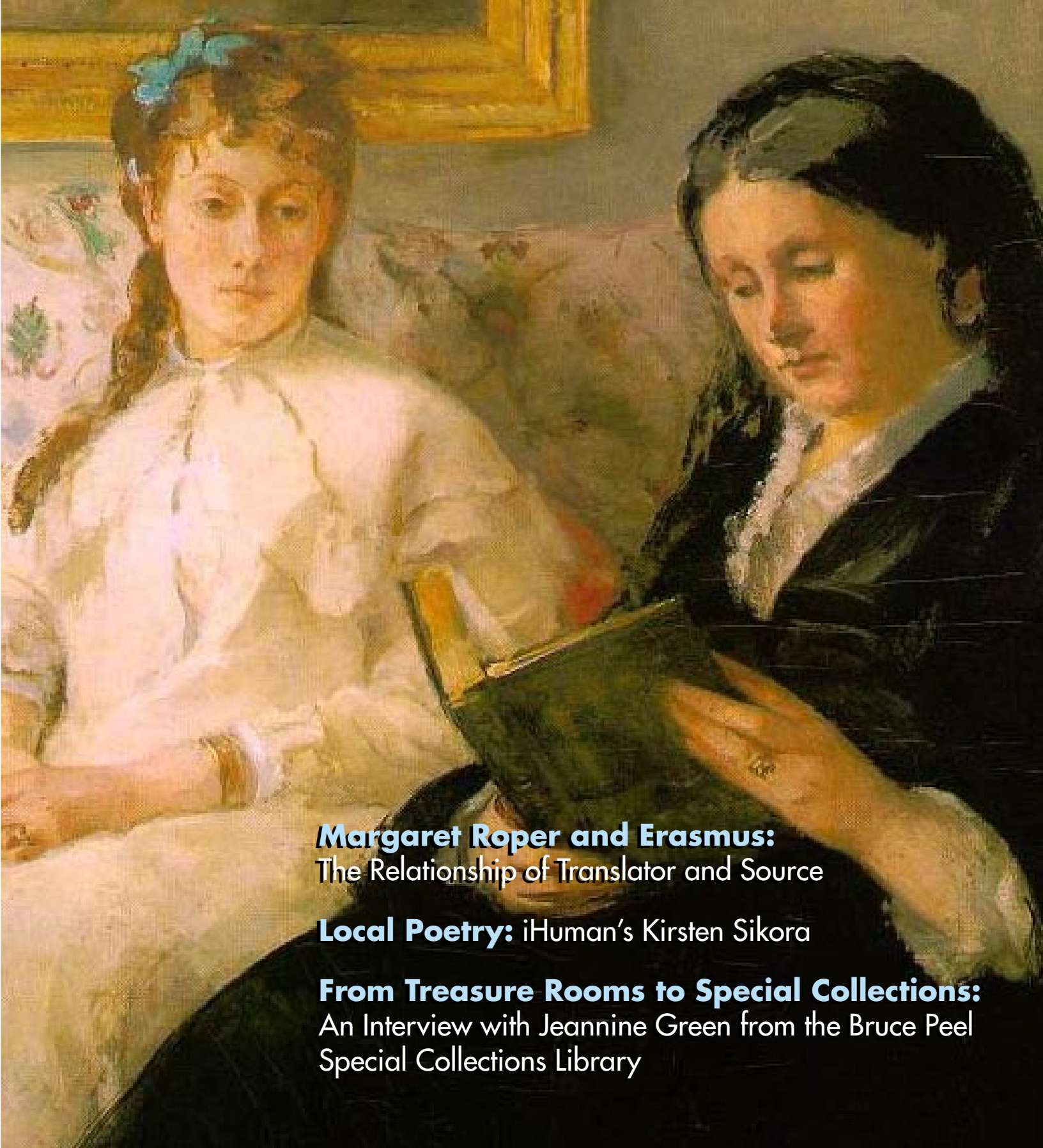


wwr magazine

the official magazine of women writing & reading

www.womenwritingreading.org

Spring 2005 • Issue 1, Volume 1



Margaret Roper and Erasmus:
The Relationship of Translator and Source

Local Poetry: iHuman's Kirsten Sikora

From Treasure Rooms to Special Collections:
An Interview with Jeannine Green from the Bruce Peel
Special Collections Library

CO-EDITORS
Patricia Demers
Gary Kelly
FILM, PHOTOGRAPHY & SOUND
Matt Bouchard
Amy Stafford
MAGAZINE DESIGN
Ian Craig
Joyce Tam
ADMINISTRATION
Patricia Demers
Chris Govias
Amy Stafford
Hannah Wensel
Joyce Tam

© 2005 WWR Magazine is a production of the CRC Humanities Computing Studio, located at the University of Alberta. WWR Magazine is published three times annually and is available exclusively online in Adobe PDF at www.womenwritingreading.org

CRC Humanities Computing Studio
L2-5A Humanities Centre
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E5
(780) 492-7509
www.crcstudio.arts.ualberta.ca

contents

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF WOMEN WRITING AND READING
Spring 2005 • Issue 1, Volume 1

ARTICLES

- 3 Margaret Roper and Erasmus: The Relationship of Translator and Source

INTERVIEWS

- 9 Romantic Women Writers and a Woman's Reading: A Conversation with Lilla Maria Crisafulli

CREATIVE FEATURES

- 14 Local Poetry: iHuman's Kirsten Sikora

REGULAR FEATURES

- 8 Women's Words on Reading
16 Exploring Archives: Interview with Jeannine Green from the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library
21 The Anthologist: Introduction to Early Modern Writer Katherine Philips



Whenever this icon appears, click on it to view multimedia content.



MARGARET ROPER & ERASMUS

The Relationship of
Translator and Source

By Patricia Demers

■ As biographers, dramatists, historians, painters, and philosophers present her, Margaret Roper is preeminently her father's creature. Educated in the More household, this erudite woman is assumed to be a paragon of filial virtue, a characterization which has the potential to muffle individuality. Only a portion of her writing has survived. Lost are her Latin and Greek verses, her Latin speeches, her imitation of Quintilian, and her treatise *The Four Laste Thynges*, which More considered equal to his own. What remain are a scattering of letters¹ and the primary text associated with her name, the translation of Erasmus's *Precatio Dominica* (1523) as *A deuout treatise upon the Pater noster* (1524), whose subject and mode appear to confirm the derivative nature of this daughter's accomplishment. With its hallmark doubling of meanings for adjectives, nouns and verbs, the treatise's claim that "he is nat a naturall and proper chyld whosoeuer do nat labour all that he can to folowe and be like his father in wytte and condicions" (Roper 108), a creative expansion of "*non est autem germanus filius, qui pro sua virili non imitatur ingenium ac mores patris sui*" (Erasmus 1221 B), encapsulates the prevailing view of this nineteen-year-old wife and mother, "the star product of More's domestic school" (King 207).

When writing to the eldest, best-known and, presumably, most gifted of his children, Thomas More regularly used superlatives to address "*puella[e] iucundissima[e]*," "*Margareta charissima*," "*dulcis-*

sima filia" and "*dulcissima nata*" (Rogers 97, 134, 154). Eating a meal was "not so sweet" to More as talking to his "dearest child" (Stapleton 109), to whom he wrote from the Tower as "myne owne good daughter" and for whom he remained "your tender louynge father" (Rogers 509). In Erasmus's correspondence with Roper, whom he greeted as "*optima Margareta*," the humanist praised the letters of all the More sisters as "sensible, well-written, modest, forthright and friendly" (letter 1401, Basel, 25 December 1523). His Christmas gift to her in the year of the publication of *Precatio Dominica* was his commentary on Prudentius's hymns for Christmas and the Epiphany; the gift not only verifies his confidence in Margaret's Latin but also reveals Erasmus's "attitude presque paternelle" since he casts himself as "le pédagogue attentioné, soucieux de former une élève de choix" (Béné 473). The following year Erasmus used Margaret as "the probable model" (King 181) for Magdalia in the colloquy "The Abbot and the Learned Lady"; this interlocutor wastes no time chastizing the Abbot's fear of women's learning, deftly wielding a double-edged sword to reply to the claim that "a wise woman is twice foolish": That's commonly said, yes, but by fools. A woman truly wise is not wise in her own conceit. On the other hand, one who thinks herself wise when she knows nothing is indeed twice foolish. (Thompson 222)

Magdalia cannily engages her companion in the topic of clerical ignorance, part of her "veiled critique of

the intellectual sloth afflicting men" (Jordan 60): "if you're not careful," she taunts, "the net result will be that we'll preside in the theological schools, preach in the churches, and wear your miters" (Thompson 223). When, in September 1529, Holbein unveiled for Erasmus his portrait of the More family, this scholarly friend wrote immediately to Margaret, "the glory of [her] British land" (*decus Britanniae tuae*), assuring her that he recognized everyone, but no one more than her (*omnes agnoui, sed neminem magis quam te*), whose lovelier spirit within shines through the exterior (*per pulcherrimum domicilium relucentem animum multo pulchriorem*) (Letter 2212, Freiburg, 6 September 1529). Thomas Stapleton, More's early biographer, devoted a whole chapter of *Tres Thomae* to More's eldest daughter, continuing the two strands of Margaret's reputation: her exceptionality ("she attained a degree of excellence that would scarcely be believed in a woman") and family likeness ("she resembled her father, as well in stature, appearance, and voice, as in mind and in general character") (Stapleton 103).

Visual and figurative images of Margaret Roper associate her with learning. The woodcut prefacing the earliest surviving edition in 1525, a multi-purpose printer's block, does not purport to represent Margaret Roper, yet the ways it attempts to define and encase the female subject are worth noting. Within the interlocking, enfoliated tracery of the border, suggestive of a cloister, this veiled woman, shrouded

in metres of cloth and almost surrounded by volumes, looks away from the open folio. This crude woodblock might prompt today's reader to reflect on the perspectival shifts and linguistic freedom with which Roper coloured her vernacular rendering of Latin. Holbein's finely detailed sketch of Margaret Roper, part of the commissioned family portrait at More's home at Chelsea, stresses the resemblance to her father and also – as much to capture the full though sideward glance as anything else – represents the subject looking away or up from the book in her hand. Books are a signature emblem for Roper. For a seventeenth-century Jesuit eulogist, Pierre Le Moyne, she was an exemplary woman of strength, a modern Maccabee (cf. 2 Maccabees 7). With her knowledge of Greek and Latin, prose and verse, philosophy and history, Le Moyne observes, Margaret was More's best work, his finest book: "*cette Fille a esté le plus docte Livre & le plus poly, qui soit sorty de l'Esprit de Morus*" (Maber 37).

In their speculations about Morean family dynamics, contemporary playwrights have imagined vastly different Margarets, an individual who is filial (for Robert Bolt) and disenchanted (for Paula Vogel). Although in his 1960 play, *A Man for All Seasons*, Robert Bolt takes many liberties in introducing Meg as an unmarried woman in her mid-twenties, "a beautiful girl of ardent moral fineness . . . [who] both suffers and shelters behind a reserved stillness" (Bolt xx), Bolt's Meg is brilliant and strong. By contrast, Paula Vogel's 1977 play, *Meg*, tries so hard to demythologize its central character that it trivializes her. Vogel's Meg is a cynic, describing herself as "Margaret the Masochist" (Vogel 6); surprisingly vapid and vain, she answers her own query about why her father decided to teach her Latin and Greek by explaining that "I am very likely the only woman in the world right now pouring [sic] over these words – there is no other woman. I am unique" (Vogel 25). This Meg is also detached, refusing to wait for her father on his journey from Westminster to the Tower and leaving her husband to fabricate the story of her public embrace of her father, "an action so stunning that it was immediately recorded in at least three anonymous accounts of More's last days" (Murphy 115). Reviewing her life, Vogel's Meg assesses her daughters as giggly gossips; in fact, Mary Roper Bassett, the only woman whose work appeared in print during the reign of Mary Tudor, was an accomplished scholar, translating her grandfather's *Treatise on the Passion* from Latin to English, the first book of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* from Greek to Latin, and the first five books of Eusebius into English (Reynolds 127).

Margaret Roper was a creative translator schooled in travelling back and forth between Latin and English. The practice of double translation, from English to Latin and then from Latin back to English, encouraged in More's home-based school, supplied the "early apprenticeship" (Weinberg 26) Margaret drew on most effectively in *A deuout treatise*. Her father's ardent belief in the need to educate girls and boys as, in the phrasing of his letter to the tutor William Gonell, "equally suited for the knowledge of learning by which reason is cultivated," not only established "More's leadership, in both practice and theory, about the liberal training of women" (Rogers 120–23) but also must have heartened and inspired Margaret when Erasmus's commentary came into her hands. She knew from experience that "the study of Latin was, to some extent, a Renaissance puberty rite – but only for boys and young men –" (McCutcheon 201) and that her rare privilege also conferred a responsibility to share and disseminate this catechetical teaching.

Her practice in interlingual translation no doubt familiarized her with the classical touchstones about the advice, in Horace's *Ars Poetica*, against word-for-word slavish translation (*nec verbo verbum curabis reddere fidus interpres*) (lines 133–34). A similar directive from Cicero's *De Optimo Genere Oratorum*, to convert not as a translator but as an orator (*nec conuerti ut interpres, sed ut orator*) by relying on the diction used by one's readers (*verbis ad nostram consuetudinem aptis*) (V. 14), had also likely been part of Margaret's formation. Such guidance would soon form the basis of Renaissance translation theory, as begun by Etienne Dolet in 1540 with *La Maniere de Bien Traduire D'Vne Langue en aultre*. Yet in this early stage of translating into English, Margaret Roper was a novelty: the first non-royal woman translator to make her mark. Her *Treatise* joined her father's 1505 translation of some of Miranda's minor works plus his biography, the 1504 translation by the Lady Margaret (Beaufort) Tudor, mother of Henry VII, of the fourth book of *De Imitatione Christi* and her posthumously published translation of Denis de Leeuwis' *Speculum Aureum* as *The myrroure of Golde for the Synfull soule* in 1522, and Tyndale's 1523 translation of Erasmus's *Enchiridion militis Christiani*.



Woodcut from the first-known edition of Erasmus' *Preatio Dominica* translated by Margaret Roper (1525). Printed with permission from the British Library.

The preface of Richard Hyrde obliquely identified the "gentylwoman / whiche translated this lytell boke" by her "vertuous conuersacion / lyuyng / and sadde demeanoure" and by her culturally approved diffidence, being "as lothe to haue prayse guyn her / as she is worthy to haue it / and had leauer her prayse to reste in mennes hertes / than in their tonges / or rather in goodes estimacion and pleasure / than any mannes wordes or thought" (Roper 100–01, 103). There is no way of checking how Hyrde's depiction of Margaret, which accords so neatly with the patriarchal discursive order, tallies with her actual personality, nor of verifying if, perhaps, his "special accommodations for her gender" might constitute a deliberate verbal manoeuvre: "enabling women to be presented . . . as writers within a culture hostile to women's speech" (Lamb 10–11). The imaginative detail and care Roper lavished on this production, its expressive idiomatic range and independent control of syntax indicate that this young artist was as fully aware as Hyrde of the extraordinariness of her accomplishment. Roper adjusted, juxtaposed and re-aligned syntactic and morphological categories. In its "ability to manipulate and mold the receiving rather than the lending tongue" (Raffel 105), her

work shows how "translation absorbed, shaped, oriented the necessary raw material" (Steiner 247).

The two close readings of Roper's translation, by John Archer Gee in 1937 and Rita Verbrugge in 1985, emphasize the natural rhythms and maturity of her achievement. Although he cites few examples, Gee argues for the "scholarship and art" of this "relatively unknown girl" by indicating how her translation "rarely follows the Latin ordering and structure" and how in the "felicitous freedom" of her diction "a Latin word [is] seldom expressed by its English derivative" (Gee 161, 165). Claiming that "the translation is as much Margaret's work as *Precatio Dominica* is Erasmus'," Verbrugge conducts a more detailed and substantiated examination of Roper's "simple, straightforward, and unpretentious" vocabulary, her "tendency to double or couple the adjectives or verbs," and her building of "parallel structures of her own" (Verbrugge 40). This essay undertakes a broader consideration of the ways Roper's translation achieves distinctiveness and independence.

In a discourse addressing an "assigned. . . way of praying" (105) (*precandi formulam* [1219 C]), it makes sense that the translator strives to clarify and crystallize the catechetical intent. Accordingly Roper enumerates the seven parts and titles them "petitions." She also adjusts sentence structure to underline didactic points. In the first petition, about the hallowing of the divine name, she expands and re-orders the source text to emphasize human duty in the face of divine magnitude.

for thy glorie as it is great / so neyther hauyng
begynnynng nor endyng / but euer in itselfe flor-
rissshynge / can neyther encrease nor decrease /
but it skylleth yet mankynde nat a lytell / that
eury man it knowe and magnifye / for to knowe
and confesse the onely very god. (106)

*Tua quidem gloria ut immensa, / ita nec initium
habens, nec finem habitura, semper / florens in
sese, neque crescere potest, neque decrescere, /
sed humani generis refert, ut illa cunctis innotes-
cat.* (1220 B)

The clearly paralleled participles and verbs affirm divine glory and prompt a human response, a response that does more than concern (*refert*) humankind ("it skylleth yet mankynde nat a lytell"), involves more than knowing (*innotescat*) this glory ("knowe and magnifye") and, by incorporating part of the next sentence, also entails knowledge and creed ("to knowe and confesse the onely very god").

To maintain parallelism and focus attention Roper often simplifies. She reduces the description of the holy spirit which began, carried on and perfected human health (*ad humani generis salutem haec omnia coepit, provexit, ac perfecit* [1222 F]) to "that was bothe the begynner and ender of all this in them" (112). She retains the force of a string of verbs, reducing fastened on the cross (*suffigimur in crucem*) to "crucified" and being submerged in the sea (*demergimur in mare*) to "drowned," to stress the mysterious and not-always-martyrous emergence of spiritual strength:

*si non includimur, excruciamur, / secamur,
urimur, suffigimur in crucem, / demergimur in
mare, aut decollamur: / tamen illustrabitur & in
nobis vis ac splendor tui regni* (1222 F)

albeit we be nat imprysoned nor turmented:
though we be nat wounded nor brent / although
we be nat crucified nor drowned: thoughe we
be nat beheaded: yet nat withstandyng / the
strength and clerenesse of thy realme: may
shine and be noble in vs. (112)

On the whole Roper's expansions are apt and effective. The rendering of *ut hac gravi perpetuaque col-luctatione virtutem tuorum & exerceres & confirmares* (1223 A) as "by continuall and greuouse batayle / to exercise / confyrme / and make stedfaste the vertue and strengthe of thy people" (112) underscores the results of perpetual wrestling in the additional reference to steadfastness. On rare occasions her string of verbs does not capture the boldness of the original. The Erasmian warning against subverters within (*intra Ecclesiae tuae moenia*) whose aim is to dishonour and impair strength (*dedecorant, ac robur labefactant* [1223 B]) does not emerge as bluntly in Roper's treatment of adversaries who "abate / shame / and dishonest the glory of thy realme" (113).

Among Roper's most successful expansions are those which reinforce the scriptural foundations of Erasmus's commentary. In discussing the obedient children who attempt to fulfil the divine will (*quae tua dictat voluntas* [1224 A]), Roper enlarges the sense of "those thynges / whiche they knowe shall content thy mynde and pleasure" (115) to accent not just the dictate of the divine will but the informed consent of the dutiful creature. Erasmus's illustration of such obedience is the Gethsemane scene and Jesus's prayer that not his will but his Father's be done. Roper expands the lesson, *ut jam pudeat quemvis hominem suam voluntas praeferre tuae* (1224 B), with an additional subordinate clause that emphasizes the

biblical example:

So that than nedes must man be ashamed / to
preferre / and set forth his owne wyll / if Christ
our maister / was content to cast his owne wyll
awaye and subdue / it to thyne. (115)

When, in explaining the petition about daily bread, Erasmus alludes to the Johannine pericope (John 6: 35–58) of bread from heaven (*sed filii spirituales a Patre Spirituum spiritualem illum ac coelestem panem flagitemus* [1225 B]), Roper makes it clear that the reference involves mental and physical sustenance, as she translates the next use of *panem* to contrast the inadequate provisions of the philosophers and pharisees, "for verily / the breed and teachynge of the proude philosophers and pharises / coude nat suffice and content our mynde" (117). The directive to reconcile with one's brother before making an offering at the altar warrants some colourful expansion in Roper's translation; not only is the verb to hasten (*propere*) vivified as "hye us a pace to," but a concluding section is added to complete the sequence. *Ita docuit Filius tuus, etiam ad altare relicto munere properandum ad fraternae pacis reconciliationem* (1226 B) becomes "Therfore thy sonne gaue vs this in commaundment / that we shulde leaue our offring euyng at the auter / and hye us a pace to our brother / and labour to be in peace with hym / and than returne agayne and offre vp our rewarde" (120).

Roper's English achieves its directness and immediacy through many – often surprising – experiments. She shows a real ability to dramatize fairly static utterances. Although in his *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, a work designed to assist translators "in interpreting authors" and a work which Roper no doubt knew, Erasmus had warned against tautology as "repetition of the same word or expression" (*Erasmus, Copia* 17), he had resorted to this technique, along with effective parallelism, to exhibit the vehement response of those who judged God through his followers and thereby dismissed him repeatedly: *Valeat ille Deus, qui tales habet cultores: valeat ille Dominus, qui tales habet servos: valeat ille Pater, qui tales habet filios: valeat ille Rex, qui talem habet populum* (1221 D). Roper's translation uses no repetition, but catches the parallelism of mounting tension and frustration, the prophetic sense of misrule and disjointedness.

What a god is he that hath suche maner of wor-
shippers. / Fye on suche a mayster that hath so
vnreuly seruauantes: / Out vpon such a father /
whose children be so leude: / Banished be suche

a kyng / that hath suche maner of people and subiectes. (109)

She is as capable of shrinking as of expanding the source. In contrast to Erasmus's catalogue of beasts and food to whom unbelievers offer worship, *boves, arietes, simias, porrum, caepe* (bulls, rams, monkeys, leek, onion [1220 d]), Roper listens more to the *De Copia* advice about metonymy (chapter xxii) to make the best-known sacrifices stand in for all the rest and reduces the list to "some also to oxen some to bulles /and such other lyke" (107). Colour is a hallmark of her style; it resides in onomatopoeic coinages such as "the bubblisshyng of ryuers" (109) for *fontium scatebrae* (1221 E), illustrative, though now archaic, words such as "ouerhippe" for *praetergrediamur* (go beyond) in her version of *neque in re divinae voluntatis tuae praescriptum praetergrediamur* (1224 E) as "that in nothyng we ouerhippe or be agaynst that/ whiche thy godly and divine wyll hath apoynted vs" (116), and precise elongations of sensory and emotional details as in enlarging *neque placet* (1225 A) to "thou vtterly dyspysst" (117), *quae carnalis est* (1225 A) to "that sauereth all carnally" (117), and *es pereuntibus fame* (1225 B) to "what tyme we were lyke to haue perished for hungre" (117).

The advice in the *De Copia* about observing "how a particular age has achieved variety in the use of words" as opposed to wasting "time with synonyms" which are "not far from babbling" (Erasmus 24–5) must have had a special place in Roper's thoughts as she embellished certain phrases to reflect Reformation realities. It is very possible that the texts, book-burnings, and ecclesiastical inspections of the campaign "to stem the steady stream of Lutheran literature" (Verbrugge 36–7) in the early 1520s were flashing through her mind when she expanded *Audi vota concordiae. Non enim convenit, ut fratres, quos tua bonitas aequavit in honore gratuito, ambitione, contentione, odio, livore inter sese dissideant* (1219 D) to

Here nowe the desyres of vntyte and concorde / for it is nat fytting ne agreable / that bretherne whom thy goodnesse hath put in equall honoure / shulde disagre or vary among themselfe / by ambitious desyre of worldely promociion / by contencious debate / hated or enuy. (106)

Although her emphatic abhorrence of violence conveys a standard *de contemptu mundi* position, especially evident in the contrast of "the realme of this worlde . . . holde up by garrisons of men / by hostes and armour . . . and defended by fierse cruelnesse"

with the victory of Jesus which "by mekenesse venquessed cruelnesse" (111), Roper not only fulfils but overgoes the letter of the source text's vehemence about the Jews. Her father's increasingly vocal role as "a staunch persecutor of heresy and an undeviating apologist for Catholic orthodoxy" (Greenblatt 53) may have affected her colouring of the original; Erasmus's words themselves reveal "a form of religious anti-Semitism, rather than racial, . . . shared by many contemporary humanists" (De Molen 94). Roper characterizes Jewish practice "in their synagoges and resorte of people" (*in synagogis*) as incessant "dispitefull and abominable bacbytinge" (107) (*abominandis probris* [1220 D]). She heightens the meaning of "dash against" in *impingunt* to "they caste eke in our tethe / as a thyng of great dishonestie / the most glorious name of thy chyldren" (107) (*Nobis probris loco impingunt gloriosum cognomen Filii tui* [1220 D]). The hoped-for conversion of the Jews means a completely unproblematic resignation, "whan the iewes also shall bryng and submyt the selfe to the spirituall and gostely lernyng of the gospell" 9113) (*Judaeis etiam in regnum Evangelicum sese aggregantibus* [1223 B]).

Familiar as she evidently is with the whole array of Erasmian suggestions for embellishing, amplifying and enumerating detail, the advice Roper follows the most concerns the method of amplification by which "we do not state a thing simply, but set it forth to be viewed as though portrayed in color on a tablet, so that it may seem that we have painted, not narrated, and that the reader has seen, not read" (Erasmus 47). Her extensions and adjustments of the Latin show a constant striving to be clear and graphic. To emphasize the almost angelic radiance of believers, she adjusts the meaning of *reluceat* (shine back) to create a compelling picture of divine glory reflected equally at human and angelic levels. *Reluceat Et in moribus nostris, non minus quam in Angelis caeterisque rebus abs te conditis, tui nominis gloria* (1221 F) becomes "that the light and glory of thy name / maye no lesse appere and shyne in our maners and lyuenge / than it shyneth in thy Angels / and in all thynges that thou has created and made" (109–110). The elongations always reveal how quickly Roper's moral intelligence tracks the consequences of wayward attitudes; *rerum fluxarum* (1224 B) appears as "frayle and vanysshing thynges" (115) and *mancipia peccati* (1227 C) as "thrall and bonde to synne" (123). She does not shy away from stern indictments or grisly details to make the contrast between Christ and Satan as visual and immediate as possible. Unlike the "naturally good and gentyll" (*natura bonus ac beneficus*) Lord, the devil is a "currysshe and vngentyll . . . may-

ster" (123) (*immiti Domino* [1228 A]); Jesus's pastoral intervention, "thou curest and makest hole the sicke and scabbe shepe" (123), an arresting but not "repulsive" (Verbrugge 42) translation of *morbidam sanas* (1228 A), is an entirely justified reclamation of possible casualties through the wounds inflicted by the devil, who was compared to "a rauenous lyon / lyeng in wayte / sekyng and huntyng about / whom he maye deuoure" (123). However, as well as hitting home the grimness, Roper deliberately softens many of the negative constructions in Erasmus's Latin. She sidesteps the straightforward declaration that unless the Father gives the bread it will not be salutary, conveyed directly through the negatives of *nec salutaris est, nisi tu Pater quotidie dederis* (1225 C), by obscuring the negative implications in the somewhat cumbersome "yet but if thou father doest gyue it / it is nat holsome nor anythyng auayleth" (118). She silences a whole clause dealing with mortal offences to lay greater stress on the amendment of fatherly correction; "if any thyng we offende the" (120) mitigates the sinning propensity of Erasmus's supposition *si quid offendimus, sicut offendimus frequenter in multis* (1226 C). As if to emphasize human compliance with divine "gentylnesse" and "wysedome," Roper alters the literal meaning of "we do not protest against" for *non recusamus* (1227 B) to "wherfore we be content to put to what soeuer ieopardy it pleaseth the" (122).

The work of this unknown girl, who was also a remarkably shrewd, self-possessed scholar, is poised on the brink of individual creative expression. Although in the sixteenth-century female-gendered activity of translating, a woman translator was "less vulnerable to the accusation of circulating her words inappropriately" because "they were not, strictly speaking, her words at all" (Lamb 12), Roper's translation is not enslaved to the source language nor does it caper irresponsibly in the target language. The respect accorded the source seems due as much to its subject and intent as to its authorship.

Her text, a commentary on what is likely the most famous prayer, is itself a meditation. The extensions and adaptations of Roper's version identify her as a forerunner of the whole contingent of sixteenth-century pious women who dedicated themselves to "taking care of souls" (Beilin 81). Although she voices a pre-Reformation doctrine, her scripturalism is every bit as precise and her enthusiasm for preaching and teaching as refined and developed as in the later English collections of prayers that "were important steps in the establishment of a feminine literary presence" (Beilin 75). Despite changes in allegiance

and creedal formulation, Roper's sentiments prepare the way for subsequent generations of women. The rich assortment of writing by women compiled by Thomas Bentley in the *Second Lampe of Virginitie* of his *Monument of Matrones* (1582) corroborates the perseverance of Roper's work. She would echo wholeheartedly the "exhortation" of Lady Jane Dudley "the night before she suffered," a prayer which the imprisoned and condemned Lady Jane wrote at the end of her Greek New Testament and sent to her sister: "It will teach you to live and learne you to die. It shall win you more than you should have gained by the possessions of your wofull fathers land" (Bentley 101). Roper would also endorse the logic of the creaturely petition in Elizabeth Tyrwhit's prayer about "our frailtie and miserie"; its contrastive picture of human weakness would be very well known to Roper:

What shall I saie to God? Thou art most good, and I euill; / thou holie, and I miserable; thou art light, and I am blind; / thou art the blessed one, and I am carefull and full of sorowe. My Lord, thou art the Physician, and I am the miserable patient; I am nothing but uanitie and corrupt, / as euery liuing man is. What shall I say O Creator but this, / that I am thy creature, and shall I perish? (Bentley 113)

Another collection with which Roper would agree, *The Praiers made by the right Honourable Ladie Frances Aburgauennie, and committed at the houre of hir death, to the right Worshipfull Ladie Marie Fane (hir onlie daughter) as a lewell of health for the soule, and a perfect path to Paradise*, contains many literary forms Roper did not attempt, such as "a Praier deciphering in Alphabet forme" the name of Lady Abergavenny's daughter and a closing acrostic. Yet Abergavenny's recorded prayer against "euill imaginations," requesting "a cleere conscience, shamefast eies, innocent hands, and a tongue to tell the truth" (Bentley 173) transmits the same pristine resolve seen throughout Roper's translation. The fervour of the catechism showing "the maner how to examine . . . young persons," in Dorcas Martin's translation from the French of *An instruction for Christians, conteining a fruitfull and godlie exercise, as well in wholsome and fruitfull praiers*, pinpoints the issue at the heart of Roper's earlier undertaking. When the Mother asks the Child to "rehearse . . . in the common language . . . the forme that he hath given us," the Child not only recites the Our Father but explains its name:

To declare the love that he beareth towards us

in Jesus Christ, to the end that in full assurance and boldnesse we may come to him onlie, and not to be afraid of him, no more than a child is of his father. (Bentley 236)

The intense filial bond between Margaret More Roper and her father accounts for her scholarship, her friendship with Erasmus and, in a practical way, our recognition of her as a translator. But this daughter for all seasons is not simply a conveyor (*translatius* meaning "carried across") from Latin to English. In its elements of self-conscious discourse, her authorial voice does not shy away from teaching, from commentary on its own functioning and primary message. Her additions and embellishments, along with decisions to elide and collapse phrases, show how warmly she responded to the rhetorical exercise of preaching. Expounding on, colouring and extending the Erasmian source, her translation supplies a truly polyphonic response.

Note

¹Among the remnants are one letter to Erasmus, two to her father in the Tower and one letter of disputed authorship, the Alington letter, an account of a conversation with her imprisoned father written to her stepsister, Alice Alington. On the matter of Margaret's writing the Alington letter, Walter M. Gordon favours neither side over the other, pointing to the facts that "there is no winning argument in this dialogue" and that "the two people are left divided, if not in common sympathy, at least in desire and understanding"; see "Tragic Perspectives in Thomas More's Dialogue with Margaret in the Tower," *Cithara* 17 (1978): 4. Elaine Beilin opts for Roper's authorship as "more than likely"; see *Redeeming Eve; Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 25. Nancy E. Wright uses Foucauldian theory to illustrate how "Margaret's words function as a homosocial bond between Thomas More and Henry VIII"; see "The Name and the Signature of the Author of Margaret Roper's Letter to Alice Alington," in *Creative Imagination; New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene*, ed. David Quint, et al. (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992), 257.

Works Cited

Beilin, Elaine. *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Béné, Charles. "Cadeau d'Erasmus à Margaret Roper: Deux hymnes de Prudence." *Miscellanea Moreana: Essays for Germain Marc'hadour*. Ed. C. Murphy, et al. Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1989.

Bentley, Thomas. *The Monument of Matrones; conteining seuen seuerall Lampes of Virginitie*. London: H. Denham, 1582.

Bolt, Robert. *A Man for All Seasons: A Play of Sir Thomas More*. Scarborough, Ontario: Bellhaven, 1963.

Ciceronis, M. Tulli. *De Optimo Genere Oratorum*. Ed. S. Wilkins. Oxford: Clarendon, 1903.

Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Correspondence of Erasmus. The Collected Works of Erasmus*. V.10. Trans. R. A. B. Mynors and Alexander Dalglish. Annotated by James Estes. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

———. *On Copia of words and Ideas*. Trans. D. B. King and H. B. Rix. Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 1963.

———. *Precatio Dominica Digesta in Septem Partes. Desiderii Erasmi Roterdami Opera Omnia. Tomus quintus*. Holl. & West Frisiae: impensis Petri Vander Aa, 1704.

Gee, John Archer. "Margaret Roper's English Version of Erasmus's and the Apprenticeship Behind Early Tudor Translation." *RES* 13 (1937): 257–71.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Hallett, Philip E., trans. *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More by Thomas Stapleton*. Ed. E. E. Reynolds. New York: Fordham University Press, 1928.

Horatius, Quintus Flaccus. *The Art of Poetry*. London: W. Heinemann Ltd., 1932.

Jordan, Constance. *Renaissance Feminism; Literary Texts and Political Models*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

King, Margaret. *Women of the Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Lamb, Mary Ellen. *Gender and Authorship in the Sid-*

ney Circle. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

Maber, Richard. "Une Machabée Moderne: Magaret Roper vue par le Père Pierre Le Moyne (1647)." *Moreana* no. 82 (1984): 30–35.

McCutcheon, Elizabeth. "The Education of Thomas More's Daughters: Concepts and Praxis." In *East Meet West; Homage to Edgar Knowlton*. Ed. R. Hadlich and J. Ellsworth. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1988.

Murphy, Clare. "Review of Paula A. Vogel, *Meg: A Play in Three Acts*." *Moreana* no. 82 (1984): 114–6.

Raffel, Burton. "How to Read a Translation." *The Forked Tongue; A Study of the Translation Process*. The Hague: Mouton, 1971.

Rogers, Elizabeth Frances, ed. *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947.

[Roper, Margaret]. *A deuout treatise vpon the Pater noster / made fyrst in latyn by the moost famous doctour Erasmus Roterdamus / and tourned into englishe by a yong vertuous and well lerned gentylwoman of .xix. Yere of age*. In *Erasmus of Rotterdam; A quincennial symposium*. Ed. Richard L. De Molen. New York: Twayne, 1971.

Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Thompson, Craig R., trans. *The Colloquies of Erasmus*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Verbrugge, Rita. "Margaret More Roper's Personal Expression in the *Devout Treatise Upon the Pater Noster*." In *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*. Ed. M. P. Hannay. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1985.

Vogel, Paula A. *Meg: A Play in Three Acts*. New York: Samuel French, 1977.

Weinberg, Carole. "Thomas More and the Use of English in Early Tudor Education." *Moreana* no. 59 (1978): 20–30. ■

[Click here to discuss this article with others in the WWR forums...](#)

women's words on reading

Women readers – from poets to musicians – share their thoughts on reading. In this issue we include excerpts from interviews with four very different women.

Carmen Rodriguez came to Canada as a political exile from Chile following the military coup there in September of 1973. She writes in both Spanish and English and currently teaches at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada. We talked to Carmen when she was in Edmonton to do a reading of her work as part of Women's Words 2004, an annual Summer Writing Week hosted by the [Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta](#).

CR: Well I've been a reader my whole life. My mom was a teacher – both my parents were teachers – so my mom taught us all to read way before we went to school. I've been reading since I was three.

WWR: Wow.

CR: You know, it's not such a fantastic feat when you think that Spanish is a phonetic language so learning to read in Spanish is simpler than English and French. But anyway I grew up surrounded by books. Both my parents really gave books a lot of value. My dad used to say things like we may not have beautiful designer clothes or the latest in furniture . . . because teachers in Chile are poor, they're still paid very poorly. It's not like here where teachers do get a decent salary – in Chile, no. So we were poor, we had very little money but we were brought up to really appreciate reading and to appreciate books. So I grew up reading all kinds of things. The books that supposedly I was allowed and also those that were "forbidden" in quotations marks. (Laughter). I managed to get my hands on them. A lot of stuff in translation into Spanish from Shakespeare to Dostoevsky, Zola, Faulkner, you name it. I was fed, really, a diet of universal literature from very early on. These days – well, my thing is fiction and poetry. I do read non-fiction once and a while but I'm always, always reading something to do with fiction and poetry. . . . Well, I can tell you that my ideal reading scenario is me in my bed curled up with my book and just being immersed in this other world that this book offers to me. For me that's my ideal reading situation. No interruptions, no nothing – just me and my book. I love that.



ROMANTIC WOMEN WRITERS AND A WOMAN'S READING: A CONVERSATION WITH **LILLA MARIA CRISAFULLI**

The first international Visitor to the WWR Program in October 2003, Professor Crisafulli is Director of the Centre for Studies in Romanticism at the University of Bologna and lead researcher of an international research project on European Women's Drama of the Romantic Age, funded by the European Community.

■ **PD: What are the major interests in your research?**

LMC: Romanticism is the area in which I have been working, researching and publishing for the last twenty years. I could define myself as a Shelleyan. In fact, the focus of my research has certainly been on P.B. Shelley and, in part, the circle of the Shelleys, including William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft; their writing interconnects. But more recently, I have turned my attention to women Romantic writers and, in particular, women poets, and most recently, women playwrights. I run a centre for women Romantic poets and a journal, which I edit; they are both interdisciplinary.

So we have other scholars involved all the time, in fact; our scholars come from different areas, disciplinary areas, such as philosophy, history, French literature, Italian literature, German literature and, of course, music. We have some brilliant, really brilliant, scholars in music and art history. So we are quite a large group.

PD: Is it a network?

LMC: It is a network, and it is not. It is a network in a sense that we have involved other universities – the University of Florence, of Rome, of Parma – but we have also involved British, French, American, and Canadian universities.

PD: Spanish?

LMC: No, not Spanish yet, unfortunately.

PD: But you're working on it!

LMC: Yes. So, that is our network. There is also a group based at the University of Bologna where I teach, where I work, and, so, let's say that this group is really Bolognese.

PD: We usually associate "Bolognese" with a sauce!

LMC: Exactly, exactly! Ragu, no?

We have a lovely, really committed group of Bolognese scholars. In Italy we are expected to apply for government or university support and financial support.

PD: Indeed. Research Grants.

LMC: Exactly, research grants. We have been ex-

tremely successful. We have so many books and volumes and transactions coming out, and our younger, very productive colleagues do work with us closely. Beyond these colleagues we have involved many students, many postgraduates, many colleagues, from different areas, and on many themes.

PD: So it's actually teams on themes.

LMC: Exactly. Exactly. Well, we have several; I'm not going into all of that. You know, in twenty years, you can imagine. But let's say if we talk about the last five or six years. We have addressed women Romantic poets, European women Romantic poets. We've been working on women writing in Europe. As a matter of fact our most recent book is due out in a week or two. It's a fascinating look at women's letters, at how women corresponded in Europe, within Europe.

PD: And obviously in different languages.

LMC: Absolutely. Different languages, on different topics. In fact, the book is divided in different sections, and each chapter has a theme, a title, a brief biography, also bibliography, and then, a discussion of the aesthetics or theory that she may have elaborated.

PD: Now, is it largely in Italian or entirely in Italian?

LMC: We have the original text and then we have

translation into Italian. So you have the original German, English, French, or even Spanish, but on the other hand, you have Italian translation.

We have done books on education, how women were educated, and how women were writing or re-writing conduct books, and circulating their own work. We have also done collections of critical essays on women, in this case, women Romantic poets. We have published books on Jane Austen; very recently we have published a book, an essay collection edited by our colleagues, Beatrice Battaglia and Diego Saglia, entitled *Jane Austen: Now and Then*.

And then, we have published a very complete and really intriguing volume – two volumes, in fact – of women Romantic poets. It is a two-volume anthology of women Romantic poets, and it's rather complete, and even in comparison with other publications in Britain or the U.S. Certainly it is one of the more, one of the most complete, in terms of the selection of women and the range of work that has been selected and translated and the bibliographies. Okay! So, now we have finished that, but you never finish something. And now we have turned our attention to theatre and drama.

PD: And that's what you talked about yesterday at the university. What particular appeal did the stage have for women in the eighteenth century? Do you think that the stage itself was a venue that was liberating or inhibiting for women?

LMC: This is a very good question. I think that the stage was very challenging for women. As I was trying to demonstrate two days ago in my talk, for women the stage was a trial, in the sense they were very much aware of the risks they were undertaking, in terms of their reputation, since the stage was a public space. So for women of the eighteenth century, and even more so for women of the nineteenth century, to be an actress or a playwright meant to be a public person, which meant also to challenge the role of the proper lady which middle-class women were supposed to maintain. And so, to work either for the stage or on the stage or behind it meant to risk transgressing the expectations of the proper lady.

PD: Well, it was exposure of some kind.

LMC: Absolutely. The stage also posed the risk of criticism and of censorship. You see theatre has a tradition of being seen as a male domain, as an art. Men had controlled and were able to control this art

from which women had to be removed.

PD: Banished.

LMC: Exactly. Banished. And so, you know, in a way, to write for the theatre meant also to challenge a long tradition of male domination and domain, and, of course, production. On the other hand, women wanted to do that, wanted to be there, wanted to write for the theatre. Why? This has very much to do with the theory of Romanticism as such, you know, the need of the Romantics – despite all restrictions, despite the fact that the Romantics are always being seen as being closed or imprisoned in their ivory tower – to communicate. They needed to communicate, to reach an audience, to reach a reader, to reach their mind, to reach their behaviour, to be able – I don't want to say to shape but I'm certainly going to say it – to shape it and to give it a new meaning, a new purpose, a new aim.

PD: And they also felt the need to communicate in the language of the people.

LMC: Exactly.

PD: To communicate in a way that would be understood.

LMC: Absolutely, because theatre and drama needed a mimetic language, a realistic language, the language of reality and also the life of the people themselves.

PD: A reflection of the mind.

LMC: Absolutely. And so women, just like men of the time, wanted to take part in this great event, which meant these mass media, this great shift in media and this need to reflect a changing reality, to shape society and give a different opportunity, especially for women. This was particularly true for women because they were deprived of legal rights. They couldn't appear in courts independently. They couldn't present their case in front of a magistrate. They didn't even have the rights to their own intellectual work. It's sad but they could not receive, as we say today, the income derived from their publication. It wouldn't go straight into their hands because they needed somebody to represent them: a husband, father, or brother. Let's think about Charlotte Smith. For her entire life Charlotte Smith was protesting against this, against the fact that she couldn't claim her rights, in public, in the court. Even when she had been divorced, for a long time, she still needed her exhusband to represent her to collect her

money from publishing. So, anyway, more than anybody else, women wanted to make their voice heard, to make their pleas, to shape an ideal woman, to shape a new woman. It's perfectly true that Ibsen with *Doll's House* started a bourgeois theatre, a bourgeois comedy, and opened the way to the new woman. Well, I say, "Yes! But isn't that only what the canon says?" Why don't we go back?

PD: Peel back the layers, and see what happened before that.

LMC: Exactly, especially as far as women writers are concerned. Especially as women playwrights are concerned.

PD: With the medium of the stage, it's significant, I think, to realize that Romantic women playwrights were writing for a public, not a private, stage. It was no longer closet drama. It was public drama, and I think that's a major difference from an earlier period. Could you comment on the different cases you have discovered? Let's compare, for instance, the experiences of the stage of Joanna Baillie and Frances Burney.

LMC: I think that maybe we can see this problem, or this question, from two perspectives. One is how somebody who was successful, as Joanna Baillie was, had, at a certain point, to withdraw. Joanna Baillie, like many other women writers, like Barbauld, for instance, had to give up their writing because of their sex. Because they were publishing so successfully, critics started wondering if it was right for them to be doing so. Joanna Baillie, despite the fact that she was successful, did decide to withdraw because she couldn't stand attacks or criticism any longer. But Joanna Baillie was one of the lucky ones in the sense that, at least for some years, she could not just write plays but also see them staged. And this was thanks, I must say, to the support of some great authorities of the time, in particular Walter Scott. Now, Walter Scott recognized Joanna's potential and used her intellectual production, her theatrical work, because, as you know, Scott was very much concerned with the Scottish Renaissance and with the creation of a national theatre, a Scottish national theatre, which he considered absolutely essential in order to shape a national identity.

Theatre has long been viewed as the platform of a national identity. This idea was the basis of Yeats' plans for Ireland. And in Australia, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was also a great concern to create an Australian identity through a

national theatre. Okay. Now, what Scott knew, being a genius, was that Joanna, being Scottish herself – although she had lived in London for a long time – could produce this kind of national drama. And she did it! So she wrote *The Family Legend* for this purpose.

PD: It was commissioned, actually, wasn't it?

LMC: Oh, yes, Scott commissioned it! The play was extraordinarily successful: it was produced in Edinburgh and the audiences of the time really responded positively. Now, on the other hand, with Fanny Burney, we have only recently discovered the volume of material she wrote for the theatre. We now realize how much she wrote for the theatre, and how involved in the interests of the theatre she was. But we don't know her as a playwright. We know her as a novelist. A great novelist. Now, we know too, that she was prevented from becoming the great playwright which she certainly could have become, based on our reading of her plays today. And the reason why she was prevented was exactly because her family – her father was Dr. Burney – was extremely well known in polite society, especially at the court. So for a young lady to write for what was judged to be a disreputable venue was simply an impossibility. She was prevented; in fact, her father forbade Fanny Burney to publish. She had offers from publishers, but her father did actually intervene to stop them. There are many others like Burney, many others. I'm convinced that Jane Austen could have been a fantastic playwright. When Austen was young, her whole family was staging plays.

PD: Maria Edgeworth wrote plays, too.

LMC: Yes. But duty calling is one perspective; the point is that some women, talented women as we know, many of whom became outstanding novelists, were prevented from writing for the public, commercial theatre.

The other perspective which I alluded to earlier is the fact that, within theatre, within the drama itself, we expect a comedy of manners from the woman writer. We tend not to anticipate a serious commitment towards society or a serious, shall we say, elaboration of either a theory of aesthetics or an aesthetic. In fact, however, women who challenged these conventions went straight into a fantastic competition with men in all the genres, in all the dramatic genres. They wrote tragedies as well as comedies, as well as farce, melodramas, and so on. An incredible number of women wrote what is called history plays. Now, if

you deal with history, it is inevitable that you deal with ideology, that you deal with how the contemporary social situation came about, how women have been...

PD: Constructed?

LMC: Well, constructed. Yes! Yes! Well-constructed, and how they were obliged to play their role. So there is a question of genre, there is a question of gender, there is a question of classes, of social classes. To deal with a history play, to produce a history play, means that you need to be concerned with all this, you know, which was quite challenging and dangerous for them. And they did it. They did it! They used time and space in a very clever way. They used Spain and Italy or Greece instead of England, but that was done by Shakespeare, too. And they used medieval life and history, or Renaissance, rather than later – eighteenth or early nineteenth century – and so they used displacement. But they needed to be able to speak, to be able to access ...

PD: And in most successful cases, they also needed and, sometimes received, support, encouragement, and mentoring from male figures.

LMC: Yes.

PD: I'm thinking of Garrick and Scott. For all of the use that they made of these women, because they were strategists, too, they also helped several women, didn't they?

LMC: Yes, I agree entirely. David Garrick was tremendously good and generous to his women but, as you said, that was often because he understood how good they were and how successful.

PD: They were marketable commodities.

LMC: Exactly. Now, I know that you have recently published a good book on Hannah More. I think this is fantastic because there are so few books on her and but she was so relevant, so important at that time, a different era.

I went to your Special Collections Library yesterday, and I picked out *Percy*, the tragedy which Garrick, in fact, supported very much. Hannah More is the author; she is responsible for the work but it was first published anonymously. There is a very good introduction by Garrick, who praises and introduces the playwright, but discloses no name. So we don't know the name.

PD: Actually, it's curious; More favoured anonymous publication. Her first work was a play for school girls, *Search After Happiness*, published anonymously. *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, which went through many editions in the first nine months, was originally published anonymously. Everybody knew who did it immediately, because it had Hannah More's intellectual trademark all over it. But, she preferred – or maybe she realized the strategy or decorum of – anonymous publication.

LMC: Yes. And anonymity is a female case. Anonymity throughout history, traditionally speaking, is certainly something that, unfortunately, characterizes women's writing. They had to draw apart a curtain. And they did it too – Joanna Baillie herself, Mary Russell Mitford and many other women. Only when they actually were successful did they feel that they could come forward, and then they did it. So, it's certainly a case of difficulty and of censorship, censorship in history, in the canon.

I just wanted to tell you another impressive thing, going back to your comment earlier about how men supported women. Thomas Betterton was another good supporter – of Aphra Behn. Garrick was supportive of at least sixteen or seventeen women playwrights of the time. You named Hannah More, but then we have Charlotte Lennox, Hannah Cowley, and many others.

I think that also, if we move away from theatres and think about other genres, we can see different kinds of support. Let's just consider how much P.B. Shelley and Mary Shelley did collaborate. They revised each other's work and advised one another; it was beautiful the way in which they supported each other in the full conviction of the genius of the other. There's also Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. In a clumsy way Godwin actually tried to revive Wollstonecraft's memory after her death.

PD: and to publish her work.

LMC: Yes. So actually there are cases where collaboration between women and men worked.

PD: It was supportive, nurturing, successful. I know we don't have a lot of time left, but in the minutes that we do, I want to ask you about your own reading. As you know, this project that Gary and I are engaged in involves investigating the connections between writing and reading for women in the present and the past, for women in our historical situation and in other times and places – across many geo-

graphical boundaries. I realize we could talk endlessly about eighteenth-century women, but let's speak about you right now. What are you reading? What kind of material excites you?

LMC: I don't know if you find this, but when you are very much committed to your research and your work, you keep on doing it – in and out of the university, at home and in the underground. So I must confess that I spend most of my time reading women's plays. It may seem a bit limited in a way. Or perhaps an obsession. But it is! It is an obsession! I want to know more, to understand more. I'm reading Mitford, Hemans, Cowley, Centlivre.

In terms of other sorts of reading, if not the material I'm reading now, my life has been somehow structured around books and reading. I can't forget two books by Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn*. When I first read them I was pretty young, but at that time everything had to be known about sex. They gave me a sort of entrée, an introduction to the topic.

PD: Did you find them shocking? Or sexist?

LMC: Shocking but fascinating. I couldn't stop reading. His way of making things physical, and tangible I found utterly amazing. But then moving on, I was very much influenced by Garcia Marquez. *Hundred Years of Solitude* was another way of opening up my imagination.

PD: What specifically did you carry away from Marquez? Was it the huge sweep of the historiographical imagination?

LMC: Well, it was the lightness. The prose floated in the air. Exactly the opposite to Henry Miller! As much as Miller made me see and feel and visualize and smell life, the physical body and physical relationships, with the same energy Marquez made me dream. I was able to fly into a huge created universe of colours, fantasy, magic and language. I think that I learned – without having his ability – the power and magic spell that a word can have. How one can produce another world.

PD: Worlds within worlds within worlds!

LMC: Exactly! Bubbles of colour surround you. You start flying with them. It's just magic! This was something that really affected me. Another important book when I was a student, in my twenties, was by an Italian, Gesualdo Bufalino. He may not

be as well known as Calvino. Italo Calvino was another one who, together with Garcia Marquez, really opened up this magic world of fiction and language and fantasy. But back to Bufalino. His book, *Diceria dell'untore*, was translated as *The Plague-Spreader's Tale*. What I was absolutely fascinated by was the fact that Bufalino used language in such a sophisticated way. He weighed words. Each word is a gem. Each word is so rich in itself, is self-contained

PD: Is it minimalist, spare writing?

LMC: I may be giving you that impression, but it's exactly the opposite – extremely rich narration, almost a flowering of words. He used words in Italian that I had never encountered before or that I had forgotten. He re-pristinated – do you say that? – made fresh, recovered a language, expressions, words that had been left behind.

PD: I rather like re-pristinated! It captures the sense precisely.

LMC: Yet within this quite elaborate, rich and decorated sentence, each word has its own relevance, its own importance. It was research of linguistic beauty. It was a celebration of words, without forgetting the kind of human understanding and depth and awareness. Bufalino in this book is very tragic, very dramatic. It's about a young man who is very ill and must go to a hospital. But the richness of the way his imagination and life, despite his body being shrunk-en and becoming less and less powerful, expanded and became richer was very compelling

PD: It reminds me of the way Michael Ondaatje's figure in *The English Patient* ruminates.

LMC: Oh yes! By the way, Ondaatje is one of the authors whom I read in the past, relating to my interests in Canadian, Australian, and postcolonial literatures. Ondaatje is one of the great inventors of magic words and worlds. I find that these authors who are so skilled in shaping the language are not just artists because they are writers, but they are multi-media creators; they join together music, painting, the bearable word, body language. So they are able to sum up the beauty in our being human and alive.

PD: Do you think it's significant that the authors you've mentioned so far as being influential in your development as a reader and a scholar have been men?

LMC: I think you're right. But Margaret Atwood and

Alice Munro have given me great pleasure, too. They are in my blood, in the way I'm made. I also read widely in Virginia Woolf. If we want to speak about magic, well, Virginia Woolf tells you a lot. I'm thinking especially of *The Waves*.

PD: Yes, the unfolding of the day in the interchapters and the stories of six individuals that intersect and weave their way through the novel.

LMC: And the voices which become instruments – piano, pianoforte, violin. The change of colours to the moods and times of day. The tragedy of living.

PD: Do you think you've always been a reader? Did you like reading as a child? Do you remember your first experience of reading?

LMC: Yes. I had a father who was an academic. He believed very strongly that his four children should read, should get into books and into the pleasure of words at a very young age. I remember on Sunday going with him to the newsagent and his saying, "go on, now, select what you want. Don't be afraid." I collected what I wanted, usually a pile of cartoons, magazines for children, and yes *Superman* and *Superwoman*.

PD: And nothing was kept from you or censored?

LMC: No, that comes at another stage! I didn't have any pressure in terms of what to read or what not to read. Until I was about twelve or thirteen and I started to read I guess you would call them paperback romances. We called them *fotoromanze*. At that time there were two very popular *fotoromanze* called *Sonio*, that's *Dream*, and *Bolero*. They had beautiful pictures, photographs of young men and women hugging and kissing. Nothing really scandalous. Everything was so proper. The dialogue and story concerned courtship.

PD: Popular romance.

LMC: Exactly. At that time Italians were very very poor, very basic. And so were these books. Nothing in these stories was enriching. And so my brother, who was eight years older, finding me with these *fotoromanze*, was extremely angry, so angry that he slapped me. This was only the second slap of my life; the first was from my parents and was absolutely justified. The second was from my brother. He told me I couldn't get into this "rubbish." He went on: "At a time when you are shaping yourself as a woman, do you want to become a stupid creature?" He re-

ported to my dad, who usually never got furious but was always calm, balanced, temperate, and genteel. My father simply forbade the magazines to come into the house. "You have had your experience," he said, "but from now on these publications will not be read in this house." I must admit that I did betray his trust a couple of times.

PD: You went underground!

LMC: Yes. As boys do in their bedroom or the bathroom, I did transgress a couple of times after that. But then I stopped. Not because I was afraid of being caught. In any case my father would never be stern. He wasn't a disciplinarian. He was somebody who liked to talk, to talk about ideas. We solved any problem through talking. But I started to look at this literature or pulp fiction through their eyes. I realized that the style of these books was rather limited. So I gave them up.

PD: Did you agree with their judgement that it was rubbish?

LMC: Well, not exactly rubbish, because it was still fun. In terms of how my language could be enriched and be more articulate, I started doing a sort of – how do you say, an analysis of how many times a word is used?

PD: A word frequency list.

LMC: Yes, a word frequency list. And I found they were always using the same words, very simple, the same structure and sentence length.

PD: So from the point of view of syntax and language you found them pretty minimal.

LMC: Yes, very minimal. Still, very handsome men! They were the same as movie and popular TV stars. They weren't unknown to me. But the one reason why I liked to read this stuff for a while, not for a very long time, was because I recognized those actors and actresses.

PD: You mentioned Henry Miller as one of your early influences. How do the *fotoromanze* and Miller connect?

LMC: Oh, they do connect. Being in Italy, being a Catholic, being brought up in a sort of bourgeois family, and being also the eldest daughter, I wasn't allowed much freedom. I don't want to put this wrong. I had lots of freedom in terms of intellectual

choices and opportunities. I could go to theatres, to concerts, to the schools I wanted; I could go abroad. But in some ways my head was cut off from my body. My body was female; it had to be forgotten somehow, left behind, or taken care of. The head had to be developed. This could also justify the fact that many of the readings or stories I remember as a child were boys' stories. I developed an independent outlook and also the wish to be a boy.

PD: The wish to have more freedom.

LMC: Exactly. So when I got to *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn*, I think something happened. I realized that body and mind come together. I also discovered how lovely, how beautiful, it is to be a woman in terms of feeling your own harmony. Your body can sense things beautifully, and can express feelings. I was undergoing a sort of transformation into young womanhood. I left my hometown and moved away to go to university. That was quite different from what women did in Italy; they used to stay at home when they were doing higher education or university. I was very much supported by my father, too, who wanted to give us the same opportunity he'd had and my brother had had. At eighteen I decided to go to another town for university. That was tremendously good for me, to be able to arrange my daily life, to decide what I was going to do each day, how I was going to feed myself, what I was going to wear, how I was going to spend my money. For a woman of my generation to be able to go away and be completely independent and responsible for your choices and intellectual pursuits was tremendous.

PD: But it was also an opportunity to test your own formation, to put into action the enlightened principles modeled for you at home.

LMC: Yes, of course. I must say I'm extremely grateful to my father for the opportunities he gave me; he put so much trust in me.

PD: Trust is essential. So we return to David Garrick, to the early enablers.

LMC: Absolutely. It's important to be backed, supported. I imagine that this is the same for everybody; all young people – men and women – need that kind of warm encouragement. But for women that is a must.

PD: Let's finish by returning to your research network. Is it pretty evenly balanced between female and male colleagues?

LMC: You know when I started my academic career the academy was a pyramid. Women were always on the lower level, the base. The higher you went, the fewer women appeared. Now I find, with great pleasure, women are more visible; the hierarchy is different. In a way it's disrupting. There are many voices. Many women are involved. So, we have many women. But, on the other hand, I think it's important to have male colleagues. It's important for my students to hear a different perspective and voice to understand some of the complexities of gender. It is true that in the humanities nowadays women tend to be in a considerable number, which is nice. I wish they were also in a large number in sciences and economics.

PD: Thank you so much for contributing to this interview. ■

[Click here to discuss this article with others in the WWR forums...](#)



iHuman's Kirsten Sikora

■ **iHuman Youth Society** is a non-profit, charitable society operating in Edmonton, Alberta, which aims to reintegrate and advocate for at-risk youth by giving them access to various forms of artistic expression. The Society was born in 1996 when Sandra Bromley and Wallis Kendal involved a number of high-risk youths in the creation of the Gun Sculpture Peace Initiative, an anti-violence project that has been exhibited locally, nationally, and internationally (www.gunsculpture.com). iHuman now works with a

core group of approximately 100 youth every year in a creative arts environment where the youth are given the resources and support they need to express themselves through artistic outlets such as painting, theatre, music, writing, film, video production and dancing. To find out more about iHuman and what they do, visit their website: www.ihuman.org

In 2001, 20-year-old Kirsten Sikora discovered iHuman Youth Society, where she began to work on sorting herself out emotionally and artistically. There they encouraged her to come out of her shell by offering her mentorship and free art supplies. Before long, she was working on plays (co-writing and acting), writing poetry, and painting with a vengeance. Kirsten has always been a poet, but at iHuman she found the courage to show her poetry to others who would value it. Writing has always been therapy, a refuge, and a survival tactic for Kirsten. She is currently working at iHuman helping other youth, particularly young girls, express themselves through writing and art. She is also working on publishing *Sketch*, a collection of work by iHuman youth to be published soon. Her debut collection, *Sundry: a book of poems*, has just been released by Sextant Publishing, a division of Cambridge Strategies, Inc., in Edmonton. The following is a sample of Kirsten's poetry.

Where applicable, click on the links to see clips from *Blood Oranges: Love and Consumption*, a film

based on her poetry written, directed and produced by Kirsten Sikora (Starring Kendra Sherick, Music by Gail Olmstead).

Love – The word

Love

The word unfolds from my tongue

Only to be caught with my teeth and bottom lip

I wonder if this has anything to do with its nature

Does it spill forth from me and then I seek to capture it

Hold it inside

Maybe that's just me

Perhaps some pronounce it "luv"

The mouth slowly offering it

Like a kiss

I've seen some mouths sneer slightly

Like the word dirties them

Certain lips smile when they say it

While others frown

This most slippery of words

It seems to get away from all of us

For even though it's the most over used word

Our lips giving it every second of every day

We still feel a lack

L . . O . . V . . E . .

Nothing in its construction belies its meaning

Yet that's the same with all words

Say something often enough it becomes empty

Meaningless

Love, like language, is born from memory.





Soul Window

Eyes flick downward
 As something glib and cynical
 Rolls off my tongue
 On to the floor
 Cringing, as I hear my own laughter
 Hard
 Sharp
 Eyes flutter upwards
 Lips pursed in a tight half smile
 A grimace
 I wonder if this is the same face
 That once had cheeks sore from smiling
 Endlessly wide
 Eyes stare straight
 Before falling flat
 Glancing inward at the wreckage of self
 Where bitterness and spite
 Has collected, caked
 Upon the joy that was once
 So bright

For a Buoy

I saw you
 Sensed a spark from the first
 Something secret, sacred, soft
 Soft
 Like your baby-wide smile
 That disarms me completely
 Sucks the strength from my sadness
 While your eyes
 So bright, vivid, alive
 Send joy-filled laughter bubbles
 From my belly to my throat
 Tickling my heart, pushing the corners of my mouth
 Such is the beauty of your soft spark
 I cannot bear to touch you
 Why run my hands over your skin?
 When it's the quality of your dreams I want to feel
 Caress your hopes
 Kiss your imagination
 Spend all afternoon making love to your
 Soft spark

When we were fierce

Once upon a time
 We weren't afraid of anything
 Holes in our elbows and knees
 Dirt under our nails
 Homeless, Restless, Aimless
 An extensive wardrobe of adventure

Graffiti

Looking over this place
 Where we made our lives from paint
 Now covered in generations of Jiffy marker
 Where eloquence and idiocy mingle
 With desperation and expression
 Something you said once spies up at me
 And I find myself staring hard at the space
 Where you used to be

Diamond Girl

Diamond Girl
 Sparkle and shine
 Harder than anything
 I cut through your densest metals
 Yet your sharpest edges
 Don't even scratch my surface
 My possibilities are endless
 I seem impossibly strong
 That alone is your grounds for
 Seeing/Exploring/Pushing
 So recklessly to the breaking point of
 My center
 And when I shatter
 You shake your head and walk away.

[Click here to discuss this article with others in the WWR forums...](#)

women's words on reading

Kate Braid has written three award-winning books of poetry and has recently published an anthology of Canadian form poetry, co-edited with Sandy Shreve, entitled In Fine Form: The Canadian Book of Form Poetry (2005). She worked in construction for fifteen years as a journey carpenter and now teaches creative writing at Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo, BC. Kate was also in Edmonton for Women's Words 2004, where WWR's James Gifford caught up with her.

KB: Right. So, the reading is really important but it's not everything. And a poem does change when you hear it, but I must say, it doesn't always change for the better. One problem is – say you have poems that you love and you get a chance to hear the poet read them. It's never the way, at least for me it's never been the way it was in my head and sometimes it's better and sometimes it's not. Or I decide I don't like the poet – the body language or whatever, they're arrogant or I don't like something – and then the poems can be ruined. So I think it's actually dangerous to go to a poetry reading, but it can also change your life! When I heard Michael Ondaatje and Sharon Thesen do a poetry reading I was smitten with love for poetry. I mean, it really changed me dramatically and changed my attitude to poetry.

JG: They're both fantastic readers.

KB: They're both great readers, great readers. Ondaatje – I already loved his poetry, I didn't know Sharon's at the time – I already loved his poetry and after that I loved it more because I had his voice in my head. So every time now I read him I can hear Michael Ondaatje. I can hear that sort of soft accent and the way he sort of softens certain vowels and the Englishness of it and the slow pace – very, very slow, careful. The way he says "Buddha" is an amazing thing – the Buddha is much softer. So I think the readings are important but there's just so few times that people can come. I like doing readings also as a performer because it gives me a feeling of whether the poem is working orally, which in the end is the final test. So you get sort of a feeling back. Not every poem, not every audience, but I know for me that when I'm reading my own poem and the hair is standing up on the back of my neck that it's working. Sometimes it's a function of audience – I'm picking up a response – but it's also meaning that the poem's working. And that, for me, makes me feel like, ok, this poem is finished.

FROM TREASURE ROOM
TO SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

EXPLORING ARCHIVES:

AN INTERVIEW WITH JEANNINE GREEN FROM THE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARY



An Interview with Jeannine Green, Head Librarian, in the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library and Patricia Demers – Tuesday, May 10, 2005

■ **PD:** Thank you Jeannine, for meeting with us and agreeing to talk about Special Collections. When did the collection start at the U of A?

JG: The Special Collections Library began in the first library at the University of Alberta which was located in the Old Arts Building. It was to the left of the central foyer. Typically, at the University of Alberta, as in most universities in North America, the Chief Librarian would have a Treasure Room close to his office – and I say “his” because most chief librarians were male at this point, in the early part of the twentieth century. The Treasure Rooms contained materials that the Chief Librarian thought were just too valuable or rare, or would suffer depredation if they were left in the circulating stacks.

PD: I love the term! (Laughter) Shades of Robert Louis Stevenson, really.

JG: Absolutely. In any event, these Treasure Rooms, as time went by, as donors donated, and as professors retired and donated their collections, became too small to contain the holdings. In the 50s and 60s Special Collection Libraries started developing their own identity, if you will, within library systems. A major landmark in the evolution of Special Col-

lections here was the death of Dr. Rutherford, the first Premier of Alberta, in the early 1940s. He was a focused collector. Fascinated and obsessed with the development of the west, both politically and culturally. His major interests were narratives of explorers – various inland and coastal explorers, the searches for the Northwest passage that were so popular – the books were very, very popular when they were published in the nineteenth century and at the time that Dr. Rutherford was collecting them in the 20s and 30s they weren't terribly valuable. Canadiana hadn't caught on yet.

PD: Wasn't in.

JG: Right. So he had his passions. Franklin's loss and the ultimate searches for Franklin. He was also interested in the cultural development of the province so he also collected really well published books of poetry. These were either gifts for his daughter, Hazel (ultimately, McQuaig), and Mrs. McQuaig collected books and donated throughout her lifetime – much longer and later into the twentieth century than her father had lived. So it was really almost a half a century of books and connections with Dr. Rutherford. It was agreed at the time of the Rutherford donation, when the librarians realized its importance, that the Rutherford collecting philosophy would carry on, that the university library would continue to buy books that enhanced the initial core of his collection. In the 60s the University of Alberta was the benefac-

tor of the province's very, very deep pockets. I mean, we were talking about Premier Lougheed this morning and I think it was during the heyday of his administration that he really did concern himself with secondary education and the development of the university. People think that I've lost my mind when I tell them this but in the 70s and 80s there was a double matching grant. For instance, if a donation was appraised at \$50,000.00 the library would receive double that amount from the government. That grant program lasted until about 1989, when the amount became a one-to-one match and then gradually died off completely. Those were the days!

I wish I'd been around because it would have been really quite exciting to see. The major collections at the University were purchased in the 60s, and during Mr. Bruce Peel's administration. Such as the Robert Woods Collection from California which contained many highlights in western Americana. This collection jibed extremely well with the Rutherford collection's focus on western Canadian history; it broadened our scope by taking us down the Columbia River to Astoria and the Pacific coast.

PD: Right, further south. Astoria was at one time a British outpost wasn't it?

JG: Oh, yes, absolutely. There was huge debate about whether both Oregon and Washington would not be part of Canada. The border would have gone down

and just sort of lopped off California and I'm sure there are a lot of people today who live in those two states wishing that had happened. (Laughter) In any event, the University had a great deal of money, but there were also, I would say, scholar librarians around at the time. Librarians that had very strong subject strengths and really selected wisely. There were also important people at this University, like Dr. Rothrock in the Department of History and Classics, who was an internationally respected French historian. He worked with a bibliographer in the library and acquired an incredibly strong French history collection; it is really quite amazing. We've had visiting scholars who have come here to teach sessions in the History department. They're absolutely amazed at our holdings, and are astonished that they can get them almost immediately because whenever they've had to find them in libraries in France, it takes more than you'd like to think for these books to be retrieved. So it's been gradual; sometimes in rather short bursts there were really major, wonderful collections acquired. And then over periods of dried-up funding we suffer a little bit. But, generally speaking, this library has really developed, I would say, to the point that it is now, in the last twenty years, among the highest ranking research libraries in Canada. John Charles, the recently retired Special Collections librarian, was very keen about our artist's book work collection and it's really due to him that we have one of the significant artist's book work collections in Canada. In the area of English literature, again, due to John and his predecessors and Dr. Forrest of the English Department, we were able to acquire the Ralph Ewart Ford Bunyan Collection, and we've

been developing our D.H. Lawrence collection. We have many foreign translations of Lawrence. To sort of flesh out Lawrence's impact on writing and literature, we also have movie stills and other Lawrence ephemeral pieces. So those acquisitions really give the collection a different dimension entirely.

PD: Yes. About different dimensions, what range of users would you say actually come into the library?

JG: We have ranges of users. Because of our strong Canadiana collections there will always be genealogists in our midst. So we have people come in from the general public and also we advertise our exhibitions. We blanket Edmonton with posters.

PD: You produce magnificent catalogues, too.

JG: So for the last – the Entomological exhibition – it was thrilling to walk into a shop and see a poster advertising it. These posters attracted people who don't ordinarily visit, because we're primarily a humanities library, though we do have some historical scientific books and of course the entomology section has been developing hand over fist lately, through the generous donation of an alumnus, a retired entomologist. We try to attract visitors from all walks of life. Of course the faculty uses the Collection, graduate students, undergraduates, the staff on campus – people who work as FSOs in various departments use Special Collections. We try to do as much outreach as possible and encourage high school teachers to bring their classes to Special Collections. We were an important, very popular part of the schedule

for the Summer Youth University Program. Do you remember how well that program was received?

PD: Yes.

JG: And that was lovely because students from grade nine – just going into high school – would come in and it was really pretty exciting and pretty intense. When I would show children, very young children who had grown up in Edmonton, for the most part, our oldest book, the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, they couldn't believe it was printed in 1493. They can't believe that they can actually almost touch something – I mean, they can, if they want to, if they wear their gloves – that's over five hundred years old.

PD: The gloves tend to add to the aura, don't they? (Laughter)

JG: Yes, they do. We love to encourage that. We have visiting scholars. There is a person at Penn State who's working on 18th-century pirates. Not the live ones, but the books that were pirated and published in Dublin and that kind of thing. Of course, now that we have the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University, I can't fail to mention the Bishop of Salzburg's Collection, another major purchase of the 60s. It was one of the key factors in the Austrians deciding to locate the Institute at the University of Alberta.

PD: Well, the collection is broad and rich and diverse, but it has some particular gems for those of us who are interested in women's writing. Would you like to tell us a little about some of those exceptional books we have for scholars and students of women's writing?

JG: I have been trying – and I still am – to collect books that reflect the history of women reading and books written for women, or books written by women for women, or books written by women for everyone. It's been one of our focuses here for the last fifteen or so years. Among the books for women, the Minerva Press was active from the late part of the eighteenth century until long after William Lane, the proprietor's, death in the beginning of the nineteenth century. For many, many years scholars, including Dorothy Blakey, who wrote the first bibliography of the Minerva Press in the 30s, thought the list of Minerva Press imprints was quite complete; but she worked without the internet. And then in the 90s, Deborah McLeod, a PhD student in the English department, discovered some Minerva titles not included in Blakey and decided to focus her disser-

Some "gems" of the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library



tation on an up-dated Minerva bibliography. Many people held the view that the Minerva Press was an early rendition or version of Harlequin novels. But Deborah discovered that while the Press did publish many novels by women, and many anonymous novels by women, it was considered a very solid press of the time and actively encouraged female authors to submit manuscripts along with standard non-fiction titles. Unfortunately, none of the archives of the Minerva Press have survived. It would have been really a gold mine to read the letters that were written between William Lane and the women whom he helped. I doubt very much whether any of those women were able to support themselves on the money that they made.

PD: On the proceeds from the publications.

JG: Exactly. Our interest in the Minerva Press started in the late 60s or early 70s when we acquired King Ernest Augustus of Hanover's collection. Here is the list of the books that were included in the collection and when it was being accessioned; the Minerva Press was really a very strong component of the King's collection. So because we already had a good beginning, we thought that we would expand on that and we've been buying Minerva Presses, as I said, for the last twenty years.

PD: So did these purchases actually begin in that boom time?

JG: Yes. I mean, we've been able to maintain our buying power. There's a dealer in England who is very sympathetic towards us; he's not got terrible cash flow problems so sometimes we can buy things kind of on 'spec' -- don't ever tell anybody that. (Laughter) This is the King Ernest Augustus's bookplate. I also brought another one out; these are all Minerva Presses, by the way. Unfortunately, the Press didn't use glorious or horrifying-looking frontispieces –

PD: No, I see that.

JG: But this, I thought, was really interesting. It belonged to a circulating library, as most three-decker novels did and that's an interesting little label that I hadn't seen before. This is a lovely leather tree calf binding; the king had his books custom-bound for his library, and they are quite noticeable in our stacks. Three-decker novels were very popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century – and we have many, many of them.

PD: Yes, obviously. Three and four deckers.

JG: Because readers using circulating libraries paid per volume. And of course, if you started a novel, you had to finish. So they worked very, very well.

PD: After all, she was just abandoned at the end of volume one; you had to have her identified and reconciled! (Laughter)

JG: The cliffhanger. We probably had ninety or a hundred Minerva titles at the time and Deborah read them all. Then she went to the Corvey Collection in Paderborn, Germany, one of the largest English language fiction collections in Western Europe. She spent several weeks there and said it was absolutely glorious. She had written and asked them for access to their Minerva titles. Deborah read Minerva novels for at least three years and every summer she would come in, every day, and sit in the reading room. We really admired her stamina! (Laughter) She did really solid research. Each of the novels in her bibliography is annotated and she's captured the tone and world of the time. She discovered many aspects of the publishing life of the Minerva Press that were not in the Blakey work. After she had successfully defended her dissertation we got her a large congratulatory box of chocolates. (Laughter)

PD: I would hope a very good bottle of wine, too! (Laughter) Well, the Minerva Press is definitely a gem of the U of A collection.

JG: It is. We have probably one of the three major collections in North America. I was at a conference in Cambridge a few years ago and an important American antiquarian book dealer spoke at our conference. The conference topic was the transition of literature, the movement of books and archives, from England to America; and subsequently to the Far East – and the magnificent libraries of English literature that were being developed in Japan. He was finding markets for English literature in Japan, particularly involving women, again. Japanese people are interested in the history of women reading in the West. The dealer observed that 'if you would have told me twenty years ago that I could get more than five pounds for a Minerva Press, I would have eaten my hat! I'm so sorry I didn't pay more attention to them!' (Laughter) We have one book that was printed at the Minerva Press that deals with the French Revolution and it was taken to Paris and was annotated. It's unfortunate it was written by a man who went to Paris after the Revolution, but he makes notes in the end leaves of what he perceived – he'd been to Paris before the Revolution and these were his reflections on what had happened.



Jeannine Green, Head Librarian, Bruce Peel Special Collections Library

PD: I see. Are the notes in English or French?

JG: They're in English because he was an English traveller. But the book that I've bought from Ximines Rare Books in England for one of the Honorary Degree recipients for the Installation ceremony in the fall, Julie Payette, is a real curiosity.

PD: Oh! The astronaut.

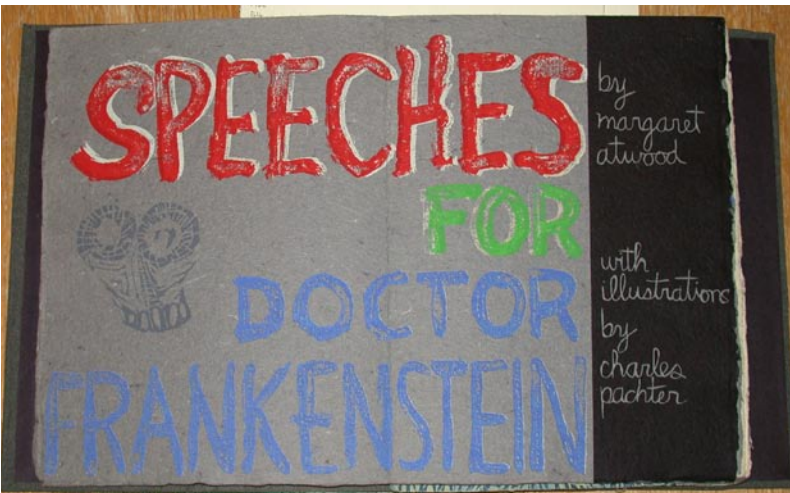
JG: Yes, the astronaut. I was leafing through Ximines Rare Books. Inc. catalogue, an English dealer, which I just got yesterday, and there's a lovely – I'll get it, it's just beautiful – (Jeannine leaves room)

PD: And another book Jeannine has brought out for us is Margaret Atwood's *Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein*. This is very early Atwood. I'm surprised they didn't put it in the exhibit right now on Canadian presses of the 60s and 70s, but this was on display about three or four years ago when Special Collections did an exhibit on the art poem. Quite rare.

JG: This is a first edition by John Harris.

PD: Oh, John Harris, the publisher for children?

JG: No. (Laughter) The title is *Astronomical Dialogue between a Gentleman and a Lady: wherein the doctrine of a sphere, uses of globes, and the element of astronomy and geography are explained in a pleasant, easy and familiar way. With a description of the famous instrument called the orrery*. It was printed in London in 1719.



Margaret Atwood's *Speeches for Doctor Frankenstein* with illustrations by Charles Pachter (1966)

PD: Is this part of *The Cabinet of Instruction*?

JG: No. The orrery was an early model of the universe.

PD: Yes.

JG: And it's printed on a folded plate. This is the first edition. It's an early attempt to present fundamentals of astronomy to female readers. John Harris was a clergyman with an abiding interest in science. In 1698 he preached the Boyle Lectures in St. Paul's Cathedral. He subsequently drifted away from a clerical life and became a lecturer on mathematics. He was engaged on more than one occasion as a compiler of the London book trade and produced the first English *Encyclopedia of Arts and Sciences* in 1704, and a massive collection of *Voyages* in 1705.

PD: So, I'm wondering if he is related, if one of his grandchildren could have been the John Harris who began the children's book trade. It would make sense, wouldn't it?

JG: Because of his connection with the book trade. But, aside from this project his personal life was erratic and tragic, and he died a pauper in 1719, the year this book was published. It's got engraved plates but I thought –

PD: It's perfect. It's wonderful.

JG: I mean, you have to have something like that for Julie Payette. Something modern wouldn't do. So that was really exciting. And then, of course, I was on tenterhooks. I emailed the order to England at about four o'clock in the afternoon on Friday. So I

they're within reason price-wise – the strong English pound and US dollar have to be factored in for most such titles.

PD: Well one of the gems that we actually have in the Library, much to the chagrin, I think, of scholars in Eastern Canada, is the first, the only, early modern edition of Lady Mary Wroth's *The Countesse of Mountgomeries Urania*. They don't have a copy of this in the Robarts Library at the University of Toronto and we are extremely fortunate to have this first edition. I say single edition because it only appeared for six months and Lady Wroth withdrew it from circulation because of charges of libel. It's the first Romance in English by a woman. Lady Mary Wroth was the niece of Sir Philip Sidney and of the Countess of Pembroke. She was the daughter of the poet, Robert Sidney, and was herself an accomplished poet as well as a pastoral dramatist. So she wrote the first pastoral, the first sonnet sequence by a woman in English, and this first magnificent, stunning, mysterious romance by a woman in English, *The Countesse of Mountgomeries Urania*. I know we're going to capture a picture of this later.

JG: And if I could just interject, you can tell by this old accession number – we don't do that anymore – that this has been in the library system probably since the 50s, I would say. That's a very, very old accession number.

PD: So you don't know exactly through whom we got this?

JG: Unfortunately, no.

PD: It's magnificent.

had to wait all week-end until Monday to see if the dealer still had it and he did....

PD: So we've got it?

JG: We've got it.

PD: Fabulous!

JG: But that's the kind of thing – when I see any books of instructions for women in dealers' catalogues I try to acquire them for the collection – if

JG: It could have been owned by a professor on faculty or possibly donated. I would suspect that it was owned by someone who had some kind of relationship with the university, but that's just a suspicion. It's not in very good shape and I've thought about sending it away to have it bound. But I wouldn't touch it. It's just too –

PD: Oh, I wouldn't. Absolutely not. I mean, it's not falling apart. I think it's actually in very good shape.

JG: No, the binding is solid and I wouldn't want anything done to that. I like its age. It's aged very, very well.

PD: I love the feel of it, quite frankly. It's almost a tactile approach to reading, isn't it?

JG: Absolutely.

PD: Another gem of the collection, changing centuries entirely, is an early collection of poems by Margaret Atwood in an artist's book called *Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein*. I know that this has been on display at different times but do you know anything about how we purchased this?

JG: No, again, I don't.

PD: It was in the collection, was it?

JG: Yes, it was in the collection.

PD: The illustrations are by Charles Pachter. It was printed in 1966. So this is very early Atwood. It's remarkable for me to realize how many undergraduate students are actually introduced to Atwood and Canadian literature and the tradition of the artist's book, which of course, is on display here, through such a work. As you were saying, we have a regular assortment of classes who come to Special Collections with their instructor and they are introduced to some of the gems of the collection. Invariably, in student comments at the end of the year, that's the class they remember most and most fondly.

JG: It's very gratifying. We have such wonderful things; it's very easy to be enthusiastic about them. We have one faculty member in the English department, Ted Bishop, who has been coming to Special Collections for twenty years; he can just hardly wait to come here because we always find something to show him he's never seen before. (Laughter) But that piece is very, very rare. And its number –

PD: 11.

JG: of –

PD: "The edition is limited to 15 copies, all on paper, hand-made from linen and cotton by me," who signs Charles Pachter to copy number 11."

JG: Now he's at the Cranbrook Institute in Michigan. That's one of the reasons why Allison Sivak (who's curating "Pressing: an Exhibition of Canadian Poetry and Small Publishers, 1950-1980") didn't use it in the exhibition. There was a short discussion on the RBMS list recently (the Rare Book and Manuscript section of the American Library Association). Apparently, Charles and Margaret were at camp together, and that's how they met, when they were children.

PD: Oh, I see.

JG: And Pachter is very interested in Canadian literature.

PD: Is he Canadian?

JG: No, an American. But they met on one of those lakes that are in southern Ontario.

PD: Perhaps Lake Michigan. (Laughter)

JG: It could be. They collaborated on two or three items and what a wonderful collaboration! This was much later, of course, after they became adults and he went on to the Cranbrook Academy. So that's how they met and that's the connection between Pachter and Atwood.

PD: Well we have lots to explore in the Special Collections and I want to thank you for this exhilarating introduction to the Collection. We're hoping that our magazine will be able to display and talk about some other highlights from the collection.

JG: Thank you very much and please do encourage one and all to visit us and to join us. I think it would be really interesting if you got people down to talk about their particular fields – Sylvia Brown

PD: And John Considine and Ted Bishop. Absolutely.

JG: I think that would be a terrific little series.

PD: Yes, that's a good idea. Thanks very much. ■

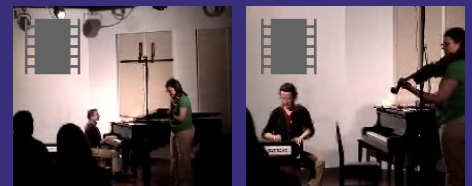
[Click here to discuss this article with others in the WWR forums...](#)

women's words on reading

American pianist Myra Melford and Canadian violist/violinist Tanya Kalmanovitch began working together immediately after a concert at the Guelph Jazz Festival in 2003. The duo performed Jazz Intersections together in February 2005 as part of the folkways Alive! concert at the University of Alberta. Myra, formerly New York-based pianist and composer, has performed in over 30 countries and won major awards for composition and performance since she began recording in 1990; she now teaches in the Faculty of Music at the University of California at Berkeley. WWR's Patricia Demers got a chance to talk to them about their reading in an informal workshop setting. Click on the links to see video footage of Tanya and Myra performing improvised pieces at the workshop.

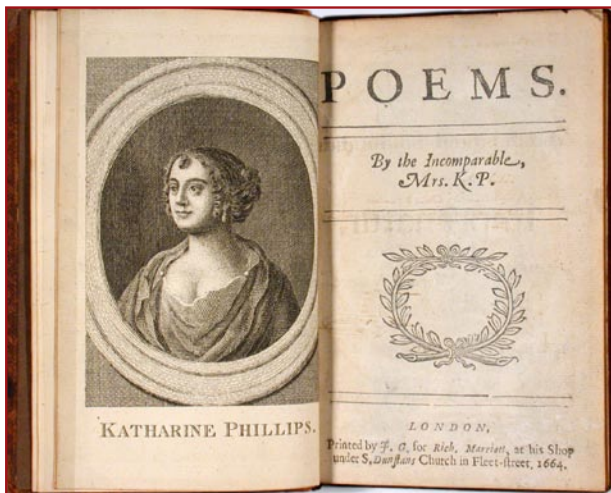
PD: Is there an overlap between reading and writing or in your case, between reading and creating? The reading could be other musicians and the reading could be literature as well. Any thoughts on that?

MM: Gee, I hadn't really thought about this before, so you'll have to give me second here. Well, first of all, I'm a very ear-oriented player and a very physical player and reading has never really been my thing. Although I studied classical music and I learned to read, I would always prefer to learn by ear. When I got to be interested in improvised music, in developing my own language as an improviser, it came very much out of a physical approach to playing – what gesture felt right and how to learn to flow with that energy. That being said, I think in a very intuitive way I've been influenced by writers like James Joyce because of two things. One was as he was getting into stream-of-consciousness type of writing it seemed to fit very well with improvisation in music. But also there are certain writers like Joyce whose language, even if you took the meaning away from it, there's a poetry and a rhythm to it that I find very musical. And it was that even more than the meaning that I found inspiring. But that's about the extent that I've thought about it, in terms of my own music.



THE ANTHOLOGIST:

Introduction to Early Modern Writer Katherine Philips



■ **The Anthologist** is a project in progress at the CRC Humanities Computing Studio. The goal of The Anthologist is to create digital anthologies, which allow images of the texts themselves to be displayed. The Early Modern Women Anthologist highlights and displays some of the resources of the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library. Selections from two volumes (1664 and 1669) of the *Poems* of Katherine Philips launch this feature.

Katherine (Oxenbridge) Philips, the Matchless Orinda (1632-1664), was born in London to a prosperous, mercantile, middle-class family and educated at Mrs. Salmon's school in Hackney, where

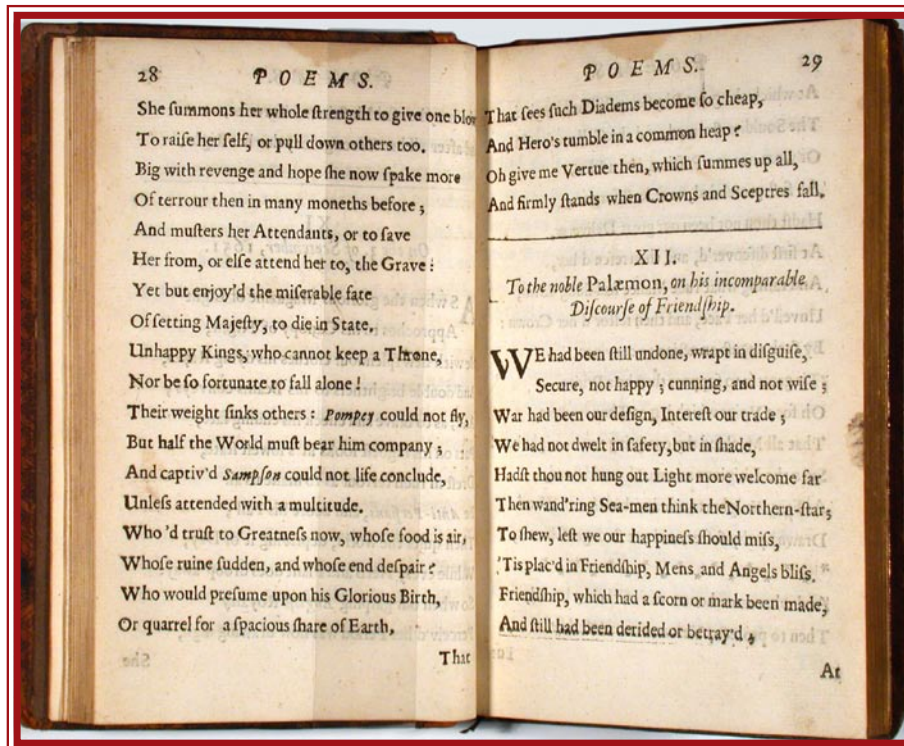
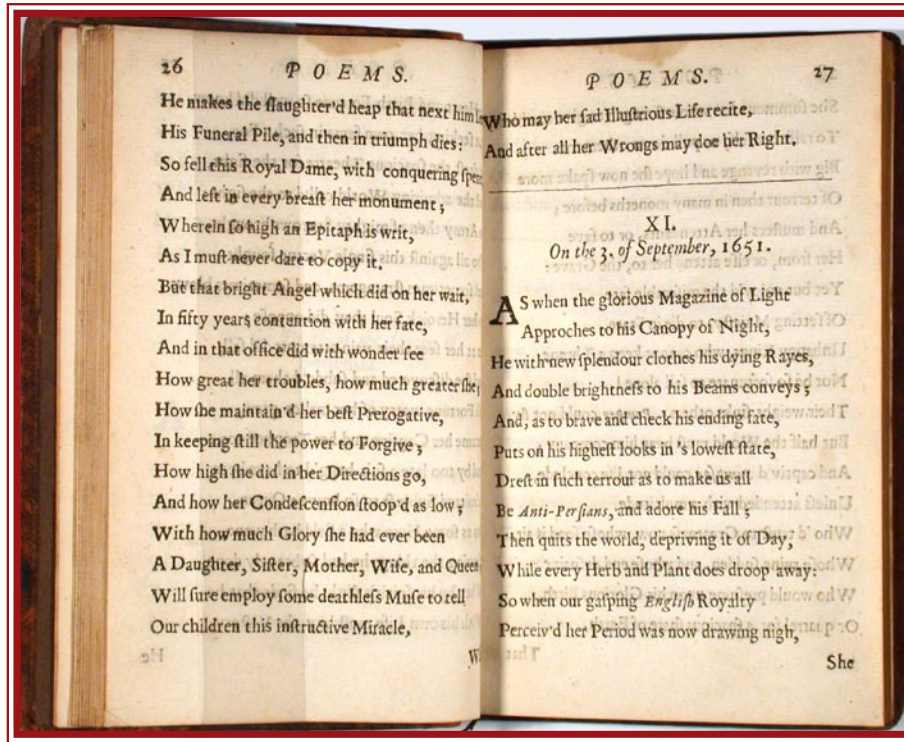
she formed the basis of her society of female friends. Philips early adopted the code name of "Orinda." Admirers soon extended this pseudonym to "the matchless Orinda." In 1648 Katherine Oxenbridge married the fifty-four-year-old widower Colonel James Philips, who was serving as High Sheriff of Cardiganshire, Wales. Orinda balanced her time between London and the Philips estate in Wales, securing influential literary champions in both locations. Poet, translator, and

letter writer, Philips died at thirty-two from smallpox, contracted during a visit to London to protest a pirated edition of her poems.

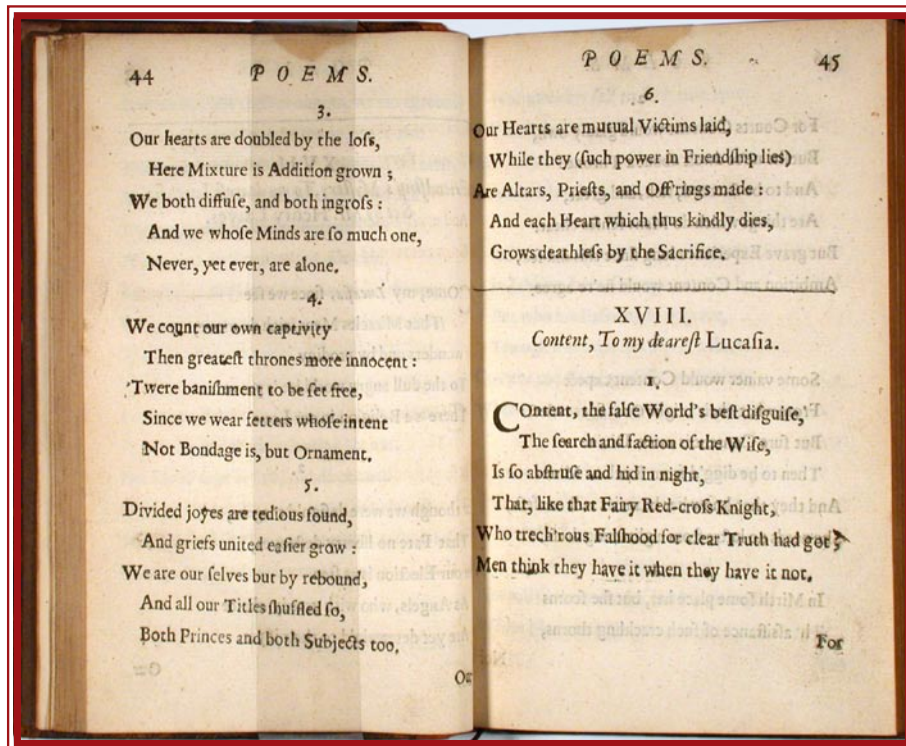
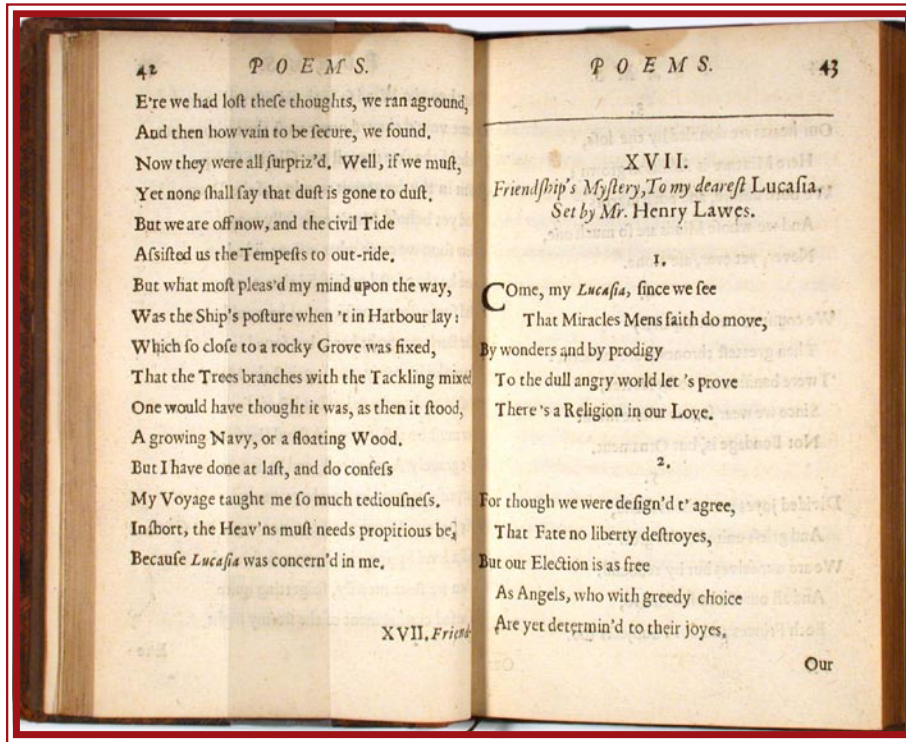
Her translation of Pierre Corneille's *La mort de Pompée* (1644), which she completed in 1663, provoked enough interest to lead to stage productions that year at the Theatre Royal in Smock Alley in Dublin and, in London, at theatres in Lincoln's Inn Fields and St. James's. The following selections from her poetry, often addressed to identified or coded contemporaries, illustrate some of the ways she opened up interior, autonomous space.

Philips composed 130 poems – dialogues, odes, epitaphs, eulogies, songs – on topics of immediate and interrelated concern: friendship, contentment, happiness, retirement, the soul, and death. Her poetry supplies a kind of cultural barometer. Though married to a Welsh Cromwellian, she does not disguise her sympathies or the breadth of her understanding of Royalist and Parliamentary causes. She boldly makes a religion of female friendship. She also grieves feelingly the death of her only son, born after seven years of childlessness.

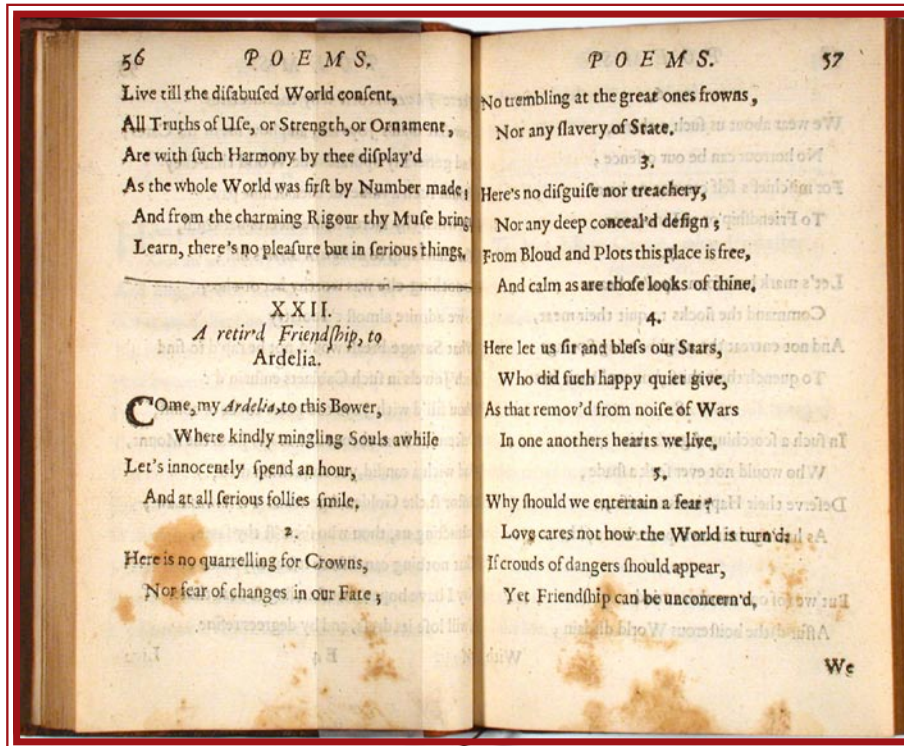
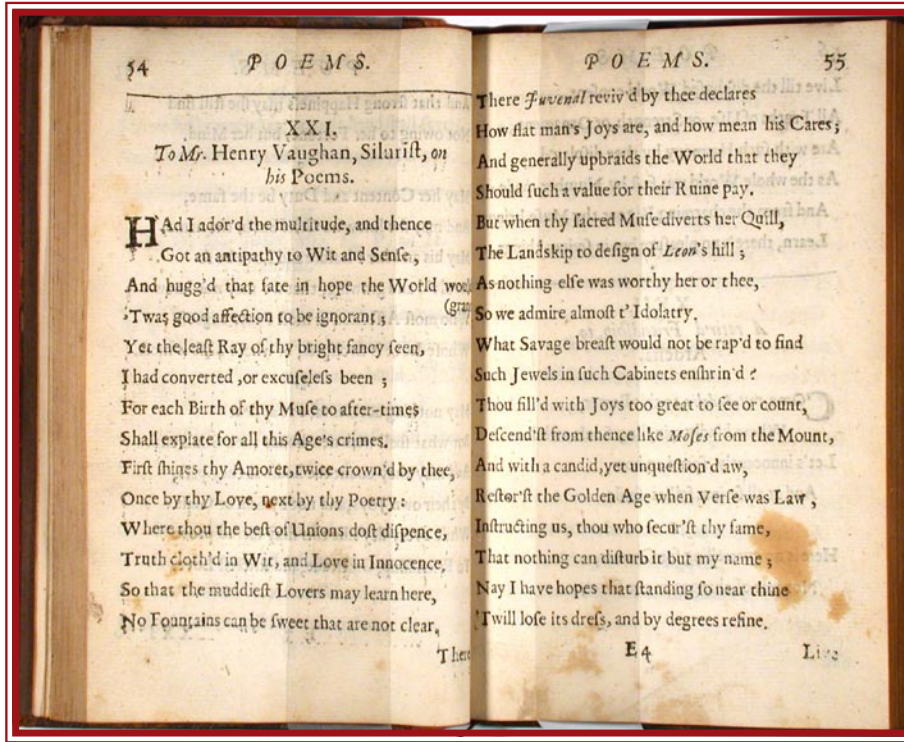
Over the next couple of pages, you will see photographs of five poems by Katherine Philips taken from the 1664 edition of her *Poems* in the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library. ►



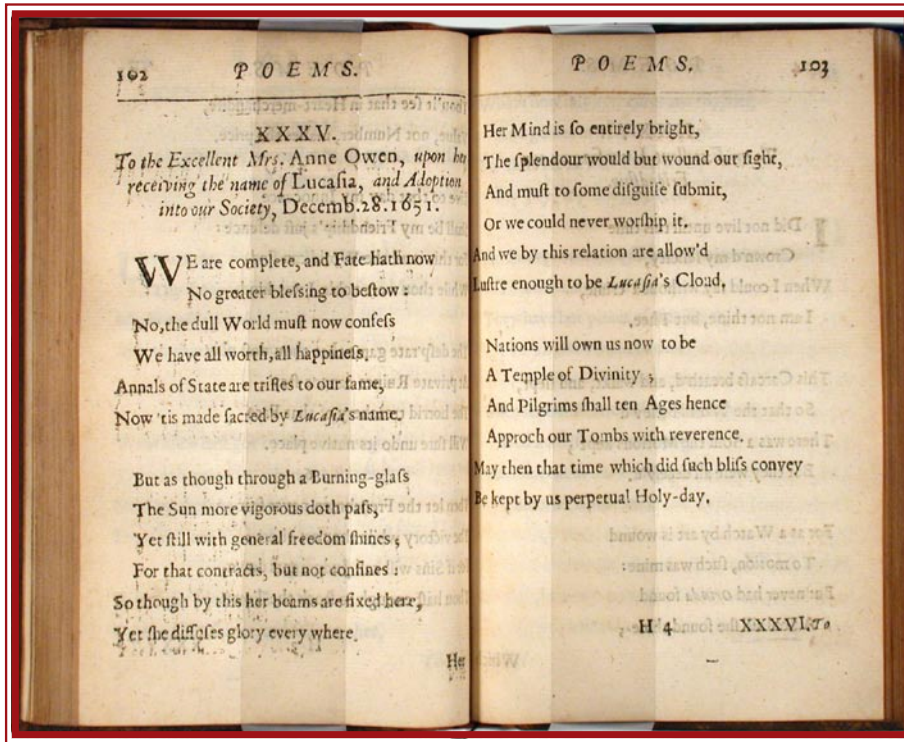
After his defeat by Cromwell's forces at Worcester on September 3, 1651, Charles II fled to the Continent. Philips invokes the defeats of Pompey, who fled to Egypt after Pharsalus, and Samson, who grinds at the Philistine prison house in Gaza (Judges 16. 21-30).



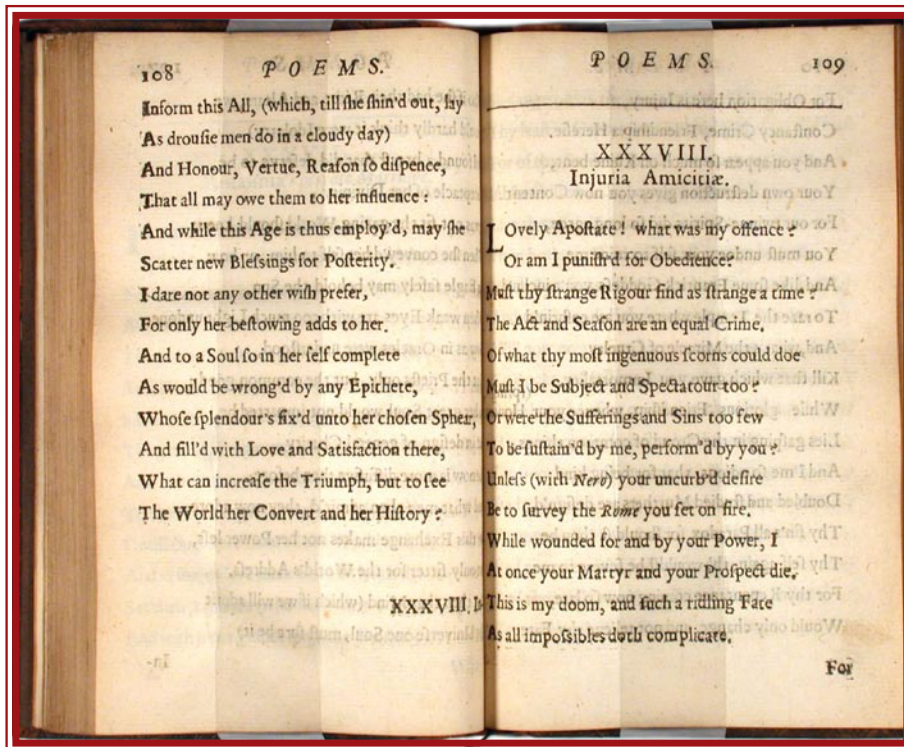
"Lucasia," Mrs. Anne Owen of Orierton, West Wales, is the subject of over twenty poems. Henry Lawes, composer and musician, was praised in verse by both Philips and Milton; Lawes wrote the music for Milton's mask, *Comus*.



Henry Vaughan, Welsh poet and doctor, shared Philips's Royalist sympathies. He added the title "Silurist" to his name in honour of the Celts (Silures) who once lived near his birthplace in Wales. His poetry expresses religious attitudes through Baroque symbolism.



Orinda claims she has been inspired and guided by Lucasia's soul.



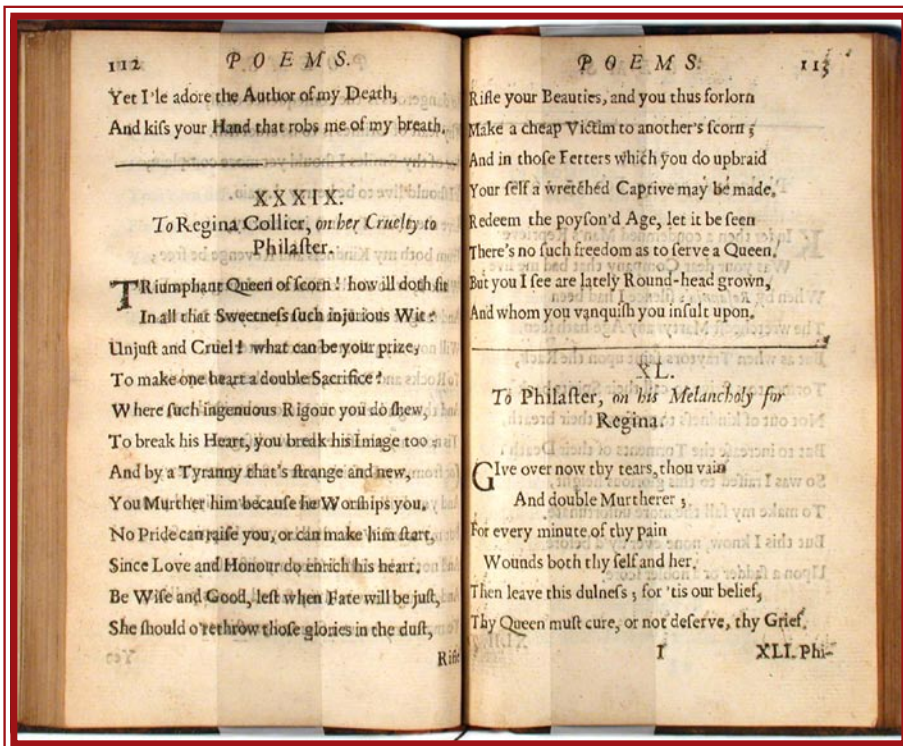
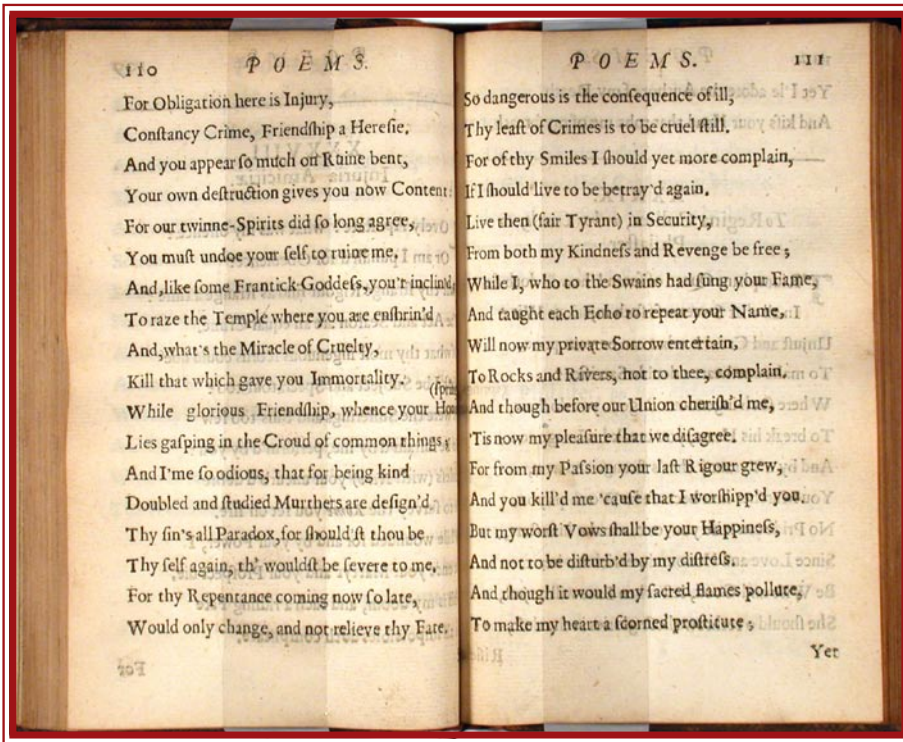
When one of the earliest members of Orinda's society of friendship, "Rosania" (Mary Aubrey), married William Montagu, Philips was not informed or invited to the wedding; hence, "friendship's injury."

women's words on reading

Tanya Kalmanovitch is a classically-trained violist/violinist who is currently completing her PhD in ethnomusicology at the University of Alberta.

TK: Well, I've always been an avid reader. I started young and never stopped. But I'm a bit omnivorous and fairly – catholic, say – in my tastes. I read a lot of fiction. I'm interested in this parallel between the reading of musical scores and reading of performances in my process of developing as an improviser. Probably the most important thing that I've done in terms of growing in Jazz improvised music is a process that we call transcription, which generally tends to imply that you're transcribing a musical performance into musical notation. But really in the way that it's benefited me the most, the actual notation has had almost nothing to do with it. It's been more a process of listening to a great musician, a great artist, a small selection of that music – maybe two minutes or five minutes – learning it by heart, learning to sing along with it, and then learning to represent that on my instrument. Because of the instrument I play it's almost – it's always a foreign instrument.

...The whole point of transcription is to take it inside yourself, I suppose. And then to translate or represent on the instrument, so it involves changing yourself. It implies some sort of transformation, or transformative process, both of yourself and the text – if you want to call it that – that you're taking on. It's probably the closest that we have to oral transmission sort of method of learning. It's been enormously instructive and valuable to me. It's been very empowering because as a performer trying to learn about playing Jazz on an instrument that is not only maligned in Jazz, but mocked in the string world and the orchestral world, (laughter) with this particular set of barriers and obstacles that I felt I faced as an adolescent and as a young woman – not that I'm not young now, but younger, still, even – this was a way for me to learn how to play Jazz in my own home without having to put myself in, what I felt to be, at times, a threatening social dynamic. The things that I learned from doing that and that I still learn from doing transcription are mine and nobody can take that away from me. This is very empowering and I see the same thing about reading and the way reading empowers people. Like my mother, growing up in a very poor community in Manitoba, and the importance that books had to her as a young girl. It's the same thing: the things that she learned from them nobody could take from her. Nobody could go inside and take that away and then you turn those things into your life.



[Click here to discuss this article with others in the WWR forums...](#)

next issue:

- **Sharon Pollock** – Interviews with the Governor General's Award-winning playwright and U of A cast of *Moving Pictures*
- Essays on Pollock's work by theatre scholars
- Interview with Patricia Rae, Head of the Department of English at Queen's University
- More local poetry
- More Women's Words on Reading

