Mary Carleton's false additions: the case of the 'German Princess'

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Mary Moders Carleton aka Henrietta Maria de Wolway, the 'German Princess' (1635–73), was the subject of a sensational trial at the Old Bailey in 1663 in which she successfully defended herself against charges of bigamy and imposture brought by her new husband, John Carleton, an eighteen-year-old lawyer's clerk. Even before the trial began, the incarcerated 'German Princess' was the talk of London; her acquittal confirmed her as a figure of scandalous celebrity with a reputation for formidable arts of persuasion and argument under duress. By all accounts, Mary played the part of a distressed and victimised foreign aristocrat—alienated from her just position and possessions—very well indeed. The prosecution, on the other hand, bungled their case. They managed

to furnish a witness to Mary's first marriage in Kent but failed to deliver the husband, a shoemaker by whom she was said to have borne two children who died in infancy. Claims that Mary had already been tried for bigamy in Kent and that she was well known for her fraudulent adventures there as 'quality in disguise' were dismissed as hearsay by the judge.

There was luck in it, and legal nicety, but if Mary had not performed impressively, the verdict might well have gone against her. It was her talent for passing as a wronged gentlewoman and a 'stranger' newly arrived in London that allowed Mary to cut such a compelling and mysterious public figure. Indeed, Mary went so far as to claim that it was John Carleton, her young husband, and his family who had tricked *her* into marriage and then prosecuted her under false pretences:

[I]f any be deceived, I am. My lord, If that they could have been insured that I had been the person as to Estate, that they imagined me to be, your Lordship should not have been troubled...they would have been contented to have practised concealment, in case I had had more than one husband. Instead of this defamation that I am loaded with, my Lord, my crime is, that I have not an Estate, or at least such a one as they imagined it to be.¹

Mary presented herself to the court as what she was—from a meritocratic standpoint and in terms of the romance plot she had adopted: quality without an estate. She refuted the charge of bigamy with a series of double entendres and aperçus like something spoken by an actress in one of the modish city comedies playing at London theatres:²

My Lord, they brand me for marrying of a Shoo-make, and another sad piece of Mortality, a Brick-layer. My lord, My Soul abhorreth such a thought, and never was accomodated with such Condiscention, to move in so low an Orb. My Lord, by all that I can observe of the Persons that appear against me, they may be divided into two sorts; the one of them come against me for want of Wit, the other for want of Money.³

1 Anonymous 1663, *The Arraignment, Tryal and Examination of Mary Moders, Otherwise Stedman, Now Carleton, (Stiled, the German Princess)*, London, p. 13.

2 Restoration theatre is associated with the rise of the actress on the London stage and of female playwrights such as Aphra Behn. The epilogue to Behn's play *The Dutch Lover* (1673) explicitly references Mary Carleton: 'Whilst sad experience our eyes convinces,/That damn'd their Playes which hang'd the German Princess;/And we with ornament set off a Play/Like her drest fine for Execution-day./And faith I think with as small hopes to live;/Unless kind Gallants the same grace you'd give/Our Comedie as Her; beg a Reprive.' Jacqueline Pearson comments that *The Dutch Lover* derives 'comic and disturbing energy from a sense that identity is essentially fluid, contingent, dependent upon how it is situated and how it is named' (Pearson, Jacqueline 1996, 'Slave princes and lady monsters: gender and ethnic difference in the work of Aphra Behn', in Janet Todd [ed.], *Aphra Behn Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 230).

3 Anonymous, *The Arraignment*, p. 13.

That this daughter of a Kentish musician called Moders, probably raised in the immigrant Dutch community in Canterbury, was able to pass 'en Princesse', as she later put it, owed much to her own talents and industry. At a time when the unsettled relation of merit and commerce to social value and prestige was a matter of constant, everyday debate, Mary was a case in point. Well-spoken, charming, highly literate and plausibly accoutred, she had taken advantage of the unusual opportunities for education and 'finishing' that seemed to have come her way through her musician father's genteel connections. The character of 'the German Princess', which Mary was able to flesh out in great detail in person and in print, was probably based in part on a woman Mary encountered at Dover and in whose service she travelled to Cologne; in part on her knowledge of romance conventions; and in part on the ubiquity of similar stories of dispossessed, exiled and often impoverished aristocrats returning from exile in the early years of post-Restoration London.⁴

Mary's scandalous celebrity began with her imprisonment in London on charges of bigamy but, interestingly, it was news of her previous scams outside the capital, delivered in the form of a letter to her new husband's family, that precipitated Mary's arrest. Written and spoken accusations travelled but the witnesses themselves did not: it was hearsay that caused Mary to be brought to trial and its legal inadmissibility that saved her. Far from putting an end to speculation, Mary's acquittal fanned the flames. She had not so much been proved innocent as (not) found to be (not) legally married to John Carleton, scrivener and pretended gentleman. In stark contrast, Mary was able to use the uncertainty surrounding her identity and the opportunistic trickery to which her notoriety had exposed her, even while she was incarcerated, to her own benefit. Accused as a 'trepanner', she showed herself to be a trickster as adept at exposing the tricks of others as she was at passing for quality. On the other hand, as Mary Jo Keitzman remarks:

Had her performance not been extremely persuasive, we might reasonably conclude that the prevalence of theatricals in which 'con women' duped men into marriage by pretending to have fortunes ought to have given John Carleton a very specific social framework with which to have read skeptically Mary's performance.⁵

Immediately before, during and after the 1663 trial, Mary became the focus of a wave of bestselling broadsides and pamphlets that took up positions for

4 Margaret and William Cavendish, for instance, were among the tide of banished royalists returning to England in the 1660s hoping to reclaim property and preferment at the new court of Charles II. In a twist on this narrative, Mary claimed, on her arrival in London, that she had powerful connections at court but did not want to make her appearance there until her money and property had been conveyed from Germany.

5 Keitzman, Mary Jo 2004, *The Self-Fashioning of an Early Modern Englishwoman. Mary Carleton's lives*, Ashgate, Aldershot, UK, p. 45.

and against her. Generally anonymous, the most substantial of these pamphlets were offered as the work (in whole or part) of Mary herself and her aggrieved husband: *The Case of Madam Mary Carleton, Lately Stiled the German Princess, truly stated, with an historical relation of her birth, education, and fortunes* (1663) by 'M. Carleton' and *The Ultimium Vale* by John Carleton. *The Case* and its heroine's transgressive life have aroused considerable interest among contemporary scholars of early modern women and it is now generally accepted as partly or wholly Mary's own work.⁶ It formed the basis for the history of the 'German Princess' that was quickly incorporated into successive collections of popular true crime narratives that eventually came to be known as the *Newgate Calendar* and influenced other ambivalently admiring representations of female rogues, often combining fictional and true elements, such as *The German Princess Revived; or the London Jilt, Being a True Account of the Life and Death of Jenney Voss* (1684) and Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722). The year after the trial, Mary played herself in a dramatisation of the case on the London stage but the play was not a success and closed after one night. By then, the first wave of public interest might have run its course. After that Mary vanished from the public eye and record for some years, until she resurfaced in court documents, indicted for theft under a series of different names—Maria Darnton, Mary Blacke, Mary Kirton, Maria Lyon and Mary Carlston—from 1669 until her transportation to Jamaica in 1671.⁷

Transportation served as a commutation (pardon) of a death sentence. By 1673, Mary had violated the conditions of her pardon by returning to London, where she captured the attention of the metropolis again in a second celebrity trial. This time it was the turnkey who recognised the 'German Princess' when she was brought into prison—proof of her continuing celebrity, at least in that restricted milieu, and of the unpredictable recognitions, ironies and intimacies passing engenders. Mary's conviction and public hanging inspired another wave of publications, chief among them *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled* (1673), a substantial criminal biography written by Francis Kirkman, a well-known

6 See, for instance: Chalmers, Hero 1992, "'The person I am, or what they made me to be': the construction of the feminine subject in the autobiographies of Mary Carleton", in Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (eds), *Women, Texts and Histories 1575–1760*, Routledge, London; Suzuki, Mihoko 1993, 'The case of Mary Carleton: representing the female subject, 1663–73', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Spring), pp. 61–83; Suzuki, Mihoko (ed.) 2006, *Mary Carleton. The early modern Englishwoman. Series II. Part 3*, Ashgate, Aldershot, UK; Keitzman, *The Self-Fashioning of an Early Modern Englishwoman*.

7 For a list of the Mary Carleton texts, see Bernbaum, Ernest 1914, *The Mary Carleton Narratives 1663–1673: A missing chapter in the history of the English novel*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., pp. 10–11. Bernbaum's groundbreaking study remains a valuable contribution in many ways. For the details of Mary Carleton's life, I rely on: Todd, Janet 2004–08, 'Carleton [née Moders], Mary (1634x42–1673)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, <www.oxforddnb.com>; Todd, Janet and Spearing, Elizabeth (eds) 1994, *Counterfeit Ladies: The life and death of Mary Frith/the case of Mary Carleton*, Pickering & Chatto, London; Todd, Janet 1999, 'The German princess: criminalities of gender and class', in Rosamaria Locatelli and Robert De Romanis (eds), *Narrating Transgression: Representations of the criminal in early modern England*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, pp. 103–12; Keitzman, *The Self-Fashioning of an Early Modern Englishwoman*.

London publisher, bookseller and bibliophile, already associated with the picaresque genres of romance, memoir and rogue literature, particularly through his role as publisher of Richard Head's *The English Rogue* (1665).⁸

Mary Carleton passed for quality and also as an unmarried virgin in an attempt to use (and abuse) the institution of marriage to her advantage. Occasionally, Mary was also reported as cross-dressing, generally associated with being deprived temporarily of the essential tools of her trade: fine clothes and jewels.⁹ This little remarked aspect of the discursive *copia* generated by Mary's life deserves more critical attention than it has received if only because it can be seen as an attempt to render Mary's passing in more conventional and familiar terms: as a literalisation of Mary's masculinised agency. Mary Frith, the model for the character of the notorious cross-dressed thief 'Moll Cutpurse', of Middleton and Dekker's city comedy, *The Roaring Girl* (1611), died in 1659. A memoir attributed to her, *The Life of Mrs Mary Frith*, was published posthumously in 1662, the year before Mary Carleton's first London trial. Mary Carleton could have read *The Life*; she would certainly have known of it. With interest in Mary Frith still current, it was not surprising that this second Mary's story should be received partly through the mediation of the first's narrative, with its emphasis on cross-dressing and disorderly female conduct. In a sense, Mary Carleton's literally deceptive finery—her aristocratic costume and ornament (the authenticity or otherwise of these jewels was much debated)—amounted to a kind of cross-dressing. It signalled Mary's actress-like conduct as a form of total theatre: her taking up of an extravagant, self-authored role that ostensibly denied any form of acting on her part while alluding to social conduct as thoroughly performative and winking at her own talent for deception. This specifically visual deception, which went beyond dress alone to include styling, deportment and *mien*, was the necessary but not sufficient condition for Mary's successful passing.¹⁰ In

8 For an excellent recent discussion of Kirkman, see Greene, Jody 2006, 'Francis Kirkman's counterfeit authority: autobiography, subjectivity, print', *PMLA*, vol. 121, pp. 17–32.

9 See, in particular, *The Female Hector, or, The Germane Lady Turn'd Mounsieur. With the manner of her comming to the White-Hart Tavern in Smithfield like a young lord in mans apparel, with a perriwig down to her shoulders, a rich belt, and a rapier by her side. How she deceiv'd the gentry at Amsterdam under the notion of the distressed lady of a banished lord, and being after discovered by a gentleman that came thither from London, was by order of the governour stript of her rich apparel, and banish'd the city in her own old weeds. How she deceiv'd an inn-keeper at Sandwich in Kent, who paund all his plate, debursed his mony, and pass'd his word for her, till that he was forc'd to fly beyond sea, not daring to go home after she had given him the slip at Billingsgate, where she promis'd to pay him all out of a great treasure she told him she had there. How she made her escape from the Kings-bench, to the cost of the turn-key 100 pound thick, with all the rest of her notable pranks and cunning deceits from her birth to this present, that have not been yet publish'd* (1663, N. Dorrington, London). I give the full title here because this obscure short pamphlet survives in a unique copy in the Beinecke Library and is not included thus far in *Early English Books Online*.

10 On the significance of dress and appearance in the case of Mary Carleton, see: Wayne, Valerie 2004, 'Assuming gentility: Thomas Middleton, Mary Carleton and Aphra Behn', in James Daybell (ed.), *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450–1700*, Ashgate, Aldershot, UK, pp. 243–56; Pritchard, Will 2008, *Outward Appearances: The female exterior in Restoration London*, Associated University Press, Cranbury, NJ.

this context, the many accounts of Mary's clothing being violently rent and removed not only constitute sexual assault but figure the impossibly literal desire to expose Mary's truth by stripping her naked.

Whereas Mary's accomplishments and seductive charms were coded as hyper-feminine, her drive, intelligence and independence opened her to charges of unwomanliness, which led, in turn, to occasional accounts of cross-dressing, not as a goal in itself, but as a contingent strategy. The role assigned to cross-dressing in the 'German Princess' texts, albeit minor, was a symptom of anxieties about, and interest in, the kinds of passing that Mary actively pursued (and those she did not). Episodes of cross-dressing in the 'German Princess' texts allegorise Mary's figural 'additions' and hermaphroditic adaptability, enhancing the multi-generic potential of her life—as romance, play or broadside—while underlining the sense in which *any* form of passing exposes the instability of genre, taxonomy, hierarchy and authority. The diverse forms of passing variously attributed to Mary in different texts suggested her essential undecidability: she was simultaneously credible and incredible, masculine and feminine, high and low, English and alien, victor and victim. At first, Mary's example seemed to offer a daring model for other lowborn women of talent and accomplishment (and perhaps men as well) to advance in a treacherous but opportunistic world. Over time, however, her example seemed to give the lie to such a possibility, at least in any continuing sense, since over the course of her life Mary's status declined even as she became more infamous. If anything, Mary lost her life not because her performance as a gentlewoman became any less convincing but because she was too well known, too exceptional and public a character, to pass as someone else. No wonder, then, that the more admiring redactions of the case of the German Princess concentrate on Mary's acquittal in 1663, omitting or otherwise minimising her execution a decade later.

The first pamphlet denouncing Mary Carleton, *The Lawyer's Clerk Trapped by the Crafty Whore of Canterbury* (1663), itemises its accusations as its title page:

A true Relation of the whole Life of Mary Mauders the Daughter of Thomas Mauders a Fidler in Canterbury. Wherein is discovered,
1. How she married a Fidler at Dover, and a Shoe-maker at the City of Canterbury. 2. How she cheated a Vintner of 60 pound, and was committed to Newgate. 3. How she cheated a French Marshant of Rings, Jewels and other Rich Commodities last March. 4. How she picks a Kentish Lords Pocket, at Graves-end, of his watch and money. 5. How she made her escape, when sold and ship'd for the Barbadoes. 6. How she came to London to the Exchange Tavern, naming her self Henrietta Maria de Vulva the Daughter of a great Prince in Germany, and married a Lawyers Clark on Easter-day last.

The anonymous author of the pamphlet, which was issued while Mary was awaiting trial for bigamy, depicted its scandalous subject as a lowborn whore, fraud and thief, already a veteran of Newgate, who worked, alone or in concert with a partner, to 'trapan' credulous men. The pornographic name assigned to her in this pamphlet, 'Henrietta Maria de Vulva', announces her as, simultaneously, a type of the wandering/foreign whore and a burlesque of Charles I's French Catholic consort, Henrietta Maria, who had only very recently returned to England, to the Restoration court of her son, Charles II.

The meaning of 'trapan' combines entrapment, fraud and extortion in a literally or figuratively sexualised context. Thus, Edward Phillips' *New World of English Words* (1658) glosses 'Trepan, or Trapan': 'to intrap, or insnare, but more especially in that manner, which is used by Whores and Ruffians.'¹¹ In Thomas Blount's *Glossographia or a Dictionary* (1656):

To Trepan, or rather trappan (from the Ital. Trappare or trappolare id est to entrap, ensnare, or catch in a gin) in the modern acception of the word, it signifies to cheat, or entrap in this manner; a whore admits a man to be naught with her, and in the very instant, rings a Bell or gives a watch word, and in comes a Pander who pretends to be her husband, and with vapouring and threats, upon the act of adultery, forces money or bond from the deluded third person. Some take this word to be derived from a Pander that does entrap, or a trapping Pander.

Here, a 'pander' (presumed to be male) conspires with a 'whore' (presumed to be female) to dupe another man, with the dissolute couple passing as husband and wife. As *The Lawyer's Clerk Trappanned* makes plain, Mary's crimes against property, rank and propriety depend on her 'crafty' ability, as a woman on the market, to 'entrap, ensnare, and beguile' (*Oxford English Dictionary*: 'trepan, trapan'). Her marks are usually men in search of an advantageous association with a woman superior in wealth or status or both. Combining pretended wealth, gentility and virtue with strategic seduction, false evidence and theft, Mary's *modus vivendi* is more subtle and independent than Blount's rudimentary example. She acts on her own account, with no need of a pander, though she does make use of maids and pages as occasional functionaries in her schemes. What she must have, however, is fresh territory to exploit and that becomes increasingly difficult, not only because her notoriety pursues her, but because she desires to be known and celebrated.

An equally brief and anonymous pro-Mary pamphlet immediately countered, claiming to be 'an Exact Accompt from her own Mouth'.¹² *A Vindication Of a*

11 Phillips, Edward 1658, *New World of English Words*, London, p. 333.

12 Anonymous 1663, *A Vindication of a Distressed Lady in Answer to a Pernitious, Scandalous, Libellous Pamphlet; intituled, The Lawyers Clarke Trappan'd by the Crafty Whore of Canterbury*, London, p. 4.

Distressed Lady In Answer to a pernicious, scandalous, libellous Pamphlet; Intituled, The Lawyers Clarke Trappan'd by the Crafty Whore of Canterbury (1663) turns the accusation of falsehood back on the author of the first pamphlet. It argues that Mary cannot be lowborn since 'Her Accomplishments do demonstrate the contrary'; she is 'adorned with apt and ready Faculties of her Mind'¹³ as well as the signs of good breeding. Crediting Mary with '*French, Dutch, Latine, Greek, Hebrew, and all manner of other Education; as Musick, Singing, Dancing, and the like*',¹⁴ *A Vindication* repeats and refutes each charge in turn, claiming that it is Mary who has been 'trappan'd', with her husband's father, 'old Mr Carleton', acting the part of pander.

These answering pamphlets with their antithetical representations of Mary as 'crafty whore' and 'distressed lady' set the pattern from the start: the hyperbolic enormity of Mary's crimes and ambitions, on the one hand, countered by the greatness of her accomplishments and the magnitude of her 'distress' on the other. According to *The Lawyer's Clerk Trapped*, 'To tell you all the pranks performed by this piece of impudence, were *too much to be contained* in one sheet.'¹⁵ Instead, the anonymous author will cut its scandalous subject down to size by giving no more than 'an epitome of her Life and actions'.¹⁶ The same tropes were still in play at the end of Mary's life and, indeed, long after her death. In the wake of Mary's execution, *Memories of the Life of the Famous Madam Charlton* (1673) claimed that 'her towring spirit was too large for her narrow fortunes'¹⁷ and that even London, the great metropolis, was not sufficient to contain her. She is represented as larger than life, always on the move and in disguise, evading capture and generating texts, a producer and receiver of fraudulent letters and faked documents. Even when temporarily immobilised, held in confinement, Mary engenders activity: crowds flock to see her, pamphlets are issued, accounts multiply.

In Francis Kirkman's Jonsonian phrase, Mary is a 'counterfeit lady' in multiple senses: she does not just traffic in stolen or counterfeit goods (like Mary Frith); as a *femme covert* and bigamist acting on her own account, she is herself a piece of stolen property and a counterfeit jewel. Mary even has her own heroic versions of this trope in *The Case*: she styles herself as an 'errant Lady', an aristocratic exception, modelled on the resolutely unmarried Queen Christina.¹⁸ In the pamphlets written against her, Mary is ambiguously presented as a femme

13 Ibid., p. A2.

14 Ibid., p. 4.

15 Anonymous 1663, *The Lawyer's Clerk Trapped by the Crafty Whore of Canterbury*, London, p. A2; my emphasis.

16 Ibid., p. A2.

17 Anonymous 1673, *Memories of the Life of the Famous Madam Charlton*, London, p. 2.

18 On Queen Christina, Garbo and passing, see Lilley, Kate 2006, 'Early modern Garbo: the two bodies of Queen Christina', in E. McMahon and B. Olubas (eds), *Women Making Time*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth, pp. 16–35.

fatale, an unfeeling 'fair jilt' in the language of Restoration and early eighteenth-century fiction and drama, who fools and fleeces men who should know better.¹⁹ As John Carleton complains in *The Ultimum Vale...A true Description of the Passages of that Grand Impostor, Late a Pretended Germane-Lady* (1663), Mary is figuratively 'hermaphrodite', a master-mistress of false 'additions' and 'crocodile teares';²⁰ 'every ingenious Reader may suppose what additions she made, and how politickly she enlarged herself in every action.'²¹ Mary uses her wardrobe and her sophisticated literacy to style herself as an aristocrat—performatively and discursively—so that she might chance to become what she deserves and aspires to be. When that fails, and as she passes transversally into the criminal class, Mary turns (or returns) to theft to survive, first casually and then in a more organised and even exuberant fashion. She becomes another kind of princess in exile or in waiting—'Henrietta Maria de Wolway' (or 'Vulva')—a reminder *en travesti* of the executed king's foreign consort, Henrietta Maria.

Authorship and criminality, posterity and passing work hand in glove in the 'German Princess' texts. As John Carleton puts it, though he wishes she had 'been dissolved into atoms for her just desserts', 'I truly think, that if she should live till she speaks and writes nothing but truth, she would never dye'.²² He realises that even his own entry into print to attempt to vindicate himself, no matter how abridged he protests it is, draws him into a labyrinth that threatens to engulf him: 'I am forced to be my own historiographer.'²³ The discursive dilation he deplores in Mary as an affront to 'the Micro-cosme or little World of many a Gentleman'²⁴ is both replicated and thematised in his abusive catalogue of her as 'a common and confident Curtizan, a cursed apostate, a storehouse of untruths, an armory of falsehoods, a castle of impudency, a treasury of vice, an enemy to all good, a receipt and exchequer of all rogeury'.²⁵

19 On the jilt, see Blackwell, Bonnie 2004, 'How the jilt triumphed over the slut: the evolution of an epithet, 1660–1780', *Women's Writing*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 141–61. Mowry refers to *The Case* as a 'whore's biography'. McKeon stresses Mary's insistence on her chastity and virtue. Mary's own account in *The Case* not only explicitly rejects the characterisation of her career as a whore's progress but positions her text as mandated by the need to defend herself against this charge. See: McKeon, Michael 1987, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600–1740*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md; Mowry, Melissa 2005, 'Thieves, bawds, and counterrevolutionary fantasies: the life and death of Mrs Mary Frith', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring/Summer); Carleton, Mary 1663, *The Case of the German Princess*, London.

20 Carleton, John 1663, *The Ultimum Vale...A true Description of the Passages of that Grand Impostor, Late a Pretended Germane-Lady*, London, p. 4.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Arriving in the New World more in the character of a celebrity than an indentured slave, Mary (or someone posing as her) wrote a *Letter from Jamaica* in which she represented her passing in terms of dramatic irony, a shared joke between friends, part of the commons:

I came to the desired haven with a prosperous gale. Where I no sooner arrived, but I was, contrary to expectation, treated en Princesse, and accommodated like my self. But one thing I have omitted; when I first set sail from England I was...despised as the base brat of a country fiddler...I fled to my old Asylum, the never failing refuge of a charming tongue and ready wit, and so had both my lodging better'd and my commons amended...At my landing, instead of a barborous slavery...I was immediately environed with a crowd of admirers. And no sooner was my name heard, but it echo'd into the remotest parts of the island and drew a wonderful confluence of the more vile and dissolute people to my habitation.²⁶

Unlike Defoe's Moll Flanders, Mary Carleton was not rehabilitated by her sojourn in Jamaica and she did not serve out her time there; but, like Moll, and that other famous libertine, the Earl of Rochester (who engineered his own 'German' scam in the 1680s), Mary died a confessed penitent.²⁷

In its bantering equivocations, the broadsheet *An Elegie on the Famous and Renowned Lady* captured the spirit in which Mary made shift to 'act Nature's part, preserve her life' and 'Improv'd, till she was Metropolitan': 'Who can ill language on her Craft bestow,/In seeking to have two strings to her Bow?'²⁸ According to Kirkman, Mary's last words at Tyburn, having laid aside her book of devotions and placed her husband's likeness on her breast, were 'pious ejaculations'. Kirkman ends his book in similar fashion, reiterating the need 'incessantly to practise piety' and emphasising the moral:

[I]f we give our selves over to ill Company or our own wicked inclinations, we are infallibly led to the Practice of those Crimes, which although they may be pleasing at the present, yet they have a sting behind, and we shall be sensible thereof when we shall be hurried to an untimely end, as you have seen in the vicious life and untimely death of this our Counterfeit Lady.²⁹

26 'Letter from Jamaica', in Keitzman, *The Self-Fashioning of an Early Modern Englishwoman*, pp. 248–9.

27 On Rochester's scam, see Loveman, Kate 2008, *Reading Fictions 1660–1740: Deception in English literary and political culture*, Ashgate, Aldershot, UK. Curiously, Loveman makes no mention of Mary Carleton.

28 Anonymous 1673, *An Elegie On the Famous and Renowned Lady, for Eloquence and Wit, Madam Mary Carlton, Otherwise Styled, The German Princess*, London.

29 Kirkman, Francis 1673, *The Countefeit Lady Unveiled*, London, p. 220.

By writing and publishing *The Counterfeit Lady*, Kirkman would seem to have ignored his own advice, willingly giving himself to the 'ill company' of his notorious subject. Implicitly, Kirkman suggests that textual intimacies—reading, writing and publishing—could be exempt from the 'sting behind'; or, on the contrary, such activities could be distinctly behind-hand. They allow, and indeed promote, a pleasurable, 'sensible' proximity and even identification—a kind of imaginative passing or doubling—while preserving or seeming to preserve virtue. Here Kirkman enters into debates current, then and now, about textual affects and effects, coming out on the side of the pleasure *and* profit of vicarious experience in a (properly or improperly) contained form. Moving from collecting, selling and translating romances and drama to writing and publishing criminal biography and memoir, Kirkman enlarged his sphere of action in the book trade by playing the part of Mary's literary pander. It is true, as McKeon argues, that Kirkman's pieties recuperate Mary for a conservative account of transgressive genre, framing her as 'the very epitome of fraud and imposture' and reserving the part of the gentleman author-bookseller for himself.³⁰ It is also clear, however, that Kirkman's editorial framing is, at least potentially, as double coded and disingenuous as his heroine. It is difficult—perhaps impossible—not to regard Mary's final scene as another ironic, 'hermaphrodite' performance under duress. By the same token, Kirkman must have expected that knowing readers (then and now) would take the hint not to take him, or his counterfeit lady, at face value.

30 McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600–1740*, p. 244.