

Introduction

The Other Voice: Neglected Histories

This volume offers texts from two early modern women writers, Bathsua Makin (1600–81?) and Mary More (1633–1716), as well as contextual material that should help readers make sense of these “other voices” from the seventeenth century and what they had to say about women’s education. Makin argued that society as a whole would benefit if women’s education was equal to men’s. More argued that women, like men, had the right to receive an education above simple literacy, and that such an education would clearly show that the inequality of married women under English law, especially in regards to property, was only a man-made institution. Her essay drew objections from her Oxford reader, Robert Whitehall (bap. 1624–85). While both women’s texts are important in the history of English education, the women themselves are important exemplars of learned women, and during their lifetimes they both enjoyed a measure of public recognition and esteem. Yet after their deaths, the women and their texts were largely ignored until the late twentieth century. The invisibility of both women after their deaths, despite the recognition they received in their lifetimes, illustrates why they fit so well in a series about the “other voice.” History has too often been constructed in ways that effectively lose and thus silence those voices that attempt to change what a culture believes about education, about rights, and about gender.

In a sense, any voice that spoke for women’s learning exemplifies the other voice, because women were Other in early modern culture. Essays on women’s education had to speak out against the classical/medieval belief that a woman was unsuited for education because she lacked capability. That belief was intensified in the early modern period by the concern that developed in the Protestant Reformation that a woman was educated at some risk to her soul. As the general introduction to this series remarks,

Only a few women wrote anything before the dawn of the modern era, for three reasons. First, they rarely received the education that would enable them to write. Second, they were not admitted to the public roles—as administrator, bureaucrat, lawyer or notary, or university professor—in which they might gain knowledge of the kinds of things the literate public thought worth writing about. Third, the culture imposed silence on women, considering speaking out a

2 Introduction

form of unchastity. Given these conditions, it is remarkable that any women wrote.¹

The sixteenth century saw the advent of the printing press altering the way that education took place. Before texts were printed, few men or women had access to them unless they were in the highest ranks of society or affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. Once the printing press was introduced in the late fifteenth century, texts became more available. Humanist educators, in particular, took advantage of increased access to textbooks to teach students in grammar schools with works like William Lily's Latin grammar book, *An Introduction of the Eight Parts of Speech, and the Construction of the Same* (1542),² believing that students who learned Latin and Greek were learning discipline as well as language, good conduct as well as good syntax. Humanist scholars such as Desiderius Erasmus, John Colet, and Thomas More began to entertain the idea of educating girls, as well as boys. Even among humanist educators, however, not everyone thought women needed much education, and some still thought educating women was a waste of time.

Later in the sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, challenges came to this model of limited education for females. In England, Sir Francis Bacon suggested that the humanist model needed to be more empirical, and his work influenced many who consequently suggested reforms for education. On the Continent, the Moravian educator Johan Amos Comenius followed Bacon's ideas and introduced a number of reforms to the humanist system of education. Comenius suggested that the humanist emphasis on the classical languages needed modification because children would learn better if they were taught in the vernacular or with picture books. He suggested that teachers erred if they relied on rote memorization in their classrooms, rather than explaining the underlying systems, yet he was aware that such systems might need to be simplified.

Perhaps the most important, and radical, of his beliefs was his idea that every child, boy or girl, in every social or racial category, deserved education. His ideas underlie those of such Enlightenment educational reformers as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel. Comenius certainly influences Makin, and his ideas about the need for universal access to education help account for the essays by

1. Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr., "Introduction to the Series: The Old Voice and the Other Voice," <http://www.othervoiceineme.com/othervoice.html> (n.d., n.p.; originally published in all 60 vols. of the first [Chicago] series).

2. William Lily's grammar books in both English and Latin were published throughout the early sixteenth century (Lily died in 1522), but the 1542 edition is the one authorized by Henry VIII for use in the schools. Although this version is called Lily's *Grammar*, others contributed to it, particularly John Colet, and the 1542 edition was done by a committee. See Hedwig Gwosdek's history, *Lily's Grammar of Latin in English: An Introduction of the Eyght Partes of Speche, and the Construction of the Same* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

both Bathsua Makin and Mary More. Yet these women's essays also mark an important turn in the history of education, as examples of new ideas that would ultimately sweep away Renaissance humanism for the Enlightenment, just as Renaissance humanism had once swept away medieval scholasticism. In England, Makin and More are precursors to the eighteenth century's Mary Astell, who advocated women's education, as well as the bluestockings, women who were noted (and often scorned) for their intellectual attainments. This introduction will begin with women's education, first considering general concerns and then turning to the specifics of early modern England. Next we shall discuss the consequences of that learning for women such as Makin and More, including both the difficulties that they faced in arguing for their identities as learned women and the ways that they sought out networks of support.

Theories and Practices: Women Reading and Writing

From the classical through the medieval period, tradition held that women were intellectually and physically inferior to men. In *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle had famously proclaimed that women's bodies were a sort of mutilated version of men's bodies because they lacked a penis.³ Renaissance scientists took this idea quite seriously, as Ian Maclean has demonstrated, although Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford suggest that some early modern thinkers had begun to modify this idea by the seventeenth century.⁴ Even Richard Mulcaster, who taught Elizabeth I and who strongly supported the education of women, remarked of girls: "Besides, their brains be not so much charged, neither with weight nor with multitude of matters, as boys' heads be, and therefore like empty cask[s,] they make the greater noise."⁵ When Mulcaster is defending the education of women, he is quick to note that such an education "will better weak nature,"⁶ for example, with the clear implication that a female is by nature weaker than a male. Because early modern culture continued to think of women as a lesser form of men, even a mutilated form, the education of women was typically regarded as having little importance.⁷

3. Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, ed. and trans. A. L. Peck, Loeb Classical Library 366 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1943), 174–75.

4. Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), esp. chap. 3; Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550–1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19–20.

5. Richard Mulcaster, *Positions Wherein Those Primitive Circumstances Be Examined which are necessary for the training up of children* (1581), 176.

6. Mulcaster, *Positions*, 170.

7. See Edith Snook, *Women, Reading, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern England* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), who argues that for present-day historians, however, the "history of reading should not be written without reference to women" (7).

This assumption of female physical inferiority was complemented by concerns about spiritual inferiority. Many in the early modern period held that all women were Eve's daughters, and hence more easily tempted to sin than were men. The schoolmaster, Thomas Salter, was particularly concerned that the education of girls be selective:

I would not have a maiden altogether forbidden, or restrained, from reading, for so much as the same is not only profitable to wise and virtuous women, but also a rich and precious jewel, but I would have her if she read, to read no other books but such as be written by godly fathers, to our instruction and soul's health, and not such lascivious songs, filthy ballads, and indecent books as be most commonly now-adays set to sale, to the great infection of youth, the names of which to recite would require a long time, and to write a great volume being more pleasant than profitable, long than learned, gallant than godly.⁸

Salter's grudging endorsement of female literacy insists that not only might unsuitable materials introduce women to dangerous knowledge, but also that womanly intellectual attainments might become a source of pride. Women, as Eve's daughters, were held to be particularly susceptible to that deadliest of sins. Some, like Sir Thomas More, held that learning actually helped women avoid pride. Defending his decision to educate his daughters, More wrote in one of his letters, "But if the soil of woman's brain be of its own nature bad, and apter to bear fern than corn (by which saying many do terrify women from learning) I am of opinion, therefore, that a woman's wit is the more diligently by good instructions and learning to be manured, to the end, the defect of nature may be redressed by industry."⁹ In humanist circles of the early sixteenth century, More was famous for educating his daughters, although his wife remained illiterate.

Another humanist educator, Juan Luis Vives, who taught Henry VIII's first child, Mary, gave much thought to education and particularly the education of girls. Vives tried to guard against the downfall of pride when he wrote that a woman might learn to improve herself or to teach her children, but she must not expect to use her education in any other way:

because a woman is a frail thing, and of weak discretion, and that may lightly be deceived: which thing our first mother Eve showeth, whom the Devil caught with a light argument. Therefore a woman should not teach, lest when she hath taken a false opinion and belief

8. Thomas Salter, *A Mirrhor mete for all Mothers, Matrones, and Maidens, intituled the Mirrhor of Modestie no lesse profitable and pleasant, then necessarie to bee read and practiced* (1579), C3r-v.

9. Foster Watson, *Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women* (London: Edward Arnold, 1912), 179.

of anything, she spread it into the hearers, [E3r] by the authority of mastership, and lightly bring other[s] into the same error, for the learners commonly do after the teacher with good will.¹⁰

Here the education of women is viewed as a possible path to authority, and Vives adamantly insists that no woman should follow it, even if she is to become queen of England. His concern to maintain St. Paul's proscription on women speaking in public or having "the authority of a man" is sufficiently common in the culture that both Makin and More address that issue in their work.

Such concerns were not simply those of male humanists. A century after Vives, Elizabeth Jocelin, who was herself a woman of considerable education, wrote a letter about her unborn baby, in the event that she died in childbirth. She told her husband that if she gave birth to a girl,

I desire her bringing up may be learning the Bible, as my sisters do, good housewifery, writing, and good works: other learning a woman needs not: though I admire it in those whom God hath blest with discretion, yet I desired not much in my own, having seen that sometimes women have greater portions of learning, than wisdom, which is of no better use to them than a mainsail to a flyboat, which runs it underwater. But where learning and wisdom meet in a virtuous disposed woman, she is the fittest closet for all goodness. She is like a well-balanced ship that may bear all her sail. She is—Indeed, I should but shame myself, if I should go about to praise her more.

But, my dear, though she have all this in her, she will hardly make a poor man's wife: Yet I leave it to thy will. If thou desirest a learned daughter, I pray God give her a wise and religious heart, that she may use it to his glory, thy comfort, and her own salvation.

But howsoever thou disposest of her education, I pray thee labor by all means to teach her true humility, though I much desire it may be as humble if it be a son as a daughter; yet in a daughter I more fear that vice; Pride being now rather accounted a virtue in our sex worthy praise, than a vice fit for reproof.¹¹

Nine days after giving birth to her daughter Theodora, Elizabeth Jocelin did indeed die. Like Vives, Jocelin fears the consequences of education, both because learning will limit her daughter's marriage prospects and because it might lead

10. Juan Luis Vives, *The Instruction of a Christen Woman*, ed. Virginia Walcott Beauchamp et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 23–24.

11. Elizabeth Jocelin, *The Mothers Legacie, to her vnborne Childe* (1624), B5v to B7r.

her to be proud. Little had changed in the course of a century to temper the fear that a woman's vanity about her learning might take her soul to hell.

Aside from these arguments from biology and theology, early English culture was pragmatic. An elite man's education was grounded in the study of Latin and Greek, developing linguistic and rhetorical skills to be employed in the court, the law, or the church. Since women had no role to play in those venues, educating them in skills that they would never use was considered folly, save for a few women of high rank or those whose fathers continued a humanist tradition in their households.¹² Moreover, as the passage from Vives suggests, women had no role to play in the public sphere. Education was far from universal, so few women were included in any way, since limited educational resources were reserved for men, who were responsible for controlling property. In contrast, under the English common law of coverture, women *were* a type of property, belonging to their fathers and then their husbands. Educating women as a sex as opposed to a few exceptional individuals, then, was considered impractical.

One reason that today's readers may be surprised at the existence of Makin's and More's writings and their advocacy for an advanced education for girls in the seventeenth century is because until quite recently, scholars were under the impression that the overwhelming majority of all Englishwomen, from every social class, was illiterate. The foundational study by David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (1980), used for its evidence of literacy rates the ability to sign one's name on legal documents, mostly ecclesiastical court records; based on this definition of literacy, Cressy believed that until nearly 1700, 90 percent of English women were illiterate, although there was significant improvement in the ability to sign one's name from the 1670s onward.¹³ His general conclusion was that "women were almost universally unable to write their own names for most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."¹⁴

12. Jane Stevenson in her study of women Latin poets argues that being able to compose in Latin was "a defining ability of the educated elite from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century," and in seventeenth-century England, she finds that "the kinds of men who had their daughters taught Latin (or taught them themselves) in the 1550s did so in the 1650s and may well have done so in the 1750s." *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 20, 369–70.

13. David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 72–73, 191–201, in particular table 6.1 and graph 7.2; see also Cressy, "Literacy in Context: Meaning and Measure in Early Modern England," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1993), 305–19. More cautiously, Roger Chartier remarked that "everywhere [in Europe] the male literacy rate is higher than the female, with a gap between the two as high as 25 or 30 percent," *Passions of the Renaissance*, vol. 3 of *A History of Private Life*, ed. Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1987–91), 115.

14. *Literacy and Social Order*, 145.

This understanding of measuring literacy and women's abilities to write and read has been widely revised. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, social historians including Margaret Spufford and Keith Thomas offered alternative ways of measuring literacy that produced different results from Cressy's signature test, especially among the lower classes and women.¹⁵ More recent studies by scholars such as Nigel Wheale, Adam Fox, Heidi Brayman Hackel, and Margaret Ferguson have also challenged our understanding of what literacy is and examined more closely how writing and reading in this period were learned. Brayman Hackel and Fox highlight a sliding scale of literacy skills that range from the ability to read simple texts (typically taught first to children in dame or petty schools run by women and often without teaching writing), to the ability to read black-letter type such as found on broadsides and signs, to more sophisticated reading and writing involving a classical education.¹⁶

The gendered term "dame school" suggests that early modern culture associated reading with women, while writing was associated with men. According to David Hall, "town records distinguish between 'woman schools,' in which women taught reading, and 'Masters Schools' where children learned to write from male schoolmasters." He goes on to suggest that most New England autobiographies report that it was the mother who taught reading to her children; and though exceptions existed, it was the father who taught his children to write. "I lived in my Father's family 12 years," Increase Mather remembered, "I learned to read of my mother. I learned to write of Father." Furthermore, because reading was taught before writing, and because writing was considered more suitable to men, "many persons, and especially women, could read but not write."¹⁷ Hall's focus on women's literacy in Protestant New England is especially telling because it draws attention to the important connection between literacy and religion.

15. Margaret Spufford, "The First Steps in Literacy: The Reading and Writing Experiences of the Humblest Seventeenth-Century Spiritual Autobiographers," *Social History* 4 (1979): 407–35; Keith Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England," in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed. Gerd Bauman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 97–131.

16. Nigel Wheale, *Writing and Society: Literacy, Print, and Politics in Britain, 1590–1660* (London: Routledge, 1999); Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Margaret W. Ferguson, *Dido's Daughters: Literacy, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003). See also recent studies in the history of reading practices by Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); *Reading, Society, and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven M. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

17. David D. Hall, "The Uses of Literacy in New England, 1600–1850," in *Printing and Society in Early America*, ed. William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1983), 24–25, 20, n. 63.

The seventeenth century saw an increasing desire for “bible literacy,” the ability to read the scriptures on one’s own, which permeated through the social levels. Protestant sectarians, especially during the English Civil War and Interregnum, placed a high value on being able to read the Bible in English and thus we find literate Quaker servant maids on evangelical missions; a farmer’s daughter, Agnes Beaumont, writing her autobiography; and village tinkers such as John Bunyan even becoming “mechanic preachers,” much to the dismay of those in authority.¹⁸ According to Thomas, Spufford, and Dolan, our original understanding of women’s levels of literacy is likely a “spectacular underestimate.”¹⁹ Wheale argues that “throughout the seventeenth century, for the first time in Britain significant numbers of women from diverse social ranks were able to read,” suggesting that the figures for literate women might indeed be nearly double what was previously believed.²⁰ Brayman Hackel correctly warns us, however, that measuring literacy for either sex is still a highly problematic area of study and that for an early modern person, male or female, to “become legible as a reader in the historical record, one must resist, one must write, and, alas, one must be lucky.”²¹

Also overlooked in literacy studies based on signatures or on surviving printed works ascribed to women writers is the active participation in literary and intellectual life by women through manuscript circulation and domestic writing.²² Databases such as The Perdita Project came into being in the 2000s because of its creators’ belief that “many more Englishwomen from the early modern period wrote in manuscript than had their work published. Those who did not publish, however, have often been invisible to the scholarly community, and in a real sense, *perdita*, lost”; by 2005, there were already “over 500 manuscripts of various kinds in the prototype Perdita on-line catalogue.”²³ Literary historians have returned to the archives to explore handwritten culture, with the result that More and Whitehall’s exchanges being conducted in manuscript no longer appears as an odd anomaly, an attempt to avoid controversy, or a failure to find a print audience, but

18. Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), chap. 4; Hilary Hinds, *God’s Englishwomen: Seventeenth-Century Radical Sectarian Writing and Feminist Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

19. Thomas, “Meaning of Literacy,” 103; Frances E. Dolan, “Reading, Writing, and Other Crimes,” in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, ed. Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymna Callaghan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 142–67, 161–62, n. 6.

20. Wheale, *Writing and Society*, 105.

21. Brayman Hackel, *Reading Habits*, 257.

22. Margaret J. M. Ezell, “The Laughing Tortoise: Speculations on Manuscript Sources and Women’s Book History,” *ELR* 38 (2008): 331–55.

23. Elizabeth Clarke, “Introducing Hester Pulter and the Perdita Project,” *Literature Compass* 2 (2005): 1–3.

instead as a practical and widely practiced alternative to print publication used by writers in many different genres, a point that will be discussed later.²⁴

In practice, the education of royal daughters and those of the highest aristocracy was in the hands of governesses and tutors. (A governess was largely in charge of conduct, while a tutor offered specialized training and education in a specific field. Because the terms are gendered, Makin, who was careful to identify herself as a tutor, is sometimes misidentified as a governess.) Over the course of the sixteenth century, the curriculum for girls of elite families in England as well as on the Continent whose parents chose to have them educated above literacy was typically centered on reading and composing in multiple languages, classical and modern, as well as music and religious practices. Recent studies have demonstrated the importance of tutors, typically foreign, not only teaching the young women but also linking them and their families with international literary and intellectual networks. For example, Makin was in the early 1640s the language tutor to Charles I's eldest daughter, Princess Elizabeth, and simultaneously corresponded with Anna Maria van Schurman in the Low Countries about her work.

It was not unusual for elite young girls to have multiple tutors who taught them in their homes. Many of these teachers were young people residing in the family, perhaps young men just graduated from university and awaiting an appointment or young women having been placed there to learn the domestic arts of running a large family home; these servant teachers were part of a practice now referred to as "life-cycle service," where young people resided and were employed in other households until they married.²⁵ Seventeenth-century Englishwomen such as Anne Halkett and Lucy Hutchinson recorded in their autobiographical writings that their tutors, often ones from the Continent who were employed by their mothers, came for varying amounts of time to teach languages, music, and reading. Halkett (1623–99) was the daughter of the provost of Eton College and her mother, Jane, was the governess to the younger children of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, Princess Mary and Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester. Halkett remembers that her mother "paid masters for teaching my sisters and me to write, speak French, play [on the] lute and virginals and dance, and kept a gentlewoman to teach us all kinds of needlework," in addition to her mother's own daily instructions in religious practices, reading, meditation, and prayer.²⁶ Lucy Hutchinson

24. See, for example, Emily Bowles Smith, "'Let them Completely Learn': Manuscript Clues about Early Modern Women's Educational Practices," in *A Manuscript Miscellany: A Summer 2005 NEH Institute*, Directed by Steven W. May, Folger Shakespeare Library, http://www.folger.edu/html/folger_institute/mm/EssayES.html.

25. See two articles by Sheila McIsaac Cooper, "Service to Servitude? The Decline and Demise of Life-Cycle Service in England," *The History of the Family* 10 (2005): 367–86, and Cooper, "Servants as Educators in Early-Modern England," *Paedagogica Historica* 43 (2007): 547–63.

26. *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe*, ed. John Loftis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 10–11.

(1620–81), the daughter Sir Allen Apsley, lieutenant of the Tower of London, recalled that she had “at one time 8 tutors in several qualities” and her dry nurse was a Frenchwoman so she “was taught to speak French and English together”; her father had her educated in Latin with her brothers, “and I was so apt that I outstripped my brothers who were at school, although my father’s chaplain, that was my tutor, was a pitiful dull fellow.”²⁷

At the far end of the social spectrum from these elite children, as mentioned earlier, parents even in smaller villages could typically send their sons and daughters for perhaps a few years to dame school or petty school, which offered reading instruction and sometimes also writing and account keeping. Poor orphan children of London of both sexes were taken in and educated at Christ’s Hospital, established in 1553: the girls were taught writing with the boys until 1710, when it was ordered that the girls should no longer attend the writing school but, instead, an apprentice of the writing master would be sent to instruct them at their house. Clearly, the emphasis in this education for girls was life skills and the domestic arts, but it also provided a chance at least for basic literacy.²⁸

What choices did a family of comfortable means have if they wished their daughter to be educated past such basic skills? Parents and guardians living in Catholic countries such as Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and France had the opportunity to have their daughters educated in convent schools. Prior to the dissolution of the nunneries under Henry VIII, England also had had a well-established tradition of educating girls in convent schools. The historian and Anglican cleric Thomas Fuller (1607/8–61) later wrote of these schools that they were “good Schools, where girls, and maids of the neighborhood were taught to read and work; and sometimes a little Latin was taught them therein.”²⁹ Fuller, writing in the 1650s, lamented the loss of such schools, noting that “if such Feminine Foundations had still continued . . . haply the weaker sex (besides the avoiding modern inconveniences) might be heightened to a higher perfection than hitherto hath been obtained.” Such an education was important for girls as “that sharpness of their wits, and suddenness of their conceits (which their enemies must allow unto them) might by education be improved into a judicious solidity, and that adorned with Arts, which now they want, not because they cannot learn, but are not taught them.”

27. Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson . . . to which is Prefixed The Life of Mrs. Hutchinson, Written by Herself*, ed. Julius Hutchinson (London: Longman, Hurst, Reses and Orme, 1806) [facsimile rept. Cambridge University Press, 2010], 15, 16.

28. See Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School: A Study of Women’s Education through Twelve Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), 194–226.

29. Thomas Fuller, *The Church-history of Britain from the Birth of Jesus Christ Until the Year M.DC. XLVIII endeavored by Thomas Fuller* (1656), 297.

Throughout the seventeenth century, devout Roman Catholic English families did continue to send both sons and daughters abroad to be educated at the English nunneries and monastic schools, for example at St. Omer, Cambrai, Douay, and Louvain, as well as English nunneries in Brussels and Paris. Among the most famous of these were the schools established by Mary Ward (1585–1645). Her first school, at St. Omer, employed thirty teachers by 1615, and in the 1620s she established schools throughout the Continent in Cologne, Rome, Munich, and Vienna.³⁰ These teachers in a three-year course instructed the girls, regardless of their future social station, in Latin, but substituted modern languages for the Greek and Hebrew found in the boys' curriculum, with the principal motivation being to enable Catholic wives and mothers to be able to educate their households and serve as apostles for Catholicism.³¹ Ward's innovations in educating girls, which included acting in moral comedies, in addition to Latin and languages, were not always well received by Vatican fathers. In 1631 the Inquisition suppressed the convents and schools and imprisoned Mary Ward, although Pope Urban subsequently in 1632 permitted her to found another house and school in Rome under his protection.³² Later generations of Catholic women continued this work on the Continent and we find, for example, Winefrid Thimelby, the abbess of a convent of English nuns at Louvain, writing in 1668 about her two young nieces Katherine and Gertrude joining her there to complete their education.

This private Catholic education of both boys and girls alarmed the Protestant English government under James I and Charles I. Legislation was proposed to prohibit children from being educated abroad and to require that they attend Protestant schools in England. As historians have noted, the desire to educate both boys and girls in the Protestant faith meant that over the seventeenth century the demand for schools increased; simultaneous with this increasing demand for Protestant educational institutions was the presence, especially in London, of increasing numbers of foreign Protestant refugees coming to England to escape persecution in France and the Low Countries. Many of these educated men and women would, over the course of the late sixteenth century through the seventeenth century, find employment serving as governesses, tutors, schoolmistresses, and masters for children of both sexes.

In addition to educators who lived in the family or taught in the pupil's home, in London and the larger towns, specialized masters and schools also taught more advanced skills. A brisk rivalry existed among London writing masters such

30. Susan O'Brien, "Ward, Mary (1585–1645)," *ODNB*.

31. Margaret Mary Littlehales, *Mary Ward: Pilgrim and Mystic* (London: Continuum, 2001), 62–63.

32. O'Brien, "Mary Ward"; Littlehales, *Mary Ward*, 167; see also Caroline Bicks, "Producing Girls on the English Stage: Performance as Pedagogy in Mary Ward's Convent Schools," in *Gender and Early Modern Constructions of Childhood*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2011), 139–56.

as John Ayres, who stated on the title page of *The New A-la-Mode Secretarie, or Practical Pen-Man, a New Copy-Book* (1682) that he was “Master of the Writing-School, at the Hand and Pen near St. Paul’s School, in St. Paul’s Churchyard, London.”³³ “Youth,” the inside cover informs the purchaser, “for mere Expedition may be there Boarded.”

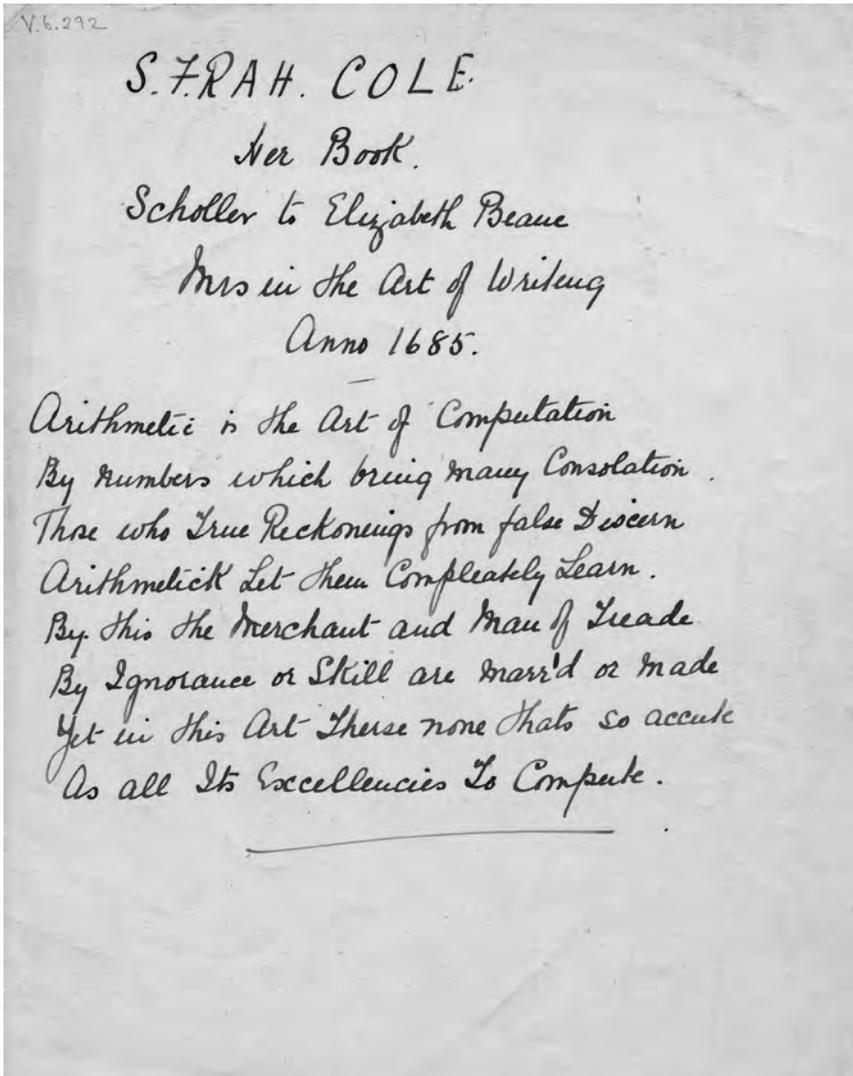


Figure 1. The title page of Sarah Cole’s arithmetic exercise book, MS V. b. 292
© The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC.

33. John Ayres, *The New A-la-Mode Secretarie, or Practical Pen-Man, a New Copy-Book*, 1682.

We do not know if the female pupils of Elizabeth Beane, who was active in the 1680s, could also board with her, but three of the copy books in which they demonstrated their calligraphy and mastery of arithmetic have survived: Sarah Cole announces on the front page that it is “Her Book” and that she is “Scholler to Elizabeth Beane Mrs. In the Art of Writing. Anno. 1685” (i.e., scholar to Elizabeth Beane, mistress in the art of writing).³⁴ The texts by Mrs. Beane’s students were based on the calligraphic system devised by the prolific Edward Cocker, author of *The Tutor to Writing and Arithmetic* (1664), a text that also appears to have been the guide for Mary More’s son, Richard Waller, in producing the elaborate 1674–76 manuscript volume of his translation and illustration of M. Vegius’s addition to Virgil’s Book XII of the *Aeneid*.³⁵ In addition to such writing manuals and copy books, pedagogical texts, especially French and Latin grammars and primers, enjoyed a steady popular market, as evidenced by surviving exercise books belonging to “lower elite” or young women from merchant families such as Elizabeth Brockman in the 1670s.

We know the names of some existing schools for girls during the seventeenth century because of their connections with the court. The Ladies Hall at Deptford educated the daughters of the members of court and gentry families. Lucy, Countess of Bedford, the prominent patron of literary men including William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and John Donne, apparently arranged for the female pupils there to perform an entertainment for James I’s queen, Anne of Denmark, in 1617, a masque called *Cupid’s Banishment* written by the headmaster Robert White.³⁶ While the speaking roles were performed by professional entertainers, the pupils of the school, two of whom were goddaughters of Anne of Denmark, embraced the ideals of chaste love through songs and complexly choreographed dances. Even during the Interregnum period when London theaters were closed by Parliament, girls in schools continued to perform in entertainments designed to showcase their acquired skills, as seen in a surviving manuscript “Cupid His Coronation In a Mask,” written by Thomas Jordan (ca. 1614–85); the manuscript text announces that it “was Presented with good Approbation at the Spittle [Christ’s Hospital foundling school in London] diverse times by Masters and young Ladies that were their Scholars in the year 1654.”³⁷

In London as well as other provincial cities, such schools for girls of good if not aristocratic birth also are mentioned from the first part of the seventeenth century onward. One was run by a Mrs. Friend in Stepney and offered girls an education in “learning at her needle, writing, music and other qualities” in the

34. Washington, DC, FSL MS V.b.292. For a further discussion, see Emily Bowles Smith, “Let them Completely Learn.”

35. London, BL MS Add. 27,347.

36. Oxford, BOD MS Rawl. B. 165, fols. 107–13.

37. Lynn Hulse, “Jordan, Thomas (ca.1614–1685),” *ODNB*.

1620s and 1630s. The Reverend Ralph Josselin (1617–83) taught his daughter Jane to read and write at home, but sent her at age ten to board at Mrs. Piggot's school in Colchester, where she remained until she was fourteen or fifteen and entered into service with his patron, the widowed Lady Harlakended. Dorothy Gardiner also points to records of schools for girls in Westerham in Kent, in Leicester, Oxford, and Exeter;³⁸ Manchester apparently had more than one school, with a very long established one taking pupils between 1638 and 1673, led by a French proprietor, Mrs. Parnell Amyer.

In London, such schools tended to be located in the suburbs. M. de la Mare's boarding school was located in Marylebone, offering instruction in writing, reading, speaking French, singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments; the area known as Hackney became so well known for its girls' schools, such as Mrs. Salmon's, where the poet Katherine Philips was sent to board when she was eight years old (*ca.* 1640), that the area was called "The Ladies University of Female Arts." Another notable Hackney school for girls, which continued well into the eighteenth century, was that established by Mrs. Perwich in 1643. This house remained a boarding school until 1788, and it is estimated that during the 1640s and 1650s, during the English Civil War and Interregnum, some eight hundred girls were educated there, young women from good families from all over the country. Instruction was provided by visiting school masters who held prestigious positions in addition to their teaching duties at the school, including Edward Coleman, a gentleman of the Chapel Royal, and Albert Bryne, a composer and organist at St. Paul's.

Mrs. Perwich's daughter Susanna (1636–61), who was educated along with her sisters at this school, was, like Bathsua Makin, a star attraction for her parent's school. On her death in 1661, John Batchiler, a relative of hers, published *The Virgin's Pattern, in the Exemplary Life and lamented Death of Mrs. Susanna Perwich, Daughter of Mr. Robert Perwich*, dedicated to "all the young Ladies and Gentlewomen, of the several Schools, in and about the City of London, or elsewhere; more particularly to those of Mrs. Perwich her School at Hackney."³⁹ Noted initially for her skill as a musician, especially in playing the viola, she attracted crowds to attend the school's concerts: "persons of high rank and quality, of all sorts, came from London, the Inns of Court, and out of several Countries ... especially the chiefest Music Masters that are now living." Upon the death of the young man to whom she was betrothed, Susanna Perwich then devoted herself to religious meditation and devotional writing, while continuing to instruct pupils at the school in writing, keeping accounts, embroidery, and music composition.

38. Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School*, 217, 218, 319, 277.

39. John Batchiler, *The Virgin's Pattern, in the Exemplary Life and lamented Death of Mrs. Susanna Perwich, Daughter of Mr. Robert Perwich* (1661).

The continuing emphasis on the acquisition of polite accomplishments, as well as the learning of vernacular languages and domestic arts in such schools, can also be seen in the glimpses we catch of musical performances conducted there. “The Scholars of Mr. Jeffery Banister, and Mr. James Hart, at their New Boarding-School for Young Ladies and Gentlewomen, kept in that House which was formerly Sir Arthur Gorges, at Chelsey” advertised their performance of Thomas Duffett’s masque *Beauty’s Triumph*, printed in 1676. The prologue, “spoken by a young Lady,” welcomes the audience but warns that “This was intended for ourselves alone, / ... and beg a kind excuse, / for straiten’d time, and a disorder’d House” and hopes that that “the want of practice, fitting dress, / And glorious Scenes, may make our failings less.” According to the text, however, the opening scene is a spectacular tableaux, with the figure of “Fate” sitting on a throne, “dress’d in a dark-colour’d Robe, powder’d with Swords, Stars, Daggers, Books, Flames and Crowns, &c—a Crown on his head, a Globe at his feet, and a great Book open before him: near his feet sit the Three Fatal Sisters, one holding a Distaff, another Spinning and drawing out Threads, and the third cutting them ... while a solemn Air is play’d by Violins, Recorders, &c.”

Also during the period when Makin and More were active in London, the poet “Ephelia” published her prologue, epilogue, and two songs from her comedy *Pair of Royal Coxcombs* described as “Acted at a Dancing-School” in her 1679 volume of collected verse. The author urges the males in the audience “to give it your Applause,” “Though not for Wit, nor Worth, but yet because / A Woman wrote it; though it be not rare,” she concludes, “It is not common.” Because it is also a school play, Ephelia hopes that her audience will not expect the level of professional entertainment found in commercial theaters whose authors “write for a Third day” benefit performance, “For She protests, She had no other ends / In writing this, than to divert her Friends.”⁴⁰

Of course, having access to a school did not ensure that a girl received an “education” in the sense that Makin and More desired it. The public performances at London’s boarding schools for girls after 1660 were sufficiently well known as to offer rich sources for social comedy, as well as serious moral concern. In Restoration comedies, female characters educated at London boarding schools typically turn out to be either affected social climbers who speak ridiculous French or vulgar hoydens with voracious appetites who drive their harassed tutors and parents to distraction. Thomas D’Urfey’s *Love for Money, or The Boarding School* (1691) is set in Chelsea, and in his preface D’Urfey ironically denies that it was based on actual experiences while “I liv’d at a Boarding School near London all last Summer.” In the play, despite the best efforts of the singing and dancing masters, the schoolgirls alternate stuffing themselves with stolen treats, ogling young men, and exchanging insults:

40. Ephelia, *Pair of Royal Coxcombs*, in *Female Poems On several Occasions* (1679), 17.

Enter Jenny with a large piece of bread and butter.

Jenny. Oh, Sister, what did John Gardner do to you, pray? Oh law, oh law—

Molly. What's that to you, long Nose? Oh law, oh law.

Jenny. My Governess will order you, she vows, and I'll tell my Mother on you, I'm resolved; she'll be here this afternoon.

Molly. And I'll tell my Father then how you peeped upon Mr. Coopee t'other day when he was going a swimming. [*Romps and pushes her.*]

Jenny. Ay, tell, tell, Snotty-nose, what care I! My mother can order you, and my father both, pray; besides, [*pushes her*] hussy, you peeped as well as I, that you did, so you did.

Molly. Go, go, baby, and make dirt-pies again. My father says I shall have a husband shortly, pray.⁴¹

Susanna Perwich's biographer declares that among his reasons for publishing an account of her life is his desire to correct those people who view "the education of public schools, as if they were places of all other most dangerous to corrupt the manners of youth." As Makin and subsequent writers such as Mary Astell would comment about how young women were typically educated, a poor education might be worse than none at all.

Seventeenth-Century English Women and Problems of Publication

Learned Englishwomen faced a mixed reception in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the mixed reception continues today as scholars try to place them and their work in literary history. One problem that scholars face is provenance and another is the radically different ideas that our own society has about publication. Just as we cannot be certain what the literacy rate for women was in the early modern period, so too we cannot be sure how many women wrote texts suitable for general study and that may offer insight into the culture in which women lived and wrote.

One problem is that women rarely wrote under their own names. Juan Luis Vives expressed a common hostility when he condemned women who used learning to do anything other than contemplate God and educate children. To write and publish that writing was a form of "speaking in public," and, following St. Paul (1 Timothy 2:12), most early modern men had firmly ruled such public speech unacceptable. The problem is illustrated by the proto-feminist pamphlets about women authored by Jane Anger (1589), Rachel Speght (1617), Esther Sowernam (1617), and Constantia Munda (1617). Only Speght writes under her own name: the others are all written under pseudonyms, and indeed, some scholars have ar-

41. Thomas D'Urfey, *Love for Money, or The Boarding School* (1691), 22.

gued that men probably wrote them. With many early modern Englishwomen, to publish under their own names invited hostile responses: Rachel Speght was attacked, as were other women writers like Cecily Bulstrode and Lady Mary Wroth. As Elizabeth Mazzola has observed, early modern women writers developed multiple strategies of defense, noting that “early modern Englishwomen’s writings often conceal rather than reveal what women knew” and that the frequent apologies by women who did write for the poor quality of their “scribblings” might well have been deliberate: “maybe illegibility was a deliberate goal, illiteracy an accomplishment. A woman could easily disown a scandalous piece of writing by attributing it to her inadequate training, after all.”⁴² More commonly, a woman who wrote for publication simply may not have identified herself, leading Virginia Woolf to remark dryly, “I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman.”⁴³

Another problem with establishing the provenance of early modern women’s work is establishing their actual identity, either because a woman changed her name through marriage or because her identity went unrecorded. A seventeenth-century woman’s name was that of her father or her husband; if she entered the public sphere, she did so through the agency of a man. Today’s culture values individuality and independence, yet in the early modern period identity was more likely to be constructed through relationships, through networks of family and friends. The values inculcated, especially for women, were those of mutuality or reciprocity instead of independence. Mary More was twice married and thus has an identity as the mother of Elizabeth and Richard Waller with her first husband in the 1660s and as the writer and artist known as Mary More in the 1670s and ’80s. It is largely through documents relating to her father, a wealthy London merchant, to her son, who became the secretary of the Royal Society of London, and sometimes to her son-in-law, Alexander Pitfield, who was the treasurer of the Royal Society, that one can begin to reassemble More’s literary and artistic acquaintances. In the case of Bathsua Makin, her identity was long confused because scholars misread a letter from her brother-in-law, John Pell, and thought the two were siblings. In fact Bathsua Makin had a sister Ithamar, who married Pell, so she was Pell’s sister-in-law. One consequence is that scholars neglected to seek other works by Makin under her maiden name, Reginald, overlooking her early publications. Thus, knowing something about a woman’s networks of family and friends is particularly important if one wants to understand her work in the context of her life. To find More and Makin, one must track male relatives both to learn her name at a particular moment in her life and to find useful records. Furthermore, as we shall see in the life of Mary More, the initial network of

42. Elizabeth Mazzola, *Learning and Literacy in Female Hands, 1520–1698* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2013), x.

43. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1989), 51.

documents associated with male relatives can also lead to a complex network of women's connections over several generations.

If an early modern audience assumed that a secular text written by a man was of higher value than one by a woman, then the attempt to assume a masculine identity (as Makin did) helped the writer manipulate audience response. Furthermore, while until very recently in modern academic circles published work has had a higher cultural status than unpublished, the majority of literary writers, both male and female, in the latter part of the seventeenth century did, like More, prefer to circulate their writing among friends rather than making it available to any member of the public who could afford a printed copy. This practice of scribal publication and social authorship did not always indicate a fear of reprisal; while indeed political satires and lampoons were unsafe to print, occasional verse, religious devotions, and polemical essays were overwhelmingly circulated among readers in handwritten copies, whether professionally done by scribes or by the writer him- or herself.⁴⁴ In this situation, women who chose scribal publication and the social circulation of their writings also chose their audience from their network of family and acquaintances. Yet that did not mean that they were shielded from controversy and debate.

This is not to say that a woman's writing was necessarily dismissed out of hand in this period. Some misogynists during any age would find that a woman writing was deplorable, while other readers would find it remarkable and praiseworthy. But being remarkable is not quite the same thing as being good. Since women in general had far fewer opportunities to practice their skills as writers, the assumption that a woman's writing had less value than did a man's writing was often a reasonable one, if one judges a piece of writing in terms of craft and polish. Nevertheless, the Makin essay is almost certainly the first instance of a woman defending her own and other women's right to an education, and she chooses to do so by ventriloquizing her own voice through a masculine persona so that her voice will not be dismissed or silenced. The More essay is almost certainly the first to suggest that women, like men, are entitled to equality under the law in England concerning property as well as to an education that would enable them to know their rights, but because it was not printed, few scholars have known about it.

44. On the prevalence of handwritten literary culture during the seventeenth century, see Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); and Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), introduction. On libels and satires, see Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire, 1660–1702* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), chap. 8.

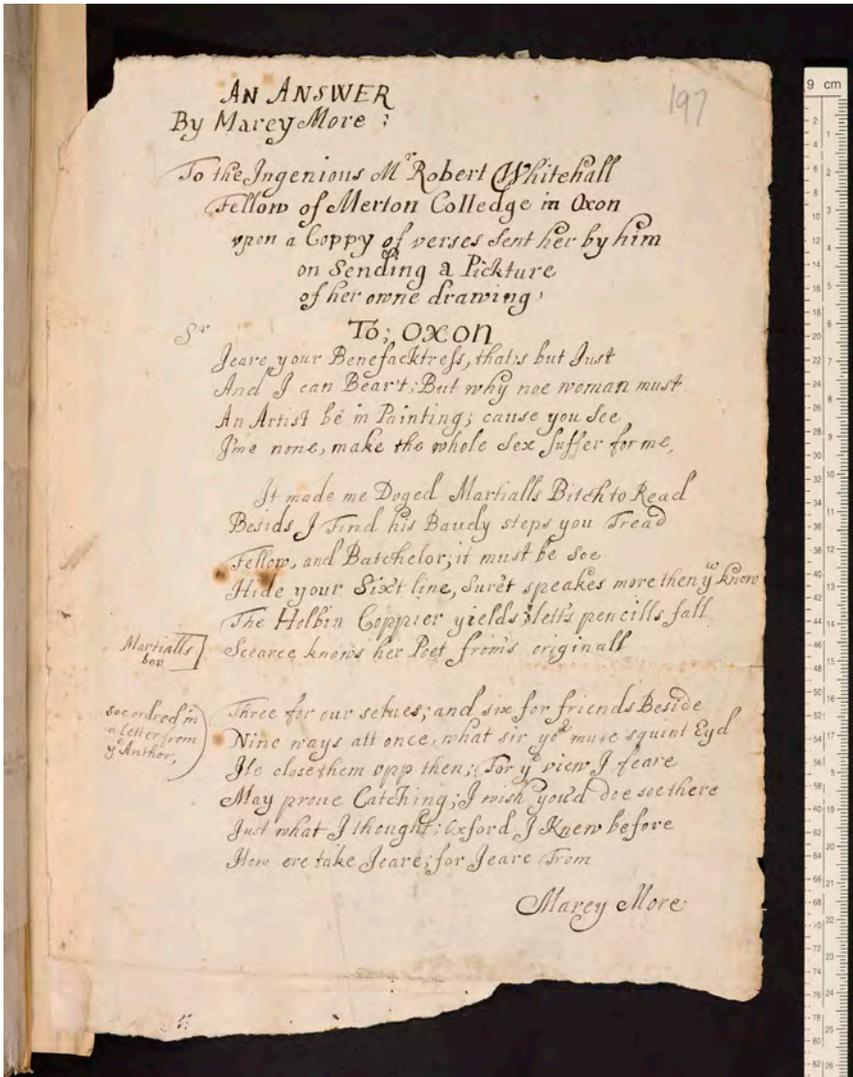


Figure 2. Mary More's manuscript poem to Robert Whitehall, BOD MS Rawl. D. 912, fol. 197

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Although nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars, including Virginia Woolf, lost sight of many women writers, as recent research suggests, early modern learned women did not and formed their own networks. Carol Pal, for example, suggests that a network of learned women in the 1640s to 1670s included the Dutch scholar Anna Maria van Schurman and Englishwomen such Katherine Boyle Jones, Viscountess Ranelagh, as well as Dorothy Moore-Dury

and Bathsua Makin.⁴⁵ Mary More too existed within a network, which we believe centered on London. The two women may even have known of one another since both had links to the Royal Society: More through her son and son-in-law, and Makin through her brother-in-law Pell. While they did not themselves attend a university, both were associated with men who linked them to Oxford (in More's case) or Cambridge (attended by More's son-in-law and Makin's brother-in-law). Nevertheless, the possibility of learning that English universities offered to young men was not open to women, and one result is that women tended to make connections in London, especially among other learned women. Anna Maria van Schurman, whose education and writings will be discussed in more detail later, was famous throughout Europe as a woman who had attended a university, the University of Utrecht, although she had to sit behind a curtain in her classes lest she distract her male peers. Moreover, in the 1640s she published a defense of women's education and also maintained an extensive correspondence with a variety of learned men and women. Sister to the scientist Robert Boyle (of Boyle's Law in chemistry), Katherine Boyle Jones, Viscountess Ranelagh, was an intellectual power (and power-broker) in her own right, although she never published. Her aunt, Dorothy Moore-Dury, like van Schurman, wrote an essay on women's education that was not printed but did circulate in manuscript.⁴⁶ All of these women, like Makin, knew of one another and were involved with the intellectual networks centered on Samuel Hartlib, the Comenian reformer of education.

More is of the next generation of learned London women. Just as Makin and women of her generation remembered and praised Elizabeth Tudor for her learning, so did the women of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries recall the women in earlier times who had insisted on women's education, such as van Schurman. As a woman who had a close connection to the Royal Society, which was also associated with Hartlib's circle, Mary More, although not related to Dorothy Moore, is likely to have known of these women, if she did not meet them personally. As we shall see below, she knew such numerous prominent members of the Royal Society of London, as well as having connections to Oxford through her exchanges with Robert Whitehall.

Networks, both familial and aspirational, are certainly important if one wants to understand these texts by Makin and More. Both women include catalogues of other women of learning and virtue, listing women by name with a short explanation of who she was and why her learning mattered. A modern reader may find a lengthy catalogue of learned women archaic and dull. Knowing that the catalogue tradition has a long history, going back to Boccaccio and Chris-

45. Carol Pal, *The Republic of Women: Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

46. Lynette Hunter, comp., *The Letters of Dorothy Moore, 1612–64: The Friendships, Marriage, and Intellectual Life of a Seventeenth-Century Woman* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2004), xxix–xxx.