculating, jealous and humiliated. Trotter's additions to the character of Elvira show female agency being used for selfish means and actively attempting to bring harm to others. While this is shown through other female characters in drama, as is discussed below, what marks Trotter's Elvira as different is that her motivations are as complex as the actions taken. Trotter also portrays how each of Elvira's actions takes effect on those around her, and on herself in a gradual way, as opposed to presenting an evil character who succeeds until a dramatic display of poetic justice at the close of the play.

In comparison, Mary Pix's depiction of her female villain, Sheker Para in *Ibrahim: The Thirteenth Emperour of the Turks* (1696) is a more two-dimensional offering. As head

of the harem for Ibrahim, the Turkish Emperor, Sheker Para serves as his chief mistress and ensures a steady supply of virgins for his satisfaction. Her love, however, is reserved for Amurat, the honourable army General, who has recently returned to the city. However, Amurat is in love with Morena, the daughter of the Mufti. Spurned by Amurat, Sheker Para is driven to revenge, which is her sole motivation. Her vengeful nature is exposed by Pix even before she has expressed her love for Amurat in person, when she describes how he has ignored her love in the past:

ACHMET Knows he his Happyness?

SHEKER PARA Yes, Yes, for I have stole a thousand burning Glances,
And sent them to his heart
Besides sweet herbs, and Amorous Flowers
[…]
Yet still he Ignorance pretends, nor meets my Eyes

ACHMET […]
Or has another gain'd his heart?

SHEKER PARA Cou'd I find out that, revenge wou'd take the place
Of Injur'd Love, and shou'd weep no more;
Revenge, Sweet Revenge, Injuries Antidote,
Wrong'd Womens darling Joy —[29]

The mere suggestion that Amurat would prefer another woman is enough to inspire revenge from Sheker Para. This is particularly striking as there is no evidence in the play that Amurat has ever returned her love for him. Sheker Para's desire for revenge comes from a skewed perspective – she believes she is entitled to his love even though it is unrequited. When she does confess her love to Amurat and is rejected, the violent language of her speech is unsurprising, as her vengeful nature has already been established so early in the play:

SHEKER PARA Gone! O Devil!
Keep down, thou swelling Heart!
Or higher rise, that I may tear
Thee with my teeth! […]
swift as I will do
To form his ruine.
(*Ibrahim* 2.1, p.13)

Her plan to ruin Amurat involves destroying his relationship with Morena and causing her harm. As the daughter of the Mufti, Morena is a free woman and there is no requirement

[29] Mary Pix, *Ibrahim: The Thirteenth Emperour of the Turks* 1.1 (London: John Harding, 1696), p.5, in Steeves Vol 1.

for her to join Ibrahim's harem. Knowing that Ibrahim would likely try and get around this if he knew Morena existed, her father has kept her hidden away. Sheker Para joins forces with the Vizier and persuades him that the best form of revenge would be to inform Ibrahim of the existence of Morena:

VIZIER Hold Madam! have you consider'd what you say?
— Is this the Vow'd Revenge — to make
His Daughter a Sultana Queen?

SHEKER PARA Short Sighted Politician! —
Had [the Mufti] design'd her for our Lord, why was she
Thus close conceal'd? Besides; I know
The Mufti hates our Licentious Emperour; his Late
Attempt upon the Relict of Morat;
His despising all his Queens when once enjoy'd;
Three Sons already bless the Imperial Line,
And make succession sure. Therefore
Shou'd her Womb prove fertil; the Royal Innocents
Are only Born for Sacrifice — these Reasons
Weigh'd as soon he'd give his Daughter
To a Brothel, as the Sultans Arms.
(*Ibrahim* 3.1, p.15)

Sheker Para knows that Morena would be treated as a concubine, without the privileges of being Ibrahim's wife. As his senior mistress, Sheker Para has experienced this treatment first-hand and has selected other women for this fate. The sacrifice of any children produced, because they are of no value to the Royal line, indicates exactly how dehumanising life in the court of Ibrahim is. The fact that Sheker Para wishes this fate on Morena, simply because she is loved by Amurat, reveals the extent of Sheker Para's cruelty. Her sole motivation is to cause misery to Amurat through the suffering of Morena. This suffering takes the form of forcibly removing Morena from her father's house and allowing her to be raped by the Emperor before being returned home, distraught at the loss of her honour (*Ibrahim* 3.1, pp.23-25). Sheker Para's cruelty is highlighted further by the false promise of friendship and help she offers Morena:

MORENA Oh! 'tis greatly in your power —
Tell the Sultan you have discovered,
As you easily may a thousand Imperfections
That I am sickly, peevish, ill Bred, and
Of a hateful disposition —

SHEKER PARA I cannot so deny your Excellencies;
But I will do my best, that you shall hear of this no more.
[…]
Rest secur'd, I am wholly yours,

Retire fair Innocence, for I see
This surprize has discomposed ye.
[…] {*Exit Morena*}
Poor easy Fool! blush Amurat
At thy ill choice! —take me
For her Friend! Yes to her destruction
I'll prove a constant one.
(*Ibrahim* 3.1, p.21)

Sheker Para carries out her plans in full knowledge of how badly Morena will be treated. Like Elvira in *Agnes de Castro,* Sheker Para is portrayed as a villain, but unlike Elvira, her motivations are less multifaceted. Even before she has been rejected by Amurat, she is motivated by the desire to avenge herself. Elvira's vengeance does come from her desire for revenge, but also stems from her dislike and jealousy of Agnes and her friendship with the Princess.

Trotter's Elvira is even more nuanced than Behn's version of the same character. Her descent into insanity highlights her fear of discovery, and creates another layer of motivation for her actions, as does her relationship with her brother, Alvaro. Karen Overbye commends the way in which Trotter sympathetically presents the relationship between the siblings, who are very loyal to one another.[30] Despite her hatred of Agnes, Elvira can sympathise with her brother after he has been rejected by Agnes. In this mixture of motivation and emotion, Trotter humanises Elvira to an extent that the audience can relate and sympathise with Elvira, unlike Sheker Para whose cruelty is her key character trait. When the corrupt Ibrahim is finally killed, Sheker Para confronts Amurat:

SHEKER PARA Turn, Traitor, Turn! And here behold
Thy Fate! — 'Twas I disclod's the
Cloister'd Maid, and forc'd her on the King
That good Turn I ow'd for your Disdain,
Then — If you love Morena, wreak
On me your Vengeance, and strike
your Ponyard to my Heart.
(*Ibrahim* 5.1, p.37)

Sheker Para still blames Amurat, labelling him a 'traitor' and believing her revenge is justified. Her request that he kill her seems to serve Pix's desire to present Amurat as honourable – he refuses to kill her and Sheker Para has to kill herself (*Ibrahim* 5.1, p.37). Amurat's love and loyalty remain with Morena, meaning that Sheker Para's desire for revenge is not fulfilled. Her desire for death is not inspired by remorse but is instead an

[30] Overbye, p.107.

escape from her failure. Sheker Para is not afforded any form of humanising, whereas Elvira is.

This layered complexity is not confined to Trotter's villains; her heroines too are portrayed in more detail than in the works of contemporary writers. In considering Trotter's use of female friendship, Heather King notes that the standard portrayal of women on the stage at the time was as 'selfish individual schemers or helpless figures of virtue in distress,'[31] while Rebecca Merrens stresses that women of the time were depicted in tragedies as 'more sinning than sinned against.'[32] Both point to the narrow way in which female characters are depicted in late seventeenth-and eighteenth-century drama, appearing two-dimensional in their motivations, behaviour and character development. As outlined above, *Marciano* indicates that Arabella is perfectly able to use her own agency to escape from prison, however, she is never shown on stage doing this. Instead, the audience hears about her escape second-hand from other characters and does not get to see her wit in action. Her motivation is her love and regard for Marciano, but through this she also displays her loyalty to her country's freedom. Beyond this desire to help Marciano, although it is shown to have two elements (her love for him, and the national cause) the audience is given no further insight into Arabella's personality. This is also the same for the female characters of the comic plot – Chrysolina and Marionetta are only concerned with finding appropriate husbands, and this motivation takes all their time and attention – they are never acknowledge the fact their country is at war and that a political crisis is ongoing.

An example of a female character confined to only one characteristic is Morena in *Ibrahim*. In perfect contrast to Sheker Para, who is the embodiment of cruelty and evil, Morena is typically good and virtuous, and cannot survive when her honour is sullied. Amurat refers to her as:

> AMURAT this fair Heaven of Innocence,
> This matchless, lovely, charming Creature,
> More Worth than Indies joyn'd to Indies.
> (*Ibrahim,* 2.1, p.8)

Morena does not contradict this in any of her actions. She accepts Amurat's love and is given very little to say by way of dialogue or part in the plot. When faced with being forced into Ibrahim's harem, she attempts to defend herself: 'Apply Rhetorick to Ibrahim',

[31] King, 'past Jesting', p.128.
[32] Merrens, p.31.

she asks Sheker Para, 'and defend Morena's Life and Honour' (*Ibrahim* 3.1, p.21), a request which indicates the equal value she places on her life and her reputation. Before she is taken away, she grabs Ibrahim's sword and runs it through her hands in a last-ditch attempt to persuade him not to take her into his bed:

> MORENA Do Tyrant! but 'tis thy last of mischeifs
> If thou dost not kill me —
> With dishevell'd hair, torn Robes, and
> These bloody hands, I'll run thro' all thy Guards
> And Camp, while my just complaints, compel rebellion!
> […]
> I will not stir, fixt upon Earth,
> I'll rend obdurate Heaven with piercing
> Crys, till I have forced their mercy!
> (*Ibrahim* 3.1, p.26)

In this moment, Morena is at her bravest as she attempts to remain faithful to Amurat and to protect herself. In Act 4, when she returns to her father's house, having been raped by Ibrahim, she sees herself as a broken woman, and this, in her mind, affects her relationships with her father and Amurat, despite her father's promise of continued protection and revenge upon the Emperor, and Amurat's sympathy and loyalty to her. Despite their assurances, Morena is convinced that she is of no value. Dressed in white in Act 5, she comments on how the outer symbolism of the clothing does not apply to her:

> MORENA Drest in these Robes of Innocence
> Fain wou'd I believe my Virgin Purity remains,
> But oh! Memory the wretched'st Plague,
> Still goads me with the hated Image of my wrong.
> My Soul grows weary of its polluted Cage,
> And longs to wing the upper Air, where
> Uncorrupted Pureness dwells.
> (*Ibrahim* 5.1, pp.37-38)

Morena suggests that her virginity, although lost now, can be regained through her death, which she refers to from the moment Ibrahim captures her. Upon hearing of the death of Ibrahim, she mistakenly believes that it is Amurat who has killed him in an act of revenge and worries that he will face divine retribution for his actions. She takes matters into her own hands, and poisons herself, hoping that she can take Amurat's place:

> MORENA I will, of my self an Offering make!
> Morena, the unhappy cause of all these Woes;
> Morena, the Atonement
> […]
> Look down ye Roman Ladies
> Whose tracks of Virtue I with care

Have followed —Behold! A
Turkish Maid —who to the last,
Your great Example imitates
Scorns to survive when Honour's lost!
(*Ibrahim* 5.1, p.38)

Morena's distress comes from the thought that her own circumstances have caused Amurat to murder the Emperor, who although corrupt and evil still deserves the respect of the office (a view held by the majority of the characters in this play). She immediately takes the blame upon herself in an attempt to save Amurat's honour. This is partly inspired by her view that her own honour has been lost anyway and in taking Amurat's place, there is no loss to her. Morena is portrayed to the audience as a sympathetic character, her desire to remain honourable and loyal to Amurat is her defining trait and one that the audience is expected to respect her for. Other aspects of her character, although hinted at through the play, are never developed by Pix. The audience is alerted to Morena's education when her father tries to use this as a reason for the Emperor to leave her alone, as a free woman:

MUFTI Heaven not Blessing me with a Male, I have try'd
To mend the Sex; and she, instead of (coining looks)
And learning little Arts to please, hath Read
Philosophy, History, those rough Studies:
And will appear like a neglected Villager
To those bright Beauties that attend the happy Port.
(*Ibrahim* 3.1, p.19)

The Mufti highlights the education which she has been given – that of a son and not a daughter. He implies to Ibrahim that this would make her less attractive to him as she has not spent as much time considering her appearance or the arts. This reference to Morena's education is similar to the way in which Sophronia's is considered in *Tarugo's Wiles.* Both women are seen to have been educated in a way that was generally reserved for males. While Sophronia is respected for her education, Morena's is merely a sidenote to her personality, and she is never given an opportunity to exercise this knowledge she supposedly has. One of Morena's strongest moments is the way in which she confronts her abusers in Act 3 with a range of emotion and righteous indignation at the injustice of her situation:

MORENA O Spare me Emperor! Spare me!
And all my future life I'll spend
In prayers for Ibrahim!
Each morning as I bless the rising day
I'll cry aloud, this id'e seen no more
Had not my God like Master heard:
[…]

> Punish my disobedience with Wracks with Gibbets,
> With any thing but loss of honour!
> Tear out my eyes, stab, mangle my face;
> Till it grow horrible to Nature.
> (*Ibrahim* 3.1, p.23)

Morena shows a great deal of courage and even injures herself in her attempts to avoid being taken by Ibrahim. However, in Acts 4 and 5, her behaviour has changed, suggesting that she is only a broken and wronged woman with no other choice but to accept her circumstances and deal with them in the same way as the Roman heroines she has studied, by taking her own life. Pix's portrayal of Morena is not as dynamic and layered as it could be. Her strength of character and her education are never explored and are not allowed to take precedence over her virtuous nature and dedication to Amurat.

In comparison to Pix, who is one of Trotter's closest contemporaries and colleagues, Trotter's honourable characters, especially the women, have multifaceted personalities, and although they generally keep the audience on their side, their decisions, actions, and behaviours are at times problematic. In *Love at a Loss*, we see Trotter portray a community of women with differing attitudes to marriage and every-day life, as outlined in Chapter 2. As with her other plays, the women she portrays are three-dimensional. Miranda is described by Beaumine as 'a very coquet, pleased with every man and pleases all while with 'em; but no sooner out of sight than she forgets, and is easily forgot' (*LL* 2.1, p.12). Her treatment of Constant leaves much to be desired, and he accuses her of 'mak[ing] my love your Sport' (*LL* 2.2, p.15). Trotter shows Miranda in two different lights – insecure in her happiness, desperate to avoid marriage, while wanting to be with Constant, and gladly settling with him by the close of the play. In contrast, Lucilia is portrayed as a virtuous young woman who is completely dedicated to Phillabell. However, her difficulty in dissuading Cleon allows her to be misguided by Lysetta's advice. Her false love letters to him end up risking her good reputation. Lesbia is portrayed as a sympathetic character at times, as she struggles with her love for Grandfoy, despite the fact she has slept with Beaumine. Her ethical conundrum is caused by her own behaviour, but Trotter never allows Lesbia to be completely unlikeable. None of the women in *Love at a Loss* are completely amoral, nor completely virtuous, and this creates a community of layered female characters for the audience to examine.

At first glance, Christina and Constantia from *The Revolution of Sweden* might prove an exception to Trotter's rule when considering the multi-layered motivations of her virtuous characters. The majority of Trotter's characters, as we have seen, are motivated by

a number of factors, or if they are presented with a single motivation (such as revenge), their morals are generally more complex. In doing so, she is not presenting Aristotelian heroines who are foiled by their flaws, but instead creating a more realistic representation of humanity and human characteristics on the stage. Christina and Constantia are seemingly virtuous without fault, as well as being motivated only by one factor – their duty to the nation in siding with the rebellion. However, this sense of duty and the agency the women use in order to ensure that Gustavus and the rebellion succeed, is itself an unusual move, as they are motivated by politics. In providing a political motive for her characters, *Revolution* becomes an example of how civic concerns of the society can be addressed by tragedy, in showing that working for the public good is a required civic duty, despite its costly nature.[33]

By considering Christina and Constantia as 'female patriots',[34] we see female characters presented in a new way to the audience. Their concerns are not focused entirely on marriage, but instead on a sense of duty to the greater good. Wilson takes this further when he observes that they 'understand better than the men around them what it means to belong to a larger political body.'[35] This is particularly true for Constantia, who prioritises this national good over Arwide, who, in contrast, falls at this hurdle, risking the national cause for the safety of his wife. Trotter portrays this sympathetically, but also as foolish. It is clear by the presentation of the characters in the play that it is the duty of the female characters that should be emulated, and not the rash behaviour of Arwide. In her mind 'women are, above all, citizens of their country, who must always put public duty before any other.'[36] Trotter presents Constantia and Christina as political entities, important to the function of the play, the plot, and the revolution itself, and in doing so, once again presents women who are layered and multi-faceted, as opposed to simple accessories to the plot. This theme of duty, while not always focused on the nation, is evident throughout her writing, as her female characters consider their duties to family, friends, marriages, or even their own ethical principles.

These complex female characters are developed through all of Trotter's plays. However, evidence of this ability to create characters who are three-dimensional in personality or motivation is clear from the beginning of her foray into fictional writing in *Olinda*. Olinda displays a similar commitment to her personal morality, in the same sense

[33] Wilson, p.96.
[34] Wilson, p.96.
[35] Wilson, p.193.
[36] Pilar Cuder-Domínguez, *Stuart Women Playwrights, 1613-1713* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p.114.

that Felicia and Ann do, but Olinda's behaviour causes the reader to question how much of her personal ethical code actually fits the usual, expected morality of someone who claims to be virtuous. Although her relationship with Cloridon is celibate, it is ultimately still adulterous because Cloridon would happily be with Olinda instead of his wife. However as long as Olinda does not compromise her own personal virtue, she feels at peace with her situation.

Trotter's characters can be relatable, dislikeable, honourable, or questionable and often reveal elements of a combination of these characteristics. Alison Fleming's assertion that 'her characters [are] unreal'[37] is unjustified as an accusation against Trotter alone. Many characters and character-types that appeared on the seventeenth and eighteenth-century stages are unlikely to have existed in reality, then or now. But it is also unjustified when considering the complexity of Trotter's female characters. While it would be unlikely to find a real woman with the evil of Elvira, the pious nature of Ann or the dogged determination of Felicia, Christina, or Constantia, they do experience emotion, practice agency, and make decisions for themselves in a way that other female characters in the plays considered in this chapter do not.

Although the extent to which Trotter herself engaged with Scottish texts is unclear, as discussed in the previous section, the Scottish dimensions of Trotter's writing are still important to consider, as they bring further relevance to this portrayal of complex female characters because of the established moral frameworks that she presents in her plays. A deeper understanding of Trotter as a stage reformer in her English context also enhances the idea that the women portrayed in Trotter's work reflect real-life women in the sense that they too are capable of reasoning, moral decision making, and complex motivations. To pursue these lines of argument further, we must look to Trotter herself and her role as a learned lady.

[37] Fleming, p.305.

Chapter 5
Catharine Trotter – a learned woman in Scotland

As previously mentioned, this thesis has taken a targeted approach to Catharine Trotter's work, focusing predominantly on her plays and novella while using her personal correspondence and samples of her poetry and philosophical writing to highlight the many intersecting themes and issues across her body of writing. In doing so, there is a danger that the depth and variety of her whole corpus of writing could be missed. The strength of scholarship by Anne Kelley, Joanne E. Myers, and Melanie Bigold is that they acknowledge the ways Trotter's literary writing is informed by her philosophical and religious world view, and vice versa.[1] This chapter explores some of the ways in which our understanding of Trotter's lived experience as a learned woman is enhanced by considering the ways in which she shares these experiences of other Scottish and English learned women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Referring to Trotter as a learned woman allows for a broader definition of her than 'playwright and philosopher' and incorporates her authorship of *Olinda*, as well as her participation in key cultural moments through the publication of *The Nine Muses* and poems addressed to the Duke of Marlborough and Queen Caroline. It also encompasses her exploration of philosophical and religious ideas through correspondence with friends, family, and significant historical figures such as the Marlboroughs, John Locke, and William Congreve.

Through examining Trotter's lived experience in this context, we also discover more of her time in Scotland. Glimpses of her time in Aberdeen, of which we know very little, are revealed in her correspondence with her niece, Anne Arbuthnot. Through these letters and writings, we see the ways in which she used her learning to participate in the public sphere. This once more emphasises her importance as a liminal figure between centuries and between borders, taking the baton from other side-lined female figures, and paving the way for new generations of learned women to enter the public sphere and use their voices in areas that were generally dominated by male voices.

Learned women in Scotland

A brief glance at the bibliography of this thesis highlights the number of terms in common usage to describe learned women from the early modern period, including 'Women of Letters', 'Female Scholars', 'Women/Female Writers'. Each has been used in reference to

[1] See Kelley (2002), (2006), (2010); Myers, (2012) and Bigold (2013).

Catharine Trotter, but none is sufficient as a single term to encompass the variety of themes, focus, or style of a lifetime's writing and learning. Referring to her only as a writer does not capture her engagement with languages; Birch notes that not only did she learn to write on her own, but she also taught herself to speak French, and learned Latin[2] which is peppered through her writing. Labelling her as a scholar would encompass these elements, as well as her religious and philosophical writing, but the term does not imply that she had much to do with fictional writing. The best term for Trotter, which appears both in early modern references to her and in present day scholarship is 'learned woman'.[3] It incorporates Trotter's education, writing and worldview, and allows for the inclusion of a number of professional and intellectual women who engaged with writing, theological or political ideas in less conventional ways than simply studying or authoring works. This thesis has made the case for including Trotter within Scottish literary history, and therefore we can consider lived experience alongside that of a number of learned women in Scotland

These women were educated to varying degrees and their engagement with their chosen subjects make it clear they were inspired by ideas and situations they could only engage with due to their education. Examples of such learned Scottish women include Anna Hume (fl.1644)[4], who edited the work of her father – political writer, poet, and historian David Hume of Godscroft (1558-1629x31).[5] After his death, Anna Hume helped prepare his *The History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus* for publication around 1644.[6] As well as editing and arranging her father's work, Hume was a translator in her own right, and translated the first three books of Petrarch's *Trionfi*, writing her own commentary to accompany them. This indicates how well she knew the material and also the level of education and skill she possessed, enabling her to engage with the works and comment on them.[7] Sarah Dunnigan refers to Hume as 'one of the most important of early Scottish women writers' whose work 'demonstrates the evolving nature of translation in seventeenth-century Scotland.'[8] While also engaging with editing, writing and translation, Hume was also attempting to associate herself with other learned women. Her decision to dedicate her translation of Petrarch, titled *Triumphs of Love: Chastitie: Death* to Elizabeth,

[2] *Works*, Vol.1, p.iv.
[3] See Brink (1980) and Labalme (1984) for background on the tradition of the learned woman beyond Scotland and Guest, (2000), and Myers (2012) for examples of Trotter as a learned woman.
[4] Sarah M, Dunnigan, 'Anna Hume (fl.1644)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/14138> [accessed 17th February 2020].
[5] Paul J. McGinnis, Arthur H. Williamson, 'Hume, David of Godscroft (1558-1629x31)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2012) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/14139> [accessed 10 June 2020].
[6] McGinnis and Williamson, *ODNB.*
[7] Dunnigan, *ODNB.*
[8] Dunnigan, *ODNB.*

daughter of the Queen of Bohemia indicates the vision and ambition Hume held for herself. Princess Elizabeth was one of the most prominent learned women in Western Europe during the period and, as the granddaughter of James VI and I, and daughter of the heir to the British throne, she was politically important in the British Isles too. Hume's dedication is a sure sign of her desire to be included within this intellectual circle and receive the patronage of the princess, and also suggests an awareness of the political significance of being known by Elizabeth.[9] Royal connections were beneficial to writers seeking patronage and approval.[10] Trotter's experience of being a young, unknown writer is also reflected in her early dedications. Her decision to honour Princess Anne, as well as other figures significant to the Marlborough circle with whom she associated indicate that she saw the importance of using such relationships to build her own reputation and raise her profile.

Other learned women of early modern Scotland were engaging with writing in a devotional and religious sense. Elizabeth Melville, Lady Culross (fl.1599-1631)[11] was the first Scottish woman to have her work printed in the public sphere with her poem *Ane Godlie Dreme* (1603).[12] Multiple reprints of the text throughout the seventeenth century show the level of success she achieved with it. Her other writings were also 'spiritual exercises, prayers and sermons. Each individual poem is a genuinely impressive statement of doctrinaire Scottish Calvinism',[13] displaying her intellectual as well as spiritual engagement with theology. Through making religious expression and devotion the focus of her writing, she became a significant player in the religious and political world from which the National Covenant of 1638 would evolve.[14] Although Elizabeth Melville's work is categorised by the traditional forms of writing, her deeply held religious principles and their influence upon her work point to a wider engagement with learning and education, and her staunchly Calvinist theology is further evidence of her political leanings and ideas.

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[9] Sarah M. Dunnigan, 'Daughterly Desires: Representing and Reimagining the Feminine in Anna Hume's *Triumphs*', in *Woman and the Feminine in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. by Sarah M. Dunnigan, C. Marie Harker and Evelyn S. Newlyn (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.120-135.
[10] Elizabeth of Bohemia was also the grandmother of Sophia Charlotte of Prussia (and George I of Britain), who termed Catharine Trotter the 'Scots Sappho'. The close cultural relationship between Scotland and the rest of Europe is well documented in the Early Modern period, with European texts influencing the Art and Literature of Scotland. The close ties of these two European learned women to Scotland are also an indication of this and emphasise ways in which Culture was influenced across the nations, as Scottish women sought the approval and influence of those outside their borders.
[11] Sarah M. Dunnigan, 'Melville, Elizabeth (fl.1599-1631)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/6009> [accessed 17th February 2020].
[12] Jamie Reid Baxter (ed.) *Poems of Elizabeth Melville, Lady Culross* (Edinburgh: Solsequium, 2010), p.98.
[13] Jamie Reid Baxter, 'Elizabeth Melville, Lady Culross: 3500 New Lines of Verse', in *Woman and the Feminine in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. by Sarah M. Dunnigan, C. Marie Harker and Evelyn S. Newlyn (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.195-200 (p.199).
[14] Reid Baxter, 'Elizabeth Melville, 3500 New Lines', p.199.

Later, Lillias Skene (1626/7-1697) would write religious poetry and preach as a key figure in the Quaker movement in Aberdeen,[15] where she left a significant corpus of correspondence and actively campaigned for the release of her husband, son, son-in-law, and other Quaker men imprisoned for their religious beliefs. She also helped found the first Quaker school in Scotland,[16] bringing her knowledge and learning into a role of educator. Like Anna Hume, Skene was eager to have the support of Princess Elizabeth in Bohemia, although in this instance this was in an attempt to gain her support for the release of the Quaker men, and also an attempt to convert her.[17] Although unsuccessful in securing the Princess's conversion, Skene did maintain a correspondence with her, and overall, Skene is responsible for the largest body of work by a 'non-aristocratic Scottish woman of her era.'[18] This is significant at a time when education and learning was often reserved for the upper classes. Her position as an activist brings a new dimension to the idea of the learned woman as she used her learning to advance her cause.

Religion was never far behind politics in this period, and Lady Anne Halkett (1623-1699) recounted her life as a politically engaged activist in the early form of autobiography.[19] Her politics were informed by her deeply held Episcopalian principles and she not only engaged with these religious and philosophical ideas through her writing, but also actively through her part in helping injured soldiers during the civil war and aiding the Duke of York in his escape from prison by dressing him in women's clothing.[20] In these instances, we see women who are clearly educated and who use their learning and their writing in other capacities than for publication or circulation. Sharing and developing their own religious and political ideas, based on issues which were hotly debated at the time, these women were active participants in the world around them through their learning and writing. As will be outlined further in this chapter, Trotter was also firmly engaged in religious and philosophical debate in the public sphere.

Some learned women within Scotland in the Early Modern period were also engaging with texts and political and religious ideas, however they were not writing in the

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[15] Gordon DesBrisay, 'Skene [*née* Gillespie], Lilias [Lillias Skein] (1626/7-1697)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/69911> [accessed 19th August 2020].
[16] DesBrisay, *ODNB*.
[17] DesBrisay, *ODNB*.
[18] Gordon DesBrisay, 'Lilias Skene: A Quaker Poet and her "Cursed Self"', in *Woman and the Feminine in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. by Sarah M. Dunnigan, C. Marie Harker and Evelyn S. Newlyn (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.162-177 (p.162).
[19] Suzanne Trill, 'Introduction', in *Lady Anne Halkett: Selected Self-Writings*, ed. by Suzanne Trill (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp.xvii-xlii.
[20] David Stevenson, 'Halkett [née Murray], Anne [Anna], Lady Halkett (1623-1699)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/11934> [accessed 17 February 2020].

traditional sense at all. They benefit most from the use of the term 'learned woman'. The Maitland Manuscripts, containing many important manuscript versions of Scottish poetry compiled from c.1570-1586, are named for the Maitland family of Lethington, in whose ownership these collections were formed.[21] Evidence suggests that Marie Maitland, daughter of Sir Richard Maitland, was involved in transcribing and collating the works within the Quarto.[22] Her name appears at the beginning of the Quarto volume, presumably written in her own hand,[23] and it is thought that she also authored some of the anonymous poetry within the collection.[24] Marie's sister, Helen, is named in the front of the second collection of the Maitland Manuscripts, the so-called Maitland Folio, suggesting that she too may have had some involvement in the bringing together of some poems.[25] The Maitland sisters were clearly educated women, and their involvement in these family collections had a significant impact on the landscape of Scottish literature through the preservation of the work of some of Scotland's most important early writers.

Perhaps the best example of the benefits that using the term 'learned woman' can bring is Esther Inglis (1570/71-1624),[26] whose skillset included calligraphy, translation, embroidery, and the creation of miniature books.[27] Her manuscripts and books were beautifully decorated and illustrated, and often gifted to significant social or political figures.[28] Her detailed work enabled her to 'assemble and publish exquisite textual objects whose value resides in the tension between manuscript and print cultures,'[29] as she interacted with literary texts differently than either authoring or translating them. 'Inglis connected the writing woman to desired political and social affiliations, negotiated in part by and for her family at the same time her books materialized an authorial self',[30] creating a level of ownership of the texts she engaged with. Inglis gifted manuscripts and books to

[21] Evelyn S. Newlyn, 'A Methodology for Reading Against the Culture: Anonymous Women Poets, and the Maitland Quarto Manuscript (c.1585)', in *Women and the Feminine in Early Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. by Sarah M. Dunnigan, C. Marie Harker and Evelyn S. Newlyn (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.89-103 (p.89).
[22] Sarah M. Dunnigan, 'Undoing the Double Tress: Scotland, Early Modern Women's Writing, and the Location of Critical Desires', *Feminist Studies*, 29:2 (2003), 298-319 (p.314).
[23] W.A. Craigie (ed.), *Maitland Folio Manuscript* Vol.2, (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1927), p.15.
[24] Newlyn, p.93.
[25] Joanna M. Martin, 'Women as Readers, Writers, and Book Owners in Late Sixteenth-Century Scotland: the Maitland Quarto Manuscript', *The Bottle Imp*, 14 (2013) <https://www.thebottleimp.org.uk/2013/11/women-as-readers-writers-and-book-owners-in-late-sixteenth-century-scotland-the-maitland-quarto-manuscript/> [accessed 10 June 2020].
[26] Elspeth Yeo, 'Inglis [*married name* Kello], Esther (1570/71-1624)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/15292> [accessed 11 June 2020].
[27] Susan Frye, 'Materialising Authorship in Esther Inglis's Books', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 32:3 (2002), 469-491, 469.
[28] Frye, p.469.
[29] Frye, p.469.
[30] Frye, p.469.

Elizabeth I and Henry, Prince of Wales, among others.[31] In choosing such significant figures to make these gifts to, Inglis signified her desire to be known, and perhaps patronised by them. This attempt to insert herself into beneficial circumstances and communities is similar to the attempts of the other women discussed here and was key in order to maintain any reputation as a writer, scholar, or creative woman. In all of these cases, the women were using their learning and education to engage with the world around them, whether that was creative, political, or religious and not just through writing or study, but also through their abilities in translation, editing or creating. These women incorporated their understanding of politics, religion, art, and literature into different channels of engagement with writing; to simply label them as 'Women of Letters' would be inappropriate in some cases and impossible in others, as not all women were exclusively writers or readers. Referring to them as 'learned women' allows recognition of the various ways in which women engaged with the world around them, and acknowledgement of the differing levels of education that these women had.

A working definition of 'learned woman' then, is a woman of any social position who engages with culture, politics, philosophy, religion, or other area of debate within the public or private sphere. Such engagement can take the form of traditional outlets such as reading or writing, or less traditional ways such as preaching, editing, translating or correspondence.[32] What is more important is that the learning of these women, whether they are formally educated or self-taught, is what allows them to interact and contribute to the issues raised in public debate. Such a definition allows for the inclusion of women who were not necessarily part of the social elite, but who were nevertheless participating in the public sphere. It allows for the incorporation of women such as Esther Inglis and Lillias Skene, who were less traditional in their engagement. Lillias Skene's public preaching would be ignored in a history of women writers, as would Esther Inglis's calligraphy and artwork, which was just as political as the poetry of Elizabeth Melville. Such a term also highlights the way in which these women were leaders in their field. Melville was the first woman to have her writing printed publicly in Scotland, the Maitland sisters, although domestically based, are key figures in the history of cultural and intellectual preservation. Including Catharine Trotter, incorporates a woman who played a foundational role in the development of epistolary fiction and contributed plays to the transitional stages of London theatrical tradition. In taking this approach to women writers and thinkers, we begin to see

[31] Yeo, *ODNB.*
[32] These examples are, of course, not an exhaustive list.

that although often unique in their individual circumstances, they all share the experience of using their knowledge to engage in public sphere. In looking for 'learned women' through Scottish literary history, there is the potential to find more figures who are learning and engaging with the public sphere, without necessarily being 'writers' in the sense that present-day scholarship expects, and in doing so, drawing attention to historical women who have been overlooked.[33] The purpose of including such women in this chapter is to emphasise that when considering Trotter within a Scottish context, her engagement with cultural and philosophical ideas brings her in line with preceding figures in Scottish history who were doing the same, and not just the English women with whom she collaborated. This once more emphasises her position as a key figure within British literary history, with relevance to national literary history in *both* Scotland and England, when so often these two are considered separately.

Very little information is available by which to judge the level of formal education for women in Scotland and England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but scholarship examining women's education in the eighteenth century has established that the education of young women was becoming a matter of public discussion.[34] Before then, young women were taught to function well in the domestic sphere more than they were encouraged to undertake academic pursuits – 'learning' was a term reserved for the classical education that was considered vital for the governing male classes.[35] These developments in the late eighteenth century display a change in attitudes towards education for girls; before then, there was very little by way of formal education for them. Taught by their mothers and, where finances allowed, by specific subject tutors, how much and what a girl learned was dependent on their family environment - what their fathers or later, husbands, would allow.[36] Women educated in the 'classical' sense were unusual, and even more so were those who published their own work in the period before the eighteenth century.[37]

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[33] The aim of defining the learned woman in this way is to be as inclusive as possible, pushing the boundaries of literary studies to incorporate women who would otherwise be ignored because they were not published authors – despite the fact many of them were engaging in the public sphere. The problem with this definition as it stands is that it would discount learned women such as Mary Queen of Scots, as her place in the public sphere is arguably a result of her position as monarch; but she should be recognised due to her engagement with literature and culture. More work needs to be done to ensure that the full spectrum of learned women in Scotland are given due consideration.

[34] Rhona Brown, 'Educating the Female Child: Debates from the Scottish Periodical Press in Enlightenment Scotland, 1750-1800', in *The Land of Story-Books: Scottish Children's Literature in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Sarah Dunnigan, Shu-Fang Lai (Glasgow: ASLS, 2019), pp.1-19, p.2.

[35] Glover, p.44.

[36] Charlton, pp.27-29.

[37] Charlton, p.6.

Each of the women detailed above, as well as a number of English women with whom Trotter collaborated, and who will be considered later in this chapter, had access to classical education and an opportunity for their interests to develop, despite the fact that some of them were not part of the social elite. These women were uncommon for their time, due to the styles of education which they received, especially for those, like Trotter, who were self-taught. Understanding the complexities of these learned women allows for them to be considered as an intellectual elite, rather than a societal one. This allows for women of any class and background to be recognised for their ability, not just talented women who also enjoyed positions of privilege. It also provides the chance to include many of these Scottish women who do not fit the traditional label of 'female writer' or 'Woman of Letters', but nonetheless were involved with ideas of writing, philosophy, religion, and politics in the public sphere. From a Scottish literary perspective, Trotter can be included as a figure of relevance among these women through her own education and learning, how she expressed her worldview, and engaged with those around her, sometimes outside of the traditional publication context. Even if unintentional, she followed in their footsteps; unusual for her intellectual ability and position within the culture she found herself in and making her own name as a learned woman.

The remainder of this chapter explores Trotter's lived experience as a learned woman through her engagement with religious and philosophical ideas, education, and through her collaboration with others. In doing so, she paved the way for a new kind of intellectual woman in the eighteenth century at the dawn of the Enlightenment.[38]

Religion

Although this section encompasses Trotter's philosophical ideas and her views on moral virtue, as well as her religion, it is appropriate to cover them all under the one umbrella-term because Trotter's religious views informed her philosophical framework as well as the ethical principles throughout her literary writing, and to an extent her literary writing, is so firmly rooted in her religious principles. Trotter's expression of religion as a foundation of her philosophical views in her letters to Thomas Burnet of Kemnay has led Anne Kelley

[38] In his book, *The First Scottish Enlightenment: Rebels, Priests, History,* Kelsey Jackson Williams argues that the late seventeenth century can be considered the 'Early Enlightenment', a useful term for the period in which Trotter was writing. Jackson Williams shows that the Early Enlightenment began as early as when James Duke of York resided in Edinburgh from 1679-1682 as this was one of the key events which sparked 'a change in Scotland's intellectual culture' (Jackson Williams, p.10). One of the figures considered as an Early Enlightenment figure was Trotter's own father-in-law, John Cockburn (discussed later in this chapter) which outlines not only Scotland's importance in the Early Enlightenment period but shows that Trotter fits comfortably within this environment.

to conclude that Trotter considered herself more of a theologian rather than a philosopher.[39] Trotter is extremely vocal in her expression of her religious beliefs in both her public and private writing, however her theological discussions are often influenced and expanded by her philosophical ideas, which in turn shapes her moral framework. Additionally, her religious writing often reveals her thought processes as she reasons and then forms her own conclusions on key matters of theology or moral virtue. One of the earliest examples of this is her conversion from the Church of England to the Roman Catholic Church before returning again to the Anglican tradition, and later Episcopalian when she moved to Scotland. As with everything from Trotter's earlier years, there is very little information upon the matter, and we are reliant on Birch's account for the details:

> The most serious and important subjects, especially those of religion, soon engaged her attention. But not withstanding her education in the protestant religion, her intimacy with several families of distinction of the Romish persuasion exposed her, while very young, to impressions in favour of that church, which not being removed by her conferences with some eminent and learned members of the church of England, she followed the dictates of a misguided conscience and embraced the Romish communion, in which she continued till the year 1707.[40]

Trotter's conversion to Catholicism seems to have occurred at a young age, and there is the suggestion that it was due to the influence of Catholic families with whom she was acquainted. Birch's reference to her 'misguided conscience' also suggests that she faced some opposition from her Anglican friends and family for her changing views. Her discussions with 'men of the first rank' in the Church of England in order to address her doubts and concerns conveys that even at this young age, it was important to Trotter to reason with others and come to her own conclusion about her faith. Although Birch's tone[41] indicates that he considered Trotter to be overly influenced by her Catholic friends, this account of her behaviour and willingness to debate seems to show otherwise indicating that she took her doubts seriously enough to explore and confront them.

Trotter's process of conversion seems to have consisted of discussion and desire to explore these religious matters in her own terms, making her own conclusions. This would be further established in her work both in the philosophical sense and in her fictional writing where she advocated for women using their own reason and deciding their own

[39] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.195.
[40] *Works*, Vol.1, p.v.
[41] Birch's tone reflects that of the anonymous accounts of Trotter's life which he used to compile his biography, and which are quoted in the Introduction. These accounts also seem to be written from an Anglican perspective and view Trotter's conversion to Catholicism as the awkward exploration and questioning of a young woman who does not fully know her own mind. See BL Add MS4265 ff.44-54.

principles. When Trotter returned to the Anglican Church in 1707, it was marked by her anonymously publishing *A Discourse concerning a Guide in Controversies, in Two Letters* which bore the subtitle *Written to one of the Church of Rome, by a person lately converted from that communion.* Trotter breaks down key doctrines of the Catholic church, explaining her reasons for rejecting them, evidenced by biblical examples, quotations, and detailed analysis. Her main argument is against the infallibility of the Church, a key doctrine of Catholicism at the time; she explains that '[t]here is no infallible guide but the Scripture'.[42] She also draws attention to the ways in which the Church of England uses the idea of infallibility in terms of the authority given to its Bishops, and argues against this too: 'But how high soever the authority of Bishops may be this is not the institution we look for in our search whom to follow, when they are divided among themselves.'[43] By looking at both churches and highlighting the areas of doctrine she does not see a biblical precedent for, Trotter shows a keen engagement with theological issues of the day, and advocates for a form of religious expression in which individuals are empowered to reason and investigate doctrines of the Church, and use theology to navigate the moral ambiguities of everyday life.[44]

The case for every day moral virtue is evident in Trotter's early literary work, and the timing of *A Discourse* is worth noting in relation to Trotter's plays, having been published only one year after what would be her final play, *The Revolution of Sweden* (1706). As her plays are not explicitly religious, it is easy to forget that Trotter wrote all her plays before returning to the Church of England. Although her fictional writing does not expound upon common issues of religious doctrine of the time, we can see the individual, reasoned approach to religion and theology that she promotes in her later writing being applied to her own characters. As discussed in previous chapters, Trotter displays characters making their own moral choices and using their individual reason to justify their decisions and actions, and so even when the outcome is not necessarily agreeable to the audience or reader, they are unable to conclude that the character is reckless or without a moral compass. As Joanne E. Myers considers:

> With its emphasis on the authority of individual judgement governed by the careful reading of scripture, *A Discourse concerning 'A Guide in Controversies'* implies that Trotter's reasons for returning to the Church

[42] Catharine Trotter, *A Discourse concerning a Guide in Controversies*', in *Works* Vol.1, pp.1-42 (p.10).
[43] Trotter, *A Discourse,* p.13.
[44] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter,* p.145.

> of England include a desire for greater intellectual autonomy than that afforded within Catholicism.[45]

While there is very little by way of obvious Catholicism in Trotter's fiction,[46] her call for intellectual autonomy is clear in the way that she writes her characters.

Trotter takes this personal autonomy seriously, reasoning with those around her and entering into debates on issues upon which they differed. Her letters to Thomas Burnet of Kemnay, and later Patrick Cockburn show that not only did she develop and maintain her own views, but she also argued her case with those who disagreed, and, in the case of Patrick, tried to convince him to adopt her view. Before returning to the Church of England, Trotter maintained her friendship with Thomas Burnet of Kemnay and his cousin, Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, [47] and some of the correspondence between Trotter and Thomas Burnet is preserved by Birch in *Works.* The two often discussed their differences in religious opinion, and while Burnet tries to convince Trotter of the 'errors' in her thinking, she refuses to be swayed and consistently argues her own view:

> For my part, I consider nothing in the opinions of my friends, but what is likely to influence their morals; and provided they worship the true God, and acknowledge the doctrine and authority of Jesus Christ, I think we are sufficiently united in religion for all the ends of friendship.[48]

> I know not how I have wandered thus from wishing there were no distinction of churches; on which subject I shall only add, that since there are such, I agree with you, that every one ought to join with that, which seems to him most in the right, and am so far of that opinion that I can by no means approve the conduct of occasional conformists: for however lawful it may be in some cases, the occasion of getting an employment does not seem to me a justifiable one for their communicating with a church, which their consciences will not suffer them to continue in.[49]

This second quotation is particularly noteworthy when we remember that Trotter's husband, Patrick Cockburn would spend a number of years unemployed as a clergyman due to his refusal to take the Oath of Abjuration when initially required of him. It would seem that Trotter's views on the subject were already formed before she met and married Cockburn in 1708. On more than one occasion, Burnet tries to address their religious differences to little avail. The letters between the two are friendly and contain other elements, including news of mutual acquaintances, what Burnet has been doing on his

[45] Myers, p.57.
[46] Myers, p.58.
[47] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.141.
[48] Catharine Trotter to Thomas Burnet of Kemnay, 2 February 1703/4, *Works* Vol. 2, p.167.
[49] Catharine Trotter to Thomas Burnet of Kemnay, 8 August 1704, *Works* Vol. 2, pp.177-178.

journeys to Europe, and discussion of John Locke among other subjects. Burnet continues to make small comments about Trotter's religion in a way that shows that despite their differences, he has respect for her:

> In every subject you write with knowledge and judgement which delighteth. You know everything well but religion; which you will never understand truly and surely by any method so well, as by reading Scripture in any language you understand, and chusing for yourself.[50]

This of course, is something that Trotter did do for herself, as her return to the Church of England was characterised by a process of thought, reading of scripture, and reasoning. In his preface to Trotter's *Discourse concerning a Guide in Controversies*, Bishop Gilbert Burnet states:

> I am not at liberty to inform the reader any farther [of the author's identity] than that they were writ by one, who had been many years of the church of Rome, but have been for some time dissatisfied with several doctrines and practices in that church, had resolv'd to examine, with great care, the grounds of that authority, on which they were received, by consulting the best books on that subject on both sides, and by advising with men of the best judgements of both communions.[51]

Trotter's own writing jumps straight into discussing the matter at hand, but these external accounts of her conversion to Catholicism and back to Anglicanism are characterised by her discussions with those around her. Thomas Burnet's concern with Trotter's theological position was not purely academic however, as his letters make it clear that he had at one time considered her as a wife, but her Catholicism was a barrier. In reference to settling Catharine's late father's debts, Burnet suggests she seeks an appropriate husband, but believes that this may be difficult due to her religious loyalties:

> They [suitable, honest men] would gladly seek you, if you were to be found in the church of England; whereas now they must bring you home like the straying lamb into the mother church of England, before they can thus rejoice over you, and lay you in their bosom; and yet you are one of the wisest virgins I ever knew.[52]

Trotter makes it clear to Burnet that she would not have considered marrying him anyway, even though she does not view a difference in religious opinion as a foundation for unhappiness:

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[50] Thomas Burnet to Trotter, 9 December 1704, *Works* Vol.2, pp.185-186 (first sequence. Page numbers 177-192 (numbering only) are repeated in error).
[51] Gilbert Burnet, 'Preface' to *A Discourse Concerning a Guide in Controversies*, *Works* Vol.1, p.3.
[52] Thomas Burnet to Trotter, 5 July 1705, *Works* Vol.2, p178 (second sequence).

> I cannot imagine, what concern you suppose I might be in about settling my person. Certainly it is not my part to seek or take any pains for any Affair of that nature; and if I had been much inclined that way, there may have been some, who did not think a perfect agreement in opinion necessary to their happiness in it with me: But as I never had a thought towards it but for one, and that there are many obstacles against that, I believe I shall end my days as I am. I have been always very fearful of putting my happiness entirely in the power of any one, though a difference in religion is what I have least apprehended would destroy it, knowing several instances of a very happy union where there has been no other disagreement, and neither side extremely biggotted [sic].[53]

Trotter's disinterest in marrying Burnet did not affect their friendship and the two maintained their contact beyond her marriage to Patrick Cockburn. The letters between Burnet and Trotter serve as an insight into Trotter's religious convictions, and her ability to defend her principles and reasoning. As a learned woman, she did not cease her constant study, her letters to Thomas Burnet talk about her reading material. She asks him to help her find

> a book which yet I have only heard of, *A Commentary upon some of the Epistles*, I think, St Paul's, written by Mr. Locke, which I am the more curious to see, because I imagine he would not write on such a subject, if he did not treat of it in some peculiar way, or with a different view from other commentators.[54]

She also tells him that the Bishop of Sarum's wife

> promised me, when we came to town, a book of Lady Masham's writing, and Mr Clarke's Sermons preached at Mr Boyle's lecture, which are highly commended; and I am very impatient to see them […] I read *Norris's Ideal World* lately, against which I think many objections might be made by one, who had leisure, and thought it of consequence enough to be worth the pains. But to oppose another's notions in matters merely speculative, which, whether true or false, are of no necessary importance to religious or moral truths, is perhaps an employment scarce worthy of a wise person.[55]

In these examples we see Trotter's desire to engage with new ideas, curious about new perspectives that might arise from Locke's interpretations of St Paul's letters. We also see a distinction between religious material and otherwise, while she objects to some of the ideas she has read in *Norris's Ideal World,* the implication is that because it holds no relevance to religious or moral truth, she does not think it worth the time or effort to

[53] Catharine Trotter to Thomas Burnet, 7 July 1705, *Works* Vol.2, p.186 (second sequence).
[54] Trotter to Thomas Burnet, 7 July 1705, *Works* Vol. 2, p.189 (second sequence).
[55] Trotter to Thomas Burnet, 12 November 1705, *Works* Vol.2, pp.190-191 (second sequence).

publicly challenge. This distinction underscores the importance Trotter placed on her own religious learning and thought.

Within three years of her assertion that she 'would end my days as I am', Trotter had met and married Patrick Cockburn. There are ten letters from Trotter to Cockburn published in *Works* from the summer of 1707, and these are the only extant parts of their correspondence, alongside an undated version of the Epilogue to *Love at a Loss* which was posted to Cockburn which remains in the collection of Birch's papers at the British Library.[56] Despite limited sources detailing their relationship, these letters show that there was a difference in opinion between the two, namely whether marriage was in line with Christian principles for a clergyman such as Patrick, and that Trotter was attempting to reason with Patrick and convince him of her line of thinking. Her reasoning is rooted in some of her core religious beliefs about the purpose of marriage and the place of affection within it. In the first of the letters, Trotter appears to challenge Patrick over his view that loving another person deeply is not in keeping with Christianity: 'I do not see, that to resolve against pleasure, or taking delight in such persons, as are worthy of our esteem, is any part of Christian wisdom.'[57] She furthers her case with more theological argument:

> We are taught that the good things in life are blessings from God, for which we are to praise him, who has given us all things richly to enjoy; and that the losses and afflictions, which we meet with in those things, that we value here, are to be looked on as fatherly chastisements, or trials of our obedience and submission to his will, who gives, and requires them of us, as he thinks fit. But how can the creatures be blessings, or punishments, or occasions of trial to us, if we have no degree of delight in them?[58]

She argues that any aspect of the Christian life requires an attachment to other individuals. Relationships, she states, are to be enjoyed as 'blessings from God', but in those times where 'trials of obedience' are part of a divine plan, she notes that these trials cannot be effective if there has not first been pleasure derived from things in the world, including other people:

[56] BL Add MS4265 f.83v. The Epilogue bears a striking similarity to the one published at the end of *Love at a Loss*, except that the characters of Lesbia and Beaumine are referred to as 'Honoria' and 'Sir Rover' respectively. As the letter is undated, this could be an earlier draft of the play, or it could be an early version of what would become Trotter's later attempt to rewrite *Love at a Loss* as *The Honourable Deceivers.*
[57] Catharine Trotter to Patrick Cockburn, 3 June 1707, *Works* Vol. 2, p.212.
[58] *Works*, Vol 2, p.213.

> To keep ourselves from any such excess is the great business of virtue; which when we do, the delight we take in any of the creatures, seems to me so far from being a fault, that we could have no virtue without it.[59]

Trotter thinks Patrick has too conservative an approach by avoiding close attachment or relationships with individuals. The discussion presents itself on a number of occasions throughout the ten letters in *Works* and each time, Trotter seems to be taking Cockburn's own arguments and deconstructing them:

> I am not of the opinion, that pleasure is inconsistent with a serious frame of mind […] For, if it were so, it would never be allowable for one of that character to marry where he could love tenderly; though I agree with you, that there is a kind, or degree, or rather a circumstance of pleasure, that unhinges the mind, by putting it in too great an agitation; but that I believe always proceed from something new and unexpected, or the continuance of which is uncertain; And when all those circumstances are over, through the pleasure does not cease, yet it leaves the mind firm and composed, and capable of turning immediately to the most serious reflections.[60]

Rather than allowing it to be argued that affection leads to foolishness, Trotter outlines how the right kind of love encourages people to think seriously on various matters. In another letter, Trotter pulls apart Cockburn's apparent hesitancy to attach himself to anyone:

> I argue with you, that the great principle of religions (or, as your phrase it, the soul of the Christian) is such an habitual elevation of the mind to God, as makes him the first intention, and virtually the aim of all our actions, for so I suppose you understand it. But when you say, that the consequence of this is a disengagement of our hearts from all earthly things, if you mean those words strictly, or such disengagement, as allows them no share at all in our affections, I cannot reconcile that with your asserting afterwards that marriage ought to be a union of mutual love, and endearments […] why do you, and all mystics, affect such a way of speaking that we must love God alone and have no degree of affection to the creatures, since you are forced to explain away the strict meaning of those expressions; for to allow that we may love the creatures in such a manner, or on such a reason, and yet to assert absolutely, that we must not love them all, is a contradiction in terms […] To say the truth, if it was the duty of Christians to love nothing but God, and that (as Mallebrance constantly asserts) all affection to the creatures were sinful, I think solitude would not only be necessary for you, but for all mankind: we should no longer be called social creatures, but all become unsociable hermits. But God, who designed us to be useful, has thought fit to make us agreeable to one another, to sweeten our cares and service and has not

[59] *Works*, Vol 2, p.213.
[60] Trotter to Cockburn, 16 June 1707, *Works* Vol.2, p.218.

> imposed such hard laws on us as some maintain, which I think may be plainly shewn from Scripture, as well as reason.[61]

From this we see her method of argument. She explains why Patrick's views are unreasonable and backs up her own thinking with logic and scripture. This emphasises her level of engagement with the issues at hand, not only challenging Cockburn's view, but using his own arguments against him to show where he is contradicting himself. Her more than ironic suggestion that they should become hermits, accentuates her passion on the subject. Trotter also hints that she does not believe Cockburn's avoidance of marriage is motivated solely by religious convictions. In her letters, Trotter discusses her feelings for Patrick by assigning them pseudonyms from her play *The Revolution of Sweden.* Referring to herself as 'Constantia' and Patrick as 'Arwide', she indicates the presence of another woman, 'Christina' and a man, 'Gustavus', suggesting that others within their circle were interested in marriage to Trotter and to Cockburn. Trotter assures Patrick in her first letter that when it comes to 'Gustavus', he has no more priority than anyone else in her life: 'whatever kind of affection I have for him, if it be passion, as you used to say it is, that however I do not suffer it so to fill my mind, as to make me neglect what I owe to myself, or my friends.'[62] On the other hand, she indicates that Patrick has already made some form of commitment to 'Christina' who is not fully committed to him:

> [Arwide's] letter, [Constantia] said, had fully convinced her that she had made very slight impressions on him since he could be so much touched, as he owned, at Christina's coldness, when he had just left her: But that he could think, though only for a moment that breaking off one engagement would put an end to the other, made it evident that [Christina's] part of the passion was a very trifling one.[63]

Trotter is unconvinced that theological principles are the only thing holding Cockburn back from marriage. Whether he was heartbroken by the mysterious 'Christina' or unwilling to decide which woman to marry is unclear, but Trotter will not allow him to make his argument completely theological when it seems obvious to her that there are other reasons for his hesitancy. This is something which is reflected in her own dramatic characters – none are ruled by a single motivation: they are often affected by emotion and ruled by reason, while not preferring one over the other.

In all her discussions with her friends in correspondence, Trotter sees religion as something that is relevant to everyday circumstances. This is evident in her formal writing

[61] Trotter to Cockburn, 13 August 1707, *Works* Vol.2, pp.241-243.
[62] Trotter to Cockburn, 3 June 1707, *Works* Vol.2, p.212.
[63] Trotter to Cockburn, 3 June 1707, *Works* Vol.2, p.215.

too, both philosophical and in her plays. In her later philosophical musings, this everyday faith is clearly important. In a piece titled 'Letter of advice to her son', published as part of *Works*, she outlines the moral virtues she expects him to live by and encourages him to think carefully about his choice of career. She urges him to only become a clergyman if he feels a genuine call to the profession:

> But let no views determine your choice to that sacred calling, but a sincere desire of promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of men. If you have not a real zeal for those ends to engage you to the service of the church, be not tempted by the prospect of any advantage or promotion in it.[64]

While at the time it was not unheard of for young men to join the clergy to earn a living, Trotter strongly advocated that the teaching of religion should not be undertaken lightly and urged her son to take this view too. Her other words to him on the practice of religion show that there was a devotional aspect she expected him to aspire to also:

> That sense, which you now have, of the worship and obedience due to the supreme being, is the best foundation for virtue, that can be laid, since it will lead you to such a habit of regular devotion and reflection on your actions, as will not let you be easy under any continued deviation from your duty.[65]

For Trotter, the value she places on education is closely tied with her religious faith. In a short piece within *Works* titled 'The Usefulness of Schools and Universities for the Improvement of the Mind in right Notions of God', she observes that:

> The greatest benefit we can receive from them, is by opening and enlarging our minds, to bring us to the knowledge of a supreme being, upon the most solid and rational grounds. This is the only immoveable foundation of moral virtue; and without this all our other studies are vain and empty, I had almost said, pernicious speculations.[66]

Education expands the mind and increases an individual's understanding and knowledge of God, she says, which in turn brings about a further development in moral virtue. Trotter evidently sees education as a means to personal improvement, both spiritually and otherwise. In 'Letter of Advice', Trotter tells him:

> It is no small satisfaction to me, to find, that you have so early shaken off that dislike to, or negligence of, serious things, which young persons are

[64] 'Letter of advice', *Works* Vol. 2, p.114.
[65] 'Letter of advice', p.111.
[66] Catharine Trotter, 'On the Usefulness of Schools and Universities for the Improvement of the Mind in right Notions of God', *Works* Vol.2, pp.125-127 (p.125).

> apt to give into, and which the greatest care in their education often fails of removing.[67]

While in this case, she is expressing her opinion that education often does not rid young people of a dislike of serious matters, the importance she places on education is evident in her emphasis on the care which should be taken in educating young people, and once they are more interested in the serious, they can pursue learning with more fervour. She goes on to recommend a number of sermons and other reading material that she hopes her son will engage with to equip him for life. The emphasis on education as a means to enhance one's understanding of God is one way in which Trotter's view that religious devotion shapes all elements of life comes to the fore.

Rather than focusing on devotion alone, or on theology and philosophical ideas within religion, Trotter advocates for a combination of the two. In 'Sunday's Journal', she highlights the benefits of both living with devotion to God, but in every aspect of life, rather than just spending days in prayer and reflection as those secluded in monasteries or similar:

> The appellation of *religious* being so peculiarly appropriated in all popish countries to such recluses, has, no doubt, very much contributed to keep up this pernicious notion, that religion consists in nothing but prayer and contemplation; and that those who are incumbered with worldly affairs have nothing to do with it. These devotees seem to have forgot that their great master, (who surely best understood his own religion) both practised, and taught, and strongly enforced, justice, charity, meekness, forgiveness, and all the social virtues, which they withdraw themselves from the possibility of exercising.[68]

Trotter saw that the marks of Christian devotion included social and moral virtue – but she also felt the need to highlight the importance of the other side of this world view – those who felt that religion had nothing to do with the world, and so there was no need for engaging in spiritual matters:

> If these busy people will bestow upon me a little of that leisure, which Sunday generally affords to persons in all stations, I would ask them, whether they have time to forgive an injury, to check a passion, to be temperate, just or charitable? If they have (and I believe no one of them will venture to say he has not) let them but join to the practice of these virtues an intention of performing them, because they are injoined by the author of their being: let them every morning as they rise, before the bustling world breaks in upon them, offer the actions of the day to him; and every night, when the busy scene is shut, even whilst they are

[67] 'Letter of advice', p.111.
[68] 'Sunday's Journal', *Works* Vol.2, pp.121-125 (p.122).

> undressing, if they really have no other leisure for it, humbly and earnestly ask pardon for what has been done amiss; and let them gladly embrace the opportunity, which one day in seven offers for a more solemn worship.[69]

For Trotter, religion is not just a matter of debating and discussing principles and theological ideas. Instead, there is an equal importance placed on everyday devotion, particular Sabbath reflections, and the application of the higher principles and ideals into daily circumstances. Trotter herself embodied this by incorporating these larger ideas into her fictional writing, debating principles with her friends and family and also through personal, devotional dedication to spiritual matters. The final poem of Trotter's printed in *Works*, closing the second volume and therefore the whole collection, is a short work titled 'The rapture of an affectionate soul to Jesus on the Cross, composed in Latin by St. Francis Xaverius; paraphrased.' It seems that Trotter took this Latin poem, translated, and paraphrased it. It is deeply devotional and focuses on the crucifixion of Christ. The speaker concentrates on the sacrificial nature of Christ's death and the debt they therefore owe to him:

> Such love my Jesu did bestow;
> And oh! Much more to thee I owe!
> Unbounded bliss thou didst forsake,
> A wretched life for me to take.[70]

The language depicts the wretched state of the speaker, the suffering and anguish of the crucified Christ, and the gratitude the speaker feels for this. It is highly emotive, reflective, and devotional. In taking the time to reflect on, translate and paraphrase this small poem, Trotter shows how personal her religious beliefs are to her and it therefore makes sense that her principles were the foundation of her writing, as well as her daily life.

Trotter's engagement with religion and philosophy in this sense brings her in line with the likes of Elizabeth Melville and Lillias Skene. Melville's deeply devotional poetry and reflections are echoed by Trotter's final poem, and in the careful, considered advice she offers to her son. To an extent, her challenge to Patrick regarding the benefit of marriage also falls into this category, as 'Sunday's Journal' notes the importance Trotter placed on bringing religious thought and reflection into the act of daily living. Skene's more activist approach to religion, writing to convert the Princess Elizabeth, and campaigning for the freedom of her male family members is also reflected through

[69] 'Sunday's Journal', pp.122-123.
[70] 'The rapture of an affectionate soul to Jesus on the Cross,' *Works* Vol.2, pp.575-576.

Trotter's own engagement with her friends in her letters. While she was not persecuted in the sense that Skene and her Quaker friends were, she engaged in writing to make her arguments. Her dealings with Thomas Burnet and Patrick Cockburn show that she was willing to argue her case in writing. Trotter, and these other learned women use their intellectualism to engage with public debate in Scotland.

Connections and collaborations

Through her connections and collaboration with other female writers, well-known political figures, and respected male playwrights of her time, Trotter built a community around her which contributed to her own career as a writer and solidified her reputation as a woman of learning. Perhaps the most significant of her collaborations was her contribution to *The Nine Muses, Or, Poems Written by Nine severall Ladies Upon the death of the late Famous John Dryden* in 1700. Between Trotter, Mary Pix, Susanna Carroll (later Centlivre), Sarah Fyge Egerton, Lady Sarah Piers and Delarivier Manley (who is credited as being the driving force behind the project),[71] the Nine Classical Muses were personified in poems of tribute to John Dryden. The poems mark the first published collection of poems authored by women in England. [72] By 1700, Pix, Manley and Trotter were reputed playwrights, and Fyge Egerton had published some of her own poetry, giving the women some experience as they published the collection. The poems indicate 'poetic authority […] as vehicles for literary criticism'[73] and provide evidence of the 'intellectual confidence'[74] the women held.

In Trotter's poem, 'Calliope: The Heroick Muse', this confidence is clear through her use of Classical references and self-assured literary criticism. After a tribute to Dryden in the opening lines, she discusses the work of other writers:

> Vanbrugh, the Comick Muse has Grac'd with Praise;
> Granvill, whose well wrought Scenes the Passions raise,
> In Tragic Strains shall long adorn the Stage;
> And Garth, in pointed Satyr, lash the Age.
> […]
> Scarce was I more enrag'd against the Three
> Assassins, Chapman, Hobbs and Ogilby;
> The last my Virgil had defac'd in vain,
> To all his Charms, by Dryden rais'd again.[75]

[71] Ros Ballaster, 'Introduction', in *The New Atalantis*, pp.v-xxi (p.xii).
[72] Anne Kelley, 'What a Pox Have the Women to do with the Muses?': *The Nine Muses* (1700)', *Women's Writing*, 17:1 (2010), 8-29, 9.
[73] Kelley, 'What a Pox', p.14.
[74] Kelley, 'What a Pox', p.3.
[75] Catharine Trotter, 'Calliope: the Heroick Muse', in *Catharine Trotter's* The Adventures of a Young Lady *and Other Works*, ed. by Anne Kelley (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.[285].

Vanbrugh, Granville and Garth are set up as natural successors to Dryden by the other Muses' poems,[76] but Trotter highlights their strengths and weaknesses, showcasing her ability to discuss and analyse the merits of other writers instead of only criticising them in praise of Dryden. She clearly disapproves of translators of Virgil's works such as Chapman, Hobbs, and Ogilby, referring to them as 'assassins' before drawing attention to Dryden's superior translation and presenting him as the saviour of Virgil's work. As the poem is voiced by a Greek Muse, there are naturally Classical references throughout, and as expected, the other Muses are invoked. Although we have no information as to whether Trotter was interacting with the original Classical texts, it is clear that she engaged with the many translations, including Dryden's of Virgil, Pope's editions of Homer and the French translations of the same carried out by Madam Anne Le Févre Dacier.[77] Her engagement with these classical authors was based upon more than one interpretation and translation of key texts, even if she was unable to read and understand the originals. While only sixty-nine lines long, Trotter's poem manages to praise Dryden by calling to mind this Classical imagery, contemporary writers and even Chaucer. This is an example of the depth and breadth of her reading, but in addition, her comments upon the contemporary writers she chooses to address display her critical engagement with and understanding of their work.

Trotter's varied knowledge base is also present in her dedicatory letter to Charles, Lord Halifax, in *The Unhappy Penitent*, in which she offers literary criticism upon other writers of the period. She critiques Dryden, declaring that while he was 'the most Universal Genius this Nation ever bred', she believes 'he did not excel in every part' (*UP*, p.A2), as his characters were not sympathetic. As well as offering opinions on Otway and Lee, Trotter also reveals her views on Shakespeare:

> The imitable Shakespear [sic] 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). (*UP*, p.A2v)

Trotter indicates that Shakespeare is a natural genius who should be admired and respected, while still allowing for the chance that there are flaws in his work. Her confidence in providing such opinions is striking, as these writers were well-known, reputable, and male. Trotter also makes the effort to display her knowledge of the European cultural scene by quoting from the French poet Boileau and praising Cardinal

[76] Kelley, 'What a Pox', pp.13-15.
[77] In letters to her niece, Trotter compares both Dacier and Pope's translations. See Catharine Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 20 January 1734/5, *Works* Vol 2, p.274 and 28 August 1735, *Works* Vol 2., p.278.

Richelieu, French statesman and patron of the Arts,[78] regarding whom she notes that, despite being a key political figure, he was not so proud that 'the Establishment and Reformation of the Theatre was not thought below his care' (*UP*, p.A3v). The variety of writers and aspects of culture with which Trotter is engaging is impressive, and the publication of *The Unhappy Penitent* in 1701, not long after *The Nine Muses* indicates her ability to incorporate this breadth of reading and knowledge into her writing. Her collaboration with other women writers also underlines the community of writing women in England who were able to unite and build connections.

These connections had not been solely formed for the purposes of *The Nine Muses*; there is evidence of a working relationship between Trotter and some of her fellow women writers in the years leading up to 1700, as they entered the world of playwriting. Friendships between Trotter and both Mary Pix and Delarivier Manley are evidenced by the presence of celebratory poems, prologues, and epilogues that the women wrote for one another's plays. Trotter's first play, *Agnes de Castro* (1696) featured a dedicatory poem penned by Delarivier Manley:

> Orinda, and the Fair Astrea gone,
> Not one was found to fill the Vacant Throne;
> Aspiring Man had quite regain'd the Sway
> […]
> Till you (Natures third start in favour of our Kind)
> With stronger Arms, their Empire have disjoyn'd.[79]

Orinda and Astrea were common pseudonyms ascribed to Katherine Phillips and Aphra Behn respectively, [80] and both poets had obtained renown and success in their lifetimes. Noting the absence of a successor for these women, Manley observes that male writers have maintained their full control of the literary sphere. Manley presents Catharine Trotter as a worthy successor who can fill the space left by Phillips and Behn. The close of the poem recognises Trotter as a legitimate authority who can establish the return of women to the writing world: 'For thus Encourag'd, and thus led by you, / Methinks we might more Crowns than theirs Subdue.'[81] Ros Ballaster summarises the purpose of the poem nicely

[78] Daniel Patrick O'Connell, 'Armand-Jean du Plessis, cardinal et duc de Richelieu', in *Britannica Academic*, (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017) <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/levels/collegiate/article/Armand-Jean-du-Plessis-cardinal-et-duc-de-Richelieu/63580#article-contributors> [accessed 2 September 2020].
[79] Delarivier Manley, 'To the Author of Agnes de Castro', in *Agnes de Castro* (London: Parker, Rhodes and Briscoe, 1696), p.[ii].
[80] Germaine Greer, et al (eds.), *Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Verse* (London: Virago Press, 1988), p.240.
[81] Manley, 'To the Author of *Agnes de Castro*'

through her observation that Manley sets Trotter as 'a female challenge to male domination in the arts.'[82] With the majority of well-known and successful playwrights being men, the emergence of Trotter as an inspiration for other female writers would have been significant, and makes the supportive community of women writers she was part of all the more important. The prologue for *Agnes de Castro* was written 'at the Authors [sic] request' by William Wycherley. As with the majority of prologues and epilogues for plays of the period, the aim was to encourage a favourable reception of the play and its author.[83] Wycherley's poem requests a patient and sympathetic response from the audience, highlighting the importance of letting this new playwright speak:

> And hear without Noise, nay with Patience too,
> Our Female Wit, if you'd have her, hear you;
> Especially, since your own talking does,
> Your pleasure interupt [sic], your Sense Expose,
> Whilst Silence, good Sense, and good Breeding shows;
> And each Man's manners, Honour, Wit appear,
> more, as he's less a Woman's Censurer,
> Then Censures, which wou'd spoil your sport forbear[84]

Wycherley's reference to Trotter as a 'Female Wit' emphasises her gender in addition to her capable mind. With the purpose of the prologue being to move the audience towards celebrating the play and the qualities of Trotter as its author, the choice of who would be asked to write it was an important one. In asking Wycherley to write the prologue, Trotter gained herself the commendation of a well-known, active male playwright. There may have been a degree of acquaintance between the two already, or perhaps she was particularly bold in making the request, but in either case, Wycherley's agreement to lend his voice to the prologue of *Agnes* would have reflected positively on Trotter, and the play itself. It was important that Trotter established herself as a legitimate playwright as she presented her first play to the world, and these two paratextual elements contributed by Manley and Wycherley would undoubtedly have aided this.

[82] Ros Ballaster, 'Seizing the means of seduction: Fiction and feminine identity in Aphra Behn and Delariveir Manley', in *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740*, ed. by Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (London: Batsford, 1992), pp.93-107 (p.103).
[83] Diana Solomon, *Prologues and Epilogues of Restoration Theatre: Gender and Comedy, Performance and Print* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2013), p.4.
[84] William Wycherley, 'A Prologue: Written by Mr Wycherley at the Authors request: Design'd to be Spoke', in *Agnes de Castro,* p.[iii].

Trotter returned Manley's favour that same year by writing a commendatory poem for Manley's *The Royal Mischief* (1696) which was similar in tone and theme to the one Manley wrote for *Agnes*:

> The Attempt was brave, how happy your success,
> The Men with shame our Sex with Pride confess;
> For us you've vanquisht, though the toyl was yours,
> You were our Champion, and the Glory yours.[85]

Trotter claims Manley's success for all women writers, while acknowledging how hard Manley has worked. Trotter uses the language of battles and empire to further her point:

> I knew my force too weak, and but assay'd
> The Borders of their Empire to invade,
> I incite a greater genius to my aid:
> The War begun you generously pursu'd
> With double arms you every way subdu'd;
> Our Title clear'd […]
> The Men always o'ercome will quit the Field,
> Where they have lost their hearts, the Lawrel yield.[86]

While Manley portrayed Trotter as a leader of returning female writers, Trotter establishes Manley as a critical figure in this effort, without whom there would be no success in gaining access to the male dominated literary field.

Delarivier Manley was not the only writer for whom Trotter contributed poems. In 1698 she wrote the epilogue for Mary Pix's *Queen Catharine.* The poem functions as a standard epilogue by focusing more on the audience reception of the play, and is marked as having been delivered by a Miss Porter, the implication being that she is a young actress, who discusses the impact of the play upon her:

> Sure practicing so young I may improve.
> That's all I come for: what's the Play to me,
> And since I'm here, I think I'll let you see,
> What you're to hope I may hereafter be,
> […]
> Who knows but I may come to act Queen Kate.[87]

This is a different perspective from the previous poems mentioned, where these female writers were placed as key figures within the world of writing for the stage. In this

[85] 'To Mrs Manley. By the Author of *Agnes de Castro*' in *Catharine Trotter's* The Adventures of a Young Lady *and Other Works*, ed. by Anne Kelley (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006), p.287.
[86] 'To Mrs Manley', p.287.
[87] 'Epilogue', *Queen Catharine* by Mary Pix, in *The Plays of Mary Pix and Catharine Trotter* Vol.1, ed by. Edna L. Steeves (New York & London: Garland, 1982).

epilogue, creating space for female figures is not done through praising Mary Pix as author, but instead focusing on the idea that the character of Queen Catharine is a role that can be inherited from actress to actress, another way of advocating for the place of women in the world of theatre. At a time when the prologues and epilogues of early modern drama were a place that women's voices could be heard,[88] Trotter portrays a young actress looking forward to when she will have her turn on stage. Trotter's expectation is that women will continue to have their voices heard on stage both as writers and actresses.

Trotter's professional relationships with Manley and Pix were a means to legitimise and support one another in a climate where there were significantly fewer women involved than men. However, she maintained other personal and working relationships beyond these two women. As noted previously in Chapter 2, *Fatal Friendship* (1698) contains four poems in praise of Trotter in the opening pages. The third poem accompanying *Fatal Friendship* is anonymous, but as with previous commendatory poems to Trotter, places her as a successor to Phillips and Behn by referencing 'Astrea' and 'Orinda':

> The fam'd Orinda's, and Astrea's Lays,
> With never dying Wit, bless'd Charles's Days
> And we suppos'd Wit cou'd no higher rise,
> Till you succeeding, Tear from them the Prize.
> (*FF*, p.A4v)

Birch mentions in his account that Bevil Higgons had also written verses in celebration of *Fatal Friendship,* but these had arrived too late in time for publication.[89] The poem was included in the version of the play which was printed in the second volume of *Works,* and in it, Higgons draws attention to her abilities as a writer, and her femininity:

> The muses empire we have still maintained;
> Till you your sex asserted, and redrest,
> By custom and our tyranny opprest.
> You shew, that if they fail in any part,
> 'Tis not in genius, but ignoble art.
> Others some small efforts of wit have made;
> But want of nerves the woman still betray'd,
> Till you, in judgment old, in fancy young,
> With all your sex's delicacy strong,
> Possess the talents we so vainly vaunt,
> With all the nicer beauties that we want.[90]

[88] Solomon, pp.10-12.
[89] *Works,* Vol. 1, p.viii.
[90] Bevil Higgons, 'To the Author of the Fatal Friendship', *Works* Vol.2, p.465.

In his poem, Higgons's praise of Trotter indicates that it was not only other women who saw her as a worthy addition to the literary world. He acknowledges that men have had the monopoly of writing, but that Trotter has brought a new perspective and made her mark. In 1693, Higgons was the recipient of a poem Trotter wrote in celebration of his recovery from smallpox, [91] and was known as a historian, poet and fiercely loyal Jacobite.[92] While Trotter was never overtly political, especially as a young woman, this early connection with Higgons, who was writing plays and poetry at the same time as her, alongside her loyalty to the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, who were closely allied with Queen Anne in the early years of her reign, indicates strong royalist loyalties for Trotter. The fact that her husband, Patrick, was initially reluctant to renounce the Stuarts when he refused to take the Oath of Abjuration in 1714 hints that at least for a time, the family may have preferred the Stuart claim. However, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Trotter's loyalties seemed more to align with the idea of monarchy in general, lending her support in accordance with what seemed reasonable at the time. Whatever her true political allegiances, we can see that not only was Trotter well connected to fellow authors, but ones who were politically significant. The attempts of Anna Hume and Lillias Skene to interact with the Princess Elizabeth, and the political activism of Lady Anne Halkett show that political engagement and involvement was one of the ways in which a Scottish learned lady could utilise her education.

The known authors of these commendatory verses were significant to Trotter in various ways, and held important positions in the world Trotter found herself in. Manley and Pix were recognised playwrights, as was William Wycherley. Sarah Piers was a key patron of Trotter,[93] and moved in the same political circle alongside the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. These individuals were able to benefit Trotter with their connections, and as noted in Chapter 3, the Marlboroughs likely brought Trotter to the attention of Queen Anne. Her family friendship with Gilbert Burnet and his wife, Elizabeth, was the catalyst by which John Locke heard of her *Defence*.[94] The support of fellow female writers was a valuable asset, as was the presence of well-known and well-reputed male writers in Trotter's circle. Aside from Wycherley's commendation of *Agnes de Castro*, and the previously discussed correspondence between Trotter and William Congreve, London playwright George Farquhar was also an admirer of Trotter and sent her a copy of his 1698

[91] *Works*, Vol.1, p.v.
[92] W.P.Courtney, 'Higgons, Bevil (1670-1736)', rev. by Eveline Cruickshanks, *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2012) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/13240> [accessed 3 September 2020].
[93] Nelson, *ODNB*.
[94] *Works*, Vol.1, p.xv-xvi.

play *Love and a Bottle* for her comment.[95] He was concerned after his play had been accused of 'affronting the ladies' and sent it to Trotter 'to stand its trial before one of the fairest of the sex, and the best judge.'[96] Farquhar's letter to Trotter also indicates that he was grateful for her appearance at the third night's performance of the play. In early modern London, the income from the proceeds of the third night went directly to the author of the play, and Trotter's appearance on that night, rather than at previous performances was taken by Farquhar as a personal compliment.[97] These good relationships with male playwrights indicate the respect that Trotter had, not only as a playwright, but also as an emerging critic on the work of others.

The community created by Trotter would have been particularly important when she faced the vitriol and satire that was directed at women writers. While some were supportive of women writing, others openly mocked Trotter and her fellow writers. In regard to *The Nine Muses*, the response was not entirely favourable. Some men 'perceived the collaboration of these six women […] as an outrageous incursion into the male territory of poetic criticism,'[98] and Kate Lilley remarks that the collection was 'a striking generic intervention'[99] on the part of these women into the world of male writers. Jeslyn Medoff states that when a woman's name appeared in a preface against one of her own plays, it was interpreted as an attempt at fame, which was generally disapproved of.[100] There are examples of Trotter using such tactics, and the general pattern seems to be that her name was not used until she had established her own reputation, and her writing had garnered some praise, aided by the fellow writers who were putting their names to her work. *Olinda's Adventures* was published initially as *The Adventures of a Young Lady* and Trotter's name did not appear next to the text until the 1718 edition. *Agnes de Castro* was published as having been 'written by a Young Lady' and the Francis Saunders printed edition of *Fatal Friendship* has no author's name attached on the front page. *Love at a Loss* was printed with the line 'by the author of *Fatal Friendship*' on the title page, but in both instances, as with Trotter's final two plays, the dedications are signed with her name and identify her as the author. As she became better known, she seems to have become more confident in assigning her name to her work, especially as in her choice of dedicatees, she was alluding to her political allegiances. But as Medoff notes, having one's

[95] *Works*, Vol.1, pp.viii.
[96] *Works*, Vol.1, pp.viii.
[97] *Works*, Vol.1, p.viii.
[98] Kelley, 'What a Pox', p.8.
[99] Kate Lilley – 'True State Within: Women's Elegy 1640-1700', in *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740* (London: Batsford, 1992), pp.72-92 (p.75).
[100] Medoff, p.37.

name out in the open, no matter how well respected, seems to have also brought trouble for female writers.

In the 1696/7 season, an anonymous play called *The Female Wits; or, The Triumvirate of Poets at Rehearsal* was staged at the Drury Lane Theatre,[101]in which Trotter, Manley and Pix were satirised. Fidelis Morgan suggests that the supportive community between the women had been unexpected, and *The Female Wits* created the anticipated squabbling and rivalry that had been absent.[102] The play assigns caricatures to each of the women: Manley is portrayed as Marsilia, the main target of the piece and noted in the Dramatis Personae as 'a poetess that admires her own works, and a great lover of flattery.'[103] Pix is Mrs Wellfed, 'one that represents a fat, female author. A good, sociable, well-matured companion that will not suffer martyrdom rather than take of three bumpers in a hand.' Catharine Trotter is portrayed as Calista, 'a lady that pretends to the learned languages, and assumes to herself the name of critic.' Trotter was establishing herself not only as a reader and learner, or even writer, but as a critic too, through her active comment on the work of others, including men. This was clearly not welcomed by everyone. *The Female Wits* depicts the rehearsal of one of Marsilia's plays and presents her spoiled, childlike behaviour during the process of the rehearsals. As the main character, Marsilia is the most disagreeable and the mocking portrayal of Manley that she represents is easily the worst of the three. Calista and Mrs Wellfed are competitive and quarrelsome, but even they are united against Marsilia:

CALISTA	I think Marsilia is very tedious.
WELLFED	I think so too. 'Tis well 'tis Marsilia, else the players would never have the patience.
CALISTA	Why, do they love her?
WELLFED	No, but they fear her, that's all one.[104]

Marsilia is loud, angry, and difficult to please. Calista (Trotter) is not unlikeable in the same sense, instead she is resented for her knowledge and interest in learning, which according to the play is a pretence:

MARSILIA	Oh! 'Tis the vainest, proudest, senseless thing. She pretends to Grammar, writes in Mood and Figure, does

[101] Fidelis Morgan, *The Female Wits: Women Playwrights of the Restoration* (London: Virago, 1981), p.390.
[102] Morgan, p.391. Anne Kelley concurs with this assessment – see *Catharine Trotter*, p.18.
[103] All character descriptions from the Dramatis Personae from Anonymous, *The Female Wits; or the Triumvirate of Poets at Rehearsal*, in *The Female Wits: Women Playwrights of the Restoration* by Fidelis Morgan (London: Virago, 1981), p.392.
[104] Anonymous, *The Female Wits* 2.1, p.405.

> everything methodically. Poor creature! She shows me her works first. I always commend 'em, with a design she shoul'd expose 'em, and the Town be so kind to laugh her out of her follies. (*FW* 1.1, p.395)

As well as acknowledging Calista's vanity and pretentiousness, Marsilia admits to praising early drafts of Calista's work when shown them, in the hopes that she will publish them and be mocked by other people. Because she has been portrayed as arrogant and pretentious, when Calista arrives on stage for the first time and discusses Aristotle and other Classical authors, she appears to be disingenuous and insufferable:

> MARSILIA I must beg your learned ladyship's pardon, Aristotle never said such a word, upon my credit
>
> […]
>
> CALISTA I cannot but remind you, Madam, you are mistaken, for I read Aristotle in his own language. The translation may alter the expression. (*FW* 1.1, p.397).

The time given in the play to Calista and to Mrs Wellfed is significantly less than the attention placed on the character of Marsilia. Other than a small instance of bickering between Calista and Wellfed when trying to gain the attention of Mr Powell in order to have their plays staged (*FW* 2.1, pp.405-406), they generally get on well and by the third act have decided to leave the rehearsal early and have dinner together, leaving the play to end with Marsilia's humiliation. The creation and performance of *The Female Wits* indicates that, while women writers including Trotter were praised for their talent and skill by one another and in other circles, there was also public opposition to their writing careers. While Trotter is not the key focus of the play, she was mocked for her interest in languages and literary criticism. For a woman such as Trotter, who always held such value over learning and scholarship, this would surely have stung. However, three of Trotter's five plays were written and performed after the surfacing of *The Female Wits*, and their moralistic tone remained a central factor, implying that any detriment to her confidence or career as a playwright was not permanent.

Trotter's supportive community of women changed over time, especially in the years after she had written her final play. Her friendship with Lady Sarah Piers remained close and the two exchanged letters after her marriage. There is no evidence to suggest that her friendship with Mary Pix changed in any way, however the relationship between Delarivier Manley and Trotter soured considerably after Trotter's playwrighting career seemed to end in 1706 with *The Revolution of Sweden*. In 1709, Manley published *The*

New Atalantis, a 'Tory-motivated exposé of the supposed 'secret' lives of rich and powerful Whig peers and politicians of the reigns of the Stuart kings and queens from Charles II to Anne I.'[105] Not only did powerful Whigs receive scandalous coverage, but Trotter was also targeted, presumably because her connections to Whig figures such as the Marlboroughs were not particularly secret. While *The Female Wits* mocked Trotter on an intellectual level, Manley attempted a character assassination and proceeded to accuse Trotter not only of poor skill as a writer but of moral hypocrisy too. In *The New Atalantis*, Trotter is referred to as Daphne, and Manley says, 'I could enumerate, were it not too tedious, many of Daphne's adventures.'[106] The reference to the 'adventures' can be interpreted as a nod to *Olinda's Adventures*, confirming Daphne as Trotter. In mentioning Trotter's tediousness, there is a connotation that Manley did not consider the novella of any interest. The reference to Daphne's 'adventures' also contains subtle undertones of Daphne's sexual promiscuity. *The New Atalantis* discusses an affair between Daphne and the married 'Count Fortunas' [Lord Marlborough] and also with 'Zara' [Lady Sarah Piers]:

> Zara, who had introduced her to the Cabal, but with infinite anxiety suffered that any lover should dare to engage where she had fixed her heart. But because narrow circumstances do not always suffer to do what they would, Daphne was still forced to have lovers, though if you believe her professions to her fair friend, they had no part in her inclinations. In short, they seemed to live only for each other.[107]

There is no extant evidence to suggest a sexual or romantic relationship between Piers and Trotter, or an extra marital affair with Lord Marlborough. The nature of Trotter's drama and later writing, including her correspondence, has such a focus on moral virtue (especially in regard to marriage in *Unhappy Penitent* and *Fatal Friendship*) that it seems unlikely that these relationships would have occurred in reality. However, Manley implies that this keen interest in virtue was also a performative aspect of Trotter's life:

> Yet she still assumed an air of *Virtue pretended* and was ever eloquent (according to her stiff manner) upon the foible of others. She also fitted her self with an excellent mask called religion, having as often changed and as often professed her self a votary to that shrine, where was to be found the most apparent interest, or which priest had the greatest art of persuading.[108]

[105] Ballaster, 'Introduction', p.v.
[106] Manley, *Atalantis*, p.160.
[107] Manley, *Atalantis*, p.160.
[108] Manley, *Atalantis*, p.160.

Manley suggests Trotter's religion was only a moral ruse rather than genuine and underlines her conversion to the Catholic church and return to Anglicanism (which had only occurred two years prior to the publication of *Atalantis*) to further her case for Trotter's religious interest being fickle and false. Manley's later publication, *The Adventures of Rivella* (1714) also targeted Trotter. In this novel, Manley uses the name 'Calista' for Trotter's character, the same name she was given in *The Female Wits.* This is important as in the *Female Wits*, Trotter's pretentiousness is targeted, and Manley draws on this in *Rivella,* blasting Trotter's moral hypocrisy. Rivella, the title character, and representative of Manley, claims that Calista had asked for help to have charges against 'Cleander' lifted. Cleander is understood to be John Tilly, a Prison governor who was under investigation for accepting bribes from a committee upon which Manley's estranged husband sat.[109] Manley claimed that Trotter had asked for her help as she thought that Manley could influence her husband, successful Tory MP, John Manley, in Tilly's favour.[110] It was following this that Manley and Tilly began a six year affair, during which they lived together,[111] and Birch has suggested that this was one of the motivating factors for Trotter's refusal to keep contact with Manley.[112] Manley uses her novella to recount her own version of these events and implicates Trotter in an affair with Tilly before he met Manley:

> At length, [Cleander (Tilly)] confessed Calista was the first lady that had ever made him unfaithful to his wife […] And Rivella laughed in her turn, because Calista had given her self airs of not visiting Rivella, now she was made the town talk by her scandalous intriegue [sic] with Cleander.[113]

Having already described Calista as a 'prude in her outward professions and the least of it in her inward practice,'[114] Manley succeeds in implying that Trotter's interest in moral virtue was false. Had Trotter genuinely had a relationship with Tilly before he lived with Manley, Trotter's refusal to associate with Manley would indeed have been hypocritical. Manley also scorns what she deems as Trotter's decision to stop writing plays for the stage in *The New Atalantis,* which was published in 1709, three years after Trotter's final play:

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[109] Katherine Zelinksy, 'Introduction', in *The Adventures of Rivella*, by Delarivier Manley, ed. by Katherine Zelinsky (Hertfordshire: Broadview, 1999), pp.9-34 (p.31).
[110] Ros Ballaster, 'Manley, Delarivier (c.1670-1724)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2009) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/17939> [accessed 13th July 2020].
[111] Ballaster, *ODNB.*
[112] *Works* Vol.1, p.xlviii.
[113] Manley, *Rivella*, pp.102-103.
[114] Manley, *Rivella*, p.83.

> [S]he now sets up for regularity and intends to be an ornament to that religion which she had once before abandoned and newly again professed. She will write no more for the stage, 'tis profane, indiscreet, unpardonable.[115]

The fact that Manley is scorning Catharine Trotter suggests that Trotter did make a conscious choice to stop writing plays, rather than her career fizzling out. By this time, Trotter had also published her much acclaimed *Defence of Locke*, and *A Discourse Concerning a Guide in Controversies*, and so was beginning to gain a reputation as a philosophical mind, perhaps another point of contention for Manley, whose own career had paused around this period.[116] A decision from Trotter to stop writing for the stage would ring true with her concerns over the immorality of the theatre. Had Trotter's career simply ended due to her own failure to have another play staged, it would be expected that Manley would have revelled in this and emphasised it in her depiction of Trotter. Manley's failure to do so makes it more plausible that there was a deliberate choice on Trotter's part to stop writing for the stage.

It is unclear how negatively these allegations affected Trotter and her reputation. As she was no longer writing plays, there is no way of knowing how her career would have been influenced, and she continued to write her philosophical and religious essays in later life. The period of 1708-1726, after her marriage to Patrick, was a quiet one. She maintained her correspondence with some friends, such as Thomas Burnet and Sarah Piers, but she published very little. This could theoretically be the result of reputational damage inflicted by Manley, but she was also raising her children and the family were in dire financial circumstances due to the political position her husband had taken; it is just as likely that her time and priorities were focused elsewhere. Additionally, while she did not publish writing under her name, there is nothing to suggest that Trotter was not circulating her writing among friends and family in manuscript form. Manley's rumours did persist in some form however, as Birch felt the need to dismiss them in his biography of Trotter, suggesting that there was remorse on Manley's part in the aftermath of the publications.[117] Anne Kelley believes that Manley's accusations of 'prudery and hypocrisy […] have had a lasting effect on the critical reception of Trotter's work, especially in the twentieth century.'[118] This rings true to an extent. One example of damage to Trotter's reputation is

[115] Manley, *Atalantis*, p.160.
[116] Ballaster, *ODNB.*
[117] *Works*, Vol.1, p.xlviii.
[118] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.23.

Margaret Maison's article which covers Pope's comments on Trotter. In her analysis, she discusses Trotter as someone:

> whose enthusiasm for the opposite sex as matched only by her ardent and articulate devotion to the works of Locke, and who progressed from a rather dubious theatrical and sexual reputation to influential heights of theological and literary respectability.[119]

Maison also refers to Trotter's marriage to Cockburn occurring after 'a series of passionate love affairs',[120] which can only be concluded from taking Manley's assessment and the surrounding rumours as fact, or by reading *Olinda's Adventures* as entirely autobiographical.[121] Another indication that Trotter's supposedly torrid sexual past is fabricated is that this was often how women were targeted. Kelley notes that 'Attacks on women writers were frequently focused on crude physical representation or accusations of sexually promiscuous behaviour, as if women's very essence rendered them unfit to engage in intellectual activities.'[122] However, any reading of her personal correspondence alone, as well as her philosophical work and early fictional work, clearly indicates that her quest for moral virtue was genuine, especially as her private correspondence was not originally intended for public consumption and so presumably would not have been written under a fictional persona.

Trotter's reputation as a woman of learning and moral virtue did remain with her in later life and immediately after her death, unlike Manley who suffered some level of ostricisation.[123] In 1785, a publication titled *Dialogues Concerning the Ladies,* discussed Trotter as a woman of noble character and superior learning:

> WALDRON That the powers of women are equal to the attainment of great degrees of excellence in literature and the arts, cannot be questioned. […] And Mrs Cockburne [sic] and Mrs Macauly Graham have displayed very considerable metaphysical abilities, though this has been supposed to be a branch of study not very congenial to female understandings.
>
> MAINWARING […] That cool reasoners may be found among the ladies, Mrs Cockburn, and some others may be mentioned as

[119] Margaret Maison, 'Pope and Two Learned Nymphs', *The Review of English Studies* 29:116 (1978), 405-414, 406.
[120] Maison, p.407.
[121] See Chapter 1 for my discussion on the autobiographical nature of *Olinda's Adventures.*
[122] Kelley, 'What a Pox', p.10.
[123] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.24.

> instances; but are not ladies of this character very scarce?[124]

Not only is she recognised as a skilled, learned woman, but she is considered a rarity, and the respect for Trotter's intellectual mind is evident. It is also an example of some of the posthumous praise that Trotter received. Manley and *The Female Wits* were unable to completely obliterate her reputation as a learned woman. Although her relationship with Manley broke down and caused some difficulty for Trotter in the long run, her other connections and collaborations have consistently contributed to the idea that she was intellectually engaged and inclined towards pursuing moral virtue on a personal and intellectual level.

A new area of connection and collaboration for Trotter is opened up through further consideration of her Scottish dimensions: the presence of the Scottish religious links held by the family of her husband, Patrick Cockburn. His father, John Cockburn was a Church of Scotland minister, who studied and was ordained by his uncle, Patrick Scougall, bishop of Aberdeen at the time.[125] In terms of his writing output, John Cockburn was founder of Scotland's first scholarly journal *Bibliotheca Universalis* (1688)[126] which translated reviews, theological and other works from French periodicals, until authorities decided to halt its publication due to concerns that some of the contents were anti-Catholic.[127] Other works by John Cockburn included *Historical Relation of the Pretended General Assembly* (1691); *Right Notions of God and Religion* (1708); *A Discourse of Self-Murder* (1716) and *An Examination of Duels* (1720). These works are a selection of his writings and display an engagement with discussions on debated areas of morality and theology. Patrick Scougall's son, Henry, was himself a clergyman and wrote a famous devotional text *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, which was first published in 1677, only one year before his death at the age of twenty-eight.[128] The text had a significant afterlife – Bishop Gilbert Burnet republished it in 1691, and Methodist founder John Wesley also produced an edition in

[124] *Dialogues Concerning the Ladies*, pp.32-33.
[125] *The Records of the Cockburn family*, by Sir Robert Cockburn and Harry A. Cockburn (London and Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1913) highlights that although there was definitely a close relationship between them, the exact degree of family connection between Scougall and the Cockburns is not entirely clear. However, *The Records* do dispute the common misconception that John Cockburn was married to Scougall's sister.
[126] Kelsey Jackson Williams, *The First Scottish Enlightenment: Rebels, Priests, History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p.30.
[127] Tristram Clarke, 'Cockburn, John (1652-1729)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2008) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/5774> [accessed July 2021]. See also Jackson Williams, p.32.
[128] Clare Jackson, 'Scougall, Henry (1650-1678)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/24941> [accessed July 2021].

1744. The text was translated into French, German, and Welsh in the mid-1700s.[129] Most significantly, although he was born in 1678, the year Henry died, Patrick Cockburn edited and produced a new edition of *Life of God* in 1726, to which he added the sermon preached by George Garden at Henry Scougall's funeral, a significant appendage because it added more to Scougall's works than had previously been published.[130] George Garden, a key player in the Episcopal movement in Scotland, was author of a text titled *The Case of the Episcopal Clergy* (1703) and a Jacobite supporter who refused to pray for William III and Mary II upon their accession to the throne.[131] He was also the brother of Patrick's mother, Anna, making Garden Patrick's maternal uncle.[132]Alongside his production of Scougall's text, Patrick's own theological writing, mostly produced in the years the family was based in Aberdeen, consisted of texts including *On the Duty and Benefit for praying for our Governors* (1728) and *The Lawfulness and Duty of Praying for our Present King and Governor* (1735). Such titles suggest that Patrick's history of non-juring, leading to his refusal to take the Oath of Abjuration in 1713, seems to have prompted him to think more on the matter of praying for those in authority in the years after he eventually took the oath. Another crucial connection between these relatives is their time in Aberdeen: John Cockburn, George Garden and Henry Scougall all completed their theological training there during Patrick Scougall's incumbency as Bishop. In 1726, having been persuaded to take the Oath by his father, Patrick was given a congregation in Aberdeen to oversee. There is no indication as to whether this placement was coincidental or the result of the influence of his father and uncle George, but Patrick Cockburn's move to Aberdeen was certainly a return to both his familial and theological roots.

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[129] Jackson, *ODNB*.
[130] Strong, *ODNB*.
[131] Stuart Handley, 'Garden, George (1649-1733)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2007) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/10351> [accessed July 2021].
[132] Clarke, *ODNB*. The Garden family were well connected with Divinity in Aberdeen. George Garden was created regent of King's College from 1673-1674 and his brother, James (also a maternal uncle of Patrick Cockburn), was Professor of Divinity from 1680-1697. Their father, Alexander Gardyne, was also a regent of King's from 1635-1638. In the 1889 entry to the *Dictionary of National Biography* for poet Alexander Gardyne (1584?-1634?), T.W. Bayne suggests that Alexander Gardyne, regent of King's, was the poet's son, which if the case would create a place within Scottish literary history for the Gardens and Cockburn families in Aberdeen, as well as a theological one. James Garden's *ODNB* entry is incorporated within Handley's entry for George Garden. See also T.W. Bayne, 'Gardyne, Alexander (1584?-1634?)' in *Dictionary of National Biography* [Archive Edition] (1899) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/odnb/9780192683120.013.10380> [accessed October 2021], Peter John Anderson, *Officers and Graduates of University & King's College, Aberdeen, 1495-1860* (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1893) <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/jqk7vnq2> [accessed October 2021] and Kelsey Jackson Williams, 'The Network of James Garden of Aberdeen and North-eastern Scottish Culture in the Seventeenth Century', *Northern Studies,* 47 (2015), 102-130.

The presence of such a network of theological thinkers and writers within the Cockburn family is an important Scottish dimension for Catharine Trotter. Not only does her marriage connect her to this Aberdeen based theological community; but the writing of these men underlines a habit of engaging with theological and philosophical debate through writing and publication. Trotter's own philosophical and theological writing habits also follow a similar trajectory. From her marked return to Anglicanism via *Discourse Concerning a Guide in Controversies* in 1707, she moved towards theological writing in the years after her marriage. Although many of her smaller works were unpublished in her lifetime, her decision to record thoughts 'On the Credibility of the historical parts of Scripture'[133], 'On moral virtue, and its natural tendency to happiness'[134] or 'On the infallibility of the church of Rome'[135] among others show that her engagement with such religious debate and discussion expressed itself through her writing. Although Birch has noted that she returned to her plays for a time in Aberdeen with the desire to redraft and edit them, her main focus in her later life was philosophical and religious writing. Given that Patrick was also writing on theological issues in the same period, as were their Aberdeen family connections, this could suggest that Trotter was making use of the network available to her. While in London, where there was access to fellow playwrights with whom she could engage, Trotter was able to develop her fictional writing. Based in Aberdeen, away from the network she had built for herself in the theatre, her transition to philosophy and theology was perhaps aided by her Aberdeen network. Trotter's time in Scotland was certainly not one where she was inactive in her writing.

Remaining engaged

Another mark of Trotter's lived experience as a learned woman comes from her willingness to stay connected to the world of learning, even when she was not producing work herself. The best example of this is through her correspondence with her niece, Anne Arbuthnot, who lived in Peterhead, a busy fishing port in Aberdeenshire, while Trotter and her family were in Aberdeen. The correspondence covers family news and discusses what they were reading. As highlighted earlier, Trotter's correspondence with Anne shows that she was always looking for new material, and shared opinions with her niece about what she was reading:

> We used to take The Gentlemen's Magazine ever since we came here, but none has been sent us this year since January. If you let me know in

[133] *Works*, Vol.2, pp.128-129.
[134] *Works*, Vol.2, pp.129-131.
[135] *Works* Vol.2, pp.134-138.

> what Magazine the poem you mention is, and in what Month (except it be in The Scots Magazine, which does not come here), I will endeavour to procure it, and give you what account I can of it.[136]

This is a good example of the dialogue between the two women who shared their thoughts and recommendations with one another. One of the conversations within *Dialogues Concerning the Ladies* notes that 'this excellent woman and her husband were at one time so low, that they could not conveniently afford to purchase even so cheap a compilation as the Gentlemen's Magazine.'[137] Whether this is a misreading of the fact that Trotter was not being sent the *Gentlemen's Magazine* or if indeed this is a reference to the precarious financial situation of the Cockburn family, it does indicate that access to the materials she wanted was not always easy, but that she maintained her keen interest in remaining connected with the world of learning. Presumably Trotter was once more able to access the *Gentlemen's Magazine* as she contributed letters in 1737,[138] and submitted her 'Poem, occasioned by the busts set up in the Queen's Hermitage' to the Magazine in the same year. Trotter had originally intended that the poem be presented to the Queen herself in 1732 but had been unsuccessful in achieving this. When Queen Caroline died in 1737, Trotter 'lamented on account of the extraordinary qualifications of [the Queen's] mind, which disposed her to be a great encourage of learning and virtue.'[139] Trotter's desire for the poem to reach the Queen, and her respect of Caroline's support for learning and virtue indicates her desire to participate in a dialogue with the Queen and court-focused circles of intellectual inquiry. It also signals the involvement Trotter still wished to have in matters of philosophy and culture. The contents of the poem are discussed in more detail below, but Trotter's decision to submit the poem to the *Gentlemen's Magazine* in 1737, reveals that the wider issues raised by the poem were significant to her, and that she wished the discussion to receive a wider audience.

Trotter also returned to thoughts of the theatre later in life. By the time her family were living in Aberdeen, it seems that Trotter sought to revisit her earlier fictional works:

> While she resided at Aberdeen, she had a design of revising the fair tragedies which she had written, as she actually did her comedy, with a view not only of correcting them, but likewise of improving the versification, and raising the diction; being sensible, that from a just distaste of the bombast and false sublime of many of the writers of tragedy in the last age, she had sunk too much into the contrary extreme

[136] Catharine Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 3 September 1743, *Works* Vol.2. p.312.
[137] *Dialogues*, p.142.
[138] *Works*, Vol.1, p.xxxviii.
[139] Catharine Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 8 February 1737/8, *Works* Vol.2., p.291.

> of too great a simplicity of style, unequal to the dignity of that species of poetry.[140]

The nature of Trotter's corrections to her tragedies is unclear. Birch noted that her comedy, *Love at a Loss,* had been published with a number of errors, which was her motivation for returning to that particular play. In an undated letter in Birch's collection at the British Library, Patrick Cockburn also refers to the errors in the printed copy of *Love at a Loss*, and notes that apart from *The Revolution of Sweden,* Trotter had no original copies of any of her plays and that none of them could be sourced from booksellers.[141] Although it is unclear whether Trotter was working from her original manuscripts or printed copies, she seems to have been unhappy with their final form and Birch hints at her dissatisfaction of the simplicity of the works. Trotter's plots are somewhat convoluted and hard to follow, but the moral aspects of the plays tend to be the driving force behind the action rather than the tragedy. Trotter's distaste for the tragedy of her contemporary writers aligns with her clear desire to be a stage reformer, elevating tragedy to providing moral weight and grandeur, and this is perhaps why her plays developed such a moral focus.

Trotter's engagement with literature, philosophy and theology remained throughout her life, including the eleven years she was living in Scotland. As highlighted above, her theological network was likely aided through the family connections available in Aberdeen. Her letters to Anne Arbuthnot also indicate that there was a collective group of people reading and sharing theological material:

> You may be sure I was not a little uneasy about Dr Clarke's sermons, till I retrieved them; though before your letter to Kitty, I had some thoughts you might have lent them to the Bishop.[142]

> I was very well pleased with you keeping [an essay written by Alexander Pope] to oblige the Bishop's people, in return for their many favours; and indeed, I am always fond of communicating, as far as I can, what I much value myself, where I think it will be acceptable.[143]

Trotter and Anne constantly discuss and recommend reading material with one another, but these letters imply that there was also some discussion with their Bishop, among others, of important theological texts that were coming into the public discourse. The same can been seen with literary reading. In one letter, Trotter tells Anne:

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[140] *Works*, Vol.1, p.xxxvii.
[141] Patrick Cockburn to Thomas Birch, BL Add MS 4265, ff.108-109.
[142] Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 9 June 1732, *Works* Vol. 2, pp.263-264.
[143] Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 7 May 1736, *Works* Vol. 2, p.282.

> I read [Jean] Racine's plays, but cannot say, that I think *Bernice* the best of them […] There are two or three English tragedies writ with the same view where lovers voluntarily part for ever to satisfy some weighty obligation; one of them by [George Granville] Lord Lansdowne, and far preferable to Racine's, though both tend to that great end of tragedy, to recommend heroic virtue.[144]

This displays a wide and continued interest, not only in English drama, but French drama too. Trotter's engagement with these texts, as well as the aforementioned French translations of Homer by Madam Dacier and the fact that her own *Olinda* had been previously translated into French, suggests a strong interest in French literature. The discussions between the two women about Pope display how much respect Trotter had for him and his work:

> Let me know if you have read [the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*] by Pope. It is no wonder you should be most charmed with him; for the advantages of a fine turn of verse are certainly very great.[145]
>
> Madam Dacier, has indeed, as you observe, done a great piece of service to those of her own country, by her translation of so valuable a book; and I think the unlearned of ours no less obliged to Mr Pope; for though Homer had been turned into English by several hands before, it was so ill done, that few had patience to read them.[…] I am charmed with the humanity of his remarks on some passages, which, though suitable to the manners of those times, are very shocking to us; and he is always very gallant to the ladies.[146]

Trotter dedicated her 1743 *Remarks upon some Writers in the Controversy concerning the Foundation of Moral Virtue and Moral Obligation* to Alexander Pope 'with the utmost deference […] by an admirer of his moral character'[147] and also wrote a letter to him, that was never sent, although it is included in Birch's biography of her.[148] She expressed her sorrow that they were never to be friends when she heard of his illness, explaining that she wished he would 'know the great value I have for him.'[149] Trotter's comments and discussion about the material she was reading speaks to more than simply a habit or pastime. She speaks with authority and knowledge about other texts and authors, drawing on her wide range of reading. In doing so, she shows the characteristics of a literary critic. Her introductions to her plays, in particular *The Unhappy Penitent* point to this as a

[144] Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 6 December 1731, *Works* Vol.2, p.258.
[145] Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 20 January 1734/5, *Works*, Vol. 2, p.274.
[146] Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 28 August 1735, *Works*, Vol. 2, p.278.
[147] *Works*, Vol.1, p.455.
[148] *Works*, Vol.1, pp.xxxix-xliv.
[149] Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 12 June 1744, *Works*, Vol.2, p.315.

practice that she developed at the beginning of her career, and maintained in her later life, even if at times it was only in private.

Throughout her time in Aberdeen and later in Longhorsley, Trotter's interest in Pope, and with the other material she was reading, is consistent with a desire to stay abreast of religious, philosophical, and literary events occurring in the public sphere. This is particularly striking because of the distance Trotter had from the cultural hubs of London and Edinburgh in her later life. Despite this distance, and the poverty she found herself in after the move to Longhorsley (1737), which would have made material difficult to access, Trotter was eager to keep her mind active and occupied. This process of remaining engaged saw her utilising her learning to involve herself in literary, cultural, and philosophical debate within the public sphere – once again proving her lifetime pursuit of knowledge.

A liminal learned woman

In the wider context of the late seventeenth and long eighteenth centuries, Catharine Trotter's intellectual pursuits can clearly be seen as preceding communities of learned women who encouraged one another to engage with intellectualism as a way of achieving moral virtue. Her place within Scottish and English traditions, preceding the Enlightenment and the female thinkers that would come from that generation make her the perfect bridge figure. It has long been accepted that Trotter was a significant influence upon the Bluestocking Society, founded in the 1750s by Elizabeth Montagu.[150] The Bluestockings upheld values including the benefit and effort of intellectual improvement, active participation in polite society, support and patronage of the arts, and philanthropy.[151] These educated women 'can be seen to have played a central role in the cultural and social transformations of the second half of the [eighteenth] century that entrenched this system of values in England.'[152] Trotter's influence on the Bluestockings has been documented for many years; Patricia Sheridan notes the correspondence between Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot, two first-generation Bluestockings,[153] in which they discuss Trotter's *Works*, which had just been published in 1751.[154] Both women's names appear on the list

[150] Gosse, (1916).
[151] Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg, 'Introduction: A Bluestocking Historiography', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 65:1-2 (2002): Reconsidering the Bluestockings, 1-19, p.2.
[152] Pohl and Schellenberg, p.2.
[153] Anna Miegon, 'Biographical Sketches of Principle Bluestocking Women', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 65:1-2 (2002): Reconsidering the Bluestockings, eds. Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg, 25-37.
[154] Patricia Sheridan, 'Virtue, Affection and the Moral Good': The moral philosophy of Catharine Trotter Cockburn and the Bluestockings', *Philosophy Compass*, 13:3 (2018) , p.1.

of subscribers to *Works*[155] confirming that these women were aware of and had been interested in Trotter's writings for some time. In addition to Gosse and Sheridan, Karen Green and Melanie Bigold both acknowledge the importance of Trotter to the Bluestockings:

> [The] influential linking of female friendship […] tested on the stage by Cockburn was an important construct for women's collective self-regulation and agency. [Elizabeth] Carter and the Bluestockings inherited this female tradition and their letters celebrate female friendship as a formative space for generating the intellectual imaginary necessary for women's writing.[156]

The importance of female friendship and the moral benefit of such friendships for women is obvious through Trotter's writing. This importance was also adopted by the Bluestockings. Karen Green highlights a number of Bluestocking learned women, namely Sarah Fielding (1710-1768), Jane Collier (1714-1755), Sarah Scott (1720-1795) and Hannah More (1745-1833) and that '[i]n their moral works and didactic novels they attempted to teach the doctrine that our true interest as rational, social beings lies in the cultivation of Christian virtue.'[157] This could equally apply to Trotter as well as any of these women, and it underlines the fact that the key themes of Trotter's writing outlasted her and took their place in the attention of future learned women.

Aside from the Bluestocking Society, Trotter can be considered a predecessor to a less well-known female society based in Edinburgh. Although on the surface they do not seem particularly linked, by taking the definition of the learned woman, and applying it to these young women, it is possible to see the ways in which they fit this tradition, alongside Trotter. The Fair Intellectual-Club was formed in 1717 by three teenage friends 'for the Improvement of one another in the Study and Practice of such Things, as might contribute more effectually to our Accomplishment.'[158] The society had initially been a secret until one of the young women fell in love with a member of a nearby Athenian Society, who accidentally revealed their existence. *An Account of the Fair Intellectual-Club in Edinburgh* explains motivations, providing a copy of their constitution and some sample speeches made by members. The only other publication the Club is known to have been

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[155] *Works*, Vol.1.
[156] Bigold, p.216.
[157] Karen Green, 'A Moral Philosophy of Their Own?: The Moral and Political Thought of the Eighteenth-Century British Women', *The Monist*, 98 (2015), 89-101, 98.
[158] M.C. (signed), *An Account of the Fair Intellectual-Club in Edinburgh: in a letter to a honourable member of an Athenian Society there. By a young Lady, the Secretary of the Club.* (Edinburgh: J. McEuen, 1720), p.3 <access.bl.uk/item/viewer/ark:/81055/vdc_100024560926.0x000001#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=-1324%2C-147%2C4768%2C2934> [accessed June 2020].

behind is *Edinburgh Miscellany*, to which members contributed, in collaboration with the local Athenian club.[159] The Club are particularly Trotter-esque in their assertion that moral virtue and reason should be key characteristics that young women should aspire to:

> We thought it a great pity, that Women, who excel a great many others in Birth and Fortune, should not also be more eminent in Virtue and good Sense, which we might attain unto, if we were as industrious to cultivate our Minds, as we are to adorn our Bodies.[160]

From this description, these young women seem to have been in privileged positions in society, presumably among the wealthier classes, unlike Trotter, who, although she had come from a respectable family, often struggled financially. Despite their part in the social elite, there is a recognition among the women of the Club that their ability to be of good sense and to develop their minds is of higher importance than their social status. The attitude and motivation of the Fair Intellectual-Club is a reminder of those characteristics of the 'Learned Woman', which transcend class and social position. Another key characteristic which the Fair Intellectuals share with Trotter is the way in which their philosophy, learning and politics is closely tied to their religious beliefs. One of the Speakers to the Club entreats her fellow members to remember the importance of their religious principles:

> And here, Ladies, I presume to put you in Mind, that, whatever others think, we can never be out of Fashion, while we are bold and open in the Profession and Practice of all Christian Duties. All People who have not cast off all Principles of Fear and Hope, are serious and attentive to the great Business of their Being. Religious Motives and Instincts are so very busy in the Heart of every reasonable Creature, that whosoever would hope to govern a Society without any Regard to these Principles, is as much to be contemn'd [sic] for Folly as detested for Impiety. Let us endeavour to maintain a due Veneration for the supreme Being in our whole Conduct, and observe strictly the Rules of Morality in our Dealings with one another, and with all the World.[161]

As noted above, political and religious views were often amalgamated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so it is unsurprising to find that the Fair Intellectual-Club saw the upholding of religious principles as a foundation of a stable society and considered the lack of such principles a concern. Trotter's own reasoned approach to religion, where matters of difference are discussed and thoroughly argued against, is echoed here by the Fair

[159] Derva Gurses Tarbuck, 'Exercises in Women's Intellectual Sociability in the Eighteenth Century: The Fair Intellectual Club', *History of European Ideas,* 41:3 (2015), 375-386, 376.
[160] *Fair Intellectual-Club*, p.3.
[161] *Fair Intellectual-Club,* p.16.

Intellectuals. Religious motives are part of 'the reasonable Creature' and religion, for them, is a reasonable (or even *the* reasonable) explanation for how the world works, and it indicates a level of engagement with philosophical and religious issues to the day. The sixth rule of the constitution states: 'That altho' different Principles and Politicks shall be no Hindrance to the Admission of Members into our Club, being Protestants: Yet none shall presume to urge these directly or indirectly in our Meetings on Pain of Censure',[162] hinting at an understanding that there will be difference of opinion among the women while simultaneously making it clear that forcing individual views on others, or holding an individual's views against them is not acceptable. This differs slightly from Trotter's approach as her writing is often in response to a difference of opinion from someone else, attempting to either defend her own reason, or persuade the other party to change their stance, but as can been seen here from the young women, and what we have seen of Trotter's early religious writings, both parties were generally in support of religious toleration.

With so little known about the individual young women who made up membership of the Fair Intellectual-Club, it is hard to distinguish what, if any, direct influence the writing of Catharine Trotter had on them. By 1717, Trotter had produced all her fictional work, but the majority of her philosophical and religious writings were not yet published. And yet, the parallels between Trotter and these young women are evident. The Fair Intellectual-Club capped its membership at nine in allusion to the Nine Muses of Classical literature.[163] Such allusions were clearly important to learned women, this reference to the Muses was also a critical component for Trotter and her colleagues in the production of *The Nine Muses* collection of poetry. The Club also sought to 'maintain a sincere and constant mutual Friendship'[164] and their pursuits were not only for 'individual improvement, but for the "improvement of one another" – a concept repeated throughout the text.'[165] Women working together, challenging one another in order that they all might improve their characters is another element present in Trotter's plays. In 2014, Lucy Porter wrote and directed *The Fair Intellectual Club*, a comedy based on the original members of the Club, and during her preparation, researched contemporary female writers, mentioning Elizabeth Singer Rowe and Catharine Trotter specifically;[166] although an indirect link

[162] *Fair Intellectual-Club*, pp.7-8.
[163] *Fair Intellectual-Club*, p.11.
[164] *Fair Intellectual-Club*, p.7.
[165] Clifford Siskin, 'Interfacing with Writing: Clubs and Systems in Eighteenth-Century Print Culture', unpublished paper delivered at 'Interfacing Knowledge: new Paradigms for Computing in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences' (University of California Santa Barbra, 8-10 March, 2002).
[166] Lucy Porter, 'The First Feminists?', *Herald Scotland*, 20 July 2014.

between Trotter and these young women, Porter's discovery of Rowe and Trotter, important pre-Bluestocking figures, signifies their importance as recognisable learned women. There was a growing interest among women to learn in order to better themselves, and the link made by these young women between intellectualism and the pursuit and achievement of moral virtue was also valued by Trotter and the Bluestockings. This is a sure sign that such discussions were occurring in Scotland, and Trotter herself would remain in the spirit of learning to cultivate virtue, as she continued her study and intellectual writing in Aberdeen from 1726-1737, strengthening her ties with a city that plays an important part within the Early Enlightenment period and beyond.[167] The ideals and principles that Trotter established in her own writing were later adopted by learned women who came after her, some of whom were directly influenced by her, confirming her legacy of learning.

Trotter saw the importance of celebrating learned women and seeing them established as inspiration for other women, evidenced by 'Verses occasioned by the busts in the Queen's hermitage' from 1732 and later printed in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* in 1737. Queen Caroline, wife of George I, set up a hermitage and thatched building called 'Merlin's Cave' in Richmond gardens, in which she installed a number of waxwork busts of celebrated individuals and male intellectuals, including John Locke and Isaac Newton.[168] According to the Richmond Burgh records, the busts included historical Kings and Queens of Britain, and many of the details of the plans for the hermitage and Merlin's Cave were published in the *Gentlemen's Magazine*.[169] In response to this project, Trotter penned the poem from Aberdeen, intending that the Queen would receive it along with a copy of her essay in defence of John Locke.[170] The package never made it to court, which naturally disheartened Trotter: 'I have lost a great deal of time and labour', she told Anne Arbuthnot in a letter, 'since all is like to end in disappointment'.[171] In the poem Trotter notes that in choosing to honour intellectuals, Queen Caroline gives them credence and renown:

> Rich in themselves she knew the solid oar,
> And gave the royal stamp to dignify it more.

[167] Jackson Williams, pp.47-59.
[168] See Stephen Taylor, 'Caroline [Princess Caroline of Brandenburg-Ansbach] (1683-1737), *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/4720> [accessed 12 August 2020] and Kelley, *Catharine Trotter,* pp.198-199.
[169] London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, 'Local History Notes: "Merlin's Cave" and "The Hermitage", pp.1-2 <https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/6331/local_history_merlins_cave.pdf> [accessed 12 August 2020].
[170] *Works,* Vol.1, pp.xxxvii.
[171] Catharine Trotter to Anne Arbuthnot, 8 June 1733, *Works* Vol.2., p.272.

Yet each new honour, added to their name,
Shall back reflect on hers a brighter fame.
Great Caroline shall gloriously resound,
Whilst [Samuel] Clerke, and Locke, and Newton, are renown'd.[172]

While these men were already well-known, the benefit of being recognised as worthy of the Queen's honour would have furthered their position in society. Trotter notes though, that the Queen has also chosen to benefit a lesser-known writer through the creation of her hermitage. Stephen Duck was a poet from Wiltshire who had worked in the gardens as a labourer, becoming a favourite of the Queen. He was placed in charge of the collection of books at Merlin's Cave as the library keeper.[173] In giving him this recognition, Queen Caroline raised him from obscurity:

But not for such illustrious names alone,
Has that choice feat her care of merit shewn:
Shar'd by the most obscure, who greatly aim,
Struggling thro' all impediments to fame,
A daring bard she views, tho' deep distress'd,
By art unaided, and by want depress'd,
[…]
The bounteous Queen, pleas'd with th' unwonted fight,
To aid th' aspiring genius in his flight.
From all incumbrances to disengage,
Seats him at ease near her lov'd Hermitage. (pp.572-573)

Trotter emphasises the good that the Queen's generosity to Duck and these better-known intellectuals will have on their work and their reputations. She makes the case for the Queen including female writers, namely Trotter herself, among these honourees, which would give wider attention to women writers:

Would royal Caroline our wrongs redress,
Vouchsafe acceptance of this mean address,
Favour a Muse, who, tho' she weakly soars,
With glory wing'd thy patronage implores;
Yet trembles whilst she tenders at thy feet
Her bold essay great Locke to vindicate
[…]
If not the work, give the attempt applause,
And patronise in her the sex's cause. (pp.573-574).

Trotter describes the additional hardships faced by writing women, 'those restraints, which have our sex confin'd,/ By partial custom, check the soaring mind' (p.573), preventing

[172] 'A Poem, occasioned by the busts set up in the Queen's Hermitage; designed to be presented with a book in vindication of Mr Locke, which was to have been inscribed to her Majesty', in *Works* Vol 2., pp.572-575 (p.572).
[173] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.212.

them being seen or heard as writers. She also alludes to the accusations of immorality and other degradations which would cause a young female writer to hesitate before she allowed her work into the public sphere:

> If some advent'rous genius rare arise,
> Who on exalted themes her talent tries,
> She fears to give the work, tho' prais'd a name,
> And flies not more from infamy than fame. (p.573)

Although Trotter was generally respected as a writer, her early years of writing had been wrought with criticism and direct attacks on her character at the hands of Delarivier Manley. In drawing attention to the esteem given to those selected as busts in the hermitage and the plight of struggling female writers, Trotter suggests that Caroline holds a unique position of being able to raise the profile of learned women. Trotter gives herself as an example of one who benefit from the Queen's attention and that a decision to do so would advance 'the sex's cause' (p.574). The decision would not only benefit the chosen woman but the cause of women writers as a whole. In seeing a learned woman honoured like this, Trotter believes that other women would be inspired to explore learning and intellectualism:

> The female world its influence would own,
> T'approve themselves to thee, reform their taste,
> No more their tie in trifling pleasures waste;
> In search of truths sublime, undaunted soar,
> And the wide realms of science deep explore. (p.574)

Women would fill their 'vacant hours' (p.575) with the pursuit of knowledge. She stays true to traditional views and values on marriage and family by suggesting that this new-found zeal for learning would not be one that 'Usurps on all the offices of life, /The duties of the mother, friend, and wife' (p.575). Trotter had held to this view for many years. In her preface to *The Revolution of Sweden*, she commends Lady Harriet Godolphin for encouraging women to work at their domestic duties while learning when 'There are so great Difficulties, and such general discouragements to those of our Sex who wou'd improve their Minds, and employ their Time in any Science, or useful art' (*UP*, p.A2). The difficulty women had in either accessing resources or being actively discouraged in their learning underlines the importance of having powerful women patronising women writers; without this, there would be little inspiration to pursue learning for themselves. This is why Trotter praised women such as Harriet Godolphin and Lady Sarah Piers, and why she intended to plead with Queen Caroline to join them in giving more attention to women of learning.

In making the case for women writers and thinkers to be patronised, Trotter sets learned woman up as the catalyst for the creation of more learned women. Harriet Guest notes that the 'Verses occasioned by the Queen's Hermitage' marked an 'early date in the story of the rise of the learned lady.'[174] This places Trotter at the beginning of what would become a more established way of women pursuing learning, which the interests of the Bluestocking society would solidify. The presence of the Fair Intellectual-Club in Edinburgh indicates that there was also an appetite for self-improvement and the pursuit of moral virtue through learning among young women in Scotland. Trotter championed this in her early writing, through her female characters as well as her own personal correspondence, and put it into practice herself through her theological and philosophical work. By applying a Scottish perspective to this argument, we see that before Trotter, there were many Scottish learned women who were using knowledge to build theological arguments, take political stances and in general engage with the world through their education. Like Trotter, they also immersed themselves in literature, religion, philosophy, and languages in varying ways outside of writing. Trotter's own lived experience, and her own status as a learned woman allows her to be easily be read as a figure who brings the tradition from the seventeenth into the eighteenth century and passing it on to the Bluestockings, Fair Intellectuals and beyond.

[174] Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning and Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p.132.

Conclusion

Proclaiming Catharine Trotter Cockburn as a missing figure within the Scottish literary canon was never the aim of this thesis. Such an attempt would have proved unproductive, making light of how well-established she is within her English context. Her influence within the development of the epistolary novel and her acceptance as a playwright within the London theatrical community, in addition to her connections with some of the best-known playwrights of her time (Dryden, Wycherley, Farquhar, Manley, Pix) establish her as belonging within English literary tradition. However, this thesis has remedied the oversight of the Scottish dimensions of her life and writing, which while often acknowledged, have been neglected when it comes to looking at Trotter in detail.

While her consistent stress of the importance of moral virtue in drama marked Trotter out in her English context as a stage reformer, this Anglo-centric understanding of her plays is here expanded through exploring the Scottish dimensions of her work and taking the Scottish theatrical context of the seventeenth century into account. Early modern Scottish drama had a moral and polemic edge which was not as consistently predominant in its English counterparts. Incorporating this Scottish perspective into a close reading of Trotter's plays has allowed for comparison with contemporary Scottish plays, drawing out an emphasis on moral virtue, social contracts and political engagement. This creates more nuanced and multifaceted picture of her work when approached from such a perspective than if her work was read solely as English Restoration or post-Revolution tragedy. The unique qualities of Trotter's plays, such as her emphasis on personal duty and morality, female friendship and agency, and her creation of layered and complex female characters allow us to see the ways in which she developed theatrical form and tradition. Combining this with her Scottish dimensions, more significance is given to these strengths thanks to the added expectation that audiences and readers would take these moral messages to heart. This is further underlined by Trotter's desire to return to her plays while living in Scotland, acknowledging that her evolving views and standards could reshape her work, rather than simply accepting the trends within the theatrical world in which she had been engaged in the previous years. The Scottish dimension of Trotter's writing delivers a deeper understanding of the ways in which Trotter's relationship with her drama developed throughout her life.

In terms of this thesis and comparing Catharine Trotter with various Scottish and English contemporary writers, one writer who has not received much attention is Susanna

Centlivre. Having joined Trotter as a contributor to *The Nine Muses* n 1700, Centlivre's playwrighting career spanned the next two decades until 1722.[1] Her plays reflect the political climate of Britain by addressing issues of changing national identity,[2] and also incorporate examples of Lockean philosophy. As Jennifer L. Airey points out, the fathers within her plays are often so terrible that the rebellion of their children is justified – presenting social contract theory in action within a domestic setting.[3] Centlivre draws other parallels with Trotter through the fact that she was largely self-educated,[4] and with the concern she had for the reputation of the London stage. *The Basset Table* (1705), in particular, explicitly addresses the positive moral influence that the stage can have in comparison with the damage done by gambling.[5]

Although their names appear together in *The Nine Muses,* there is no evidence that Trotter had a working relationship with Centlivre in the way that she did with Delarivier Manley and Mary Pix. Centlivre was also beginning her playwrighting career as Trotter's was about to come to an end. That being said, these similarities suggest that Trotter is a natural predecessor to Susanna Centlivre and what she would achieve on the London stage. A future comparison between the writing of Trotter and Centlivre would open avenues for further exploration of female writers on the London stage during the early eighteenth century and provide further awareness of Trotter's part in this community. Incorporating Trotter's Scottish connections as part of the comparison between the two women would also help to highlight areas of differentiation between the two writers.

The Scottish dimensions of Trotter's life also enrich our knowledge of her as a learned woman. A growing awareness of Trotter's continued dedication to literary and theological discussion, personal study and reading during her time in Aberdeen and Longhorsley, despite her distance from London, has contributed to the depiction of her as an educated woman, using her learning to enter public discourse on a variety of contemporary issues and debates. In doing so, she resembles a number of Scottish women who also used their learning to contribute to and participate in the public sphere. These commonalities provide for a continuity between these women. Trotter bridges the gap

[1] J. Milling, 'Centlivre [née Freeman; other married name Carroll], Susanna (bap.1669?, d. 1723)', *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2007) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/4994> [accessed September 2021].
[2] Anderson, p.452
[3] Jennifer L. Airey, 'I must vary shapes as often as a player': Susanna Centlivre and the Liberty of the British Stage, *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research* 28:1 (2013), 45-62, 55.
[4] Milling, *ODNB.*
[5] See *The Bassett Table,* 1.1 and Airey, pp.53-54.

between learned woman of earlier centuries in Scotland, including Anna Hume and Esther Inglis, and those who followed, such as the Fair Intellectuals. Trotter holds a vital place in ensuring the continuity of this history; and there is room for further investigation to ascertain what other women could be incorporated into the fold of Scottish literary studies who would otherwise remain in obscurity. Trotter's position within literary and philosophical history also places her as a forerunner to the Bluestockings of the eighteenth century.

Despite the progress that this thesis has made in bringing light to the Scottish dimensions of Trotter's life and writing, there is still plenty to be gained by this approach regarding Catharine Trotter. Due to the literary focus of this project, the Scottish dimensions of Trotter's later philosophical and theological writing and engagement have only been referred to on a more general level. A more thorough understanding of the Episcopal theological networks in Aberdeen (particularly during the period that the Cockburn family was resident) and Aberdeen's role in educating and producing Enlightenment thinkers,[6] would provide further detail of who Trotter was associating with, as well as key theological issues within the community at the time.

The preliminary findings of this thesis showing the theological and philosophical clout of the Cockburn family provide a promising indication that further delving into Trotter's Aberdeen connections will yield profitable results. A study of Trotter's philosophical beliefs and writing within the context of the developing of Scottish philosophical debate at the time, especially with relevance to the approaching Enlightenment, would be advantageous to our understanding of Trotter from this perspective and provide more detail of how she 'fits right in'[7] to this context. This is especially important in relation to Trotter's understanding and support of John Locke, whose philosophy differed from that of his Scottish Enlightenment successors such as David Hume and Adam Smith as a result of his theocentric approach,[8] which is shared by Trotter through her own combination of religious practice and moral philosophy.

One of the biggest challenges facing scholars who wish to study the writing of Catharine Trotter is the lack of accessibility of her texts. While online archives have

[6] Jackson Williams, pp.48-51.
[7] Bigold, p.160.
[8] John Dunn, 'From Applied theology to social analysis: the break between John Locke and the Scottish Enlightenment', in *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. by Istvan Holt and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp.119-135 (p.122).

increased availability of her plays and some of her other works, the most comprehensive collection of Trotter's works remains Thomas Birch's edited collection from 1751. The value of this collection is enhanced by the fact that Trotter was involved in its creation before her death in 1749. However, the lack of inclusion of all but one of her plays, and the editing of her correspondence to remove family news and discussion sections is a significant omission.[9] Birch's original papers from which he published *Works* also contain a number of unpublished poems, some of which are likely authored by Trotter, and other poems, letters, as well as a collection of letters that seem to be part of an epistolary novella[10] which are not in Trotter's hand and are not catalogued among the papers in the British Library as being Trotter's. Establishing Trotter's authorship of the writings which are seemingly attributable to her would be beneficial not only for further study of Trotter but would provide a more three-dimensional record of her writing. This in turn could open up the opportunity for their inclusion, along with the plays, philosophical papers, and unedited correspondence of Catharine Trotter into a complete, edited, critical edition of her works. Increasing the accessibility of Trotter's writings in this way would create additional avenues of study, including further exploration of her Scottish dimensions. Although modern editions of some of Trotter's plays are in existence, an up-to-date critical edition of all five of her plays would provide the opportunity for the Scottish aspects of her drama to be fully contextualised, ensuring that this dimension is no longer overlooked or forgotten.

Analysis of the Scottish dimensions of Trotter's life and writing provides this more comprehensive picture of her as an author and learned woman, but it also impacts the field of Scottish literature, with particular relevance to the seventeenth century. As noted throughout, formal Scottish plays from the period are rare, and exploration of Trotter's seventeenth-century context has shown that, although not an example of 'Scottish plays', her work can be situated within and contribute to the Scottish theatrical tradition of the early modern period. This thesis has argued that Trotter should be considered, along with other playwrights 'of Scotch extraction'[11] such as Lodowick Carlell and David Crawford to broaden the field, which would otherwise be significantly narrowed by study dedicated to only works produced in Scotland. The country has never existed in a vacuum, sharing significant relationships with England, Wales, Ireland and France, and other European connections, particularly in the early modern period, and as noted in the introduction, this creates a need to approach Scottish literature with an acceptance of fluid boundaries and

[9] Kelley, *Catharine Trotter*, p.207.
[10] BL Add MS 4265.
[11] Gildon, p.179.

definitions. Focusing only on Scottish-born or Scottish based writers whose work was only ever produced and published in Scotland, particularly in the seventeenth century, would narrow the field. This singular focus is also not reflective of Scotland in the early modern period. This thesis has modelled an approach to a Scottish-linked writer that allows for her origins and other contexts to be appreciated, while providing the means for which her Scottish dimensions are given their due consideration. The more holistic picture of Catharine Trotter Cockburn that has resulted from this approach is evidence of the fact that there are many gains to be made for the reputation and understanding of overlooked authors within Scottish literature.

Appendix 1: Plot Summaries of Catharine Trotter's plays

Agnes de Castro; or, The Amorous Husband

Theatre: Theatre Royal, Drury Lane[1]
Premiere: December 1695 or early January 1696

The Prince of Portugal's new Spanish wife, Constantia, has come to court with her friend and companion, Agnes de Castro. The Portuguese courtiers resent the Princess's preference for Agnes; Elvira is especially angered as not only is Princess Constantia an outsider, but the general understanding was that Elvira was to marry the Prince. Upon discovering that the Prince is harbouring a secret love for Agnes, Elvira and Bianca make sure that Constantia finds out in order to ruin the exclusive friendship of Agnes and the Princess. Elvira tells her brother, Alvaro, about the Prince's secret love. Alvaro is also in love with Agnes and Elvira hopes that his jealousy will lead him to harm the Prince.

Despite Elvira's efforts to end their friendship, the Princess relies on Agnes for emotional support. Meanwhile, Alvaro asks the King to arrange for him to marry Agnes, but she refuses because she does not love him. Elvira forges a letter from the Prince, addressed to Agnes, which implies that she does return his love and is willing to run away with him. This is used to make the Princess believe that Agnes has betrayed her, despite Agnes's promise that she never loved the Prince. The King sends the Prince away to war, in an attempt to remove him from the situation. Alvaro informs his sister of his plans to marry Agnes, in order to inflict pain on the Prince by watching the woman he loves marry someone else. Elvira is not convinced by this and becomes so incensed that she decides to murder Agnes in order to be rid of her.

Elvira mistakes the Princess for Agnes and fatally stabs Constantia, fleeing as Agnes discovers them. Constantia and Agnes are reconciled, and with her dying breath, the Princess warns Agnes about Elvira's plans. Grief-stricken, Agnes tries to kill herself, but instead falls into a swoon, allowing Elvira to set the scene as if Agnes is the murderer. The King sentences Agnes to death and places her under arrest. Lorenzo, one of Alvaro's men, is left in charge of Agnes, while Alvaro enlists the help of two more of his men to help kidnap Agnes, and force her to marry him.

[1] All performance details and runs of plays have been sourced from the London Stage Database <https://www.eighteenthcenturydrama.amdigital.co.uk/LondonStage/Database > [accessed May 2021]. They are also available in Kelley (2002).

Lorenzo realises Agnes is innocent and decides to go to the Prince in the hope that he will be able to rescue her. Worried than an attempt to escape will convince everyone of her guilt, Agnes is intent on meeting her death sentence. After Lorenzo leaves, two of Alvaro's men kidnap her. Meanwhile, Elvira is visited by the ghost of Princess Constantia who assures her that her guilt will be revealed, driving Elvira to insanity. Alvaro discovers that Lorenzo has gone to meet the Prince, and so uses this to his advantage by telling the King that Lorenzo and Agnes have escaped together, while Alvaro plans to meet the men who have kidnapped Agnes at a secret location, revealing his plans to rape her before handing her over for execution. This is Alvaro's revenge against the Prince for his treatment of Elvira and his love for the woman Alvaro wanted to marry, but he also considers it punishment for Agnes's refusal to marry him. Before his plan is enacted, Bianca arrives with news of Elvira's mental state and the King and Alvaro accompany her to deal with it.

Agnes is returned to court by the Prince and Lorenzo, who have averted the kidnapping attempt. Both the Prince and Agnes maintain their innocence against accusations of an affair and Constantia's murder. Elvira is brought to speak, but on seeing Bianca, Elvira stabs her for fear she will reveal the truth of what happened. Before she dies, Bianca confirms that Elvira was really behind the Princess's death. Elvira is taken away, Agnes is pardoned, and the King reconciles with his son, much to Alvaro's fury. Agnes decides she will return to Spain, despite the Prince's attempts to persuade her to stay and marry him. Alvaro attempts to kill the Prince, but fatally wounds Agnes by mistake. The men fight and Alvaro dies, and Agnes also succumbs to her wounds. The grief-stricken Prince attempts to take his own life but is prevented by the King, who closes the play with a reminder of his son's duty to the nation, and the assertion that sadness will eventually fade.

Fatal Friendship

Theatre: Lincoln's Inn Fields, Betterton's Company
Premiere: May/June 1698

Felicia and Gramont have been secretly married as Gramont was not deemed an appropriate husband for Felicia by her brother, Bellgard, due to his lack of fortune. He has also been unable to make an income in the army as he caused an incident that resulted in death of the General's son and the imprisonment of his best friend, Castalio. Bellgard wants Felicia to marry Gramont's father, Count Roquelaure which would improve her social and financial standing. Gramont brings Felicia the news that their infant son (sent away to maintain the secrecy of their marriage) has been kidnapped by pirates who are demanding a large ransom.

Bellgard visits Lamira, a young widow, who has to remain unmarried if she wants to keep her husband's money. Bellgard knows that Castalio loves Lamira and that if he receives a pardon from the King, he would be released and be returned to his fortune. Bellgard wants Lamira to marry Castalio and live comfortably, but Lamira does not love Castalio and is therefore unwilling. She admits that she is in love with Gramont and Bellgard encourages this in the hope that Felicia might then be persuaded to marry someone else. He suggests that Gramont and Lamira marry in secret so as to protect her money (since Gramont would not be able to provide her with that) and still be able to marry for love. Bellgard undertakes to persuade Gramont , who is obviously unwilling, but in an effort to maintain the secrecy of his marriage to Felicia, does not completely oppose it. Bellgard enlists Count Roquelaure's help to convince Gramont to marry Lamira. News arrives that Castalio will need to pay a large fine if he wishes to be released. Roquelaure offers to front the money but only if Gramont marries Lamira. Gramont initially refuses, however on discovering that Castalio's situation has worsened due to an added accusation of spying, Gramont feels he owes a debt to Castalio for all the help he gave him. Rather than confessing that he married Felicia, he agrees to marry Lamira which will provide the money for Castalio's release and to pay the ransom for his son. Feeling guilty about his decision, Gramont promises himself to never consummate his marriage with Lamira. She is immediately suspicious and Gramont's inability to tell her he loves her leads Lamira to realise that Gramont is in love with someone else.

As Felicia waits for a promised visit from Gramont, her brother arrives with the news that Gramont is married, but he cannot reveal the bride's name. Horrified, Felicia reveals the truth. Bellgard is furious, but upon hearing that Gramont and Felicia share a son

together, he promises to honour the family name and take revenge on Gramont for the sake of Lamira, Felicia and her son. Felicia is distraught at the thought of her husband with another woman. A chance meeting between Felicia and Lamira results their identifying one another as ‘the other woman.’ Felicia is also given an opportunity to confront her husband about his misguided judgement, which ends in their reconfirming their love for one another.

Lamira determines to extract herself from the situation, but she does not want Gramont and Felicia to be together. She decides to retire to a convent and leave her fortune for the financial provision of Felicia and her son on the condition that Felicia never sees Gramont again. She knows that being unable to see Felicia is what will bring Gramont the most pain. Upon his release from prison, Castalio visits Lamira and declares his love for her. She rejects him as she is unable to trust anyone. Castalio offers to be of service to her, and because of his friendship with Gramont, she is reluctant to tell him the truth. She explains to him that she has a plan and that if it fails, she will take up his offer of delivering revenge on her behalf.

Felicia refuses Lamira’s offer. Bellgard threatens to cut her off and to keep her and Gramont apart if she does not accept Lamira’s conditions. Gramont tries to persuade Felicia to accept the offer for the sake of their son. Felicia reluctantly agrees and they part. Castalio finds Gramont who confesses everything. Castalio is furious about Gramont and Bellgard’s actions as both men knew that he loved Lamira, who has now been implicated in this scandal. A fight ensues and Gramont accidentally wounds Castalio. Horrified at his actions, Gramont stabs himself. Felicia, Lamira and Roquelaure discover the dying men, as. news arrives that Castalio and Gramont have been pardoned by the King. Castalio dies rejoicing in his restored reputation, while Gramont dies in sorrow knowing this disaster would have been avoided if he had just waited for the King’s pardon. Lamira leaves for the convent and Count Roquelaure takes Felicia and her son under his protection as his daughter-in-law and grandson.

Love at a Loss: or, Most Votes Carry It

Theatre: Theatre Royal, Drury Lane
Premiere: 23 November 1700

Lucilia is due to marry Phillabell but has been receiving letters from Cleon who is in love with her. Even though she does not love Cleon, Lucilia has been encouraged by Lysetta to reply. Lucilia is concerned the letters will incriminate her and ruin her relationship with Phillabell. Lysetta suggests that Lucilia tell Cleon that she is only marrying Phillabell out of obedience to her father, but that she really loves him. Lysetta's logic is that Cleon would rather cuckold another man rather than have a wife of his own, which will allow the marriage to go ahead unhindered and buy them time to get the letters back.

Lesbia's wedding to Beaumine keeps being delayed. She admits that she accepted his proposal as revenge towards Grandfoy, whom she believed to be unfaithful. However, she has now discovered that this was not true and still loves him. Lesbia and Beaumine have already consummated their relationship, and he had promised Lesbia that they would marry once his mother had died but Beaumine's mother died a while ago and nothing has progressed. Despite the fact that Lesbia and Beaumine have already had sex, Grandfoy is willing to marry Lesbia, and has made her promise that if she finds Beaumine to be unfaithful, she will return to him. Lesbia has given Grandfoy a ring which she was given by Beaumine. Lucilia and Lesbia suspect that Miranda might be a rival for Beaumine's affections, but she is currently engaged to Constant.

Beaumine tries to dissuade Phillabell from getting married. His anti-marriage stance explains his delay in marrying Lesbia. Meanwhile Grandfoy visits Lesbia and encourages her to really investigate her feelings for Beaumine. He confirms his love for her, but Lesbia cannot bring herself to accept his marriage proposal. Beaumine visits her too and Lesbia brings up the fact that he has hidden his mother's death from her to avoid marrying and his supposed affection for Miranda.

Miranda is not sure she likes Constant enough to marry him, but Lucilia tells her she should go ahead. When asked about her feelings for Beaumine, Miranda's response is much warmer. Lucilia reminds her that she cannot love two men. Constant arrives and laments the way Miranda acts as if he is a displeasing sight. He suggests that he break the engagement which would allow her to find another lover. Miranda does not accept the offer and tells him they will be getting married. Constant still suspects that Miranda is in love with someone else. Beaumine visits Miranda and is invited to return.

Lesbia decides to have revenge on Beaumine for visiting Miranda. She asks Grandfoy his opinion about what to do next. Lucilia and Lesbia meet Beaumine and Phillabell. Lucilia is concerned that the men may meet Cleon who will tell Phillabell about her letters. Lesbia pushes Beaumine to announce their engagement, but he is still hesitant. Cleon meets Grandfoy and compliments his new ring. Grandfoy explains that it was given to him by a woman who received it as a love token from another man; Beaumine recognises the ring as his gift to Lesbia and is furious.

Phillabell and Beaumine discover that Lysetta has dropped one of the fake letters from Lucilia to Cleon. Phillabell believes the letter and is devastated that Lucilia is in love with Cleon. Beaumine admits that discovering Lesbia's unfaithfulness is more hurtful than he anticipated. Lucilia and Phillabell's wedding is cancelled due to the revelation that Lucilia has been unfaithful.

Miranda receives an unexpected visit from Lesbia who claims that she has no interest in Beaumine, so Miranda can marry him. Miranda also claims that she does not love Beaumine. They realise that Beaumine has been manipulating them into believing they are rivals. Miranda realises that she really is content with Constant, but she decides not to tell Beaumine this in order that he will still attempt to court her. Beaumine visits, so Lesbia hides. Miranda makes Beaumine believe she loves him but is jealous of Lesbia. Beaumine rejects the idea of Lesbia in order to convince Miranda of his love for her. She insults Constant in order to make it seem that she really does love Beaumine, but Constant arrives and hears everything she has said. He is particularly angry because he has always insisted that she can break the engagement off, and she has always refused. Lesbia reveals herself in order to reconcile Miranda and Constant, showing that she heard Beaumine's declaration of love to Miranda. Constant and Miranda agree to marry the next day.

Phillabell confronts Lucilia about the letters to Cleon. Lysetta takes the blame, claiming they are forgeries, written without Lucilia's knowledge. Phillabell is eventually convinced, and their wedding plans are resumed. Grandfoy confronts Beaumine over his treatment of Lesbia. They agree to let Lesbia chose which of them she will marry. Miranda and Constant arrive to reveal that they are just married. Lesbia, torn between which man she should marry asks Miranda for advice. Miranda suggests they put it to the vote. The vote is tied, and Miranda, with the casting vote, settles it on Beaumine.

The Unhappy Penitent

Theatre: Theatre Royal, Drury Lane
Premiere: 4th February 1701

Charles VIII of France is delaying his wedding to Margarite of Flanders, to whom he has been betrothed since childhood. The King is really in love with Ann of Britanie, while Margarite is in love with the Duke of Lorraine, who wants her to elope. Lorrain is expected to offer military to Naples, but his love for Margarite is causing him to delay while he waits to see if she will leave with him. He enlists the help of Ann's father, the Duke of Britanie to help speed up a marriage between the King and Ann, as this would free Margarite to marry. Britanie agrees to help, but with the intention of sabotaging Lorrain and marrying Margarite himself.

The Duke of Austria, Margarite's brother, is furious at the King's treatment of his sister. Lorrain persuades Austria to allow him and Margarite to marry that day, which would allow him to take up his position in Naples and help them in their war efforts. Margarite agrees to this plan, and shares it with Ann. She is horrified that Margarite would break her promise to marry the King. Ann believes that the King needs to be the one to release Margarite from the contract and that Margarite should not act until this has been done.

The King receives a letter from Margarite, asking him for freedom from the engagement as she has been abandoned by him anyway, and implying that she has fallen in love with another. Convicted by the letter and feeling guilty about how he has behaved, he goes to see Margarite, but en-route encounters Ann, who persuades him that he must keep the bargain and marry Margarite. Margarite is horrified that the King will still not release her from their contract, and tries to end the relationship herself, but the King will not hear of it. Ann insists both the King and Margarite must keep their word, despite being in love with the King herself. As the King has refused to end the engagement, Lorrain persuades Margarite to marry him immediately in secret.

Britanie forges a letter from the King to Margarite which says that the King desperately wants Margarite to be his wife and that they have consummated their relationship. On reading the letter, Lorrain is led to believe that Margarite's decision to marry him is really part of a deceptive plan by her and the King. Lorrain confronts Margarite, who is puzzled and upset by what has happened. Her denial prompts Lorrain to leave her. Britanie realises he needs to run interference if he wants to avoid the truth being

revealed. He tells Margarite that the king has commanded her to stand by the letter or he will kill Lorrain. Margarite is now faced with the choice of restoring her honour, which means her husband will die, or by standing by the lie, which means Lorrain will continue to separate himself from her. Britanie says that if Lorrain goes to Naples, it will be easier to clear his name, but at the moment, Lorrain has still not been persuaded to go. Austria disowns his sister in a mark of loyalty to the betrayed Lorrain.

Margarite seeks Ann's help, but when she hears that Margarite had actually married Lorrain in secret, she and believes that Margarite has brought this on herself. Margarite makes a vow to God that if her honourable reputation is restored and Lorrain allowed to live, she will forgo ever seeing him again and seek a religious life. Ann agrees to help her.

Lorrain decides he will go to Naples, but because delayed for so long, the Lords of Naples have had to accept defeat. Britanie discovers that Lorrain and Margarite are already married and that he has caused a great deal of turmoil to no purpose. He tries to persuade Lorrain to take Margarite back as his wife, but Lorrain is too hurt to do so. The King arrives and tells Margarite he is renouncing his claim to her in order that she may be with Lorrain. The forged letter is discovered, and it is revealed that the Duke of Britanie has left Paris, writing a letter explaining his plot and the motivation. Margarite forgives the King, and the King and Ann are reconciled. Lorrain wishes to be reunited with Margarite, but she realises that as a result of her vow she must refuse to see him ever again. She decides to keep her word and retire to a life of prayer. She is carried away distraught by her servants, while a bereft Lorrain is left behind. The King and Ann are now free to marry if they wish.

The Revolution of Sweden

Theatre: Queen's Theatre, Haymarket
Premiere: announced on 7th Feb 1706 but first performed 9th February.
Other known performances: 12th, 14th, 16th February 1706

Gustavus is leader of the Swedish rebellion against Danish rule. Some Swedes, particularly the Archbishop and the Viceroy, are siding with the Danes, which makes the rebellion more difficult. Gustavus has great hope in his friend, Count Arwide, who is bringing a reinforcement army. Christina, a long-time friend of Gustavus, who helped him escape when her husband, Beron, tried to hand him over to the Danish army, arrives at the camp disguised her own nephew, Fredage, and is welcomed by Gustavus.

Meanwhile, Beron, the Viceroy and the Archbishop are concerned at the influence the rebels have over the people. The Archbishop leads an attack against the rebels, but they are able to escape and are joined by Arwide and his reinforcements from Germany. Meanwhile, the Archbishop and Beron have kidnapped Constantia, the wife of Arwide. They believe this will make Gustavus and Arwide vulnerable, as Arwide will be distracted by his wife's fate. Constantia reveals that she would rather her husband remained loyal to his country and cause, rather than focusing on rescuing her. Beron takes more prisoners, including Christina in disguise. She laments that even as 'Fredage', she is still under the power of her evil husband.

The Viceroy and the Archbishop send a ransom demand to Gustavus and Arwide. They must lay down arms and give themselves over if they wish to have Constantia freed. Arwide naturally wants to save her, but Gustavus tells Arwide they must resist the urge to prioritise their families over the cause. Arwide leaves to rescue his wife, leaving Gustavus distraught.

While imprisoned, Christiana successfully manages to keep up her disguise and allows Beron to think 'Fredage' can be used as a double agent. The Viceroy tries to take Constantia as his mistress in exchange for her safety but sentences her to death when she refuses. She is horrified to discover that Arwide has handed himself over to the Viceroy in exchange for her. Constantia pleads for Arwide's life, and the Viceroy agrees to think it over, but keeps them both prisoners in the meantime. The Viceroy and Beron decide to deceive Arwide into signing documents which he believes will see Swedish hostages released and a Danish retreat but in reality, the documents state that he will deliver supplies to the Danes and join their forces. It also states that in exchange for his freedom,

Constantia will remain in captivity and become the Viceroy's mistress. Constantia is shocked that her husband has agreed to such terms. When Arwide comes to see her, he confirms that he did sign the document, unaware that each has a different understanding of the agreement.

Gustavus has made a treaty with Lubeck and now the Danes are trapped in Stockholm. Gustavus has offered them safe passage to Denmark, but the Viceroy must first release his prisoners (ironically, this is the very agreement Arwide thinks he made). The Archbishop persuades the Viceroy to take Gustavus's deal. Constantia asks to be freed ahead of the other prisoners. Her plan is to arrive and speak to Gustavus before Arwide gets there, since she still believes he has betrayed them all. Beron agrees and believing that 'Fredage' will act as a double agent for him in Gustavus' camp, sends him with Constantia. When they arrive at the camp, Gustavus is heartbroken to discover what Arwide has done but insists that Arwide be given an opportunity to explain himself.

Gustavus pretends that Constantia has not told him anything in order to see if Arwide reveals his guilt. Arwide is still able to detect a difference in Gustavus' behaviour towards him and at this, Beron, is delighted. He brings 'Fredage' in on the next part of his plan, which prompts Christina/Fredage to try to prove Arwide's innocence. When Gustavus confronts Arwide about the deal he made with the Viceroy, neither mentions the actual terms of the agreement and so again fail to realise they have different understandings. Gustavus is furious at Arwide and insists that they part forever.

Beron tries to persuade Arwide to stand as administrator of the reformed Sweden, in opposition Gustavus, but Arwide refuses. This exchange is overheard by Constantia, who begins to suspect foul play. Gustavus meanwhile appears before the Senate to confirm the victory over the Danes and the upcoming free election. Arwide nominates Gustavus for a role in Senate, and they decide to declare him King of Sweden. Arwide admits to signing the document, but only when the articles are read aloud does he realise he was tricked. 'Fredage' and Constantia are sent for in order to vouch for him. Constantia relates the conversation she heard between Arwide and Beron, noting that Arwide was deceived. 'Fredage' appears before the senate but has been wounded by Beron in an attempt to silence the truth. 'Fredage' confirms Arwide's innocence, Beron's deception, and reveals herself to be Christina. Christina dies of her wounds, Beron is arrested and sentenced to death and Arwide is acquitted.

Appendix 2: List of Prologues, Epilogues and Dedicatory Poems between Trotter and her Contemporary Playwrights

Prologues, Epilogues and Poems written for Trotter's works

Title	Year	Author
'To the Author of *Agnes de Castro*'	1696	Delarivier Manley
Prologue to *Agnes de Castro*	1696	William Wycherley (at Trotter's request)
'To the Author of *Fatal Friendship*'	1698	Bevil Higgons (arrived too late for the printing, was not included with the play until the reprint in *Works*)
'To the Author on her Tragedy, *The Fatal Friendship*'	1698	P. Harman
'To my much Esteemed Friend on her Play call'd *Fatal Friendship*'	1698	Sarah Piers
'To the Ingenious Author on her Tragedy, call'd *Fatal Friendship*'	1698	John Hughes
Prologue to *Fatal Friendship*	1698	P. Harman
'To the Excellent Mrs Catharine Trotter'	1701	Sarah Piers (published with *The Unhappy Penitent*)

Prologues, Epilogues and Poems written by Trotter for fellow writers

Title	**Year**	**Addressee**
'Verses sent to Mr. Bevil Higgons, on his sickness and recovery from Smallpox'	1693	Bevil Higgons
'To Mrs Manley. By the Author of Agnes de Castro'	1696	Delarivier Manley
'To Mr. Congreve on his Tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*'	1697	William Congreve
Epilogue to *Queen Catharine, or the Ruines of Love*	1698	Mary Pix
'Calliope: The Heroic Muse'	1700	John Dryden (upon his death)

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An excellent and extensive list of all versions and editions of Trotter's works can be found in Anne Kelley's *Catharine Trotter, an early modern writer in the vanguard of feminism* (2002). Due to space constraints, I have chosen to only record the versions of Trotter's works I have personally accessed and focused my attention towards providing an updated record of secondary material regarding Trotter.

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