The Ladies Diary:  
Or, The  
Woman's ALMANACK,  
For the Year of our LORD, 1715.  
Being the Third Year after Leap-Year.  
Containing many Delightful and Entertaining Particulars,  
peculiarly adapted for the Use and Diversion of the  
FAIR-SEX.   
Being the Twelfth Almanack ever Publish'd of that kind.

Hail Sacred Peace. Hail long expected Days  
Which Britain's Glory to the Stars shall raise!  
Oh stretch thy Reign, fair Peace! from Shore to Shore  
Till Conquests cease, and Slavery be no more.  

Printed by J. Wilde, for the Company of Stationers.
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ABSTRACT

The almanac genre was immensely popular throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet published almanacs for women were nonexistent at the turn of the eighteenth century. This dissertation, drawing on archival research undertaken in Great Britain and North America, foregrounds The Ladies’ Diary, a pioneering almanac for women, from its founding in 1704 until 1753, a period when the publication’s character and influence were established. Though scholars increasingly acknowledge the significance of almanacs as cultural catalysts, they have rarely attended to the eighteenth-century almanac for women. My examination contextualizes the genre broadly according to its instructional, creative, and social functions. The Diary was one of the longest running publications of the eighteenth century, allowing for the development of an interactive mode of editorship and of reader agency, and the popularization of subject matter such as the enigma poem. The Diary’s expansion of audience and content enabled women, among other contributors, to mark their presence as almanac readers, writers, and even self-reflexive editors. While most critics of this almanac have discussed its public value as a mathematical magazine, the Diary invites a more multifaceted interpretation.

My Introduction presents the scholarly foundation and context surrounding the emergence of the almanac for women that serves as the framework for this thesis. Chapter One attends to seventeenth-century precursors of the Ladies’ Diary, astrological and burlesque almanacs that incorporated discursive female tropes. Early almanacs by women are also examined here. Chapter Two introduces the Diary in relation to public perceptions of the almanac genre, underscoring its originator’s innovative editorial methodology (1704-1713). The chapter also invokes eighteenth-century periodicals for comparison and to demonstrate patterns of influence. Chapter Three focuses on the editorial shifts within the
*Diary* that led to its expanded and then compromised cultural capital (1714-1753). It also explores the complex position of the female almanac editor (1744-1753). Chapter Four studies the construction of the *Diary*’s audience and traces its actual readers. It then analyzes the readers’ favored genre, the enigma. The dissertation concludes with an overview of the originality and significance of the *Diary*.

**Keywords:** *The Ladies’ Diary*, women’s almanacs; English almanacs; English periodicals; readership; popular culture
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EDITORS OF *THE LADIES’ DIARY* (1704-1753)

John Tipper, editor of the 1704 to 1713 issues. Mathematician and teacher.

Henry Beighton, editor of the 1714 to 1743 issues. Land surveyor, draughtsman, engineer, astronomer, enclosure commissioner, fellow of the Royal Society.

Elizabeth Beighton, editor of the 1744 to 1753 issues. Wife of Henry Beighton, correspondent with Thomas Cowper (contributor to the *Ladies’ Diary*), Robert Heath (Elizabeth Beighton’s co-editor), and Thomas Simpson (subsequent editor of the *Ladies’ Diary*).

Robert Heath, co-editor with Elizabeth Beighton until his apparent dismissal in 1753. Mathematician, army officer, Simpson’s antagonist.
A NOTE ON CITATIONS

In all citations from primary sources, including manuscript correspondence, I have retained the original spelling, punctuation and capitalization. I have retained the original spelling of the names of contributors to The Ladies’ Diary along with the designations of Mrs., Miss, and Mr. I have made changes in spelling only in cases of obvious typesetting errors. In citations from manuscript correspondence I have italicized text which is underlined for emphasis in the original. In citations from almanacs I have also italicized all forms of typesetting for emphasis.

I have taken all citations from almanacs in their original issues. The only exception is The Ladies’ Diary for 1704 and 1705, the originals of which have not survived. When citing from these two issues, I have used Charles Hutton’s Diarian Miscellany. In providing page references for primary materials, I have followed the original numbering system. I have thus used signatures for citations from almanacs other than The Ladies’ Diary unless the sources were paginated. Most of the originals of The Ladies’ Diary carry signatures in the first part of the almanac, while pagination is used in the second part. In such cases I have again followed this system. References to the dates of almanac publications reflect the dates provided on their title pages, not the dates when they were released to the public.

To reduce footnoting, I have cited passages from The Ladies’ Diary and The Diarian Miscellany within my text, using the abbreviations LD and DM. The sources for all other quotations from primary and secondary materials are provided in footnotes. The abbreviations LD and DM are also used in footnotes.
INTRODUCTION

The Printed Almanac and the Forces behind Its Production: Frames for the Study of The Ladies' Diary

The Ladies’ Diary; or, The Woman’s Almanack was a pioneering almanac for women published annually from 1704 until 1841, when, joined with The Gentleman’s Diary, it appeared as The Lady’s and Gentleman’s Diary, and was published as such until 1871. This dissertation studies various aspects of the Ladies’ Diary, covering the period from 1704 until 1753. During this period the publication emerged and established itself as an influential force in the print marketplace. While the almanac’s astrological foundations were declining in status by the beginning of this era, other textual, and in the case of the Diary, literary and mathematical elements were replacing this traditional content. After a discussion of the seventeenth-century precursors of the almanac for women, my thesis examines the Diary in relation to the editorships held by John Tipper (1704-1713), Henry Beighton (1714-1743), and Elizabeth Beighton and Robert Heath (1744-1753), as they sought to promote the almanac in the print marketplace. Scholars have attended to the Diary’s mathematical content but have neglected its literary character. Through an examination of discourse, narratives, and particularly the enigma poem, this analysis will emphasize that these aspects of the Diary developed the agency of the reader, allowed for an interactive mode of editorship, and contributed to the almanac’s success as one of the best-sellers of the eighteenth century. Women were not only targeted as a novel audience for the Diary, but became actively engaged as its contributors. The Diary was thus an influential motivator of female agency in the literary public sphere at a time when literary periodicals for women were rare and when no other almanacs for women
existed. A widely distributed publication, the *Diary* accorded women cultural significance as integral participants in the formation of the reading public. It served as a tool through which they could attain a comprehension of poetic and scientific forms of knowledge, exercise their skills as poets and lay scientists, and thereby obtain at least a modicum of authorial credit.

In this Introduction I present various aspects of the almanac genre pertinent to my subsequent study of the *Ladies' Diary* and its forerunners. I also overview the scholarly attention accorded to the genre’s cultural significance. I then look at scholarship on the *Diary* along with presenting my distinct approach. I also introduce two key frameworks for my further analysis of the *Diary*, namely the concept and function of the almanac editor and the status of women’s education in the eighteenth century. These frameworks will allow me to demonstrate in the course of this dissertation that the *Ladies' Diary* was a catalyst in the transformation of notions of the almanac genre, the reading audience, and the role of the editor, serving as an educational tool in the fields of poetic composition (my particular emphasis), astronomy, and mathematics.

**The “most popular book in the English language”: Definitions, Types, and Functions of Almanacs**

Eustace Bosanquet, a historian of the almanac genre, begins his 1917 bibliography of English printed almanacs and prognostications with the enthusiastic assertion that “for three and a half centuries the Almanack has been the most popular book in the English language; and together with the Bible has been the basis of practically every household library in this country.” During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he continues, the two likely
The word “almanac” has a range of possible etymological origins. One, found in N. Einer’s 1621 almanac, is “almon-aght,” a Saxon term referring to sticks carved with the moon’s movements. Another could be “manacus” or “manadius” from the Latin for the circle in a sundial. In England, the word “Almanack” can be traced back to Roger Bacon’s Opus Majus (1267), where it stands for the tables of the heavenly bodies’ motions. In medieval and early Tudor times, almanacs relayed the conjunctions and oppositions of the sun and moon, eclipse dates, and the movable feasts. They therefore differed from calendars which offered the days and the months of the year accompanied by the names of the saints. One of the earliest almanacs, claims Mortimer Collins, was Stonehenge, while Louise Curth determines that a papyrus edition is among the earliest locatable almanacs, believed to be from the era of Ramses II (1304-1168 BC). Prior to printed versions, clog almanacs, as they were known, were popular during the early Middle Ages. They featured the lunar cycle and Christian holidays notched and rendered in pictorial form on a square stick of box or other hardwood which was meant to be hung up for reference. Manuscript almanacs carrying ecclesiastical information were also common in medieval Europe. Johannes Gutenberg had launched the first printed almanac in 1448 before his famous Bible was published.

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London, almanacs were printed in significant numbers by the 1550s; most of these were translations of European editions. English compilers began launching their almanacs from the 1540s on. Around 1540 the almanac and calendar began to be issued together for public consumption, along with the prognostication, which depended on the astrological and astronomical information presented in the almanac. One significant date in the history of British almanac publishing is 1603 when the Company of Stationers, the London guild that controlled printing and bookselling, was granted by James I the exclusive right to publish almanacs and prognostications. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, almanacs were published under the monopoly of the Company of Stationers. In 1775 its monopoly ended as a result of Thomas Caman's legal challenge to the Company's patent to publish almanacs; the Stationers were, however, still able to control the market due to a raised stamp duty, and after Caman's death in 1788, they purchased his interests.

Printed almanacs were annual publications in booklet or sheet form. Booklet almanacs usually featured two parts: the calendar part or the almanac proper, and the prognostication part, known as "Latter" or "Second Part", "Appendix", or (in the trade) "Prog." The first part began with a title page, often followed by a boastful preface to the reader, and then such elements as the chronologies of historical events and the reigns of English monarchs, the calendar, eclipse dates, planetary conjunctions, and the beginning dates of the four terms of the year, while also offering the characteristic feature of the

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Zodiac Man, a diagram that showed the governance of zodiac signs over bodily parts. The calendar was divided into columns, recording the days of the week, followed by such listings as the sunrise and sunset, holidays, saints’ days, and weather predictions, accompanied by seasonal verses and maxims, though the right-hand column was occasionally left blank for private notes. The second part at times began with its own title page carrying a printer’s imprint or a heading. It included an “Astrological Judgment” or a prediction for the coming months based on the astrological and astronomical information recorded in the almanac proper, as well as a range of tables, like tide-tables, tables of weights and measures, and interest tables, medical and agricultural advice, information about town distances, dates and places of fairs and markets, recipes, dates for posting letters, legal advice, essays, verse, and advertisements. Almanacs were of three main forms. “Blanks” and “Sorts,” to use the jargon of the print trade, were booklet almanacs; the former typically included some blank space for personal notes within the calendar and provided two facing pages for every month, while the latter offered only a single page for each month with no blank space and was shorter by four leaves. “Sheets” were one-page publications, the cheapest type, similar to today’s wall calendars. The Ladies’ Diary was of the booklet type.

In the later part of the sixteenth century, broadsheets usually cost just a penny and a twenty-four page almanac, two pence. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the prices were raised, the cheapest sheet almanacs costing 3d. The price of almanacs depended on such factors as to whether they were bound, multi-paged, and sold in London or in the provinces. If unbound, they were likely to get recycled as tinder, wrapping material, or toilet paper. For wealthy readers, almanacs were bound into durable volumes, often used as

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11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 97.
13 Curth, “‘Courteous Readers’: The Target Audience,” 84.
account books or diaries and suitable for keeping in a library, whether for ornamental purposes or as “family heirlooms.” The almanac covers could feature portraits likely used as decoration. Thus, while an almanac often served a utilitarian function for the farmer, it was used broadly by people from various strata of society. Almanacs can be therefore viewed as “influential cultural messengers” that regulated the life of a wide range of readers.

The eighteenth century was marked by one top-selling British almanac, *Vox Stellarum*, originally titled *Kalendariurn Ecclesiasticum* until its 1701 issue. It was begun by Francis Moore, an astrologer and physician, in 1699 and, after his death in 1714, was released annually by the Stationers’ Company throughout the century. In 1801 it sold 362,449 copies, its profit amounting to over £2,595. Another long-running title was *Poor Robin*, launched in 1662 by the satirist William Winstanley. It was a mock-almanac, combining the regular features of the traditional almanac with a satirical edge. *Poor Robin* sold about 7,000 copies a year during the seventeenth century, but by 1801 its sales had dropped to just over 4,000 copies. Other eighteenth-century almanacs were to a large extent continued titles from the previous century. Bernard Capp considers “the golden age of English almanacs” to be from 1640 to 1700 when the genre carried political, religious, and social polemic. Maureen Perkins claims that “the eighteenth century was a period of stagnation for English almanacs,” since the Stationers’ Company was releasing almost the same titles and content

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14 Ibid., “The Genre of Almanacs” and “Courteous Readers,” 42, 80, 85-86.
16 Maureen Perkins notes that the first Moore's could have been written either for a 1698 or for a 1699 edition. As she explains, such confusion arises from the incongruent dating of almanacs’ prefaces and their publication dates; prefaces were usually dated by the year when they were written, which preceded the one for which they were published. Perkins, “Almanacs and Prophecy: Vox Stellarum,” 92, 92-93n15.
throughout the entire period. Yet, as this dissertation will show, the existence of the *Ladies' Diary* is evidence not for the stagnation of the genre, but for its rejuvenation in the eighteenth century, a period during which the *Diary* evolved into one of the best-selling publications, relying on vital contributor support and the agency of the female reader.

### The Growing Interest in the Almanac: Scholarship on the Almanac Genre and *The Ladies' Diary*

Scholarly research on almanacs has been limited, much of it attending to either the genre’s history or its astrological and medical facets. One of the earliest critics of significance, Eustace Bosanquet, undertook the pioneering bibliographical study of almanacs to the year 1600 in *English Printed Almanacks and Prognostications* (1917). His discussion of the history of the genre, including a definition of the word “almanac,” is useful background material for my thesis. By the late 1930s, interest in almanacs had become both critical and bibliographical. F. P. Wilson, in a talk before the Bibliographic Society (1938), focused on the “comic parodies of astrological prognostications,” listing such publications as *The Owl’s Almanack* and *Poor Robin*, titles I will draw upon in Chapter One. Marjorie Nicolson, in “English Almanacs and the ‘New Astronomy’” (1939), examines almanacs in relation to the burgeoning interest in astronomy. Nicolson finds that their content shifted from general reference to more specific cultural preoccupations after 1640, often underlined in prefaces and essays. It is this mode of reader contact that my dissertation explores. Nicolson’s article

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also addresses the Ladies' Diary as exemplifying “the growing interest of women in science” and describes John Tipper’s lessons on astronomy as “distinctively ‘modern.’” Nicolson claims that Tipper “sweetened [the] hard instruction” of his scientific essays with a “sugar coating: puzzles . . . [and] serialized fiction,” but my dissertation will show that the puzzles were not merely the simple modes of entertainment that Nicolson suggests they were.22

However, it is not until 1979 that a truly comprehensive work appeared, Bernard Capp’s English Almanacs, 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press. Capp’s important study of the genre attends to the linkages between astrology and the almanac’s utilitarian functions. He shows the effectiveness of almanac astrology in the sphere of politics and religion, looks at the concerns of almanac astrologers for the condition of society, and discusses the relevance of almanac astrology to medicine, science, and history. Capp briefly focuses on the almanacs’ interest in the subject of women as well as on female almanac compilers, which I will elaborate on in greater depth in Chapter One. It was Capp’s analysis of the historical and literary content of almanacs that initially drew my attention to the neglected field of almanacs and literature. Capp claims that the “appeal of the almanac did not lie in any literary value,” but in its ability to fill “a wide variety of roles, cheaply and concisely.” He also states that the key literary role that the almanac played was “indirect”: the genre stimulated literary debate on almanacs and the development of a “distinct and popular sub-literary genre of satirical works in burlesque form.”23 My thesis will expand these generalizations by foregrounding and analyzing the enigma poem which was the Ladies’ Diary’s major literary feature. Capp’s last chapter, “The Eighteenth Century,” usefully argues that a new kind of almanac was emerging in which instruction and amusement was blended, referring to the Diary as an

example. Capp's conclusion emphasizes that the almanac, with its multiple functions, remained "the greatest triumph of journalism" until modernity.24

More recently, in 2004, Capp has addressed the continuing indifference of scholars to this genre in an article entitled "The Potter Almanacs." Noting the immense popularity of almanacs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Capp traces the publishing history of almanacs in their evolution from the innocuous publications of the late Elizabethan and early Stuart times to the 1640s when they became the disseminators of partisan politics. Capp points to the wide range of functions that almanacs served, as well as their low price, as reasons for their popularity. Many almanacs, Capp also states, were not politically controversial, but offered instead valuable utilitarian information. His overview provides a context for my approach to the genre, particularly regarding his assertion that the almanac had become an educational force.

Another substantial analysis of almanacs is Maureen Perkins's Visions of the Future: Almanacs, Time, and Cultural Change, 1775-1870 (1996). The book resumes the discussion of almanacs where Capp ceased his analysis, asserting that the almanac remained popular, a tool "with which nineteenth-century people thought." Although Perkins's focus is later than the time span which my dissertation explores, the definitions she provides, her examination of the history and role of the Stationers' Company in almanac control, her discussion of the history and influence of such famous publications as Poor Robin and Vox Stellarum, and, particularly, her remark that each almanac was of individual character and constituted "a work of literature" that people "read," are valuable to this thesis. Indeed, as we will see with the enigma poem in Chapter Four as well as with other literary elements that I examine in Chapter Two, the Ladies' Diary was not designed merely for temporal consultation, but to

24 Ibid., "Conclusion," 292.
serve as a more permanent scientific and poetic sourcebook. Also, Perkins's overview of the history of the almanac in relation to women has been influential in my study of the *Diary*. She usefully comments on the preponderance of female almanac hawkers between 1757 and 1775, but also makes the more debatable claim that the presence of the *Diary* was a sign that "most almanac customers were women." Yet the genre appealed to male readers, even in the case of the *Diary*, which was addressed explicitly to a female consumer.\(^{25}\)

The most recent book on almanacs by Louise Curth, *English Almanacs, Astrology and Popular Medicine: 1550-1700* (2007), expands our comprehension of the genre's use and circulation in her study of almanac ownership based on inventories, auction lists, accounts, and manuscript notes. Curth defines the almanac, due to its ubiquity, as representing "the first true form of British mass media." While tracing the evolution of the genre alongside the growth of the commercialization of medicine, Curth importantly discusses seventeenth-century almanacs by women and aimed at them, material I am reliant on for my own examination in Chapter One. She remarks that titles under female names "would have been especially risky" to publish, suggesting that such seventeenth-century almanacs "did not appeal to enough readers" or else were "not well-timed" to be successful. As we will see with Tipper's venture, his decision to launch an almanac for women remained a risky one, but the *Ladies' Diary* indeed appealed to a female consumer and correspondent and became successful in the process.\(^{26}\)

I am additionally indebted to two articles on the genre. Joao Luis Lisboa's essay entitled "Popular Knowledge in the 18th Century Almanacs" (1989), focusing on a collection of Portuguese almanacs, discusses the common European structure of almanacs, their


\(^{26}\) Curth, "Introduction" and " 'Students of astrology and physick': The Authors," 2, 73.
astrological content, “anti-almanacs,” and the demographic of the almanac consumer, all pertinent to my analysis. Lisboa’s comment that the almanac’s power lay in the reproduction of knowledge applicable to every-day life and not in the transmission of “any great discovery” is also connected to my study of the almanac as a tool of influence. Almanacs were indeed educational catalysts, a claim that needs to be nuanced once we take the Ladies’ Diary into consideration. While Lisboa states that almanacs only served to replicate information, the Diary clearly transformed the way that information was presented for its readers through its editorial style and novel content.

Another compelling article on the almanac, “History, Nation, and the Satiric Almanac, 1660-1760” (1998), by Frank Palmeri examines the history and techniques of the satiric almanac, including a case study of the most popular almanac of this type, Poor Robin. Most significantly, Palmeri asserts that “the satiric charge” of seventeenth-century almanacs such as Poor Robin diminished after the first two decades of the eighteenth century. It was replaced with a paradigm that “embraces an ideal of lucid seamless unity, emphasizes education in politeness, and pragmatically recommends work and saving.” Palmeri further claims that the later eighteenth-century almanac was reshaped by the inclusion of the essay form and thus “approaches a literary annual.” My argument, also centered on a specific ideology of the genre, includes a discussion of Poor Robin, attending to gender construction as one aspect that influenced its marketplace success.

Almanac research to the present date, as is evident, has detailed the genre’s definitive features, history, and cultural significance. While the interest in the genre is growing, only a few contemporary scholars have chosen to examine the almanac my dissertation covers, The

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None of the current literary histories that study the eighteenth-century periodical press, such as Kathryn Shevelow’s *Women and Print Culture* (1989) or Iona Italia’s *The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century* (2005), have undertaken a thorough analysis of the *Diary*. The academics who have analyzed the almanac genre, like Capp and Perkins, also treat the *Diary* peripherally and even in misleading terms. For instance, neither Capp nor Perkins mentions the editorial management of the publication by Elizabeth Beighton, Perkins emphasizing that the almanac “was always prepared by a man.”

The *Ladies’ Diary* has received more thorough attention from critics who take an interest in its mathematical content. Among those who have devoted at least an article to the subject of the almanac is Teri Perl, whose 1979 essay, “The Ladies’ Diary or Woman’s Almanack, 1704-1841,” is a pertinent source for the study of contributor demographics, though Perl’s focus is primarily a mathematical one and is based mainly, in speculative and partial fashion, on Thomas Leybourn’s 1817 index of contributors. Perl’s discussion of the condition of eighteenth-century mathematical education for men and women and its connection to the “growth of the printing industry” has proven influential for this thesis. However, my analysis of the *Diary* substantially diverges from Perl’s, not only in its focus on the publication’s literary elements, but in its broader research into the almanac’s audience base. A more recent contribution towards a better understanding of mathematical practitioners who were correspondents of the *Diary* is an article by Ruth and Peter Wallis, “Female Philomaths” (1980), which draws on Perl’s argument and encourages further research into “the social and economic development of the 18th century in general, and in

30 Teri Perl, “The Ladies’ Diary or Woman’s Almanack, 1704-1841,” *Historia Mathematica* 6 (1979): 44.
particular [of] the position of women within it.” Women mathematicians, as the article underlines, though rarely discussed, participated in the consumption of mathematical periodicals, wrote and translated books on mathematics, and worked as mathematical practitioners.

Shelley Anne Costa’s dissertation from 2000, along with her 2002 articles on The Ladies’ Diary, have been foundational sources for this thesis, though I am concerned with other aspects of the publication than its mathematical content. Using contextual, gender, and biographical analyses, Costa’s case study of the Diary presented in her dissertation, “The Ladies’ Diary: Society, Gender and Mathematics in England, 1704-1754,” examines how mathematics and society are related in Western culture throughout the time period my dissertation also covers. Costa centers her analysis on patterns of mathematical contribution, traces a few mathematical contributors, and scrutinizes the career and editorship of Henry Beighton in particular. Costa’s dissertation informs my thesis with such aspects as biographical details on the editors and specific contributors, statistics relating to contributor submissions, and an overview of patterns of reader submission.

An examination of the gendered patterns included in the Ladies’ Diary’s addresses to its readers has been a particularly salient approach for both Costa and myself, though my conclusions diverge from hers. She observes, in relation to mathematical questions, that the address to women was not more than a “chivalrous gesture . . . appropriate to the overall theme of the almanac.” In contrast, my study of the Diary’s most popular genre, the enigma, and its modes of address in Chapter Four allows for broader conclusions in relation to the agency of the almanac’s female reader. Further, while my perspective on the Diary

underlines the significance of audience networks, as does Costa’s dissertation, my thesis expands Costa’s research, as well as that of Perl, in terms of the cultural implications of the almanac’s use and function.

Costa’s articles, “Marketing Mathematics in Early Eighteenth-Century England: Henry Beighton, Certainty, and the Public Sphere” and “The Ladies’ Diary: Gender, Mathematics, and Civil Society in Early Eighteenth-Century England,” drawing in large part on her dissertation, address the connection between gender and mathematical contributions to the *Diary* and provide an additional framework for my analysis. Costa’s observations about the relation between Beighton’s economic identity and the almanac are central to my study of his editorial praxis in Chapter Three. In the latter article, Costa examines the polite conversational character of the *Diary’s* scientific content, noting the “power of civil society to generate and perpetuate notions of science.” Yet, though her contribution is valuable in relation to the formation of the *Diary’s* reading public, Costa makes debatable claims regarding contributor patterns. For instance, she asserts that conventions of modesty led women to drop out of the “mathematical dialogue” in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, while I interpret modesty as a rhetorical pose. Thus, while Costa’s attention to the *Diary’s* mathematical content is commendable, it also leaves analytical gaps to fill. Among other critics who have taken an interest in the *Ladies’ Diary*, Robert Bataille’s two articles on Robert Heath, Elizabeth Beighton, and their collaborator Thomas Cowper (1987 and 1990) focus on such editorial matters as contributors’ compensation, standards of literary taste, difficulties with tardy printers and the autocratic Stationers’ Company, and on Beighton’s role as almanac editor. Overall, Costa’s and Bataille’s articles further contribute to our

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understanding of the *Diary* as a mathematical magazine, with Bataille also drawing our attention to the exigencies of Elizabeth Beighton’s editorial position.

While scholars situate the *Ladies’ Diary* as an important publication within the field of mathematical journalism, my analysis of this almanac broadens claims for its significance to the history of ephemeral literature. My goal is to show what role the *Diary’s* literary elements played in the expansion of an interactive readership, one including a substantial female audience. It was in particular one literary feature of the almanac, the enigma poem, which enhanced the almanac’s popularity in the literary marketplace, as I will discuss. Also, the *Diary* capitalized on the success of earlier periodicals for women and holds a commendable position as one of the earliest literary periodical ventures that acknowledged female writing, as well as being the earliest almanac that relied on a strong contributor base. Indeed, a focus on the mathematical content alone, though it is an important aspect of the *Diary*, does not allow for a full analysis of the multifaceted functions that this almanac served in the marketplace.

“New forms of professional behavior”: The Concept and Function of the Almanac Editor

This dissertation devotes significant space to the praxis of editors. My intention is not to suggest that the *Ladies’ Diary’s* content, tone, function, and success relied solely on the individual choices of the almanac editors. Yet they remain key figures in shaping the form and reception of the *Diary*, as I will show. During the eighteenth century, and particularly with the advent of the press, editing was becoming an increasingly distinct and widespread form of employment. The individuals who undertook the position of periodical editors were often writers, while in the case of almanacs they were frequently practitioners of astrology
and medicine. As Bernard Capp shows, motivations for astrologers to enter into the business of almanac publishing included the propagation of evangelical beliefs, an annual source of income, the possibility of increased respectability in their profession, and opportunities for the patronage of the wealthy. Assuming an editorship could increase their celebrity status. Conversely, their authorial credit could be compromised. Overall, editors could be perceived as posturing hacks, or in the words of William Hazlitt in the nineteenth century, as “scrubs, mere drudges, newspaper-puffs . . . bullies or quacks . . . nothing at all.”

During the initial half of the eighteenth century at least two forces affected the proliferation of editors. First, with the expiry of the Licensing Act in 1695 the book industry expanded to outlying towns, and in the case of almanacs, though they required ecclesiastical approval, enabled them to be published with no other licensing controls. It was thus a welcoming era for new almanac titles. Second, as I wish to emphasize in this dissertation, the success of literary periodicals at the turn of the eighteenth century contributed to the development of the editorial function and an increased possibility for a regular source of employment for editors. This factor is pertinent to the study of the Ladies’ Diary, since the publication capitalized on periodical models in relation to the construction of the editorial function, as I will elaborate in Chapter Two.

In the eighteenth century, it was the development of the editorial role in the production of literary periodicals that was central in establishing the editor as a recognizable and respected public figure, one distinguishable from booksellers and printers and integral to the continued emergence of the concept of the author. According to Robert Iliffe, “the

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37 Capp, “Development of the Almanac,” 50.
manifestation of the 'editor' was intimately bound up with the appearance of the 'author,' and should be taken into account in the history of the latter. Indeed, author and editor were terms frequently used as synonyms in reference to almanac compilers. Clifford Siskin, in his overview of the economic situation of England's publishing industry between the 1720s and the 1760s underlines that, while papermakers were going bankrupt during this period and the numbers of printed titles, as well as of London booksellers, were dropping considerably, the periodical sector was flourishing and the "product of its critical efforts was new forms of professional behavior embodied in the Author." Siskin suggests that it was the construction of "Author-Editors" as well as of "Readers-as-Authors" in periodicals that enabled the continued popularity of the form and "induced the flow of capital." By placing the persona of the author-editor at the forefront of the work, the periodical created a deeper level of involvement for the reader. Indeed, as we will see in the case of the Ladies' Diary, the author-editor function along with that of the contributor played a crucial part in the success of the publication.

Rather than working as invisible proof corrector in the service of booksellers, the editor played the new role of a collaborator with the reader-as-author. Relying on material submitted by readers, eighteenth-century editors were being reformulated as constructors of "public 'identities' . . . [and as] trustworthy managers of the transit of private and personal material into the public sphere." Thus, an editor who received such material and controlled it could act as a "confessor" or pose a "threat," while his identity was also "a source of fascination" or excitement for his audience. As the century progressed, the viability of the
editor’s role was enhanced by the device of eidolons designed to encourage readership and to serve as commentary on the taste and morale of the times. As Roger Chartier remarks, authors and publishers “tried to impose . . . a prescribed reading” on their texts through such features as prefaces and intertextual commentary. Editors, with textual devices like prefaces to the reader and the inclusion of interactive genres, as we will see in my discussion of the *Ladies’ Diary*, fashioned themselves as public commentators and thereby attempted to draw readers to the almanac.

The ideal of politeness, as a mark of elite discourse and a tool for regulating the social dynamic, certainly had a pervasive effect on eighteenth-century editorial modes of creating the literary public sphere. The editors of literary periodicals cultivated a female audience through their polite discourse. The *Ladies’ Diary* lured its female reader into the consumption and later creation of the text by means of genteel forms of rhetoric. One key way in which John Tipper maintained this civil etiquette was through the medium of interactive textual conversation, as I will elaborate in Chapter Four. Through such conversations, politeness emerged as a required social skill. Polite editorial repartee with readers enabled forms of “self-reflexivity” in the audience, instructing readers in how to engage in the discourses of commercial publication. Contributors for whom this polite rhetoric was modeled could gain access to forums that were previously closed to them. As Brean Hammond comments, gentility in this era was connected less to “birth and status” than to “self-presentation.”

42 Siskin, “Periodicals, Authorship, & the Novel,” 166.
Concomitantly, almanac editors developed a concern with self-presentation and the status of the genre itself, as we will see in the case of Henry Beighton. They used a polite mode of rhetoric as a gentrifying force for the ephemeral almanac. In general, almanac editors were men of various professions: frequently astrologers, mathematicians, physicians, and teachers. Although they often ventured into such publications to create a forum for the expression of their doctrines and to attack claims made by other contemporaries in the same professions, as did the later editor of the *Ladies' Diary*, Robert Heath, the *Diary*'s editors prior to Heath did successfully establish the publication as a respected forum of polite conversation. This proved a successful marketing tactic for an audience seeking genteel forms of reading and the improvement of their own social skills.

Through rhetorical acts of self-presentation, the pioneering influence of the eighteenth-century almanac on the popularization of the editorial function must be emphasized. As my research shows, almanacs were among the earliest genres published periodically that fictionalized the figure of the editor and thereby aimed to playfully engage their readers with constructed personae. Almanacs were marketed through editorial personas even prior to Richard Steele's famous Isaac Bickerstaff. During the seventeenth century, playful eidolons such as Poor Robin, acting as the "authors" of editorial prefaces, were contributing to the popularity of almanacs. As with later literary periodicals, in seventeenth-century burlesque almanacs the "real" editor became of secondary importance to the editorial persona. On the other hand, the individual or "real" almanac originator was often distinctly marked within almanacs. Such publications included editorial prefaces signed by their authors or title pages that revealed their authors' names, as evidenced by Sarah Jinner's and Mary Holden's almanacs, discussed in Chapter One.

44 See Capp for a discussion of Richard Saunder's mockery of the astrological beliefs propagated by such almanac makers as William Lilly, John Gadbury and John Whalley ("The Eighteenth Century," 239).
John Partridge, John Gadbury, and Francis Moore, who also published almanacs in their own names, were, as Capp underlines, “the greatest names in the world of popular astrology” at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In fact, even though they were dead by 1720, their names still figured in the titles of the almanacs they originated, while the Stationers’ Company hired anonymous editors to continue the compilation of these publications. As Capp also elucidates, despite the fact that the attitude of many anonymous compilers was “casual,” the material for their issues being merely “plundered without acknowledgment” from earlier almanacs, even the anonymous compilers were able to maneuver the text in order to advertise themselves. Charles Leadbetter, one such editor of Partridge’s almanac, inserted in the publication plagiarized fragments from earlier Stuart almanacs. He also cunningly promoted the value of his astronomical observations under the guise of the editor’s friend, “the Ingenious Mr Leadbetter,” as he fashioned himself.45

Yet the editors of almanacs who exposed their identities to the public, while frequently gaining renown, were also risking their reputations, since, as happened in the case of Partridge that I discuss in Chapter Two, they could be ridiculed. Even editors writing anonymously for the Company of Stationers could be challenged. George Parker, an astrologer and physician, in 1707 not only attacked the Company for appointing editors for “a small Sum of Money,” stating that out of “about 30 several Authors, on whom Almanacks are father’d by the Stationers, not much more than a third part are in the land of the Living,” but also dubbed, as one example, the editor of Edward Pond’s almanac, “a very ignorant Pretender.”46

46 John Parker, “To the Candid Readers,” in Parker’s Ephemeris ... (London, 1707), A3v. See also Capp, “The Eighteenth Century,” 240-41.
The standard fees that the editors gained from almanac undertakings were small. Also, almanac originators received no remuneration for their first almanac issue, while they could be made liable for the Company of Stationers’ losses. However, for many self-taught editors almanac compilation was at least a source of some income, especially if they edited more than one title. Capp remarks that the editor of Moore’s almanac, Henry Andrews, was paid twenty-five pounds a year at the end of the eighteenth century, while the Company benefited up to several thousand pounds from the publication. Earlier in the century, the compiler of Moore’s was remunerated with as little as five guineas. The editor of the Ladies’ Diary, Elizabeth Beighton, received ten pounds a year in the middle of the century. The Company’s dominance and profitability during the eighteenth century thus persisted through this practice of hiring editors to compile established and long-running almanacs.

Thus the role of the almanac editor was crucial to the publication’s reputation, although editorial success was related to many factors, often beyond the agency of the editor. In the case of the Ladies’ Diary, the almanac editor served as a catalyst for reader agency. The inclusion of interactive elements in the publication contributed to an expanded readership demographic that for the first time prioritized the female contributor as a vital figure in almanac production. Editorial prefaces encouraging the female reader to take on an active role in the almanac’s public forum sold the publication, while the Diary participated in creating an enlarged notion of the editor as a collaborator rather than as merely a compiler of previously prepared almanac material. In this respect, the Diary’s editors innovated modes of reader affiliation, from the ideals of polite discourse to the interactive aspects of publication, to suit the exigencies of the literary marketplace.

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“A properly female accomplishment”: Women’s Education in the Eighteenth Century

The *Ladies’ Diary* aimed to further women’s education in the eighteenth century through its inclusion of poetic forms, mathematical problems, lectures on astronomy, and instructional writings. As many periodicals of the first half of the century championed female education and the *Diary* was particularly addressed to a female reader-contributor, it is crucial to provide a background on the condition of women’s education at that time. In the course of the eighteenth century, when education relied on the private sector and when many children did not attend school, their education was based on such sources as “lectures by itinerant scientists, almanacs, parental tutelage, shop signs, nursery rhymes, church sermons and decorations, instruction by trade masters or journeymen, and advice from neighbors and relatives.” Almanacs were thus significant social catalysts: spread widely and cheaply, they could serve as educational tools for the young, poor, self-taught, and, as with the *Diary*, leisured readers.

The state of education and literacy in general improved considerably between the mid sixteenth and the mid eighteenth centuries, according to the social historian J. A. Sharpe. Although even in 1760 illiteracy was still relatively widespread and a lack of education was rarely seen as an obstacle to economic attainment, England had a “variegated educational system, of which the population made considerable use.” By the eighteenth century there existed “at least five different educational levels,” which were divided by social class. The first, and most elementary type, was the provision of literacy, followed by more

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51 Ibid., 276, 278.
intensive training in reading, writing and basic arithmetic, then preparation for professions and business, education in the classics, and the tutelage offered by universities and the Inns of Court. What had stimulated educational development were factors like the Protestant urge to read the Bible and thus an increase in the accessibility of such literature as Psalters and vernacular Bibles, and the influence of Puritans on the expansion of schools. Another significant change that affected the improvement of education among the poorest was the establishment of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1699 that founded charity schools. The eighteenth century also saw “the proliferation of private academies, boarding schools and day schools which offered practical training for the clerk, the mechanic, the tradesman or the enterprising artisan.” By 1743, a sampling of parishes in the diocese of York indicates that fifty-eight per cent offered “a school of some sort: ‘charity’, ‘free’, ‘endowed’, ‘public’, ‘private’, ‘English’, or ‘petty.’”

As Clifford Siskin asserts, “the division of knowledge in the eighteenth century was informed by divisions of gender”; Ruth Perry has also emphasized that gender was more a definer of educational status than social class. The schooling available for women, as well as the narrow range of subject matter presented them as suitable to their nature, indicate that gains in their education were, at best, slow and partial. The era can be characterized as offering more of a pragmatic training for women, enabling them to better serve their social function, than a liberal and self-fulfilling education. Lower-class girls, if they attended school at all, were enrolled in charity schools. Mary Astell’s Chelsea school, founded in 1709 and

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coordinated by the SPCK, was one example of such a school.\textsuperscript{54} There also existed such possibilities as free schools, dame schools, and parish schools. As the century progressed, spinning schools and Sunday schools were additionally established for the poor. Yet the education of poor girls remained altogether "totally inadequate" in terms of the number of schools and their curriculum.\textsuperscript{55} A poor girl's education in a charity school consisted of training in literacy, catechism, discipline, and domestic skills necessary to render her self-reliant and ready to labor as a maid or a cook. The charity schools thus served to equip girls with service-related skills, as well as a pious state of mind and a fixed sense of morals. Even in the face of such a meager curriculum, complaints still surfaced that these impoverished girls were educated above their station. Less fortunate girls taught themselves to read with the chapbooks that were circulated throughout the countryside by hawkers.\textsuperscript{56}

Overall, Kathryn Shevelow summarizes the system of schooling for women of various social classes as "rudimentary," a "'polite' feminine education" based on such subjects as reading, writing, music, dancing, drawing, and French.\textsuperscript{57} Middle- and upper-class girls were usually sent to boarding schools where they were trained in mostly domestic skills, though many were taught at home by parents, a governess or a tutor, depending on family finances. A cultivation of abilities like sewing, knitting, cooking, and supervising servants along with other accomplishments as etiquette, posture, and singing, was thought to render a woman more attractive in the competitive matrimonial market; such "ornamental accomplishments" were considered necessary in running efficient households and educating

\textsuperscript{54} See Perry, "The Company She Keeps," 232-81.
children.\textsuperscript{58} They also marked the wealth and status of a family. Yet even for girls from wealthier families, the educational possibilities open to their brothers were often inaccessible to them. Women were excluded from universities, the Inns of Court, and the grammar schools. Women’s exposure to formal education remained, in essence, “too brief.”\textsuperscript{59}

The list of subjects that women were not encouraged to pursue was lengthy. Brian Dolan includes the following: “science and politics, national identity, ancient languages, religious toleration.” Dolan also notes that the content of any book “written in learned Latin was deemed ‘improper’ for ladies,” while the “study of foreign languages could create an undesirable, unpatriotic and cosmopolitan mentality.”\textsuperscript{60} Yet many women longed for access to such subjects and indeed mastered them. One important means for a girl to become learned was to pursue a course of self-education. Regardless of the limitations of formal schooling, many women of status acquired artistic skills and knowledge of foreign languages and history, and went abroad, leading to a refinement in their tastes and morals.\textsuperscript{61}

One influential figure in the sphere of women’s education and social reform was Mary Astell. Her \textit{Serious Proposal to the Ladies} was published in 1694 and reissued five times by 1701. The book fights for women’s education, highlighting the lack of their training for social roles. It also opposes such “easy mediocrity” as female laziness and idleness. While Astell argued for education as a way for women to better their conduct, she also framed it as a mode through which women could have an enriching existence of their own. Astell encouraged women to band together in support for the establishment of schools resembling “something between a women’s college and a convent without vows.” Such institutions

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., “If anything could inspire,” 50.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 44, 52.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 18, 22.
would allow women without any means of support to train in social services. Astell’s advocacy of female education influenced contemporary women writers like Judith Drake, Lady Mary Chudleigh and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Female intellectuals who were influenced by Astell’s text contributed to a discussion on the value of and need for women’s education. For instance, Lady Montagu’s second issue of the Nonsense of Common-Sense (27 December 1737), a politically-charged periodical, offered, as Isobel Grundy comments, a “feminist exhortation to women to study and to influence the state of society.”

During the first half of the eighteenth century, women’s education is a recurrent theme in literary periodicals in general and not only those authored by women. Many critics have emphasized the limitations of this rhetorical position. As Shevelow argues, the “curriculum” that periodicals offered women, or, more precisely, “the formulation of a way of thinking about how women should act and what they should know,” was “located outside of public social structures; it was ‘feminine’ in its contents and in its limits, designed not to challenge but to reinforce the conception of natural differentiation of social functions between the sexes.” The periodicals “reinforced the domestic ideal”; women, through their aegis, were “educated for the home, in the home,” as Shevelow explains. Though such periodical editors as Richard Steele claimed to champion female education, Rae Blanchard’s conclusion remains cynical towards Steele’s actual achievement: “if Steele had any definite ideas about a course of training, he never expressed them.” Iona Italia’s compelling overview of periodical content in relation to women’s education confirms the fact that during the 1740s-1770s, magazines promoted their cause as utilitarian or educational,

64 Shevelow, “Gender Specialization and Feminine Curriculum,” 148-49.
expressing “grand ambitions for women’s education.” Yet, Italia concludes, they often “fail to deliver on these promises.” Much of the concern for women’s education in periodicals was directly linked to an anxiety about the social effect of women’s “novel-reading habits” and offered women instead suggestions for “safe” alternatives. In such cases the instructional content merely provided a way to correct women’s negative tendencies rather than presenting them with any specific educational alternatives. Overall, Italia’s analysis suggests, despite the fact that we can find many essays in such periodicals on scientific and literary subjects, the majority of these publications spent more space rhapsodizing about the glories of a female education than offering a thorough program of intellectual subjects for their female audience to engage with. 66

However, by the end of the century, women’s desire for education had infiltrated the public sphere in manifest ways, including the periodical press. Harriet Guest observes that in the 1750s, commentators showed an awareness of the “desirability of recognizing learning as a properly female accomplishment.” 67 Like the Ladies’ Diary, publications such as Charlotte Lennox’s Lady’s Museum from the early 1760s, the essays of which “span a wide range of academic subjects,” undoubtedly created “a demand” for women’s education and then satisfied it, as Italia more optimistically remarks. 68 This suggests that the impact of periodicals on female tutelage in this century was not only in championing the need for female education, but also in enabling women to access scholarly learning without a formal education. Women’s participation in the periodical reading public had increased considerably by the end of the century. Eventually, eighteenth-century women’s articulations of their

68 Italia, “‘Studies proper for women,’” 200, 205.
desire for education, though they were "in large part idealizations," as Siskin asserts, were articulations that nonetheless "functioned constructively, bringing about improvement in the supposed means of improvement."\textsuperscript{69}

The educational commitment of the \textit{Ladies' Diary} throughout the first half of the eighteenth century is remarkable, especially when we take into account the lack of formal education for women at the time. The \textit{Diary} was one of the earliest periodical publications to make a substantive contribution to women's education by including exercises in specific fields of knowledge. Under John Tipper's editorship, the \textit{Diary}, rather than offering only domestic topics and entertaining stories at a basic literacy level, privileged the study of mathematics, geography, astronomy, and poetry. Henry Beighton then markedly distinguished between poetic and scientific forms of knowledge. The editors' choices of enigmas and mathematical problems along with their private discussions of these submissions with contributors emphasize editorial commitment to the creation of an educational environment. The construction of reader agency in the almanac was a significant force that stimulated readers to practice certain modes of knowledge and thus independently educate themselves. The \textit{Diary} is proof, I argue in this dissertation, that women's participation in the reading public and in the consumption of such forms of knowledge had been assuming a new force since the beginning of the century.\textsuperscript{70}

In Chapter One I introduce the gendered character of the almanac, undertaking an examination of the rhetorical construction of women in seventeenth-century almanacs, in both traditional and burlesque forms. Such rhetoric, I claim, was drawn from popular early

\textsuperscript{69} Siskin, "Engendering Disciplinarity," 56.
\textsuperscript{70} At the same time, the young and the auto-didact, for example, practiced the poetry and mathematics that the almanac instructed them in, as we will see.
modern genres like the *querelle des femmes* and jests and often served as a technique for burlesquing the almanac. I further study the character of selected prefatory addresses to the reader, observing the general lack of reader agency they accorded to women; it was mainly mock-almanacs that directly addressed women though only as consumers of the genre. Yet despite the fact that seventeenth-century almanacs rarely targeted the female reader in an explicit manner, almanacs authored by women and aiming at female readers did exist, as I show through my overview of Sarah Jinner's and Mary Holden's publications. I conclude with an analysis of their mock counterparts written under the pseudonyms of Sarah Ginnor and Dorothy Patridge. The agency of the female reader in almanacs was indeed rarely acknowledged before the eighteenth century, while that of the female contributor was nonexistent. Thus the *Ladies' Diary* was a pioneering proponent of such modes of interaction with the reader.

In Chapter Two I discuss the print culture context in which the *Ladies' Diary* emerged in 1704. Framing this overview with an elaboration of eighteenth-century literary representations of the almanac, I situate the *Diary* as a unique and competitive publication. I suggest that the *Diary*, modeled on aspects of *The Gentleman's Journal*, became successful in part through its offering of a similar content and character. I then use John Tipper's correspondence to trace the almanac's foundation in the marketplace, particularly as connected to its intended readers. I further contextualize the emergence of the *Diary* in terms of various social and literary factors, including women's participation in almanac consumption, dissemination and production. I also compare the *Diary* with other periodicals for women of the era, claiming that its positive reception is attributable to Tipper's distinct methodology. I additionally discuss the spin-off publications that imitated and rivaled the influential *Diary*.
In Chapter Three I initially focus on editorial shifts which grounded the publication as a mathematical and educational text. Under Henry Beighton's lengthy editorship (1714-1743), I assert, the *Ladies' Diary* increased in cultural capital, emphasizing the study of mathematics and thereby renouncing its affiliations with the prognosticating and ephemeral almanac. I also discuss the influence on the almanac of Beighton's professional activities, the significance of his anonymity and his attention to the instructional aspects of the almanac. I then turn to the challenges faced by his wife, Elizabeth Beighton, after she assumed her editorship following Henry's death (1744-1753), arguing that she was a competent negotiator of her position. Factors such as the control exerted by the Stationers' Company, the impact of contributor support, and the effect of her co-editor, Robert Heath, on her editorial management are addressed here.

In Chapter Four I analyze the *Ladies' Diary's* contributors and their favored elements of the almanac, the enigma poem and its answer (1704-1753). I begin by presenting my biographically- and statistically-based research into the *Diary's* contributors, as well as examining various modes of editorial interaction with the *Diary's* readers, to draw conclusions about the character of the almanac's audience. I then discuss two poetic sub-genres, the enigma and its answer, in terms of their range of prosody, languages, verse forms, rhetoric, and themes as an introduction to my study of how the editors framed the enigmas and how their audiences responded to them. The chapter ends by considering the reception and influence of the enigma form, including its appearance in one of the *Diary's* competitors, *The Gentleman's Magazine*. The enigma, I claim, was a valuable literary genre that established a new kind of reader-contributor.

My Conclusion signals the transformative character of the almanac genre during the eighteenth century. It summarizes the dissertation, focusing on the originality and
significance of the *Ladies' Diary* in relation to its content and editorial management. I thereby emphasize that the *Diary* cannot be underestimated in the history of British literature and print culture.
CHAPTER ONE

Seventeenth-Century Almanacs on and by Women: Precursors of
The Ladies’ Diary

Textual Quarrels

Margaret Ezell remarks in *The Patriarch’s Wife* that seventeenth-century almanacs, among other genres written by women, such as ballads, religious meditations, prefaces to translations, and friendship poems, suggest “alternatives to conventional women’s roles in society” and underline that women “formed a special audience, which received different female models than those depicted in domestic conduct books by men.”¹ I focus in this chapter on seventeenth-century almanacs in a search for textual alternatives for women and trace to what extent the signs of a female audience were inscribed within the almanac genre. I observe that seventeenth-century almanacs were marked by the rhetoric of the *querelle des femmes* (debate about the nature and role of women) and of popular jests. They capitalized on the category of woman as a marketing tactic, extending their quarrel towards the female almanac compiler. This chapter aims, given this context, to recover obscure seventeenth-century almanacs on and by women as significant texts in the history of gendered literature. Its originality resides in the fact that it combines an analysis of the discourse on women in seventeenth-century almanacs with an acknowledgment of women’s presence in the seventeenth-century print culture of almanac publication.

I first discuss the extent to which a discursive misogyny marked the almanac genre in the seventeenth century, both in its serious and burlesque forms. Emphasizing the rhetorical exclusion of women as an actively engaged readership in almanacs, I also study the almanacs’ addresses to readers to trace their target audience. Seventeenth-century almanacs often directed their rhetoric to specific groups of men or to a generalized audience, women being constructed more frequently as subject matter than as readers. However, despite a seemingly restrictive rhetorical climate for the female reader, several female-authored almanacs did exist. I thus next examine Sarah Jinner’s and Mary Holden’s almanacs, attending to their content and any indications as to their intended audience. Jinner’s *Almanack or Prognostication for the year of our Lord 1658* is the first and one of the few surviving almanacs published by a woman in the seventeenth century. Though Ann Hughes claims that women’s “intervention” transformed, to some extent, the almanac genre that was “overwhelmingly misogynist,” I argue instead that women’s almanacs stimulated further textual quarrels. In other words, discursive misogyny was not instantly erased by such textual interventions, as I show in the final section of this chapter. I attend there to pseudonymous almanacs by Sarah Ginnor (1659) and Dorothy Patridge (1694), the texts being a clear mockery of the almanacs produced by women, and in particular of women’s medical writing. In essence, the *Ladies’ Diary*’s precursors can be interpreted as participants in the battle of texts that sold almanacs, a battle in which the rhetoric of traditional almanacs was countered by both feminized and burlesqued zones of discursivity.

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A Blessing or a Wasp?: The Debate on Women in Almanacs

Depictions of women in either a paternalistic or a derogatory fashion are marked in seventeenth-century male-inscribed almanac rhetoric. Almanac compilers frequently drew on the popular *querelle des femmes* and its misogynistic undertones. The querelle genre, which dates back to the time of Christine de Pizan (1364-1430), was revived during the seventeenth century, revolving in particular around such themes as women's education and their inferiority. Overall, almanacs, as we will see, capitalized on the primary techniques characteristic of the querelle: the use of a literary character to depict human faults or virtues and of jest as a means of attack. Literary representations of women were often little more than a coterie's form of misogynistic humor or else served as a rhetorical tool enhancing the mockery of the almanac genre; the framing of almanacs according to “repressive prescriptions” should not be comprehended as depictions of “actual behavior.” Regardless of the predominance of misogynistic depictions of women in almanacs, this genre enabled women to establish a transformative textual presence, as we will see in the case of Sarah Jinner and Mary Holden. But before these female editors are discussed, this section focuses on the female literary types that the almanac popularized throughout England.

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In the seventeenth century, female almanac readers were not targeted as a distinct audience nor did almanacs by women appear regularly in the print marketplace. Though Patricia Crawford estimates that the number of women’s publications grew and their variety expanded during the century due to such factors as political turbulence and thus the expansion of women’s involvement in public debate, she also admits that female authors were not “numerous enough to constitute an alternative literary society.” Yet women’s issues in general are featured prominently in literature from the beginning of the century. *Hic Mulier*, an anonymous work published in 1620, is one example of a pamphlet that capitalizes on the popularity of the querelle. It attacks women who fashion themselves in masculine-looking attires as “monsters of unnaturalness,” gesturing in its first paragraph to a common literary ideal of women as good and modest, “armed with the infinite power of Vertue,” full of “honours that never perish,” women “ever young, because ever vertuous, ever chast, ever glorious.” In this pamphlet, women, in the words of Lynette McGrath, are given “an idealized iconic status” that requires selflessness, silence and chastity. In response, one week after *Hic Mulier* appeared, another pamphlet, *Hæc Vir*, was published as a satire of male foppishness. The two texts are examples of the phenomenally popular pamphlet quarrel on the subject of gender roles.

Almanacs exploited the topic of gender with no less vehemence throughout the century, elaborating on positive and negative stereotypes of women for early modern

7 Woodbridge, “*Hic Mulier* and *Hæc Vir*,” 145.
9 Lynette McGrath, “Elizabeth Cary: The Nomadic Subject; Space and Mobility in the *Life and Mariam*: Refusing the Ex-Centric; Postings the False Ideal,” in *Subjectivity and Women’s Poetry in Early Modern England: Why on the ridge should she desire to go?”* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 189.
10 For a discussion of early modern pamphlet wars see Woodbridge, “*Hic Mulier* and *Hæc Vir*,” 139-51; and Henderson and McManus, “The Debate about Women,” 3-46.
audiences ravenous for such themes. Negative portrayals of women, often spiced with humor, served as elements in a rhetorical game. Positive ones, on the other hand, fitted into the overall character of the almanac as a genre, the aim of which was to regulate the everyday life of a commoner with prescriptive advice on such aspects as seasonal work, housewifery and husbandry.

Almanac publications used positive representations of the good and efficient wife as part of a calendrical commentary on domestic management. Samuel Thurston advocates that good housewives should in December “betake themselves to the wheel and needle; . . . provide cloathing for their families.” In John Bucknall’s almanac, if it rains moderately in June, “the good wife will have store of Butter, Cheese, and Milk, (if she have many Cows) whereby she may (if she be not idle) provide well for her Family.” Similarly, Nathanael Culpepper advises that in April “all good Houswives look to their Dairies.”

Concomitantly, seventeenth-century almanacs prescriptively divide labor between wives and husbands according to specific seasons. They capitalize on the image of the Good Wife who serves as her husband’s fellow laborer. Ferdinando Beridge writes that in June “weeding of corn and sheering sheep are seasonable busines for the good husband and huswife.” He further reminds that in September while a husband sows “Rie and Wheat,” his wife prepares “Verjuice, and pluck[s] Hemp.” Thomas Trigge points to a similar allocation of duties, prefiguring Culpepper’s advice when he states that in April, while husbands “sow Hemp, Flax, Barley, Pole . . . hops, and give Bees liberty to labour, . . . Good Huswives . . . look to their Dairies.”

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11 Samuel Thurston *Angelus Anglicanus* . . . (1652), E5r; John Bucknall, *Ro’ch [tevarin]; or, The Shepherds Almanack* . . . (1676), B3r; Nathanael Culpepper, *Culpepper Revised* . . . (Cambridge, 1681), C4r. Unless otherwise noted, all citations from almanacs referenced in this chapter were published in London.

12 Ferdinando Beridge, *Oi Dodekomzooi* . . . (1654), A5v, A7r; Thomas Trigge, *Calendarium Astrologism* . . . (1661), A4r.
century in which “the division of labor and responsibility between husband and wife [was] taken for granted,” in almanacs the Good Wife is presented as a husband’s co-worker; their mutual cooperation keeps the family well provided for. The character of the Good Wife thus does not depict her as “feeble, incapable, or servile.” Instead, she is her “husband’s partner” and his “able companion who maintains harmony by maintaining order.” Margaret Ezell notes that the image of the Good Wife was popular during the seventeenth century and was usually associated with country life. She was thus a frequent character in almanacs that aimed at a rural population. The set of woodcuts inserted below, featured in Walter Gray’s *Almanack with a Prognostication* for 1604, represents a sequence of vignettes where the wife is her husband’s industrious workmate, whether by slaughtering animals, sheep-shearing, harvesting or treading grapes. They are mutually dependent on each other’s efficient labor, sharing the same spaces in work.

Figure 1.1: A selection of woodcuts from Walter Gray’s *Almanack with a Prognostication* (1604, B6v, B7v, B8v, Cv).

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The Good Wife acts not only as her husband’s fellow laborer, but is also a devoted wife and mother. Almanacs thus often included depictions of the joys of marriage and advice on maternity. When Thomas Fowle prophesizes a merry and successful year, he bases this prophecy on the delight women will take “in the society of their Husbands,” and how they will “easily conceive and bear Children, so that the year in general should be accompanied with much felicity.” Women are also inscribed as mothers in need of advice. John Gadbury, for instance, urges women to “covet the assistance of discreet and careful Midwives, lest for want thereof, they suffer in their bringing forth children.”15 Such advice directed at women underlines that they were a significant part of the implied demographic readership of almanacs. Yet, overall, they were more often commented upon than directly addressed.

Though this iconic ideal of the Good Wife is figured as a desirable model, it often recedes in favor of sensationalized female stereotypes. In weather forecasts and prognostications in almanacs, certain stereotypical character flaws are equated with women. “Women be Wasps, if angered,” states John Booker in his almanac for 1653 in which he prognosticates good and evil days through an acidic commentary on women. He also warns that “Winters weather and Wom[e]ns thoughts oft change.”16 Such negative female characters can be grouped into three major categories: the seductress, the scold and the vain woman. These prominent female stereotypes17 were immensely popular to advise against or prognosticate about in almanacs. A woman’s nature is perceived in Trigge’s almanac to be prone to sexual scandals, often ending with “Abortions and miscarriages.” A scold was a type of especial prominence. John Tanner announces that women have “Two quiet seasons, in their beds and grave.” Trigge advises care in order to “prevent heats and scolds.” In a

15 Thomas Fowle, Speculum Uranicum . . . (1696), C2v; John Gadbury, Ephemeris . . . (1672), D3r.
16 John Booker, Calestial! Obseroations . . . (1653), B3r, v.
similar fashion, Thomas Fowle in “Astrological Observations” prognosticates that women “will be apt to Brawl and scold with their Husbands this year, and also to domineer over them,” adding that there is no cure for this situation as even Socrates, “a Wise Phylosopher (I’ll assure you) . . . he could not tame such a Woman: with all his Philosophy: and there be many men now adays (yee too too many) that partake of Socrates his fortunes.” The remedy for such an impertinent scold is the severest punishment. Bucknall recommends “a Receit that’s good and strong! / With a sharp knife cut out her Tongue.”

As well as scolding, vanity is a trait of women that seventeenth-century almanacs highlight. For instance, women are depicted as taking pride in their appearance and selecting artificial means to beautify themselves. Gray points out that the women who “paynt” their faces should feel shame. Trigge, similarly, observes that ladies “hide (for shame!) their Painted Faces” when nature blooms in Spring and “Flora presents variety of Graces.” This image was an element of the contesting discourses on women’s face painting in vogue during this era, in which, as Frances Dolan discusses, women’s agency was constructed negatively whether in a defense of or in an attack on cosmetics. Another vain behavior associated with women is excessive drinking, as this habit connects to their self-indulgence and the resulting squandering of money. Bucknall warns against drinking wives, as when they “Ale-house use,” they bring poverty to their husbands who are left in no more than “Rags.”

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18 Trigge, Calendarium Astrologicum (1665), A4v; John Tanner, Anglus Britannicus . . . (1659), Bv; Trigge, Calendarium Astrologicum (1661), A5v; Fowle, Speculum Uramticum (1685), Br; Bucknall, Ro’eh [devarim] (1676), B7r. For other examples of almanacs that advise how to control a Bad Wife see Bernard Capp, “Society,” in English Almanacs, 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 124-25. Capp points out that satirical almanacs in particular advocated such methods as beating, semi-official sales, skimmingtons, or hanging, as proper punishment for a shrew. For evidence of such methods within ballad literature see Elizabeth A. Foyster, “Restoring Manhood: Taming the Scold,” in Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage (London: Longman, 1999), 193-95, 206.

19 Walter Gray, An Almanack with a Prognostication . . . (1604), A5v; Trigge, Calendarium Astrologicum . . . (1692), A4r.


21 Bucknall, Ro’eh [devarim] (1676), B3r.
Such content, especially when related to discussions of marriage, emerged to some extent from the querelle, which in the seventeenth century, as Christopher Lasch claims, “adhered to the old terms of [gender] debate.”22 The almanac, being a populist genre of a prescriptive character, was a text into which these kinds of admonitions fit well.

Burlesque almanacs, of which Poor Robin, launched in 1662 by the pamphleteer and polemicist William Winstanley, is a prominent example, adopted such proverbial misogyny and took it to parodic extremes. Poor Robin warrants particular attention here, since it sold well throughout the seventeenth century, sparing few types of women whether young or old. As Cyprian Blagden shows in his comparative table of thirty-nine almanacs, in the years between 1664 and 1669 and between 1685 and 1687, the print runs for first impressions of Poor Robin varied between 18,000 and 25,000.23 The almanac was published until 1828 and drew a wide readership. Maureen Perkins observes on the basis of textual evidence that Poor Robin seems to have targeted “the poorest level of the reading public,” readers such as “those in variable paid employment.”24 Yet the fact that the almanac was often bound together with a set of other almanacs implies a wealthier sort of reader as well.

As Don Allen states, by 1605 the burlesque almanac and prognostication had become an “established literary form with the professional writers.”25 Burlesque, which can be defined as “a travesty of a literary form,”26 was appropriated by almanac compilers to

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mock the conventions of the almanac genre, and particularly its emphasis on astrology. Poor Robin often concluded a collection of bound almanacs “like a satyr play following a tragic triology in Athens, mocking and inverting the conventions of the more serious genre.”

During the seventeenth century, anti-female satires in various commonplace literary forms such as epigrams and anagrams participated in a dialogue on women that was often nothing more than a collection of sardonic witticisms. Jesting was indeed an important technique for drawing the reader into the world of Poor Robin and for boosting its sales. Its popularity certainly resided in its burlesque character; Poor Robin “was above all to make its readers laugh.”

The almanac turned from the prescriptive topos of the Good Wife towards the conventions of jesting as another way of capitalizing on the same audiences that bought almanacs as personal guides. Poor Robin combined exaggerated representations of various follies with a strong criticism of the “economic and ethical shortcomings of the times” as well as of “the astrologer and his practices.”

Poor Robin, the almanac’s eidolon, satirizes female types in every issue between 1664 and 1700, and often maintains a conservative attitude to society in which women are marked and objectified to the end of telling a good joke. For example, Poor Robin asserts that a wife is rarely a “blessing”:

Who lights on a good Wife he has a blessing
Far better than all words of my expressing,
But let me tell ye friends (tis truth I say)
Such blessings do not happen every day.

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29 Perkins, “Comic Almanacs,” 123.
At another time, Poor Robin warns against the marriage trap when he tells a story of a
neighbor who is asked by a woman, “what News there?” to which he replies that “there was
Act out that every Man should have Two Wives.” The woman then responds that she will
“never believe that, for there is not one married Man in Ten, but he finds enough, if not too
much of one Wife.” Even at the turn of the eighteenth century, Poor Robin’s precautions
against a binding marriage are no less biting; he addresses the reader with an unsettling
question:

What man in’s Wits won’t rather chuse
The hempen, than the Marriage Noose?
Or in so plain a Case would faulter,
And take the Ring to leave the Halter.\footnote{Poor Robin [pseud.], \textit{Poor Robin} . . . (1679), Cr; ibid., (1696), A4r; ibid., (1700), A4r.}

\textit{Poor Robin} also plays with the conventions of the genre, such as astronomy or
almanac making, infusing his observations with gendered amusement. Poor Robin
prognosticates an influence of a “feminine Eclipse” on the tongues of women “insomuch
that some Women shall have more and stranger tongues than ever Babel had to tell its ruins;
viz, a lying tongue, a lisping tongue, a long tongue, a lawless tongue, a loud tongue, and a
liquorish tongue, but never a true one.”\footnote{Ibid., (1683), C2v.} As Frank Palmeri discusses, one of the most
prominent techniques of \textit{Poor Robin} is the juxtaposition of mock and serious elements of the
almanac genre.\footnote{Palmeri, “History, Nation, and Satiric Almanac,” 383.} The parodic chronology of events frequently lists some nonsensical events
related to women to question the non-parodic chronology of historic events and to debate
its political message.\footnote{For a discussion of these two elements in relation to political perspectives see Palmeri, “History, Nation,
and Satiric Almanac,” 383-90.} The burlesque chronology frequently incorporates gendered jokes. In
1693 Poor Robin chooses cuckolds to include in his parodic chronology; namely that it has been 987 years since women “found the Invention of domineering over their Husbands” and “quickly after” began the “Art of Cuckolding them.” In 1695 he further announces that it has been “00000000” years since women “left off Scolding.” In 1692 the chronology also derisively refers to women who attempt to make almanacs: 56 years have passed since “Women began to learn to make Almanacks, as if there were no Women-Lyers before.” Such a statement rhetorically fuses a female stereotype with a common jest in relation to the dishonesty of almanac makers.

Similar to serious almanacs, though with greater hyperbole, Poor Robin diagnoses the seductress, the scold and the vain woman as the three major categories of women. Cuckolding women, as already illustrated, are a distinct theme of the almanac. Poor Robin, on other occasions, blames handsome wives for making a cuckold out of a man and furnishing him with “Ware to go to Horn-Fair.” Wives who make their husbands “deal in Hornware” are castigated as their offence is worse than that of “Whores.” As Pamela Brown underlines, horn jokes in early modern England were perceived as “a source of dependable delight, fuel for a bullying laughter.” Brown further observes that horning during certain entertainments like plays “offered a focus for nonspecific, collective festivity and cathartic hilarity.” Such jests, she underlines, “do not simply reproduce gender ideology: they also provide contestatory narratives that invite women’s participation.” Poor Robin was a keen promulgator of jests on various types of women, reinforcing the currency of female literary tropes in the literary marketplace.

35 Poor Robin [pseud.], Poor Robin (1693), A4r; ibid., (1695), A4r; ibid., (1692), A3v.
36 Ibid., (1687), C4v, B3r.
Poor Robin also raises the issue of women as readers as part of his mock prognostications. If a young woman chooses to read, her choice is never right, but rather reflects her character as one prone to vanity, since maids specialize in the superficial enjoyment of “many Love-Epistles and whining Sonnets.” His prognostication warns that such activities are to be feared, since their result will be the scarcity and raised prices of paper. Other mock almanacs also undertook this theme. The Owles Almanacke for 1618 prophesizes a bad day on the twenty-first of each month when a wife “can read [her] Husbands name in his little boyes horne-booke,” alluding to her predilection for infidelity. These mock almanacs often presented women’s lives as superficial; in Poor Robin, “Country Wenches” wish for nothing less than “handsome, rich, lusty Husbands, fine Cloaths, good Victuals, strong Drink, long Sleeps, and no Work.” Such commentary could be comprehended as the “vituperation of women” practiced through the aegis of such publications, a “manly sport” producing “the war of the sexes.” However, as the comments on reading suggest, this satire was not confined to gender only; it was rather evocative, in a broader sense, of the war of texts. Using the rhetoric of parody, the editor of Poor Robin is not merely reiterating stereotypical tropes, but rather uniquely combining them with a critique of the almanac genre. Yet Poor Robin not only disparages the astrological prognostications of non-parodic fellow texts, but also women’s preoccupations with other genres while also drawing on the techniques of the querelle in the interests of furthering his own publication.

Bernard Capp explains that such ridicule has roots in the “old tradition of crude misogynist humour found in ballads, jest-books and other chap-books.” He also observes

38 Poor Robin [pseud.], Poor Robin (193), Cór; [Thomas Dekker], The Owles Almanacke . . . (1618), 61; Poor Robin [pseud.], Poor Robin (1696), Cr.
that the "extreme language" in almanacs served the purpose of enlivening "stale jibes."\(^{40}\) By the end of the sixteenth century, the querelle had become little more than "formulaic diatribes," an over-used and argumentatively-predictable genre, yet still popular due to its engaging subjects, such as sexuality and adultery.\(^{41}\) Although critics have observed that "the comic is first and foremost conservative . . . tell[ing] stories about cuckolds in order to safeguard the institution of marriage"\(^{42}\) and "protect[ing the] advantageous position" of men,\(^{43}\) whether such misogyny marked the presence of actual oppression, is questionable.

Phyllis Rackin finds such claims "incomplete"; there exists no "totalizing master narrative" which can "account for the varied experience, tastes, interests, and allegiances" of all women.\(^{44}\) Linda Woodbridge similarly concludes that frequently there exists not "a scrap of external evidence to suggest any connection" between a literary production and life.\(^{45}\)

Participating in the querelle about women, almanac editors turned such discourses into witticisms for their own ends, often combining them with commentary on the generic characteristics of the almanac itself or else with its parody. In fact, the high sales of *Poor Robin* indicate that the almanac reacted to a demand for such forms of satire, responding to the vast body of controversial literature about women in print. Women who read such frequently misogynist jests likely "would have felt a strong sense of distance from the ridiculed subject, not proximity," becoming thereby "implicated in a culture of misogyny."\(^{46}\)

\(^{40}\) Capp, "Society," in *English Almanacs*, 123.
\(^{41}\) Lasch, "The Comedy of Love," 8.
\(^{44}\) Rackin, "Misogyny is Everywhere," 42, 53.
\(^{45}\) Woodbridge, "The Genre," 17.
Yet, whether lauding with exemplars or deriding with jeers, seventeenth-century almanacs fixed women into types, against which female editors could shape their own rhetoric and in the process mark their agency through contesting discourses. Though the almanac remained throughout the seventeenth century a genre commonly compiled by men, rarely addressing women as active participants in the formation of the reading public or almanac compilation, women almanac compilers, as we will see further in this chapter, had begun to contest the male-inscribed discourse of the genre. They found unique ways in which to situate their own authorial voice in public, targeting the female almanac reader in an explicit manner through their advisory content. One such female almanac maker, Sarah Jinner, the earliest identified female almanac editor in print, is important for the way she capitalized on the conventions of the genre for her own marketing ends and challenged its rhetoric with a feminized approach. Later, editors such as John Tipper, the inauguratur of The Ladies' Diary in 1704, further explored the potential of the genre through an attention to female issues and women's agency, establishing a wide female audience for their almanacs and enabling a network of female contributors within the Diary's circle of readers. Thus, the Diary, as we will see, is an exceptional almanac in its address to the female reader-contributor, expanding the functions that the almanac offered women.

Who Were the “Understanding Readers”? Gender Constructs in Seventeenth-Century Almanac Prefatory Addresses

Women were not only represented as idealized or problematic types in many seventeenth-century almanacs, but their actual reader agency was not explicitly considered, as I have discovered in a study of prefatory addresses to the reader in selected almanacs. The prefatory address to the reader was at that time an infrequent and irregular characteristic of
almanacs. Certainly, evidence of the text in general is no assertion of who its actual readers were. Yet it indicates editorial aspirations to some extent and allows us to trace the visible presence of the female reader in the popular almanac form. Overall, prefaces included salutations to the reader as textual headings as well as part of the prefaces themselves. These addresses were often broadly-framed, constructed to draw the almanac makers and their readers together as members of a friendly textual coterie. They featured greetings couched in polite discourse that beckoned readers to be text-based friends and companions. Walter Gray’s almanac in 1604, for example, salutes “the Courteous Reader” and in the prefatory letter refers to his audience as “kinde friend.” Arthur Hopton, in 1610, constructs a lengthier address “To the kinde and friendly Readers, favourers of Urania,” or in other words, of astrology and astronomy. John Tanner in 1657 salutes “the Courteous Reader” and Thomas Fowle in 1694 refers to his readership as “Friendly.” Such addresses to the reader were aimed at a wide readership not divided by gender or social class.47

In addition to such broadly-framed salutations, almanac compilers also appealed to a male audience. John Bucknall’s almanac, being in purpose a guide for shepherds, addresses in 1675 “the Shephards of England,” constructing his audience collegially by referring to them, in the subsequent letter, as “fellow Labourers.” In 1676 the address expands as the compiler salutes “the Shepherds” as well as “Plow-men of England,” specifying particular laborers while concomitantly generalizing his primary salutation as he dubs his readers “My beloved Country-men.” Hopton, in his almanac for 1612, also ends up masculinizing his target readership by referring to them as “Gentlemen.” Emphasizing his elite male readership, Tanner omits his frontispiece image in 1661, as the “Good fellows” who peruse his almanac will need no “signe” to realize that the almanac they have purchased is indeed

47 Gray, An Almanack with a Prognostication (1604), B3r; Arthur Hopton, Hopton . . . (1610), B2r; Tanner, Angelus Britannicus (1657), A2r; Fowle, Speculum Uranicum (1694), Av.
the genuine article. He compares the quality of his almanac to a “faire house” in which men may drink “good wine,” this depiction serving as a rhetorical figure for a textually constructed male coterie that invokes camaraderie and revelry. As Adam Smyth remarks, wine was perceived as a “courtly drink” and thus associates the intended reader with an image of the urban courtier. In these ways, almanacs frequently specified their intended male readership as either rural or urban. Through the popular figure of the gentleman the texts aspired to “a sense of exclusivity” and “privilege,” which served as a rejoinder to the base, popularizing medium of print.

If women are mentioned in almanac prefatory addresses, they frequently function as textual tropes. Maureen Bell elaborates that “woman,” when invoked in addresses, may be equally “constructed as evidence of intended readers (or at least intended owners or recipients)” and “might be read as part of a rhetorical strategy in which ‘woman’ became a marketing device.” As I have already shown, in seventeenth-century almanacs women function less as an explicit target group of readers or even consumers of the genre and more as signs, rhetorical strategies and marketing tropes. In Fowle’s 1697 preface, the category of woman serves as a textual comparison in the mode of proverbial misogyny: “I know men in these days are as curious in the choice of Books (amongst which I may include Almanacks) as that of Women.” This comparison plays directly into the tendency to “figure texts as female bodies” present in various writings from the Renaissance on.

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52 Fowle, *Speculum Uranicum* (1697), Bv.

patriarchal ideals. Also, Fowle makes references to the symbolic figure of the
aforementioned Urania, the Muse of astrologers and astronomers. As the almanac is often
briefly browsed, the genre is merely “Saluted at the threshold” by male readers who “never
attain the least glimpse of her Arcana’s, or inner rooms to admire her.” The Muse, standing
for the almanac, does not receive adequate appreciation and in the words of the compiler:
“very few are skilful in her Mysteries.”54 Clearly, instead of being envisioned as flesh and
blood audience members, women serve a symbolic function, either representing men’s
textual preferences or the genre itself.

Poor Robin, in contrast to serious almanacs, attacks and parodies a superficial
politeness, ridiculing, with its 1676 issue, the “musty, mouldy, worm-eaten Epithets, of kind,
courteous, debonayre Readers.”55 In contrast to other traditional almanacs, Poor Robin
emphasizes different strata of society as its audience demographic, highlighting the presence
of women as almanac consumers. In 1673 the salutation is directed: “To any Reader, Man or
Woman, / My Lines they are to all in common.” Poor Robin’s prefatory letter further levels
all kinds of women regardless of their age and moral inclination: “sage Matron or modest
Virgin, chaste Wife or great bellied Maid.” In 1682 the reader is characterized as being of any
“age, profession, sex, degree or calling whatsoever,” while in 1681 and 1698 Poor Robin
salutes “any reader, he or she, / It makes no matter who they be.” In 1685 the introductory
letter includes two options, “Whore or Honest woman” in the audience group and in 1700
Poor Robin again salutes “any Reader, poor or rich, / Male or Female, I care not which.”56

54 Fowle, Speculum Uranicum (1697), Bv.
55 Poor Robin [pseud.], Poor Robin (1676), Av.
56 Ibid., (1673), Av; ibid., (1682), Av; ibid., (1681), Av; ibid., (1698), Av; ibid., (1685), Av; ibid., (1700), Av.
In this way, Poor Robin levels his readers and thereby implicitly questions “given social and literary hierarchies.”

Poor Robin’s addresses include women as potential consumers, even though their aim, as I have mentioned, is the leveling of various social groups, not their equality per se. The representation of women as consumers is obviously a marketing device that capitalizes on the image of a female reader; Poor Robin himself emphasizes humorously that the almanac’s primary aim is to “get Mony” (1682). The issue for 1673, in which Poor Robin addresses both men and women, admits that “there is no more difference betwixt an honest mans six pence and a knaves tester, than there is betwixt Barm and Yeast, a Broom or a Beesome, or two shillings six pence, and a half crown pcece.” The various members that he enumerates within his audience are thus of material value, since, as he states in 1685, they “put their Moneys together, and one will pass as well as the other.” In 1698 Poor Robin again addresses his almanac to any reader, emphasizing once more, “For if they do but buy the Book, and pay for it, wh[at] matter who they be that buy it.” For Poor Robin the discourse he peddles is a commodified one; he emphasizes the social leveling that the marketplace creates. In the end, many almanac makers aimed to target a wide cross-section of society, women constituting a group of almanac consumers independent of how the texts constructed their readership.

Regardless, though the almanac acknowledges women, and particularly their monetary “assistance,” Poor Robin often specifies his audience as exclusively male, thereby establishing his own hierarchies even as he discursively rejects them. He also uses polite discourse in this form of address that he otherwise disclaims. In 1669, 1686, 1687, and 1689, the almanac is addressed to “the Understanding Readers. Gentlemen” as it is in 1672 and

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58 Poor Robin [pseud.], Poor Robin (1682), Av; ibid., (1673), Av; ibid., (1685), Av; ibid., (1698), Av.
1675: “To the courteous (not currish) Readers. Gentlemen.” In conjunction with the leveling salutations included in Poor Robin, presenting gentlemen as his target audience enables Poor Robin to engage in multiple discourses. When a gentleman is addressed, this type of reader is foregrounded as actively engaged either in an interpretation of the almanac or in a comprehension of the exigencies of the marketplace. In 1672 Poor Robin asks his male readers to “read the Book through, and if it cause not one smile from you, I shall say you are of a very Satu[r]nine complexion indeed.” In 1686 “Gentlemen” are informed that in this year they will “find many things worthy of [their] serious observation.” Further, in 1687, “the Understanding Readers. Gentlemen” are asked to question whether it is the quality of the writing that best sells the almanac or simply whether it sells well, because it evokes “Mirth” and dispels “Melancholy.” Poor Robin thus overtly courts his male readers, aspiring for their approval and interpretative engagement with his text. In these instances the almanac indicates that literary and social hierarchies did exist: women in these almanacs are not part of the leisured group that functionally interprets texts.

Though women were “a constant presence” in the culture of print at that time, with the activities of printing, binding and book selling being “domestic activities,” and the genre of the almanac serving a utilitarian function for a mass audience, women are not overtly specified as readers in the traditional seventeenth-century almanacs, apart from their burlesque counterparts. Groups of intended male readers underline the “maleness” of the genre, even in the burlesque Poor Robin. Though Poor Robin’s prefatory addresses incorporate a discourse of inclusivity, this discourse only aims to reach various types of buyers. When women are referred to in Poor Robin, their agency is mainly figured as the agency of the

59 Ibid., (1669), Av; ibid., (1686), Av; ibid., (1687), Av; ibid., (1689), Av; ibid., (1672), Av; ibid., (1675), Av.

60 Bell, “Women Writing and Women Written,” 440.
consumer. Certainly, this is not a mode in the service of a literary coterie of readers, as we will see in the case of the *Ladies' Diary*.

**"But, why not women write, I pray?": Sarah Jinner's and Mary Holden's Almanacs**

As I have shown, seventeenth-century almanacs often prescribed conventional roles for women as domestic rather than public entities. Yet early modern women found the means, in Wendy Wall’s words, to “confront the social and sexual stigma of print.” Though for both sexes publication, which was “rhetorically scripted as a lower-class activity,” was a risky undertaking, a woman’s decision to enter the business of print could be perceived as

Figure 1.2: Title pages to almanacs by Sarah Jinner and Mary Holden.
“a sign of her refusal to respect sanctioned cultural boundaries”; the female writer could be seen as “a ‘fallen’ woman in a double sense: branded as a harlot or a member of the nonelite.”61 Also, textual references to a woman reading were often equated with “disease, madness, deception, rebellion and transgression of the boundaries of acceptable femininity.”62 Women regularly had to contend with negative and sexualized connotations to legitimize their texts in public. Overall, seventeenth-century almanacs contributed to the textual inscription of women as types rather than as audiences or authors, as we have seen.

The replication of types that represented women as chaste or disruptive within the domestic sphere often led to women’s defense of their appearance in print. As Rebecca Gibson observes, until the latter decades of the eighteenth century, when writings by women significantly increased and were pursued with marked confidence, female-authored poems were frequently preceded by “an apology for any defects in the work,” drawing on public expectations of female modesty.63 Women in the early modern period, as Margaret Ferguson argues, operated under “considerable social pressure to disguise” their ability to write, and often chose to translate, or to write anonymously or under a pseudonym. They could be perceived as mere “receptacles” for male words rather than as “authoritative wielders of the pen.”64 Yet the category of woman was an attractive one to capitalize upon, as I have shown. Thus “the announcement of female authorship could be considered an inducement to

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64 Margaret W. Ferguson, “Renaissance Concepts of the ‘Woman Writer,’” in Women and Literature in Britain, 149, 153.
buy.'

This section will look at the strategies that women almanac makers developed to situate their own writing within the literary public sphere and sell their ventures.

When we take into consideration the predominantly masculine-authored almanac genre, along with the anxiety centered on the woman author in early modern England, as well as the “medical hierarchy policed . . . by the London College of Physicians,” it is unsurprising that one can only locate the rare female astrologer or midwife almanac maker. As Alan Weber remarks, Sarah Jinner’s and Mary Holden’s almanacs, which were published during the time span of, respectively, 1658-1664 and 1688-1689, appeared at periods when “the influence and prosecutorial power of the College dropped to their lowest points, when the regulation of printing grew lax, and when radicals such as Nicholas Culpeper were attacking established medical institutions.” Elaine Hobby observes that in the period between 1649 and 1688, women who wrote for publication constituted less than one per cent of the total publication output, though the numbers of women writers were considerably higher if one considers unpublished manuscripts in circulation. Patricia Crawford’s table listing women’s published writings throughout the century estimates a total of 620 first editions, which includes a category of “Advice: Practical” comprised of “almanacs, cookery books, mixtures of medical cures and recipes, and medical works,” and counts twenty-one such first editions published between 1641 and 1700. Since Crawford includes only the various types of practical advice women offered at that time and does not enumerate the titles, it is not possible to count how many almanacs she managed to identify.

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67 Ibid.


69 Crawford, “Women’s Published Writings,” 268-69, Table 7.3.
Overall, however, women's participation in the book industry increased during the seventeenth century. As Crawford states, "it was no longer a wonder that a woman should write for publication" by 1700, political events such as the Civil Wars and Interregnum being of particular influence. Although Margaret Ezell admits that women constituted a small percentage of published authors during the seventeenth century, she underlines that their "output was not negligible." I have established that the number of surviving almanacs by women counts for six such publications. Yet, even though almanacs by women represent only a modest number, not all of them might have survived, and their presence in the print marketplace did have an effect on the era's print culture, judging by their mock counterparts discussed in the next section of this chapter.

It is important to emphasize that the concept of "women's intervention" into the "misogynist literary genre" of the almanac is partially misleading due to the fact that for women almanac compilers gender was not a binding category; their publications were no more gender-focused than politically-concerned or centered on genre. As this dissertation will also argue, there did not exist one sex-specific almanac for women in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Yet, because early modern almanacs by women drew attention to women as a significant component of the audience for almanacs and used the almanac form as a utilitarian tool to meet women's needs, female almanac compilers remain important in the history of gendered literature. They also re-contextualized traditional modes of almanac discourse to some extent and enlarged the field of textual possibilities for women to engage with and benefit from.

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70 Ibid., 231, 213.
71 Ezell, "Conclusion: Theoretical and Practical Patriarchalism," in The Patriarch's Wife, 162.
72 Hughes, "Jinner (or Ginner), Sarah," 245.
In any study of early English almanacs, Sarah Jinner of London and Mary Holden of Sudbury are significant editors in the fields of medicine, politics, and astrology. They professed medical services at a time when the London College of Physicians did not deny women the right to practice health care, but rather “silently” encouraged it “as long as they maintained their place within a medical hierarchy regulated by the College Fellows.” Both wrote almanacs in periods of political unrest: Jinner during the Civil War and Restoration and Holden at the time of the Glorious Revolution. Their almanacs were risky undertakings and they had to take measures to avoid specific political prophesy. Also, it was an era when women who were active as astrologers were perceived as witches, fortune tellers or prophetesses. Thus, in their almanacs they positioned their medical advice in relation to “the status of astrology as a rational science.” These almanacs also featured weather prognostications, astronomical information, the calendar, tables of common interest, husbandry and housewifery tips, and advertisements.

The almanacs by Jinner and Holden, together with their mock counterparts, have been reproduced for scholarly use, they have been examined by scholars, and entries on these editors have been included in biographical dictionaries that focus on English women writers. *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Fascimile Library of Essential Works* (2002) has reprinted the almanacs of Jinner, Holden, Patridge, and Ginnor. In his introduction to these texts, Alan Weber situates Jinner’s and Holden’s publications in a historical context, as they appeared at a time, after the 1640s, when women’s literacy was growing and female publications, including medical writings, were increasing in numbers. Weber observes that Jinner positions her writings within a “learned and written tradition of medicine” as well as a “respectable tradition of natural philosophy (astrology),” differentiating her publication.

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from the prognostications of fortune tellers and witches as well as from religious female prophetesses who “draw on . . . stereotypical female passivity and irrationality, and argue that instead of intellectually interpreting scripture, they were merely serving as conduits of the *vox Dei.*” Holden undertook a similar approach, as Weber remarks. The *Biographical Dictionary of English Women Writers, 1580-1720* (1990), identifies three women almanac writers in separate entries, namely, Sarah Jinner, Mary Holden, and Dorothy “Partridge.” The entries briefly point to the attendant complexities of the texts, such as whether Patridge’s name is a pseudonym or whether the 1659 almanac by Sarah Ginnor was written by Jinner. A *Historical Dictionary of British Women* (2003) includes an entry on “Jinner (or Ginner), Sarah (fl. 1658-64)” by Ann Hughes. Yet Hughes’s confusion of Jinner’s real and Ginnor’s pseudonymous names partially invalidates her entry. Also, though Hughes notes that three female almanac compilers have been identified, neither she nor the dictionary further name the remaining two of them. Questionably, Hughes additionally claims that Jinner “accepted women’s subordinate position.”

It is mostly Jinner’s four almanacs from the period between 1658 and 1664 that form the basis for our knowledge of her life and writings. Significantly, Bernard Capp, in a recent biography on Jinner, relates that a Captain Henry Herbert referred to Jinner in 1673, which suggests, Capp observes, that she was likely alive at that time and shows that her name was “well known.” Here Capp also informatively summarizes her almanacs as texts that ridicule “conventional medical wisdom on sexual differences,” offering medical advice for women and men as well as political commentary that was open to both republican and royalist

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76 Hughes, “Jinner (or Ginner), Sarah (fl. 1658-64),” 245.
readings.77 In his book on almanacs, Capp dubs Jinner a “female radical” due to her social and political commentary.78 Hobby’s discussion of Jinner’s writings then suggests that Jinner “replaces Aphra Behn as, possibly, the first woman to make money by her pen.”79 Jinner’s publications have been also examined by academics taking an interest in the history of medicine, since her almanacs include advice in relation to such health problems as colds, menstruation, infertility, childbirth, hernia, and genital problems. Weber, for instance, notes that Jinner’s almanacs feature information on abortifacient drugs “increasingly omitted from male-authored texts.”80

Jinner’s almanacs must have sold well. John Tipper writes in 1703 that the Company of Stationers “never give any thing for the first year of any New Almanack. But of many they take bond that if they cannot sell the first impression, to take off 1,000 or some such Number to save them harmless.”81 The Company would have earned at least a modicum of profit on the almanac to continue with the publication until 1664. Jinner’s first number was published for 1658, based on her statement in An Almanack and Prognostication for the year of our Lord 1659 that last year was the first of her “appearing into the world in print” and that she undertakes her publication once more being “encouraged . . . to set Pen to Paper, seeing it was so well accepted; and finding that it hath don great good in the world.”82 If, as Capp

78 Capp, “Almanacs and Politics,” in English Almanacs, 87.
79 Hobby, “Skills Books—Housewifery, Medicine, Midwifery,” 182.
82 Sarah Jinner, An Almanack and Prognostication for the year of our Lord 1659 . . . (1659), Br.
notes, Jinner was still alive in 1673, it remains uncertain if her 1664 almanac was the last one that was published.

In the preface to the reader included in the inaugural issue for 1658, Jinner positions herself as a female almanac editor, invoking a compelling tone that plays with rhetoric from the battle of the sexes. She assures the reader that her aim is not to “assume or usurp the breeches,” but to “shine in the splendor of vertue, [which] would animate our Husbands to excell us.” This contestatory rhetoric is seemingly balanced by a disclaimer regarding the fact that her medical advice was to be grounded in sexual discourse. When she informs readers of the medical contents of her almanac, she affects a sexual reticence in stating that “More I could have inserted, but for modesties sake I omit.”

However, when we examine more closely the contents of Jinner’s publications, we notice that this display of modesty capitalizes on rhetorical conventions of the era and is overshadowed by her array of medicinal, astrological, and political knowledge and a strong plea for women’s causes. Thus, though Jinner’s negotiation of her position as an almanac editor in the 1658 preface relies on the rhetorical conventions of her times, the content of her almanacs counters the textual paradigm of a modest woman. In *An Almanack or Prognostication for the year of our Lord 1660* she refers to modesty as a tool that can be applied when needed; for this issue, a modest rhetoric ensures the safety of public expression at a time when political propaganda is dangerous. Her concern here is not that of a modest woman, but that of a political writer who must hide facts beneath the guise of a modest discourse.

*An Almanack or Prognostication for the year of our Lord 1658* straightforwardly opposes the stigma of publication connected to female astrologers along with female writers. Jinner

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83 Ibid., *An Almanack or Prognostication for the year of our Lord 1658...* (1658), Br.
84 Ibid., *An Almanack or Prognostication for the year of our Lord 1660...* (1660), Br.
points out that one “may wonder to see one of our Sex in print especially in the Celestial Sciences.” Her statement implies that while women were publishing more readily in other genres, a female almanac editor remained anomalous. Yet Jinner’s opening address, on an unapologetic note, assures readers of her right to publish. She states that it is only space constraints that restrain her from a fuller defense: “I might urge much in my defence, yea, more then the volume of this Book can contain: in which I am confined, not to exceed ordinary bulk.” While praising a poem by Katherine Philips, prefixed to the 1651 edition of William Cartwright’s *Comedies, Tragi-Comedies, with Other Poems*, Jinner comments on Philips’s authorial success, a success that could be more prominent if not for her modesty topos: “And, I pray you, what a rare Poem hath one Mistris Katherine Philips near Cardigan writ, it is printed before Cartwrightes Poems, who, if her modesty would permit, her wit would put down many mens in a Masculine strain.” Following the preface, she also explicitly affirms the value of her own publication, advising her readers to “keep these annuall pieces, for if, life be permitted, it is intended to be a collection of Rarities, worth thy view and preserving.”

One year later Jinner also rejects the conventional rhetoric of modesty, boasting of her astrological and medical abilities as she states, in regard to the prognostications of the last year, that “none fell out more truer” and as for the “Physical Cures none were better.” Such self-praise, typical of almanac prefaces to the reader, is also present in *An Almanack or Prognostication for the year of our Lord 1660*, in which, using the discourse of reliability, Jinner assures her reader that her prognostications from last year “did perform what could be expected from a Work of that Nature: The great Actions of the Northern Kings; to wit, Sweden and Denmark were hinted sufficiently . . . the unhappy undertakings of the Cheshire and Lancashire

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85 Ibid., *An Almanack or Prognostication* (1658), Br, Bv.
People, and divers other things, not a few, were according to Art predicted, and accordingly came to pass.” In this issue she also displays certainty as to the correctness of her astrological calculations, challenging the famous Italian scholar, astrologer and astronomer, Andreas Argolus, who had described two Eclipses of the sun, neither of which, she admits, can she “discover... by Astronomical Calculation to be seen in any part of this Earthly Globe.” It is the discourse of rational calculation characteristic of the genre that Jinner invokes to legitimize her editorial presence without a reliance on the modesty topos.86

In relation to women’s issues, Jinner’s rhetoric is irate rather than modest; she directly asks in the almanac for 1658: “But, why not women write, I pray?” She further contests the coterie of “witty Coxcombs [who] strive to put us out of conceit of our selves, as if we were but imperfect pieces.” This rhetoric is central to the feminized side of the querelle des femmes genre, which defends the rights of women in society. Arguing for equality with men in terms of “judgement and memory,” and bitterly criticizing them for restricting female “education and schooling,” Jinner takes pride in her female predecessors’ strength in governing, writing, and medicine, ironically leaving only “Horses and Mules,” symbols of men, to “boast of strength of body.” While successful women such as the warring Amazons, the queen of Assyria, Semiramis, the German astronomer and astrologist Maria Cunitz, and Queen Elizabeth are cited to exemplify the tradition of female authorities, Jinner refers to “Princes” as “Dunces.” She also draws on the history of female writers, mentioning both the Countess of Newcastle and the previously mentioned Philips. Such exemplifications were again common in the pro-female querelle, which perpetuated the image of “independent women and of women as makers of culture and civilization.”87

86 Ibid., An Almanack or Prognostication (1659), Br; ibid., (1660), Br, B8v.
87 Ibid., An Almanack or Prognostication (1658), Br; Kelly, “Early Feminist Theory,” 87.
Jinner's almanacs distinctly targeted women's medical needs; women of the lower and middle classes who had limited access to physicians were likely her intended audience. As Weber underlines, "the need for vernacular medical literature written by women and concerned with their specific health needs clearly existed."\(^{88}\) The medicinal cures that Jinner advocates aim to remedy different problems related to women's beauty and health, as well as to maternity. She inserts advice against freckles (1660) and pimples (1660, 1664). She promotes cures that "make Children: teeth come without pain: proved" (1660), "Pills to expel a dead Child" (1658, 1659, 1664), "A most excellent Plaister to strengthen Women with Child, to wear all the time they be with Childe" (1658, 1664), and recommends a solution for the problem of "clotted or congealed Milk in the Breasts" (1658, 1664). She also adds advice for wet-nurses "that want Milk" (1658). Jinner additionally contests male-authored astrological discourses with the previously mentioned information regarding abortifacient drugs, thereby situating herself in the role of learned expert. Her advocacy of medical advice for women emphasizes the utilitarian possibilities of the almanac and draws attention to its intended female audience in need of such advice.\(^{89}\)

Jinner's almanacs however, do not only target women. Her medical advice extends to the male reader. Further, Jinner invokes a political discourse to capitalize on the market for those interested in world affairs. In her almanac for 1658 she prognosticates that "News of great transactions arrive of the affairs of Europe, the Marchant suffereth exceedingly . . . Flanders is much disturbed." She often refers to the threat stemming from the invasion of the Turks; in May 1660 for instance she warns that "France, Germany, and Spain, shall taste of the same Dish: the Turk intendeth to advance further upon Europe." Later that year she

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\(^{89}\) Jinner, *An Almanack or Prognostication* (1658), B6v, B7v, B8v; ibid., (1659), B8v; ibid., (1660), B2v; ibid., *An Almanack For the Year of our Lord God, 1664 . . .* (1664), B4v, B5v, B7v.
laments that “since I first writ, I have had nothing but sad Tidings, Changes, and
Overturnings to prognosticate: I hope this year will determine of those dangers, that we shall
be no more subject to those uncertainties, which are the bringers forth of Misery and Want
to this Nation.” Jinner’s visionary reportage, which shows her awareness of both internal
political issues and international spheres of activity, local occurrences and distant eclipses,
situates her as a public commentator. Yet, as I have remarked, she exercises a dose of
cautions. When in 1659 Richard Cromwell’s Protectorate was overthrown and the unstable
country stood on the eve of the Restoration, she predicts political turmoil for the following
year while stating that “It is not convenient nor safe to particularize either persons or things: therefore we
shall take the liberty to set forth things in the modest and most general terms, that thereby we may avoid
offence and danger, that otherwise will fall inevitably upon us.”90 Jinner thus advocates for women’s
causes while never losing sight of the political arena. Unlike newsbooks, none of which
addressed women as a distinct readership,91 Jinner’s almanacs convey political commentary
to women who ostensibly constitute part of the texts’ intended audience.

Additionally, by presenting divergent material, Jinner also predicts more sensational
events. She prognosticates for 1658 that lascivious women will be “more apt than ordinary in
bestowing the Pox upon their Clients” and she further elaborates on women’s lusty
tendencies, warning against marriage in the spring due to “unseemly wantonness, and
lightness in Women.” She also criticizes female promiscuity, prognosticating for 1659
“terrible Adulteries and Fornications, the loss of abundance of Maiden-heads, and the desire
of old women to young men.” On the other hand, she exposes male lustfulness when in the
almanac for 1659 she advises “such Sea-men that are of any repute and credit, that intend

90 Ibid., An Almanack or Prognostication (1658), Cv; ibid., (1659), C3v; ibid., (1660), C2r, C4v, Br.
91 Joad Raymond, “Newsbooks, their Distribution, and their Readers,” in The Invention of the Newspaper: English
Wedlock, not to look so low as the blew Apron, but have higher thoughts.” She further comments in the 1659 issue that “Knaves that attempt the chastity of those that are not professed Whores, will find it a difficult matter to attain their ends.” Jinner’s rhetoric opposes the topos of the disruptive woman that circulated in almanacs such as Poor Robin with her own judgment regarding the conditions of society. Her facility with multiple discourses, crossing gender and class distinctions, marks her female authorial voice as a powerful one.  

This voice is indeed distinct within Jinner’s publications, despite the fact that some parts of the almanac were likely pre-written or pre-calculated by others. Jinner’s and Holden’s almanacs relied on the practice of drawing on material circulating in other texts. They carry comparable and, at times, verbatim duplicates of monthly astrological observations. These are similarly titled, as, for example, “Observations for the good Husbands and good Housewives” in Jinner’s almanacs for 1658-1660 and “the good Husbandry and good Housewifry” in Holden’s 1688 almanac. It is possible that Holden drew certain material from Jinner’s almanac or that they knew each other due to their medical practice. In an era when female almanac publication was rare, such alliances would have been significant sources of authorial support.

Mary Holden’s publication, The Womans Alamanack For the Year of our Lord, 1688, looks from the outset like a traditional almanac with the exception that its title overtly targets a female readership. The first part of the almanac incorporates such elements as the Zodiac

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92 Jinner, An Almanack or Prognostication (1658), B2v; ibid., (1659), B2v, B3r.
93 Ibid., An Almanack or Prognostication (1658), Cr-C4v; ibid., (1659), C4v, C3v; ibid., (1660), Cr, C4v-v; Mary Holden, The Womans Almanack For the Year of our Lord, 1688 . . . (1688), B3r.
94 In his biography of Jinner, Capp remarks that Captain Herbert linked Jinner with the almanac maker Richard Saunders (1613-1675). Richard Saunders is also mentioned in one of the 1689 advertisements included in Holden’s almanac, but he is a different person who, after the earlier Saunders’s death, took over his almanac series under the same title, Apollo Anglicanus. It seems possible that Jinner and Holden knew of each other through the Saunders’ circle. Capp, “Jinner, Sarah (fl. 1658–1664),” and “Bibliography of English Almanacs to 1700,” in English Almanacs, 378.
Man, a calendar with weather prognostications, and a regal table. The second part begins with a title page and offers observations on the four quarters and each month of the year, eclipse prognostications, a lengthy listing of fairs in England and Wales, and tables of sunrise, annuities, reversions, and interest rates accompanied by explanations as to how to use them. The predominance of information for consultation suggests that the publication addresses the commoner, whom it instructs in husbandry and housewifery, as well as in the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle. For October, for example, the almanac advises to “recreate your spirits by harmless sports,” while for December it warns to “avoid all care that may trouble thy spirits.” The second part of the almanac ends with advertisements; the first one is signed “Mary Holden.” The advertisements, Weber remarks, suggest that Holden practiced as an apothecary. Weber argues that Holden “should be viewed as a fully professionalized practitioner, possibly belonging to a guild and practicing as an apothecary and physician, and probably well-trained in obstetrics through the midwives’ informal system of apprenticeship.” The advertisement signed by Holden promotes her electuaries and her practice within the field of medicine: “I may do all the good I can, I Publish this to the World, that I have Excellent Remedies for all Women troubled with Vapours, Rising of the Mother, Convulsion fits; also the Canker in the Mouth, with so much ease, that the patient will hardly feel it; and all other Diseases incident to my own Sex.” Holden’s advertisement underlines the utilitarian aspect of her almanac, her aim likely to gain a wide female clientele and increase her reputation as a reliable practitioner of medicine.

Holden’s life, even more than Jinner’s, remains locked in obscurity, since the only biographical information available stems from her two almanacs published in 1688 and 1689.

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95 Holden, *The Woman’s Almanack...* (1688), A4v, B4r.
97 Holden, *The Woman’s Almanack* (1688), B4r.
The Woman's Alamanack; or, An Ephemerides For the Year of Our Lord, 1689 identifies Holden as a "Midwife in Sudbury, and Student in Physick and Astrology." Critical references to her publications have been insubstantial. They have emphasized Holden's limited significance as a seller of toothache remedies and a supporter of Tycho Brahe's outdated astronomical theory. Only recently has Weber importantly situated Holden's publications within early modern medical history; outside of London, he notes, "the bulk of medical care was carried out by mixed practitioners like Holden who combined the skills of the apothecary, surgeon, physician, midwife, and herbalist." Weber also argues that both Holden and Jinner did not merely advertise folk or herbal remedies, but attempted to "improve female-administered health care and to challenge the existing medical hierarchy." More importantly for my argument, the two almanacs by Holden adopted standard strategies of the genre to situate her publications within the almanac industry, while still leaving marks of her own editorial agency.

Despite its title, however, Holden's 1688 almanac does not emphasize a gendered audience as its explicit target nor its compiler as a woman as much as Jinner's publications do. Its content, such as the observations for each quarter and month of the year, is presented in very general terms as advice for restoring one's health or as tips for gardening and sowing. Though "Gentlewomen" are mentioned in "May's Observations," "Aged People" are also here addressed. Aiming thus at a broad audience, Holden defends her astrological notions, justifying her publication on the grounds of Biblical evidence: "For as much as some do think that Astrology was invented by the Heathens, I shall endeavour to prove that it was

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from the beginning of the World, devised by the Sons of Seth.” She shows how astrology survived the Biblical flood when the grandsons of Adam constructed two pillars on which they “Graved all that concerned Astrology, or the observances of the Stars.” Thus, she argues, astrology, due to its antiquity, cannot be denigrated. She further underlines that “the Art and study is both laudable and excellent, and founded upon good principles of Scripture,” adding Biblical references to support her claims. As Weber remarks, this sanctioning of astrology with the Bible was aimed to disassociate the publication from witchcraft and magic, women astrologers being particularly likely to be accused of such practices. This type of justification was one strategy used to situate Holden’s almanac as legitimate.

Holden’s almanac for 1689 differs markedly from the 1688 issue. A woman’s name on the title of the 1688 almanac along with a brief description of the almanac contents as “Calculated for the Meridian of London” and of use “for any part of ENGLAND,” might have attracted fewer buyers than a detailed exposition of almanac contents. The 1689 number, in contrast, advertises a broad spectrum of information intended for a wide readership: “Wherein is Contained (besides the State of the Year) the Solar Ingresses, Various Configurations, Aspects, Conjunctions, and Diurnal Motions of the Planets. With the Rising and Setting of the Sun; With other Necessaries that may conduce to the compleating such a Work; Also the time of High-Water at London-Bridge. With the Moons Age: Calculated for the Meridian of London, whose Latitude is 51 Degrees, 32 Minutes, and may serve for any other part of England.” Such descriptive title pages, a common feature at the time, targeted a broad audience and enabled readers to judge the usefulness of the

102 Ibid., A5r.
almanac without further perusal. In this way, adopting a standard almanac practice, Holden situated her publication among other contemporary almanacs as being no less utilitarian.\textsuperscript{104}

*The Womans Alamanack; or, An Ephemerides For the Year of Our Lord, 1689*, like the 1688 issue, also consists of two sections. The almanac proper includes the Zodiac Man, the calendar with weather prognostications, and tables of common knowledge. Yet, the second part, in addition to various tables, carries more emphasis on astronomical knowledge than the 1688 number. A discourse that reflects Holden's position as a physician is also more visibly marked here, in her prognostication of "Cancers in the Breasts, ill digestion in the Stomach, Surfeits, Giddiness of the Head, Apoplexy, yellow Choler, and saltish humours in the Face and Stomach, pains in the Feet, and faintness in the Limbs," and when she advises to "consult with your Physitian before it be too late." Aiming at a broader clientele than with her 1688 advertisement, she not only promotes her cures for mothers in the advertisement section, but also refers to a "rare Electuary, that cureth any Fits whatsoever."\textsuperscript{105}

*The Womans Alamanack* for 1689 implies that Holden as an almanac maker increasingly and deliberately chose its contents. She underlines the individuality of her selections in her statement that "Last year I writ neither of Fairs, Horses nor Mares, but it was [included at] Mr. Printers Pleasure." Thus, while in her 1688 issue the information on fairs covered nine pages, she now provides her readers only one paragraph on fairs inserted among advertisements on the penultimate page. This decrease in Holden's deference to the printer is likely due to her increased confidence as an almanac editor. The statement marks the presence of a female agency within the pages of the almanac. Adding to our sense of Holden's increased control over her representation in the almanac, she makes only a passing

\textsuperscript{104} Holden, *The Womans Alamanack* (1688), Ar, ibid., *The Womans Alamanack; or, An Ephemerides For the Year of Our Lord, 1689* . . . (1689), Ar.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., (1689), A5v, A5r, B3v.
remark on the subject of animals in relation to the eclipses which are to happen in 1689: “some Pestilential sickness among great Beasts, as Horses, Cows, and Oxen.” In this reference to her selection of content, Holden moves beyond her previous number to assert her editorial agency.

Holden's and Jinner's publications show that the target audience for such almanacs was not gender-specific nor was their rhetoric imitative of other, male-authored publications. These women found individual means to mark their own presence within the public sphere and to draw attention to the almanac as an informational tool for a female audience, while at the same time not excluding possible male readers. The almanac provided a functional space for female medical practitioners, allowing them to promote their services, build contesting narratives, and emphasize their own editorial agency.

The “Fraud” of Sarah Ginnor and Dorothy Patridge: A Battle of Mock Prognostications

Two other publications, by Sarah Ginnor (1659) and Dorothy Patridge (1694), are worth noting in this chapter since they were mock counterparts of almanacs for women; written under a female-styled pseudonym, they responded to women’s almanacs in print by drawing on their discourse and content in a satirical fashion. The presence in the marketplace of such almanacs as those by Sarah Jinner thus incited a textual battle that enlarged the scope of the traditional *guerre les femmes* to include the figure of the female almanac editor and reader. The two publications have stimulated scholarly debate as to whether Sarah Ginnor and Dorothy Patridge were pseudonyms. Since no genealogical

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106 Ibid., B3v, A6v.
records have been found to prove their identity, and as the amount of anti-female invective between the covers of these almanacs is overwhelmingly high, I am convinced that they were constructed as pseudonymous texts. As Louise Curth importantly underlines in her recent book on almanacs, determining the sex of the author on the basis of the text itself is a questionable approach.\textsuperscript{107} Indeed, these publications could be compiled by men who assumed a female-styled alias to capitalize on the burgeoning market for almanacs by women, or by women who saw profit in becoming thus "implicated in a culture of misogyny."\textsuperscript{108}

Ginnor’s and Patridge’s publications share several characteristics. Their title pages lack an imprint of the Company of Stationers as authorization, indicating the involvement of

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{almanac_titles.png}
\caption{Title pages to almanacs by Sarah Ginnor and Dorothy Patridge.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{107} Curth, “‘Students of astrology and physick,’” 68. See also Marcy L. North, “Reading the Anonymous Female Voice,” in The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 255.

\textsuperscript{108} Smyth, “Readers and Readings: ‘To Father the Brat of Another’s Brain,’” 51.
a smaller publisher. Also, they do not include the conventional features of the almanac proper, such as the calendar. The calendar may not have survived in extant copies, but more likely it was not included. Ginnor’s preface to the reader is followed by “Astrological Observations,” and Patridge’s almanac begins with “Monthly Observations in Goodhousewifrey.” They include sections of meteorological tips, such as “What Thunder signifieth every Moneth” in Ginnor’s almanac and “How to judge of Weather by the Clouds” in Patridge’s publication, and offer commentary on health and husbandry in a burlesque mode. It seems likely that they were published as mock prognostications.

Capitalizing on the discourse of divinations along with the appearance of female almanac makers who worked within the field of medicine, these publications aimed to combat the marketing of almanacs by and for women.**

Critics have read *The Womans Almanack; or, Prognostication for ever* for 1659 by Ginnor as a pseudonymous publication or have interpreted the almanac’s contents literally.**

Convincingly, Alan Weber emphasizes that the almanac “provides important evidence for the reception of Jinner’s legitimate work,” since it is obvious that “the Ginnor author” perceived Jinner’s medical advice to women as “sexual in nature, and therefore a fit object for pornographic humour.”** Weber also claims that the publication was written by a man, thereby realizing “Jinner’s fears about the misappropriation and misunderstanding of her

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**Sarah Ginnor [pseud.], *The Woman’s Almanack; or, Prognostication for ever* . . . (1659), A2v, A7v; Dorothy Patridge [pseud.], *The Woman’s Almanack, For the Year 1694* . . . (1694), Av, A4r.

**Elaine Hobby considers Ginnor’s name as a disguise. However, for Ann Hughes, the almanac’s pseudonymous and satirical character is not evident. Assuming that Jinner and Ginnor is one person, Hughes quotes from the almanac, stating that it is Jinner who “supported women’s right to a public voice,” and interpreting her style as “vivid and bawdy.” In an earlier discussion, Margaret Ezell took “Ginnor’s” argument seriously, claiming that Ginnor assumes a “secular approach to the question of the true nature of women’s abilities . . . attempting to remove notions of inferiority” and “hopes to encourage women readers to enrich their own circumstances and their self-esteem.” Hobby, “Skills Books—Housewifery, Medicine, Midwifery,” 181-82; Hughes, “Jinner (or Ginner), Sarah [fl. 1658-64],” 245; Ezell, “Women Writers: The Female Perspective,” in *The Patriarch’s Wife*, 111. See also Beil, “Jinner, Sara, [fl. 1658-64],” 115.

text by male readers.” Not only does it include gendered satire and misogynistic stereotypes, but it expresses the compiler’s resistance to women’s medical authority.112 Recently Curth, similarly to Weber, has suggested that the publication could have been written by a man. Curth attributes such an interpretation to the fact that the almanac includes “highly misogynistic references.”113

Literal misreadings of the text might have arisen from the serious tone conveyed in the pseudonymous Ginnor’s address to the reader, which invokes a pro-female querelle. Like Jinner, Ginnor calls for a woman’s right to receive an education. The lack of education among women, Ginnor states, is “the chief invitation which hath caused me to publish this smal Tract.” Ginnor, in a similar fashion to Jinner, lauds women’s achievements in terms of the “learned Authors of our Sex” and women’s medicinal skills reflected in “great & wonderful cures.” S/he further advocates for a woman’s right to speak independently, claiming that “it is as lawful for us to be Judges & plead our own Causes in our own gowns as Lawyers to plead for others.” Also, where Jinner states in her almanac for 1658 that her aim is to urge women to “shine in the splendor of vertue ... [which] would animate our Husbands to excell us,” Ginnor elaborates on this formulation, pleading that “the knowledg in this Art will animate our husbands to excel us ... and make them be in our studies many times when they would be in an Alehouse.” This is a marked usurpation of Jinner’s authorial voice.114

However, Ginnor does not use serious rhetoric to support women’s cause but rather participates in a battle of texts; her almanac aims to “stir up others.” The publication uses the elements of typical almanacs and the category of women to deepen the mockery of the

112 Ibid., “Women’s Early Modern Medical Almanacs,” 386.
113 Curth, “‘Students of astrology and physick,’” 68.
114 Ginnor [pseud.], The Womans Almanack, A2r; Jinner, An Almanack or Prognostication (1658), Bv.
genre in general. For example, the title of Ginnor’s publication, “A Prognostication for ever,” blatantly burlesques and undermines the reliability of its own prognosticating statements. The almanac ridicules the weather observations for each month, and undertakes a mockery of saints’ days. Saint Bede, known as the English “Doctor of the Church” and a historian, is mockingly presented as advocating that “there be three dayes, and three nights, that if a Child be born therein, the body abideth whole and shall not consume away untill the day of Judgment; that is in the last dayes of January . . . And if a Tree be hewed at, on the same day, it shall never fall.” Additionally, the pictorial representation inserted below, accompanied by a riddle, presents evidence of Ginnor’s mockery of the astronomical elements of almanacs, capitalizing at the same time on the sexual advice for women offered in traditional almanacs. Ginnor explains that lunar eclipses connect to female happiness arising from “dark nights [which are] to us as a fountain, whence flows all our mirth, joy, pleasure, sports, and melodious recreations.” A recipe that provides simple calculations of the number of letters in names which tell “How to know whether a Woman be with Child of Boy or Girl, or estimate a wife’s honesty and show whether it will be the husband or wife

Figure 1.4: Sarah Ginnor’s riddle from The Womans Almanack: “Expound you may the piece ’tis but a Riddle, / The pleasure of our Sex lies in the middle” (1659, A6r).
who dies first” is an example of Ginnor’s mockery of medical almanacs for women along with, once again, their prognosticating aspect.115

Once we take the whole publication into consideration, the conclusion is that Ginnor’s almanac was provoked by the presence of Jinner’s texts. The usurpation of Jinner’s material is evident especially when Jinner’s arguments are reformulated in the fashion of burlesque almanacs. For example, in relation to female sexuality in “Astrological Observations,” Ginnor predicts that women will become “more free then usual in bestowing the P—on their Clients” and prognosticates “unseemly wantonnesse, letchery and lightness in women,” imitating the sexualized discourse found in Jinner’s publication.116 Ginnor’s Womans Almanack thus extends the querelle specifically towards Jinner and her almanacs in print, while using the category of woman to deepen the mockery of the almanac genre in general.

Patridge’s Woman’s Almanack, For the Year 1694,117 similar to Ginnor’s publication, has caused some difference in opinion among critics as to its character. While Bernard Capp and Alan Weber have concluded that the text is likely pseudonymous, the latter also claiming that, due to the prevalence of sexual humor in the text, it was likely authored by a man, Curth, on the other hand, suggests that the almanac appears to have been written by a woman. Yet, as with Ginnor’s publication, rather than attempting to decide how women read the Woman’s Almanack, I focus instead on its clear opposition to the prognosticating aspect of almanacs for women.118

115 Ginnor [pseud.], The Womans Almanack, A2r, A3r, A3v, A6r, A7r.
116 Ibid., A2v.
117 The issue of The Woman’s Almanack, For the Year 1694, which I consulted at the Bodleian Library, carries the name “Patridge,” not “Partridge.”
The almanac's intended audience is identified as the “Female Sex” on its title page. The publication's discourse is claimed to be “adapted” to the “Capacity” of its female readership, including information that instructs on how one should act as a good housewife and how to calculate expenses. The title page also promises to impart information on various cosmetics and reveal, for example, how to know “which shall die first a Man or his Wife.” Patridge's *Woman's Almanack*, I argue, mocks the conventions of the almanac genre, and particularly of almanacs that targeted a female readership, with the incorporation of such material. Thus, female sexuality is openly satirized, together with the discourse of palmistry: “The Sister of the Line of Life . . . [and] also the Mount or ring of the Thumb big, and elevated with many cross disordered Lines, with Lines chequerwise near the Wrist of the Hand; all these denotes and intimates the Woman will kiss in a Corner, or beat her Puff-past with her Neighbour’s Rowling-pin,” both images alluding to acts of cuckoldry. Patridge’s *Woman's Almanack* also plays with the conventions of the genre in terms of divinations, such as the prediction that if New Year's Day falls on a Tuesday, then “Women shall dye.”\(^{119}\) Such tropes assist the compiler to bring humor to the publication and concomitantly satirize the almanac for women. Patridge’s almanac subverts the serious discourse found in such publications as Jinner’s and Holden’s, burlesquing their rhetoric of advice to capitalize on the underside of the almanac market.

Ginnor’s and Patridge’s prognostications indicate that as female almanac compilers were gaining in strength in the marketplace, so too was the market for their satire. This satire likely parodied women who read almanacs for the discursive seriousness behind the ephemeral almanac’s advice. Considering Ginnor’s advice on how “to know whether the Wife be Honest or no,” and one of Patridge’s final recipes, “How to know whether a

\(^{119}\) Patridge [pseud.], *The Woman's Almanack*, Av, B2r, A2v.
Woman be a Maid or no,” these publications aimed at readers who would revel in their bawdy rhetoric and in the anti-female querelle.\textsuperscript{120} The mock prognostications emphasize the presence of a market for the ridicule of the genre, especially in its feminized version.

The increasingly open climate for the development of the female readers’ agency as writers and contributors for early eighteenth-century periodical publications, and particularly for the \textit{Ladies’ Diary}, which I now go on to examine, cannot be discussed without acknowledging the presence of those seventeenth-century almanacs that engaged in the commodification and transmission of a feminized discourse, whether in serious or satirical forms. In an article on almanacs included in the \textit{New Quarterly Magazine} from 1876, critic Mortimer Collins recounts a sketch from an obscure novel of a husband and wife fighting over almanacs. The husband “takes in \textit{Poor Robin}; the wife trusts wholly to \textit{Francis Moore, Physician}.” Collins concludes that “such a matrimonial complication is quite conceivable when the Almanac was a Power.”\textsuperscript{121} This remark points to the character of seventeenth-century almanacs, in which gender differentiations were already a consideration prior to the emergence of the \textit{Ladies’ Diary} in 1704 or even Moore’s in 1699. \textit{Poor Robin}, along with other seventeenth-century mock almanacs, evoked the category of woman as a fitting subject for prescriptive advice or satire, including jesting modes of rhetoric about women as almanac compilers. The dissemination of gendered-based ridicule in almanacs hinted at the participation of women in print culture, while it provided a range of “contestatory narratives” for women to engage with.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{120} Ginnor [pseud.], \textit{The Woman’s Almanack}, A7v; Patridge [pseud.], \textit{The Woman’s Almanack}, B2v.

\textsuperscript{121} Mortimer Collins, “Almanacs,” \textit{New Quarterly Magazine} 5 (October to January 1876): 430.

\textsuperscript{122} Brown, “Between Women,” 91.
Overall, my research indicates that seventeenth-century almanacs rarely addressed women as active participants in the reading public, despite the fact that almanacs were phenomenally popular. While rare examples of almanacs that overtly acknowledged the female reader did exist, women formed the implied general audience of seventeenth-century almanacs more as consumers of their temporal guidance. Since the agency of the female reader and compiler was rarely present in almanacs prior to the eighteenth century, while that of the female contributor was nonexistent, the *Ladies' Diary* was a key proponent of various modes of interaction with the female reader, establishing a new type of reader-contributor. The *Diary* thus distinctly marked women's identity as a group with specific needs and interests, expanding the possibilities for women's active engagement in the literary public beyond their consumer agency. As I will argue in the remaining chapters of this dissertation, in the history of the gendered almanac, the *Ladies' Diary* must be considered a significant text for the development of women's literary agency in the public sphere.
CHAPTER TWO

The Almanac for Women in the Early Eighteenth-Century Literary Marketplace: The Inauguration and Impact of The Ladies' Diary

The Provocation of Genre

During the eighteenth century, the almanac was almost as regularly criticized in the literary marketplace as it was routinely consulted, nearly on a daily basis. Accusations included the unreliability of content, the superficiality of approach, and the ephemerality of the genre. It is indeed evident that the almanac, including the innovative Ladies' Diary, inaugurated in 1704 by John Tipper, was a provocative genre that a variety of individuals engaged with. An analysis of the context of the Ladies' Diary's inauguration and its impact form the core of this chapter. Initially, I trace the various types of literary commentary on almanacs published during the eighteenth century to frame the Diary's inauguration and success with the genre's disparagement in the literary public. I further attend to the battle of texts that the Diary itself stimulated during the century. I examine how Tipper countered the low and suspect reputation held by the astrological and prognosticating almanac, thus ensuring the Diary's competitiveness in the print marketplace. One such tactic, which I discuss in this chapter, was the inclusion of periodical-like content; with this technique Tipper situated the publication in contrast to the traditional almanac, allying it instead with the earliest miscellany periodical that addressed women, The Gentleman's Journal (1692-1694). I then use Tipper's correspondence as an informative source regarding his editorial intentions for the Diary's audience as well as complexities related to the almanac's inauguration. The
correspondence shows in particular how Tipper planned to market one of the unique aspects of the publication: the fact that the Diary addressed female readers, an innovation adopted from the practices of the periodical press from the 1690s onwards. My analysis goes on to show women’s participation in the Diary’s consumption, production and distribution.¹

Since the competitiveness of the Ladies’ Diary rested to a large extent not only in its unique address to the female reader, but also in its affiliations with literary periodicals for women, I additionally illustrate the Diary’s innovative positioning in relation to two early periodicals for women, The Records of Love (1710) and The Mirror (1719). This analysis further highlights reasons for the almanac’s success. In the last section of the chapter, I compare another early miscellany periodical, Tipper’s adjunct publication, Delights For the Ingenious (1711), to the Diary as the first spin-off from the almanac in terms of content and editorial marketing. Like the Diary, Delights For the Ingenious incorporated enigma poems, paradoxes and mathematical questions, and relied on prize offerings and readers’ submissions of material to the publication. I also point in this section to the presence of other imitative and rival publications of the Diary. In short, the original and popular Ladies’ Diary, as this chapter will show, emerged at a ripe moment in print culture history for generic change. Featuring such genres as the enigma poem and mathematical question, combined with an interactive editorial style, the almanac responded to the demand for new educational and entertaining texts that addressed women as their target audience.

¹ The early eighteenth-century periodical press is often difficult to classify according to a specific genre, since, for instance, a monthly periodical may incorporate characteristic features of other types of publications, such as an annual almanac, as this chapter will show in the case of Tipper’s ventures. I therefore use the term “periodical” to encompass such literary forms as the essay-periodical, the miscellany periodical, and the almanac, all popular publications that appeared in the marketplace at regular intervals. For further analysis of the blurring of periodical terminology, see Iona Italia’s “Introduction: The Rise of the Periodical,” in The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century: Anxious Employment (London: Routledge, 2005), 2-4.
"Starmonger, and quack": The Public Response to Almanacs

The almanac was often the subject of rhetorical scorn driven by textual competition in the literary marketplace of the eighteenth century. Of the many detractors who lampooned almanacs, Jonathan Swift was without question the most illustrious. For his attack on the genre and its compilers, Swift chose to confront John Partridge, a shoemaker, a fierce opponent of the High Church, a renowned London astrologer, and the editor of an almanac entitled *Merlinus Liberatus*. Swift's literary hoax constitutes a significant document in the literary history of the almanac, since it highlights the widespread influence of the genre, and also shows how such attacks further stimulated the almanac's sales.

Partridge had become an icon of public enmity as a quack astrologer prior to Swift's sly scheme. In 1700 a series of pamphlets by Tom Brown in the fashion of burlesque prognostications, entitled *The Infallible Astrologer; or, Mr. Silvester Partridge's Prophesie and Predictions of what shall Infallibly happen in, and about the Cities of London and Westminster, for every Day this Week*, ridiculed Partridge's divinations as deceptive.² Partridge's prognostications were also mocked in a circa 1700 print (see Figure 2.1). The bewigged editor is here depicted in his study, backed by books and pots, with a quill in his hand, seemingly tossing off arcane prophecies in the presence of an inquisitive gentleman, an admiring lady, a puzzled servant, and a lame old woman wearing a sorcerer's hat. While such an array of characters may indicate the wide appeal of Partridge's predictions, the inclusion of the witch points also to the association of astrology with the occult.

Figure 2.1: "Dr. Silvester Partridge's Predictions." Ca. 1700. This print faces p. 163 in *The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, Serious and Comical, In Prose and Verse. In Four Volumes. The Fifth Edition, Corrected from the Errors of the former Impressions. With the Life and Character Of Mr. Brown, And a Key To all his Writings. Adorn'd with Cuts.* Vol. 1. London, 1720.
Swift's hoax, initially published under the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., revolved in particular around the foretelling of deaths and resulted in the famous prediction of the date and time of Partridge's death. Swift set out to compose a satire debunking the absurd predictions of almanac makers as well as the almanac's naive readership through a literary hoax that destined Partridge for an early grave. The publication that introduced the hoax was a pamphlet entitled *Predictions for the Year 1708. Wherein the Month, and Day of the Month, are set down, the Persons named, and the great Actions and Events of next Year particularly related as they will come to pass*, which was undertaken, as it announced, to "prevent the People of England from being farther imposed on by vulgar Almanack-Makers." Framed in opposition to the fallacies of almanac compilers, the "sottish Pretenders to Astrology," Swift's pamphlet includes humorous prophecies, attempting thereby to reform the obfuscating language of prognostications with a discourse of "intelligible" specificity. The first prediction concerns the death of "Partrige" on the 29th of March, 1708, "about eleven at Night, of a raging Fever."  

*Predictions for the Year 1708* was an immediate success: it was reprinted, imitated, pirated, and translated; stirring up controversy, it gave rise to a multiplicity of responses, many of which were by Swift himself, thus illustrating the currency of almanac-related themes in the marketplace. Carrying on the ruse, prior to the time when the first prediction by Bickerstaff was to come true, Swift planned to launch another pseudonymous piece entitled *An Answer to Bickerstaff. Some Reflections upon Mr Bickerstaff's Predictions for the Year*.

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MDCCVIII. By a Person of Quality, again a clear mockery of speculating almanacs. Though on the one hand Predictions for the Year 1708 is here dubbed a hoax, “hastily written in a sudden frolic,” and Bickerstaff’s predictions are placed in doubt as a scheme to create suspense rather than fulfillment, the narrator also acknowledges the pertinence of Bickerstaff’s commentary against “the credulity of the vulgar.” While this particular pamphlet was not published until after Swift’s death, he continued to capitalize on his hoax in the literary marketplace in other ways.5

Swift followed his Answer to Bickerstaff with a broadside elegy which attacked Partridge and his almanac. It was, as George Mayhew asserts “hawked under the very windows of Partridge’s house in the Strand within hours of the moment of his supposed death on March 29.” “An Elegy on Mr. Partridge, the Almanac-maker, who died on the 29th of this Instant March, 1708” wittily draws analogies between Partridge’s trade as a shoemaker and his astrological practices, using the occasion to produce punning connections between the astrological “sign Boötes” and the cobblering of “Boots.” An epitaph joined the elegy, purportedly sealing Partridge’s tomb with Swift’s memento mori addressed to “A cobbler, starmonger, and quack.”6

Swift buried Partridge at a still greater depth within the same year when he struck with a report of Partridge’s death: The Accomplishment of the First of Mr. Bickerstaff’s Predictions. Being an Account of the Death of Mr. Partridge, the Almanack-Maker, upon the 29th Inst. In a Letter to a

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Person of Honour. Written in the Year 1708. Stylized as if written by a former revenue clerk and Partridge’s distant acquaintance, the narrator relates Partridge’s deathbed confession. The almanac compiler admits his predictions to be “meer Impositions upon the People” published, crassly, to make a living. The low status of the trade of almanac makers is further underlined when Partridge admits that his almanacs were his “own Invention,” a trickery motivated by a need for “Bread.” Revealing the falsities of the genre, Partridge admits that it is composed by “silly Wretches . . . who can hardly write or read,” to the point where they leave it to the printers to copy weather prognostications from outdated almanacs. In response to the Accomplishment, as well as to Partridge’s own defense launched in his 1709 almanac, Swift’s Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq; Against What is Objected to Him by Mr. Partridge, in His Almanack for the Present Year 1709. By the Said Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq; Written in the Year 1709, assures the public that Partridge died as predicted with less than a half-hour’s error in his computation and, even if he still appears to be writing almanacs, it is because, “Time . . . gives [almanac makers] a Lease in Reversion, to continue their Works after their Death.” Swift thereby comically attends to the fact that almanacs were compiled under the names of their originators long after their deaths.

Partridge quickly responded. As early as 1689, in his preface to Mene Mene, Tekel Upharsin he rejected prognostications written under his name as not of his authorship, and vociferously asserted the reliability of his divination according to the rules of Astrology. After Swift’s series of attacks, Partridge defended his case with an assurance that he remained among the living despite the fact that his almanac for 1710 was not in print. In A

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7 Swift, The Accomplishment of the First of Mr. Bickerstaff’s Predictions . . . , in Basic Writings of Jonathan Swift, (1708), 676; Swift, A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq. . . . , in Basic Writings of Jonathan Swift, (1709), 682. Swift additionally capitalized on the success of his Predictions for the Year 1708 by releasing A Famous Prediction of Merlin, the British Wizard, Written above a Thousand Years Ago, and Relating to the Year 1709, With Explanatory Notes. By T. N. Philomath, Written in the Year 1709.
Letter to a Member of Parliament from Mr. John Partridge, touching his Almanack for the Year 1710, and the Injunction, whereby the Publishing of it is staid for the present, Partridge clarifies that the reason for an injunction against his publication of his 1710 almanac lies not in Swift’s attack, but instead in his own dispute with the Company of Stationers over the Company’s monopoly in publishing almanacs.¹ Due to the dispute, which also concerned Partridge’s recompense for his successful almanac, the Company allowed the attack to continue, capitalizing on Swift’s parody by a further ridicule of Partridge in a 1710 issue of Bickerstaff’s Almanack. However, as Bernard Capp notes, Partridge “commanded a far greater market than Bickerstaff could ever hope to capture,” and in 1714 Partridge again produced an almanac for the Company. Additionally, there appeared in the literary marketplace not only publications that echoed Isaac Bickerstaff’s eidolon, but also others that turned the tale upside down and capitalized on Partridge’s name. As Partridge’s name was exploited in various texts, Partridge certainly profited from his popularity as a literary creation, the Company granting him an exceptionally high fee of £100 per annum in 1713 for his best-selling almanac.²

Swift thus did not doom Partridge’s almanacs, and prognosticating almanacs like Partridge’s maintained a substantial audience throughout the century. From Margaret Weedon’s summaries of the 1708 “Blanks” in print, it is apparent that almanacs which relied on prognostications of various sorts were widespread, including publications by William

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¹ Misleading statements about Partridge’s career have been made by various critics, to the point that his name was struck from the Company of Stationers’ roll of members and thereby he lost his right to publish his almanac. This error has been recently repeated by Paul J. Degategno and R. Jay Stubblefield. See their “Accomplishment of the First of Mr. Bickerstaff’s Predictions,” in Critical Companion to Jonathan Swift, 14.

² Another confused argument revealed that the Stationers stopped issuing Partridge’s almanacs, since they thought he was truly dead. Richmond P. Bond refutes such claims in his article, “John Partridge and the Company of Stationers,” Studies in Bibliography 16 (1963): 61-80.

Andrews, John Chattock, Henry Coley, Job Gadbury, Richard Gibson, Francis Moore, John Tanner, John Wing, Dove, Pond, and, of course, John Partridge (all commonly referred to by their originator's name), as well as the burlesque almanac Poor Robin and an anonymously published work, The English Chapman's and Traveller's Almanack. Though the weight of prognostications differed among these publications, such almanacs attest to the fact that predictions constituted a popular feature of this genre in the early eighteenth century. The attacks on the genre could have served less to undermine its popularity than to promote it.

At the same time, Swift's ruse was enthusiastically welcomed by the literati of the day, the subject of prognostication stimulating many contemporary debates about the validity of this practice as well as the status of the almanac genre. Daniel Defoe in A Review of the State of the English Nation, remarks that almanacs are cheap and meteorologically inaccurate ephemera worth no regard and its readers, "Fools to be Deceiv'd." However, it was in the Tatler that Richard Steele presented perhaps the most thorough reaction to almanacs, expanding upon Swift's hoax through the eidolon of Isaac Bickerstaff. Bickerstaff frequently updates his readers on Partridge's story by arguing for the veracity of his earlier prediction regarding his "departed Friend John Partridge." The periodical also comments on the low value of the almanac in terms of its trivial content. Similarly to Defoe, Steele mocked the almanac's fallible version of meteorology and its audience as "the Ignorant." One of the best known poems by Alexander Pope, his Rape of the Lock, also alludes to Partridge. Once Belinda's curl has been cut off, the stolen object is placed ceremoniously among the constellations, the sight of which will make Partridge, "th' Egregious Wizard," foretell "The

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10 For a fuller discussion of Steele's periodical eidolon as well as Swift's Isaac Bickerstaff, see Bond, "Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.," in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature: Essays in Honor of Alan Dugald McKillop, ed. Carroll Camden (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 103-24.
Fate of Louis, and the Fall of Rome.” Partridge’s prognosticating almanacs clearly became an ongoing subject of derision at the beginning of the eighteenth century, these satires likely incited by the almanacs’ immense popularity. The almanac was a commercially sound genre, and thus stimulated other authors to exploit it and compete with it.\(^\text{12}\)

Other periodicals dating from the time of the Ladies’ Diary combined the attack on the prognosticating aspect of the almanac with a mockery of its other elements. The Spectator, casting aspersions on gimmicky ways of writing poetry, likens the project of writing Latin verses with the use of ready tables to almanac predictions. A correspondent recounts witnessing “a Student in Astrology” who composes Latin verses without any understanding of the language. The student blindly follows rules published by a mathematician who has “contriv’d Tables by which any one, without knowing a Word of Grammar or Sense, may . . . be able to compose or rather to erect Latin Verses.”\(^\text{13}\) Once translated by his acquaintance, the verses are revealed to be on the subject of “a Tempest of Wind”—ironically fit subject matter for conventional almanacs, and thus included, along with their translation, in an almanac. The student is further absurdly considered a foreteller of “the last great Storm.” This anecdote, which provides instances of “false Wit,” presents the almanac as a source of casually compiled material, its predictions turning out to be true merely due to


\(^{13}\) The reference here is to an invention of John Peter whose work entitled Artificial Versifying A New Way to Make Latin Verses . . . (1678), instructs on how to make hexameter and pentameter verses in Latin from tables that he arranged and that included letters of Latin words. A person who used the tables did not have to understand Latin to make such verses. Edward Bensly, “Latin Hexameters by Machinery: John Peter,” Notes and Queries, 11th ser., 3 (1 April 1911): 249-50. See also [Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, and others], The Spectator, ed. Donald F. Bond, vol. 2, no. 220 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 356n5.
chance, while Latin poetry published in almanacs is mocked as doggerel, lacking any artistic and intellectual value. Periodical editors were likely thus concerned to set their texts as distinct from almanacs, deriding the genre to enhance the reputation of their own productions. They created in this way a hierarchy of texts for the public to choose from, the almanacs being relegated to the lowest echelon.  

Another aspect of the almanac genre that was called into question was its trendiness among women, a stratagem intended to flatter the taste of the consumer whose choice of other texts was perceived as enlightened when compared with that of the almanac reader. *The Gentleman's Magazine* published a verse titled “On an Almanack sent to a Lady” in 1749, echoing Swift’s piece, “Verses Wrote in a Lady’s Ivory Table-Book” from circa 1698. This caustic poem on the genre from the *Gentleman’s Magazine* ironically dubs an almanac an “Emblem of beauty,” seemingly admirable due to its apparel—its “gold and vellum.” Regardless of such a decorative binding, presented as enticing to women, the almanac is a “cheat”—its contents include “No wit . . . No solid sense”; the publication becomes “quickly old.” The verse concludes with an assurance that women “shall boast a longer reign, / Whose mind can virtue’s charms retain”: after the implied criticism of women’s base fascination with the superficial, the author locates true value in their moral conduct. Yet the verse suggests that almanacs were valued as attractive gift books, thus adding to their competitive edge in the literary marketplace. Overall, the *Gentleman’s Magazine* clearly aimed to shame women, the newly discerned group of potent consumers for almanacs, into turning

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15 Swift’s poem reads like an enigma, though the reader does not have to guess the answer. It parallels a mind full of trivia with a genre full of trivia. It brings together the lady’s trifling jottings and her suitors’ patronizing flattery to suggest that they devalue true art; the book is ironically presented as being of no intellectual significance.

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their attention from the genre. Like the Spectator, the Gentleman’s Magazine thereby introduced a hierarchy of genres, in which an almanac ranks at the bottom.\textsuperscript{16}

Along with periodicals, other genres also responded negatively to the almanac during the century and beyond, further emphasizing the inter-generic competition that existed among texts that vied for an audience in the marketplace. In a letter written in 1740, and published in John Nichols’ Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century in 1812, the Reverend William Clarke stingingly rebukes the genre, commenting on a specific almanac, the editor of which is Clarke’s addressee. Clarke’s observations bring to mind the Ladies’ Diary’s astronomical and mathematical contents, since he dubs the almanac a “Physico-astronomico-mathematico-calendario-tydical Lucubration.” Such a faux Latinate description highlights the collage-like structure of the almanac, and underlines the apparently superficial treatment each element receives. Clarke is particularly bewildered as to how “Mathematics and Riddles” came to be included in almanacs at all, unless, that is, they function as “a sort of hieroglyphicks” for the weather. Here, he appears to be directly critiquing such almanacs as the Diary that featured, as I will soon elaborate, both verse and mathematical problems. Clarke further suggests that “chronology instead of mystery” would be a fitter content for his correspondent’s almanac, thus expressing a preference for the traditional features of the genre. He concludes his rebuke of the almanac by devaluing its readership as constituting the “middling sort of readers, who are the lowest class of any.” Clarke’s comments underline how the construction of an audience was often marked by a class-based categorization of its reading material.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} The Gentleman’s Magazine 19 (January 1749): 40.

\textsuperscript{17} William Clarke to an unknown recipient, 17 February 1740, in Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century; Comprising Biographical Memoirs of William Bowyer, Printer, F.S.A. and Many of His Learned Friends; an Incidental View of the Progress and Advancement of Literature in This Kingdom during the Last Century; and Biographical Anecdotes of a
Much later in 1775, James Boswell’s \textit{The Life of Samuel Johnson}, in a similar fashion to Clarke’s letter, indicates that the almanac typically serves as a register for historic occurrences. Boswell, in reply to Samuel Johnson’s complaint that history is mostly speculative, except for basic names and events, argues that Johnson’s understanding of history is reductive; history from this point of view is “no better than an almanack, a mere chronological series of remarkable events.” Set at the close of the eighteenth century, \textit{Adam Bede}, the novel by George Eliot that established her as the leading novelist in the late 1850s, also raises the question of almanacs in relation to their inherent elements. While Mr. Poyser, a yeoman with traditional values, believes in prognostications to be “as true as th’ Bible,” a cranky old gardener, Mr. Craig, comments acidly on almanacs in relation to the weather, saying that the “meteorological almanecks can learn me nothing.” Mr. Craig utterly undermines one of the key purposes of an almanac’s existence, emphasizing that the weather is so unreliable that “a fool ’ull hit on’t sometimes when a wise man misses; that’s why th’ almanecks gets so much credit. It’s one o’ them chancy things as fools thrive on.”18 These sources add new perspectives on the almanac genre. Aside from the castigation of its prognosticating aspect, the almanac was also denigrated when associated with chance and a reductive chronology, views that, by this time, had become fixed tropes in the literary marketplace in reference to almanacs.

Thus, the almanac, a popular and influential genre throughout the eighteenth century, invoked a range of textual responses. The genre was often considered in relation to its traditional features; prognosticating and meteorological content garnered a particularly

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sardonic reaction. The introduction of new elements into the genre such as enigmas also provoked controversy, as we will next see. Such dismissive responses suggest the low level of public esteem accorded to the almanac, indicate the intent to popularize alternate texts in the competitive marketplace of the eighteenth century, and highlight the demand for literary satire as a form of public commentary.

Public ridicule of the almanac genre underlines, I argue, the marketplace competition among genres aimed at the leisured consumer such as the periodical, the novel, the play, and the almanac. This consumer-directed battle also concerned the Ladies' Diary. Even though the initial editors of the Diary, John Tipper and later Henry Beighton, found means by which to raise their product beyond the general estimation of almanacs as unreliable and vulgar texts, as I will elaborate further in this dissertation, the Diary faced ridicule from other genres during its long run. Such a battle of texts underscores the Diary's immense, and at times controversial, marketplace popularity, along with the aspiration of other authors to attain similar success with their textual productions. One such instance is located in Frances Brooke's periodical, The Old Maid. The 1755 number includes a letter from a man, "an old Fellow of a College," who complains of his failure to be published in periodicals. He mentions that he has even "descended so low as to send an Enigma to the compiler of the Ladies Diary." However, that this reader was eventually published in the Old Maid points to the implied marketplace competition between the Diary and Brooke's periodical. The Diary's popularity was subsequently noted in an epistolary novel by Margaret and Susannah Minifie, The Histories of Lady Frances S—, and Lady Caroline S— from 1763. The protagonist, Lady Frances, gushes that she will take more pleasure from guessing an expected surprise than "half my sex will find in explaining all the conundrums set forth in the Ladies Diary for the year." This comment suggests that the Diary's conundrums were a
popular form of entertainment among female readers. The novel thus competed with the Diary, claiming to offer a different reading experience. In 1782, Hannah Cowley’s play The Belle’s Stratagem, A Comedy, presents Letitia Hardy, one of the main protagonists, assuming the persona of an insipid and naïve country wench to secure the attentions of her intended husband. As an example of her simplistic pastimes, she notes that she has made “a string of names, all in riddles, for the Lady’s Diary,” which again implies that the Diary was known for its popular, if apparently reductive, forms of entertainment at the time. Yet, as I will explicate in Chapter Four, such riddles were not as simplistic as here presented nor were they written by the unlearned. Rather, these types of puzzles were often complex literary forms, requiring a knowledge of poetic composition and intellectual engagement. The critique of enigma poems in genres that targeted the leisured female reader underlines the fact that such puzzles functioned as forms of entertainment, potentially threatening the popularity of other genres for women.19

“Peculiar for the Fair Sex”: Print Culture Contexts for The Ladies’ Diary’s Inauguration

John Tipper’s Innovations and The Gentleman’s Journal as a Source

The distribution figures for almanacs suggest the extent of their popularity. Vox Stellarum, known as Moore’s, was launched in 1699 by Francis Moore. It became a leading almanac publication during the eighteenth century. By the 1760s Vox Stellarum reached

annual sales of 82,000 copies, a number which increased to over 100,000 in the 1770s, and mounted further to 365,000 in 1802 and 560,000 in 1839. In contrast to Vox Stellarum’s rising sales figures, circulation numbers for the Ladies’ Diary fluctuated during the century, its success particularly marked by an increase from a printing of 4,000 copies in 1705, to 17,000 in 1714, and further to 36,000 in 1753. Afterwards, though its sales dropped by more than half to approximately 15,000 in the 1770s, the Diary was the second best-selling booklet almanac out of twelve such almanacs noted in the Company’s records. In 1771, according to the Company’s records, Moore’s almanac sold approximately 120,000 copies, and The Ladies’ Diary 16,000, followed by Poor Robin at 10,000, and Partridge’s publication at 5,000. Such numbers are phenomenal when compared with typical print runs of book editions, which reached approximately 750 copies. The sales figures of Moore’s and The Ladies’ Diary outstripped even such exceptional “monster editions” as 2,000-copy editions of playbooks and 4,000-copy editions of histories, or the 5,000 copies of the first edition of Henry Fielding’s Amelia. Daniel Fenning’s Universal Spelling-Book sold 18,000 copies; the Diary was competitive even in relation to such utilitarian works. In this section I will provide insight into aspects of eighteenth-century print culture that influenced the Diary’s success in the literary marketplace.

20 The distribution figures of other almanacs varied between 4,000 and 1,300 copies, the order by ascending number of sales being Season, Gentleman, Wing, Parker, White, Saunders, Pearse, and Andrews. Capp comments that due to Moore’s phenomenal success, the pattern of sales common in the Stuart period ended—no longer did almanacs compete with each other without one leader dominating. Capp, “The Eighteenth Century,” in English Almanacs, 1500-1800, 239, 263; Records of the Worshipful Company of Stationers, microfilm, 8520/reel 98, pt. 10, 1st ser., box C, envelope 4; John Tipper to Humphrey Wanley, n.d., in Original Letters of Eminent Literary Men of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries: With Notes, and Illustrations by Sir Henry Ellis . . . , ed. Henry Ellis (1843; repr., New York, NY: AMS Press, 1968), 314; Robert Heath to Thomas Cowper, 21 January 1753, BL, Add. MSS 43741:30r.

While the Ladies' Diary was an innovative force in the marketplace, Vox Stellarum, or Moore's, followed the traditions of the genre to a large extent. Its title page, as was typical for many almanacs, included a list of its contents and identified its compiler by name and occupation as “Francis Moore, Licens’d Physician, and Student in ASTROLOGY.” Other traditional almanac features found in Vox Stellarum included a calendar with weather forecasts, astrological observations and prognostications, common-knowledge tables, such as a table of kings and queens of England, of the names and characters of the zodiac signs, planets, and aspects, and of high-water times at selected localities. Vox Stellarum also incorporated a chronology of remarkable events, information on eclipses for the year, and prognostications for the four quarters of the year. As Maureen Perkins discusses, Moore’s publication was “the archetypal prophetic almanac, and . . . it was the use of prophecy which was the key to its success.” Prognosticating almanacs thus continued to be popular during the eighteenth century, as I have already noted.

The Ladies' Diary's unique contents set it apart from a contemporary such as Vox Stellarum. Instead of giving prominence to conventional features like divinations and chronologies, the Diary prioritized the inclusion of literary and scientific elements, such as enigmas and mathematical problems. John Tipper's almanac commenced with a title page that, rather than a list of contents as in Vox Stellarum, included a portrait of Queen Anne with a poem invoking her. Also, instead of prioritizing the name of the originator, the page emphasized its focal audience—women. Next, within the calendar part of the almanac, the contents included several traditional features, such as the preface to the reader, advertisements, the calendar, and the explanation of the characters of planets, zodiac signs,

22 Francis Moore, Vox Stellarum . . . (London, 1704), Ar.
and aspects as well as other notes for the specific year. This section, however, featured neither prognostications nor weather forecasts. In addition, this part was marked by novel elements, such as directives on the chapters of the Bible to be read on Sundays, as well as essays on astronomy in the place of traditional tables of common knowledge. As Shelley Anne Costa enumerates, other unusual elements of this section included a comparison of watches and clocks to sun dials, the uncommon use of the space below the calendar for themed remarks of common interest, and a twelve-page calendar instead of the typical one of twenty-four pages.24 The latter was a practical step that allowed the literary, philosophical and mathematical elements to take precedence in the second part of the almanac. Tipper thus did not rely entirely on innovative features, but incorporated selected elements typical of common almanacs, compressing the traditional material to create space for his unique additions.

The second part of the *Ladies' Diary*, which included narratives, paradoxes, enigmas, and mathematical problems, was more distinct from traditional almanacs than the first section. In other almanacs, this part was typically devoted to astrological commentary and prognostications; Tipper's *Diary* replaced such content with entertaining and educational texts. Moreover, rather than being an almanac based exclusively on its editor's compilations, the *Diary* was comprised largely of original material submitted by contributors whose names were acknowledged alongside their submissions. Tipper also published lists of contributors; from 1712 on these became a regular feature of the publication on its final pages. To encourage contributions, in 1710 he offered prizes in the form of a set of his almanacs for correct answers to a Prize Enigma and Prize Question, both these types of puzzles coming

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to constitute regular elements from that time on. Accompanying such altered content was a shift in editorial practice. Designing the almanac to appeal to his intended consumer group of women, Tipper sought to attract and maintain this audience. In the *Diary* the figure of the editor played a significant part in marketing the publication for women, ensuring its respectability, and encouraging reader submissions. Various revisions to the structure of the almanac rendered the *Diary* a competitive force in the marketplace, eventually influencing other publications to follow suit in their content and approach, as will be discussed further in this chapter. Tessa Watt remarks in her study of chapbooks (1550-1640) that they were produced in "response to the growing market of readers created by the rise of literacy." As I will further elaborate in the dissertation, leisured, literate readers, including but not limited to women, were targeted by the *Diary*. In many ways, thus, the almanac with its new content and format was a successful response to the altered conditions of the consumer market.

One central publishing strategy that responded to the dynamics of the literary marketplace was an association of the *Ladies' Diary* with the burgeoning periodical press for women. Literary periodicals addressing a female readership were few at the turn of the century. *The Gentleman's Journal; or, The Monthly Miscellany* (1692-1694), edited by Peter Anthony Motteux, was the first true miscellany periodical to address women. In October of 1693 Motteux allocated one issue, entitled *The Lady's Journal*, to women's literary interests. *The Gentleman's Journal* shares many similarities with *The Ladies' Diary* and I will explicate how Tipper, as his female readers' guide, was indebted to Motteux's publication. While Shelley Anne Costa contends that "the most likely model for the *Diary* is the *Athenian Mercury*,"
John Dunton’s 1691-1697 publication,26 I argue that the Gentleman’s Journal is a more closely-related model for the Diary. Running from January 1692 until the 1694 issue for October-November, the Gentleman’s Journal, even more than the Diary, was a true miscellany periodical, its pages featuring an array of poetry, songs set to music, prose narratives known in the periodical as ‘novels,’ essays, translations, news, and book notices. Along with enigmas in verse, it offered mathematical explications, astronomical remarks and medical information.27 A similar, though more narrow literary and scientific focus characterized the Diary throughout the eighteenth century. As I will discuss, the two publications resembled each other in many aspects, an association which rejuvenated the character of the almanac.

Edited by the exiled French Huguenot Motteux, the Gentleman’s Journal’s mode of presentation was based on the Mercure Gallant, a Parisian monthly periodical. In partial imitation of the French model, which structured its materials around a letter to a lady formerly from Paris and now residing in the provinces, the English periodical used the convention of the epistle, this time to a gentleman in the country, to shape its contents.

However, unlike the Mercure Gallant with its prominent “court news and gossip,”28 Motteux’s journal was designed more as a repository for serious and satirical texts, many of which


27 See [Peter Anthony Motteux], The Gentleman’s Journal; or, The Monthly Miscellany 3 (May 1694): 129; 3 (August-September 1694): 234-35; 3 (July 1694): 199-200. The Gentleman’s Journal was published in London in three volumes. Quotations from the periodical are referenced by volume number, date of publication, and page number. Throughout the initial year in print each number was paginated consecutively as a separate unit, the pagination being continuous throughout the following volume, and afterwards similarly throughout Volume Three.

affected a moralizing and instructional tone and included pieces written to the end of encouraging women's literary output and education, as well as equality between the sexes. A host of literary figures were its contributors, from John Dryden and Matthew Prior, to William Congreve and Nahum Tate, a fact that emphasized the periodical's appeal to literary circles.

Two scholars, Shawn Lisa Maurer and Margaret Ezell, have analyzed the Gentleman's Journal in some detail. Maurer examines how Motteux as an editor fashioned himself in the role of a "civilizing bachelor," his masculine rhetoric constructing women as "cultural others," beings outside cultural production and the economic sphere. Maurer thus distinguishes between the way the narrative voice of the editor configures women versus men. While Maurer accurately detects the contrast in the rhetoric found in epistles to male versus female readers, her suggestion that in the Lady's Journal women primarily served as "texts in and of themselves" rather than "creators of texts," which positions them outside the "boundaries" of masculine culture, diminishes the significance of the role that women played in the formation of the periodical as its contributors and intellectual agents as well as the way the periodical offered women a channel for literary publication. Ezell, in contrast to Maurer, compellingly examines how the Gentleman's Journal appropriates "the conventions of 'amateur' coterie literary circles" through, for example, the incorporation of interactive poetry and the epistolary form into a commercial production. The periodical, Ezell claims, constructed its readers as both spectators and respondents, nurturing a friendly literary community, one that was amateur, and yet that participated in a commercialized form of publication, with its gender and social divisions elided by Motteux's address to "the Ingenious." Ezell's argument also underlines that the periodical's female audience at the time

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was constituted of “a thriving community of . . . readers and writers, previously invisible to our eyes because of their adherence to coterie literary practices, but, in the pages of the Gentleman’s Journal, entering the commercial arena through Motteux’s new literary form.”

The existence of the Lady’s Journal issue, along with verses and enigma solutions by women therein, as I will soon exemplify, as well as of the Ladies’ Diary with its strong female contributor base, highlights the new possibilities that periodicals presented for the public and particularly for amateur female writers at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Once we link the Gentleman’s Journal with the Ladies’ Diary, it is possible to draw preliminary conclusions regarding Tipper’s methodology in relation to his intended audience. Robert Mayo connects the two publications, lauding the Gentleman’s Journal’s vitality, and noting that Tipper’s Diary was the next publication after Motteux’s venture to address women and include fictional narratives. He states that the almanac was “a kind of Ladies’ Journal, since it offered in addition to the usual paraphernalia of almanacs, a miscellany of recipes, medicaments, female biographies, advice on marriage and family life, mathematical questions, poems, and stories.” Both periodicals indeed display a similar tone and content.

Stories like “Love’s Alchemy: Or, A Wife got out of the Fire” in the March 1692 number and

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"The Widow by Chance" in the January 1693 issue from the *Gentleman's Journal* follow equivalent narrative trajectories to "The Unfortunate Abbot" (*DM* 1705-1710) and "Of the man that Cuckolded himself" (*DM* 1705) from the *Ladies' Diary*, all implying a conduct moral beneath an entertaining veneer. Although these tales are designed primarily for entertainment, the regulation of conduct before and in marriage remains a subtext. While in "The Widow by Chance," a young lady, betrothed to an old gentleman whom she loathes, participates in his scheme to win her back, a ruse that inadvertently leads to his death, in Tipper's "Of the man that Cuckolded himself," a husband's folly similarly leads to misfortune when he mistakes his masked wife for a different woman. One possible message arising from both these stories is that marriage must be desired by both parties or else it is ill-fated; these stories also warn against certain types of men: foolish husbands, depraved coxcombs, and whimsical courtiers, familiar themes from the genre of the *querelle des femmes*.

Instructional essays, likewise, were a prominent feature included in the *Gentleman's Journal* and the *Ladies' Diary*. In the former, this type includes philosophical musings, lessons on subjects from maps to diving, accounts of international traditions, and essays on the equality of the sexes and female education. The types of instructional writings in the *Diary* that mirror those published in its predecessor feature cultural and astronomical observations, as well as advice to women. For example we can set an essay from Motteux's August of 1694 issue, "Part of a Letter about a Woman's being burnt at Suratte, for the sake of her dead Husband," beside Tipper's 1704 inclusion, "MARRIAGE CEREMONIES in divers Countries." Although each provides an element of sensational entertainment, both Motteux and Tipper also use these tales to comment moralistically on specific traditions. In terms of advice to women, such pieces as Motteux's commentary on matrimony from the *Lady's Journal*, and "Rules and Directions for LOVE and MARRIAGE" in Tipper's inaugural
number, are comparable in tone. They warn women against careless marital decisions, though the former more radically states that “those Women whose Souls are far above the trivial Concerns of a Family, would do better to remain free,”32 while the counsel from Tipper’s almanac is more conventional in relation to women’s marital state, offering maxims on the choice of a husband. Further, the essay from the Lady’s Journal, “That Women may apply themselves to Liberal Arts and Sciences” and Tipper’s lives of famous queens defend the female sex in the mode of the pro-female querelle. Both editors seek to entice women as readers through the presentation of instructional accounts that would appeal to their interests. Tipper’s almanac evidently benefited from Motteux’s narrative models given their currency in the literary marketplace.

Additionally, in reference to audience construction, Motteux’s and Tipper’s methodologies resemble each other in that they rely on the rhetoric of modest gallantry when they address women. While Motteux’s inaugural address to his readers acknowledges his debt to the Mercure Gallant, at the same time the editor contrasts the French model with the Gentleman’s Journal in terms of its tone and in reference to its female audience. Motteux claims that the material his periodical offers is not to include the “Flatteries and Daubing” that the editor of the Mercure Gallant is accused of, and, also in contrast to the Parisian publication, his periodical is “no less the Ladies Journal than the Gentlemens.” Motteux further assures his female readers that they need not fear to be “exposed to the Blush,” a tone of modesty that Tipper adopts for his almanac, in which he similarly assures that no content of his is to “raise a blush” (DM 1704, 2), likely in an attempt to distance his text from the rhetoric of burlesque almanacs. At the same time, as Maurer shows, through such strategies as dubbing his dedication to the ladies in 1693 a “Declaration of Love,” Motteux’s mode of

address “sexualizes his relation to his female readers.” Tipper acts similarly in his 1709 preface entitled “To the Charming FAIR,” in which he expounds on women’s physical charms as his inspiration, situating his verse as a tribute of love. These strategies in particular aim to entice and maintain female readers as primary consumers of the almanac.33

The similarities between the two publications further lie in the fact that though Tipper claims that the Ladies’ Diary is “designed on purpose for the diversion and use of the fair sex” (DM 1704, 2), while Motteux presents the Gentleman’s Journal as only “partly writ for them,” the publications aim to serve both sexes.34 Dubbing their collective readership ‘the Ingenious,’ both editors shape their readers as a “literary clique”35 participating in the formation of the text through responses to their literary offerings. They anticipate a dual reception, that of the reader-respondent with his or her literary contributions and that of a mass readership with its potential financial support. Moreover, both editors direct their readers with regular editorial guidance, often linking the selected material thematically through their editorial commentary, and thereby shaping an engaging rhetorical relationship with their audiences. This textual coterie encourages a sense of audience affiliation both for literary and social ends to expand and solidify marketplace loyalties. Wendy Wall’s observation about Renaissance audience relations holds true for the turn of the eighteenth century as well: “printing had to be imagined in ways that made it acceptable to audiences who understood and valued the text within the patronage system of manuscript exchange.”36

One strategy editors used to validate readers’ participation in the literary public, in particular through the means of such ephemeral publications as almanacs, was to introduce the text as

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33 Ibid., 1 (January 1692): 1; ibid., 2 (October 1693): 323; Maurer, “Chaste Heterosexuality in the Early Periodical,” 42.
an undertaking formed by a collective of private individuals, while also creating the sense of a subjective relationship between the writer and reader.

Thus, the two publications were also allied not only rhetorically, but in their aim to develop the agency of contributors. To strengthen his claim that his publication vindicated the cause of women, Motteux in 1693 reserved the October issue for the female sex. As in the case of the *Ladies' Diary*, it not only featured material designed to appeal specifically to women, but indeed consisted of “Pieces written by Persons of the Fair Sex,” such as a verse translation from the French attributed to Aphra Behn and a poem on friendship entitled “To Lucretia” by “Lady Withens,” and thereby provided a forum for contributor agency. Motteux, in his address to the ‘fair sex,’ elaborates on the practice of women’s writing. Illustrating Ezell’s thesis regarding Motteux’s modification of the coterie from a private to a public one, in this epistle the editor draws on his perception of the female coterie to comment, “you write too seldom, and only for your private diversion.” Nevertheless, he assures women that their writings “equal the best of our profess’d Authors” and deserve publication in a wider forum. Tipper, similarly, uses the rhetoric of effusive encouragement in relation to women’s writing, as in his 1711 preface in which he assures women of their “Success” in the solving of enigmas (LD 1). Catering to the female reader as well as writer was to consume nearly the entirety of Tipper’s almanac.37

However, Tipper’s partial adaptation of Motteux’s description of enigmas as well as his use of several of the sample enigmas published in the earlier miscellany periodical comprise the *Ladies’ Diary’s* most direct debt to the *Gentleman’s Journal*. Tipper drew parts of his definition of enigmas and his sample enigmas verbatim from the *Gentleman’s Journal*, which suggests that he viewed Motteux’s miscellany periodical as an inspiration and a source

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of material for this feature. Since Motteux’s enigmas were apparently even read by the
Queen, as his August of 1692 issue claims, Tipper’s adoption of them can be allied to his like
desire to appeal to royalty and the upper-class reader, an aim which I will demonstrate
below. While Motteux’s unique formation of reader agency, as well as his incorporation of a
diversity of literary genres, can be seen as an influence on the Ladies’ Diary, the almanac’s
introduction of the enigma genre is Tipper’s most vital debt to his predecessor. All these
features surely rendered the Diary popular during its first years in print.

The Inaugural Design of The Ladies’ Diary

Further insight into the forces behind the inauguration of this innovative almanac
can be found in John Tipper’s letters. Between 1703, when Tipper was conceptualizing the
Ladies’ Diary, and 1705, when its rapid sales were already proving the success of his venture,
hedescribed with his friend, Humphrey Wanley, a former Bodleian librarian at Oxford
and, at the time, a secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.38 Wanley, as
the letters imply, frequently acted as Tipper’s advisor regarding the contents and promotion
of the Diary. Within this correspondence a few concerns surface regarding the Diary’s
management, such as the publication’s appeal to women, the appropriateness of its content,
the necessity for an editorial identity, and the success of the almanac in the marketplace.
These letters are a significant source for this dissertation, since they explain many of the
complexities of inaugurating such a diverse almanac for women. As will become evident,

38 For further biographical details on Humphrey Wanley (1672-1726), see Peter Heyworth, “Wanley,
Humfrey (1672–1726),” in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison
2007).
these letters are key in illuminating Tipper's aspirations for his venture. They also explain his choice of a rhetorical approach for his chosen demographic of readers.

Tipper frequently discusses the *Ladies' Diary* focal readership as a subject for his letters, which allows us to draw conclusions regarding his intentions for the publication. He decides to make the *Diary* an almanac for women due to the fact that this novel concept, as he perceives it, could draw consumers to the publication. Introducing his addressee to the publication, Tipper emphasizes that the almanac is “designed for the sole use of the Female Sex” and that it is “the first Almanack printed peculiar for the Fair Sex, and under the Reign of a glorious Woman.” The following letter details the contents of the *Diary*: Tipper underlines such elements as a prefatory address to women, the commendation of Queen Anne through verses that were “actually spoken . . . at the Maior’s Parlour,” culinary recipes, medicinal advice, and “the Praise of Women in general” throughout the second part of the almanac. The *Diary* under Tipper’s aegis clearly aimed to include entertaining and informative subject matter designed specifically for women.39

As Tipper describes to Wanley the contents of his inaugural issue, he provides occasional commentary that justifies his selection of the material. He claims that the reason why his calendar contains so many “Particulars all at length” is because “few women make reflections, or are able to deduce consequences from premises.” Tipper’s gallant rhetoric in the *Ladies’ Diary* is initially shaped by such constrained notions of his female readers’ abilities, a rhetoric that defines and yet still appeals to and mentors the demographic he aspires to. The publication’s targeting of a female readership is in part achieved by its rhetoric of politeness and gender-based instruction. Later on in the letter to Wanley, Tipper

reassures him that his almanac “contains no Secrets of Women, nor any expression to offend the chastest ear,” thus highlighting the superior standards of the publication for his influential correspondent. Tipper’s description of the almanac’s contents in this letter also suggests what types of women he intended to draw to the almanac, from those who were in need of everyday advice, like servants, to those who at leisure time could enjoy entertaining stories, verses, and enigmas. In a summary of the list of contents, Tipper underlines that “tho’ it is not all fit for a Queen, yet it is all designed peculiarly for the Women.”

His editorial address from the 1704 issue of the *Diary*, which refers to a range of female readers, promotes the *Diary* as intended for “ladies . . . waiting-woman and servants . . . the married . . . the virgin . . . the serious . . . the jovial . . . mothers . . . and those that delight in gardening, painting, or music . . . in sum, the ingenious shall have something exalted to exercise their wit, and the meanest some subjects adapted to their level” (*DM* 1704, 2). Such a constructed audience speaks to Tipper’s aspirations, as reflected in his correspondence, to address the tastes and needs of an expanded female audience. The features of the *Diary* were, using Wendy Wall’s formulation, “generated in response to specific cultural problems” and answered constructed female interests.

Tipper’s letters to Wanley further elaborate on the gender-based audience that he originally envisioned for the *Ladies’ Diary* and present the key role that class played in the construction of this readership. Tipper aimed high—he refers to the Queen as a possible reader of his almanac in addition to “Ladies of the Court”; a few of his letters address his aspiration to present the *Diary* to the Queen and ladies of high social standing. Before the first issue is to reach the marketplace, he asks Wanley whether he would consider proper a dedication to “the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty.” Tipper believed that such an address to

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40 Ibid., 8 November 1703, 307.
the Queen, or else to "Lady Craven," the representative of the upper class, would lead to a surge in his almanac's sales. On several occasions, he also suggests that class-oriented motivations would encourage women of a lower status to purchase the Diary, bespeaking his comprehension of the battle of various texts for readership in the literary marketplace. Tipper shows his shrewdness as a salesman when he asks Wanley if he could persuade one of his friends to prepare a few gifts for gentlewomen in the form of bound issues of the Diary, which would "infallibly promote the Sale of a good number of them"; most women, he confidently asserts, take the wisdom of the court as their guide. This strategy signaled the range of audience intended for his venture. Despite Wanley's apparent disapproval of Tipper's aspirations, the Diary's titular page carried Queen Anne's portrait, which was prepared in copper on Tipper's order.\textsuperscript{42}

Tipper's letters, while including commentary on his focal audience, also relate to his editorial practices. Though the Ladies' Diary may appear to have been conceptualized and edited by one man, it was obviously a collaborative compilation. Tipper prepared the copy of the Diary using Wanley's assistance. For instance, he states in July of 1711: "I have done all the Calendar part, and indeed near all the rest but the last sheet. I have thought to put in some new Song, provided it was a good one, and never in print." As he further explains, he has mislaid his copy of "'Dear Albana'" by one "Mr. Weldon," which Wanley has given to him, and therefore asks Wanley for another submission: "Pray, if you have by you a very good song, never in print, or can procure one, to send it me per next."\textsuperscript{43} In another letter, he also asks Wanley to "correct the Epocha" within his chronology and requests Wanley to send him ideas for "subjects more useful and delightful" than the ones that Tipper proposes

\textsuperscript{42} Though Tipper intended to draw a primarily female audience to his almanac, not only women, as Chapter Four will emphasize, constituted its readership. John Tipper to Humphrey Wanley, 3 November 1703, 306; ibid., 8 November 1703, 308; ibid., 15 November 1703, 311.
\footnotetext[43]{Ibid., 11 July 1704, 312.
to publish.\textsuperscript{44} The collaboration between Tipper and Wanley reflects the practices of almanac compilers who frequently relied on such assistance, as we will also see in Chapter Three. Such an approach testifies to the multiple influences on the formation of the almanac.

Tipper's editorial identification is another issue discussed with Wanley. Tipper initially assures his correspondent that his intention to launch an almanac for women has been kept completely secret: not even his wife and "the most familiar friend" know about his involvement in November of 1703. It appears that his initial caution stems from the possibility of failure; Tipper did not know how the Company of Stationers would react to his proposed venture. Yet, as he further comments on his secretive undertaking, once it is launched, it will become necessary for him to reveal his identity in order to "promote the Sale of it, and to dispose of those [almanacs] the Company are to give to [him]." Though the Ladies' Diary's title page did not reveal the editor's name, Tipper did not remain anonymous within the publication. The fact that his name is not included on the title page may have increased the interest in the almanac in an era when the identity of an editor was a source of intrigue or fascination for readers.\textsuperscript{45}

As a master at Bablake Hospital school in Coventry, Tipper received a salary of twenty pounds. He also worked as a private teacher, boarding some pupils with him and regularly visiting others.\textsuperscript{46} As Shelley Anne Costa argues, Tipper undertook the compilation of the almanac out of the need to gain additional funds. Twenty pounds meant "half the annual income of an average farmer or shopkeeper, a fifth that of a greater freeholder and a tenth that of a lesser merchant or artisan." Moreover, Tipper had to pay half of his salary to

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., n.d., 314.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 15 November 1703, 309-10.
\textsuperscript{46} Capp, "Tipper, John (b. before 1680, d. 1713)," in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27468 (accessed July 12, 2007). See also the 1706 issue of LD for a list of subjects which Tipper taught privately. They included writing, geometry, astronomy, and music (Av).
his predecessor, Richard Butler. For the father of a growing family, an annual source of income was a crucial asset.\(^{47}\) Thus Tipper sought a regular source of funds, capitalizing on the newly forming niche of female consumers through his recourse to successful periodical material.

Yet, as Tipper’s correspondence reveals, the inauguration of a new almanac was at first an insecure undertaking, creating much anxiety for its editor. In the first place, as I have already noted, Tipper did not believe that the *Ladies’ Diary* would be accepted for publication. He did not even keep its manuscript copy, since he knew that the Company “would hardly meddle with a New Almanack.” Despite his reservations however, the Stationers accepted his almanac “at first sight.” Furthermore, contrary to their typical practice, they did not request a bond in the amount of approximately “1,000” in case the first impression was a failure. They additionally promised Tipper “one hundred of a present” if the publication was printed again for 1705. However, for his initial issue Tipper received no recompense, as was the Company’s policy. His position as the editor would be secured only if the almanac sold well. Tipper therefore often underlines his uncertainty in relation to the *Diary*’s initial success. Additionally, as he informs Wanley, the Company has determined that it should be “a dearer book than any they have printed this year,” the inflated price making him doubt whether it would prove competitive in the marketplace. Tipper thus believed that the presentation of the almanac to the Queen and gentlewomen would aid his cause. He also sent a proposal to the Stationers that he would cover the expenses of the copper plate and give them the 1705 issue cost-free, if they lowered the price. Though Tipper states that the offer had “no other intent but to conceal [him] self from the World,” his further words indicate that his major concern was the possibility of failure; he insists that

if the Company will not lower the price, sales will be hindered among the hawkers who are “the chief persons that spread an Almanack abroad, and make it known to the World.” His engagement with the mechanisms of the print marketplace is evident here.  

Despite Tipper’s fears, the issue must have sold well, since the 1705 number was printed in the next year. Tipper’s almanac met with surprising success in 1705—“beyond mine and the Company of Stationers expectation, . . . of 4000 which they printed, they had not one left by New-Years-tide,” as he reports in a letter to Wanley. Yet Tipper’s discomfort in relation to the price appears to have been justified, since with the 1705 issue he had to “retrench” the Ladies’ Diary by half a sheet to make it the same price as that of other almanacs. The Company seemed to trust from the start that an almanac for women would be a hit. Its tactic of initially selling at above the standard almanac price could have been in part designed to create curiosity among potential buyers; the following year, once the almanac became more affordable, the demand concomitantly increased. Tipper’s strategy of appealing across class-based interests proved successful and during his life the Diary rose in demand.  

Apart from financial issues with the Stationers, Tipper also mentions within the correspondence the pressure he feels to produce the almanac according to their tight schedule. This stricture constituted a serious problem for further editors, as I will elaborate in Chapter Three in the case of Elizabeth Beighton. Though Tipper thought in July that he had two months ahead of him during which to compile the Ladies’ Diary, the Company had recently written to him that he must now “send it forthwith, or it will be too late.” While never expressing the vitriol of Elizabeth Beighton in relation to the Company’s tactics,

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48 John Tipper to Humphrey Wanley, 8 November 1703, 308; ibid., 3 November 1703, 305; ibid., 15 November 1703, 310.
49 Ibid., n.d., 314.
50 Ibid., 11 July 1704, 312.
Tipper still evinces in these letters a frustration with the Company's stringent policies. Tipper's correspondence with Wanley testifies to the fact that the inauguration of an almanac for women was a multifaceted undertaking concerned with marketing strategies such as the selection of both captivating and high-standard material, the promotion of the almanac among the potential buyers, and the negotiation of the almanac's price with the Stationers' Company. Tipper's letters are a significant source in illustrating the practices of an almanac editor, as well as proving that Tipper indeed intended to direct the *Diary* to a reconstituted audience group for almanacs: women. They thus demonstrate the ways in which Tipper exploited the competitive marketplace to guarantee that his almanac venture would meet with success.

The “Feminization” of the Almanac: Women in the Context of *The Ladies’ Diary*

As I have shown in this chapter, traditional almanacs were frequently satirized during the eighteenth century; even Henry Beighton acknowledged that “ye vallu[e] of old Almanacks is usualy to a Proverb estimated at a low rate.” Derogatory comments on the genre emphasized its trivial and nonsensical content. To ensure competitiveness in an early eighteenth-century print marketplace reliant on established titles, with the almanac a subject of mockery and reading material becoming more accessible and increasing in variety, a new almanac required more than outmoded astrology to popularize it. As I have observed, John Tipper chose a rhetorical program of instruction and entertainment as early as 1704 to target an audience of women at a time when not only almanacs, but also periodical publications for a female readership, were still rare. Given the fact that during the seventeenth century what

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51 Henry Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 2 April 1739, BL, Add. MSS 43741:1r.
sold well were not almanacs for women, but rather ones that disseminated proverbial, and frequently mocking discourse about them, Tipper's almanac that explicitly appealed to a female audience was a significant initiative, highlighting the presence of the economic and intellectual agency of women. As I will initially discuss in this section, the *Ladies' Diary* allows us to determine the dual contexts of early eighteenth-century social history that enabled Tipper to successfully market such an almanac: increased literacy among women and women's association with the gentrification of periodicals. As I will also underline, the story of women in the context of the *Diary* would not be comprehensible without an acknowledgment of their actual use of this almanac, their involvement in print trades and thus their participation in the industry of almanac production and distribution.

The manner in which women were constructed as an intended audience in the *Ladies' Diary* was shaped in part by their growing literacy. Between the sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries literacy was increasing gradually. Available data suggest that in 1714 male literacy reached 45 percent and female 25 percent, and that in London between the 1670s and 1720s female literacy grew from 22 to 66 percent. However, as John Brewer and J. Paul Hunter emphasize, literacy numbers are unreliable due to a lack of solid evidence, which is particularly true in relation to women. Moreover, literacy depends on factors such as class, locality, and age, which are impossible to account for entirely in such calculations. Further, as scholars like Tessa Watt, Margaret Spufford, and Roger Chartier underline, many people learned to read before they learned to write or could read but not write. Brewer suggests

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that literacy be addressed from a different angle–how this purported rise in literacy was accompanied by “an increased provision of reading matter, a development that changed the nature of reading itself.” Thus a marked shift from intensive reading, or repetitive and minute inspection of one text, to “more varied reading, ranging from repeated and careful examination of some texts to the perfunctory perusal of others,” as Brewer points out, is clearer evidence for the increase in literacy.

This transformation is reflected in the layout of the Ladies’ Diary, as its readers could find texts within its pages that required close examination while other content could be casually and briefly perused. On the one hand, the Diary could be read for everyday information through a regular practice of consultation of the calendar and its array of common knowledge. This mode of reading was not based on intensive examination, but was rather a routine-based reading, patterned similarly throughout the year. Bernard Capp notes that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the chronology of major dates since the Creation was possibly the only source in which the less-literate read about history. Such enumeration-based texts could be still found within the Diary. On the other hand, the Diary reflected the more developed literacy of its audience, offering in its second part an extensive selection of material that could be either carefully studied or perfunctorily scanned during leisure time. Through its conduct narratives combined with instructional writings and mathematical problems, the Diary was no longer an almanac that was merely consulted. Its contents proved that it aimed at women able to examine a publication comprising a range of entertaining and instructional texts as well as to provide witty and thoughtful submissions.


At the time of Tipper’s publication, women did participate in the public consumption of a variety of texts, from almanacs to miscellanies and novels. Tipper’s correspondence makes it clear that he recognized women as capable readers already; he chose a wide spectrum of content for contemplation and entertainment that would appeal to their tastes and needs. For Tipper, women constituted an important segment of potential readers whose interests could lead to viable marketplace profits, among other benefits. It was therefore within the context of women’s growing access to a variety of literary materials that the *Diary* emerged.

Another context for the *Ladies’ Diary* publication is what Iona Italia dubs the “gentrification” of periodicals connected with their “feminization.” By their feminization Italia means that women’s presence as the implied audience of early eighteenth-century periodicals was considered to gentrify a genre; periodical editors attempted to “shake off journalism’s associations with a male, urban, trading readership who anxiously monitored foreign policy and the prices of goods and stocks.” The *Diary* was an early example of such a marketing tactic. The rhetorical connection of women with polite culture, and thus an apparent detachment from scurrilous forms of political intrigue, aimed to elevate the reputation of popular texts whose readership included women. As Italia remarks, an address to women was considered to “signal a high-minded political disinterestedness and preference for literary subjects, which would guarantee that the publication would outlast the scurrilous work of mercenary hacks, paid to inflame and perpetuate party squabbles.” The focus on a female audience was, in this context at least, more clearly a potent marketing ploy that capitalized on gendered rhetoric than a selective address.

Even more in the case of the almanac, long sullied by rhetorical vulgarity, fallible weather forecasts, and questionable political prophesies, as well as its links with what was

58 Ibid.
perceived as the coarseness of its trade and lower-class readership, such associative
gentrification was a rejuvenating tactic. One strategy to eradicate the common stereotypes
that clung to the almanac was this new association with the female reader. While gentlemen
were “a sub-group of male readers,” women readers were all regarded, according to “polite
convention” as “ladies.”59 The title of Tipper’s almanac itself indicates the potency of this
rhetorical convention. Furthermore, Tipper’s tactic of drawing gentlewomen in as an
audience and thereby forming a custom for other women to follow associated the almanac
with a well-bred type of female reader, and thus concomitantly reflected a policy of
appealing to the lower classes. Yet Tipper’s publication is not merely addressed to women as
a superficial tactic of gentrification; his almanac is also rhetorically attuned to the interests
and needs of particular classes of women, including, but not limited to the middle class, thus
reflecting Tipper’s aim to appeal to various types of female consumers to render his almanac
popular in the marketplace.

I argue that women constituted a vital segment of the audience of the Ladies’ Diary as
its contributors and readers. My research into the almanac’s readership during the period
from 1704 to 1753 shows that, with the exception of the first three issues when Tipper was
not yet relying on readers’ submissions, women contributed to all numbers of the almanac.
Thus it was a unique almanac that acknowledged women not only through editorial rhetoric,
but also through the publication of their writings. During John Tipper’s and then Henry
Beighton’s editorships, women’s and men’s submissions appeared side by side in the same
forum, placing their abilities on a par, irrespective of gender. In addition to women’s
submissions, evidence in relation to the almanac implies that, from its early days, it served
women as a record book. Almanacs, like printed miscellanies, display the fact that their

59 Ibid.
readers came from a wide cross section of the population; one copy was often circulating among a group of readers.\textsuperscript{60} An almanac could be one individual’s journal or it could function as a repository of information for the entire family. For instance, the Bodleian Library’s copy of the 1715 number was annotated by Alice Le Neve and her mother, who used the almanac as a diary.\textsuperscript{61} Personal notes begin in the almanac in 1724, after the death of Alice’s father, and continue until 1774. They at first record the accounts of Alice’s disbursements and boarding expenses. These listings of, for instance, the costs of mending her shoes and a new pair of stockings, were inscribed by her mother. It seems that she also made notations on the covenants for the lease of her land. Such remarks conclude for 1729 when Alice would have been seventeen. Further jottings were apparently made in Alice’s own hand. Inserted in these listings are records of rent paid by tenants, accounts of the crops sown on Le Neve’s land, and comments on allowances for tenants who built sheds, ditched, and brought Alice her coal. The issue of the 1715 \textit{Diary} served evidently as a family record book for these women in their attempt to keep their profits and deductions straight.

While women’s use of the almanac is possible to trace, the context for women’s role in the production and distribution of Tipper’s \textit{Ladies’ Diary} is harder to establish. Yet research into the correspondence of subsequent \textit{Diary} editors and pertinent scholarship into the burgeoning print trade of the early eighteenth century allows for a few observations. As Paula McDowell, Hannah Barker, and C. J. Mitchell discuss, women were involved at all


\textsuperscript{61} Alice Le Neve was born on the 17th of August 1712 in Wymondham, Norfolk. Her parents were Francis Le Neve and Johanna Stone. This information is based on a note included in the 1715 issue of LD held at the Bodleian Library and a record of Alice Le Neve’s christening in the \textit{International Genealogical Index}. The Le Neve family from Norfolk published local almanacs during the seventeenth century. See Capp, \textit{Bibliographical Notes}, in \textit{English Almanacs, 1500–1800}, 321.
levels of the trade at this time. Taking into consideration the fact that a family formed “an economic unit” in the early eighteenth century and that the times were marked by a “proliferation of establishments” within the printing trade, as well as that typically a master printer, together with his wife, or else a widow with a manager, would lead an establishment, we can determine that during Tipper’s time increasing numbers of women were involved in the culture of print. Typically, a woman could enter the trade through marriage, have a business bequeathed to her, or else serve within the trade from her childhood. Additionally, as McDowell elaborates, despite the fact that “most women printers, booksellers, and binders . . . were in fact related to male or sometimes female members of the Stationers’ Company, any woman could theoretically be admitted to the freedom of the Company in her own right by apprenticeship, patrimony, or redemption (purchase).” Though even widows were barred from purchasing the livery and therefore from voting or holding office within the Stationers’ Company, they could take apprentices and partners, employ managers, and hold shares in the Stationers’ Company’s joint stock. They could enter or remain in the trade to make a living. In the case of the Diary, after the death of their husbands who acted as its editors, certain widows were granted benefits from the Company, such as free rent and the position of the almanac editor for which they received an annuity. After the death of her husband Henry, Elizabeth Beighton, as I will discuss in Chapter Three, was hired as the compiler of the Diary, earning her living thereby.

Women were also known to serve as almanac printers, sellers, and hawkers. The *Ladies' Diary* was printed by John Wilde until his death in 1720 when his son, Allington, took over the business after his father. John Wilde’s daughter, Martha, was likely involved in the printing business with her father and in the production of the *Diary* before her marriage to Samuel Richardson in 1721. Working on the lower echelons of society, hawkers distributed almanacs directly to their customers; they were frequently women, old, illiterate, and even homeless, crippled, or blind.67 “Mrs. J. Drew” from Exeter, for example, worked as “a carrier or retailer of almanacks for the Printer of the Exeter and Plymouth Gazette” during winters until she died, aged 99.68 We can be certain that many women hawked the *Diary* during Tipper’s time and afterwards. Given women’s participation in the compilation, production, and distribution of print materials in this era, any new almanac title could benefit women from various strata of society, whether they were editors, mercuries or hawkers; in the case of the long-running *Diary*, women profited from one title over the course of many years. The *Diary* provided a range of opportunities for women from various classes as its consumers, economic agents, and self-educators; it was, among many possible functions, an entertaining and educational tool, a guide of practical information, a space for marginalia, a source of income, and a forum for publication.

68 “Devonshire,” *The Monthly Magazine; or, British Register* 12, no. 76 (1 August 1801): 84. J. Drew is mentioned in Barker (88).
The Records of Love (1710) and The Mirrour (1719): Early Periodicals for Women and The Ladies’ Diary

Though later periodicals for women, The Records of Love; or, Weekly Amusements for the Fair Sex (1710) and The Mirrour (1719), attempted to capitalize on the era’s interest in women’s improvement as did The Ladies’ Diary, they lacked the almanac’s level of direct and regular interaction with their female readers. This interactive character of the Diary was one key to its success at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and its permanence as a textual artifact beyond this era. John Tipper’s editorial allegiance to his female readers is thus important to acknowledge as a strategic approach that participated in the formation of a new reading public at the beginning of the century. As I will show, in contrast to the Diary, a periodical that not only welcomed but also published female readers’ submissions, the Records of Love and the Mirrour did not approach the female reader on the basis of their contributions. Instead, the female reader was only offered a compilation of narratives in the case of the former, while the Mirrour’s selection of material even dismissed the female reader.

In the face of the Diary’s phenomenal success and its popularity among the female consumer, which I will demonstrate in Chapter Four, it seems that Tipper’s tactics were of particular appeal, a new and unique form of marketing that upheld the almanac’s cultural capital throughout the century.

The Ladies’ Diary had been launched before the time when periodicals for women substantially increased in number. Following the Diary in 1704, the most prominent eighteenth-century periodicals, Joseph Addison’s and Richard Steele’s productions of The Tatler (1709-1711) and The Spectator (1711-1712, 1714), also included an address to women, a tactic which became entrenched in the popular press. Capitalizing on the success of the instructional short prose featured in such ventures as the Athenian Mercury, the Gentleman’s
Journal, and the Ladies’ Diary, the Tatler and Spectator influenced an array of other instructional-style periodicals for women, among them such offshoots as The Female Tatler (1709-1710) and The Female Spectator (1744-1746). It was therefore during the first half of the eighteenth century that the tradition of periodical publication for women based on instructional entertainment was established.

The Ladies’ Diary, being one of the earliest instances of such a trend, was successful in part due to, as I have underlined, its appeal to female readers. Soon other periodicals, such as the Records of Love and the Mirror, drew on such an approach. The Records of Love, a twelve-issue miscellany periodical addressed to “the Fair Sex” that appeared on Saturdays during the first three months of 1710 and was edited by Henry Carey, relied heavily on entertaining fiction with an apparent aim to “promote a Love of Virtue in our Youth, by insinuating Examples, and diverting Passages.”\(^{69}\) It has been noticed by scholars whose interests lie either in the history of periodicals or of the novel as it was serialized in magazines. They group the Records of Love and the Ladies Mercury as exceptional examples of early periodicals that specified women as their intended readers. The Records of Love is also dubbed a forerunner of early nineteenth-century magazines, such as the Lady’s Monthly Museum and Belle Assemblée.\(^{70}\) Yet my study of the Ladies’ Diary in relation to later miscellany periodicals

\(^{69}\) [Henry Carey], The Records of Love; or, Weekly Amusements for the Fair Sex (7 January 1710): 15. Records of Love was published in London. Quotations from the periodical are referenced by date of publication and page number, the pagination being continuous throughout the volume.

for women such as the Records of Love shows that the Diary was in fact a harbinger of such developments.

The Records of Love presented a miscellaneous format while emphasizing the entertainment narrative, for the most part in the form of conventional courtship stories. As Samuel Macey notes, the major plot line of the tales is based on the typical Restoration narrative in which the protagonist wins the heart of a beauty, marries her and thereby gains a large fortune. In these stories young girls are entertained with implications regarding what kind of man is worthy to win their hearts. Thus Carey’s periodical, as with other early periodicals for women, including the Ladies’ Diary, might claim to combine entertainment with instruction. Yet, though the editor may have felt strongly about women’s issues, he offered them a rhetorically engaging periodical rather than a text that presented real-world options. Though Carey’s sketches afford young women a glimpse beyond the world of marriage, they offer them no serious alternatives; outside of a marital state, women are represented only as engaged in dubious intrigues such as cross-dressing and drinking “Glass for Glass.” While such depictions were certainly not read as representing actual scenarios, they nonetheless fashion a rhetoric primarily restricted to the themes of love, matrimony,


72 Periodicals such as Tipper’s and Carey’s promoted the activities of the schools with which the editors were connected and thereby drew the readership of the local populace. The Records of Love was for Carey an initial opportunity to publish his songs. Set to music by John Reading, an organist and a composer, they likely served as entertainment for a girls’ boarding school in Old Bosvil Court which was advertised in issue eleven. The school was in the charge of Mary Carey since 1691, possibly Carey’s mother. Carey’s pastoral ode written in celebration of the Queen’s birthday was “Spoken” in the school “by a young Lady.” Similarly, in LD we find “A short Entertainment performed by the Blay-coat Boys of Babblelake Hospital in Coventry, before the Magistrates and divers other Gentlemen in the Mayor’s Parlour, upon...the Thanksgiving Day for our wonderful Victories and Successes in Flanders and Spain” (1707, B8v). Norman Gillespie, “The Authorship of The Records of Love (1710),” Notes and Queries 30, no. 6 (December 1983): 491-92; [Carey], Records of Love (11 February 1710): 93.

73 Gillespie dubs Carey, arguably, an advocate of “female emancipation,” on the basis of Endimion Gossip’s advocacy of a female cause. Women, Gossip notes pityingly, are “denied a Learned Education, of which they are equally as capable as the contrary Sex” and are instead restrained to “the empty enjoyments of Tea-Table and the Toilet.” Gillespie, “Authorship of The Records of Love,” 493; [Carey], Records of Love (28 January 1710): 53.

74 [Carey], Records of Love (18 February 1710): 105.
transgression, and intrigue. Carey thus seasons the *Records of Love* with entertaining variety rather than any utilitarian aim, paradoxically counseling women on how to save themselves for a beneficial marriage while concomitantly treating them as enticing objects of the male gaze. The *Diary*, in contrast, offered women more than entertaining rhetoric.

Another early periodical that claimed to specialize in writing for women, though with a different tone and effect than the *Records of Love*, was *The Mirrour*. It was published anonymously every Thursday in 1719 and also had a twelve-issue run. The publication has been critically neglected apart from brief notes in the guide to the microfilm collection that includes the periodical, where it is classified, together with the 1728 *Parrot*, as a “‘tatling’ magazine,” its focus being women’s follies. Though conduct narratives and poetry form elements of the content of this essay-periodical, instructional pieces written by the editor and the contributors predominate throughout. In the words of one contributor, the *Mirrour* offers valuable “Lectures on Deformity” of the age. Despite the fact that the first issue of the periodical has not survived, it is evident that the *Mirrour* was originally shaped as intended for a female readership; its second issue, devoted to the subject of women’s follies, announces that the editor’s mandate is to undertake the question of “the Weaker” sex by

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75 The authorship of *The Mirrour* has not been established. The periodical was published by William Rufus Chetwood (d. 1766), a novelist, playwright, and one of the major London booksellers. Chetwood published most of the new London plays between 1719 and 1722, and in 1719 served as the prompter at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. My research indicates that he at least contributed to the advertising column of the *Mirrour* if the whole was not of his own creation: the column advertises books published by him, such as Eliza Haywood’s novel *Love in Excess*, and Richard Savage’s *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Theophilus Keene*, along with his comedy, *Love in a Veil*, and a performance of Robert Howard’s *The Committee* for his benefit. William J. Burling, “Chetwood, William Rufus (d. 1766),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2005, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5247 (accessed January 9, 2008).


77 Italia defines an essay-periodical as a weekly or sub-weekly publication marked in particular by two folio pages and one long essay. The *Mirrour* fits this category, though in addition to the editorial commentary in an essay format, it also features entertaining stories, poetry, and letters from correspondents, and thus its content is of a miscellaneous character. Italia, “Introduction,” 3.

78 *The Mirrour* 7 (19 March 1719). *The Mirrour* was published in London. Being a two-page periodical, it is referenced by issue number, followed by the date.
serving as “a Champion for the Fair,” a familiar form of rhetoric from the *querelle des femmes.* The editor’s instructional rhetoric applies corrective paternalism to try to convince women to alter their bad habits. While the editor does assert that “Souls have no Sexes,” and that women are possessed of “Innocence, Humility and Modesty,” this state is in their “native Purity,” since despoiled by the “Growth of Folly in their Minds.” In the face of their weaknesses, he recommends “the search of Knowledge,” a common rhetorical concern of the era, but fails to provide any specific program of action towards this end. His essay is grounded in the exemplification and then castigation of women’s faults. Yet, at the end of this second number, the editor promises to make “Descantations” on the faults of men in the following issue, a classically querelle-like approach. 79

The third number of the *Mirror* begins with a statement regarding the female correspondents’ hope for an equally blatant condemnation of male frailties. However, this issue and the next one defer the editor’s promise to focus on such a theme, presenting instead a funeral announcement that arrived just when the editor was “preparing to give [his Female Readers] their Satisfaction.” Here the editor draws humorously on the battle of the sexes, neglecting to include negative tropes of men in favor of his other subject matter. In the next issue the editor persists in this tactic, pleading “an unavoidable Necessity of Publishing” letters from his male correspondents and prefers, as he states, to count on women’s “good Nature for [his Pardon]” rather than to run “the risque of disobliging these Gentlemen who are pleas’d to favour [him] with so early a Correspondence.” The imagined rapport with his female readers is rendered uneasy as the editor transfers his interest in the female sex to other subject matter. Moreover, throughout the periodical no letters are published as identifiably from women. As a correspondent assures the editor in issue seven,

79 Ibid., 2 (12 February 1719).
“YOUR Mirrour . . . had gone nigh to be broken, if you had not discreetly withdrawn it from the Ladies.” The correspondent justifies the periodical’s change in the subject, claiming that the instruction against ill-manners that the publication has undertaken would be of no further appeal to women, because they are unwilling to face their true “Likeness.”

In short, the Mirrour’s connection with its female readership is revealed as a superficial and even irrelevant relationship. While the Records of Love features entertaining conduct narratives mainly focused on attaining a marital state, the Mirrour’s instructional essays either satirize women’s weaknesses or else nearly elide the female sex as a vital readership. In contrast, Tipper combined the modes of entertainment and instruction to address the female audience, his discourse employing respectful modes of rhetoric designed to encourage contributions from female readers.

From the Ladies’ Diary’s inauguration, the publication contained features atypical to traditional almanacs, as I have already noted in this chapter. Two such core elements during most of the years of Tipper’s editorship from 1704 until 1710 were the conduct narrative and the instructional essay, popular genres in literary periodicals as evidenced by the Records of Love and the Mirrour. Yet there exist differences between the presentation of the material in the almanac and the two periodicals. First, the Diary was more inclusive in that it did not prioritize the publication of either of its types of prose offerings, but featured a wide range of texts. Next, the Records of Love recounts its tales with only minor editorial intrusions, frequently through a third-person perspective. Tipper’s Diary, on the other hand, contextualizes its stories with an appeal to women’s rhetorical judgment, a tactic which likely increased their identification with the featured narratives; as an incentive to audience engagement, Tipper often includes his commentary on the presented material. For example,

80 Ibid., 3 (19 February 1719); 4 (26 February 1719); 7 (19 March 1719).
prior to the story “Of the man that Cuckolded himself” in the 1705 number, Tipper suggests that single men are not the only individuals prone to folly, but that often those who wed show evidence of shortsightedness too. With such commentary, he mediates between text and reader to guide response rather than merely enticing it. Tipper’s commentary on the other stories can also be summative, serving as an incentive for reading the material. For example, in 1709 the following summary precedes a conduct narrative: “IT MUST be confess that Harmony and Concord between Husband and Wife, is greatly owning to their own prudent Conduct . . . and to entertain my Fair-Reader a little on this Subject, I shall here give one Historical Example of the Charms of true Conjugal Affection” (LD C3v). Conversely, Carey’s editorial approach mainly appeals to the readers’ curiosity about the development of the narrative rather than to their interpretive abilities; for instance when he points to a later issue for his readers, he justifies its further continuation with a brief generalization that its “Circumstances . . . are . . . numerous and surprising.” Tipper’s address to his “fair readers,” in contrast, suggests that he aimed to mentor them so that they would not only to relate to, but would also interpret the narratives he featured.

The wide array of instructional essays that Tipper included in his Ladies’ Diary is similarly arranged with attendant commentary. First, Tipper, unlike the editor of the Mirror, valorized the trope of the “fair sex” as a figure amenable to instructional guidance. At the same time, to draw a committed readership, Tipper shapes an omnipresent editorial voice that, as with the conduct narratives, encourages the annual engagement of women with the Ladies’ Diary. For instance, in the first number, Tipper concludes the “Rules and Directions on LOVE and MARRIAGE” with the admission that he would additionally “give the young virgin directions how to manage herself . . . but the sheets [he is] confined to, oblige [him] to

81 [Carey], Records of Love (11 February 1710): 92.
defer the prosecution thereof to [his] next” (DM 1704, 8). With such a promise, he directs his readers towards the anticipation of future features, thus encouraging and constructing a loyal consumer group while also assuring them that he plans to enable their further pursuit of instruction. He then fulfills his discursive commitment, unlike the editor of the *Mirrour* who betrays his rhetorical promises to female readers in favor of responding to men’s requests. While both instances serve as rhetorical strategies, Tipper’s, by taking a constructive approach to women’s interests and education, appears to have elicited a more tangible commitment from the female reader and contributor. The *Mirrour*, even though its editorial voice is a more compelling one than that found in the *Records of Love*, is not shaped to the end of stimulating textual interpretation for its female reader. Rather than estranging his female readership with disdainful condemnations, as does the *Mirrour*’s editor, Tipper uses his commentary to strengthen the aim of his texts and underline his female readers’ agency, establishing a relationship of discursive affiliations between the editor and the female reader designed to lead the almanac to marketplace success among women. Tipper’s *Ladies’ Diary* thus assumes a conversational arrangement between its material and its audience rather than an oratorical one that sermonizes without the aim of audience interaction, whether real or imagined.

Periodicals such as the *Records of Love* and the *Mirrour* often claimed to convey morals coupled with entertainment. Tipper’s almanac, though it revealed a similar editorial predilection, was, according to its bricolage format, more open to the inclusion of a variety of material from recipes, folklore, and astronomy to conduct narratives and instructional writings. More importantly, unlike the *Records of Love* and the *Mirrour*, through an editorial voice that directly addressed women, Tipper did not merely entertain his readers, nor
attempt simply to “reclaim them by moral teaching.” Instead, by discursively acknowledging their roles as readers with various tastes and needs, and encouraging their active participation in the formation and interpretation of the almanac, he highlighted his publication as an almanac that featured women as its primary audience members and contributors. Since it was only after the second decade of the eighteenth century when a “women’s audience began to occupy its own distinct place in periodical publishing,” the *Ladies’ Diary*, though ostensibly an almanac, can be considered a true precursor of the periodical press for women.

**A “Variety of Curious and Useful Subjects”: Spin-offs from *The Ladies’ Diary***

Between 1704 and 1711, John Tipper was involved in two other publications: *The Art of Reading* (1705), an education manual for parents and teachers, and *Great Britain’s Diary*, an almanac designed for tradesmen and businessmen with its first number for 1710. After Tipper had been serving as the editor of the *Ladies’ Diary* for seven years, in 1711 he launched a companion publication to his successful almanac. The new venture was entitled *Delights For the Ingenious; or, A Monthly Entertainment For the Curious of Both Sexes*. According to

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83 Shevelow, “Gender Specialization and Feminine Curriculum,” 150.
85 Tipper’s inauguration of *Great Britain’s Diary* attests to the fact that traditional almanacs for men of various trades were in vogue at the time of *LD*. Not designed for “Men of Leisure and Contemplation,” as Tipper’s first issue explains (1710, Av), its contents were comprised of traditional elements in the first part of the almanac, such as a table of kings and queens of England, the Anatomy Figure, and a description of the characters of the planets and aspects, while the second part was devoted to various particulars for tradesmen. For a discussion of the almanac in relation to *The Chapman’s Almanack*, a similar publication in focus, and Tipper’s foregrounding of novelty, see Costa, “The Origins of the *Ladies’ Diary*,” 97-99, 104-05.
Alison Adburgham, a primary motivating factor for Tipper's endeavor was the success of the *Diary*. The large number of annual submissions that Tipper received marked this success; in the 1711 *Diary* Tipper pronounced his almanac so popular that it required an adjunct publication to serve as a repository for his excess material, claiming that he was able to insert in his almanac only ten percent of all submissions. Solicited by his readers to publish their contributions, Tipper proposed a monthly periodical that would resolve the problem—"if not "with One, [he] may with Twelve Books a Year, Answer all [his readers'] Expectations" (*LD* Av). He also assured his readership of the similarity between the periodical and the *Diary* in terms of price and length, thereby suggesting that he aimed for the same audience.

*Delights For the Ingenious* is an interesting hybrid: a periodical initiated by the editor of an innovative almanac. Due to the fact that the new venture was a monthly periodical and yet also a partial imitation of the *Ladies' Diary*, *Delights For the Ingenious* is difficult to classify generically. The publication can be approached as a forerunner of the magazine, a genre that became well-established in the literary marketplace by the middle of the century. Like future magazines, Tipper offered a broad array of content—a re-introduction of the miscellaneous types of writings that he had gradually trimmed from the pages of his almanac and an addition of new elements. By 1711, the second part of the *Diary* came to specialize in mathematical questions, enigmas, paradoxes, and answers in verse; *Delights*, in contrast, was, as Tipper commended in his *Diary*, comprised of a "vast Variety of Curious and Useful Subjects, both in *Prose and Verse*" (*LD* 1712, 20), including not only stories, essays, and epigrams, as the earlier issues of the *Diary* were, but also answers to philosophical questions.

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86 Adburgham, "Fashionable Education and Lonely Scholars," 49.
87 For an analysis of the characteristics of the genre of the magazine and Edward Cave's periodical, see Italia, "Introduction" and "Inventor or Plagiarist? Edward Cave and the First Magazine," 18-20, 110-22. Cave, as Italia shows, was the first periodical editor who applied the modern usage of the word "magazine" for his publication.
both in prose and verse, and many other different types of poems, such as epics, elegies, odes, and pastorals. Also, in the manner of the magazine, the publication was based both on material already published and on novel offerings. Further, Tipper’s periodical, with the inclusion of tales that address themes of social behavior, reflected the contemporary fashions of literary journalism.

Yet Delights For the Ingenious has much in common with the genre of the almanac and indeed with the Ladies’ Diary. Though Shelley Anne Costa situates Tipper’s publication in the context of the period’s “culture of novelty,” and Tipper commences his periodical with a jovial verse emphasizing that the key appeal of the endeavor is its newness, Delights can be dubbed a Diary-based periodical, its first supplement and spin-off. While Tipper indeed aimed for originality, which his requests and publication of original verses confirm, it is also evident that he intended a greater inclusivity in order to prepare, as he had partially done with the Diary, an instructional and good-manners manual reliant on contributor submissions.

Tipper’s periodical miscellany was similar to the Ladies’ Diary in many ways. The title pages of Tipper’s new venture, except for the inaugural issue, carried a reference to its shared editorship with the Diary—“By the Author of the LADIES-DIARY”—thereby capitalizing on Tipper’s already popular output. The periodical also featured the core component of almanacs—a calendar for each month written in the fashion of the Diary. In addition to the inclusion of enigmas, paradoxes, mathematical questions, and answers, all in the manner of his almanac, Tipper also frequently drew on the Diary’s close relevance to his Delights. For instance, in January, he pointed to an exemplary question located in the Diary and revealed who won the prizes proposed there and in February he inserted an answer in

verse to the *Diary*’s Prize Enigma as well as answers by contributors to the 1704 enigmas from the *Diary*.89 Furthermore, Tipper’s editorial mode was modeled after the audience rapport he had developed through the *Diary*. His request for contributions was followed by an offering of prizes and he, on occasion, listed the names of his contributors.90 Similar to the *Ladies’ Diary* that encouraged collection through, for instance, the publication of serialized fiction and the catalogues of contributors, Tipper’s new venture was intended to extend its usefulness beyond a mere calendar year.91

Textual mentorship, as was the case with the *Ladies’ Diary* and his 1705 manual, was one of Tipper’s explicit intentions. Therefore the collection consisted of instructional essays, such as “The Method of learning the Mathematicks” and “Of Neat and Elegant Behaviour,” and informed on subjects that Tipper taught as a private teacher, such as music and astronomy. Also, Tipper introduced his readers to the diversity of poetic forms, elaborating on their characteristics, originators and subject matter in a light, entertaining tone. Through such content, Tipper constructed himself as a poetic mentor to his readers, shaping their intellectual perceptions of various genres. The readers could practice what they studied within the periodical either through their own submissions or by a further perusal of Tipper’s selections. The following aphorism from Tipper’s inaugural title page summarizes his intention for his educational manual: “He certainly doth hit the *White*, / Who joins *Instruction* to *Delight*.” Underlining the instructional purposes for his publication even more explicitly than was the case with the *Diary*, Tipper made it apparent that he designed this periodical for “Learners.” The learners that he addressed, as another fragment reveals, were

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89 See [Tipper], *Delights For the Ingenious*, no. 1 (January 1711): 28, 38; ibid., no. 2 (February 1711): 72-73, 75-76.

90 One of the contributors was Martha Fowke, who later became a poet of some renown. One of her two poems published in Tipper’s periodical was an elegy for another well-known woman writer, Mary, Lady Chudleigh.

91 [Tipper], *Delights For the Ingenious*, no. 8 (October-December 1711): 282.
comprised of "the Youth of Both Sexes," and therefore an ostensibly broader readership than in the case of the *Diary*, though, as was previously mentioned, the almanac's readership was not comprised merely of female readers.\(^2\)

A copy of the periodical held at the Lilly Library at Indiana University suggests that Tipper's intentions were realized. First, this specific issue was passed from generation to generation, serving in 1809 as a gift from a mother to her son in the form of a bound book. Second, notes included in this copy show that its user, possibly a young learner, studied the mathematical problems and enigmas included therein. The manner in which this periodical was used suggests that it fulfilled its intended purpose as an educational tool for the young.

A periodical and an almanac such as Tipper's ventures thus could serve as textbooks used as permanent rather than ephemeral texts. They functioned as educational sources due to their codification of modes of instruction. Such texts stimulated their audiences to practice certain forms of knowledge towards their self-education. It was this educational aspect that also contributed to their competitiveness in the marketplace.

Marketplace competition has the power to either undermine or strengthen a publication. In the case of the *Ladies' Diary*, once the character of the traditional almanac was rejuvenated by Tipper and Beighton, the *Diary* continued to stimulate other publications to emulation during Beighton's editorship and afterwards. In the middle of the century, *The Gentleman's Magazine* was the *Diary*'s competitor, publishing enigmas while criticizing the almanac's content. Such rivalry was underlined, for example, through a caustic attack addressed "To the Purchasers of the Ladies Diary, 1744." The pseudonymous author of the letter sarcastically remarks on the answers to Question 240 and on the following editorial

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\(^2\) Ibid., no. 4 (April 1711): 152; ibid., no. 1 (January 1711): 17.
commentary published in the *Diary's* issue for 1744 as misrepresentations of certain mathematical rules through which the problem was solved. The “Author of the Ladies Diary” is blamed for “many Errors,” and is characterized as lacking care in following current data, and as “superficial in his Quotations.” Also, direct references to the *Diary* in *The Gentleman's Magazine* regarded the genre of enigmas; the magazine's competitive position in relation to poetic submissions will be elaborated on in Chapter Four. *The Gentleman and Lady's Palladium*, an almanac initiated in 1749 by Robert Heath, was another publication compiled in an attempt to surpass the *Diary's* popularity by appropriating its contents, a case which will be discussed in Chapter Three. Moreover, Henry Season’s almanac, *Speculum Anni*, which he edited from 1733 until 1774, combined both traditional and uncommon features of almanacs, including enigmas and paradoxes with their answers; as Bernard Capp notes: “the enigmas, which [Season] included in imitation of *The Ladies' Diary*, drew replies from local readers.” This imitation of the *Diary’s* enigmas underscores the popularity of interactive genres promoted by the almanac and prominent in periodicals of the era as a means of drawing on contributor material.

Further, as the first periodical publication with a mathematical focus, the *Ladies' Diary* gained a particularly wide appeal during the first half of the eighteenth century and especially under Beighton’s editorship. After Tipper's death in 1713, the almanac promoted astronomy, mathematics, land surveying, and engineering, and thereby prompted the inauguration of other periodicals akin to it in content, such as *The Gentleman's Diary; or, The Mathematical Repository* projected in 1740 by land surveyors John Badder, William Whitehead,

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93 Supplement to the Gentleman's Magazine, For the Year 1743 13 (1743): 702.
and Thomas Peat. *A Miscellany of Mathematical Problems*, published in 1743 by Anthony Thacker, a teacher of mathematics and a contributor to the *Diary*, republished mathematical questions from the *Ladies’ Diary* as well as from the *Gentleman’s Diary* for the year, surpassing the two by accompanying the questions with their answers in the same issue. Another mid-century periodical, *Mathematical Exercises*, also by a mathematician, John Turner, in the fashion of the *Ladies’ Diary* incorporated such elements as enigmas, paradoxes, mathematical problems, and answers. Later during the century, Charles Hutton, a successful mathematics teacher, the chair of mathematics at the Royal Military Academy, and a patron of the study of mathematics, compiled a 1775 five-volume republication of the *Ladies’ Diary’s* mathematical and poetical parts, entitled *The Diarian Miscellany: Consisting of All the Useful and Entertaining Parts, both Mathematical and Poetical, extracted from the Ladies’ Diary, From the beginning of that work in the year 1704, down to the end of the year 1773. With many additional Solutions and Improvements*. He dubbed the *Diary* “original,” emphasizing the publication’s contribution to the “study and improvement of the mathematics.”\(^5\)

Such widespread re-printings and imitations of the *Ladies’ Diary*’s content demonstrate the publication’s success and the popularity of its content. Moreover, the almanac outlasted the various forms of criticism discussed at the start of this chapter: the *Diary* ran for more than a century until it was united in 1841 with *The Gentleman’s Diary* under the more inclusive rubric *The Lady’s and Gentleman’s Diary*, and was subsequently published as such annually until 1871.\(^6\) Such longevity indeed highlights the success of its textual innovations in winning a large and loyal readership.

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\(^6\) R. C. Archibald, “English Mathematical Diaries,” *Notes and Queries*, 11th ser., 1 (19 February 1910): 147. See Archibald for an enumeration of various mathematical reprints and supplements of *LD* which were published from the 1740s onwards (147-48).
In conclusion, Tipper aimed not only to entertain in his literary productions, but also to educate and mentor. Drawing on the growing fashion of an address to women as intended readers for periodicals, Tipper retained the almanac’s traditional features, expunged controversial ones, and introduced an entertaining mode of instruction through stories and lessons. Other elements that he incorporated, including mathematical problems and enigmas, also served this aim. As I have shown in this chapter, the factors that contributed to the competitiveness of the *Ladies’ Diary* in the print marketplace included Tipper’s selection of material and his rhetorically expressed allegiance to a female readership. The growth of a reading public, along with the presence of various spin-offs from the almanac in the marketplace, also had an impact on the almanac’s success. Though prognosticating almanacs were frequently derided during Tipper’s time, such publications still sold well. Therefore the fact that the *Diary* was immediately successful in the print marketplace, especially in the face of the novel features that Tipper introduced within the genre of the almanac, indicates the existence of a readership group eager for such content, the reconfigured audience that will be discussed in Chapter Four. The subsequent editor, as I will elaborate in the next chapter, constructed the almanac with a greater emphasis on education through scientific content, intending the publication for a more diverse audience than Tipper had originally envisioned.
CHAPTER THREE
Shifts in the Direction of The Ladies’ Diary: The Editorships of Henry and Elizabeth Beighton, 1714-1753

The Significance of the 1714-1753 Editors

As I discussed in Chapter Two, what established the Ladies’ Diary as a competitive publication under John Tipper’s editorship was to a large extent the novel character of the almanac. During the first half of the eighteenth century in general, the Diary’s success depended in part on the prudent editorial direction of the publication in the face of various complexities related to the genre, the market, and the monopoly of the Company of Stationers. I will show in this chapter how the almanac was integrally connected to both a personal and an occupation-related economy, a connection particularly marked in Henry Beighton’s editorial strategies. As it grew in popularity, the Diary was altered under Henry Beighton, its editor for the three decades following Tipper’s death (1714-1743). The key shifts in the character of the almanac that Beighton advanced ensured its public appeal and increased its cultural capital from that time onwards. Various re-printings and imitations of the Diary, also noted in Chapter Two, capitalized on his scientifically-centered model. In this chapter, therefore, I focus on Beighton’s approach to the genre and elaborate on the Diary’s development through the lens of his professional activities, his anonymous rhetorical stance, and his emphasis on the almanac’s educational function. I argue that in order to counter the unreliable character of the almanac genre and meet his self-promotional objectives, Beighton modified the almanac by introducing scientific content and enhancing its educational
function, thereby also fashioning his *Diary* in such a way as to raise its reputation and draw a broad audience.

During the decade following Henry Beighton’s death in 1743 (1744-1753), the *Ladies’ Diary* was to some extent under the control of his wife, Elizabeth Beighton. Her manuscript correspondence, which I examine in a later section of this chapter, assists in our comprehension of her editorial practices during the Company of Stationers’ monopoly as well as the complexities of her editorial agency. My overview of Elizabeth Beighton’s situation positions the editor within the monopolistic system of almanac production, a subject which has received little attention from print culture historians. Also, by responding to a question identified by Christine Haynes for future studies of authorial construction—“to what extent has the work of the author been shaped by collaborators and intermediaries?”—my analysis of Elizabeth Beighton’s correspondence exemplifies the core reliance of almanacs on collaborators. Thus, while focusing on the *Diary*’s editorial structure, I concomitantly acknowledge the role of contributors who frequently cooperated in the compilation of the almanac. I also examine Elizabeth Beighton’s use of a polite, and later an oppositional rhetoric, in her relations with her almanac collaborators and the Company, arguing that she was a competent negotiator of her editorial position.

The first decade of the *Ladies’ Diary*’s existence with Tipper as an editor was a crucial period that affected its public estimation. Similar to Tipper’s collaborative practices, as I will show in this chapter, editors working in partnership with contributors were indeed primary determinants in shaping the Beighton family’s publication and the new prestige that the *Diary* acquired during that time. As the increase in the number of spin offs from the *Diary*

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and in the demand for the publication indicate, the competitive status of the *Diary* during the Beightons' editorships was enhanced by the inclusion of material of high standards particularly within the field of mathematics, the almanac's reputation reliant to a large extent on the collaborative efforts of the editor and contributors.

“*Design . . . of a quite different Nature*”: Henry Beighton’s Editorship, 1714-1743

Henry Beighton, who edited the *Ladies’ Diary* from 1714 until 1743, shifted both the tone and content that John Tipper had initiated. It was Beighton’s social position as an eminent mathematician, land surveyor, mechanist, and engineer that influenced the transition of the *Diary* into a scientific resource and an educational textbook. Drawing from his editorial prefaces within the *Diary*, from surviving manuscript letters, and from available biographical information, I will discuss in the first part of this chapter how Beighton fashioned himself as an almanac maker within the *Diary*, a rhetorical pose marked by an anonymous editorial stance which foregrounded the study of mathematics and other sciences. My analysis of Beighton’s editorship attends in particular to the effect of a different editorial approach from Tipper’s on the *Diary*; Beighton indeed presented an altered version of the almanac for the public, one which expanded its readership base and educational functions, emphasizing concomitantly the interest of mathematicians in such a textual investment.
Henry Beighton's Perception of the Almanac Genre

The common disregard for the almanac was one of Henry Beighton's noticeable concerns in relation to his Ladies' Diary. Similar to many literati of the day, he disdained certain aspects of the genre, launching his own textual battle against the traditional almanac, vigorously opposing its rapid obsolescence and low status in order to promote his own product. For example, the fact that an almanac's service ends after a year is jokingly remarked on in a poem that concludes Beighton's 1715 Diary. Almanacs are here also contemptuously presented as making up "the dirty heap / Of Penny Ware" (LD 24).

Furthermore, in his editorial prefaces, Beighton reserves especial criticism for one key aspect of the traditional almanac: weather prediction. He openly argues against it, stating that since "no certain Rules for foretelling the Weather are yet known," prognosticators have no reason to make solid claims as to future weather conditions (LD 1717, Av). In his prefaces, Beighton also attacks such almanac compilers, the "Fortune Tellers," as he dubs them, whose weather predictions have not proven true and whose language is not "well understood." He uses as an example the unpredictably wet summer that has recently passed to provide support for his claims (LD 1726, Av). As an editor who bases the cultural capital of his publication on scientifically-proven calculations, Beighton thereby distinctly grounds his almanac in scrupulous empiricism. He disdainfully approaches the editors of almanacs also in other respects. In his 1723 preface, he dubs an almanac compiler "a Prognosticator[,] . . . a Quack-Doctor and Star-gazing-Politician," and describes the profession as belonging to a group of "mean" employments that "no Man endu'd with any tolerable share of Reason would choose" (LD Av). The new editor of the Diary, who promoted learning based on rules and observations—rational forms of proof—highlighted meteorological prognostications as utter foolishness and an almanac, overall, as an ephemeral publication with no permanent value.
His rhetorical dismissal of content that lacked any scientific foundation was a strategy which aimed to strengthen the *Diary*'s reputation in the print marketplace by affiliating it with systematized forms of knowledge.

To promote his publication as distinct from other almanacs, and thereby expand its cultural capital, Beighton emphasized the utility, unique character, and popularity of the *Ladies’ Diary*. Since the publication required the traditional format of an almanac, he justified the calendar’s inclusion with the claim that it provided “Service undisputable” on a daily basis (*LD* 1715, Av). Apart from offering this one standard element of almanacs, Beighton in many other ways attempted to make his *Diary* unique. Though in the first lines of his 1716 preface he defends the genre as highly esteemed by the “Judicious and Learned,” and as “encouraged” by “many of the greatest Men of ours, and the former Ages,” who “have in their own Names published *Almanacks*,” its positive reception depends on “how useful the Design is” rather than on its past reputation. Beighton immediately situates his “Design” in contrast to “all our Annual Writers” with an intention “to promote some Parts of Mathematical Learning amongst the Female Sex’ (*LD* Av). Similarly, he outlines the novel, scientific focus of his publication in the 1723 number as distinct: “the design of my DIARY is of a quite different Nature . . . My Endeavours [intend] to introduce our FAIR-SEX to the Study of *Mathematics*.” He demarcates here his own product from “every Thing” of the almanac “kind” (*LD* Av). Beighton’s repudiation of the genre as a promotional tactic is evident.

Shelley Anne Costa asserts that Beighton’s “reasons for promoting mathematics in the *Diary*'s public sphere derived partly . . . from a somewhat grudging need for financial
His position as a lower landowner "with a modest pedigree," along with his role as a fellow of the Royal Society, must have led to a heightened sense of the pressures of his rank. He was likely concerned that his public reputation as an editor of a cheap, suspect genre could diminish his prestige as a fellow of the Royal Society, a position that he held from 1720 on. Thus, to distinguish his *Ladies' Diary* from a typical almanac, Beighton imbued his publication with a discourse of rationality, frequently contrasting popular astrology with "a language of reason." Determined, as I have noted, to define his almanac as one grounded in a scientific discourse, in contrast to Grubstreet ephemera permeated with "trifling Disputes," his 1732 preface harshly reprehends such lower-class publications (*LD* *Av*). Also, he curtly dismisses contemporaries who "write out of Spleen, Pride, or the getting of Money," while his own mathematical focus excludes "Profit" (*LD* 1720, *Av*). To disavow any implications of a profit motive in relation to his publication, Beighton frequently refers to his editorship as a means whereby he can do his "Countries Service" through advocating a general interest in the sciences while educating his fellow citizens in mathematics (*LD* 1718, *Av*; see also 1715-1719, 1722, 1724, *Av*). As he underlines, the *Diary's* marketplace uniqueness is evidenced by its continual appeal—in 1724 he states that "this *Diary* has stood its Ground 21 Years, and neither tire the Author, wore out his Correspondents, or exhaust the Subjects" (*LD* *Av*). With such a claim, Beighton highlights the new cultural capital of his rejuvenated *Diary*, a publication that has proved a public success with its revitalized function as an educational tool and a scientific sourcebook.

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2 Shelley Anne Costa notes that Beighton’s annual income from his land, one hundred pounds, was "unusually low for a member of landed society." Costa, "Marketing Mathematics in Early Eighteenth-Century England: Henry Beighton, Certainty, and the Public Sphere," *History of Science* 40, no. 2 (June 2002): 212, 213.

3 Ibid., 213.

4 Ibid., 214.
Henry Beighton and the Mathematical Precedent

Typical almanacs, as I noted in Chapter Two, concentrated on various kinds of prognostications and common information for everyday use. John Tipper had already altered the content of the *Ladies' Diary*. His introduction of entertaining and instructional prose, enigmas and arithmetical problems in verse had reconfigured the genre. Henry Beighton, in accordance with his profession as a mathematician and civil engineer, shifted the *Diary's* content to weigh it more densely with mathematical material. Beighton, as his wife's correspondence with Thomas Cowper indicates, was not “concern’d in” the *Ladies' Diary* as an editor until 1714. According to Shelley Anne Costa, prior to his death at the end of March 1713, Tipper likely prepared the *Diary's* 1714 preface, which commemorated the almanac's tenth anniversary, along with certain sections of the *Diary's* material. One exception, as she suggests, was possibly the final sentence of the preface that promoted Beighton's focal material, mathematics, rather than Tipper's more generalized subject matter. It is indeed not until the 1715 number of the *Diary* that Beighton’s editorial presence is truly marked. While the 1714 issue echoes Tipper’s embellished prose, for instance, in his commendations of answers to enigmas, Beighton quickly introduced his own pared-down style, one suited to his programmatic approach to almanac editorship. By 1730, as Costa claims, “the collection of characteristics which Beighton had given the almanac was stable enough to constitute a new genre: the recreational mathematical magazine.” Yet, as I underline in this dissertation, such a generic classification is not so simple; the *Diary* was still an almanac published under the

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5 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 10 May 1744, BL, Add. MSS 43741:6r; Costa, “Inventing the Serious Amateur Mathematician, 1714-1754,” in “The *Ladies' Diary*: Society, Gender and Mathematics in England, 1704-1754” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2000), 302n2, 313-14, 314n11. Unless otherwise specified, the location of all correspondence of Henry and Elizabeth Beighton, and Robert Heath referenced further in this chapter is BL, Add. MSS 43741.

6 Costa, “Inventing the Serious Amateur Mathematician,” 298.
monopoly of the Company of Stationers and offered material that transcended its
codification as a mathematical magazine, Beighton’s rhetoric rather expanding the function
of the almanac than confining it solely to a mathematical focus.

However, in contrast to Tipper, whose publication encompassed a greater range of
subject matter, the course of mathematical study was indeed a paramount theme for
Beighton to the point that “a reader who judged the Ladies’ Diary on the sole basis of
Beighton’s own descriptions would not realize that it contained anything other than
mathematics, when verbal enigmas were as popular as ever and still comprised half of the
Diary’s contents.” 7 Beighton clearly preferred mathematical logic to poetic composition. In
the 1728 number of the Diary Beighton argues for an inclusion of mathematical questions
written in prose, rather than in a “Rhyming Gingle.” While he does not indicate that his aim is
to diminish the value of poetic compositions, since he also admits that a mathematical
question written by a “True Poetical Genius” is aesthetically valid, he still hopes to receive more
questions from readers who are not “Poetically inclined.” Encouraging the pursuit of
mathematics, the editor justifies prose compositions with the argument that instead of
displaying the “Airy Fancy” necessary for “rhiming,” mathematicians are “confin’d to
Demonstration, Rules, Axioms, Theorems and Problems” (LD 1). Thus, while for Tipper
arithmetical questions were “no other than Enigmas” (LD 1709, B5r), for Beighton the
dichotomy between poetic and scientific modes of knowledge was a transparent one.
Beighton considered mathematical questions as not only vital exercises for his audience, but
also the element in the almanac most likely to increase his venture’s reputation. As an
eminent mathematician, Beighton introduced a hierarchy of knowledge onto the pages of his
almanac in which mathematics took first place.

7 Ibid.
The *Ladies’ Diary* clearly shows the process of transformation from its role as a
generalist almanac under Tipper’s management to a scientifically-centered and educational
text under Beighton’s editorship. As Costa argues, Tipper intended to make his almanac
widely accessible and therefore offered mostly simple arithmetical questions. Beighton, in
contrast, substantially increased the difficulty of his mathematical problems. While Tipper’s
more difficult prize questions “had encompassed astronomy, trigonometry, and plane and
solid geometry, Beighton’s first prize question raised the stakes by demanding sophisticated
knowledge of mathematical physics.”8 Beighton’s almanac also included essays entitled
“Excellency and Usefulness of *Mathematical Learning*” (*LD* 1715, 1-4), and “Mr. *Lock* on the
*Mathematics*” (*LD* 1727, 1-2), as well as elaborations on the subjects of astronomy, land
surveying and engines, including a Prize Enigma in 1725, the answer to which was “A Fire-
Engine” (*LD* 1726, 3).

Beighton often emphasized the utilitarian function of such a scientific focus. In his
essays on engines, for example, he draws attention to their value and usefulness (*LD* 1721,
21), bewildered that no engineering manuals are presented “in a Practicable Method, as
might inform or teach others” (*LD* 1722, 20).9 The instructional objective of his almanac
was paramount for Beighton. Not only did he underline that the educational function of his
publication raised the *Ladies’ Diary* above the level of common almanacs, but he also sought
to entice the interest of mathematicians, among other types of readers, in his own almanac.

As John Money observes, in the eighteenth century “mathematical writing was not only

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8 Ibid., “‘Ingenious Ladies’ and ‘Sons of Art’: The *Ladies’ Diary’s* Mathematical Correspondents, 1707-1724,”

9 See Costa’s Chapter Four, “‘Reduced to a mathematicall calculus’: The Economic Background of the
*Ladies’ Diary’s* Mathematics, 1714-1743,” in her dissertation for a delineation of Beighton’s engagement in the
mining industry as well as his involvement in the construction and modification of steam engines. As Costa
shows, Beighton became famous in the circles of the Royal Society for having automated the Newcomen
engine (287, 292-93).
extensively spread; it also involved a wide range of occupations,"^{10} professions like engineering, mathematics, land surveying, cartography, teaching, and astronomy, all of which Beighton targeted with the *Diary*. The almanac was a response to the growing demand for texts promoting specific forms of knowledge, while also serving as a self-promotional venture for Beighton within his occupational environment, as I will show. Also, as I will later discuss, it was a text that participated in the discussion of female education frequently found in periodicals of the era.

**Henry Beighton’s Approach to the Editorial Role**

Most almanacs published during the eighteenth century were not written under the names of their current editors. As I remarked in my Introduction, the Company of Stationers hired almanac makers to compile almanacs under the name of their originators. When editing the *Ladies’ Diary*, Henry Beighton referred to its originator by his name; John Tipper remained the almanac’s founding father whose name was worth acknowledging, as Beighton did in his 1717 eulogy for him. However, Beighton himself did not employ a markedly personalized polemic in relation to the publication. He used the genre to disseminate aspects of his professional engagements through an anonymous rhetorical stance. In contrast to Tipper’s direct use of his name in his prefaces, Beighton did not mention his name even once during his editorship. Yet, despite Beighton’s self-effacing approach, his identity was known to at least a segment of his audience through the professional activities which he promoted in the *Diary*, its pages conflating an anonymously

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stylized editor with a private individual whose investments were both ideological and material, as I will argue.

Beighton’s gestures towards his true identity on the pages of the Ladies’ Diary suggest that he, like Charles Leadbetter, whose case I noted in my Introduction, played with the genre’s conventions of anonymity. Thus, Beighton’s namelessness was to some extent a conventional pose. However, while Shelley Anne Costa claims that Beighton’s “long-lasting editorial namelessness established the Ladies’ Diary as a magazine whose content derived from tradition (albeit its own tradition) than from the personal whims of an editor,” it is also evident that Beighton’s diminished emphasis on editorial personality constituted another key shift in the direction of the Diary: it paradoxically allowed his own selection of content to be foregrounded, as I analyze in this section. Rather than bringing the almanac’s editorial persona into the centre of discussion for the audience to engage with, Beighton pointed to the study of mathematics as an area most worthy of readers’ attention. Thereby Beighton further disassociated his product from typical almanacs by underlining its rational function.

Beighton, following familial tradition, was a land surveyor and civil engineer. His professional accomplishments include a popular map of Warwickshire, “surveys, accounts, and terriers of small areas,” drawings of county churches and manors, an improved steam engine, and tracts on steam power, engineering, scientific instruments, and meteorological observations. Additionally, Beighton was a practitioner of the lead trade, an investor in Heaton colliery, and an astronomer. He was also involved as a commissioner in the new system of enclosure, and was a fellow of the Royal Society, as I have mentioned. As my next chapter underlines, the Ladies’ Diary served certain scientific circles of mathematicians,

teachers and land surveyors. The publication was thus for Beighton part of both a personal and business economy. By promoting his own occupational pursuits such as engineering, land surveying and cartography, as I will further discuss, he sought to increase their public estimation among specific circles of professionals, though his almanac also aimed to circulate mathematics among more non-specialist consumers to increase their interest in such forms of knowledge and thus better sell the publication.

Beighton hints at his true identity a few times on the pages of the *Ladies’ Diary* through the lens of his professional occupations, particularly astronomy and land surveying. Disdaining astrology, Beighton lauded astronomy, dubbing this field “the most noble and sublime” of all “Mathematical Sciences” (*LD* 1716, Bv; 1715, 1), though, as Money points out, during this era a “very considerable overlap continued to exist between astrology, astronomy and the practice of teaching mathematics.” The promotion of astronomy in the almanac thus highlights the contestatory positioning of this field versus astrology, Beighton situating his almanac as distinct from other publications within the same genre that heavily relied on astrological prognostications. The editorship of the *Diary* allowed him to comment on various aspects of astronomy, including the causes and dates of eclipses (see, for example, *LD* 1715, A2r-v; 1716, A2r-v, Bv-B2v). The preface to the 1717 number mentions Beighton’s intention to publish a treatise on “all the visible Eclipses of the Sun before the Year 1764,” which he initially frames as a potential link to his real name. As Beighton explains, such a disclosure would prove his “Ability or Courage” to face critics (*LD* Av). Yet the following number provides reasons for the delay in this endeavor, such as his decision to wait until he reviews proper astronomical tables from Edmond Halley, a professor at Oxford.

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at that time,\textsuperscript{14} which will improve his undertaking (\textit{LD} 1718, \textit{Av}). The publication of the treatise being thus postponed, Beighton’s identity remained a secret, but only to a certain extent. In Costa’s words, the association of Beighton’s name with his intended treatise allowed him to “appear willing to disclose his identity without actually having to state who he was.”\textsuperscript{15} In this way, I claim, he could promote his economic activities indirectly, thereby disassociating himself from the publicity stunts of traditional almanac editors while paradoxically benefiting from the tacit knowledge of his achievements among specific groups of readers. Thus, within the preface, he retained his anonymous rhetorical stance, though he also suggested a link to his identity through an association with the famous astronomer Halley; he reports Halley as being “pleas’d to say, He would give us new \textit{Astronomical Tables}” (\textit{LD} 1718, \textit{Av}). Though Beighton resisted the connection of his name with the almanac genre itself, when he could hint at his identity through the lens of his other professions, or his professional relationships, he occasionally did so, his circuitous rhetoric serving him ostensibly as a means of occupational promotion.

Another profession that Beighton promoted on the pages of his almanac through a similar tactic was land surveying. He marketed his expertise as a surveyor in relation to his publication of the map of Warwickshire, thereby mediating between his commercial endeavors. The undertaking was advertised for the first time in the 1722 number of the \textit{Ladies’ Diary}, accompanied by an explication of Beighton’s methods of surveying, the map’s contents, scale, size, and subscription details (\textit{LD} 23-24). Despite the required solicitations for subscription, Beighton maintained his anonymity in relation to his publication of the map, only listing the names of booksellers who accepted subscriptions. Yet in the 1723


\textsuperscript{15} Costa, “Inventing the Serious Amateur Mathematician,” 302.
number, he announces that, despite his resistance to being uncovered as an editor, "an Affair I have voluntarily engaged my self in, as the last Page of this DIARY will shew, may in some Measure discover me" (LD Av). Nevertheless, at the end of the number, he simply informs his readers that the "Author has undertaken, and almost completed A New and Actual Survey of WARWICKSHIRE" (LD 23). Beighton obviously used such strategies to further realize his economic ambitions without sullying what he presented as his ideological aims of public mathematical instruction.

Bernard Capp asserts that almanacs served as self-promotional sources "for those who compiled editions under their own name." Such almanac makers as Edmund Weaver, a licensed physician and a surveyor, and George Parker, an astrologer and physician, were well known through their publications. Yet Beighton's Ladies' Diary, though styled as an anonymous endeavor, also served as a self-promotional venture for its editor. Beighton used the almanac genre to advertise his professional undertakings and thereby attract the readership of eminent savants of the time to the Diary. His anonymity thus assisted him in the promotion of his instructional methodology, a tactic that could advance interest in mathematics if the subject was presented objectively. This strategy was also likely connected with the gentrification of periodical texts through their "feminization"; in a publication for women, a disassociation from tropes of trade and commerce was a necessary pose. In other words, whether the rhetoric present in the Diary "feminized" the text or subtly promoted its editor's occupational undertakings, in the end it similarly acted towards a dissociation of the publication from commercial motives.

In the same manner, Beighton's anonymity was associated with his educational ideology: the introduction and foregrounding of the study of mathematics. In an age in

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which the declaration of editorial identity could be perceived as “vulgar and tawdry.”\textsuperscript{17} Beighton used the convention of anonymity to show that he, rhetorically disparaging any ambition, worked on the almanac from a non-commercial intent. Though he also admitted the “pains” that accompanied the almanac’s compilation (\textit{LD} 1715, Av), he styled himself as a leisured connoisseur who sought to attain public objectives, in contrast to editors hired to compile Grubstreet ephemera. While Costa claims that Beighton, as the \textit{Ladies’ Diary}’s editor, used his “economic identity to give meaning to mathematics in the public sphere,”\textsuperscript{18} it is also evident that he wished to construct mathematics as a sphere apart from the commercial, its practice superior to mere financial concerns, though the \textit{Diary} also subtly hinted at the potential profit that his publication was contributing to through such undertakings as his land surveying and cartography, as I have discussed. Above all, Beighton expresses his inclination for anonymity as stemming from an aspiration to present a purportedly objective approach to the \textit{Diary}’s contents.

This objective approach was designed to raise the public estimation of the \textit{Ladies’ Diary} and its scientific endeavors. Beighton resisted any tinge of sensationalism attached to mathematical pursuits. As I noted in my Introduction, the editor-author’s identity was frequently “a source of fascination” for the era’s audiences.\textsuperscript{19} Beighton claimed that he particularly wanted to avoid participating in such a trend. The 1715 number thus elaborates that if his “Performance [were] tolerable . . . the Knowledge of the Author might probably Invalid it, if not, neither the Author’s Name, nor what otherwise be said, could be a sufficient Guard against the Censure of those critical Persons, to whose perusal it may be likely to fall” (\textit{LD} Av). With this statement, he rejects authorial identification as relevant to


\textsuperscript{18} Costa, “Marketing Mathematics,” 212.

\textsuperscript{19} Iliffe, “Author-mongering,” 169.
the presented material. He later attributes the success of his publication not to his editorial presence, but to the value of the material contained therein that induces “the sprightly Youths of our Age to a Love for Mathematical Learning” (LD 1718, 1). Rather than “grasping at the Honour of commencing Author,” Beighton underlines that educational initiatives are the “most necessary Part” (LD 1718, 1). He also emphasizes the moral usefulness of the subject matter; the Diary is exclusively “designed either to better our Selves, or rectifie our Judgments and Understanding” (LD 1727, Av). Mathematics was, in part through Beighton’s anonymity, foregrounded as a disinterested pursuit. However, this constructed anonymity could also indirectly increase the curiosity of the common reader as to Beighton’s authorial identity and thus better sell the almanac.

Overall, Beighton presented an almanac which engaged more directly with its content and less with an editorial praxis. Near the end of his editorship the inclusion of prefaces was even replaced with other material as if Beighton had detached himself from the public purpose of the editorial role. Following many years of preface writing, during which he often commented on the subject of anonymity, the prefaces began to repeat themselves. In 1731 Beighton announced that “AFTER so many Prefaces already, ’tis not easy for to know what to say” (LD Av). Then from 1734 until 1743, the Ladies’ Diary shifted its tone by offering prefaces that elaborated on calendar computations, as well as other features “founded upon the Common Principles of Religion” such as tides and chronological tables, features related to “the immediate Act of GOD” and His “Promise” that “the Righteous shall be had in Everlasting Remembrance” (LD 1734, A2r). Once the subject of festivals and feasts observed in England was exhausted, the editor included a discussion of the utility of the “Arts and Sciences,” such as arithmetic, algebra, and analysis (LD 1743, A2r). The rhetorical emphasis on his adoption of anonymity was thus eventually absorbed by the presentation of
scientific material, although, at the same time, his position as a notable mathematician was
gaining in prominence through his foregrounding of such a course of study; this objectivity,
in other words, promoted the economic ventures that Beighton was involved in.

**Henry Beighton and the Popularization of Mathematical Learning**

At the time of Henry Beighton’s editorship, mathematical studies in England,
according to Teri Perl, were just beginning to rise to prominence. Such factors as the
expansion of trade and the growth of navigation since the Elizabethan period, as well as the
formation of new dissenting academies during the later seventeenth century that dominated
the field of practical mathematics, had enhanced the prestige of the study for men, even
prior to the eighteenth century. The later seventeenth century had additionally witnessed the
pursuit of mathematics as a pastime among the leisured nobility and gentry, and in particular
among members of the Royal Society, founded in 1662. By the beginning of the eighteenth
century certain schools for young men, like the Woolwich Military Academy, had introduced
training in mathematics, though the branch did not yet constitute a university subject.20 The
first “extensive ‘modern’ ” mathematical curriculum advertised was John Ward’s Writing and
Mathematical School in Leominster, Herefordshire, in 1742, which offered such
mathematics-based subjects as arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, and navigation.21

Nevertheless, such an education was not widely accessible; it was often self-training at home
through periodicals like the *Ladies’ Diary* that allowed for the study of mathematics especially
in the case of, but not limited to, women. As John Money also observes, the 1740s was a

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peak in the increase in the production and circulation of mathematical texts.\textsuperscript{22} The Diary thus participated in the expansion of the supply of educational material in this field.

Beighton claimed that he intended to promote such a course of studies for the benefit of his audience, which he specified explicitly as being a broader one than John Tipper's. While the audience for many almanacs was discursively limited to men of various trades, and Tipper, in contrast, addressed the Ladies' Diary to women, Beighton additionally targeted two other groups of readers in an explicit manner—the learned and the young.\textsuperscript{23} The 1741 number states that mathematics is instructional for both "Genius's of the most knowing" and "young Students" (LD 23), and in the preface for 1722, Beighton words his goal as the introduction of mathematics to "both Sexes" (LD Av).

Addressing an expanded readership in the latter preface, the editor dubs scientific studies "useful" as well as "applicable to almost all the Affairs of Humane Life" (LD 1722, Av). Further, within his 1733 preface, he summarizes the advantages of mathematical learning, emphasizing both pedagogical and moral aims. Along with developing reasoning and attentiveness, mathematical study can free the mind from "Prejudice, Credulity and Superstition" (LD Av). Mathematics thus had a "distinctively moral component" for Beighton, in Shelley Anne Costa's words,\textsuperscript{24} and as I have already noted; he claimed that its rational pursuit could elevate the mind above purposeless trivialities. Certainly such rhetoric differed from the mode in which almanac editors addressed their audience: Beighton fashioned his Ladies' Diary as a scientifically, and thereby morally educational manual, rather than a source of prophesies or common information.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 338.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 214.
Though “there is no evidence to suggest that mathematics was considered less accessible to women than to men,” especially since formal education in mathematics was limited during the eighteenth century for both sexes, a scientific education was not always recognized as a proper subject for women, as Beighton’s counter-rhetoric implies. However, young girls in boarding schools were educated in “Arithmetick” or basic mathematics. Tipper’s offering of arithmetical puzzles for women further confirms that such material was not necessarily perceived as inappropriate. Furthermore, Beighton’s rhetoric indicates that it was a neglected subject and one essential for women to engage with. In 1696, prior to the emergence of the Ladies’ Diary, Judith Drake, an intellectual and author, had remarked on the lack of serious mathematical education for women. An Essay In Defence of the Female Sex, attributed to her, points to a need to educate women in arithmetic and business, lamenting that once a merchant’s wife is widowed or a merchant’s daughter orphaned, she is not able to manage her accounts, a situation which brings ruin upon her business or estate. Beighton’s defense of women’s mathematical education can indeed be situated alongside such contemporary efforts as Mary Astell’s celebration of “the power of education to improve the condition of women,” Judith Drake’s challenge to “the usefulness of the privileged male education that legitimized male authority,” and Eliza Haywood’s campaign for women’s education as “a passport to full humanity.” Yet despite the widespread attention to female education in the periodical press at that time, rarely was any specific program of studies provided other than instruction in ethics and taste. Mathematical

25 Perl, “Ladies’ Diary or Woman’s Almanack,” 43.
26 [Henry Carey], The Records of Love; or, Weekly Amusements for the Fair Sex (18 March 1710): 175.
problems such as those the *Diary* included for common practice were still unique, serving as challenging exercises for women to learn from.

Beighton’s address to a female readership in regard to mathematics, an atypical move for a male editor of an almanac during his era, underlined the role that the popular print media could play in the scientific education of women. Beighton was one of the early modern promoters of scientific education for women, claiming that their “Qualifications” are “sufficient” to undertake such studies (*LD* 1719, Av). He particularly regrets the dearth of texts introducing them to “Scientifical Knowledge,” and deems such neglect as “a Dogmatical Humour in the World.” Situating himself as the women’s “Amanuensis” (*LD* 1717, 2) in the mode of the pro-female *querelle des femmes*, Beighton acknowledges that their “clear Judgments, a sprightly quick Wit, a penetrating Genius, and . . . discerning and sagacious Faculties” are in no way lesser to men’s (*LD* 1718, 2). As further evidence of his supportive rhetoric, the preface to the 1720 number ascertains that women “have of late successfully gone thro’ a Course of Mathematicks and Experimental Philosophy” as well as through studies in astronomy. He also expresses the hope that the *Ladies’ Diary* is proving “Serviceable” to women in aiding the growth of their mathematical skills; these exercises, he assures his male readers, are issuing as “mostly the Products of [women’s] own Pens,” lest they should doubt women’s able output (*LD* Av). Beighton’s advocacy of mathematical problems as fitting for women was a foundational initiative since, unlike Tipper, he editorialized regularly on the “fair sex’s” considerable ability in this field, determined that they should have equal access to the development of their mathematical skills. Through these editorials Beighton promoted mathematics for a female consumer, a clear, if unstated, investment in the industry that circulated educational texts for women.
To reinforce his cause, Beighton also devoted a sizable portion of his 1721 number to convincing his male readers that mathematics is a worthy undertaking for women. While men may think that such studies divert women from religion and family and are "not the Business of their Sex," Beighton asserts that, on the contrary, both learning and mathematical sciences will not only make them no less serviceable in the home, but also lead them to a deeper admiration of the "infinite Wisdom in the Creator" (LD Av). A similar rhetoric was later invoked by Haywood as a justification for female education, as when, in one issue of the Female Spectator of 1745, she claims that the study of "Natural Philosophy" enables the soul to better contemplate the Creator. 29 It was the development of such a public discourse of educational and moral edification that allowed Beighton to assign a superior value to his publication. The 1726 number emphasizes the unique function of the Ladies' Diary in that it has introduced "the Fair-Sex to the Study of the Mathematical Sciences in a Method, tho' unprecedented yet [he] hope[s] as Commendably, as it hitherto has been pleasing and satisfactory" (LD Av). The Diary was thus a rare almanac that persistently advocated for women's education, instead of, as I noted in relation to the Records of Love and the Mirrour, lacking a practical program of study for them to follow. Female readers of the Diary indeed may have benefited from this almanac, as it was one of the cheapest and most widely distributed publications that championed self-education at a time when education for women was limited. Certainly, women expressed interest in such modes of knowledge, to which their presence as contributors of mathematical answers testifies. Although the Stationers' Company drew huge profits from its monopoly in such educational texts, while Beighton capitalized on the burgeoning commercial interest in such material, and

concomitantly promoted his own occupational ventures, these economic motives do not invalidate the almanac's educational significance.

In contrast to Tipper who marketed a generalist almanac for women in his own name, Beighton highlighted the *Ladies' Diary*'s mathematical content through an anonymous and objective editorial voice. The anonymous approach that Beighton advocated on the pages of the *Diary* served the purpose of drawing the attention of readers to scientific material through which they could practice mathematics, while it also aimed to gentrify the almanac by its disassociation from economic objectives as a commercial venture. Yet Beighton markedly shifted the *Diary*'s character to also meet his self-promotional ends. While he introduced his audience of both sexes to scientific studies and to such subjects as engineering and land surveying, he concomitantly promoted his professional activities among certain scientific circles in England, capitalizing on the demand for such forms of knowledge. Due to Beighton's emphasis on educational goals, the *Diary* remained at the center of interest for many years after Beighton's death. The association of the mathematical discipline with the almanac had the effect of raising the publication's cultural capital. Under Thomas Simpson's editorship (1754-1760), material from the *Diary* was even used in college examinations.\(^\text{30}\) Also, as I showed in Chapter Two, the *Diary* was widely imitated by mathematicians and land surveyors who undertook similar ventures during Beighton's time and afterwards. In light of the economic success of such texts, the *Diary* can be read as one of the instigators of the marketplace strategy that created and relied on the rising demand for educational materials in the field of mathematics.

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\(^{30}\) Frances Marguerite Clarke, “Editorship of the ‘Ladies’ Diary: Simpson as Editor of the Ladies’ Diary,’ ” in “Thomas Simpson and His Times” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1929), 171.
The “benefit[s] of writing”: Elizabeth Beighton’s Editorship, 1744-1753

Elizabeth Beighton assumed editorial responsibilities for the *Ladies’ Diary* upon the death of her husband in 1743. In the second part of this chapter, I will analyze the ways in which she negotiated her editorial position in the face of the policies, arrangements, and demands of the Stationers’ Company. As I will argue, Beighton,31 reliant on her husband’s collaborative connections, developed various strategies to position herself as editor within the eighteenth-century almanac publishing industry, and particularly in relation to the monopolizing presence of the Company. This case study is based on Beighton’s surviving manuscript correspondence, primarily with Thomas Cowper, a teacher of mathematics, and, like her husband, a land surveyor,32 along with selections from the letters of the *Diary’s* subsequent editor, Thomas Simpson. It also draws on a 1746 poem from the *Diary* on her editorship and a 1760 biographical obituary of Beighton published in the *Gentleman and Lady’s Palladium.* Together, these sources show that though Beighton did not benefit from the economic possibilities connected to almanac making to the degree that her husband did, she developed strategies to secure the editorial position which offered her financial support on an annual basis.

Two critics have provided interpretations of Elizabeth Beighton’s editorship. Robert Bataille evaluates her contribution to the *Ladies’ Diary* on the basis of her correspondence, while Shelley Anne Costa, foregrounding the manner in which Beighton’s editorship has been neglected by historians of the almanac, and mainly by Charles Hutton in his preface to the *Diarian Miscellany* (1775), attends more briefly to the challenges that Beighton faced in her

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31 To avoid confusion as to whether my discussion concerns Elizabeth or Henry Beighton, in this section I refer to Elizabeth Beighton at the beginning of each paragraph by her full name, shortening it to Beighton for subsequent text unless further clarity is necessary.

attempts to maintain her position as an editor. Although Bataille usefully comments on Beighton's difficulties with the Company of Stationers and the financial straits she found herself in, he has omitted noteworthy information that, for example, clarifies her situation after Henry's death, provides evidence of her deepening financial and editorial troubles, and suggests her ongoing involvement in the *Diary* after January of 1753. Bataille also underestimates the influence of Robert Heath, her co-editor, upon the publication, claiming, for instance, that Beighton diverged from her husband's editorial practices by offering a new element titled "The Ladies Oracle, or Querist," while this piece was Heath's inclusion, as the correspondence suggests.\(^3\)

My analysis offers a greater variety of perceptions on Beighton's editorial position. Costa also includes misleading statements. For instance, she claims that the Stationers wished to arrange for somebody to "edit the enigmas" in lieu of Beighton, when it was in fact her correspondents that they wished to appropriate.\(^4\) Thus, my study of the letters aims to be more inclusive and attentive to the complexities of Beighton's role in the *Diary*, a position that involved such tasks as compiling, writing, and submitting material for the almanac, but was challenged by a range of difficulties resulting from the practices of the Stationers' Company and her co-editor, Heath, who acted against the *Diary* in the early 1750s. As I will argue in this section, just as her husband sought to and indeed did increase the cultural capital of his publication, Beighton sought to maintain these assets, especially when challenged by a ploy designed to diminish the almanac's reputation.

Contemporary female authors, such as Eliza Haywood, also faced difficulties in securing "a foothold in the material production and sale of texts" due to various social and economic barriers, as did Elizabeth Beighton. Haywood's agency, however, was a more


\(^4\) Beighton's manuscript letters also do not indicate that she managed, as Costa writes, "enigma-related correspondence." Costa, "Inventing the Serious Amateur Mathematician," see esp. 324-26, 329-37.
visible one; she functioned as an independent author. Beighton’s role as almanac editor was affected by the monopolistic system of the Stationers’ Company; she functioned as a hired almanac compiler, drawing on the cultural capital of the Ladies’ Diary that had been already established. Yet, similar to Haywood, Beighton developed strategies to “compete actively within print culture” and earn her living thereby. Like Haywood, she aimed to secure an audience for her publication and controlled her textual production to some extent. In brief, they both strove for the advancement of their authorial agency in the print marketplace.

One strategy that Elizabeth Beighton relied on to secure her position, as we will later see in her correspondence, was an appeal to public sympathy. This strategy is foregrounded in a pseudonymous poem included in the 1746 number of the Ladies’ Diary. Composed in the form of a sequence of answers to enigmas and addressed to “LADIES,” the initial lines record Henry’s death, commemorating his dedication to instructing “the FAIR,” “Philosophers, and Philomaths.” As the lines continue, Beighton, “his Belov’d” who “mourns his Loss,” is presented as if the Diary is, without dissension, her sole inheritance: “This her DIARY,” while her role is defined as that of a “Guide” and “Mother.” The sympathetic lines depict her as a wise, maternal figure on whom the readers rely (LD 15). During this era, often the most independent women were widows who had inherited property and businesses. For a woman in the book trade, widowhood could present the possibility of “increased [public] sympathy.” Assisting the afflicted widow, “induc[ing] each gen’rous Pen to join / [in] the Promotion of this good Design,” as the lines of the poem read, is the stated purpose of this expression of public compassion. This was indeed a potent strategy for Beighton to draw upon in relation to her almanac collaborators, as we will see.

36 Ibid., 105.
Yet the poem also hints at the intricacies of Elizabeth Beighton’s editorial position. The fact that she is presented as heir to her husband’s Ladies’ Diary in the form of answers to enigmas, a form considered particularly engaging for women (as I will elucidate in Chapter Four), along with the foregrounding of her womanly characteristics, underscores her status as a widow, rather than her authorial agency, as the grounds for her editorship. This piece, though designed as a tribute to the part Beighton played in sustaining the almanac after her husband’s death, thus depicts her more as a vulnerable widow than as a hired editor for the Company of Stationers. The poem further underlines that the “AUTHOR’s Task” is to select among the best submitted material to the almanac in support of Beighton’s cause. This statement reflects one key complexity of Beighton’s situation as an editor: the fact that the Company hired Heath as her co-editor, making the Diary dependent on their collaborative efforts to a large extent (LD 15). As we will further see, Beighton’s editorship was reliant on a range of factors, including the management of the publication in the face of Heath’s sly schemes. Yet she was a competent negotiator of her position through her use of various discourses.

Elizabeth Beighton’s Position after Her Husband’s Death

Several of Elizabeth Beighton’s letters relate to her personal and financial situation after her husband’s death. Beighton’s first surviving letter, dated February 14, 1744, imparts a tone of desolation after the “loss” of her husband and, five weeks later, of her only child, a son.37 As Henry “dyed Intestate,” she foresees financial problems and the necessity of

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37 The fact that in this letter Elizabeth Beighton grieves the death of her son contradicts the claim made by Alan F. Cook, the biographer of Henry Beighton, that she also had a daughter with Henry “whose name may have been Celia.” Cook, “Beighton, Henry,” http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1964 (accessed July 12, 2007).
altering her current lifestyle. Her pittance being barely sufficient, as she informs Thomas Cowper, she has applied to the Company of Stationers to grant her the “benefit of writing” by hiring her as the almanac compiler. Such a request was not easily granted, as Beighton’s case indicates. John Tipper’s widow received some benefits earlier during the century, but only due to Henry Beighton’s arrangement. After Thomas Simpson’s death in 1761, his wife was granted free rent from the Company and had the power to select the Ladies’ Diary’s compiler. However, it is not evident that these two widows played a role in managing the Diary. Clearly, after her husband’s death, Beighton’s compromised financial situation was one of the reasons why she undertook the career of an almanac editor, rendering her reliant on his venture in which she likely had been involved during his life; she thereby qualified for the position of an almanac editor, becoming one of the few eighteenth-century female periodical authors who lived on the proceeds of their publications. Yet, as the letter of February 1744 informs us, it was only with the support of “Some generous gentlemen” unknown to her, as she underlines, that her editorial position was initially secured, despite the fact that another person had “put in for it.” The opponent with whom she had had a “Struggle” was “F. Holliday,” likely one Francis Holliiday, a contributor to the Diary and Thomas Simpson’s pupil. His challenge to her editorship appears to have spanned at least a two-year period. However, Beighton’s position was granted due to some influential supporters, presumably her husband’s acquaintances who had interests in her assumption of

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38 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper?, n.d., 33r.  
39 As a widow, in addition to the annual pension of thirty pounds and free rent, Mrs. Simpson also received half of the copy money that Edward Rollinson, the current editor of LD, earned. She was capable of exerting such control over LD as to threaten Rollinson that she could “give it to some other Person.” The threat was strong enough to cause him to apply for leniency to the Company’s court once he was not able to pay the fee she had become accustomed to. The weight of this threat suggests that the widows of former editors may have had the power to select compilers, and thus determine the direction the almanac would take to a certain extent. Edward Rollinson to the Worshipful Company of Stationers, n.d., Records of the Worshipful Company of Stationers, 1554-1920, ed. Robin Myers (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1985), microfilm, 8520/reel 98, pt. 10, 1st ser., box C, envelope 7.
the role. Her editorship was thus initially dependent on factors beyond her own agency. Not only does this letter underline the importance of collaboration in almanac production that marked the publishing industry in this era, a fact I underlined in my discussion of Tipper's inauguration of the *Diary*, but it also speaks to the dynamics of competition that surrounded Beighton's editorship.40

Elizabeth Beighton's "disconsolate condition" after her husband's death is again evoked in the letter of May 10, 1744, in which she expresses compassion for an illness in Cowper's family, comparing it with her own "Sorrowfull State." The suffering that Henry's death has caused has not, however, met with compassion from those who disposed of her husband's fortune, nearly reducing her to a "meer Nothing." She commences the letter of January 29, 1753, nine years later, by commiserating with Cowper, who has recently lost a child, a situation that recalls her husband's and son's passing and her subsequent financial distress: "of £2300 I believe there is not £200 left besides the 140 that was forc'd to compound for [in interest]." As the letters indicate, one reason why Beighton became and remained firmly bound to her editorial tasks was her tenuous financial situation, an unfortunate aspect of Henry's legacy.41

On the basis of the evidence stemming from the correspondence, I argue that Elizabeth Beighton, in holding the editorship of the *Ladies' Diary*, performed the functions of a manager, a compiler, and a writer. Beighton's primary managerial role was to submit the copy of the *Diary* to the Stationers' Company by their deadline. The fact that she was responsible for this duty renders her the *Diary's* main editor. She also served as an intermediary between her correspondents and the almanac, receiving submissions and

40 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 14 February 1744, 4r; Costa, "Inventing the Serious Amateur Mathematician," 332; Wallis, "Holliday, Francis 1717-4x1787 / pseud Gamston Retford; H.," in *Biobibliography of British Mathematica*, 281.

41 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 10 May 1744, 6r; ibid., 29 January 1753, 31r.
making selections of material for the Diary, and thereby shaping to some extent both the content and the perceptions readers held of the almanac. It is also evident that she wrote astronomical calculations that were published in the almanac, at least at the beginning of her involvement with the Diary. As her editorship became more complicated by Robert Heath's schemes and the pressures brought on by the Company, as I will further discuss, Beighton's reliance on her own contributions of material to the Diary was reduced. Although in 1753 she undertook transcriptions of her correspondents' submissions, the material remaining a vital part of the Diary's success, her role during the early 1750s often seems to have been diminished to that of an intermediary between Cowper and Heath. On May 27, 1752, she writes: “Mr. Heath . . . is very busie about the Diary and woud be glad to have your Contributions.” At the same time, she refused to devalue her managerial role for the Diary, claiming on January 3, 1753, that it was in her power to obtain quality submissions so that the almanac would “neither drop nor too much Sink in Credit.” In order to maintain her position as an almanac editor, she had to navigate multiple discourses, including such ones that rhetorically situated her as a victim after her husband's death and ones that highlighted her as a capable and influential editor. Thus, while she needed to reinforce her co-editor's cause within her correspondence, she also had to maintain the Diary's cultural capital when he acted against the publication.

Heath's influence on the publication was substantial. He provided certain material which was compiled under his direction. Heath attended to at least the preparation of mathematical elements as well as the material related to enigmas, and served as a proof corrector in London. He also introduced new elements to the almanac, such as the previously mentioned “The Ladies Oracle, or Querist” that relied on question and answer

42 See Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 29 May 1746, 8r.
43 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 27 May 1752, 22r; ibid., 3 January 1753, 29r.
strategies. Elizabeth Beighton and Robert Heath thus acted as joint editors, though their role as such was not equally acclaimed, as we will see. In an era when the function of the editor was not clearly specified, it was usually the original compiler of the almanac that gained renown for the publication and was therefore preserved for posterity. Yet, as the correspondence indicates, Heath attempted to garner a larger share of the editorial acclaim; he soon pilfered material from the *Ladies' Diary* to lower its cultural capital and supplement one of his other periodical ventures.

Despite the disrepute that his editorship eventually brought, it is his name that figures on the pages of Charles Hutton’s 1775 republication of the almanac, while Elizabeth Beighton’s editorial role is disregarded, underlining the fact that Hutton, the chair of mathematics at the Royal Military Academy at that time, did not consider her contributions to the almanac significant. Additionally, there existed a high demand in England for the continuation of the mathematical elements of the *Ladies' Diary* after Henry’s death and therefore its outstanding mathematicians were mostly remembered, Beighton’s career generating little interest. Beighton’s reputation as the *Diary’s* editor was later nullified by the canonization of eminent mathematicians in relation to the almanac. As I have discussed in my Introduction, even current scholarly interest in the publication has remained centered on its mathematical capital. Heath, as did Henry Beighton, relied on public interest in mathematics, presenting his own doctrines on the pages of the almanac.

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44 Hutton summarizes the sequence of “nominal authors” during the seventy years since *LD*’s inaugural publication in 1704, enumerating them in the following order: “Mr. John Tipper, the original projector and beginner of the work, from the year 1704 to 1713 inclusive; Mr. Henry Beighton from 1714 to 1744; Cap. Rob. Heath from 1745 to 1753; Mr. Tho. Simpson from 1754 to 1760; and lastly Mr. Edw. Rollinson from 1761 till his death in 1773.” Hutton, “Preface,” in *DM* (London, 1775), 1:v.
Elizabeth Beighton’s Editorial Strategies

Elizabeth Beighton’s letters suggest the complexities of her involvement with the *Ladies’ Diary*, presenting her as a strategic business woman who constructed her public image with the use of multi-layered discourses designed to maintain her position and encourage contributor submissions. Pressures on her managerial position over the almanac evidently stemmed from multiple factors, the difficulties multiplying with time. Two primary causes of her anxiety were the continual need for timely submissions to the *Diary*, along with the insufficient means to compensate her key contributor, Thomas Cowper. Cowper’s contributions were necessary for the maintenance of the *Diary*’s high standards. Therefore she asks Cowper, in the letter of February 14, 1744, to continue to assist her with his astronomical submissions in the way he had regularly done during her husband’s life. Beighton also requests Cowper’s assistance during the same year when her continual “heavy greif” and the disreputable way she has been treated by her husband’s executors affect, as she claims in the letter of May 10, 1744, her ability to make correct astronomical calculations, inducing fear that she may “commit blunders.” She further counts on the speedy submission of these calculations due to the deadline for the copy of the *Diary* established at the beginning of June by the Company of Stationers. In a later instance, a letter of March 27, 1751, she expresses concern that Cowper is unwell and requests him to submit his usual contributions with expedition, since “the Stationers require the copy this year Sooner than usual.” In these ways, she grounds her rhetoric either in the mode of “an afflicted widdow,”

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45 The deadline for the submission of the copy to the Company was usually late spring.
or else a dependent editor, aiming thus to secure Cowper's participation in the almanac compilation. 46

Other strategies which facilitated Elizabeth Beighton's relation to her contributors included the rhetoric of lack and remuneration. The editorship of the *Ladies' Diary* was an annual source of employment, though the proffered earnings provided minimal recompense for Beighton. On May 29, 1746, Beighton's impoverished situation makes her feel "assham'd" when offering only as little as "a Crown" to Cowper for his contributions, and she hopes that she will be able to further recompense him in the future, expressing optimism at this early stage about their eventual economic gain. At another time, in appreciation of Cowper's contributions, Beighton sends him ten diaries which, as she relates in the letter of November 23, 1750, she hopes he "will receive Safe, [since] they are a Sort of goods which lose much of their value when Stale." Her gratitude towards her contributor was also expressed through the gift of a cheese. While Heath on occasion sends Cowper "half a Guinea, according to promise," likely for his contributions to Heath's various publications, Beighton's attempt to live by her editorship appears to be a constant financial challenge. On January 29, 1753, Beighton complains that her remuneration reaches merely ten pounds, while the Company receives "betwixt three and four hundred pounds a year (Clear gains)." Compared with her husband who relied on other occupational endeavors like cartography and land surveying, Beighton evidently had far fewer economic options to supplement her income with. 47

Yet Elizabeth Beighton found means to benefit from her husband's economic capital as a land surveyor and cartographer to advance her own relations with Cowper and support

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46 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 14 February 1744, 4r; ibid., 10 May 1744, 6v; ibid., 27 March 1751, 12r.
47 Ibid., 29 May 1746, 8v; ibid., 23 November 1750, 11r; ibid., 27 May 1752, 22r; Robert Heath to Thomas Cowper, 18 June 1752, 23v; Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 29 January 1753, 32v.
her editorial cause. Like Henry, she also used the almanac towards her own financial gains, though on a much lesser scale. First, she found a strategy to maintain a correspondence with Cowper by alleviating his and her own related costs to a certain extent. Sir Roger Newdigate, the fifth baronet of Arbury, for whom her husband had worked as a land surveyor, as a Member of Parliament for Oxford University at the time, occasionally franked her letters by affixing his signature. Postal franking enabled governmental officials to send mail for free. At the end of the letter from May 27, and in the next one from August 11, of 1752, she comments on her inclusion of a frank with her request for Cowper's contributions, and also on being impeded from writing a letter to Cowper due to the lack thereof. Beighton thus benefited from her husband's economic relations to some extent, finding a means through which to facilitate the correspondence with Cowper by alleviating its costs. Beighton's depleted financial situation also compelled her to search for other means of support.

Drawing on her husband's public renown as a cartographer, she republished her husband's Warwickshire map in the early 1750s. The undertaking was advertised in the 1750 number of the *Ladies' Diary* as prepared by "the late Mr. Henry Beighton" and sold by "M[rs.] Beighton" (LD 46). Such means of assistance as the franking of letters and the republication of Henry's map emphasize the presence of a business model reliant on intimate networks. Elizabeth Beighton benefited from these sources to sustain her editorial position as well as to aid herself financially.48

Yet such financial supplements were minimal as the correspondence indicates, Elizabeth Beighton relying mostly on her editorial remuneration. Not only did Beighton endure problems while initially securing her editorship as I have discussed, but it also seems

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that she experienced troubles in maintaining her position at the helm of the *Ladies’ Diary*. Due to such problems, Beighton began to present herself in letters to Cowper as an embattled editor, one victimized by outsider plots and by the Company’s machinations. On May 29, 1746, she faced an attempt to “overthrow” the *Diary*, commenting that she has “had trials to teach me resignation.” Then on January 29, 1753, Beighton argues against the Company, accusing the Stationers of trying to “use” her as they “please,” by demanding the private letters from her contributors in return for a “Salery” and “a Copy wrote” for her. The identities of the Stationers who make such a demand being unknown to her, she “call[s] it a promis from nobody.” Not unreasonably, Beighton underlines that as long as it is she who prepares the copy, nobody else can “claim the price.” She asserts her title to the publication’s management and its resulting profit based upon inheritance in the defense of her “authors right as Relict” of her husband. According to Robert Bataille, the Company had indeed aimed to “wrest complete control” over the publication in 1753.49

In response to the Stationers’ summons to forward her contributors’ letters to the Stationers’ Hall, Elizabeth Beighton states on January 29, 1753: “I Shal never order them to Send their letters there and pay postage when they have a free passage to me here.” She here phrases her opposition in an altruistic fashion: it is the contributors’ ease that she claims to feel a concern for. In an earlier letter of January 3 she implies that submitting to such a demand would mean “putting a Sword in their hand to fight [her] with,” a statement which rhetorically engages with a battle metaphor, underlining her defensive position in relation to her editorship. Additionally, in a letter of January 31, 1753, possibly addressed to Heath, she reveals that the Company is currently attempting to bribe her, informing her that if she forwards her correspondents’ letters, she will be reimbursed in the amount of ten pounds a

49 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 29 May 1746, 8r; ibid., 29 January 1753, 32v; Bataille, “Elizabeth Beighton and the *Ladies’ Diary*,” 23.
year, or else, the Stationers will replace her. Regardless of such a threat, Beighton remains determined to resist their attempts to “give up my frends to be . . . pull’d to pieces,” once again strategically foregrounding a loyalty to her audience. In fact, through her skilled maneuvering within a tangible network of contributors, Beighton secured in the Company’s view the “best” contributors, as she proudly asserts in the letter of January 3. Despite the Company’s threats, Beighton once more claims with confidence on January 29 that anything the Stationers publish without her participation will render merely “a poor Diary out of the Common Rubbish.” In her view the Company is better served by supporting her efforts than by publishing their own lesser version of the almanac. Akin to her husband here, she upholds the rhetoric of quality and superiority in relation to her almanac.50

Elizabeth Beighton frequently emphasized the importance of contributors to the advancement of the Ladies’ Diary throughout her 1753 letters. Defining her position as a protector of the Diary’s “Credit” or reputation, in her letter to Cowper of January 3, 1753, Beighton mediates between her text and correspondents, “desir[ing] the assistance of all who have been [her] friends or are willing to aid a widow.” Here she deftly sutures two discourses together in one plea, the first appealing to personal affinities and the second drawing on her afflicted situation. The Diary’s success, she is aware, remains heavily dependent on contributor support, especially now that Heath’s editorial practices have acted counter to the Diary’s best interest. Unlike John Tipper, who sought to enhance his Diary’s reception with his complementary 1711 publication, Delights For the Ingenious; or, A Monthly Entertainment For the Curious of Both Sexes, discussed in Chapter Two, Heath was determined to challenge the Stationers’ Company’s monopoly and concomitantly undermine the almanac’s sales, which resulted, in part, in his demotion, a case which I will discuss further below. Due to the fact

50 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 29 January 1753, 31v, 32v; ibid., 3 January 1753, 29v; Elizabeth Beighton to Robert Heath?, 31 January 1753, 33r.
that Heath no longer supported the *Diary* in January of 1753, even more than before

Beighton needed to remind Cowper of how essential his assistance was, especially in that she was “at an age past putting [her] Self in any other way of life.” On a friendly, though apprehensive note, she hopes that Cowper will keep his promise of “Never desert[ing] the Diary while [she is] concern’d in it.” As Beighton’s correspondence shows, the success of her editorship depended on such variables as continual submissions of material to the publication, sufficient funding to manage her correspondence and to recompense the work of her contributors, the timely delivery of the *Diary’s* copy to the Company, and her contributors’ support for her editorial endeavor. When Beighton faced insecurity and opposition in relation to her editorship, she narrated her story to Cowper, drawing on a rhetoric of friendship, dependence, promise, affliction, gratification, defense, and attack, while also using practical means, all in an attempt to keep her contributor attached to her cause so that he serves the publication as he had done during her husband’s management. Thus, during her editorship, Beighton drew on collaborative practices marked by various maneuvers designed to benefit her economic position.51

**Elizabeth Beighton’s Professional Relationship with Robert Heath**

Elizabeth Beighton’s story is not complete without closer attention to the conflict that arose due to her co-editor’s mismanagement of the *Ladies’ Diary*. This conflict resulted in a shift in the control of the publication from Elizabeth Beighton’s and Robert Heath’s hands to those of Thomas Simpson. Ruth Wallis, in her biography of Heath, explains that he was not only accused of filching exemplary contributions from the *Diary* to publish them in his *Gentleman and Lady’s Palladium*, initiated in 1749, but also that the final decision to dismiss

51 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 3 January 1753, 29r.
his services was made when he printed, in the 1752 number, two pseudonymous problems
"in doubtful taste." His conflict with the Company of Stationers, as well as, likely, his
scheme to use Beighton towards his own ends, led in part to the cessation of her editorial
position in the *Diary*. Simpson then not only assumed the editorship of the mathematical
section, but was also selected by the Company to replace Beighton as the almanac’s manager.
The collaboration between Beighton and Heath, in other words, resulted in a conflict of
interests, as I will discuss.

By 1753 the almanac was faltering, as becomes evident from the list of prize-winning
contributors in the 1754 number of the *Ladies’ Diary*, where Simpson, Heath’s scientific
rival, reports the dearth of even one correct solution for the Prize Question and merely two
correct answers for the Prize Enigma. He attributes the compromised cultural capital of the
*Diary* to Heath, whose aim is to “balk, and, if possible, to utterly extirpate the Ladies
Diary.” Loyal contributors who “did Honour” to the publication have cut their ties to it.
Simpson further presents himself as “a Friend to the Cause of the Widow of the former
Compiler,” while Heath is depicted as a “virulent Detractor” who, “without her Consent or
Knowledge,” abused “her real Friends” in order to “get all . . . Diary-Letters into his Hands,”
and then to accomplish a “Ruin of the *Diary*.” Simpson here adopts a similar gendered
discourse as Elizabeth Beighton. He appeals to public sympathy to frame Heath’s opposition
to her cause while highlighting his own rivalry. As Simpson assures his readers, regardless of

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(accessed July 16, 2007). Heath frequently attempted to evade the Company’s monopoly by, for instance,
publishing an almanac in French. He also planned to publish a mock almanac for 1755 in a language of his own
invention comprehensible to English. He complains in his letter dated March 15, 1753, that there exists no real
“Security of an Author’s Property,” the Stationers being able to buy copies from authors as they wish, even
after an author has already “matured a Plan” regarding his publication for them. Robert Heath to Thomas
Cowper, 15 March 1753, 38r; ibid., 28 March 1754, 48r.

53 The dispute between Heath and Simpson regarded their conflicting theories of the doctrine of fluxions.
For details concerning the controversy see Clarke, “Publication of The Doctrine and Application of
Fluxions,” 150-61.
Heath’s replacement, Beighton is still gratified with the same “Stipend” as her husband “for compiling the Work” (LD 48). But by this point, despite Heath’s initial support of Beighton’s editorial position, his actions had led to his demotion and then to her replacement by Simpson in 1753. As I will discuss, Heath’s attitude towards Beighton’s position as the Diary’s compiler was reliant on his private interests.

Heath’s approach to Elizabeth Beighton’s position is indicated in several letters as well as an obituary that he published after her death. It was Heath’s depiction of her character in his obituary that presumably reinforced the public image of Beighton as merely that of a widow who received benefits from the Ladies’ Diary after her husband’s death. On January 3, 1753, Beighton indicates in her letter to Thomas Cowper that Heath publicly “declines having any more to do” with the Diary. Despite his involvement in the editorial direction of the Diary until 1752, once he has been dismissed, Beighton expects him to “Satirise the Diary.” This fear arises from his earlier assurance, as she reports, that though he would “never be an enemy” to her, he could certainly prove to be “a bitter one to the Diary.” Beighton well understands that this dissociation of the producer from the product is spurious: the Diary is her only “Subsistance” and therefore, as she asserts, Heath’s attack on the publication and his expression of friendship towards her ironically constitute “Consistant things.” In her assessment, Heath merely assumes a rhetoric of friendship, while using the almanac as a vehicle for his own advancement. 54

A dismissive attitude towards Elizabeth Beighton’s editorship is noticeable in Heath’s letter of January 21, 1753, in which he takes credit for having more than doubled the sales of the almanac, wondering ironically as to “how much the Stationers next Author will sink it.” This statement undermines Beighton’s role as in any way essential for the

54 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 3 January 1753, 29v.
management and success of the publication during this period. Furthermore, with his *Palladium*, which he discusses as “better received,” and of which “there is more in Quantity,” Heath aims to profit by diminishing the sales of the Company’s *Diary*. Attempting to justify his mistreatment of Beighton, he states that he “wou’d serve [her], cou’d [he] do it,” but his own quest for fame compels him to choose to rival the publication rather than help Beighton strengthen her position.\(^{55}\)

Heath’s further promise to “do all in [his] Power to serve Mrs. Beighton, indepe[nden]t of [the Stationers]” again establishes a false separation of the female editor from the material conditions of her editorship, along with his assertion that his actions provide the optimal assistance to Beighton, albeit as a poor widow and not as an almanac editor. In one of his following letters to Cowper, dated February 27, 1753, Heath urges Cowper to join him in preparing “better Diary [submissions] . . . for the Benefit of a Widow by the late Author of the Ladies Diary.” Though Heath claims generous motives, his proposal merely underscores his denigration of Beighton to the topos of a needy widow dependent on contributions, while he aims to urge Cowper to contribute to his ventures.\(^{56}\)

Heath’s public assessment of Elizabeth Beighton, a biographical obituary published in his *Palladium* in 1760 after her death on October 12, 1759, depicts Beighton in terms similar to the previously discussed poem from the *Ladies’ Diary’s* 1746 number, as a “constant and affectionate Wife” and a beneficiary of the *Diary* after her husband’s death. The obituary, entitled “A TRUE CHARACTER. By the AUTHOR,” emphasizes Beighton as an exemplary woman “eminent for her . . . Conduct, Prudence, Piety, and Morals!” This announcement depicts Beighton primarily as a “Relief” of her husband and a “Proprietor” of the almanac who, due to her “disinterested Friendship and Benevolence,” served as a “public

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\(^{55}\) Heath’s statement—“When you commence public Author expect Anxieties greater than the Fame you enjoy,” compounds the sense that it is his desire for public esteem that drives his publication ventures. Robert Heath to Thomas Cowper, 21 January 1753, 30r.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 21 January 1753, 30r, v; ibid., 27 February 1753, 36r-v.
Example.” Her “two huge Manuscript Volumes” of correspondence are mentioned as reflecting her “Merit and Virtue.” It is thus mainly her moral character that Heath foregrounds here, framing her as a “NOBLE PATTERN OF HER SEX,” and lauding her for the delight she took in “the Promotion of human Happiness.” However, when drawing attention to the Diary, Heath does give credit to the support of her friends, her “sprightly Talent,” and “solid Judgment,” that made her establish an “unrivalled Reputation” for the almanac. He also comments on the “private and public Advantages” that her publication contributed to, attending to her editorial and economic agency. He underlines that she was not only a writer, but also an active participant in the print culture of her times who understood the mechanisms of the Stationers’ Company. Yet Heath’s tribute was almost wholly framed according to a gendered rhetoric that considered Beighton in terms of her character, not her editorial abilities. This piece thereby served Heath as an expression of his support for the cause of the widow and thus of the Diary, which additionally could work in favor of his own publication.57

As Elizabeth Beighton once noted herself, her situation would have been “worse,” if not for her “writing and reading,” especially since she had lived alone for “Several years.”58 The management of the almanac presented her with considerable intellectual nourishment in addition to financial support. Yet it was also marked by the rivalries attendant on such a public profession. While other editors, to a certain extent, may have thrived on the competitive environment of almanac production, especially as it related to the promotion of their occupations, from surveying to astronomy, Beighton’s correspondence does not imply

58 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 3 January 1753, 29v.
that she benefited from such a milieu other than through earning her annual remuneration of ten pounds. Heath’s mismanagement of the Ladies’ Diary bore certain consequences for Beighton’s situation: though she received an annuity after his demotion, she was still dismissed from her position as a result and Simpson assumed her duties. Earlier than this, Heath’s actions increased her anxiety, as she needed to maintain her editorial post, the publication of the almanac providing her with an income. Yet despite all the difficulties that Heath’s sly schemes against the Diary caused, Beighton was an influential editor in the sphere of almanac publication; until Heath compromised its cultural capital, the reputation of the Diary to a large extent depended on her astute ability to garner the best contributors and to maintain the loyalty of influential supporters.

Polite Discourse and The Ladies’ Diary’s Production in the Early 1750s

The exigencies of the Ladies’ Diary’s production entailed the use of various rhetorical modes, as I have already discussed. In her correspondence, while dealing with a multitude of editorial and financial pressures in the face of the Stationers’ Company’s arrangements and Robert Heath’s schemes, Elizabeth Beighton often relies on conventions of politeness and amity. They shed further light on her editorial tactics and suggest that she may have strategically refused to acknowledge the realities of her almanac’s situation as they stood in the early 1750s, choosing rather to highlight her capable management of and influence over the publication. On the one hand, as I have analyzed, Beighton’s polite discourse was designed to draw the support of influential correspondents and express gratitude for their submissions, as her competitive position at the helm of the Ladies’ Diary required such a delicate rhetoric. On the other hand, Beighton’s polite tone became strained with time under
the pressure of obstacles to her continued editorship, implying a sense that the true situation
was being kept from her. An analysis of her battle over the control of the Diary, marked by
her shift from the discourse of gentility to a more defensive mode, allows for a better grasp
of the conflict of interests in relation to the almanac.

Elizabeth Beighton’s polite rhetoric was directed not only towards Thomas Cowper,
to whom she was grateful for his continual collaboration, but also towards Heath, with
whom she needed to maintain a partnership. Though Beighton critiques Heath’s abilities as
“fall[ing] Short” early in the correspondence, her rhetorical expression of gratitude to him
comes initially from “his pleading with the company of Stationers,” which enables her to
continue to compile the copy. Her letter to Cowper of August 11, 1752, further assesses
Heath as her “most Steady and best of friends,” despite the fact that during the whole period
of her editorship she has only seen him twice. Though in need of reliable contributors to her
“Cause,” namely Cowper and Heath, who collaborated together in terms of other
publications as well as the material included in the Ladies’ Diary, the almanac being her
“Chief Support,” Beighton’s message from August sounds no note of desperation. She does
not overtly betray a suspicion that Heath’s new publication, The Gentleman and Lady’s
Palladium, advertised in the 1749 number of the Diary merely as its “Appendix” (LD 32),
could endanger the sales of the almanac or her editorship. Rather, she continues to validate
her collaboration with him, describing him as “a Man of Sound Morals and generous
disposition,” and the production of the Diary as an equally valid publication to Heath’s other
projects. the “Diary Palladium and French almanack.” However, Heath’s statement in his
letter to Cowper, written possibly in 1753, expresses his certainty that his Palladium will “far
excell the Diary,” while he also mentions that the Company of Stationers is “apprehensive
the Palladium is dangerous to the Diary.” Beighton’s continued mode of politeness in
reference to Heath considers their collaboration as mutually supportive, reinforcing her position as an influential manager of the publication who nonetheless continues to rely on his support.59

Refusing to admit to an awareness of Heath’s sly editorial intentions, Elizabeth Beighton’s rhetorical stance of gratitude towards Heath lasts until 1753. Her initially unquestioning tone towards his management of the publication is still present in a letter of January 3, 1753. Though she reads in “publick papers,” that Heath has left the *Ladies’ Diary* of his own accord, as “his Spirit cannot bear the treatment of the Stationers (or rather their Agents) and Printers,” and though, as she admits, Cowper indicated to her Heath’s intentions to decline his involvement in the publication, she asserts that she cannot “imagion it wou’d be So!” Even once she reads in the papers about Heath’s decision to withdraw his contributions to the publication, she claims that she will remain his friend as he has proved one to her. She declares that she will bear his “hot temper” in a “Calm Serene Manner” due to the fact that her “Sedentary life has need of all the tranquility it Can.” Beighton’s story indicates that she uses a conciliatory approach; knowing that Cowper continues to assist Heath with the *Palladium* and other publications, she advances a rhetoric of detachment to maintain her relationship with the two in order to secure her own source of employment.60

Despite her prior expressions of politeness and amity towards Heath, Elizabeth Beighton openly criticizes him on January 29, 1753. She drops her polite mode of discourse when he decides not to select a winner for the prizes. He leaves her with “a useless Stock [of

59 Ibid., 10 May 1744, 6v; ibid., 11 August 1752, 24r; Robert Heath to Thomas Cowper, n.d., 28r, v.
60 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 3 January 1753, 29r, v. That Beighton was initially unaware of Heath’s scheme is indicated in a letter written by Simpson to her, fragments of which Clarke includes in her analysis of the relations between Heath and Simpson. Simpson explains here that Heath’s handling of *LD* was scandalous and abusive to the point of the near discontinuance of the publication. As he informs Beighton, if a replacement for Heath had not been found, the next number of *LD* would have been suppressed by the Bishop of London, who acted as the Company’s patron. Thomas Simpson to Elizabeth Beighton, n.d., in Clarke, “Editorship of the ‘Ladies’ Diary’: Further Trouble with Heath as to the Diary,” 174.
Diaries] upon [her] hand,” products which could have meant an additional profit and because of which the Company annually deducts “12 d.” from her income.61 This situation, as the letter indicates, irritates her, since the amount has been deducted from her honorarium and Heath, who usually determined to whom the almanacs were to be awarded, has replied in an evasive way. He has merely sent her a copy of his new periodical, the Lady’s Philosopher, likely inaugurated in 1751. This reply provokes a caustic and dismissive critique of Heath’s new publication in the January 29 letter to Cowper. Although Beighton soon frames her commentary with the sugary pronouncement that “I always tell him what I think is wrong, in a Soft gentle manner, for I think it the duty of a friend,” her summation that his periodical is all “despite and Cavil” seems more blunt an assessment than a friend would usually venture. In the face of Heath’s schemes against the Ladies’ Diary, Beighton sheds her formerly conciliatory rhetoric and assumes a confrontational one. She speaks with conviction that he will not sell the periodical, since “few wou’d Care to embroil themselfs in others quarrils So loos the relish for what was instructive and drop the Curiosity of looking into it.” Robert Bataille pertinently concludes that Beighton’s criticism of Heath’s Lady’s Philosopher is “one of the few extant instances of a female professional journalist questioning the judgment of a male peer who was himself trying to reach a female audience.” Further on in the letter, Beighton also maintains her disapproving tone, openly depicting Heath’s “Satirical temper” as pitiful, since it “gain’d him More enemies than his fine qualifications Cou’d do friends.” While she has tried to reason against his “lash upon particuler persons” in his Palladium, he

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61 This fragment additionally reveals that the prizes that LD offered were a marketing ploy in which a small monetary investment was at first necessary, their cost being the editor’s responsibility.
“has took up the Cudgels again”; in now openly describing her opponent as hot-headed and pompous, she is perhaps again attempting to maintain Cowper as an ally.\textsuperscript{62}

Though Elizabeth Beighton usually adhered to a discourse that met acceptable codes of civility even in the face of relentless pressure and stress, she ultimately judged Heath’s editorial subterfuges harshly. Her shift in rhetoric suggests an attempt to maintain Cowper’s partnership, a concern for her own position, and a means to uphold the high standards of the almanac. Her ire towards the Company of Stationers also compelled her to forsake polite norms. For the most part, Beighton sustained the rhetoric of politeness as long as it served to enable her to retain her collaborative efforts with Cowper and Heath. Once Heath began to act counter to her interests, she used an embattled mode of discourse that sought to situate herself as the unjustly treated opponent of both Heath and the Company. In the end, Beighton’s editorship depended on her influential friends and collaborators, as well as her reputable correspondents. Needing to negotiate multiple communicative relations, she deftly constructed her story in the correspondence to preserve her position.

**The Cessation of Elizabeth Beighton’s Editorship**

Despite Elizabeth Beighton’s attempts to resist the demands of the Company of Stationers and secure her editorial position, her role as the compiler was on the point of being terminated in 1753, a fact confirmed in Robert Heath’s letters to Thomas Cowper of February 27, 1753, and March 15, 1753. In February, Heath summarizes her current situation as “servile” to “the Rulers” who “have taken the writing of the Diary” from her and “oblige her to send what Copy She Can, Transcripts from Correspondents,” a rhetoric

\textsuperscript{62} Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 29 January 1753, 32r; Bataille, “Elizabeth Beighton and the Ladies’ Diary,” 25.
that draws on his combative relations with the Company's agents, as well as his positioning of her as merely a hack compiler. Two weeks later, he refers to an earlier letter from Beighton which suggests that she is still engaged in the affairs of the *Ladies' Diary* through the preparation of its copy for the Company, an arrangement that Heath interprets as an attempt to "drop her quite as they pretend the Property of the Copy is Theirs." Yet her editorship was well supported by her influential friends and respected correspondents to the point that she was a significant asset for the Company while also in a position to negotiate further financial benefits stemming from her editorial experience once Thomas Simpson was appointed as the *Ladies' Diary*’s main editor.\(^3\)

Still, on April 2, 1753, the date of her penultimate extant letter to Cowper, Elizabeth Beighton is embroiled in the affairs of the *Ladies' Diary*. She requests Cowper’s assistance with the letters she “receiv’d for the Diary,” selections from which she has transcribed at Simpson’s “demand.” It seems that, because of her need for an income, Beighton has complied with the Company’s request that she turn her contributors’ letters over to Simpson. It is plausible to conclude that the Company had effectively bribed her; should she choose to retain the letters, they would simply deny her any further financial stake in the almanac. A letter from Heath to Cowper of July 4, 1753, confirms that the Stationers continued to promise her a payment of ten pounds a year if she satisfied their demands. The Company thus, in Heath’s formulation, left her no other choice but to “prostitute her Friends,” as the Stationers “Scruple [no]t to say,” though as she informs Cowper, instead of simply forwarding the letters to Simpson, she selectively transcribed what she considered essential, capitalizing further on her influential position in the chain of correspondence.

\(^3\) Robert Heath to Thomas Cowper, 27 February 1753, 36r; ibid., 15 March 1753, 37v.

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Thus the correspondence implies that Beighton satisfied the Company’s demands, while refusing to yield entirely to their despotic requests.\textsuperscript{64}

Indeed, Elizabeth Beighton was a deft negotiator of her position in the face of multiple challenges. Simpson’s letters, included in Frances Marguerite Clarke’s study of his life and career, also provide further information on Beighton’s involvement in the politics of the publication during Simpson’s editorship. One of them from Simpson to Beighton, dated March 19, 1754, attests to her continued compilation of the astronomical segment of the \textit{Ladies’ Diary}, which Simpson requests due to its omission in the packet she has sent him. As she provided astronomical calculations a year ago, he writes to her to solicit them again. His letter also confirms his receipt of the aforementioned letters from “the old Contributors,” which Simpson still values highly, despite the fact that he has managed to win “great encouragement” from his own readers; he asserts that he obtained “near 100 letters . . . and many of them from Masterly hands,” underlining thereby the degree of support he was receiving as the \textit{Diary}’s new editor. Yet Simpson also expresses appreciation for Beighton’s endeavors to re-engage her past contributors and assures her that he will honor their vital submissions. Simpson thus sees Beighton as an essential collaborator in the success of his editorship.\textsuperscript{65}

The final piece of information about Elizabeth Beighton’s situation emphasizes the entangled pressures she faced at the end of her editorship. On May 25, 1754, Beighton seems anxious as to whether Cowper has provided astronomical calculations for the \textit{Ladies’ Diary}, questioning him if “the new authors of the \textit{Diary} have apply’d to [him] for the \textit{Lunations}.” Due to illness she has not been able to forward them herself to “the Compiler,”

\textsuperscript{64} Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 2 April 1753, 39r; Robert Heath to Thomas Cowper, 4 July 1753, 43v.

\textsuperscript{65} Thomas Simpson to Elizabeth Beighton, 19 March 1754, in Clarke, “Editorship of the ‘Ladies’ Diary’: Change in Contributors to the Diary; Further Trouble with Heath as to the Diary,” 173.
and it is now past the deadline. She indicates that her failure may be the “pretence for
Shewing [her] no further favour.” However, not only has she been gravely ill, but her “Late
Sickness” has taught her to “hold all Sublunary things light,” presumably a reference to her
recent conflict over the almanac. By this time, the cessation of Beighton’s role as the
almanac’s editor was finalized; the 1754 number of the *Diary* was already under Simpson’s
control. Although Heath’s 1760 obituary of Beighton indicates that she might have
withdrawn from public life soon after 1754 because of a “threatening Disorder” during the
last “3 or 4 Years” of her life, Beighton was granted an annuity on a continual basis after
Heath’s demotion. The Company of Stationers’ records include a letter of Beighton
addressed to the Company’s Treasurer, John Hett from May 1, 1756, confirming that she
still received ten pounds at that time in the form of a pension. The *Diary* thus proved an
economic gain for the Beighton family over four decades of the century.66

Postmortem Assessments

Despite Elizabeth Beighton’s editorial efforts for the *Ladies’ Diary* over a nine-year
period, until quite recently her career was relatively obscured. To the mathematician Charles
Hutton, who undertook the editorship of the *Diary* in 1773 and republished seventy years
worth of mostly mathematical and enigma-related contributions, Beighton was little more
than the “amiable wife” who shortly before and after her husband’s death merely managed
the enigmatical parts.” Hutton does not list her among the successive “nominal authors
that have conducted the work during the different years of its existence,” but rather refers to
her as a figure “partly concerned with them in its management.” Her marginalization may

66 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 25 May 1754, 49r; Elizabeth Beighton to John Hett, 1 May 1756,
have been directly related to the fact that she was not a mathematician. Thus, subsequently, her editorial position was scarcely attended to by another mathematician, Thomas Leybourn, in 1817. In his four-volume compilation of the past century of mathematical contributions to the *Diary*, Leybourn states only that due to Henry Beighton’s effective management of the almanac for the Company of Stationers, his “widow” was allowed to continue superintending it, albeit with the assistance of a “deputy.” As Shelley Anne Costa notes, Leybourn’s unclear syntactical formulation indicates that Elizabeth Beighton, together with an unnamed deputy, held editorship until Robert Heath took over the position in 1745. Both Hutton and Leybourn point to Heath as the official editor who succeeded Henry Beighton in 1745 and held the position until 1753, while neither of them clearly specifies Elizabeth Beighton’s editorial duties. Similarly, a more contemporary critic, E. G. R. Taylor, in his 1966 survey of mathematicians of the Hanoverian era in England, dubs Heath the “sole editor” of the almanac for a decade after Henry Beighton’s death. Even later, though Teri Perl in her 1979 article on the mathematical objectives of the *Diary* and its audience does acknowledge Elizabeth Beighton’s editorship, she claims that Heath became the editor in 1745. Perl thus limits her editorship to three years, while also confusingly dubbing her “Caelia Beighton.” A further mathematical publication, the 1986 *Biobibliography of British Mathematics and Its Applications*, briefly defines Heath’s position as an editor working under the “nominal control of [a] widow,” without, unfortunately, providing any further details.67

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Robert Bataille’s attention to Elizabeth Beighton’s life and struggles is thus the first detailed summation of the significance of her position, with Shelley Anne Costa additionally shedding further light on her attendant difficulties. My analysis of Beighton’s correspondence and role is intended to show the complexity of her editorial position in greater detail, arguing that, due to her compromised role at the helm of the *Ladies’ Diary*, she engaged in a range of maneuvers, as well as employing a discursive range from the polite to the embattled, in an attempt to retain her editorship and the reputation of the almanac. It is readily comprehensible from Beighton’s letters why her editorship was a constant struggle: such factors as her widowhood and poverty, as well as Heath’s and the Stationers’ underhanded tactics complicated her editorial position. Furthermore, as is evident from the correspondence, Beighton’s responsibilities exceeded those of a nominal editor, who only possesses a titular, rather than any intrinsic, influence. Not only did she compile the copy of the *Ladies’ Diary*, but she also exercised an impact on the content of the publication, providing astronomical contributions. Beighton’s editorship also required frequent mediation between the Company and her contributors, the almanac’s success, as well as her position, depending to a large extent on such exchanges. Regardless of her service to the Company, Beighton’s reputation after her death has remained exceedingly modest in contrast to the respect accorded her husband, long considered an eminent editor of the *Diary*. Despite the fact that the profit of the Company of Stationers increased during the period of Beightons’ positions, 17,000 copies being sold in 1714 and 36,000 in 1753,68 Elizabeth Beighton’s name did not succeed those of her husband and Heath in the line of influential editors; she has instead been better remembered as Henry Beighton’s wife, while it was the name of her co-editor, Heath, that followed that of her husband on the pages of Hutton’s publication.

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68 Robert Heath to Thomas Cowper, 21 January 1753, 30v.
In conclusion, the low estimation of the almanac genre was one factor that stimulated Henry Beighton to create a unique publication that attended to education through systematized forms of knowledge and was presented as a scientific sourcebook. The *Ladies’ Diary* remained well-received throughout the three decades under his pen, drawing the attention of many eminent figures of the day, including but not limited to mathematicians, as I will show in the following chapter. Henry Beighton evidently took his editorial position seriously, the almanac serving him well as a self-promotional investment. He persisted at its helm for three decades, altering its function in this time, and thereby enlarging the *Diary’s* cultural capital. When Joao Luis Lisboa, in his article “Popular Knowledge in the 18th Century Almanacs,” states that the almanac’s function is “not to discover or to spread any great discovery,” but to “reproduce an amount of [proverbial] knowledge,” he clearly does not have access to more radical almanacs like the *Diary*, the content of which was not based on widely disseminated forms of knowledge. Henry Beighton’s advocacy of the significance of the mathematical erudition of men, women, and the young, his foregrounding of the importance of multiple scientific disciplines, and the mode in which he played with the conventions of anonymity in order to raise his product beyond the low estimation of the sensational ephemera present in the print marketplace establish him, after his predecessor John Tipper, as another innovator of the almanac genre. Henry Beighton realized the marketplace success he could attain with the creation of this textual model, rendering him both a committed editor and a deft businessman.

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Henry Beighton’s collaborators remained loyal to the publication after his death, the reputation of the almanac enduring intact until Heath’s mismanagement in the 1750s. Elizabeth Beighton’s correspondence informs us of various publishing practices during this time, from their monopolization to their corruption, and also of the role that her correspondents played in the success of the *Ladies’ Diary*. Her letters mark the difficulty that she faced in maintaining her position as an almanac compiler. Elizabeth Beighton’s editorial career was shaped, as her rhetoric implies, by many challenges to her role, in response to which she constructed her public image as either a widow in need or else as an influential editor. Elizabeth Beighton’s diplomatic, and, later, embattled rhetoric presents her as a woman who used discursive means to strengthen her position and to oppose its cessation. Her letters highlight the strategic manner in which she sought to solidify connections with her primary contributor, Thomas Cowper, as well as the rhetoric she drew upon to represent her disappointing editorial collaboration with Robert Heath. Elizabeth Beighton’s letters are indeed a rare source of textual evidence regarding the influence and commitment of a female editor at work in the production and publication of an eighteenth-century almanac.
CHAPTER FOUR

“Oft times my Father is a Man, / But sometimes not, for Woman can / Beget me”: Readership and the Enigma in *The Ladies’ Diary*, 1704-1753

*The Ladies’ Diary*’s Readers and Their Favorited Genre

*The Ladies’ Diary*, as discussed in previous chapters, was successful due to its particular set of innovations. The inclusion of such elements as stories and instructional writings, as I noted in Chapter Two, and of the focal genre of this chapter, the enigma, expanded possible uses of the almanac. As I will underline in this chapter, it was the enigma, the favored genre of the *Diary’s* readers, which most influenced the publication’s success in the literary marketplace. Through the contribution of two forms of the enigma poem—the puzzle itself and its answer—the *Diary*’s readers displayed the range of their poetic accomplishments and formed a textual coterie of “ENIGMATISTS” (*LD* 1731, 3). My research into the *Diary’s* actual readers reveals that many of them were women.

In this chapter I thus examine the readers of the *Ladies’ Diary* and their favored genre. Following an overview of scholarship related to the study of the *Diary’s* readership, my research on this audience forms the framework of my analysis, from biographical and statistical summations of contributors to their geographical localities. Initially, I focus on the differing modes in which the *Diary’s* editors interacted with their readers during the first half of the eighteenth century, concomitantly presenting a profile of the publication’s actual readers. Next, I explicate the character of the enigma poem, a genre also implicated in the study of the reader. Beginning with the enigma’s definition and origins, I then analyze the
range of prosody, languages, verse forms, rhetoric, and themes that characterized the enigmas and their answers. My observations attend to the sub-genres’ potential complexity as poetic forms and to the fact that their contributors were well-read in prosodic styles. I further address the rhetorical modes which the various editors used to present the enigma poem to their readers, as well as the intertextual addresses to readers included in enigmas and their answers, strategies that emphasize a modification of the almanac’s traditional audience. This chapter ends with a focus on the national reception of enigmas, while also attending to perspectives on the form featured in the popular Gentleman’s Magazine, the almanac’s competitor. Indeed, it was the inclusion of enigmas and their answers in the Diary that contributed to its longevity; through them, the publication maintained its cultural value even when it lost its temporal purpose. From its modes of versification to its diverse editorial presentation, the enigma is the genre that transformed the character of the Diary, and developed, along the way, a new kind of almanac reader-contributor.

Those “new... old and constant” Contributors: The Ladies’ Diary and Its Readers

Scholars have addressed the complexities of tracing an actual audience for periodicals, but few have engaged directly with the contributors of the Ladies’ Diary. Kathryn Shevelow, in her discussion of the epistolary device used in the Athenian Mercury, addresses the question of the reader, positing that “the reader ‘represented’ is the reader constructed, not necessarily because [the reader’s] letter is an editorial fabrication, but because the representation of the self in writing is always a construction, whether on the part of the
alleged writer or on the part of the periodical’s editors.” I attend to the construction of the
Diary’s reader in this section, which allows me to consider the actual contributor at the same
time. The construction of the reader was a central marketing strategy for the Diary, and yet
the almanac also left traces of its actual contributors, rendering it a valuable source for a
literary historian.

Shelley Anne Costa’s dissertation on the mathematical aspects of the Ladies’ Diary, as
well as her two articles, “Marketing Mathematics in Early Eighteenth-Century England:
Henry Beighton, Certainty, and the Public Sphere” and “The Ladies’ Diary: Gender,
Mathematics, and Civil Society in Early Eighteenth-Century England,” serve as influential
sources for my dissertation on the subject of the almanac’s patterns of readership. While in
her dissertation Costa emphasizes the active role that readers assumed in the Diary’s form of
entertainment, she also attends to the way that John Tipper reconfigured the almanac to
stimulate his readership’s interest in the publication. Costa claims further that Tipper
homogenized his readers as female primarily in order to preserve the novelty of the Diary.
Once the editorship was undertaken by Beighton, his central task, after Tipper had
established “a reader-centered format before him,” remained to guide his readers toward
correct submissions, mathematical studies, and “intellectual discipline.” In contrast to
Tipper, Beighton’s rhetoric drew attention to the male readership of the almanac, including
the clergy, men of letters, and teachers of mathematics, while also unifying a broader
audience through the promotion of mathematics as an overarching subject matter for the
Diary.²

¹ Kathryn Shevelow, “Readers as Writers: The Female Subject in the Athenian Mercury,” in Women and Print
² Shelley Anne Costa, “The Origins of the Ladies’ Diary in Early Eighteenth-Century Print Culture,”
As Costa rightly underlines, the indices of contributors included in the *Ladies' Diary* allow for a study of the patterns of reader submission. In her analysis of the discrepancy between the numbers of male and female contributors on the basis of selected indices and Beighton's 1718 assertion of the existence of up to 500 letters from women, Costa concludes that few women wished to see their names in print, and thus "no more than twenty-five percent of the total number of female mathematical correspondents . . . were individually mentioned in the almanac.” Though Costa attributes this tendency primarily to “ideals of feminine modesty,” I argue that anonymity and the use of pseudonyms were popular conventions during this era as reflected on the pages of the almanac. Thus, Costa’s “simplifying assumption” that female pseudonyms in the *Diary* represent actual women and male pseudonyms stand for actual men is disputable. 3

Addressing the question as to who the mathematical contributors to the *Ladies' Diary* were, Costa focuses on the submissions of a “small group of exceptionally able women who contributed regularly to the *Ladies' Diary* between 1710 and 1723,” research suggesting that the almanac’s audience was comprised of a “circle of relatives and near-neighbors.” Among the contributors, Costa studies the case of sisters Mary and Anna Wright from Cheshire, the two “earliest named female correspondents” to the *Diary*, and their first cousin, Thomas Wright, who, she implies, worked together with them on mathematical questions. Mary Nelson, she further suggests, was the married name of Mary Wright, while Anna

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3 Ibid., “‘Ingenious Ladies’ and ‘Sons of Art,’ ” 149, 151, 152, 158. Thomas Leybourn in his Index of mathematical contributors to *LD* attributes the alias of “Ann Nichols” to “Mr. W. Wales.” See Thomas Leybourn, “Index: Of the Names of the Persons who have Proposed and Answered the Questions,” in *The Mathematical Questions, Proposed in the Ladies' Diary, and Their Original Answers, Together with Some New Solutions, From Its Commencement in the Year 1704 to 1816* (London: J. Mawman, 1817), 4:429. This case is referred to by Teri Perl in “The Ladies' Diary or Woman's Almanack, 1704-1841,” *Historia Mathematica* 6 (1979): 45.
Philomathes was the pseudonym of Anna Wright. Although Costa asserts that Anna Wright did not contribute after 1723, her name reappears in the 1735 issue (LD 23); also, though Costa claims that Mary Wright died around 1719-1720, there is a record of her submitting to the *Diary* in 1742 (LD 24). Thus these contributions continued for much longer than Costa recognizes, and remain open to further research. The evidence also belies Costa’s assertion that there were no further female mathematical contributors between the mid 1720s and the 1750s. My research builds on Costa’s generalizations, but addresses a lengthier time span, 1709-1753, as well as encompassing various groups of readers who contributed to the *Diary*. It thus attends to the multiple contexts of the almanac’s use.

Teri Perl, who in her 1979 assessment of the *Ladies’ Diary* covers the period of 1704-1841, is another scholar to address the aspect of the almanac’s contributors in some detail. Perl traces the demographic shifts in the almanac as the increase in the sophistication of its mathematical questions converged with the evolution of mathematics in England and the growth of technology during the century to produce a climate unfavorable to amateur female mathematicians. Perl locates some audience patterns in the *Diary*, particularly in terms of gender. She implies that many of the female contributors may have been connected by marriage or blood to mathematical practitioners. Also, she shows that self-taught mathematicians, as well as those who were connected with institutions that offered training in “practical mathematics and natural science,” contributed to the almanac. However, Perl states that “very little is known about its readership,” and further, after claiming that the *Diary’s* readers were seemingly drawn from a cross-section of the population she concludes that “whether or not this broad audience materialized is not known.” Thus, this chapter’s

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4 Costa, “‘Ingenious Ladies’ and Sons of Art,’” 116, 186, 188-222.
5 Perl, “Ladies’ Diary or Woman’s Almanack,” 41, 44-45, 48.
elaboration of the *Diary*’s multifaceted readership is a key to an enhanced comprehension of the almanac’s character and function. As my research reveals, women submitted not only mathematical questions, but also enigmas, and though their presence is a complex one to trace, it is indeed visible.

An article by Margaret Ezell, “The *Gentleman’s Journal* and the Commercialization of Restoration Coterie Literary Practices,” to which I referred in Chapter Two, makes observations about that periodical’s readership which remain valid in relation to the *Ladies’ Diary*. Ezell claims that Peter Anthony Motteux, the editor of the *Gentleman’s Journal*, relied on conventions of literary coterie circles. As Ezell shows, by using the epistle form, a collegial relationship was nurtured between the writer and reader, an interaction further established through the publication of enigmas and their replies. Further, she suggests that pseudonyms were, for readers, signs of membership in this interactive coterie. Ezell also points to the fact that most of the submitted materials to Motteux’s periodical came from “writers whose only previous literary venue would be a coterie manuscript culture.” Similar to the case of the *Diary*, the *Gentleman’s Journal* did not independently construct its audience; rather it “adapted the conventional coterie literary environment for commercial ends in such a way that women writers felt encouraged to participate.” As a result, in the case of Motteux’s periodical, the publication of enigmas often led women to the submission of “more ambitious materials,” such as songs and short fiction, and in the *Diary*, according to my research, female contributors often submitted their writings on a regular basis, becoming recognized members of this literary community of readers.⁶

Covering ten-year spans from 1709 to 1753, my research into the Ladies’ Diary’s readership reveals several important patterns. First of all, during this whole period, more clearly identifiable male than female contributors responded to both enigmas and mathematical questions. Overall, women and men responded to more enigmas than mathematical questions. One exception was the period of 1709-1713, when men submitted approximately one and a half times more answers to mathematical problems than to enigmas. The divergence is likely due to the fact that Tipper promoted poetry as a particularly fitting element for women, and as Ezell remarks, enigmas written by women were a popular “coterie practice” by the eighteenth century. Yet, with time the enigma became the favored genre in the Diary among men as well.

The highs and lows of both enigma and question contributions during the first half of the eighteenth century can be attributed to multiple factors, from the Ladies’ Diary’s popularity and its editors’ marketing strategies to geographical and social constraints. Despite Beighton’s emphasis on the mathematical component of the almanac, for instance, it was in the middle decade of his editorship, 1724-1733, that the highest number of

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7 My data is based on the catalogues of contributors which are available for the period of 1709-1753; a list of contributors appeared for the first time among the pages of the almanac in reference to answers to both enigmas and mathematical questions in 1709 and became a regular feature on the last pages of the publication from 1712 onwards. I worked with 4,868 different names, including pseudonyms and initials. I sorted them into ten-year spans apart from the time period of John Tipper’s editorship, which covers five years of available catalogues. The resulting data, which I discuss at various points of this chapter, is represented by two tables included in Appendix B: Numbers of Respondents to Enigmas and Mathematical Questions, 1709-1753. Calculating the numbers of respondents to enigmas and questions cannot be precise. One difficulty resides, for example, in the frequent use of pseudonyms, which creates the question as to whether a certain name is a pseudonym or not. Another concern is whether a person who uses an initial before his surname is the same one using a full first name in cases when their surnames are identical. Also, at times, the catalogues include confusing formulations which do not allow for a differentiation as to whether a specific person responded to an enigma or a mathematical problem. Overall, if a name, for example, was not marked by the designation of a “Mr.” or “Mrs.,” typical for the identification of actual readers in the almanac, or else combined the designation of “Mrs.” with initials, as “Mrs. T. R.” (LD 1725, 22), then it was counted as a pseudonym. Determining how many men versus women donned such sobriquets is a pointless task, since each sex may have assumed, at times, the opposite sex’s pseudonyms to either increase the comfort of publication, for women, or, for men, to better subsume themselves into a publication that was, ostensibly, intended for women.

contributors responded to enigmas, the proportion being approximately two and a half times more enigma than question respondents. Enigmas were certainly the most popular genre during Beighton’s time, though during each decade of his editorship, he also received the highest number of responses to mathematical questions, especially by men. Further, the number of pseudonyms used was the highest during Beighton’s last decade of editorship, 1734-1743. Such a pattern is attributable to the probability that, since according oneself a pseudonym was connected more to conventions of literary play than to modesty, the almanac increasingly served as a forum where wit mattered more than authorship. The readers, by this point, were displaying a textual familiarity with each other by using pseudonyms for amusement, creating the “sense of a literary clique.” Adam Smyth also suggests that such aliases emphasized the “exclusivity” of the participating coterie, marking a distance from “mass-printed reality.” Compared to Henry Beighton’s last decade of editorship, the presence of Elizabeth Beighton and Robert Heath as editors seems to have led, in part, to an increase in the number of women submitting responses to both enigmas and mathematical questions. However, this rise could be due to decreased use of pseudonyms at that time. Men’s contributions to both enigmas and mathematical questions concomitantly diminished in those years, likely due to Heath’s attacks against a group of mathematicians.

The manner in which individual editors engaged with their audience provides one implication of the type of readership each sought to draw to the almanac. Tipper framed his textual relationship with his diverse audience using a tone of gentility aimed at attracting a

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9 Ibid., 335.
cross-section of the population; in his initial preface, he lists a wide range of social groups as
the audience for his almanac, from “ladies” to “servants” (DM 1704, 2). The first name that
Tipper mentions in the almanac in reference to enigmas is the poet laureate, Nahum Tate,
the author of Enigma 5 in the almanac for 1705.\footnote{Nahum Tate was a poet, a playwright, and a translator. He held the laureateship from 1692 until his death in 1715. For Tate’s biography see David Hopkins, “Tate, Nahum (c.1652–1715),” in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26986 (accessed May 20, 2008).} The inclusion of Tate’s puzzle served to
emphasize that the enigma was practiced by known literati. Also, since this poem was taken
from The Gentleman’s Journal as a model, drawing on the success of the earlier periodical could
have had the additional effect of raising the enigma’s status by association and thus
encouraging the Ladies’ Diary’s readers to undertake the composition of an already popular
poetic form.

Tipper regularly indicates the presence of a network of acquaintances contributing to
his almanac. In 1706, for example, he underlines the “general Satisfaction” that enigmas
provide, while also thanking “some of [his] Friends” for their recent submissions of material
(LD C3v). Also, Tipper’s own level of involvement with his network of readers is suggested
by a note in the 1707 number when he requests a correspondent, from whom he received a
letter, to reveal his name so that he “might return an Answer” (LD C3r). The Ladies’ Diary in
these ways served as a forum for various modes of contact.\footnote{Charlotte Caroline Richardson (1796–1854) likely reestablished contact with her mother through a poem inserted in LD in 1815, which identifies her as the youngest daughter of Betty Richardson. Next year, a poem from her mother, who was a frequent contributor to LD, was published, celebrating the finding of her lost
child, and arrangements were made for Charlotte to visit her family. Charlotte Richardson, who was a poet and
a novelist, later dedicated her collection of poetry, Harvest, a Poem, in Two Parts: with other Poetical Pieces (1818), to
LD’s editor, Charles Hutton, and contributed to LD until her death. Her parents, Robert and Elizabeth, had
become acquainted through the interactive aegis of the almanac’s puzzles. This story underlines the private
means to which the almanac could be put. The two generations of Richardsos were contributors to LD and its
successor, The Lady’s and Gentleman’s Diary, for over seventy years. Not only did Charlotte’s sisters, Elizabeth
Anne and Eleanor, submit material to the almanac, but the former together with Charlotte edited a volume of
their mother’s Poems based on her contributions to LD. J. R. de J. Jackson, “Richardson, Charlotte Caroline
(1796–1854),” in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford:
Diary's material as influenced by reader agency. A “Letter to the Author” that commences the 1708 issue expresses disbelief regarding a series of geographical curiosities and asks for Tipper’s opinion of them. Tipper, in response, also in letter format, acknowledges that these phenomena occur, and assures the reader that an elaboration upon them will “appear in [his] next” (LD Av). In such a manner, Tipper shows that he is eager to alter the Diary's content on the basis of reader interaction. This strategy served as a marketing tool for the encouragement of readers' submissions.

Names of contributors for answers to enigmas and questions along with other submissions included pseudonyms (“one who stiles himself Leander”) and actual readers’ names and localities (“Mr. Tho. Cook, of Exon”) (LD 1708, C2v). By 1711, lists of respondents to both enigma and mathematical questions were becoming extensive and from 1712 onwards a catalogue of contributors became fixed on the last pages of the almanac, though lists of contributors were also featured at various other places in the almanac. Within these lists, beside the names of contributors, their occupation is also occasionally mentioned, as in the case of “Mr. Tho. Markham of King's Linn, a very good Mathematician” (LD 1711, C2v). Such references to established figures within the almanac's network elevated contributor status. The Ladies' Diary during Tipper’s editorship engaged many contributors on an annual basis. One traceable contributor, Charles Leadbetter, a writer on astronomy and practical mathematics, as well as an editor of John Partridge’s almanac, submitted material (both answers to enigmas and mathematical questions) to the Diary during Tipper’s editorship, and then had his eclipse predictions for London included by Henry Beighton.
from 1721 until 1740. Certain contributors thus had a marked effect on the Diary for many years.

While I addressed Henry Beighton’s lengthy editorship and, in part, his construction of the reader as it relates to the study of mathematics in Chapter Three, I will here discuss his representation of actual readers and trace a few contributors whose biographical information remains accessible. Beighton often provides clues as to the demographic of his readership. His apologia to the Prize Enigma of 1714, in which he begs the “Gentlemens Pardons” for not including their enigma answers, while asserting that the enigmas are “chiefly for [the fair Ladies’] Diversion,” refers to the mixed-sex readership of the Ladies’ Diary at that time (LD 4). Beighton’s readership consists, as he remarks, of “new Correspondents” as well as “old and constant Friends” (LD 1717, 2).

Encouragement of reader agency, and particularly of a female one, is a marked strategy of the Ladies’ Diary’s editors throughout the first half of the century, and a particularly distinct theme in Henry Beighton’s prefaces. Beighton underlines in 1718 that his Diary allows “a Multitude of Authors” to “appear in Print” (LD 1). Here he also compliments the “Fair-Sex” for their “bountiful Contributions” (LD Av), while in 1720, he announces that the Diary’s submissions are “mostly the Products of their own Pens” (LD Av), thereby encouraging women’s initiatives. Further, commenting on his vast readership in 1721, Beighton informs his readers that he has received 200 letters, omitting his introduction in order to acknowledge as many contributors as possible (LD 1). He also underlines the

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influence of his readers upon his decisions in regard to the publication, as when in 1720 the “Opinions” of his “fair Correspondents” cause him to alter the location of Latin enigmas within the almanac (LD 1). In the 1741 number, Beighton plans to publish a volume of mathematical questions based on the Diary’s submissions, in which the names of the contributors will be affixed to their writings so that they will be “transmitted to Posterity,” not only for the contributors’ own benefit, but to provide an incentive for more readers to engage in those “laudable Studies” (LD 23). Such an initiative must have served as an encouragement for many readers to strive for excellence in their contributions.

Certainly, participation in the Ladies’ Diary’s forum of contributors allowed many readers to be noticed by other fellow contributors and even gain renown. One such contributor whose name remains traceable is William Gibson, a self-taught mathematician who “sent in answers to all problems set in the Gentleman’s Diary, the Ladies’ Diary, and The Palladium,” his fame spreading in Britain and overseas.14 Another reader of this ilk was William Chapple, a topographer, whose contributions to the Diary led him to the attention of the Reverend Bligh of Silverton, also a contributor to the almanac. Through Bligh’s recommendation, Chapple was hired as a clerk in 1738 by Bligh’s uncle, John Richards, another contributor to the Diary, which was a crucial step towards Chapple’s later career as a land steward, builder, cartographer, and surveyor.15 Thus, Beighton was correct in noting the possibility of rewards for fellow contributors who revealed their actual names.16

16 While few readers are readily identifiable during Tipper’s editorship, during Beighton’s longer position, the numbers of biographically-identifiable readers significantly increase. Clear identification is, of course, not
Readers themselves were often involved in commentary, which emphasizes the interactive format of the *Ladies' Diary*. Not only were enigmas submissions that invited interactive responses, as I will elaborate in this chapter, but other features of the *Diary*, such as mathematical questions and letters from contributors, served this function as well.

Responding to the high number of contributions from female readers, one reader, Mr. David Meredith, in his letter included in the 1721 number of the *Diary*, requests a page “wherein . . . Male Contributors might have an opportunity of addressing the Fair, with some short Epigrams upon the happiness of their Genius.” Using the conventional rhetoric of polite discourse, he explains that while his pieces may be “rude,” they will nonetheless serve to “applaud the shining Productions of the Ladies, that every Year appear to us” (*LD* 2).

Although two verses then follow, praising Astrea and Adrastea on their superior contributions, Meredith’s proposal is not otherwise adhered to, perhaps suggesting that the contributors preferred to engage in enigmas and mathematical questions instead. In another case, the 1727 issue includes a satirical letter from “Philomusus junior,” critiquing those contributors who do not confine themselves to one genre they are good at, either mathematics or poetry, but who unskillfully “intrude into the Provinces of others” (*LD* 2). Beighton, in turn, comments on this letter, justifying its inclusion by framing it as an encouragement of mathematical questions in prose (*LD* 1728, 1).

always possible. For example, with a common name, such as John Turner, biographical possibilities proliferate, since there were at least three mathematicians who went by this name. See “Turner, John of *York* b 1710-1747 *pseud I.T.; J.T.*,” in *Biobibliography of British Mathematics*, 207. In my analysis, I combine the evidence from *LD* with biographical and literary research.
This tendency of contributors to become, in Clifford Siskin’s words, “Readers-as-
Authors,”17 is attended to by Beighton in the preface from 1732 when he notes that readers
relentlessly “pass Sentence” on an author, “scarcely allow[ing] him either his own
Expressions, Choice of Matter, or Method of digesting the same.” However, Beighton
claims that he will continue to adhere to the principle of variety, and refuse to enter into
“trifling Disputes between any Competitors in this Work” (LD Av). When Beighton is
compelled to mention errata, he usually credits a contributor, as in: “Mr. James Hemmingway
says the Answer to the 168th or Gamester’s Question is absolutely false, and shou’d have
been thus” (LD 1734, 12). Though Beighton’s Ladies’ Diary encouraged the “flow of
conversation”18 from correspondents, the publication was not yet the forum of textual
dispute that it later became.

Types of contributors to the almanac at this time are evidenced by the names affixed
to the contributions and the indices of names. Among Beighton’s contributors was the
author of Enigma 244, “a Schoolmaster in the West” (LD 1741, 15). Traceable teachers who
contributed to the Ladies’ Diary included Anthony Thacker, a teacher of mathematics “at
Birmingham Free-School” (LD 1743, 23), who assisted Beighton in the compilation of the
mathematical part of the Diary in the early 1740s,19 and William Brown, another teacher of
mathematics.20 The Diary was thus known among school teachers who likely used it as a
pedagogical tool. The Diary’s accounts of eclipses also list various contributors who
practiced astronomy, thereby increasing their renown within this field. In 1733, for instance,

17 Clifford Siskin, “Periodicals, Authorship, & the Romantic Rise of the Novel: Reader-As-Author; The Flow of
Conversation,” in The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830 (Baltimore, MD: Johns
18 Ibid.
19 See “Thacker, Anthony b1715-iii1744,” in Biobibliography of British Mathematics, 257; and Costa, “Inventing
the Serious Amateur Mathematician,” 326-29.
20 “Brown, William Teacher of the Mathematicks at the Free School in Cleobury 1714-11ix1773,” in Biobibliography of
British Mathematics, 323.
Eclipse predictions are noted as having been accomplished by individuals such as Mr. Chattock, or John Chattock, a contributor of eclipse observations for Coventry, among other locales.

By the time of Elizabeth Beighton's and Robert Heath's co-editorship, the wide readership of the *Ladies' Diary* had established a strong base for the publication. The new types of reader-contributors during this time seem to stem from Heath's circle of...

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21 See "Chattock, John b1685-a1740," in *Biobibliography of British Mathematics*, 34.
22 Beighton drew too many contributors to *LD* to discuss each of them individually within this short section. Submissions were framed by a network of intimately connected correspondents, as in 1714, when a brother and sister, Josias and Mary Boydall, contributed, as Beighton underlines (*LD* 4). Most of the traceable readers are male contributors, among them Beighton's acquaintances and mathematical collaborators. To give a sample of the wide spectrum of contributors, we find among them John Jennings, an independent minister and a teacher preparing students for the nonconformist ministry; John Fearnside, an astronomer, a bookseller, and a stationer; and Christopher Mason, a land surveyor to Earl of Northampton. Also, *LD* indicates that Isaac Thompson, the Quaker bookseller and printer, contributed to the almanac during 1726-1727. Further, almanac makers participated in *LD*, for example, John and James Hartley, Edmund Weaver, and Thomas Sparrow. There were also contributors who submitted material to various periodical publications, such as John Canton, connected with Spital Square Academy in London, who submitted answers to enigmas as well as calculations of lunar eclipses to *LD*. Canton was also a contributor of poetic pieces to the *Gentleman's and London* magazines. Prestigious contributors to *LD* include William Stephens, a politician and colonial official, and his wife, Mary. Henrietta (Harriet) Godolphin (née Churchill), duchess of Marlborough, is another possible upper-class enigma respondent in 1729. As for other female contributors, certain biographical traces may also be discerned, including two poets, Mary Masters and Mary Leapor; Mary Lover, likely a wife or a daughter of Joshua Lover, another contributor; and Elizabeth Harrison, a writer and children's educator. See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for the biographical information on Jennings, Canton, Stephens, Godolphin, Masters, Leapor, Lover (in the biography of Benjamin Martin), and Harrison; *Biobibliography of British Mathematics* on Jennings (115), Fearnside (344), Mason (289), John Hartley (200), James Hartley (188), Weaver (70), Sparrow (155), and Lover (in biography of Benjamin Martin, 211); Anthony D. Barker, "Poetry from the Provinces: Amateur Poets in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the 1730s and 1740s," in *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*, ed. Alvaro Ribeiro, SJ and James G. Basker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), on Thompson (244); and Bernard Capp, "Appendix One: Biographical Notes," in *English Almanacs, 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), on John Hartley (311), Sparrow (332), and Weaver (336).

acquaintances. The *Diary* occasionally mentions contributors from the Isles of Scilly, a place where Heath had served with his regiment and made a survey. However, what permeates the *Diary* is its attention to the doctrine of fluxions and Heath’s rhetorical ire directed against a group of mathematical contributors, a clear departure from John Tipper’s and Henry Beighton’s more neutral discourse. Heath negatively assesses some readers’ mathematical knowledge in the 1748 issue when he advises that those readers who do not find their mathematical solutions inserted should “consider what a Figure their Errors would have made in Print” (*LD* 31). Although in the same number he lauds specific correspondents for their “indefatigable Art and Sagacity” (*LD* 34), and exact astronomical calculations, he warns his readers that he will reject contributions which are false and “absurd Compositions” (*LD* A2v). Yet Heath did not merely omit such submissions, but often abused the actual contributors.

Heath reprimands specific persons as, for instance in 1745, when he comments that the answers provided by Anthony Thacker, among others, cannot “possibly be” (*LD* 28). He also states in 1748 that due to the “superior Reputation” of the *Ladies’ Diary*, he will not accept lesser productions, such as the “illiterate and absurd” ones submitted by R. R. H. Cacodæmon of Newcastle (*LD* 31-32). In the number for 1751, he directly refers to a letter of John Turner, a mathematician and a private pupil of Thomas Simpson (the subsequent editor of the *Diary* and a teacher of mathematics): “We acknowledge the Receipt of Philo-Turner’s Letter, in the Dark, which we brought to Light, with all the Malefactors” (*LD* 43). Yet while he satirizes certain persons, he also lauds others. A sample of the snide as well as

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complimentary rhetoric that Heath uses is included in the 1751 number, in which the list of contributors includes such approval as "Mr. William Jepson . . . we like him," as well as "Mr. Ralph Hulse . . . angry without a Cause." This list also carries many fictitious aliases which are abusively played with, as for instance, "Dr. Subquintuplicate, silent! He and some other famous Doctors enter into a Conspiracy to write the Ladies Diary" (LD 47-48).

This inconsistency points to Heath’s conflicted position in his management of the publication; while on the one hand he aimed at maintaining its popularity, he also used the Ladies’ Diary to respond in a satirical manner towards his scientific rivals. The following anonymous remark addressed to Heath by a contemporary, who was likely Turner himself,26 comes as no surprise in light of the Diary’s content during Heath’s editorship in the 1750s: “How many Persons of Reputation and superior Genius have you under different, fictitious, Names grossly insulted and abused? Even to that Degree, that the Diary under your Hands, is become remarkable for Scandal and Defamation; which are there dealt out with unbounded License.”27 Heath used the Diary as a tool to disseminate his own doctrine in the public sphere, while he inserted the best contributions submitted to the almanac into his other ventures to increase their popularity. Due to his editorial misdemeanors, as I discussed in Chapter Three, Heath was replaced by Simpson in 1753. Simpson from the outset sought to regain the reputation of the almanac and drew a broad contributor base back to the publication. The Diary, as the preface to the readers underlines in 1754, is once again dedicated to “every Class of Readers,” since it is no longer “a Mathematical Treatise.” It also

26 See Frances Marguerite Clarke, “Publication of ‘The Doctrine and Application of Fluxions: Controversies Concerning the Treatise,’” in “Thomas Simpson and His Times” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1929), 158-59.
assures the audience that “Personal Scandal” will not mar its content, nor will it serve as a “Cause of Offence” (LD A2v), a clear reference to Heath’s practices.

Eighteenth-century periodical editors were believed to serve as reliable managers of private material, capable of responsibly transmitting it within the public sphere. The climate that Tipper created for his almanac was particularly welcoming for various sorts of private submissions. While Beighton remained essentially attentive to a broad audience, Heath tampered with this construction of the editor as a trustworthy public commentator, partially for self-promotional ends. Editors were key in forming reader interpretations and in facilitating contributor networks. Under the aegis of the editor, over the course of the first half of the eighteenth century, actual readers of the Ladies’ Diary were engaged in modes of “self-reflexivity” as they learned “how to converse”\(^{28}\) with other contributors as well as with specific editors. The Diary reconfigured the passive, generalized, and often masculinized reader of the traditional almanac into an active, specific, and even feminized participant; through such genres as the enigma, readers became involved in constructing their almanac, as they concomitantly shaped their own personas. My research into actual readership data shows that the Diary, in addition to serving as a personal journal and a pedagogical text, was used as a scientific sourcebook by mathematicians, astronomers, teachers, and the young, as a public forum for amateur poets’ and mathematicians’ publications, as a community resource by both town and country folk, and even as a channel for personal connections by generations of readers.

Anything Superior to “trifling and foolish *riddle-my-riddle, one two three*”: The Enigma’s Origins

As I noted in Chapter Two, *The Ladies’ Diary* was unique in its inclusion of literary and scientific elements and its concomitant omission of certain traditional features of the almanac genre. My research underlines that a central way in which the *Diary*’s readers, and particularly women, were engaged as contributors during the first half of the eighteenth century was through two poetic sub-genres, key signifiers of the new literary character of the publication: the enigma and its answer. The two enigma forms were more popular than other elements of the almanac included in its second part, and were widespread periodical features during the eighteenth century. Yet they have not received substantial attention from literary critics. The remaining sections of this chapter will therefore focus on these two sub-genres’ characteristics.29

As I will elaborate, through the submission of these rhymed and often complex puzzles, the *Ladies’ Diary*’s readers, among them women, displayed various prosodic abilities when they participated in a textual club of enigma enthusiasts. While earlier almanacs expressed little interest in the agency of the reader, readers of the *Diary* became involved in its poetic compositions. Further, as I will also underline, the enigma is a key genre to study in the history of the gendered almanac, since it played a crucial role in the reconstruction of the once male-centered almanac audience into a more gender-inclusive audience; John Tipper specifically considered poetry fitting subject matter for a female readership, and the almanac

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29 The enigma was offered in *The Gentleman’s Journal*, as I mentioned in Chapter Two, and then promoted by Tipper from 1704 onwards. Further on during the century, the genre also appeared in other periodical publications, such as *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, *The Lady’s Weekly Magazine* and *The Lady’s Magazine; or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex* (launched, respectively, in 1731, 1747 and 1770), as well as in books, like *Thesaurus Enigmatis; or, A Collection Of the most Ingenious and Diverting Enigma’s or Riddles* (1725). The latter republished puzzles from *The Gentleman’s Journal* and *LD*. For other book titles that carried enigmas and riddles see William F. Shortz, “British Word Puzzles (1700–1800),” *Word Ways* 6 (1973): 135.
during his editorship attracted growing numbers of women who participated in the submission and solution of enigmas.

The enigma genre has roots earlier than the eighteenth century. During Aristotle’s time, “enigma” was “a figure related to metaphor.” Classified from the fourth century until the early Renaissance “as one of the seven species of allegory . . . known as such . . . to all schoolboys learning their Latin from [Donatus’s] standard textbook,”30 the word assumed its early modern identity—a “short composition in prose or verse . . . an exercise for the ingenuity of the reader . . . in guessing what is meant; a riddle”—as early as 1539 in Richard Taverner’s translation of Erasmus’s proverbs.31 Yet riddles and enigmas are not simply a type of word puzzle. In the history of word games, riddles are the oldest and the most dominant genre in use from antiquity on, first by the Babylonians in their school texts, and also by the ancient Hindus, Persians, Arabs, Greeks, and Romans in riddle-contests and stories. Tony Augarde, in his 1984 book on word games, differentiates the two, explaining that while the enigma is “in its narrowest sense . . . a kind of riddle in verse,” the riddle is “mere doggerel verse.”32 With the advent of print, during the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, enigmas were viewed as modes of intellectual production,33 while serving also to entertain. It was particularly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as Augarde remarks, that the enigma “developed into a genre in which the poetry became as important as the riddle.”34 During the eighteenth century, crossing class interests, the enigma appealed to common folk,
the young, writers, philosophers, and statesmen. Intellectuals like Jonathan Swift, Horace Walpole, David Garrick, and William Cowper are known to have written enigmas.  

It seems indeed that the enigma was a favored literary form at that time.

Enigmas began to appear in some seventeenth-century almanacs as the almanac genre increasingly aimed at entertainment. The first locatable appearance of published enigmas in almanacs is in Samuel Danforth’s *An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1647*, printed for Massachusetts. Though Danforth’s compact verses for each month of the year are simpler than later enigmas, they do draw attention to their central component, the metaphor, as when supply ships are associated, in the puzzle for July, with “wooden Birds.”

Other editors who composed and published enigmas in early American almanacs were Samuel Cheever in 1660-1661 and William Brattle in 1682. The enigmas in these American almanacs mainly prognosticated events or focused on specific seasons.

During the early eighteenth century, Tipper’s *Ladies’ Diary* was the leading British almanac to include a thematically broadened enigma as a core element. The *Diary* also encouraged reader agency in the form of answers to its enigmas, a mode of reader response that the enigma solicited.

Tipper, I argue, is indeed a central figure in the enigma’s popularization in Great Britain and should be counted as influential in the history of word puzzles.

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38 Though Tony Augarde mentions Tipper in his guide to word games, it is only in relation to Tipper’s *Delights For the Ingenious; or, A Monthly Entertainment For the Curious of Both Sexes*: Augarde remarks that Tipper’s definition of the enigma included therein proves that the genre was “well established by the beginning of the eighteenth century.” Augarde, “Enigmas,” 16.
Tipper’s introduction to the enigmas in the first number of the *Ladies’ Diary* for 1704 presents a definition of these puzzles, one which emphasizes their instrumental function as intellectual stimulation. Tipper drew parts of his definition verbatim from the September 1692 issue of *The Gentleman’s Journal*. The almanac defines an enigma, as does Peter Anthony Motteux’s periodical miscellany, as a “dark description of things clear and well known, to be explained for the diversion and exercise of the mind,” and further, “it is an ingenious and beautiful obscuring the plainest things, which when discovered, strikes the soul with admiration, while we pleasingly wonder to see how it was possible to lay as it were a veil before the sun.” Enigmas are here distinguished from “trifling and foolish riddle-my-riddle, one two three” types of verse, the function of which is to amuse the ear, not to edify the mind.

Further, following *The Gentleman’s Journal*’s description, enigma-sleuthing is a task allied with ancient “Princes and Philosophers,” who also used this pastime as a source of “pleasing and innocent surprizals” (*DM* 12). The enigma’s historic foundation is thus framed in the first number of the *Diary* as an incentive for audience involvement.

In the *Ladies’ Diary* for 1708 Tipper presents his audience with a puzzle that further explicates the major characteristics of the enigma. Enigma 17 underlines the excitement and curiosity present in the enigma’s “Vizard-Mask” or its ability to conceal its essence. Significantly, this puzzle emphasizes both male and female contributors’ ability to write enigmas, as it suggests that though often the enigma’s “Father is a Man,” a woman is also able to “Beget” it. Further, the enigma associates the readers’ compositions with an act of the intellect in its reference to the Roman goddess of wisdom, Minerva, who resembles the enigmas in that they “come / Forth from the Head, the Nobler Womb.” The remaining part of the enigma emphasizes the “Ancient” origins of the puzzles, marking their appearance as long as “three thousand Years ago,” and comparing their uncovering with the difficulty of
Samson’s riddle for the Philistines. Just as the solution to Samson’s riddle was too difficult to
guess, the enigma’s desire also to be “Victorious over [the sleuths]” makes the resolution of
such puzzles challenging:

A Race so Ancient, scarce another
Can boast of; for my Eldest Brother
Did (as unquestion’d Writers show,)
Flourish three thousand Years ago:
He that Philistines did Subdue,
And so hope I to be Victorious over you.

(LD C3v; for the full text of this enigma see Appendix A)

During the initial years of his editorship, Tipper uses exemplification to further
familiarize his readership with the form. To familiarize readers with the character of the
enigma, his 1704 number presents a sampling of four enigmas designed to serve as models,
“particularly for the diversion and entertainment of the fair-sex” (DM 14). Tipper’s insertion
of such models, which he adapted from The Gentleman’s Journal, underlines the fact that he
perceived his role as an instructional one; in Motteux’s words, enigmas “exercise . . . Wit.”39
These models established predominant conventions for reader submissions: verse most
often written in rhyming couplets of iambic pentameter with various figures of speech, such
as metaphor and paradox. Furthermore, Tipper’s 1711 Delights For the Ingenious; or, A Monthly
Entertainment For the Curious of Both Sexes defines a “WELL-PENN’D” enigma as “artfully
contriv’d, wherein Truth Walks in Masquerade, and where a Delicacy of Thought and Beauty
of Expression shines throughout.” Tipper here attends positively not only to the enigma, but

to its answer, lauding the process by which his readership uncovers the solution hidden in these literary puzzles. 40

By the 1705 number of the *Ladies’ Diary*, original enigmas were not yet flowing from readers’ pens, but, as the editor observes, contributors had succeeded in providing correct solutions to the initial enigmas. To further encourage his contributors’ efforts, in this 1705 number Tipper provided his readers with four more enigmas, all drawn from Motteux’s periodical. However, despite the ideological significance Tipper initially accorded to enigmas, during the first few years of his editorship the enigmas could not yet be deemed a distinguished feature of the *Diary*. They were a significant segment of neither the almanac as a whole, nor of its second part, in which they were preceded by the much lengthier narratives discussed in Chapter Two. It was only in the almanac for 1711, when Tipper ceased publishing fictional narratives, replacing them with original puzzles and their answers, both by now couched in verse, that the genre gained a prominent place in the *Diary’s* second part. Once the editorship passed to Henry Beighton, the second part of the *Diary* increased in space, and from 1718 onwards it counted as many as eight pages more than the first part. This pattern, which Beighton maintained, established the second part as more prominent, allowing enigmas together with mathematical questions and their answers to consume the most space in the publication.

Contributor interest in the enigma intensified with time. During Tipper’s last four years of editorship (1709-1713) and Beighton’s first ten (1714-1723), the number of male enigma respondents increased more than seven times, that of women over three times. Although the numbers of enigma respondents fluctuated during the first half of the century,

40 [John Tipper], *Delights For the Ingenious*, no. 1 (January 1711): 25.
they were higher than those of mathematical contributors, even when Beighton promoted mathematical learning above any other element of the almanac. During his final decade of editorship (1734-1743), the number of all enigma respondents was more than two times higher than those who responded to mathematical questions, the second most popular element of the *Ladies’ Diary*. The possibility of “active or interventionist approaches to [the text]”41 through enigmas and verse answers to enigmas contributed to the positive reception of the almanac as a whole in the literary marketplace. This phenomenon is one example of how the *Diary* was not a fixed text, but was rather open to reader agency.

**The “Ingenious” Enigma: The Range of Prosody, Languages, and Verse Forms**

Apart from defining the general character of the enigma in his first and sixth numbers, John Tipper did not further codify the genre. Despite this fact, though many enigmas adhered to the editor’s models, the range of their versification and poetic forms increased throughout his editorship. This proliferation of innovative modes of versification and poetic forms indicates that the *Ladies’ Diary’s* contributors were well-read in the common poetic styles of their times. The enigma’s prosodic and linguistic variety, which I will point to in this section, also attests to its literary complexity.

The *Ladies’ Diary’s* enigmas often displayed the generic characteristics of the era’s established verse patterns. For the entire period I cover, enigmas employed the couplet. The couplet, and most commonly, the decasyllabic or heroic one, perhaps retained its popularity

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as a mode suited to enigmas in that it allowed for the gradual development of an argument. Also, the couplet enabled the expression of a “conversational politeness” and thus befitted the tone of the Diary. The era’s most common meter, iambic pentameter, remained highly visible in enigmas, though other rhythmic patterns, such as iambic tetrameter, also popular at the time, additionally appeared.

While these types were upheld, other more fluid forms of versification were also evident, often first modeled by Tipper. Such a variety of versification suggests the literary growth of the genre. One such mode of versification was triplets, “a larger and more flexible unit than the couplet.” Further, Tipper, in Enigma 23, provides an example of iambic heptameter: “I challenge Nature from her Store or Magazine to shew / One thing that doth by its great Age, or Use, the stronger grow,” an innovative exception later used by the composer of Enigma 85, for instance: “Drawn from the Womb a useless Mass, I for a while remain” (LD 1709, 24; 1719, 13). Also, variations can be noted among poems such as Enigma 48 by Mrs. Hannah Giddy, featuring several lines in anapestic tetrameter (“I HAVE a good Servant, deserves a good Name; / He’s always at hand, and scarce ever to blame”), which is at times lengthened to thirteen syllables (“I must tell you this further, which perhaps may you pose”) (LD 1713, 13). As the enigma was a genre marked by

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45 To emphasize LD’s female contributors, quotations from their submissions are referenced by the inclusion of their names.
prosodic flexibility, it was practiced by amateur poets who entered into publication for the first time.

Through ensuing issues, marking their increasing facility with the genre, the Ladies’ Diary’s readers also began to submit lengthier and more creative enigmas. Initially, the most frequently repeated pattern counted sixteen lines, though enigmas featuring as few as six lines or as many as thirty-two were also published. One lengthier enigma of fifty-one lines, “An ENIGMATICK TALE. By a Gentleman of Darbyshire,” is included in the number for 1711 (LD 9-10). Tipper’s final issue in 1713 includes another unique form, “The ENIGMATICK Dance, Composed by the Ingenious Mrs. Molly Cokayne.” This piece of thirty-four lines describes the “wandring Starrs [that] do the Dance create,” as Mr. Abel Ragg explains in the following number for 1714 (LD 5). It describes the Copernican solar system, particular lines referring to the names of planets. It not only requires a knowledge of the solar system, but it also demands more than one solution word and a lengthier span of attention for its descriptive detail. The editor underlines that this enigma is “Ingenious” and “composed by one of your Charming Sex” (LD A5r-v), thereby acknowledging women’s skill in composing complex poems while employing an astute marketing strategy (for the full text of this enigma see Appendix A).

Under Henry Beighton’s direction, the forms and rhyme schemes of enigmas more often present evidence of literary complexity. Enigmas, in general, continued to become

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46 One figure partially accountable for introducing such types of irregularity into the English verse tradition was Abraham Cowley, who became known for his successful adaptation of the Pindaric ode, according its three-stanza structure a greater freedom of line length and meter. Women, as Kathryn King notes, found his poetic influence especially amenable, as this initiative allowed them to compose classically based verse in the vernacular though they “were not necessarily learned themselves.” While in the first decades of the eighteenth century contemporaries held Cowley responsible for the supposedly “lax poetic habits” of women, others considered that it was time for the limitations of the closed couplet to be challenged and a looser form to take its place. Kathryn R. King, “Cowley Among the Women: or, Poetry in the Contact Zone,” in Women and Literary History: “For There She Was,” ed. Katherine Binhammer and Jeanne Wood (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 47, 48; Richard Bradford, “The Theory of Rhyme, and Poetic Genres,” in Augustan Measures: Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Writings on Proseody and Metre (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 155-85.
lengthier, perhaps as correspondents grew more adept at the genre. The majority of the enigmas after the 1720 almanac, in fact, exceed twenty-four lines. Many enigmas are also couched in experimental forms. Experimental enigmas include such longer poems as the “Pindarick Enigma” by D. (or Deborah) Roscoe, in the almanac for 1719. Its form reflects the contemporary understanding of “Pindaric” as a byword for irregularity. Another literary variation of the enigma was provided by Mrs. Eliz. Dod in the almanac for 1722 with her puzzle in blank verse, a form most famously used by William Shakespeare and John Milton. Although blank verse was considered appropriate for “subjects of dignity and force,” it was adopted for this enigma, whose answer was the wholly undignified object, “A BRIDLE for a Scold” (*LD* 1723, 3). The fact that the closed couplet and blank verse, “two separate, self-regulating spheres,” co-existed in the *Diary’s* enigmas serves as evidence of the flexibility of the genre. Another unusual variation of the puzzle is provided in Enigma 214 in the almanac for 1735, which not only sets a new puzzle to be solved in the next year, but also answers five enigmas from the last year using capital letters to distinguish the solutions within the text (*LD* 17).

Beighton’s most challenging addition was the inclusion of Latin and, later, French verses. Beginning in 1719, he published Latin enigmas at intervals, starting with one and occasionally presenting even three at a time in subsequent numbers. Peter Anthony Motteux, in *The Gentleman’s Journal* for December of 1693, in which he included an ode in Latin, had admitted that women “will better relish an account of our last Enigma’s” than additional Latin verses, since they cannot “be edified by them.” Though it thus seems likely that

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Beighton included Latin enigmas to draw male sleuths to the publication, and thereby raise
the status of the enigma and the Ladies' Diary, he was also concerned not to alienate his
female audience with the Latin puzzles, expressing hope that his inclusion of such enigmas
would not “lay any Restraint on the Fair Sex” (LD 1), an inclusion that apparently had no
such effect; though in much smaller numbers than men, women did submit answers to Latin
enigmas, as my research indicates. Further, in the almanac for 1719, Beighton also expresses
his intention to publish enigmas in French, another lure for his learned readership. This time
he justifies this offering as more accessible to women, since French is “fashionable amongst
Ladies” (LD 1). However, while the composition of French enigmas appeared to engage
fewer readers, Beighton continued the practice of offering Latin enigmas due to their
popularity. 50

Along with the growth in the variety of enigmas, the versification in their answers
also reflects a marked developmental progression, emphasizing an increasing ease with the
genre. In the inaugural number of the Ladies' Diary, the first two enigmas are followed by
their answers, revealed by the editor in a prose format. Tipper explains in his almanac for
1704 that the first enigma is a “description of the alphabet, and the other of a shadow” (DM
13). Yet, from number six onwards, the answers to last year’s enigmas precede the new
puzzles and are composed in verse. During Tipper’s editorship, the answers in verse range
from two to thirty lines. As with enigmas, each verse is presented in rhymed couplets or
triplets with iambic pentameter or tetrameter predominating as metrical patterns. The

50 Greek was another language which appeared in LD, though most frequently due to Heath’s influence.
During Beighton’s editorship, one answer to an enigma in 1719 was written in both Greek and Latin. During
the time span of 1744-1753 Heath included his own submissions in LD under a Greek pseudonym and an
enigma in Greek was also featured in the 1745 number.

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solution to an enigma included in an answer is frequently presented as a single word, as in
the verse by Mr. Thomas Smith comprised of a four-line acrostic:

T I M E is a thing none can too highly prize,
I t hastes away, and with much Swiftness flies:
M uch Prudence 'tis the main thing to pursue,
E ternity of Bliss from thence accrews.

(ND 1713, 7)

Single-word solutions, such as “TIME” above, could appear anywhere in the answers from
the first word to the last. At first, the answers contain only one such word, most often
placed prominently in either italics or block letters. The answer in the almanac for 1711, by
Mrs. Barbary Sidway, initiates an innovation to this format, incorporating all the single-word
solutions to the last year’s enigmas in one brief couplet: “A Pen, Ship, and Conscience, and the
little Word No, / A News-Paper and Taurus do all your Riddles show” (ND 6). While both
forms co-exist in the almanac for several years after Beighton’s assumption of editorship,
from the 1724 almanac onwards, almost all the single-word solutions are presented in the
latter format, in which all or most of the words appear in one verse, not only due to space
constraints, but likely because of the popularity of this answer form, one initiated by a female
reader.

Answers in verse became, during Beighton’s time, almost as complex and
experimental in structure and meter as enigmas themselves. The answers to enigmas, as with
the enigmas themselves, surpassed mere doggerel verse. In addition to acrostic verses,
among other experimental examples, a subtle variation in form can be found in the response
to the Prize Enigma in the 1721 number. The verse, by Mr. Massey, comprises four four-line
stanzas, but with three tetrameter lines followed by a dimeter line shifted to the far right margin as the last line of each stanza:

OLD Homer told in EPIC Song,

The Siege of once renowned Troy,

A Siege, that lasted ten Years long,

To please a Boy.

(LD 8)

The answer to all enigmas by Colonel Dagger in the almanac for 1743, as another example of the variety of verse forms, is written to the tune of a hunting song entitled “The Hounds are all out, &c.” and carries three stanzas of four lines, the first words of a refrain following after each quatrain (LD 2). In addition to the Latin enigmas, answers can also be found in Latin. Though not all Latin enigmas were responded to with Latin answers, such answers appeared at intervals and included not only solutions to the Latin enigmas of the last year but also to the English ones. In the Ladies’ Diary for 1723, Mrs. Anne Russel sent her brief answer couched in the form of a quotation from Juvenal, implying her knowledge of Latin (LD 2). Answers in French were, like the enigmas, less popular than those in Latin. Overall, as with English-language enigmas, answers to them grew longer and more ambitious in their mode of presentation as the years went by.

During Elizabeth Beighton’s and Robert Heath’s period of editorship, the enigmas and their answers continued to show complexity. They included such forms as an ode (LD 1745, 2), and a “SONG-ENIGMA” (LD 1751, 81), the latter composed by Heath behind the guise of a Greek-styled pseudonym. Only one French enigma was published in the 1749 number, the puzzle couched in a paragraph form, yet Latin enigmas remained popular. Evidently well-versed in the common poetic styles of the era, the almanac’s audience used
the almanac forum to present their poetic abilities. As I will further discuss, the enigma poems and their answers also allowed readers to engage in an epistolary fashion with other contributors as well as the editor, thereby creating a literary community of amateur poets.

“Ideas infinite”: The Diversity of Rhetorical Strategies and Themes

Rhetorical strategies and themes in enigmas and their answers also diversified over the years. The answers to enigmas combined an apparent simplicity of subject matter with a complexity of composition. The single-word solutions to the enigmas usually followed the rule that subjects should be "things clear and well known" (*DM* 1704, 12). Henry Beighton’s correspondents, similarly, emphasize this aspect of enigma composition, as when Mr. Ismael Bibby explains that subjects should be "common and well known" (*LD* 1731, 2). Thus, the single-word solutions to the enigmas most often relate either to domestic objects, or else to common, and frequently abstract, nouns. The solutions that appear more than once throughout John Tipper’s and Henry Beighton’s editorships present between them both options: a pen, salt, a looking-glass, a hoop-petticoat, a kiss, a weathercock, a seal, a shadow, a clock, the alphabet, death, an echo, conscience, fame, and hope. An enigma and an almanac are also solutions that recur. Under Elizabeth Beighton’s and Robert Heath’s editorship, perhaps due to the latter’s provocative style, though simple themes for enigmas such as love, a bell, and a rose remain, they occasionally became subversive and promotional of Heath’s other periodical ventures. These include a prostitute, a son of Sodom, and *The Palladium*. While solutions to enigmas may seem reductive in their use of only one word, the poetic and interpretative abilities that the verses engaged in their composition and resolution were far from elementary.
The straightforward solution to the enigmas was hidden behind a veil of various rhetorical strategies, indicating again the skill of the *Ladies' Diary*’s readers as writers and interpreters. Initially, the most prominent rhetorical strategy was the paradox. In Enigma 16 from the 1708 number, the paradox “I speak aloud, yet want a Tongue; ... / I seldom Wound till I am Dead” depicts elements of its subject’s composition, in this case, gunpowder (*LD* 14). Later on, during Henry Beighton’s editorship, other rhetorical strategies also became prominent. One of them, actually inaugurated by Tipper, involved telling a story which used a first- or third-person point of view. For example, Enigma 45 presents a cautionary fable about Kate, the “heedless Slut” who “Stumbling, ... let the Skillet fall, / Amongst the Coals with Milk and all” (*LD* 1713, 12). Other literary strategies that highlight the enigma’s complexity as a poetic composition include description, comparison and contrast, parallelism and inversion. The elaboration of detail accumulated through these literary devices points to the need for close-reading strategies and thus to the inherent difficulty of the genre; the solution will only be discerned by the reader’s attention to this accretion of rhetorical elements.

Further, the answers to enigmas developed an interactive voice, which correspondents used to comment on such aspects of the enigmas as their complexity, their composition, or their resolution, while revealing the single-word solutions at the same time. The answer to Enigma 24, for example, included in the almanac for 1710 and “resolved by a Lady” narrates the experience of the enigma’s sleuth in the following words:

As I in shady Grove was walking,

And of your mystick Riddles talking,

What is’t, said I, *Spot* has the same

As every thing that I can NAME?
An Echo from a neighbouring place,
Distinctly answered what it was.

(LD 8)

Such modes of composition emphasize the experience of enigma sleuthing as one undertaken by a participant in a literary coterie, a correspondent actively engaged in both the construction of the poem and its context. A regular reader of the Ladies' Diary would undoubtedly become a more adept sleuth and writer of the answers, as the genre itself, with its recurrent subjects and rhetorical strategies, became increasingly familiarized. An audience schooled in such modes of poetic composition gathered around the almanac and its enigmas.

Throughout these almanacs, the themes of enigmas and their answers are also diverse. Thematic patterns are significant for the way they underline audience preoccupation with popular forms of content. Enigmas that invoke societal mores are most representative of a phenomenon that fuses the traditional themes typical of past almanacs with a variety of other social concerns. "Tom of Bedlam's Solution of the Ridling Diary" published in the almanac for 1732, bitterly criticizes the condition of Georgian society in such lines as: "The Nation's DRUNK, and Virtue's under LOCK, / And Rich and Poor, and Wise and Fool, will all at length to Bedlam flock" (LD 2). In addition to the current condition of society, love and marriage also serve as social themes, used particularly during Henry Beighton's, as well as Elizabeth Beighton's and Robert Heath's editorships, as a contextual frame for the answers. For example, an answer by Mr. William Johnson addressed to a friend, Strephon, who is about to marry, attempts to discourage him from such a step, warning, in rhetoric familiar from the querelle des femmes, of falseness and delusion, because marriage may "prove a bitter Pill" and the lovers' "Sweets with SALTS, nay sharper MUSTARD mix." Instead, he recommends bachelorhood, "Books and Friends," and "useful Studies" as the ultimate
happiness (LD 1729, 3, 4). Colonel Dagger also offers advice regarding marriage, recommending two different approaches in his answer, which depend on whether one marries a widow or a virgin. A widow should be “boldly... Storm[ed]... / If she to your Measure must stoop,” while the latter should be “flatter[ed]” (LD 1741, 3). Another reader, who writes under the pseudonym of Rusticus, answers the enigmas of 1739 in the form of Prudentius’s advice to his son on wives. Prudentius presents the characteristics of a Good Wife, such as beauty, virtue, modesty, and “generous Blood” (LD 1740, 6). Instances of such idealizations are frequent in both answers and enigmas, especially when female beauty and virtue are praised. While such rhetoric recalls earlier almanacs, here the querelle discourse is embedded within a genre that was designed to appeal specifically to women.

Further, in a similar fashion to seventeenth-century almanacs the querelle discourse is used to expose female vices, especially cuckolding and scolding. “A BRIDLE for a Scold” is the previously mentioned subject of Enigma 110 by Mrs. Eliz. Dod (LD 1723, 3). Further, wives that make their husbands cuckolds are deemed “Plagues” and compared to “A SMOAKY House, [and] A LOUSY Bed” in an answer by a pseudonymous contributor, Damon Dimentiensis (LD 1736, 6). One of the poetic narratives about cuckolded husbands published in the almanac for 1733 is about a “doating old Fool” who marries a “gay wanton young Lass” and is crowned with horns (LD 4). Women, in addition to these faults, are also blamed for their vanity, when such possessions as pearls and patches are deemed “bewitching Trinkets” in the Prize Enigma for 1731 (LD 21). The fact that women participated in the querelle debate in these enigmas underlines its dominant use as a literary strategy rather than a real-world critique. As Adam Smyth remarks, for the female reader one
mode of response to textual misogyny may have been “contesting readings.” One example of a pseudonymous female voice that participates in the querelle debate is an answer in the almanac for 1735 by humorously-styled Coquettella, a sixty-year old maid who teaches young girls “LIBERTY,” cautioning their “defenceless” hearts “Against the rude, impertinent Attempts / Of that vain, foppish, haughty Thing, call’d MAN” (LD 6). Another answer by Mrs. Eliz. Cotterell in the almanac for 1740 criticizes female dullness and instructs girls on the value of life. Rather than wasting time on cards, she prefers to “steer” the “Lines” in enigma sleuthing (LD 6). Yet such responses are rare, and often, due to their pseudonymous character, it is uncertain if women were their contributors. Thus, Smyth’s argument that the female reader was “implicated in a culture of misogyny” that capitalized on such literary types as vain and scolding women presents a convincing interpretation. The existence of only few contesting voices suggests that the female readers of the middle class could have also been participating in the reinforcement of gender ideology that positioned their class as superior to those on lower economic echelons.

However, while the Ladies’ Diary was still representing stereotypical discourse in the enigmas and their answers in a manner similar to earlier almanac publications, the periodical also reached beyond the presentation of the clichéd opinions of the querelle, encouraging female intellectual involvement in this publication. Therefore, though mental labor was still represented as “too hard a Task” for women to attempt, because their “bright Fancy” might be “strain[ed],” as one enigma teasingly suggested (LD Enigma 243, 1741, 15), this assumption was belied through women’s actual participation in enigma composition and resolution. While the almanac often imaged women according to the restrictive modes of the

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52 Ibid.
querelle, it also attributed its success to women, frequently acknowledging the almanac’s
dependence on women’s skill as enigma composers and sleuths. Both tactics, in the end,
amounted to successful, if seemingly divergent, rhetorical and promotional modes.

Along with such social themes and their rhetorical modes, other themes were present
in enigmas, underlining the popularity of a wide range of subject matter within this flexible
genre. They include nature, often used symbolically to depict the origin and composition of
the object in question, or mythology, invoked, for example, to elaborate a narrative. Images
of the body are also drawn upon to make reference to physical proportions or sexuality, and
even to the body’s processes in producing mucus and gas. While such visceral content is
rare, its presence attests to the almanac’s folk origins. Additionally, references to war,
literature, history, royalty, and the Bible provide clues to the solutions to enigmas. The
number of references present in enigmas suggests that contributors to the *Ladies’ Diary* drew
their ideas from diverse sources.

Indeed, this high number of rhetorical strategies and themes in the puzzles and also
the variety of versification exemplified in the previous section confirm the enigma’s complex
composition. One particular example, Henry Beighton’s detailed explanation of the Prize
Enigma published in the almanac for 1735, the solution to which is a faggot or “a bundle of
sticks, twigs, or small branches of trees bound together,”53 attests to the challenging aspects
of the verses. The editor states in the following number for 1736 that this enigma’s sleuthing
requires “Sagacity,” since it is “very difficult to find out.” He further explains its
mythological, religious, and literary references. The third line in the last stanza, for instance,
which reads: “Our Likeness is this Moment ’fore your Eyes,” requires a learned enigma

(accessed May 14, 2008).
sleuth to know that "Rapin, St. Evremont and other French and Italian Authors have compar'd that sort of Verse which we call Pindaric to a Faggot, and not improperly from its Resemblance of them as to their inequality of size and length" (LD 1735, 21; 1736, 8). Despite the apparent difficulty, Miss Anna Maria Button solved this enigma correctly and was awarded the annual prize of twelve diaries.

Women's ability to solve complex puzzles was often acknowledged in the Ladies' Diary, a fact that draws our attention to the almanac's emphasis on the agency of the female reader. In the almanac for 1713 Tipper appends a note on the uncommon subject of Enigma 43, which is "the Sea" and which requires the knowledge of its "Flux and Reflux." Despite the seemingly unfamiliar theme, Mrs. Brown solved it (LD 10). Then in 1726, eleven women and twenty-eight men, Beighton claims, answered the Prize Enigma correctly, which was the "Description of the Invention and Progress of the Engine for raising Water out of Mines by the Force of Fire" (LD 5, 10). As is evident, the enigmas presented "Ideas infinite" and their content was unpredictable, since an enigma could be presented in many forms: "To Day I'm Thomas, Abigail to Morrow; / Or Bird, or Beast, or Fish, or Stone, or Tree, / Gust as the Whim directs) I soon can be" (LD Enigmas 164, 1730, 11; 101, 1721, 11). The Diary, with such a range of forms, must have broadened the literary skills of its readers, including women. Epithets that extol the benefits of enigma composition, such as "In Studies deep my sprightly Thoughts are spent," or that compliment enigma writers, depicting them as "learn'd ingenious Brains" of "penetrating Genius," as in Enigma 164 by Mrs. Utrecia Smith (LD 1736, 10-11), are tributes to these skills, while also serving as promotional tools to draw

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54 As Beighton explains, the engine was invented by "Herbert, Marquiss of Worcester" (Edward Somerset, 2nd Marquess of Worcester) circa 1644. Thomas Savery then obtained a patent for that invention in 1689, and in 1712 Thomas Newcomen improved the engine by "applying the Weight of the Atmosphere instead of the Elasticity of the Steam" (LD 1726, 10).
further contributors. The “Problems” presented in the enigmas are dubbed “hard” (LD Enigma 164, 1730, 11), and the composition of the enigmas themselves was obviously challenging, offering the Diary’s contributors many hours of engagement and the satisfaction of seeing the publication of their linguistic handiwork.

The era in which the Ladies’ Diary was published encouraged amateur submissions, many popular periodicals requesting original material from readers and thus creating a motive for acts of reading and writing. In Clifford Siskin’s words, readers “desir[ed] at the very least to read the kind of material which they themselves wrote or which appeared in the periodicals for which they wrote,” in the process becoming “real authors themselves.”55 The almanac thus allowed for what Kathryn Shevelow calls a transformation of “literacy into readership,” and, even further, I argue, of readership into authorship.56 In particular, poetic offerings, such as the Prize Enigma, reassured female contributors that there existed a demand for their submissions. Evidently well-versed in the common poetic styles of the era, the almanac’s female contributors readily displayed the range of their skills in their composition of enigmas and their answers. The Diary thus remains significant as one of the earliest almanac publications that overtly acknowledged the importance of writing by women.

The “Poetical Artist,” the Methodical Mathematician and the Provocative Editor: John Tipper’s, Henry Beighton’s and Robert Heath’s Engagement with Enigmatic Forms

During the period that my dissertation covers, each compiler of the Ladies’ Diary’s poetical part presented a contrasting approach to the offering of the enigma poem. At the

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56 Shevelow, “Readers as Writers,” 64.
time when John Tipper edited the almanac, formal rules for the composition of enigmas did not exist. Instead, Tipper's rhetorical engagement with his readers solicited their enigma submissions and mentored them in their practice of enigma forms, promoting their “useful Learning and Ingenuity,” and thereby framing the genre as an educational one (LD B8v).

The closest Tipper came to setting a rule was in his prefatory address to “the Charming Fair” published in verse in the almanac for 1709, in which he assures his female readership that in these verses only what “might truly Profit and Delight” is to be found, and “No unchaste Words, with harsh offensive Sound . . . / Nor Thought, which nauseous Images inspire” will mar the content of enigmas (LD Av). Tipper thereby sought to gentrify the enigma as a fitting preoccupation for his intended readership. Though Tipper was primarily a mathematician, he did not encourage his female readers to practice mathematics as Henry Beighton would later do, but rather claimed that verse was “the fittest Offer'ing” for his female audience, since “Love and Poetry Companions are” (LD 1709, Av).

Indeed, as Henry Ellis, the editor of Tipper’s correspondence, notes, “it does not appear that the improvement of mathematical science was a particular object with the ingenious projector.” Tipper proposed enigmas in his first number, while arithmetical questions were inaugurated only four years later in 1708 and, as with enigmas, were modeled in verse. In 1709 he requested that the arithmetical questions be “very pleasant, and not too hard; and likewise that they may be proposed in Verse; which will still be the more taking among the Ladies” (LD B7r). Tipper’s aim was to appeal continuously to his female readers.

Further, when in 1711 Tipper comments on the proper composition of the arithmetical

questions, he asserts that their writer is a “Poetical Artist” (LD C4v). In these ways, as I will further show in this chapter, the relationship Tipper established with his audience through enigmas and answers to enigmas was marked by his high level of textual interaction.

Likely to encourage reader submissions, Tipper remarks in 1710 that he is taken aback by the dissatisfaction his female readers express over the lack of difficulty of his proposed puzzles, as his enigmas are “so easy, they could find them out almost at the first reading” (LD B8v). Raising an objection to this criticism, he challenges his readers by offering the more complex Enigma 32, promising to reward those who can correctly answer it. The first woman from whom he receives a correct answer will be awarded twenty almanacs that she can share with her “Friends and Acquaintance” (LD B8v). He will also award the first person from whom he receives an answer to one of his proposed arithmetical questions twelve of his almanacs. The unequal number of prizes for the solution of enigmas and mathematical problems implies that Tipper found enigmas a fitter offering in an almanac for women. The prizes, as Tipper claims in his following number, proved to be powerful incentives for his audience.

Tipper assures his readers in the almanac for 1711 that the publication of these prize puzzles is generously responded to with an “abundance of Thanks and Complements, and a Multitude of Letters from all parts of the Kingdom” (LD B3v). He distinguishes the enigma for which the prize is offered by titling it the “Prize-Enigma” and commenting further that it is “for the Ladies only Benefit” (LD C2v). From this year onwards, the Prize Enigma was featured regularly in each almanac, serving as a potent, and provocative, marketing tool. To “both divert and gratify the Curiosity of the Inquisitive Fair-Ones, in relation to the Success of that Affair,” Tipper provides his readers with much detail regarding the manner and kind of responses he receives, many of which are incorrect, including one from a man who
pompously asserts his wife’s accuracy, assuring Tipper that she “was positive [the answer] was the Moon, and therefore he as positively demanded, and would not be bubbled of the promised Reward” (LD B3v). When, due to space limitations, Tipper ceases his account of reader responses to Enigma 32, he admits to his readers that to do justice to their voracious submission of enigmas would be impossible, since it would: “fill a Volume twice as big as my Diary” (LD B5v). That his offer of prizes was received with enthusiasm is evidenced by the frequency of submissions which urge the editor to award almanacs according to his promise.

Once the prizes became a regular feature of the almanac, Tipper began to remark on problems related to the management of related contributions. In the Ladies’ Diary for 1711, he explains that he received two correct answers on the same day and decided to award each correspondent ten almanacs. However, he also admits that neither of them “was so kind to let [him] know whether ever they received them or not” (LD B4r). In this way, he confirms his personal involvement in the correspondence. To avoid any suspicion of partiality, he also “solenmly assure[s]” his readers that “neither Favour nor Affection shall ever incline [him] to bestow [the prizes]” in an unjust manner (LD 1711, C2v). He continues to acknowledge the difficulty of serving a regionally diverse audience in his statement in 1712, admitting that women who “live in the remote parts of the Kingdom Complain, and that Justly too, That they have not the same advantage to gain the Prizes as those who live nearer the Author’s Habitation” (LD C3v). Thus, he determines in this year that prize winners will be drawn by three lots on the twenty-seventh of December. He announces that he will reward the woman who is first drawn and who correctly answers the Prize Enigma with twelve almanacs. Next, the names of all men who reply properly will be added to those of women for a draw with an award of eight almanacs. Finally, among all the prize question respondents, the first person drawn will win ten almanacs. Such a solution not only favored female readers in giving them
increased opportunities to win, but also, due to the higher number of prizes offered, established prize enigmas, rather than prize questions, as a more gratifying genre for the “Ladies” to be involved in.

Also in 1712, Tipper emphasizes the standards he expects for the prize enigmas. Responding to the female correspondents who complain that their remote location inhibits them from gaining prizes, Tipper claims that the new deadline gives his readers “time enough to put their Answers in good Verse” (LD C3v), emphasizing the standards of quality he expects from these puzzles. He does not hesitate to inform his readers of the many wrong answers to last year’s Prize Enigma, thereby confirming its complexity. One reader, for example, imagines it to be a “Bed of four Leggs” and Tipper comments bawdily, it must be such a one on which “young Men take great Delight in getting Bastards” (LD 5-6).

Tipper’s editorship, marked by his personalized interaction with readers, was followed by Henry Beighton’s lengthier, more intellectually stringent, and anonymous editorship. Though in 1714 Beighton’s epithets echo Tipper’s complimentary tone, when the respondents’ answers are lauded as “ingenious” (LD 3, 6, 7, 9, 10), “incomparable,” and “Comprehensive and Witty” (LD 10), by the following issue he has pared down such flowery forms of rhetoric, and from then on refers to his readers most often by their names or aliases.⁵⁹ (As I noted in Chapter Three, the 1714 issue may have been prepared in parts by Tipper before his death.) This change in practice underscores the fact that Beighton’s textual relationship with his readers reflected concerns other than the regular need for an effusive encouragement of poetic submissions. Beighton’s editorship reflects his social position as “a

⁵⁹ The instances that laud the readers’ responses by adjectival markers are few during Beighton’s editorship. In the almanac for 1722 he comments on Galatea’s and Mr. David Meredith’s answers as ingenious to distinguish their accomplishments, since they provide solutions to all enigmas within one verse (LD 4, 5). Other complimentary captions include “Astrea’s incomparable Answer” (LD 1719, 5), and “The following Lines well deserve a Place in Answer to the Prize-Enigma, by Mr. T. Lane” (LD 1720, 9).
respectable mathematician and mechanist, and the most eminent civil engineer of his time\textsuperscript{60} and is marked by his greater level of attention to the instrumental value of mathematical questions rather than poetic compositions, as I discussed in Chapter Three. His lessened emphasis on such complimentary rhetoric could also be due to the fact that the \textit{Ladies' Diary} was, by this point, established in the print marketplace.

From the earliest years of his editorship Beighton promoted mathematical sciences, which he saw as differentiating his publication from other almanacs. This focus is underlined by his encouragement of the composition of mathematical rather than enigmatic forms. For instance, in the almanac for 1719, he distinguishes between the two types of contributions; while enigmas “fit each one’s fancy,” mathematical questions are “useful” in the “Progress in the Mathematicks” (\textit{LD} 1). Despite the fact that he continued to publish enigmas annually, he never once admitted that poetry was as useful as mathematics, stating later in 1739 that enigmas exemplify merely a “Variety of curious Thoughts” (\textit{LD} 21). Rather than being a pleasant poetic exercise, for Beighton the answering of enigmas has the pedagogical value of enabling a “serious and methodical Way of thinking on any Subjects” (\textit{LD} 1718, 1).

Beighton’s methodology, one based on precision and logic, is emphasized by the detailed rules for the construction of literary puzzles which he offers in the almanacs for 1723 and 1731. He includes lengthy fragments of letters elaborating on the correct content of enigmas from two readers who wrote under the names of Calypso and Mr. Ismael Bibby. In Calypso’s letter, the first rule has a gendered basis; subjects should be “generally known,” since female readers are not well versed in “the Mysteries of all Arts and Sciences” (\textit{LD} 1723, 1). Secondly, metaphors should never be mixed nor imagery inconsistent. This rule

\textsuperscript{60} Ellis, Editor’s Note, 304.
speaks to the enigma as a puzzle to be solved according to solid poetic standards. A third rule that Calypso proposes is that, to lessen confusion for sleuths, it is important to properly use generalities and particulars. Finally, a regard for time and place must be adhered to.

Then, to additionally emphasize the genre’s logical structure, the almanac of 1731 appends a description of the enigma with one repeated rule and two additional ones. The enigma is said to have two key properties, namely that it is “obscure before Solution” and that it is “plain” afterwards. Thus the aim behind such a composition is to “puzzle” rather than to “confound.” As the letter further suggests, it is “allowable” to use such literary devices as “Tropes and Figures, Ambiguities and Equivocations, Punns and Quibbles” to this end though three guidelines must be followed. The rule that subjects should be common is re-emphasized with two additional recommendations that all words should be “intelligible” and that the description of the subject must be “just” and “true” (LD 1-2).

These rules clearly reflect Beighton’s favoring of methodical reasoning over poetical fancy. When in 1736 Beighton applauds the Prize Enigma, his admiration stems from the piece being “strictly just to the Rules of a true Enigma” (LD 8).

From 1736 until his death in 1743, Beighton eagerly promoted mathematical forms of learning in lieu of enigmas. His distinction between two forms of knowledge contrasted with the more encompassing ideal of a “Poetical Artist” that Tipper encouraged. Despite Beighton’s foregrounding of mathematics, readers formed a circle of enthusiastic respondents to enigmas and the enigmatic forms were popular throughout the century. The deft way in which Tipper encouraged enigma submission drew a broad audience to the almanac; Beighton’s advocacy of the clarity and erudition of the enigma was likely a potent marketing tool aimed to raise the status of this poetic sub-genre.
The enigmas’ level of popularity in the Ladies’ Diary, however, was compromised to a certain extent by Robert Heath. As I elaborated in Chapter Three, Heath’s mismanagement of the publication reduced the number of enigma submissions, a situation which Thomas Simpson underlines in his list of prize-winning contributors in the 1754 number of the Diary. Yet, at the beginning of his editorship, Heath’s commentary on enigmas was a promotional one. In 1747, while Heath asks his contributors to send their enigmas on new subjects and, like Tipper before him, explains that mathematical questions are “but another Kind of Enigma’s” (LD 22, Av), he also underlines the value of enigmas as an intellectual exercise. He states that though the form “may appear to some” as “trifling and useless,” the composition and resolution of enigmas leads to “a Habit of reasoning distinctly and closely,” and “the Intellectual Faculties are extended to their utmost Limits of Improvement” (LD Av). In 1750, he also claims that enigmas are useful in “improving the Understanding of Young Persons of both Sexes, and for leading them . . . into an early Habit of Thinking.” They “learn” in the process “to judge of Sentiment and Diction” (LD Av). In this manner, he emphasizes the role of the almanac as an educational tool for the young.

However, in the almanac for 1749, Heath’s tone, in contrast to Tipper’s and Beighton’s, is marked by irritation with his readers’ submissions. He appends an editorial note that explains the omission of many answers due to “want of room.” At the same time, he chides his audience for submitting enigmas that are “too long, considering their Use, or Entertainment.” Heath emphasizes that the answer to enigmas should be “as concise as possible, consistent with the proper Character, or Lesson of Instruction, it should set forth.” He thus interprets the exceedingly long enigmas as evidence that contributors were becoming lax in their poetic submissions. Heath’s concern here, similar to Beighton’s, is with the standards of enigma composition, as he further emphasizes that there are “Scales of Judgement”
by which enigmas are assessed, claiming that some submissions have been so insufficient that they have not “weigh’d down a single Grain” (LD 20). Yet by incorporating such comparisons, Heath introduces a critical tone in a manner that Tipper and Beighton tended to avoid. In a letter written to Thomas Cowper, Heath discusses an enigma he received from Cowper’s friend, commenting that he could not judge the “Fitness” of the puzzle, because it lacked an accompanying solution. He appears unabashed in admitting that he never studies the “Enigmas to find them out,” since he judges the poetry as “indifferent.” Thus, though Heath encourages the submission of enigmas in the *Ladies’ Diary*, it is as a promotional tactic only.

Further, as Elizabeth Beighton’s letter of January 23, 1753, indicates, Heath used the puzzles numbered “6th and XI” (356 and 361) to vent his anger against the “Characters of two princeple Agents” of the Stationers’ Company. In Enigma 356, which Heath wrote under a pseudonym, he ironically depicts a printer who is “guilty of Blunders” and is in a pact with “the Devil” (LD 20). Enigma 361 denigrates *The Monthly Review*, a publication that engaged in the controversy over the definition of fluxions. He refers to the publication as “An impudent Piece, without Morals or Shame” (LD 21). Heath thus dismantled the gentlemanly and friendly repartee that distinguished the enigmas during John Tipper’s and Henry Beighton’s editorships. The reputation of the *Ladies’ Diary* had to be recuperated later through Simpson’s efforts.

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61 Robert Heath to Thomas Cowper, 23 May 1751, BL, Add. MSS 43741:15r.
62 Elizabeth Beighton to Thomas Cowper, 29 January 1753, BL, Add. MSS 43741:31v-32r.
“Bright Female Wits, be yours the glorious Praise”: The Rhetorical Acknowledgment of Women

The Ladies' Diary's enigmas and their answers allowed for the development of a textual interaction between the editor and his audience as well as among the readers themselves. In the early eighteenth century, when the distinction between the oral and written word was blurred and when much of the writing on public matters was expressed in verse, as J. Paul Hunter observes, poetry was "considered a standard means of public communication." Further, Margaret Ezell argues that textual conversations within a commercial venture, "couched in terms of a friendly community of amateur exchange," established "an atmosphere of an exclusive coterie" in periodicals, while they also contributed to the creation and consolidation of a "literary community." As the frequent use of pseudonyms underlines, this community was founded not on the notion of authorial proprietorship, but, as Adam Smyth notes, on the model of a coterie comfortable with the free circulation of literary material. Thus, enigma forms in particular allowed for an interactive sensibility, reflecting the epistolary character of the interchange of material between the editor and his readers, as illustrated in the enigmas' initial and intertextual addresses.

These addresses to the readers in the Ladies' Diary were frequently gendered, thereby highlighting women, and particularly gentrified female readers, as a potent audience within the textual coterie and as actual contributors of the Diary's material. The addresses present in

64 Hunter, "Couplets and Conversation," 11, 15.
66 Smyth, "Readers and Readings: 'To Father the Brat of Another's Brain'; Why Were Printed Miscellanies Read?," 52.
enigmas assume two variations. Firstly, at the start of the enigma, or within, there often appears an address to the “Ladies,” usually accompanied by some adjectival marker such as the frequently used “Ingenious.” Secondly, an invocation is appended to the address, in which the “fair sex’s” assistance is requested to solve the enigma: “Say who I am, bright Nymphs, for surely you, / Or none can prove such Paradoxes true” (LD Enigma 136, 1726, 11). This flattering rhetoric aimed to draw a wide female audience to the almanac who would contribute to both its success and to a renewed respect for the genre itself.

Before 1707, only one enigma included an address, and that an intertextual and non-gendered one, namely: “Go learned wits, now proudly boast your parts” (DM Enigma 8, 1705, 40). Initially, such non-gendered second-person references were made: “Yes he has got a Thing the very same / As each of these, or any other thing that you can name” (LD Enigma 24, 1709, B4v), or: “try what of the Myst’ry you can make” (LD Enigma 26, 1709, B5r). Typical for almanacs, men are explicitly addressed, as in Enigma 31, in the almanac for 1710, which incorporates a direct address of “Sir” (LD B8v). Such rhetoric proves that though John Tipper’s Ladies’ Diary initially aimed overtly at a female consumer with its narratives and instructional writings, as I discussed in Chapter Two, the inclusion of enigmas which explicitly address the male consumer expanded the intended audience for the second part of the almanac.

Likely due to the success of the almanac among its female readership, the numbers of female enigma respondents soared from 1710 onwards, multiplying, as my research shows, more than three times between 1709-1713 and 1714-1723. With Enigma 27 the practice of addressing the female readers of these puzzles commenced: “And, Ladies, but for Me, you had in vain / Expected your Cleanthes here again” (LD 1710, B8r). Perhaps also influenced by Tipper’s prefatory addresses to “the Fair Sex,” “the Obliging Fair,” and “the
Charming Fair,” and by “An Address to the Ladies upon the New Year” in number nine \((LD\ 1712,\ Av)\), enigma writers began to insert addresses to women in their puzzles themselves. Such addresses often challenged the “Ladies” to “try [their] Wits” \((LD\ Enigma\ 59,\ 1715,\ 11)\), or “cast [their] Thoughts about” \((LD\ Prize\ Enigma,\ 1715,\ 22)\). Three rhetorical modes of addresses to the “Ladies” are particularly prominent in the \textit{Ladies’ Diary}: praise of their beauty or charm, acknowledgment of their unique sleuthing capacity, and admiration of their intellect. Two enigmas in the almanac for 1720 provide examples of the first type, calling the “Ladies” the “fair Diviners” \((LD\ Enigma\ 95,\ 14)\) and the “charming Fair” \((LD\ Enigma\ 96,\ 14)\). The second mode of address is exemplified in Enigma 141 by Mr. Jac. Pritty, in which he encourages women in their attempts to solve the enigmas, praising their “Genius” as particularly designed to reveal the “dark Allusions” of the enigma’s “mystic Name” \((LD\ 1727,\ 11)\). The third type is then represented by a compliment, as “Bright Female Wits, be yours the glorious Praise” \((LD\ 1718,\ 5)\). The tropes common in the \textit{querelle des femmes} discourse were, in such a way, turned to the aim of drawing an avid female readership.

The answers to these enigmas additionally emphasize the character of the interaction between various correspondents and the editor. Correspondents write to the editor, for example, in relation to promised awards, underlining the demand for the almanac. A frequent contributor, the pseudonymous reader Blowsabella, appeals to the editor for her promised award, referring to Tipper in the following lines: “This comes to demand (Sir) the \textit{promis’d Reward}, / Which if you don’t pay (Mr. Tipper) ’tis hard” \((LD\ 1711,\ 2)\). Mrs. Anne-Rachel Vesly also addresses the editor, hoping to receive an award for the answer she sent: “If this Solution (Sir) you grant is true, / Your Recompence is claim’d by A. R. V.” \((LD\ 1712,\ 5)\). Other correspondents’ references to the editor evoke the atmosphere of a circle of
a friendly coterie. Brunetta, another pseudonymous reader, in 1725 dubs Henry Beighton “Kind Sir” (LD 4), and Blowsabella in 1727 presents her answer in the form of a letter that begins with an informal address: “Friend Harry —— kindest Critic of my Rhyme, / How dost in Warwickshire bestow thy Time?” (LD 5). Such rhetoric, attentive to the tropes of private correspondence, emphasizes the editor’s authoritative role in the management of the publication, along with the mutual collaboration between the editor and the reader.

In addition to a direct engagement with the editor, the textual community of readers was also gaining a rhetorically-based level of intimacy with each other through the direct address offered by enigmas and their answers, further underlining the constructed atmosphere of a literary coterie. Such an address often took the form of a direct response to the specific contributor or group engaged with writing or resolving the enigmas. In 1712, Mrs. Sarah Newbold’s Enigma 43 salutes the “sweet English Ladies,” who, she hopes, will solve her enigma, establishing a textual relationship with the women sleuths by inviting those who guess the answer to “drink a Dish of Tea” with her (LD 11). When in the almanac for 1736 one of the readers, the prolific and popular Blowsabella, writes a farewell enigma to all readers, in 1738 Mr. Randle Dod’s response laments her absence, addressing Blowsabella with a display of grief: “And will dear Blowza then forsake us quite, / Nor with her Pen her Servants more delight?” (LD 5). This community of readers was involved in various textual exchanges through genteel modes of rhetoric, playing with pseudonyms and their writing styles, and thereby forming a tightly-knit textual coterie within a commercial publication. Ezell suggests that even the use of pseudonyms reflects the practice of a coterie circle, since readers in this manner “became a recognized part of a group, with a special identity within
it." While female-styled pseudonyms may or may not have been adopted by traceable women, their presence still suggests an inscription of the “feminine” within the almanac.

The *Ladies’ Diary’s* initial and intertextual addresses were gendered to appeal to a range of correspondents for the enigmas and thereby obtain their annual submissions. Also, they aimed to enhance the curiosity of the potential consumer as to next year’s publication. Contrary to seventeenth-century almanac makers that popularized their texts in part through a participation in the negative inscriptions of the querelle discourse, the addresses that developed over the course of the *Diary* emerged from a newly gentrifying rhetoric that sought to acknowledge women as a significant readership group, in order to better sell the almanac, while also establishing in the process a network of actual contributors. Women clearly formed a visible part of this network.

“*General satisfaction*”: The Reception and Popularity of Enigmas

As the enigmas were increasing in complexity with time, they were also rising in popularity, as I have already noted. In the number for 1718 Henry Beighton announces to his readers that his *Ladies’ Diary* “out-sells the rest, there scarce any besides selling above 6 or 7 Thousand Yearly” (*LD* 2), a number that grew to approximately thirty thousand copies at mid-century. This popularity was long-lived: the *Diary ran* for more than a century and parts of it were republished in 1775 by Charles Hutton. This republication of the *Diary’s* literary and mathematical features, a response to “the great and universal desire of people to obtain all the Diaries,” transcended the ephemeral quality of the almanac.

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68 Charles Hutton, “To the Public,” in *DM* (London, 1775), i:ii. 238
Data pertaining to the *Ladies' Diary*'s contributors confirms that enigmas during the first half of the eighteenth century were well-received. As Shelley Anne Costa calculates in her dissertation on the basis of data from the *Diary* for 1711, 1716-1718, 1720, and 1722-1724, enigmas were the most popular among the *Diary*'s features: among female readers there were “four times” more respondents for enigmas than for mathematical questions.\(^69\)

My research, covering the period from 1709 to 1753 when the lists of respondents to both enigmas and mathematical questions were included in the almanac, indicates that this proportion increased over the years to approximately six times in 1724-1733, and then almost thirteen times in 1734-1743, declining to seven and a half times in 1744-1753. Yet women were not the only readers to take an interest in the enigma, as I have noted. Though during the period of 1709-1713 men responding to mathematical problems outnumbered those responding to enigmas by a proportion of three to two, in later years, even when Henry Beighton promoted mathematics in his *Diary*, more men responded to enigmas than to mathematical questions by a proportion of approximately three to two. Overall, during 1709-1753 there were more enigma than mathematical respondents, the proportions being five to four for 1709-1713, almost two to one for 1714-1723, and over two to one for 1724-1753.\(^70\)

Beginning with the number for 1705, Tipper acknowledges the receipt of enigmas which, he prides himself, provided “general satisfaction” upon their publication (*DM* 39). In his editorial preface “To the Charming Fair,” included in the first part of the almanac for 1707, Tipper announces that he has been proffered “a great many” verses, enigmas and fictional narratives “from most Parts of the Kingdom” (*LD* Av). In the almanac for 1709, he

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\(^{69}\) Costa, “‘Ingenious Ladies’ and ‘Sons of Art,’” 146.

\(^{70}\) This data refers only to contributions in English.
again underscores a “multitude of Letters [he has] received from all parts of the Kingdom,” which confirms the positive reception of enigmas and arithmetical questions (LD 1). In the 1711 number, while once again noting that he has been the recipient of “a Multitude of Letters from all parts of the Kingdom”—this time in response to his promised prizes—he also boasts of having in hand “no less than 28” letters “in one Day” from women who have answered the enigma for which he promised a reward of twenty diaries (LD 1). Such statements imply the geographically widespread popularity of enigma poems, not only the high demand for the almanac.

Though such assertions of the almanac’s popularity could be a marketing strategy rather than a factual record of audience response, data from the Ladies’ Diary enables one to trace a tangible and locatable community of enigma respondents. Though at first the community for the enigmas was perhaps editorially imagined, constructed for the purpose of boosting sales, it quite quickly became an actual one as correspondents submitted enigmas and their answers from various parts of the country. The enigma audience can be defined as a community not only in the sense that certain correspondents lived in close proximity to each other, or were related by family, but also that they even formed groups—for instance, the Club Sohoe, which submitted communal answers. The Diary allows us to access information about its readers’ localities because this publication provides not only names, but also reveals where the readers lived; no almanac prior to the Diary has provided such a vivid portrait of its textual community. I have determined, through this data, how far the popularity of the almanac reached.
The two maps\textsuperscript{71} which I insert on the following pages represent the available localities of enigma contributors under John Tipper’s and Henry Beighton’s editorships in England and Wales. They suggest the almanac’s wide readership as well as the popularity of enigma composition, with Tipper’s readers represented by 25 localities, while Beighton’s audience, covering 30 years in comparison to Tipper’s 10, is much greater at 102 locations. Contributors to the \textit{Ladies’ Diary} were drawn from diverse locations, including hamlets, market towns, quiet shires, and bustling cities. Readers submitted enigmas and answers from areas as distant as Wales, while many correspondents came from small villages in which the inhabitants knew each other on a first-name basis. Beighton’s advertisements for Andrew Buckley’s medals are another sign of the far-flung interest in the enigmas: “My Ingenious Friend Mr. \textit{And. Buckley} of \textit{Birmingham} in \textit{Warwickshire}, who Annually Publishes the Golden Almanack, being a Neat Pocket Medal . . . Stampt [last year] the Solution to 80 Enigma’s on his Medal, as he will this Year 1719, the 87th Enigma. They will be sold in several great Towns in \textit{England}, an Account whereof will be in the Publick Advertisements in the News-

Papers” \textit{(LD 1719, 24)}. Thus, a combination of advertisements and knowledge of the correspondents’ actual locations implies that such an audience was drawn from a wide geographical range.

\textsuperscript{71} I have drawn two maps that cover the period from 1704 until 1743 to show the increase in reader locations between \textit{LD}’s initial and its flourishing phases; after 1743 the almanac’s popularity remained relatively stable. Researching the geographical locations of the contributors of enigmas and their answers in \textit{LD} has proven to be a complex task. This complexity is due primarily to variants in the spelling of place names. Thus, in cases of doubt, I have marked places as undetermined. However, the practice of including the county’s name frequently eliminates the possibility of error. Further, in relation to the contributors, it is difficult to establish at times whether they responded to enigmas or to mathematical questions. In cases when the list of contributors does not distinguish between answers to enigmas and mathematical questions, as in 1712 and 1713, I have not shown locality.
Localities of Enigma Contributors to *The Ladies' Diary*, 1704-1713

![Map of England with localities marked]

**Legend**
- One contributor from a determinable locality
- Two contributors from a determinable locality

*Figure 4.1:* Localities of enigma contributors to *The Ladies' Diary*, 1704-1713. The original spelling of localities has been retained.
Localities of Enigma Contributors to *The Ladies' Diary*, 1714-1743

Figure 4.2: Localities of enigma contributors to *The Ladies' Diary*, 1714-1743. The original spelling of localities has been retained. If place names are attributable to more than one area, the location is marked as undetermined.

Legend

- One contributor from a determinable locality
- Two or more contributors from a determinable locality
- One contributor from an undetermined locality
- Two contributors from an undetermined locality

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Capitalizing on the popularity of enigmas in *The Ladies' Diary*, such widely read periodicals as *The Gentleman's Magazine* also published these rhyming puzzles, or riddles, as that periodical also referred to them without clearly differentiating between the two forms. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, founded at the height of the *Diary*’s renown, perhaps sought to rival its competitor. Usually in the most common couplet or triplet form, enigmas were presented in many issues of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, beginning in July of 1731. The enigma’s ubiquitous presence was marked in this periodical by readers and editors, who both praised and derided the form. A critical perspective on enigmas is particularly pursued by one pseudonymous reader, S. S., in the October issue of the *Gentleman’s Magazine* from 1740; the correspondent snubs the enigma by deeming it a mere riddle which “plagues[s]” and “hurts[s]” with its brand of trivial difficulty. The reader further dubs enigma writers “idle bards, by fancy led.” An editorial note then thanks the reader for “attacking these trifling amusements with so much spirit, elegance and judgment.” To justify the publication of the enigmas in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, the note explains that “a moderate use of enigmas” has been “recommended by some of our learned friends, as not wholly improper for a work of general acceptance.” However, the editor also admits that only “one [enigma] in twenty for which admittance was desired,” has been inserted. Thus, despite the intended criticism, the editorial note also indicates the wide popularity of the form.72

Soon afterwards, in December of 1740, reactions to S. S.’s verse arrived, further underscoring the enigma’s controversial reputation. An indignant anonymous reader observes that enigmas were “never calculated . . . for Heads, like [S. S.’s]; but for Men of Skill and Penetration, who can understand dark Sayings.” The correspondent reads the editor’s note as “mere Irony,” asking him to publish two answers; the first one argues for a

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“Universal use” of enigmas, while the second mocks S. S. in such words as “Plainly inform the skull of S. / That two and two make four.” The caustic verse by S. S. also does not go unnoticed by Blowsabella in the Ladies’ Diary for 1742. As Beighton describes it, Blowsabella’s poem was “[o]ccasioned by some sarcastical Verses in the Gentleman’s Magazine, against Enigmatists, sign’d S. S.” Blowsabella’s words castigate both the editor of the magazine and the reader, as it is “hard to tell” which one is a “greater Ass.” This enraged response concludes with praise for Beighton’s “nobler Scheme,” the purpose of which is “to divert, and to improve the Fair” (LD 21). Such repartee shows that enigma poems were not only interactive within the pages of the Diary itself, but also among a broader periodical community of readers, thereby creating an expanded textual dialogue.

Regardless of the dissent the enigma created, the Gentleman’s Magazine continued to publish the puzzles, incorporating many of the common features of the Ladies’ Diary’s enigmas. However, unlike in the Diary, there was no Prize Enigma offered and there was rarely any editorial commentary on these verses. Further, the Gentleman’s Magazine lacks a generic definition of enigmas, riddles being divided from enigmas on occasion, while at other times they are merged. Though the lack of any editorializing in relation to the enigma confirms that the form was well established in the literary marketplace by this time, it also underlines that the Gentleman’s Magazine did not attach much significance to this feature as a potent marketing strategy.

In conclusion, the level of rhetorical interaction with the enigma in the Gentleman’s Magazine indicates that the Ladies’ Diary’s editors pursued a genre that garnered a particularly avid response. In contrast to their function in the Gentleman’s Magazine, the enigmas were an

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73 Ibid., 10 (December 1740): 615.
innovative feature of the Diary. As my data reveal, enigmas and their answers included in the Diary were written all over England and even beyond. By promoting this unique feature in the publication, John Tipper and Henry Beighton successfully reconstructed the almanac’s temporal and traditional character, establishing new literary possibilities for the Diary’s users. As a result, rather than being an ephemeral reference text often dismissed shortly after its publication, the Diary was republished as a miscellany, ensuring its future survival. Enigmas became highly popular due to their entertainment value, and the “literary environment of friendly community, founded on mutual literary exchange”74 among readers and editors that they offered. They increased the originality, and thus the sales of the Diary. Despite the almanac’s later loss of popularity at the time of the transition in management from Elizabeth Beighton and Robert Heath to Thomas Simpson in 1753, the enigma regained its level of respect among the Diary’s readers under Simpson’s editorship, continuing to contribute to the Diary’s success until past the turn of the nineteenth century.

Many early eighteenth-century periodicals provided neither contributor locations nor left any other signs of their community of readers; the Ladies’ Diary is anomalous in its recording of such data. Instead of fictional eidolons, frequently created by periodical editors during the first half of the century, the Diary’s coherence was established through an epistolary-style interaction with actual individuals. This exchange was then instrumental in encouraging the development of the writing habit, a habit that led women to become active textual participants within the almanac genre. Considering the fact that women in the eighteenth century were to a large extent self-educated, the almanac offered its readers important schooling in poetic composition and the possibility for amateur publication. As is evident, the Diary’s audience was both geographically broad and capable of engaging in


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diverse modes of interaction. Agnes Atkinson’s description in Enigma 236 of the almanac as a “Book of Fame” might be read as a valid assessment indeed; the almanac still provides enduring traces of its original audience (LD 1739, 16).
CONCLUSION

The Originality and Significance of The Ladies’ Diary

As this dissertation indicates, the almanac was marked by its transformation. The genre did not replicate entrenched patterns within a fixed format over the centuries, belying its definition as conservative even in recent publications. The 2000 Encyclopedia of Ephemera, for example, describes the genre’s “editorial formula and general layout [as] substantially unchanged,” and the inclusion of “a flourishing advertising section” as the only modification in its format that took place during the first half of the eighteenth century.¹ However, eighteenth-century almanacs challenged patently traditional conventions: the prognosticating element was no longer of primary importance and the overall layout of such publications was diversifed as new types of content drew the interest of the consumer. In becoming inclusive of the female reader, in drawing its marketplace politics from the popular periodical genre, in foregrounding an educational content, and in offering the enigma poem, the Ladies’ Diary truly became a new species of almanac and thus remained one of the best-selling texts throughout the eighteenth century.

Seventeenth-century almanacs, whether prognosticating or burlesque ones, positioned the female reader, if they acknowledged her at all, as a generalized consumer of the text, rather than as an active contributor to the text’s formation. Almanacs of this era also participated in the continued production of the querelle des femmes, propagating images of women as part of a rhetorical jeu d’esprit. The references to women in almanac prefatory

addresses served either a symbolic function or a marketing one rather than presenting them with any broader prospects, such as education or publication. In the case of Poor Robin, references to women enhanced the almanac’s burlesque character and assisted in its politics of leveling, whereby various strata of society were reduced to the status of mere consumers through the low satirical humor of this mock almanac. Yet Sarah Jinner’s and Mary Holden’s medical almanacs directly pointed to the needs of the female reader, even if only as a recipient of medical and other kinds of advice. These publications also significantly emphasized the public roles of women as almanac editors and medical practitioners.

In this context, the significance of the Ladies’ Diary resides in the fact that it aimed beyond utilitarian advice; this almanac not only addressed the female reader with pertinent information, but also foregrounded her agency in the development of the genre. In such a way, the almanac departed from its typical mode of rhetorical exclusion of the female reader. Though women obviously used almanacs earlier than the eighteenth century, between the covers of these texts they functioned most often as tropes or consumers. With the Diary, women could, for the first time in terms of this genre, consider themselves figured as both visible readers and active contributors to this phenomenally popular almanac. The Diary, in other words, highlighted their role as important participants in the field of cultural production.

But one cannot truly consider the innovative character of the Ladies’ Diary without examining it in the context of the contemporary periodical genre. Its address to women as a leisured and knowledgeable audience, its genteel rhetoric, and its reconstituted subject matter were all drawn from the example offered by the periodical. As I have argued, The Gentleman’s Journal was the most influential periodical behind the formation and success of the Diary. The Diary sought to imitate this periodical’s entertaining and instructional content as well as
its response to the newly visible agency of the female contributor in the literary arena. The almanac, as a genre, had been a “catch-all” of material before the eighteenth century, a diverse miscellany of resources; now, as it merged this format with the more refined elements of periodicals, it became another species of its genre. The Gentleman’s Journal was among the earliest periodicals that profited from the publicized literacy of women and their available leisure time. And the Ladies’ Diary was the first almanac to follow such a trend, reconstituting the genre’s traditional elements, from its appeal to the working class and a masculine audience to its astrological- and agricultural-based content, in order to adhere to the changed politics of the print marketplace. Such a shift was unprecedented in the history of the genre.

Part of this shift was shaped through the Ladies’ Diary’s editorial management. The core innovation of John Tipper and, even more strongly, Henry Beighton was to foreground intellectual pursuits, and particularly for the latter editor, the study of mathematics. They thereby assumed a visibly active role in relation to audience response and demand. Tipper constructed his audience base by adopting a gallant rhetoric towards women and other readers in order to entertain them as well as to entice them to become learners and contributors. Beighton placed additional emphasis on the educational function of the almanac: to convince his readers to take the practice of mathematics seriously and to engage them thereby in the contribution to and solution of mathematical problems. Both editors particularly encouraged their female readers to conceptualize themselves as capable of learning. While traditional almanacs simply presented women with recipes and folk cures, the Diary featured material that demanded its female audience to think independently, to write poems, to craft solutions to challenging mathematical problems, and to interact with other readers on the level of their own growing gender articulation. While during the seventeenth
and eighteenth centuries almanacs offered female readers essential guidelines in regard to
husbandry and calendrical events, the *Diary* was indeed an exceptional and significant
publication in that it was marketed as an educational resource for women to benefit from at
a time when women’s access to education was limited.

Of course, in the process of publication, Tipper and Beighton also succeeded in
promoting their private occupations, such as teaching and mathematics, the *Ladies’ Diary*
thereby becoming in a short period of time an important spoke on the wheel of the
emerging commerce of information. Furthermore, through their emphasis on instruction,
Tipper and Beighton successfully reconfigured the almanac’s temporal status; instead of
serving as an ephemeral reference text and thus one often forgotten shortly after its
publication, the *Diary* attracted growing numbers of loyal readers and not only female ones.
It was imitated and even republished as a miscellany, the latter format in particular ensuring
its future survival.

An important episode in this story was the editorship of a woman, Elizabeth
Beighton. Her correspondence with Thomas Cowper reveals how Beighton, after the death
of her husband Henry, continued to control the *Ladies’ Diary* until Robert Heath, her co­
editor, acted against the publication in the early 1750s. Faced with the monopolistic and
competitive conditions of almanac production, Beighton skillfully negotiated her editorial
position and contributed to the positive reception of the *Diary* in the print marketplace. In
the long run, women could and did benefit from the *Diary* in various ways during the
eighteenth century, whether as its editors or readers: the almanac served them as a financial
supplement, a personal journal, a self-education manual, a channel for personal connections,
and even a venue for publication.
One primary element of significance for both the Ladies' Diary's popularity and longevity was the enigma poem. No prior scholarship has substantially considered the importance of the inclusion of this form in the almanac in enticing a female readership, in shaping a literary community of enigma writers and respondents, and in forming notions of styles and standards for verse. Enigmas were constructed as a wholly appropriate pastime for women, the respect accorded to the genre of poetry in this era and to the enigma form itself as presented on the pages of the Diary, contributing to the popularity and advancement of the enigma, both in a literary and commercial sense. With the aid of the enigma, the Diary benefited from the increase in leisure time among middle-class women and in turn provided them with a text-based community of readers to interact with, write for, and learn from, a periodical where women could see their literary material published. The Diary was, in other words, crucial to the development of a new public consciousness, in which women were not merely embedded in textual narratives, but embraced as vital contributors. Thus, as the only almanac addressed to women to include the enigma from the very beginning of the eighteenth century, the Diary was a participant in not only the creation of a marketplace success for this form, but in the instantiation and popularization of a feminized literary text.

The enigma poem was not just frivolous doggerel. It was a literary genre with poetic standards, a form that inspired a textual dialogue among the Ladies' Diary's readers and editors and drew together a literary circle of amateur poets. The mentorship provided by the Diary's editors on modes of versification instructed the audience in literary skills. If the goal of the Diary's editors was to encourage reader response through the publication of enigmas, and thus to offer the premier almanac in the field of poetry (along with mathematics), they fulfilled this goal exceptionally well. Not only did the Diary disseminate a range of instruction in relation to enigma composition, but it also capitalized on the interest of its audience in
verse, providing amateur poets with a widely-circulating forum for their publications. These factors combined to have a decided effect on the success of the *Diary*.

To conclude, the *Ladies' Diary* should be read not just as a curio from the eighteenth century, a textual artifact of purely historical and scientific significance. In the way it addressed its audience, including women as a vital readership constituency within the eighteenth-century literary public, in how it traced the success of the periodical genre and sought to mirror its marketplace politics, and in its prominent inclusion of the enigma poem, a genre with literary value, the *Diary* must be seen as a significant text in the lineage of English literature and in the trajectory of women's involvement in print culture.
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Appendix A: Samples from *The Ladies' Diary*

A cover page to *The Ladies' Diary* for 1744. © 2008, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, The University of British Columbia Library, by permission. The dimensions of this issue are 15.5 by 9.5 cm.
A title page to *The Ladies' Diary* for 1744. © 2008, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, The University of British Columbia Library, by permission.
A calendar page for January from *The Ladies' Diary* (1744, A3r). © 2008, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, The University of British Columbia Library, by permission.
A Latin enigma and answers to enigmas from The Ladies’ Diary (1744, 2-3). © 2008, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, The University of British Columbia Library, by permission.
A solution to a Prize Question from *The Ladies’ Diary* (1744, 18-19).

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Enigma 261 from The Ladies’ Diary (1744, 20-21). The solution to this puzzle is “Light.” © 2008, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, The University of British Columbia Library, by permission.
Enigma 17

I WITH a Vizard-Mask am Born,
To shew my Face to th’ World I scorn;
And tho’ the curious Searchers strive
Me of my Vizard to deprive,
Altho’ they bite their Nails and Frown,
Long as I can, I’ll keep unknown.
Nor am I without cause thus Shy,
For when bold Mortals me descry,
I in that very Moment Die.
Oft times my Father is a Man,
But sometimes not, for Woman can
Beget me, but be’t He or She
Who e’er begets, doth bring forth me.
My passage also into Light
Is to all others opposite,
For I Minerva-like do come
Forth from the Head, the Nobler Womb.
A Race so Ancient, scarce another
Can boast of; for my Eldest Brother
Did (as unquestion’d Writers show,)  
Flourish three thousand Years ago:  
He that Philistines did Subdue,  
And so hope I to be Victorious over you.

Enigma 17 from *The Ladies’ Diary* (1708, C3v). The solution to this puzzle is “Enigma.”
“The \textit{Ænigmatick Dance}, Composed by the Ingenious Mrs. Molly Cokayne”

IN Fifteen hundred thirty one,
Or thereabout, a famous Dance began,
FIRST in the middle \textit{Solomon} took place,
A Blade in former Time of Active Pace,
BUT now with Age and Impotence opprest,
He sits and sleeps, and nods, and takes his rest.
And as Two Country Girls on Holy-days,
For want of Third to hobble out the \textit{Hays},
TO hedge and bind in Figure, Mode and Rule,
Place in the middle Churn, or Chair, or Stool,
Or lay my little Master on the Ground;
Then nimbly draw their Magick Circles round;
SO in the middle \textit{Solomon} the Wise,
Was Stool, or Chair, or Churn or what you please;
Candle in Hand, to give their Worships Light,
To step it true, and guide their Paces right.
NEXT him in order a bright \textit{Youth} advanc’d,
About he went, about he nimbly pranc’d,
And mimick’d curious Motions as he danc’d.
THE next a \textit{Lady} sprightly brisk and gay,
Slender and Young, and Beautiful as \textit{May},
With active Paces, Circled round her way.
NEXT hand in hand \textit{two Sisters} whisk’d about,
And next a \textit{warlike Bully} stalk’d it out.
The next a \textit{King} with th’ Aspect of a God,
And next with graver Steps his \textit{Father} trod:
THEY both mov’d grave, as if o’ergrown with Sloth,
And \textit{Infant-Dancers} tripp’d about them both.
These were the jolly Crew,—and these were all,
These were the Blades that did compose the Ball;
THEY danc’d whole Years in Harmony and Chime,
And to their Motion all the World kept time.

\textit{Now ladies, if you tell me who they were,}
\textit{I’ll say you’re witty too as well as fair.}

\textit{“The Ænigmatick Dance” from The Ladies’ Diary (1713, A5v-B2r).}
This puzzle describes the Copernican solar system.
A catalogue of contributors from *The Ladies' Diary* (1744, 30-31).
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Appendix B: Numbers of Respondents to Enigmas and Mathematical Questions, 1709-1753

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<th>Time span</th>
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<th>1724-1733</th>
<th>1734-1743</th>
<th>1744-1753</th>
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Numbers of respondents to enigmas in English, 1709-1753.

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<th>1714-1723</th>
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<td>295</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>242</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Numbers of respondents to mathematical questions, 1709-1753.