Presenting a Self:
The Polished Correspondence of Alexander Pope's 1737 Publication

Vera Coenen
s3045226
Master Thesis
Letterkunde (Engelstalig)
Supervisor: dr. N. Geerdink
Second Reader: dr. M. Corporaal
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Abstract

Although abundant scholarly research has been conducted into nearly every aspect of the life and works of Alexander Pope (1688-1744), the collections of his correspondence that were published in the 1730's have been largely neglected. It has long been known that Pope thoroughly edited his letters before print and that his publication even contains fabricated material; a matter from which it may be inferred that he was extremely conscious about how his texts were to be received by his public. This research is focused on his 1737 publication and will closely examine a number of letters in light of the "posture" theory that was established by Jérôme Meizoz. The chapters of this thesis will delve into Pope's relationships with the established literary figure Joseph Addison, the witty Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and his dear friend Martha Blount. Pope was a man who maintained many intimate friendships but who also made many enemies, and this publication enabled him to present a different side of himself.

Keywords:

Joseph Addison, Martha Blount, Correspondence, Jérome Meizoz, Mary Wortley Montagu, Alexander Pope, Posture, Self-presentation.

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Introduction

"The life of a Wit is a warfare upon earth;" these famous words apply without doubt to the life of the man who wrote them ("Preface" *Works*). Alexander Pope (1688-1744) is often considered the greatest English poet of the eighteenth century, and according to *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* he was "the only important writer of his generation who was solely a man of letters" (Lipking and Noggle 2493). Although William Shakespeare had a century earlier already enjoyed a level of professional success that enabled him to retire comfortably, it should be noted that Shakespeare was an actor-manager as well as a playwright; Pope was therefore "the first English writer to build a lucrative, lifelong career by publishing his works" (2493). These works, as will be seen, were not limited to his strictly literary output but also included his personal correspondence. This present study will examine the self-presentation of Alexander Pope in the collection of letters he published in 1737.

An Odd Man Out

Despite the ultimate success Pope enjoyed, it cannot be said that his road to fame was easy. Pope encountered resistance on many fronts and for manifold reasons; the first of them being the very age in which he was working. The eighteenth century in English literature is generally denominated by many different terms – the Augustan Age, the Age of Reason, the Age of Neoclassicism – and no writer did more to distinguish this time than Alexander Pope. In fact, in modern criticism, the timeframe of this literary period is quite firmly fixed by the years of his birth and death. It was an age of wit, political engagement, social commentary, and, most of all, satire. Eighteenth-century writing was in constant dialogue; critical essays and reviews were gaining ground, plays or novels were written in reaction to previous plays or novels, and more often than not, writers were met with satirical publications which specifically targeted their works or affairs. Being one of the greatest satirists of his age, Pope was quick to offend others or reply to criticism of his own work, and was in turn open to harsh blows from his rivals. His genius led many of his contemporaries to view him with esteem and love, but his sharp wit and even sharper pen also meant that he made many enemies.

Besides the polemic nature of Pope's century and the consequences of his satirical talent, there were other factors of a more personal nature which can account for the continual

opposition to his career. As Pat Rogers asserts in his *An Introduction to Pope*, "The wonder is not that he became such a good writer, but that he became one at all" (1). Pope had inherited the disadvantage of being of Roman Catholic faith; in the year of Pope's birth, the last Catholic to reign England, James II, was dethroned and expelled to France. Rogers elaborates on this matter in his essay "Pope and the Social Scene," and explains that, within this political context, "Catholicism often connoted Jacobitism, which in turn spelt treason" (101). These political fears led to several anti-Catholic measures that were introduced in Pope's youth and later life. One of the earliest laws entailed that Papists were expelled from the city, causing Pope's father to retire from his linen business and move his family first to Hammersmith on the outskirts of London, and later to Binfield in Windsor Forest ("Social Scene" 101). An act of 1700 further determined that Catholics were forbidden to receive education; these conditions were in later years expounded to bar Catholics from voting and holding public office. An additional measure which affected Pope personally was one from 1715, which required all Roman Catholics to register their estates, so that additional land-taxes could be imposed on this class; taxes which were later on increased even further. In his pursuit of a literary career, it is noteworthy that Pope had from the start been removed "from the centre of things" ("Social Scene" 102) – quite literally in terms of location, but more existentially with regard to his position as a pariah. The fear of Catholicism that ruled the eighteenth century differentiated Pope from other men of letters, excluding him "from the sort of patronage that was bestowed by statesmen on many writers during the reign of Anne" (Lipking and Noggle 2493). Pope was thus left to his own devices in achieving his literary goals.

In addition to the misfortune of the faith he was born into, Pope was soon to be afflicted by another distinctive problem. Probably in infancy, he contracted tuberculosis of the bone, or as it is now known, Pott's disease.[1] The symptoms from this condition first played up at the age of twelve or thirteen, and not only permanently fixed his stature to a height of about four feet six inches (1.37 metres) but ultimately crippled him in later life. Furthermore, the disease brought on numerous complications such as respiratory problems, fevers, and extreme sensitivity to cold. Indications of these ailments are often present in Pope's personal correspondence, where he, for example, concludes his letter with a remark concerning his bad eyesight and the violent headache his writing has produced.

As much as his ill health must have affected his spirits, what really added insult to injury was the fact that his critics and enemies were always quick to target his physique.

[1] This diagnosis was made, with the help of medical experts, by Marjorie Nicolson and George Rousseau. See *"This Long Disease My Life": Alexander Pope and the Sciences*.

While his Catholicism formed ample ground on which to condemn Pope from the start, this charge was further aggravated by his reputation as a crippled, hunchbacked dwarf. Joseph Spence, who knew the poet well and may be regarded as his first biographer, remarked that "All the people well acquainted with Mr. Pope looked on him as a most friendly, open, charitable, and generous-hearted man; – all the world almost, that did not know him, were got into a mode of having very different ideas of him" (Spence 15-6).[2] In *The Early Career of Alexander Pope*, George Sherburn discusses the nature of the attacks Pope faced throughout his life, and asserts that "Nothing is (usually) proved; the most sensational charges are made in the vaguest possible terms; and by reiteration the charges have been made to pass as an authentic source of light on Pope's character" (153).[3] Charges that were frequently repeated concern a number of his "moral traits," namely his supposed "ingratitude, treachery, ill-nature, and malice" (154) – "ill natured little false Dog" or "hunch-back'd Toad" are some of the signifying terms Pope was to encounter during his lifetime. Pope thus had ample reason to want to defend himself against these cruel charges and to attempt to build a more positive reputation for himself. His letters, demonstrating his many relationships with important figures and proof of the deep, lasting friendships he maintained, formed the perfect method to achieve this.

The Publication of Pope's Letters

An opportunity presented itself in 1733, when the notorious bookseller Edmund Curll advertised his plans of publishing a life of Pope. These types of biography issued by Curll were typically scandalous and outrageous – as Pope's friend Arbuthnot observed, they "added a new terror to death" (qtd. in *Early Career* 162). There had been conflict between Curll and Pope before, most notably in 1726, when he acquired some of Pope's youthful letters and published them without the poet's consent. Pope seemingly took great offence from this publication and took it as an excuse to call in the letters he had sent to his friends – letters which he most likely already planned to use in the future. On 17 June 1728, for example, he wrote to Hugh Bethel:

> After the publishing of my Boyish Letters to Mr. Cromwell, you will not wonder if I should forswear writing a letter again while I live … I am reduced

[2] Unless otherwise specified, citations from Spence's *Anecdotes* were taken from the complete edition by Singer and Dobrée.

[3] *The Early Career of Alexander Pope* by George Sherburn will be referenced by its abbreviated title, *Early Career*.

> to beg of all my acquaintances to secure me from the like usage for the future, by returning me any letters of mine which they may have preserved; that I may not be hurt after my death by that which was the happiness of my life, their partiality and affection for me. (ii. 501)[4]

In the 1733 advertisement, Curll called upon his readers to send him "Any Memoirs, &c. worthy of his Deserts" to be "faithfully inserted" (qtd. in Winn 31). The publication was to include "Dissertations, Digressions, Notes, and all Kinds of poetical Machinery in order to render the Work Compleat" and so that "Nothing shall be wanting but [Pope's] (universally desired) Death" (qtd. in Winn 30-1). Despite Pope's indignation with regard to the publication of his letters in 1726, the story changes considerably, in retrospect, when taking into account all the known facts about the later publications. On 11 October 1733, Curll received a note from a man who signed himself P.T., providing information about Pope's "Family and Parentage," and offering to send "divers Memoirs" for the forthcoming *Life of Pope* (iii. 388). As Curll later on began to suspect, this P.T. was no one other than "Trickster Pope" himself;[5] and in November of that year, he wrote again to Curll, this time offering "a large Collection of his *Letters*," which "will alone make a Perfect and the most authentick *Life* and *Memoirs* of him that could be" (i. 395-6). At this time, Curll did not take the bait, but sixteen months later, in 1735, he contacted Pope directly, enclosing the letters he received from P.T. and proposing to work together.[6] Pope responded by bringing out a public advertisement claiming that any letter to be published by Curll was a forgery, and that he had not consented to any publication. As P.T., however, he wrote again to Curll, offering to provide a more substantial collection of letters that he had now printed himself.[7] Curll finally struck a deal with P.T. and placed an advertisement for the publication. The numerous deceptions that led to the publication of Pope's letters are truly complex, and as James Anderson Winn explains, the story is rendered even more so because the only sources available to us are the accounts published afterwards by Pope and Curll – "both of whom had

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[4] Owing to the frequency of use, citations from *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope* by George Sherburn will be denoted solely by volume and page number.

[5] Curll published his account of the events as *The Initial Correspondence* in his second volume of *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence*. Although this account is much more accurate than any Pope offered, Curll's tireless chicanery had made him a thoroughly discredited man, and the public apparently paid no attention to his (rightful) accusations.

[6] As Pope describes in his (anonymous) *A Narrative of the Method by Which the Private Letters of Mr. Pope have been Procur'd and Publish'd by Edmund Curll, Bookseller*, he believed that Curll meant for him to look over the edition of Cromwell letters, so that Curll could print it as revised by Mr. Pope himself.

[7] As Winn observes, "delivering a printed version to Curll would conveniently deprive Curll of the chance to alter texts or add footnotes" (205).

reasons to lie and did" (35). The "long, sly, and even melodramatic intrigues" (i. xiii) with which Pope ultimately achieved his goals are manifold and complicated, and cannot be fully repeated here.[8] What it all boils down to is that on 23 May 1735, Curll published *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence for Thirty Years…*, but his very plan to publish was secretly prompted by Pope, and the letters Curll printed were collected, edited and delivered through Pope's doing. Having orchestrated Curll's publication of his correspondence, Pope publicly reacted with indignation to this piracy and finally asserted the need to issue his own authorized edition: *Letters of Alexander Pope, and Several of his Friends*, published in 1737.

Although it is hardly possible to take all the known facts about this publication into consideration here, it is important to examine some of the motives that may have steered Pope to draw up his elaborate schemes. Winn rightly points out that "Pope's motivation can never be called simple" (34), but in recent criticism a number of plausible explanations have been offered which have provided significant insight into the matter. The first important factor to be considered is the mere fact that Pope wished to publish his correspondence. To equate such personal, informal documents with one's literary works and publish them as such, was a rare practice in the early eighteenth century, when composing poetry was considered an elevated occupation. Winn points out that Pope was largely aware of the tradition of letter writing which was rooted in the classical works of Cicero, Pliney the younger, and Seneca. Even though this approach was unusual in his age, Pope recognised the worth of his personal letters and wished to take up a place in the epistolary tradition. Had he, however, simply published his correspondence without some sort of precedent or provocation, he would have been condemned by his contemporaries on grounds of vanity and self-conceit. In the preface of his official edition, Pope delineates the consequences of Curll's unauthorised publication of his letters and touches on this very point. He explains that

> The better your Reputation is, the more your Name will cause them to be demanded, and consequently the more you will be injur'd … You are therefore reduc'd, either to enter into a personal treaty with such a man … or to take such other measures to suppress them, as are contrary to your Inclination, or to publish them, as are contrary to your Modesty. ("Preface" *Letters*)[9]

[8] A complete, detailed account of these deceptions can be found in Winn 30-37 and 203-21.

[9] Citations from Pope's official publication will be denoted by the abbreviated title: *Letters*. In transcribing the text I have omitted instances of the archaic character 'ſ' and used the modern 's' for the purpose of readability.

Erasmus, likewise, planned on publishing his correspondence in the early sixteenth century, but like Pope, he "found it necessary to conceal his involvement" (Winn 42). Winn argues that Pope's style in his correspondence follows Erasmus' notions for letters as a genre in itself, suggesting "the continuity of an epistolary tradition rooted in classical antiquity" (44). Even when Pope claims he is writing informally and from the heart, which he professes is true of most letters in this publication, his writing is aimed at a specific audience, and his simple tone is "the result of a conscious choice by [a man] fully capable of more highly wrought, artificial statement" (48). Pope had different reasons for selecting the different letters as part of his publication, but according to Winn, the one quality they all share is that "they are worthy of taking their place in the history of letter writing" (70). In order to fulfil his plans and become part of this epistolary tradition without damaging his reputation, he needed to circumvent the scrutinizing and condemning eyes of the judges of his day; the only way to publish, then, was to have a notoriously unpopular figure like Edmund Curll provide an acceptable motive.

However despicable Pope's actions may seem today, it should be remembered that he lived in an age of great deceptions. Contemporary polemics knew no boundaries and its actors delighted in the intrigues of their social milieu. Pope was most likely partly driven by the sheer joy of deception, but it should also be noted that the scrupulous Curll was by no means an innocent victim in the matter. Curll had, after all, been advertising for biographical facts and documents on Pope, and as Sherburn explains, "the substitution of an epistolary image (self-drawn) for an abusive biography assembled by Curll" would put Pope in a much better light. The fact that he could achieve his personal goals while at the same time wreaking revenge on his old enemy must have particularly delighted the poet. While allowing for these motivations, James McLaverty also offers a different incentive for the manner in which Pope used Curll to achieve his ends. He takes note of the contemporary events of the book trade in Pope's day, and argues that Pope was largely preoccupied with the Booksellers' Bill which was then going through Parliament. When Curll received the books of letters they were promptly seized and brought before the House of Lords, as the advertisement (which P.T. had urged him to place) suggested that the publication would contain private letters of peers – an illegal breach of privilege. It has been said that Pope was especially vindictive and orchestrated the entire event to see Curll legally punished, but according to McLaverty, "Curll was to serve as an example of a villainous bookseller" in order to gain protection for authors in terms of copyright (264). Pope's preface indeed comments on conditions in which

booksellers can do as they please without regard for the rights of the author, and urges such practices to be prevented in the future:

> As an *Author*, you are depriv'd of that Power which above all constitutes a good one, the power of rejecting, and the right of judging for your self, what pieces it may be most useful, entertaining, or reputable to publish, at the time and manner you think best … To open Letters is esteem'd the greatest breach of honour; even to look into them already open'd or accidentally dropt, is held an ungenerous, if not an immoral act. What then can be thought of the procuring them merely by Fraud, and the printing them merely for Lucre? We cannot but conclude every honest man will wish, that if the Laws have as yet provided no adequate remedy, one at least may be found, to prevent so great and growing an evil. ("Preface" *Letters*)

The outraged tone which Pope adopts in this preface naturally rings extremely hypocritical, knowing that he himself was responsible for the pirated edition, but that does not necessarily mean that none of his intentions were honourable.[10] One thing in which Pope certainly succeeded was stirring up attention for his forthcoming publication, and this fact in itself can account for Pope's intentions. If he indeed put together his collected letters in order to form a self-defence against antagonistic charges, he would certainly want it to be received by as many people as possible. As it turned out, the entirety of his schemes – the many advertisements and public outcries, the lawsuit against Curll, the different editions and reprints of his correspondence, and finally his own, approved, official version – made sure that his letters, which were "not intrinsically a particularly interesting volume," nonetheless became "the literary event of the year" (Winn 37).

Posthumous Reputation and Past Research

The importance of Pope's correspondence has been demonstrated by the significant impact George Sherburn's luminous edition has had on Pope studies in the twentieth century. Whereas Pope's editors and biographers from the late eighteenth century conveyed sheer admiration for the poet's genius, granting him a firm place among the English classics, this opinion was swiftly overthrown in the nineteenth century. With the rise of Romanticism came

[10] Although he was not successful in this instance, Pope indeed won a copyright suit against Curll in 1741, concerning his correspondence with Jonathan Swift. See, for instance, Mark Rose, "The Author in Court: *Pope v. Curll* (1741)." Here, Pope's efforts are said to mark "an important transitional moment in the concept of authorship and of author's rights, and a transitional moment, too, in the conception of literary property" (198).

antipathy to the previous age, and the contemporary poetic values "made Pope's conscious artistry, and his public frame of reference, seem the antithesis of poetry" (Barnard 27). Pope's 1806 editor, William Lisle Bowles, regarded him as "inherently second-rate, deficient in sensibility, and ignorant of nature" (Barnard 26-7), and effectively began a trend in literary criticism which expelled Pope from the ranks of the great. As Sherburn points out, "To judge Pope by romantic criteria is of course to condemn him by the laws of a country in which he was no citizen," (*Early Career* 18) but this reasonable approach apparently was not part of the Romantics' manner of thinking. Moreover, since they did not think much of his poetry to begin with, they were even "readier to think badly of Pope as a man" (18). As John Butt relates, "there has always been a strong temptation to assume that Pope's satires must have been written by a person of peculiarly vindictive temperament" (62). It is often believed that "he cannot have had many friends; and surely that deformed body was a faithful representation of the deformed mind within" (62). His notorious tricks and treacherous satires on people who were once his friends, came to be condemned by the moralising Victorians, who regarded him "as a wicked satirist" targeting enemies and friends alike, and as "the most despicable poet in the entire history of English literature" (Rousseau 5-6). It was Charles Wentworth Dilke who finally revealed the extent of Pope's deceitfulness when he discovered that Pope had revised some of his letters to John Caryll and published them as written to Joseph Addison or William Wycherley. This fact "seemed a last blow to Pope's honesty" and resulted in "an attitude of suspicion" toward all matters concerning Pope (*Early Career* 20). Indeed, the substantial Elwin-Courthope edition of Pope's works, published in the late nineteenth century, is highly censuring of Pope's character. It was in this edition, which formed the standard until the publication of works by Sherburn and Maynard Mack in the second half of the twentieth century, that the full story of Pope's misdealing in publishing his letters appeared for the first time. It was not until the 1930's that biographers "[took] up the gauntlet to write an objective account" (Rousseau 7); there had been defences of Pope before, but Edith Sitwell's 1930 biography, for example, is a highly romanticised account which rather reached the opposite extreme and excuses any fault on Pope's part. Most notably Sherburn's *The Early Career of Alexander Pope* from 1934 formed a thoroughly academic and objective endeavour to shed new light on the poet. In addition to the work by Sherburn, students of Pope are greatly indebted to Maynard Mack, whose *Alexander Pope: A Life* from 1985 offers a near complete, definitive, and balanced account of seemingly all aspects of

Pope's life and works.[11] In his preface, Mack notes the difficulty of balancing condemnation and justification with regard to Pope's actions, and writes that:

> Without concealing his warts, I have consciously avoided magnifying them or dwelling on them to the exclusion of all else; and where there are extenuating circumstances to be considered … I have thought it proper to consider them. Pope's worst faults were grievous, but so are the faults of most of us; and I believe he has suffered long enough from a specious of self-righteousness in his commentators that one must make every effort to avoid. If the results of the effort in my case are dismissed as special pleading, so be it. There are few poets who cannot use an advocate. (viii)

These two scholars are largely considered as the authoritative voices in the study on Pope, and their work will indeed prove of indefatigable use in this present research.

When Sherburn published his long-awaited *Correspondence of Alexander Pope* in 1956, he increased the total number of letters that were previously available by about a third; his work consists of five volumes, containing nearly 2,200 letters written over a period of forty years. For the first time, it was made possible to view the poet in full, through abundant, reliable, chronologically ordered material, supplied with detailed footnotes. Furthermore, the whole of letters, often transcribed from original manuscripts, succeeds in largely mitigating the gravity of Pope's editorial practices. Sherburn has found that "Trivialities concerning daily life or finances are omitted; so also are small indecorous remarks, either slightly salacious or profane" but he asserts that "the most common changes are purely stylistic: the letters are made more concise, the sentences more straightforward, the diction more elegant" (i. xv). Mack takes a more statistical approach to the edition and points out that

> Of the more than 2,100 letters in the new edition, only 12% (280 letters) were printed by Pope, and of these 12% nearly one third are now reproduced from autograph copies or reliable transcripts … Only 27 letters, less than 1½%, are signalized by the present editor as conflations, fabrications, or possibly a mixture of both. (*Collected in Himself* 146)

Although this calculation is somewhat misleading – as Pope obviously had no need to tamper with letters he had no intention to publish – 27 out of 280 published letters is still a small

[11] Due to the frequency with which this work is used here, I have refrained from denoting citations by providing its title. Unless otherwise specified, citations of Mack are taken from *Alexander Pope: A Life*.

percentage.[12] Considering the stark indignity with which Pope's conduct has been met in the centuries after his death, the nuancing offered by Sherburn's collection is of immense value.[13] From this edition of Pope's truly private letters, most of which were never revised or published in his lifetime, it has finally been made possible to get out the man; "Not a bad sort of man, on balance … An affectionate man, certainly," is what Mack has to discern from the warmth that lies hidden in these texts. Rousseau even points out that "If the Victorians had actually read Pope's letters, they would have discovered far greater emotion, passion, and feeling" than the personal traits they have ascribed to him now (40).

Dilke's discoveries have largely influenced the public opinion on Pope, and despite Sherburn's efforts, it has furthermore affected the modern critical approach to his letters. Howard Erskine-Hill has pointed out that, as a result, "Attention has been diverted from the collections of Pope's correspondence printed in his lifetime, as not quite 'the real thing', as an embarrassing or dishonest contrivance on the poet's part," and he further observes that Pope's own publication is his "only major work not to have been edited in the twentieth century" (10). In "Letters of Mr. Alexander Pope and the Curious Case of Modern Scholarship and the Vanishing Text," Raymond Stephanson explains that this shift in focus is partly due to the critical trends that arose in the latter half of the twentieth century. For example, approaches of New Criticism or Freudian interpretative models largely took over the scholarly field, and these were immensely aided by the newly available wealth of Pope's private letters – causing his own published selection to become of less interest. Ironically, it is even largely due to Sherburn's outstanding collection that Pope's own texts have never been picked up for scholarly research: "while the 1726-37 editions are lurking in the apparatus, it is practically impossible to reconstruct them" (Stephanson 18). Sherburn meticulously denoted which letters were present in which of Pope's editions, and he furthermore used half brackets to indicate the changes Pope made to the text upon publication, but his chronological ordering and the sheer number of letters in his collection have caused Pope's own selection and sequencing to get lost in the greater whole. In 1998, Erskine-Hill claimed that "The editing and introducing of Pope's own version of his correspondence remains a major task for some future scholar" (10-11). In 2007, Stephanson was still suggesting that "perhaps it is time to return to Pope's own editions of the letters"

[12] The particular publication discussed here contains 194 letters, of which 20 are known fabrications (see Appendix I).

[13] Furthermore, these numbers are merely based on the letters that have become available with Sherburn's edition. Since its publication in 1956, additional letters have come to light, and even now there is no way of knowing the actual total number of letters Pope wrote and received in his lifetime.

(19). This thesis forms a reply to their pleas and will look into the official, authorised, 1737 edition of Pope's correspondence.

Present Study

Considering the elaborate schemes Pope designed in order to see his work published, and the meticulous care with which he edited or transposed the letters, it is clear that Pope was consciously trying to achieve a specific end. He was aware of the reputation which had largely been formed by his enemies, and was moved to attempt and change this public view of himself. In examining Pope's published letters, this research has at its heart the ideas developed by the Swiss scholar Jérôme Meizoz, whose theory of "posture" can be used to examine the manner in which an author is generally viewed, and, more importantly, the manner in which he attempts to present himself to the outside world. Meizoz had earlier outlined his posture theory both in German and in French in the article "Die "posture" und das literarische Feld" and in *Posture littéraires: Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, but in 2008, his ideas appeared for the first time in English: "Modern Posterities of Posture: Jean Jaques Rousseau." He has adopted the term "posture" from the work of Professor Alain Viala, who defined it as "the manner of taking up a position in the field" (Meizoz 83).[14] An author can, for example, take up a prominent position in a very modest fashion, or flamboyantly occupy a modest position in the field. Meizoz enlarges Viala's term of posture and for him it includes "one or several discursive ethos(es) which participate in its construction;" the term "ethos" being used as the "(general) way of being (of a) writer" (83). An authorial posture is thus made up of several factors. Firstly, it is formed by the author himself, who can for example convey a public image or persona that may differ from his personal character. It is furthermore determined by other mediators such as journalists, biographers or critics, but also by the book cover or the presentation of the published work, and the general outer appearance and presence of the author himself. In addition to solely encompassing the works of an author, posture is thus made up of non-verbal behaviours as well as textual utterances.

The concepts of presentations of the self and the formation of identity are not necessarily new in the English field of literary studies, where most notably Stephen Greenblatt gave voice to these ideas in his 1980 book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. He observes that "in the sixteenth century there appears to be an

[14] I.e. the concept of the literary field, as developed by Pierre Bourdieu in the late twentieth century.

increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process" (2) and has dedicated several essays to the self-fashioning of different sixteenth-century authors; an approach that may just as well be applied to eighteenth-century poets. Greenblatt's approach, however, is largely preoccupied with external forces that contribute to the shaping of an authorial identity, such as the individual social background of the author and the authoritative institutional powers that rule the sphere in which he works. In his preface that was newly added in 2005, Greenblatt comments on the situations that led him to first conceive of these ideas and on the manner his book ultimately came to be written, and he remarks that

> However random the particular occasions were, there was in fact an underlying design, but it was a design over which I exercised only partial control. This should hardly come as a surprise to me: one of the principles of the book is that the dream of autonomous agency, though intensely experienced and tenaciously embraced, is only a dream. I was finding my own voice all right, but that voice could not float free of a powerful set of institutional, intellectual, and historical forces. (Greenblatt xi)

For Greenblatt, autonomy is thus largely non-existent, whereas the French scholarly tradition that has yielded Meizoz's concepts does recognise the possibility for an author to exert his own meaning and intentions and to influence the manner in which he is perceived. Furthermore, due to his religion, Pope was largely excluded from the literary community of which most of his contemporaries were part. Pope did not receive the sort of patronage and the formal, institutional education that was common for authors of his age; this sphere of influence which is largely emphasised by Greenblatt may then not be fully applicable to the case of Pope. Meizoz incorporates the effects and influences external forces exert on an authorial posture, but within his concept of posture, the author himself can move more freely and consciously attribute to and construct the self-image he wishes to convey.

Naturally, there are a number of factors present in Meizoz's theory that cannot be considered in a study on Pope as they are too modern to apply; fame and public self-representation in the media, for instance, have taken an entirely different form in our modern age from the manner in which they existed in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, as there are many different aspects that together make up an author's posture, it should be noted that this research focuses on a very specific part of Pope's. This thesis will examine Pope's 1737 publication through the eyes of Meizoz and determine the self-crafted posture Pope offered

through these letters, in opposition to the (imposed) postures of Pope the satirist, the Papist, the crippled hunchback, and the devious, treacherous, ungrateful man.

As Stephanson pointed out, it is not possible in Sherburn's edition to view at a glance which letters were included in Pope's publication or in what order they appeared. For an investigation into self-presentation or posture, it is important to examine the publication as a whole and take into account, for instance, what correspondents Pope included and to what extent; what kind of figures he saw fit to credit by name and which ones he rather printed anonymously; and what correspondents or letters he chose to exclude from this publication. The first step in this research, then, was to create an inventory of all letters present in the official 1737 edition, which may then be compared to the relevant letters in Sherburn's collection with regard to the dates, addressees, and alterations Pope made to the texts. The first phase of this research, to get a clear overview of the publication as a whole, has resulted in the creation of three documents, here added as Appendix I, II, and III. A more detailed clarification on the material included in these tables, as well as a number of the more particular insights and observations this work has yielded, can be found in Chapter I.

After the initial examination of the publication's general content, two case studies have been selected for a closer, in-depth analysis. The first set of letters to be considered, in Chapter II, is from the section of Joseph Addison, an influential essayist, poet, and playwright, who can be taken as demonstrative of the literary circle Pope sought to be part of. Theirs is an interesting relationship because, by the time Pope's letters were brought to the public, the two friends had fallen out. Despite the fact that they were no longer on friendly terms, Pope apparently still felt adamant that their relationship be underlined and he published seven of their letters – the only letters that are now available from this correspondence (see Appendix II, III). What is particularly striking about this section is that each of the letters presented as written to Addison is either suspected to be or has been proven a fabrication (see Appendix I); it was this section which largely caused the Victorians' condemnation of Pope's character. As these letters are wholly Pope's doing, a close examination can determine the kind of image Pope wished to present to his public with regard to the relationship between himself and a noteworthy literary figure.

The third chapter of this thesis is focused on the letters written to or by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, an ambitious, worldly fellow author, and Martha Blount, one of Pope's most intimate friends. Pope was often the laughingstock of his enemies because of his physical deformity, a matter which was frequently connected with rumoured impotence and the fact that he never married. As can be seen in Appendix I, all letters to these women were

printed anonymously, which may indicate that they contain utterances of a romantic, personal nature. Pope may have selected to publish these letters in order to present a different side of himself and oppose the manifold rumours concerning his private affairs and personality.

In these chapters, the selected letters are examined closely and regarded in light of the situational context in which they were written. Biographical discussion thus forms a large portion of the research in order to be able to form a vivid picture of the relationships and events that are being discussed; this “reality” can then serve as the backdrop against which the letters are analysed. Through this approach, it will be possible to establish the kind of posture Pope contrived to present his readers with through the publication of his private correspondence.

Chapter I:
Appendices and Observations

The very first step of examining Pope's publication in general already brings about a number of challenges. Pope did not head each letter with a date or an addressee, and, what is more, the information he did provide has at times been proven to be false. With the aim of collecting all the necessary information and to determine, as far as possible, the particular kind of material that is present in Pope's publication, I have created Appendix I.

This table forms a list of every single letter that is included in Pope's 1737 publication, to which is added all the information he offered with the text. The first column, "Contents 1737 Edition," lists the letters in the order they appear in the publication. Pope divided and grouped these letters into several chapters indicating an overall correspondent for each "Section;" the headings of these sections can be found in the second column. The third column, "Correspondent as Printed by Pope," specifies the title or salutation which Pope provided the letters with, although he did not include this for each one. The date printed by Pope, if any, can be found in the fifth column, "Date by Pope," in his exact phrasing.

Besides the general information that can be inferred from the 1737 text itself, this table also includes the details that Sherburn has established during his indispensable work on Pope's correspondence. For each letter, the actual writer or recipient is noted in the fourth column, ""Real" Correspondent." This section lists the names of the correspondents whose identity Sherburn has verified from the original manuscripts or comparable sources, or, when no evidence was available, the person that he has determined to be the most likely in connection with the timing, placing, or context of a certain letter. The sixth column, "Date by Sherburn," contains the date that Sherburn has ascribed to each letter. Barring a few exceptions, the dates are usually the same as Pope's, but this information is especially useful for the letters where Pope did not print any. I have entered the dates and addressees in the same fashion as Sherburn: square brackets indicate inferences whereas a question mark shows more serious doubt. Sherburn has furthermore prefixed a number of letters in his edition with certain symbols, which are listed in the seventh column. In this table, a dagger (†) means that a letter rests only upon the authority of Pope's editions; two vertically parallel lines (‖) indicate that the letter was published by Pope but is now available in Sherburn's text from a more authentic source; and an asterisk (*) is given for a letter that is suspected as a

conflation or fabrication by Pope.[15] The final column of this table shows where each letter can be found in Sherburn's edition, noting the volume and the page number. The texts as printed by Sherburn can be regarded as the real, complete letters, as the omissions or changes Pope made in his various publications are included in his transcripts and provided with useful notes. This column thus makes it possible to quickly find each letter and access the relevant information Sherburn has offered.

Looking up all the letters in the *Correspondence*, entering the basic details into a single document, and taking note of Sherburn's comments, has rendered it possible to clearly determine what sections of Pope's publication contain letters that are tampered with; in other words, for what sections further examination may be fruitful. The column ""Real" Correspondent" particularly shows that Pope has not always truthfully presented his correspondence. With Sherburn's information available in the overview, it becomes apparent, for instance, that two of the letters that are presented as written to Edward Blount (letters XC and XCI) were actually written to John Caryll. From the column with the corresponding symbols it is furthermore easily noted that the majority of the letters to Joseph Addison are known fabrications, and that the section of letters to Henry Cromwell largely consists of letters denoted with parallel lines, meaning that the transcripts were taken from a trustworthy source other than Pope's editions. Because these published letters can be thoroughly compared to the originals in terms of alterations or omissions, an analysis of such a section may yield indispensable insights into Pope's editorial practices.

Based on the information collected in Appendix I, Appendix II presents a list of all the correspondents that feature in Pope's publication, in alphabetical order. The second column, headed "Total (as presented by Pope)," shows the number of letters that he has attributed to each correspondent. First, the total number of letters is given, after which this number is divided into letters written to or by the respective correspondent. The column ""Real" Total (as gathered from Sherburn)" concerns the same letters that Pope published, but, here, the numbers are added up under the actual correspondents as they appear in the fourth column of Appendix I. The last two columns are based on the index of Sherburn's edition and indicate the total amount of letters between Pope and his respective correspondents that have been recovered, in order to give an idea of the number of letters that may have been available to him. For the first section, only the surviving letters that had been written before 1735 were

[15] Sherburn employs an asterisk (*) for letters that had not been previously available in an edition of Pope's collected letters, and a double dagger (‡) to indicate fabrications by Pope, but for the purpose of legibility in the small cells of this table I have opted to substitute the double dagger for an asterisk.

counted. Pope could naturally not have printed anything that had not yet been written, and given what is known about Pope's involvement in the Curll publication of 1735, we may assume that he had already made his selection at this time.[16] The final column shows the total number of letters that is now available for each correspondence. This last column of total numbers, although irrelevant for Pope's publication as it includes letters written after the time of printing, can serve as a more general overview of how Pope's friendships with these people progressed.

From the first section of this table, concerning Pope's 1737 publication, it is easily noted that he did not credit certain people by name. Whereas Lord Bathurst, for instance, is included in the list of correspondents, there is no number of letters connected to this entry. Furthermore, this column shows 13 letters that as presented as having been sent to or from Edward Blount, while it is determined from Sherburn's information in the next column that the "real" total is only 11; two of these letters were, after all, in fact written to Caryll. Likewise, it can be seen that 3 letters to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu were printed, while Pope has credited none of these. From the final section of the table, which includes the total number of letters Pope exchanged, we gather, for instance, that he continued to write to Martha Blount but that his relationship with her sister, Teresa, came to a halt after 1734. Although it cannot be claimed that the totals in this table are definitive – many letters were never saved by their recipients or have not been recovered – the numbers can yield an adequate impression of how much material was really available to Pope when preparing for print. A list such as this may lead to significant observations and crucial questions about, for instance, Pope's selective methods. For example, given the fact that the total number of letters between Pope and the Duke of Buckingham is no more than 7, it is not surprising that only 3 of these were printed. It is, however, striking that Pope chose to include only 2 letters from his correspondence with the Earl of Burlington even though they had at the time already exchanged at least 45 letters. Both can be regarded as notable figures whose friendship Pope may have wished to emphasise; what may then have been his reasons for favouring the one over the other?

There is one correspondent in this list, "Mrs. –," whose identity remains unknown. Within Pope's publication, it is appended to the letter which precedes it, sent to John Caryll, in which they speak of a woman whose identity Sherburn has determined as Elizabeth Weston. Despite this conceivable indication for the recipient's identity, Sherburn believes

[16] From Sherburn's dates in Appendix I it furthermore becomes clear that the publication does not contain letters written after 1734.

that the addressee may have been Mrs. Cope, a cousin of Caryll's, and he placed the letter accordingly in the year 1726, rather than in 1712, which is the year appointed to the preceding Caryll letter (see Appendix I). The entry for the number of printed letters to or from James Craggs is also rather unclear; only one letter is addressed to him specifically, but others may have been presented as part of this correspondence as well. In the section with letters to and from John Caryll, rather than directly referring to him, Pope entitled it "To the Honourable J.C. Esq." James Winn has noted that this "no doubt led readers to infer that they were to Pope's more famous friend James Craggs" (Winn 90). Craggs has therefore been included with "1 (or 7)" letters to his name, counting the Caryll letters that may be perceived as belonging to Craggs, but excluding letters to or from Caryll that appear in different sections or bear different headings. William Fortescue presents a similar case: letter CXVIII was presumably addressed to him and is listed as such (albeit in square brackets) in Sherburn's *Correspondence*, but letter CL, addressed to "Mr. F–," is noted to be "either Fortescue or Fenton" (i. 482). In Sherburn's index this letter is for some reason only listed under Fenton, but in these appendices it is included in both entries, within brackets.

The information that becomes apparent from this table has been organised in Appendix III, which lists the correspondents in the order of the number of letters from high to low. The information included in this table is similar to that of Appendix II, taken from its third and fourth columns, but this concise overview is particularly useful for examining to what degree the correspondents appear, in Pope's printed edition as well as in his general letter-writing life as gathered from the *Correspondence*. The first section lists the correspondents that are present in Pope's edition, along with the corresponding number of letters. As this table aims to show the quantity of letters that were available to Pope for his selection, rather than what he wished to present, the letters have been added up according to the actual correspondents taken from the section ""Real" Total (as gathered from Sherburn)" of Appendix II. The second part of the table, column three and four, lists the same correspondents only here they are ordered by the total number of letters that can be found in Sherburn's edition, written before 1735.

In this table it is possible, for instance, to determine with one glance that even though Fortescue hardly features in Pope's edition (1 (or 2) letters), theirs was an important friendship, to which their 68 letters written before 1735 can attest. It also quickly becomes apparent that John Gay is the one of whom the most letters were printed by Pope, namely 23. Furthermore, it can be inferred that although Gay received the most attention in Pope's publication, John Caryll was really the one with whom he exchanged the most letters. While

there are 32 letters available that were written before 1735 between Pope and Gay, already 144 letters had passed between him and Caryll; yet only 12 of Caryll's were published, and none with direct mention of his name.

To the table of Appendix III is added a short list of figures who are extremely present in Sherburn's edition, as they maintained elaborate relationships with Pope, but who are somehow not included in his publication at all. A notable example of this is Edward, 2nd Earl of Oxford, whose correspondence with Pope left us with 150 letters written before 1735. The 1737 edition does contain 2 letters, out of a total number of 12 letters, of the 1st Earl of Oxford, yet Pope has not chosen any from the abundance of letters to and from the 2nd Earl, Edward. It is puzzling why Pope would publish 2 letters from a small-scale correspondence yet neglect to include a man whose rank and title is exactly the same, but with whom he did maintain a long friendship. Another significant example is his choice to include a letter written to Lord Halifax; this letter is the only one that has survived, from which it may at least be safe to infer that they did not exchange many. Why, then, did Pope so strongly desire to emphasise his contact with this noble figure, instead of desiring to foreground his (more profound) relationships with other aristocrats?

Although William Fortescue is in fact present in Pope's publication, he is included in this table due to the large total number of letters that passed between the two. Pope published 1 (or 2) of their letters, but these were printed anonymously, and they were taken from a total of 68 letters written before 1735 – leaving us to wonder why he did not include more from this seemingly close friendship. Likewise, this table features William Broome with whom Pope had already exchanged 66 letters until the time of publication; yet he chose to publish none. Besides these examples, the most notable character that is missing from Pope's 1737 edition is, of course, Jonathan Swift. The friendship and collaboration of these two satirists were, and still are, renowned, and any reader of Pope's correspondence would expect Swift to be included. One reason for Swift's absence in this publication is that Pope simply did not yet have the letters in his possession, as Sherburn claims in the introduction to the year 1737 that "Pope's correspondence in this year is focused on … the tedious process of persuading Swift to return the letters Pope had written to him" (iv. 52). Another reason may be that, even if he had acquired the letters in time, Pope had different plans for this particular correspondence. The fact that Swift was not included in this publication does not mean that he did not esteem their relationship highly enough; it rather means the opposite. From their surviving letters it has become clear that Pope had long wished to publish this correspondence. He wrote to Swift that he had "kept some of [Swift's] Letters and some of those of [his] other friends,"

and made an implication of his intention to publish. He claimed that if he were to publish his letters "for [his] own secret satisfaction" and obviously "not without the good will of worthy and ingenious Men," it would not be epistolary fame which he aimed for, but: "the Fame I most covet indeed … which must be deriv'd from my Friendships" (iii. 101). On 16 April 1741, an official edition indeed appeared, exclusively dedicated to the letters to and from Swift. The printing of these letters took place under similar circumstances of scheming and deception as those that surrounded the 1737 publication, and forms a complex story in its own right which, here, cannot be given the attention it deserves. Despite the harsh scorn from previous editors that Pope would stoop so low as to deceive even his good friend Swift, Mack shows to be convinced that Swift "knew from early on that Pope planned to make public a record of their acquaintance" (668), a view shared by Sherburn, given his note to the letter quoted above: "After what Pope writes here Swift could never fail to realize Pope's ambition to publish their letters" (iii. 101). This effectively explains why Swift's letters are absent from the 1737 edition: the two were already cooking up an independent publication of their correspondence.

The statistical approach taken here to the 1737 publication yields noteworthy insights concerning Pope's selective methods, and several correspondents or sections can be seen to surface as requiring further examination. By looking up each of the printed letters in Sherburn's edition and taking note of his comments, it has furthermore been possible to get a firm grasp on the kind of alterations Pope made, most notably in terms of fabrication, conflation, or transposition. The initial composing and studying of these tables has made clear that there is much to be gained from an in-depth research into Pope's 1737 publication, and the following two chapters will provide an elaborate, close analysis of the printed letters of Joseph Addison, Martha Blount, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Chapter II:
The Literary Monarch and the Hunchback'd Toad

The relationship between Alexander Pope and Joseph Addison (1672-1719) was a complex one of mutual admiration underlined with bitterness and dispute. It ultimately drove Pope to write a searing portrait of Addison's character with which his enemies – and many of his editors – have, over the centuries, continuously found fault. "Should such a man, too fond to rule alone," Pope wrote,

> Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne;
> View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
> And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
> Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
> And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
> Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
> Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
> Alike reserved to blame or to commend,
> A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend; (*Epistle* ll. 197-206)

Drawing the description closer to Addison by referring to his play, *Cato*, the figure is described to "Like Cato, give his Little Senate laws, / And sit attentive to his own applause" (ll. 209-10). In rounding off the portrait, Pope leaves no doubt about the identity of the person described, although his name was thinly veiled in early publications: "Who but must laugh, if such a man there be? / Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?" (ll. 213-14).

This chapter will delve into the relationship between Pope and Addison and examine the way in which Pope presented it in his published letters. Their acquaintance has often been defined, retrospectively, by the above-cited Atticus portrait, a matter in which Pope is harshly condemned for composing such cruel verses. The severity of these lines and the fact that they are meant to capture the character of a man whom Pope was closely associated with, are an important part of why the "legend of Pope's treachery to his friends … was handed down from generation to generation of readers" (Ault, "Pope and Addison" 428-9); a tradition that began with the readers of his own day. The core of the charge rests on the fact that the portrait did not appear until the 1720's, and was never published during Addison's lifetime. It has therefore long been believed that the words were never presented to him, "as man to man and poet to poet," but that this was a ruthless attack on Pope's part, "on a dead friend no longer able to defend himself" (Ault, "Pope and Addison" 435). According to Pope's own

account as recorded by Spence, however, he had written the lines long before their publication, at a time when he had apparently been angered by a rumour that Addison had hired another writer to publish scandals about him. In reaction to this, he had written Addison a letter in which he wrote that if he "was to speak severely of him in return for it, it should not be in such a dirty way" (Spence 106) but directly to his face, telling him of his faults as well as allowing for his good qualities, "in the following manner" (106). To this letter he then appended the portrait. Pope concludes that: "[Addison] used me very civilly ever after; and never did me any injustice, that I know of, from that time to his death" (106). Although there have been several doubts about this account, Ault is convinced that it is "on the whole and in intention" true, and that Pope has been falsely condemned for his "treacherous and unprovoked attack on Addison" ("Pope and Addison" 448). It is indeed fair to say that the accounts of the decline of Pope's and Addison's relationship have been strongly affected by unjust bias; rather than it being an unprovoked attack, the Atticus portrait should be regarded as the culmination of years of uneasiness, friction, and conflict. When selecting his letters for print in 1737, Pope may have been moved by the wrongfully accusing opinions on the matter and desired to offer a different story.

The chapter falls into two main parts. In the first section, the many complex proceedings that took place in the few years of Pope's and Addison's acquaintance will be broken down in order to be able to fully understand what happened, who was involved, and why these figures (re)acted in the manner that they did. An understanding of what transpired during their relationship will then make it possible to research what kind of story Pope wished to convey to his public when he selected and composed these letters twenty years later. Did he, for instance, leave out any important details or change some of the facts? Was he trying to paint a more beautiful picture, for example by conveying more warmth and affection than was in fact present in their acquaintance? Or did these letters perhaps present Pope with an opportunity to exempt himself from any blame for their falling out, and to make Addison out to be the one responsible? The second section of this chapter will closely analyse the letters published in the section "Letters to and from Mr. Addison" to provide an answer to these questions. Throughout his life, Pope faced charges from his contemporaries in which he was made out to be ungrateful, treacherous, or malignant; charges that were largely based on their conviction of Pope dishonouring the memory of his supportive friend Addison. With the publication of these letters, Pope was able to present a different side of the story, to shed new light on the proceedings, and to construct a new, more positive, posture for himself.

The "Reality" of Their Acquaintance

The details of their friendship, quarrels, and the events that shaped them, are fully given in Sherburn's *The Early Career of Alexander Pope* – as well as later in Mack's *A Life* – and in Peter Smithers's full-length biography of Joseph Addison. Sherburn starts his chapter on Addison with the reminder that "In considering the decline of the friendship between Addison and Pope, it is well to keep in mind the two facts that they were never really intimate and that they never openly quarrelled" (114). Mack explains their issues by stating that "They were too much alike in some ways: both vain, both exquisitely sensitive to criticism … both secretive and on some occasions devious" (272). More importantly, in addition to their similarities, "they were such clear opposites in temperament … in way of life, and in their responses to experience that misunderstandings could almost be counted on" (272). Although they may have never been openly hostile to one another and their quarrels were perhaps often grounded on misunderstanding, several subtle slights and (anonymous) attacks appeared in written form, from which a certain sense of dislike can indeed be established.

Besides the two points that Sherburn stated, it should also be noted that the troubled nature of their relationship was often the result of the workings of other people. Addison, through his successful collaborations in the periodicals *The Tatler*, and later *The Spectator*, which had "a fame and popularity unknown to any former publication" (Smithers 241), soon established himself as "the natural monarch of a literary kingdom" (224). He presided over a group of poets and essayists, mockingly referred to by Pope as his "Little Senate," with whom he frequently gathered at Button's, the coffeehouse which he established as the literary hub. Although Pope was on friendly terms with these wits when he was first introduced into their group, he was never really one of them – perhaps because he was already settled in his own preferred literary circle – and several instances of dispute with its members occurred. It is important to realise that Addison, who was regarded as their leader, was often held accountable for their actions against Pope, and Pope, having a reputation for causing trouble, was in turn often blamed for having written offending satirical pieces with which he had nothing to do. Because of this, the fact that their friendship existed in the greater whole of a polemic literary community perhaps unjustly contributed to their estrangement. The characters whose actions and involvements most significantly put a strain on Pope's ties to Addison and the wits at Button's, were the well-known critic John Dennis (1658-1734), the poet Ambrose Philips (1674-1749), and Addison's friend and protégé Thomas Tickell (1685-1740). In order to interpret and understand the kind of public image that Pope wished to

present of his acquaintance with Addison, the complex story of the events that occurred during this relationship needs to be drawn up first.

Pope and Addison met around the autumn of 1711, but they had probably already known about each other for a few years through their publications and a number of mutual acquaintances. At this time, Pope had recently published his *Essay on Criticism*, a poem that was both highly acclaimed and criticised, and the reception of this work already marked the first traces of uneasiness in the relationship between Addison and Pope. The primary cause of this was the severely criticising pamphlet *Reflections Critical and Satyrical, upon a late Rhapsody, call'd, an Essay upon Criticism* by John Dennis. Dennis, at this time already fifty-three years old, had in his day established a respectable place among the highest literary circles, but may have felt that his best work was behind him and that he no longer quite belonged to "the new literary generation forming in the London of Addison and Steele" (Mack 179). Although Dennis had a real talent for criticism, it is often said of him that he was "ever imagining slights where they did not exist" and that "he could not easily tolerate the opinions of others when they differed from his own, or their success if it were greater than what he had himself met with" (Mack 179). Overall, Dennis was a talented critic who had once enjoyed a prominent place in the literary world but whose old-fashioned notions could no longer keep up with the changing poetic values. He took offense at Pope's *Essay on Criticism* as it presented the modern views of a young, inexperienced poet – after all, Pope was only twenty-three years old at the time – concerning the field "over which he had long claimed to rule" (Mack 182). Furthermore, the *Essay* contained a sketch of an overbearing critic named Appius, a reference to one of Dennis's failed tragedies and an obvious caricature of his person. Feeling personally slighted by the poem, Dennis's critique was ruthless. After 24 pages of pedantically pointing out fault after fault, he concludes that

> Thus are his Assertions, and his Precepts frequently false or trivial, or both, his thoughts very often crude and abortive, his Expressions absurd, his Numbers often harsh and unmusical, without Cadence and without Variety, his Rhimes trivial and common. (Dennis, *Reflections* 24-5)

But while Dennis claimed to be enraged by Pope's *Essay* because "I not only found my Self attack'd without any manner of Provocation on my side, and attack'd in my Person, instead of my Writings" ("Preface" *Reflections*), he did not limit his critique to Pope's text either, but harshly targeted "his religion, his father, his old friendships, his political loyalty, and his crippled body" (Mack 183-4). He consistently refers to Pope as being young, little, or lowly,

and goes as far as to draw up extremely insulting imagery concerning Pope's venomous character as a writer: "As there is no Creature in Nature so venomous, there is nothing so stupid and so impotent as a hunch-back'd Toad" (*Reflections* 26). Commenting on Pope's love for the Greeks, he even remarks that

> This little Author may extol the Ancients as much and as long as he pleases, but he has reason to thank the good Gods that he was born a Modern. For had he been born of *Græcian* Parents, and his Father by consequence had by Law had the absolute Disposal of him, his Life had been no longer than that of his Poems, the Life of half a day. (29)

With good reason, it is commonly agreed that "No more cruel review ever greeted a young beginner" (*Early Career* 91) than the harsh words uttered by Dennis, with which he had firmly established himself as one of Pope's most hated enemies.

Despite the pamphlet's negativity, it had as a direct result that several people now tended to side with Pope out of sympathy, and, if anything, it had strongly advertised his poem by drawing attention to it. In December 1711, the *Essay* was favourably discussed in *The Spectator*, Richard Steele's new periodical of which Addison was the main collaborator. Although Addison wrote about the work with high admiration, calling it "a masterpiece in its kind" ("253" 61), Smithers claims that, in Pope's opinion, he made the mistake of smoothing over Dennis's remarks and finding fault with the poem's passages in which Pope had parodied such critics. Addison begins this issue with the lines: "There is nothing which more denotes a great Mind, than the Abhorrence of Envy and Detraction" ("253" 58), and continues that he is "sorry to find that an author, who is very justly esteemed among the best judges, had admitted some strokes of this nature into a very fine poem" ("253" 59). According to Sherburn, this issue "gave the *Essay* its due meed of praise" but "possibly a superflux of blame" as well (*Early Career* 94). Smithers suggests that Addison was perhaps trying to soothe Dennis by showing that he, too, believed that the offending lines in the *Essay* were uncalled for, and that he suspected Pope would be sufficiently pleased with the *Spectator*'s praise to not be bothered by its criticism (230). However, Smithers also believes that this is when Pope was first offended by Addison, as he writes that "the pontifical air of the paper was precisely such as would wound and enrage the abnormally sensitive younger poet" (230). If Smithers is correct in his conjecture that Addison had already began to upset Pope in this first review of 1711, it means that their friendship was under pressure from the very beginning. It also goes to show that Addison's obligations as a literary businessman – to

placate important figures such as Dennis and to try and keep everyone content – played a significant role in the decline of their friendship. If Pope indeed perceived these business techniques as personal slights, that would explain much about his manner of reaction in the dealings that were yet to occur.[17]

In the period that followed, Pope remained on reasonably good terms with Addison and his circle. By 1713, however, he was becoming more and more exasperated as it became clear to him that they were not quite acceptant of him as a poet. This gradually unfolding clash had at its heart the 1709 publication of the collected *Miscellany* by bookseller Jacob Tonson, which contained both the "Pastorals" by Pope and those by the writer Ambrose Philips. Although Pope had admired the latter's poems, he soon felt they were too often unfairly favoured over his own. When the *Miscellany* first came out, Steele had written a glowing review in the *Tatler* about Philips's contribution, without acknowledging Pope's, and, after Philips had received a second edition, Addison wrote praising pieces in issues of the *Spectator* in November 1711 and October 1712 (Mack 215). Besides the fact that Addison, too, failed to mention Pope's poems, he paid special attention to the virtue of Philips's transferral of classical myth to English lore, voicing that "for a Christian author to write in the pagan creed" would be "unpardonable in a poet that is past sixteen" ("523" 56). Pope, "who lovingly revived the fauns and nymphs of Rome and Greece" (Fineman 27) when writing his pastorals, must have felt especially snubbed.

In 1713, five more essays on pastoral poetry appeared in the *Guardian*, another Addison and Steele periodical that ran from 12 March until 1 October, and once again, Philips's were the only ones that mattered to this anonymous critic. As Sherburn writes, "A poet need not be excessively sensitive to criticism to be hurt at such biased neglect of his work" (*Early Career* 119). Pope had written fine poems which had been highly acclaimed by other respected literary judges such as William Wycherley, "but for the Little Senate they did not exist" (*Early Career* 19). Although Sherburn and Mack both maintain that there is no mention of Pope in these essays either, Daniel Fineman points out that this is not, in fact, the case. Rather than having been excluded in these papers as well, he had in fact been quoted in *Guardian* No. 30, but according to Fineman, this reference turned out to be a slight even greater than neglect. The anonymous *Guardian* critic, nowadays believed to have been Thomas Tickell (Mack 215), picked up on Addison's earlier remark that modern pastorals ought to transpose the material to rustic English legends, and complimented this very quality

[17] Sherburn and Mack are of the opinion that it was not until later, when further aggravated, that Pope came to view this as an injustice.

in the work of Pope. Instead of referencing Pope's pastorals, however, the lines that were quoted in this paper are from Pope's translation of Chaucer's tale *January and May*, implicitly stating "that Pope wrote noteworthy pastoral only when he was translating Chaucer" (Fineman 26). Furthermore, Tickell was undoubtedly familiar with the opposing trends that occurred within this genre, namely either following the classics or incorporating English elements; his citing of Pope's passage "in support of a current tendency in the eclogue to which Pope was unalterably opposed" (26) could therefore not simply have been a mistake. Having been taken up in Addison's group and thus most likely familiar with the previous commentary on the pastorals, "It could only be tongue in cheek … that he chose to single out Pope for the very quality that was not to be found in his pastorals" (27). On top of having had his work neglected by the Little Senate for several years, he was now being mockingly provoked, and Pope was not one to simply let something like this slide.

His response to the matter occurred in the form of *Guardian* No. 40, which appeared on 27 April 1713. Here, Pope posed as the same critic who had written the five previous papers on pastoral poetry, and Steele, apparently not catching its strong satirical tone, published the text without question. The essay is presented as a defence of why the pastorals of Mr. Pope had not been discussed in the earlier issues. In the text, Pope draws up a comparison of his own poems and those of Philips's and supports the conviction that the latter's are to be preferred. His discussion of Philips's lines, however, is thick with sarcasm and false acclaim, and his conclusion based "on grounds palpably absurd" (*Early Career* 119). For instance, he lavishly praises Philips's "elegant" and "rustic" employment of vernacular dialects in his dialogue, and his creativity with which it is suddenly made possible to have summer birds singing in November. At the same time, Pope justifies the exclusion of his own poems from the discussion, by stating that they simply cannot be classified among pastoral poetry, according to the criteria that were established in the essays. After all, "[Pope's] clowns do not converse in all the simplicity proper to the country" (Pope, *Guardian* 228), but employ a language that is much more refined. What is more, he even grasps the opportunity to casually place his own poems at the highest rank, stating that "Mr. Pope hath fallen into the same error with Virgil" (*Guardian* 228), whose eclogues do not all meet these pastoral requirements either. Ultimately, he assures the public that Pope's poems were not excluded because they were undeserving of attention, but because, if measured against Philips's, they are not pastoral poems. "Upon the whole," he concludes, "[Pope] is of the same class with Moschus and Bion," as like them, he has written poems that "are by no means pastorals, but 'something better'" (*Guardian* 235). With one short essay, Pope

managed to make fools of both Philips, whose highly regarded poems were made to look ridiculous, and Steele, who unwittingly approved the publication of such a provocative piece, believing it was indeed written by the original *Guardian* critic. Tickell was most likely also irritated by the episode; even though most readers would not have known that he was the author of the previous essays, someone had still adopted his identity and made light of his critiques. Addison, "with his firm ideal of gentlemanly conduct" (Mack 216), would most definitely not have approved of such pranks, even if he had not been directly involved. The Little Senate's reluctance to pay credit to Pope's pastorals apparently annoyed him enough so as to be moved into an action which may have seriously offended four of its members in one fell swoop. In Mack's words, they "must have recognized from then on that Pope could be a formidable opponent" (216), and it may well be said of Pope that this sequence of intentional exclusion and opposition made him decisively wary of the goodwill of Addison and his Little Senate in the years to come.

A few weeks before Pope's issue of the *Guardian* appeared, Addison's play *Cato* was first brought to the stage. This play was a sensational success and is now often remembered as his greatest literary accomplishment, but it is relevant for the dynamics of Pope, Addison, and the other characters involved, rather because it "became the occasion of Pope's getting into further mischief" (Mack 221). John Dennis, not believing that the literary quality of *Cato* justified such success as it enjoyed, published a pamphlet of *Remarks upon Cato* in July 1713. Although some of its criticism can still be taken to be sound, the tone is similar to that which Dennis expressed in the review of Pope's *Essay on Criticism*: "The critical objective is not to assess the play's defects and virtues but to bury it in the rubble of its exploded faults" (Mack 222). Even though the uneasiness over the pastorals was growing high at this same time, Pope and Addison were publically associated and, officially, still on excellent terms. Pope had in fact written the prologue for *Cato*, and perhaps wanted to make "a friendly gesture on behalf of Addison" (Mack 222) by rising to the defence of the latter's play. In any case, Pope had not forgotten the crushing words of Dennis's *Reflections*, and most likely the main reason for his moving into action is that he "saw in Dennis's pamphlet an opportunity to even the scores" (222). Dennis had once again slandered a successful literary piece with unfair, biased remarks, and Pope grasped the chance to quickly write a mocking account of Dennis's doubtful sanity, the *Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris, Concerning the Strange and Deplorable Frenzy of Mr. John Denn*--, published only seventeen days after the *Cato* review. Pope had sent the manuscript to Addison beforehand, but although Addison did not directly discourage its publication, he refused to be associated with it, and he "now read the pamphlet

with strong disapproval" (Smithers 266). Addison took measures to assure Dennis that he was not involved with this attack upon the latter's person, most likely in order to protect his name and reputation and to keep the peace between him and his critics or fellow authors. What remains unresolved is why, if Addison indeed had not wanted Pope to publish his countermove, he had not advised against it more strongly beforehand; for as Mack maintains, Pope probably would not have refused a direct request from this influential man (225). Whatever their exact motives, however, Addison must have become more and more annoyed with the impulsive actions of the young Pope, who had now taken matters into his hand by reacting on a review of a play that was not even his own, and involving Addison by using it as grounds for his own personal revenge.

The situation which caused irreparable damage, marking the hopelessness of Addison and Pope ever really improving their relationship, was to ensue in the years 1713-1715. In the autumn of 1713, Pope publicised his plans for translating the *Iliad*, which was to be a subscription book of six volumes, one published per year. In the preface to the first volume, which appeared in 1715, Pope states that "Mr. Addison was the first whose advice determined me to undertake this task; who was pleased to write to me upon that occasion in such terms as I cannot repeat without vanity" (*Iliad* xxxix-xl).[18] Although he may have encouraged Pope to carry out the plan at first, he ultimately neglected to help him win subscribers, and furthermore, it was not long before he began to take action against this production. On 23 March 1714, Pope signed a contract for the Homer translation with publisher Bernard Lintot, and two months later, Thomas Tickell, the author of the above-mentioned *Guardian* papers, signed a similar agreement with Lintot's rival, Tonson. According to Pope's own account "There had been a coldness between Mr. Addison and me for some time," (Spence 105), but Addison had nonetheless informed him that Tickell had translated the first book of the *Iliad* and was planning on publishing it. This fact should be of no consequence to Pope, but Addison did not relate that Tickell, too, was of a design to produce not just the first book but the entire *Iliad*. As Sherburn claims, "very likely Pope never knew the details of this Tonson-Tickell agreement" (*Early Career* 130), which was likewise set up as a subscription for several volumes. In his early stages of translating and acquiring subscribers, he was unaware that Tickell was planning to extend his production beyond the first book, and since these plans for the publication of multiple volumes were never realised, he most likely never learned the truth about the competition's intentions.

[18] See i. 196 (published letter LVI), where Addison encourages Pope in *Iliad* translation.

However, he soon came to suspect that Tickell's translation "was part of a general Buttonian effort to discredit his own work when published," and by the time of the publication of the first book, he realised that Addison had been deeply involved in this matter (Mack 276).

It is no wonder that Pope was concerned when it became clear that his *Iliad* was to be accompanied by another author's version. According to what Addison had apparently told Pope, Tickell had already completed his translation earlier than 1714, but they had for some reason not published it yet. In the onset of the appearance of Pope's first book, "a brisk pamphlet war sprang up" (Smithers 323), marking several attempts to ridicule Pope's undertaking. As opposed to Tickell, who was educated at Oxford, Pope had not enjoyed the proper education in the classics and his attackers made sure to point out that he was no match for this scholarly translation. They further gibed at matters such as Pope's size and religion, mockingly writing, for instance that his would be a Roman Catholic translation of Greek heroics. The collaborators of these pamphlets were friends of Addison's, at least one of whom frequented Button's (Mack 277). More slanderous pamphlets followed, and Pope's translation was being harshly ridiculed before it even came out. What is more, it was becoming more and more clear that Tickell's publication was being held back on purpose. Pope ultimately published his first book on 6 June 1715, which was immediately followed by the announcement of Tickell's, which appeared merely two days later. They had apparently been waiting for Pope to publish in order to heighten the anticipation for the two editions, and also to ensure public comparison – from which they believed Tickell's translation, grounded on his proper schooling, was sure to come out as the most favourable.

A rival translation appearing simultaneously with his own posed a number of threats to Pope. The grounds on which the Button's wits attacked his literary quality, was, although biased, perhaps not entirely unfounded. As Sherburn muses, "Even he himself must have doubted his ability to succeed in such a rivalry; they might be right, he might be incompetent" (*Early Career* 145). If Tickell's edition indeed turned out to be the better one according to the public and critics, Pope's reputation as a poet would suffer greatly, and everything he had worked for might have been lost. On a more practical matter, Tickell's competition might drastically take away from his proceeds, a matter which, although he would most likely insist it was all about the art, was of great concern to Pope. Through his talent, Pope had won access to the "most fashionable society," of which he had always longed to be part, but "for such a career money was essential" (*Early Career* 132). He had managed to get excellent terms in his contract with Lintot, in which he essentially became his own publisher; Lintot would hold the copyright to his translation for future publication, but

Pope could decide on all editorial and printing matters for this first edition. Furthermore, he was to receive two hundred guineas per volume and seven hundred and fifty copies were to be printed for free; every penny of the subscribers' payments thus belonged to him (Mack 267). He had successfully procured an extensive list of subscribers, but the terms were such that they only paid two guineas in advance, up to a total of six guineas at the time when all volumes had been published. If Pope's first volume were discredited by Tickell's, his subscribers would have the sense to not sign up for the following volumes, prematurely ending Pope's project.

Fortunately for Pope, it never came to this. A few days after the publications, Pope received a note from Lintot stating that "[Tickell's translation] is allready [*sic*] condemn'd here and the malice & juggle at Buttons is the conversation of those who have spare moments from Politicks" (i. 294). The Buttonian controversy surrounding the translations also partially caused the universities of both London and Oxford to declare for Pope (*Early Career* 144), and his friends were abundant in their praise. In a letter dated 7 July, George Berkeley related that he and some of his friends found Pope's translation "more easy, more poetical, and more sublime" than Tickell's (i. 304); and Swift, although he had occasional remarks on the text, predicted that "If it pleases others as well as me, you have got your end in profit and reputation" (i. 301). That he had indeed; according to Mack's "most conservative estimates," Pope ultimately made a profit of up to £4000, or, converted to more modern rates, about £80,000 (268). The only circle in which his translation did not enjoy its usual success, was, of course, Button's. In a letter dated 8 July, which was printed in Pope's other editions of his correspondence but omitted from the 1737 version, John Gay relates to him that he is "inform'd that at *Button*'s your character is made very free with as to morals, *&c*." (i. 305), and that few are pleased with his translation.

It must have been especially hurtful that the supporters of Tickell should be the people whom Pope had considered his friends in the previous years. There had perhaps always been some uneasiness, but he had frequented Button's for quite a while and admired most of the literary figures who were associated with it. Furthermore, it was not just any rival translator who caused all this trouble, but one who was the protégé of Addison and "probably [his] most intimate friend" (Ault 432), indicating the latter's involvement. Smithers maintains that "there is no evidence that Addison originated the project in which Tickell was now engaged" (323) – he attributes the main responsibility to Tonson – but given how tightly Tickell was linked to Addison, Pope must have suspected that Tickell would not have embarked on such a grand project without his patron's approval (323). More importantly, when the translation

finally appeared, a nagging rumour sprang up which said that the text was not Tickell's at all, but Addison's. "A surprising number of persons in the eighteenth century believed this" (*Early Career* 131), and Pope must have grown distrustful. Sherburn is not convinced of the truth of this claim, but he also does not believe that Addison is clean in the matter. Although it is difficult to say who carried the greater responsibility for the rival translation, Tickell became friends with Pope after Addison's death and enjoyed "a reputation for integrity that leads one to believe that if he erred in trying to spoil Pope's triumph in the *Iliad*, he erred because an older and highly influential friend urged him into error" (*Early Career* 127). Addison was, after all, aiding Tickell in building a literary career, and it would not do for the latter to go against Addison. With regard to the attacks that preceded Pope's publication, it is known that Addison caused the original title of one of the pamphlets, *The Hump Conference*, containing a sneering reference to Pope's back, to be changed to *Homerides*, and had the harshest mockeries removed before publication. Because of this, Smithers maintains that "Addison attempted to prevent attacks on Pope's person" (323) and never quite intended for the rivalry to get so out of hand. According to both Sherburn and Mack, however, we are once again "left to wonder at Addison's intentions" since it has been found that the pamphlet was changed mainly in order "to avoid eliciting sympathy for the victim," and there is no account of any real suggestion against the publication being made (Mack 277). There will always remain some uncertainty about the extent of Addison's involvement and about whether or not his intentions were underlined with malignity, but it is safe to say that Pope could not help but be suspicious of the man he had previously venerated.

The Published Letters of Joseph Addison

There will most likely never be a definitive account which fully explains the details of these events and the motivations or impressions that steered Addison and Pope in their actions. It is, however, possible to conjecture from his published letters the kind of story that Pope wished to put forward and bring into history. When he published in 1737, it had been nearly two decades since Addison's death in 1719, so Pope's would probably have been the only account that was available at this time. His section "Letters to and from Mr. Addison" (see Appendix I) consists of seven letters to or from Addison, to which are added eight letters to or from different correspondents; four of these are unaccredited, but they are all distinguished from the Addison letters. All were written between 1713 and 1715 and are in one way or the other concerned with the proceedings discussed above. It is important to remark that each of

the letters presented as to have passed between Pope and Addison have, in modern times, been either proven or suspected to be fabricated by Pope upon publication. This discovery has rendered them untrustworthy for factual or biographical matters, but it can only add to the discussion of Pope's desired posture. It has been said that Pope perhaps had no choice but to reconstruct these letters as he simply did not have any at hand; he had been requesting the return of his letters from as early as 1712,[19] but either he had not asked Addison to do this or the latter never complied. Sherburn further nuances the situation with the (conjectural) explanation that "His public would have considerable interest in letters to Addison, and if none appeared they would wonder why" (*Early Career* 21). He allows that Pope's rearrangement of Caryll's letters in order to present them as Addison's was an act of "undoubted and inexcusable impropriety," but insists that "there is no need to impute darker motives" (21). Whatever the reasons for his fabrications, the view of his and Addison's relationship that is presented in these letters is a striking one. His selection, albeit a possibly idealised version, clearly offers Pope's side of the story in order to oppose what most of his contemporaries took for the truth.

The first letter printed as to Addison, number LV, is dated 20 July 1713, but Sherburn lists 30 July as a more suitable date. The letter was, however, fabricated from parts of that sent to John Caryll on 19 November 1712,[20] so "the date matters only in so far as the letter represents *what may have happened*, even if Pope had no copy of any letter he may have written on the subject" (i. 183*n*).[21] As far as fabrications go, this one is considered to be "most deftly 'translated'" and "perhaps Pope's masterpiece in this kind" (i. 183*n*). Indeed, when comparing this printed letter to the original as was sent to Caryll, it becomes clear that Pope ingeniously modified certain names or phrases that directly refer to circumstances involving the former in order to render them applicable to Addison. What is more, is that this letter forms an outspoken declaration of friendship and appreciation; the kind of feelings Pope harboured for his good friend John Caryll, but which are here expressly transposed unto Joseph Addison. "I am more joy'd at your return than I should be at that of the Sun, so much as I wish for him this melancholy wet season;" he begins this letter (*Letters* 106). He then

[19] See i. 156, written to Caryll on 19 November 1712:
"I have an odd request to you that if you ever thought any of my epistles worth preserving, you will favour me with the whole cargoe … I never kept any copies of such stuff as I write; but there are several thoughts which I throw out that way in the freedom of my soul, that may be of use to me in a design I am lately engaged in …"

[20] See i. 154.

[21] The '*n*' in the citation serves to indicate that reference is made to one of Sherburn's footnotes, to be found on the listed page.

follows up on this image of the sun in order to explain away critics' reasons for finding fault with some of Addison's work: "'tis his fate too, like yours, to be displeasing to Owls and obscene animals, who cannot bear his lustre." In the original letter to Caryll, he wrote that "[w]hat put [him] in mind of these night birds, was that jail-bird the *Flying Post*" (i. 154) but in this published fabrication, the *Flying Post* has been replaced with the name of John Dennis. Apparently, there had been an instance where someone attacked Caryll in a periodical, but Pope adapted these lines in order to make them fit into the situation of Dennis's *Remarks upon Cato*. Further on in the letter it becomes apparent that Pope grasped this as an opportunity to excuse the actions with which he was involved following on Dennis's critique. Evidently having taken some action in defence of Caryll, the following lines have been left mostly unaltered in his fabrication, but transposed to the context of Addison, the situation referred to here is ingeniously changed into a different one. In the letter to Caryll he writes that:

> it was never in my thoughts to offer you my poor pen in any direct reply to such a scoundrel … but only in some little raillery in the most contemptuous manner thrown upon him, not as in your defence expressly, but in scorn of him *en Gaieté de Coeur*. (i. 154)

The lines as written to Addison similarly read that "'twas never in my thoughts to have offered you my pen in any direct reply to such a Critic, but only in some little raillery; not in defence of you, but in contempt of him" (*Letters* 106-7). It may be noted that Caryll's "scoundrel" has again been replaced by "Critic," and in his publication Pope added a footnote stating that "This relates to the Paper occasion'd by Dennis's Remarks upon Cato, call'd, Dr. Norris's Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis" (107). It will be remembered that Pope wrote this narrative as payback for the way Dennis had attacked his person, and that Addison was apparently strongly displeased with the action. Dennis had later on obtained and printed a letter written by Richard Steele and addressed to the publisher Lintot, which stated that

> Mr *Addison* desir'd me to tell you, that he wholly disapproves the Manner of Treating Mr. *Dennis* in a little Pamphlet, by way of Dr. *Norris*'s Account. When he thinks fit to take Notice of Mr. *Dennis*'s Objections to his writings, he will do it in a Way Mr. Dennis shall have no just Reason to complain of. (i. 184)[22]

[22] Printed in *Remarks upon Mr. Pope's Dunciad* (1729)

The public would thus not only have known of Pope's action against Dennis, but would also have believed that Addison had not approved of this. Pope uses this Addison letter to exempt himself from the accusation of having wreaked revenge on Dennis, explaining that he only acted because this attack was directed at Addison: "indeed your opinion that 'tis intirely [*sic*] to be neglected, would have been my own, had it been my own case" (*Letters* 107). He further supports this by claiming that Dennis's words on his *Essay* never really bothered him and that the review rather made him "heartily merry" (107) in two minutes' time. After all, "[Dennis] has written against every thing the world has approv'd these many years" (107), and his unfounded attacks should best be ignored. With this letter, Pope adapted the words he wrote to a dear friend so as to assign this role to Addison. He justified his revenge on Dennis by claiming that he only took on this task because this time, Dennis had attacked Addison and indeed had gone too far. Pope showed himself assuring Addison that he wrote not necessarily to defend the latter, but rather because Dennis's appalling actions over the years had seriously invited such a response. Furthermore, Pope attempts to oppose the common belief that he was, at the time, harbouring a vengeful attitude towards Dennis and wished any real harm; he states that he really only meant to write "in some little raillery," making light of the situation and excusing his intentions.

Letter LVI, written on 26 October 1713 by Addison, is an important one with regard to the turmoil which surrounded the Homer translations. This letter has been suspected as a fabrication as well, but Sherburn is not convinced that it is not, in fact, genuine. Given the fact that Pope, in his preface to the *Iliad*, claimed that Addison was the one who first supported the undertaking, it may be assumed that the latter had indeed written an encouraging letter, and according to Sherburn, "this may well be it" (i. 196*n*). Sherburn further points out the fact that, in this letter, Addison mentions to be "at present wholly immersed in country business" (*Letters* 108), which he indeed was at the time, but which Pope could hardly have remembered when he supposedly composed the fabrication twenty years later (i. 196*n*). In this letter, Addison expresses his faith in Pope's ability to make the *Iliad* translation a success. "I question not" he writes, "but your Translation will enrich our Tongue and do honour to our Country; for I conclude of it already from those performances with which you have oblig'd the publick" (108). It is no wonder that Pope chose to include these glowing words on his talent in his publication, especially since they were (or are at least presented to be) written by the king of the literary community. Interestingly enough, Addison is here evidently shown to have offered to aid Pope in his project when he remarks that

> if you think I can any way contribute to the forwarding of them [Pope's proposals for translating], you cannot lay a greater obligation upon me than by employing me in such an office. As I have an ambition of having it known that you are my Friend, I shall be very proud of showing it by this, or any other instance. (*Letters* 107-8)

These friendly words may indeed have been written by Addison, but even if he offered to be of service at one point, we have seen that he never provided Pope with any support in the matter, and the 1730's public would have been aware of this as well. Sherburn notes that even in 1735, when the letters were first printed in Curll's edition, Pope apparently did not know about Tickell's contract to translate the entire Iliad (i. 196*n*); there is no evidence of this knowledge in any of the letters or other accounts. He had, however, been suspicious of Addison's involvement and resented the fact that the latter had not seemed to take measures to prevent his coterie from attacking Pope. In the years that followed on their Homer quarrels, however, Pope and Addison had reconciled as best they could and had begun to once again write about one another with admiration. By publishing this 1713 letter, then, Pope shows to not desire to dwell on the past and to draw attention to the fact that Addison had once uttered the kindest words in support of him, no matter the dealings that might have taken place in later years.

The following letter from Addison, number LVII, contains additional kind words on Pope's translation. Sherburn makes no mention of this letter being a fabrication; it is, however, denoted with a '†' which indicates that there is no other known source for the letter than Pope's publication. It is only a short letter in which Addison states that he is glad Pope no longer only appeals to "one half of the Nation," namely Swift and Arbuthnot, for instance, who were considered Tory writers and had no affiliation with Addison, "when [he] might command them all" (*Letters* 108). His final lines further note the strength of their acquaintance at this time; due to their intimate friendship he feels comfortable "taking all this freedom with you," and states that they "have lived many years together, in an unreserved conversation," and that he sincerely wishes that they "may do so many more" (109).

The undated letter LVIII is an almost verbatim fabrication from passages of letters that were written to John Caryll in 1713: the first paragraph is taken from a letter dated 23 June,[23] the second and last from the one written on 12 June,[24] and the third, fourth, and fifth

[23] i. 179
[24] i. 176

paragraph from that of 17 October[25] (i. 197*n*). As opposed to the above-mentioned masterful fabrication, this one is done carelessly and can hardly be considered anything more than "a curiosity" (i. 197*n*). For instance, Pope failed to delete some of the information he provided Caryll with, even though it would be of no use to Addison; he writes, for example, of news about Steele and *The Guardian*, matters with which Addison would have been just as familiar as Pope. Furthermore, although he does not provide a date, he placed this letter in between the one from 2 November and another dated 14 December 1713, indicating that this letter should be taken as if written somewhere during this same time. In the letter, however, he discusses *The Guardian* as if it were still being published at the time, but this periodical was discontinued on 1 October of this year (i. 197*n*). It is debatable how many readers would have noticed such a thing, or even have been aware of this fact in the 1730's, but compared to Pope's subtlety in other fabrications, the placing of this letter was indeed rather careless.

In the first part of the letter, Pope discusses the fact that many people from different (literary or other) groups have unkind opinions of him: "indeed an author, who is come upon the town, is enjoy'd without being thank'd for the pleasure, and sometimes ill-treated by those very persons who first debauched him" (*Letters* 109). Upon publication he omitted the clause "like a whore that's come upon the town" (i. 179) for obvious reasons of impropriety, but the imagery remains intact; Pope feels that people enjoy his work as they please, but are unappreciative and will just as easily turn their backs on him or insult him. Such are matters commonly discussed with one's close friends, and here Pope assigns this role to Addison; something that is especially striking since the responsibility for several such attacks lay, at least in later years, with people from Addison's circle. He goes on to state that "to tell you the bottom of my heart, I am no way displeased that I have offended the Violent of all parties already," indicating that those people who do him dishonour are simply not worth his time, and he furthermore claims that he does not feel "the least malevolence or resentment against any of those who misrepresent me or are dissatisfied with me" (109). With these lines, Pope communicates that he was not to blame for the most part of the disputes and in fact assumed the attitude of being the bigger person in these situations. Pope presents himself here as having adopted a mature approach to the criticism he so often encountered. By presenting this discussion as having taken place between himself and Addison, this may in turn be taken to indicate that the latter shared this mitigating view of Pope's attitude and intentions.

[25] i. 193

In the following part of the letter he writes with regard to the papers he wrote for *The Guardian*, which were published without identification of the author. He writes that "'tis a pleasure to me that you guess'd so right in regard to the author of that Guardian you mentioned" (109), but also explains that he wished that the majority of the readers would not attribute the papers to him; he so rarely contributed to the periodical that he ought not to receive "the credit of such a report with some people, nor the disrepute of it with others" (110). The original letter from which these lines are taken was written on 12 June 1713, less than two months after the appearance of *Guardian* No. 40, in which Pope cleverly defended his own pastorals. Although this may then well be the *Guardian* paper referred to here, this should not necessarily be taken as truth for the fabrication, which was supposedly written in December. However, even if readers of this constructed letter were not intended to directly connect this mention of an anonymous *Guardian* to No. 40, the association is there nonetheless. Pope may have purposely selected the letter that contained this reference in order to convince his public that Addison was aware of his authorship in the matter, at least a few months after its publication, and even seemed to condone it – even if this had not really been the case. Furthermore, in this letter he is shown to have discussed this infamous essay with Addison in an extremely casual manner, implementing the sense that if his being the author had been of no consequence to someone as involved as Addison, it ought to be of no consequence to the public either.

Letter LIX, dated 14 December, is again one actually sent to Caryll with only negligible alterations.[26] This letter is one that most particularly shows that Pope wanted the public to view his relationship with Addison as one of deep, intimate esteem and mutual love. Unlike the letters which contained remarks on the Homer translation or explanatory lines about quarrels to do with other literary figures, the subject matter of this letter is not at all concerned with professional affairs. Pope starts this letter by stating that he had been trying to come up with lines "worthy communicating to you in a letter" all week, but is forced to conclude that his "rambling head can produce nothing of that sort (111). Therefore, he hopes that Addison will not be bothered by a letter that does not contain news of any sort but only tells "the old story, that I love you heartily," and is written "with more unreservedness than ever man wrote or perhaps talk'd to another" (111). The letter is made up of philosophical musings about the uncanny workings of the universe and the "incongruous animal" that is man, after which Pope concludes that despite everything, "we must return (thro' our very

[26] 14 Augustus 1713, i. 185

condition of being) to our narrow selves, and those things that affect our selves" (112-3). He rounds off the letter by stating that "I never return so much into my self as when I think of you, whose friendship is one of the best comforts I have for my own insignificancy" (113). This letter is something more than a medium through which Pope tries to exempt himself from blame in one case or other, or to attempt to set the record straight with regard to his intentions in the dealings that ultimately caused a rift between himself and Addison. Here, he can be seen to take his presentation of their relationship to the next level. He evidently attempts to convince his readers that he and Addison were not only literary collaborators who were on rather friendly terms, but were indeed the best of friends, who were even in the habit of writing to each other simply for the sake of being in touch.

Like many of the others, Letter LX forms a deft modification of one of the letters sent to Caryll.[27] Pope relates the difficulties he has encountered while translating Homer, and further on discusses the attacks that had been well underway at this point. One clever alteration occurs where, in the original, Pope mentions the fact that:

> you [Caryll] are concerned how I shall be paid, and are soliciting with all your might that I may not have the ill fate of many discarded generals, to be first envied and maligned, then perhaps praised, and lastly neglected. (i. 220)

Caryll was apparently soliciting people to subscribe for Pope's translation; Addison, as will be remembered, never took on that task despite his promises. The printed letter, then, shows the simple replacement of the words "you are soliciting with all your might" by "you are solicitous" (*Letters* 113); here, Pope only notes that Addison has shown to be worried about these matters, without ascribing any sort of action. He then states that the first fate of "these generals," namely to be maligned, has already befallen him from several angles following his proposals for the *Iliad*. He makes light of his attackers' accusation that he is "not a master in the Greek" by claiming that none of them can know unless they are experts themselves and unless they approach him to exchange ideas and remarks (*Letters* 114). In any case, Pope states, "if they can read (for I know some critics can, and others cannot)" they are welcome to look over some of his other Homer translations that had appeared in earlier years (114). He then explains that he is used to all sorts of charges, some calling him a Tory, "because the heads of that party have been distinguishingly favourable to me;" some a Whig, "because I have been favoured with [your] … friendship, and of late with my lord Halifax's Patronage"

[27] 1 May 1714, i. 219

(114).[28] He grudgingly wonders why they would find fault with his being favoured by such varied types of men, as the "much more natural conclusion" that may arise from this fact is "that a person who has been well us'd by all sides, has been offensive to none" (114). The conviction he shows in this letter is that "[t]his miserable age is so sunk between animosities of Party and those of Religion" (114) that no good can ever come of it and that he wants no part in the divide: "I am ambitious of nothing but the good opinion of good men, on both sides" (114). It is curious that Pope chose to include this letter in which he speaks of the attacks that occurred in the onset of his Homer publication, as we have seen that this uproar was mostly caused by Addison's fellow Buttonians. One explanation may be that this letter is presented as having been written on 30 January 1714, when Pope had only just begun work on the translation and there had not yet been much controversy. To Pope's knowledge at this time, Addison and his coterie would not have been so apparently involved with the attacks, since the greatest part of the storm that would ensue in the following year had not yet taken place. It may well be the case that Pope expressly chose to include a letter that was written around this time; the original to Caryll is dated a few months later, but was still written a full year before the publication of his *Iliad*, which formed the culmination of the struggles. In this manner he is able to show the public that he had intended from the very first to stay out of the fray and to not involve himself with politics, religious matters, or any attacks that may be directed at his person. By displaying to discuss these matters with Addison, he furthermore indicates that he was in no way suspicious of the latter's sincerity at this time. With this letter, he effectively ensures the view of his innocence, and shows that whatever transpired in later years was not in the least due to his intentions or attitude.

It should be noted that these letters were all (presented as) written in 1713 or early 1714. The kind of relationship with Addison that Pope wished to construct in these letters, then, should only be applied to their dynamics before the Homer controversy. The following letters in this section carry dates from the summer of 1714, when the uproar was well underway, and one from 1715 when the translation had been published, and it is evident that here, Pope is not intent on emphasising the intimacy of his acquaintance with Addison. In Letter LXI, which was added to the Addison section, their mutual friend Charles Jervas, looking to soften the dispute, assures Pope that Addison professed to have nothing against him, even though "insinuations were spread, that he did not care you shou'd prosper too

[28] The original reads: "because I have been honoured with Mr. Addison's good word, and Mr Jervas's good deeds, and of late with my Lord Halifax's patronage" (i. 220). It has been pointed out that Pope did not receive the kind of patronage that most of his contemporaries enjoyed (see Introduction); in this case, it must be recognised that Pope had already at this time established a name for himself.

much as a Poet" (*Letters* 115), and that he is fully intent on assisting Pope with any means available to him. Pope's response, however, implies that their quarrels are not so easily fixed. After the shame brought to him by Pope's *Guardian* prank, Ambrose Philips had apparently taken it upon himself to try and sway Addison's opinion of Pope for the worse, as Pope writes that "You as thoroughly know the scandalous meanness of that proceeding which was used by Philips, to make a man I so highly value suspect my dispositions towards him" (116). He relates that the current situation causes him to "expect nothing but Civility from him, how much soever I wish for his friendship" (116). Only if and when Addison will once again judge his character fairly, without interference from people who bear Pope no goodwill, will they be able to resume their friendly acquaintance. "In a word," he concludes, "Mr. Addison is sure of my respect at all times, and of my real friendship, whenever he shall think fit to know me for what I am" (117). Pope thus presents himself as having been open to any improvement in terms of their acquaintance, but also tells his readers that the coldness between them was in fact caused by the misjudgements and obstinacy of not himself but of Addison.

In Letter LXV, which was written to Caryll but for which Pope did not provide an addressee in his 1737 publication, he briefly explains what transpired with regard to Addison and Philips:

> Mr. Philips did express himself with much indignation against me one evening at Button's Coffee-house (as I was told) saying, that I was enter'd into a cabal with Dean Swift and others to write against the Whig-Interest, and in particular to undermine his own reputation, and that of his friends Steel and Addison. (*Letters* 120)

He then excuses Addison by relating that the latter approached him afterwards and "assur'd me of his disbelief of what had been said, of the friendship we shou'd always maintain, and desir'd I would say nothing further of it" (121). What Pope is trying to put forward with these published letters, then, is the impression that their falling out was also for a large part caused by external forces, such as the gossip and hatefulness of the other people involved.

Despite the contributing factors, however, it is evident that his feelings of resentment ran deep. In letter LXVII, also to Caryll (although unaccredited in the publication), Pope admits that "I must expect an hundred attacks upon the publication of my Homer" as "all people in general are prejudiced against new beginners" (125), and when these beginners eventually start to climb up the ladder, people will only find new grounds for disapproval.

The final letter to Addison that Pope printed, LXIII, is dated 10 October 1714 and is completely different in tone than the others he included. At this point, "Pope had no hope of 'civilities'" from Addison (i. 263*n*), and he seems to finally have accepted the fact that the latter was working against him. Unlike most of the other letters there is no source for this one and no proof for its being a fabrication; Sherburn notes that "One may assume that the letter was so important to Pope that he kept a copy, or one may assume that when preparing his letters for publication … he composed this letter, never sent" (i. 263*n*).[29] Whether he indeed sent it to Addison or not, its inclusion in the publication means that Pope wished to reveal Addison's involvement in the Homer attacks and show his public that Addison carried the greater responsibility for their falling out.

This letter is rather problematic as it appears to be made up of niceties, but can also be taken to be thick with sarcasm. In its opening, Pope refers to Jervas's account of Addison's attitude towards him, stating that "you have lately been pleased to speak of me in a manner which nothing but the real respect I have for you can deserve" (118), indicating that his own attitude should indeed not have yielded anything but kind words from Addison. He then asks him to relate the identity of "your poetical acquaintances" who are responsible for the attacks. He states that "Methinks no man should question the real friendship of one who desires no real service" (118), indicating that he has never asked for anything, and therefore did nothing to deserve such a treatment. He concludes this section with the note that he is not "so humble as not to dare heartily to despise any man who does me an injustice" (118). In any other context, this line could be taken as a rather neutral statement not necessarily directed at Addison, but, given the circumstances, it seems to contain a threat of sorts, or at least a thinly veiled declaration of his sense of resentment. In the following lines he claims that he never had anything but respect for Addison, but that he will not praise himself for this quality. After all, "all the world speaks well of you, and I should be under the necessity of doing the same, whether I cared for you or not" (118). With this remark, he rather seems to remove any sentiments of friendship from the situation, barring the distant respect which any one is bound to feel for an important figure such as Addison.

In the next part, he seemingly implores Addison to look over his Homer translation, as he knows that "the reputation of my Poetical Work will depend upon the character you give it" (118). He notes that "I shall never believe that the author of Cato can speak one thing, and

[29] Sherburn writes that "All the other letters printed as sent to Addison are demonstrably fabricated from letters to Caryll; for this letter there is 'source'." (i. 263*n*). It seems that Sherburn is here forgetting that the printed letter LVII from 2 November 1713 (to be found on i. 196) has not been matched with a source either and is therefore not necessarily a fabrication.

think another" (118), drawing attention to Addison's sincerity, or in this case, rather the lack thereof. He states that this request should be regarded as a sign of "the trust I repose in your good-will," as he is providing Addison with the "opportunity of speaking ill of me with justice" (119) – pointing out the fact that Addison was already harshly criticising the work even before it appeared, and thus before he could have found any just fault with it.

With this letter, Pope furthermore shows that he is prone to hold a grudge for a very long time. Now, with everything that has happened between him and the wits at Button's, he shows to remember a snub that occurred back in the days of his early career, which apparently he still feels strongly about several years later. "My bookseller is reprinting the Essay on Criticism" he writes to Addison, "to which you have done too much honour in your Spectator of Nº 253" (119). Not only does he name the specific issue in which this slight occurred, but he goes as far as to directly cite the critical remark which Addison made about him in this paper; namely, the above-mentioned lines about his admitting some strokes of envy and detraction in his *Essay*. Pope here requests Addison "to point out those strokes" (119) supposedly in order to be able to right these wrongs in the reprint.

The letter is really set up in the same manner as some of their earlier ones, in which they comment on each other's works and offer their opinions, but it rather serves as a parody. Pope appears to show appreciation for Addison's help and remarks, but the tone in which he writes is expressive of his indignation toward him. It seems as though Pope, during these disillusioning days that led up to his Homer publication, recalled every injustice with which Addison had been associated and included them all in this letter. He first praises Addison's quality of honesty, only to shoot it down by subtly turning it into a wry accusation of the attacks upon him. Pope emphasises the notion of sincerity by presenting himself as the one who was always open, honest, and receptive of Addison's opinions, while Addison found unjust reasons to treat Pope injuriously through mockery and attacks. This letter in fact conveys the same sentiment which, it can be imagined, drove Pope to write his infamous Atticus lines.

The letters which Pope included in his publication thus show his acquaintance with Addison from the beginning to the very end. The first number of letters are presented to be from the time when they were on friendly terms, barring a few instances of uneasiness. Here, their relationship is even enriched and portrayed as being much more intimate than it really was. The inclusion – and fabrication – of these letters indicates that Pope wished the public to focus on their friendly collaboration, which indeed took place in between quarrels. In the onset of his Homer publication, however, their relationship changed drastically, and Pope

could not simply neglect this fact in his collected correspondence. The later letters in this section make mention of some of the quarrels and emphasise the fact that these disputes were, for the most part, out of Pope's control. He does not go so far as to change the whole story and to blame Addison for everything that happened, but he does foreground his own good intentions and is sure to express his regret at having lost the intimate acquaintance of Joseph Addison. In response to the accusations of ingratitude and deceitfulness he faced, he conveyed an intimate relationship which severely came to suffer from Addison's actions with respect to the Homer translations. By publishing these letters, Pope constructed a kinder posture of himself than that which had been attributed to him by his contemporaries, and strategically grasped the opportunity to right some of the wrongs which his Atticus portrait had brought him.

Chapter III:
"To a Lady abroad" and To a Dear Friend

For all of Pope's genius, social standing, and success, perhaps his most painful regret was his romantic life, which seems to have come to nothing but unrequited love and disappointment. This private matter of the poet's personal life becomes of import in the discussion of his posture because in his lifetime it was seldom treated as private. As seen in the previous chapter, Pope had much to suffer from his enemies on several fronts, and these attacks were not limited to his literary qualities. By the time Pope started to make a name for himself, "he was already established in his own mind and in the minds of others as a dwarf and a cripple" (Mack 153), and his enemies grasped every opportunity to remind him of his physical shortcomings. His poor health, his crooked frame, and the feelings of inferiority that most likely accompanied it, underlined many, if not all, of Pope's relationships (romantic or otherwise), and it is widely supposed that this had a significant impact on the romantic prospects he dared to envision for himself. Pope never married, which in turn meant that his ever-ridiculed physique was by his enemies easily targeted as a reason for his failing love life.

This chapter consists of three main parts. The first section will delve into some of the attacks Pope had to endure, after which the "reality" of his private situation will be sketched by drawing on examples from his personal, unpublished letters and discussing the manner in which Pope presented himself in the company of some of his male friends. After establishing the image that was most likely present in Pope's mind regarding his romantic life and the ferocious context of attacks in which he was operating, this chapter will closely analyse two cases of correspondence that are present in the 1737 publication. When it comes to Pope's personal life, the affiliations that are the most discussed are his relationships with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) and Martha Blount (1690-1763), and these will be the main focus of this chapter. His acquaintance with Lady Mary was brief but passionate, and they exchanged very ardent letters during the years 1716-1718. Martha Blount he had known since he was about 19 years old, and she remained his dear friend throughout his whole life. Martha also had a sister, Teresa (b. 1688), and it is commonly believed that she may have been Pope's favourite Blount for a while, but for the sake of selection this acquaintance will not be a focus here. His relationship with Teresa was another complex one with an unexplained

falling out, and their correspondence is hardly present in the 1737 publication;[30] this case is therefore not quite relevant for the purpose of this research. Lady Mary and Martha Blount are the two women of whom it is said that they played a romantic role in Pope's life, and this chapter will show that these relationships, and the rumours that accompanied them, were of immense influence on the posture he appears to have desired to construct. From the selected letters it will become clear that Pope reacted to his enemies' attacks and dealt with the image that was imposed on him in different ways. The publication of these letters enabled Pope to demonstrate that, contrary to popular belief, he indeed enjoyed close, romantic relationships with women, and it further allowed him to present himself as a kind, warm, and loving man who did not deserve to be spoken of in such cruel terms.

"Little Alexander the women laugh at"

The literary community in which Pope was trying to conquer and maintain his place was often harsh and offensive, and in order to form an understanding of the negativity he had to go up against, two examples of written attacks that were issued are given here. In 1716, John Dennis's *A True Character of Mr. Pope and his Writings* appeared, "offering the coffee houses fifteen tightly packed pages of abuse" (Mack 300). To reference a few of its devastating lines, the author first claims that Pope's deformity "did not come by his own Fault, but seems to be the Curse of God upon him" (Dennis 9). He then defends his finding fault with the poet's physique by asking the reader to consider the fact "that there is no one Disease, but what all the rest of Men are subject too [*sic*]" (10). Not an ordinary disease, then, Pope's deformity is

> Visible, Present, Lasting, Unalterable, and Peculiar to himself. 'Tis the mark of God and Nature upon him, to give us warning that we should hold no Society with him, as a Creature not of our Original, nor of our Species … 'tis certain at least, that his Original is not from *Adam*, but from the *Divel*. (9-10)

In 1742 – evidently after the publication of Pope's letters discussed here, but relevant as the culmination of the ridicule on his sexuality in his lifetime – there appeared *A Letter From Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope*, in which his enemy Colley Cibber relates an anecdote from Pope's youthful years, which Sherburn presumed to have taken place probably in 1716 or 1717 (*Early Career* 157). The situation was that he and an unnamed, mischievous nobleman had

[30] Letter LXXIX was written solely to Teresa, letters LXXVI and LXXVIII jointly addressed to both her and Martha. Nowhere is her name explicitly printed in the publication.

convinced the "little *Homer*" to accompany them to "a certain House of Carnal Recreation" so that they "might see what sort of Figure a Man of his Size, Sobriety, and Vigour (in Verse) would make, when the frail Fit of Love had got into him" (Cibber 24).[31] Cibber writes that when "the little-tiny Manhood of Mr. *Pope*" had proceeded into a private room, he slammed open the door to find "this little hasty Hero, like a terrible *Tom Tit*, pertly perching upon the Mount of Love" (24). He quickly pulled Pope off of her, since, he maintains, he could not leave the poet at risk of a venereal disease "which his thin Body might never have been cured of" (24-5). Thus, Cibber relates, for the honour of their nation he took it upon himself to rescue the poet and assure the completion of the Homer. This incident was quickly picked up by engravers, who produced several versions of the image of Pope being dragged by his heels to safety (Mack 779-80). It is easily imagined that such harsh ridicule and the fact that the story spread so far, so quickly, was devastating to Pope; in Mack's words, this pamphlet was "the most shattering ridicule of his wretched carcass that had ever been delivered" (779).[32] As the first example was written during the early years of Pope's success, and Cibber's story of his youthful indiscretions still found such an eager audience decades after the fact, it is clear that this type of violent criticism hounded Pope throughout his career. He was not only judged by the merit or failure of his literary endeavours, but was time and again subjected to attacks on his physique, which, according to his enemies, did not only mark the impossibility of his having a sexual relationship, but was also proof of his malign nature.

Pope later assured Joseph Spence that Cibber's story was a complete lie; he had indeed been invited by the gentlemen to join them to visit a "bagnio," but "nothing happened of the kind that Cibber mentions, to the best of my memory, and I had so few things of that kind ever on my hands, that I should have scarce forgot so material a circumstance" (Spence 197). Despite this confession that he had seldom found himself in such a situation, it can be seen in some of his letters that he often "put up a brave front at being a rake" (*Early Career* 157) during and before the years in which this escapade had supposedly taken place. It should be noted that the majority of his earliest acquaintances as a young poet were well-established men who were much older than he, such as William Wycherley (1640-1715), Sir William Trumbull (1639-1716), and Henry Cromwell (1659-1728). As Sherburn explains, "amongst the giants of his day he must have felt inferior," and there "would always be on Pope's part a forced effort to meet such friends on equal terms in eating and drinking" (*Early Career* 44).

[31] This nobleman was most likely the Earl of Warwick, Addison's stepson. Pope names him as "Lord W." in his account to Spence (34).

[32] Pope soon retaliated by making Cibber his king of dunces in *The New Dunciad*, which was completed within three months after this attack.

This sentiment remained present in his later years, when he frequented the town taverns and tried to keep up with the others with regard to women; or he at least endeavoured to share in their bawdy banter. In a letter from 24 June 1710, for instance, Pope relates to Cromwell that he "was the other day in company with a Lady, who rally'd my Person so much, as to cause a total Subversion of my Countenance" (i. 89-90). In return, he claims to have embarrassed her with the following rondeau, which he appended to the letter:

> You know where you did despise
> (Tother day) my little Eyes,
> Little Legs, and little Thighs,
> And some things, of little Size,
> You know where.
>
> You, tis true, have fine black eyes,
> Taper Legs, and tempting Thighs,
> Yet what more than all we prize
> Is a Thing of little Size,
> You know where.

This letter happens to be included in his publication, and it is interesting to note his habit of editing certain phrases in order to clean up the content of his correspondence.[33] For the present letter he omitted this entire piece and instead remarked that "I am glad you like'd the foolish Rondeau I Sent you upon my own Littleness: It is the first Rondeau, I believe, in our language" (*Letters* 60). Even though at the time, or at least in his personal correspondence, Pope wanted to appear every bit as much a man as his friends, it is evident from this alteration that he did not feel comfortable presenting his vulgar, youthful jests to the public.

On another occasion on 21 December 1711, he writes to Cromwell from Mapledurham, home to the Blount sisters, that

> every moment my Eyes are employed upon this paper, they are taken off from Two of the finest faces in the Universe: For I am at this instant placd betwixt Two such Ladies that in good faith 'tis all I'm able to do, to keep my self in my Skin. (i. 137)

[33] Letter XXVIII (i. 89-91).

To this last phrase, Mack added the note "[i.e. foreskin]" (151), specifying the crudeness of the remark Pope confidently sent to the womanising Cromwell. Alike the previous example it may be remarked that Pope published this letter only with the excision of this last line.[34] Further on in this letter he continues with a type of "mock-heroic banter" which, in Mack's words, covers but not conceals "some genuine urges underneath" (151). Pondering the effect the present ladies are having at him, he writes that

> these are Eyes that have more Persuasion in one Glance than all *Sapho's*[35] Oratory and Gesture together, let her put her Body into what *moving Postures* she pleases … How gladly wou'd I give all I am worth, that is to say, my *Pastorals* for *one* of their *Maidenheads*, & my *Essay* for the other? I wou'd lay out all my *Poetry* in *Love*; an *Original* for a *Lady*, & a *Translation* for a *Waiting Maid*! (i. 137)

For this explicit section Pope consistently omitted the reference to their "Maidenheads" and substituted it with the more neutral "them" (i. 137*n*) to clean it up in his published versions. What is striking about these remarks in the original letters is that he continually attempts to present himself as a "seasoned man of the world" (Mack 151) to his womanising acquaintances. Battling his own feelings of inferiority and the image that his enemies continually impose on him, it is evident that his romantic life was a sore point for Pope and one he felt he needed to defend. The examples discussed above were not published and are therefore not part of his constructed posture, but they show Pope's private preoccupation with the matter and indicate that, whatever the truth of his escapades, he at least wished to appear equally successful with women as his friends. In contrast to this confident exterior, it is crucial to note that what he expressed to his close friend Caryll during these same years paints an entirely different picture; one that is probably much closer to reality. On 25 January 1711, he wrote that "'Tis certain the greatest magnifying glasses in the world are a mans own eyes, when they look upon his own person." However, he confesses that even in this magnified view, he does not appear to himself as "the great Alexander Mr. Caryll is so civil to, but that little Alexander the women laugh at" (i. 114).

[34] In 1726, without Pope's approval, Curll had printed a faithful text of this letter, which among others he had purchased from Elizabeth Thomas, presumed mistress of Henry Cromwell. The edited letter which Pope was later to print, however, happens to not be present in the particular 1737 edition that is discussed here.

[35] Elizabeth Thomas.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The unpublished letters discussed above have shown that his romantic life, or the lack thereof, was a matter upon which Pope was largely fixated. The following section will discuss Pope's complex relationship with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and provide a number of possible reasons for their falling out. Furthermore, the nature of their correspondence and the ways in which he dealt with his physical shortcomings and feelings of inferiority will be determined by examining a number of telling instances from private, unpublished letters from their correspondence. The discussion will then turn to the three letters that are present in the 1737 publication and analyse the kind of self-image Pope contrived to establish in the minds of his readers by their inclusion.

He had met Lady Mary sometime in the first half of 1715, and "had at once been dazzled by her wit, daring, and social position" (*Early Career* 203). Her beauty was renowned and had caught the eyes of the court, through which her husband, Edward Wortley Montagu, an eminent Whig, was trying to work his way up the political ladder. Through their shared passion and talent for poetry and satire, a friendship soon sprang up between Pope and this worldly woman; but after a short acquaintance in London, Edward Wortley Montagu acquired the position of British envoy to the Sultanate of Turkey, where he and Lady Mary stayed from 1716 to 1718 (Mack 302). Although Pope and Lady Mary exchanged remarkably devoted letters during these two years, it should also be understood that this period of her absence in fact formed the heyday of their friendship. Their relationship was short-lived and rather problematic, partly owing perhaps to their conflicting political affiliations; Lady Mary's circle mainly consisted of Whigs while Pope had strong ties to the Tories, and satires of the one were bound to hit friends of the other (*Early Career* 205). It must be noted that it has also often been understood that the tension resulted from opposing expectations for their relationship. Pope was easily infatuated by her striking intelligence and beauty, but Lady Mary was also "vivacious, ambitious, [and] aggressive" (Mack 295), and her sharp tongue and harsh judgment had quickly made her unpopular with the other ladies of the London society. A few months after the start of her acquaintance with Pope, she contracted smallpox which left her face deeply pitted and resulted in the permanent loss of her eyelashes; "pitted, not pitied" was the pun with which her contemporaries reacted to this (Mack 295). Although she found no sympathy from her fellow socialites, the misfortune of losing her beauty is often considered as one of the reasons why Pope drew ever closer to her. His fondness was supposedly "fortified by a deep vein of fellow-feeling," as she was now, like himself,

subjected to the cruelty of ridicule and looked upon as "damaged," albeit much less severely (Mack 301). Despite their shared interests and mutual respect, however, Pope's initial affection did not survive their later quarrels. Although the poet had at first been blinded by her beauty and intelligence, Joseph Spence's depiction of Lady Mary captures well the duality of this complex woman: "the most wise, the most imprudent; loveliest, most disagreeable; best natured, cruellest woman in the world" (Spence and Underhill 210).[36]

It is commonly believed that Pope fancied himself in love with her during the years in which they were close, and there is an ongoing discussion about whether or not the two actually had an affair. What further complicates the story of their acquaintance is that while his letters to her are filled with flattering remarks and passionate expressions of intimacy, it is never clear to what extent his remarks should be taken for truth. In addition to this, she was, of course, married, and the tone in her replies is generally much cooler and more distant than the one Pope adopts. In 1720 or 1721, when the Wortley Montagus had returned to England, Pope arranged for them to become his neighbours at Twickenham, where he had recently purchased his villa; but even this early after her much desired return there are accounts indicating that Lady Mary hardly ever met with Pope. In later years the only warmth between them was, in Sherburn's terms, "the gradually cooling ardour of a more or less imaginary passion" (*Early Career* 208), and somewhere before 1728 their friendship turned into bitter enmity.[37] This drastic change has never been fully explained, but over the years several hypotheses have been raised; including trivialities such as Pope failing to lend her a harpsichord which he had promised her for an evening party, or her having returned a pair of borrowed sheets unwashed. The two that are the most noteworthy are naturally the ones given by the chief figures involved. In Lady Mary's account to Joseph Spence she related that she had Dr. Arbuthnot ask Pope "what Lady M. had done to him," and that Pope's explanation for their falling out entailed that she and Lord Hervey "had pressed him once together … to write a satire on some certain persons, that he refused it: and that this had occasioned the breach between us" (Spence 146-7). She, however, refuted this by adding that she did not "remember that we were ever together with him in our lives" (147). Her statement as presented in *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, indeed, offers a different story. Here it is said that

[36] This passage, from a letter Spence wrote to his mother, is cited in the notes section of Underhill's edition of Spence's *Anecdotes*.

[37] The year in which the first open attack on Lady Mary by Pope or his allies appeared; "The Capon's Tale" by Jonathan Swift.

> at some ill-chosen time, when she least expected what romances call a *declaration*, he made such passionate love to her, as, in spite of her utmost endeavours to be angry and look grave, provoked an immoderate fit of laughter; from which moment he became her implacable enemy. (Wharncliffe 92)

This account, in which Pope is presented to have been "reminded of his extreme deformity more forcibly than by a thousand words" (92), has been accepted as true by several scholars throughout the centuries. The underlying sentiment of this conviction is clearly captured in one of the notes by Spence's editor John Underhill: "where Pope is concerned, wounded vanity will explain almost anything" (Spence and Underhill 211). Whether this instance really happened or in fact caused the breach between them is not essential to this research; what is important is the fact that Pope's contemporaries may have taken it for the truth. The people from Pope's and Lady Mary's immediate circles were naturally aware of the breach between them, and according to Edith Sitwell, Lady Mary's accounts of what had happened were also "float[ing] round and round the fashionable part of the city, and the country places that knew her" (165), possibly meaning that many others were laughing along with her. By the time Pope was making his selection of letters to be printed, he and Lady Mary had become bitter enemies, and it is difficult to determine why he would include letters from this failed relationship and thus emphasise a situation that may have caused him such embarrassment. Keeping in mind his motivations with the Addison letters, a plausible explanation is that Pope again desired to right some wrongs and to attempt to sway his contemporaries' opinion; as Lady Mary's account might well have caused them to view him as nothing more than a crippled, unsuccessful, scorned lover.

When trying to form a picture of the nature of the correspondence between Pope and Lady Mary, it is important to recognise that Pope's writing was generally influenced by a fully formed tradition of letter writing. The introduction to this work has already made note of the fact that one of Pope's goals in publishing his letters was to take up a prominent place in this epistolary tradition and add himself "to the succession of great letter writers beginning with Cicero" (Winn 71). Pope's correspondence with Lady Mary forms a clear example of his awareness of these epistolary predecessors as it is traditionally agreed that different correspondents warrant different styles and tones. According to Winn, Pope's model for writing to his female correspondents was Vincent Voiture (1597-1648), and this influence becomes strikingly visible when examining his letters to Lady Mary. The style of Voiture

was a courtly one packed with "fulsome compliments, protestations of devotion, and sexual *double-entendres,* adding up to the implication that the writer is an incorrigibly wicked but irresistibly charming fellow" (Winn 101). Although Pope generally used this mode as suitable for all female correspondents, he particularly embraced it with regard to Lady Mary, taking on a more extreme form that is on a similar level with the stance he assumed when writing to his rakish male friends. Mack rightly observes that "Only extravagance, in its double sense of roving fantasy and conspicuous excess, can adequately describe the character of th[is] correspondence" (302). The convention Pope employs here is that of "epistolary gallantry," which is "a species of flirtatious game, governed, if not by rules, at least by norms." Mack eloquently explains further that

> It demands most of all a witty imagination because its object is to flatter in unusual and pleasing ways. It often inspired delicate feats of exaggeration because exaggeration preserves the carnival tone and the comic distance without which the whole game might collapse into bouts of heavy breathing. And, further, epistolary gallantry invites sexual undertones because the smoke of so much compliment palls quickly if there is not thought to be somewhere a fire. Alike creative or destructive according to its use, the undercover fire reminds both parties that the game *can* be played seriously and for high stakes. (302-3)

Whatever the reality of their feelings towards each other, then, the character of their correspondence is firmly marked by the conventions of this style.

Pope was naturally aware that Lady Mary was married and that any real action on their uttered plans was out of the question, but this did not keep him from conjuring up a number of vivid fantasies in his letters to her. To show an example, "he wittily carries forward a recurring fantasy" (Winn 111) in an unpublished letter that Sherburn placed in October 1716, namely that Lady Mary bring him back a "fair Circassian Slave." This imagined concubine is from the start equated to Lady Mary herself, as Pope begins to describe her as "She, whom my Imagination had drawn more amiably than Angels, as beautiful as the Lady who was to chuse her by a resemblance to so divine a face" (i. 364). He goes on to picture himself with this woman, "whom my eager wishes had already lodg'd in my arms & heart," and brings in a more sexual innuendo when stating that he would gladly allow "those hands, which I had destined for the soft Offices of love" to remain abroad, but only "upon this condition" that Lady Mary return to England (i. 364). In this letter Pope

further imagines that he may follow Lady Mary across the globe, "not only to Constantinople," but especially to "those parts of India, where they tell us the Women best like the Ugliest fellows, as the most admirable productions of nature, and look upon Deformities as the Signatures of divine Favour" (i. 364-5). In any case, he states, he would certainly meet her in Lombardy, "the Scene of those celebrated Amours between the fair Princess and her Dwarf" (i. 365).[38]

In this unpublished letter, Pope is openly flirtatious and jocularly deals with his unfortunate physique by presenting fabled cases where beautiful women are coupled with dwarfs or "the Ugliest fellows" who have deformities like his, seemingly in order to convince Lady Mary that this is no reason that they should not be together. Of course, the convention entails that the writers' remarks are over the top, and Norman Ault, among others, explains that Pope's letters are "both ardent and tinged with a playful extravagance which suggests that his gallantry was not meant to be taken too seriously" (*New Light* 359). Others such as Mack and Winn, however, believe that it may well be the case that this style of self-dramatisation serves Pope as a way to express his true emotions "in a form far enough from being explicit that his own feelings are protected" (Winn 113). Whether his jocularly expressed sentiments were based on true feelings or not is of no consequence, but the allusions and innuendos he makes in this letter can indeed be taken as telling of the insecurities that occupied his mind. The fact that he did not publish this letter may mean that he simply found it too personal or too sexually explicit a text to offer to his larger public, but it may also mean that when he was making the selection years later, he was embarrassed to consider these hopeful musings of his youth, knowing that they ultimately never led to anything. Although this letter was not included in his 1737 edition and therefore does not contribute to his discussed posture, it does form a clear example of the nature of his correspondence with Lady Mary. Furthermore, it may be taken as indicative of his romantic background for which he may have felt it was necessary to construct a certain posture. He takes great measures to assure Lady Mary that she should indeed consider him a prospective lover, indicating his preoccupation with the question whether any woman would ever allow a dwarf like him to extend their acquaintance beyond the realms of friendship into something more (physically) romantic.

From a now known total of thirty-three letters (see Appendix II, III), Pope selected three for his 1737 publication, namely XLV, XLVI, and XLVII. These letters are placed

[38] Pope probably knew this story from a verse that was published in Tonson's 1709 *Miscellany*, to which he had contributed his aforementioned "Pastorals."

among the uncredited section of John Caryll, and it must be noted that Lady Mary's name is not directly stated either. It is therefore difficult to determine whether Pope's public was aware of her identity, and whether Pope could rely on these letters to present some statement regarding their falling out. In the table of contents, Pope denoted the letters as "To a Lady Abroad," perhaps simply in order to distinguish them from the preceding letters regarding another woman, presumably Mrs. Weston. It could also be true that this mention of the correspondent's foreign travels was enough to signify that these were indeed written to Lady Mary during her absence in the Orient. Sitwell expresses the opinion that because of their quarrels, Lady Mary "was to be deprived of the honour of having her name associated with his correspondence" (160), but it is difficult to be sure whether Pope really meant to obscure Lady Mary's identity. Perhaps his public was familiar enough with her person and the story of their friendship so as to not need her name explicitly printed in order to figure out who this correspondent was. These published letters do not contain images as explicit as are present in the unpublished ones that he wrote to Lady Mary or his male friends, but there are many examples of characteristics that abide by the convention of epistolary gallantry. Whatever the awareness of her identity, then, the letters' inclusion may have served as a way for Pope to show a side of himself that opposed the rumours about his failed romantic life, by presenting his public with the fact that he maintained charming, romantically charged correspondence with a woman, whether the public believed this woman to be Lady Mary or someone else.

As noted above, the dramatic nature of the style which he adopts often means that Pope's utterings may be taken with a grain of salt; he himself, however, often assures Lady Mary that the opposite is true. In the first printed letter to her, XLV, he begins, for instance, by insisting that all the letters she will receive of him "will be the most impartial representations of a free heart" (*Letters* 87), that whatever he will write "will be the real thought of that hour" (88), and that "The freedom I shall use in this manner of *thinking aloud*, may indeed prove me a fool; but it will prove me one of the best sort of fools, the honest ones" (88).[39] Winn remarked that these notions were exactly what impressed Pope when reading the letters of his predecessors: he sought to "throw himself out on paper" (Winn 59) and he often expressed to believe that the art of letter writing ought to be natural, open, and relatively free of polish (48-9). But even while expressing to Lady Mary his ambition to write freely and from the heart, his manner of writing is highly polished and his imagery expressly exaggerated:

[39] 18 August [1716], i. 352.

> If Momus's project had taken, of having windows in our breasts, I shou'd be for carrying it further, and making those windows, casements; that while a man show'd his heart to all the world, he might do something more for his friends; even give it them, and trust it to their handling. I think I love you as well King Herod did Herodias (tho' I never had so much as one dance with you) and would as freely give you my heart in a dish, as he did another's head. But since Jupiter will not have it so, I must be content to shew my taste in life, as I do my taste in painting, by loving to have as little drapery as possible. (88)

Rather than really writing openly and with "as little drapery as possible," he develops an elaborate piece of imagery that draws on the classics, showing off his wit and knowledge. The letter is extremely flattering to Lady Mary when Pope, for instance, relates that "Books have lost their effect upon me, and I was convinced since I saw you, that there is one alive wiser than all the sages" (89). He goes on to remark that any gentleman who would converse with her, "would have been strangely deceiv'd, while they thought only to fall in love with a fair lady, and you had bewitch'd them with Reason and Virtue" (89). He not only emphasises Lady Mary's beauty but her mind and character as well, and furthermore, he insists that all who should have the fortune to meet her will certainly be just as awed. Besides this type of straightforward flattery, he uses particularly extravagant terms when expressing his grief of losing her company. He writes that since she left, he can only pass by her house "with the same sort of melancholy that we feel upon seeing the tomb of a friend, which only serves to put us in mind of what we have lost" (90). Comparing her temporary absence to the death of a close friend seems rather extreme, and surely this dramatic description, rather than presenting the actual degree of his sentiments, is aimed at pleasing this worldly, witty, and unattainable woman. Publishing this letter in turn enabled him to show off his skill and classical knowledge to his 1737 audience, and to demonstrate that he had a knack for writing charming letters that are in line with the specific epistolary convention he adopts.

Letter XLVI begins with Pope's affirmation that he "can never have too many of your letters," and is even "angry at every scrap of paper lost" (*Letters* 91). As in the previous letter he makes a reference to Greek mythology for the sake of dramatisation when he comments that "your leaves methinks like [a Sybil's] are too good to be committed to the winds, tho' I have no other way of receiving them but by those unfaithful messengers" (91). In this letter, he again emphasises that all which he communicates to her is genuine, by applauding "the justice you do me, in taking what I writ to you in the serious manner it was meant" (91). He

writes that on this point he can bear no doubt on her part, and that it would "be vexatious indeed, if you should pretend to take that for wit, which is no more than the natural overflowing of a heart improv'd by an esteem for you" (91). It should be noted that this letter is not so much openly flirtatious as focused on the intimate friendship that exists between them. For instance, Pope describes that his heart is "not like a great warehouse, stored only with my own goods, or with empty spaces, to be supply'd as fast as Interest or Ambition can fill them," but a place of which "every inch [is] let out into lodgings for its friends, and [it] shall never want a corner where your idea will always lie as warm, and as close, as any idea in Christendom" (91). The rest of the letter is beautifully written and clearly shows a charming, romanticising side of him. "If you must go from us," he writes, "I wish at least you might pass to your banishment by the most pleasant ways; that all the road might be roses and myrtles, and a thousand objects rise round you, agreeable enough to make England less desirable to you" (92). Although it is presented as written to a friend rather than to a romantic interest, there are still instances of gallant exaggeration, most particularly when Pope wishes for her return "at the expence [*sic*] of a whole people," stating that he hopes "that even slaughter, ruin, and desolation may interpose between you and the place you design for" (92).

The final printed letter, XLVII, is written in an equally charming manner and highly flattering of Lady Mary. He movingly refers to himself as "the man who has really suffer'd very much from you, and whom you have robb'd of the most valuable of his enjoyments," namely, "your conversation" (*Letters* 93). He claims to be miserable about her absence, but takes comfort in the fact that her "thoughts upon paper will be a more lasting possession" than spoken conversation can be, and that "I shall no longer have cause to complain of a loss I have so often regretted" (93), namely when he could not precisely recall each word she had uttered when they met. This letter is filled with true examples of the exaggerated, gallant style he chose to adopt, for instance when he writes that "I attend you in spirit through all your ways, I follow you through every stage in books of *Travels*, and fear for you through whole folio's" (93). Another evidently overdramatic scene is his description of Mr. C.[40] and himself, who "never meet but lament over you: we pay a kind of weekly rites to your memory, where we throw flowers of rhetoric, and offer such libations of your name as it would be profane to call Toasting" (95).

These published letters are all typical examples of Pope's affiliation with epistolary gallantry as they contain many instances of dramatic flattery, but it is evident that these

[40] Congreve (i. 357)

published versions are distinctly less explicit than the unpublished instances that were discussed above. The most striking matter about these letters, then, can be uncovered when they are compared to Sherburn's transcripts of the originals. Letter XLVI, for instance, reads as a pleasant letter written to a dear friend abroad, but its original contained a spicy remark which Pope suppressed when editing for print. In this passage he reminds himself that, writing as honestly and openly as he is prone to, he should take care to not "write my self all out to you;" for "if this correspondence continues on both sides at the free rate I would have it, we shall have very little Curiosity to encourage our meeting at the Day of Judgment" (i. 383-4). The remark "at the free rate I would have it" leaves no question as to his intentions, namely that he desires to be on much more intimate terms with Lady Mary than they are at present. In the published text of letter XLV, Pope had remarked that the distance that existed between Lady Mary and himself may enable them to write freely and "without a blush," since it "removes a great many of those restrictions and punctilious decorums, that oftentimes in nearer conversation prejudice truth, to save good breeding" (89). Although this observation seems innocent enough in the context of this letter, the omitted passage of letter XLVII elaborates on this matter and puts it in a much more sexual light. Here, he admits that the further she travels away from him, the more freely he will write, and that he earnestly wishes she would do the same (i. 384). He then suggests that they be "like modest people, who when they are close together keep all decorums, but if they step a little aside, or get to the other end of a room, can untie garters or take off Shifts without scruple" (i. 384). He may still be referring to writing openly, but his imagery is doubtless extremely sexual, and the notion of secretly sneaking off into another room is furthermore implicit of an extramarital affair. It is no wonder that Pope chose to suppress remarks like these from his official publication, especially if the public was indeed aware of the identity of the married Lady Mary. It should, however, be noted that his omitted and sexually explicit remark about the Day of Judgement is not the only one of this nature that is present in these letters. Although this passage has not yet been discussed here, he had already mentioned Judgement Day in his published letter XLV, where his expressed belief of writing "with as little drapery as possible" is followed by a subtle innuendo about Lady Mary's nakedness (*Letters* 88). Although he is referring to showing his heart and baring himself through letter writing, he cleverly makes a comparison to painting in order to allude to a more visual nakedness of the body. He then remarks tongue-in-cheek that he does not think "every body naked so fine a sight, as your self and a few more would be" (88), after which he concludes that "there will certainly come some day of judgment or other, to uncover every soul of us" (88). Although this naughty quip of

mentioning Lady Mary's naked body is obviously cutting it close, Pope apparently did not consider it so crude as to require omission. It may in fact be the case that he particularly wished to emphasise the underlying concept of Judgement Day. "Ruefully viewing his own twisted body" and "aware that there was no queen ready to disrobe for him" (Winn 114), he evidently took comfort in the fact that on this day, his earthly body would no longer be of consequence. The ones who had bodies that were not afflicted like his, but who had souls that were twisted instead, would then be revealed and the tables would finally turn in his favour.

Although he never really speaks of his own twisted body in the letters he chose to publish – the references to the Princess and the Dwarf are, for instance, only made in unpublished ones – his awareness of it can still be seen shining through the surface of his carefully constructed words. The letters to Lady Mary that Pope published in 1737 are packed with elaborately developed imagery, carefully dramatised flattery, and knowledgeable references to classical mythology, and therefore clearly show his talent of writing to women in a specifically applied mode. It can therefore be safely said that Pope's schemes of epistolary fame, as Swift once termed it, played a large role in publishing these particularly polished letters.[41] However, when taking into consideration the background of Pope's romantic life, his concern with his own physical shortcomings, and the ruthless attacks thereon by his enemies, it can also be argued that the letters' inclusion served as a way for Pope to show his public that he indeed had had women in his life to whom he could write such gallant letters. He evidently did not feel comfortable to provide his readers with the original, at times sexually explicit versions of his correspondence, but that may be attributed to the mere matter of personal privacy. Whatever the reality of his love life, the letters that he published ultimately show Pope as a charming man writing "To a Lady abroad," maintaining the kind of correspondence that was intimate enough for flattery, flirtatious jests and expressions of affection.

Martha Blount

We have seen that, for a time at least, Lady Mary stood at the centre of Pope's affections, and it is also commonly agreed that Martha's sister Teresa may have occupied the greater part of his heart for a moment. But "these passions died" (Rogers, "Social Scene" 136), and the obvious representative of Pope's romantic interests is undeniably Martha Blount, "by far the

[41] In a letter dated 26 February 1729/30: "I find you have been a writer of Letters almost from your infancy, and by your own confession had Schemes even then of Epistolary fame." (*Corr*. iii. 92)

most sustained of [his] female friendships" (136). Pope had met the sisters as early as 1709 when he was 19 years old, either at Whiteknights, home to their grandfather who was also the Popes' neighbour, or through Caryll, who was Martha's godfather (Mack 242). Two years younger than Pope, "Patty," as he endearingly called her, was "blonde, blue-eyed, shy, modest, docile, tender-hearted, even-tempered, fearful of thunder, and a voracious reader" (243); she was also catholic, well-educated, and may well have struck him as the ideal match. Gossip indeed began to sprout early about the nature of their friendship, and followed Pope throughout his life. In 1725, for example, he wrote to Caryll that "[a] very confident asseveration has been made, which has spread over the town, that your god-daughter Miss Patty and I lived 2 or 3 years since in a manner that was reported to you as giving scandal to many" (ii. 353) but he disowns it by stating: "God knows upon what motives any one should malign a sincere and virtuous friendship!" (ii. 354). Likewise, he felt the need to assure his friend Broome a few months earlier that the latter's "report of my quitting, or being in the least inclined to quit, the easy, single state I now enjoy, is altogether groundless" (ii. 134). Such rumours persisted until after his death nearly 20 years later; he left Martha the use of his estate, and there are accounts of genuinely surprised contemporaries wondering that his will named her Miss Martha Blount, and not Mrs. Alexander Pope. Although it is quite certain that they never married or became truly intimate – according to Sherburn there is "no evidence of the slightest validity" to support it (*Early Career* 292) – the gossip has survived throughout the ages, and many believe even today that the two may have been lovers.

Sherburn claims that marriage may indeed have been in the works at some point in their acquaintance, if only "Pope's 'carcase' had not been so crazy and insignificant and if Martha Blount had not been so tall and stately." According to him, "[t]he poet evidently felt that marriage would simply make them look ridiculous" (291). It is indeed striking that Pope wrote to Martha and Teresa (Letter LXXVIII) about Lord Harcourt proposing a relative of his to become Pope's wife, "being tender of her interests, and knowing … that she is less indebted to fortune than [Pope]." Pope told him "'twas what he could never have thought of, if it had not been his misfortune to be blind; and what I never could think of, while I had eyes to see both her and my self" (*Letters* 143). With a phrase that he omitted upon publication, Pope adds that "as matters now were, I did not care to force so fine a woman to give the finishing stroke to all my deformities, by the last mark of a Beast, horns" (i. 431). Here he evidently references the tradition of the cuckold, implying that any woman who married him would have no choice but to be unfaithful. It is significant that he wrote of this matter to Martha and Teresa, as it can be inferred that this topic was on his mind in relation to them.

Here in 1717, when he was still a rather young man, we see Pope already discarding any hope of marrying a nice woman. More particularly, he discards in this letter the possibility of being with one of the Blount sisters. Just above the previously mentioned passage, he develops a somewhat more sexual implication: he writes that "in the midst of my glory I am wounded, and find my self a meer man," but "[t]o tell you from whence the dart comes, is to no purpose, since neither of you will take the tender care to draw it out of my heart, and suck the poison with your lips" (*Letters* 143). As Stephanson asserts, "this is pretty racy stuff … cleverly asking [them] at least to imagine their female mouths pressed against his chest" (18). It is significant that he assumes from the start that neither of them will do so. The fact that he chose to publish these accounts is quite troublesome; we have seen that he rather chose to present himself as a witty flirt and suppressed several remarks about his physique, but here he directly asserts that the idea of him having a romantic involvement is ridiculous because of his outer appearance. It should be noted that all letters to or from Martha and Teresa were published anonymously, with either no mention of any name or bearing the unrevealing heading "*to Mrs. B.*" (see Appendix I). Furthermore, in this same letter he changed a mention of "Bolton street," where the Blounts then lived, to a more neutral "St. James' Square" in the published version. He evidently took measures to avoid the identification of the Blounts, and in this letter he effectively emphasises that his marrying or carrying on a scandalous affair had always been out of the question. One reason for publishing these telling phrases, then, may be that he wished to protect Martha's reputation, which had already been damaged by those nasty rumours which surrounded their friendship.

As with his letters to Lady Mary, there are instances in the (unpublished) correspondence with Martha in which he openly confesses his infatuation, or makes teasing quips of a more sexual nature. In June 1717, for example, he writes that he "can't express the Desire I have of being Happy with you a few days … at Mapledurham" and adds in parentheses the remark: "or nights, if you would give me leave" (i. 409). But for the most part, his correspondence with Martha is markedly different from that with Lady Mary. As Sitwell observed, "there are no hollow and windy gallantries, no powdered effigies of an unreal passion" in these letters (128), and Winn has termed them "as bare of artifice as any Pope wrote" (122). From a total of 24 letters to or from Martha, 19 to or from Teresa, and 18 jointly addressed to both sisters (see Appendix II, III), Pope published 8 letters from his correspondence with the Blounts. Six of these will be analysed in this chapter, namely LXXVII, LXXIX, LXXX, CLXVIII, CLXIX, and CLXXXVI. As noted earlier, all of these are anonymous, and the letters are furthermore scattered throughout the different sections of

the publication. At times, Pope failed to provide the letters with any heading whatsoever, which means that their occasional placement in a group of letters to a male correspondent may have even led his public to believe that these were addressed to this same person. Whereas the first three letters to be discussed bear a gender specific heading such as "*Madam*," or "*To Mrs. B.*," the final three are not provided with any such indication of the recipient's gender; it is only in our modern time that the addressee is known or supposed to have been Martha Blount. This fact poses a marked difference between the previously discussed correspondence of Lady Mary, which was presented as a collected set of letters written "to a Lady abroad," and the scattered letters to Martha which are never ascribed to her within the publication. As some of these letters were not necessarily presented as written to a woman, their inclusion cannot serve the same purpose as the letters to Lady Mary, namely to convince his readers of the presence of romance in his life. It will be seen, however, that these letters to Martha posed a different means of opposing the cruel allegations Pope faced during his lifetime. Rather than trying to flatter any unattainable, worldly woman, he and "Patty" were truly close, and the letters that he chose to publish are expressive of his values of true friendship. Rather than defending his love life, it will be seen that Pope put these letters to work in order to battle against the widespread belief in his malignant personality.

Letter LXXVII bears the year 1715, when the Blount sisters had left Mapledurham, which was only 10 miles from the Popes' house in Binfield, and were staying at a more distant address in London instead (i. 318-9*n*). The letter expresses Pope's regret at Martha's departure with an eloquence that is characteristic of the poet:

> The weather is too fine for any one that loves the country, to leave it at this season; when every smile of the sun, like the smile of a coy lady, is as dear as it is uncommon: and I am so much in the taste of rural pleasures, I had rather see the sun than any thing he can shew me, except your self. (*Letters* 140)

He continues in a more philosophical manner and delves into matters of temporality and death, pondering how much earthly friendships will still mean in the end. He relates to Martha that "[t]he separation of my soul and body is what I could think of with less pain; for I am sure he that made it will take care of it," but that "I cannot think without tears of being separated from my friends" (140). He wonders what a torment it should be to be a spirit and "still to love those creatures it is quite divided from," unless perhaps it should be so that after death, "all that we esteemed in this imperfect state will affect us no more, than what we lov'd in our infancy concerns us now" (140-1). After this dense, serious paragraph he admits that

"[t]his is an odd way of writing to a lady," and assumes that if Martha was to show this letter to her friends he would be "under a great deal of ridicule" (141). He shows to be aware that "this kind of language was a break with the gallant tradition" (Winn 105) that was commonly used when writing to women, but he must have felt that Martha was something else: "perhaps you may not your self be quite a stranger to this way of thinking" (*Letters* 141), he writes. With this letter it becomes clear that Pope did not write to her as he usually did to other female acquaintances, but that he saw her as an equal to whom he could express his most serious inner thoughts.

Letter LXXIX bears no date, but was placed by Sherburn in late October 1714, around the time of the coronation of King George I, an occasion for which both Pope and the Blounts were in London. Pope had left town slightly earlier than the Blounts and wrote this letter to Teresa on the subject of Martha's health, who had come down with the smallpox (i. 264*n*). "The chief cause I have to repent my leaving the town, is the uncertainty I am in every day of your sister's state of health" (*Letters* 143), are the lines he opens with. He claims that "No one can be more sensibly touch'd at this than I; nor any danger of any I love cou'd affect me with more uneasiness," but he chose to omit the following phrases:

> A Month ago I should have laughd at any one, who had told me, that my Heart would be perpetually beating for a Lady that was thirty miles off from me; and indeed I never imagined my Concern could be half so great for any Young Woman whom I have been no more obliged to, than to so innocent an one as She. (i. 264)

Sherburn notes that these lines were most likely omitted because they are "excessively tender" (i. 264*n*), but even though the wording – his heart perpetually beating for her – is indeed quite dramatic, the rest of the letter seems equally emotional and tender. He admits he "cannot be so good a christian" as to accept her moving on to a better place and finding happiness there, as this would grieve him too greatly (144). "May her life be longer and happier than perhaps her self may desire," he writes, and "May her beauty be as great as possible, that is, as it always was" (144). But even if the smallpox should ravage Martha's countenance (as it did Lady Mary's), Pope claims that she can rest assured that "she shall have one man as much her admirer as ever" (144). Even if the letter was published anonymously and if Pope's public were unable to conjecture the identity of the mentioned "sister," this letter shows Pope as a worried friend, who shows kindness and who cares greatly about the health and wellbeing of the letter's subject.

Letter LXXX is of a rather different nature than the previous one. The date is quite uncertain, but Sherburn added [February 1715?] for the sake of placement. Here, Pope again shows his skill in letter writing and again puts Martha on an equal level of learnedness with himself, treating her as a correspondent with whom he can discuss his work, his poetic principles, and most of all, his values of friendship. The opening paragraph is worthy of quoting at length:

> I am not at all concern'd to think that this letter may be less entertaining than some I have sent: I know you are a friend that will think a kind letter as good as a diverting one. He that gives you his mirth makes a much less present than he that gives you his heart; and true friends wou'd rather see such thoughts as they communicate only to one another, than what they squander about to all the world. They who can set a right value upon any thing, will prize one tender, well-meant word, above all that ever made them laugh in their lives. If I did not think so of you, I should never have taken much pains to endeavour to please you, by writing, or any thing else. (*Letters* 144-5)

As seen earlier in his letters to Lady Mary, Pope advocates the honesty and openness of wearing one's heart on one's sleeve and having a window in one's bosom. To Lady Mary, however, his writing was still filled with witty developments and tongue-in-cheek comments, while more pointedly in this passage to Martha he rejects jest and wit. Here, he declares that entertainment and jesting alone cannot be enough between true friends, as there is real intimacy involved and an earnest interest in the others' wellbeing. It is rather moving to see Pope, a master of wit in any situation and famous for it, declaring to Martha that "I wou'd cut off my own head, if it had nothing better than wit in it; and tear out my own heart, if it had no better dispositions than to love only my self, and laugh at all my neighbours" (145). Pope is a wit in all things, but here he indeed wrote Martha a letter that is "less entertaining than some [he has] sent," and yet it is all the more intimate. He speaks of how his Homer translation is coming along, and comments that his progress is mostly due to them being apart, for if he were in her company, "How many verses cou'd I gladly have left unfinish'd … had I been permitted to pass all those hours more pleasingly?" (145). The nature of those comments with which Pope addresses the balance of wit and openness of heart is, however, truly complex. Joining the discussion about the extent to which Pope's confessions can or should be taken seriously, Winn observes that:

> Pope's only real attraction, his way of competing with the Blount's handsomer beaux, is his wit; but, as he confesses, he would like to dispense with wit and confess his increasingly serious feelings about them; however, the danger that they may laugh at a declaration of love requires that that declaration be couched in terms which are self-protective; and the mode of self-protection that works best is – wit. (106)

Indeed, Pope concludes this letter with the tender declaration that "Whatever some may think, Fame is a thing I am much less covetous of, than your Friendship; for that I hope will last all my life, the other I cannot answer for" (145). And, in line with Winn's argument, this confession is immediately couched in the funny musing "What if they shou'd both grow greater after my death? alas! they wou'd both be of no advantage to me!" (145). After all, no matter his intentions, wit is probably never far from Pope's writing. But even if the kind words he speaks are to some extent aimed at pleasing her, it is without a doubt that in Martha's case, this is not done in the overly gallant or witty manner we have seen in some of his other letters.

The following two letters are placed at the end of the John Gay section, relating to Pope's correspondence with him and written at a much later time than the ones previously discussed. Letter CLXVIII was termed by Sherburn "a most troublesome letter" (ii. 511*n*): it seems to be composite of paragraphs from different letters written at different times, although Sherburn placed it in [September 1728].[42] Furthermore, Pope published it without an addressee and within the publication, it seems to be presented as another letter written to Gay (see Appendix I). As there are no originals of these letters in existence, Sherburn listed the addressee as [Martha Blount?] in order to indicate that her identity as correspondent is only conjectural. From Sherburn's footnotes it becomes clear that he assigned this letter to Martha based on Letter CLXIX which follows it: "since the letter following this in Pope's edition … is presumably addressed to Miss Blount, this present letter may also be addressed to her" (ii. 511*n*). To his transcription of CLXIX he in turn added that "Miss Blount first appears as the person to whom this letter is addressed in Warburton's edition of 1751" (iii. 335*n*). It is cases such as this, where crucial factuality is simply lacking, that truly demonstrate the complexity of dealing with Pope's correspondence. Whether the addressee was indeed Martha or

[42] For example, in the first paragraph Pope speaks of his journey to Bath (in 1728), but in text that follows he is apparently with Lord Bathurst at Cirencester (ii. 511*n*).

someone else entirely does not, however, change the content or the way these friendly letters may have been received by the public.

Pope begins Letter CLXVIII by stating that "It is a true saying that misfortunes alone prove one's friendships: they show us not only other peoples for us, but our own for them" (*Letters* 288). He has evidently fallen on rather hard times, and now more than ever he values his close acquaintances. For instance, he is presently travelling to Bath, and writes that he wishes he had done this earlier, "for every day I defer it, the more I am in danger of that accident which I dread the most, my Mother's death (especially shou'd it happen while I am away)" (288). His own health is failing as well, and he writes that he "cannot keep pace with [his friends], any more than [he] can walk with a stronger man;" furthermore, he regrets (understandably) that "reading and writing … are growing painful to my eyes" (289). Apart from these matters, he remarks that he and his addressee have never before been separated for such a long period of time, and he fears for their friendship:

> Methinks, we live to be more and more strangers, and every year teaches you to live without me: This absence may, I fear, make my return less welcome and less wanted to you, than once it seem'd, even after but a fortnight. (289)

He objects that "[t]ime ought not in reason to diminish friendship," and it is indeed doubtful that his journey would jeopardise his friendship with Martha or any other close friend, but it is clear that Pope is writing this letter from a melancholy state of mind; here, he is not at all aiming to write a pleasing or diverting letter. The following paragraphs provide a more substantial indication that the recipient of his letter was in fact Martha, as he urges his addressee to move out of his/her current residence and live independently, if only "for two or three months" (290). Pope is supposed to have given Martha encouragement of the like on several occasions (for instance, in the last letter to be discussed in this chapter). The underlying story is that in 1729, Teresa became involved with a married man, and Pope was evidently concerned that "Martha's reputation and tranquillity would be damaged by her continuing to live with her mother and sister in London" (Winn 121-2). On another note, his vehement disapproval of Teresa's affair has been taken as a point of argument to disprove the romantic nature of Pope's and Martha's relationship, and, as Winn remarks, the fact that Martha did not listen and continued to live with her family, "[a]t the same time [indicates] his lack of power over her" (122). Pope's reason for desiring her to move out, as expressed in this letter, is that he wants her to "consult [her] ease and quiet, by becoming independent of those who will never help [her] to either" (289). He reproaches her when he writes that "You

grow too indolent, and give things up too easily," but apologetically expresses that he cannot help but repeat this sentiment as "I never think tenderly of you but this comes across me" (290). The fact that he feels confident enough to speak his mind shows the closeness between Pope and his addressee, and his reproofs convey a protective attitude. He is writing as a friend, hoping to once again "find resolution rise, and chearfulness grow upon you," and ends with the request "pray write, and be particular about your health" (290). This letter seems extraordinarily free of polish considering its content, as Pope writes freely of his own hardships and expresses nothing but true sentiments and tender desires for the wellbeing of his friend. However, it must not be forgotten that this letter is a composite one, and thus deliberately patched together for the sole purpose of publication. Even though the separate pieces may have been written honestly and there is no reason to doubt his esteem for his addressee, there can equally be no doubt that Pope desired his public to see him in this particular, fabricated light.

Letter CLXIX was written in 1732 and as with the previously discussed one, the only source for it is Pope's own publications. It is without an addressee, although it is denoted as "*To* –" in order to distinguish the correspondent from Gay. This Pope did for obvious reasons, as the letter is his reply to the news his correspondent previously informed him of, namely that Gay had passed away. In the publication he added the footnote: "Mr. Gay dyed Nov. 1732, at the Duke of Queensberry's house in London, aged 46" (*Letters* 290); Sherburn notes that Gay actually died on December 4th, but this discrepancy is probably nothing more than a slip of memory. The letter is extremely sad and Pope seems to be at a loss for words on the matter: "I purposely avoid saying more. The subject is beyond writing upon, beyond cure or ease or reflection, beyond all but one thought, that it is the will of God" (290). He also relates that, to make matters worse, his mother's health is slipping again and that she can now do little but sleep.[43] Pope's tone throughout this letter is extremely grave and in the last paragraph he even admits that he is "unfeignedly tired of this world, and receive[s] nothing to be call'd a pleasure in it." He continues: "I have nothing left but to turn my thoughts to one comfort; the last we usually think of, tho' the only one we shou'd in wisdom depend upon, in such a disappointing place as this" (291). With this one last comfort he seems to mean his own death, which due to his own physical ailments probably never seemed so far off to him. Despite his grief and his morbid state of mind, however, Pope shows in this letter to still rely on his friendships. Upon the subject of Gay's death he discloses that "Indeed I want a friend,

[43] Editha Pope died on 7th June 1733.

to help me to bear it better. We want each other … Let us comfort one another, and if possible, study to add as much more friendship to each other, as death has depriv'd us of in him" (290). He acknowledges that he "wou'd above all things see you," and even extends the invite that his addressee and Hugh Bethel come to dinner sometime soon. He concludes with the lines "Be assur'd I love you both, and be farther assur'd, that friendship will increase as I live on" (291). With this letter, Pope shows that no matter the gravity of the situation or his uneasiness of mind, he can always rely on his intimate acquaintances and be a loving friend himself. For lack of an original it is impossible to determine how much of this letter was edited, but by its inclusion in the publication Pope provided his public with an extremely personal account that clearly shows his grief, worries, and warmth.

The final letter to be discussed, CLXXXVI, was included in the section of letters to Hugh Bethel and others, and is the third to last letter in Pope's publication.[44] Sherburn indicates that there is no other source for this letter than Pope's editions, in which it was only ever printed with the unrevealing heading "*To* –." In his edition of the correspondence, Sherburn again denoted Martha's name as the addressee within square brackets so as to indicate that this is not entirely certain, but no explanation is given as to how the letter came to be ascribed to her. In Pope's edition it was dated Sept. 7, 1733, but Sherburn remarks that Pope probably did not date it before he was preparing for print, and October is more plausible for the contents of the letter. Despite the fact that Pope's own edition is the only known source for this letter, there is no mention of its being suspicious in terms of alterations or composition. When writing it, Pope was 45 years old and his mother passed away just a few months earlier. This letter, like the one previously discussed, shows an extremely melancholy side of Pope, the tone of which is already set with his opening paragraph:

> You cannot think how melancholy this place makes me:[45] every part of this wood puts into my mind poor Mr. Gay with whom I past once a great deal of pleasant time in it, and another friend who is near dead, and quite lost to us, Dr. Swift. I really can find no enjoyment in the place: the same sort of uneasiness I find at Twitnam, whenever I pass near my Mother's room. (*Letters* 316)

[44] Barring the four letters that were added after printing.
[45] He is visiting Lord Bathurst at Cirencester Park (iii. 385*n*).

He remarks that he has not yet written to Mrs. G. because even though he thinks he should, he has "nothing to say that will answer the character they consider me in, as a Wit" (316).[46] Pope is evidently not his old self when writing this letter and cannot bear to put up a merry front to anyone. His eyes are growing very bad and "it brings tears into them almost to write to you, when I think of your state and mine" (316). He confesses that "Life, after the first warm heats are over, is all down-hill; and one almost wishes the journey's end, provided we were sure but to lye down easy, whenever the Night shall overtake us" (317). But before his life comes to an end, "(the only way I ever shall leave you)," he lets no opportunity pass to remind his friend that "to the last of my moments, the thought of you, and the best of my wishes for you, will attend you" (317). The supposition that Martha was this letter's intended recipient is enforced by its last section, where Pope repeats his desire that she act independently and for herself. He rather urges her to do so quickly, for when she decides upon this in his lifetime, it "wou'd make me, as well as your self, happier;" while waiting too long "could make you only so" (317). Rather than the elaborate compliments Pope is prone to include, this letter ends with a simple "Adieu." Because of their unhappy content and the grave tone in which Pope writes, these last number of letters appear to be much more personal and genuine than some of the others that have been discussed. The fact that he evidently expressed these feelings of great sadness and uncertainty to at least one of his correspondents, can in turn be understood as evidence of the deep and lasting friendships Pope sustained throughout his life. Having time and again suffered his enemies' sneers concerning his twisted, devilish body and the malignity these marks supposedly signify, Pope grasped the opportunity of publishing his letters in order to demonstrate that his caring, good nature led him to enjoy abundant love in his life.

It has been demonstrated that the vehement attacks which Pope endured on the matters of his physique and his single state meant that he had ample reason to include letters to his female correspondents in his publication. The letters to Lady Mary were denoted as written to a woman, and with these Pope contrived to present himself as a man who was in the company of eligible women and did not shy away from writing to them in a flirtatious, suggestive style, indicating that this woman in fact replied to him in a similar manner. The first set of letters to Martha Blount were denoted as written "*to Mrs. B.*" or headed "*Madam*," and with these, Pope showed that he was also capable of writing serious letters to a woman whom he evidently held in great esteem. Here, he moved away from the traditional style of

[46] Sherburn gives no indication as to the identity of this woman, but it may be assumed that Pope means a relative of John Gay.

addressing women and shared as an equal the musings of his mind. The last letters that have been discussed do not bear any heading that indicate the correspondent's gender and therefore serve a different purpose than Pope's defence of his sexuality. They are in fact expressive of the most personal and genuine matters that occupied his mind and heart. With these letters Pope did not strive to present himself in a romantic light, but they enabled him to bare his soul with regard to the deaths of his friend and mother, and show his public how much love he reserved for his intimates. As defence against his enemies' accusations that he had a "Curse of God upon him" which marked his person so as to warn people that they should hold no company with him, Pope's publication of these letters sought to rectify this view and show him instead as a loving, caring friend.

Conclusion

Viewing Pope's printed letters through the lens of Meizoz's concept of posture, it has become clear that Pope consciously attempted to construct and instil in the minds of his readers a specific self-image, steered by and in opposition to the reputation he came to be equated with through the words of others. Owing to the many ruthless attacks he encountered throughout his career, it can well be imagined that the poet had ample reason for wanting to defend himself, and by closely examining the printed letters to or by Joseph Addison, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Martha Blount, it has become evident that this is exactly what he contrived to do with the publication of his correspondence.

Pope's acquaintance with the famous and influential Joseph Addison came to suffer greatly in later years, and through the offensive lines of his Atticus portrait, his reputation came to suffer even more. Despite this trouble, it has been shown that Pope still wished his public to focus on the fact that he and Addison once enjoyed a relationship of mutual respect and friendly collaboration. The degree to which Pope desired to flaunt this particular relationship becomes especially evident from the fact that he not merely chose to include such letters in his publication, but that he largely composed them himself. In these letters, he can be seen to magnify their intimacy and present their bond as a close, warm friendship between two of the great literary minds of their day. He does not conceal the fact that their relationship turned sour at the onset of his Homer publication, but he does offer the much-needed nuancing of his own respectable intentions and emphasises that their quarrelling was, for the most part, out of his control. Whatever is true of the extent of their intimacy or the events that eventually led to their falling out, publishing these texts enabled Pope to present the story in a different light and offer a vindication of his actions and intentions.

Pope faced particularly cruel ridicule with regard to his romantic life, or lack thereof. His enemies never failed to aim their stings at his deformed physique, and furthermore insisted that his crippled frame was reflective of the deformed and twisted mind within. We have seen that the inclusion of the letters to Lady Mary and Martha Blount enabled Pope to oppose these views in his publication and offer a much more positive posture than was hitherto present in the minds of his contemporaries. The courtly letters to Lady Mary were specifically denoted as written to a woman and can be taken to serve as proof of the existence of romance in his life. They are furthermore exemplary of the specific gallant style Pope was prone to adopt when writing to female correspondents, and they enabled him to show off his skill in writing within a particular epistolary tradition. The letters to Martha Blount were

printed anonymously and often without any mention of the recipient's gender; they will therefore not have been perceived by his readers as specifically written to a woman. Rather than providing a defence for the attacks on his romantic talents and prospects, then, these letters were aimed at opposing the dominant conviction regarding his malign character. They are among the most personal and openly emotional letters Pope wrote, voicing his grief at having lost his mother and his dear friend, and expressing his genuine need for love and friendship. By including the letters to Lady Mary and Martha Blount in his publication, Pope not only defended the nature of his sexuality but was also able to provide his readers with an account of his personality that foregrounds his values of friendship and presents him as a kind, caring, and loving man.

What is of course most ironic about Pope's endeavours to offer a self-constructed, positive posture in defence of himself, is the fact that his dealings in trying to achieve this very aim are what caused the severe outrage of his posthumous editors. The elaborate manoeuvres Pope drew up in order to save his reputation – most notably his deception of Curll and the transposition or fabrication of a number of his letters – have ultimately resulted in a stigma on the poet's character that has reached so far as to contaminate generations of readers and scholars. More recent studies have successfully endeavoured to exonerate Pope, or to at least cause the academic world to view him in a more nuanced light, but the surreptitiousness that has clung to Pope's own editions of the correspondence have caused these publications to be largely neglected in scholarly work. Following on appeals by scholars such as Erskine-Hill and Stephanson, this thesis has looked into the correspondence of Pope as it was originally intended to be read; but this research has covered only a small part of the 1737 publication, merely touching upon the various fields in which future research may yield so much more.

As was briefly discussed in the first chapter, the statistical first step of this study has brought to the surface numerous other correspondents present in Pope's publication who may require further examination. This research has opted to offer a close and in-depth study of three of the correspondents, but one may also wish to take into account the sections Pope himself organised within his publication. Why, for instance, did Pope largely fill out the section of "Letters to Hugh Bethel Esq; &c." with letters to other correspondents such as the Earl of Peterborow? This long section consists of 19 letters, while only 4 of them are expressly presented as having been written to Bethel (see Appendix I); what do these letters have in common that warrants them being placed together? Furthermore, the correspondents to be studied may be grouped into different categories relating to their background, such as

literary figures, members of the nobility, religious or political leaders, etc. It should be interesting to compare, for example, the kind of tone or style Pope adopts when writing to acquaintances of different standing; to examine how he deals with his unaccepted religion in the large section of letters to and from Francis Atterbury, the Bishop of Rochester;[47] or to view the correspondence he exchanged, as a young poet, with the much older, established literary figure William Wycherley in comparison to the later letters that passed between Pope and John Gay, a fellow author and his close friend.

One aspect which Stephanson particularly focused on when expressing the need for closer study into Pope's own editions, is the manner in which Pope edited his texts. This thesis has taken into account a number of the more significant textual changes that have become apparent by studying the letters against Sherburn's complete transcripts, but there is still much to be gained from examining Pope's alterations in a more meticulous manner. In response to the indignation of his earlier editors, vindication has been offered through the observation that the majority of Pope's changes is purely stylistic. What these scholars failed to recognise, however, is that it is within these small, stylistic changes that much can be discovered about Pope's editorial practices. James Anderson Winn, for instance, offered an impressive interpretative reading of Pope's letters, but he does not distinguish between published or unpublished letters, and, as Stephanson observed, he furthermore opted to reference the complete texts as they are printed in Sherburn's *Correspondence*, fully discarding Pope's own editing: "In transcribing the texts, I have omitted the half brackets Sherburn employed to indicate passages excised when the letters came to be printed" (Winn 10). It is evident, however, that Pope paid significantly close attention to the manner in which his letters were to be received, and a detailed study of his alterations can determine their overall effect. It must be noted that such an approach is rendered somewhat difficult by the fact that many of the letters in the 1737 publication are not available from a more authentic source than Pope's editions, as can be gathered from the symbols column of Appendix I. But even if the text cannot be considered in light of the original letters, Pope published several different versions of his correspondence, each with its own modifications or omissions that are thoroughly noted by Sherburn. Every fine-tuning tweak to Pope's words was done consciously and in turn contributed to the kind of posture these edited, polished letters offered his readers.

[47] Especially in retrospect when preparing for publication in 1737; Atterbury was arrested for Jacobite plots in 1721 (Letter CLXII was written from the Tower of London) and banished in 1723. Their acquaintance could thus implicate Pope; perhaps the inclusion of these letters served to exonerate himself from such suspicion.

The overview created as Appendix I may prove an extremely useful tool for any research conducted into Pope's publication of 1737, as it clearly lists the material that Pope included and enables easy access to the relevant letters and the necessary information offered by Sherburn's edition. Whereas the scope of this research only permitted a close analysis of a relatively small number of letters, the publication needs to be regarded as a whole in order to fully reconstruct the posture Pope offered with this edition. Furthermore, Pope's own official version may be compared to the editions published by Curll, in terms of overall content as well as stylistic alterations. Even when all this has been done – meticulously tracking all the changes Pope made to the text, establishing the overall effect of these changes with regard to the original letters, drawing a comparison between these versions and the Curll publications, and establishing the (different) self-images Pope provided in all these versions considered in full – Meizoz's concept of posture does not end here. As delineated earlier, this thesis has examined a small portion of Pope's posture, as offered by the selected letters from his 1737 publication. In Meizoz's approach, posture encompasses a large number of additional elements, which include overall appearance, reputation, and representation of the author. Pope's posture is thus not limited to his written words or textual utterances, and it is certainly not restricted to a textual self-representation within a single publication. The research that has been conducted here has shown that much can be gained from an in-depth discussion of Pope, his correspondents, and the letters he chose to print for public consumption, and it has become evident that taking a more inclusive approach may yield even more significant insight into the poet. This thesis may thus form a stepping stone to a much more comprehensive field of study, a field which will be immensely aided by the appendices created and the approach taken here. Such a large-scale approach in the future is indeed indispensable in order to ever understand the manner in which a multifaceted figure like Alexander Pope worked within his dynamic age, to be able to fully reconstruct the different components of his posture, or to get a firm grasp of the extent to which he himself contributed to the way he was perceived by his audience.

Appendix I

Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
	Letters to and from Mr. Wycherley						
I	""	-	*to* William Wycherley	Dec. 26, 1724 [48]	26 December 1704	†	i. 1
II	""	-	*to* William Wycherley	March 25, 1705	25 March 1705	†	i. 5
III	""	-	*to* William Wycherley	April 30, 1705	30 April 1705	†	i. 8
IV	""	-	*to* William Wycherley	June 23, 1705	23 June 1705	*	i. 9
V	""	-	*to* William Wycherley	Oct. 26, 1705	26 October 1705	†	i. 11
VI	""	*From Mr. Wycherley*	*from* William Wycherley	Feb. 5 1705-6	5 February 1705/6 [49]	†	i. 13
VII	""	-	*to* William Wycherley	April 10, 1706	10 April 1706	†	i. 15
VIII	""	-	*to* William Wycherley	Nov. 29, 1707	29 November 1707	†	i. 33
IX	""	*From Mr. Wycherley*	*from* William Wycherley	Feb. 28, 1707-8	28 February 1707/8	†	i. 40
X	""	-	*to* William Wycherley	May 20, 1709	20 May 1709	†	i. 60
XI	""	*From Mr. Wycherley*	*from* William Wycherley	May 26, 1709	26 May 1709	†	i. 62
XII	""	*From Mr. Wycherley*	*from* William Wycherley	April 1, 1710	1 April 1710	‖	i. 79
XIII	""	*From Mr. Wycherley*	*from* William Wycherley	April 27, 1710	27 April 1710	‖	i. 84
XIV	""	*The Answer*	*to* William Wycherley	May 2, 1710	2 May 1710	†	i. 86
	Letters to and from Mr. Walsh						
XV	""	*Mr. Walsh to Mr. Pope*	*from* William Walsh	June 24, 1706	24 June 1706	†	i. 18
XVI	""	*To Mr. Walsh*	*to* William Walsh	July 2, 1706	2 July 1706	†	i. 18
XVII	""	*From Mr. Walsh*	*from* William Walsh	July 20, 1706	20 July 1706	†	i. 20
XVIII	""	*From Mr. Walsh*	*from* William Walsh	Sept. 9, 1706	9 September 1706	†	i. 21
XIX	""	*To W. Walsh, Esq;*	*to* William Walsh	Oct. 22, 1706	22 October 1706	†	i. 22

[48] For Letter I, the year is given as 1724 within the text. This is most likely a printer's error in this specific edition, as Pope added the footnote "The Author's Age then Sixteen" (*Letters* 9). Sherburn makes no mention of this mistake and lists the year as provided by Pope as 1704.

[49] In the sixth column, I have retained Sherburn's annotation of the years. He comments that "Practically always when Pope gives the year date for a letter written between 1 January and 24 March, the year is 'Old Style'; that is, to him the date 10 February 1714 means 1714/15. For him the year began with 25 March" (i. xxvii*n*).

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

Appendix I

Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
	Letters to and from Mr. Cromwell						
XX	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	Nov. 1, 1708	1 November 1708	‖	i. 51
XXI	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	Jan. 22, 1708-9	19 January 1707/8	‖	i. 36
XXII	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	May 7, 1709	7 May 1709	‖	i. 56
XXIII	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	June 10, 1709	10 June 1709	†	i. 63
XXIV	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	Aug. 19, 1709	29 August 1709	‖	i. 70
XXV	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	October 19, 1709	19 October 1709	‖	i. 72
XXVI	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	April 10, 1710	10 April 1710	‖	i. 81
XXVII	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	May 17, 1710	17 May 1710	‖	i. 87
XXVIII	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	June 24, 1710	24 June 1710	‖	i. 89
XXIX	""	*From Mr. Cromwell*	*from* Henry Cromwell	Aug. 3, 1710	3 August 1710	†	i. 95
XXX	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	Aug. 21, 1710	21 august 1710	‖	i. 96
XXXI	""	*From Mr. Cromwell*	*from* Henry Cromwell	July 15, 1710	15 July 1710	†	i. 91
XXXII	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	July 20, 1710	20 July, 1710	†	i. 92
XXXIII	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	Oct. 12, 1710	12 October 1710	‖	i. 98
XXXIV	""	*From Mr. Cromwell*	*from* Henry Cromwell	Nov. 5, 1710	5 November 1710	†	i. 102
XXXV	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	Nov. 11, 1710	11 November 1710	†	i. 103
XXXVI	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	Decemb. 17, 1710	17 December 1710	†	i. 109
XXXVII	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	Decemb. 30, 1710	30 December 1710	†	i. 111
XXXVIII	""	-	*to* Henry Cromwell	Nov. 12, 1711	12 November 1711	‖	i. 135
	Letters to and from the Honourable J.C. Esq;						
XXXIX	""	*To the Hon. J.C. Esq.*	*to* John Caryll	June 15, 1711	25 June/ 2 August 1711	*	i. 117, 120, 131
XL	""	-	*to* John Caryll	June 18, 1711	18 June 1711	‖	i. 117
XLI	""	-	*to* John Caryll	July 19, 1711	19 July 1711	‖	i. 126
XLII	""	*The Hon. J.C. to Mr. Pope*	*from* John Caryll	May 23, 1712	23 May 1712	†	i. 142

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

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Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
XLIII	""	-	*to* John Caryll	May 28, 1712	28 May 1712	‖	i. 143
XLIV	""	*Madam,*	*to* Mrs. –	-	February 1725/6	†	ii. 367
XLV	""	*Madam,*	*to* Mary Wortley Montagu	-	18 August [1716]	‖	i. 352
XLVI	""	*Madam,*	*to* Mary Wortley Montagu	-	[1716-17]	‖	i. 382
XLVII	""	*Madam,*	*to* Mary Wortley Montagu	-	20 August [1716]	‖	i. 355
XLVIII	""	*To the Hon. J.C. Esq.*	*to* John Caryll	Decemb. 5, 1712	5 December 1712	-	i. 160
	Letters to and from Mr. Steele						
XLIX	""	*From Mr. Steele*	*from* Richard Steele	June 1, 1712	1 June 1712	†	i. 145
L	""	*To Mr. Steele*	*to* Richard Steele	June 18, 1712	18 June 1712	†	i. 146
LII [50]	""	-	*to* Richard Steele	July 15, 1712	15 July 1712	†	i. 147
LIII	""	-	*to* Richard Steele	Nov. 7, 1712	7 November 1712	†	i. 149
LIV	""	-	*to* Richard Steele	Nov. 29, 1712	29 November 1712	*	i. 158
	Letters to and from Mr. Addison						
LV	""	-	*to* Joseph Addison	July 20, 1713	30 July 1713	*	i. 183
LVI	""	*From Mr. Addison*	*from* Joseph Addison	Oct. 26, 1713	26 October 1713	*	i. 196
LVII	""	*From Mr. Addison*	*from* Joseph Addison	Nov. 2, 1713	2 November 1713	†	i. 196
LVIII	""	-	*to* Joseph Addison	-	[December 1713?]	*	i. 197
LIX	""	-	*to* Joseph Addison	Dec. 14, 1713	14 December 1713	*	i. 201
LX	""	-	*to* Joseph Addison	Jan. 30, 1713-4	30 January 1713/14	*	i. 208
LXI	""	*Mr. Jervas to Mr. Pope*	*from* Charles Jervas	Aug. 20, 1714	20 August 1714	†	i. 244
LXII	""	*Mr. Pope's Answer*	*to* Charles Jervas	Aug. 27, 1714	27 August 1714	†	i. 244
LXIII	""	*To Mr. Addison*	*to* Joseph Addison	October 10, 1714	10 October 1714	†	i. 263
LXIV	""	*To the Earl of Halifax*	*to* Lord Halifax	Dec. 1, 1714	3 December 1714	‖	i. 271

[50] This seems to be a printer's error in the numbering of the letters. The sequencing jumps from L to LII (in Pope's table of contents as well in the text itself) but the printed page numbers confirm that no letter is missing (*Letters* 99-101).

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

Appendix I

Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
LXV	""	*To the Honourable…*	*to* John Caryll	June 8, 1714	8 June 1714	†	i. 229
LXVI	""	-	*to* John Caryll	July 13, 1714	[13] July [1714]	‖	i. 235
LXVII	""	-	*to* John Caryll	July 25, 1714	25 July 1714	†	i. 238
LXVIII	""	-	*to* Charles Jervas	Aug. 16, 1714	16 August 1714	†	i. 243
	""	*To the Honourable James Craggs, Esq;*	*to* James Craggs	July 15, 1715	15 July 1715	†	i. 306
	Letters to and from Sir William Trumbull, &c.						
LXX	""	*Sir William Trumbull to Mr. Pope*	*from* William Trumbull	Oct. 19, 1705	19 October 1705	†	i. 10
LXXI	""	*From Sir William Trumbull*	*from* William Trumbull	April 9, 1708	9 April 1708	†	i. 45
LXXII	""	*From Sir William Trumbull*	*from* William Trumbull	March 6, 1713	6 March 1713/14	†	i. 212
LXXIII	""	*To Sir William Trumbull*	*to* William Trumbull	March 12, 1713	12 March 1713/14	†	i. 212
LXXIV	""	-	*to* William Trumbull	Dec. 16, 1715	16 December 1715	†	i. 323
LXXV	""	*From Sir William Trumbull*	*from* William Trumbull	Jan. 19, 1715-6	19 January 1715/16	†	i. 327
LXXVI	""	*To Mrs. B.*	*to* Teresa and Martha Blount	1715	[23 July 1715]	‖	i. 307
LXXVII	""	*Madam,*	*to* Martha Blount	1715	[1715]	†	i. 318
LXXVIII	""	*Madam,*	*to* Teresa and Martha Blount	-	[September 1717]	‖	i. 429
LXXIX	""	-	*to* Teresa Blount	-	[Late October 1714]	‖	i. 264
LXXX	""	*Madam,*	*to* Martha Blount	-	[February 1715?]	†	i. 280
LXXXI	""	*To Mrs. Arabella Fermor on her Marriage*	*to* Arabella Fermor	-	[1714-15]	†	i. 271
LXXXII	""	*To the Honourable Mrs.*	*to* Mrs. H[ervey] [Molly Lepell]	-	[1720]	†	ii. 41
LXXXIII	""	*To Mr. Congreve*	*to* William Congreve	Jan. 16, 1714-5	16 January 1714/15	*	i. 274
LXXXIV	""	*From Dr. Arbuthnot*	*from* John Arbuthnot	Sept. 7, 1714	7 September 1714	†	i. 251
	Letters to and from Edward Blount, Esq; &c.						
LXXXV	""	-	*to* Edward Blount	Aug. 27, 1714	27 August 1714	*	i. 246
LXXXVI	""	*From Mr. Blount*	*from* Edward Blount	-	[September 1714?]	†	i. 247

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

Appendix I

Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
LXXXVII	""	*From Mr. Blount*	*from* Edward Blount	Nov. 11, 1715	11 November 1717	†	i. 320
LXXXVIII	""	-	*to* Edward Blount	Jan. 21, 1715-6	21 January 1715/16	†	i. 328
LXXXIX	""	-	*to* Edward Blount	Feb. 10, 1715-16	10 February 1715/16	*	i. 329
XC	""	-	*to* John Caryll	March 20, 1715-16	20 March 1715/16	‖	i. 335
XCI	""	-	*to* John Caryll	June 22, 1716	22 June 1716	‖	i. 343
XCII	""	-	*to* Edward Blount	Sept. 8, 1717	8 September 1717	*	i. 424
XCIII	""	-	*to* Edward Blount	Nov. 27, 1717	27 November 1717	†	i. 454
XCIV	""	-	*to* Edward Blount	Oct. 21, 1721	21 October 1721	†	ii. 88
XCV	""	-	*to* Edward Blount	June 27, 1723	27 June 1723	†	ii. 176
XCVI	""	-	*to* Edward Blount	June 2, 1725	2 June 1725	†	ii. 296
XCVII	""	-	*to* Edward Blount	Sept. 13, 1725	13 September 1725	†	ii. 319
	Letters to and from the Honourable Robert Digby						
XCVIII	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	June 2, 1717	2 June 1717	†	i. 408
XCIX	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	March 31, 1718	31 March 1718	†	i. 472
C	""	*From Mr. Digby*	*from* Robert Digby	April 17, 1718	17 April 1718	†	i. 473
CI [51]	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	May 1, 1720	1 May 1720	-	ii. 43
CII	""	*From Mr. Digby*	*from* Robert Digby	May 21, 1720	21 May 1720	†	ii. 47
CIII	""	*From Mr. Digby*	*from* Robert Digby	July 9, 1720	9 July 1720	†	ii. 49
CIV	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	July 20, 1720	20 July 1720	†	ii. 49
CV	""	*From Mr. Digby*	*from* Robert Digby	July 30	30 July [1720?]	†	ii. 51
CVI	""	*From Mr. Digby*	*from* Robert Digby	Nov. 12, 1720	12 November 1720	†	ii. 58
CVII	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	Sept. 1, 1722	1 September [1724]	†	ii. 253
CVIII	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	-	[27 June 1724?]	†	ii. 240

[51] For letter CI, as for a number of other letter, no symbol was provided by Sherburn. With the letters included in this table, this usually means that they were first published before any of Pope's 1737-42 editions, and that the relevant printed source forms the letter's provenance. In this column, the absence of a symbol is denoted by '-'.

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

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Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
CIX	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	1722	[May] 1722	†	ii. 115
CX	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	-	[Winter of 1723]	†	ii. 161
CXI	""	*From Mr. Digby*	*from* Robert Digby	Aug. 14, 1723	14 August 1723	†	ii. 191
CXI [52]	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	Oct. 10	10 October [1725]	†	ii. 329
CXII	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	Aug. 12	12 August [1725?]	†	ii. 314
CXIII	""	-	*to* Robert Digby	Dec. 28, 1724	28 December 1724	*	ii. 280
CXIV	""	*To the Honourable Edward Digby*	*to* Edward Digby	April 29, 1726	21 April 1726	†	ii. 375
	Letters to and from Several Persons						
CXV	""	*To Mr. Fenton*	*to* Elijah Fenton	May 5, 1717	5 May [1720]	*	ii. 45
CXVI	""	*The Rev. Dean Berkley to Mr. Pope*	*from* George Berkeley	Oct. 22, N.S. 1717	2 November O.S. 1717	†	i. 445
CXVII	""	*Mr. Pope to…*	*to* Charles Jervas	Decemb. 12, 1718	[1720]	†	ii. 23
CXVIII	""	*To Mr…*	*to* [William Fortescue]	Sep. 17	17 September [1728]	*	ii. 521
CXIX	""	*To Dr. Arbuthnot*	*to* John Arbuthnot	Sept. 10	10 September [1725]	*	ii. 318
CXX	""	*To the Earl of Burlington*	*to* the Earl of Burlington	-	[November 1716]	†	i. 371
CXXI [53]	""	*The Duke of Buckingham to Mr. Pope*	*from* the Duke of Buckingham	-	[August 1718]	-	i. 485

[52] Perhaps another printer's error: the number CXI is repeated for two consecutive letters (*Letters* 192-6), although this is not the case in Pope's table of contents. Oddly enough, this has not affected the numbering and heading of the subsequent letters: the subject summaries Pope provided in his table of contents still match the relevant letters that follow within the text. For Letter CXI, Pope wrote the following in the table of contents: "*From Mr.* Digby. *A Letter of Friendship: The disadvantages of an ill Constitution. Consolation in Friends of Integrity. Their manner of Life in the Country prefer'd to that in the Town*." It seems as though, here, the two letters are presented as one, but in truth only the first is from Digby while the second is written by Pope to Digby. Perhaps these letters were combined in the table of contents in order to show that the latter formed the answer to the former, but the dates Pope printed (14 Aug. and Oct. 10 respectively) seem too far apart to warrant this conclusion.

[53] Extensive and confusing errors occurred with the numbering of a section of letters starting with CXXI, *from* the Duke of Buckingham. Not only are the numbers CXXI and CXXII repeated, the errors are even different within the table of contents and the text itself. In the table of contents, the letters are listed in the following order: CXXI, *to* the Duke of Buckingham; CXXI, *from* Buckingham; CXXII, *to* Buckingham; and CXXII, *to* the Earl of Oxford. Within the text of the publication, the order is CXXI, *from* Buckingham; CXXII, *to* Buckingham; CXXI, *to* Buckingham; and CXXII, *to* Oxford. The heading added to the first letter in the table of contents, "*In answer to a Letter in which he inclos'd the Description of* Buckingham *House written by him to the D. of* Shrewsbury," belongs to the third letter within the text. Furthermore, the pagination within the text shows repetition as well. Whereas the first two letters are on pages 215-22, the page number of the following letter is again denoted as 215; the last letter, *to* Oxford, begins on page 220 (*Letters* 215-22, 215-21).

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

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Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
CXXII	""	*To the Duke of Buckingham*	*to* the Duke of Buckingham	Sept 1, 1718	1 September 1718	†	i. 492
CXXI	""	*To the Duke of Buckingham*	*to* the Duke of Buckingham	-	[1718?]	†	i. 508
CXXII	""	*To the Earl of Oxford*	*to* the Earl of Oxford	Oct. 21, 1721	21 October 1721	‖	ii. 90
CXXIII	""	*The Earl of Oxford to Mr. Pope*	*from* the Earl of Oxford	Nov. 6, 1721	6 November 1721	‖	ii. 91
	Letters to and from Dr. Atterbury Bishop of Rochester						
CXXIV	""	*The Bishop of Rochester to Mr. Pope*	*from* Francis Atterbury	Decemb. 1716	[December 1716]	‖	i. 378
CXXV	""	*The Bishop of Rochester to Mr. Pope*	*from* Francis Atterbury	Nov. 8, 1717	8 November 1717	‖	i. 451
CXXVI	""	*The Answer*	*to* Francis Atterbury	Nov. 20, 1717	20 November 1717	†	i. 453
CXXVII	""	-	*to* Francis Atterbury	Sept. 23, 1720	23 September 1720	†	ii. 53
CXXVIII	""	*From the Bishop of Rochester*	*from* Francis Atterbury	-	28 September 1720	‖	ii. 54
CXXIX	""	*From the Bishop of Rochester*	*from* Francis Atterbury	March 26	26 March 1721	‖	ii. 73
CXXX	""	*Lord Chancellor Harcourt to Mr. Pope*	*from* Lord Harcourt	Decemb. 6	6 December 1722	†	ii. 146
CXXXI	""	*The Bishop of Rochester to Mr. Pope*	*from* Francis Atterbury	Sept. 27, 1721	27 September 1721	‖	ii. 83
CXXXII	""	*From the same*	*from* Francis Atterbury	Oct. 15, 1721	15 October 1721	‖	ii. 86
CXXXIII	""	*From the Bishop of Rochester*	*from* Francis Atterbury	Feb. 26, 1721-2	26 February 1722	‖	ii. 104
CXXXIV	""	-	*to* Francis Atterbury	March 14, 1721-2	14 March 1721/2	†	ii. 106
CXXXV	""	*From the Bishop of Rochester*	*from* Francis Atterbury	March 16, 1721-2	16 March 1722	‖	ii. 107
CXXXVI	""	-	*to* Francis Atterbury	March 19, 1721-2	19 March 1721/2	†	ii. 109
CXXXVII	""	*From the Bishop of Rochester*	*from* Francis Atterbury	April 6, 1722	6 April 1722	‖	ii. 113
CXXXVIII	""	*From the Bishop of Rochester*	*from* Francis Atterbury	May 25, 1722	25 May 1722	*	ii. 119
CXXXIX	""	*From the same*	*from* Francis Atterbury	June 15, 1722	15 June 1722	‖	ii. 124
CXL	""	-	*to* Francis Atterbury	July 27	27 July [1722]	†	ii. 127
CXLI	""	*From the Bishop of Rochester*	*from* Francis Atterbury	July 30, 1722	30 July or 3 August 1722	‖	ii. 128
CXLII	""	*From the Bishop of Rochester*	*from* Francis Atterbury	April 10, 1723	10 April 1723	‖	ii. 165
CXLIII	""	*The Answer*	*to* Francis Atterbury	April 20, 1723	[20 April 1723]	‖	ii. 166

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

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Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
CXLIV	""	*To the same*	*to* Francis Atterbury	May 2, 1723	May 1723	†	ii. 169
	Letters to and from Mr. Gay						
CXLV	""	-	*to* John Gay	Nov. 13, 1712	13 November 1712	†	i. 153
CXLVI	""	-	*to* John Gay	Dec. 24, 1712	24 December 1712	†	i. 168
CXLVII	""	-	*to* John Gay	Aug. 23, 1713	23 August 1713	†	i. 187
CXLVIII	""	*Dear Mr. Gay,*	*to* John Gay	Sept. 23, 1714	23 September 1714	†	i. 254
CXLIX	""	-	*to* John Gay	Nov. 8, 1717	8 November [1717]	†	i. 449
CL	""	*From Mr. Gay to Mr. F–*	John Gay *to* F–	Aug. 9, 1718	9 August 1718	†	i. 482
CLI	""	*Dear Gay,*	*to* John Gay	Sept. 11, 1722	11 September 1722	†	ii. 133
CLII	""	-	*to* John Gay	July 13, 1722	13 July 1723	†	ii. 181
CLIII	""	-	*to* John Gay	Sept. 11, 1722	[September-October 1722]	†	ii. 137
CLIV	""	-	*to* John Gay	-	[1728/9]	†	iii. 2
CLV	""	-	*to* John Gay	-	[1728/9]	†	iii. 2
CLVI	""	-	*to* John Gay	-	[1728/9]	†	iii. 1
CLVII	""	-	*to* John Gay	-	[1728/9]	*	iii. 3
CLVIII	""	-	*to* John Gay	-	21 July [1730]	†	iii. 121
CLIX	""	*Dear Sir,*	*to* John Gay	Oct. 16, 1727	16 October 1727	†	ii. 453
CLX	""	*From Mr. Gay to Mr. Pope*	*from* John Gay	Aug. 2, 1728	2 August 1728	†	ii. 508
CLXI	""	-	*to* John Gay	Aug. 18,1730	18 August [1730]	†	iii. 125
CLXII	""	-	*to* John Gay	Sept. 11, 1730	11 September 1730	†	iii. 131
CLXIII	""	-	*to* John Gay	Oct. 1, 1730	1 October 1730	†	iii. 134
CLXIV	""	-	*to* John Gay	Oct. 1730	October 1730	†	iii. 138
CLXV	""	-	*to* John Gay	Oct. 23, 1730	23 October 1730	†	iii. 142
CLXVI	""	-	*to* John Gay	Oct. 2, 1732	2 October 1732	†	iii. 318
CLXVII	""	*From Mr. Gay to Mr. Pope*	*from* John Gay	Oct. 7, 1732	7 October 1732	†	iii. 321
CLXVIII	""	-	*to* [Martha Blount?]	-	[September 1728]	*	ii. 511

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

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Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
CLXIX	""	*To –*	*to* [Martha Blount]	-	[6 December? 1732]	†	iii. 335
	Letters to Hugh Bethel Esq; &c.						
CLXX	""	-	*to* Hugh Bethel	July 12, 1723	12 July 1723	†	ii. 178
CLXXI	""	-	*to* Hugh Bethel	Aug. 9, 1726	9 August 1726	†	ii. 386
CLXXII	""	-	*to* Hugh Bethel	June 24, 1727	24 June 1727	†	ii. 436
CLXXIII	""	-	*to* Hugh Bethel	June 17, 1728	17 June 1728	†	ii. 501
CLXXIV	""	*To the Earl of Peterborow*	*to* the Earl of Peterborow	Aug. 24, 1728	24 August [1732]	†	iii. 306
CLXXV	""	*From the Earl of Peterborow*	*From* the Earl of Peterborow	-	[August 1732]	†	iii. 310
CLXXVI	""	-	*to* the Earl of Peterborow	-	[September 1732]	†	iii. 311
CLXXVII	""	*From the Earl of Peterborow*	*from* the Earl of Peterborow	-	[October 1732]	†	iii. 317
CLXXVIII	""	*From the Earl of Peterborow*	*from* the Earl of Peterborow	-	[April 1732]	†	iii. 281
CLXXIX	""	*From the Same*	*from* the Earl of Peterborow	1732	[Early May 1732]	†	iii. 282
CLXXX [54]	""	*From Dr. Swift to the Earl of Peterborow*	?	?	?	?	?
CLXXXI	""	*To –*	*to* Lord Bathurst	Sept. 23	13 September [1719]	†	ii. 13
CLXXXII	""	*To the Earl of Burlington*	*to* the Earl of Burlington	1731	[January 1731/2]	-	iii. 265
CLXXXIII	""	*To Mr. C–*	*to* John Caryll	Sept. 2, 1731	3 February 1728/9	‖	iii. 12
CLXXXIV	""	*To Mr. –*	*to* Jonathan Richardson	June 10, 1733	10 June 1733	†	iii. 374
CLXXXV	""	*To Mr. B–*	*to* Hugh Bethel	Aug. 9, 1733	9 August 1733	†	iii. 380
CLXXXVI	""	*To –*	*to* [Martha Blount]	Sept. 7, 1733	7 September 1733	†	iii. 385
CLXXXVII	""	*From Dr. Arbuthnot*	*from* John Arbuthnot	July 17, 1734	17 July 1734	†	iii. 416
CLXXXVIII	""	*To Dr. Arbuthnot*	*to* John Arbuthnot	July 26, 1734	26 July 1734	*	iii. 418

[54] Unfortunately, it has not been possible to successfully locate Letter CLXXX, printed by Pope as from Swift to the Earl of Peterborow. In Sherburn's index there is no such letter to be found under either name, and even a close examination of all the entries concerning Peterborow has not yielded results. Since Pope did not give any indication of the year in which it was written, the letter could not be found by browsing through specific sections either. A likely explanation is that the listed addressees are false and that Sherburn thus placed the letter under a different correspondent. Quite a number of these letters required some investigation in terms of Sherburn's placement, but in this case it unfortunately remains inconclusive.

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

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Contents 1737 Edition	Section	Correspondent as Printed by Pope	"Real" Correspondent	Date by Pope	Date by Sherburn	Symbol	Sherburn (Volume, Page)
CLXXXIX [55]		*To Dr. Swift*	*to* Jonathan Swift	August 1723	[August 1723]	‖	ii. 183
CLXL		*Lord B. to Dr. Swift*	[Bolingbroke] *to* Jonathan Swift	-	[August 1723]	-	ii. 186
CLXLI		*From Dr. Swift*	*from* Jonathan Swift	Sept. 20, 1723	20 September 1723	‖	ii. 198
XCII		*To Dr. Swift*	[Pope and Bolingbroke] *to* Jonathan Swift	December 10, 1725	14 December 1725	‖	ii. 348

[55] The last four letters in this publication are added at the end and not included in Pope's table of contents. The first of these pages bears the message: "P.S. *Since* the foregoing *Sheets were printed off, the following Letters having been published without the Consent of their Writers, we have added them, tho' not in the order of time.*" (*Letters* 322). Sherburn remarks that the first two letters first appeared in Curll's *New Letters of Mr. Pope* (1736) and in his fifth volume of *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence* (1737), but that the last two "apparently appeared first in Pope's official edition" (ii. 349*n*). Furthermore, Sherburn claims that they may have been "clandestinely furnished by Pope" (ii. 183*n*), perhaps in order to convince Swift to return letters to him (ii. 348-9*n*). As these letters were added after the initial printing of the edition, I have not included them in the totals of Appendix II and III.

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 17-8.

Appendix II

Correspondents	Number of Letters							
	Pope's 1737 Publication						Sherburn's Edition	
	Total (as presented by Pope)			"Real" Total (as gathered from Sherburn)			No. of letters up to and including 1734	Total no. of letters
	Total	To	From	Total	To	From		
Mrs. –	-	-	-	1	1	-	---	---
Joseph Addison	7	5	2	7	5	2	7	7
John Arbuthnot	4	2	2	4	2	2	15	15
Francis Atterbury	20	7	13	20	7	13	39	39
Lord Bathurst	-	-	-	1	1	-	21	29
George Berkeley	1	-	1	1	-	1	4	4
Hugh Bethel	4	4	-	5	5	-	20	47
Edward Blount	13	11	2	11	11	2	17	17
Teresa & Martha Blount	-	-	-	2	2	-	19	19
Martha Blount	-	-	-	5	5	-	24	35
Teresa Blount	-	-	-	1	1	-	20	20
Duke of Buckingham	3	2	1	3	2	1	7	7
Earl of Burlington	2	2	-	2	2	-	45	60
John Caryll	-	-	-	12	11	1	144	148
William Congreve	1	1	-	1	1	-	7	7
James Craggs	1 (or 7)	1	-	1	1	-	4	4
Henry Cromwell	19	16	3	19	16	3	43	43
Edward Digby	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2
Robert Digby	17	11	6	17	11	6	19	19
Elijah Fenton	1 (or 2)	1	(1)	1 (or 2)	1	(1)	4	4
Arabella Fermor	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1
William Fortescue	-	-	-	1 (or 2)	1	(1)	68	112
John Gay	24	20	3	23	20	3	32	32
Earl of Halifax	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1
Mrs. Hervey	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1
Charles Jervas	2	3	1	4	3	1	18	18
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu	-	-	-	3	3	-	33	33
Robert, 1st Earl of Oxford	2	1	1	2	1	1	12	12
Earl of Peterborow	7	2	5	7	2	5	12	14
Jonathan Richardson	-	-	-	1	1	-	27	55
Richard Steele	5	4	1	5	4	1	13	13
William Trumbull	6	4	2	6	4	2	10	10
William Walsh	5	2	3	5	2	3	6	6
William Wycherley	14	9	5	14	9	5	36	36

More detailed clarification on this table can be found in Chapter I, pages 18-20.

Appendix III

Pope's 1737 Publication		Sherburn's Edition			
Correspondents	"Real" No. of Letters	Correspondents	No. of Letters (Up to/ incl. 1734)	Notable Correspondents missing in Pope's edition	No. of Letters (Up to/ incl. 1734)
John Gay	23	John Caryll	144	Edward, 2nd Earl of Oxford	150
Francis Atterbury	20	William Fortescue	68	Jonathan Swift	75
Henry Cromwell	19	Earl of Burlington	45	William Fortescue	68
Robert Digby	17	Henry Cromwell	43	William Broome	66
William Wycherley	14	Francis Atterbury	39	Aaron Hill	35
John Caryll	12	William Wycherley	36	Jacob Tonson,	23
Edward Blount	11	Mary Wortley Montagu	33		
Joseph Addison	7	John Gay	32		
Earl of Peterborow	6	Jonathan Richardson	27		
William Trumbull	6	Martha Blount	24		
Hugh Bethel	5	Lord Bathurst	21		
Martha Blount	5	Hugh Bethel	20		
Richard Steele	5	Teresa Blount	20		
William Walsh	5	Robert Digby	19		
John Arbuthnot	4	Teresa & Martha Blount	19		
Charles Jervas	4	Charles Jervas	18		
Duke of Buckingham	3	Edward Blount	17		
Mary Wortley Montagu	3	Dr. John Arbuthnot	15		
Teresa & Martha Blount	2	Richard Steele	13		
Earl of Burlington	2	Robert, 1st Earl of Oxford	12		
Robert, 1st Earl of Oxford	2	Earl of Peterborow	12		
James Craggs	1 (or 7)	William Trumbull	10		
Elijah Fenton	1 (or 2)	Joseph Addison	7		
William Fortescue	1 (or 2)	Duke of Buckingham	7		
Mrs. –	1	William Congreve	7		
Lord Bathurst	1	William Walsh	6		
George Berkeley	1	James Craggs	4		
Teresa Blount	1	Elijah Fenton	4		
William Congreve	1	George Berkeley	4		
Edward Digby	1	Edward Digby	2		
Arabella Fermor	1	Mrs. –	1		
Earl of Halifax	1	Arabella Fermor	1		
Mrs. H[ervey]	1	Earl of Halifax	1		
Jonathan Richardson	1	Mrs. H[ervey]	1		

More detailed clarification on the contents of this table can be found in Chapter I, 20-22.

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