

Summer 7-14-2019

THE CHAOTIC DOMESTIC: TRACING AFFECT IN REPRESENTATIONS OF NATION, CLASS, AND GENDER IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LABORING- CLASS WOMEN'S WRITING

Kelly J. Hunnings

University of New Mexico - Main Campus

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/engl_etds



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hunnings, Kelly J.. "THE CHAOTIC DOMESTIC: TRACING AFFECT IN REPRESENTATIONS OF NATION, CLASS, AND GENDER IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LABORING-CLASS WOMEN'S WRITING." (2019).

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/engl_etds/273

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Language and Literature ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Kelly J. Hunnings

Candidate

English Language and Literature

Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Gail Houston, Chairperson

Dr. Carolyn Woodward

Dr. Pamela Cheek

Dr. Donna Landry

**THE CHAOTIC DOMESTIC: TRACING AFFECT IN
REPRESENTATIONS OF NATION, CLASS, AND GENDER IN
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LABORING-CLASS WOMEN'S
WRITING**

BY

KELLY J. HUNNINGS

B.A., English, Classical Civilizations, East Carolina University, 2011
M.A., English, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2013

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

English

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2019

DEDICATION

To my parents, Sandra and Larry, who inspired in me an appreciation and understanding of what it is to work diligently and to feel deeply; to my sister, Rachel, for her kindness and spirited energy. Last, but certainly not least, to my husband, Aidan, who continually offers unwavering support, while also gently reminding me to have fun.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my committee members, Dr. Carolyn Woodward, Dr. Donna Landry, and Dr. Pamela Cheek, for generously sharing their knowledge and time on this project. A special thank you to Dr. Gail Turley Houston, the chair of this dissertation, for her constant support and encouragement. I also want to recognize several organizations that funded my research, including the American Society of Eighteenth Century Studies (ASECS) for funding research at McGill University, the National Library of Ireland, and Trinity College Dublin.

**THE CHAOTIC DOMESTIC: TRACING AFFECT IN REPRESENTATIONS OF
NATION, CLASS, AND GENDER IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LABORING-
CLASS WOMEN'S WRITING**

by

Kelly J. Hunnings

**B.A., ENGLISH & CLASSICAL CIVILIZATIONS, EAST CAROLINA
UNIVERSITY, 2011**

M.A., ENGLISH, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CARBONDALE, 2013

PH.D., ENGLISH, THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, 2019

ABSTRACT

My dissertation traces a term I call the “chaotic domestic” in the writing of a collection of eighteenth-century women laboring-class writers: Mary Barber, Mary Collier, Mary Leapor, Ann Yearsley, and Janet Little. The chaotic domestic in the hands of these writers is multi-layered and affect-driven, focusing as they do on issues regarding nation, class, and gender. As both a poetic trope and the seeming natural and dynamic state of the domestic sphere, the image of the domestic that this set of writers represents and defines is turbulent, unruly, and one that deals with the tangled web of local and global, public and private, gendered and classist identity politics. Most importantly, I seek to demonstrate how the chaotic domestic serves as something these writers *do* to subvert class and gender systems that affect their public and private lives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1.....	25
CHAPTER 2.....	63
CHAPTER 3.....	95
CHAPTER 4.....	128
CHAPTER 5.....	158
WORKS CITED	189

Introduction

“Affective atmospheres are shared, not solitary, and bodies are continuously busy judging their environments and responding to the atmospheres in which they find themselves.”
—Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* pg. 15

Nétwork. *n.s* [*net* and *work*] Any thing reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections.
—Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (1785)

William J. Christmas observes that “the eighteenth century was the first period in English literary history to see the ranks of published plebeian poets increase dramatically” (17). For this project, I define laboring-class or “unlettered” poets as those who were self-taught, assisted, and financially supported by a literary patron (Christmas 40-1).¹ In particular, this project focuses on a network of poets linked through their shared use of what I term a “chaotic domestic,” which I theorize and define below. The writers I include are: (1) Dublin’s Mary Barber, a self-taught merchant’s wife who was by no means wealthy, but also not a domestic servant; (2) Hampshire’s Mary Collier, who most notably wrote *A Woman’s Labour* in response to Stephen Duck’s *A Thresher’s Labour* and became the model on whom many laboring-class women based their poetry; (3) Northampton’s Mary Leapor, a domestic servant perhaps best known now for her poem, “Crumble Hall.” Later in the century there are (4) Bristol’s Ann Yearsley, whose

¹ Because more of the poets I discuss are laboring class than not, and because I am responding to an already strong scholarly tradition, I will continue to use the term “laboring class” to describe the writers, movement, and style of writing outlined here in this project. For ease, the category of “self-taught” is used interchangeably with the term “laboring class.”

infamous dealings with her patron Hannah More have dominated twentieth century scholarly discussion of her work, and (5) Ecclefechan, Scotland's Janet Little, who would be inspired by the work of Collier, Leapor, and Barber in the development of her own poetic responses to Robert Burns. Their writing spans nearly a century, from 1734 to 1792, and represents three nations, England, Ireland, and Scotland. In the rest of this introduction, I focus on outlining the reasons for seeing these writers as in a network even though spatially and temporally their paths never crossed.

In reconfiguring traditional definitions of the domestic, we might begin by analyzing important definitions of the term itself. Beginning with the terminology used in the eighteenth century, and a foundation for definitions since, we should look at Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*, which underlines how the writers I analyze fit and do not fit the culture's idea of the domestic. He suggests four definitions of "DOME'STICAL. DOME'STICK. [*adj*]": 1) Belonging to the house; not relating to things publick; 2) Private; done at home; not open; 3) Inhabiting the house; not wild; 4) Not foreign; intestine." Surprisingly, in *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (2006), Michael McKeon defines the domestic not unlike Johnson, with a focus on the physical sites it entails, the home, the kitchen, and spaces that are interior, traditionally feminine, and private (436-7). What is more surprising is what neither of these writers includes. Reviewing these two definitions, it is important to note that neither writer allows room, to use a pun, for any disruptions that naturally occur in the domestic setting. Thus, these definitions do not acknowledge the hidden labor necessary to maintain order, or the daily living practices that constantly disrupt order. Indeed, they do not use "domestic" as a noun describing a servant. Hence, these

definitions are completely based upon and avoid the mention of the labor needed to keep the domestic domesticated. Here, again, the laborer is made invisible.

In my definition of the domestic, what becomes most important is to identify laboring-class persons; I define them as people hired to help with cleaning and other tasks relating to the home. Further, I also frequently turn to alternate, adjectival definitions of the domestic: the domestic as that which refers to the actions within one's own nation—similar to Johnson's fourth definition, "not foreign"—and the domestic as that which is related to the running of a home or family relations. In any sense, the domestic here functions as a practical space. What I examine is how fluid this space and position is based on the female laborers' responsibility for and lack of ownership of this site and position. I also pay attention to the other labor the women in this network shared, which was not only that they were domestic laborers—they were also professional published writers who used these domestic sites as the backdrop and subject of their writing.² This, of course, complicates their writing and domestic labor even further. In any case, I have chosen these five poets from among many eighteenth-century laboring-class women poets because, most importantly, the aesthetic quality of their work indicates that they deserve intensive study. Using supple and sophisticated word choice, imagery, tone, along with other unique and innovative formal choices, the writers of this network submit to, subvert, and manage this new positionality as laboring class female writers.

I gather a range of important features of their poetry under the term "chaotic domestic," a term I introduce to the discourse on laboring-class writers. The chaotic

² Jennie Batchelor's *Women's Work Women's Work: Labour, Gender, Authorship, 1750-1830* (2010) explores the connection between writing and the domestic for those who are not laboring class women.

domestic tracks the often-fraying relations between laboring-class women writers. My theoretical apparatus helps to examine the styles and themes used and addressed by these writers as well as the socio-political context for their writing, particularly in regard to how feelings do work and work invokes many feelings. Raymond Williams may be viewed, in part, as an affect theorist, based on his important and famous coinage of the phrase “structure of feeling.” Williams’s discussion of “structures of feeling” provides a rubric for locating and understanding the liminality of feeling that is important to how I analyze affect in this dissertation. Certainly Williams’s phrase has received much interest, praise, and censure over the past several decades. In the *Politics and Letters* (1979) interviews Williams himself calls the phrase “deliberately contradictory.” Indeed, it would seem that scholars who want to use the phrase define it differently from one another.

But it is fair to say that Williams considers the “structure of feeling” as a means of respecting the existence of feeling as a systemic dynamic expressed in the lives of the lower classes within the emerging dominant economic force of capitalism, indicating that, as E. P. Thompson also shows, those belonging to lower social classes were agents who created their own culture and conventions. As Williams suggests, we make a mistake to view the social consciousness as fixed but outside the personal as lived and dynamic; in other words, we should reject the idea that the social as somehow rigidly homogeneous is the dominant means of understanding class and be open to the idea that the personal cannot be “reduc[ed] to fixed forms” because living persons manifest “complexities,” “tensions,” “shifts,” “uncertainties” and “unevenness” and “confusion” (128-9). According to Williams, dominant social beliefs only become a more formal

“social consciousness” when they are “lived, actively, in real relationship[s]” (130). With attention to affect—what Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth later call “shimmers”—Williams’s approach to understanding expressions of feeling and experience allows for fluidity and conflict and honors the feelings and bodies of the lower classes as individuals but also in their production of a social consciousness (168).

Williams’s approach suggests that emergent changes in social consciousness, including in relationships between classes, “do not have to await definition, classification, or rationalization before they exert palpable pressures and set effective limits on experience and on action”(132). These changes, says Williams, are changes in structures of feeling to which critics of class must pay close attention. Thus Williams asks us to focus on the interstices where life is lived by different social classes. With Williams’s “structures of feeling” as foundational to my study, I argue that domestic spaces—and subsequently how laboring-class women disrupt, resist, and re-write domesticity in the highly affective form of the “chaotic domestic”—serves as a site of potential revelation and register the conditions of life that translate across individual people, nations, and time periods as they develop through lived experiences.

To reiterate, in using the term “structures of feeling,” Williams seems to suggest that the Marxist critic must move beyond merely locating and describing “formal concepts of ‘world-view’ or ‘ideology’”—“systematic beliefs”—and also focus on how their meanings and values are actively lived and felt. Thus he recognizes that in everyday practice, formal or systematic beliefs may be responded to by individuals in multiple and conflicting ways, beginning with “formal assent” coupled with “private dissent” and including the “more nuanced interaction between selected and interpreted beliefs and

acted and justified experience” (132). Thus, for this study, I view Williams’s “structures of feeling” as a representation of feeling that is patterned and organized, but in ways that do not compromise the fluidity of said feeling. Certainly at any moment experiences and practices are framed by what Williams describes as residual, dominant, emergent, and resistant cultural events and forms. Williams’s terms enable me to describe how the writers I analyze can seem to assert or support one aspect of culture while also including a conflicting emotion in their enactment of that image or theme. Because of this complexity of position, and potential for contradiction, lived experience is vital for understanding what and how feelings emerge amongst laboring-class women. I see Williams’s “structure of feeling” as a wide, capacious, and highly nuanced method through which to trace a shared bond between laboring-class women, a bond that relies on lived experience.

The chaotic domestic, I argue, is many things: it is an affect, a type of structure of feeling in which there are shared affinities between women domestic servants who tend to spaces that are not their own. The lived experience of a newly formed historical group of lower-class women writers both conforms to and resists contemporary class assumptions that often awkwardly managed how to approach this new kind of woman writer. Indeed, this structure of feeling is further made unique by being represented by laboring women writers who use it because they have special needs only satisfied by the chaotic domestic. Thus, I see it as both a dynamic system within which laboring women writers must work, and a supple dynamic that allows individual writers the agency to resist and react to the emerging capitalist relations of domestic labor.

However, the tendency of critics to read eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature in discrete categories makes the often subtle connections between laboring-class writers difficult to understand and even more difficult to trace. In the hopes of developing a capacious understanding of women's laboring-class writing and the use of the chaotic domestic, I see current affect theory as enabling a highly nuanced discussion of the affects of unique "in-betweenness" shared by laboring-class women writers. While the tendency for cultural historians and literary critics is to focus closely on divided units of religion, politics, and family (to name only a few), this intense focus on the separate entities that make up personal and public life is not consistent with a lived experience. As Williams describes in *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (1968), "[W]hile we may, in the study of a past period, separate out particular aspects of life, and treat them as if they were self-contained, it is obvious this is only how they may be studied, not how they were experienced" (9). Experience becomes crucial in understanding the nuances of personal and public life, particularly for those who face oppression and marginalization on intersecting elements of their identities. Although in 1968 Williams does not yet employ the term "structures of feeling," he does develop an analogy that he will return to each time he discusses ideas and concepts surrounding "structures of feeling": "We examine each element as a precipitate, but in the living experience of the time every element was in solution, an inseparable part of a complex whole" (9). In this study, I focus on those inseparable parts that indicate that larger whole.

Part of noting the "complex whole" of these structures of feeling is paying close attention to how bodily feelings like pain, anger, frustration, and so forth manifest in the poetry within this dissertation. The body itself is vital to understanding how affect theory

will be used within this dissertation, but not without its own complexity. Like Williams's "structure of feeling," Deleuze's definition of the body is a slippery site as he notes, "a body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity" (127). In *Difference and Repetition* (1994) Deleuze provides the act of swimming as a useful model for how the body can be considered, as there are always at least three bodies involved: the body of the learner, the body of water, and the body of knowledge. Each of these bodies is, of course, organized differently. What's more, these bodies relate to one another differently. In the case of this dissertation the body includes one's physical body as it is lived through real material biological processes; "material," in this context, is as Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean define in *Materialist Feminisms* (1993), "the proposition that the origins of all forms of existence, including human activity, can be explained in terms of physical being" (3). Beyond the material, the body also refers to one's body of written work; the social construction of the body through the concepts of gender, class, and race; the larger socio-political body politic; and of course the growing body of laboring-class women writers. Indeed, I suggest there is a body of laboring-class women writers using what I call the chaotic domestic to share the experiences endured by their individual, physical bodies in the form of frustration, hope, and socio-political critique.

These forms of the body simultaneously convey and critique daily experience of a culture dominated by simultaneous conformity and resistance to social hierarchy.

Theoretical obstacles and historical simplifications, to name only a few, have hindered our understanding of this hierarchy and its literary impression. The label of "laboring class" itself is highly misleading when applied to a culture that conceived of itself

through gradations of “status” or “rank,” many of which are further nuanced by gender, nation, and race. A recent edited collection by Diana E. Boyd and Marta Kvanne called *Everyday Revolutions: Eighteenth-Century Women Transforming Public and Private* (2008) argues that our understanding of women’s work is always complicated by its liminal status vis-à-vis the public and private, for women constantly move between both as sites of labor. In foregrounding intersections and liminal borders, this collection is important for emphasizing the work of domestic servants as vital to the order of the home. As I show, each of these writers uses the “chaotic domestic” to comment on affect-driven local, national, and international socio-political issues of her day, and to express how domestic spaces affect them in lived, complex ways. Yet the five writers included in this dissertation each draw from a particular set of local, national, and global experiences from their particular moment in literary history that make them a compelling example of the chaotic domestic in action. Specifically, these women are connected through their use, critique, and adaptation of laboring-class poetic conventions.

In tracing the relationship between affect and the chaotic domestic, I turn to Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg’s “An Inventory of Shimmers” from *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010) by identifying affects of “in-betweenness” (1). Seigworth and Gregg view affects as dynamics that are removed from cognitive “knowingness” and that move beyond emotion. In other words, unlike emotion, affect is unconscious and cannot be named in language, but only in shimmers, images, symbols, bodily gestures and movements, rhythms, and sounds. Their theory describes affect as both a movement within a state of relation between different things or people, and the exchange of intensities. Moreover, Lauren Berlant’s suggestion that “Affective atmospheres are

shared, not solitary” further demonstrates the power of liminal connections between writers. Berlant’s statement that “bodies are continuously busy judging their environments and responding to the atmospheres in which they find themselves” indicates that affective atmospheres, like writing, are always collaborative (15). Williams’s distinction between the formal class and social beliefs that are seemingly fixed and the lived, daily, confusing experience of personal life wherein we simultaneously conform and resist seems attuned to this idea. The notion of the “structure of feeling” implies that, affective responses may be said to demonstrate a shared historical moment.

By using affect theory, it is possible to see the writers of this network as connected through poetic conventions and socio-cultural events through organized patterns that respond to their unique situations and towards which, as agents, they create a set of dynamics, systems, and language to describe liminal “domestic” sites of oppression and opportunity both at home and work. Within the poetry discussed in this dissertation, the domestic is frequently depicted as a privileged site that is owned by those belonging to the upper classes, who expect it to be maintained through the invisible labor of those of a lower social rank. Because of this, the domestic laborer feels pride in being the only one able to keep the domestic sphere orderly (and thus they feel a kind of pseudo-ownership of that sphere), yet, the domestic laborer also feels the unconscious, unnamed affects of anger, resentment, and ironic humor regarding their relationship with something they do and do not own—this, too, is part of the “chaotic domestic.” All of the writers of this network express the liminal tensions between domestic responsibility and domestic ownership. Mary Barber, for example, includes the unnamed affect of anger when she

witnesses the schoolmaster discipline her son. Likewise, Mary Leapor must help keep her master's estate orderly, despite his own poor planning, while only she takes the blame. The same pattern can be seen throughout the poetry of this literary network, revealing the efforts laboring-class women make to reclaim power from their class- and gender-based displacement.

I am also influenced by Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2009) and Sara Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (2004), wherein both scholars cultivate a structure or "ecology" of feeling in response to cultural politics.³ Here, both Bennett and Ahmed recognize the limitations of locating emotion primarily within the individual; instead, they offer metaphors of surface and boundary to emphasize how experiences with emotion and feeling divide and categorize individuals into social groups and cultures. For example, Ahmed details the way that emotions "produce the very surfaces and boundaries" of the individual and the social and that "objects of emotion take shape as effects of circulation" (10). Importantly, they argue that emotions and feelings move; they are not things we can have or possess. I pay attention to that movement in the rhythms of the poetry by these writers, rhythms that express the non-linguist affects of the chaotic domestic. Likewise, I see Nicole Pohl's reconsideration of the use of space in relation to gender as key to my study of the chaotic domestic. In *Women, Space and Utopia, 1600-1800* (2006), Pohl argues that there is a complex relationship between identity and social space and how spaces are gendered. I suggest that the writers included within this dissertation were aware of the socio-cultural politics of their day and subsequently used their lived experiences to cultivate an image of the

³ Laurence Buell defines "ecology" as a study of the interactions among organisms and their environment.

domestic wherein affective energies—a sense of “in-betweenness”—intertwines with social and political critique.

I find that pushing the bounds of how we define “ecological spaces” and how they influence our emotional responses to culture is undeniably useful in tracing connections between writers with shared affinities. In tracing the chaotic domestic as a type of “structure of feeling” and noting the presence of existing affective ecologies where we would not expect them, we can subvert and revise our expectations regarding literary networks and women’s writing. I argue that the women of this network sensed the socio-cultural politics of having feelings regarding the changing socio-political landscape that were not always explicitly understood in the culture at large, and in their writing we see this awareness expressed through the shared use of a chaotic domestic. These feelings were not always fully formed, but, rather, manifested in confusion, complexity, tension, unevenness, as Williams suggests, and these women writers are developing a language to express this structure of feeling in their poetry.

Because the chaotic domestic is still in the realm of what Williams calls the emergent, the writers of this dissertation disrupt traditional domesticity as a mode of experimentation and playfulness as they figure out the complexities of the domestic as a site of feeling. Thus they are formulating and controlling while also experimenting in this fluid site. The chaotic domestic in the hands of these writers is multi-layered, focusing as they do on issues regarding nation, class, and gender. The image of the domestic they represent and define is turbulent, unruly, and one that mirrors and engages with what is happening outside of the given domestic environment, be it the kitchen, the attic, the dining room, or the fields. The chaotic domestic is both a poetic trope and the seeming

natural and dynamic state of the domestic sphere. Further, the chaotic domestic is also something these writers *do* to subvert class and gender systems that affect their public and private lives: acting as an image, natural state, and subversive literary feature, the chaotic domestic may represent contradictions but is neither illogical nor irrational, but instead a useful and liminal representation of how those responsible for keeping domestic spaces orderly viewed and acted as nuanced, sophisticated, flexible agents and supplicants in those spaces.

The five poets of this dissertation explore a wide range of affects including anger, resentment, longing, and loss through the use of the chaotic domestic. In these implicit and explicit expressions of raw affectual energy, these writers complicate traditional definitions and understandings of the domestic, resulting in the image, motif, and enactment of the chaotic domestic. In applying this term to laboring class or “unlettered” poets it is possible to see how laboring-class women comment on domestic orderliness in relation to their own socio-political identities, reconfiguring traditional definitions of the domestic to include domestic workers. In particular, the poetry of this network attempts to voice the internal affects of the isolated laboring class woman through responses to the enclosure of public lands, the rise of capitalism, and the forcible unions of England with Scotland and Ireland. This project, then, asks that we reconsider how we perceive domestic spaces and domestic work in closely examining the presence of the chaotic domestic in the verse of five women laboring-class writers: Mary Barber, Mary Collier, Mary Leapor, Ann Yearsley, and Janet Little.

By focusing on the “chaotic domestic,” I aim to map a literary network between these five laboring-class women writers in an effort to understand more completely the

affective atmosphere of laboring-class writing and publishing, while also re-evaluating the term “literary network” to include self-taught women who were largely confined to domestic spaces with limited mobility and education. In their varying usages and constructions of the domestic—all of which evolve throughout the period—these writers present a challenge to constructions of private and domesticated spheres. I argue that the “chaotic domestic” binds the writers analyzed in this dissertation in the sense of emerging from their work not only as a poetic trope or motif, not only as a structure of feeling, but also as a discourse.

In tracing an ongoing conversation within the literary works of the writers included in this dissertation, Donna Landry’s *The Muses of Resistance* (2005) serves as a parallel model for the identification of a discourse between laboring-class women writers. Regarding the idea of literary networks, although the links between the women of this dissertation are largely literary—and, indeed, those literary connections reveal varying conceptions of the chaotic domestic—I revise the term “literary network” to include marginalized, isolated, women writers. Deborah Kennedy’s study *Poetic Sisters: Early Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (2013) does just this. Kennedy expounds upon conceptions of “sisterhood” and women’s collaborative writing as previously established by Rachel Crawford’s essay “The Structure of the Sororal in Wordsworth’s ‘Nutting’” (1992), Janet Todd’s *Daughters of Ireland* (2004), Jennie Batchelor’s *Women’s Work: Labour, Gender, Authorship, 1750-1830* (2010), and Amy Culley’s *British Women’s Life Writing, 1760-1840* (2014). All of these works challenge a view of working women as immobile and a-political; they complicate a version of literary networks that depends on

privilege, travel, and maleness. While Kennedy, for example, opts for the phrase “poetic sisters” as it points to a sense of “shared vocation,” (2) and Crawford uses “sororal” to describe influence and collaboration between women, I seek to simply extend the term “literary network” to include laboring-class women who lack mobility and the means to meet with one another, but still use the same image of the chaotic domestic through which to respond to the socio-political issues of their day.

In his study of Leapor, Richard Greene asserts that she was “not the outstanding poet of her generation, a distinction belonging to Gray or Smart” (209). This opinion largely permeates the discourse on women’s laboring-class writing, as literary-historical tradition has been written as largely imitative of Augustan models. Despite this prejudice or limitation, there has been, since the 1990s, a resurgence of interest in laboring-class writers and women writers alike, with particular credit going to Catherine Gallagher’s New Historical approach to literary studies. Gallagher’s role as initiator of political engaged new historicism argues for representation of marginalized writers, whose presence within literary canons suffered at the de-historical approach of New Critics. Likewise, emphasis on women’s laboring-class writing is increasingly socio-cultural, with, for example, the work of John Goodridge in *Rural Life in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry* (1995), William Christmas’s *The Lab’ring Muses: Work, Writing, and the Social Order in English Plebeian Poetry, 1730–1830* (2001), and Paula R. Backscheider’s *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry* (2005). Each of these works is foundational to studying both women writers and laboring-class writers. While I align myself with these scholars because they pay particular attention to gender and class politics of the period, my study forges connections where previously there have been very

few. In tracing literary connections to point out the affinities the writers of this network share, for example, I consider the emotional nuances of laboring-class women's writing as revealing of their own bodily agency.

Plenty of scholars have discussed various intersections between class and gender in laboring-class women's writing. Groundbreaking in the discussion of intersectional feminism, specifically to the development of black feminism, Kimberlé Crenshaw coins the term "intersectional" in her essay "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" (1989). Certainly Barbara Smith's description of her own vision of feminism in 1984 serves as an example for the need for intersectional perspectives: "I have often wished I could spread the word that a movement committed to fighting sexual, racial, economic and heterosexist oppression, not to mention one which opposes imperialism, anti-Semitism, the oppressions visited upon the physically disabled, the old and the young, at the same time that it challenges militarism and imminent nuclear destruction is the very opposite of narrow." Intersectional feminism is the understanding of how women's overlapping identities—including race, class, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and sexual orientation—affect how they experience oppression. Intersectionality serves a method to understand the oppression the writers of this dissertation experience on the basis of class, gender, and often nationhood. That power and oppression emerge in a highly multilayered, and often nuanced, capacity further grounds the discussion of an affect-driven network of laboring-class women writers in a real and knowable context.

In terms of discussions specifically about laboring-class writers, Donna Landry's groundbreaking *Muses of Resistance: Laboring-Class Women's Poetry in Britain, 1739-1796* (1990) examines the historically significant aesthetic aspects of women's laboring-class verse. Moira Ferguson, too, traces the intersections between nation, class, and gender in women's laboring-class writing in *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets: Nation, Class, and Gender* (1995). Ann Messenger's *Pastoral Tradition and the Female Talent* (2001) provides a survey of eighteenth-century genre studies with particular emphasis on feminist themes and invoking implicit feminist ideology. Messenger, like Anne Milne in "*Lactilla Tends her Fav'rite Cow*": *Ecocritical Readings of Animals and Women in Eighteenth-century British Labouring-class Women's Poetry* (2008) writes of the pastoral as a male mode of poetic production. Landry's, Ferguson's, Messenger's and Milne's intersectional feminist scholarship is integral to my own study, as they uncover complex relationships between gender, class, and national identification. In redefining the term "literary network" to include oppressed or marginalized writers, I rely on intersectional feminist theory to guide my study in order more accurately to see the differing levels of oppression that the women of this network face in writing and publishing their verse.

One factor that hindered women laboring-class writers from being recognized as possessing literary ambitions was the culture's patriarchal conception of "natural genius." Morag Shiach's *Discourse on Popular Culture: Class, Gender and History in Cultural Analysis, 1730 to the Present* (1989) considers the role of the "peasant poet" within popular culture of the eighteenth century. Specifically, how those who were self-taught maintained "simplicity of expression and honesty of emotion" (45). In his article "Ann Yearsley and the Distribution of Genius in Early Romantic Culture," Tim Burke observes

that many laboring class writers were considered to have inherent or natural talent. As Burke rightly points out, the natural genius paradigm contributed to “the cultural silencing of the female voice” (223). For Barber, Collier, Leapor, Yearsley, and Little—all of whom were described in their time as possessing natural genius or talent—such a description usurps their capabilities and their diligent efforts to practice and increase their talent. Natural talent was a popular trend in published literature, and something their readers could be counted upon to understand; yet it misrepresented their talent and diligence. The idea of natural genius also suggested that it was just Nature’s rare quirk to give these women such talent, thereby reiterating the idea that women in general could have such talent. Throughout their poetry these poets both conform to and reject notions of natural talent, often obscuring what model they actually believed. In conforming to the natural genius model, these writers express a keen awareness of the literary tradition’s trends and conventions; in their subversion of the form, these same writers assert themselves as agents in their performance of professional writing.

In terms of the unique relationship that existed between the patron and poet there has been much scrutiny, as contemporary critics of laboring class poetry are often eager to understand the often-fragile dynamic of the patron-poet relationship (Keegan 4). Understanding the conflictual nature of the patronage system is important for understanding the calculated risks laboring-class women writers take in asserting themselves as agents within their writing. Indeed, this tradition of power imbalance pervades the verse of nearly every laboring class poet of the eighteenth century, and Tim Burke observes in his discussion of natural genius in the literary tradition that the popularity of laboring class poets in the eighteenth century “signals in part a complicated

nostalgia for a less organized, more organic society perceived to have been lost” (217). Like the emphasis on “natural genius,” the patronage system also detracted from the merit of a laboring-class writer by stressing the impressive act of a laboring body producing literature rather than the literature itself. For laboring-class writers to demonstrate their prowess as writers, they first had to contend with expected dedications and tributes to patrons and readers. Only then are they able to subvert claims of maintaining “accidental” talent by virtue of being laboring class.

Mary Waldron notes that the connection between the patron and the poet is often developed in prefatory material of laboring-class writers, where we often see tensions between writer and patron (25). Although middle-class readers were enamored with popular laboring-class writing in the eighteenth century, such attention to patronage led the writers I examine here to perceive “the near-universal distaste with which their writing was received” (Kord 218). Despite their popularity, laboring-class writers were considered largely accessible rather than intellectual.⁴ The presence of the patron in laboring-class writing indicated that the poet was willing to perform a type of martyrdom in order to display her prowess and capability as a writer. In his discussion of literary patronage, Greene claims: “on the one hand, [patronage] reflected economic injustices in society ... on the other, it was an essential means of access to the reading public” (112). The underlying tensions between poet, patron, and reader are perhaps the most glaring convention of laboring-class writing. These tensions shape both the form and content of the verse as poets of this tradition write poems to patrons in the form of epistles or

⁴In response to the growing trend of publication of laboring class writers, Samuel Johnson notes in *The Idler*: “At the time when the rage of writing had seized the old and the young, when the cook warbles her lyrics in the kitchen, and the thrasher vociferates his heroics in the barn” (45-6)

tributes, create elaborate personae for their patrons, and craft an image of themselves that is disempowered by the benevolence of the patron. The elaborate addresses directed toward patrons within the verse of many laboring-class writers shows readers and patrons what they are capable of stylistically. This further illustrates their powers as writers and helps, perhaps, to elide somewhat the humiliation of having to be patronized in the first place.

In terms of structure, I give each poet her own chapter in this dissertation. In Chapter 1, I argue that Mary Barber (1685-1755) sets the precedent for the later writers I will examine, with a specific focus on poems from her 1734 collection *Poems on Several Occasions*. Characterizing herself as “ailing Irish housewife” and adopting the persona of “the Citizen’s Housewife Poet,” Barber often writes of domestic responsibilities. I focus closely on three poems she wrote about and to her son, Constantine: “Written for My Son, and Spoken by him at his first putting on Breeches,” “Written for my Son, and Spoken by him in School upon his Master first bringing in a Rod,” and “To the Rt Hon. John Barber, Esq. Lord Mayor of London, on committing one of my Sons to his Care,” for these demonstrate the affectual elements of the chaotic domestic, and how this motif operates within Barber’s verse. In each of these poems Barber challenges “Custom’s” restrictions, that is, the conventions of genteel English society. Barber’s complaints about the foolishness and discomfort of certain physical toils are handled with light humor combined with stylistic choices that emphasize the harshness resulting from the ludicrous conventions about dress. Barber uses traditionally Irish forms of dress—“brogues”—to stress Irish sensibility as opposed to English convention. In doing so, the monarchical

metaphor that Barber develops is at times playful, and one that is seemingly childlike in its dichotomous development of good and bad. The subtext is, however, critique along with the shrewd concession that she must do it anyway. Throughout her verse Barber critiques far more than mere breeches. Barber uses domestic responsibility to show her readers how they are simultaneously self-imprisoned and subordinate to forces beyond their control.

In Chapter 2, I focus closely on Mary Collier's (1688-1762) *The Woman's Labour: An Epistle to Mr. Stephen Duck* (1739) and argue that she is, quite possibly, the most instrumental poet in this network. All of the writers analyzed in this dissertation were familiar with her response to Stephen Duck's *The Thresher's Labour* (1730) and the debates it caused, and I argue that this suggests how influential her ideas were regarding what I see as the chaotic domestic. Specifically, I suggest that in the poem Collier utterly fractures domestic space; perhaps best represented by the sudden jumps she makes when describing her own position and the temporal setting in the poem, demonstrating both exterior socio-political concerns and deep internal conflicts regarding her body's powers and limitations. Collier represents the domestic as a chaotic space that reflects the discord of the outside world. In particular, Collier's ability to consolidate the natural with the human-made in her poem "The Woman's Labour" makes for a strong representation of specific "domestic toils" that she must complete after her full day of work. Indeed, the labor represented here—what Arlie Hochschild describes as the "second shift"—offers a view of the domestic that is not comforting or idyllic; rather, the same tier of labor and chaos that happens outside of the home continues within the home. In this context, the landlords and estate owners are simply replaced by husbands, fathers, and children.

Chapter three focuses on Mary Leapor's (1722-1746) widely acclaimed "Crumble Hall" from her posthumously published collection, *Poems, on Several Occasions* (1748), and how the domestic is, for Leapor, utterly chaotic. This mock-country manor poem highlights the demands placed upon Leapor as a writer and as a domestic servant and the poem displays class distinctions as they are lived on the country estate. In this chapter I position my view of "Crumble Hall" alongside Donna Landry's politically- and socially-inspired reading of much of Leapor's writing, but where Landry and others claim the action within the "Crumble Hall" estate serves as a metaphor for the action happening outdoors—or the enclosure of large swaths of commons in Northampton—I suggest that Leapor's depiction of the home reveals complex, entangled images of domestic life and comfort that offer affectual "shimmers."⁵ For example, sites of lavish beauty are followed by often-brutal bodily responses and physical decay. Leapor inhabits a space of authority and anonymity when she uses the satirical genre to critique and comment on other works of literature and contemporary socio-political event wherein she discusses and exhibits shimmers of affect through her underlying anger, frustration, and longing regarding local politics, class dynamics, and patronage and mentorship.

In Chapter four I suggest that Ann Yearsley's (1753 – 1806) "Clifton Hill" (1785) contributes to the development of what I call the chaotic domestic based on Yearsley's claims of authority over political, artistic, economic components in her life within the poem, while at the same time recognizing and demonstrating affects about just how her

⁵The third chapter of Donna Landry's *Muses of Resistance: Laboring-class Women's Poetry in Britain, 1739-1796* (1990), "An English Sappho brilliant, young and dead? Mary Leapor laughs at the fathers," argues that Leapor's demystifies the country household as social institution while commenting on the enclosure of English commons and the ideology of improvement.

body is being exploited by the upper classes. In many ways her assertions of authority over these elements within her verse point out the relative displacement Yearsley experiences in acting as writer, laborer, woman, mother, wife, and literal and figurative milk cow while also seeing herself as providing an important political and artistic position in her community through her writing. Perhaps the most important feature of her writing is how she uses the chaotic domestic to blur the lines between poetic and personal identities in order to point to the power of the mind. Yearsley describes internal states that empower her to upend the constraints on women and laboring-class writers so that she claims a position of artistic, political power as an uprooted self. Specifically, I focus on her poems “Clifton Hill” and “To Mr.—, an Unlettered Poet, on Genius Unimproved.” These two poems demonstrate the shift in Yearsley’s verse from an assimilation of conventions within the laboring-class poetic tradition to a concentration upon more individualistic, introspective thinking and feeling, as a means of establishing and authorizing her own unique positionality and voice.

Chapter 5 traces assertions of “Scottishness” in Janet Little’s (1759-1813) verse from her 1792 collection, *The Poetical Works of Janet Little, The Scottish Milkmaid*, or areas of seemingly explicit nationalism wherein affectual moments wrought with personal frustrations are described. If we consider Johnson’s fourth definition of the domestic— “not foreign”— we find that Little’s version of domesticity challenges traditional views of what it means to be an eighteenth-century Scottish citizen, especially if one was a woman.ⁱ Little’s identity as a Scottish, laboring-class, and woman writer places her in a liminal position between nationalist politics and the silenced role of women as non-citizens within their own nations and produces powerful affectual

conflicts in the poetry. I explicate several of Little's poems that do not always directly explore facets of the domestic but instead the complications of being "not foreign," yet also not citizen, that allow the chaotic domestic to become as much a subject of personal identity as one of socio-political identity, particularly as she praises and critiques Robert Burns. Like her description of Burns, Little writes of Scotland, her home, her laboring-class status, as something uncontrollable and innate. Little fully realizes and propounds what I term the chaotic domestic in her reflections on wilderness in Scotland, her verse, and domestic responsibility. The rejection of English models is an obvious rejection of England itself and, in turn, an assertion of Scottish pride and nationalism.

Throughout the dissertation, I restructure definitions of literary networks, laboring-class women's writing, and domesticity through a close reading of one or more of each writer's verse. A particular emphasis is placed on the affective features that organize each writer's staging of domestic space and its subsequent disruption. As I show, gender, nation, and social class are tremendously important for the examination of literature of the eighteenth century. I argue the "chaotic domestic," a type of affect, is an important link between Irish, Scottish, and English laboring-class women writers. In mapping this literary network, I suggest the chaotic domestic binds the literary and domestic work of Mary Barber, Mary Collier, Mary Leapor, Ann Yearsley, and Janet Little. Primarily, in this study I consider the chaotic domestic as a thread to draw meaningful literary connections between these women and a further expression of individual, lived experience. Secondary features of this study include a reevaluation the

term “literary network” to include marginalized writers and challenge the view of women laboring-class writers as purely local, regional, and often a-political.

CHAPTER 1

Making a “Minor Poet” Considerable:

Linking Mary Barber, Ireland, and the Laboring-class Poetic Tradition

Mary Barber’s connection to England has always been clear: her status as an Anglo-Irish woman writing and publishing in the eighteenth century almost ensures that she would share some sort of tie with the Dublin-London literati. Her relationship to the laboring-class poetic tradition, however, has not always been so obvious. Although she is perhaps best known now for her friendship with Jonathan Swift, who in 1734 assisted in the publication of her collection *Poems on Several Occasions*, Barber’s influence on the literary landscape of England, Ireland, and Scotland makes her a valuable contribution to the ever-growing canon of women laboring-class writers. Despite her success in the eighteenth century, by the twentieth century she was classified as a “minor poet.”⁶ Her success in her own day can be measured by the extraordinary assemblage of subscribers that took three years to complete, among four locations: Dublin, Tunbridge Wells, Bath, and London. Largely, critics note this undertaking and the sheer size and volume of Barber’s subscription list. As a beneficiary of feminist recovery work, Adam Budd, Christopher Fanning, and Emily O’Flaherty are the main figures in Barber’s critical conversation and they have successfully traced the impact and importance of Barber’s

⁶ National Library of Ireland Manuscripts, LO P 244

subscription list. Each utilizes new historicist methodologies in arguing for Barber's influence over the Irish literary landscape. Also in the vein of feminist recovery work, Paula Backscheider's article "Inverting the Image of Swift's 'Triumfeminate'" (2004) discusses Mary Barber in context with other members of Swift's "Triumfeminate" such as Laetitia Pilkington, Elizabeth Sican, and Constantia Grierson, breaking away from the familiar model to tie Barber solely to Swift. Despite this body of work, few scholars seem to know what to *do* with Barber.⁷ How do we place Barber—a not quite Irish, not quite English, not quite laboring-class, not quite middle-class woman writer—in conversation with other writers belonging to a poetic tradition that hinges deeply on identity politics?

In this chapter I focus closely on three of Barber poems written about and to her son, Constantine: "Written for My Son, and Spoken by him at his first putting on Breeches," "Written for my Son, and Spoken by him in School upon his Master first bringing in a Rod" and "To the Rt Hon. John Barber, Esq. Lord Mayor of London, on committing one of my Sons to his Care," as these demonstrate the affectual elements of the chaotic domestic, and how this motif operates within Barber's verse. In taking a closer look at Barber's legacy in relation to how the field of eighteenth-century studies understands women's laboring-class writers today, it is clear that we calibrate our understanding of these writers as isolated figures disconnected from literary history. In contrast, Barber serves as the foundation of collaboration between the women laboring-class writers of the network I examine that includes Leapor, Collier, Barber, Yearsley, and Little. This chapter argues for the ways in which Barber not only participates in the

⁷ In particular, Emily O'Flaherty fully uncovers Barber's subscription list in her dissertation *Patrons, Peers and Subscribers: The Publication of Mary Barber's Poems on Several Occasions* (2013).

laboring-class poetic tradition through her cultivation of the chaotic domestic, but also in how her use of this motif helps to set in motion the possibility of these five writers becoming agents in their performance of professional writing. The affect I term the chaotic domestic stretches across three nations and over the course of a century, making Barber the first figure in a literary network of women laboring-class writers to upend traditional images of the domestic thereby politicizing otherwise seemingly a-political environments. Barber's influence over trends within laboring-class women's writing is important for understanding the literary connections shared by the largely immobile writers of this network, Mary Collier, Mary Leapor, Ann Yearsley, and Janet Little-

In their varying usages and constructions of domestic space—all of which evolve socially and culturally throughout the period—these writers challenge both social and political custom in how they use the chaotic domestic to represent the home as unstable, frenzied, and perpetually in motion. Barber's verse conveys the messiness and “in-betweenness” of everyday domestic life in eighteenth-century Ireland, as well as her own liminal position as Anglo-Irish. As noted in the introduction, one of the aims of this dissertation is to re-evaluate the term “literary network” to include self-taught women who were largely confined to domestic spaces with limited mobility and education. The term “network” in this context simply indicates that there is a web of influence between the women of this dissertation, one that can be seen in the shared use of what I call the “chaotic domestic.” Although I do not argue for direct conversation between the women of this literary network, I instead use the chaotic domestic as a thread to draw meaningful, literary connections between these women. The affinity the writers of this network share in their development of domestic spaces tells us they are personally

invested in socio-political conversations, in tune with the literary trends and conventions of women's laboring-class writing, and that laboring-class women's writing operates as a movement unto itself. In the poetry discussed here, the domestic operates as that which is a wild and uncontrollable force. I use the term chaotic domestic to describe the consolidation of the turbulence of the outside world with that of domestic space. In their brilliant descriptions and usage of the domestic as a site of disruption, I argue, the women of this tradition disrupt Englishness itself.

Specifically, I assert that Barber is the first writer of the eighteenth century to cultivate an affect-driven understanding of her own position as a domestic laborer in relation to the chaotic domestic as a literary motif. My approach to the chaotic domestic sets Barber squarely at the beginning as a progenitor of a network of laboring class women writers. I introduce the term "chaotic domestic" to describe an understanding of the domestic as a site that is turbulent, unruly, and one that mirrors what is happening outside of the home and within nature and society. Specifically, I investigate how Barber's poetry implicitly engages matters of empire, gender, and class through representations of the mundane responsibilities of motherhood. Herself a so-called domestic servant, Barber the domestic forcefully makes the domestic site a fraught scene of competing desires, affects, and relationships that engages with ideologies and in many cases undermines or at least interrogates them through her poetic re-creation of this dynamic site in her writing, particularly in how it manifests in her role as mother. Although the chaotic domestic progresses throughout the course of the laboring-class literary network I uncover in this dissertation, the relationship between emotion and the chaotic domestic manifests in impressive and formidable expressions of feeling. In the

case of Barber, these eruptions of feeling cluster around her own status as a mother, an Irishwoman, and a laborer.

Barber's ability to adopt the persona of a caring mother while also critiquing the limits of gendered ideologies surrounding "Custom" is important for how we have come to know and understand her and her writing. Her self-fashioned persona of "Citizen's Housewife Poet" continues to distract readers from her nondualistic approach. Also distracting for critics is her massive subscription undertaking that proudly displays the names of English aristocracy and royalty. Because Barber made great efforts to leave Dublin in favor of London, and because of the strong aristocratic influence of her patrons and subscribers, her critics, such as Charles Read, Christopher Fanning, and Adam Budd have historically placed her as an intensely *Anglo* poet, rather than *Anglo-Irish*.⁸ Regardless of her strategies in publication and readership, Barber's verse is fraught with angst for her own social, national, and gender status. We see this specifically within her collection—both the subscription pages and the verse itself—wherein Barber interpolates feelings of frustration, isolation, and angst as well as ambition, gratitude, and self-consciousness regarding her complex positionality.

If the nation is the home, Barber's is one of self-consciousness, and even, at times, self-loathing in terms of her status as an Anglo-Irishwoman. Much as been said on the subject of nationhood in the eighteenth century. For studies on the nation, Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation* (1992) has long been a core text on "inventing" the British nation. A.D. Cousins and Geoffrey Payne's recent volume, *Home and Nation* (2015) also traces "patterns of disagreement" in the discourse on representations of

⁸ Conrad Brunstrom and Declan Gilmore-Kavanagh also discuss the category "Anglo-Irish"

domesticity and nationhood. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose's edition *At Home with the Empire* (2006) explores expressions of Britain's empire through everyday practices. All of these texts, while using different methodologies and primary sources, describe assertions of English order as a distinctly colonial practice. More to this point, Inderpal Grewal's *Home and Harem: Nation, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (1996) argues both "home" and "harem" are "relational nationalist constructs" that require the deployment of women and female bodies within the antagonistic and comparative framework of colonial epistemology (5). The impositions placed on Barber's home and body, too, place her in painful positions, as she outlines in "Written for my Son, and Spoken by Him at his First Putting on Breeches."

The contrast between Barber's lengthy list of genteel and aristocratic subscribers and her poem "Written for my Son, and Spoken by Him at his First Putting on Breeches" shows a crisis of identity politics. For example, Barber champions the plain, sensible Irish brogues and praises the unaffected wildness of the birds and Irish children, while at the same time she publicly expresses her desire to leave Dublin and to gain approval of English genteel audiences. Again, it is not enough to say her socio-political commentary is pure "subtext"; instead, it seems likely that her personal ambitions paired with her complex national identity allow her to create verse that is multifaceted in its development of a chaotic domestic. Indeed, here we can imagine a version of Barber's identity that is perhaps best defined, for lack of a better term, as Anglo-Irish.

David A. Valone and Jill Marie Bradbury's edited collection *Anglo-Irish Identities, 1517-1845* (2008) investigates how individuals experienced the ambiguities and conflicts of identity formation in a colonial society, how writers fought the economic

and ideological superiority of the English, and how the co-option of Gaelic history and culture was a political strategy for the Anglo-Irish. So, too, Desmond Bowen's *History and the Shaping of Irish Protestantism* (1995) and Mervyn Busteed, Frank Neal, and Jonathan Tonge's edition *Irish Protestant Identities* (2008) refer to the term "Anglo-Irish" as fraught with religious, economic, and cultural implications that extend into the twenty-first century. Social historians tend to agree that the phrase, no matter how many questions it begs, intimates one's status within Ireland as socially mobile outsider.ⁱⁱ These interpretations are vital for building my own historical foundation on Barber's liminal positionality not as Anglo or Irish, but instead how she occupies the vexed term "Anglo-Irish."

Barber's liminal position is wrought with affect. Before analyzing Barber's work, it is important to precisely explain how I use the term affect to describe the chaotic domestic. Emotional labor is made more determinate in turning to Raymond Williams's understanding of "structures of feeling" from *Marxism and Literature* (1961). Williams glosses the phrase in the *Politics and Letters* (1979) interviews when he underlines the "deliberately contradictory" emphasis on the term:

[I]t was a structure in the sense that you could perceive it operating in one work after another which weren't otherwise connected—people weren't learning it from each other; yet it was one of feeling much more than of thought—a pattern of impulses, restraints, and tones (133).

Structures of feeling come to represent feeling that is patterned and organized, but in ways that do not compromise the fluidity of said feeling. It alludes to "specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships"; the interchange between thoughts

and feelings, or as Williams calls it: “practical consciousness of a present kind.” In tracing these structures to shared forms and conventions, Williams asserts we can consider structures of feeling as structures of experience. The chaotic domestic encapsulates a patterned and repetitive affinity the writers of this network share with one another. For Barber, what I term the chaotic domestic allows for a deeper understanding of her liminal identity as an Anglo-Irish woman participating in the laboring-class poetic tradition.

Williams’s term helps establish an understanding of how Barber’s fusion of identities—her liminal status as laboring-class and Irish—sets in motion a formal trend in laboring-class women’s writing broadly. The rubric regarding the structure of feeling and the liminality of identifying and locating feeling is important for how I use the term “affect” in this dissertation. Specifically, in tracing the relationship between affect and the chaotic domestic, I turn to Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg’s “An Inventory of Shimmers” from *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010) by identifying affects of “in-betweenness” (1). Their theory describes affect as both a movement within a state of relation between different things or people, and the exchange of intensities; Seigworth and Gregg view affects as dynamics that are not only removed from cognitive “knowingness” but also move beyond emotion. For the purposes of this dissertation, affect is the state that exists between the utterance of a word and the meaning of the word.

Williams’s term contributes to how we discuss non-hegemonic, non-dualistic expressions of liminal identities, and allows us to see how Barber cultivates an inner dynamic—both within the home and in terms of the individual self—in the form of the

“chaotic domestic” by means of which new formations of feeling emerge. Barber creates chaos in instances of heightened emotional exchange, often by locating areas of ambiguity or liminality to do so. Within this network, the chaotic domestic is a performance by the writer in order to obtain agency as a member of the laboring classes and as a woman writer. Specifically, Barber uses the chaotic domestic to cultivate a critique of tyrannical government and social custom; her use of the chaotic arises in comparable structures of feeling throughout the century in the verse of other laboring-class women writers. As women laboring-class writers are often relegated to the margins of literary history and literary trends, the need to apply affective elements of class-consciousness becomes increasingly clear as the chaotic domestic encompasses a bridge between the writers of this network.

The affective elements—or “in-betweenness,” as Gregg and Seigworth note—serve as an exchange of intensities moving between different things or people. An explicit example is Barber’s status as an Anglo-Irish woman; her position as such is charged with affect as she is allowed neither to participate nor comment on the state of England, Ireland, or the needs of either set of citizens. Far more nuanced, however, is how the women of this network respond to and challenge gender and class ideologies through chaotic representations of domestic spaces, as each does so differently, depending on her nationality or the decade in which she publishes. If we believe, as Williams does, that feeling is organized or patterned, how these women create and operate within domestic spaces in their verse becomes a vital site of “the delicate and least tangible parts of our activity” (Williams 64). The practical and physical realities of

how laboring-class women cultivate domestic space in their verse, independently of one another, while also maintaining the same essential patterns, is important to this project.

In terms of her own position, Barber demonstrates the status of “in-betweenness” in her status as mother, Irish, and laboring class, as I show in the three poems, wherein she must navigate the cultural requirement of moving her son from a domestic female space that tends to be more associated with love and leniency to the masculine sphere, a site of social rules that tend to be associated with discipline. In addition, she shows the in-betweenness of being Anglo-Irish and having to navigate the complex and conflicted emotions about the supposed inferiority of all things Irish. By paying close attention to how domestic responsibility emerges in Barber’s verse—and the subsequent feelings that arise from the complexity of her own identities—it is possible to see beyond her poetry as purely a site of critical recovery or even as a biographical project. Instead, we can see how her verse intertwines poetic conventions and socio-cultural events through organized patterns—“structures of feeling”—that arise from liminal sites of oppression both at home and work.

For Barber, emotion and the chaotic domestic are immersed in the reality of maternal care. Although Barber’s readers come to expect intimacy in the form of maternal care, she also uses her role as mother to make socio-political commentary. In addition, in the space between gender expectation and reality, Barber pushes the reader to see the chaotic domestic as informing the roles of both *citizen* and *mother*, and thus bolstering a sense of authority and agency for women as agents who must manage their existence in movement between the public and private spheres. As Donna Landry argues in *The Muses of Resistance* (1990), Barber is an early initiator of the citizen-mother

relationship, which becomes a major literary trope by the 1790s. In establishing this connection, Barber offers pointed moments wherein she highlights socialized practices that not only restrict men and women physically, but also those that restrict women's education. In her poetry, Barber also describes and analyzes the experience of performing the traditional duties of a mother preparing her child to enter the larger social sphere that is harder for her to enter because she is female, an irony she ponders in her poetry.

The first poem I discuss is Barber's "Written for my Son, and Spoken by Him at his First Putting on Breeches." The poem, like much of Barber's verse for her son, with its double-voiced form, straddles the propriety of a woman writing simultaneously candid statements for her son and socio-political satiric impersonations of contemporary life. At the outset of the poem, Barber describes her son's distress at first having to wear britches. Throughout, Barber explains the discomfort of clothing: tight, uncomformable shoes, taut hatbands, and, of course, restrictive trousers. Ultimately we come to find that although Barber is against the restraints of Custom, she concedes to its human made power. In doing so, she personifies Custom—here characterized as a tyrant—and Reason, which is subjugated by the inexplicable whims of Custom. Playful in tone, particularly as much of the poem is written from the perspective of Barber's son, the anti-blazon attack of socialized dress casts Barber as a loving and dutiful mother, one who is—like all of us—at the mercy of Custom. Throughout, Barber shows an emotional domestic landscape in her recommendation of her son, as she—the mother described in the poem—begins to manage her son's engagements with and emotional responses to the demands of society. At the same time, she must also manage her own emotions about this event and what it

means for her authority over him and her own body. Barber mixes both these elements of domestic responsibility and thus produces a new, more chaotic dynamic for managing the myriad felt landscapes.

On the literal level, the poem looks at how children's bodies are introduced to the constraints of the public sphere and society's strange customs. Throughout, the mother mostly addresses her son's emotional frustration and terrors. Indeed, the son—and his subsequent discipline—is presented as the foremost issue of the poem. Margaret Doody (74) and others are right to see this poem as a unique satire against specifically adult male clothing. Indeed, on his first wearing britches, Barber's son enters into a distinctly male space, one that not only severs Barber's relationship with him, but also sets in motion a life-long experience of Custom's tyranny over one's body based on gender constructs. Being a poem between Barber and her son, it is playful in its hyperbolic disdain for fashionable and uncomfortable clothing, as Barber sees her son endure clothing as a product of Custom, his entrance into maturation via the binding of his "feet":

Our legs must suffer by ligation,
 To keep the blood from circulation;
 And then our feet, tho' young and tender,
 We to the shoemaker's surrender;
 Who often makes our shoes so strait,
 Our growing feet they cramp and fret;

Here, the end-stopped lines produce their own discipline while the imagery employs the language of bodily constraint, even suffering. The punctuated and abrupt end to each line, paired with the violence to the human body invites us to extend our sense of Barber's

concerns beyond matters of purely class or gender distinctions in dress to the large-scale oppression experienced by the masses striving for social conformity.

The stylistic and practical discomfort of fashion at this period indicate ideological enforcement of disciplining the body, which is linked to the English belief that its system of discipline was important to impose on other countries. The colonizer's imposition upon indigenous dress and identity is within the following lines, as brogues are specifically Irish: "Our wiser ancestors wore brogues,/ Before the surgeons brib'd these rogues,/ With narrow toes, and heels like pegs,/ To help to make us break our legs" (5-18). From personifying Custom as a tyrant and the resulting conflict with Reason, what Barber manages to do in fifty-six lines is worth exploring at some length; indeed, spatially, Barber moves from an intimate moment of motherhood and domestic responsibility in a single home, to a removed distance, wherein she critiques the lengths to which humans go to adhere to "Custom" —here spelled out for us as the physical discomfort of clothing. Barber is thus critiquing the structures of feeling perpetrated in eighteenth-century Britain, a rising imperial nation dependent upon painful gender and class structures.

In terms of the son's pain, the poem features the child complaining in the language of an anti-blazon, by enumerating body parts cut off by restrictive clothing under the auspices of clothes-makers or other authority figures. In this way, the attention paid to the son's feelings through convoluted and abrupt syntax and imagery interrupts the otherwise dynamic propulsion of the poem. For example, Barber chooses blunt, harsh primarily consonant clusters as rhymes to end the heroic couplets, including the terms "fret," "bound," and "gout." This language produces starkly violent images with words

that move forcefully and quickly over the tongue, quickly propelling the reader to the next line, only to be met with yet another monosyllabic word, such as “peg” and “leg.” The sounds and pacing generated here are not those of the purely coddling, doting mother, but also the self-imposed sharp proscriptions of an opinionated writer.

But Barber’s deployment of quick wit and sharp opinions tells us this is not simply a poem for her son. For, in the spirit of the chaotic domestic, Barber is fighting more than one kind of oppression in the poem. While simultaneously generating sympathy for her son, Barber also directs us to her own pain. In sympathizing with her son’s emergence into adulthood, she draws from her own experiences of physical pain and mental constriction. As a sufferer of gout, Barber was often bed-ridden for weeks at a time (Budd 4). Because of her physical ailments, her ability to tend to domestic responsibilities undoubtedly suffered as her husband was often in his shop on the south side of Dublin. Moreover, domestic work in her own home and the responsibilities that accompany motherhood were not considered “work” at all, but instead broadly perceived as socio-biological obligations. To fall short of these obligations, as Landry notes, is not a mark of simple ineptitude at one’s job, but rather a larger indication of one’s moral failure as woman (116). Barber’s reference to her own pain is a pointed critique of the socially constructed elements of domestic responsibility; just as she questions the social demand to wear uncomfortable clothes, so too does she reveal her exasperation with motherhood as an innately female and biological responsibility. Unlike her persona of well-regulated “Citizen Housewife Poet,” Barber intimates here that her place in the home also causes pain and chaos. Barber’s discomfort in the home is encapsulated in her telling her son about the social pressures that await him in adulthood. Indeed, because

Barber herself does not believe in or even strictly adhere to the advice she extends to her son, her position within the home as one who provides domestic comfort becomes fraught as she encourages recognition of such a bargain.

Barber offers pointed moments wherein she highlights social practices that not only restrict men and women physically, but also those that restrict women's education. Christopher Fanning is right in noting that the metaphors here are surely feminist (88). This confrontation introduces the poem's political and military imagery, which provides the framework for an analysis of the restrictions men impose upon women in the indirect terms of a clothing metaphor. As Fanning observes, although hatbands (as noted by Doody and others) are a piece of masculine apparel, if we focus on metaphor we may remark that, one of the central proto-feminist concerns of the period is the deprivation of education by men who "cramp our brains" (24).

However, if we pursue further the implications of Fanning's argument, we see how Barber's sensitivity to the subject is heightened, as she was self-taught. Having had no formal education, for example, and instead relying on the use of books from Swift and others, Barber draws a line between herself and her son; indeed, although her son's education is restricted because of social expectation—here spelled out as Custom—the restriction on her own education has to do with gender politics, thus making the monarchical metaphor of Custom as tyrant even more directly applicable. Despite that both Barber and her son suffer from "cramped brains," their experiences, where gender is concerned, leads to entirely different outcomes, and her use of the chaotic domestic allows her to make that distinction. In the following stanza, for example, Barber positions herself as one on the outside of the central constraints of dress, as she writes "Fair

privilege of nobler natures, / To be more plagu'd than other creatures!" (29-30) Certainly, she includes herself with fellow humans in their engagement with Custom; however, her tone indicates her marginal position, as she suggests that she does not enjoy the "fair privilege" of being in a natural, unencumbered state. In this case, Barber is neither her son nor herself; her complaints, while rightly noted by Fanning as feminist, serve not only as a marker of gender inequality, but become intersectional in their attention to class and gender; a testament to "in-betweenness" in Barber's identity, while she is still able to fight for the rights her son should have.

In many terms, Barber confronts larger imperial thought, a contradictory message when held in conjunction with her desire to leave Dublin in favor of London. Despite this, Fanning notes:

it is certain that the form of the poem – its argumentative mode, the standard analogical reasoning in the comparison with nature, the political jab at English imperialism in the reference to our wiser Irish ancestors' brogues (15) – is above a child. The poem exceeds the limitations of the mouthpiece which allows the poem to be voiced, thus necessarily drawing attention to the female poet's disguised authority. (88)

Many of Barber's formal choices indicate a change in perspective and a nearly constant amendment to voice. Certainly Fanning is right in noting the argumentative attitude of the poem, but I argue that instead of bringing the reader's attention to "disguised authority," Barber actually shows us the dual nature of her power. In Barber's preference for "brogues" in favor of the painful shoes introduced by the English upper and middle classes, she brings together dramatically competing viewpoints regarding English

influence in Ireland. Indeed, it would be more fitting for Fanning speak more on English colonization than imperialism as Barber's development of the Irish as animalistic, being without "Custom," and therefore closer to nature, is fraught with both praise and condemnation.

Initially, Barber's description of the Irish lacking refinement may be understood as an insult. Read another way, though, Barber's preference for sensible brogues indicates her affection for Irish attitudes towards "Custom"—or genteel English customs. Elsewhere in the poem Barber describes birds as maintaining far more sense than their human counterparts: birds—like the Irish and their brogues—do not adhere to insensible social practices. Instead, it is English influence that urges a strict adherence to Custom. In this case, as fashion, not as indigenously developed practice, or in Williams's terms "practical consciousness" (132). Barber counts on colonial English attitudes to dictate how her English audiences would read her work, and it is highly possible her Irish audiences read her verse another way. By using anti-blazon structure paired with a childlike perspective in her verse, Barber demonstrates her authorial prowess in her fusion of reason and emotion, a premise whereby we see her explode the emotional energies through personal encounters—real or imagined—to celebrate the power of raw affectual states as noteworthy and transformative in themselves.

Barber's commentary on systemic gendering continues in the poem as Barber watches her son wrestle with "Custom." Barber uses her couplets to weigh the various garments that restrict women and those that restrict men. She purposefully intersperses the hatband—as Fanning observes, a notably gendered *male* piece of clothing—with a distinctly *female* socio-political issue. The overlap in gender is, like almost every other

component of Barber's writing, ambiguous and purposeful. The undefined merging of Barber's feelings in relation to her public image creates verse that is dynamic at the same time as it further complicates our understanding of her as a participant in the laboring-class poetic tradition. Yet, her development of the chaotic domestic—which includes feelings of both obeisance and self-confidence—enacts real domestic conversations, those that are messy and authentic to the nuances of domestic labor and hence akin to the life of the laboring masses.

Within the verse Barber is careful to speak not through her own set of experiences and even gender, but instead through that of her son as she observes injustices through the perspective of a child, thus preserving her authority as woman and mother. Further, that Barber assists her son in this process of socialization indicates that “Custom” ultimately comes for all genders; male privilege cannot help a man overtake the tyrant Custom. It is Barber's self-awareness about being disciplinary in her domestic role that gestures towards chaos; indeed, by questioning the social structures that inform her and her son's lives, she politicizes Custom. In this critique of “Custom” she establishes a view of women's rights that benefit men as much as they benefit women.

The body is policed under the same auspices as Britain's growing empire. Adhering to Custom advances the good of the empire, because the body, like Irish subjects, is chaotic, unkempt, and unruly. Thus, both the body and Irish subjects must be controlled. The relationship between controlling and restricting the body and military imagery punctuates Barber's understanding of power dynamics in the period. On a broader level, she critiques how society as a whole is deformed by Custom. The domestic in this context represents physical pain in ways that open out onto ironic critiques of class

and nation. At the end of the poem Barber writes that the tyrant Custom “delights to make us act like fools” (52). Here is another indication of how chaos rules domestic life, as Barber so brilliantly points up; there is no reason or measure to the rules of Custom. Of course on the surface these lines show an argument typical of the eighteenth-century (that of reason over emotion), but she shows that emotion is more intellectually complex and knowledgeable than mere reason in this respect. A surface reading of this poem might suggest that it is purely about reason and sense over the impracticalities of eighteenth-century English fashion.

Read another way, we see that it is in this tension between Custom and foolishness that Barber asserts her political concerns. For example, despite the fact that those belonging to the lower classes are expected to endure pain and suffering in performing domestic labor and do it invisibly—both at home and at work—the implication remains that those belonging to the middle and upper classes cannot domesticate their own households without the assistance of the laboring classes. In many cases, including Barber’s own verse, the lower classes were viewed as “wild” and chaotic themselves, as they lack the knowledge and experience of social custom. Despite the view that the non-Anglophone Irish laboring-classes are “wild,” the upper classes of Georgian Ireland rely on them to establish their own civility through their domestic servitude, and assert the politeness brought by English colonization, these are forms of both public and private work. In her claim that Custom “delights to make us act like fools” Barber shows us that those of a higher social rank are actually those who make the laboring classes act like fools in their exploitation of “Custom” over reason.

Barber writes about more than a simple turning point of maturation in her son's life. She uses the subject matter of the poem as a dynamic moment in a child's life to comment on chaos and repression within the culture at large. Certainly there is the pointed commentary on gender—as previously noted—as well as commentary regarding how the rearing of children often happens outside of one's own domestic sphere, as Barber's son is repeatedly socialized by his headmaster at school. Yet, despite the fact that the socialization of a child happens outside of the home, Barber cunningly reconfigures the maternal model and shows us it is within domestic spaces that we may encourage children to achieve the rank of "citizen" and that eighteenth-century culture depends on domestic servants to perform disciplinary education regarding its children. Indeed, on the latter point, Barber rightly realizes that Custom—and its subversion—is as political as it is social. She implores Reason, portrayed as the viceroy within the poem: "Weak viceroy! Who thy power will own, / When Custom has usurped thy throne?" (48-7) The liberties and freedom taken from men and women at the hands of Custom parallels the experience of those belonging to the laboring classes subjugated to imperial ambitions through colonization. Although Barber cannot create a space wherein her son succeeds and does not conform to many of the basic tenants of socialization—such as the wearing of restrictive clothing—she can foster a sense of individualism and free-thinking that pushes beyond the limits of hierarchical power, as her criticism of painful shoes serves as a pointed nod at English colonial attitudes.

Of course the power of raw emotion often manifests itself as tension within Barber's verse, as Barber uses domestic responsibility to show her readers how we are our own prisoners, subordinate to forces simultaneously beyond our control and of our

creation. In this tension Barber asserts her political concerns. Indeed, the monarchical metaphor that Barber develops in many of the poems to her son is at times playful and seemingly childlike in its dichotomous development of good and bad, with reason giving way to Custom. The alternate view of this is, however, commentary. By moving the reader from a domestic space to a socio-political one, Barber transports her readers outside of themselves. For example, in “Written for my Son, and Spoken by Him at his First Putting on Breeches,” she does this with birds, who “are cloath’d by heav’n with wondrous care:/ Their beauteous, well-compacted feathers/ Are coats of mail against all weathers” (32-4). Here, the wildlife is commanded not by the tyrant of Custom that humans follow, but instead by Reason. Barber uses the juxtaposition of humans and animals as a method through which to write a type of prehistory, one that points to domestic spaces as burdensome, restrictive, socialized, and dominated by the tyrant “Custom.” In contrast, those of the natural world are portrayed as innate, idyllic, and free to enjoy “Reason.” This particular dichotomy, while not uncommon in this period, is important to comprehending Barber’s grasp of human history—both past and present. That is, as the poem begins and ends with human submission to Custom over Reason, we see that Reason has been “usurp’d” by the tyrant Custom and “we must yield.” By the end of the poem the two—Custom and Reason—are conflated into one; Custom seemingly depends on chaos and Reason must overtake it.

Taken another way, this poem—like many of Barber’s poems—exposes her views in regard to absolute rule and dualistic ideologies more broadly. Much like “Written for my Son, and Spoken by Him at his First Putting on Breeches,” Barber deploys a monarchical metaphor in her nurturing of her son’s understanding of world. During the

period in which Barber writes her collection of verse, Ireland had seen many changes, with Dublin as Protestant stronghold firmly set, as George II became the King of Great Britain in 1727 and soon bestowed royal assent on the Disenfranchising Act of 1728, which prohibited all Roman Catholics from voting. The completion of Trinity College Dublin in 1732, an all-Protestant institution of education at the time, and its placement in the center of Dublin represent undeniably strong symbolic moves literally and figuratively to de-center the Roman Catholic population. Barber was a Protestant herself, like her friend and mentor Jonathan Swift. Swift, we will remember, pays particular attention to the injustices experienced by the non-Anglo-Irish at the hands of English influence in his *A Modest Proposal For preventing the Children of Poor People From being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and For making them Beneficial to the Publick* (1729). Here, Swift satirically suggests that the impoverished Irish might ease their economic troubles by selling their children as food for rich gentlemen and ladies. Barber's own sympathies are implied through her connection with Swift, as she also observed English prejudice against the Irish.

The monarchical metaphor continues as Barber presents the body as that which will not stay orderly and must be bridled with uncomfortable clothing, and it is clear she evaluates far more than mere clothing. The interiority of domestic space within the poem—and its subject matter—is inversely related to affect, so that the actual “structure of feeling” of the domestic sphere is deeply driven between wild affects that must be domesticated, and physical spaces that refuse to stay orderly. The chaos of public and private spheres is developed from Barber's son first wearing britches. In regard to gender, Barber observes her son move from the freedom of free-flowing garments, a gender-

neutral space, to having his legs and genitals rigidly policed. Yet, as noted above, controlling the body is made more specific as it becomes increasingly clear throughout the poem that Barber refers to the female body. Barber goes so far as to assert that restrictive clothing does more than constrain one's body, but limits one's life: "Thus dress, that should prolong our date, / Is made to hasten on our fate." (27-8) In these lines Barber draws a relationship between adhering to Custom and death. Certainly Barber's diatribe against the discomfort is primarily aimed at physical toils, as mentions of "cramp," and "gout" are followed by more dramatic phrases such as clothing that will "break our legs," "bind our wrists," and "keep the blood from circulation." Through these highly physical descriptions we see the relationship between chaos and affect, as affect is unconscious and without language. Regarding critical work, we may observe that Barber's brutal, explicit language of broken bones ties Williams's "structures of feeling," as the other writers of this network include harsh descriptions of women's bodies such as Mary Leapor's "aching limbs" and "headaches." In Barber's adopted role of "Citizen's Housewife Poet," her physical pain comes to represent the pains of other women. In other words, the pain and suffering of the physical labor that laboring-class women were required to do is part of the structure of labor in the eighteenth century: the lower classes were expected to endure such pain and suffering to serve the middle and upper classes. In putting her son in britches, Barber sets her son on the road to servitude of the upper classes, as acceptance of this role is an aspect of his own maturation. Implicitly, Barber experiences pain, as she is a mother who separates from her son as a direct result of gender discipline due purely to his maturation.

As Barber's verse exemplifies the chaotic domestic through commentary on gender, class, and empire, her merging of Custom and Reason continues into other poems to her son. For example, in "Written for my Son, and Spoken by him in School upon his Master first bringing in a Rod" Barber captures the quotidian components of life, ones that she could count on readers to expect from mothers. Broadly, the poem recounts—from the perspective of her son—the first experience of discipline outside of the domestic sphere, specifically from the schoolmaster. The poem posits a level of instruction that has young boys play as they learn, and turns play into "a science" (22). Although Barber uses the poem to speak through her son, she includes pointed elements of her own identity. Certainly it would seem the poem actually serves as a mother's response to her son first enduring punitive punishment at the hands of a schoolmaster. Barber's argument is that if more kindness and play were included at school, the schoolmaster would both "make a fortune" and "be the darling of the mothers" (16-8). Her pointed inclusion of how mothers would interpret a kind schoolmaster gives weight to her persona as the "Irish Citizens Housewife" and signals to the reader that the mother—Barber in this case—is to be considered sympathetically as she observes her son learn a difficult lesson. Although she has always been the one to discipline her son in the past, it is ultimately taken out of her hands.

Even more ambitious is the defiant role she adopts in questioning a male disciplining her son. Indeed, by the end of the poem Barber leads the reader to perceive a seemingly normal aspect of social interaction—the discipline of a son by a teacher—as instead a larger question regarding who is allowed to discipline the members of a family? Who is allowed to discipline the domestic sphere, if motherhood is indeed an aspect of

that space? Again, Barber's ability to direct the reader to the process of socialization of one's child and one's self is an important facet of her roles as both mother and poet, two positions that are presented in the poem as constituting work, and thus representing social action. In presenting these types of work as chaotic, complicated, messy, and difficult to complete or define, Barber further directs her reader to the chaotic domestic as a method of understanding the domestic as a socialized space, one that shares a relationship with political structures.

Like Swift, Barber subverts monarchical metaphor as she strives to encourage kindness in place of violence as a rule of governance. Barber even posits that such kindness will procure desired results faster than a tyrannical approach, similar to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* when the King of Brobdingnag's hatred of military violence as kings should, instead of making war, make "two blades of grass grow where only one grew before." This pointed commentary on English colonial customs extends into Barber's verse. As with her description of the process of getting dressed, Barber adopts the voice and attitude of her son in his first exposure to punitive discipline:

Our Master, in a fatal Hour,
 Brought in this Rod, to show his Pow'r.
 O dreadful Birch! O baleful Tree!
 Thou Instrument of Tyranny!
 Thou deadly Damp to youthful Joys;
 The Sight of thee our Peace destroys.
 Not Damocles, with greater Dread,
 Beheld the Weapon o'er his Head. (1-8)

Once again Barber uses the voice of a child to represent Ireland; in her discussion of clothing and violence in the schoolmaster's treatment of children, she writes the Irish as innately wild and innocent, and also untouched by aspects of culture that do not make sense, such as self-harm. On the most basic level, there is a humorous tone here, as Ireland is a child who cannot be disciplined by one who is not his or her mother.

In terms of form, the humor of appropriating the language of Classical mythology with this singular Irish boy allows Barber's discussion of the process of socialization to become messy in pointing out that disciplinary measures do structure the nation and, in doing so, they become of utmost importance for a domestic manager and citizen, such as Barber, and she is therefore entitled to speak her mind on the subject. Here, the incident of the individual Anglo-Irish child being disciplined mirrors the cultural silencing of the Irish. The rod in this context is the colonial presence that silences the children or, in this context, the Irish. The mere sight of the schoolmaster "our Peace destroys." This is overtly colonial, as well as childlike, a reaction complicated by the fact that the poem is actually written by Barber, an Anglo-Irish woman, though narrated through the voice of her son. Barber's status as Anglo-Irish and her efforts to leave the country signal a complex emotional identity: is Barber the schoolmaster? Or is she the child?

The blunt language draws a pointed connection between the body and natural elements, made clearer through the steady use of heroic couplets. As we have already seen, in Barber's verse the body occupies decidedly domestic spaces. It is through the domestic that we see how bodies are socialized. In particular, Barber points to the wearing of uncomfortable shoes and tight hatbands as decidedly domesticating components of the body in society. In this case, the "dreadful Birch" and the "baleful

Tree” generate sounds that are harsh and clipped; Barber shows the pain and anxiety that accompany the “Instrument of Tyranny.” Natural landscapes are, for Barber, just as subjugated as women and men’s bodies. The making of implements of discipline and punishment from trees parallels the subjection of the body to the demands of fashionable modern dress. Despite the fact that the poem’s content is presumably intended to provoke nostalgia for childhood dreams of all play and no punishment, Barber keeps us in the present as “Peace” is actively destroyed. In the poem there is an increasing loss of sense that Barber tells us results in chaos. Indeed, here Barber shows us that like the human body, natural landscapes are also increasingly oppressed. Instead of order, as the reins on women and landscape tighten, there arise increasing fracture and chaos, manifested in the form of revolution: where there is oppression, chaos emerges, causing a revolt against oppression.

Chaos extends to political landscapes, as later in the poem Barber refers to “That Sage,” or John Locke, and his treatise on education. Her knowledge of political literature is deployed elegantly here, under the guise of motherly concern. To read “the Master’s” role here as one of tyrannical government is not a difficult stretch of the imagination, as Fanning argues with regard to other moments in Barber’s verse, such as “Written for My Son, and Spoken by him at his first putting on Breeches.” Barber’s complex and often ambiguous political identity makes her perspective on education difficult to place, particularly with her allusions to Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693). Here, Locke explains how to educate that mind using three distinct methods: the development of a healthy body; the formation of a virtuous character; and the choice of an appropriate academic curriculum. In particular, the first point of nurturing a child’s

body in an effort to nurture their mind would apply to Barber's poem as Locke quotes from Juvenal's *Satires* in his encouragement of "a sound mind in a sound body" (1).

Perhaps of greater interest to Barber are Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1689). There is surely an irony in Locke's arguing for freedom of thought, but also justifying colonization when based on ideologies of "improvement." Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* argues against the necessity of monarchical power, a contrast to the conservative perspective of many of his other works such as *Two Tracts of Government* (1660) and *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* (1669) defending slavery and serfdom. In *Two Treatises*, however, Locke argues through the lens of natural rights and contract theory. Locke claims governments exist by the consent of the people and, more importantly, governments can be replaced with new governments, if necessary. Locke defines political power as "a right of making laws, with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties for the regulating and preserving of property and of employing the force of the community in the execution of such laws, and in the defense of the commonwealth from foreign injury, and all this only for the public good" (I. iii). Government is thus a trust, forfeited by a ruler who fails to secure the public good. The ruler's authority, that is to say, is conditional rather than absolute. Although Barber does not explicitly state her disdain for the monarchy, her nearly constant criticisms of monarchical, colonial, and absolute power are a dominant thread in her verse. Barber's reference to Locke works in two levels: first, she intimates her astute knowledge of political writing. On the second level, Barber uses Locke as a figure of contradictions, further intimating Barber's own complex political identity.

For Barber, the relationship between affectual energies and political commentary manifests in the chaotic domestic. As we have seen, the chaotic domestic as a motif is a complicated consolidation of overlapping elements of Barber's identity: motherhood and nationhood, as well as labor that is physical, intellectual, and emotional. These themes are also found in the third poem which I focus closely: "To the Rt Hon. John Barber, Esq. Lord Mayor of London on committing one of my Sons to his Care," wherein Barber employs the language of the colonizers to describe the disciplining and economic maintenance of her Irish son. Unlike the first poem, on her son wearing britches, Barber does not assume the voice of her son, but instead speaks on his behalf to Lord Mayor John Barber, no relation:ⁱⁱⁱ "To the late King of Britain a Savage was brought, / Which wild in the woods of Germania was caught. / The Beaux, and the Belles, beheld it with Joy; And at Court the high Mode was to see the Wild Boy" (1-2; 5-6). Brilliantly bold and funny with this introduction, Barber reminds us of British governance, suggests fashion makes the "wild" Irish into exotic objects of curiosity, and challenges British sense of superiority regarding the Irish in her obvious reference to "Peter the Wild Boy," who was found in 1725 living wild in the woods near Hanover in Germany. The boy walked on all fours, showed uncivilized behavior, and could not be taught to speak a language. In drawing a relationship between "Peter the Wild Boy" and her own son's Irish upbringing, she allows the Irish component of her identity to become the subject of humor for English audiences, but also alludes to England's violent colonial history, as Peter was brought to England in 1726 by George I who, with a group of hunters, discovered the boy. In the poem Barber addresses the Lord Mayor of London in an effort to procure her son employment and financial support in London. Again, Barber resorts to

a humorous tone at first but then the Irish and class implications hold sway; Barber shows her readers how heartbreaking the transaction is, as she both critiques and participates in the exchange of her son. This fluid and conflicted approach is deeply ingrained in Barber's cultivation of the chaotic domestic. In this poem the chaos of domestic life is wrapped up in her own national identity as an Anglo-Irishwoman, as she prepares to send her son to an English member of the upper classes who can domesticate him more thoroughly than people in his Irish home.

Barber extends her use of a double-voiced form beyond this initial representation of her son's experience. Later in the same poem Barber writes:

In the Wilds of Hibernia this Boy was beset,
 And caught (as the Natives are there) in a Net:
 The Creature has Sense, and, in my Eyes is pretty,
 With Talents to make a good Man in the City (9-12)

In these lines Barber describes her son's move to London to make use of his "talents," despite his position as a "savage" from Ireland. The details she includes about her son in this context—"the Wild Boy"—are at first understood as "an ironic reflection on English prejudices toward the Irish" (O'Flaherty 208). Typical of what readers might expect from an Anglo-Irish writer well connected with influential literary figures from Dublin and London, Barber's depiction of a wild, animalistic Irish people indicates her acknowledgement of English audiences and their expectations. Instead of agreeing with her audience, Barber simply panders to them; that is, although she is willing to poke fun at the Irish, she includes her own son—and by extension herself—as an aspect of Irish

cultural life. Barber uses self-deprecation as a subversive means of gathering support for herself through subscribers and the sympathy of her readers.

In describing her son as a “Creature” with “Talents” she alludes to a variety of English imperial traditions: the English hunt; the bringing of persons of color to England from Africa and America to put on display; the caricature of the Irish as wild. Barber’s commentary on English custom indicates the ways in which she believes she and her son are distinct; indeed, she shows that her son does have considerable “talents” to use in London, as he is sensible and he is an outsider. The connection between her son’s sense and his position as an outsider, for English audiences, at least, is important for further understanding the gestures Barber makes in conflating her longing to leave Dublin with making a better life in London, as well as her disdain for the prejudice of the English towards the Irish. Barber’s awareness of these traditions of supposed Irish inferiority and consequently ill treatment, which only continues to grow throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, indicates her understanding of her own liminal position between being Irish and English; a citizen and a subject; a mother and a domestic laborer.

Barber’s realm of control is largely relegated to the domestic sphere. The domestic backdrop of her verse allows that sphere to extend to a broader audience. Because of this, Barber cannot assist her son build a better life in terms of opportunity, occupation, or finance, but she can “sell” her son’s qualities to those with power; thus, Barber capitalizes on pastoral conceits of lowly shepherds and servants, as well as Stephen Duck’s success, in her initiation of the chaotic domestic. For Barber and many other laboring-class women writers, there is a delicate political dance instigated vis-à-vis gender and nation. In this context, the chaotic domestic is an agentic positionality that

Barber can inhabit as needed; she channels the intensities of her own feelings in “selling” her son and uses them for economic and artistic gain. Within her verse what Barber does have to say for her son is that he is both “industrious” and “smart” (13). These qualities, innate and dependent upon reason, are similar to those found in the birds in “Written on my Son first Wearing Breeches.” Again, in this context her son’s wild and uncivilized qualities become valuable for better understanding and navigating the world. However, the constraints placed on Barber’s own gender make the possession of these qualities—valuable traits for any person—futile and, as she suggests elsewhere, wasted. This pressure arrives from the intersectional oppression of gender, class, and the Irish colonial relationship

Barber’s personal desires to leave Ireland and settle in England set the backdrop for all of her claims regarding Dublin and Ireland in her verse. I position my view of this poem alongside Emily O’Flaherty:

the poem is typical of Barber’s personal ambitions. It was she who felt caught in Ireland’s ‘Net’ and wished to free herself and her family from the fetters of life in Ireland. Barber had also proven her ‘Talents’ – industry, organization, and prudence to exploit every opportunity to her advantage and ‘make good’ in London (209).

As O’Flaherty suggests, Barber attributes to her son her own qualities; she makes him a proxy for herself. Despite this, Barber’s longing to leave Ireland in favor of England has colored how critics have read her relationship with the Irish and, thus, to which part of “Anglo-Ireland” she most aligns herself. On the one hand, in referring to the Irish as wild and uncivilized, Barber is willing to debase herself and her son. Certainly she sees how

the English perceive the Irish and, in turn, the Anglo-Irish. On the other, this tells the reader that she wishes to disassociate herself from the latter half of her hyphenated identity entirely. In either context, there is little change in how Barber perceives the hierarchy of the Irish in relation to the English. Further, in enacting a hard-nosed, practical housewife's decision to recognize the reality of English hierarchies, she uses this knowledge to help her son. For Barber, this is a complex and savvy position that benefits both herself and her son by playing with and against general English prejudices. Such a stance parallels Barber's ingenious generating chaos within domestic spaces.

Although O'Flaherty's reading is compelling, it does not answer the complex questions of Barber's identity as woman. In fashioning Irish life and identity as wild, Barber tells her reader a great deal about the pressures placed on her gender. The poem illustrates Barber's hopes to leave Ireland for England, and the hopes she holds for her son, showing us the sacrifices she is willing to make as writer and mother for the betterment of her craft and of her son's livelihood. Barber's role of mother within the poem is important to understanding her view of relative powerlessness women of all classes experienced in the period. Again, outside of the domestic sphere, Barber cannot do much to help her son; what's more, even within this space she must contend with the discipline and social regulation of outsiders, as we have seen in her poem on the school master or in her commentary on restrictive and uncomfortable clothing. Essentially, there is very little space wherein Barber can mother her son. But the poem's existence itself further complicates Barber's relative helplessness, as, in giving her son as a present, she is seemingly powerless. Yet, writing publicly proves a forceful seizure of power and agency for Barber and other writers within this network. Her voice in the public sphere,

although describing domestic matters, helps her son gain power despite his denigrated positions of Irish and working class.

In Barber's exchange—although on the surface playful—there is intimacy through controlled restraint. Barber writes: "The Creature has Sense, and, in my Eyes, is pretty, / With Talents to make a good Man in the City" (11-12). In removing herself from the subject—her son, "the Creature"—Barber creates a sense of comic distance between herself and the end result: her son leaving her to enter the care of another. Within the space that Barber creates between herself and the subject, she allows for instances of motherly intimacy: "and, in my Eyes, is pretty" (12). Although again there is an opportunity for comedy—mothers should find their own children beautiful—the reader is simultaneously reminded that this is, indeed, Barber's son, and therefore only a partial view. Therefore, the space created between Barber and her son is filled with intimacy that is distinctive, and pertaining solely to their relationship, components of which the Lord Mayor can never share or take from her.

In "On Committing One of my Sons to his Care" Barber places clear values on intelligence and industriousness; she tells her readers that she, like John Locke, values independent thinking. Her son's independence, and her assertions of his ability to thrive in a variety of contexts, are, of course, not unlike her own characteristics. Indeed, in favoring her son's ability, we learn of Barber's own personal philosophy: those who are smart, hardworking, and capable should thrive. Barber claims public opinion of her son should be based on his personal traits and characteristics, his hard work and honest nature. In contrast, Barber's depiction of middle- and upper-class English readers does not include these characteristics; instead, we find those who blindly adhere to the

foolishness of Custom in lieu of freethinking. Although Barber represents her son, at best, as purely a child and at worst as animalistic and “wild,” she does imagine his Irish identity as valuable to his character. Again, Barber’s place in the dichotomy she creates for her son is unclear—does she consider herself one of the London literati? Or is she identifiably laboring-class Irish? The answer is simultaneously both and neither, as Barber constantly changes her voice, tone, and perspective by using her son as a focus of the poem. Barber participates in all those categories in order to take care of her own son and self. Indeed, her use of the chaotic domestic means Barber does not have to be entirely tied to a positionality or identity; she maneuvers between categories we now term “Anglo-Irish” and “laboring-class” for her own purposes.

This disdain, represented by Barber with surface-level comedy, comes in the form of offering her son as “such a Present.” On the one hand she can count on English and upper-class readers’ delight over the opportunities granted to her Irish son as just that—opportunities. Further, her prominent subscribers would understand her son’s departure from Dublin to London as an unequivocally improving move towards social betterment, both economically and socially. Beyond the surface-level comedy, the core of this scenario shows that Barber must endure the heartache of giving her son over to John Barber, the Lord Mayor of London. Such maternal perplexities continue throughout the next century and a half for not only the Irish, but other colonized nations around the globe. These issues become increasingly more complicated throughout the eighteenth- and nineteenth- centuries as issues of class betterment within England and Scotland unfold. Indeed, the role of Barber’s son as “a Present” represents a larger issue of nationalism, wherein she criticizes the exchange of people within England or on the

behalf of England, both forcibly and otherwise, on the supposition that England is rich with wealth and opportunity, but never with the direct accusation that such “smart” and “orderly” “presents” build England’s empire. Further, this present, as with all presents, creates obligations on the recipient to provide something in exchange, such that an elaborate and sophisticated exchange takes place in which both get something. In this sense Barber is both loving mother and a hardnosed, tough-minded woman whose approach is necessitated by class hostilities and by being a woman. Essentially, in all of her roles—mother, writer, citizen, domestic manager, and sometime domestic laborer—Barber does what she must in order to survive. Barber’s ability to clean, hide, and display the precise parts of her identity make her a valuable and undeniable initiator of the chaotic domestic within the laboring-class poetic tradition.

Barber’s collection was, aside from Matthew Prior’s 1718 folio, unequaled in terms of its number of subscribers. Despite her popularity, there have been few efforts to connect her with other poetic traditions (Budd 204).⁹ By 1986 Barber’s position within the Irish literary landscape had changed so drastically that in a printed edition of several her poems as a component of the seminar *Historical Bibliography in Practice*, the biography of Mary Barber’s life and work written by the Rare Books Group of the Library Association of Ireland refers to her as “minor poet of eighteenth century Dublin” who “was befriended by Swift, who read and corrected her verse.”^{iv} Thus, one hundred years after Charles Read’s 1896 description of Barber’s lingering influence over the Irish literary landscape, Barber’s claim to fame was simply her proximity to Swift. Her status as a “minor poet” continues into the twenty-first-century, despite the resurgence of

⁹ Brian A. Connery discusses Mary Barber’s interpersonal relationships in *Representations of Swift* (2002).

interest in women's poetry. Any recovery has been, thus far, indebted to the feminist recovery that ensures her interest for us. This neglect is perhaps due to her social standing as a merchant's wife; indeed, she was not truly laboring class, nor did she hold a domestic service position, as is often the case with laboring-class women writers. Even so, her status as self-taught, her cultivation of a persona as the "the Citizen's Housewife Poet," and her eagerness to publish and participate in the formal and thematic trends of the recently en vogue tradition of poor writers, as Duck was already gaining popularity, makes her a valuable contribution to this poetic movement.

Where one could argue that all of the poets in this project are at this stage recovered, Barber is perhaps the last to have her poetry included in the history of women's and laboring writing. Her exclusion from the laboring-class poetic tradition is not because her verse does not warrant study, but instead because Barber has become an increasingly difficult poet to place within this tradition. Because of the massive shifts in Irish literary culture and life, Barber's stronghold in Ireland's literary landscape has diminished; indeed, her status as Protestant Anglophone Irish and not-quite-fully laboring-class makes her often less appealing to twenty-first century attitudes towards *Irishness* as an expression of an anti-English sentiment.¹⁰ Moreover, that her verse is often fraught with angst or mocking praise for Dublin and its inhabitants—and her subsequent attempts to leave the City—also complicates her position as a "poet of place." Essentially, finding a place for Barber in twenty-first century canons, particularly in relation to other poets of the period such as Duck, is difficult because of her poetic

¹⁰ Stuart Whigham discusses similar de-colonized "anti-English" attitudes in relation to his article on Scottish sports: "'Anyone but England'? Exploring anti-English sentiment as part of Scottish national identity in sport" (2012)

ambiguity. Regardless, Barber's thematic investment in what I have termed the "chaotic domestic" lingers on in the period, evolving and taking firmer shape throughout the eighteenth century.

It is my purpose to recuperate Barber's reputation by showing how she initiates the chaotic domestic as a motif, the progression of which continues to show disruption of many forms of order: Englishness, gender constructs, and social custom broadly. Barber's discussion of domesticity in relation to her cultivation of domestic space becomes a telling feature in how the other writers of this network use the chaotic domestic in their verse. For Barber, the chaotic domestic operates as both a natural part of the domestic and a performative positionality that she uses simultaneously to undermine and force change on society, particularly in how it manifests in her role as mother. In her complication of motherhood, Barber rewrites our understanding of domestic life and work. Her three poems, "Written for My Son, and Spoken by him at his first putting on Breeches," "Written for my Son, and Spoken by him in School upon his Master first bringing in a Rod" and "To the Rt Hon. John Barber, Esq. Lord Mayor of London, on committing one of my Sons to his Care" draw pointed comparisons between physical labor and motherhood as both being forms of domestic servitude. Barber's persona revolves around her role as dutiful mother and wife, thus making the distinction between life and work difficult to discern in her poems, and this marks a contrast with the later poets of this network.

CHAPTER 2

Solidarity Amongst an “Army of Amazons”:

Mary Collier’s *The Woman’s Labour*

“Fancying he had been too Severe on the Female Sex in his *Thresher’s Labour* brought me to a Strong Propensity to call an Army of Amazons to vindicate the injured Sex” – Mary Collier, Preface to *The Woman’s Labour* (1762)

“Solidarity involves commitment, and work, as well as the recognition that even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, we do live on common ground.” – Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004)

With the publication of her influential poem *The Woman’s Labour: An Epistle to Mr. Stephen Duck* in 1739, Mary Collier initiated a tradition of working women’s poetry, as Collier appears to have been the first published laboring-class woman poet in England (Landry 56). The above quoted lines from the 1762 preface to the poem are exceptional in their pointed call for solidarity amongst laboring-class women, but they also unhinge traditional conceptions of the domestic, as defined by Samuel Johnson.¹¹ This chapter will examine how Collier pushes the bounds of Johnson’s first definition of the domestic — as “not relating to things public”— as she develops a structure of feeling around seemingly personal, internal struggles that she makes public through her poetry, thereby

¹¹Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* (1785) suggests four definitions of “domestic”:

1. Belonging to the house; not relating to things public;
2. Private; done at home; not open;
3. Inhabiting the house; not wild; Not foreign; intestine

asserting that these struggles are shared amongst laboring-class women and suggesting they have political implications for the culture. The sensory details Collier notes in regards to the effect and affect of labor on the laboring-class woman's body are driven by affectual shimmers, specifically moments of raw, liminal expressions of self-identity that are brought in the public sphere.

Collier's poem was written in response to Stephen Duck's popular poem *The Thresher's Labour* (1730), and as Moira Ferguson notes in *Eighteenth Century Women Poets: Nation, Class, and Gender* (2008), was "included in every edition of Collier's volumes" (7). Today, the poem has enabled capacious and varied discussions on laboring-class women's writing, proto-Marxism, feminism, ecocriticism, ecofeminism, New Historicism, and many other fields in English literary studies. What I aim to contribute to the discourse on Collier and *The Woman's Labour* is a close analysis of the affectual "shimmers" that emerge not only in her criticisms of Duck's poem, but more importantly in the connections she forges with her fellow laboring-class writers. Within her work, Collier seems to recognize that women across a swath of society would identify with the shimmers she metaphorically imagines and describes. Indeed, the distinct blend of issues Collier presents is unique: she argues for recognition not just for herself, but demonstrates solidarity with all laboring-class women, creating a corpus of affects and tropes around lower-class women writers and laborers. Rather than pursuing discord, Collier seeks unity with those belonging to her rank and station, and gender. Thus, Collier points directly to the systemic nature of women's oppression and thus produces consciousness-raising as a means of creating solidarity amongst women. The structure of feeling Collier produces is searing in its description of the ways the women's laboring-

class body and psyche are continually tested and exploited within the system of agricultural labor in a hierarchical society in which the capitalization of agriculture, agricultural “improvement,” and cash economy are on the rise.¹² Indeed, Collier honors the pain and hope experienced by women as they try to create such a network in reaction against systemic gendered and classed oppression.

In this chapter I point to how Collier’s *The Woman’s Labour* exemplifies the chaotic domestic through analyses of gender and class, specifically in relation to the affects generated from the descriptions of labor within her verse and the intersecting vectors of oppression she endures. In this argument, I suggest that Collier’s depiction of the home as a site of labor reveals complex, intertwined images of domestic life and discomfort that offer affectual shimmers of both pain and hope. In framing the poem as a response to Duck, Collier allows the reader to see the chaotic domestic in action, as their shared and differing oppressions reveal points of identification wherein Collier calls on her fellow laboring-class woman to recognize and claim both the power and debilities they experience around emotional and physical labor at home and at work, but to also share in the fruits of this labor. By sharing her poetry in a public way, she taps into political sites of suffering, causes of discontent and possibilities for amelioration that she believed were shared by her fellow laboring-class women. Part of the complication of considering affect within *The Woman’s Labour* (1739) is that Collier’s points of personal frustration hinge on how the lower-class laborer was dealing with the margins of what is

¹² Joel Mokyr’s *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1850* (2009) and Peter Jones’s *Agricultural Enlightenment: Knowledge, Technology, and Nature, 1750-1840* (2016) explores the effects of enclosure and the rise of industrial factories on philosophy and cultural outlook in the eighteenth century.

sensed and what is known about their future security, as, historically, the laborer's working life was becoming increasingly unstable. The historical consequences of enclosure and the rise of industrialization produce a transitional moment wherein Collier uses her poetry to generate the kinds of affective response that make affect theory useful for tracing how she strives to create solidarity with her fellow laboring-class women.

Namely, I consider the root of these "shimmers of affect" in the autobiographical preface to the expanded 1762 edition of *The Woman's Labour*. Here, Collier is critical of Duck's description of women laborers as feckless and weak: "fancying he had been too Severe on the Female Sex in his *Thresher's Labour* brought me to a Strong Propensity to call an Army of Amazons to vindicate the injured Sex" (312). Collier's response to Duck's *Thresher's Labour* carries an undeniable socio-political commentary, but by using the trope of an "Army of Amazons," Collier develops a powerful structure of feeling that changes the landscape of working women's writing. In focusing closely on the lack of support laboring-class women received both at work and at home, Collier considers a topic previously unconsidered in poetry and thus enables a strong sense of solidarity amongst laboring-class women. Indeed, Collier's call for an "Army of Amazons" initiates the kind of solidarity that Sara Ahmed considers powerful as "even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, we do live on common ground" (189). In other words, the conditions and experiences of laboring-class women diverge as their job responsibilities, geographical locations, and personal lives constitute a great deal of difference, and yet the oppression, thanklessness, and frustration felt at both home and work serve as a powerful sense of solidarity between women of the laboring classes. Little is known about Collier's personal life, about her role as seasonal

fieldworker and washerwoman makes her a reliable source of noting the exploitation of women's labor. Collier's continued sense of solidarity amongst laboring women, as evidenced in *The Woman's Labour*, serves as an example of deeply personal and complex affectual shimmers; moments wherein Collier brings forth the treatment of laboring-class women broadly speaking in the framework of a response poem to Stephen Duck.

In doing so, Collier makes public knowledge her complaints and shared experiences as a laborer in a way that no other English woman writer had done before. In responding to a popular writer and poem, Collier strategically presents class- and gender-based complaints on a public stage, thus demonstrating her deep attunement to pain, hope, personal and political frustrations on the behalf of herself and women of her station. This is part of Collier's refusal to act coyly or in the mode of self-denial; indeed, in simply using the term "Amazons" to describe women belonging to the laboring classes, Collier is bold, unrelenting, and defiant against systems that constrict women. In fact, Collier's response to Duck is Amazonian, or at least, in the spirit of battle, as her direct challenge to Duck acts as a kind of bold, verbal dual.¹³

The laboring-class woman's body is extraordinarily powerful as Collier compares its capabilities to that of an Amazon. Indeed, Collier's assertion that laboring-class women can bear great amounts of pain and labor, while also being capable of brutal and shrewd revenge—as in the poem she writes—suggests an alternative means of seeing how women operate within domestic spaces. To reiterate, Collier's use of the chaotic domestic subverts a class and gender system that affects her public and private life: acting

¹³ Adrienne Mayor's *The Amazons: Lives and Legends of Warrior Women across the Ancient World* (2014) uncovers the socio-historical significance of the Amazons, defining them as "fierce warrior women dwelling on the fringes of the known world."

as an image, natural state, and subversive literary feature, this term is a useful representation of how Collier and her fellow laboring-class women were expected to keep domestic spaces orderly while they also acted as agents, supplicants, and class inferiors within those spaces. The chaotic domestic in the hands of Collier is multi-layered, focusing specifically on the intersections of her identity as woman and laboring class. Thus, in this chapter, I first focus on the chaotic affectual energy apparent in Collier's *The Woman's Labour* through a close examination of the shared shimmers of pain and hope Collier cultivates in solidarity with other women of the laboring classes. In doing so, I analyze the ways Collier, as a laboring-class woman, contradicts Johnson's first definition of the domestic—"not relating to things public"—as she gives voice to, and, in doing so, makes public, seemingly private injustices relating to how laboring women were treated both at home and work. Finally, I look closely at the ways Collier complicates the class and gender systems she addresses in her response to Stephen Duck.

Formations of the body are vital to my construction of the chaotic domestic, the idea of a structure of feeling, and the use of affect theory within this dissertation, which can be seen together as operating under a feminist theory umbrella. Again, Deleuze's definition of the body is useful in its capaciousness: "a body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity" (127). Such a vast definition allows us more readily to trace the chaotic domestic in work of seemingly disconnected writers. More specifically, in *The Body in Pain* (1985) Elaine Scarry emphasizes the experienced body, one that has the potential to feel pain. Scarry's consideration of the experience is important for the study of laboring-class women who openly feel bodily pain, as often this pain is used to demonstrate the

unnaturalness of tending to domestic spaces and goods that belong to someone else. In paying close attention to the varying usages of the body within Collier's verse, we can more readily note the implicit meanings of the effect of labor on the individual physical body, such as pain, anger, and fatigue, as well as a sense of what would later become a body of laboring-class women writers using chaotic domestic to create solidarity with one another. On this latter point, laboring-class women writers as a body, beginning with Collier, use their verse to describe a structure of feeling that changes how the domestic must be seen, and in doing so they critique the larger dominant body politic that is both hierarchal and patriarchal.

For Collier the domestic becomes a vital area for shedding light on shared emotional turmoil experienced by women of the laboring classes. I will pay particular attention to the ways that *The Woman's Labour* utterly fractures domestic space; demonstrating both exterior socio-political concerns and deep internal conflicts regarding her body's powers and limitations. In addition, Collier uses her poem *The Woman's Labour* to represent "domestic toils" that she must complete in her own domestic space after her full day of work. Indeed, the labor represented here—what Arlie Hochschild describes as the "second shift"—offers a view of the domestic that is not comforting or idyllic; rather, the same tier of labor and chaos that happens outside of the home continues within the home. The landlords and estate owners are simply replaced by husbands, fathers, and children. I will also show that Collier uses interior spaces to comment on national attitudes regarding women.

Despite the intersections of her class and gender, Collier is explicit in the strategic methods through which she conveys the chaotic domestic through her personal injuries

and, in doing so, lifts up her fellow laboring-class women as shining examples of diligence, efficiency, and hard work in often intolerable conditions. Within the literary network of laboring-class women writers detailed in this dissertation, the chaotic domestic is a performance by the writer in order to obtain and voice agency as a lower-class woman writer. Specifically, Collier utilizes what I call the chaotic domestic to assert an image of laboring-class women as industrious, organized, and vital elements of their communities, even to the point of being the very foundation of society. Part of this recognition emerges in what Sara Ahmed describes as “solidarity,” a commitment through which Collier boldly pushes the reader to recognize a sense of authority for laboring-class women as agents in both the public and private spheres and as agents who manage the movement between these spheres.¹⁴ As women laboring-class writers are often relegated to the margins of literary history and literary trends, the need to apply affective elements of class-consciousness becomes increasingly clear. The chaotic domestic constitutes a bridge between the writers of this network.

In terms of biographical similarity, Collier and Duck share much in common, including having the same social status and rudimentary education. John Goodridge notes another connection, suggesting that Collier’s “declaration that she ‘soon got by heart’ Duck’s poem suggests a strong empathy with [Duck]” (15). Part of my reading of the chaotic domestic in this context will focus on Goodridge’s latter point: indeed, Collier’s shared connection with Duck—as well as the points in their identities in which they deviate—is the catalyst for heightened affectual moments wherein Collier reveals the

¹⁴ Ahmed argues that solidarity requires “commitment, and work, as well as the recognition that even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, we do live on common ground” (189).

chaos of her own identity as a woman and laborer charged with tending spaces that are not her own, both at home and at work. Within these two areas of home and work, the liminality of Collier's identity as woman and worker is charged with sociocultural understandings regarding class and gender. In this way, her development of what I call the chaotic domestic becomes increasingly political.

The context for the poem involves forces affecting the construction of gender and class. Many feminist critics note Collier's proto-feminism. Certainly in the poem Collier initiates a gender debate with Duck's *Thresher's Labour*, as she responds to Duck's accusations against laboring-class women, frequently appropriating his language and images to create a deeper sense of irony. Indeed, Collier's bold and unrelenting critique of Duck has contributed to the interpretation of Collier as a proto-feminist and proto-Marxist figure, as Landry, Ferguson, and Anne Milne all point to a sense of socio-political commentary within Collier's depiction of woman's labor. In presenting laboring-class women as agents of their own experiences, Collier reworks narratives of bodily control over women's bodies while reclaiming spaces of oppression as those of power.

In addition to the importance of her poem in terms of feminism is the class aspect. Collier shows us that her response to Duck's *Thresher's Labour* (1730) serves as a broad response to larger hegemonic forces, particularly those that divide laboring-class people. William Christmas, Donna Landry, and Moira Ferguson note that evidences of sociopolitical commentary within *Woman's Labour* hint at the sweeping change to stable employment, particularly for those in rural communities belonging to the laboring classes. John Goodridge and Margaret Doody also comment on the changing landscape

of rural England and its effect on Collier's verse. As public lands were increasingly enclosed, access to workable, functional land by non-gentry became more difficult than ever. Indeed, as Ferguson remarks: "the sixty-four acts that had been passed between 1740 and 1749 to enclosure that crescent of land had swelled to about four hundred by the end of the century" (8). That Collier and Duck's poems seemingly anticipate this fraught period is telling: certainly, the consequence of a future of uncertainty in one's employment weighs heavily on the physical, psychological and emotional aspects of their poems about the laborer's life.

Duck's poem *The Thresher's Labour* is explicit in its attack on laboring-class women, arguing that the brunt of labor falls to laboring-class men. According to Richard Greene: "'The Thresher's Labour demonstrated that the experiences of labour itself could be the basis of poetryAs a model for labouring poets, this composition is especially important'" (108). And yet, despite the inspiration and influence Collier draws from Duck, his description of labor practices pointedly neglects women. For example, in *Thresher* Duck writes:

Our Master comes, and at his Heels a Throng
 Of prattling Females, arm'd with Rake and Prong:
 Prepar'd, whils't he is here, to make his Hay;
 Or, if he turns his Back, prepar'd to play.
 But here, or gone, sure of this Comfort still,
 Here's Company, so that they may chat their fill:
 And were their Hands as active as their Tongues,
 How nimbly then would move their Rakes and Prongs? (140-7)

Here, Duck's resentment toward women laborers plays out as they have some seeming liberty and ability to talk as they work. Within these lines Duck is accusatory and dismissive and belittling of the labor performed by "prattling Females," going as far as to assert that if women's "hands [were] as active as their tongues" they would be able to work faster and with more efficiency. Namely, within Duck's poem he uses gender as a means to divide the laboring classes. In doing so, Duck's poem does not consider the possibility that work and talk can happen at the same time. Indeed, Duck misses the idea that work can happen through talking, and that creating a network of laborers also helps establish a more robust work ethic and commitment to the group's success. While it is conceivable that in denigrating the work of laboring-class women Duck seeks to distinguish the emotional and physical turmoil laboring-class men must endure, what ultimately happens within *The Thresher's Labour*—as Collier notes in *The Woman's Labour*—is a severing of class alliance; an absence of solidarity between laboring-class men and women.

In his efforts to make the male worker heroic, Duck ultimately resorts to belittling women as a foil. In denigrating women, Duck compares them to animals, such as likening their "prattling" to sparrows as in the following lines from *Thresher's Labour*: "On some green Brake, a Flock of Sparrows play; / From Twig to Twig, from Bush to Bush they fly; / And with continu'd Chirping fill the Sky" (192-94). The description of the sparrows themselves would be charming if they were not representative of laboring-class women. Indeed, the same condescending tone of "prattling" emerges here as Duck equates women to sparrows as a means of denigration. In grouping all women together as a seeming flock of bird whose "continu'd Chirping fill[s] the Sky," Duck isolates the

experience of the laboring-class male, ascribing to him solitary and heroic virtues (94). For Collier, the camaraderie she feels amongst her fellow laboring-class women is a strong asset as she continually uses “We” statements to describe their shared labor. The demands of eighteenth-century life and culture for laboring class people seem clear at first: whether it is washing or threshing, Collier’s complaints of physical pain and discomfort are something her laboring-class readers could understand. Indeed, these shimmers of physical pain are aspects readers come to expect from the laboring-class poetic tradition, but the mundane qualities of Collier’s complaints make her argument about laboring-class women’s representation all the more valuable in tracing the chaotic domestic.

In regard to the seemingly mundane site of shared work, Lauren Berlant states that the “ordinary” is a “porous zone that absorbs lots of incoherence and contradiction, and people make their ways through it at once tipped over awkwardly, half-conscious, and confident about common sense.” She adds that while, “Laws, norms, and events” construct desired communal behavior, “in the middle of the reproduction of life people make up modes of being and responding to the world that altogether constitute what gets called “visceral response” and intuitive intelligence” (53). Berlant’s assertion of “the ordinary” as a highly socialized construct applies to Collier’s open challenge to hegemonic value. In her challenge to Duck that “We oft change Work for Work as well as you,” Collier urges a reimagining of both what it is to be a woman and what it is to work. Collier draws from herself a personal argument on the behalf of all laboring-class women; in this claim Collier stands in solidarity with her fellow working women. Indeed,

she seldom founds her argument on claims made by an “I”, but rather Collier deepens her argument and its scope in asserting “We” statements.

Raymond Williams writes of the lower classes in much the same vein: “It is easy to feel the strain of the labourer’s voice as it adapts, slowly, to the available models in verse.” (88) The word “strain” suggests the effort to perform, but also results in emotional and actual physical suffering. Part of this “strain” is encountering and trying to fulfill a new role society gives the laborer, one that includes psychological terror regarding one’s financial security. Williams senses that the writers belonging to the laboring classes use poetic forms as a means of expressing what no poetry had expressed before; indeed, glimpses of pain, hope, and personal frustration that accompany living laboring-class life are brought forth in the “strain of the labourer’s voice,” as well as the need of their bodies and minds to “adapt” to these profoundly complex socio-economic forces. Physically and emotionally, Collier exhibits the kind of strain Williams describes. Collier’s description of the insecurity of being lower class and female, as well as the criticisms of both her status as laborer and woman would presumably place her in an isolated position. And yet, Collier’s determination not to betray her fellow laboring-class women shows a great deal of resilience. Although Collier’s own personal desires, frustrations, and feelings communicate the strain Williams mentions, in establishing an “Army of Amazons,” or developing a structure of feeling around gender and class identity, Collier distinguishes herself from Duck as an agent of her own physical body and the body of female workers she feels she represents. Collier’s response is an explicit reminder to readers that although she must answer to a master in her domestic service position, she is the master of her responses to the master and of her writing.

Within the first lines of the poem, Collier mocks Duck for not recognizing the commonality he shares with laboring-class women, boldly and confrontationally addressing him in the first two words:

Immortal Bard! thou Favrite of the Nine!
 Enrich'd by Peers, advanc'd by CAROLINE!
 Deign to look down on One that's poor and low
 Remembering you yourself was lately so; (1-4)

In these lines Duck, the “Immortal Bard,” is stripped from his laboring-class ethos. Collier suggests that because royalty (Caroline) has recognized and rewarded Duck’s work, he now only “deign[s]” to relate to those of his same class status. This mocking of his royal connection, despite his own lowly origins, is playful, but also cutting. In merely the first two lines alone Collier shatters hegemonic values regarding publication and class status: indeed, that Duck is celebrated in court—presumably as the favorite of the muses—i.e., prominent English critics—is not, for Collier, an aspect to celebrate, but instead one to mock. Here, Collier implicitly assures the reader that she has not forgotten her own laboring-class background. The couplet lulls the reader into a comfortable iambic pentameter wherein Collier takes full opportunity explicitly to attack Duck for his attempts to give supremacy to the integrity of his writing rather than remember that he was, indeed, a mere field laborer “lately so.”

In part, Collier mocks Duck for his prominent connections in *A Woman’s Labour* so that she may boast of her own laboring-class background. In doing so, Collier demonstrates a fiery display of class antagonism, wherein she further emphasizes her

own bodily autonomy but she also recognizes that her body is just a metonym for all women's bodies and the scut work they are charged to do in terms of their class and gender position:

No Learning ever was bestow'd on me ;
 My Live was always spent in Drudgery :
 And not alone ; alas ! with Grief I find,
 It is the Portion of poor Woman-kind. (7-10)

These powerful lines are full of pain and anger: Collier's anger that she lacked any type of formal education and was always "in drudgery" brings forth a distinct, intersectional sense of longing and resentment on the basis of class and gender. Here, Collier explicitly registers that her physical body is part of a body politic of working women who are systemically treated as inferior. The poem, from the outset, works rhetorically to correct an imbalance that is supported not only by Duck, but those who denigrate the work of laboring class people and women broadly. Before the poem even reaches ten lines the personal and widespread social oppressions are understood by the reader for the rhymes "me" and "Drudgery" emphasizes Collier's personal plight and draws attention to and highlights Duck's change of social status (9-10). That the reader must slow down to read the elongated concluding vowel sound of each word demonstrates to the reader that the feelings of drudgery seem eternally demanding. Within these very first lines of the poem is a combination of ethos, pathos, and clever taunting. Certainly, Collier casts herself as a sympathetic character, one who has lived "in drudgery" because of her poor and uneducated background, but in doing so Collier conforms to many of the expectations of a working class writer.

Certainly, there would have been an expectation for marginalized writers to apologize for their writing on the grounds of their disadvantaged background. Despite this, Collier coyly suggests that unlike Duck, with his newfound pretensions, she does not forget her laboring-class background. Collier's claim that "no learning was ever bestowed on me" reads as a boast, supporting her sense of laboring-class ethos that Duck has, presumably, lost. In distancing herself from Duck, Collier suggests that she is "not alone" and shares far more in common with "the Portion of poor Woman-kind." These assertions carry with them potential points of commonality wherein Collier reminds the reader that she exposes the realities of life for all laboring-class women, building on the solidarity she initiates in her call for an "Army of Amazons." Specifically, these affective moments simultaneously reveal both anger and a commitment to continue bringing private and internal struggles—what Williams calls "strain"—to the public sphere.

Further, in calling for an "Army of Amazons," Collier describes a moment of prehistory wherein women and men lived happily, and women were respected. As mythological and metaphorical figures, Amazons feature heavily in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century poetry and drama (Rubik 147). As Margaret Rubik notes, the Amazon was "a sword woman who evinces a skill in combat similar to that of a man, whose aggression...is something 'inner' ingrained in her personality" (147). As an image, the Amazon figure is important to Collier's feminist stance, as the Amazons occupy what Simon Shepard considers a "middle ground" between woman and warrior (9). In detailing the work expected of laboring-class women, Collier shows the liminality of her own identity:

Till Time and Custom by degrees destroy'd
 That happy State our Sex at first enjoy'd.
 When Men had us'd their utmost Care and Toil,
 Their Recompence was but a Female Smile; (15-8)

Collier explicitly appropriates Duck's language to offer demonstration of her own literary prowess as well as irony. For example, while "The happy State our Sex at first enjoy'd" (16) refers to a Golden Age of Woman, just as Duck's poem refers to the Classical view of the Golden Age of Man, Collier's reference to a Golden Age of Woman cleverly plays with Duck's language while also conforming to the trend of Neoclassicism within popular verse of the period. Implicitly, the highly nuanced and intersectional natures of Collier's complaints emerge. Indeed, Collier directs the reader to understand that real and complex feelings are at the heart of her poem. The internal rhyme in "alas! That Golden Age is past" (29) further serves as an affectual shimmer in that it emphasizes the unnamable turmoil and strain that women of the laboring classes experience. What's more, as the reader understands there has not yet been a Golden Age of Woman, Collier's cry for solidarity amongst laboring-class women becomes more important than ever.

Both Landry and Milne note the previous historical silences Collier brings to public attention in her poem. Landry focuses closely on the intersecting elements of oppression Collier handles: "*The Woman's Labour* directly redresses traditional historical silences regarding laboring women's oppression; the triple burden of wage labor, housework, and childcare; and the gender ideology that places women illusively outside both material production and language" (56-7). The forms of labor represented within the poem—both those named and unnamed—are certainly represented as burdens. Through

drawing attention to questions of feeling, Collier presents elements of her own personal identity in relation to what she knows is experienced by other women of her same class status:

But in the Work we freely bear a Part,
 And what we can, perform with all our Heart.
 To get a Living we so willing are,
 Our tender Babes into the Field we bear (92-5)

The straightforward tone of these lines, “But in the work we freely bear a Part,” is immediately combative and confrontational. In what follows, Collier presents affect-driven lines that appeal to the emotional labor that laboring-class women take on as well because of their gendered position, in particular, in the charged line, “And what we can, perform with all our Heart.” Certainly, the responsibilities of personal and professional domestic life and work merge throughout the course of the poem, thus representing previously unheard labors performed by working class women, such as Collier. The phrase “perform with all our Heart” carries with it the magnitude of emotional labor expected of women. She poetically describes a situation in which women take their children into the fields because they are forced to because the economic system refuses to recognize the “labor” women perform when carrying a child and giving birth to and nurturing it. Thus, like the Amazons, these laboring women’s bodies do double work simultaneously, providing nurture to the child and working in the field. This is a source of pride but also of resentment and it vocalizes these issues so that they become part of the body politic.

Collier's claim to the work in which laboring-class women "freely bear a Part" critiques the economic system for depending upon laboring-class women without recognizing the need to support and acknowledge their combined maternal and domestic labor as part of the economic system. In line 95, the insinuation of child labor—or caring for children in the field until they are able to work—propels her anger further. As Hans Medick notes, "Child labour, which both in its intensity and duration went far beyond that of the corresponding labour of farm peasant households, was in fact a vital necessity for the rural...families" (302). Collier sees how exploitation and oppression becomes inherited through the economic system and class hierarchy in which she lives, thus necessitating a need for solidarity amongst people belonging to the laboring-classes. Indeed, Collier interjects her claims, presumably completing the other side of a debate or argument.

An integral aspect of the labor Collier describes is the labor of nurturing. Indeed, the myriad of emotions Collier brings forth in describing both her paid and unpaid labors is eloquently summed up in the following lines: "To get a Living we so willing are, / Our tender Babes into the Field we bear." Not only does Collier again echo her claim that laboring-class women "freely" and "willing[ly]" participate in the economic system that enables them to take care of themselves and their children, despite criticisms from men such as Duck; she also points out that her physical and emotional labor is further encumbered with gendered expectations regarding childcare. In bringing children into the atmosphere of physical labor, laboring-class women's domestic responsibilities are brought from the environment of the home into the public sphere.

Collier also conveys the oppression endured by laboring-class women in her

formal choices. Like Duck and other plebeian poets, Collier makes use of the popular heroic couplet in *The Woman's Labour*. For example, she writes, "Cambricks and Muslins, which our Ladies wear, / Laces and Edgings, costly, fine, and rare, / Which must be wash'd with utmost Skill and Care" (lines 159–61). Peggy Thompson claims that "Collier is more consistently successful than Duck in maintaining control of the couplet and that she thus refutes the implication of Duck's struggles" (510). But, specifically, Thompson points to Collier's "violations" of the heroic couplet as a means of exposing her feelings regarding the injustices laboring-class women face. While Thompson considers the "triple" ending of lines 159–61, "Which must be wash'd with utmost Skill and Care," as mimicking "the apparent endlessness of her toil," I also see Collier's choice as a method of drawing the reader's attention to the differences between laboring-class women and upper-class women (517). Within the lines themselves Collier explains the beautiful and intricate garments—"costly, fine, and rare"—that upper-class women wear, but that laboring-class women must wash. In this description, Collier also subtly implies that the clothing itself indicates who works and who enjoys leisure: silk and lace, for example, require great amounts of labor to produce, but those who enjoy the leisure of wearing these items are not meant for the kind of labor a working-class woman performs, yet the labor behind their production and care is intensive. Here, Collier provides an example of perhaps one of the most glaring ironies of the hierarchical class system: laboring-class bodies may produce and care for the goods and spaces upper-class body enjoys, but they must not use these items and therefore are made invisible. Indeed, although the framework of the poem is a litany against Duck's treatment of women, Collier uses the opportunity to point out to her readers the distinct problems laboring-

class women experience as a direct result of the demands of upper-class women.

Certainly Thompson is correct in noting that Collier's formal choices indicate the oppressive tediousness that laboring-class women must endure at home and work. And yet, Collier's eagerness to represent the problems facing women of the laboring classes specifically is a foundational aspect of the poem; indeed, in documenting what upper-class women wear and how their livelihood is made possible by the strains of the labor of working-class women, Collier generates sympathy for the laboring-class and possibly produces some antagonism towards upper-class women with these descriptions. Indeed, Collier weaves together the personal and professional as part of the emotional labor expected of women workers. Collier does this when comparing the act of child rearing with the tending of crops:

And wrap them in our Cloaths to keep them warm,
 While round about we gather up the Corn ;
 And often unto them our Course do bend,
 To keep them safe, that nothing them offend :
 Our Children that are able, bear a Share
 In gleaning Corn, such is our frugal Care. (95-100)

The repetition of harsh "C" sounds throughout this section highlight the soft sounds of "Children," "Share," and "safe." In making way for the comforting images of children, safety, and sharing, Collier forces the reader to see the contrast and strain between her varying domestic responsibilities; indeed, not only are laboring-class women charged with completing arduous field work and child-rearing, but also with providing a safe and comforting domestic environment for children, husbands, and masters. Implicitly,

Collier's interchange of child and corn brings to the forefront the expectation for women domestic servants to tend to children, as well as spaces, that do not belong to them.

Collier's allusion to child rearing presents the often impossible and emotionally dreadful situation wherein the competing claims of providing financial and emotional support to both give life to and nurture children becomes unbearable. In making the point that her children must also "bear a share" when tending to corn, Collier brings forth a stark proto-feminist-Marxist reminder that in tending to land and domestic responsibilities for the benefit of others, laboring-class people must neglect their own children and domestic responsibilities. The particular pain that is experienced from having one's children assist in labor is emphasized by the contrast of the soft sounds and images mentioned previously: "children," "share," and "safe." In this contrast, Collier shows us the unnamable and liminal aspects of being a woman of the laboring classes, as she voices the strains the economic system places on both women and children when the child becomes a worker within the system.

Continually, Collier develops a structure of feeling via her challenge to traditional definitions of the domestic that initiates—and, indeed, necessitates—a shared sense of solidarity amongst laboring-class women. Moreover, in creating a structure of feeling, what I call the chaotic domestic, Collier provides a sense of solidarity that challenges the status quo, suggesting that the laboring-class woman's body is invaluable to the formation of the same economic system she critiques. Part of this challenge within *The Woman's Labour* is Collier's reimagining a more effective form of familial relationship,

one that harkens to simultaneously real and imagined aspects of the past, further evoking the powerful language of her “Army of Amazons”:

When they by Arts or Arms were render'd Great,

They laid their Trophies at a Woman's Feet ;

They, in those Days, unto our Sex did bring

Their Hearts, their All, a Free-will Offering ;

And as from us their Being they derive,

They back again should all due Homage give. (19-24)

Within these lines Collier breaks the boundaries of her society in pushing traditionally domestic and private issues into the public sphere. The rhythm of the couplet shows the evenness of Collier's imagined past as women produce life and therefore receive due credit or “homage,” generating a heroic and mythic view of childbearing and nurturing. In these lines Collier references a collaborative relationship between men and women, in regard to both military and artistic pursuits. Specifically, Collier's allusion to “those days” wherein men brought to women “Their Hearts, their All, a Free-will Offering” brings forth expressions of her own present suffering wherein Collier powerfully draws the reader's attention to the unnamed and silent problems of her class and gender by naming these and making them public. Indeed, Collier's line “Their Hearts, their All, a Free-will Offering” (22) is later echoed in her description of her own labor: “And what we can, perform with all our Heart. / To get a Living we so willing are” (92-3). What Collier suggests here is an equitable exchange of labor and homage, one that recognizes the many silenced forms of women's labor.

Although Collier does outline the emotional labor expected of women of the laboring classes, her initial appeal to her readership always first emphasizes the demands of physical labor on the body. Collier's descriptions of "tiresome Labours" make way for the comparison with slavery, which emerges throughout the course of the poem. In this comparison, Collier forces the reader to recognize both the physical and emotional exhaustion of being at the whim of a master, while also initiating a larger group mentality around the needs of the specific oppressed group. Collier writes "Accept these Lines: Alas! What can you have / From her, who ever was, and's still a Slave?" (5-6) This phrase explicitly points to the plight of the laboring woman, while also placing Duck in the position of a master.

Indeed, later in *The Woman's Labour*, Collier describes women's work as "Slavery": Pots, Kettles, Sauce-pans, Skillets, we may see, /Skimmers and Ladles, and such Trumpery, Brought in to make complete our Slavery" (210-2). The litany of women's work, and the varying domestic apparatuses that constitute a day of work, show Collier's readers that there is no domestic comfort to be found at home: instead, the objects that conjure warm, domestic imagery for many serve only as reminders of continuing work necessary in their own homes for laboring-class women. Also, elsewhere in the poem, Collier exclaims that "Our first Extraction from a Mass refin'd, / Could never be for Slavery design'd" (8-9). These lines, although rhetorically misappropriating slaves to represent the laboring classes, serve as an emotional appeal, one that works to establish a deeper understanding of the nuances of the many roles played in the women's laboring-class life. Collier asserts a detailed description of the physical toil: "sweat," and "blood runs trickling down/Our wrists

and fingers.” The condition of laboring-class women’s fingers and wrists is a powerful metonym for the suffering and arduous work that women laborers performed in the period. These are followed by descriptions of emotional and mental strain: “With heavy hearts we often view the Sun/Fearing he’ll set before our work is done.” The continuous expectations of work, both public and private, is powerfully captured in Collier’s description of the fear she feels in not being finished before her husband returns home.

In describing her feelings of unfinished work as “fear,” Collier demonstrates a strong power imbalance between laboring-class women and men. The use of “slave” to describe the disempowerment experienced by women in the period was common, but Collier’s reference[s] to the mute slaves of the “Turks” is explicit in its comparison. Lisa L. Moore considers this pointed nod to colonialism as Collier’s way of drawing on “a more familiar Orientalist image of women as slaves to male despotism, using it to counter the assumption that she should refrain from criticizing Duck on account of her sex” (104). The comparison, although problematic, asks readers to reconsider their assumptions in regards to domestic labor and woman’s role within the home. Indeed, Collier is bold in repeatedly offering the image of the slave as a culmination of oppressions experienced by laboring-class women. What’s more, in using this comparison Collier further admonishes Duck, as he is someone who should be her ally against such class oppressions.

Collier’s references to the litany of work she and laboring class women must complete is confrontational and bold, creating an Amazonian body almost:

Our tender Hands and Fingers scratch and tear :

All this, and more, with Patience we must bear.

Colour'd with Dirt and Filth we now appear ;

Your threshing *sooty Peas* will not come near. (217-20)

In detailing the stress upon the body, Collier focuses upon the physical pain and discomfort women laborers must endure. The stark image brought forth here of “Dirt and Filth” not only shows how the labor performed is painful and physically scarring, but also shows humiliation. The harsh “t” of their “tender” hands and fingers doomed to “tear” is followed immediately with pointed reminders of gender expectations. Because laboring-class women must endure the consequences of physical labor with gendered expectations of their physical and emotional temperament, that they will bear their drudgery with beauty and patience, Collier suggests the plight of the laboring-class woman is far more complex than Duck acknowledges or knows. Indeed, the final line presented here, “your threshing sooty Peas will not come near” (220), offers a deeply internal and painful affectual shimmer wherein Collier acknowledges that the wear of physical labor on her body is not only painful to the touch, but also is painful in how her body is changes appearance; laboring-class men, such as Duck, can not “come near” to experiencing the level of grim and dirt laboring-class women endure.

Within these lines is a pertinent reference to the following lines in Duck’s *Thresher*: “When sooty peas we thresh, you scarce can know/ Our native colour, as from work we go” (lines 64-5) Here, Duck literally states that those belonging to the laboring classes have skin as black as African slaves’ after performing this type of labor because of the dirt, sweat, and soot that attaches to their bodies during labor. These lines from *Thresher*

show readers how laboring-class people become alienated from the stability of their own identities, as the “Sweat, and dust, and suffocating smoke” transform laborers into de-familiarized bodies (*Thresher* 10). In this case, the relationship between Collier and Duck’s phrasing is not merely homage. Instead, in adapting Duck’s language, Collier creates a space in which to explore the physical and emotional weight which systems of economic exploitation place on laborers, while also making pointed references to women laborers as slaves.

Throughout the poem Collier’s feelings show she is seething, outraged, and shocked, even, at Duck’s assertion that laboring class women are weak and lazy. She responds to these charges angrily:

The *Washing* is not all we have to do:
 We oft change Work for Work as well as you.
 Our Mistress of her Pewter doth complain,
 And ’tis our Part to make it clean again. (202-5)

Before Collier launches into a litany of work laboring women must complete, often at the whims of their employer, she illustrates how the close quarters of domestic servitude show a far more oppressive presence within the domestic servant’s life: the lady of the house. The close proximity of work and private life shows a feature of domestic servitude that Duck is unlikely to understand or directly sympathize with, as the woman domestic worker is under near-constant scrutiny from her employer. Collier’s frustration with Duck’s lack of understanding erupts as she pointedly argues: “The *Washing* is not all we have to do: / We oft change Work for Work as well as you” (202-3). Here, Collier expresses that there is far more that makes up

women's work than Duck has observed; indeed, the raw emotion of the phrase "not all we have to do" provides its own emphasis, as Collier argues for the recognition of her labor, both seen and unseen.

In outlining the varying and often overlapping responsibilities of laboring-class women, Collier appropriates Duck's language to describe laboring-class women as industrious and hardworking, specifically using the image of the bee and the beehive to do so. Collier, by using the bee metaphor, creates the connection that draws out a reading of the poem as a nature poem and allows for its broader implications to be considered. For example, when Duck describes women as "sparrows," as mentioned previously, Collier responds by using the hard working bee as a metaphor for laboring-class women. The sparrow, associated with nagging chirping and active sexuality, does not offer the same industrious performance of labor Collier outlines, or at least not one that had permeated eighteenth-century life and culture. The bees create a sense of solidarity in the distribution of their labor to support the hive, and their bodies do more than is expected based on their size. So, too, do women laborers carry more burdens than one can imagine. Milne looks closely at the cultural meaning of the beehive in eighteenth-century Britain: "In considering bees' reputation as perfect creatures functioning in a perfect community and producing a perfect product, it is important to acknowledge that this 'reputation' exists as a form of human manipulation in which bee nature becomes bee culture"(Milne 115).

Milne's compelling case for Collier's use of the beehive as participation in discussions regarding women's division of labor is important for recognizing just how subversive she is in writing *The Woman's Labour*. Of course the explicit arguments on

behalf of her gender have been noted, but the liminal and highly nuanced argument for justice, representation, and the reclaiming of the exploited laboring woman's individual bodies and the body politic of laboring women as a group held together in solidarity are contained within the image of the bee. Certainly in the eighteenth century the bee was increasingly an emblem of control and industriousness, both in and out of a literary context. Milne cites Joseph Warder's *The True Amazons: or, The Monarchy of Bees* (1712) as one of the principle examples of transforming this image of bees from "folk culture into natural science" (58). Warder's reference to bees as "Amazons" is, as Milne notes, a powerful connection to Collier's call for an "Army of Amazons to vindicate the injured Sex." That bees worship a queen shares a relationship with the mythology surrounding the Amazons, and stresses the trope of men as drones working for the real site of power, the feminine. In using the bee metaphor, Collier suggests that the work of laboring-class women is essential to the nation and its political security. Moreover, in connecting both the subordination of the bees to that of laboring-class women, Collier also suggests that their reclaiming of their bodily power would mean the detriment of the hegemonic suppressive power.

Between Collier's description of women as both disempowered "slaves" and industrious "bees," Milne is right in pointing to the social disconnect women endure on the basis of their perceived cultural value and the self-sustaining work they ultimately perform. The reference to bees shows that Collier is aware of the georgic form she is subverting that often refers to bee keeping. The seeming contradiction between the images of "slave" and "bee" serves as a raw moment of affect wherein Collier shows her reader what it is to be a laboring-class woman who contributes greatly to her community

and her work place, but only receives limited rights, comforts, and respect in return. The image of the “slave” and the “bee” are each used to draw the reader’s attention to how integral the unrecognized labor of marginalized people is to upholding a system of power that suppresses them.

The image of the bee echoes the initial call for an “Army of Amazons,” or a sense of solidarity amongst laboring-class women. Indeed, the final line of the poem brings order to the inherently chaotic aspects of domestic servitude, further establishing the importance of laboring-class women to the cultivation and preservation of domestic spaces:

So the industrious Bees do hourly strive
 To bring their Loads of Honey to the Hive;
 Their sordid Owners always reap the Gains,
 And poorly recompense their Toil and Pains (243-6)

Here, the comparison between bees and laboring-class women is pointed and analytical: both endure physical and emotional “toil and pains” for the benefit of their “Owners,” and to the detriment to their own bodies. Strangely, within these lines Collier initially conjures images of harmony, and a larger ecology wherein the bees are aptly interconnected and contented with their “position” in life. As Milne notes, “Collier’s bee metaphor justifies a methodology for owners that perpetuates exploitative labor practices” (66). And yet, in the final two lines Collier shows her readers something altogether quite different: for example, here, the oppressive “Owner” is always understood as a human presence. In showing how the honey of bees and the labor of women serve male hegemony, Collier both comments on, and exposes her personal

frustrations about, the exploitation of her class and gender status in a patriarchal system. And yet, at the same time, Collier is clever in her choice of tropes as both the Amazon and the queen bee are powerful female figures. Moreover, to depict the taking of the human cultivation and capture of bee's honey in the same light as women tending to domestic spaces that do not belong to them, Collier lays in place the chaotic domestic and temporarily makes chaotic the society to which she writes. Indeed, as she seems to say, that which should be inherently natural has become distorted.

By bringing issues of social inequality to the public sphere through writing, Collier wreaks chaos in the body politic. *The Woman's Labour* should be seen as pushing traditional definitions of domesticity beyond the private sphere, and boldly making the domestic a public issue. Indeed, Collier's call for an "Army of Amazons" asks for her readers to consider the unrecognized power of women's laboring-class bodies. The image of labor within *The Woman's Labour* is presented as intensive, backbreaking, never-ending, and, of course, thankless. In focusing closely on the lack of economic, emotional, and physical support laboring-class women receive both at work and at home, Collier develops a structure of feeling about the strains of her life that enables a strong sense of solidarity amongst laboring-class women. Moreover, the sensory details Collier notes in regards to the effect and affect of labor on the laboring-class woman's body are driven by affectual shimmers, specifically moments of raw, liminal expressions of self-identity that are brought to the public sphere. Collier uses the inherent chaos of domestic service and labor to point out notable cracks in eighteenth-century life and culture. Despite the

relative thanklessness of her position as a washerwoman, Collier makes the chaos visible to the public.

CHAPTER 3

“The sav’ry kitchen much Attention calls”:

The Chaotic Domestic in Mary Leapor’s “Crumble Hall”

The sav’ry kitchen much Attention calls:
 Westphalia Hams adorn the sable Walls:
 The Fires blaze; the greasy Pavements fry;
 And steaming Odours from the Kettles fly.
 See! yon brown Parlour on the Left appears,
 For nothing famous, but its leathern Chairs,
 Whose shining Nails like polish’d Armour glow,
 And the dull clock beat, audible and slow (lines
 56-63)

In the above epigraph to this chapter, from “Crumble Hall” printed in her posthumously published volume, *Poems, on Several Occasions* (1748), Mary Leapor develops a structure of feeling: one loves the warmth and comfort of this space. While the above lines are exceptional in terms of the poem’s overall presentation of Crumble Hall as dirty and falsely regal, they show the domestic—the interior of the home—in rich sensory terms: the warmth of “the Fires blaze,” the smell from “the Kettles,” the appearance of the “shining Nails,” and the “audible and slow” sounds of the clock, show a structure of feeling of which only a laboring class woman poet might be aware. In this particular view of domesticity each facet is dependent on the other for refinement and completion. The sensations described allow the reader to see the chaotic domestic in action, as their interconnections are areas of affect-driven “shimmers” wherein brutal, unkempt, and dark characteristics of the home intermingle with the beautiful, comfortable elements for which domestic servants are responsible. Indeed, the attention to detail in this epigraph indicates the invisible labor of those responsible for keeping order through constant work.

Leapor's own position—and later termination—as a domestic servant at Edgecote House is largely considered the inspiration for the poem's unflattering description of the condition of the manor. In this mock-country manor poem, told through the perspective of Leapor's poetic persona, Mira, the action described in the lines presented shows the domestic as bustling, functional, and overflowing with energy and life. Replicating what she observes in the natural environment of her native Northampton within conventionally domestic spaces, in "Crumble Hall," Leapor points to the unglamorous realities of the condition of the estate, while simultaneously criticizing the estate owners rather than praising them and the grounds on which they live. The poem features a gothic estate that is crumbling with an interior of fascinating twists and turns, offering a strange mixture of stylistic features. In doing so, she makes the form of the country manor poem flexible enough to reveal the deep connections between the natural and the domestic, creating a site of tension and affectual energy through which gender and class-based complaints may be raised. Mira also expressly notes the condition of her body as framed by gender and class politics—specifically, land enclosure—while she also addresses Leapor's patron in intensely personal ways.

Certainly in this chapter I position my view of "Crumble Hall" alongside Donna Landry's politically- and socially-inspired reading of much of Leapor's writing, but where Landry and others claim the action within the "Crumble Hall" estate serves as a metaphor for the action happening outdoors—or the enclosure of large swaths of commons in Northampton—I suggest that Leapor's depiction of the home reveals complex, intertwined images of domestic life and comfort that offer affectual

“shimmers.”¹⁵Specifically, areas of sumptuous beauty are followed by often-brutal bodily responses and physical decay. Indeed, although Richard Greene argues Landry “consistently overstates Leapor’s radicalism” (50), the social, cultural, and political emphases of Leapor’s verse suggest there are powerful emotional nuances that critics of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are only now beginning to uncover. Indeed, as Raymond Williams has early on suggested, the praise of natural landscape comes to mean praise for “who the genius of the place may be...its owner” (123). And in the case of “Crumble Hall,” Leapor brilliantly shows who the real “owner” is based upon sheer physical and emotional labor. In showing a view of an estate that is flawed and, even, mismanaged, I argue Leapor extends “Crumble Hall” beyond mere comedy, and instead offers pointed, political complaints based on her culturally denigrated social position.

Indeed, in the poem Leapor uses her position as laboring-class woman to point directly towards the messy, complicated role domestic servants play within manors such as Crumble Hall. Leapor uses language, phrases, and images from either space—interchanging throughout the course of the poem—to describe the manor and grounds of the estate, showing “shimmers” or areas of affect-driven expressions of wherein the domestic servant must continuously tend to areas that do not belong to them, and do so with inordinate care so as not to lose their own jobs. In part, Margaret Anne Doody’s *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered* (1985) and Roger Lonsdale’s anthology *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (1989) have transformed the study of eighteenth-

¹⁵The third chapter of Donna Landry’s *Muses of Resistance: Laboring-class Women’s Poetry in Britain, 1739-1796* (1990), “An English Sappho brilliant, young and dead? Mary Leapor laughs at the fathers,” argues that Leapor’s demystifies the country household as social institution while commenting on the enclosure of English commons and the ideology of improvement.

century poetry to include marginalized writers. In doing so, they pave the way for scholarship that acknowledges the expansive view of women's writing that allows for in-depth analysis and consideration for what Anne Milne terms "the fundamental uncertainties of language and representation" (19). These "uncertainties" emerge through the chaotic domestic, indicating Leapor is an agent who is a powerful actor in her writing who uses the chaotic domestic to be subversive.

As always, the critique that "Crumble-Hall" offers should of course be examined in relation to Leapor's most important model, Alexander Pope, and again the outcome is more complex than meets the eye. Whereas several critics argue that "Crumble Hall" serves only as an imitation of Pope's writing, rather than Leapor's own social commentary¹⁶, Bridget Keegan observes that Leapor's fondness for Pope allows "Crumble-Hall" to operate as a social statement, one that "draws upon Pope's aesthetic and formal principles" (182). And yet, "Crumble Hall" throws Pope's poem on its head by altering the position of the speaker and satirizing the mode of the manor poem, thus complicating all of the oppressed bodies that she presents in the poem.^vOne of the greatest distinctions between Leapor's "Crumble Hall" and Pope's "Epistle to Burlington" is the strategic way in which Leapor decenters the reader through destabilizing the country manor. As David Fairer notes, Leapor describes the estate and the speaker in much the same terms, and in doing so she is strategic in her various characterizations of the estate, the speaker, and the overall poem itself (Fairer 152).

¹⁶ Caryn Chaden suggests Leapor's work is primarily derivative of Augustan models in her essay "Mentored from the Page: Mary Leapor's Relationship with Alexander Pope"(31-7).

Within Leapor's posthumously published volumes of poetry, *Poems on Several Occasions*, volumes I & II (1748 & 1751) are countless examples of verse with formal and thematic accomplishments that flex Leapor's ambitions as a prominent and well-respected writer. And yet, "Crumble Hall" has come to represent the entire cache of her style: dark, comic, and satirical, Leapor's reimagining of the country-manor poem makes "Crumble Hall" what Landry considers "a rare artifact" (107). In cleverly capitalizing on the popularity and recognition of Pope and Swift's rhetorical patterns—specifically using "Crumble Hall" to echo Pope's "Epistle to Burlington"—Leapor simultaneously demonstrates what she knows and what she has read while also exercising great nerve and authorial prowess in critiquing popular formal conventions through satire.

An essential aspect of "Crumble Hall" is that Leapor satirizes the events occurring in both the upstairs and downstairs spaces. The beginning of "Crumble Hall" immediately engages with the class divide, while also assessing the relationship between domestic labor and the act of writing. Leapor writes of the emotional and physical toll that domestic and literary work has on the laboring class woman. Her punishment plays out on her physical body, as she suffers headaches from balancing both literary and domestic work: "Oppressed with headache, and eternal whims/ Sad Mira vows to quit the darling crime" (lines 4-5). In her explicit address to her body's ailment, Leapor not only cleverly elicits sympathy from her upper- and middle-class readers, but she also directly and pointedly addresses just how the estate owners use her physical body to perform domestic work. Leapor usurps power from the owners by continuously committing her "darling crime," publishing her poetry. In this line Leapor illustrates how her literary work is a choice, one of which she takes full possession.

Moreover, the word “crime” cheekily conveys the fact that she disrupts class and gender conventions in writing the poem itself. Leapor shares that Mira wishes to write, or commit the “darling crime,” but she must also work arduously as a domestic servant before doing so (line 5). The phrase itself—“darling crime”—indicates a playfully artistic egotism, one that certainly displays Leapor’s passion and commitment to writing, as well as her willingness to work against convention and hegemonic custom. Part of this approach is the demarcation of Leapor’s art and her domestic position as pointed and analytical: Leapor’s position as a woman domestic servant traditionally indicates that she should not be writing, yet she is willing to commit such a “crime” regardless of the repercussions. Mira’s comment upon the estate itself seems to highlight the owner’s pretension and ignorance of the conditions pervading the estate that cannot help but affect the working environment of the servant class.

In describing the events and condition of the estate in relation to her own distinctly laboring-class female body, Leapor brilliantly lays out the ecology within the home as a type of tour; specifically focusing on the sensory elements of domestic life. Leapor’s development of the sensory features of the home, the close attention to detail, and the intricacies of everyday life show domestic spaces as unmanageable, powerful, and even unpredictable. In part, the chaotic depiction of domestic life—made explicit in “Crumble Hall” as domestic servants are charged to care for and tend to spaces that do not belong them—comes to match Lawrence Buell’s definition of “ecology” as simply “the interconnection among life forms...” and “the interactions between organisms and the environment” (139). In the case of “Crumble Hall,” the interconnection between the domestic servants and the chores they must complete is one that is mutual, sensible, and

functional. Yet, the role of the owner—or rather the owner’s presence throughout the poem—comes to represent a dysfunctional relationship, a chaotic and damaged ecology of the home.

For example, Leapor describes the domestic as the site of something alive and not quite manageable without personal investment. As seen in the epigraph to this chapter, Leapor illustrates the natural order of a kitchen through sensory descriptions of the smell of the kitchen and the sound of the clock. Outlining the steps of preparation and care that must be taken before cooking begins, Leapor shows that, like all work, it must be completed in a certain time frame. Leapor cleverly compares her work in the kitchen and its natural transitions to the transition from winter to summer:

From cold *December* to returning Spring;
 Tell how the Building spreads on either Hand,
 And two grim Giants o’er the Portals stand;
 Whose grisled Beards are neither comb’d nor shorn,
 But look severe, and horribly adorn. (lines 30-4)

Here, Leapor describes how the senses respond to a series of transitions which ultimately lead to a comic and dark conclusion about the estate: from cold to warmth, the ever-changing growth of the estate, and finally the state of the giant’s beards—“neither comb’d nor shorn.” The series of doubles laid out funnel to the “grisled Beards” that are “severe, and horribly adorn” the hall. The decay on the sculptures—expressed by their “grisled beards”—serves as a further indication of the passage of time. There is no beautiful conclusion to these doubles, no sense of oneness; instead, Leapor shows us

tangles, harsh sounds and images, and, in doing so, cultivates affectual shimmers that hinge on her identity as a laboring-class women charged with maintaining the estate.

Leapor's position within the estate is hugely important to locating the chaotic domestic. In this sense, the cyclical, never-ceasing aspects of domestic responsibility are brought to bear. The cyclical nature of the home with its repetitive patterns of loveliness and dirtiness is an explicit instance of what I term the chaotic domestic. For Leapor, chaos is an intrinsic component of domestic and natural spaces; indeed, time indicates both are always in motion. And yet, Leapor does not write domestic nor natural spaces conventionally. Anne Milne notes in her study on the connection between animals and laboring-class women writers that although it is clear that these women write about nature it is "not in the way that we have socialized to recognize writing about nature." (23) Milne's concept of nature as a social construct is important when considering contemporary feminist methodology, which places constructs of race, gender, and class as intersecting. Indeed, the ecological feminist perspective insists on an examination between representations of the domestic and the natural as a feminist issue.

Therefore, it is important to consider how Leapor develops a domestic ecology within "Crumble Hall" in order to see what areas of the estate are functional, and also those areas of the estate that are decayed and neglected by the owners. The fluidity and flexibility of Leapor's position working and living within the domestic sphere indicates she is accustomed to a certain amount of chaos, yet Leapor represents her familiarity with chaos as a powerful tool of disruption of class expectations. In showing the dilapidated condition of the estate, Leapor further expresses how there is never one, idyllic outcome awaiting, but instead a continual series of domestic tasks that must not only be

performed, but performed with investment. Because domestic servants do not enjoy the fruits of their labor, so to speak, there are always areas of the estate that see disuse and neglect.

An aspect of Leapor's radical reimagining of the country manor poem is her own agency within the estate. Indeed, throughout "Crumble Hall" Leapor takes control of the domestic environment by exposing its darker elements: "Here the pleas'd Spider plants her peaceful Loom: / Here weaves secure, nor dreads the hated Broom." She does this repeatedly, and places Mira in various positions and perspectives in the home; observing and taking note of what she sees and must manage as domestic laborer:

Safely the Mice through yon dark Passage run,
 Where the dim windows ne'er admit the sun.
 Along each Wall the Stranger blindly feels;
 And (trembling) dreads a Spectre at his Heels. (lines 52-5)

The upper classes have not built an impressive architecture for living comfortably or beautifully. While some chaos is essential and integral to domestic spaces, the manor in this context falls apart; things do not work, and are seemingly in the wrong places—as windows are useless in not providing light. The servant, Mira, knows all this because on a daily basis she has to try to bring some sense and order to the estate owner's thoughtlessness. Further, the thoughtlessness about architecture, which is supposed to focus on comfort and beauty, indicates that the very structure of society, wherein upper classes are in charge, is founded on a complicated lie; indeed, as Leapor shows with the condition of the estate, the upper classes do not know what they are doing. Thus, their attempts to organize and keep elements of nature at bay through enclosure and

architecture are useless because the pests, bugs, deteriorating wet and mold will get in. In this contrast, Leapor creates a socially charged message about the appearance of the wealthy versus the physically, morally and intellectually damaged condition of the wealthy estate owners.

The presence of the specter in the above lines also further develops a sense of liminality within the poem. Certainly, the initial view of a stranger suspecting a ghost behind her is first and foremost understood as satire, as the haunting image suggests cobwebs and other features of a home that is uncomfortable. Alternatively, the invisible yet felt presences of the domestic servant is not unlike a ghost, as Esther Peeren notes: “servants or domestic workers as living ghosts... asks what subjects in professions socially-constructed as inferior or dehumanizing can do to challenge this evaluation and assert themselves as subjects entitled to respect, attention and care” (77). The specter at the readers’ heels suggests there is also an invisible presence in one’s domestic space, particularly when that space is occupied and curated by someone else: “Along each Wall the Stranger blindly feels;/ And (trembling) dreads a Spectre at his Heels”(54-5). In this instance, the domestic servant haunts the halls, attempting to make a decaying space appear lively and comfortable. In this instance, the very class ideology invested in large estates—that can never be properly managed—reveals that class hierarchy is, in its very nature, gothic.

Continuing with this line of argument, because Leapor’s position within the home is charged with sociocultural understandings regarding class and gender, her development of what I call the chaotic domestic becomes increasingly political. That the estate places the stranger in an unknowing and uncertain position suggests that there is notable tension

within the home itself, one that is developed from inherent chaos of being between two worlds, as the specter arrives from the supernatural. Leapor allows the estate to become a site for knowing and unknowing; feeling frightened in a large, darkened estate is not uncommon, and yet Leapor uses commonplace fears, anxieties, pests, and other images to create a home that indeed crumbles not simply because houses fall apart—which is certainly something Leapor understands—but as a laboring class woman Leapor carries an agency within domestic spaces that makes this chaos work for her to critique the hierarchy that upper-class domestic space depends upon. There is an inherent chaos in domestic and natural environments, but Leapor shows us that she is a writer and servant enacting a chaotic domestic agency in disrupting the upper-class home and revealing its chaos.

The use of the trope of the specter is only one way in which “Crumble Hall” challenges conventional hierarchies. Indeed, an aspect of Mira’s role of insider-outsider allows us to see the highly political nature of “Crumble Hall.” Landry argues that the “patriarchal despotism” and “domestic tyranny” of the woodcarvings of the manor’s entrance hall promote a view of gender and class history that depends on limiting working women’s ability to move freely in discursive spaces (113). A notable example within “Crumble Hall” wherein Leapor collapses social hierarchies happens when Mira compares the grandeur of the estate with the practical realities of the parts of the home that go unseen:

Then step within – there stands a goodly Row
Of oaken Pillars – where a gallant Show

Of mimic Pears and carv'd Pomgranates twine,

With the plump Clusters of the spreading Vine. (lines 35-8)

At first glance, the oak pillars and carved pomegranates support a view of the estate that is much in line with readers' expectations regarding country manor poems. The estate appears to be beautifully ornamented, and her descriptions of the home ultimately lead the readers' mind outside to exotic, sumptuous details: the pears, pomegranates, and "the spreading vine."

But, with each new description of the home, the reader is increasingly led to dark, natural images: where the pomegranates should be lovely details of the estate's honor and grandeur, these details come to indicate excess and decadence. The spreading vine generates a dynamic energy from which Leapor uses elevated Neoclassical language and imagery to draw a comparison between the height of the home and a Cyclops: "The Roof—no Cyclops e'er could reach so high" (43). There are no comparisons to the home reaching the heavens or the magnificent height of mountains, but rather to the monstrous form of the Cyclops. That the Cyclops' distinct feature is that it has only one eye suggests that the home is also made distinct based on what it lacks. Leapor quickly then points out the estate's gargoyles and describes the "strange forms" in all of their state of spewing, grinning, and smiling. The darkly bizarre outward appearance of the home is a staunch contrast to the highly pleasing and functional state of the kitchen, as laid out in the epigraph. Again, Leapor shows her reader that where there is personal investment in a residence, there is comfort.

In contrast, where there is neglect, there is also decay. The cyclical demands of domestic life tell us that domestic spaces must be cared for, lived in, and made functional.

For example, the spider Leapor describes is emboldened only by the absence of the broom. In charging others to see to the needs of the home, the estate owners of course overlook features and spaces that are not used regularly. In creating such large living spaces (equal to the ideology they support) it becomes impossible to keep them orderly. The fusion between the domestic, the natural, and the aesthetic as aligned with a specific hierarchical class structure in this context is rich and dynamic, as these are features of the home that the estate owner must see mended; therefore they are in a constant state of decay and erosion. Indeed, as these are cleaned by domestic servants only when instructed to do so there is little investment for their longevity. The dark features of the home disrupt class expectations as they directly criticize the estate owners and their inability to oversee and manage an estate.

The critique continues as Mira guides the reader to see where the master of the house resides; she is bold and unrelenting in her description of those in undeserved power. She attacks the intellectual capacities of the master of the estate:

Here the strong Doors were aptly framed to hold

Sir Wary's Person, and Sir Wary's Gold.

Here Biron sleeps, with Books encircled round;

And him you'd guess a student most profound.

Not so – in Form the dusty Volumes stand:

There's few that wear the Mark of Biron's Hand. (90-93)

Packed within only a few lines, Leapor displays a shocking sense of class antagonism as she challenges the intellectual capacities of the master, who cannot be “profound” because his books are “dusty” from disuse. (91-2) Here, the master is cast as willfully

ignorant, and therefore undeserving of the potential power the books (and the class hierarchy they represent) offer and thus of the estate in general. In particular Leapor pokes fun at “Biron,” suggesting that while he may have the trappings of intellectualism, the books are purely ornamental. And yet there is no humor in Leapor’s implicit reminder that her own body suffers to maintain the master’s façade of intelligence. As Leapor is charged to keep domestic spaces tidy and orderly, the disuse of books and bedrooms makes her job more difficult, more tiresome, and more repetitive. In dusting the master’s books, Leapor upholds the appearance of his intelligence.

As part of this approach, Leapor points to the invisible qualities of labor by highlighting the steps required to obtain a finished product. For example, in the epigraph of this chapter Leapor utilizes sensory details to create an ecology within the kitchen: the sounds of sizzling, crackling of the frying and fire, and the kettles putting up steam; the smell the odors of grease; the attention to the feel of leather and the sight of polished nails within the clock—a notable reference time—which the domestic servant is always fighting against to get things done. All this together suggests that invisible labor creates the beautiful household and anticipates its cyclical needs. Yet, more to the point, there is a strong disconnect between the comfort and control of the kitchen, and the shabby, declining grandeur of the parlor which is supposed to be the site of hospitable actions and luxurious comfort with implications of the wonderful food to come as well as the warm comfort of bedrooms and servants at one’s beck and call.

But Leapor shows the real site of creation of this promise is in the kitchen—the heart of the home. In many ways, Leapor suggests that if appreciation for invisible labor does not happen then everything else falls apart. Because of her position as a servant who

always sees the nuanced distinctions between the parlor and kitchen—sensuously, intellectually, and emotionally—she illustrates that she is capable of inhabiting a liminal position and capable of moving between positionalities (just as she easily moves between the spaces and needs of each room in the house). Despite the cultural degradation associated with the servant position, she becomes an agent of her otherwise disempowered body, maneuvering through spaces she knows intimately, but which belong to those who would rather her presence go unseen.

Indeed, to tend to human made spaces that remain unused serves as merely one example of how Leapor locates areas of tension within the estate, forcing the reader to observe the dynamics of decline: the dust gathering, the mice scampering, and the sun scorching. Although stately homes appear static, they are not exempt from the passage of time. The lines about the library demonstrate a sense of decline, as Leapor’s criticisms of the unused books extend beyond issues of taste, and instead concentrate upon the idea of false intellectualism.¹⁷ The books that encircle Biron’s head serve as a false totem, preserving an arcane sense of self-fashioned intellectualism. In doing so, Leapor flexes her own intellectualism by expressing criticisms about the estate owners; again, she distinguishes herself as an outsider whose deep knowledge of this domestic space must be set against the owner’s shallow forms of knowledge, a reliable figure in evaluating areas of tension and chaos throughout the estate.

¹⁷Ralph Harrington discusses this concept of taste extensively in his discussion of Pope’s “Epistle to Burlington.” For Harrington, the poem contains within it a problem and then a solution: the problem is the tasteless aesthetic produced in much eighteenth-century architecture, and the solution is Lord Burlington’s tasteful “aesthetic vision” (Harrington 2).

In her tour of the estate, Leapor allows a consolidation of the domestic and natural to take place as Mira continuously shows the darker, concealed areas:

Back thro' the Passage -- [up] the Steps again;
 Thro' yon dark Room -- Be careful how you tread
 Up these steep Stairs -- or you may break your Head.
 These Rooms are furnish'd amiably, and full:
 Old shoes, and Sheep-ticks bred in Stacks of Wool;
 Grey Dobbin's gears, and Drenching-Horns enow;
 Wheel-spokes -- the Irons of a tatter'd Plough. (95-101)

The speaker, Mira, cautions the reader to “be careful,” because of the nature of the servants’ stairs—which are narrower and more difficult to navigate. Although the rooms in the house are furnished, they contain old, bug-infested items. In these lines the outdoors literally move into the home. Wild, animal imagery is used to describe the condition of the rooms: the dobbin’s harness, sheep-ticks, and drinking horns. These items compete for space in the servant’s small quarters, and not only suggest the home mimics nature, but rather that nature has literally moved into the home itself.

What’s more, these items, evidences of nature, become normal features of the home in general, despite that they are not items directly used by the upper-class owners. Included in these humble items are implements of labor—the tattered plow and wheel spokes. Instead of introducing obvious and foreign elements of nature, Leapor chooses to include those that are common and, even, expected in their relationship to domestic work. Leapor more directly points to the intrinsically chaotic elements of domestic and natural spaces. The hidden infrastructure the upper-class depends upon, but knows nothing about,

is implicit in this instance: there are tools, mechanism, and ambiguous senses of timing servants use to provide food and comfort for owners that are dependent upon experience. As the servant and writer, Leapor makes the invisible labor visible. What also becomes visible in this exchange is chaos. Housekeeping is constant, demanding, backbreaking, and often feels futile in its fight with dust, mold, bugs, and infestations brought in by weather, as well as people's bad habits and the passage of time. In providing a semblance of order—no matter how temporary—the servant is made heroic.

Leapor shapes the view of the servant through playful nods at the patron-poet relationship, an expected feature of laboring-class writing. In offering a view of the patron-poet relationship that shares a connection with the owner-employee relationship the poem's framework—an address to Leapor's literary patron—is important for locating the darker elements of the poem wherein Leapor criticizes the exploitation of laboring-class women. At the outset of the poem Leapor's persona Mira is torn between the indecision of writing or not writing; vowing to quit, only to "repent in rhyme." When she is aroused again by inspiration, her patron, Artemisia, is pleased: "The sun returns, and Artemisia smiles" (8). Certainly it is no secret that much of laboring-class poetry shifts between complaints about working life and praise for the patron, who enables the poetry to be read by others. And yet, Leapor's position—her personal view—in the midst of the latent class and gender tensions of the writing and publication process is nearly impossible to uncover in her displays of gratitude for her patrons.

Leapor famously maintained an excellent personal and working relationship with her patrons, Freemantle and Susanna Jennens, and, in her development of a critical dilemma with them, she draws a pointed comparison between artistic labor and domestic

labor. For example, Leapor suggests emotional labor in waiting for her patron's approval in the key line "The sun returns, and Artemisia smiles" (8). In frequently returning to her patron, Artemisia, as the chief reader of "Crumble Hall," Leapor reminds us of the poem's original framework: Mira, the downtrodden and exhausted domestic servant and writer seeks and must obtain Artemisia's approval. And yet, in comparing the patron-poet relationship with the master-servant relationship, Leapor urges the reader to see just how the labor of a domestic servant is not only physical, but emotional too. Artemisia comes to mean the opposite of the dark, sinister details of the home: the sun. The metaphor of Artemisia as the sun also suggests that the approval of one's patrons and readers is, much like domestic work, cyclical and always in need of completion.

In particular, the first two lines of "Crumble Hall" cast Mira as a sympathetic character; one who is in tune not with her employer or friends, but instead her patron: "When Friends or Fortune frown on Mira's Lay, / Or gloomy Vapours hide the Lamp of Day (1-2)." The "Lamp of Day," again, refers to Artemisia as the sun or the light within Mira's creative life. Certainly, Leapor's own chaotic position as laborer, woman, and writer is understood at the outset of the poem. And yet even here she consolidates the natural with the domestic: the same outcome is produced when friends and finance deny Mira as when the sun does not shine. Because Leapor asserts that the influence of nature over Mira's emotional state—and vice versa—is connected, she sets in motion an image of the chaotic domestic as dependent on personal experience; one that hinges on the observation and location of tension. Only in Leapor's descriptions of the estate and the distinct moments of tension within the interconnection of home and nature does she allow her reader to see her feelings.

The structure of feeling curated within her description of the kitchen—detailed by the sizzling and crackling of the fire—plays out in her exploration of what she knows; Leapor establishes a relationship between her feelings and the chaotic domestic. The guided tour of the estate is a distinctly personal and provides an insider’s understanding of the demands of the estate and what must be sacrificed in order to maintain order in chaos. For example, Mira understands the physical pains of a woman domestic servant as revealed in the key lines “With low’ring Forehead, and with aching Limbs, / Oppress’d with Head-ach, and eternal Whims” (2-3). With the physical pains comes an emotional firestorm: Leapor’s body is twisted and hunched both because of the demands of her physical labor—i.e. writing and domestic service—and also the emotional weight of her class and gender position. In “low’ring [her] Forehead” Leapor references class hierarchies and her own culturally denigrated position as woman laborer. Moreover, the “eternal Whims” suggests she must always make herself available to support the needs of her employer. Indeed, Leapor’s intimate familiarity with the expectations of a woman domestic servant is presented at the onset of the poem, as her work is never done. The estate is not grand and beautiful because of the owner’s neglect, but it is her job to maintain it to the best of her ability.

Just over halfway through the poem Leapor refers to Artemisia once again; this time, Leapor is more insistent and eager for her to understand the effort both Mira and Sophronia take to work skillfully and efficiently. What follows, then, after the interruption of Mira’s tour of the estate, is a distinctly sumptuous display of food and food preparation. On the latter point, the preparation is particularly important to grounding the otherwise confounding and obstinate nature of the poem’s first half; where

Mira has shown the estate in marvelous twists and turns, she continues the same energetic and enthusiastic momentum, but this time she explores the body's relationship to domestic labor, as opposed to the labor of writing:

Sophronia sage! whose learned knuckles know
 To form round cheese-cakes of the pliant Dough;
 To bruise the Curd, and thro' her Fingers squeeze
 Ambrosial Butter with the temper'd cheese:
 Sweet Tarts and Puddens, too, her skill declare;
 And the soft jellies, hid from baneful Air. (115-120)

Sophronia is a friend and fellow domestic laborer addressed in several of Leapor's poems, including, "An Epistle to Artemisia. On Fame," "Advice to Sophronia," and "The Disappointment." Here, her knuckles are familiar with the construction of the round cheesecakes, showing the body's relationship to labor. Leapor's use of harsh and brutal words and phrases such as "bruise," "fingers squeeze," and "the temper'd cheese" show that domestic service, like writing, is a physically demanding job, one that relies on knowing and understanding the patterns and repetitions that emerge in the act of creation. Leapor's sumptuous language regarding the food, or the end of product of her labor, emphasizes the sacrifice she makes through her body. Developing a series of contrasts serves as a kind of doubling, that Leapor uses to generate a rapid, wild pacing, catapulting the reader into a liminal, affect-driven site—what I consider the chaotic

domestic.¹⁸ The fraught relationship between the working body as servant or agent, becomes a battle Leapor invites us to see.

So, too, does the comparison between domestic service and writing become increasingly clear as Leapor artfully interpolates sumptuous language with that which is vicious and physical. For example, “Ambrosial Butter with the temper’d cheese” (118) expresses the product of domestic labor—the butter—as otherworldly and as a worthy subject of high poetry. In contrast, the cheese, although also a worthy subject, is described as “temper’d,” which suggests both the stabilizing of an ingredient, but as a process requires a great deal of patient, invisible labor by servants. The time devoted to the creation of beautiful food and a tidy kitchen is an element of this frustration. Yet, although the tempering of cheese suggests arduous labor, so too does Leapor use “temper’d” to allude to the human temperament. Again, Leapor highlights individual components of the kitchen and the domestic servant’s daily expectations, and, in doing so, generates affectual shimmers, or dynamic moments wherein she expresses a complex array of emotions—frustration, anger, bitterness, pride, and joy—despite her liminal position within the home. Certainly the satirical nature of the poem itself suggests intertwined feelings, particularly as the comedy of the poem makes way for deep frustration.

Leapor’s explicit references to the body in relation to domestic work set up a series of contrasts, particularly within the lines “whose learned knuckles know / To form round cheese-cakes of the pliant Dough” (115). Disciplined hands continue to bear the

¹⁸ Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg’s “An Inventory of Shimmers” from *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010) describes affects of “in-betweenness” (1).

evidence of the creation of the beautiful, rounded cheesecakes, further indicating the relationship between artistic and domestic work is its cyclicity. No matter how many cheesecakes are eaten, domestic servants such as Leapor will need to make more. Just as the estate's cooking and cleaning requires daily maintenance, the work of a poet—writing, revising, editing, proof-reading—is never completely finished, but rather demands that the body learn to anticipate its needs. Indeed, the abuse of her body echoes the headache and aching limbs described at the beginning of the poem as an expression of the writing process, especially as writing is Leapor's second job—or her second shift—completed presumably at night when she should be sleeping.

Establishing a relationship between artistic and domestic creation also reveals how domestic servants become masters and artists as Leapor forces the reader to pay attention to how food is made, to note that it takes a master to create the finished product, and that domestic work is a meticulous, precise, and fluid project. In this instance Leapor reframes her own bodily identity as indebted servant to emboldened agent. Indeed, in laying out the physical demands of creation, Leapor demonstrates that one must maintain “learned knuckles” in order to develop one's craft. The final two lines of this section punctuate the relationship between domestic work and artistic work, revealing affectual shimmers bind them: “Sweet Tarts and Puddens, too, her skill declare; / And the soft jellies, hid from baneful Air” (119-20). The desserts are made sweeter by the skilled and practiced hands of the domestic worker and, yet, there are aspects of participating in the domestic labor force that must remain hidden and protected from view. The “soft jellies,” for example, should avoid harmful exposure much in the same way the domestic

servant's and the writer's labor is simultaneously both invisible and safeguarded because of its intimacy.

Vital to seeing Leapor as an agent within "Crumble Hall" is carefully noting the embittered attitude Leapor carries to her satire; for example, turning back to her description of the library, she does not speculate that the books are unread; rather she knows they are so because she cleans them. Mocking the conventions and expectations of the country-manor poem, Leapor satirizes ruin and the false grandeur of "Crumble Hall":

Gay China Bowls o'er the broad Chimney shine,

Whose long Description would be too sublime:

And much might of the Tapestry be sung:

But we're content to say, The Parlour's hung. (68-71)

These lines demonstrate Mira's journey through the manor, wherein she notes various items of esteemed repute—and some less so—and notes what *could* be said about them. By saying that the chimney's "long description would be too sublime" (69) or that much "might" be said about the tapestry (70), Leapor satirizes the way that poets often write of large estates. Indeed, that the grandeur of a chimney would stimulate Kantian and Burkean notions of the sublime associated with terror, awe, and interior conflict should be initially interpreted as a satirical statement. In endlessly poking fun of the home and the descriptions of her various tasks, Leapor also positions herself as the ultimate decider of when something is done: "The Parlour's hung" suggests the same finality of a cook deciding that a dish is now "done." While this is notably satire, as Leapor points out the tediousness of such descriptions—indeed, a cook knows when a dish is complete, the

parlour, however, does not traditionally have this finality—outside of satire, Leapor shows tremendous power in declaring “The Parlour’s hung.”

Despite her humor, Leapor knows the home, like natural landscapes, can be groomed and tamed, but without proper care it will take on a life of its own. In the poem Mira is both a keenly observant outsider of the pleasures of the estate, while she is also a domestic servant dependent on the estate’s profitability for her own future. Leapor’s position as an outsider within the domestic spaces she serves makes her a reliable figure in observing these areas of chaos—noting the instances of tension and fragility in her domestic servitude. As a voyeur who tends, but does not use the master’s space, Mira’s tour of the estate provokes a sense of disconnection to the master, his class ideology, and to her bodily and psychological comforts, but also to her humor, grit, and deep knowledge; although Mira can see the estate in its entirety, she cannot live on or use its domestic comforts. Thus Leapor points to the unnatural situation of caring for spaces one cannot enjoy, and subsequently creates feelings of deep attachment and disconnection and even anger.

Both formally and thematically, Leapor complicates the tradition of the country-manor poem in her discussion of the declining condition of the estate: noting that the estate that was “once hospitable” now appears “severe, and horribly adorn[ed],” the poem suggests that “Of this rude Palace might a Poet sing / From cold December to returning Spring” (lines 29-30). In this case the line “might a poet sing” (29) satirizes the conventions of the country manor poem. That a poet “might” speak of the estate tells the reader that the condition of the estate is not quite worthy; further, she will show that the manor as revealed through the eyes of a domestic servant, who has access to almost every

corner of the home, is a view that cannot be the same as that of the estate owner. In fact, hers is a more expansive and nuanced view. Mira's position as a domestic servant is an important component of tracing the affectual shimmers in this poem, as her position operates as a type of ethos through which the state of the manor indicates more than a declining home, but instead generates a commentary on the owner of the estate as irresponsible and incapable.

Indeed, Leapor addresses the maddening and uncontrollable features of the home. Mira's ability as a servant to know domestic spaces correctly allows her to sense its every need and mood. Therefore her flexibility and fluidity operates in tandem with the condition of the estate, and is essential to maintaining its stability. Leapor is keenly aware of her liminal position within domestic and natural spaces, and she describes the chaos within her verse—showing a collapse of the natural and domestic in one, uncontrollable expression:

No farther -- Yes, a little higher, pray:
 At yon small Door you'll find the Beams of Day,
 [Where] the hot [Leads] return the scorching Ray.
 Meads, Fields, and Groves, in beauteous Order lie.
 From hence the Muse precipitant is hurl'd,
 And drags down Mira to the nether World. (102-107)

As the reader is directed to the top of the home, daring to go higher and higher despite the condition of the stairs, there is an overwhelming light that emerges; directing the reader to look over Northampton's bounteous landscape. The arrangement of Edgecote House show the highest point of the house was storage, and likely only used and accessible to

servants. In noting the “Beams of Day” creeping through the ceiling, Leapor suggests the servants maintain an ideologically expansive view of the home. The view—the “Beams of Day”—is described as almost visionary, far more so than the “sun” Artemisia. As the sun’s beams shine in, the top floor—although in a state of disrepair—becomes an area wherein the serving class can best see the action, dynamics, and outcomes of the upper classes below as well as the estate’s margins and boundaries outside.

The charged language of the scorching sun makes the landscape initially difficult to view; in many ways Leapor uses this moment to rework traditional hierarchies. Leapor’s line, “At yon small Door you’ll find the Beams of Day” shows a wonderful sense of liminality wherein Leapor makes the supposed line between the inside and the outside, the domestic and the natural, part of a continuum rather than two separate spaces with rigid boundaries. The landscape of the estate is in “beauteous order,” indicating that the socialized hierarchies of the home are, from the domestic servant’s vantage point, hardly “beauteous.” The use of “order” in this context is rife with double and hidden meanings, as the brief allusion to social hierarchy as one’s order springs to mind based on Leapor’s own class status. Yet, the representation of the natural world within “Crumble Hall” as frenzied and perpetually in motion seems to indicate something else entirely; indeed, natural landscapes, like domestic ones, are cyclical and perpetually in motion. “Order” in this context comes to mean “arrangement.” This is similar to the epigraph of this essay wherein Leapor depicts an image of the home with a “beauteous order” of domesticity—“The Fires blaze; the greasy Pavements fry; / And steaming Odours from the Kettles fly.” In Leapor’s cultivation of a wildly sensory, chaotic, yet also congruous

and harmonious domestic atmosphere, she draws a relationship with the features of the natural landscape as evidence of affectual shimmers.

Perhaps the most effused with affect is the image of the muse hurling Mira back down to the nether world. In these lines—“From hence the Muse precipitant is hurl’d, / And drags down Mira to the nether World” (106-7)—Leapor satirizes the hierarchal political system that will always put the servant class in their place when they assert power. In this case, Leapor’s assertion that she is literally at the top of the house with an entire view of the estate expressly asserts her power. A darkly comic image, that on one hand indicates that Leapor does “know her place,” while also showing that a system that puts humans within a hierarchical structure is ineffectual.

Leapor reinforces the negative images of the hierarchical aspects of the estate in uncovering the darker and far more secretive elements of the home. In doing so, Leapor evokes harsh, brutal language to draw an entangled relationship between the home, nature, and the physical body. In this way Leapor points to the body as a manifestation of the chaotic domestic, and there is no better candidate to address those bodily pains than a woman domestic servant, whose work is consistently doubted within her culture:

Shall we proceed? -- Yes, if you’ll break the Wall:

If not, return, and tread once more the Hall.

Up ten stone steps now please to drag your Toes,

And a brick Passage will succeed to those. (84-87)

Throughout the poem, starting at the very beginning, there are continued shimmers of the poet-servant’s aches and pains from physical labor and emotional anger. Leapor capitalizes on her insider knowledge in both teasing and pointed examples: “Yes, if you’ll

break the Wall” and “now please drag your Toes” are on the outset comic as the master dozes in his study, and the tour is loudly traipsing around his home, unbeknownst to him. And yet, they also imply that physical discomfort is unavoidable at this juncture of the tour, particularly for the domestic servant charged with walking up and down the stairs repeatedly. Again, the language used is harsh and brutal; phrases such as “break the Wall,” “ten stone steps,” “drag your Toes,” and “a brick Passage” expose a home that is not comfortable and accommodating, but tough and unforgiving. Like many Leapor’s moments of satire wherein she subverts the country-manor form by highlighting the inelegant features of the estate, when using explicit language she invites natural elements that are normal and even expected in a household context. Leapor uses the declining condition of these materials to show how the inherent chaos of nature invades the inherent chaos of the domestic.

As we have seen, Leapor moves between comparing the grandeur of the manor with the unseen, dirty areas hidden from view; a feature we presume is present in most manors, particularly those with negligent owners. Yet in doing so, Leapor elevates her descriptions of the manor with Neoclassical references, but first literally guides her reader upwards: “We count the Stairs, and to the Right ascend,/Where on the Walls the gorgeous Colours blend.” (72-3) Even though the owners are not actually present within the poem, the accouterments of their historical class power are exhibited through the art works of the house—in particular those representing the estate owner’s ancestors—but also representing an aristocratic mythology reiterated in the expensive books they own, as those belonging to the laboring classes could not afford such luxurious libraries. In describing this, Mira knows these cultural artifacts represent her master’s power, but in

making fun of them she tips the scales to honor the agency and power of people belonging to the laboring classes. Indeed, melding the readers' path up the stairs, next to the walls wherein "colours blend," Leapor transports the reader somewhere else entirely. Leapor blends the colors on the wall as a method of showing how books, paintings, and even the more unflattering features of the home maintain a life of their own. Indeed, Leapor directs the reader to see how those belonging to the upper classes create their own mythological (and useless to the servant class) narratives and personal history, even when they live in states of decay and disrepair: "George bestrides the goodly Steed;/ The Dragon's slaughter'd, and the Virgin freed" (74-5).

In doing so, "Crumble Hall" comes to demonstrate the chaotic domestic through confusion, complexity, tension, unevenness, and Leapor develops a language to express this structure of feeling in her poetry. This sense of confusion is only exacerbated as Mira moves through the manor, comparing and contrasting rooms, domestic concerns become natural ones as the exterior of the estate is brought to the interior. For example, in the poem's final stanza, Leapor shows us the culmination of the natural and the domestic, enacting contiguity in order to better convey the deep affects held in the tension between the two spaces:

Strange Sounds and Forms shall tease the gloomy Green;

And Fairy-Elves by *Urs'la* shall be seen:

Their new-built Parlour shall with Echoes ring:

And in their Hall shall doleful Crickets sing.

Then cease, *Diracto*, stay thy desp'rate Hand;

And let the Grove, if not the Parlour, stand. (181-186)

In these lines the reader is spatially and psychologically decentered. Nature ravages an abandoned house; everything starts falling apart without the domestic servant there to keep the order. The “strange sounds and forms” titillate, but also alienate; placing the reader and Mira somewhere undefined and unknown. Despite her alienation, Leapor counts on domestic servants to understand the affectual shimmers described in this instance: laboring-class women are charged to daily tend to spaces that are both not their own nor in use by owners of the estate. Their work becomes simultaneously unappreciated, unnecessary, and futile against the ravages of time. What’s more, laboring-class women are expected to sacrifice their physical bodies to maintain pretenses of grandeur for the owner of the estate. Despite this, when Leapor commands Diracto to “cease” she takes charge of both the writing and the estate.

Both Jeannie Dalporto and Vassiliki Markidou argue that in desiring preservation of the grove and parlor “complex socio-economic changes on the country estate were being negotiated through the landscape in the eighteenth century” (Dalporto 228). In terms of the chaotic domestic, I see the relationship between the parlor and grove as vitally important for the recognition of labor performed by vulnerable domestic servants. Indeed, to see interior spaces as exterior ones means there are no secrets; spaces that are not used suffer under nature’s hand and the natural cycles of deterioration will enter the interior through infestation, rot, mold, and sheer age. Indeed, by the close of the poem the reader comes to find that the natural and the domestic are consolidated as deeply interconnected and, at times, seemingly merge as one; inherently chaotic, heavily socialized, and the site for deep affects regarding gender and class status.

The final lines of the poem suggest that the entire concept of the country manor is one built on fanciful deception. Leapor forces us to wonder what people would willingly manage an estate so poorly? Why possess spaces and objects that one does not and cannot use? In this case, the grove acts as the parlor for “Fairy-Elves” who enjoy the singing of crickets as entertainment. The estate owners are disconnected from reality, so much so that they become nearly imaginary features of the estate itself. Leapor suggests that although her labor is invisible, those who insist on maintaining the pretense of the estate’s grandeur are the only ones who refuse to see the decay. Moreover, in evoking Neoclassical tradition, Leapor refers to the contractor in charge of altering the grove into the building and garden as *Diracto*.

Indeed, by the end of the poem it is clear that the estate is in perpetual motion, changing as England’s landscape and conceptions of taste so regularly do. Despite taking the reader on a tour of the estate, Leapor shows the estate as not a site of grandeur or permanence, but instead as a space that is constantly moving and changing. In doing so, Leapor de-centers the upper-class home as the pillar of the poem, and points to the labor force as the only constant. This sense of de-centering is punctuated in the poem’s final line, as Mira tells *Diracto*: “And let the Grove, if not the Parlour, stand.” (186) The relationship between the grove and the parlor tells us that the home, like the natural elements surrounding the estate, is perpetually in motion; unfixed and constantly changing.

Turning back to the structure of feeling developed in Leapor’s “Crumble Hall,” it is important to end where this chapter began: the epigraph. Leapor shows how important

it is to pay attention to the sensory elements of domestic life—smells, sounds, and textures—to get at the invisible labor that creates the household. The cyclical, seasonal, never-ending aspects of domestic labor are brought to life as Leapor suggests each day requires a repeat of domestic labors. The sensory details Leapor notes about the home and estate help us see that she has a particular way of seeing and feeling about her domestic environment based on the fact that her body is a working-class body that has to make sure the domestic space is clean, inviting, smells good, looks sumptuous, and do it in a timely and invisible manner. In the opening epigraph, for example, there is a sense of pride regarding each of the domestic details she points up, but there is a sense of how time is always against the worker, and almost a tiredness in the face of the work needed to keep the nails polished and make sure the leather looks good and is comfortable. “Crumble Hall” shows how the owner’s neglect of his estate results in deterioration and wear. This prompts many of Leapor’s domestic responsibilities and what I term the chaotic domestic emerges as an opportunity for Leapor to disrupt class and gender demands; she uses her liminal position to make that which is invisible, visible.

The chaotic domestic that emerges through the staunch contrast between domestic comfort and domestic disrepair: “the Fires blaze,” the smell from “the Kettles,” the appearance of the “shining Nails,” and the “audible and slow” sounds of the clock create a beautiful sense of ecology within the kitchen. And yet, the areas of the estate that the owner must make use of show signs of disuse, such as the unread books. Through her attention to sensory perception, Leapor’s “Crumble Hall” challenges conventional, gendered, classist notions of nature writing in its ability to establish a complex, affectual relationship between domestic life and labor. In a complex dynamic, Leapor observes,

participates in, and resists the dysfunction of the upper-class estate, and all of the subsequent dark details associated with that decentering and dissolution; indeed, for Leapor the domestic is inherently chaotic and her placement within it is an important aspect of disrupting understandings of domestic “normalcy.” Again, Leapor is both outsider and insider, tending to a home and family that are not her own; she sees the estate with and without a sense of emotional care or personal economic interest resulting from the fact that it is dependent upon her labor and knowledge while she is dependent on the owner. Instead, Leapor uses the inherent chaos of the home to point out notable cracks in eighteenth-century life and culture. Despite the relative invisibility of her station and position within the estate, Leapor makes the chaos visible to a broader audience.

CHAPTER 4

“I eager seiz’d”:

Affect and Authority in Ann Yearsley’s Verse

Born in Bristol to Anne and John Cromartie in 1753, Ann Yearsley was a dairywoman from a line of Bristol dairywomen, later advertised by her choice of poetic moniker “Lactilla.” Famously, in her poem “Clifton Hill” (1785), Yearsley writes: “Half sunk in snow/ Lactilla tends her fav’rite cow” (19-20). Through this scene Yearsley affirms not only her identity and identification with fellow-laboring class women, but also gestures at solidarity with the cow herself, which, as her favorite cow, she has an intimate affective relationship with; gendered as female, the cow and Yearsley work in unpleasant conditions—during “angry storms” and “half sunk in snow” throughout the “hoary Winter”—while isolated from other people. There is no pastoral idealization of the cold conditions and the very real work, real cows, and real milkmaids that are represented in the poem. Throughout her verse, Yearsley honors the laboring classes by highlighting rather than ignoring the pain of being a laboring-class woman. A proto-Romantic and proto-feminist, Yearsley relates a structure of feeling felt in the lives of laboring-class women and implicitly demands respect for this positionality. In this chapter, I argue that in recognizing the laboring woman’s body as a powerful creative and affective force in that it can produce nourishment (i.e. milk) naturally and internally, Lactilla demands that her body of work—both her writing and her domestic service position—be given their societal due. Naming herself Lactilla, Yearsley uses the chaotic domestic as an artistic and political gesture through which to reframe hegemonic class relations, gender, and societal norms.

Both Yearsley and the milk cow face the physical onslaughts of harsh winters so that the upper classes don't have to, but, as Yearsley seems to suggest, their closeness to nature also produces deep and almost visceral connections to and knowledge of her local surroundings and Nature itself and how she is constantly interacting simultaneously with each in a "tangled relationship." The relationship between Yearsley's domestic service position as a milkmaid paired with one of the many gendered responsibilities of laboring-class women to provide milk for children who are not their own is important to understanding how Yearsley shapes her own self-image. Yearsley points to her shared connection with the milk-cow, who is also cold and seemingly dispossessed of her own power. Through the use of the name "Lactilla"—which expressly ties her to the cow, its udders, and its provision of milk—it is clear that Yearsley does not simply comment on the isolated experience of one laboring-class woman, but, instead, she comments on the ways in which the exploitation of labor and women feeds the nation: the cow feeds not only her own calf, but is responsible for feeding relative strangers; so, too, do laboring-class women find themselves responsible for fulfilling motherly duties for upper-class children not their own and tending to vast aristocratic spaces that do not belong to them. The pun of "expressing" milk works here as well, as Yearsley, to a certain degree, gives the cow a voice, suggesting that domesticated animals are also made invisible in a class society.

Hence, instead of focusing on the tumultuous relationship with her patron Hannah Moore as many critics have in the past, in this chapter I suggest that Yearsley may be even more important in the laboring-class poetic tradition for her development of what I

have termed the “chaotic domestic.”¹⁹ For example, Yearsley’s writing implicitly rejects Johnson’s second definition of the “domestic” (“Private...not open”²⁰). A close focus on Yearsley’s “Clifton Hill,” demonstrates how the chaotic domestic emerges as a political instrument through which she navigates the political, artistic, and economic components of her life through open and often blunt recognition of how her body is being used and is affected by the upper classes. Along with scholars who have noted the radical and subversive qualities of the pastoral and prospect genre, I suggest that Yearsley largely subverts expectations regarding who writes about landscapes, and who has the right to write about feelings within her culture.²¹

In doing so, Yearsley develops a unique voice that is proto-Romantic. In foregrounding her status as woman laborer, a historic challenge to poetic conventions and the class and gender systems, Yearsley delves deeply into her own identity as writer, woman, and laborer, and, in doing so, describes seasons, events, memories, and anecdotes as a kind of exhibition of how the chaotic domestic works within her verse.

Tim Burke suggests Yearsley’s adoption of the persona “Lactilla” serves as a device of

¹⁹ Donna Landry’s study, *The Muses of Resistance: Laboring-Class Women’s Poetry in Britain, 1739-1796* (1990), like Kerri Andrews’ emphasis on David Garrick in *Ann Yearsley and Hannah More, Patronage and Poetry* (2013), extends critical conversations on Yearsley’s verse beyond the infamous Hannah More feud to include other levels of influence. Andrews also closely examines political and personal relationship between Yearsley and More in *Ann Yearsley and Hannah More, Patronage and Poetry: The Story of a Literary Relationship* (2013).

²⁰For the purposes of this project, I turn to Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* (1785) to underline how the writers I analyze fit and do not fit the culture’s idea of the domestic.

²¹ Margaret Anne Doody, William Christmas, Donna Landry, and Anne Milne each challenge the conception of the pastoral as a purely aesthetic, a-political mode of poetry.

self-commodification and self-promotional strategy, indicating her awareness of how her body is perceived by the upper classes. Yearsley's verse points out the relative psychic displacement she experiences as writer, laborer, woman, mother, wife, and literal and figurative milk cow. But her verse also asserts that these positionalities and the lived, material experiences they represent, must obtain a political and artistic voice in the community.

Within this chapter I focus on Yearsley's three poems "Clifton Hill" (1787) and "To the Honourable H—e W—e, on reading the *Castle of Otranto*, December 1784" and "To Mr.—, an Unlettered Poet, on Genius Unimproved" (1787). Yearsley frequently describes her working aesthetic as one that "rushes on [the] untaught mind." It is crucial to note that I focus on Yearsley's brilliant syntax and structure developed in these poems as she suggests that she sees the world through a logic of affect rather than a linear kind of imagining of Clifton, as she also shows the range of her affect, from profound grief to many kinds of rapture. In other words, Yearsley shows that the chaos of feeling is the way we see the world—not in the logical ways a traditional pastoral works. Thus, she uses the metaphor of "tangled" to note how complex this structure of feeling is and it takes a mind like hers that is used to the chaotic domestic to describe. In closely examining a series of moments in these poems that reveal what I call the chaotic domestic—or, specifically, areas that inhabit a site of inbetweenness and subvert systemic harm to the lower class and laboring women—Yearsley develops a subversive idea of the laboring-class woman as having a powerful eye for observing and registering the complex structure of feeling that has arisen around the life of laborers in Clifton at this moment in time. Indeed, in showing her readers this connection, Yearsley describes the

injustices felt by laboring-class women. As I will show, Yearsley asserts power in instances wherein class structure is meant to disempower the laboring classes; indeed, her engagement with economic, domestic, artistic, and socio-political subjects is charged with affect as she curves the motif of the chaotic domestic inward, to detail her own personal relationship with those subjects, thus pushing the laboring woman's experience of the domestic into the public sphere.

In addressing her own pain, Yearsley anticipates the Romantic turn to affect, an aesthetic developed by Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, among others, but she does not have the luxury of being able to remain on the high abstract level they do and is thus more attentive to the practical materialities facing the laborer's engagement with Nature. Yearsley's use of the chaotic domestic manifests through the relationship she draws between the laboring-class body and the landscape of Clifton, beginning as it does with her relationship with the cow and tangled views, and continuing as a manifestation of her grief for her dead mother, buried within Clifton graveyard. In doing so, Yearsley suggests that as a laborer her body is attentive and viscerally entangled with Nature as she works within its messy and chaotic processes.

A number of scholars, including Landry and Mary Waldron in her book *Lactilla, Milkwoman of Clifton: The Life and Writings of Ann Yearsley, 1753-1806* (1996), argue that Yearsley was influenced by other prominent writers of the period, especially Alexander Pope, and that Yearsley, like Pope, employed an objective or disinterested view of Nature in her writing. Although they often conflict with each other in their analyses of "Clifton Hill," both Landry and Waldron see Yearsley as distant and removed from her rural village. For example, Waldron considers Yearsley's proximity to rural life

and work distant concluding that Yearsley is “in the rural community but not of it” (12). Landry, too, considers Yearsley’s discussion of labor highly aestheticized (149). In contrast, I argue that in “Clifton Hill,” Yearsley’s critical reflection on her own laboring-class appears in her intimate descriptions of the flora, fauna, and socio-cultural formation of Bristol. Anne Milne’s *“Lactilla Tends her Fav’rite Cow”*: *Ecocritical Readings of Animals and Women in Eighteenth-Century British Labouring-Class Women’s Poetry* (2008) discusses Yearsley as a reflective writer, yet she misses how Yearsley’s meditations on her own laboring-class identity are saturated with varying degrees of emotion. I argue that only by artistically inhabiting a seemingly peripheral perspective on local life can Lactilla reach a position of reflection and contemplation that involves viscerally experiencing the emotions evoked by her laboring life.

Since Yearsley’s verse challenges traditional views of both laboring-class writing and the pastoral, Raymond Williams’s *The Country and the City* must be brought to bear in analyzing her work. Williams is critical of writers who use the pastoral to misrepresent the complexity of the working class experience the way William Empson had previously (146). In *Some Versions of the Pastoral* (1935) Empson claims that the “pastoral process” consists in “putting the complex into the simple,” thus suggesting the simplicity and naiveté of the laboring classes (23). Williams’s work documents the “real history” of rural spaces and, in doing so, cautions against “images and associations” that largely ignore the complexity of rural life (1). Williams and Yearsley reject this simplistic view of laboring life and urge readers to understand that there is a great deal of complexity and radicalism in something seemingly as simplistic as the laborer’s life. For example, Yearsley’s raw, uninterrupted interaction between the mind and natural landscapes within

“Clifton Hill” results in that shocking image of how a laboring-class woman might feel about making her body—her service position as a milk woman as well as the labor of her breasts—implicitly available to an upper-class woman’s infants. Thus, Yearsley’s poetic performance as Lactilla boldly focuses on how she suckles the social body with her personal writings in the same way that she provides her intimate maternal body for the public purposes of serving the upper class.

Yearsley’s representation of Lactilla as one who openly feels bodily pain while carrying out the responsibilities of domestic labor is reminiscent of Elaine Scarry’s work on the body. As Scarry writes, “There is not, as there is for most workers, a brief interval of exemption at the end of the day when [s]he is permitted to enact a wholly different set of gestures.” (Scarry 83). Yearsley thus demonstrates the unnaturalness of tending to spaces and goods that belong to someone else, as she notes the repetition of “gestures” that make up the laboring woman’s working life. Disciplining the body to perform repetitive tasks that one would not otherwise perform without express demand or need shapes how Yearsley writes of the laboring-class woman’s body. As I show, Yearsley politicizes the pastoral by representing a more personal sense of the chaos, conflicts, and tensions arising in the domestic laboring-class woman as a result of the demands made by a hierarchical class system.

To understand Yearsley’s bold use of raw affects in her writing it is important to remember the circumstances of Yearsley’s poem “To the Honourable H—e W—e, on reading the *Castle of Otranto*, December 1784.” First of all, writing her opinion of Walpole, a well-educated son of the first British prime minister, who was already a

notable writer and politician, illustrates how she boldly disrupts class and gender lines. Secondly, comically remarking upon issues of plot and character in the famous gothic novel, Yearsley upholds the good sense of the serving maid, Bianca, whom Walpole treats as a farcical figure. Namely, Yearsley pretends to identify with the stereotypical image of Bianca as simpleton maidservant, but is disappointed with presentation:

The empty tattle, true to female rules,
 In which thy happier talents ne'er appear,
 Is mine, nor mine alone, for mimic fools,
 Who boast thy sex, Bianca's foibles wear. (9-12)

In many ways Yearsley's poetic response to Walpole's novel serves as a means of entering into the literary conversation through metaphorically throwing down a gauntlet; that is, like Leapor and others, Yearsley uses satire and wit as a way of asserting and inserting her identity as a writer of intellectual poems into the upper-class male canon.

Walpole seems to have been insulted by Yearsley's impertinence. Instead of responding directly to her, he wrote to Yearsley's patron, Hannah More, a sign of his classist response. In the letter, Walpole writes of his outrage and disappointment in regard to Yearsley's poem and it is well worth quoting at length:

What! If I should go a step farther, dear Madam, and take the liberty of reproving you for putting into this poor woman's hands such a frantic thing as the *Castle of Otranto*? It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written, an age in which much was known; that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were conformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled; was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be

brought back to imagination, than to be led astray by it—but you will have made a hurly-burly in this poor woman’s head which it cannot develop and digest (qtd. in Waldron 94).

At first glance Walpole is utterly dismissive of Yearsley, suggesting, shockingly, that she should not have been allowed to read his novel because it is beyond the apprehension of a woman of the laboring classes. Clearly, based on his superior class position, he expected her as a laboring woman to be deferential to him. Referring to Yearsley as being “poor” twice in the brief note, Walpole concludes that therefore she cannot read properly, let alone write, thus insulting Yearsley’s ability to fully comprehend his writing. Yet, Walpole’s overreaction indicates Yearsley’s ability to disrupt class-based authority, to get under his skin, if you will; certainly that Yearsley upsets Walpole suggests just how powerful her analysis was—and she knows it. Waldron observes that either “Walpole himself does not seem to have read the poem very carefully or was lacking in a sense of humor” (95). Indeed, Walpole’s comments indicate that on a number of levels he found Yearsley unfit as a reader of his work and was unsettled and insulted by her provocative use of the chaotic domestic in writing and publishing the poem. From his patriarchal perspective, she should not have undermined class hierarchy by offering a critique of his gothic novel, comic or not. Writing his response to More rather than Yearsley was an insult; yet Yearsley emerges from this contretemps with consolidated authority as a writer who boldly disrupts class relations.

In “Clifton Hill,” Yearsley illustrates a similar audacity, as she politically and emotionally surveys landmarks in Southwestern England, including Clifton Church

graveyard, St. Vincent's rocks, the Hotwells, the Avon River, and Leigh Woods. The speaker of "Clifton Hill" also surveys a range of topics, while entangling them with these specific Natural scenes, class, commerce, her familial relationship with her mother, and the precariousness of her own position in her community as a laboring-class woman. Yearsley's powerful stylistic choice to move back and forth between giving a prospect view of Clifton and realistically representing her own laboring-class domestic space and the chaotic feelings it produces demonstrates a complex use of the chaotic domestic: continually in the poem she breaks boundaries while also maintaining order. In short order, then, the poem's survey of landscapes, both interior and exterior, boldly critiques the socially and economically privileged while also foregrounding her own complex feelings.

Disdaining those who enjoy the spoils of Britain's foreign conquests, Yearsley disrupts the very form of the pastoral in her view of time: recollecting the past, and providing an appreciation of the present, she anticipates a vastly different socio-political future that might make space for a woman like herself. What Yearsley does so well is to bring the realistic view of nature and domestic labor to the surface to distinguish it from that which is purely an idealistic rendition of the pastoral; this, in turn, serves to lay bare the terms on which the laboring woman exists in the margins between urban commerce and pastoral idealization. At the same time, Lactilla's Roussevian observations on the world anticipate Wordsworth's discussion of the rustic mind in his *Preface*; indeed, Yearsley collapses the lure of the wild with domestic sensibility along with aligning her body with the landscape.-

This element of tension begins with the decidedly non-traditional winter opening of “Clifton Hill,” with its focus on the cold and unwelcoming elements of Bristol winters. The “lone” hour paired with “angry storms” reveals a place that is isolated and difficult to navigate. This relationship between Nature’s landscape and the human body generates affectual energies that spread to the speaker of the poem. The rapid pace and rhythm of “Clifton Hill” is produced by the focus on the aural sense—in setting the scene of the poem, Yearsley describes the sounds of “Rapture’s call,” the “bleating flocks,” and the mourning bird who “complains.” This aural focus positions Yearsley as an experienced figure who has learned to pay attention to Nature’s particularities so as to navigate the ways Nature might annihilate her at any moment. Likewise, the pacing simultaneously indicates Yearsley’s deft regulation of herself, interaction with Nature, and navigation of the difficulties of her working life as a laborer, while also demonstrating her artistry as a writer. The speaker is in control of this complicated chaotic dynamic as she transitions from varying images and memories of the landscape. She easily moves between the “angry,” “hoary” place, where the “feather’d warblers quit the leafless shade” and “the savage haunt of man” (1-10).^{vi} Within the first two lines, Yearsley boldly demands that the reader pay attention to both simultaneously. Within these initial shockingly visceral lines, Yearsley collapses the complicated and sensory relationship between the body and the landscape, describing how the “chill’d soul deploras her distant friend” and, in doing so, intimates the shared connection between nature’s “chill’d” body and that of the individual self. Indeed, both her physical body and her “soul” shiver when faced with performing labor at Clifton.

In the lines that follow, Yearsley depicts Clifton as including a “savage” or dangerous, aspect, suggesting that the antidote (of warmth and safety) can only be provided by the laboring woman’s mastery over domestic space:

The Swain neglects his Nymph, yet knows not why;

The Nymph, indifferent, mourns the freezing sky;

Alike insensible to soft desire,

She asks no warmth—but from the kitchen fire;

Love seeks a milder zone; half sunk in snow

Lactilla, shivering, tends her fav’rite cow (15-20)

That the kitchen fire—made and kept up by the laboring woman—is juxtaposed to Lactilla freezing opens up the dark irony that Lactilla makes others warm and safe while being herself literally left out in the cold. This is a perfect illustration of what the laboring woman must do every day in order to keep the upper class house and family safe, warm, and in working order. Here, Yearsley suggests that all societal notions about metaphysical topics (i.e. love) are made subordinate by the sheer need to be safe and warm first and foremost. The exchange between the nymph and swain, both “insensible to soft desire” further expresses Yearsley’s underlying anger at the classist construction of feeling: essentially, Yearsley asks who is given time and opportunity to develop lofty ideals regarding human emotion? Who has time to engage with the muse or grand notions about love? Certainly those tending to livestock, homes, fields, children, and washing are not afforded time, nor are they encouraged to engage with their emotions. Indeed, in these lines that begin the poem the swain does not even know why it is he neglects his nymph, other than through custom.

Although the “shiver” Lactilla feels in this line could be understood to illustrate her subservient position, the speaker’s deep mental engagement with her landscape and its effects on her body show that the shiver is more than simply physiological: indeed, in describing her physical response to the same cold that fills her mind with “gloomy objects,” Yearsley demonstrates her body’s ability to engage ideologically and artistically with a landscape that physically might cause her demise at any moment. Here, Yearsley gestures towards complex feelings that demonstrate her awareness of the natural landscape as part of the infrastructure of agricultural life. These details point directly to Yearsley’s mental and bodily relationship with the landscape and, in doing so, imply that she is in tune with the chaotic relationship between domestic life and the natural landscape. Certainly Yearsley shows that laborers have feelings and the cow is not just an animal to them, but instead another being that is also in tune with the chaotic relationship between domestic life and the natural landscape. Lactilla’s shiver becomes in itself an affectual shimmer, a demonstration of the underlying emotion developed by laboring-class people; not easily expressed but underneath the veneer of social expectation waiting to emerge.

“[T]he kitchen fire,” “the low cottage door,” and the presence of her “fav’rite cow” do not take the reader to idealized versions of Bristol’s landscape; instead, the poem demands that Lactilla remain in a domestic space, and that she stay firmly in view of the cottage, the fire, and the hedgerows which serve as a barrier between herself and her milk-[ing]cow and any notion of a boundless landscape. The tensions between the “kitchen fire” and Lactilla’s “shivering” frame illustrate that the laborer can never fully enjoy comfort in nature nor comfort in the home, for these are the bald circumstances of

laboring life. The affect generated here is a tangle of ironic emotions: she is forced to work in freezing conditions and yet the fire she builds is not primarily for her—it is for the upper classes who employ her. The complex and contradictory mix simultaneously creates the very comfortable domestic conditions the owner expects from the laborer, and also marks all of her labor as invisible to the owner.

This connection between body and landscape is made more apparent by a series of opposites. The “angry storms” and “Northern blast” give way to the stillness of the “silent grove” absent of “soft sensation” and “fluttering pulse” and demonstrate a deep connection between the landscape and the laboring-class female body. In placing the speaker in the midst of the soon-to-be lifeless grove, Yearsley aligns her affects with Nature’s storms and demonstrates that laboring-class women are complicated fixtures of not just the poem, but also the landscape itself. In doing so, Yearsley shows how the laborer must agilely anticipate the unpredictable, unnatural, yet also cyclical demands of the upper classes on the laboring classes while also enduring hardships from natural elements, such as cold, fatigue, and hunger. Indeed, in showing the speaker’s sensory connection to Bristol’s landscape Yearsley suggests that it is important that society understand humankind’s material traces on the landscape. In sharing what she knows, Yearsley makes the laboring woman’s private, internal, and bodily knowledge available to the public. For example, when the speaker of “Clifton Hill” does seek comfort in a domestic space, simply to get warm by of “the kitchen fire,” it is a visceral image alluding to the laborer’s work as physically mediating the margins between the domestic and nature on the behalf of the upper-class employer.

The primal need for shelter and warmth is emphasized when the poetic persona finds a bird near the cottage door, a creature that is both domestic and wild:

The beauteous red-breast, tender in her frame,
 Whose murder marks the fool with treble shame,
 Near the low cottage door, in pensive mood,
 Complains, and mourns her brothers of the wood.
 Her song oft wak'd the soul to gentle joys,
 All but his ruthless soul whose gun destroys. (23-8)

At first, Yearsley notices the bird's beauty and song, demonstrating her sensitivity to the aesthetic in nature. This aesthetic, in light of class structure, might be unexpected coming from a laboring woman. The bird's "pensive mood" mirrors that of the speaker gazing out on the landscape, and indirectly references how those of the upper classes hunt for pleasure, not necessity. Just as Lactilla's emotional shivers share a relationship with the cow, so too is she linked affectually to the bird. On one hand, that the bird is not in the woods or over the field but instead "near the low cottage door" indicates there is little comfort to be found in a "beautiful" or domestic space that cannot defend against numbing cold. However, on the other, we see the bird's presence as showing the laboring speaker's acclimation to nature (in the form of the bird) crossing boundaries (as a version of entanglement) into domestic space.

Yearsley's opinion of the upper classes manifests in how they treat those belonging to the laboring classes—such as Walpole's description of the maidservant, Bianca—and animals, such as the bird whose brothers were shot by hunters. Yearsley's

opinion of the upper classes as hunters is explicit, as she describes the death of animals as “murders”:

For this, rough clown, long pains on thee shall wait,
 And freezing want avenge their hapless fate;
 For these fell murders may'st thou change thy kind,
 In outward form as savage as in mind;
 Go, be a bear of Pythagorean name,
 From man distinguish'd by thy hideous frame. (29-34)

Yearsley harangues the upper classes for the sporting murder of animals, going so far as to call the hunters “rough clown(s).” What’s more, Yearsley considers adequate punishment for the so-called hunters a “freezing want” to “avenge” what they have done to the birds. Boldly, Yearsley does not hesitate to directly challenge the genteel image of the upper class man in pointing out his “savage” internal nature as a “murderer.” In doing so, Yearsley demonstrates that she can see the disparity between one’s appearance and one’s character while also drawing a relationship to philosophical principles such as the Pythagorean theorem, suggesting further entanglement between her understanding of the complex and senseless class relationships and accepted social ideas regarding who has the right to access nature without punishment or consequence.

After this assault on upper-class norms regarding hunting, Yearsley gradually switches back to a warm, spring-summer setting in which love is now possible. Here, again, she critiques upper class behaviors considered sophisticated. In this section, she begins making connections across a number of meanings of “rapture,” sexual, spiritual, intellectual. She is particularly bold in her assertion that the laboring-class maid is able to

use her common sense to navigate the sexually dangerous terrain of the rapture of erotic relations. This is in contrast to the silly upper-class maid who dies from “Fashion” and “Dissipation.” Avoiding using the seeming pastoral sheen of calm sentiment, Yearsley demands that her audience understand the difficulties the young lower-class maiden faces:

No high romantic rules of honour bind
 The timid virgin of the rural kind;
 No conquest of the passions e'er was taught,
 No need e'er given them for the vanquish'd thought. (55-58)

Yearsley suggests that, although “No conquest of the passions e'er was taught,” the lower-class maiden does not need upper-class conduct books or formal moral instruction, but instead learns from “fear of shame” to control her passions. On the other hand, she describes the dissipated upper-class maiden who has access to books and wealth, but still makes a moral misstep and is punished. There is anger in these lines as Yearsley points to the injustice of the vigilance that the lower-class maiden must display to protect herself in contrast to the upper-class maiden who is given privilege, opportunity, and forms of education not readily available to women of the laboring classes. Already fatigued by inopportunity, work, and gender constraints, Yearsley shows how utter fear becomes one of a few available psychic tools readily available to constrain laboring-class women. But she also notes that the maiden’s wily “mock disdain” and “unreal scorn” to control the swain’s advances are strategically powerful. Yearsley has no answer for this unjust situation, but by unleashing her anger about the injustice she boldly puts all classes on notice.

In the poem village locals are depicted as closer to nature, without affectation:

No conquest of the passions e'er was taught,
 No meed e'er given them for the vanquish'd thought.
 To sacrifice, to govern, to restrain,
 Or to extinguish, or to hug the pain,
 Was never theirs (55-61)

Here Yearsley describes the demands on those belonging to the lower classes, and honors the laboring classes in foregrounding rather than extinguishing their pain. In noting the sacrifice, restraint, and care of laboring-class people not to show feeling, Yearsley registers the underlying anger about that requirement of the lower classes. In contrast, she critiques the upper class categorically in these lines: those of the upper classes have the luxury of enjoying high romantic or chivalric feelings, such as sacrifice—all the while knowing their own position as rulers remains intact. Those of the lower classes have a seemingly simpler position in relation to their personal feelings as they do not have time to philosophize about love.

Line 50 includes the image of the “screaming milkmaid,” which we could imagine as Yearsley or, at least someone of her socio-economic background. Here, we see an example of how she has mastered the art of staying chaste without any of the resources of those belonging to the upper classes; part of this mastery, of course, is her understanding the fierce societal punishment for a laboring-class woman who loses her chastity outside of marriage. The comparison between the lower-class maiden who learns naturally to resist sin—sex before marriage—and the upper-class maiden who does not learn from written conduct books to resist corruption, and therefore dies young, is an

important feature of Yearsley's representation of the chaotic domestic as an affect within the poem. She uses familiar cautionary tales, while challenging class-based assumptions on virtue and character, to establish an actual version of sublimity that, while not purely dichotomous, links to mortality. At this point in the poem, the ultimate affect of a series of deeply painful anecdotes describes laboring-class woman experience: the affectual energies rumble beneath the surface while the young woman of the laboring classes learns quickly that because her body is low born, it must be protected from pregnancy as her body's ability to perform labor is all she has to make her way in the world. In contrast, the young woman of the upper classes has more privilege and more ways of avoiding financial disaster. Just as the dangers are real, so too is Yearsley's anger.

Transporting the reader from the solitary, cold outdoor environment of Bristol, Yearsley then describes, in the vein of proto-Romanticism, how the mind simultaneously creates and is created by Nature. Implicitly, Yearsley tells us that the imagination's connection to deep emotion in tranquility is produced by a laboring-class woman's experience. For example, upon seeing a laborer at the bottom of the hill, she notes: "The landscape rushes on his untaught mind, / Strong raptures rise, but raptures undefin'd" (50-51). The affect of this phrase—"raptures undefin'd"—outright asserts that those belonging to the lower classes are capable of high and deep thoughts and feelings, of love, for example. The highest form of feeling, for Yearsley, is the feeling of "rapture" and that this is ultimately fully understood by the lower classes even though they might not be able to describe it in words. In a brilliant move, she entangles sexual rapture with spiritual and aesthetic rapture here. Instead, laboring-class people experience shimmers of

affect or “raptures undefin’d.” As a member of the laboring classes Yearsley is further elevated as an artist because she feels the many different shimmers and finds metaphors and imagery to describe them. That “strong raptures rise, but raptures undefined” suggests the very difference between emotion and affect according to affect theorists: affect cannot be defined but instead only captured through multiple images, sounds, and syntactical patterns. Yearsley produces a complex arrangement of imagery to describe the emotional landscape with which she is already immersed.

Vital to those memories is Yearsley’s mother. The darker elements of the poem collide as Yearsley’s memory of speaking with her mother about death in the same beautiful landscape filters into her discussion of landscape, sexual politics, and domesticity. As Landry notes, “*Clifton Hill* is in one sense a memorial to Yearsley’s mother, who had died the previous winter...and who lies buried in Clifton Churchyard” (137). Yearsley begins the poem’s topographical expedition with her mother’s grave, or her “sacred turf” (73). Landry considers Lactilla’s disbelief at her mother’s death a rhetorical reflection of Yearsley’s “difficulty... with this material” and with good reason as Yearsley’s anticipation of censure from her readers stems from her belief that upper-class readers will be “incapable of comprehending a poor woman’s grief” (137). Instead, Yearsley cleverly indicates just the opposite: whether through explicit or implicit expressions of emotion, she suggests that a woman of the laboring classes can make those of the upper classes understand her grief. In assisting the reader on an expedition between the highs of rapture and the lows of grief, Yearsley follows a logic of affect rather than aesthetic boundary or reason. Yearsley shows us the loss of her mother is unnamable,

raw, and as deeply entrenched within her memory and understanding of the landscape as her own shivering body, the boundless hills, and the changing of the seasons.

There are meaningful contradictions within Yearsley's memories of her mother within the graveyard. Although Yearsley feels tremendous grief, she also notes the presence of the church wherein "sacred raptures rise," pointedly contrasting her grief with rapture. Allowing the two to intermingle within the same memory. Further, Yearsley describes how "gloomy objects fill the mental eye," while also telling us that the same landscape, although "gloomy," is "sacred." Yearsley reveals how these primarily sensory perceptions emerge from highly nuanced expressions of feeling. That which is sacred, the ground in which the speaker's mother is buried, conjures dark images as well as ones of nostalgia and longing. Indeed, the emotional nuances of Yearsley anger, sadness, and eagerness reveal the injustices of the laboring-class woman, further evidenced in the poem in the following lines:

As o'er the upland hills I take my way,
 My eyes in transport boundless scenes survey:
 Here the neat dome where sacred raptures rise,
 From whence the contrite groan shall pierce the skies;
 Where sin-struck souls bend low in humble prayer,
 And waft that sigh which ne'er is lost in air. (68 – 72)

In these lines Lactilla's eyes cannot contain the "boundless" landscape; certainly, she flirts with the idea of the sublime in a distinctly pastoral setting: "upland hills" is notably beautiful, but that "sacred raptures rise" points to a far more sublime encounter with the natural world. Rapture takes on many meanings within the poem, particularly

when contrasted with tragic emotions such as grief and loss, as in the cases of Louisa and Yearsley's mother. In doing so, Yearsley deals indirectly with the highs and lows of affect, demonstrating the tangled memories and emotions within her own mind and how these play out on her body. For example, the end of the poem features memories and local anecdotes that "rush" onto the speaker in increasing emotional intensity. The speaker hears singing and liturgy—distinctly human made features—and yet seeing a church in the midst of a natural setting with supernatural songs arising from it creates a compelling and sublime image.

The complex myriad of emotions that Yearsley puts forth is instead expressed as a projection of what critics of her suffering might think of her: she projects how her critics might perceive her as "light, cruel, vain, / Whose deeds have never swell'd the Muses' strain, / Who bosoms other sorrows ne'er assail / Who hear, unheeding, Misery's bitter tale" (94-8). Instead of attempting to apply words to her own suffering at the loss of her mother, Yearsley conjures class-based concerns in regards to what her critics will say. More importantly, Yearsley's self-consciousness at receiving critical censure for expressing her desire to be with her mother is affectually important inasmuch as it lays out her deepest heartache and longing, regardless of how critics may perceive the poem. The collision of emotional responses, those from the past and the projected future, anchors the reader to the emotional realities of Yearsley's personal longing.

Yearsley continues to turn her discussion from the landscape and people of Bristol inward, commenting on the landscape's relationship with her soul. Although Yearsley acts as an observer, she also brings affect to her positionality, using the phrase "untaught

minds” in other poems such as “To Mr.—, an Unlettered Poet, on Genius Unimproved” from *Poems on Various Subjects* (1787): here, speaking to a fellow laboring-class writer, she writes, “Deep in the soul live ever tuneful springs, / Waiting the touch of Ecstasy, which strikes / Most pow’rful on defenceless, untaught Minds” (48-50). Comparatively, Wordsworth’s later belief that a poet is “a man speaking to other men” mirrors how Yearsley’s own mind is “untaught” speaking to “untaught Minds” (50). If we believe, as Jameson does, that shifts in social arrangements produce changes in affect and media, Yearsley’s suggestion that “untaught minds”—specifically her own—are capable of profound artistry is a self-conscious assertion of laboring-class representation, one that is shaped by affect (10). The repetition of the phrase “untaught minds” in Yearsley’s verse suggests that “taught minds” are ironically taught to view the world according to often precious aesthetic philosophy. In doing so, Yearsley implies that taught minds are not burdened with social conditioning or rules regarding how one must perceive Nature. In this context, her mind is unbridled and unencumbered by pretention and artifice when looking at Nature because she is constantly working within and beside Nature.

Yet, like Barber’s poems on behalf of her son, Yearsley writes this poem in a double-voiced form often switching perspectives from male to female, further stressing her own nuanced position as a woman of the lower classes. In this instance, Yearsley acknowledges expectations regarding gender and the laboring-class poetic tradition in having the perspective of the “untaught mind” belong to a man; yet, like Barber before her she uses the cloak of maleness to invite the reader to understand her own opinions. That the “landscape rushes on his untaught mind” reinforces the notion that the mind, for Yearsley, functions as perhaps the freest space with which a human may engage (50).

Additionally, Yearsley's belief in the power of the untaught mind hinges on her understanding of its ability to access elements of Imagination and Ecstasy—the spirit of poesy—and foretells Romantic ideals that the bard is in many ways prophetic. Yearsley's view of laboring-class people is pointed, political, and contrary to expectations of the laboring-class poetic tradition. She goes beyond the image of laboring-class people as simple and unaffected, and asserts a sense of authority as a laboring-class writer in her suggestion that laboring-class people are perhaps the most equipped to write poetry. Indeed, Yearsley's authority over her own bodily autonomy serves as an enactment of the chaotic domestic. In suggesting that the laboring mind is poised to have a symbiotic and rapturous relationship with nature, Yearsley rejects socio-political images of laboring-class women as purely dependent and immobile. Instead, she presents a view of laboring-class women as having the potential to author areas of their own lives; through the chaotic domestic there are rapturous moments of insight and freedom the laboring woman can access.

Although marginal, Yearsley's relationship to village life, landscape, and domestic work does not make her a passive observer. Instead, her development of sensory images to describe her bodily engagement shows just how sensitive she is to her environment—whether exterior or interior spaces. For example, by placing the reader in a difficult position, midst the onslaught of caustic, confusing sounds of the “clumsy music” of the sailors, “the sighing maid,” and “vulgar dissonance,” followed by isolated silence, the persona in the poem makes the reader viscerally aware of the fluidity and instability inherent to the laboring-class woman's life. In this way, Yearsley buttresses the general impression of *Lactilla* as one who is removed from the community of Clifton Hill by

complexly intertwining offering of praise to Bristol's economic accomplishments (as she does in admiring the laborers and sailors), its landscape, but always from a distance. Yearsley's array of personal and commercial paired with attentiveness to work and landscape complicates the pastoral, thus making it far richer and more complex in its ability to provide an ecology of class relations and affects. These contradictions serve as a means of reconfiguring the pastoral; one that presents a complicated view of what it means to be in a laboring-class community that is also burgeoning with commerce, a rural space that is not free of social demands on its community members, and women who are simultaneously cast to the margins of society and nature. Within this liminal space between society and nature, Yearsley is able to self-fashion herself so as to make those margins a place of recuperation, one that offers a sense of freedom from gendered constraints found in traditionally pastoral spaces.

Yearsley's reputation and self-presentation are hugely important for shaping how we see the laboring class female body in her work. Indeed, Yearsley's seeming awareness of what Laura Mandell calls "the *real* experience of the repugnant female body" is utilized not only as a tool of confrontation, as with Walpole, but also one of recuperation in "Clifton." The condition and experiences of Lactilla's body throughout "Clifton Hill"—her shivering, sadness, and anger—produces notable tensions with her often dream-like remembrances of seasons past. In tracing memories while also propelling the reader into personal bodily experiences, Yearsley is able, as Landry notes, to write "Clifton Hill" as "a text of reparation through memory" (137).

The story of Louisa further supports the complex emotional registers laid out in the poem. According to Quentin Bailey, Louisa was believed to be the illegitimate

daughter of Frances I, the Emperor of Austria (175). Through this anecdote there are a series of buried emotions that relate directly to what it is to be a woman having lost love. Specifically, Yearsley's mention of her mother's grave and Louisa's physical position under the haystack gesture towards not only emotional loss, but also the suppression of emotions. Part of this suppression of emotions happens within domestic spaces: "Trouble and misery dwell in houses, and there is no happiness but in liberty and fresh air" (Thompson 49). Ironically, as the domestic is supposed to be the sphere where women are most at home, Yearsley seems to use Louisa's story, in part, to underline just how harmful the domestic sphere can be for women. Louisa ultimately comes to signify constraints placed on both women and the working classes. Indeed, Louisa is hiding in the haystacks. She is both dead and alive in that her story serves as a cautionary tale for young women belonging to the laboring classes, and also may serve as a recognition that women are metaphorically buried in their houses in an ideology that traps them at home; here, the domestic backdrop of Louisa's tale indicates that such a domestic scene has the capacity to do more harm than good.

In this context, Louisa is "lawless anarchy" but she is also now made orderly by having her story memorialized and spoken in the poem. Yearsley notes, again, that she as a writer "sympathizes" with all the tangled tenants and makes sense of their disorderly meaning in her well-fashioned poem. Louisa is one of the cautionary tales for the young women of the community to bear in mind so as to not let their erotic feelings take control. Here, Yearsley does not simply follow a conservative agenda, but instead she uses Louisa's story to interrogate a culture that disallows women from having and acting on sexual feelings. Louisa's liminal position enables her to become a tenant of the chaotic

domestic within “Clifton Hill.”

The chaos outlined within the poem is not purely from cautionary tales nor memories, but from the people who inhabit Clifton. Yearsley writes “Various the tenants of this tangled wood,” which features a kind of inherent and implicit chaos that further suggests she can observe all the different kinds of people in her town as well as their intricate—“tangled”—relationships with one another. Lactilla’s position in relation to the plebeian culture of the sailors seems ambiguous, an ambiguity that is later expounded upon in “To the Bristol Marine Society” from her second collection. The sailor’s music is “clumsy” and their delight “rough” in its vernacularism, as Landry argues in *Muses*, is different from the sensibility of the literate laborer whose powers of literary articulation set her apart from much of the class for whom she speaks and out of whose situation she writes (122). This particular moment in the text is often perceived as, at worst, a classist view of the working classes, and, at best, a self-deprecating view of Yearsley’s own class status.²² What Yearsley actually does in the midst of these contradictions is point to a notable area of tension wherein it is possible simultaneously to experience sympathy and pleasure in a community, while also in this moment standing outside her usual engagements within the community in order to observe it through her writerly affects. The tension between these two ideas supports Yearsley’s development of the chaotic domestic as a state of “in-betweenness”; one fraught at times with her own personal class resentment and her position as writer and domestic servant.

²² Dustin Griffin discusses the pull between self-presentation and self-preservation for laboring-class writers of the period. The struggle to maintain authenticity while simultaneously complying with the demands of middle-class readers is well-documented in the poetic tradition (193)

Many critical accounts of Yearsley's history have focused on the Yearsley-More quarrel (Demers 21). In doing so, critics have often portrayed Yearsley as simply an exploited victim of the laboring classes and More as an oppressive figure of the literati. In many respects such a description makes sense: during the height of their quarrel More's friends joined forces against Yearsley. For example, Mrs. Frances Boscawen, a fellow member of The Bluestocking Society, referred to Yearsley as "that odious woman" and Mrs. Montagu, one of Yearsley's other patrons, observed that "bestowing a gift on such wretches gives them power over one" (Demers 72). Yet, as I have shown here, Yearsley's personal relationships are not the only places wherein she asserts agency. In "Clifton Hill" Yearsley expresses registers of internal landscapes of feeling vis-à-vis external landscapes and, in doing so, she shows how the female laboring-class body can more readily recognize affectual shimmers because of its liminality and proximity to natural and domestic landscapes. Yearsley's entire second collection, *Poems on Various Subjects* (1787), reflects her desire to see and experience positions of power, as her patrons do, and she also begins to adopt the attitude and responsibilities of a patron-figure in her verse. In her disruption of form, Yearsley positions herself as a tastemaker, one who simultaneously challenges and establishes poetic trend and convention. Yearsley makes ample use of what I term the "chaotic domestic," through her claims to authority over political, artistic, economic components of her life at the same time that she recognizes just how her body is being used by the upper classes.

Yearsley's poetic identity was burdened with competing representations of domesticity, and education as a vector of class identity is simply one of them. The chaos

of her own poetic self-representation influences how she interacts with those belonging to her own social order, as we see in “To Mr.—.” Yearsley simultaneously mocks those of the upper social orders while also adopting their tone and attitude to observe the customs of laboring-class people. As Williams notes, structures of feeling show the conflicts within feeling within specific socio-economic groups—Yearsley seeks to describe a new structure of feeling whereby the laboring woman poet receives respect for her art. Much like “Clifton Hill” in emphasizing the “untaught mind” rather than the cultivated or taught mind she uses the poem to connect creativity with laboring class status. In “To Mr.—” Yearsley describes the “moment”²³ when a poem occurs to uninterrupted, natural genius:

I eager seiz'd, no formal Rule e'er aw'd;
 No Precedent controuled; no Custom fix'd
 My independent spirit: on the wing
 She still shall guideless soar (36-39)

In these bold, powerful lines Yearsley is without restraint. Here, Yearsley represents affectual energies in her suggestion that being in this position as a laboring-class woman with natural genius provides the most rapture and soaring writing. Not a passive recipient, she seizes power to write. Thus, “Rule” does not awe her, and precedent and custom do not control her, because she maintains an independent spirit. Like Barber, Collier, and Leapor before her, Yearsley avoids domination by the upper and middle classes, and in doing so establishes a sense of laboring-class ethos and sheer unbridled

²³The emphasis upon the “moment” of creation shares a relationship with the concept of natural genius. Moira Ferguson posits that for Yearsley the “intuitive response to inspiration . . . was an unencumbered, accessible poetic act” (54)

authority. Her spirit is “independent” and without restraint; instead of an evocation of a distinctly eighteenth-century aesthetics, in an extraordinary move by a laboring-class woman writer establishes her own unique aesthetics based the chaotic domestic.

Social expectations regarding the role laboring-class women play in artistic production is turned on its head in these lines as Yearsley takes control—and wants the reader to know she takes control: “I eager seiz’d, no formal Rule e’er aw’d” (36). Yearsley suggests that her artistic creativity emerges spontaneously, yet she is not the passive recipient of “natural genius.” Rather, Yearsley’s personal and artistic ambitions come to life in her enthusiasm to express her own creativity. Yearsley becomes somewhat like Prometheus in performing a revolutionary, forbidden act as a person of the lower classes seizing artistic power. Bold and unrelenting in her assertion that she is responsible for her poetic success and creativity, Yearsley defies many central tenants of the laboring-class poetic tradition; in particular she claims the right to artistic authority. She claims access to pure feeling despite what the reader knows of Yearsley’s personal history as a largely indebted and dependent poet, her “spirit”—her artistic genius—“guideless soar[s].

CHAPTER 5

“My Hand Still Trembles when I Write”:

Affecting Scottishness in Janet Little’s Verse

“May she wha writes, of wit get mair,
An' a' that read an ample share
Of candour every fault to screen,
That in her doggerel scrawls are seen.”

All this and more, a critic said;
I heard and slunk behind the shade;
So much I dread their cruel spite,
My hand still trembles when I write
(lines 57-64)

The above lines, from Janet Little’s (1759-1813) “Given to a Lady Who Asked Me to Write a Poem,” printed from her 1792 collection, *The Poetical Works of Janet Little, The Scottish Milkmaid*, develop a structure of feeling. The lines are exceptional in their pointed interpolation of Scottish and English dialectical patterns, but they also unhinge traditional conceptions of the domestic, as defined by Samuel Johnson.²⁴ This chapter will examine Little’s critique of Johnson’s fourth definition of the domestic— as “not foreign”— as well as the structure of feeling she develops around her liminal position vis-à-vis Great Britain’s burgeoning empire, Scottish nationalist politics, and the silenced role of women as non-citizens within their home nations. The above lines illustrate that, while a seeming insider within the Scottish laboring-class writing community, Little is well aware of the patriarchal laws, class restrictions, and imperial

²⁴Again, Johnson’s definitions of “domestic”:

1. Belonging to the house; not relating to things public;
2. Private; done at home; not open;
3. Inhabiting the house; not wild; Not foreign

interference that allow the cruel spite of her critics. Yet, despite the cruel critics Little almost directly calls out, Donna Landry observes, “the poet’s hand may tremble, but she has not stopped writing” (8). Indeed, that very trembling and her willingness to highlight it in verse suggest Little’s sensitivity and self-conscious awareness of herself as a professional writer and artist. She is simultaneously genuine and performative in noting her bodily response and, in doing so, Little creates a complex position for herself; she is both masked and fully revealed. That Little is willing to feature her emotional, bodily responses by describing her laboring-class female body as “slunk behind the shade” and her hand as still “trembl[ing] when [she] write(s)” shows that, while the “slunk[ness]” indicates terror and how English critics batter examples of Scottishness, she bravely imagines a new structure of feeling for her fraught identity. In this structure of feeling—what I call the chaotic domestic—Little shows how brutal the critique of her poetry from English critics is through her merging of defiant and bold Scots dialect with proper English syntax.

A vital aspect of Little’s physical response to censure—both her “trembl[ing] and having “slunk”—is gender. Certainly, there was great contention of women entering into the public sphere in the eighteenth century, as Olympe de Gouge protested against the exclusion of women from the French political sphere, and her contemporary, Mary Wollstonecraft, argued in 1792 that in women “dependence of body naturally produces dependence of mind” (Kevin 1). Therefore, in threatening the presence of women’s physical bodies in public spheres, so too do male authorities of the period stifle the capabilities of the minds of women or, in this case, their body of writing. Indeed, Deleuze suggests that the relationship between body and mind is as follows:

The mind begins by coldly and curiously regarding what the body does, it is first of all a witness; then it is affected, it becomes an impassioned witness, that is, it experiences for itself affects that are not simply effects of the body, but veritable critical entities that hover over the body and judge it (124).

Part of the mind's judgment over the physical body that Deleuze describes shows the varying degrees of containment that the one's physical body undergoes as it processes, and develops from, various experiences. As Clare Hemmings notes, the body and mind share an undeniable connection, although "detached," and "differently affected" (563). For Little, the fusion of Scottish and English languages serves as an effective vehicle for her depiction of these types of containment; an expression of her mind's resistance to her body's containment as both a laboring-class woman with limited access to education and essential rights, and also as Scottish woman part of the body politic. On the latter point Little uses exertions of Scottish dialectical patterns in her poetry to talk back to the British empire.

The combination of English and Scots creates affect-driven "shimmers" about her position as a woman, as Scottish, and as lower class, in a world where she is also expected to acknowledge Englishness as superior to her Scottish origins. Thus, in this chapter, I focus on the chaotic affectual energy apparent in several of Little's poems that do not always directly explore facets of the domestic as it relates to the home, as, for example, we have seen in Leapor's "Crumble Hall" and Yearsley's "Clifton Hill." Instead, I analyze the complications of being "not foreign"—yet also not citizen—a position that quite literally displaces Little from the nation that shapes her identity: Scotland. The complex rhetoric describing the affects of "in-betweenness" can be seen in

her poem, “Given to Lady Who Asked Me to Write a Poem,” which I will first discuss. Finally, I look closely at the complicated relationship Little maintained with fellow laboring-class writer Robert Burns in two tribute poems, “On a Visit to Mr. Burns” and “An Epistle to Mr. Robert Burns.” I show that her description of their relationship illustrates the different forms of in-betweenness Little faced in relation to Burns’s relative male privilege. Although Little clearly admired Burns, she sought to be celebrated as he was, thus resulting a complex structure of feeling that exposes the nuanced and fraught elements of Little’s identity as a laboring-class Scottish woman.

Little was born in 1759, the same year as Burns, and was employed as a servant in the household of Frances Dunlop, Burns’s patron, who also became Little’s patron. Although she was the daughter of a farm worker, she became the servant to a local clergyman and as result expanded her education. As a result, Little was able to obtain a position with Dunlop. As her poems demonstrate, she had a deep knowledge of the authors central to those traditions, and she benefited from the fact that Scottish writing was increasingly popular amongst the British. But though, as we shall see, Little viewed herself as Burns’s poetic equal, as illustrated in “An Epistle to Mr. Burns,” her lowly origins and her gender colored the reception of her poetry, so that her poetry collection of 1792 was condescendingly described as being by “the Scotch Milkmaid.”⁽³⁾ It is no wonder her verse is fraught with raw emotion.²⁵

Thus far this dissertation has focused on shimmers of affect whereby laboring-class women writers highlight complex and unnamable areas of heightened emotion. In

²⁵Affect theory has enabled a discussion of consolidated and converged identities in relation to laboring-class women writers.

understanding and locating these shimmers, I use the term “chaotic domestic” to describe a dynamic system within which laboring-class women writers must work, but also one that is supple in the ways that allow individual writers the agency to resist and react to the emerging capitalist relations of domestic labor. In this chapter, I look to additional definitions of the domestic that pay attention to the meanings of the domestic vis-à-vis the nation. Indeed, in showing that Little’s verse demonstrates the range of affects that both reflect feminist concerns and seemingly nationalist sentiments I look closely at Johnson’s fourth definition of the domestic— “not foreign”— and find that Little’s version of domesticity is a rejection of traditional definitions of the domestic, such as Johnson’s. Moreover, Little’s identity as a Scottish, laboring-class, woman writer places her in a liminal position between Great Britain’s burgeoning empire, Scottish nationalist politics, and the silenced role of women as non-citizens. As shown in the epigraph of this chapter, Little’s physiological response to her nameless critics—her hand trembling in response to stale, hegemonic criticism—shows her own personal affects, even trauma, regarding political oppression experienced by women and British subjects broadly.

Thus, part of the affectual elements of Little’s verse relies on her poetic engagements with England and her status as an elided self—her identity as female, Scottish, and laboring class. Because Little is not part of England’s domestic sphere, the domestic changes shape in this chapter; indeed, unlike earlier discussions of Barber, Collier, Leapor, and Yearsley, the focus shifts from the home as the domestic sphere to the idea of England and Scotland as domestic sites wherein Scotland has undergone a forced domestic merger with England. Within this newly merged “Britain,” a lower-class Scotswoman is unable to enjoy the rights and privileges as citizen based on the

intersections of her oppressed identity, and, because of this, she must find subversive ways to maintain her Scots nationality while also battling to survive as a laboring-class woman writer. In closely analyzing the culmination of Little's complex identity, it is possible to note shimmers of affect through her expressions of underlying anger, frustration, and longing regarding local and international politics, class dynamics, and gender constraints. The shimmers are found in Little's word choice, slant rhyme, syntax, enjambment, line length, imagery, and dialectal patterns. In "Percept, Affect, and Concept" Gilles Deleuze writes, "The writer's specific materials are words and syntax, the created syntax that ascends irresistibly into his work and passes into sensation" (167). Little's fusion of Scots and English, and how she meaningfully intersperses the two dialectical patterns, allows her writing to move into the elevated, unnamable position of affect. Indeed, with the many oppressions weighing on her identity, her rhetorical choices are integral to understanding the structure of feeling she constructs within her poetry.

To understand the shimmers of affect in Little's poetry, it is important to examine Scotland's political situation before analyzing the syntactical register of affects in poetry. An important component of Little's Scottish identity is the 1707 Act of Union. Scotland's Union with England ended Scottish Parliament and resulted in the relocation of many parliamentarians, politicians, and aristocrats to London. Scottish law, however, remained entirely separate from English law; therefore the civil law courts, lawyers, universities, and jurists remained within Scotland. Because of this, a new middle-class elite dominated Edinburgh and facilitated the development of the Scottish Enlightenment. Although Sir Walter Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather* (1828) later suggests that the idea of a "Scottish"

identity had faded after the Act of Union,²⁶ his own influence contributes to an increasing sense of Scottish identity and a renewed interest in versions of Scottish history. Converging with the laboring-class poetic tradition, newly en vogue male Scottish writers were more marketable than ever before, and the fundamental divide in Scottish life and culture takes hold in the interpolated English and Scottish language within Little's verse.

Linda Colley's *Britons* (1992) also helps us to understand the intersections between Little's Scottishness, lower-class status, and gender. At the beginning of the eighteenth-century, Scotland participated in the forging of a new national identity for Great Britain, one that by the end of the century was constituted by "Britishness," but a Britishness that was never actually realized as Scottish. Instead, at the close of the century there was a new, liminal identity within Scotland. Susan Gal and Gail Kligman's *The Politics of Gender after Socialism* (2000) is one of the foundational studies that documents the relationship between gender and socioeconomic change. Gal and Klingman note, "state policies constrain gender relations, but ideas about the differences between men and women shape the ways in which states are imagined, constituted, and legitimated" (4). I extend their argument to include other societal and cultural changes—such as the forcible union of Scotland with England. Gal and Kligman argue that during huge societal changes we more clearly see gendered assumptions, as former ideas are modified, and differing or similar gendered structures can occur within and across contiguous geographic arenas. Thus, Little's seeming rejection from respected

²⁶ Scott wrote in *Tales of a Grandfather*: "the two sister nations... [were] blended together in manners as well by political ties" becoming "gradually approximated to each other, until the last shades of national difference may almost said to have disappeared."

literary circles—that she “trembles when [she] write[s]”—emerges due to new formations and expectations of national, class, and gender statuses within Scotland.

Cairns Craig’s work is also important here as he describes Scotland’s fraught colonial history as resulting in its being “an imaginary place in the geopolitical atlas of the world, which has failed either to ‘crystallise’ into a nation or to be absorbed effectively into the national identity of its southern neighbor” (2). Therefore, Little’s status as a Scottish woman makes her distinct within this dissertation. The inequalities for eighteenth-century laboring-class Scottish women can be understood in simultaneous multiple contexts, language and law perhaps being central. As Craig notes, within literature, Scotland represents “a problem” as it is never fully absorbed in a British identity that would have made Scottishness irrelevant. Little’s collection emerges nearly one hundred years after the forcible union between Scotland and England to create the political entity of Great Britain, and Little herself emerges squarely into the growing popularity of the laboring-class poetic tradition’s mark in Scotland. Indeed, she is also exceptionally attentive to the literary marketplace and how she presents herself within that market (Kord 43).²⁷ In *Misogynous Economies: The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (1999), Laura Mandell argues “the eighteenth century saw the birth of the concept of literature as business: literature critiqued and promoted capitalism, and books themselves became highly marketable canonical objects” (1). At this point, the inclusion of Scots vernacular in literature is not only popular, but as a viable aspect of literary “business,” further represents the “problem” of Scotland’s

²⁷Moira Ferguson discusses Little’s politics in the chapter of *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* entitled “Janet Little, the Ayrshire Dairywoman” (91-109).

acclimation with English national identity. Craig and others suggest that by the nineteenth century Scotland maintained only a “cultural sub-nationalism” that hinged on an “*Anglo-British* constitutional identity” (Craig 2). Although Little shows distinct anxiety over entering into an “*Anglo-British*” literary market place, she also exhibits sophisticated savvy about positioning herself within said market.

For Little, as well as the other laboring-class women writers of this network, affect emerges from areas of “in-betweenness” within one’s socio-political identity. The presence of “Scottishness” within her verse suggests raw, intersectional feelings regarding her own disempowerment as a Scottish woman belonging to the laboring classes. Thus, Little’s position as a powerless outsider very much on the literal and metaphorical periphery creates and comments on a structure of feeling about spaces that are not her own and that she is required to domesticate and order; indeed, she must enact the attitudes of a dutiful citizen without the benefits. Little critiques her participation in the British body politic in her poem “Given to a Lady Who Asked Me to Write a Poem.” In the poem, Little describes how in the past it was difficult for poets who fell outside of Anglo-hegemonic values to find praise for their art. Throughout the poem she urges English critics to include laboring-class Scottish writers such as herself and Burns in a new, complex poetic tradition, but within her complaints affectual shimmers emerge regarding her strong sense of being Scottish—areas wherein she implicitly makes the demands of a citizen. For example, in contrast to Little’s argument that more writers than just Alexander Pope should be praised, she also notes that now, in her day, it seems that any “dunce” can write and be praised—even a “milkmaid” such as Little. At this stage,

the popularity of the laboring-class poetic tradition, and the popularity of Scottish laboring-class writers, such as Robert Burns, was not lost on her, and yet as a woman she knows her role as writer will be overlooked, discounted, and judged. Because of this, Little must consistently argue for her value only then coyly to undercut the quality of her writing. For example, she flaunts and dismisses her labor thusly: “Mair fit she wad her dairy tent;/ or labour at her spinning wheel, / An’ do her work baith swift an’ weel” (48-50). In these lines, Little exhibits her frustrations in that she is allowed only to detail her domestic work, but belittle her efforts as a writer. As part of these frustrations, Little implicitly lays out the bitter position of being a good writer, yet having her writing held to standards beyond her control because she is viewed as a second class citizen.

Of course, another aspect of Little’s apology for her writing—while demonstrating her literary prowess—is her attention to gender, as we have seen with Barber, Collier, Leapor, and Yearsley. With consideration to the gendered critique of this poem, Leith Davis suggests that “Little’s poetry foregrounds how dependent the ideology of the nation is on the construction of a gendered society” (623). Moira Ferguson, too, balances political astuteness and sensitivity to Little’s intersectional identity in *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets: Nation, Class, and Gender* (2008). Ferguson lays out the intersections of Little’s identity, calling many of her poems “gendered, anticolonial testimonials” (91). Stephen C. Behrent also notes Little’s attention to gender in her socio-political statements, suggesting that she was keenly aware of the ways in which male writers, such as Burns, were generally able to escape criticism for speaking on issues perceived to be above rank and station (223-4). With this in mind, Little’s apologies and frequent self-criticisms come to indicate more than the typical expectation that

eighteenth-century women writers must always begin by apologizing for writing for the public, but also an expectation to be humble based on class and nationality. In this way Little's shimmers of affect—her Scottishness as an enactment of what I term the chaotic domestic—are the distinct areas wherein her readers can see her socio-political statements in action.

In "Given to a Lady," for example, Little writes of Burns's favorable critical reception in the line "Nor dare critics blame his quill" (224). The tone of bitterness in relation to her poetic idol is made more explicit when she comments on her own work, as when Little remarks: "[m]y hand still trembles when I write" (62). In this line Little opens up new emotional and psychic territory wherein the laboring-class Scotswoman may write. That the body trembles in anticipation of exposing her writing in a professional, public sphere shows just how radical it was for a Scotswoman belonging to a low social rank to write and publish poetry. Yet, in describing her own bodily responses to the act of writing, Little challenges the seemingly hard boundary between foreign and domestic, as defined by Johnson. Indeed, in simultaneously cowering before and deriding her critics in committing the act of writing, Little defies hegemonic viewpoints.

As Little describes it, although the nameless critic of "Given to a Lady" is coyly puzzled that a Scottish writer of lowly origin believes she has the right both to write poetry and be praised for it, he becomes utterly overwhelmed when "a milkmaid must tak up her quill." Here, Little directly responds to privileged circles of readers—"reviewers and 'the literati'"—who view her writing as lowly on the basis of class and nationality (Regan 210). After the nameless critic expresses disbelief that there could be such a thing as a milkmaid poet, Little quickly reiterates the ways in which Burns has been able to

convert his initially suspicious readers to accept him, as the nameless critic carefully considers the positive attributes of Burns's verse. In the poem, Little ultimately demonstrates intimate knowledge of Burns's role as prominent laboring-class writer—intimating that his status as a laboring Scottish poet makes his success mean more—but in doing so carefully articulates the restrictions and censure she faces as a laboring-class woman writer.

Despite her praise of her fellow Scotsman, elsewhere in her verse there is frustration, menace, and condemnation of Burns. The fracture in Little's "Scottishness"—and the subsequent tensions that emerge—is made more determinate because she is a woman. Although Burns's display of class antagonism towards polite English society was arguably far more direct—because, as Little suggests, he as a man is allowed to maintain such antagonism—Little shows she is also willing to take social and political risks in her writing, reflecting a deeply internalized sense of social injustice. For a woman to comment on national issues was far more controversial than if done so by male counterparts, many of whom were able to cast a vote, own property, and receive an education. Little's risky socio-political commentary is found elsewhere in "Given to a Lady Who Asked Me to Write a Poem," wherein the inverted social relationships that dominate Little's collection of verse play out as Little asserts that Burns's success represents a break in Augustan, Neo-Classical literary values: "A ploughtman chiel, Rab Burns his name, / Pretends to write; an' thinks nae shame" (lines 21-2).

Despite Burns's success—and Little's apparent deep admiration for his verse—she writes about feeling frustrated because she holds the same class rank and nationality as Burns but has constantly to contend with the additional restrictions and criticism

placed on her gender. In the lines below Little even subtly critiques Burns in an effort to show the injustice and emotional paralysis she faces due to criticism focused on or influenced by her gender, class, and nationality:

Yet Burns, I'm tauld, can write wi' ease,

An' a' denominations please;

Can wi' uncommon glee impart

A usefu' lesson to the heart (37-40)

The explicit comparison Little draws between herself and Burns within these lines conveys her anger about the reception of male laboring-class Scottish writing in contrast to that of women's laboring-class writing. Little's interjection—"I'm tauld"—indicates that while others claim Burns is a great writer, she suspects there is more complication to his art and artistic process. Although it is hardly Burns's fault that virtually any subject matter is available to him, Little is willing to show that much of her resentment and emotional blockage is founded on her gender constraints. Indeed, as Burns "Can wi' uncommon glee impart / A usefu' lesson to the heart," Little comically imagines a scenario wherein Burns gleefully shares pointed and meaningful verse with his readers. Despite the sense of comedy in these lines—the "uncommon glee"—Little conveys real resentment that her writing must be far more nuanced in order to receive praise from readership.

That Burns can convey lessons to "the heart" suggests shimmers of Little's own desire to influence the way that her readers think and feel. Yet, she cannot do this with the "ease" Burns displays based on her gender, as her verse might be viewed as sentimental and lacking in profundity simply because she is female. Instead, Little must

be far more covert and nuanced in how she approaches controversial subjects. Specifically, the frustrations Little uncovers deal with her engagement with socio-political commentary. It is not simply that the reading public better receives Burns, but rather that the subject matter itself is available to him. For example, in the following lines Little expresses both her amazement at and frustration that when Burns asserts his political opinions, instead of receiving public ridicule he receives praise:

An' what is strange, they praise him for't.
 Even folks, wha're of the highest station,
 Ca' him the glory of our nation.
 But what is more surprising still,
 A milkmaid must tak up her quill;

The critics who praise Burns for his openly political verse cannot perceive Little as “the glory of [Scotland]” because she is a woman. Little’s specific phrasing here suggests that for her, writing is a necessity as she “must tak up her quill,” resulting in criticism because of her gender. The shimmers of affect that arise in in Little’s use of the word “must” are indicative of her complex, intersectional position. In praising Burns just before describing the necessity for her own writing, Little structures the line to place herself as an equal to him. In this case, Little, as the “milkmaid,” is compelled to write, regardless of the almost certain criticism she will receive. That Little is obligated to write provides a platform for launching her public persona, despite that she does not explicitly state what is behind the “must”: economic need, the call of the Muses, or even the fulfillment of a national call to arms. Part of obscuring her reasons for writing allows Little to use her supposed naiveté to her advantage and, in doing so, confront her critics directly. Little is uncontrollable to

those who wish to censure her, subverting their expectations and confounding critics who see her act of writing as strange, subversive, and socially inappropriate.

Despite Little's complaints that she is unable to articulate political concerns in the same way that Burns does, she cleverly asserts pointed gender concerns. Indeed, Little's strategic use of this framework—her criticisms that Burns receives preferential treatment from the reading public based on his gender—serves as commentary in and of itself. Although London's literary circles are ready for a break in popular Augustan literary tradition, they are not ready for a woman to expressly critique socio-political structure, as Little notes: "Burns, I'm tauld, can write wi' ease, / An' a' denominations please" (35-6). For Little writing "with ease" is not so simple or direct; as a woman writer she must strategically assert her thoughts and opinions.

Her critique of England's colonialism and classism also permeates "Given to a Lady," as Little casts both herself and Burns as outsiders within English courts: "A ploughtman chiel, Rab Burns his name, / Pretends to write; an' thinks nae shame / To souse his sonnets on the court" (21-3). In these lines, Little points directly at English imperial values, particularly in relation to the traditional ideals surrounding colonized bodies. For example, as Little writes of Burns, with the informal usage of his name "Rab," she describes him as wild and as Other. His status as "chie" and his drunken or "souse[d]" state conforms to imperial viewpoints on colonized bodies, particularly that the Scottish are drunken and wild. In "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors" Edward Said notes that those who are colonized come to represent everything the oppressors want to disassociate themselves from. Indeed, like Said's claim that "Europe and the West, in short, were asked to take the Other seriously" (223), so too

does Little simultaneously want colonized Scottish bodies, women's bodies, and laboring-class bodies to be taken seriously. And yet, despite offering a distinction between prominent English writers and Burns, Little is explicit that English readership ultimately praises Burns for his difference. Little surmises that it is not only her status as Scottish and laboring class that makes her ripe for criticism—because these certainly do—but also her identity as woman.

Part of Little's claiming of her Scottish identity is that she is not inspired or motivated by prominent English male writers such as Pope or Johnson—whom she specifically criticizes for his treatment of the Scottish. Rather, she is inspired by Scottish male writers or, even, English women writers generally speaking, such as Elizabeth Singer Rowe and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. In particular, she praises fellow laboring-class writer Robert Burns and earlier celebrated Scottish heroes, such as William Wallace.²⁸ In contrast, Little heavily criticizes Johnson because of his dismissal of the Scottish as lacking English virtues (Ferguson 98). Little criticizes Johnson partly by slyly using dialect Johnson would not necessarily understand, thus showing the additional power being bi-lingual brings:

But Doctor Johnson, in a rage,
 Unto posterity did shew
 Their blunders great, their beauties few.
 But now he's dead, we weel may ken;
 For ilka dunce maun hea a pen,

²⁸Little celebrates William Wallace in the poem "Written on a Foreigner's Visiting the Grave of a Swiss Gentleman, Buried Among the Descendants of Sir William Wallace, Guardian of Scotland in the Thirteenth Century."

To write in hamely, uncouth rhymes;

An'yet forsooth they please the times (lines 14-20)

Piquing the reader's interest with familiar writers such as Johnson, Little is aggressive in her defense of Scotland, allowing phrases such as "ilka dunce hea a pen" to clash with the reference to respectable English writers and show that her Scottish verse does "please the times." Here, through the clash of two dialectal patterns, Little generates raw, affectual energies that highlight her defense of Scotland. In doing so, Little is wily; the subversive qualities of her dialectal patterns show a willing vulnerability to the criticisms she will receive from sophisticated London critics.

Part of Johnson's complaint about Scotland's culture sets in motion a defensiveness within Little's work that differs from that of Yearsley and Leapor, who were also often challenged because of their lack of formal education; instead, Little exerts a complex emotional sense of Scottish patriotism in response to the pressures to model her writing after popular English writers. While initially it may seem that Little is overeager to criticize Johnson where and when she can, her censure of English hegemony simply manifests in her critique of popular English writers. Certainly, in praising Scotland's ability to "write in hamely, uncouth rhymes" that also are praised and considered pleasing, she suggests that she—a self-described "milkwoman"—is a candidate for the changing literary canon of her day. In addressing the inequalities of poetic production, gender, and the nation, Little shows that her defiance of traditional definitions of the domestic serve as ownership over her own seemingly slippery identity. Her poem acts to create a Scottish hierarchy of writers in England that submerged

Scottish identity in the 1707 Union Act. In doing so, Little insists that England must make space for its “domestic” notions for the country that has been othered: Scotland.

Part of how Little nuances her own socio-political commentary, as we have seen in “Written to a Lady,” is through her use of Scots dialect. Her occasional interjection with language distinct to her nation and class confronts the reader with affectual shimmers, usually conveying pointed areas of her identity. For example, in the following lines Little continues to discuss her frustrations with Burns’ acceptance within prominent literary circles, regardless of the content of his verse:

Can ilka latent thought expose,
 An’ Nature trace whare’er she goes;
 Of politics can talk wi’ skill,
 Nor dare the critics blame his quill. (41-44)

Formally, the poem’s couplets allow the reader to move quickly and with ease. Yet, Little’s Scottish phrases, such as “ilka,” clash with many of her English words, as “dunce,” and result in an abrupt and bumpy interruption of her rhyme scheme. The Scottish phrases direct the reader’s attention to shimmers of affect wherein Little exposes her own personal frustrations with her treatment from critics. Specifically, in altering her syntactical patterns, Little forces the reader to slow down and consider her message; indeed, the clarity of the final line of this section—“Nor dare the critics blame his quill”—is preceded by lines with informal, regional, and specifically Scots language. In this case, the mounting emotional energy is firmly punctuated in that Little pointedly uses a language that her critics will understand.

An aspect of Little's use of Scots dialect is how she uses regionalism to her advantage. Raymond Williams has repeatedly questioned what makes a place "regional" or "provincial," describing such terms as "an expression of centralized cultural dominance," a process which dismisses anything beyond the middle-class city as, at best, secondary, at worst, insignificant. Scottish writers suffered from a kind of double regionalism, wherein their writing was critiqued based on the metropolitan middle-class audience. With consideration to Williams's concerns regarding the label of "regional," Little's use of the Scots language in her poetry contributes to her overall tone of defiance. Little uses Scots vernacular to show how her position is a hybridization, as she intersperses Scots and English within her verse. In particular, Little praises Scots dialectical patterns in references to Classical figures and popular, well-respected writers; thus she demonstrates some levels of formal education, but never at the expense of her laboring-class ethos.

Again, I consider Little's late eighteenth-century assertions of Scottishness as a type of affect, one that demands a close look at the meaning of "domestic" in a country that has been domesticated by and submerged in England's "homeland," fraught class and gender positions, a distinct liminality of feelings, and the multiplicity of language in Scotland at the time. In doing so, we see clearly that laboring-class Scottish writers use assertions of Scottishness—language, syntax, and poetic models—to call for radical rethinking of hegemonic values of the period (Williams 5). Instead of asserting the ways that Scotland's culture shows promise, or using overt displays of intellectualism, Little challenges Johnson by accentuating her Scottish dialect and heritage. For Little, Johnson's opinion does not matter because "now he's dead," and in many ways the poem

suggests that attention to Augustan models of writing is likewise deceased (line 17).

Unlike Barber, Leapor, and Yearsley, whose poetry reflects their eagerness to belong to the ranks of prominent English writers, Little emulates laboring-class poets and the conventions of their literary tradition.

After this brief pause in her ironic presentation, Little's gender complaints ensue. With the critic's scorn of "a milkmaid poem-books to print" marked by breaks in the flow of the lines, gives shape to Little's personal incredulity and exasperation. Yet the scorned female author has the last word. Throughout the poem, inverted commas have signaled the critic's persona and voice. Only in the final stanza does the poet speak for herself, referring explicitly to her body through emotional language, such as "slunk" and "dread," which both are found in the epigraph of this chapter. The hard "k" sound of "slunk" and the lazy schwa of "un" and the sheer force of "dread" conjures a myriad of complex images. Indeed, while it is clear she dreads negative critical reception, the energy gathered in the description of her mounting fears suggests something far more ambiguous: indeed, the physiological results of her anticipation show that criticism of her writing becomes criticism of her own denigrated identity as a laboring-class Scottish woman.

Despite these emotional and disturbing images, Little refuses to let patriarchy intimidate her, challenging her nameless critic with her statement of raw emotion found in "My hand still trembles when I write." The line simultaneously refers to cowering and defiance. The initial image of a woman afraid is swiftly undercut in taking a closer look at just how physically affected Little is in committing the act of writing. The physicality of her fear shows precisely how bold she is in continuing to write despite censure from

her critics. Little is well aware of what is at stake when she writes: every aspect of her identity will be pulled apart and critiqued. And yet, in continuing to write Little conveys a deep sense of defiance. In expressing how afraid she is to write and writing anyway, Little reclaims her body's fraught liminal status; she is simultaneously terrorized and fearless.

Little further conveys her fearlessness through comedy. Little expresses mock-surprise through the voice of the same nameless critics over the suggestion that a milkmaid should feel compelled to write. In the following lines Little criticizes her own writing, telling the critics that they should be thankful that Johnson is now deceased, who she belittles with the diminutive nickname, "Sam"—as he would take particular issue with her use of regional dialect:

An' she will write, shame fa' the rabble!

That think to please wi' ilka bawble.

They may thank heav'n, auld Sam's asleep:

For could he ance but get a peep,

He wi' a vengeance wad them sen'

A' headlong to the dunces' den (lines 24-34).

In these extraordinarily supple lines, Little makes brilliant use of Scots dialect. She uses Scots language and syntactical patterns boldly and defiantly, with seeming acceptance that she could not, even if she wished to, change the minds of English writers and critics. Within these lines, Little criticizes English intrusion in Scottish life in a far more covert fashion and, in doing so, also offers a critique of relations between Scotland and England. Specifically, that "auld Sam's asleep" undermines any sense of cultural superiority that

Little's English readers and critics may hold. Certainly, Little knows her status as laboring-class, Scottish, and woman will always be held against her as a writer. In projecting what critics might or could say, even those such as Johnson who are dead, Little shares an image of herself as fearless and keenly aware of disadvantaged social position; writing despite it. Her language is excited and quick; shrouded in bitter irony: "But what is more surprising still." The above lines indicate that Little does not simply opt to write, but instead that she "must tak up her quill" and that "she will write."

Little may have triumphed poetically over tyrannical laws and social expectations in "Given to a Lady," but she was less successful in her attempts to persuade Burns that she merited his consideration, despite the pleading of her employer and patron. Her patron, Dunlop, an Englishwoman, made no secret of her dislike for Burns' political openness, but she understood his popularity and chose largely to ignore it (Ferguson 91). Defending Little, Dunlop wrote to Burns after he had repeatedly avoided a meeting with Little: "I ought to tell you Jenny Little says you are very stupid, did not come and meet her when you were at Mauchline. She is sure she would not grudge going five times as far to see you."²⁹ Moreover, when asked by Dunlop to read Little's poems, Burns queried: "Do I have to read them all?" (7)

Undoubtedly Little knew of Burns's hesitancy to meet with her, and the following two poems I discuss here, "On A Visit to Mr. Burns" and "An Epistle to Robert Burns," highlight the complex myriad of emotions Little discusses in her relationship with Burns. Certainly Little's comment to Dunlop in regards to Burns's "stupid[ity]" reveals Little's

²⁹*Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop: Correspondence*, pg. 96

artistic egotism, as she believes Burns has not treated her as she deserves. Specifically, affectual shimmers of both anger and admiration emerge in Little's simultaneously ironic praise and critique of Burns and Scotland. Irony plays an integral role in "On A Visit to Mr. Burns," wherein Little plans a trip to visit Burns. The poem follows Little's visit, during which her excitement at meeting Burns bubbles to the surface of the poem, showing simultaneously shimmers of cultural pride and resentment when meeting her literary icon. Yet her praise is always interlaced with bitterness and irony. For example, the poem begins with a series of fanciful questions, whereby Little places the reader directly in her shoes as she first lays eyes on Burns: "IS't true? or does some magic spell / My wond'ring eyes beguile?" (1-2). By initiating the poem with a series of questions, Little places herself as an outsider trying to understand Burns's grasp on Scottish literary imagination, yet all the while Little is keenly aware that her position as woman makes her an unlikely candidate for Scottish literary icon. Indeed, Little's frustration at her inability to reach the level of praise Burns enjoys plays out in the form of irony. For example, upon seeing Burns, Little is astonished to the point of questioning her own sensory reception: "Is't true?" and do her "wond'ring eyes" deceive her? The interrogatory form of these words coupled with their over-the-top admiration indicate Little cheekily undercuts and critiques Burns's status while also praising him. In doing so, she shatters conventional hierarchies of literary success by suggesting that she, as a lower-class Scotswoman, should be able to make such judgments.

The next lines also show bitterness, frustration, and cunning: "Is this the place where deigns to dwell / The honour of our isle?" (3-4). When Little describes Burns as the "honour of [Scotland]," we see distinct shimmers of displacement of her own country

and, therefore, her own body. On the latter point, Little's status as woman betrays her literary ambitions; her popularity cannot match that of Burns, despite that he only "deigns" to reside where she desires. The gasping rhythms of the opening stanza presents an exaggerated image of the supposedly unsophisticated visitor's excitement and wonder as she approaches the place wherein Burns condescendingly suffers to live. She cannot be the honor of Scotland because she maintains few rights to the development of law, property, profession, and education. As one without the legal ability to effect substantive change in the socio-political sphere, Little, by implicitly comparing herself to Burns, instead expresses her frustrations at being "not foreign" yet distinctly not citizen within her own country. Burns, whom she carefully casts as condescending to his own people—he only deigns where she delights to reside in Scotland—is praised far more than Little. Thus her poetry becomes a battlefield regarding her displaced status.

The basis for this displacement is the expectations for women in the period. Again, throughout the poem Little constantly bolsters not only Burns's abilities as a successful writer, but the ways in which he is well-received by both his readership and inspiration personified:

The charming Burns, the Muse's care,
Of all her sons the pride;
This pleasure oft I've sought to share,
But been as oft deni'd. (lines 4-8).

Little often writes that she is betrayed by inspiration, but in this poem to Burns she reveres him as one who has been blessed by the Muses, even more than anyone else. Once again, in doing so Little shows her relative displacement as a laboring-class

woman. She wishes to share the praise that Burns receives as one of the Muse's "sons"—a distinctly gendered choice—but instead she becomes not just the neglected daughter, but the "deni'd" daughter. The term "deni'd" carries enormous repercussions: Little is an active agent in her writing; she continually seeks out opportunities to share and publish her work, despite the negative reception she will likely receive. Still, Little is coy in her praise of Burns. Her use of the word "charming" conjures diminutive and, even, feminine images rather than profound description of Burns's writing. From this, Little conjures connotations of hurt, embarrassment, and frustration, as she is seemingly forced to wait for critics to decide whether or not they consider her work valuable, while "charming" Burns receives praise.

"An Epistle to Mr. Robert Burns" begins not unlike "On a Visit To Mr. Burns," as Little uses the first several lines to praise Burns as the honor of Scotland: "FAIRFA' the honest rustic swain, / The pride o' a' our Scottish plain" (1-2). What follows, then, is a celebration of Burns for being able to write poems for both English and Scottish readers. In her epistle to Burns, Little asserts her desire to gain a wide readership of her own—indeed, like Burns she demonstrates her abilities in both Scots and English—but she postures as one who does not maintain the flexibility of appeasing an entire nation. For example:

In vain I blunt my feckless quill,
Your fame to raise,
While echo sounds, frae ilka hill,
To Burns's praise. (39-42)

Little explains she has writer's block and notes her verse is not even worth praise, and yet she also slyly suggests that she has difficulty conjuring praise for Burns, hinting that he, too, has faults as a writer. In expressing her frustration with her lack of inspiration, Little again styles Burns as having the capacity to satisfy the Muses more than anyone else. And yet, in these lines Little's reverence for Burns becomes an affectual shimmer of simultaneous pride and frustration. Little's Scottish phrases, "frae ilka hill," interrupt her praise for Burns and draw the reader's attention to the easy rhyme of "raise" and "praise." This, paired with the image of the "echo," Little suggests again that there is space for another Scottish writer to rise as worthy of national praise. Driven by her liminal identity and her crisis of artistic confidence, Little conveys that her poetic voice is also highly individualized. Throughout Little's poetry, then, she uses praise of Burns to reveal personal anxieties regarding artistic criticism.

The reality of meeting her poetic idol culminates in one final gesture as Little describes her bodily response to meeting Burns in "On a Visit to Mr. Robert Burns":

With beating breast I view'd the bard;

All trembling did him greet:

With sighs bewail'd his fate so hard,

Whose notes were ever sweet. (29-32)

Her "beating breast" heaves with anticipation as she gazes upon Burns, and just as she trembles when she writes, so too does she tremble as she greets him. The sensory descriptions of Little's beating heart, sighing breath, and trembling body develop a sense of tension as one of the most iconic Scottish writers meets with Little. Burns, as we know from "Written to a Lady," is always the subject of comparison for Scottish laboring-class

writers, and Little keenly feels the injustice of the comparison based on her gender. All of these sensory details contribute to the mounting anticipation of the meeting. Little covertly shows how she is in charge of this poetic moment; she shows him as a genius, even Godlike, but then she happily represents his downfall too, thus exhibiting her power artistically and politically. The anticipation, however, comically gives way to a very human depiction of a wounded Burns, not the hero one might expect.

Indeed, the second half of “On a Visit to Mr. Burns” explicitly mocks Burns’s human frailty. The poem maintains an alternating and, at times, imperfect rhyme scheme, one wherein we are asked to brace ourselves as Little forces us into the bumpy and uncertain terrain wherein Little encounters Burns. In the poem Little describes meeting with her poetic idol shortly after he had fallen off a horse, named “Pegasus” in the poem. The obvious reference to Classical mythology (including the winged horse of antiquity traditionally associated with the poetic muse that Byron later notes must be ruled in order to be a great writer) shows Little’s position as an agent within the laboring-class poetic tradition, as she sees her hero fall the implication is that she can take his place. Instead of festive trumpets announcing Scotland’s national hero, “a dire alarm” broadcasts the poet’s arrival. Indeed, Burns enters not as a hero, but instead injured. Little uses this opportunity—Burns’s fall—in multiple contexts. For example, Little uses Burns’s injury to remind him and her readers of human frailty. Moreover, symbolically and literally this injury comes to mean that Burns writing has flaws and that he cannot just rest on his laurels, but must continually write great work in order to maintain his position in the English canon. Little intimates that Burns has been too self-assured and comfortable in

his role as Scotland's premier poet. In using Burns's fall to suggest there is opportunity for herself to be considered Scotland's hero, Little is clever and decisive:

No cheering draught, with ills unmix'd,
 Can mortals taste below;
 All human fate by heav'n is fix'd
 Alternate joy and wo.

Again, we notice how Little balances the mock-heroic portrait of the national poetic icon with a genuine, non-ironic acknowledgement of his achievement—hence, she “alternate[s] joy and wo.” Just as Burns's fall from his suggestively named horse indicates, he is human and moved by fate and time just as everyone else. Certainly Little's meeting with Burns humanizes her idol, but also in telling her readers of the reality of meeting with Burns, she asks her reader to wonder why it is that Burns receives extraordinary praise while she receives censure from critics. In doing so, Little shows how Burns is not always surrounded by “cheering,” and is just as human as any other writer.

Part of Little's praise for Burns is to cleverly demonstrate her own poetic prowess. For example, where she praises Burns for his natural genius, she is critical of prominent Augustan-English writers, such as in the following lines in “An Epistle to Mr. Robert Burns”: “Did Addison or Pope but hear,/ Or Sam, that critic most severe,/ a plough-boy sing, wi'throat sae clear...” (lines 12-15). The poem includes Burns in the list of great Scottish artists, such as Allan Ramsay, and celebrates Burns's ability to reach broad audiences: “To hear thy songs, all ranks desire; / Sae well thou strik'st the dormant lyre” (16-7). Like her description of Burns, Little writes of Scotland, her home, her

laboring-class status, as something uncontrollable and innately part of her rather than that which is purely socialized. Despite this chaos, Little's ownership of her nationality, gender, and class makes her a powerful agent of her body, as she does not merely gesture at the complications of her identity; she fully realizes the chaotic domestic in her reflections of her legal status as a laboring-class woman within Scotland's socio-political landscape.

Speaking ironically, Little frequently places herself in a position of subservience to a literary giant like Johnson (or, even, Burns), as she dismisses her ability to write as he does—knowing full well that she does not want to write as he does—because of her position as a milkmaid. Including lines in the Scots dialect Little suggests that she is not only capable of maintaining her defiant attitude toward the English, but also that Scottish culture and language needs little assistance from someone like Johnson. Part of Little's critique of Burns shows that his popularity with the English has somehow compromised his Scottishness. Little's interactions with Burns and her concerns regarding gender representation in literary culture serve as a criticism of both English and Scottish literary landscapes, placing Little in a fraught position of having outsider and insider knowledge.

Little writes her poems to Burns in simultaneous contexts. As Craig notes, Scotland maintains multiple languages and Little makes use of them all, even when they prove contradictory. In this way Little cultivates a structure of feeling. For example, the reader is invited to feel Little's apprehension upon first arriving at her meeting with Burns. As she initially praises Burns as "the honour of our isle," she implodes organized, polite English verse, and in doing so enough demonstrates her knowledge—and, of course, her rejection—of traditional Augustan verse form. Little highlights her Scottish

lineage and champions Scottish national identity, just as Burns does in his poetry. Little attempts not only to impress Burns and relate to him through their shared heritage and public-sphere themes, but also to celebrate his ability to appeal to a wide readership. Little's homage to Burns is an ambitious means of inserting herself within the group of poets praised; in doing so, she forces celebrated writers and critics to make her at home and include her in England's domestic set of authors. In connecting herself to Burns, she forces her critics to consider why it is she is not held to the same esteem as Burns.

Both "An Epistle to Mr. Robert Burns" and "On A Visit to Mr. Burns" bring forth a complex series of affectual shimmers, ones that place Little simultaneously in the position to praise Burns and to also begrudge his gendered ability to receive success in publication. In reimagining the lineage of successful writers to include Burns, implicitly Little makes way for herself as the future of Scottish laboring-class poetic talent. Indeed, in arguing for Burns's talent as exceeding English literary giants such as Johnson, Pope, and Addison, Little creates space for multiple upsets to hegemonic values and intimates that she herself has the talent and potential to become one of Scotland's great artistic geniuses.

Little expresses little hesitancy in using her degraded status to her advantage in the publishing world. By 1792, when Little's volume was published, Blake, Cowper, and many other writers had already published poetry that brought forth commentary and, often, an aestheticized view on rural life and the hardships of laborers. Yet, despite the popularity of labor-centered content and even the celebration of a laboring-class Scottish writer like Robert Burns the epigraph of this chapter represents a powerful testament to

the challenges women laboring-class writers faced in the eighteenth century. The chaotic domestic that emerges through Little's description of her "doggerel scrawls" and her near-certain knowledge that critics will criticize her writing culminates in a decidedly defiant and accepting version of her writing that, on closer look, is complicated in her complex claim: "My hand still trembles when I write." Through her use of English and Scots language and syntactical patterns, Little's verse challenges conventional notions of what it was to be a Scottish laboring-class woman in the eighteenth-century. Indeed, with every assertion of seeming-Scottish nationalism, Little also points to the inequalities of being a Scottish laboring-class woman. In pushing the bounds of how we consider images of the domestic to include one's nation, it is possible to see how Little makes the chaos of being a laboring-class Scottish woman visible to a broader audience. The epigraph to this chapter is from the close of "Given to a Lady," wherein Little writes that the critic's words make her hide "beneath the shade" (line 50). Because she is denied rights as both woman and citizen, upheaving Johnson's traditional definition of the "domestic," Little resides somewhere else, positioned as an outsider very much on the inside of a socio-political landscape.

Works Cited

- Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Andrews, Kerri. *Ann Yearsley and Hannah More, Patronage and Poetry*. Pickering and Chatto, 2015.
- Backscheider, Paula R. *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005.
- Barber, Mary. *Poems on Several Occasions*. Palala P, 1735.
- Batchelor, Jeannie. *Women's Work Women's Work: Labour, Gender, Authorship, 1750-1830*. Manchester UP, 2010.
- Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke UP, 2009. Print.
- Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke UP, 2011.
- Behrendt, Stephen C. "Scottish Women Poets" *British Women Poets and the Romantic Writing Community*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2008: 222-316.
- Bex, Anthony R. *The Moral Self in Eighteenth-Century Poetry: A Study in the Poetics of Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper and Yearsley*. PhD Thesis. University of Kent, 2014.
<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/id/eprint/47607>
- Boyd, Diana E. and Marta Kvande. *Everyday Revolutions: Eighteenth-Century Women Transforming Public and Private*. University of Delaware Press, 2008.
- Budd, Adam. "Merit in Distress: The Troubled Success of Mary Barber." *The Review of English Studies*. 53.210. 2002.
- Buell, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub. 2005. Print.

Burke, Tim. "Ann Yearsley and the Distribution of Genius in Early Romantic Culture"

Early Romantics: Perspectives in British Poetry from Pope to Wordsworth. New York: St. Martin's, 1998: 215-230.

Chaden, Caryn. "Mentored from the Page: Mary Leapor's Relationship with Alexander

Pope." *Pope, Swift, and Women Writers*. Ed. Donald C. Mell. Newark: Delaware UP, 1996. 31-47.

Christmas, William J. *The Lab'ring Muses: Work, Writing, and the Social Order in*

English Plebeian Poetry, 1730-1830. Newark: Delaware UP, 2001.

Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. Yale UP, 1992.

Collier, Mary. "The Woman's Labour: An Epistle to Mr. Stephen Duck." *The Thresher's*

Labour & The Woman's Labour. Ed. Moira Ferguson. Los Angeles: University of California P, 1985.

Craig, Cairns. "Constituting Scotland." *Irish Review*. Cork UP, 2001.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black

Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989.

Dalporto, Jeannie. "Landscape, Labor, and the Ideology of Improvement in Mary

Leapor's "Crumble Hall." *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 2001.

Davis, Leith. "Gender and the Nation in the Work of Robert Burns and Janet Little."

Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900. Rice UP, 1998.

Deleuze, Giles and Félix Guattari. "Percept, Affect, and Concept," *What is Philosophy?*

Columbia UP, 2001.

—. *Difference and Repetition*. London: The Athlone Press, 1994.

- . *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988.
- Doody, Margaret. *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered*. Cambridge UP, 1985.
- Drew, Erin and John Sitter. "Ecocriticism and Eighteenth-Century English Studies" *Literature Compass*, Wiley, 2013.
- Duck, Stephen. "The Thresher's Labour". *The Thresher's Labour & The Woman's Labour*. Ed, Moira Ferguson. Los Angeles: University of California P, 1985.
- Fairer, David. "'Flying atoms in the sightless air': Issues of Coherence and Scale in Leapor and Yearsley." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*. 34.1: 141-61, 2015.
- Fanning, Christopher. "The Voices of the Dependent Poet: The Case of Mary Barber." *Women's Writing*. 8.1. 2001.
- Ferguson, Moira. *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets: Nation, Class, and Gender*. Albany: SUNY UP, 1995.
- Gallagher, Catherine and Stephen Greenblatt. *Practicing New Historicism*. Chicago: Univ of Chicago P, 2000.
- Gal, Susan and Gail Klingman. *The Politics of Gender after Socialism*. 2000.
- Goodridge, John. *Rural Life in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry*. Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Goodridge, John, and Bridget Keegan. *Eighteenth-Century English Laboring-Class Poets*, Vol 2:740, 1780. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003.
- Greene, Richard. *Mary Leapor: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Women's Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.
- Griffin, Dustin H. *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

- Gifford, Terry. *Pastoral*. Psychology P. 1999.
- Historical Bibliography in Practice*. Rare Books Group of the Library Association of Ireland, 1986.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home*. New York : Penguin Books, 2003.
- Jameson, Frederic. "The Twin Sources of Realism: Affect, or, the Body's Present." *The Antinomies of Realism*. Verso, 2013. 27-44.
- Johnson, Samuel. eds. W.J. Bate, John M. Bullitt, and L.F. Powell, *The Idler and The Adventurer*, vol. 2. *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1963.
- Jones, Peter. *Agricultural Enlightenment: Knowledge, Technology, and Nature, 1750-1840*. Oxford UP, 2015.
- Kennedy, Deborah. *Poetic Sisters: Early Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2013.
- Keohane, Catherine. "Ann Yearsley's 'Clifton Hill' and its Lessons in Reading." *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture*. 41.1: 233-53.
- Kevin, Catherine. *Feminism and the Body: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.
- Kord, Susanne. *Women Peasant Poets in Eighteenth-century England, Scotland, and Germany: Milkmaids on Parnassus*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003.
- Landry, Donna. *The Muses of Resistance: Labouring-Class Women's Poetry in Britain, 1739-1796*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

- . “The Resignation of Mary Collier: Some Problems in Feminist Literary History.”
The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature. Ed. George
 Alexander Kennedy. New York: Methuen, 1987. 99-120.
- and Gerald M. MacLean. *Feminist Materialisms*. Blackwell, 1993.
- Leapor, Mary. Richard Greene and Ann Messenger, Eds. *The Works of Mary Leapor*.
 Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.
- Little, Janet. *The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid*. UC Davis, 1998.
- Mandell, Laura. *Misogynous Economies: The Business of Literature in Eighteenth-
 century Britain*. Lexington: Kentucky UP, 1999.
- . “Demystifying (with) the Repugnant Female Body: Mary Leapor and Feminist
 Literary History.” *Criticism*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1996. 551-82.
- Markidou, Vassiliki. “And Let the Grove, If Not the Parlour, Stand”: Home, Memory,
 and Gender in Mary Leapor's “Crumble-Hall.” *Home Cultures: The Journal of
 Architecture, Design and Domestic Space*, 2009.
- Mayor, Adrienne. *The Amazons: Lives and Legends of Warrior Women Across the
 Ancient World*. Princeton UP, 2014.
- Medick, Hans. “The Proto-Industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of
 Household and Family during the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial
 Capitalism.” *Social History*, 1976.
- Messenger, Ann. *Gender at Work: Four Women Writers of the Eighteenth Century*.
 Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1990.

- Milne, Anne. "Lactilla Tends Her Fav'rite Cow": *Ecocritical Readings of Animals and Women in Eighteenth-century British Labouring-class Women's Poetry*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2008.
- Mokyr, Joel. *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1850*. Yale UP, 2009.
- Moore, Lisa L., Joanna Brooks, Caroline Wigginton, eds. *Transatlantic Feminisms in the Age of Revolutions*. Oxford UP, 2012.
- O'Flaherty, Emily. *Patrons, Peers and Subscribers: The Publication of Mary Barber's Poems on Several Occasions (1734)*. 2013. NUI Galway. PhD Dissertation: <http://hdl.handle.net/10379/4274>
- Read, Charles Anderson. *The Cabinet of Irish Literature*, London: London Blackie, 1896.
- Rubik, Margarete. "Women in the Arms: Amazons in the 17th Century English Drama." *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts*, 2014.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: OxfordUP, 1985.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Touching Feeling*. Duke UP, 2002.
- Seigworth, Gregory J. and Melissa Gregg "An Inventory of Shimmers." *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham: Duke UP. 2010.
- Shepherd, Simon. *Amazons and Warrior Women. Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth Century Drama*. Brighton: Harvester, 1981.
- Shiach, Morag. *Discourse on Popular Culture: Class, Gender and History in Cultural Analysis, 1730 to the Present*. Stanford UP, 1989.

- Thompson, Peggy. "Duck, Collier, and the Ideology of Verse Forms." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2004.
- Waldron, Mary. *Lactilla, Milkwoman of Clifton: The Life and Writings of Ann Yearsley, 1753-1806*. Athens: Georgia UP, 1996.
- Whigham, Stuart. "'Anyone but England'? Exploring anti-English Sentiment as Part of Scottish National identity in sport." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 2012.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- . *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*. Hogarth, 1968.
- Wong, Shirley Lau. "Country Bumpkin and Cosmopolitan: Some Versions of Postcolonial Pastoral." *The Global South*. Indiana UP, 2014 (7.2), 153-172.
- Yearsley, Ann. *Poems on Various Subjects, 1787*. Oxford: Woodstock, 1994.
-