Pope, Curll, and the Intermediality of Eighteenth-Century Character

One wonders whether Alexander Pope did quite foresee the avalanche of print he would set off when he was planning the publication of his familiar letters. He must have known that Edmund Curll and other booksellers would quickly move to reprint if they could at all get away with it, but the sheer scale of operations – and the reader demand that such a scale implied – may have surprised even him.[1] The publication of his letters came at an already busy time for Pope, who, in 1733-7 alone, published 24 new titles as well as a vast number of further editions and reprints of these and older titles. The letters, however, drove the publication of Pope's texts and of Popeiana to a level of frenzy that had only been reached once before, in the aftermath of the publication of the *Dunciad* (1728). By the time the dust was settling, Pope had stage-managed three different versions of his correspondence in at least 17 editions between 1735 and 1742, while notorious London book seller Edmund Curll had produced at least a further 11 editions and had added engravings of Pope and his correspondents to all of his volumes. It is therefore probably safe to say that the publication of *Letters of Mr. Pope and Several Eminent Persons* on 19 May 1735 marked the beginning of a media event that would attract the attention of British readers, writers, and booksellers for the next seven years.[2]

Though the focus of many excellent studies, the broad outlines of what I call the "*Letters* media event" bear summarizing again if for no other reason than that its timeline and cast are extremely convoluted. After initial, pseudonymous contacts with Curll as early as 1733, Pope had managed to sell a pre-printed edition of the *Letters of Mr. Pope* to Curll in 1735 and, disguised behind epistolary acronyms and an agent, had also induced the bookseller to advertise the edition as his own. Pope then cried foul and managed to get an injunction from the Lords

forbidding the further sale of "Curll's" *Letters*. Undeterred, Curll reprinted and sold Pope's letters as *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence* (1735-7), a five-volume series that Paul Baines and Pat Rogers have described as an "omnium gatherum" and "catch-all title" for Popeiana, Swiftiana, and beyond.[3] Other booksellers followed suit and brought out reprints of the *Letters of Mr. Pope*, some of them (like the *Letters* "Printed for T. Cooper") with Pope's unacknowledged involvement. Pope, meanwhile, took this outpouring of letters as an occasion to decry the supposedly clandestine publication of his personal correspondence and promised an authorized and "corrected" edition, finally published as *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope, and Several of His Friends* on 19 May 1737. In 1740-41, Pope manufactured another apparently clandestine publication of letters (this time of his correspondence with Jonathan Swift and John Gay, a Dublin project supposedly instigated by Swift against Pope's wishes) and promptly issued an authorized edition, *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose. Vol. II* (1741). And once again Curll moved to reprint, but this time Pope went to court to stop the dissemination of *Dean Swift's Literary Correspondence* (1741). Lord Chancellor Hardwicke granted the injunction against Curll's volume that Pope had sought, and the judge's decision that the copyright in familiar letters remained vested in the sender continues as an important precedent for copyright law in the Anglophone world.[4] The following year, Pope published the Swift-Gay correspondence as the final volume of his octavo *Works* while once again disguising his involvement; this was the last time that the letters appeared in print during his life.

Previous scholars have shown that Pope pursued a variety of goals in the publication of his correspondence. He used the scandal surrounding Curll's purportedly clandestine publication of the initial volumes to help defeat the Booksellers' Bill then under debate in Parliament, which would have extended terms of copyright. The letters themselves, meanwhile, supported his

defense against attacks on his person and morals, and they extended his self-monumentalization as a poet who was both a classic and a national treasure.[5] However, this work leaves largely unanswered the question why Pope chose selections from his correspondence to do this work. After all, he had already been waging battles with his detractors in verse and prose, and his poetry in particular was a means for Pope to intervene in contemporary notions of authorship and copyright as well as in his readers' conceptions of his person.[6] Why also publish letters?

I want to suggest that the answer lies in the particularly close relationship that the eighteenth century perceived between familiar letters, sincerity, and character. Pope's requirements, I argue, were met particularly well by the ways in which familiar letters were read in eighteenth-century Britain as well as by the formal properties specific to published correspondence. Familiar letters were considered by many to be the vehicle of a letter writer's sincere thoughts and sentiments and were therefore thought to provide as unmediated a view of her or his personal character as was possible in writing. Yet while sincerity prescribed honesty and truth to the moment, it also presupposed that opinions and feelings would alter with changing correspondents, situations, and the passage of time.[7] Like a face that registers the transformations of mood and age, therefore, correspondence had to be re-read over and over again as an archive of character that could sustain both deep and broad reading strategies. As a result, the volumes of a published correspondence also functioned as character matrixes for eighteenth-century readers. The accumulation of letters displayed a letter writer's social networks while assembling and keeping in balance large numbers of potentially disparate portraits of the letter writer without the formal requirement of their narrative integration into a single, coherent identity.[8] The study of published familiar correspondence therefore reveals that

eighteenth-century character was a fundamentally relational, interactional form of identity predicated on the reading of letters-as-countenances.

This imbrication of epistolarity and correspondence with portraiture also already indicates that character was both constituted within and disseminated via the entire range of eighteenth-century technologies of mediation. In using the term "intermediality" I mean to indicate both the conditions of emergence and the functions of eighteenth-century character. Wherever character was discussed and analyzed – whether in face-to-face conversations, epistolary exchanges, or printed debates – it arose within the interstices between the media forms that gave it legibility and currency. In other words, the formulation of character always occurred in the contact zones where opinions and arguments in their mediated forms (oral or written, visual or textual, manuscript or print) encountered each other. As a consequence, eighteenth-century character acted as an interface by connecting the period's media forms to each other and to their users; it mediated (between) them and made meaningful exchanges possible about who somebody was or was thought to be. In that sense it might be salutary to think of character as an "actor-network," as Bruno Latour uses that term, so that "character" comprises the traces of relations connecting individuals and giving them social shapes as well as the accounts that render those traces visible.[9] Personal character could thus never actually be owned or controlled by any one person, not even by the person whose character was under debate. The best an individual could hope for was to participate instead in the translations and interpretations through which her or his character came to be formulated. In the eighteenth century, to "have" a character meant to mediate and be mediated.

Moreover, this sense of the mediation of character also entails its irrevocable materiality since it needed to be transmitted, received, and processed through one medium or another. In

fact, character in the eighteenth century was invariably linked to the media forms through which it circulated because it could not be thought apart from the technologies of writing and drawing, the reading materials, and the infrastructures that facilitated its inscription and dissemination.[10] The elaborately engraved, initial capital "I" of the "Preface" to the authorized *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope* (figure 1) may serve to illustrate this point. Within the text of the "Preface," the initial capital spells part of the word, "If," while it also separates itself from the rest of the text on the page – it is distinct in medium, size, and design. Yet, as I will show later on in this article, the initial capital at the same time exemplifies an intersection of media that was central to Pope's strategies for representing himself within the *Letters*. It is at once an image, an engraving, a piece of type, and a lexical mark; and as the first person pronoun, "I," it foregrounds eighteenth-century readers' desires to find a letter writer's personality expressed in her or his familiar letters. Above all, therefore, the initial capital in Pope's "Preface" emblematizes the nexus of media in which eighteenth-century notions of "character" were embedded. As the one term that connects all of the initial capital's forms of existence within the *Letters*, eighteenth-century character relates marks in ink on paper to the metal type or engraved plates that left them; to the textual or visual portraits they compose; to the sitter's face; and to the letter writer's personal and social identities. Wherever character was formulated and analyzed, it always emerged as an interface between media forms and their users that foregrounded its materiality and mediality. In articulating the print publication of Pope's familiar letters with the formulation of his personal character, I therefore also aim to show that mediation was fundamental to the very constitution of character in eighteenth-century Britain.

The "Sincerity Effect": Correspondence, Character, and Mediation

To recapture the mediation of eighteenth-century character, we need to begin by excavating that term's full range of references in the eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson's roster of definitions in the *Dictionary* offers a good place to begin that work; the surprisingly long list runs as follows:

1) A mark; a stamp; a representation.

2) A letter used in writing or printing.

3) The hand or manner of writing.

4) A representation of any man as to his personal qualities.

5) An account of any thing as good or bad.

6) The person with his assemblage of qualities.

7) Personal qualities; particular constitution of the mind.

8) Adventitious qualities impressed by a post or office.[11]

In terms of my discussion, it is striking how the list moves from representation to the objects of representation. More specifically, Johnson's definitions take readers from the means of representation ("marks," "letters," and handwriting) to the representation or "account" itself, from there to the person (or "any thing") represented, and finally to the "qualities" that compose the person. Johnson's list of definitions implies a primacy of the means and the practices of representation over what is being represented, which indicates that "character" is fundamentally a matter of reception and mediation.

Deidre Lynch and David Brewer have worked in this vein in their pioneering studies of eighteenth-century characters: Lynch when she revealed the materiality of eighteenth-century visual and textual portraiture that underlay the portrayal of novelistic characters; and Brewer when he insisted on the centrality of readers' interactions with their books to the persistence and transformations of fictional characters.[12] Despite their work, however, the vast majority of meanings associated with "character" during the period remain unexplored from a media-historical perspective. This continued oversight is all the more striking since character (in the sense of personal and social identity) was strongly associated with the letter form throughout the long eighteenth century. Above all, it tended to be linked with familiar correspondence, with letters exchanged between family members and friends. Discussing "the curiosity which the Public has always discovered, concerning the Letters of eminent persons," Hugh Blair thus explained in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) that

> [w]e expect in them to discover somewhat of their real character. It is childish indeed to expect, that in Letters we are to find the whole heart of the Author unveiled. Concealment and disguise take place, more or less, in all human intercourse. But still, as Letters from one friend to another make the nearest approach to conversation, we may expect to see more of a character displayed in these than in other productions, which are studied for public view. We please ourselves with beholding the Writer in a situation which allows him to be at his ease, and to give vent occasionally to the overflowings of his heart. . . . There, if any where, we look for the man, not for the Author.[13]

Short of face-to-face conversation, familiar letters represent for Blair the least mediated means of accessing a person's character. Yet Blair's formulation of familiar letters' capacity to reveal the personal characters of private people also emphasizes that the formulation of character is a social process. The language he employs to discuss the qualities of familiar letters highlights that, while letters "introduc[e] us into some acquaintance with the Writer" and promise to reveal her or his "real character," such insights require the writer's "display" as well as the reader's "discovery" of character. In other words, Blair conceives of an individual's personal character as the product of a reading process in which "Readers of taste" (i.e. appropriately trained, polite readers) negotiate the "Concealment and disguise" of epistolary conversation to uncover the occasional "overflowings of [the letter writer's] heart." "Character" may therefore (amongst other things) describe an individual's moral and personal qualities, but those qualities are themselves socially oriented attributes that indicate the individual's attitudes towards others – her or his conduct in social life – and are assigned to that individual by others.

In locating the formulation of personal character within the operations of reading circuits, Blair followed ideas that had been current at least since the beginning of the century. In a passage added to *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) in the posthumous *Works* (1714), for example, John Locke had emphasized the importance of letter writing as part of a gentleman's education:

> The writing of Letters has so much to do in all the Occurrences of Humane Life, that no Gentleman can avoid shewing himself in this kind of writing. Occasions will daily force him to make use of his Pen, which, besides the Consequences, that, in his Affairs, his well or ill managing of it often draws after it, always lays him open to a severer

> Examination of his Breeding, Sense, and Abilities, than oral Discourses; whose transient Faults dying for the most part with the Sound, that gives them Life, and so not subject to a strict Review, more easily escape Observation and Censure.[14]

Locke here warns letter writers that their letters will not only be scrutinized for their adroitness at coordinating their economic interests but will also open them to "Observation and Censure" of the figures they make in society, in other words, of their characters. In distinction to Blair's emphasis on the reader's role in discovering character, however, Locke foregrounded the need for letter writers to be deliberate about how they displayed themselves in their letters.

And it was to the same sense of deliberation in the epistolary crafting of character that Johnson had recourse in his *Life of Pope* (1781) when he questioned the "veracity" of a character displayed in letters. After complaining that, "[i]t has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him," he then charges:

> Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not shew to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. . . . a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance, in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.[15]

Doubting the sincerity of personal character as it is displayed in familiar letters, Johnson here seeks to heighten the sense of mediation of which letter writers and readers should be aware.[16] What in Blair's account appears as occasional lapses in the self-conscious craft of epistolary self-fashioning ("Concealment and disguise") is for Johnson at best "a calm and deliberate performance" and at worst "fallacy and sophistication." Yet despite those doubts, Johnson here merely complicates the fundamental connection between familiar letters and personal character rather than breaking it entirely. In foregrounding rhetorical craft and performativity he reveals the apparent immediacy of familiar letters as a "sincerity effect," but he does not fundamentally reject the notion of familiar letters as a site of the formulation of character, however deliberate that process may be.

It is all the more suggestive, then, that Pope was actually very much aware of the centrality of this "sincerity effect" to eighteenth-century epistolary discourse. In an early letter to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Pope in fact revealed that he consciously used this effect to heighten his self-characterization. Pope there promises that all his letters to Lady Mary "will be the most impartial Representations of a free heart, and the truest Copies you ever saw, tho' of a very mean Original."[17] He goes on to insist that "whatever I write will be the real Thought of that hour," repudiates "[c]ompliment either to you or myself," and warns her that she will find his letters "most Horribly Like" in their representations of him (*Correspondence* 1:353). As Helen Deutsch points out in her excellent reading of this letter, its most salient element is Pope's rhetorical performance of sincerity, a performance that sets up the potential revelation of physical, emotional, and moral deformities as proofs of his sincerity.[18] It is therefore not so much at issue whether Pope is actually being honest and open with his reader. The importance of this letter and of its rhetoric of sincerity instead lies precisely in the accumulation of gestures of self-

exposure. These gestures, by virtue of their apparent disregard of appearances, in turn come to perform the immediacy and sincerity of Pope's self-expression as well as the transparency of the medium in which he chooses to represent himself.[19] Johnson's critique of epistolary sincerity in the *Life of Pope* should therefore not primarily be understood as aiming at the demystification of its performative rhetoric. Instead, his intervention was a gambit to re-deploy sincerity as an actor-network by reminding readers of the mediations it performed in the formulation of character.

"[T]he best Work, or best character": Mediating Pope

Johnson's remedialization of sincerity also stressed that a person's character not only relied on the manner in which it was portrayed or on the ways in which it came to be read but also depended on how it was relayed and ran the risk of being transformed every time it switched between media. Eighteenth-century character was at one and the same time the message, the medium, and the interface between media forms and their users. In the "Preface" to the authorized *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*, the poet had gestured to this intermediality himself when he cast the negotiation of character through letters in the language of portraiture. Visual media were indeed central to the dissemination and interpretation of character in this period, but Johnson's definitions in the *Dictionary* expanded the term to incorporate the means of its representation as well as its social effects and functions. In eighteenth-century Britain, "character" was therefore a matter of media ecologies, of the interactions in which media forms, mediating technologies, and media users could engage with each other. Pope was of course eminently aware of the centrality of character to these ecologies and actively harnessed it in his project to publish familiar letters in order to influence how his personal character was perceived.

To illustrate my point I turn to a pivotal moment in the "*Letters* media event," the outpouring of print sparked by Pope's publication of his familiar correspondence on a massive scale.

In 1736, as Pope was preparing the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope* for publication in expensive folio and quarto, the poet asked his friend, the painter Jonathan Richardson, to contribute a portrait for the title page (figure 2).[20] Richardson complied, and he also supervised the engraving and printing of the portrait as well as of the elaborate headpiece and initial capital for the "Preface" (figure 1). <Insert figure 1 and figure 2 about here> In March 1737, Pope wrote again to thank Richardson for taking good care of the poet's business:

> I hope your Friend has done justice to your Work, in rolling off that excellent Etching in My Titlepage which will be the most Valuable thing in the book. As soon as they, together with the Headpiece & Initial Letter to the Preface are done, & the Sheets quite dry, I must desire your Care again to cause them to be very cleanly packed up & sent to the Printer's Mr Wright. . . . You know the *least Dirt* thrown on the best Work, or best character, will spoil the whole Grace of it. (3 March [1736/7], *Correspondence* 4:58)[21]

Playing on the versatility of the term "character," Pope here connects his status as a poet and a moral member of society to the representation of his poetry and of himself in print as well as to the medium and technology of print itself. Dirt can literally compromise the quality of a print product and may interfere with its aesthetic and commercial values, which in turn might have implications for the literary standing and social credit of its author. At the same time, metaphorical "dirt" in the shape of negative reviews and personal attacks may damage Pope's reputation as well as his writings, which again threatens to deflate his social status and literary

stock together. Pope here sets up an analogous relationship between "Work" and character as social categories of signification, between literary labor and its monumentalization in print on the one side and a complex configuration that links reputation, identity, and the typographical elements of representation on the other. The legibility of Pope's character becomes a matter of artisanal execution, of the distribution of the finished product on print markets, and of buyers' interest and proficiency in reading characters. Who Pope is, and what he is worth, is a matter of typefaces, engraved lines, and the care with which they are rolled off, packed up, folded, and sown together to form the finished product.

So much for Pope as poet, but what of his personal character as a private man? In the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (published the year before he wrote the letter to Richardson) Pope had expressed a desire for the cessation of text and the representation of his personal life within it, and he would repeat that wish again the following year in the *Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace* (1737).[22] The most striking expression of that wish, however, occurs in the headpiece of the "Preface" to the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope* (figure 1). The banderol draped around the Mercury bust's torso reads, "Vellem Nescire Litteras!" – an exclamation that Suetonius ascribes to the Roman Emperor Nero upon signing his first death warrant: "I wish I had never learned to write!"[23] Pope here signals a desire to differentiate his role as a satirist punishing transgressions of morals and taste from his personal life, a distinction that disavows the violence and public engagement of his (Juvenalian) satire at the same time that it reclaims the role as a necessary evil and as the duty of a moral arbiter.[24] In setting up this distinction, moreover, Pope also projects a "true" (personal and private) character that precedes and exceeds its representation in writing rather than being constituted by it. In that respect, the banderol inscription resonates with a letter to his friend Hugh Bethel, in which Pope claims that "no other value is to be set upon" the

Letters "but as they are the markes of a plain mind, & undesigning heart" (2 November 1736; *Correspondence* 4:39). According to this credo, the *Letters* were not to be valued as mere print objects but as the traces of Pope's personal and moral character. As a consequence, however, any readerly access to Pope had to remain partial because it occurred through the mediations of writing and print while the core of Pope's self, the subject of the letters, remained exterior to the text and anteceded it.

Pope thus offered his readers the wish never to have learned to write as yet another trace of his character. Yet that trace also invariably recalled the intermediality of character. Not only did the cursive hand on the banderol gesture towards Pope's highly mediated body, it also rehearsed Johnson's list of characters all the way from the marks of representation *per se* via the analysis of hands and personal qualities to the imprint of public office on a private individual. In that respect, the banderol in the headpiece resembled the portrait on the title page of the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope* (figure 2) since each sought to remediate traces of Pope's body in order to transform them into iconic gestures of literary worth and moral integrity. Richardson's medallic portrait of Pope therefore gained part of its value from its ability to offer Pope's readers a glimpse of the otherwise private person and potentially carried an even greater value than the letters because it displayed the subject at one single view.[25] Moreover, in both cases the traces of Pope's body had themselves been engraved on steel, inked, and printed to form elements in Pope's "opus magnum" of self-monumentalization. The complex interplay of media that is visible in the headpiece, the portrait, and the initial capital "I" – writing, drawing, engraving, and printing – thus highlights the important role that the aesthetic and artisanal quality of his "Work" played in Pope's efforts to characterize himself. The poet's person and profile; his representation in image and text; the metal type and engraved plates; and the marks in ink that they left on the

paper composing his books: in Pope's formulation, these "characters" all relied upon and constituted each other. This multivalence of character lay at the heart of the proliferating editions of Pope's letters between 1735 and 1742. It was the driving force in the production of ever new editions of his letters as much as it was the guiding principle encouraging readers to buy and read those editions.

Which "Pope"?

Each edition of Pope's correspondence was accordingly designed to offer its readers a variety of character portraits from which they could assemble their readings of Pope's character. Many of these portraits incorporate traits associated with character types, but the letters' focus is at all times on how these character traits inflect Pope's personal character rather than fully assimilating Pope's character to any types.[26] There was, for example, the portrait of a young Pope given to indulgences in sexual innuendo, sallies of courtly wit, and occasionally pedantic discussions of poetics or literary composition.[27] In the "Preface" to the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope,* as well as in letters to postal innovator and would-be patron Ralph Allen, Pope made much of "the omission of some passages, improper, or at least impertinent, to be divulg'd to the publick; or of such entire letters, as were . . . not approv'd of by him" (*Correspondence* 1:xxxix). Yet the portrait of a fledgling poet playing the wit and Restoration rake while seeking the attention of older, established males was nevertheless included in all editions of his correspondence.

That Pope did not entirely suppress this aspect of his early correspondence implies that Pope enjoyed this rakish character, though he could never say so, publicly or privately. His inclusion, at least in the unacknowledged *Letters of Mr. Pope*, of letters full of sexual innuendo

besides those belonging to the Cromwell or Wycherley correspondences reinforces that impression. A letter titled, “To a Lady in the Name of her Brother,” for example, describes the male writer’s attempts to decide an intersex person’s sex by “the surest method of believing, seeing and feeling” and offers his conclusion that the person

> partak[es] of the good qualities of both sexes: for she is neither so inaccessible as other Ladies, nor is he so impudent as other Gentlemen. Of how obliging and complaisant a turn appears by this, that he tells the Ladies he has the Inclinations of a Gentleman, and that she tells the Gentlemen she has the *Tendre* of a Lady. ([10 February 1714/15?]; *Correspondence* 1:279)

Another, untitled letter compliments its female recipient on her and her daughter’s beauty and closes with the lewd remark that “’tis certain you have a strange happiness, in making fine things of a sudden and at a stroke, with incredible ease and pleasure” (1 March 1704/5; *Correspondence* 1:4). Even the most explicit letters between Pope, Cromwell, and Wycherley usually still contained occasional discussions of the correspondents’ versifications, yet in these rakish letters to unknown recipients such weighty topics were entirely displaced by libertine sentiment. The extensions and embellishments of his rakish side therefore indicate, I think, that Pope thought of it as an integral part of the gallery of epistolary portraits he offered his readers in his published correspondence.

Further evidence for such an interpretation derives from Pope’s inclusion of this rakish character in all versions of his letters. The authorized *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope* tended to downplay this character in comparison to all other versions by drastically reducing the number of

early letters included as well as by excising some of the racier passages from other letters.[28] Nevertheless, readers of this collection could still encounter in its pages Pope's musings on a naked Lady Mary (18 August [1716]; *Correspondence* 1:353) or his mildly erotic fantasies of coquettish muses: "Those Aeriall Ladies just discover to me enough of their Beauties to urge my Pursuit, and draw me on . . . still in hopes (& only in hopes) of attaining those favors from 'em, which they confer on their more happy admirers elsewhere" (12 November 1711; *Correspondence* 1:135). Pope was evidently not ready to entirely remove this sexually allusive, playful image from his array of characters, not even from the version of his correspondence targeted at his most elite audience.

The differences between the *Letters of Mr. Pope* and the octavo *Works* V-VI, both unacknowledged but definitely compiled and published under Pope's direction, were of a subtler nature. Editorial emendations of the letters in the *Works* produced a toned-down version of the rakish figure in the *Letters of Mr. Pope* though it remained significantly more present and explicit than in the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope.* A letter to Cromwell, in which Pope discusses the nature of his relationship with a female neighbor to whom he and Cromwell refer only as "Sappho" may serve as an example of the textual differences between the *Letters of Mr. Pope* and the *Works*.[29] After telling Cromwell that "Sappho" has not accompanied him "into the Country," Pope assumes a libertine voice in the *Letters of Mr. Pope* and assures Cromwell that he is contented with the situation,

> because I have no very violent Inclination to lose my Heart, especially in so wilde and savage a place as this Forest is: In the Town, 'tis ten to one but a young Fellow may find his Stray'd Heart again, with some Wilde-Street or Drury-Lane Damsell; but here, where

> I cou'd have met with no Redress from an unmercifull, virtuous dame, I must for ever have lost my little Traveller in a Hole, where I cou'd never rummage to find him again. (18 March 1707/8; *Correspondence* 1:42)

Such rakish banter fit well with other appearances of this character in the unacknowledged and apparently Curll-produced *Letters of Mr. Pope*. The octavo *Works*, on the other hand, equally unacknowledged but intended to form part of the monumental record of Pope's literary life, required a muting of this voice. The same letter in the *Works* accordingly skips the entire passage quoted above, resuming with the tamer assertion that "you have your Lady in the Town still, and I have my Heart in the Country still, which being wholly unemploy'd as yet, has the more Roome in it for my Friends" (*Correspondence* 1:42). Pope thus transformed a libertine set piece into a display of friendship and of Pope's tender sentiments for his friends. In the process he offered his readers a glimpse of one of his more serious characters, one that his fellow translator of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, William Broome, Pope's identified as "the compassionate and obliging friend" (1 December 1735; *Correspondence* 3:512). Some sexually allusive or otherwise playful letters, like the one to an anonymous female recipient (discussed above) remained part of the gallery of characters that Pope arranged in the *Works*. Yet he clearly also tried to revise the epistolary record to construct a more serious image of himself than those he projected to the letters' original recipients or to readers of the *Letters of Mr. Pope*.

The display of friendship was certainly another important consideration for Pope, especially when it came to his friendships with important or well-known figures of his time. As Pope had explained to the Earl of Oxford as early as 1729, "I foresaw some dirty Trick in relation to my Friend Wycherley's papers which they were publishing; & nothing can at once do

justice so well to Him & to Me, who was by him employd in [revising] them, as the divulging some parts of his & my Letters" (6 October 1729; *Correspondence* 3:55).[30] In the "Preface" to the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*, he expanded this interest to the publication of his correspondence as a whole, declaring that the letters "preserv'd the memory of some Friendships which will ever be dear to him, or set in a true light some Matters of fact, from which the Scriblers of the times had taken occasion to asperse either his Friends or himself" (*Correspondence* 1:xxxvii). The publication of his letters therefore also allowed Pope to settle old scores, demonstrate his close friendship with a renowned playwright and other important people, and reinforce his self-display as a mature poet involved in elite cultural networks.

Not surprisingly, entire sections of his correspondence are therefore given over to fighting old literary battles and settling old scores with antagonistic critics. Sometimes Pope had to readdress or entirely invent letters to produce such narratives. Thus letters originally written to Pope's friend John Caryll were readdressed to Joseph Addison and Richard Steele to render their increasing animosity and rivalry during the run-up to Pope's translation of the *Iliad*. At the end of this particular correspondence Pope had the last word in a sarcastic letter he probably composed for the purpose prior to publication of the letters. The same sequence includes letters to and from William Congreve (again transferred from Caryll), Sir William Trumbull, John Gay, and other famous friends, who alternatingly praise Pope and disparage Addison, Steele, the critic John Dennis, "and a thousand more like him" (25 July 1714; *Correspondence* 1:238). All served to present Pope in a positive light, not merely as an accomplished poet but as a party in literary and personal quarrels who was always in the right. Fame was accordingly another important element in the composition of these correspondences within the various editions of the letters. When Pope expressed amazement to the Earl of Oxford at "finding what a number of Facts [the

letters] will settle the truth of, both relating to History, & Criticisme, & parts of private Life & Character of the eminent men of my time" (c.15 September 1729; *Correspondence* 3:54) he was well aware that these "eminent men" and their lives would be assembled around him as the central figure. The ambiguous references to "History" and "Criticisme" – do they relate to Pope or to his famous friends? – bound Pope and his interests closely to the concerns of the great. Mather Byles's breathless assertion that his reading of the *Letters of Mr. Pope* "le[d] me into the First thoughts, and Domestick Character of so great a man" as Pope himself ([1736?]; *Correspondence* 4:17) thus certainly echoed Pope's designs for the social and literary-historical position in which his published letters would situate him.

Prefatory Matters

The variety of characters that Pope supplied and through which he spoke extended beyond the letters themselves, all the way into the paratext of the various versions of his published correspondence. The "Preface" to the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*, for instance, speaks of "the author" in the third person, which casts the unidentified speaker of the "Preface" as a figure distinct from "Alexander Pope, the author," as well as from Pope's various character portraits within the letters. The octavo *Works* complicated this play of character between the editions by printing a version of the "Preface" in the first person, adding a note from "The Booksellers to the Reader" that announced:

> We have prefix'd the *Author's Preface*; and to make it known to be such, have put it into the *First Person* (as it originally stood in his Specimen) instead of the *Third* (as he since

> alter'd it) lest future times shou'd be led to mistake it for some other Editor's. (*Correspondence* 1:xxxvi, n2; emphasis in original)

Vacillating between "author" and "editor," the voice of the "Preface" here seems hard-pressed to retain its individuality as well as its status as a figure distinct from Pope. The "Booksellers" claimed that the speaker of the "Preface" was in fact Pope who sought to disguise his voice as that of an independent editor. Yet this revelation also raised the possibility that the Pope of the "Preface" represented yet another aspect of Pope's personal character, a "Pope" who tried to disguise his authorship of the documents that framed the letters by ventriloquizing other voices and assuming other characters.[31]

That of course also raised questions about the status of the "Booksellers" themselves. Their fear that the author might be mistaken for an editor implied that the figures of author and editor lacked distinguishing characteristics besides the author's biographical, first-person voice, which the "Booksellers" themselves claimed to have restored in an act of editorial emendation. But if the authorial first person of the "*Author's Preface*" was an indicator of the malleability of character within the print public sphere rather than a sign of biographical authenticity, it followed that the third-person voice was not a reliable characteristic to differentiate editors and commentators from their bio-historiographical subjects either. Voice in fact persistently fails as a reliable indicator of character in the paratext of the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope* and of the fifth and sixth volumes of the octavo *Works*. Readers of the prefaces and their editorial commentary were instead encouraged to read for versions of "Pope" in each document.

As a result, prefatory figures like the "Booksellers" and the speaker of the "Preface" helped mediate between the Pope (or "Popes") of the letters and Pope's attempts to intervene

through print in the reading of his personal character. Pope's creation of editorial and authorial voices in the prefatory matter of his published correspondence connected his self-portrayal within the letters intimately with the mechanisms of multiplication and dissemination that defined the letters' print publication. The proliferation of prefatory characters duplicated the proliferation of character portraits within the main body of the letters. As a consequence, it indicated to readers that Pope's attempts to shape his personal character by publishing his familiar correspondence depended on his play with multiple characters and voices. By acting as his own editor and commentator, in other words, Pope alerted his readers to the immersion of "character" within contemporary media ecologies, an immersion that linked the display of personal character to the means of its reproduction and dissemination and thereby inevitably turned printed collections of familiar letters into character matrixes.

Moreover, the variety of authorial characters within the prefatory matter and the exchanges between them revealed that the relation between one correspondence and the character portraits it contained was repeated on a larger scale by the relation between the *Letters* media event and the enormous number of editions of Pope's letters that it spawned. Just as no one letter or character within an edition could lay claim to a portrayal of the "true" Pope, so no one edition could inherently lay claim to an authoritative representation of Pope's character over other editions.[32] Vying for textual authority by exposing other introductory voices as "Pope" or not "Pope," the exchanges between prefatory characters instead modeled the competition for readers' attention between the versions of Pope's correspondence. In relating the proliferation of prefatory voices to the proliferation of character portraits within the letters as well as to the proliferation of editions of his letters, Pope thus also dramatized his attempt to participate in the formulation of his personal character by circulating familiar letters in print. Yet since such

participation inevitably encountered the multivalence of eighteenth-century character, much of the burden as well as the power to construct Pope's character lay with the readers of Pope's correspondence who could choose from a plethora of portraits circulating in print. Many of these portraits – especially those offered in textual form within his correspondence but including a few visual portraits as well – had of course been hand-picked and carefully manipulated for publication by Pope. When we turn to those portraits that escaped Pope's control, however, and to Edmund Curll's elaborations and additions to Pope's arsenal in particular, we can develop a better sense of the broad range of relays through which character was remediated in this period.

Portraying "Pope"

Curll included portraits of Pope from the moment he issued his own editions of Pope's letters. On 1 December 1735, he advertised the sale of "Four Prints of Mr. *Pope*, in different Attitudes. Price 6 *d.* each" in a catalogue of *Books Printed for E. Curll, at Pope's-Head*,[33] and he also included these prints as frontispieces to his octavo and duodecimo editions of the first four volumes of *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence*, one in each volume.[34] Three of the line engravings were derivatives of portraits of Pope already well known from other, sanctioned engravings. They copied portraits painted by Gottfried Kneller in 1716 and 1722 – known through mezzotints by John Smith (1717) (figure 3) and George White (1723) – as well as one painted by Pope's good friend Charles Jervas in 1714.[35] <Insert figure 3 about here> Curll clearly recognized the iconic value of Pope's image and sought to profit from it by including Pope's portraits in his publications as well as by selling them separately.

In that respect, the fourth line engraving of the series represented something of a scoop for Curll. The print followed a portrait by Kneller of 1721 that shows Pope in profile, laureated,

in an oval frame formed by a snake biting its own tail.[36] Yet Curll's engraver, Parr, added the title, "Horatius Anglicanus," to the poet's portrait (figure 4). <Insert figure 4 about here> Curll's portrait engraving thus reached beyond the simple reproduction of Pope's sanctioned, classicizing iconographies – illustrated by the medallic arrangement of the portrait, the laurel wreath, and the ouroboros framing the poet's profile – by adding the reference to Horace, to Pope's translation of classical texts for contemporary use, and to the importance of Pope and his poetic projects for a national literature. With this engraving, moreover, Curll pre-empted Pope's efforts at disseminating this particular image in print by three years; John Faber's authorized mezzotint of the 1721 Kneller portrait was not published until 1738, again without the title "Horatius Anglicanus."[37] Curll was thus the first to offer a print of this portrait to a wider audience, an accomplishment that emphasizes his active involvement in the elaboration of Pope's image as well as in the multiplication of his character portraits.

Curll's manipulations of this engraving are particularly striking when we consider it in the context of some of Pope's other portraits that Curll included in the volumes of *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence*. In Curll's engraving after Kneller's 1716 portrait, the volume of the *Iliad* that Pope holds in Kneller's painting was excluded and with it any explicit references to Pope's efforts at self-classicization in his portraits (figure 5).[38] <Insert figure 5 about here> The "Horatius Anglicanus" engraving restored this aspect of Pope's image and added to it a reference to literature as a national product. Pope is here not simply a poet in the classical tradition, he is also an English poet who makes classical texts available to modern audiences and who links British culture to Augustan Rome. It was thus crucial for Curll's customers to be able to interpret Pope's character, visually as well as textually, once they had purchased *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence*. Curll's combination of visual with epistolary portraits highlighted to his

readers that reading "Pope" was an exercise in characteristic reading – in the apprehension of personal and moral character through close physiognomic study – across a broad range of media. It is therefore important to recognize that *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence* was more than just an opportunistic piracy. Curll's publication strategies in fact reflected on and underscored Pope's own practices in engineering the publication of his letters.

By extension, Curll's engravings also helped to subtly differentiate and thereby to multiply the writer's various characters. The line engraving in *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence* that follows Jervas's portrait of 1714 (figure 6) shows Pope as a gentleman writer just as Vertue's version did in Pope's first volume of *Works*.[39] <Insert figure 6 about here> Curll's engraving therefore supports the character Pope sought to give himself in the "Preface" to his authorized Letters and raises the poet's literary standing as the author of a poetical *Works*. The engraving after Kneller's medallic 1721 portrait (figure 4) likewise repeats the original's valorization of Pope as a neo-classical poet of high-cultural works, but it elaborates on this portrayal by also identifying Pope as the imitator and English heir of Horace. By adding a few characteristic details to this engraving, Curll thus added another character to Pope's arsenal. The inclusion of the title "Horatius Anglicanus" not only served to support Pope's claims to social and literary eminence, it also asked viewers to differentiate between versions of Pope-as-poet and thus enabled them to produce subtler, more diversified readings of Pope's personal character.

This applies similarly to the engravings based on the 1716 and 1722 portraits by Kneller. Both engravings silently gesture towards portraits of Pope as the translator of Homer, but explicit references to this project are missing from the engraved portraits. Curll's engraving based on the 1722 Kneller portrait (figure 7) lacks the title "Homer" on the spine of the book on which Pope

leans, possibly because it followed White's mezzotint, which also drops the name on the book's spine.[40] <Insert figure 7 about here> The engraving after Kneller's portrait of 1716 (figure 5), in which the *Iliad* volume that Pope holds both in Kneller's painting and in Smith's mezzotint (figure 3) is missing entirely, may be more telling. The alteration was probably at least to some degree a compositional decision. The line engraving's oval frame (not present in either painting or mezzotint) already significantly reduces the space around Pope's figure so that the inclusion of the book might have crowded the pictorial space too much.

However, this decision also had iconographical and characterological implications for Curll's and Pope's audiences. The exclusion of Kneller's explicit reference to Pope as a translator of classical texts required viewers to become more discerning readers of character as well as more avid consumers of print materials. In order to understand this image of Pope, they needed to compare it to other representations of the poet and read for similarities and differences between them. Style of clothing (especially the cap) and facial expression and shape aligned the engravings after Kneller's portraits of 1716 (figure 5) and 1722 (figure 7) with each other. This presumably also linked the "Popes" represented in them and identified them as related versions of the poet. At the same time, the two portraits asked viewers to read for subtle differences in characterization and to relate those strokes of character to the appropriate character type. The 1722 "Pope" focused on melancholy as the simultaneously enabling and debilitating condition of poetic inspiration, whereas the 1716 "Pope" seemed (at least in Curll's version *sans* Homer) to be more interested in his social status, as indicated in the gentlemanly clothes. Curll's proliferation of Pope's image thus encouraged his readers to become adept at discerning strokes of character by differentiating between multiple representations of a particular head and face. At the same time, Curll also encouraged his readers to become better consumers, since a full

analysis of Pope's characters was only possible if readers possessed a significant knowledge of other print products. They certainly needed to be familiar with Smith's mezzotint (figure 3) in order to supply the deletion of references to Pope's translation of the *Iliad* in Curll's engraving after that portrait (figure 5). Comparison of Pope's portraits, in Curll's publications as well as more generally, accordingly necessitated the consumption of multiple publications that would feature representations of the poet.

That audiences not only participated in this commercially promoted activity of characteristic reading but clearly enjoyed it and demanded from print makers that they supply more materials for this activity, may be illustrated by an interesting print advertisement from 1731 (figure 8). <Insert figure 8 about here> The advertisement, itself a complex *trompe l'oeil* engraving, presents the viewer with what appears to be a heap of engraved images and texts meant to acquaint potential buyers with the stock of Popeiana available from the shop of "H[enry] Overton *without Newgate*."[41] Its center is occupied by an engraving that derives from the 1716 Kneller portrait while prints featuring excerpts from *Windsor-Forest* and *The Rape of the Lock*, together with the Duke of Buckingham's "Encomium on Mr Pope and His Poems" and other prints, peek out from underneath this portrait. Read with an eye to the mediations of eighteenth-century character, this intricate advertisement encourages its viewers to decode the meanings of the elements in this advertisement in order to identify specific relationships between the various "Popes" that are on display.[42] The advertisement can therefore be understood both as a medley of Pope's characters and as a constellation of the various kinds of character (letter, type, "hand," reference, portrait, and so on) through which Pope's personal character came to be mediated when published in print. By extension, the print advertisement therefore also serves as

an illustration of the reading practices that made the publication of Pope's letters and portraits possible as well as successful.

Which "character" was in danger of being spoiled by "the *least Dirt*" thus invariably remained ambiguous in Pope's letter to Richardson because its ambiguity resulted from the eighteenth-century multivalence of the term "character" itself. In publishing the poet's letters, Pope and Curll together rehearsed the imbrication of social with typographical characters by linking such apparently disparate print characters as title page portraits and frontispieces; engraved headpieces and capitals; and the typefaces of printed letters to the construction and dissemination of personal character. They thus not only revealed that "characteristic writing" in the broadest sense in the last instance relied on print characters, but more specifically that Pope's likeness on the title page bespoke his social status; that his literary eminence rose or fell with the engraver's skill; and that the print quality of his *Letters* reflected on his moral reputation. Attention to the media histories of published letters as well as to the media ecologies of which they were a part therefore has the potential to reveal the role of "character" as an interface between individuals and society. Once we recognize the mediations that character performed in this period, the study of media ecologies can offer new methods of tracing the networks of reading, writing, printing, and retailing within which social identities were formulated and circulated in eighteenth-century Britain.

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Notes

1. For my bibliographical work in this article, I have primarily drawn on Paul Baines and Pat Rogers, *Edmund Curll, Bookseller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 246-76; David F. Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, rev. and ed. James McLaverty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Reginald Harvey Griffith, *Alexander Pope: A Bibliography*, vol. 2 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1927); James McLaverty, "The First Printing and Publication of Pope's Letters," *The Library*, 6th ser., 2, no. 3 (September 1980): 264-80; Alexander Pope, *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 1:xi-xxiii; and James Anderson Winn, *A Window in the Bosom: The Letters of Alexander Pope* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), 203-221.

2. I extrapolate from William Warner's discussion of the "*Pamela* media event" as a media production that generated and fed on its own critical debate, consumer interest, and imitations, "producing a sense that this media event ha[d] become an ambient, pervasive phenomenon which properly compel[led] the attention and opinions of those with a modicum of 'curiosity'" (William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998], 178).

3. Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 266, 276.

4. See Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), esp. 63-6; and Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 285-8.

5. For representative expositions of these goals, see McLaverty, "First Printing," 264, 271-80; McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 143,

213, 233-4; and Mark Rose, "The Author in Court: *Pope v. Curll*," *Cultural Critique* 21 (1992): 196-217.

6. For Pope's literary battles and self-representations, see in particular Helen Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); Catherine Ingrassia, "Dissecting the Authorial Body: Pope, Curll, and the Portrait of a "Hack Writer"," in *More Solid Learning: New Perspectives on Alexander Pope's "Dunciad"*, ed. Catherine Ingrassia and Claudia N. Thomas (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2000), 147-65; Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 44-76; Maynard Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with W. W. Norton, 1985), esp. 178-84, 222-5, 457-94, 775-81; John Richardson, "Defending the Self: Pope and His Horatian Poems," *The Modern Language Review* 95, no. 3 (July 2000): 623-33; and Raymond Stephanson, *The Yard of Wit: Male Creativity and Sexuality, 1650-1750* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 130-31, 179-87, 202-23. For Pope's involvement in changing ideas about authorship and copyright, see especially Foxon, *Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*; McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning*; Rose, "Author in Court," and *Authors and Owners*; and Linda Zionkowski, *Men's Work: Gender, Class, and the Professionalization of Poetry, 1660-1784* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 97-128.

7. Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971) remains one of the standard works on sincerity.

8. Keith Stewart identified the display of friendships and familiar networks as one of the central functions of published correspondence in eighteenth-century Britain and remarked on their importance in the construction of a letter writer's character, yet he did not recognize their

potential for the contiguous display of multiple characters; see Stewart, "Towards Defining an Aesthetic for the Familiar Letter in Eighteenth-Century England," *Prose Studies* 5, no. 2 (1982): 184-6, 189.

9. See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), esp. 131-3, 179-80, 217-8.

10. The last comprised a vast range of materials, such as ink and quills, pencils and paints, ink pots, canvas and paper, spectacles and candles, mirrors and glass windows, printing presses, copper plates and engravers' tools, book and print shops, highways, the postal service, shipping, and all the industries and personnel that in turn facilitated the production of these infrastructures.

11. Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755), "character."

12. Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998); and David A. Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character, 1726-1825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

13. Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed. Linda Ferreira-Buckley and S. Michael Halloran (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 418.

14. John Locke, *The Works of John Locke Esq.* (London, 1714), 3:86. Eve Tavor Bannet has traced similar notions in Robert Dodsley's *The Preceptor* (1748) and elsewhere, in *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 17-20.

15. Samuel Johnson, "The Life of Pope," in *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets; With Critical Observations on Their Works*, ed. Roger Lonsdale (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 4:58.

16. In a letter to Hester Thrale four years earlier, Johnson had already playfully put his views on the performativity of epistolary discourse into practice by mocking the language of emotional disclosure while hinting that, if Thrale knew how to read the lines, she might yet capture a sense of his sincerity towards her; see Johnson to Thrale, 27 October 1777, in *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. Bruce Redford (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 3:89-90; as well as two perceptive treatments of this letter: Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, *Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 16-20; and Raymond Stephanson, "*Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope* and the Curious Case of Modern Scholarship and the Vanishing Text," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 31, no.1 (2007): 11-12.

17. Pope to Lady Mary, 18 August [1716], in Pope, *Correspondence*, ed. Sherburn, 1:352-3. Unless noted otherwise, all further references to Pope's letters will be to this edition and will appear in the text as *Correspondence* accompanied by the date assigned them by Sherburn. Many of the letters I discuss were included in some or all of Pope's versions of his correspondence, though the text, dating, and order of the letters as well as the grouping of letters and correspondents differ, often dramatically, between the various versions. Pope's letter to Lady Mary is a case in point: in the unacknowledged *Letters of Mr. Pope*, it appears as the penultimate letter of a group of "Letters to Several Ladies" whereas it follows a letter to Elizabeth Weston within a group of letters to Pope's friend John Caryll in the authorized *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*. Pope may possibly have altered the placement of this letter to make identification of Lady

Mary with the "Lady Abroad" named as the letter's recipient in the contents of the authorized version slightly more difficult.

18. Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace*, 28-9. Pope here thus deliberately and explicitly rejects the display of wit in letters that was part of an alternative early-eighteenth-century tradition in letter writing, a tradition into which he self-consciously and sometimes gleefully inserted himself in letters to friends such as William Wycherley or Henry Cromwell (I will return to that tradition again later); for a still excellent discussion of that tradition, see William Henry Irving, *The Providence of Wit in the English Letter Writers* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1955).

19. This is one of many instances in which Pope's representational strategies in his letters and in his poetry (in this case *Satire* II.i) mirror each other; Deutsch discusses the connection between Horace, Pope, auto/biography, and self-exposure (Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace*, 147-68, 199-201).

20. I will identify the portraits of Pope that I discuss in this chapter by referencing the numbers they have been assigned in the two most important catalogues of images of Pope: The Grolier Club's early *Catalogue of the First Editions of the Works of Alexander Pope (1688-1744) Together with a Collection of the Engraved Portraits of the Poet and of His Friends* (New York, 1911); and William K. Wimsatt, *The Portraits of Alexander Pope* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965). Richardson's title page etching is thus Grolier 34/Wimsatt 43.1.

21. The "Friend" who "roll[ed] off that excellent Etching" was very likely Paul Fourdrinier (fl. 1720-58) who was known for his superior skills as an architectural engraver; he also engraved the funereal monument to John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, for the edition of the Duke's *Works* (1723) that Pope edited. In the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*, Fourdrinier is

credited with engraving the headpiece as well as a tailpiece for the "Preface" after designs by William Kent, and similarities in the design as well as the style of execution suggest that the two were probably also responsible for the initial capital letter. On Fourdrinier, see Timothy Clayton, *The English Print, 1688-1802* (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 1997), 113, 176-7.

22. For excellent discussions of the two poems on these terms, see Deutsch, *Resemblance & Disgrace*, 197-217; and Richardson, "Defending the Self," esp. 632-3.

23. In Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *Nero* 10.2; see William K. Wimsatt, "'Amicitiae Causa': A Birthday Present from Curll to Pope," in *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature: Essays in Honor of Alan Dugald McKillop*, ed. Carroll Camden (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 348. The headpiece was reused twice in *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope, in Prose. Vol. II* (1741) – as a headpiece preceding the first letter in that volume and as a tailpiece at the end of the volume following the reprinted *Key to the Lock* – as well as once in *Epistles of Horace Imitated. By Mr. Pope* (1738) as a tailpiece for the Latin text of *Epistle* I.i. In all these cases, however, the banderol with its Latin inscription is missing. The tailpiece and initial "I" of the "Preface" were also reused, for they appear again as headpiece and initial capital letter for the first letter (Pope to William Wycherley, 26 December 1704) in the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*; Pope clearly made the most out of Kent's and Fourdrinier's high-quality work. Given the frequency with which these engravings were reused, it is all the more surprising that none of them appear in James McLaverty's list of John Wright's printer's ornaments (James McLaverty, *Pope's Printer, John Wright: A Preliminary Study* [Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, Bodleian Library, 1976], 37-49) since the headpiece allows us

to link Wright, who does appear in the imprint of the *Letters* as well as the *Epistles of Horace Imitated*, to the printing of the *Works . . . in Prose. Vol. II* as well.

24. My thanks to Darryl Domingo for reminding me of this connection.

25. Richard Wendorf touches on the immediacy of character in visual portraiture as an advantage over verbal portraiture (an advantage that Richardson himself touted in several of his theoretical works) in Richard Wendorf, *The Elements of Life: Biography and Portrait-Painting in Stuart and Georgian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 14. For an analogous and now standard reading of the frontispiece to the 1717 *Works* as a visual component in Pope's bid to construct a poetic self, see amongst others Vincent Carretta, "'Images Reflect from Art to Art': Alexander Pope's Collected *Works* of 1717," in *Poems in Their Place: The Intertextuality and Order of Poetic Collections*, ed. Neil Fraistat (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 195-233; and McLaverty, *Pope, Print and Meaning*, 62-4.

26. On the place of typological reading in the formulation of character, see Paul J. Korshin, *Typologies in England, 1650-1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), esp. 111-4, 122-32, 226-45; and, more recently, Kristin Jensen, "Reforming Character: William Law and the English Theophrastan Tradition," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 22, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 443-76.

27. This aspect of Pope has received much attention from scholars such as Wendy L. Jones, *Talking on Paper: Alexander Pope's Letters*, English Literary Studies Monograph Series 50 (Victoria: English Literary Studies, University of Victoria, 1990), 26-7; Stephanson, *Yard of Wit*, 168-70, 174; James Grantham Turner, "Pope's Libertine Self-Fashioning," *The Eighteenth Century* 29, no. 2 (1988): 123-44; James Anderson Winn, "Pope Plays the Rake: His Letters to

Ladies and the Making of the *Eloisa*," in *The Art of Alexander Pope*, ed. Howard Erskine-Hill and Anne Smith (London: Vision, 1979), 89-118; and Winn, *Window in the Breast*, 63-6, 101-4.

28. For example, fourteen letters from the Wycherley correspondence and twelve letters from the Cromwell correspondence did not make it from the *Letters of Mr. Pope* into the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*; neither did the letter titled "To a Lady in the Name of Her Brother" nor the letter to an anonymous female correspondent I discuss above.

29. The letter was omitted entirely in the authorized *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope*.

30. In the event, Pope's second volume of *The Posthumous Works of William Wycherley* (1729), a counter to a volume of *The Posthumous Works of William Wycherley, Esq.* (1728) edited by Lewis Theobald and possibly published with the help of Edmund Curll, seems to have been suppressed at the last minute or withdrawn shortly after publication; see Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 246-7; Vinton A. Dearing, "Pope, Theobald, and Wycherley's *Posthumous Works*," *PMLA* 68, no. 1 (1953): 235-6; Griffith, *Alexander Pope*, 1:174; and McLaverty, "First Printing," 265, 267-8.

31. Pope's readers had of course already encountered this strategy in some of Pope's satires in poetry and prose, particularly in the various editorial voices of *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729).

32. William Broome's carefully-worded praise in 1735 for "the late publication" indicates that readers by and large ignored Pope's allegation that the *Letters of Mr. Pope* was a Curllean piracy as well as his declaration that the *Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope* was to be the only authoritative edition of his letters on the market: "Yet, after all, some few passages being retracted, where is the mighty grievance? . . . You have, like our greatest beauties, shown there is such a thing as an excellence in trifling agreeably" (1 December 1735; *Correspondence* 3:512).

Instead, they seem to have considered all editions as authentic, if sometimes not sufficiently edited for polite tastes.

33. The famous catalogue's first page has been reproduced in Baines and Rogers, *Edmund Curll*, 244.

34. Which portrait served as frontispiece for which volume, however, seems to have been rather inconsistent and varies between copies of the same edition. Some volumes (like volume 1 of the duodecimo edition in Davidson Library, University of California at Santa Barbara, or volume 2 of the same edition in the British Library) even lack a frontispiece portrait of Pope entirely. In others, its place is supplied by a portrait engraving of one of Pope's correspondents that usually featured elsewhere within the volumes: volume 4 of the octavo edition in the British Library, for example, has a portrait of Addison as its frontispiece while an engraving of Pope after the 1721 Kneller portrait appears later in the volume. (Interestingly, that portrait, which is usually found as the frontispiece for volume 3, is missing in the British Library copy of that volume.) My measurements of the engravings and of the impressions that the copper plates made in the paper during printing indicates that Curll used the same plate of each portrait for both octavo and duodecimo editions. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that the "Four Prints of Mr. *Pope*, in different Attitudes," were identical to those printed for the first four volumes of *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence* and that they would have been available in the same formats as those books.

35. Kneller's 1716 portrait is Wimsatt 5.1 while Smith's mezzotint of that portrait is Grolier 1/Wimsatt 5.14; Kneller's 1722 portrait is Wimsatt 7.1 and White's mezzotint is Wimsatt 7.8. Jervas's portrait of 1714, finally, is Wimsatt 2.1; a line engraving of this portrait by George

Vertue (erroneously ascribed to Kneller in Grolier) served as the frontispiece for Pope's first volume of *Works* to which I refer above (Grolier 28/Wimsatt 2.2).

36. Kneller's 1721 portrait is Wimsatt 6.2; Curll's version, a line engraving by [Nathaniel?] Parr, is Grolier 31.

37. Faber's mezzotint is Wimsatt 6.13.

38. This anonymous engraving is Grolier 10.

39. The line engraving by Parr following Jervas is Grolier 29.

40. The engraving after Kneller's 1722 portrait, another Parr production, is Grolier 20.

41. The portrait in the advertisement is Grolier 11/ Wimsatt 5.15. Henry Overton was primarily a seller of prints, so other portrait engravings of Pope and his correspondents would probably have been available from his shop as well. For short summaries of the Overton family business, see Sarah Tyacke, *London Map-Sellers, 1660-1720* (Tring, UK: Map Collector Publications, 1978), 130-35; and Clayton, *The English Print*, esp. 5, 106, but also 75, 80-81. The many examples that Clayton includes in his survey of eighteenth-century prints demonstrate that *trompe l'oeil* engravings were a favorite genre for print seller's advertisements and trade cards; see, for example, Clayton's figures no. 2, 7, 9, 118, 120-1, 124.

42. An earlier (1729) *trompe l'oeil* engraving from the shop of Henry Overton, with John Gay as its central subject, encourages precisely this sort of characteristic reading in two lines of verse: "Our Medley has a meaning – and no doubt / You all have sense enough to find it out."