

20.

‘The present therefore seems improbable, the future most uncertain’: transcending academia through Charlotte Lennox’s *Lady’s Museum* (1760–1)

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How can scholarly editing and publishing have an impact beyond academia? More specifically, how can teaching, editing and publishing proto-feminist eighteenth-century texts now help humanists envision future possibilities for the public humanities? To begin to grapple with these questions, we turn to Charlotte Lennox (c. 1729–1804), the eighteenth-century writer of Scottish-Irish descent (then) famous for authoring the *Female Quixote* (1752) and (now) for inspiring Jane Austen, especially her satire *Northanger Abbey* (1817). We are co-editing the very first critical edition of the eclectic, educational magazine Lennox edited, the two-volume *Lady’s Museum* (1760–1), in our DH initiative the Lady’s Museum Project at ladysmuseum.com. We follow in the footsteps of Lennox, who in the essay ‘Of the Universe Considered under a General View’ challenges the ‘so common cry against the practice of natural philosophy [science], *What is the use of this?*’ To answer, she takes the reader on a Dante-esque tour of the universe, through Venus, Earth, Pluto, the Moon and Mars; the ‘frosts of Greenland’ and other areas within the ‘system’, the ‘vast machine, of which our globe is but a single part’, culminating in a scientific case study of an insect and a mic-drop moment in the

conclusion: 'Let us, I say, but once reflect on this review of nature, and who can ask what use these studies have?' In a similar vein, if someone – and let's face it, not only the general public and undergraduate students, but also most humanists who are not also eighteenth-centuryists – were to ask us of the Lady's Museum Project, Why Lennox? Why now? 'What is the use of this?' we would mimic Lennox. We would like to take you on tour through Lennox's textual universe, her *Museum*, and say: here is *Philosophy for the Ladies*, one of the nine regular series, printed in seven instalments over two years in which 'useful pieces of knowledge' on insects, animals and humans equip readers for informed discussions on the growing field of natural philosophy. Here is the *History of Harriot and Sophia*, one of the first serialised novels in English, which predated Charles Dickens's famous use of that publishing method by about 75 years.² We would then point to the English translation of the *History of the Princess Padmani*, a Hindu romance still widely read in India today, and the revolutionary-at-the-time *Lady's Geography* and *Original Inhabitants of Great Britain* series, which

- 1 Anonymous, 'Of the Universe Considered under a General View,' the *Lady's Museum* 1, no. 2 <https://ladysmuseum.com/of-the-universe-as-considered-under-a-general-view/>. 'As there was no authorial attribution, "The Lady's Geography" and "Philosophy for the Ladies" might have been written by Lennox.' Susan Carlile, *Charlotte Lennox: An Independent Mind* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 195.
- 2 Lennox was the first woman author to serialise a novel, second to Tobias Smollett's *The Adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves* (1760–2), which may have been the first, as the serialisation of his novel began in the *British Magazine* (1714–75), two months before the serialisation of Lennox's novel, but it ended in 1762, a year after the *Lady's Museum* ceased publication and the same year Lennox published *Sophia* (1762). Scholars cannot say for certain whether Lennox knew about Smollett's serialisation when she was serialising her own novel, but archives reveal that Anthony Walker created the illustrations for both publications. However, Robert D. Mayo suggests, 'more likely it was a spontaneous effort, predicated on similar assumptions regarding the new-advanced state of general taste'. *The English Novel in the Magazines, 1740–1815* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 277.

jointly argued against British imperialism when it was proliferating. Read together, the essays posit that, like the islands European nations were then exploiting and colonising, Britain was once an island with 'original inhabitants'.³ Finally, we would immerse you in the satire of the *Trifler* letters, the editorial persona that laces the magazine with signature Lennox sarcasm and wit that rails against gender stereotypes. Written to entertain *and* instruct a general audience, the *Lady's Museum* achieved activism through a rich array of literary genres. In its second life, its activist message and powerful prose are again resonating with a general audience including student and public participants.

This magazine still resonates because the imperialistic and patriarchal structures that Lennox and other contributors wrote against are still in place – including the academy, which has long repressed and ignored women writers including Lennox. We are updating Lennox's proto-feminist magazine and mission now because recovery of women writers continues to be necessary to upend oppressive patriarchal and imperialistic systems. This essay engages with future possibilities and considers how digital and scholarly editing and publishing can have an impact beyond academia. We began by looking back to 1760, when Lennox advocated for a new educational philosophy inclusive of women through a wide range of writing genres within her eclectic magazine. Next, we will describe the Lady's Museum Project's future-focused project management, site design and public-outreach processes. We will describe the intrinsic value of centring creative processes by decentring traditional editorial and educational relationships. Through creative activities traditionally reserved for the editor such as writing introductory essays and editorial glosses and recording and editing audio versions of the text, students and other nonspecialist users are co-creating the project's future alongside eighteenth-century specialists. Finally, we

3 Karenza Sutton-Bennett and Susan Carlile, 'Teaching the Lady's Museum and Sophia: Imperialism, Early Feminism, and Beyond', *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640–1830* 12, no. 1 (Summer 2022) <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/abo/vol12/iss1/7/>.

will discuss sustainability: how scholarly editing can transcend academia and enter the ironically more secure public sphere, even if the project managers and site owners themselves work precariously in, or even adjacent to, the academy.

Overlooked, neglected, and/or ignored eighteenth-century texts by and about marginalised subjects harbour special meaning in our fraught present and therefore powerful potential to engage the public now. The *Lady's Museum* is not a text that our patriarchal and imperialistic systems – including the literary canon – have deemed adequately cultured and civilised. Our project takes part in feminist bibliography practices as defined by Kate Ozment to correct that oversight.⁴ Users of Lady's Museum Project, such as students, academics and the public can participate in a shared purpose of unearthing this valuable, genre-rich treasure trove and displaying these exemplars of early, woman-led literary journalism in public view. By preserving and updating centuries-old texts, co-workers on digital editions can feel empowered to participate in writing history in new ways – *alongside* academics and not through some academy-student-public trickle-down effect (the traditional model), which, given the state of the academy and the precarity of the professorial profession itself, is no longer feasible anyway. As we intend to show, by combining the teaching and scholarly editions of the same text under the same URL and increasing public outreach in *nonscholarly*, creative venues, project managers can encourage momentum and motivation amongst lifelong learners. In this way, we can keep projects alive via decentred relationships amongst specialists and nonspecialists as co-workers.

Theory and design

Digital and traditional humanists occupy a similar position as the *Lady's Museum* essayist who must answer regarding natural philos-

4 Kate Ozment, 'Rationale for Feminist Bibliography', *Textual Cultures* 13, no. 1 (2020), DOI: 10.14434/textual.v13i1.30076.

ophy: ‘What is the use of this?’ This is not (necessarily) a bad thing. In our project we not only welcome such questions, but we also make it a point to ask them of ourselves continuously. Cathy N. Davidson points to DH project managers’ ethical imperative to continuously ask: Why?⁵ As in, why fund this project? This innovation? Why display these data, in this way? And more to the point: who and what is this work *for*? We turn to the proto-feminism of the late eighteenth century to grapple with our present and to envision new, intersectional and digital futures. The *Lady’s Museum* embodied and argued for a philosophy radical at that time: to provide all genders with a globally conscious curriculum of novels, poetry, essays, translations and hands-on learning activities in nature predating and prefiguring Romanticism – a philosophy we seek to update for the twenty-first century reading public, and not just those privileged enough to reside in the academy.⁶

Yes, this is a feminist project; no, it is not just *for* women. Like the *Lady’s Museum* itself, the Lady’s Museum Project involves all genders in a spirit of collegiality and collaboration. The landmark *Women’s Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1690–1820s*, edited by Jennie Batchelor and Manushag N. Powell (2018) dismantles the erroneous (if understandable) notion that because an eighteenth-century periodical title contained the word ‘female’ or ‘lady’ (such as the *Female Tatler*, the *Lady’s Museum*, and the *Lady’s Magazine*), it was primarily for and by women. Rather, the monikers ‘female’ and ‘lady’ pandered to certain readerships in the same way the *Gentleman’s Magazine* aimed for a wide range of genders and classes, not solely gentlemen.⁷ Lady’s Museum Project contributors of all genders are

5 Cathy N. Davidson, ‘Difference Is Our Operating System’, in *Disrupting the Digital Humanities*, ed. Dorothy Kim and Jesse Stommel (Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2018), xi, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv19cwdqv.2>.

6 Susan Carlile, ‘Charlotte Lennox’, 335. ‘By 1835 Lennox was firmly in the Romantic canon of Shakespeare criticism.’

7 *Women’s Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1690–1820s*, ed. Jennie Batchelor and Manushag N. Powell (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018). The value of this scholarly work on women’s writing is immense, and the cost to

invited to not only the authorial but also the editorial table. Jacqueline Wernimont troubles the idea that simply increasing representation of feminist and women's texts is 'enough' to thoroughly practise feminist theory.⁸ Therefore not only does the Lady's Museum Project provide the public with access to a text of critical and cultural importance in the history of feminism, journalism and literature; it also builds the framework for feminist editing and project management.⁹ We distribute editorial authority and actively destabilise the student/teacher, writer/editor binaries, reflecting Ray Siemens and Corina Koolen's conception of the social edition, through which editors can use the affordances of social technology to shift roles from ultimate authority to facilitator of reader contributions.¹⁰ Rather than us, the co-editors and eighteenth-century specialists, adding annotations that we think undergraduates ought to know – the traditional book model – undergraduate students have written over 90 per cent of the annotations for the student/non-specialist edition of the *Lady's Museum*, where their names are prominently attributed to link to from their résumés.¹¹ The non-

those without access to a university library is prohibitive: currently \$177 USD on Amazon (for print and e-book versions), underscoring the importance of educating the public about women's history in literary journalism through lower-cost scholarly editing venues other than academic publishing.

- 8 Jacqueline Wernimont, 'Whence Feminism? Assessing Feminist Interventions in Digital Literacy Archives'. *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2013), <http://digitalhumanities.org:8081/dhq/vol/7/1/000156/000156.html>.
- 9 As 'nontraditional' graduate students we bring experience to the project that predates our PhD and digital humanities training so that our team leadership processes are based on our previous careers including Karenza's in event management and office administration and Kelly's in journalism, technical writing and project/product management.
- 10 Ray Siemens and Corina Koolen, 'Toward Modeling the Social Edition: An Approach to Understanding the Electronic Scholarly Edition in the Context of New and Emerging Social Media', *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 27, no. 4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/lc/fqs013>.
- 11 In this practice of students editing, glossing and teaching future students through introductory essays, we are indebted to Jaime Goodrich's approach in *The Poetry*

specialist edition is for nonspecialists including undergraduates, and it is therefore annotated *by* undergraduates.¹² The specialist edition is forthcoming and will be edited by specialists, hopefully by a team of scholars including but not limited to us.¹³ We thus see our editorial work as building the framework for students *and* scholars to find fulfilment and ideally to have fun while doing this work, in alignment with Ozment's argument that feminist bibliography continues 'work on women's lives and labor by providing tools for feminist scholars to use in their work, while simultaneously building a framework that allows such work to flourish'.¹⁴ And like Franklin and Pohl, 'We also acknowledge that digitization will require a revaluation of traditional scholarly practices and priorities.'¹⁵ Because scholars, students and the reading public have equal access to consume *and* contribute on the same URL – notably a .com and not .edu – the magazine continues its eighteenth-century mission

of Gertrude More and *Dividing the Kingdoms*, and Simone Chess's in the *Warrior Women Project*, in which Kelly participated, learning first hand the rewarding, professionalisation experience of participating in public-facing humanities projects during graduate coursework and assisting her ability to co-create this one with Karenza. Jaime Goodrich and Kelly Plante, gen. eds., *The Poetry of Gertrude More: Piety and Politics in a Benedictine Convent* (2021), <https://s.wayne.edu/gertrudemore>. Jaime Goodrich, gen. ed., *Dividing the Kingdoms: Interdisciplinary Methods for Teaching Shakespeare to Undergraduates* (2020), <https://guides.lib.wayne.edu/folgerkinglear>. Simone Chess, gen. ed., and Kelly Plante, project manager, *The Warrior Women Project* (2021), <https://s.wayne.edu/warriorwomen>.

- 12 While it has been easiest to reach undergraduate students for glossing through the lesson plan and our institutional connections, we are receptive to and brainstorming ideas for how to build a framework that would welcome public glossers as we have for Lady's LibriVox.
- 13 In this involvement of a community of scholars for the annotation and introduction of texts we would follow the illustrious footsteps of the *Pulter Project*. Leah Knight and Wendy Wall, gen. eds., *The Pulter Project: Poet in the Making* (2018), <http://pulterproject.northwestern.edu>.
- 14 Kate Ozment, 'Rationale for Feminist Bibliography', 151.
- 15 Franklin and Pohl, 'An Editor's Duty', 178.

to provide an inclusive learning space, now with the potential to smash scholarly silos.¹⁶

Scholarly silos are a major reason why most people including humanists know little to nothing about Lennox and *The Lady's Museum*. In 2000, Clifford Siskin coined the term 'The Great Forgetting' in his chapter of that title to describe 'The Great Tradition for English departments' of omitting women writers (except Austen) from their curriculums.¹⁷ In 2006, Jennie Batchelor reviewed Betty A. Schellenberg's *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-century Britain* in an essay titled 'The Great Remembering'. But scholarly monographs and essays do not make an informed public. For instance, in a 2022 *Publishers Weekly* article titled 'The Female Quixote and Me', a male novelist describes how he managed to publish a novel about a female version of *Don Quixote* without even knowing about Lennox's novel titled *The Female Quixote*.¹⁸ He then dismisses the work using the very same masculine-centred aesthetic criteria Siskin, Batchelor, Schellenberg and countless literary scholars since have debunked. *Don Quixote* lives on confidently in the literary canon; *The Female Quixote* does not. And that is a particularly hard ceiling to crack. Since the 1980s feminists have been 'unearthing women's writing from the special collections and making it directly available through reprints and digitization, often entirely bypassing the canon mediated to the reader via publishers, literary institutions and academic scholarly editors.'¹⁹

16 Due to our precarious institutional affiliations as graduate student co-editors – we do not know where we will work after we graduate – we created the Lady's Museum Project on a .com rather than a .edu domain. Rather than detracting from the site's scholarly merit, we believe the .com domain enhances our project's communal identity.

17 Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

18 Seth Kaufman, 'The Female Quixote and Me', *Publishers Weekly* (29 July 2022), <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/columns-and-blogs/soapbox/article/89975-the-female-quixote-and-me.html>.

19 Caroline Franklin and Nicole Pohl, "'An Editor's duty is indeed that of most

Bypassing the canon is a good start. But when initiatives primarily reach academic audiences, the public – including well-read novelists and publishers – continues to forget.

Contemporary authors, publishers and their reading public constitute an untapped audience for DH projects, which tend to ignore the creative writing community (likely due to institutional stove-pipes that separate supposedly serious academic work from creative writing). For example, in 2021 *Creative Nonfiction Magazine* solicited pitches for its special issue on the origins of that genre citing Daniel Defoe – and no women writers – as among its earliest progenitors. Kelly successfully pitched and published an article in that issue correcting the magazine's previous, erroneous portrayal of Defoe (who in fact appropriated the secret-history formulas of Delarivier Manley and Eliza Haywood), complete with a suggested reading list of early-modern women creative-nonfiction writers linking to an online store for further reading.²⁰ Unfortunately, chronically understudied texts such as Haywood's *The Female Spectator* (1744–6) were impossible to link to a quality edition at a price that introductory readers would be willing to pay. That periodical has gained warranted scholarly attention in the past 10 years, but there is not a full open-access digital version.²¹ This illustrates why we want *The Lady's Museum* to remain free. When other publications

danger": The Rationale for a Digital Edition of Elizabeth Montagu's Letters', in *Editing Women's Writing, 1670–1840*, ed. Amy Culley and Anna M. Fitzer (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2018), 171–191– [180].

20 Kelly Plante, 'The Secret History of Creative Nonfiction: A Tour of Pioneering Women Writers Critics Conveniently "Forgot"', *Creative Nonfiction Magazine*, no. 76, 'Exploring an Expanding Genre: The Evolution of Creative Nonfiction', <https://creativenonfiction.org/writing/the-secret-history-of-creative-nonfiction/>.

21 "'The Mad Exploit She Had Undertaken": A Critical Edition of Eliza Haywood's *The Female Spectator* Book 14, Letter 1', The Warrior Women Project, accessed 1 November 2022, <https://s.wayne.edu/warriorwomen/haywood-edition/>. Kelly Plante created an open-access mini-edition of *The Female Spectator* in 2020, but the full digitised edition of the periodical is behind the paywalls of ECCO and PastMatters that require institutional licences to access.

link to it, their readers will immediately be able to read it. The public is hungry for Jane Austen-like adaptations. To reach this untapped audience, we plan to publish literary nonfiction texts on and off our website, in periodicals like *Harper's*, *Lapham's Quarterly* or *The New York Times*. By connecting scholarly and public audiences through contemporary literary writing – in periodicals that are descended from *The Lady's Museum* itself – we can reverse 'The Great Forgetting'.

To help the public remember, we must continually attract readers and keep them interested, invested and involved in these eighteenth-century texts. To keep readers involved, we must avoid the outdated feminist site design model of the 'encyclopaedic online database'. Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith describe this pitfall: 'While its editions and textual assemblages might invite readers into the electronic archive and provide pathways through which the texts might be approached, many readers may never find their way to this site. And when they do reach it, the more experimental of these case studies might look too unfamiliar to be legible to some of the very audiences we would like to attract, especially those new to the field of early modern women's writing.'²² Sara C. E. Ross and Paul Salzman have argued that 'One solution to the tension between the archive as impenetrable mass, and the individual woman's text that might fly beneath the large digital humanities radar, is the curated archive of early modern women's writing.'²³ By curating an archive of one magazine and one editor, Lennox – rather than creating a database of multiple woman-penned periodicals – we avoid the too-complex encyclopedic-database format. By prioritising a look-and-feel of simplicity and legibility in our site design – versus dazzling users with big data and innovation – we can attract users who do not want

22 Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith, 'Editing Early Modern Women in the Digital Age', in *Editing Early Modern Women*, ed. Sarah C. E. Ross and Paul Salzman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 262 and 266.

23 Sarah C. E. Ross and Paul Salzman, 'Introduction' in *Editing Early Modern Women*, ed. Sarah C. E. Ross and Paul Salzman (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 17.

to bother with complex textual apparatus, thus transcending the impenetrable mass of DH projects.²⁴

Collaborative work and education

We extend Lennox's original mission of publishing valuable educational material at a low (or in our project's case, free) cost. Art galleries and museums have long been associated with open-access, informal learning.²⁵ Lennox herself called her magazine a museum, as a place of learning for her readers. Her magazine includes several noteworthy (textual) exhibitions including: translations of two French educational treatises, encyclopedic-styled serialised articles on natural philosophy and geography, an original serialised novel, memoirs of historical figures, and 13 images paired alongside the various articles.²⁶ Susan Carlile posits that Lennox chose to title her

24 To read more about the design of LMP, see Karenza Sutton-Bennett and Kelly Plante 'A Numerous and Powerful Generation of Triflers': The Social Edition as Counterpublic in Charlotte Lennox's *The Lady's Museum* (1760–1) and the Lady's Museum Project (2021–)' *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 35, no. 2 (Spring 2023).

25 John Oliver, 'Museums: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)', accessed 1 November 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJPLiTkCSM>. Museums are not fully open-access, and themselves have a legacy steeped in eighteenth-century European imperialism – namely stealing artefacts from across the globe and making them inaccessible to those cultures but accessible to the British public – a history provocatively communicated to a public audience in the comedy show *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*.

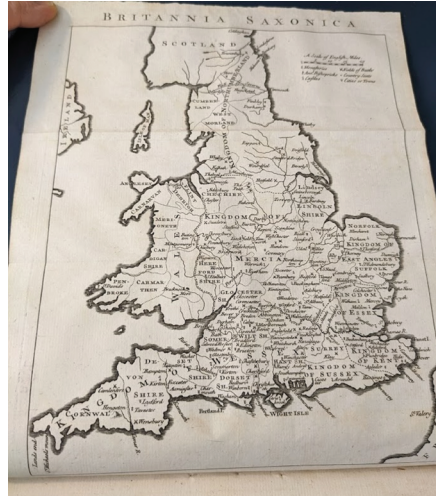
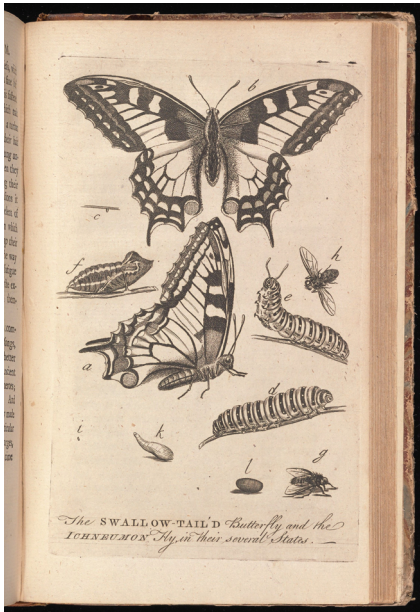
26 Images in periodicals in the eighteenth century were rare because of the cost. Most periodicals only had a frontispiece or emblem. The only example of images in a periodical before Lennox's is John Newberry's periodical for children, *The Lilliputian* (1752), which contains several images to enhance the didactic tales. As the publisher of *The Lady's Museum*, Newberry most likely encouraged Lennox to include images to augment the didactic lessons of her periodical's articles and serialised novel. Images are available from the 1752 volume of the periodical through the British Library collections online. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-lilliputian-magazine>. The Lilliputian Magazine: or, *The*

magazine museum 'to mirror the newly established British Museum, which opened on 15 January 1759 and was only a twenty-minute walk from her current address. [The museum's] [e]ntry was free and given to "all studious and curious Persons".'²⁷ While periodicals themselves originally catered to a paying audience, the vast collections of Lennox's were far cheaper and therefore more attainable than buying an entire library of books. Moreover, periodicals' circulations became open-access with their extended readerships in the public spheres of coffee houses and tea houses: increasingly popular gathering places in the eighteenth century for learning outside the institution. We see that today to a limited degree. Google Books contains the second volume of *The Lady's Museum*, including low-quality versions of the magazine's images, which makes it difficult to closely examine them. However, in the vein of the British Museum's free entry to *studious* and *curious* individuals, the Beinecke Rare Book Library has digitised two *Lady's Museum* illustrations and shared them with the public on its website (Figures 20.1 and 20.1a). The other images are only available in person at the publicly funded British Library in London, England. Up until 2023, scholars could request the digitisation of these images for a cost (price varied depending on type of use), but we have requested the Beinecke Rare Book Library to make not only all the magazine images, but the entire two-volume periodical available to the public, further extending the intent of Lennox's museum.

The Lady's Museum Project has so far undergone a wider than expected public interest in the form of contributions. In the first year of our teaching the project in classrooms, students from Canada and Brazil volunteered to write critical essays for the website, continuing their engagement with the magazine outside the classroom (some after attaining their degrees). This demonstrates the appeal

young gentleman & lady's golden library, being an attempt to mend the world ... & to establish the plainness, simplicity, virtue & wisdom of the golden age, etc.
London: printed for the Society [i.e., the Lilliputian Society]; published by T. Carnan [1752].

27 Carlile, *An Independent Mind*, 171.



Figures 20.1 and 20.1a These illustrations, two of the 13 in *The Lady's Museum*, appear in *Philosophy for the Ladies* and *Original Inhabitants of Great Britain* serial essays.²⁸ Public domain.

of public humanities projects for students. Using our curated archive as a launch point, we started a subproject to produce an accessible audio book of the *Museum* that we call the *Lady's LibriVox*. We partnered with LibriVox to create the audiobook because LibriVox audiobooks are open-access: 'free for anyone to listen to, on their computers, iPods, or other mobile device, or to burn onto a CD', and 'read by volunteers from all over the world'.²⁹ Brandeis University awarded our first audiobook reader, poet and PhD candidate Jenny Factor, a paid internship to record volume 1 of the Trifler letters for our site. After hearing about the initiative, Ashley Bender, a professor

28 'The Lady's Museum. By the author of The female Quixote,' Digital Collections, Yale University Library, accessed 1 November 2022, <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/15825022> and <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2042245>.

29 'Volunteer for LibriVox,' LibriVox, accessed 1 November 2022, <https://librivox.org/pages/volunteer-for-librivox/>.

at Texas Woman's University asked us if she could use our Lady's Librivox lesson plan for her upper-year undergraduate course.³⁰ However, when she attempted to sign her students up to read the *Treatise on the Education of Daughters* series, we discovered that volunteers from the general public had already claimed some of the instalments. We launched the project in the summer of 2022, and by October, 70 per cent of the sections were recorded and 100 per cent of the sections were claimed. Volume 1 of the magazine is now published on librivox.org, archive.org and ladysmuseum.com; volume 2 is forthcoming with an estimated project completion date of fall 2024.³¹ This public interest underscores how learning and engaging with eighteenth-century texts can in fact transcend the classroom bounds. In a culture that still elevates poetry and novels over literary nonfiction, we did not foresee the general public's interest in recording such an obscure (to them) eighteenth-century 'woman's magazine'.

A historical 'woman's magazine' can, it turns out, unite scholars, students and the public under a shared editorial vision. Since we started work in summer 2021, hundreds of undergraduate students have written essays contextualising the publication for a public audience, created infographics analysing the periodical's images, and completed the scholarly annotations for the site's course reader and *The History of Harriot & Sophia*. Since summer 2022, public volunteers have read, proof-listened and managed the *Lady's LibriVox* audio book project, thus lending hundreds of (literal) voices, and not just ours, to the public's long-overdue re-introduction to Lennox at this most crucial time for broadcasting feminist history.³² The site

30 The lesson plan is publicly available to use at 'Lady's LibriVox', the Lady's Museum Project, accessed 1 November 2022, <https://ladysmuseum.com/community/librivox/>.

31 *The Lady's Museum*, Volume 1, The Internet Archive, https://archive.org/details/ladys_museum_1_2307_librivox. *The Lady's Museum*, Volume 1, LibriVox, <https://librivox.org/the-ladys-museum-volume-1-by-charlotte-lennox/>.

32 The Lady's LibriVox, the Lady's Museum Project, <https://ladysmuseum.com/community/librivox/>.

design of ladysmuseum.com allows users to navigate the text at their own pace and according to their own (and/or their teacher's) interests.³³ In this way, this eighteenth-century text speaks to readers where they are now. It rails against the patriarchal myth of the solo author or genius by encapsulating a co-creative public sphere that unites a multiplicity of present, past and future authors, editors, students, teachers, lifelong learners and scholars just as it did in 1760–1.³⁴ Feminist eighteenth-century scholars are still responding to the fallacy propagated since Jürgen Habermas's 'Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere' (1964), that the public sphere originating in the eighteenth century was the domain of men while women kept to the private sphere. The very presence of Lennox's *Lady's Museum* on the web, thrust into the so-called public sphere again after years of suppression or convenient forgetting, dismantles that fallacy.³⁵ This is what the Lady's Museum Project is *for*.

Crucially, this overlooked publication serves as a conversation starter for issues important to readers today, especially at the intersection

33 We refer to the teaching edition as a nonspecialist edition to emphasise that it is not just intended for teaching in the academy, but also for public access.

34 Franklin and Pohl, 'An Editor's Duty', 176. Franklin and Pohl make a similar theoretical connection between feminist work in the digital humanities: 'Derrida argued that electronic mail was transforming the public and private binary. Digitising eighteenth-century correspondence certainly inverts the conventional distinction between public and private paper correspondence.' The same applies to the correspondence in the form of letters to and from the editor and the Trifler published in *Thee Lady's Museum*. Rachael Scarborough King has argued that the letter served as a 'bridge genre', connecting early periodicals and novels. In this way, by publishing letters from eighteenth-century periodicals, digital humanists form a secondary bridge genre from the eighteenth century to now.

35 Franklin and Pohl, 'An Editor's Duty', 177–8. We are not the first to argue for the transformative power of including women's writing in the archive: 'As scholars of women's writing, we would agree that official archives have traditionally been used to support patriarchal authority and priorities... the nature of the archive and what it can do will itself change through the inclusion of female correspondence.'

of gender, race and the imperialistic and nationalistic legacies of the eighteenth century we are all grappling with today. As one student in Karenza's class asked during our presentation on *The Lady's Museum* and the digital humanities: But was her proto-feminism just about white women? Sutton-Bennett and Carlile answer by showing how *The Lady's Museum* argues for an increased understanding and appreciation of the strength of women in present-day India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia in the History of the Princess Padmani and the Lady's Geography: 'The activism in *The Lady's Museum* extends from English women's education to their participation on an international scale. Three more essays provide particularly fruitful ground for classroom discussion on women's engagement with British imperialism.'³⁶ Their article also introduces teachers to the potential impacts of *The Lady's Museum* at a Hispanic Serving Institution with relevance to students. Historical periodicals such as the *Lady's Museum* prompt important conversations about our reckoning with eighteenth-century legacies today such as systemic racism, sexism and imperialism; conversations we all need to be having, and not just in the academy.

Phases of scholarly and non-scholarly editing and publishing

Digital scholarly editing projects can offer the public and scholars alike access to historical content, without cost to the *lifelong learner*. This term's widespread usage today underscores the public's increasing interest to learn beyond the academy. TED Talks, Netflix documentaries, MasterClasses, Great Courses, YouTube, audio books, podcasts and 'BookTok' function as knowledge sources for those who want to continue their learning beyond secondary, college or university education. Moreover, with the decrease in well-paying and stable academic jobs, scholars are leaving the academy and still want to continue their learning informally, turning to public institu-

36 Karenza Sutton-Bennett and Susan Carlile, 'Teaching the Lady's Museum and Sophia,' 5.

tions such as libraries and open-access digital sites for their research. Likewise, 'independent scholar' is no longer a dirty word, as they have become more accepted with the rise of alt-ac careers. In fact, Karenza has begun a career that combines her skills as a professor and co-editor of the Lady's Museum Project. In her role as senior education manager in a non-profit association, she applies the skills she gained co-creating the curriculum for Lady's Museum Project.³⁷ We have therefore designed and will continue to update and raise public awareness about the Lady's Museum Project for this wide range of target users inclusive of lifelong learners and independent scholars.

But how will we continue to do so after we graduate and therefore may no longer reside in the academy? As Spencer D. C. Keralis bluntly puts it, 'Without student labor, the academy as a whole would grind to a halt.'³⁸ Student labour built our project. Fortunately, fellowships through the Canadian and American Societies for Eighteenth Century Studies (2021 and 2023) have funded the WordPress site and domain name costs for 15 years, as well as funding some student labour and travel costs towards finishing the course reader. However, our editorial labour remains unpaid and was not done for credit at our institutions. To maintain, update and innovate the site, we are continuing to volunteer our time as a 'labour of love' on top of our other jobs, seeking outside funding and support. This could, of course, become the reality for other DH projects as universities stall tenure-track hires in the humanities.³⁹ Since starting work on this

37 In August 2022 Karenza started working at Ontario Professional Planners Institute as their Education & Community Manager. In January 2024 she was promoted to Senior Manager of Education & Events. She develops and manages continual professional development courses for accredited urban and rural planners in Ontario, Canada. Her work profile can be found here: <https://ontarioplanners.ca/oppi/staff>.

38 Spencer D. C. Keralis, 'Disrupting Labor in Digital Humanities; or, the Classroom Is Not your Crowd', in *Disrupting the Digital Humanities*, ed. Dorothy Kim and Jessee Stommel (Publishing info), 274, <https://muse.jhu.edu/chapter/2333145>.

39 See Amy E. Earhart, 'Can We Trust the University?: Digital Humanities

project, both of us have received our PhDs, and we may or may not have an 'institutional affiliation' in the coming years. Thus, we are in a position to verbally and in writing challenge – but not to ourselves reform – the academy itself.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, in harnessing the LibriVox volunteer structure and public mission, our project is remaining in front of the paywall as opposed to expensive, subscription databases such as Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO) and even the feminist Orlando Project, which Kathryn Holland and Susan Brown have acknowledged is only accessible to much of its target audience when it is free during Women's History Month, largely because they pay contributors.⁴¹ In addition to the decrease in humanities tenure-track jobs, funding trends show how the digital humanities have historically been at odds with feminist projects. Christina Boyles has shown how not only the National Endowment for the Humanities, but also the long-standing feminist funding source of the Mellon Foundation, shifted priorities from women's recovery to digital projects since the

Collaborations with Historically Exploited Communities', in *Bodies of Information*, ed. Elizabeth Losh and Jacqueline Wernimont (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), <https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-4e08b137-aec5-49a4-83c0-38258425f145/section/6a48cd20-cfa5-4984-ba32-f531b231865f##ch07>.

40 'Be a Part of Our First Chawton House Audiobook,' Chawton House, accessed 1 November 2022, <https://chawtonhouse.org/whats-on/maria-or-the-wrongs-of-woman-a-chawton-house-audiobook/>. In stark contrast, Chawton House, the museum devoted to women's writing through its historical connection to Jane Austen, is soliciting donors to pay for the opportunity to record an audio book of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria: or, the Wrongs of Woman* as a fundraising campaign for the museum to obtain a copy of Wollstonecraft's *Posthumous Works*. This is a glaring example of the power of Austen's legacy over Lennox and even Wollstonecraft.

41 Kathryn Holland and Susan Brown, 'Project | Process | Product: Feminist Digital Subjectivity in a Shifting Scholarly Field,' in *Bodies of Information*, ed. Elizabeth Losh and Jacqueline Wernimont (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), <https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-4e08b137-aec5-49a4-83c0-38258425f145/section/659243b3-23ce-47b4-90ce-611a32f719e6##ch22>.

advent of DH.⁴² In combining the two, we hope to circumvent that risk. This is a balance all digital scholarly editors must strike, and there are no right answers in the current institutional structure.

To quote *The Lady's Museum's* inaugural essay: 'Our present seems improbable, the future most uncertain.'⁴³ As we enter the next phase of our project – adding the scholarly edition adjacent to the nonspecialist edition and expanding contextual apparatus on ladysmuseum.com – we see the potential to continue our public-facing goals even as our future institutional affiliations remain uncertain. We hope to enter a larger open-access library such as the peer-reviewed aggregation site 18thConnect.org. We could expand public interest through presentations, annotation and audiobook-recording workshops in publicly funded libraries, book shops and coffee houses. We want to keep this resource outside the paywall for those interested inside and outside the academy. For us, it is crucial that we keep this historical-yet-still-relevant text as accessible as possible so that anyone can cite – and participate in it – and the literary labour of Lennox and her fellow proto-feminists then, and DH contributors now, can cease to be forgotten.

42 Christina Boyles, 'Counting the Costs: Funding Feminism in the Digital Humanities'. In *Bodies of Information*, edited by Elizabeth Losh and Jacqueline Wernimont (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), <https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-4e08b137-aec5-49a4-83c0-38258425f145/section/6a48cd20-cfa5-4984-ba32-f531b231865f##ch07>.

43 Anonymous, 'Of the Universe', the Lady's Museum Project, <https://ladysmuseum.com/of-the-universe-as-considered-under-a-general-view/>.