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THE POETICAL WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Social Influences on Editorial Practices

Simone Celine Marshall



THIS ARTICLE PROVIDES A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS of some of the most striking features of the 1807 edition of *The Book of the Duchess*, as compared with its predecessors.¹ The 1807 edition of *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, in which *The Book of the Duchess* features, has only come to light in recent years, and it reveals an important stage in the development of the modern editorial process.² *The Book of the Duchess* has been chosen for this analysis because, in a practical sense, it is limited enough to be manageable, but more importantly, it is a significant poem in Chaucer's oeuvre, and yet not drawn from *The Canterbury Tales*. *The Canterbury Tales*, as will be explained, has a very different editing history from the other works of Chaucer. In addition to these reasons, *The Book of the Duchess* is a poem the authority of which has never been questioned,³ and thus it has appeared in every printed edition of the works of Chaucer, providing this study with extensive points for comparison.⁴

The 124-volume edition of *The Poets of Great Britain*, containing *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, came into being when, in 1807, a group of thirty-three London booksellers began publication of a work that claims from its title page to be a reprint of John Bell's 1782 series *The Poets of Great Britain* (see Figure 1).⁵ The more popular poets within the 1782 series had been reprinted from time to time during the twenty or so years after its initial publication: notably, the works of John Dryden were reprinted twice. Thus, in 1807, it must have seemed a financially safe venture to reproduce the entire series. Volumes 1–14 (or 1–7, as it was also bound) comprise *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*.⁶ Each volume is prefaced with an engraved image illustrating Chaucer's works (see Figure 2), and the title page explains that along with the poetical works is included *The Life of the Author: A Critique* by Thomas Warton and *Essays, Notes, and a Glossary* by Thomas Tyrwhitt (see Figure 3).

An advertisement in *The Monthly Literary Advertiser*, a booksellers' trade magazine, from 9 May 1807 gives some significant information regarding the circumstances of the publication (see Figure 4). According to this advertisement, the 1807 edition purports to be a combination of the earlier editions of Johnson and Bell, including the best parts from each. For this article, it is important to note that Chaucer's works are regarded both as an important inclusion in this collection; they are, however, now very difficult for the reader to understand.

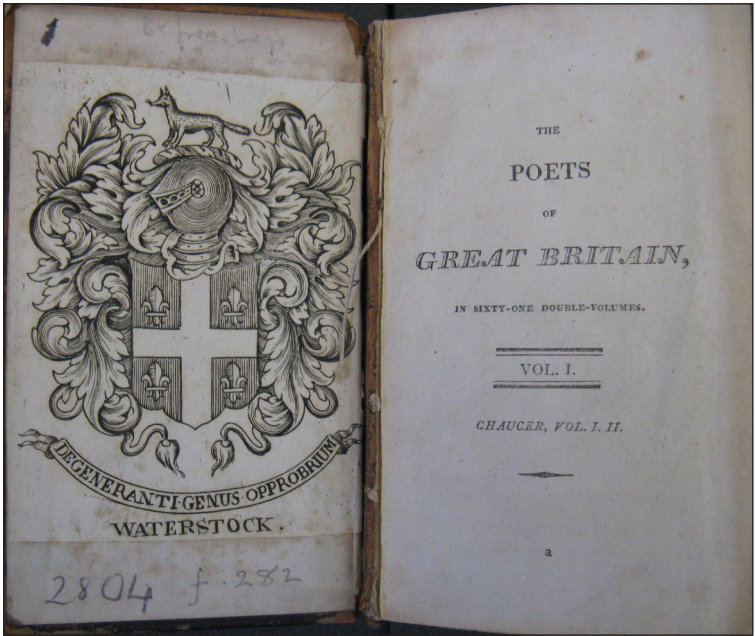


FIG. 1. FRONTISPIECE AND FIRST TITLE PAGE FROM *THE POETS OF GREAT BRITAIN* (LONDON: CADELL & DAVIES, 1807). PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR'S OWN.



FIG. 2. ENGRAVING OF CHAUCER'S IMAGE AND SECOND TITLE PAGE (BELL EDN) FROM *POETS OF GREAT BRITAIN* (LONDON: CADELL & DAVIES, 1807). PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR'S OWN.

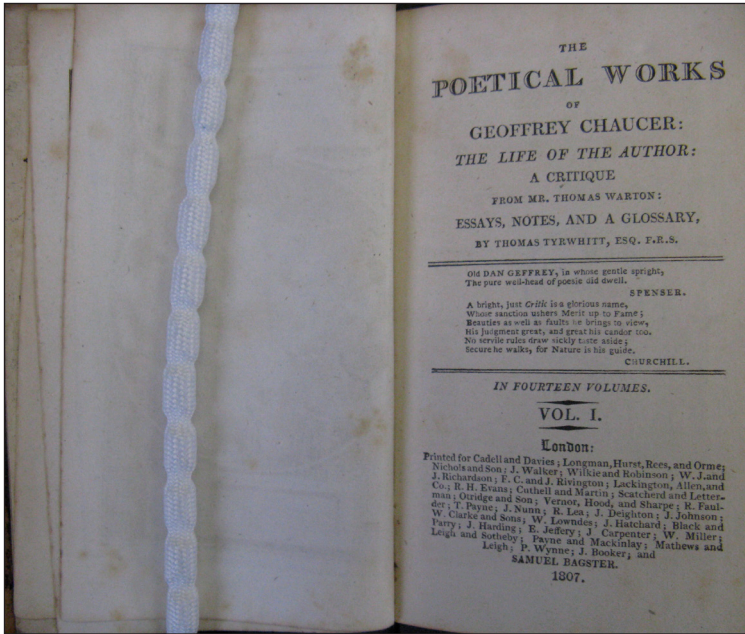


FIG. 3. THIRD TITLE PAGE FROM *THE POETS OF GREAT BRITAIN* (LONDON: CADELL & DAVIES, 1807).

PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR'S OWN.

**BRITISH POETS, 124 Vol. 18mo, 121 sewed;
Or, in 61 Vol. in extra boards, 121 12s.**

THE WORKS OF the BRITISH POETS; with their LIVES, principally written by SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

* * This Edition embraces the most esteemed Poets from Chaucer to Sir-William Jones, and unites the advantages of Johnson's and Bell's Editions, as far as the two plans are compatible; containing Chaucer and Spenser, omitted by Johnson; and Rowe's *Lucan*, Pope's *Homer*, and Dryden's *Fables*, Virgil, Juvenal, and Persius, omitted by Bell—performances too celebrated to be longer excluded.

The Text is correctly printed from a Copy collated with the Editions of the highest authority. On Chaucer and Spenser superior attention has been bestowed; the Glossaries to each, enlarged; and the Punctuation deliberately considered and revised; so that it is hoped that, in these ancient Authors, such a measure of perspicuity and illustration is attained, as will nearly remove the veil of obscurity which a revolution in language had thrown over their beauties.

Printed for Cadell and Davies; Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme; Nichols and Son; J. Walker; Wilkie and Robinson; W. J. and J. Richardson; F. C. and J. Rivington; Lackington, Allen, and Co.; R. H. Evans; Cuthell and Martin; Scatcherd and Letterman; Ottridge and Son; Vernon, Hood, and Sharpe; R. Faulder; T. Payne; J. Nunn; R. Lea; J. Deighton; J. Johnson; W. Lowndes; J. Hatchard; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury; John Harding; E. Jeffery; J. Carpenter; W. Miller; Leigh and Sotheby; Payne and Mackinlay; P. Wynne; J. Booker; T. Osell; Joseph Harding; J. Mawman; John Cawthorn; James Cawthorn; Wilson and Spence; and Samuel Bagster.

FIG. 4. ADVERTISEMENT FROM *THE MONTHLY LITERARY ADVERTISER*, 9 MAY 1807.

There is an enlarged glossary and punctuation has been 'deliberately considered', all with a view to removing the 'veil of obscurity' from the language. Of importance here is that the works of Chaucer have been sufficiently re-examined that they constitute a new edition of his works.⁷

The Editorial Assertions of the 1807 Edition

The editor of the 1807 edition begins with a General Advertisement, which is divided into two sections, one entitled 'The Canterbury Tales' and the other 'The Disputed Tales and Miscellaneous Poems'. The division here is important, as it reflects the distinction made by earlier editors, most notably John Bell and Robert Anderson.⁸ Both Bell's and Anderson's editions had used (without permission) Thomas Tyrwhitt's first edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, while using John Urry's 1721 edition of Chaucer's works for the remainder of the poems.⁹ Thus the 1807 editor's distinction is a clear indication that he, too, is in some way conceiving of his enterprise in relation to the efforts of his predecessors.

It is beneficial, for accuracy's sake, to quote extensively from the Advertisement. Of *The Canterbury Tales*, the editor says:

The Canterbury Tales are printed from the second edition of Mr. Tyrwhitt's publication, [2 vols. 4to, 1798]. In conformity with Mr. Tyrwhitt's evident intentions, the present Editor has introduced in the places to which they belong, several important revisions, by that learned critic of his own notes and opinions; the following Abstract from the *Advertisement* prefixed by the delegates of Clarendon Press, tends to explain what the revisions are:

'In a copy of the work, which Mr. Tyrwhitt had reserved for his own use, it was found that he had inserted several emendations and additions; in parts of the work having written some things otherwise than as he first gave them to the world.

It is according to such corrections, therefore, that the work is now printed [...]

Still, however, in the edition from the Clarendon press, the principle of incorporation does not seem to have been carried so far as is desirable and as useful attention to method may safely urge it; for the more deliberate opinions of the learned Editor are left in the promiscuous places where they happened to be penned. It appeared, therefore, to the present Editor, that he should essentially promote the design of Mr. Tyrwhitt [...] The present Editor has, therefore, altered every retracted or connected passage, making it correspond with the opinion subsequently pronounced by Mr. Tyrwhitt.¹⁰

The editor, then, has apparently expanded on the work of the editors of the second edition of Tyrwhitt's *Canterbury Tales*, thus completing the work that he would have done, it is assumed, had he lived long enough to do so.

Following this, the editor then introduces his approach to editing the remaining texts in the edition, under the title of 'The Disputed Tales and Miscellaneous Poems':

The Edition in 1721, by Mr. Urry, has been hitherto the best, of that part of the works ascribed to Chaucer to which the late able Editor of the *Tales* did not extend his labours: but the blemishes imputed to the edition of 1721, are considerable.

Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Todd, and other competent critics, have concurred with Dr. Hickes in the censure (*Sax. Gram.* p. 29.) of Mr. Urry, for changing the old English *hir* into *their*, and *hem* into *them*, without the authority of a single manuscript. The words so unwarrantably supplanted have been restored in this edition.

Mr. Urry has been further blamed (Tyrwhitt's Essay, n. 68,) for spelling nouns plural as *dremis*, *rockis*; whenever he wished to denote that, to complete the metre, the word must be pronounced with a factitious syllable; he followed a similar practice in the termination of the preterite of verbs, transforming *lived*, *limped*, to *livid*, *limpid*. This mechanical mode of indicating an extra syllable disguises the meaning of the word, and misrepresents the state of English orthography, when Chaucer wrote; it is therefore, in the present impression, discarded as an unjustifiable innovation.

Another approximation to the manuscripts has been made, by rescinding the sign (') of the genitive case, and by restoring the spelling where *es* has been without authority converted into *is*.

In many words diversely spelt, the Editor has followed the orthography of Tyrwhitt, to prevent the multiplication of articles in the *Glossary*.

The punctuation has been throughout revised. Chaucer was aware that the power of punctuation, as differently exercised, may often occasion or supersede a commentary.¹¹

The editor, noting the criticism of others, has also acknowledged the errors within Urry's edition, which will apparently be corrected in his own edition. It is perhaps pertinent to consider briefly the specific features of Urry's edition, to reconcile the 1807 editor's need to avoid his predecessor's errors.

The 1721 edition of John Urry has been much maligned over the centuries, and for many different reasons but, as William Alderson points out, it is an edition that has much to recommend it, and, even acknowledging its failings, one must accept that it is an edition that continued to have a great deal of influence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹² Problems arose with the edition during the process of its creation with the sudden death of Urry in 1715, long before the work was near completion. The friends and associates who then took up the work and brought it to completion seem to have done so grudgingly, and clearly there was a great deal of frustration at the state in which Urry had left his work.¹³ The biggest difficulty was that Urry had not left any documentation

indicating his editorial methods, and so those continuing the work were left to guess at his intentions. From the information Urry did leave, it is clear he had intended to consult as many manuscripts as possible to use for comparison for his edition, and indeed he left a list of those he did consult. It is not clear, however, how he intended to use the manuscripts, and the resulting texts do not show many instances of influence from manuscript readings.

Perhaps one of the biggest failings of Urry's edition, however, was his method of emending the text. There was, without doubt, a logic behind his process, but he left no explanation for this. It seems that Urry supposed that Chaucer's metre must have been regular, and thus any irregularities must have been the result of poor work from scribes and/or previous editors. As such, Urry undertook to 'correct' the metrical errors through a series of different means. It is this act primarily that led to numerous negative charges against the edition—Tyrwhitt infamously described Urry's edition as 'by far the worst that was ever published'.¹⁴ There are four features specific to Urry's method of editing. The first is Urry's habit of including a grave accent 'to distinguish those medial or final -e's which should be pronounced in a Chaucerian line'.¹⁵ As noted above, Urry was convinced that Chaucer, as a great poet, must have used a regular metre in his verse, and thus whenever he encountered lines that did not agree with this pattern, Urry would insert whatever was required to 'correct' the metre. Frequently this amounted to a grave accent on an 'e', although he employed other methods as well. The second feature of Urry's method is to alter the spelling of words ending with -en, -ed, -es, -est and -eth, to -in, -id, -is, -ist and -ith whenever he considered such words require a more strongly pronounced syllable. Third, Urry at times has added entire prefixes and suffixes to complete the metre. As Alderson says, Urry seems to have regarded these 'as free counters in his metrical game'.¹⁶ Finally, Urry has sometimes added or omitted whole words, again to ensure the metre complies.

The editor of the 1807 edition gives every impression of agreeing with Tyrwhitt's assessment of Urry's edition. There is, however, another factor to be considered here. Previous scholars who have examined Urry's edition have tended to compare it with other early printed editions of Chaucer and with many of the surviving manuscripts of Chaucer's works.¹⁷ However, to my knowledge, none have examined Urry's edition alongside the many modernisations or translations of Chaucer's works, which became increasingly popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Modernised editions of Chaucer's works were produced for several reasons: there were certain parts of Chaucer's works deemed unsuitable for public consumption, such as *The Miller's Tale*, with its high level of crudity. This tale was often published on its own; while in collections of Chaucer's works, it was frequently omitted altogether. Modernisers of Chaucer believed they were improving Chaucer's works by bringing the language up to a modern level of sophistication. Perhaps surprisingly to us today, the modernised editions of Chaucer's works were not necessarily intended for those who could not read the Middle English texts. Rather, there is an assumption that readers of the modernised texts were already familiar with the poems in Middle English,

and the modernisations, often completed by prominent poets, were considered an enhancement of the works.

Considering Urry's edition alongside modernised editions of Chaucer reveals that, while Urry's premature death resulted in an unclear methodology to his editing process, he was incorporating many of the motivations and reasoning of the modernisers of Chaucer's work into his own. Perhaps one ought not to compare Urry's edition with other Middle English editions of Chaucer, but rather with modernised editions; it might, at the very least, be pertinent to consider his work alongside both. This would account for the significant changes that he introduced to his text, which are very much in keeping with other modernised editions. This line of argument is important for this article because it seems to me that the 1807 editor may have been influenced by the same motivations, though perhaps not deliberately. The 1807 editor, while generally complying with Urry's and Tyrwhitt's texts, has made one significant alteration that does not reflect any known exemplar, introducing considerably more punctuation into his text, which is much more in keeping with late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century punctuation use. Given the editor's explanation that he would indeed modify the punctuation, this does not seem to be accidental, but rather a concerted effort to produce a text that was easy to read, perhaps in line with Urry's emendations.

Contents of the 1807 Edition

One significant feature of *The Book of the Duchess* as it appears in the 1807 edition is found in a footnote at the beginning of the text:

This Poem, which in the editions is called the *Dreme of Chaucer*—a title calculated to confound it with *Chaucers Dreme*, is in the *Leg.* of G. W. 418. denominated by our Poet, the *Deth of Blaunche the Duchess*. In the MSS. Fairf. 16, and Bod. 638, it is called 'the Booke of the Duchesse'.¹⁸

Here we learn that the editor did indeed refer to at least these two manuscripts when preparing the text of *The Book of the Duchess*, despite his rather vague attitude towards the manuscripts as stated in the introduction.¹⁹ Steve Ellis remarks that the first published use of *The Book of the Duchess* as the poem's title is in the Chiswick 1822 edition of the work.²⁰ Prior to this, as the 1807 editor notes, it was known as *Chaucer's Dream* or *The Dream of Chaucer*.²¹ This title caused considerable confusion among early editors as another poem—*The Isle of Ladies*, as it is now entitled, though not thought to be authored by Chaucer—was also known by this title, and certainly editors did confuse them on occasion.²² Here, then, we have a clear example of the work being published under the title of *The Book of the Duchess* as early as 1807.

As already noted, from the footnote at the start of the text, we learn that at the very least the editor was aware of and had seen the Fairfax and Bodley manuscripts in which the poem occurs. The editor seems not to have been aware of the third manuscript occurrence of *The Book of the Duchess*, in MS Tanner

346, despite it also being housed with the Fairfax and Bodley manuscripts at the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Differing from the others, the Tanner manuscript has the title as *Chaucer's Dreame*.

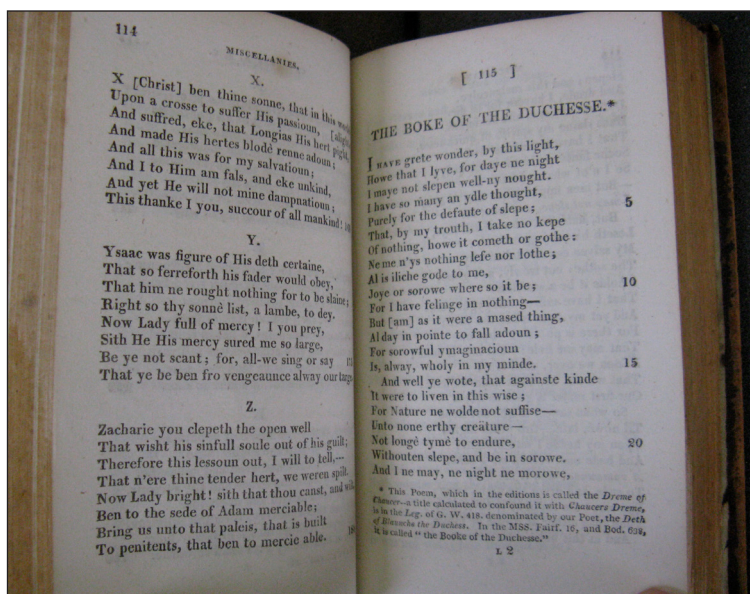


FIG. 5. 'THE BOKE OF THE DUCHESSE' FROM THE *POETS OF GREAT BRITAIN* (LONDON: CADELL & DAVIES, 1807). PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR'S OWN.

A line-by-line comparison with each of the three manuscript editions of the poem, as well as with the printed editions of William Thynne (1532, 1542, c. 1550), John Stow (1561), Thomas Spaght (1598, 1602, 1687), John Urry (1721), John Bell (1782), Robert Anderson (1798) and Alexander Chalmers (1810), indicates that the 1807 editor has largely imitated Urry's text, but with some significant amendments.²³ Perhaps the most notable change that the 1807 editor has made throughout his text is to remove the -in, -id, -is, -ist and -ith endings that Urry first inserted (and which Bell retained) into the text. Just as he had claimed in his introduction, he has changed these word endings to -en, -ed, -es, -est and -eth throughout. It might be assumed, therefore, that the editor is attempting to remove Urry's errors and to revert to the features of the manuscript editions of the poem, or at the very least to Thynne's 1532 edition, but this is not the case at all. There is a total of 513 instances where the 1807 editor alters a word from Urry's text ending with -in, -id, -is, -ist or -ith to -en, -ed, -es, -est or -eth respectively, the most substantive change to the entire text, but this rarely agrees with any one of the three manuscripts or with Thynne's edition. What is noticeable here is that the instances that do agree are examples such as the words 'other' (changed from 'othir'), 'ever' (changed from 'evir') and 'wonder' (changed from 'wondir'). The instances where the 1807 text does not agree with

the manuscript or with Thynne's edition are words such as 'withouten' (changed from 'withoutin'), which occurs in the manuscripts and in Thynne as 'withoute'; 'slepen' (changed from 'slepin'), which occurs as 'slepe'; and 'asken' (changed from 'askin'), which occurs as 'aske'. Thus, we can see a common trend: Urry has added -in to words that originally had an -e ending, and so it is clear the 1807 editor has consulted neither the manuscripts nor Thynne; he has, in all 513 instances, simply altered his text to agree with the general criticism as noted by Tyrwhitt and other critics.

This appears to be a feature of the 1807 editor. It seems to me that even he were aware of and had access to the manuscripts (as he appears to have done for two of those containing *The Book of the Duchess*), he has not used the manuscripts' orthography, preferring instead to rely on other critics' views of the text.²⁴ And, if one considers how the editor explains his concerns about Urry's use of the -in, -id, -is, -ist and -ith endings, his argument is in fact sound: 'This mechanical mode of indicating an extra syllable disguises the meaning of the word, and misrepresents the state of English orthography, when Chaucer wrote; it is therefore, in the present impression, discarded as an unjustifiable innovation.'²⁵ As the editor explains, Urry's intention behind altering the text to use these endings is to outline clearly to the reader (perhaps one not familiar with Middle English, as was often the case by the eighteenth century, or who was more familiar with modernised versions of Chaucer) that some syllables were to be pronounced if the line of verse were to agree with the poem's metre.²⁶ The 1807 editor admits this as an 'innovation' to the text, and does not disapprove of the text on these grounds. Rather, his concern is that the reader may inadvertently introduce other incorrect assumptions about the text so written. They may assume, for example, that this spelling is an accurate indication of orthography as used by Chaucer, and further misunderstand the meaning of these altered words. The editor's concern seems understandable, and his method of correction has been thorough: the difficulty for a modern editor, however, is that the editor's changes have no provenance in the manuscripts.

The 1807 editor also criticises Urry's edition for its odd use of personal pronouns. All three of the fifteenth-century manuscripts tend to use 'hir' as the third-person feminine objective pronoun. In the 1532 Thynne edition, the pronoun is spelt 'her', and in the Urry edition the pronoun is also spelt 'her'; there are 112 instances where both editions uses 'her'. The 1807 editor has consistently emended this pronoun to 'hire', even though this spelling appears in no other earlier edition or manuscript. In addition, Urry has consistently used the third-person possessive pronoun spelt 'ther', when it appears in all the manuscripts and Thynne as 'her'. In the 1807 edition, the word is spelt 'hir' throughout; it is difficult to understand the 1807 editor's reasoning for his emendations of these pronouns, as they clearly bear no resemblance to earlier editions or manuscripts.²⁷ I would suggest that this is an instance of the editor following the orthography outlined by Tyrwhitt in the glossary to his edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, which has the following entries:

HIR, pron. Poss. SAX. Their.

HIRE, pron. Poss. SAX. Her.²⁸

This agrees entirely with what the 1807 editor has used in his text, and it seems very likely that Tyrwhitt's glossary is the origin of this emendation. Interestingly, Tyrwhitt's glossary in his second edition acknowledges Urry's glossary as being well crafted, and in fact goes so far to indicate that it was the basis for Tyrwhitt's own glossary: 'It would be injustice to the learned author of the Glossary to Mr. Urry's edition, not to acknowledge, that I have built upon his foundations, and often with his materials.'²⁹ Despite this, Tyrwhitt concludes by stating that 'Mr. Urry's edition should never be opened by any one for the purpose of reading Chaucer'.³⁰ Perhaps with such an attitude, it is not surprising that the 1807 editor chose to follow Tyrwhitt's orthography.

Further in agreement with Tyrwhitt, it seems likely that the 1807 editor has elected to use the spellings of 'hire' for 'her' and 'hir' for 'their' in accordance with Tyrwhitt's explanation of Chaucer's use of these words in *The Canterbury Tales*:

Hir; Their. The Possessive Pronoun of the third Person Plural is variously written, *Hir*, *Hire*, *Her*, and *Here*; not only in different Mss. But even in the same page of good Mss. There seems to be no reason for perpetuating varieties of this kind, which can only have taken their rise from the unsettled state of our Orthography before the invention of Printing, and which now contribute more than any real alteration of the language to obscure the sense of our old Authors. In this edition therefore, *Hir* is constantly put to signify *Their*; and *Hire* to signify *Her*, whether it be the Oblique case of the Plural Pronoun She, or the Possessive of the same Pronoun.³¹

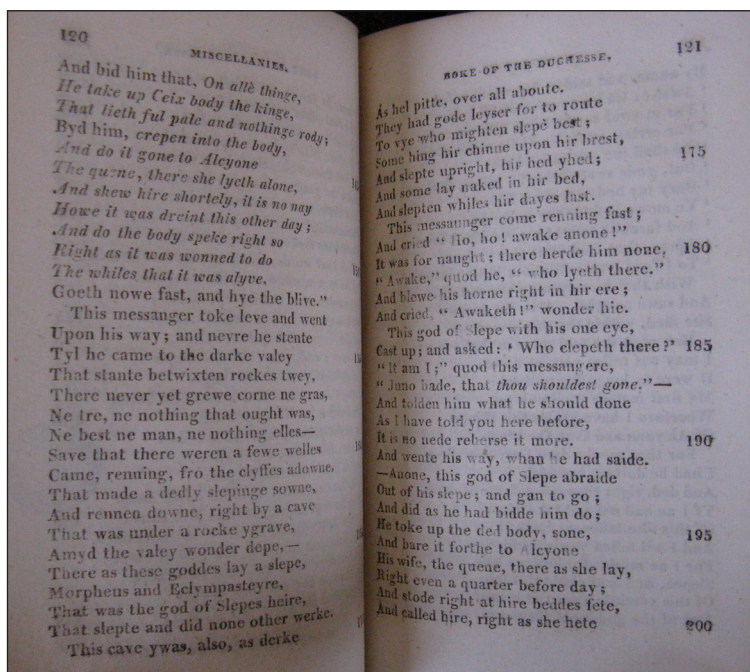
This note is made specifically with respect to Tyrwhitt's grammatical analysis of the first eighteen lines of *The Canterbury Tales*. The 1807 editor had noted with respect to his edition of *The Canterbury Tales* that he would 'promote the design of Mr. Tyrwhitt', and it seems that this has followed through into the other texts within his edition.³² As the note above explains, Tyrwhitt has decided which spelling to use for these specific pronouns, and has applied them consistently throughout. The 1807 editor, it would seem, has done the same, regardless of the spelling used in any of the earlier editions of *The Book of the Duchess*.

The use of the apostrophe is a notable feature of Urry's text that had not been used in previous editions and which does not occur in the manuscripts containing Chaucer's works. In his introduction, the 1807 editor complained about Urry's use of this piece of punctuation and indicated his method of correction: 'Another approximation to the manuscripts has been made, by rescinding the sign (') of the genitive case, and by restoring the spelling where *es* has been without authority converted into *is*.'³³ In *The Book of the Duchess*, there are eleven such instances in Urry's text where the genitive case has been represented by an apostrophe, and on each occasion the 1807 editor has emended these in the manner indicated above. For instance, Urry's text has 'slep'is', 'bedd'is'

and 'world'is', and this is emended in the 1807 edition to 'slepes', 'beddes' and 'worldes'. The editor has suggested that this emendation is an 'approximation to the manuscripts', which broadly speaking is correct. On this point, the three manuscripts rarely agree with each other, but frequently they will reflect a spelling that is either the same or like that chosen by the 1807 editor. Interestingly, however, on every occasion the 1807 text agrees with Thynne's 1532 edition. In the case of the examples given above, the manuscripts present the following:

LINE	1807	MS TANNER 346	MS BODLEY 638	MS FAIRFAX 16	THYNNE 1532	URRY 1721
168	slepes	slep	slepes	slepes	slepes	slep'is
199	beddes	beddis	beddys	beddys	beddes	bedd'is
209	worldes	worldis	worldes	worldes	worldes	world'is

(See also Figures 6 and 7). Unfortunately, with so few examples in total to judge, it is difficult to know if this indicates that the 1807 editor was using Thynne's text for these emendations or some other model, or if this agreement is entirely coincidental.



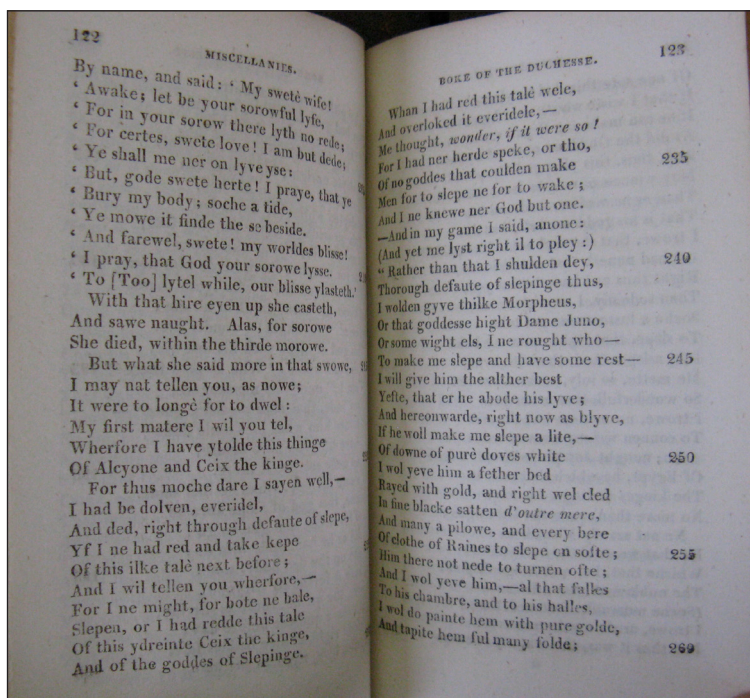


FIG. 7. 'THE BOKE OF THE DUCHESE' FROM *THE POETS OF GREAT BRITAIN* (LONDON: CADELL & DAVIES, 1807). PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR'S OWN.


are in total 119 apostrophes in *The Boke of the Duchesse*. Aside from the eleven mentioned already, there are forty-one instances where the apostrophe is used to indicate a contraction or abbreviation of a word, such as 'so'rowful' and 'hem'. The remaining sixty-seven instances of apostrophes are less easy to explain, but appear to relate to Urry's method of indicating the metre of the verse. The 1807 editor has described this method of spelling as an 'unjustifiable innovation'. Perhaps he is being polite, but it seems to me that this statement reflects the fact the Urry's alterations to the text were indeed innovations intended to aid the reader otherwise unfamiliar with Middle English verse. William Alderson, too, notes that despite the severe criticisms of Urry's edition, it does indeed make a genuine effort to improve the texts of Chaucer, and in fact its greatest weakness seems to be that Urry died before he was able to leave an explanation and justification for his editorial methods.³⁴ Just as Urry's spelling is described as an 'unjustifiable innovation', one could similarly describe Urry's method of correcting and indicating metre. It seems that Urry's use of apostrophes, when they do not correspond to either the genitive case or to contractions or abbreviations, indicate an unstressed vowel in the line of verse. For instance, 'And many' an hart, and many' an hinde' (l. 427) shows that the metre is four stressed syllables per line; while ordinarily, Urry believes there will be correspondingly four unstressed syllables in the line, here he is indicating that there

are two extra unstressed syllables.³⁵ As mentioned, this use of the apostrophe occurs on sixty-seven occasions in *The Book of the Duchess*, but it is completely removed by the 1807 editor.

Urry added another feature to his text to aid the reader in the pronunciation of the Middle English. Throughout his text, he has inserted the grave accent above certain syllables in words to indicate to the reader where syllables are to be pronounced. This action is entirely Urry's invention and does not appear in any of the manuscripts or earlier editions, but it appears to be a feature that the 1807 editor has adopted throughout his text. Thus, despite his criticisms of Urry's text, the 1807 editor has been happy to accept many of his innovations. For example, in line 20, agreeing with Urry, the 1807 editor has 'Not longè tyme to endure'. The two accents indicate that the terminal -e on 'longe' and 'tyme' is to be pronounced, to complete the four-stressed line metre. The terminal -e on the word 'endure' remains silent. The 1807 editor, however, may have used another source for the punctuation of his edition. As noted, Urry's text does not provide a watertight comparison with the 1807 edition's punctuation, and yet it is clearly related. But it is helpful to consider Tyrwhitt's edition. As mentioned, Tyrwhitt edited only *The Canterbury Tales*, but provided copious notes about the authorial status of the other texts attributed to Chaucer, and it is clear the 1807 editor made considerable use of these notes. However, there is another feature of Tyrwhitt's edition that demands some attention: his process of editing is often identified as among the earliest that could be recognised as a modern process of editing.³⁶ He consulted as many manuscripts as he could, and is often regarded as the first to describe Chaucer's metre accurately.³⁷ Nevertheless, it is well known that, while consulting the manuscripts, Tyrwhitt recorded his annotations on to a copy of Thomas Speght's 1602 edition of the *Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*.³⁸ As a result, the publishers of Tyrwhitt's first edition, Bowyer and Nichols, prepared their text according to the corrections and alterations that Tyrwhitt had entered on to this copy. Where nothing was entered, the publishers followed the text as printed in Speght's edition—this is not so significant as far as the text and metre go, but it is quite significant where the punctuation is concerned. Despite his suggestions elsewhere, Tyrwhitt devoted little attention to the punctuation in his edition; thus, that which is printed, in both his first and second editions, is nearly identical to that of Speght's 1602 edition, even in the occasional instances where the punctuation no longer makes sense with the text. As a result, it is possible to argue that the 1807 editor, so heavily reliant on Tyrwhitt's second edition, has inadvertently imitated Speght's punctuation, while thinking that he is drawing on Tyrwhitt's.

The Impact of the 1807 Edition

From this examination of *The Book of the Duchess*, it appears to me that the 1807 editor, at the very least, fully intended to present an edition of the work that was an improvement on all previous texts. The extent to which he has achieved this, however, is less easy to determine, and hinges considerably on what one regards

as an ‘improvement’. Unlike Urry’s edition, we can infer a clear and logical editorial process throughout, making his decisions understandable. The editor’s deference to Thomas Tyrwhitt is clear throughout, but it seems unlikely that we should regard the 1807 edition as the version that Tyrwhitt himself would have produced, had he lived long enough to do so. The scrupulous care and powerful intellect behind his edition of *The Canterbury Tales* is not found to the same degree in the 1807 text. What we do see, however, is a gesture towards Tyrwhitt’s style, rather than an example of rigorous editing. The 1807 editor appears well versed in the work of Tyrwhitt, as well as the 1721 edition of Urry; however, despite the superficial impressions he gives, it does not appear that he has undertaken the same degree of research as Tyrwhitt in examining the manuscript editions of the poems. To be fair, this study considers only *The Book of the Duchess*: it is entirely possible that the editor’s efforts were inconsistent across the works of Chaucer, or indeed that it is not the work of one individual. We have no sense of the period over which the editorial labour took place, and thus there is no way to estimate if it was feasible for a single person to conduct the editing process alone.³⁹ What we can determine from examining a single poem, though, is that it is fair to consider the work a new edition—sufficiently different from all previous editions—which demonstrates commendable efforts at advancing the quality of the text and anticipating more recent approaches to textual criticism. 

NOTES

1. *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1807), pp. 115–60.
2. See Simone Celine Marshall, *The Anonymous Text: The 500-Year History of The Assembly of Ladies* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 118–22; and Simone Celine Marshall, ‘The 1807 Edition of the Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer’, *N&Q*, 58 (2011), 183–86 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/notesj/gjro53>>.
3. According to Colin Wilcockson, ‘[t]hough in none of the manuscripts do the copyists assign *The Book of the Duchess to Chaucer*, his authorship has never been questioned. He lists it among his works as “the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse” in the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* (418, G 406) and as “the book of the Duchesse” in his Retraction (*Tales* X. 1086). Chaucer’s authorship is also attested in Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes* (bk. 1, Pro 304–5)’—see Wilcockson, ‘The Book of the Duchess’, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: OUP, 1987), p. 966.
4. See Appendix 1 for publications details of *The Book of the Duchess*.
5. John Bell (ed.), *The Poets of Great Britain Complete from Chaucer to Churchill*, 109 vols (Edinburgh: Apollo, 1782–83); for a full list of booksellers contributing to the 1807 *Poets of Great Britain*, see Appendix II.
6. According to Thomas Bonnell: ‘To save customers money on binding, they marketed the set in two forms, taking the trouble to print different series title-pages listing different contents, one headed *The Poets of Great Britain, in One Hundred and Twenty-Four Volumes*, the other *The Poets of Great Britain, in Sixty-One Double Volumes*’—see *The Most Disreputable Trade* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), pp. 293–94.

7. The 1807 series included fifty-four poets in total; three from Bell's series were removed, while seven new poets were added. I have not attempted to investigate whether the works of poets within the series have been similarly re-edited for the 1807 edition, although this would warrant future investigation, especially regarding the works of Spenser. For a full list of poets included in the 1807 edition, please see Appendix III.
8. Bell (ed.), *Poets of Great Britain*, and Robert Anderson (ed.), *A Complete Edition of the Poets of Great Britain* (London: Arch, 1792).
9. Tyrwhitt was most aggrieved by Bell's actions in particular: 'The Assured manner in which my name is used, may lead people to imagine that I have been at least consenting to this republication of my book; and therefore I beg the favour of you, and all my other friends, to take every opportunity (the more public the better) of declaring for me, that the whole transaction has passed without my consent, approbation, or knowledge'—see *Gentleman's Magazine*, 53.1 (1783), 461–62. See also Thomas Tyrwhitt (ed.), *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, to which Are Added, an Essay upon his Language and Versification; an Introductory Discourse; and Notes* (London: Payne, 1778), STC T76319; John Urry (ed.), *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Compared with the Former Editions, and Many Valuable MSS, Out of which, Three Tales Are Added which Were Never before Printed* (London: Lintot, 1721), STC T106027.
10. *Poetical Works of Chaucer*, pp. ix–xi.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. xii–xiii.
12. William Alderson, 'John Urry (1666–1715)', in *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*, ed. by Paul G. Ruggiers (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1984), pp. 93–115 (p. 114).
13. Anthony Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses: The History of the Writers of the University of Oxford, from the Year of our Lord 1500 to the End of 1640* (London: Bennet, 1691–92).
14. 'Appendix to the Preface', in *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer*, ed. by Thomas Tyrwhitt, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1798), p. lxiii.
15. Alderson, 'John Urry', p. 110.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
17. Alderson, 'John Urry', pp. 93–115; Joseph A. Dane, 'The Reception of Chaucer's Eighteenth-Century Editors', *Text*, 4 (1988), 217–36.
18. *Poetical Works of Chaucer*, p. 115.
19. The Book of the Duchess appears in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fairfax 16; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 638; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Tanner 346.
20. *The Poems of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 5 vols (Chiswick: Whittingham, 1822).
21. Steve Ellis, 'The Death of *The Book of the Duchess*', *Chaucer Review*, 29 (1995), 249–58.
22. Annika Farber, 'Usurping "Chaucers dreame": *Book of the Duchess* and the Apocryphal *Isle of Ladies*', *Studies in Philology*, 105 (2008), 207–25 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sip.2008.0007>>.
23. For a consideration of each of these editions of the works of Chaucer, see: James E. Blodgett, 'Some Printer's Copy for William Thynne's 1532 Edition of Chaucer', *The Library*, 1 (1979), 97–113 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/library/s6-I.2.97>>; James E. Blodgett, 'William Thynne', in *Editing Chaucer*, ed. by Ruggiers, pp. 35–52; Robert Costomiris, 'Some New Light on the Early Career of William Thynne,

- Chief Clerk of the Kitchen of Henry VIII and Editor of Chaucer', *The Library*, 4th ser. 1 (2003), 3–15 <<https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/library/4.1.3>>; Brian Donaghey, 'William Thynne's Collected Edition of Chaucer: Some Bibliographical Considerations', in *Texts and their Contexts*, ed. by Julia Boffey and John Scattergood (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 150–64; Bradford Y. Fletcher, 'Printer's Copy for Stow's Chaucer', *Studies in Bibliography*, 31 (1978), 184–201; Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie (eds), *John Stow (1525–1605) and the Making of the English Past* (London: British Library, 2004); John Rowland Hetherington, *Chaucer, 1532–1602: Notes and Facsimile Texts, Designed to Facilitate the Identification of Defective Copies of the Black-Letter Folio Editions of 1532, 1542, c. 1550, 1561, 1598 and 1602* (Birmingham: Hetherington, 1964); Thomas F. Bonnell, 'John Bell's "Poets of Great Britain:" The "Little Trifling Edition" Revisited', *Modern Philology*, 85 (1987), 128–52 <<https://doi.org/10.1086/391611>>.
24. George Hickes, *Linguarum vett. septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archæologicus* (Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1705).
 25. *Poetical Works of Chaucer*, p. xiii.
 26. Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); David Matthews, *The Making of Middle English, 1765–1910* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Charlotte Morse, 'Popularizing Chaucer in the Nineteenth Century', *Chaucer Review*, 38 (2003), 99–125 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/cr.2003.0026>>; Thomas Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
 27. See J. A. Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre, *A Book of Middle English*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005); Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, *A Guide to Old English*, 6th edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).
 28. Tyrwhitt (ed.), *Canterbury Tales*, 2nd edn, p. 582.
 29. *Ibid.*, p. 521.
 30. *Ibid.*, p. 524.
 31. *Ibid.*, pp. 64–65.
 32. *Poetical Works of Chaucer*, p. xi.
 33. *Ibid.*, p. xii.
 34. Alderson, 'John Urry', p. 114.
 35. See Norman Davis, 'Language and Versification', in *Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Benson, pp. xxix–xlv.
 36. See *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894).
 37. In fact, Chaucer's metre had already been analysed by the poet Thomas Gray in his essay 'Observations on English Metre', but this was not published until after his death: see Thomas Gray, *Essays and Criticisms* (London: Heath, 1909), pp. 21–38.
 38. Tyrwhitt's printer's copy now exists in two parts: as *The Workes of our Ancient and Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer, Newly Printed*, ed. by Thomas Speght (London: Islip, 1602), STC 5080; and as *The Workes of our Ancient and Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chavcer, Newly Printed*, ed. by Thomas Speght (London: Islip, 1602), STC S107210.
 39. Cyprian Blagden, *Stationers' Company 1403–1959* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1960); Phillip A. H. Brown, *London Publishers and Printers 1800–1870* (London: British Library, 1982); Ian Maxted, *The London Book Trades 1775–1800* (Folkestone: Dawson, 1977); Robin Myers and Michael Harris, *Stationers' Company and the Book Trade* (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1997).

APPENDICES

I. *Publications of The Book of the Duchess*

The Book of the Duchess appears in the following publications up until the end of the nineteenth century:

1. William Thynne (ed.), *The Workes of Geoffrey Chaucer Newly Printed, with Dyuers Workes whiche Were Neuer in Print Before* (London: Godfray, 1532), rptd 1542 and c. 1550 [STC 5068, 5069, 5070, 5071, 5072, 5073, 5074].
2. John Stow (ed.), *The Woorkes of Geffrey Chaucer Newlie Printed, with Diuers Addicions, which Were Never in Printed Before* (London: Kyngston, 1561) [STC 5075, 5076, 5076.3].
3. Thomas Speght (ed.), *The Works of Our Ancient, Learned, Excellent English Poet, Jeffrey Chaucer: As They Have Lately Been Compar'd with the Best Manuscripts, and Several Things Added, Never Before in Print* (London: Bishop, 1598), rptd 1602 and 1687 [STC 5077, 5078, 5079, 5080, 5081, Wing C3736].
4. John Urry (ed.), *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Compared with the Former Editions, and Many Valuable MSS, out of which, Three Tales Are Added which Were Never before Printed* (London: Lintot, 1721) [STC T106027].
5. John Bell (ed.), *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Edinburgh: Apollo, 1783) [STC T75497].
6. Robert Anderson (ed.), *A Complete Edition of the Poets of Great Britain* (London: Arch, 1792).
7. *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (London: Cadell, Davies, et al., 1807).
8. Alexander Chalmers (ed.), *Works of the English Poets, from Chaucer to Cowper* (London: Johnson, 1810).
9. *The Poems of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 5 vols (Chiswick: Whittingham, 1822).
10. Frederick J. Furnivall (ed.), *Odd Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems*, Chaucer Society, 23 (London: Oxford University Press, 1868–80).
11. Frederick J. Furnivall (ed.), *A Parallel-Text Edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems*, Chaucer Society, 21 (London: Paul, Trench & Trubner, 1871–79).
12. Walter W. Skeat (ed.), *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894).

II. *Contributing Booksellers to The Poets of Great Britain*

The full list of booksellers is as follows:

Cadell & Davies	W. J. & J. Richardson
Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme	F. C. & J. Rivington
Nichols & Son	Lackington, Allen & Co.
J. Walker	R. H. Evans
Wilkie & Robinson	Cuthell & Martin

Scatcherd & Letterman
 Otridge & Son
 Vernor, Hood & Sharpe
 R. Faulder
 T. Payne
 J. Nunn
 R. Lea
 J. Deighton
 J. Johnson
 W. Clarke & Sons
 W. Lowndes
 J. Hatchard

Black and Parry
 J. Harding
 E. Jeffrey
 J. Carpenter
 W. Miller
 Leigh & Sotheby
 Payne & Mackinlay
 Mathews & Leigh
 P. Wynne
 J. Booker
 Samuel Bagster

III. A Complete List of Poets in The Poets of Great Britain

Geoffrey Chaucer
 Edmund Spenser
 Abraham Cowley
 Sir John Denham
 John Milton
 Edmund Waller
 Samuel Butler
 John Wilmot,
 2nd Earl of Rochester
 Wentworth Dillon,
 4th Earl of Roscommon
 John Pomfret
 John Philips
 John Dryden
 Edmund Smith
 William King
 Thomas Parnell
 Sir Samuel Garth
 Nicholas Rowe
 Joseph Addison
 Matthew Prior
 William Congreve
 Elijah Fenton
 John Gay
 George Granville,
 Baron Lansdowne
 Thomas Tickle
 James Hammond
 William Somerville

Richard Savage
 Jonathan Swift
 William Broome
 Alexander Pope
 Christopher Pitt
 James Thomson
 Isaac Watts
 Ambrose Philips
 Gilbert West
 Williams Collins
 John Dyer
 William Shenstone
 Edward Young
 David Mallet
 Mark Akenside
 Thomas Gray
 George Lyttelton,
 1st Baron Lyttelton
 Edward Moore
 Charles Churchill
 William Falconer
 John Cunningham
 Matthew Green
 Oliver Goldsmith
 John Armstrong
 Samuel Johnson
 Soame Jenyns
 Sir Williams Jones
 Richard West

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Katherine Voyles lectured at the University of Washington, Bothell from 2010 to 2020. She holds a PhD in English from the University of California, Irvine.

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Colette Davies is an AHRC M4C PhD candidate at the University of Nottingham. Her research explores novels published by the Minerva Press written by a range of neglected professional women writers. These works shed light on how women writers responded to an era of transformation in the literary marketplace and to a socially turbulent context through their works of fiction. Colette is one of two Postgraduate Representatives for the British Association for Romantic Studies and co-organised the BARS 2019 International Conference, 'Romantic Facts and Fantasies' and the BARS 2020 ECR/PGR Conference, 'Romantic Futurities'. She is a co-contributor for the 'Romantic Novel' section of the *Year's Work in English Studies* and has published blogs with *Romantic Textualities* and the British Association for Romantic Studies.

JoEllen DeLucia is Professor of English at Central Michigan University and the author of *A Feminine Enlightenment: British Women Writers and the Philosophy of Progress, 1759–1820* (EUP, 2015). Recently, she co-edited an essay collection with Juliet Shields entitled *Migration and Modernities: the State of Being Stateless, 1750–1850* (EUP, 2019). Portions of her current research project on George Robinson's media network and Romantic-era literature have appeared in *European Romantic Review* and Jennie Batchelor and Manushag Powell's *Women's Magazines and Print Culture 1690–1820s: The Long Eighteenth Century* (2018).

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Peter Garside taught English Literature for more than thirty years at Cardiff University, where he became founding Director of the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research. Subsequently, he was appointed Professor of Bibliography and Textual Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He served on the Boards of the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels and the Stirling/South Carolina Collected Edition of the Works of James Hogg, and has produced three volumes apiece for each of these scholarly editions. He was one of the general editors of the bibliographical survey *The English Novel, 1770–1829*, 2 vols (OUP, 2000), and directed the AHRC-funded *British Fiction, 1800–1829* database (2004). More recently, he has co-edited *English and British Fiction 1750–1820* (2015), Volume 2 of the Oxford History of the Novel in English; and forthcoming publications include an edition of Scott's *Shorter Poems*, along with Gillian Hughes, for the Edinburgh Edition of Walter Scott's Poetry.

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Simone Marshall is Associate Professor in English at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Her research platform, *A World Shaped by Texts*, concerns how our understanding of the world around us is directly shaped by texts: religious, scientific, literary, legal and historical. Her research programmes include race, women, medievalisms and anonymity, as well as a specific focus on Chaucer. Marshall's research programme on Chaucer and his afterlives includes attention on the continuations of *The Squire's Tale*, an examination of an edition of John Urry's 1722 Chaucer located in Auckland City Library, as well as cross-cultural comparisons between Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls* and Sufi poet Farid Ud-din Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*. Marshall's research has been featured in the media, including *The History of Anon*, a BBC Radio 4 series on the history of literary anonymity, broadcast 1–4 January 2013, as well as interviews on Radio New Zealand National in 2010 and 2013 on the 1807 Chaucer. Further details can be found at <https://simonecelinemarshall.com/>.

Kelsey Paige Mason is a PhD candidate at Ohio State University interested in nineteenth-century transatlantic literature, futurity and utopianism. She analyses nineteenth-century primary texts from ideological and repressive spaces (such as prisons and plantations), as well as from utopian communities and draws correlations between these primary texts and utopian/dystopian fiction. She is interested in how published and unpublished narratives portray the utopian impulse towards the future, including questioning which populations are excluded from future speculation. Her recent publications include 'Writing Revolution: Orwell's Not-So-Plain Style in *Animal Farm*' and 'A Lifetime Sowing the Blues: The Diary of Lucius Clark Smith, 1834–1915'.

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