

Jael Henrietta Pye's *Poems. By a Lady* and *A Short View of the Principal Seats and Gardens In and About Twickenham* were bound together in 1767 and privately published. This allowed her to control the distribution of her work, which would have been 'a reassuring alternative to the threat of a rapidly expanding readership'¹. The poems are almost all dedications and praises of members of polite society, and many are followed by a poetic response from the dedicatee. Therefore the collection includes verses by Horace Walpole, the author of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), and Henry James Pye, who was the Poet Laureate from 1790 until 1813 and Pye's brother-in-law. The private publishing of the poems means that contemporary reception and reviews are limited, but these replies provide some clues, although Pye would have been unlikely to include any but the most complimentary. Similarly, two responses to her accounts of Twickenham are prefaced to that collection; one attributed to Dr. Campbell and one anonymous appraisal.

When *Poems. By a Lady (Poems)* was reprinted in 1772, *The Critical Review* praised Pye's 'refinement of language and suppressed indelicacies' and found her poems 'remarkable for purity and refined taste'². Whilst these assessments are accurate and would be difficult to contradict, the poetry is hardly original. As John Brewer notes, often in the eighteenth century 'the writer was not *the author* but a protean figure whose value lay in his ability to assume a number of authorial roles'³,

¹ Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 239.

² Quoted in Betty Rizzo, 'Jael Henrietta Pye' in *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers: 1660-1800* ed. by Janet Todd (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1987), p. 261.

³ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), p. 148.

and for Pye this role was of humble self-deprecating poet praising the virtues of others, while claiming to speak with the voice of ‘Truth and Candour’⁴. Though Lucy Newlyn argues that ‘the familiar topos of modesty reflected genuinely low self esteem’⁵ in some cases, whether genuine or not it makes it difficult to grasp any sense of her personality. This is detrimental to her poetry, for as Brewer says, ‘what makes a literary work singular and original is its author’s creativity, the impress of individual character or personality on the text’⁶. Instead of this, Pye writes typically ‘florid odes to personified virtues’⁷ that read more like sycophantic flattery than sincere comments. Her description of Horace Walpole and his house (*P*, 10) was in fact so extravagant that his response advised her to ‘check thy fancy’s flight’ (*P*, 11).

Likewise there is a distinct lack of originality in *A Short View of the Principal Seats and Gardens In and About Twickenham (A Short View)*. The ‘return to nature’⁸ movement which C. V. Deane sees as recognisable from 1750 onwards had led to the ‘adoption of stock diction’⁹ which often made descriptions of nature repetitive of other works and of themselves. Pye actually admits in the introduction to the collection that she overuses such words as ‘view’ and ‘prospect’ (*T*, v), and she also repeats another typical language feature of this genre as identified by John

⁴ Jael-Henrietta Pye, *Poems. By a Lady bound with A Short View of the Principal Seats and Gardens In and About Twickenham* and a commonplace book (London: 1767), p. 5. Subsequent references will be included in the text, under the respective abbreviations ‘*P*’, ‘*T*’ and ‘*CB*’.

⁵ Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 226.

⁶ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), p. 153.

⁷ Roger Lonsdale (ed.), *Eighteenth Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. xlv.

⁸ C. V. Deane, *Aspects of Eighteenth Century Nature Poetry* (Holland: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1967), p. 1.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

Arthos: ‘the use of the present participle as an epithet’¹⁰, for example ‘rising ground’ (*T*, 4). Writers could distinguish their descriptions and make them more interesting by using ‘skill in selecting the objects that best convey the atmosphere of the scene’¹¹ but Pye’s depictions generally take the style of a list, and there is very little effusive or vivid language which might conjure a real impression of her subjects. The only instance of poetic language, ‘the house is as white as snow’ (*T*, 16), has been taken by Betty Rizzo to be demonstrative of the overall tone of the collection¹², but it is difficult to find any other examples to support this view, and the accounts remain flat and toneless.

The commonplace book handwritten in the 101 blank leaves at the back of the volume was written some seventy years later than Pye’s works, one entry being dated 25th July 1841. The commonplace book was defined in Ephraim Chambers’ *Cyclopaedia* (1728) as ‘a Register, or orderly Collection of what things occur worthy to be noted, and retain’d in the Course of a Man’s reading, or Study’¹³. The writer of the commonplace book is unnamed, though it could be postulated that it was written by an ancestor of Edward Owen Vaughan Lloyd who lived from 1857 to 1914, and whose armorial bookplate appears in the front of the volume. It could equally have been written by a descendant of Pye, or of one her dedicatees who are likely to have received copies of the volume.

¹⁰ John Arthos, *The Language of Natural Description in Eighteenth Century Poetry* (New York: University of Michigan, 1949), p. 3.

¹¹ C. V. Deane, *Aspects of Eighteenth Century Nature Poetry* (Holland: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1967), p. 95.

¹² Betty Rizzo, ‘Jael Henrietta Pye’ in *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers: 1660-1800* ed. by Janet Todd (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1987), p. 261.

¹³ Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopædia; or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (London: Printed for James & John Knapton, 1728), entry on ‘Commonplace’.

The contents of the commonplace book give some clues about its writer, as the sources indicate reading material available to them. It seems likely that the writer was male, as extracts include one entitled ‘Punctuality in our engagements with our wives’ (CB, 8-11) from the *Odd Fellows Quarterly Magazine* (1840). He was probably well educated, as he was evidently familiar with foreign languages including Latin, French, and Italian. Some extracts appear with translations, and some were presumably readable as they were. Extracts in this commonplace book were taken from a wide range of sources, including John Milton’s *Comus* (1637) and Robert Southey’s *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), and periodicals such as *The Spectator* (1711-1714) and *Master Humphrey’s Clock* (1840-1841), so the writer would have had access to a well-stocked classical library as well as contemporary materials. He may have had a modest start in life though, as he includes a passage called ‘Alluding, in conversation to our humble origin, when we have risen from a low to a high station in life, a good policy’ (CB, 14). Paul Langford notes that ‘it was easier to progress from rags to riches in law or medicine than it was in trades which required an extensive apprenticeship and a handsome capital’¹⁴, which suggests that the writer was a professional man.

Further examination of the sources can support more speculation on his occupation: he may have had some interest in law, as three extracts come from *Nouvelles Causes Célèbres* (CB, 40-41, 45, 64-65), a 37-volume collection of reports of well-known French court decisions from the 17th and 18th centuries published in 1763; he may have been a politician, as he notes Sir Samuel Romilly’s appraisal of the

¹⁴ Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 72.

virtues of William Pitt (*CB*, 24-25) who was Prime Minister in the late-eighteenth century; the fact that he kept a commonplace book at all supports this, as such books were often used by an orator to enable him to ‘collect materials from the various places stored in ... the notebook and then skilfully integrate them together into a coherent whole’¹⁵.

Whoever the writer of the commonplace book was, they would certainly have been familiar with, and probably a fan of, the two collections by Pye that precede it, since commonplace books were usually written in notebooks which were specifically designed for the purpose. In fact a template had been devised by John Locke and published posthumously in 1706 by which extracts were systematically indexed and ordered¹⁶, and by the end of the eighteenth century ‘prospective Lockean compilers could purchase commonplace books with a pre-stamped version of the Lockean index’¹⁷. It cannot be definitively said whether the blank leaves at the back of this volume were originally bound with Pye’s works, or whether the three collections were re-bound together at a later date, but the positioning of the three collections in relation to one another changes their significance. As D. F. McKenzie argues, ‘the non-verbal elements of typographic notations within [books], the very disposition of

¹⁵ Lucia Dacome, ‘Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth Century Britain’, *The Journal of the History of Ideas, Inc.*, 65.4 (2004) 603-625
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_ideas/v065/65.4dacome.html> [accessed April 2006] (para. 9 of 31)

¹⁶ John Locke, *A New Method of a Common-Place-Book. Translated out of French from the Second Volume of the Bibliotheque Universelle*, in John Locke, *Posthumous Works of Mr. John Locke* (London, 1706), p. 311–36.

¹⁷ Lucia Dacome, ‘Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth Century Britain’, *The Journal of the History of Ideas, Inc.*, 65.4 (2004) 603-625
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_ideas/v065/65.4dacome.html> [accessed April 2006] (para. 22 of 31)

space itself, have an expressive function in conveying meaning'¹⁸, or as he more succinctly puts it, 'forms affect meaning'¹⁹. Since the collections by Pye have a demonstrable lack of originality and the commonplace book is, by definition, not an original work, the most interesting characteristic of this volume is its form, and it is this aspect's impact on meaning that will be examined.

I

McKenzie locates the origin of the word 'text' as the Latin *texere*, 'to weave'²⁰, using this to argue that the word does not specify any particular material, and thus it can be applied to 'verbal, visual, oral, and numeric data'²¹. Equally though, the fact that 'text' originally means 'to weave' serves the argument that three collections brought, or woven, together as they are in this volume form a new text. This text itself forms what Wolfgang Iser terms the 'artistic pole'²². The artistic pole interacts with the 'aesthetic pole'²³, or the realisation of the text by the reader, and it is this interaction between text and reader which generates meaning, or what Iser calls the 'actualisation'²⁴ of a text. The interaction between text and reader is not due to a relationship like 'that of transmitter and receiver, for this would presuppose a common code'²⁵, and all realisations of the text accomplished by different readers would thus be the same. This is clearly not the case, as it would

¹⁸ D. F. McKenzie, 'The Book as an Expressive Form' in *The Book History Reader* ed. by David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 31.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Wolfgang Iser, 'Interaction Between Text and Reader' in *The Book History Reader* ed. by David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 291.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

place the aesthetic pole in a fixed position, so the actualisation of the text would be fixed too. Still, Iser argues, 'if communication between text and reader is to be successful, clearly the reader's activity must be controlled in some way by the text'²⁶, though not prescriptively.

As is particularly pertinent in the case of this volume, Iser names the controlling devices as the gaps and blanks in a text. For the commonplace book, the relevance of this comment is immediately apparent. Instead of making use of the 'Heads' advocated by the Lockean method of compilation, which would mean that 'any [extract] may be found, and turn'd to at pleasure'²⁷, it was not indexed or classified, so gaps are placed between every extract and its neighbours. In the Lockean template on the other hand, extracts were grouped together by subject, so gaps between extracts would be instantaneously negotiated by common themes. Chambers himself did in fact lack a complete commitment to orderly classification, in that he 'rejoiced in the manner in which the alphabet threw things together in unexpected juxtapositions'²⁸:

To do justice to a *collection*, I mean a general and promiscuous one, it has its advantages. Where numbers of things are thrown precariously together, we sometimes discover relations among them, which we could never have thought of looking for²⁹.

²⁶ Wolfgang Iser, 'Interaction Between Text and Reader' in *The Book History Reader* ed. by David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 292.

²⁷ Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopædia; or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (London: Printed for James & John Knapton, 1728), entry on 'Commonplace'.

²⁸ Richard R. Yeo, 'Ephraim Chambers' Cyclopaedia (1728) and the Tradition of Commonplaces', *The Journal of the History of Ideas, Inc.*, 57.1 (1996) 157-175
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_ideas/v057/57.1yeo.html> [accessed April 2006] (para 28 of 33)

²⁹ Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopædia; or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (London: Printed for James & John Knapton, 1728), I, xxv.

If the arbitrary order of letters in the alphabet can bring up new relations between disparate subjects, presumably so too can the order in which the writer of the commonplace book read literature and extracted maxims. To take extracts five and six from the commonplace book as an illustration of this, the following have been placed together:

That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,
Why then we rack the value
(Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, IV:1 (CB, 6-7));

We term sleep death, and yet it is waking that kills us ... I dare not trust it
without my prayers
(Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, p. 173 (CB, 7)).

Under the Lockean system, these two extracts might be placed under 'loss' and 'sleep', and would thus be completely separate, but placed together, there is a comment about the impermanence of possessions, loved ones, and life itself that would be less emphatic were they to be taken singularly. The gap between the extracts has enhanced their meaning. In this context, Chambers' comments seem to constitute an early, and far less technical, discussion of the function of gaps in producing meaning.

Of even more import is the fact that in this volume the juxtaposition of the three collections immediately creates two greater gaps, and this 'stimulates the reader into filling in the blanks with projections'³⁰. In other words, the reader will form connections between *Poems* and *A Short View*, and between *A Short View* and the commonplace book, simply because they have been brought together to form one

³⁰ Wolfgang Iser, 'Interaction Between Text and Reader' in *The Book History Reader* ed. by David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 293.

text in a single volume. If the three collections were bound separately, they would not take on the meaning that is enabled by the fact that they are connected.

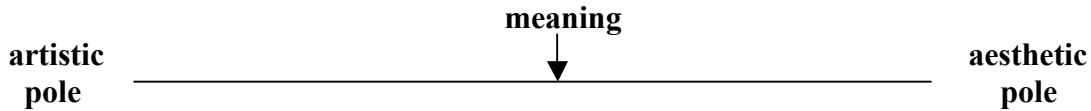
Together they become like Iser's example of a novel with a wandering viewpoint:

The threads of the plot are suddenly broken off, or continued in unexpected directions. One narrative section centres on a particular character and is then continued by the abrupt introduction of new characters. These sudden changes are often denoted by new chapters and so are clearly distinguished; the object of this distinction, however, is not separation so much as a tacit invitation to find the missing link³¹.

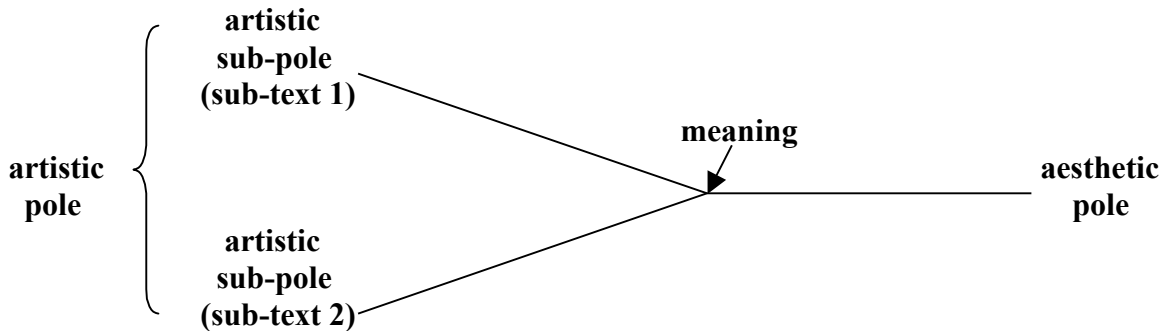
However they are not a novel: there is no plot running through all of them; rather than new characters there is a new writer; instead of new chapters there are entirely new collections. They are three disparate collections that have been forced together to form a text. The new text is not a cohesive whole, as each of the three collections could function independently of the others, which would not be true of sections of a novel. The gaps between the three collections therefore deserve a more separatist term: spaces. These spaces will function in the same way as gaps, governing the way in which a reader realises a text and takes the position of the aesthetic pole. Yet since the text is split by the two spaces between the three collections into three sub-texts, so too will the artistic pole be split into three. These might properly be termed artistic sub-poles. Gaps will still exist in each sub-text, guiding the way in which the reader interacts with each individually, but the meaning of each sub-text will also be governed by the spaces, and perhaps more so. Thus the actualisation of the text is a no longer a product of the interaction solely between text and reader, or artistic and

³¹ Wolfgang Iser, 'Interaction Between Text and Reader' in *The Book History Reader* ed. by David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 293.

aesthetic poles as in Iser's model, in which interaction creates a line between the two poles, and the actualisation of the text is 'situated somewhere between the two',³²:



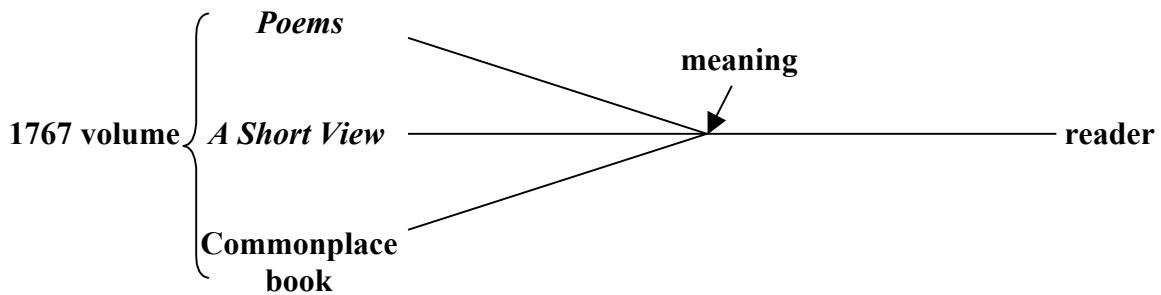
Instead there will be an interaction between the aesthetic pole, that being the realisation of the reader, and the two artistic sub-poles on either side of the space which the reader seeks to find the missing link across. The artistic sub-poles on either side of the space cannot interact with one another since the sub-texts are static, whilst an interaction is a dynamic process. However, the reader will have to interact with both sub-texts in the attempt to find the missing link between them, so there will be two lines of interaction. The point at which these lines converge, creating a 'V' which bridges the space between the sub-texts, is the actualisation of the text, or meaning:



In this volume then, the meaning of *Poems* will be generated by an interaction between the reader and *Poems*, and the reader and *A Short View*, as the reader

³² Wolfgang Iser, 'Interaction Between Text and Reader' in *The Book History Reader* ed. by David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 291.

interacts with both and finds the missing link. The meaning of the commonplace book will be generated by an interaction between the reader and the commonplace book, and the reader and *A Short View*. The meaning of *A Short View* will be the product of an interaction between the reader and all three sub-texts, and will be situated at the point at which all three lines of interaction converge:



Iser writes that gaps and blanks enrich the meaning of a text, as ‘it is the implications and not the statements that give shape and weight to the meaning ... the said expands to take on greater significance’³³. Therefore spaces, as more extreme versions of the same, can only enrich the meaning of a text to a greater extent. A space forces the reader to interact with two sub-texts, so the dynamism of interaction will be doubled. Since *A Short View* is situated next to the commonplace book, and these two sub-texts will have the greatest space between them, not in physical terms, but in terms of authorship and genre, this space will best illustrate how the meaning of the two sub-texts is enhanced by it. The missing links that will bridge the space will be identified, though not exhaustively, with discussion of the ways in which these links will affect the meaning of the two sub-texts, and the text as a whole.

³³ Wolfgang Iser, ‘Interaction Between Text and Reader’ in *The Book History Reader* ed. by David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 293.

II

Dacome defines the commonplace book as work which brings together

the order of learning and the methodising of one's thoughts, the pursuit of self-improvement, and the fashioning of the polite individual. While collecting and ordering notes and thoughts, compilers also worked on their own intellectual, moral, and social edification³⁴.

These comments immediately allow the reader to bridge the space between the commonplace book and *A Short View* by applying the explicit purpose of the commonplace book to the implicit purpose of Pye's accounts: order, self-improvement and politeness. This casts light on what is *not* said in *A Short View*, which in turn means that 'the unsaid comes to life in the reader's imagination'³⁵, so the meaning of the sub-text is enhanced.

Both collections attempt to impose order on the areas of culture on which they focus: *A Short View* takes what are practically inventories of landscape, architecture, and interior decoration; the commonplace book makes vast quantities of literature more manageable, assembling a 'compend of knowledge'³⁶. Such an approach was necessary since, as Brewer notes, 'the sheer quantity of information, the number of publications to read, pictures to see and performances to attend ... put a strain on the ideal of the refined person, well versed in the arts'³⁷. Pye writes that her collection of accounts of Twickenham were written as 'a hint to my

³⁴ Lucia Dacome, 'Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth Century Britain', *The Journal of the History of Ideas, Inc.*, 65.4 (2004) 603-625
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_ideas/v065/65.4dacome.html> [accessed April 2006] (para. 16 of 31)

³⁵ Wolfgang Iser, 'Interaction Between Text and Reader' in *The Book History Reader* ed. by David Finkelstein & Alistair McCleery (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 293.

³⁶ Sister Joan Marie Lechner, *Renaissance Concepts of the Commonplaces* (New York: Pageant Press, 1962), pp. 2-3.

³⁷ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), p. 427.

memory, when length of time, or other accidents, might possibly efface the idea' (*T*, iii). She catalogues her experiences in what she refers to at first as her journal (*T*, iii), so that she can keep up with the fashions in the arts that she is exposed to. Landscaping itself had been 'raised to the level of an Art in the eighteenth century'³⁸, and as well as natural descriptions Pye frequently mentions paintings displayed in drawing rooms, such as those by Raphael and Rembrandt in Mr Hudson's house in Twickenham (*T*, 23). Commonplace books had emerged as a reaction to the increasing volume of books printed, and the fear that one could never read and retain all of the information within them, so again there is 'the desire for comprehensiveness, the wish to enumerate the world'³⁹. Another collection of extracts from 1791 claimed to present any readers with 'a great variety of English Books; to introduce them to an acquaintance with our best and most approved Writers; and lay the foundation for improvement and entertainment in advanced life'⁴⁰.

This attempt to improve is equally true of Pye's accounts. In her introduction to *A Short View* she mentions that she has written it in order to receive and retain as much instruction from her visits as possible, noting that such journeys form 'the only way we have of becoming at all acquainted with the progress of arts' (*T*, iv). The juxtaposition of the commonplace book highlights this sentence, giving far more meaning to a point that the reader might otherwise pass over. Her limited

³⁸ David C. Streatfield & Alistair M. Duckworth, *Landscape in the Gardens and Literature of Eighteenth Century England: Papers Read at a Clark Library Seminar 18th March 1978* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), p. 3.

³⁹ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), p. 472.

⁴⁰ *Extracts: Elegant, Instructive, & Entertaining* (London: 1791), p. 1.

and restricted acquaintance with ‘the progress of arts’, her guided tours of other people’s residences, contrasts sharply with the wide array of literature that the writer of the commonplace book is able to experience. Julius Bryant describes Pye’s journal as ‘tangible evidence of the pastime [of visiting villas] as a kind of stuck-at-home sisters’ Grand Tour’⁴¹. Pye is desperate to improve herself as much as possible, criticising the way in which most young ladies pay such visits ‘without answering any other end than barely saying they have been there; ... neither receiving any instruction from it themselves, nor rendering their conversation more amusing’ (*T*, iv). Both the writer of the commonplace book and Pye document their experiences of culture to avoid being like ‘the man who reads, and neglects to write down the essence of what he has read’ in the case of the former, or ‘the man who sees, and omits to record what he has seen’⁴² in the case of the latter, as such oversights would inhibit self-improvement. Such pursuit of self-improvement and a well ordered mind was ‘valued as a sign of social as well as personal accomplishment and moral integrity’⁴³.

Furthermore, as Jeremy Black puts it, ‘The inspiration of spectator and reader’ to document their experiences demonstrated their ‘fine delicacy that variously called forth and inculcated appropriate behaviour’⁴⁴. This was vital

⁴¹ Julius Bryant, ‘Villa Views and the Uninvited Audience’ in *The Georgian Villa* ed. by Dana Arnold (Somerset: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1998), p. 17.

⁴² *A new commonplace book; being an improvement on that recommended by Mr. Locke; properly ruled throughout with a complete skeleton index, and ample directions for its use* (London: printed for J. Walker, 1799), p. 1.

⁴³ Lucia Dacome, ‘Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth Century Britain’, *The Journal of the History of Ideas, Inc.*, 65.4 (2004) 603-625
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_ideas/v065/65.4dacome.html> [accessed April 2006] (para. 31 of 31)

⁴⁴ Jeremy Black, *A Subject for Taste: Culture in Eighteenth Century England* (London & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 19.

within a society that, throughout much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ‘cherished the performance of mental control through polite conversation’⁴⁵. Politeness was an important indicator of taste and class, and works such as commonplace books were demonstrations of these qualities, for as Brewer writes, ‘The book had ceased to be merely a text and had become an icon and object which conveyed a sense of its owner’⁴⁶. The writer of the commonplace book included some extracts on this very subject, seeming to agree that ‘an ill choice of [books] is ... the most pernicious mischief that can be ... ill ones deprave the mind’ (Robert Ward, *De Clifford*, p. 252 (CB, 76-78)). Similarly authors like Pye used politeness in their writing, ‘thereby showing at once both their skill in writing smooth verses and their awareness of social decorums (this would make them an appropriate house-guest)’⁴⁷. The issue of politeness is explicit in the sub-text of the commonplace book, and this bridge across the space highlights again what Pye is *not* saying in her own sub-text: that she wishes to be considered polite.

The writer of the commonplace book laments the elitism and snobbery of polite or high society as he includes the following extract:

There is many a man in those streets honest as you are ... who, if his pockets were three days empty – would sell thought, reason, body, & soul too, for that little coin!; is that the fault of the man? – no, it is the fault of mankind! God made man; behold what mankind have made a god! When I was poor I hated the world; now that I am rich I despise it
(Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Money* (CB, 17-18)).

⁴⁵ Lucia Dacome, ‘Noting the Mind: Commonplace Books and the Pursuit of the Self in Eighteenth Century Britain’, *The Journal of the History of Ideas, Inc.*, 65.4 (2004) 603-625
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_history_of_ideas/v065/65.4dacome.html> [accessed April 2006] (para. 31 of 31)

⁴⁶ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), p. 189.

⁴⁷ David Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century 1700-1789* (Malaysia: Pearson Education Ltd., 2003), p. 27.

This comment highlights an implicit concern of Pye, who evidently felt excluded to some extent by polite society, being dismissed by Walpole, one of her most prominent dedicatees, as ‘a Jewess, who has married twice and turned Christian, poetess and authoress’⁴⁸. As Thomas Woodman writes, politeness can also be used to ‘define, control, and exclude’⁴⁹. Pye’s uncle, Moses Mendes, was a third generation descendant of one of the many ‘Spanish and Portuguese Marrano merchants who had fled from their homes in order to be free to worship God in their own way’⁵⁰ in the seventeenth century. The Sephardim were generally accepted, and indeed, ‘in matters of language, costume, deportment, and taste, [they] were not markedly dissimilar from their neighbours’⁵¹. However, prejudices still existed, and the Ashkenazi Jews in particular suffered ‘social and cultural ghettoization’⁵² in London, as ‘the belief in the otherness of the Jews was an inheritance of centuries-old Christian theological contempt for Judaism’⁵³.

A particular condition of their acceptance into mainstream society was the acquirement of country houses and estates, which constituted a ‘means of acquiring social respectability, for the ideal of the English gentleman at this time was tied to the ownership of land and the cultivation of country pursuits’⁵⁴. Such a purchase also reinforced a move away from Judaism, as it ‘indicated a willingness to live ...

⁴⁸ Quoted in Betty Rizzo, ‘Jael Henrietta Pye’ in *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers: 1660-1800* ed. by Janet Todd (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1987), p. 261.

⁴⁹ Thomas Woodman, *Politeness and Poetry in the Age of Pope* (London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1989), p. 12.

⁵⁰ Albert M. Hyamson, *The Jews of England: An Historical Survey* (Essex: Anchor Press Ltd., 1951), p. 14.

⁵¹ Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656-1945* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 11.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2002), p. 68.

⁵⁴ Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656-1945* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 11.

outside Jewish social circles and without access to synagogues'⁵⁵. A third benefit would have been a distancing from the 'association of the Jews with commercial chicanery and street ruffianism'⁵⁶ at a time when anti-Jew hostility increasingly existed 'independently of any theological framework'⁵⁷. Thus Pye's pursuit of acceptance into country-house polite society, as demonstrated in *A Short View*, was particularly important for her. The space between *A Short View* and the commonplace book has guided the reader to apply the notion of politeness to her accounts, and thus the generic descriptions of landscape and architecture have been given more meaning in terms of Pye's background and concerns.

Reciprocally, the Jewish background of Pye highlights some interesting inclusions in the commonplace book which add much to its significance. There are seventeen maxims taken from *Ecclesiasticus*, a Jewish work by Yeshua Ben Sira written around 180-175 BC, making it by far the most quoted work. Another extract taken from *Wisdom of Solomon* reinforces the connection with Judaism, as it is thought to have language and ideas of Greek origin, and is thus likely to have been written by an Alexandrian Jew. Both *Ecclesiasticus* and *Wisdom of Solomon* are included in Ketuvim, the third and final section of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), as is *Proverbs*, from which another extract is taken. Whilst *Solomon* and *Proverbs* both also appear in the Old Testament though, *Ecclesiasticus* is not a biblical text. It is accepted as part of the biblical canon by Catholics, but not by Protestants, and at the time the commonplace book was written, the official religion was Church of

⁵⁵ Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656-1945* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 13.

⁵⁶ Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2002), p. 71.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 69.

England. Therefore it seems plausible to suggest that the writer of the commonplace book was at least familiar with the Tanakh, though he may not have been a practising Jew. He certainly drew comfort from the maxims of *Ecclesiasticus*, writing out one entitled ‘How we ought to grieve for departed Friends and Relations’ and noting that it was ‘extracted on the day following a mournful event in my family: which took place on 24th July 1841’ (*Ecclesiasticus*, 38:16 (CB, 46-48)). It seems unlikely that these extracts would take on so much significance and enhance the sub-text were they not juxtaposed to Pye’s sub-text and thus her ancestry and concerns.

As has been aptly demonstrated, the space between *A Short View* and the commonplace book has done much to enrich their meaning. The placing of the three sub-texts binds them together, not only physically, but in terms of themes and import, and this can only serve to make them more significant as a text. The writer of the commonplace book includes an anonymous extract which says, ‘By reading we enjoy the dead, by conversing with the living, and by contemplation ourselves’ (CP, 78). In the case of this volume though, by reading we can enable the dead (including Pye, the writer of the commonplace book and the authors of the extracts he includes) to converse with one another, as the reader contemplates the gaps and spaces, finding the missing links which bridge them. This enhances significance and meaning, and gives the volume an importance that it would perhaps otherwise lack.

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