

The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer (1763)

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Edited by

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P U B L I S H I N G

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INTRODUCTION

How did people learn to write letters in the eighteenth century? La Fleur suggests a solution in Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768). When his master, Yorick, is obliged to write a love letter to Madame de L*** in Amiens and cannot find words to express his feelings: "I wrote and blotted and tore off, and burnt, and wrote again – Le Diable l'emporte!– said I to myself..." La Fleur hands out a small pocket book full of letters, out of which he soon extracts a model letter, destined for a corporal's wife. After reading it, Yorick decides to use it: "I took the cream gently off it, and whipping it up in my own way – I seal'd it up and sent him with it to Madame de L***." Servants, and occasionally their masters, were thus liable to copy model letters. While Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (one of the most famous letter-writers of the century) also learnt from books, others were probably taught the art of writing epistles by their parents, teachers or friends, whose writing experience was also perhaps born in theoretical readings.¹ Thus, even though they were not the only means of reaching excellence in the art of writing, letter manuals must have been used in the eighteenth century.

In a period of economic prosperity from the end of the seventeenth century, the printing of books of all types rose significantly in the 1740s.² Like many other books, letter-writing manuals were part of the process, and more than 160 editions can be traced for the eighteenth century,³ 72

¹ The manuscript letters kept in the Bodleian Library Oxford, which were initially sent by William Gilpin to his grand-son William show that the clergyman and former teacher would readily lavish praise or advice on the young learner in the epistolary manner. See for instance the succession of letters in MS Eng. Misc. e. 518; At a later stage of her life, Mary Delany requested advice in letter-writing from Jonathan Swift and Samuel Richardson. See Alain Kerhervé, *Mary Delany, une épistolière anglaise du XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), p. 326-327.

² James Raven, « The Book trades », *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England*, Isabel Rivers, ed. (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003), p. 3.

³ Judging from William London, *A Catalogue of The Most Vendible Bookes in England* (1657), letter-writing manuals were already part of the "most vendible

being printed after 1750.⁴ The most famous manuals of the period were *The Complete Letter-Writer; Or, Polite English Secretary* (Stanley Crowder, 1755) which was repeatedly plagiarized in later works; *The Young Secretary's Guide* with 27 editions between 1687 and 1764; and *A New Academy of Compliments; Or, The Lover's Secretary* which reached its 17th edition in 1784. Others were devised by famous authors: Daniel Defoe attempted to capitalize on his aura with *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726); Samuel Richardson's *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends, on the Most Important Occasions* (1741) is said to have initiated his career as epistolary novelist.

Yet, in spite of the publication of a number of conduct books destined for women from the end of the seventeenth century,⁵ for example *The Gentlewomans Companion; Or, A Guide to the Female Sex ... With Letters and Discourses upon All Occasions* (London: printed by T. J. for Edward Thomas, 1682) or *The Polite Lady: Or, A Course of Female Education. In a Series of Letters, from a Mother to her Daughter* (London: Printed for J. Newbery, 1760), the letter-writing manuals were largely intended for men. Their front pages occasionally stipulated that they were designed for "youth of both sexes," as in *Familiar Letters on Various Subjects of Business and Amusement. Written in a natural easy manner; And published principally for the Service of The Younger Part of Both Sexes* (1754) edited by Charles Hallifax; the frontispiece of *Everyman His Own Letter-Writer* (1782) was revised in order to add a woman; yet James Howell's *Epistolae Ho-Eliaanae* (1705) did not comprise any letter written by a woman, and only 25% of the examples provided by *The Universal Letter-Writer* were ascribed to women in 1800.⁶

books" in the seventeenth century. See Louis B. Wright, "Handbook Learning of the Renaissance Middle Class," *Studies in Philology*, 28 (1931), p. 69-70.

⁴ Various catalogues were used, and the editions were checked whenever feasible. For more detail, see Alain Kerhervé, "Diffusion du modèle épistolaire en Angleterre au XVIII^e siècle," Anne Bandry and Jean-Pierre Chardin, eds., *Diffusion de l'écrit au XVIII^e siècle* (Condé-sur-Noireau: Corlet Numérique, 2010).

⁵ On conduct literature and its growth in the eighteenth-century book market, see Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality* (New York: Methuen, 1987), p. 10 sq., and Vivien Jones's introduction to *The Young Lady's Pocket Library; Or, Parental Monitor* (Bristol: Thomes Press, 1995), p. v-vi.

⁶ For more detail on the place of women in letter-writing manuals, see Alain Kerhervé, "L'expression de l'intimité chez les épistolères anglaises au XVIII^e siècle : de la théorie à la pratique," *La Lettre et l'intime. L'émergence d'une expression du for intérieur dans les correspondances privées* (XVII^e-XIX^e

Largely disregarded by academics studying the letter-writing manuals from the beginning of the twentieth century,⁷ the present work (entitled *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*) was the first manual which was exclusively destined for women in eighteenth-century Britain.⁸

Editions

The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer was initially released in 1763.⁹ As stated on its front page, it was printed in London by and for Thomas Lownds. It was printed again in 1765.¹⁰ Thomas Lownds (1719-1784)¹¹

siècles), Paul Servais and Laurence Van Ypersele, eds. (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2007), p. 83-84.

⁷ It is absent from the seminal studies of Katherine Gee Hornbeak, "The Complete Letter Writer in English 1568-1800," *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages*, vol. 15.3-4 (1934) or William Henry Irving, *The Providence of Wit in the English Letter Writers* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1955). However, more recent studies devoted a few pages to the manual; see Eve Tavor Barnett, *Empire of Letters. Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1680-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. xiv, 51, or Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 40-42.

⁸ In the seventeenth century, a manual for women was edited by Henry Care, *The Female Secretary; Or, Choice New Letters Wherein Each Degree of Women May Be Accommodated with Variety of Presidents [i.e. Precedents] for the Expressing Themselves Aptly and Handsomly on Any Occasion Proper to their Sex* (London: Thomas Ratcliffe and Mary Daniel, 1671).

⁹ Several volumes of the 1763 edition are kept in libraries: one at the British Library (London, UK), one at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (München, Germany), others in the United States of America: College of William and Mary, Colonial Williamsburg Found Res Library, Library of Virginia, New York Society Library, University of California (Berkeley, Bancroft), University of Michigan Library, University of Waterloo, Vassar College.

¹⁰ *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer; Teaching the Art of Indicting Letters ... Being a Collection of Letters, Written by Ladies, ... The Whole Forming a Polite and Improving Manual, ... The Second Edition, with Corrections and Additions* (London: printed for the editor, and sold by T. Lownds, 1765). One edition is kept in the British Library (London), one in the Bodleian Library (Oxford), three in the USA at Brown University (Providence), Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore) and Rice University, Fondren Library (Houston). It is interesting to note that the book first appeared in 1826 in *The Catalogue of Books in the Library of Brown University* (Providence: Walter R. Danforth, 1826), at a time when there were only male students at Brown University, as spotted in the library Internet site [www.brown.edu/Facilities/University_Library].

was a bookseller from the early 1750s onwards. He started working at the Bible and Crown in Exeter Exchange and, after a few years, he moved to Fleet Street where he had a famous circulating library, which held more than a thousand volumes.¹² In the 1760s he had many plays printed, as the full title page to his *English Theatre in Eight Volumes* shows: “printed for T. Lownds in Fleet Street. Where may be had, all sorts of plays.” He also reprinted the works of famous novelists (such as Defoe, Richardson and Smollett), and was involved in the printing of a number of works written by or destined for ladies.

Both editions of *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* were largely advertised in other books published by Thomas Lownds, the advertisements highlighting that the manual was “dedicated to her majesty Queen Charlotte and adorned with a beautiful frontispiece, engraved by Taylor, 2s 6d, neatly bound in red” in the “books printed for T. Lownds” section of *The Discovery: Or, Memoirs of Miss Marianne Middleton. By Mrs. Woodfin...* (London: printed for T. Lownds, 1764), p. 261, and of *The Convent: Or, The History of Julia* (London: printed for T. Lowndes, 1767), p. 241, *The History of Julia* being exclusively composed of letters, and many of the books advertised in its back section dealing with women or letters, and of Eliza Haywood, *The Fruitless Enquiry. Being a Collection of Several Entertaining Histories and Occurrences, Which Fell under the Observation of a Lady in her Search after Happiness* (London: printed for T. Lowndes, 1767), p. 289.¹³ Later productions, such as *The Husband's Resentment; Or, The History of Lady Manchester. A Novel* (London: printed for T. Lowndes, 1776), p. 231, or Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, *The Sylph; A Novel* (London: printed for T. Lowndes, 1779), p. 209, only gave the title and price (2s 6d) of the book in long lists of publications.

Very shortly after it was released in London the manual was also printed in Dublin. Since the Statute of Anne or Copyright Act 1709/1710

¹¹ The British Book Trade Index [<http://www.bbti.bham.ac.uk/>] estimates that Thomas Lownds was a bookseller in Fleet Street from 1751 to 1784. The other elements were gathered from the English Short Title Catalogue and Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

¹² *A New Catalogue of Lownds's Circulating Library, Consisting of Above Ten Thousand Volumes* (London: T. Lownds, 1758).

¹³ This advertisement sounds largely ironical when one considers that Eliza Haywood's works were largely plagiarized in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*, as shall be demonstrated later.

granted legal protection to literary property in Great Britain only, the reproduction of books in Ireland was possible.¹⁴ The Dublin edition, as stated on its front-page, was printed by and for James Hoey, bookseller and printer in Skinner Row.¹⁵ The Dublin edition is presented at length in a twelve-page catalogue of *Books, Printed by and for James Hoey, Junior* (Dublin, 1763).¹⁶ The advertisement highlights the mention added to the Irish title that people should “be careful in asking for the Dublin Edition, printed by James Hoey, junior, as no other is correct.” In fact, the Dublin edition is not very different from the London version: its first 275 pages are quite similar. It comprises ten additional pages of text entitled “Appendix not in the English version”¹⁷ and two pages of advertisements for books sold by Hoey. The ten pages are successively composed of an essay entitled “The Precedency due to women” whose origin can be traced as written by Sir George MacKenzie, in *The Works of that Eminent and Learned Lawyer* (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1722), vol. 2, p. 550-53; a second component of the additional part, “Of doing the Honours of the Table,” was taken from Martha Bradley’s *The British Housewife: Or, The Cook, Housekeeper’s, and Gardiner’s Companion* (London: printed for Stanley Crowder and Henry Woodgate, [1760?]), p. 73-75; a third section is composed of “A few short and intelligible forms of billets, which may be varied at pleasure so as to serve all occasions” extracted from *The Complete Letter-Writer* (Crowder, 1757). The advertisement, however, was fully reproduced at the end of Margaret Minifie, *The Histories of Lady Frances S--*, and *Lady Caroline S--* printed in Dublin for James Hoey, junior and James Potts, in 1763, p. 280-83, and many shorter presentations were published in several other works, for instance Charlotte Lennox, *The History of the Marquis of Lussan and Isabella* (1764), p. 202, *The Orientalist: A Volume of Tales after the Eastern-Taste. By the Author of Roderick Random, Sir Launcelot Greaves, &c. and Others* (Dublin: printed by James Hoey, junior, 1764), p. 287-88 (one and a half page), Pietro Metastasio, *Artaxerxes. An English Opera. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden* (Dublin: printed by D. Chamberlaine,

¹⁴ For instance, see Mary Pollard, *Dublin’s Trade in Books, 1550-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 66 *sq.*

¹⁵ James Hoey (1757-1781) was a Dublin bookseller, printer and circulating library keeper. For full detail, see Mary Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade 1550-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 291-295.

¹⁶ See Appendix B, p. 395.

¹⁷ See Appendix A, p. 387.

and J. Potts; and J. Hoey, 1765), p. 47 (6 lines, price 2s 8d). In the early 21st century, several copies of this edition can still be found in libraries.¹⁸

Authorship?

In all catalogues, *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* is of unknown authorship. The title pages of the editions consulted bear no other indication of origin than that of the printers and booksellers. And yet, a paper by Sidney A. Kimber, "The 'Relation of a Late Expedition to St. Augustine,' with Biographical and Bibliographical Notes on Isaac and Edward Kimber," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 28 (1934), p. 81-96, reproduces a manuscript notebook "begun by Edward Kimber in the year 1762" listing the writings of Isaac Kimber and his sons Edward and Richard. A line in the notebook reads: "1762. Ladies Complete Letter Writer. 7.7.0. 2nd Edit 3.3.0." Several remarks may be in order. Firstly the date of 1762 is probably the date when Kimber carried out the preparation of the manual, since the front-page of the first edition clearly reads 1763.¹⁹ Secondly, the sums of money perceived must have been added after 1762, when the first edition and the second edition (1765) were released. This possibility is confirmed by the fact that the last entries to the notebook are for 1766.²⁰ Thirdly, a manuscript note by Edward Kimber held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, states that he received 15

¹⁸ This is the most conserved edition of the book in the world. It is kept in the British isles: In the United National Library of Ireland, in the Oxford University Bodleian Library (checked), in the University of Sheffield UK; It is held in several libraries in the United States of America: Brandeis University Library (Waltham), Cornell University (Ithaca, NY), Fordham University (Bronx, NY), New York University, Brigham Young University Library (Provo), University of Arizona (Tucson), University of Delaware (Newark), University of Minnesota (Duluth), University of Minnesota (Morris); at least four copies can be traced in Canada: Dalhousie University, Killam Library (Halifax), McGill University (Montreal), Mount St Vincent University Library (Halifax), University of British Columbia Library (Vancouver); The book is also available in New Zealand in the University of Auckland Library. Those data were collected from Worldcat (worldcat.org) and the *English Short Title Catalogue* (estc.bl.uk).

¹⁹ It can still be noted that Hoey's Dublin edition is dated March 1763, which suggests that the London edition was released early in 1763.

²⁰ Another paper published one year later takes the authorship of Kimber for granted. See Frank Gees Black, "Edward Kimber: Anonymous Novelist of the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, 17 (1935), p. 41.

pounds 15 for “the copy right of My Peerage of Ireland”²¹ which may suggest that 7.7.0 was the price of the copyright of *The Ladies Complete Letter Writer*, since Kimber's *Peerage of Ireland* was composed of two volumes and comprised about twice as many pages as his letter-writing manual.

In *A Colonial Woman's Bookshelf*, Kevin J. Hayes further supported the idea of Kimber's authorship by showing that Edward Kimber had previously reproduced the four lines printed on the front page of the manual, with the same mention “Incert. Aut.,” in *The London Magazine*, n°5 (July 1746).²² Moreover, several internal textual clues may reinforce this conjecture. Letter 45 contains a reference to a “Mrs Modish,” a name chosen by the editor of the manual, which is also the name of a woman met by Joe Thompson, the eponymous hero of one of Kimber's novels. The presence of a character called “Ardelio” in letter 74 may also be linked with “Generosity and Treachery display'd, said to be a true story of a young gentleman, under the fictitious name of Ardelio,” authored by Kimber in *The London Magazine* in 1766. The choice of letter 116 referring to the London earthquakes felt in 1761, that is two years before the manual was released, may also be a reminder of Kimber's interest and concern in earthquakes, as clearly expressed in his essay entitled *A letter from a Citizen of London to his Fellow Citizens, and through Them, to the People of England in General, Occasioned by the Late Earthquakes* published in 1750. Those choices establish another link between Kimber and the manual.²³

Edward Kimber (1719-1769)²⁴ was the son of Isaac Kimber (1692-1755) who directed the editorship of the *London Magazine* from 1732 till 1755. It was at that time that he became well read in various topics, started

²¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Eng. Misc. c. 297, fol. 31. Date: 23 January 1767.

²² Kevin J. Hayes, *A Colonial Woman's Bookshelf* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), p. 163. Another six references are made to Kimber's authorship in Kevin J. Hayes's *Itinerant Observations in America by Edward Kimber* (University of Delaware Press, 1998) where the authorship is not demonstrated but considered to be obvious. Betty A. Schellenberg also takes Kimber's authorship for granted in chapter 5 of *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 123, 131.

²³ For the complete references to these parallels, see the notes to letters 45 and 74.

²⁴ The biographical content of this paragraph is taken from Jeffrey Herrle, “Kimber, Edward (1719-1769),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) and Kevin J. Hayes, ed., *Itinerant Observations in America* (University of Delaware Press, 1998), introduction, p. 11-19.

to write poems and gathered editorial training and experience. Between 1742 and 1744, he travelled to America, recording his *Itinerant Observations in America* which were published serially in *The London Magazine* upon his return. His American experience was also reflected in his first two novels, *The Life and Adventures of Joe Thomson* (1750) and *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Anderson* (1754). He wrote another five novels and produced *The Happy Orphans* (1759), a translation of Crébillon's text, largely influenced by Eliza Haywood's *The Fortunate Foundlings: Being the Genuine History of Colonel M---rs, and his Sister* (1744). On his father's death in 1755, he took over the editorial work of *The London Magazine* and became involved in various forms of anonymous literary and editorial activity. He made indexes for law books, periodicals and histories; he compiled several peerages (*The Peerage of Scotland*, 1767; *The Peerage of Ireland*, 1768; *The Peerage of England*, 1769) and such how-to manuals as *The Tradesman Director; Or, The London and Country Shopkeeper's Useful Companion* (1756)²⁵ or *The Universal Pocket Book* (1760). The composition of *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* (1763) seems to have been the type of editorial work he was regularly involved in at the time.

Critical reception and circulation

The reception of letter-writing manuals is rarely accounted for in books, magazines or letters. The only testimony that could be found of *The Lady's Complete Letter-Writer's* printing was authored by the novelist Tobias George Smollett, in 1763, in *The Critical Review*:

“Art. 40. *The Lady's Complete Letter-Writer; Being a Collection of Letters Written by Ladies, Not Only on the More Important, Religious, Moral, and Facial Duties, But on Subjects of Every Other Kind that Usually Interest the Fair Sex.* 12 mo. Pr. 2s. 6d. Lownds.

This collection, like former compilations of the same kind, is gleaned from the works of our most eminent essayists and novel writers. It seems to be executed with judgement; and we may venture to pronounce it as entertaining and instructive as any that have preceded it.”²⁶

²⁵ It contained a section entitled “Of the Stile of Tradesmen's Letters”, see *The Tradesman Director; Or, The London and Country Shopkeeper's Useful Companion* (London: printed for W. Owen; S. Crowder and H. Woodgate, 1756), p. 62.

²⁶ In *The Critical Review* (W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1763), vol. 15 p. 408.

Tobias Smollett is rather positive when he acknowledges the book to be “entertaining and instructive.” However, as a very well read critic, he is fully aware of the origin of the letters, which he notices originate from “the works of our most eminent essayists and novel writers,” contrary to what is claimed in the preface of *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*. Moreover, he does not consider the manual to be very different from “former compilations of the same kind,” “any that have preceded it” which may constitute a reserve. And yet the manual was widely circulated.

Below is a list of the entries found in several booksellers’ catalogues, between 1766 and the end of the century. The book was thus regularly for sale in private bookshops or at book auctions. Most of the titles were second-hand volumes, taken from the libraries of deceased people. However, considering that most catalogues were formed from several sources, it is impossible to draw conclusions as to the persons who might have owned or bought it originally. Still, the three editions of the manual seem to have been circulated along the second half of the century, some of them unread, the adjective “new” being used several times (in 1771, 1784, 1787, 1791, 1798) to describe the condition of the book. To the list may be added the 1797 *Catalogue of the London and Westminster Circulating Library*²⁷ which shows that the manual was also available to people who could not or did not want to afford the cost.

Date	Catalogue	Entry	Ed.	Price
1766	<i>A Complete Catalogue of Modern Books</i> , p. 44	Lady’s Complete Letter Writer		2s 6d
1769	<i>Elizabeth Lynch’s Sale Catalogue of Books, for the Year, 1769</i> , p. 37	1134 Complete Ladies Letter Writer	1763	2s 2d
1771	<i>C. Parker’s New Catalogue for the Winter 1771</i> , p. 72.	1920 Ladies Complete Letter Writer, <i>new</i>	1765	2s
1773	<i>L. Davis’s Sale, 1773. A Catalogue of the Libraries of Several Learned Persons Lately Deceased...</i> , p. 221.	8002 Ladies Complete Letter Writer	1763	1s 6d
c. 1780	<i>A Catalogue ... Containing Above Thirty Thousand Volumes...</i> by T. Smith and Son, Booksellers, in <i>Canterbury</i> [1780], p. 88.	2813 Ladies Complete Letter-Writer	1765	2s
1784	<i>A Catalogue of Books, Including the Collection of the Late Mr. John Millan ... by Thomas and John Egerton</i> , p. 88.	2648 Ladies Complete Letter Writer, <i>new</i>	1765	2s

²⁷ *Catalogue of the London and Westminster Circulating Library ... Which are Lent to Read by David Ogilvy & Son, Booksellers* (London, 1797), p. 69.

1784	<i>A Catalogue of Several Libraries of Books ... They will begin selling on Monday, February, 9, 1784, by David Ogilvy, p. 79</i>	3206 Ladies Complete Letter Writer	1763	1s 6d
1784	<i>Pridden's Catalogue for 1784, of Scarce and Valuable Books... by John Pridden, p. 65</i>	2819 Ladies Complete Letter Writer, <i>new</i>	1752 [sic]	2s
1786	<i>A Catalogue (for 1786) of Several Libraries and Parcels of Books, Lately Purchased ... by William Collins, p. 100.</i>	3696 Ladies Complete Letter Writer	1765	1s 6d
1787	<i>A Catalogue of Books ... Which are Now Selling, 1787, ... by Thomas and John Egerton, p. 190.</i>	6026 Ladies Complete Writer, <i>new</i>	1765	2s
1788	<i>A Catalogue of Books ... Which are Now Selling, 1788 ... by Thomas and John Egerton.</i>	6592 Ladies Complete Letter Writer, <i>new</i>	1765	2s
1790	<i>A Catalogue of the Elegant and Valuable Libraries ... Which Will be Sold by Auction ..., 1790, p. 11.</i>	299 Ladies Complete Letter Writer	1763	-
1791	<i>A Catalogue of Books ... Now upon Sale ... by William Collins [London, 1791], p. 69</i>	2512 Ladies Complete Letter-Writer, <i>neat</i>	1765	1s 6d
1791	<i>A General Catalogue of Books in All Languages, Arts and Sciences, that Have Been Printed in Ireland ... Dublin: George Draper, Jun., 1791</i>	Ladies Complete Letter Writer <i>12mo</i>	-	2s 8d
1792	<i>J. Todd's Catalogue for 1792 ... to be Sold ... on Tuesday, June 12th, 1792... till Christmas [York].</i>	5473 Ladies Complete Letter Writer	1763	1s 6d
1798	<i>Lackington, Allen, & Co.'s Catalogue, Volume the first, Michaelmas, 1798, to Michaelmas, 1799, p. 117.</i>	4542 The Ladies complete Letter Writer, <i>new in boards</i>	1765	1s 6d

Furthermore, the circulation of the manual was not limited to the British Isles. It also seems to have been quite fashionable in the American colonies, where some booksellers imported it immediately after it was first released and advertised it. As Konstantin Dierks explains, it was publicized five times between 1763 and 1766 in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.²⁸ Kevin J. Hayes gives a list of references which prove that it “could be found from Boston to Williamsburg during the last decade and a

²⁸ On this point, see Konstantin Dierks, “The familiar Letter and Social Refinement in America, 1750-1800,” *Letter Writing as a Social Practice*, David Barton and Nigel Hall, eds. (John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000), p. 33 and 38.

half of the colonial period.”²⁹ This relative success, confirmed by the 1765 second edition and the Dublin copy, must have originated in the contents and organisation of the manual.

Epistolary rhetoric

From the sixteenth century, some letter manuals contained theoretical introductions on epistolary rhetoric. It was found in a six-page long section entitled “On the habite and partes of an Epistle” in Angel Day’s *English Secreterie* (1586, p. 18-23) or a much longer one in *The New Art of Letter-Writing* (T. Osborne, 1762, p. 1-125).³⁰ Beyond the definition of the different constitutive parts inherited from Greek and Latin epistolary rhetoric – *introductio*, *narratio*, *exordium* – most manuals stressed the importance of the choice of introductory and closing formulae. It is not the case in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* since it does not contain any other introduction than a dedicatory preface. As a consequence, the technical composition of the letter was to be understood or learnt from the model letters themselves, which probably justifies the exceptional variety of its opening and closing formulae.

The introductory formula is largely varied in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*. Most cases can be summed up by the following chart whose horizontal line represents the beginning of the formula: “Dear,” “My dear,” “Honoured,” or nothing; its vertical column corresponds to the following noun used: “Madam,” “Sir,” a first name or a family link.

	Dear	My dear	Honoured	φ	Total
Madam	12	0	4	15	31
Sir	0	0	3	14	17
First name	10	16	0	0	26
Family link	16	6	1	0	23
Total	38	22	8	29	97

²⁹ Kevin J. Hayes, *A Colonial Woman’s Bookshelf* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), p. 73, and note p. 162.

³⁰ Most of the introduction of *The New Art of Letter-Writing* (T. Osborne, 1762) was not original, since it was largely translated and adapted from two French manuals by Puget de La Serre, *Le Secrétaire de la Cour* and *Les Compliments de la langue française*, as Katherine Gee Hornbeak demonstrated in “The Complete Letter Writer in English 1568-1800,” *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages*, vol. 15.3-4 (1934), p. 74.

The entries gathered in the chart represent 97 out of 122 letters. They permit to draw a few rules from the examples. They correspond to two distinct choices from the part of the writer: “Sir” or Madam” are used in 48 cases, a first name or family link in 49. While “(my) dear” was never used in front of “Sir,” it was used almost as frequently for “Madam” as nothing. Still, the letters in that category commonly began with just “Sir” or “Madam.” When the writer decided to use the first name of or her family link to the addressee, she would almost systematically have it preceded by “dear” or “my dear,” the former being more frequent with the family link (“Dear cousin,” letters 10 and 48; “Dear daughter,” letters 15, 36, 62), the latter with the first name (“My dear Sally,” letters 16 and 106; “My dear Euphrosine,” letters 89-91, 118).

To these can be added a few more exceptional phrases, such as “Cousin Jenny” (letter 33), “Most honoured Madam” (letter 3), “My dear friend” (letter 120), “My dearest” (letter 63), “Dear Miss” (letter 49), “My dear” (letters 52 and 64) which are rather close to the preceding ones. The opening of letter 122, “May it please your Majesty” is exceptional, as highlighted by the preface of the manual, because it is destined to the King of Prussia, and is thus bound to abide by the most refined rules of royal communication. However, the opening formulae do not appear above the initial sentence in fifteen letters. In six cases, no direct allusion is made to the addressee of the letter (letters 66, 70, 76, 81, 82, 96), which may sometimes have been explained by the assumed proximity of the two correspondents, at least in the correspondence from which the letters were extracted. In the other cases, the reference to the addressee is inserted in the first sentence, within the very few words when “Madam” is used, for instance: “Be not in pain, good Madam” (letter 46); “Envy, Madam, has taken the upper Hand...” (75) or “You oblige me extremely, Madam, in naming...” (76). In a few other examples, the reference to a friend can be found two or three lines after the beginning of the letter, more particularly in letters 69 to 74 which come from the same source and start in a rather similar way, as letter 69 shows: “I have often, I may say very often, purposed writing a long Epistle to my dearest Sukey...” In that example, the person to whom the letter is destined is placed as a compliment, and no longer as an apostrophe in the initial sentence.

A particular attention is also paid to the variety of closing formulae in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*, which presents an exceptional variety of endings compared to the other manuals of the century. If this wide array of possibilities is partly due to the diversity of endings used in the letters

chosen by the editor, it must also have been a voluntary decision on Edward Kimber's part, since he changed the end of some letters. For instance, two different formulae were added to the conclusion of letters 61 and 62, which were taken from Osborne's *New Art of Writing Letter* (1762) in which they were concluded by Your &c. Yet, six letters (44, 53, 77, 78, 79, 81) are not concluded, fifteen end with "Yours &c.," three with "Adieu," one with "Farewell." Those minimum endings may have been justified in places by the fact that they were placed at the bottom of a page, with too little space remaining (for instance see letter 115). Beyond those 25 cases, which still suggest three different ways of ending a message, the examples are exceptionally varied.

86 formulae begin with a possessive ("your Ladyship's" in two cases, "his" in one, 83 occurrences of "your") followed by a more or less complex noun group, whose grammatical organisation can be represented by the following chart.

Noun group structure						Occ.
Poss.				Adj.	Noun	20
Poss.				Adj.	Adj. Noun	2
Poss.				Adv.	Adj. Noun	31
Poss.				Noun 2	And Noun	1
Poss.		Adj.		And	Adj. Noun	6
Poss.			Adv.	Adj.	Adj. Noun	10
Poss.		Adj.	And	Adv.	Adj. Noun	1
Poss.		Adv.	Adj.	And	Adj. Noun	12
Poss.		Adj.	Noun 2	And	Adj. Noun	1
Poss.	Adv.	Adj.	And	Adv.	Adj. Noun	2
						86

The grammatical structures of the closing formulae could be varied. More than half of them remained simple: "you" + "adj." + "noun" (20) or "your" + "adj" + "adj" + "noun" (31) being the most often used. Still more complex ones were not to be disregarded as the structure "your" + "adv." + "adj." + "and" + "adj." + "noun" which is resorted to in twelve cases and two longer ones clearly suggests. Moreover, the choice of different words made it possible to vary formulae endlessly. With the exception of the second noun which, when inserted, is exclusively "friend," all the grammatical categories correspond to a very large variety of words: the most frequent adverb is "most" (42 occurrences), but "truly" (5), "ever"

(4), “greatly” (1) and “very” (1) are also used. The range of possibilities is even larger with adjectives: while “fearful,” “grateful,” “loving,” “thankful” and “unhappy” are only used in one formula each, “afflicted” appears twice, “obliged” three times, the most frequent choices being “faithful” and “sincere” (7), “tender” (8), “dutiful” (13), “obedient” (14), “humble” (22) and “affectionate,” used in 35 letters, that is 30 % of the total.

Moreover, the noun group is often introduced or preceded by “I am” (45 cases) or more occasionally “am” (3), “believe me” (2), in such formulae as “I am your affectionate mother” (letter 1). The noun group is also often preceded by a reference to the addressee (59 letters): “dear Madam” (7 occurrences), “Madam” (15), “honoured Madam” (3), “Sir” (5) and “my dear” + first name (8) being the most frequent phrases used. Combined with “I am,” it gives such endings as “I am, honoured Madam, your obedient daughter” (letter 14). In fifteen letters, those two elements are separated by a complement which reinforces the intensity or sincerity of the feelings expressed, “and ever shall be” (letter 65), “from my heart” (letter 62) or “with the greatest sincerity” (letters 104, 105, 108, 114). Thus some letters end with “I am with duty and love to my honoured papa Madam, your most dutiful daughter” (letter 75). The variety of the longest formulae can be seen in the following examples:

I am, with my humble duty to you and my dear papa, honoured Madam, your dutiful, obedient daughter (letter 23)

I am, with all the tenderness and obedience I am capable of, your most dutiful daughter, Sophia Wellbred (letter 61)

I am, and ever shall be, your faithful and truly affectionate wife (letter 65)

I am, with the greatest sincerity, Dear madam, your most obedient humble servant (letters 104 and 105)

In the four examples, a prepositional noun group (letters 23, 61, 104) or a coordinated clause (letter 65) is inserted between the initial “I am” and the attributive noun group composed of “your,” followed by one or two adjectives and a noun, to which the signature can be apposed. Those complex endings marked a desire to express deep respect and feelings, while conforming to the rules of the genre, which were clearly written with examples in other manuals. One of the least often quoted of them is *Some Short Observations for the Lady Mary Stanhope Concerning The Writing of Ordinary Letters*, by Philip Stanhope, second Earl of Chesterfield. Amongst many other elements, it stated that “most obedient

servant,” “most obedient humble servant,” “most obedient faithfull servant” were to be used when addressing people of the writer’s quality; “your most humble servant,” “your very humble servant” for gentlewomen; “your affectionate frejnd,” “your most affectionate frejnd” for any other person.³¹ As a whole in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*, only five long formulae (from “I am” to signature) are repeated twice, six letters have no ending, which makes a total of 111 different closing formulae out of 122 letters. If the manual did not have an introduction explaining the rules to be followed, it still constituted a very much varied example of letter rhetoric. Moreover, the editor attempted to come up with a new organisation of the letters.

Organisation

The general economy of the manual was rather new at the time. Unlike many other manuals, *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* was organised: It was composed of three parts of unequal length.³² They define three categories in which the readers were supposed to be finding the necessary models for their own correspondences. “Part 1: letters of advice to young ladies and others, from Parents, Relations, and Guardians, on the most important subjects” defines a degree of priority by its initial position and the stress put on “the most important subjects.” However, in spite of the announced priority, that part is only composed of 22 letters, that is to say less than 20% of the total; in “Part 2: letters relating to love, courtship, marriage and the conduct of married life” (40 letters, nearly twice as many as the previous one) a specific category devoted to the relationships between the sexes was defined, even though it also contained letters of advice which might have been inserted in part 1; The selection of letters in “Part 3: Letters on various subjects of importance and amusement ... on Death, on the pleasures of the country, and the joys of town, female oeconomy, hiring and management of servants, dress, balls, assemblies etc etc and of Compliment and Civility” (60 letters) seems to have mainly

³¹ Philip Stanhope, *Some Short Observations for the Lady Mary Stanhope Concerning The Writing of Ordinary Letters*, Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis, ed. (Farmington: Lewis, 1934), p. 6.

³² The origin of this organisation may have been influenced by Charles Hallifax’s *Familiar Letters* (1755), of which a number of letters were also taken by Kimber. See Charles Hallifax’s description of the role of the editor in the Preface to his manual, p. vii (“[I] distributed them, in a great measure, according to the Nature of the Subjects.”)

originated in thematic concerns with groups of letters gathered by topic (death, natural catastrophes) or origin (letters from Haywood's *Epistles*).

The initial objective of the manual which, as stated in its front page, was to "teach the art of inditing letters" is regularly lost. In several occurrences, stories are related lengthily in part 3, where some letters are inserted more for the entertainment they provide to readers, than for the stylistic model they may offer. The trend can be perceived from part 1, letter 17, in which the advice passed to a young woman is illustrated by a "story" of reasonable length (p. 40-42). However, both the series of letters and the length of certain units in part 3 clearly change the tone of the manual: The writer of letter 72 wants to know more of her correspondent's "Life and Adventures;" Letters 89 to 91 (31 pages) comprise "an account of a surprizing adventure" to quote the way they are initially introduced.³³ The entertainment was obvious, but the editor seems to have been unable to operate larger cuts in the works the letters were taken from. A part of this general organisation was similar to the classification of Hallifax's *Familiar Letters* (first printed in 1754, then reproduced in 1755, 1763 and 1764). However, only the last two parts were similar. Hallifax had two initial categories devoted to letters from "A Youth placed with a relation in London," and "Letters of politeness and ceremony." The three categories adopted by *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* must have been thought to be the suitable ones for ladies in particular.

The letters are occasionally gathered because they have the same origin. Letters 71 to 75 are taken from John Kidgell, *The Card* (1755), a book written by the Reverend John Kidgell (b. 1722) whom Walpole described as a "dainty, priggish parson, much in vogue among the old ladies for his gossiping and quaint sermons," in which Edward Young is ridiculed under the nickname of Dr Elwes.³⁴ Interestingly enough, letter 70, which was not found in *The Card*, is also connected with Edward Young, which may have explained the editorial choice of associating them in the manual. However, in John Kidgell's book, if several chapters (chapters 1 to 4, chapter 9) were made of letters, most of which were exchanged between Miss [Sukey] Paget, whose taste for the pleasures of life was resented by her mother who sent her to a country seat of her

³³ Conversely, letters 100, 102, 119, which were taken from Mary Collyer, *Felicia to Charlotte* (1744), whose initial purpose was more fictional than exemplary, are not used for their diegetic possibilities.

³⁴ See Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets* (London: printed for C. Bathurst, 1781), vol. 2, p. 282.

friends, and Miss Vokes, who continued to enjoy the delights of life in London, the letters printed in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* were not originally consecutive ones.³⁵ Yet the letters were minutely reproduced with Christian and family names, so that Sukey is chosen as a first name in letter 69, although it did not have the same origin.

Another possible editorial characteristic aiming to create unity between the letters was the insertion of signatures. For instance, letters 59, 60, 61, 62 seem to belong to the same circle when one reads their signatures: "Alice Gooding," "Susanna Gentle," "Sophia Wellbred," "Ann Lovely." While the four writers have very common first names, their surnames represent moral characteristics. However, the four letters do not have the same origin. When they were initially published, the first two, taken from Mary Collyer's *Letters from Felicia to Charlotte* (1749) were signed Felicia, the next two, extracted from *The New Art of Letter-Writing, Divided into Two Parts* (1762), were unsigned. The signatures must have been the result of some editorial work which was specific to *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* and aimed to create unity, if not to disguise the origin of the first two letters. Yet, confined to four consecutive letters, that unity remains episodic and does not correspond to any global strategy.

Furthermore, the organisation is not effective at all in places. For instance, letters 6 to 9 are supposed to be taken from a correspondence between a young woman and her mother. In letter 6, the daughter asks her mother to repeat the advice she gave her before they parted "in writing." The next two letters do not allude to this request, so when letter 9, written by the mother, begins with "the next piece of advice that I gave you..." one feels that there must be something missing in the manual. Initially, the letters had been published in Joseph Spence, *Moralities: Or, Essays, Letters, Fables and Translations. By Sir Harry Beaumont* (London, 1753), as letters 1, 2, 3 and 5, letter 4 from that edition being omitted in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*, which explains the unexpected and surprising beginning of letter 9. In Spence's series of letters, letter 4 is the beginning of the mother's advice, for instance p. 60 ("If you remember there were four things that I particularly desired of you...") and p. 64 ("So that the Advice given you in this letter is not the opinion only of a simple woman; but of some of the wisest men that ever were..."). Logically enough, letter 6, p. 69 begins with "My third piece of advice to you was..." Similarly, at the beginning of letter 73, Miss Paget thanks Miss Vokes for

³⁵ See *The Card*, p. 21, 24 (same two initial letters), then p. 50, p. 127 and p. 167.

her “two kind letters,” while only one of them (letter 72) was found in the manual.

Another type of internal contradiction could affect the message of the manual as can be perceived in the association of letter 17, taken from Tavernier, and letters 29 and 30 from Richardson. In letter 17, an aunt advises her niece never to answer a letter from a young fellow, should one be bold enough to write her directly, without a first application to her parents. The piece of advice reads: “be sure you do not write yourself” (p. 45). Conversely, letter 29 is an example of “the answer of a Lady to a Gentleman’s Letter in which he professes his Tenderness for her” (p. 63) and letter 30 “Letter from a Lady encouraging her Lover to a further declaration” (p. 64). Here the absence of logic between the first and the next two letters is striking, and it weakens the message the manual was supposed to be passing onto a female reader.

So, in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*, the blurred organisation participates in the difficulty to grasp the main objective, if any, of the editor. The principal reason for that must be the various origins of the letters.

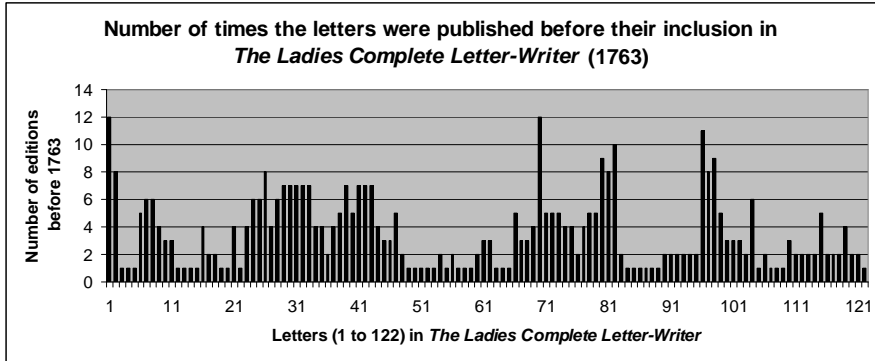
Origin of the letters

In the preface of the manual, the editorial process is highlighted by the editor: “I have taken great pains to gather, from every former Compilation, the very best and most approved Forms of Female Epistolary Writing...” (p. ii). In a way it pays tribute to the previous manuals it took letters from, even if their names are not mentioned. However, it continues: “To these I have added many original letters never before published...” Kevin J. Hayes comments on it by suggesting the seemingly “feigned” nature of this statement from a “master of pseudo-veracity,”³⁶ and indeed his intuition is absolutely exact, since very few short passages from the letters may have been written in Kimber’s hand. They were highlighted in the notes to the letters concerned, mainly letters 49, 52, 102, 103.

In fact, the 122 letters were all published in other books before their collection in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*. In a way, they could then not sound totally original to people who had read previous manuals. The

³⁶ Kevin J. Hayes, *A Colonial Woman’s Bookshelf* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), p. 74.

graph below shows the minimum number of times the letters (1 to 122) of *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* had been published before they were gathered in 1763.³⁷



It clearly shows that none of the letters was introduced in the manual for the first time. So, in spite of the apparent originality of its title, its content was not very original. If thirty letters had been published only once before, eighty-nine epistles were reaching their third or more edition. The manual relied on blockbusters, with 31 letters which were printed five times or more before their inclusion in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*, while letters 80 and 98 were being released for the tenth time, letters 82 for the eleventh, 96 for the twelfth and letters 1 and 70 had already been published in twelve books. One notes that the first letter of the manual was among the most often reproduced—the editor was far from being as original as his preface suggested.

In the case of several previous editions, it is often difficult to tell whether the letters were taken from their original source or from subsequent publications. For instance was letter 1 directly copied from Eliza Haywood’s *Epistles for the Ladies* (1749-50), or from one of the two manuals *The Complete Letter-Writer* (Crowder, 1756) and John Newbery’s *Letters on the Most Common, as Well as Important Occasions*

³⁷ This graph is an adjusted version of a graph published in Alain Kerhervé, “Les Femmes dans *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* (1763),” *Épistolaire. Revue de l’A.I.R.E.*, 35 (2010), p. 191-210; further research was conducted after the first graph was issued. All the sources which were taken into account are detailed in the notes to the letters at the end of the present edition. Other sources may have been overlooked.

in Life (1756) were it was subsequently edited? In any case, letters were being recycled within the new epistolary manual. What would today be called plagiarism but was then perfectly acceptable³⁸ seems to have been a key stage in the composition of letter-writing manuals. As demonstrated by Judith Rice Henderson, it was already the case in the sixteenth century with Gamerius's textbook of letter-writing borrowing from Hegendorff's and Negro's.³⁹ And the fashion was largely extended into the eighteenth century as Catherine Hornbeak showed for the use of many of Puget De La Serre's letters or introductory material in *The Academy of Compliments*. She praised Angel Day's *The English Secreterie* (1586), Nicholas Breton's *Poste with a Made Packet of Letters* (1602) and Samuel Richardson's *Familiar Letters* (1741) because they were composed of original letters written by their authors and not taken from previous works; as a consequence, their models were reprinted in many other letter-writing manuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴⁰

The question of the coherence of the various sources can still be tackled since some letters come from various sources, with sometimes totally opposite messages. They are presented in the graph below which represents the eleven main works in which the letters had been released prior to their insertion in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* and the number of letters taken from each source.

The main source in number of letters is Eliza Haywood's *Epistles for the Ladies* (London: printed and published by T. Gardner, 1749-50). Eliza Fowler Haywood (1693?-1756) was a very prolific author.⁴¹ Beginning as an actress, she became a political writer (*A Letter from H— G—g, Esq.* [1750]) and translator (*Letters from a Lady of Quality to a Chevalier*

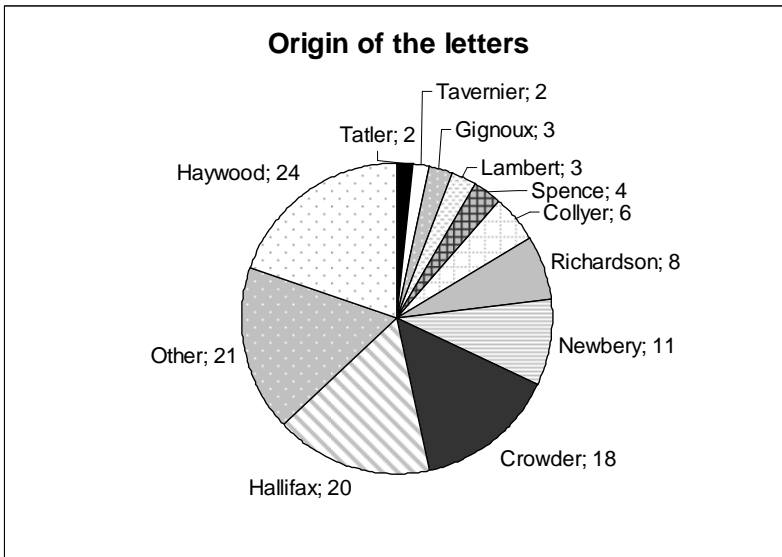
³⁸ Jack Lynch, "The Perfectly Acceptable Practice of Literary Theft: Plagiarism, Copyright, and the Eighteenth Century," *Colonial Williamsburg: The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation*, 24.4 (Winter 2002-3), p. 51-54.

³⁹ Carol Poster and Linda C. Mitchell, *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present* (University of South Carolina Press, 2007), p. 165.

⁴⁰ Katherine Gee Hornbeak also traced the origin of *The Enimie of Idleness* (1568) as a translation of *Le Stile et maniere de composer, dicter, et escrire toute sorte d'epistre, ou lettres missives* (1566). See "The Complete Letter Writer in English 1568-1800," *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages*, vol. 15.3-4 (1934), p. 3, 17, 33, 40-42, 53, 59, 65-69, 73, 74, 117-119.

⁴¹ General information on Eliza Haywood was taken from Paula Backscheider, "Haywood (née Fowler), Eliza," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) and the introduction to the *Selected Works of Eliza Haywood*. Alexander Pettit, ed. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000).

[1721]) before excelling in prose fiction, her most famous novels being *Love in Excess* (1719), *Anti-Pamela, Or, Feign'd Innocence Detected* (1741) and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751). Both depicting the fashionable pastimes of eighteenth-century society and highlighting the oppressive status of women, her works were famous at the time and often associated with epistolary writing, which must have justified such a large selection of letters by the editor. In *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*, Eliza Haywood's narrative excellence was largely acknowledged in letters 89-91 and 120-121 which tell two "extraordinary adventures," so was the quality of her description of her contemporary society (masquerade, letters 86-87, earthquake, letters 95 and 116, retirement in nature, letter 57). Her convictions on the superiority of the female mind over physical beauty (letters 58, 83, 84), on the importance of educating the mind (letters 1, 117, 118) and on the careful attention that should be paid to listening to one's heart when marrying (letters 56, 88, 92-93) were also taken up from the beginning to the end of the manual. One also notes that several other phrases or passages may also have been influenced by Haywood's *Female Spectator* (see notes to Preface, letters 1 and 2), by *The Injur'd Husband* (1723) (note to letter 120) and by *Love-Letters on All Occasions Lately Passed Between Persons of Distinction* (1730) (note to letter 92).



The next source is Charles Hallifax's *Familiar Letters on Various Subjects of Business and Amusement. Written in a Natural, Easy Manner* (London, 1755). Even though it was not the most famous letter-writer of the period, it was reprinted several times until 1764 and largely plagiarized by many other editors, including Crowder and Dilworth, because it contained original, "genuine" letters, many of which of "his own writing from supposed persons, and upon imaginary occasions." (Preface, p. viii). Eve Tavor Barnett points to the higher status of those letters intended for the aristocracy and the "upper strata of the mercantile and trading community."⁴² And indeed, the letters reproduced in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer* mainly concern ladies having to deal with their servants (letters 10, 11, 111, 112), receiving invitations to parties or other leisure activities (letters 105-109) or writing on rather trifling matters, "to dissuade a widow from a second marriage" (letter 48), "for it is impossible for me to speak what I have to say" (letter 64). Even when the writers are of lower social status, being servants or apprentices, their epistolary style remains high (letters 14, 15) and they are raised to marry "a gentleman" (letters 12, 13, 27) or an "officer" (letter 63).

At the origin of the next important sources, Crowder and Newbery were also the editors of two famous epistolary manuals. Stanley Crowder's *The Complete Letter-Writer, Or, Polite English Secretary* (1755) must have been the most recognized during the second half of the eighteenth century. It ran through over twenty official editions before the end of the century, and was repeatedly pirated in Scotland and America.⁴³ The manual being composed of many letters borrowed from various origins, it is only natural to see some of its letters plagiarized in *The Ladies Complete Letter-Writer*. John Newbery (bap. 1713, d. 1767) was a generous and industrious bookseller and editor established at the Bible and Crown and mainly specialized in books for children. He published A

⁴² See Eve Tavor Barnett, *Empire of Letters. Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1680-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 151-152.

⁴³ *The Complete Letter-Writer; Or, Polite English Secretary* (London: Stanley Crowder and Henry Woodgate) was edited in 1755, 1756, 1757, 1758, 1759, 1761, 1762, 1763, 1765, 1767, 1768, 1770, 1771, 1772, 1775, 1778, 1785, 1788, 1789, 1792. It was regularly revised and corrected between 1756 and 1768 and remained almost unchanged afterwards. For more detail on the origin of the editorial process, see Eve Tavor Barnett, *Empire of Letters. Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1680-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 152-154.