

Eliza Haywood's Eighteenth-Century Readers in Pennsylvania and New York

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THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY (NYSL)—NEW YORK CITY'S OLDEST LIBRARY—HAS digitized and transcribed its earliest surviving borrowing ledger, which documents the reading history of its members from July 1789 to April 1792.¹ The ledger contains information about the reading habits of five hundred NYSL members, including famous figures such as George Washington, John Adams and Alexander Hamilton. The NYSL ledgers are an extremely important source of information for book historians and literary critics, since they provide an insight into reading habits of Eliza Haywood's eighteenth-century readers. Twenty years ago, Ronald J. Zboray demonstrated the value of the mid-nineteenth century ledgers of the NYSL for historians of Antebellum America but few scholars have explored the earlier ledgers.² In the following essay I provide

¹ Although the ledger was found in an 'extremely fragile condition' in 1934, amongst rubbish at a previous library location, it was not properly restored until early this century ('About the Ledger'—which contains links to NYSL library catalogues of 1789 and 1793, plus the supplements of 1791 and 1792). The ledger was digitised and published on the NYSL website in December 2010 ('The New York Society Library Opens Historic Ledger to Public').

² Zboray's detailed study focuses on the borrowings of 229 subscribers over two, three-year periods: 1847-49 and 1854-56. For scholarship on the borrowing (or 'charging') ledgers of other nineteenth-century institutions, see below. At present, the (digitised) first borrowing ledger appears to have provided material for only a single scholarly footnote (Miller 210n4).

some context for this new online source of information for eighteenth-century scholars, by comparing findings from the NYSL ledger with the published portion of the borrowing ledgers of the Union Library at Hatboro, Pennsylvania, to suggest how the NYSL ledger data can be interpreted, and how it might add to our knowledge of Haywood and other eighteenth-century writers.

* * *

Eliza Haywood (1693-1756) was one of the first professional women writers in Britain. She has been the subject of significant academic interest since the 1980s, especially for some of her later works—such as *The Female Spectator* (1744-46) and *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751). In one of the few impartial accounts of Haywood written during her lifetime, William Chetwood succinctly described her thus:

Mrs. *Haywood* has made herself eminent to the polite World by her Writings ... Her numerous Novels will be ever esteem'd by Lovers of that Sort of Amusement. She is likewise Authoress of three Dramatic Pieces. ... As the Pen is her chief Means of Subsistence, the World may find many Books of her Writing, tho' none have met with more Success than her *Novels*, more particularly her *Love in Excess*, &c. ... Mr. Pope has taken her for his Goddess of *Dulness* in his *Dunciad*; but she need not blush in such good Company (57 note b).

A longer—but still short—account of Haywood's life, which appeared eight years after her death, explains that

from a supposition of some improper liberties being taken with her character after death by the intermixture of truth and falsehood with her history, she laid a solemn injunction on a person who was well acquainted with all the particulars of it, not to communicate to any one the least circumstance relating to her (Baker, vol.2, Q1v, col.1-2).

At least partly as a result of her 'solemn injunction', it seems, a lot less is known about Haywood than many of her (male) contemporaries.³ And, as a consequence, the contempt with which well-known writers, such as Alexander Pope, treated Haywood has coloured accounts of her, her writing and her readership for over two hundred years. As Christine Blouch explained in 2004:

³ Despite the rapid growth in scholarly interest in Haywood, much about her life remains obscure. Kathryn King's recent *Political Biography of Eliza Haywood*, for example—a book-length critical and historical investigation of a selection of Haywood's works—adds little of consequence to Christine Blouch's 1991 account of Haywood (King; Blouch; updated in Blouch 2000).

The parameters of critical discourse and the literary canon itself have broadened considerably in recent years, and the early woman writer, a figure of whom Haywood is so clearly emblematic, provides a significant area of inquiry in these discussions. ... the role of her works in early (and current) debates about the formation of the novel, are sufficient in themselves to make her interesting. She also provides a unique case study in the politics of literary history (8).

Because of Haywood's importance in the history of the early novel, her putative readers have a long history in criticism. The first writer to discuss Haywood's readers was Edmund Gosse, who, largely on the basis of the orthography of a signature in a book he had purchased, declared in 1891 that Ann Long, the previous owner of his book, was 'a milliner's apprentice or a servant-girl' and, therefore, was representative of Haywood's readers in general. Gosse confidently characterised Haywood's readers as 'servants in the kitchen ... seamstresses ... basket-women ... 'prentices ... straggling nymphs'; readers who would 'read [a book] to tatters, and [throw] it away ... [or] drop warm lard on the leaves ... tottle up ... milk-scores [or] scribble in the margin ... dog's-ear ... or stain it, or tear it' (161-64). A series of scholars have repeated Gosse's characterisation of Haywood's readers, modified it, or challenged aspects of it. In 2005, an exasperated Kathryn King wrote:

The space given over to fictionalized reading responses in histories of the early novel is astonishing when you think of it, and in Haywood criticism Ann Lang is nearly inescapable. It is scarcely an exaggeration, in fact, to say that the story of Haywood's role in the making of the novel has been largely a story of Ann Lang: a narrative assembled out of historical circumstance, informed speculation, theory-derived complication, and out-and-out fabulation (262).

Haywood's readers are significant then, because of her importance in the history of the early novel and because she is emblematic of early woman writers in general.

My interest in Haywood was prompted by Dale Spender's 1986 claim that Haywood was 'one of, if not *the* most versatile, prolific and popular writers of her day' (81, emphasis in original). That Haywood was versatile, prolific and popular is evidenced by my *Bibliography of Eliza Haywood* (2004)—which lists seventy-two works by her, in a total of 394 editions and issues (20)—but Haywood's popularity cannot be measured in editions and issues alone. In my 2006 essay on the success of Haywood's *The Female Spectator*, I cautioned:

We need to know who owned and read Haywood's works, where and when they read them and what these readers thought of their reading material.

We also need to know which of Haywood's works were discussed, reviewed, commented upon or cited and how people obtained copies of her works. Furthermore, it is essential that we can answer these same questions concerning the works of Haywood's contemporaries if we wish to compare Haywood's success with that of other authors or with writers in different genres, or with the success of individual works by Haywood or with the works of other writers in the period (212).⁴

Presently, we lack the volume and range of studies that would make it possible to test Spender's claim about Haywood. In practical terms, what is required is a larger body of close and large-scale studies of individual readers (their book acquisitions and borrowing, reading habits, preferences and responses to individual texts, based on borrowing records, diaries, journals, marginalia, etc.), book ownership (based on library catalogues, auction catalogues and probate inventories) and bookselling (based on the business records of printers, publishers and booksellers).

Work in this broad area—reader reception—has been booming in recent years (Raven 1998), but this type of scholarship has been underway for over a century. Daniel Mornet's 1910 and 1925 studies of private library catalogues in France enabled him to compile information on the popularity of individual novels in the eighteenth century. According to Mornet, Chevalier de Fleuriau's 1754 translation of Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, for example, was one of the ten most popular English novels of the eighteenth-century, appearing in twenty-six of 392 private libraries (Mornet 1910, 461). This placed it eighth in popularity behind such works as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1741-42; appearing in seventy-eight libraries) and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1754; in forty-four), Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749; in seventy-seven) and *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* (1742; in forty) and Sarah Fielding's *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744; in thirty-five).

Almost a century after Mornet, Alicia C. Montoya's study of female writers in eighteenth-century Dutch auction catalogues—combining private (auction) and circulating library catalogues—found Haywood's *Female Spectator* in sixteen percent of the 254 catalogues examined, behind Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Letters* (1763; twenty-four percent), Francis Sheridan's *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph* (1761; twenty-one), and Delarivier Manley's *The New Atlantis* (1707-36; sixteen), but ahead of Sarah Fielding's *David Simple* (eleven), Francis Burney's *Evelina; Or, The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*

⁴ These questions began to be asked in histories of reading in the late 1990s. See Raven 1998, 269; Jackson 1042.

(1778; eleven) and *Cecilia; Or, Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782; ten), and Francis Brooke's *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* (1736; ten) and *The History of Emily Montague* (1766; ten) (Montoya 199-201 'Figure 7. The most frequently found 18th-century titles'). Haywood was the most popular individual author (her works being held in twenty-five percent of libraries), ahead of Montagu (twenty-four percent), Sheridan (twenty-one), Charlotte Lennox (twenty), Brooke (twenty) and Burney (seventeen) (194). An intriguing aspect of Montoya's study is the information it provides on the language in which an individual author's works were encountered. *The Female Spectator*, for example, appeared (and, we can assume, was read) mostly in French (sixty-eight percent), rather than Dutch (twenty-four) or English (only nine), whereas Montagu's *Letters* appeared mostly in Dutch (thirty-seven) and English (thirty-five) rather than French (twenty-seven) (197-201).

Jan Fergus' long-awaited book (Traister 246) on *Provincial Readers in Eighteenth-Century England* appeared in the same year as Montoya's essay. Fergus' study of '3300 customers for printed matter between 1744 and 1807' (1) is based on the 'very incomplete' (28) bookselling and circulating-library records of the Clay family in Daventry, Rugby, Lutterworth and Warwick and Thomas Stevens in Cirencester (7). Fergus enumerates buying and borrowing figures from these booksellers for 321 'Novels in English bought and borrowed, 1744-1807' (250-68: Appendix 2). A selection of thirty-two 'canonical' works—by which Fergus means books for which there was an enduring demand—appears in Table 2.2 (85-6). These novels range in absolute popularity, calculated by totalling purchases and borrowings of books, from Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality* (1760-72; five bought, twenty-nine borrowed; a total of thirty four) down to Tobias Smollett's *The History and Adventures of an Atom* (1769; one bought, one borrowed; total of two). Since Table 2.2 only includes works that Fergus defines as enduringly popular it is of limited assistance in establishing the most popular novels—whether canonical (as usually understood) or not.⁵

⁵ Fergus describes her definition of canonical as 'crudely behavioural' (83); certainly her definition (83-4) is idiosyncratic and, to the casual reader, rather confusing, since it includes novels not normally considered canonical, such as the anonymous *The Life and Adventures of Bampfylde Moore Carew* (1745; five bought, two borrowed; total of seven) and John Langhorne, *Letters Supposed to Have Passed Between Theodosius and Constantia* (1764; six bought, none borrowed; total of six), includes works not often considered novels, such as [James Kenneth Ridley], *Tales of the Genii* (1764; two bought, none borrowed; total of two), but excludes works often (now) considered canonical, such as Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (none bought, three borrowed; total of three). For an overview of historical and recent debates about the canon, see Morrissey and Gorak.

Seven of Haywood's works are mentioned in Fergus' study.⁶ The frequency with which these works were bought or borrowed is reasonably easy to establish, but it is not so easy to compare the popularity of her works to other titles (Appendix 2, listing the 321 novels bought and borrowed, is organised by date of first publication and Table 2.2 by author) or to see how popular one novel is compared to all other novels. However, an analysis of Fergus' data shows that over eighty percent of novels have totals for buying and borrowing of five or less,⁷ and that the most popular thirty percent of novels were bought or borrowed more than twice (see table below).

| | bought | borrowed | total | in top |
|---|--------|----------|-------|--------|
| <i>Memoirs of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman</i> (1743) | 3 | 3 | 6 | 15.9% |
| <i>The Invisible Spy</i> (1755) | 4 | 1 | 5 | 18.1% |
| <i>The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless</i> | 0 | 3 | 3 | 29.3% |
| <i>La Belle Assemblée</i> (1724-34) | 2 | 0 | 2 | n/a |
| <i>The Fortunate Foundlings</i> (1744) | 1 | 0 | 1 | n/a |
| <i>Novels</i> [<i>Secret Histories, Novels and Poems</i> (1725)] | 1 | 0 | 1 | n/a |
| <i>The Fruitless Enquiry</i> (1727) | 0 | 1 | 1 | n/a |

While three of Haywood's titles are among the top fifteen to thirty percent of novels in terms of popularity, 'disproportion takes over'—as Fergus states (87)—once individual titles by female authors are compared to titles by male authors: Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* was bought and borrowed thirty-two times, *Clarissa. Or, The History of a Young Lady* (1748) thirty and *Pamela* fourteen; Smollett's *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) was bought and borrowed twenty-six times, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), twenty-three and *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748) eleven, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* was bought and borrowed twenty-two times, *Amelia* (1751) thirteen and *Joseph Andrews* seven. The total buying and borrowing of the three most popular works of Richardson, Smollett and Fielding are: seventy-six, sixty and forty-two; Haywood's most popular three titles total fourteen—less than a

⁶ Only four are indexed under Haywood's name. The 'Index to Novels' includes, under Haywood, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *The Invisible Spy* and *The Fruitless Enquiry*; the 'General Index' adds *The Female Spectator* (298, 307). *Memoirs of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman* is included in the 'Index to Novels' under James Annesley (297), *La Belle Assemblée* under Madam Gomez (298). Not indexed are *The Fortunate Foundlings* and Haywood's 'Novels' (i.e., *Secret Histories, Novels and Poems*).

⁷ Totals of 1-5: 270 titles; 6-10: 26; 11-15: 12; 16-20: 5; 21-25: 3; 26-30: 3; 31-35: 2. The number of items with totals up to six: total of one (157 titles), two (70), three (27), four (9), five (7), six (12).

quarter of the totals for Richardson and Smollett, and one third of the total for Henry Fielding. The 'triumph' of men's novels in these figures and the 'shrinking demand over time for women's novels' is typical of Fergus' data (87, 88), but this pattern is not repeated in the NYSC and Hatboro data discussed below.

Presently, the studies of Mornet, Montoya and Fergus are—apart from my essay on the success of *The Female Spectator*—the only sources of information on Haywood's popularity in the eighteenth century: there have been no other reader-reception studies either of Haywood, and few which provide information on her works: despite the important work which has been done on this general area.⁸ One of the reasons why so little work has been done on Haywood's eighteenth-century book-buyers, borrowers and readers is due to the scarcity of primary materials necessary for such in-depth studies. As David Allen explains in his history of lending libraries in Georgian England: 'surviving documents that might allow us to identify individual customers, or to study the actual patterns of buying and borrowing that they sustained (justly regarded, for obvious reasons, as the Holy Grail of library historians interested in reading), are now exceptionally rare' (121). Consequently, although it is clear that many public and private libraries held works by Haywood in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—making a study (such as Montoya's) of British or American libraries theoretically possible—detailed borrowing records have only been available from one library containing her works: the Union Library at Hatboro.⁹

Since Chester T. Hallenbeck's 1932 study of the books borrowed from the Hatboro Library, America's reading culture has been illuminated by numerous studies, but few of these provide detailed information about reading and book ownership in the eighteenth century. Prior to Zboray's 1991 examination of the NYSL ledgers (for 1847-49 and 1854-56), William J. Gilmore used estate inventories to examine the reading habits of four hundred families in the upper valley of Vermont between 1780 and 1835 (see esp. 64-7, Table 2-1 'Windsor District Family Libraries, 1787-1830: Most Widely Read Authors and Works'). Haywood's works are not among the one hundred most widely read authors and works Gilmore lists but, since Gilmore does not present his data in any detail, it is

⁸ Paul Kaufman's pioneering studies of circulation records include no works by Haywood, and his most-detailed studies are of a library that contained only five individual novels among nine hundred titles: Samuel Richardson, *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded* (1741-42), Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1773) and *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1760-67), Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1766), Sir Herbert Croft, *Love and Madness* (1780) (Kaufman 1960, 107, 110, 112, 115; Kaufman 1969, 33). As Raven states, the Bristol Library records—like those at Hatboro and NYSL in only being partially published—have been 'virtually neglected since Kaufman's examinations' (Raven 1998, 278).

⁹ As explained above, Fergus enumerates book buying and borrowing, rather than transcribe borrowing records.

not clear whether her works are represented at all in the Vermont inventories and how her works compare in popularity with other eighteenth-century writers discussed here.¹⁰ Since Zboray, Antebellum America's reading culture has been examined in studies by Christine Pawley, drawing on records from Sage Library, Iowa (1860-1900), Emily B. Todd, drawing on records from Richmond Library Company (1839-60) and the Lyceum and Library Society of New Orleans (1854-67), and Katherine Wolff, drawing on records from the Boston Athenaeum (1827-51).¹¹

Important work is also being done in the area of eighteenth-century book ownership at the University of Utrecht. The best known of these studies, Joost Kloek's 1999 article questioning the 'reader revolution' thesis of Jürgen Habermas and Rolf Engelsing via the records of a Middelburg bookseller, is based on a much larger body of Dutch bookselling and probate records. Kloek's study—like Han Brouwer's 1995 examination of a bookseller from Zwolle, José de Kruif's 1999 and 2001 examinations of bookselling records and estate inventories from The Hague—transforms bare lists of books (either purchased or owned), with a meta-analysis based on a detailed classification of books and book-buyers.¹² Unfortunately, although the total period examined by the Utrecht research is 1730 to 1850, the raw data is not available and the processed data does not mention Haywood, or provide information relevant to her popularity. However, studies like these offer a sophisticated model for investigating large groups of readers via bookselling or borrowing records.

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Since Hallenbeck's study of the books borrowed from the Hatboro Library provides one of the few sources of data on Haywood's eighteenth-century readers, it will be useful to examine it in some detail, so that comparisons can be made with the NYSL data. Unfortunately, Hallenbeck only published 'a portion of the first loan book' (189).¹³ Although two loan books were known to Hallenbeck (covering 1762-87) only 'about one third of the subscribers' names and only the years 1762-1774'—the years leading up to the Declaration of Independence in July 1776—were included in his study (291), and the remaining material has not

¹⁰ But see below for the few novels named in Gilmore's study.

¹¹ Wolff uses borrowing data infrequently; see, for example, 5-6, 163 n13.

¹² The classification of book-buyers is based on a 'prosopographic dossier', which includes such things as a date of birth and death, marital status, occupation, value of property, religious denomination, membership of associations, public offices etc. Fergus provides a lot of similar information, but does so without the same clear sociological purpose. As Traister states (247), Fergus 'is often able to give the readers she writes about their own real names and to locate them in their communities, geographically, by gender, by marital status, by position and class, and by age'.

¹³ For more information on the Hatboro library, see Ross.

been subsequently published.¹⁴ Formed as a subscription library in 1755, twenty miles from Philadelphia, the Hatboro Library circulated a relatively small number of books to the local, town and rural clientele. Hallenbeck records 211 titles as having been borrowed, by twenty subscribers (one female), over the thirteen years of his records.¹⁵ Five of the 211 titles are by Haywood: *The Fruitless Enquiry*, *Betsy Thoughtless*, *The Husband* (1756), *The Wife* (1756) and *The Female Spectator* (329, 336, nos. 76-79 and 185 in the 'Bibliography of Works in the Foregoing Transcript'). But this small library also contained Montagu's *Letters*, Elizabeth Rowe's *Friendship in Death* (1728)—the only other female writers represented—Richardson's *Pamela*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Charles Johnson's *Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea* (1760), Brooke's *The Fool of Quality* and *The History of Miss Charlotte Seymour* (1754).

Hallenbeck—unlike many more recent scholars—provides a full transcript of the Hatboro borrowing ledgers for his twenty subscribers. Consequently, although the sample of subscribers is small, it is possible to investigate the popularity of these authors with some subtlety—enough subtlety to present difficulties of interpretation. The six most popular novels in the Hatboro collection are listed in the table below, followed by the number of subscribers who borrowed volumes of each novel, the number of subscribers who appear to have finished the novel, the percentage of borrowers who completed the novel, the number of times a subscriber borrowed a volume or volumes, and the total number of volumes borrowed.¹⁶

¹⁴ The library possesses three loan books; vol.1 containing the names of subscribers, with details of the books borrowed, 1762-84; vol.2 containing the names of subscribers, with details of the books borrowed, 1784-90 (towards the end of this volume, books are referenced by shelf—or accession—number only, rather than by title); vol.3 containing the names of subscribers, with the books borrowed, 1790-98 (referenced by shelf—or accession—number only). Harriet Ehrsam, e-mail message to author, 5 March 2014. I would like to thank Harriet Ehrsam, Librarian, at the Union Library Company of Hatborough, for providing information about these volumes.

¹⁵ Hallenbeck lists the following subscribers: William Folwell (abbreviated as WF here; see 292-4); Joseph Hart (JH; 294-6); Jacob Cadwalader (JC; 296-9); Benjamin Powers (BP; 298-300); Isaac Hough (IH; 300-2); Joseph Delworth (JD; 302-4); Abraham Lukens (AL; 304-6); Able Morgan (AM; 306-7); John Jarret (JJ; 307-8); David Davis (DDa; 308-9); Amos Watson (AW; 309-11); John Lukens (JL; 311-2); Daniel Dungan (DDu; 312-3); Peter Lukens (PL; 313); Thomas Hollowell (TH; 314); James Young (JY; 314-7); Isaac Longstreth (IL; 317-9); John Watts (JW; 319-20); Margaret Rees (MR; 320-1); John Murry (JM; 321-2). The borrowing dates range from 4 September 1762 [for DDa] to 29 December 1775 [WF], but the records for many subscribers cover a shorter range (the two shortest being only 26 months: DDa being from 4 September 1762 to 3 November 1764 and MR from 8 August 1764 to 25 October 1766).

¹⁶ For the eleven titles not included in this list, but in the Hatboro collection—such as Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (borrowed three times), and Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker* (borrowed only once)—see Appendix 1.

I have listed the titles in order of popularity, as I interpret it. Although ten subscribers took out volumes of *Adventures of a Guinea*—giving it the highest number of subscribers—only two (JD and JM) borrowed all volumes and, therefore, either finished the book or attempted to do so.¹⁷ Although *Charlotte Seymour* is in two volumes, and many subscribers borrowed two volumes at a time, the fact that every subscriber borrowed all volumes of this novel suggests these readers were much more engaged by the novel than the readers of *Adventures of a Guinea*. Nine subscribers borrowed volumes of *Betsy Thoughtless*, *Pamela* and *Tom Jones*, so I have listed these according to the number of subscribers who appear to have completed the novel. The fact that more subscribers borrowed the third and fourth volumes of *Betsy Thoughtless* and *Pamela* is evident in the increased number of borrowings of these novels, and volumes borrowed, compared to *Tom Jones*.

| Title | vols. | subs. | finished | % | borrowed | vols. b. |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|----------|------|----------|----------|
| <i>Betsy Thoughtless</i> | 4 | 9 | 6 | 66.6 | 30 | 38 |
| <i>Pamela</i> | 4 | 9 | 5 | 55.5 | 30 | 40 |
| <i>Tom Jones</i> | 4 | 9 | 3 | 33.3 | 24 | 32 |
| <i>Adventures of a Guinea</i> | 4 | 10 | 2 | 20 | 15 | 25 |
| <i>Fool of Quality</i> | 5 | 8 | 2 | 25 | 18 | 25 |
| <i>Charlotte Seymour</i> | 2 | 6 | 6 | 100 | 13 | 17 |

In the table above, there is little to choose between *Betsy Thoughtless* and *Pamela*—the former appears to have been read more often, but more volumes of the latter were borrowed. To explain why I have placed *Betsy Thoughtless* above *Pamela* it is necessary to look more closely at the pattern of borrowing of each novel. Table 2 lists the subscribers and the volumes they borrowed of each novel.¹⁸ Note how four subscribers read *Betsy Thoughtless* straight through (JD, AL, AW, JL), whereas only one subscriber read *Pamela* through—twice (JD). However, three subscribers read *Betsy Thoughtless* and *Pamela* through in an interrupted and somewhat erratic way (*Betsy Thoughtless*: BP, IH, JD; *Pamela*: BP, IH, AW—PL being a possible fourth). Likewise, three subscribers appear to have abandoned each novel (*Betsy Thoughtless*: JC, PL, JW; *Pamela*: JL, DDu, IL). The

¹⁷ A third (TH) borrowed the third and fourth volumes, but not the first two volumes. See Appendix 1 for further details.

¹⁸ Where a subscriber borrowed the same work on successive occasions a date range is given, and a semi-colon separates the volumes borrowed on each occasion. Where the borrowing of other works interrupts the borrowing of volumes of *Betsy Thoughtless* or *Pamela*, each borrowing of these novels is listed separately.

fact that more subscribers read *Betsy Thoughtless* straight through suggests these readers were much more engaged by the novel than the readers of *Pamela*.

Betsy Thoughtless

Pamela

JC 11 April 1768 [vol.1,2]

BP 3-11 October 1763 [vol.2; vol.2]

BP 31 January 1766 [vol.1,2(?)]

BP 15 September 1766 [vol.3,4]

BP 21 July-30 August 1766 [vol.3,4]

BP 8 November 1766 [vol.1,2]

IH 30 August-6 December 1773 [vol.1; vol.2; vol.3]

IH 9 March 1763 [vol.1]

IH 1 April 1774 [vol.?)

IH 15 February 1772 [vol.2]

IH 8 September 1774 [vol.3]

IH 20 April 1772 [vol.3]

JD 25 November 1763-25 January 1764 [vol.2; vol.1; vol.1; vol.2; vol.3]

IH 4 June 1772 [vol.4]

JD 28 February-11 April 1766 [vol.2; vol.2; vol.3,4]

IH 13 April 1773 [vol.1]

JD 31 January-17 March 1769 [vol.1; vol.2,3; vol.4]

IH 1 May 1773 [vol.2]

AL 10 January-4 March 1771 [vol.1; vol.2; vol.3; vol.4]

IH 30 August 1773 [vol.2]

AW 10-19 November 1764 [vol.1; vol.2,3; vol.4]

JD 10 August-24 October 1763 [vol.1; vol.2; vol.3; vol.4; vol.4]

JL 31 March-8 April 1767 [vol.1,2; vol.3,4]

JD 8 April-3 May 1769 [vol.1,2; vol.3,4]

PL 9 October 1766 [vol.1]

JJ 23 December 1764 [vol.1,2]

JW 11 October 1764 [vol.?)

JJ 27 June 1772 [vol.1]

AW 28 February-14 March 1768 [vol.3,4; vol.1,2]

AW 25 July 1768 [vol.1,2]

JL 29 September 1764 [vol.1,2]

DDu 17 May-9 July 1764 [vol.1; vol.2]

PL 2 October 1766 [vol.1,2]

PL 27 October-7 November 1767 [vol.4; vol.4]

IL 27 November 1773 [vol.2]

Of course, the fact that only one reader of *Betsy Thoughtless* (JD) returned to the novel after finishing it (i.e., borrowing the final volume), whereas three readers returned to *Pamela* may be taken to suggest these readers of *Pamela* were much more engaged by the novel than the readers of *Betsy Thoughtless*.¹⁹ In fact, Table 2 shows a complex record of borrowing, where subscribers (apparently) start novels in the middle (JD begins with volume two of *Betsy Thoughtless*; AW begins with volume three of *Pamela*), abandon them for lengthy periods (*Betsy Thoughtless*: IH and JD; *Pamela*: IH and PL), do not read volumes in sequence (BP reading *Pamela*), or skip volumes altogether (PL skips volume three of *Pamela*). This somewhat chaotic pattern is typical:²⁰ five of the nine borrowers of *Tom Jones* (JD, JJ, AW, IL, MR) did not begin with the first volume and two of the three subscribers to borrow the fifth volume of *The Fool of Quality* did not borrow the fourth volume first. Did these subscribers have the other volumes, or borrow them elsewhere? Did they read them in the library? Had they read them before? Or were these 'desultory readers', as Fergus describes them (108, 116), simply skimming or 'browsing'?²¹

Similar patterns are evident if we examine the borrowing records for other literary genres, such as *The Female Spectator* and its competitors. Table 3 is comprised of all periodicals of the essay-type.²² There is little difference in popularity evident here between Edward Moore, *The World* (1753-56) and *The Female Spectator*: more subscribers appear to have read all of the former, and more volumes of it were borrowed in total, but volumes of *The Female Spectator* were more frequently borrowed. Although no subscriber appears to have read the whole of Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* (1711-12), essays from this periodical were also available in Addison's *Works* (4 vols; 1753 edition)—which was borrowed by six subscribers—and *The Beauties of the Spectators, Tatlers and Guardians* (2 vols; 1763)—which was borrowed by two.²³

¹⁹ Fergus reports (104-6) only six instances of 'Multiple and Repeated Readings' in her data: *Betsy Thoughtless* is one of the six, *Pamela* is not.

²⁰ Fergus reports (109) that seventeen percent of borrowings from the Clays circulating libraries were of odd volumes, and one third of subscribers borrowed odd volumes.

²¹ Fergus considers and dismisses the possibility that such readers obtained the missing volumes in other ways, stating 'the sheer numbers of desultory borrowings suggest that browsing is a more likely explanation' (109 and n.40).

²² See also Appendix 1D-F. For my discussion, and definition, of the eighteenth-century literary periodical, see Spedding 2006.

²³ AL borrowed all volumes of Addison's *Works* and the first volume of *The Spectator*, while MR borrowed half of the volumes of both Addison's *Works* and *The Spectator*.

| Title | vols. | subs. | finished | % | borrowed | vols. b. |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|----------|------|----------|----------|
| <i>The World</i> | 4 | 10 | 3 | 30 | 16 | 27 |
| <i>The Female Spectator</i> | 4 | 11 | 2 | 18.2 | 20 | 28 |
| <i>The Spectator</i> | 8 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 27 |
| <i>The Adventurer</i> | 4 | 5 | 1 | 20 | 9 | 13 |
| <i>The Connoisseur</i> | 4 | 5 | 1 | 20 | 7 | 12 |
| <i>The Tatler</i> | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 9 |
| <i>The Guardian</i> | 4 | 2 | 1 | 50 | 3 | 5 |

Although a somewhat chaotic pattern is evident in the record of volumes borrowed, this is not unexpected. In a collection of essays, even a collection written or edited by a single person or group of people, most individual essays will stand alone. And again, however chaotic the pattern appears at first, the detail is revealing. MR (the only female subscriber), who had successively borrowed volumes eight, two, six and one of *The Spectator*, borrowed the first volumes of both *The Spectator* and *The Female Spectator* on the same day—to compare them, perhaps. In the following year she also looked into *The Guardian* (volume one), *The Adventurer* (volumes three and four) and *The World* (volumes three and four, then one and two). In a similar fashion, it appears that JW was exploring Haywood's works by borrowing, first, volumes of both *The Female Spectator* and *Betsy Thoughtless* at the same time, then her *Husband and Wife* immediately prior to re-borrowing the first two volumes of *The Female Spectator*. Such patterns are suggestive, but illusive.

That both MR and JY would borrow the last two volumes of *The World* before the first two volumes makes sense for the reason suggested—the periodical essay stands alone. But the same pattern of borrowing is apparent with *Pamela* (by BP), suggesting that *Pamela* may have been (and these periodicals were) subject to the type of 'intensive reading' Rolf Engelsing describes as typical before the 'reading revolution'—namely, the continual re-reading of a small body of 'improving' works. Samuel Johnson famously warned that 'if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself'; advising Thomas Erskine that 'you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story as only giving occasion to the sentiment'. If discontinuous reading is evidence of intensive reading, then the position of works in Tables 1 and 3 must be reconsidered—and the logic of favouring works

read to completion over works continuously re-read must also be reconsidered.²⁴

* * *

The NYSL was formed in 1754 as a subscription library open to the public of New York. It was centrally located, in a room in the old City Hall, on Wall Street, and circulated a relatively large number of books to the local, city and urban clientele. The British captured (late in 1776) and held New York City for most of the American Revolutionary War (1775-83)—during which time many of the library's books were looted or destroyed. After the war, the American Congress temporarily occupied the building (from March 1789 to December 1790), at which time the library re-opened with whatever books could be recovered and—having served as the first 'Library of Congress'—grew to approximately five thousand volumes by 1793 ('History of the Library' and 'A Further History of the Library'). The period covered by the first borrowing ledger is, then, somewhat atypical: a period of rapid post-war (re)growth and, for most of that time, at the centre of a new nation's (temporary) capital.

The online transcript of NYSL's first borrowing ledger identifies 1136 titles²⁵ borrowed by 502 subscribers (eleven female) from July 1789 and April 1792, but the library must have had almost four times this number of books²⁶ and many more females readers, who obtained books through male relatives.²⁷ Users of the NYSL site can browse or search within three categories—'People' (subscribers), 'Books' (listed by author and/or short title), and 'Pages' (i.e. the 361 pages of the ledger itself, which record the borrowings of individual subscribers).²⁸ However, the list of books is not organised alphabetically under each author's name, and the keyword search is not a reliable guide to the authors included. This is

²⁴ Fergus argues that discontinuous reading is 'desultory', rather than 'intensive'; suggesting that desultory reading of fiction was encouraged by sentimental and non-linear narratives, the part-publication of fiction and the ubiquity of collections of 'beauties and extracts' (113-6).

²⁵ There are 1137 titles indexed on twenty-five separate pages, one for each letter of the alphabet (except x). One of these titles is 'Another book'; the individual page for which states 'Unable to identify this title, as the entry in the ledger reads 'Another book''.

²⁶ Matthew Haugen provides details of the growth in the number of volumes in the library and the number of subscribers based on the surviving catalogues: 1758 (859 volumes/118 subscribers); 1761 (1018/[not stated]); 1789 (3100/239); 1791 (3800/305); 1792 (4600/493); 1793 ([ca.5000]/892); 1800 ([ca. 6000]/[not stated]).

²⁷ Married women and female children are underrepresented in all accounts of reading based on business accounts, because they were less likely to have disposable income and, since they did not exist legally apart from their husbands or fathers, they 'were thus less likely than widows and unmarried women to obtain credit' (Fergus 35-6).

²⁸ Ingrid Richter and Mark Bartlett were the coordinators of the transcription project; Richter was also in charge of the database and website creation; Erin Schreiner and Matthew Bright were responsible for bibliographic research; Schreiner, Bright, Marie Honan, Peri Pignetti and Lawry Yates with 'cataloging transcriptions' ('Credits').

because the titles used in the ledger are very short—gnomic even—rarely more than three words, often taken from subtitles and/or using truncated words.²⁹ In most instances, the ledger titles have been identified with books that are listed in a series of NYSL catalogues published between 1789 and 1793. Unfortunately, these NYSL catalogues are—consistent with cataloguing of the time—almost as brief as ledger titles. Where titles are expanded, the extra information provided is occasionally descriptive, rather than part of a sub-title. So, for instance, *Memoirs of Lady Woodford* (1771) appears as ‘Lady Woodford’ in the ledger, which is expanded to ‘Lady Woodford (memoirs of) a novel. 12mo’ on the web page that records borrowings of this title, details taken from the 1791 catalogue. Since the web page for each title is linked to an index of ledger titles alone, and no attempt has been made to further identify the books in the index, it can be difficult for users to locate a particular book or books by a particular author using the search facilities provided.³⁰ Consequently, the only way to locate works by Haywood, for instance, is to search through all 1136 titles in the index and hope that any ledger titles for works by her are recognisable.

As it happens, there are three works by Haywood in NYSL’s first borrowing ledger: *Memoirs of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman* (under ‘Unfortunate Nobleman’), *Female Spectator* and *Betsy Thoughtless*. Of these, volumes of *Betsy Thoughtless* were borrowed on sixty-seven occasions; only nine of the twenty-four borrowers (37.5%) appear to have finished the novel—a much lower percentage than borrowers at Hatboro (66.6%). Volumes of *The Female Spectator* were borrowed on forty-three occasions; four of the twenty-three borrowers (17.4%) appear to have finished the periodical—a similar percentage to borrowers at Hatboro (18.2%). Volumes of *Memoirs of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman* (not held at Hatboro) were borrowed on twenty-two occasions; since neither the ledger nor the 1789 catalogue indicates more than one volume, it seems likely that all borrowers had the opportunity to finish the novel.³¹

Although the borrowing of Haywood’s works at the NYSL is illuminating in itself—since most of the books in this collection appear not to have been

²⁹ Although a few titles contain more than twenty-five characters (such as ‘Anderson’s Genealogical tables’, ‘Goldsmith’s Animated Nature’, ‘Miller’s Gardeners’ Dictionary’ etc.), most have fewer than twenty (such as ‘Adair’s Hist. America’, ‘Adam’s Antiquities’, ‘Am. Museum’, ‘An. Lewis 14’, ‘Anq. Lewis XIV’ etc.).

³⁰ By contrast, as stated, Hallenbeck expands these gnomic references in a complete ‘Bibliography of Works in the Foregoing Transcript’, identifying the author, full title and imprint etc. (323-40).

³¹ The first volume of *Memoirs of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman* was published without a volume statement on the title-page; the title-page of the second volume states ‘Part the Second’. It is possible that the NYSL library held only the first volume; however, since the two volumes were often bound together, it is also possible that the NYSL set was complete (Spedding 2004, Ab.57).

borrowed at all in the period of the first ledger³²—this borrowing needs to be put in context. Because of the size of the NYSL and the number of subscribers it is not possible in the space available to analyze the same proportion of borrowing records for the novels and periodicals in the Hatboro library, or to investigate the borrowing records in the same detail. Where the published Hatboro borrowing register records twenty-four novels and essay-periodicals (Appendix 1), of which half are examined above, NYSL's published borrowing ledger includes 151 separate novels and essay-periodicals³³ (Appendix 2), of which only slightly more than one eighth are discussed below.³⁴ However, the scope of NYSL data facilitates broad, larger-scale analysis, complementary to that carried out for the Hatboro library. And I have provided considerable detail in the appendixes to this essay in the hope that this data will prompt others to undertake more detailed studies of their own.

One hundred and thirty-five of the novels listed in Appendix 2A were identified by searching for each NYSL title in the four standard bibliographies of eighteenth-century prose fiction (McBurney, Beasley, Raven, Raven and Forster).³⁵ A further four works of prose fiction, not in these bibliographies, are included in my analysis: two from the seventeenth-century (Aphra Behn's *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684) and Giovanni Paolo Marana, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (trs. 1687-92)), and two missed or omitted in Raven and Forster (José Francisco de Isla, *The History of the Famous Preacher Friar Gerund of Campazas* (trs. 1772) and William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy: or, The Triumph of Nature* (1789)). The 139 works of prose fiction thus identified at NYSL represent only twelve percent of the titles recorded in the first borrowing ledger—a figure consistent with most circulating libraries in London, 1748-1802.³⁶

³² The library grew from 3400 to 4600 volumes between 1789 and 1792, but only 1136 of these are recorded in the ledger as having been borrowed (this is 33.4% of 3400, 24.7% of 4600, or 28.4% of 4000—the average of the two figures).

³³ Editions of the collected works of an individual author have been excluded because of the difficulty of identifying the borrowing of the individual titles within these editions. The example of Henry Fielding's *Works* is discussed below.

³⁴ I have not here attempted to identify and compare other genres of works in the NYSL, nor have I attempted to identify the genres I do discuss with particular groups of readers (however defined: by sex, class and occupation etc.). Although Jackson warns (1043) against the 'over-simplified identifications of genres with readerships', a careful study of genres and readerships at NYSL could be very fruitful.

³⁵ Fergus uses the same method to identify the novels in her study (268).

³⁶ Kaufman (1967, 11-2) estimates the proportion of fiction in six of eight circulating libraries in London as fifteen percent, or less; outside of London the quantity varied significantly.

The two main measures of popularity I have used to differentiate the prose fiction thus identified at NYSL are (a) the total number of volumes borrowed³⁷ and (b) the same figure divided by the number of volumes in each work. As the Hatboro data shows, the total number of volumes borrowed offers a crude but effective measure of popularity, which effectively differentiates the most from the least popular works. Using this measure it is clear that prose fiction was a very popular genre at NYSL, with significantly higher than average borrowings-per-title compared to other genres.³⁸ The second figure is intended to represent the number of times the full complement of volumes for each multi-volume work might have been borrowed, this number being a representation of the number of times each multi-volume may have been read (*not* the number of times all volumes were actually borrowed and/or read, either sequentially or cumulatively). This second measure is intended to differentiate works in only a few volumes, which a large proportion of people borrowed in their entirety—and may have read in their entirety (like *Charlotte Seymour* at the Hatboro library)—from works in many volumes, which only a small proportion of people finished or borrowed in their entirety (like *The Spectator*, ditto). While borrowings-per-volume is certainly an imperfect measure of popularity, compared to the precise counts of full-set readings established above from the Hatboro data, it is a useful substitute in a larger data set. And, as my discussion of the Hatboro data establishes, precise counts of full-set readings can be misleading. Certainly, they also imperfectly represent the frequently-chaotic pattern of reading which the ledgers reveal.

When the 139 titles are ranked according to these two measures of popularity (Appendix 2B and 2C), most of the highest-ranked titles are those which are recent: all but one of the top dozen was printed between 1782 and 1791, whereas only five of the following dozen were printed in the same period. If the

³⁷ The NYSL site uses this measure in a section on books ‘that were most popular among Library members during the years covered by the first charging ledger’ (‘Popular Books’).

³⁸ Based on a random sample of one hundred and twenty titles (the first ten of every hundred, excluding novels), the average number of recorded borrowings per title at NYSL is 9.1 (120 titles, 1087 borrowings); the average number of borrowings per title for novels is 55.8 (139 titles, 7759 borrowings)—more than six times higher. Only ten novels were borrowed fewer than nine times; meaning over ninety percent of novels were borrowed more often than the average for all other titles that appear in the first NYSL borrowing register. Since the NYSL library contained approximately four thousand titles during this period, most of which do not appear in the first NYSL borrowing register, the 139 prose fiction titles discussed in this essay represent only 3.5% of the NYSL collection as a whole. (However, it is not clear how many works of prose fiction were in the NYSL collection, but not borrowed in this period. Consequently, it is not clear how representative these 139 titles are of prose fiction in the NYSL collection generally.) This finding is consistent with Kaufman’s expectation that ‘many establishments must have circulated many times the number of novels as any other genre’ (15b). By contrast, novels were ‘much’ less popular than other genres in Fergus’ data (7).

volume-borrowings for the 139 works of prose fiction are totalled (7759) and distributed by decade, it becomes clear just how much works from the 1780s dominate borrowings, with almost sixty percent of all volumes borrowed, far ahead of works from the 1750s, 60s and 70s, at approximately ten percent each. And most of this dramatic difference in popularity is due to works published in the second half of the 1780s, which is only partially due to the larger number of novels available at NYSL from the 1780s in general, and the second half of the 1780s in particular. As the fifth column shows, the number of borrowings per work is actually highest (narrowly) for the 1750s, but the high figure for the 1780s is mostly due to borrowings of works from the second half of the 1780s.³⁹

| decade | works | borrowings | % of all | borrowings per |
|----------|-------|------------|----------|----------------|
| 1690s | 2 | 49 | 0.6% | 24.5 |
| 1700s | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 |
| 1710s | 1 | 12 | 0.2% | 12 |
| 1720s | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 |
| 1730s | 4 | 93 | 1.2% | 23.3 |
| 1740s | 8 | 429 | 5.5% | 53.6 |
| 1750s | 11 | 756 | 9.7% | 68.7 |
| 1760s | 15 | 614 | 7.9% | 40.9 |
| 1770s | 20 | 835 | 10.8% | 41.8 |
| 1780s | 66 | 4507 | 58.1% | 68.3 |
| [1790-91 | 12 | 464 | 6% | 38.7] |

Although works from the 1740s make up less than six percent of all borrowings, the average borrowings per work of titles from this decade is high—higher than titles from the 1760s and 70s. Titles from the 1750s were slightly *more* popular than the most recent novels on offer at NYSL. This shows that many older British novels retained their appeal in post-revolution New York. But not all canonical

³⁹ On average, while the number of works from each year increase five-fold, the number of borrowings increase ten-fold between 1779 and 1790. The number of works published in each year: 1779 (2), 1780 (3), 1781 (1): 3yr av. is 2; 1782 (3), 1783 (5), 1784 (4): 3yr av. is 6; 1785 (11), 1786 (9), 1787 (9): 3yr av. is 9.7; 1788 (10), 1789 (11), 1790 (9): 3yr av. is 10. Borrowings in each year: 1779 (102), 1780 (48), 1781 (26): 3yr av. is 58.7; 1782 (451), 1783 (194), 1784 (93): 3yr av. is 246; 1785 (627), 1786 (608), 1787 (771): 3yr av. is 668.7; 1788 (649), 1789 (950), 1790 (288): 3yr av. is 629. The borrowings per work, based on three-year averages, are: 1779-81 (29.3); 1782-84 (41); 1785-87 (68.9); 1788-90 (62.9).

authors and novels, closely associated with the 'rise of the novel' by scholars such as Ian Watt, and the focus of contemporary scholarly attention,⁴⁰ contributed to the continuing popularity of works from this period. While novels by Richardson, Smollett and Henry Fielding were certainly popular, those by Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe attracted only modest interest, while there is no record of any work by Laurence Sterne being borrowed in the NYSL register.⁴¹ In the cases of Fielding and Swift, the exclusion of their collected works from the statistics analysed above renders their four novels invisible, but it appears likely that Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* was borrowed sixteen times, while his *Tom Jones* and *Amelia* were borrowed ninety-two and fifty-four times respectively,⁴² and Swift's *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World ... By Lemuel Gulliver* (1726) was borrowed only thirteen times.⁴³ By comparison, volumes of Richardson's *Pamela*, *Clarissa* and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* were borrowed forty-six, seventy-two and 119 times, and volumes of Smollett's *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* were borrowed thirty-eight and 119 times. Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner* (1719) was only borrowed twelve times.

Based on total borrowings alone, the ten most-popular novels in the NYSL from before 1776 (the same period covered by the Hatboro borrowing register), include—in addition to *Peregrine Pickle*, *Clarissa*, *Charles Grandison* and *Tom Jones*—Henry Brooke, *The Fool of Quality* and *Juliet Grenville* (1774), Phebe

⁴⁰ A title-search of Google scholar, for both authors and novel-titles, suggests that only six of the thirteen most popular novels identified below have been the subject of wide scholarly attention since 1990: those by Richardson, Smollett, Fielding, Haywood and Mackenzie.

⁴¹ The NYSL may not have acquired Sterne's *Works* until 1793 (*The Charter* 1793, 77 no.2488). Sterne's *Works* were modestly popular among Gilmore's Windsor district families (66 no.66; present in 1.5% of libraries), but popular in Fergus' midlands bookshops and libraries (255, 257; *Tristram Shandy* and *Sentimental Journey* being bought and borrowed thirteen and eleven times, placing both works in the top eight percent of novels).

⁴² The twelve volumes of Fielding's *Works* were borrowed 252 times (the equivalent of 21 readings of the set). It is not clear which twelve-volume edition the NYSL held, but if it was a recent edition such as the 'New', twelve-volume edition of 1783, Fielding's novels were contained in vol. 6 (*Joseph Andrews*), vols. 7-9 (*Tom Jones*) and vols. 10-11 (*Amelia*). Since the 1789 catalogue lists these three novels separately (*The Charter* 1789 34, 44, 70 and 19), in the number of volumes indicated (one, three and two), and *Amelia* appears in the borrowing register described as 'vol.10', it seems likely that the NYSL held an edition similar in arrangement to this 1783 edition, if not the 1783 edition itself. However, since the edition cannot be confirmed, I have not included these titles in Appendix 1. (I have also treated the separately-listed borrowings of *Amelia* as borrowings of volumes of Fielding's *Works*.)

⁴³ The twenty volumes of Swift's *Works* were borrowed 111 times (the equivalent of 5.6 readings of the set). It is not certain which twenty-volume edition the NYSL held, it was likely *The Works of the Reverend Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's Dublin*, 20 vols. (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1772). In this edition Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is in vol.3.

Gibbes, *The Woman of Fashion* (1767), John Shebbeare, *The Marriage Act* (1754), Edward Kimber, *The Life and Adventures of James Ramble* (1755) and Haywood, *Betsy Thoughtless* (see Appendix 2B). Six of these novels are also among the ten most-popular novels at NYSL, on the basis of per-volume borrowings; the other four being John Huddleston Wynne, *The Man of Honour* (1771-73), Henry Fielding, *Amelia*, Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (1771) and *Memoirs of Lady Woodford* (1771) (see Appendix 2C). Of the four novels displaced from the top ten at NYSL, when popularity is ranked according to per-volume borrowings, only *Clarissa* is significantly demoted (moving from the top- to the bottom-ten novels).

The Hatboro collection appears to have contained only three of these fourteen popular novels, plus another three that feature in the first NYSL borrowing register. The popularity of the six novels held in both collections, based on raw borrowings alone, are below. On the basis of these figures it appears that the three most popular pre-1776 novels in both Hatboro and New York were, *The Fool of Quality*, *Tom Jones* and *Betsy Thoughtless*.

| | Hatboro (place, of 17) | in top 25%? | NYSL (place, of 45) | in top 25%? |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Brooke, <i>Fool of Quality</i> | 4 | * | 1 | * |
| Fielding, <i>Tom Jones</i> | 3 | * | 6 | * |
| Hawkesworth, <i>Almorán and Hamet</i> | 14 | | 45 | |
| Haywood, <i>Betsy Thoughtless</i> | 2 | * | 10 | * |
| Johnstone, <i>Chrysal</i> | 5 | | 16 | |
| Richardson, <i>Pamela</i> | 1 | * | 18 | |

The first NYSL borrowing register shows borrowings of twelve essay-periodicals. On the basis of total borrowings, periodicals were considerably less popular than novels at NYSL. When all volume-borrowings of essay-periodicals are totalled (396) and compared with the total for novels (7759—or 7934, if the figures for Henry Fielding and Swift are included), it is clear just how much less popular the genre was at NYSL in absolute terms.⁴⁴ But the total borrowing figures for the most popular periodicals compare favourably to those of popular novels, and for four periodicals (with borrowings of forty-three to fifty-one each) the total borrowings would certainly place them in the top half of novels from the period up to 1776, between *Roderick Random* (thirty-nine borrowings) and *The Vicar of*

⁴⁴ Whether the figures for Henry Fielding and Swift are accepted or not, essay-periodical borrowing makes up less than five percent of the combined totals of novels and periodicals (396 of 8065 or 8240).

Wakefield (fifty-two) in popularity.⁴⁵ Likewise, the per-volume borrowings of the four most popular essay-periodicals (at 17.5-24.5 borrowings per volume), would place them in the top half of novels, between *Charles Grandison* (17.0) and Johnstone’s *Chrysal* (25.0) in popularity.

Only two of each of the four most popular periodicals in each borough, thus calculated, appear in both—Oliver Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World* (1760-61), and Vicesimus Knox, *Essays, Moral and Literary* (1778)—the remaining four, which each appear in one list only, are: *The Spectator*, *The Female Spectator*, Henry Mackenzie, *The Lounger* (1785-87) and John Hawksworth, *The Adventurer* (1752-54). Unfortunately, although six of the NYSL titles are among the seven periodicals held at Hatboro, half of these six most-popular NYSL periodicals were not at Hatboro, complicating any comparison between the two institutions. Rather than comparing only these three titles, the table below compares all six titles recorded in both the Hatboro and NYSL borrowing registers. On the basis of these figures it appears that the two most popular pre-1776 essay-periodicals in both Hatboro and New York were, *The Spectator* and *The Female Spectator*.

| | Hatboro (place, of 7) | in top 33%? | NYSL (place, of 12) | in top 33%? |
|--|--------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Steele, <i>Tatler</i> | 6 | | 10 | |
| Steele and Addison, <i>Spectator</i> | 2 | * | 1 | * |
| Steele, <i>Guardian</i> | 7 | | 12 | |
| Haywood, <i>Female Spectator</i> | 1 | * | 4 | * |
| Hawksworth, <i>Adventurer</i> | 4 | | 7 | |
| Coleman and Thornton, <i>Connoisseur</i> | 5 | | 8 | |

* * *

On the basis of the available borrowing records it appears likely to be true that Haywood was one the most popular pre-1776 writers in both rural and urban America in the late eighteenth century. That is, returning to Spender’s claim, Haywood was ‘one of’ the most popular writers ‘of her day’—which, I take to mean, of the 1750s and 60s. However, it is also clear that she was unlikely to be ‘the most’ popular writer of her day—as Spender’s emphasis suggests. As the above analysis shows, the novels of Richardson, Smollett and Henry Fielding remained popular in subscription libraries, as were the essays of Addison and

⁴⁵ In Gilmore’s study of Windsor District families, 1787-1830, *The Vicar of Wakefield* was the most frequently-encountered novel (present in a modest 1.8% of libraries) (65 no.52).

Steele. However, as the NYSL borrowing records also show, in general, novelists of Haywood's 'day' were much less popular than contemporary novelists, many of whom are now almost completely unknown and who are unstudied today.⁴⁶

Also, even if Haywood were *the* most popular author in both the Hatboro and NYSL collections, scholars interested in the reception of Haywood's works need to engage with a wider range of available sources of information and to take a broad range of historical approaches, to translate 'popular' into a meaningful analysis of reception—as Raven advocates in his survey of 'New Reading Histories' (1998 272, 279). Though the Hatboro and NYSL collections span rural and urban centres, each may be atypical of those centres or otherwise unrepresentative.⁴⁷ And, even if these collections are typical of rural and urban centres in America, Fergus' data suggest that Haywood may not have been as popular in provincial centres in Britain. Only by identifying and analysing other sources of information on Haywood's reception will irregularities and weaknesses in individual sources be balanced out (Jackson 1049).

The analysis of records of book buying and borrowing offers a welcome shift in focus from book production to consumption—allowing scholars to correlate patterns of consumption with patterns of (imagined) 'demand' that have been extrapolated from a record of editions.⁴⁸ However, records of book borrowing tell us as little about the motives for borrowing, as records of book buying or book production tell us about the motives for buying or printing a book, and they tell us almost nothing about how the books were read (Raven 1998, 277). Books were printed in the (mistaken) belief that they would sell, and bought or borrowed in the (mistaken) belief that they would be of interest to the reader (Jackson 1043). The challenge is to align what we now know of the production and borrowing of works by Haywood, 'with the evidence of use left by actual readers' and 'to translate what we know of the circumstances in which a text was read' to a broader understanding of Haywood's reception (Raven 1998, 279-80).

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⁴⁶ The NYSL website offers a list of the most popular books, 'featuring'—as the introduction to this lists states, 'titles and authors both canonical and nearly forgotten' ('Popular Books').

⁴⁷ 'Certain types of library may be comparable, but there is no representative type of library, with or without surviving usage records' (Raven 1998, 278).

⁴⁸ Fergus characterises the critical attention of scholars such as William St Clair as 'focus[ed] on reader's access, not their agency' (4).

Haywood's readers and bibliographical problems raised by the publication of Haywood's works. His essays on Thomas Gardner—the publisher of most of Haywood's later works—are forthcoming in *Script & Print*.

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