

Georgia State University

ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

English Dissertations

Department of English

Spring 4-20-2011

Elizabeth Carter's Legacy: Friendship and Ethics

Afag S. Fazlollahi

Georgia State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_diss

Recommended Citation

Fazlollahi, Afag S., "Elizabeth Carter's Legacy: Friendship and Ethics." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2011.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/1955421>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

LIZABETH CARTER’S LEGACY: FRIENDSHIP AND ETHICS

by

AFAG FAZLOLLAHI

Under the direction of Malinda Snow

ABSTRACT

“Elizabeth Carter’s Legacy: Friendship and Ethics” examines the written evidence about the relationships between Elizabeth Carter and her father, Dr. Nicolas Carter; Catherine Talbot; Sir William Pulteney (Lord Bath); and Samuel Johnson to explain how intellectual and personal relationships may become the principal ethical source of human happiness. Based on their own set of moral values, such as intellectual and individual liberty and equality, the relationships between Carter and her friends challenged eighteenth-century traditional norms of human relationships.

The primary sources of this study, Carter’s poetry and prose, including her letters, present the poet’s experience of intellectual and individual friendship, reflecting Aristotle’s ethics, specifically his moral teaching that views friendship as a human good contributing to human happiness—to the chief human good. Carter’s poems devoted to her friends, such as Dr. Carter, Talbot, Montagu, Lord Bath, as well as her “A Dialogue” between Body and Mind, demonstrate her ethical legacy, her specific moral principles that elevated human relationships and human life. Carter’s discussion of human relationships introduces the moral necessity of ethics in human life.

INDEX WORDS: Elizabeth Carter, Nicolas Carter, Catherine Talbot, Elizabeth Montagu, Samuel Johnson, Sir William Pulteney (Lord Bath), Hester Chapone, Human Relationships, Father-Daughter Relationships, Intellectual Friendship, Marriage, Ethics, Virtue, Bluestockings, Stoicism, Epictetus, Letters, Sermons, Poems, *Rambler*,

ELIZABETH CARTER'S LEGACY: FRIENDSHIP AND ETHICS

by

AFAG FAZLOLLAHI

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2011

Copyright by
Afag Fazlollahi
2011

ELIZABETH CARTER'S LEGACY: FRIENDSHIP AND ETHICS

by

AFAG FAZLOLLAHI

Committee Chair: Malinda Snow

Committee: Lynee Gaillet

Murray Brown

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

April 2011

To my husband and friend, Bijan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my committee chair Dr. Malinda Snow, whose professional attention and support contributed significantly to the completion of this dissertation. Special thanks to Dr. Snow for being patient with me in reading my drafts and making me a better thinker and a better writer. I would like to thank the members of my doctoral committee, Dr. Lynee Gaillet and Dr. Murray Brown, for their input and assistance.

I would like to thank my friend Patricia Chapman for encouraging words and expertise.

I have to thank Dr. Tamara Gosta, my dear friend, who was the first reader of my drafts. Tamara was always there for me to discuss my ideas and writings. I had her support at every stage of my writing process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
INTRODUCTION	9
Chapter One: A Father-Daughter Relationship: A Principal Source of Moral Values	23
1. Introduction	23
2. Dealing with Facts: “They were Father and Daughter and Trusted Friends”	33
2. Elizabeth Carter to Her Father	41
3. Letters: Reflection of Friendship	55
4. “Nobody Knows What May Happen; I never said I would not marry”	59
5. A Husband and Wife Relationship: An Ethical Issue	69
Chapter Two: Behind the Lines of Poetry: Elizabeth Carter and Intellectual Friendship	81
1. Introduction	81
2. Defining Friendship: Intellectual and Individual Freedom	84
2. To Her Friends: Catherine Talbot, Elizabeth Montagu, and the Earl of Bath	92
Chapter Three: Elizabeth Carter: Friendship and Letters	129
1. Introduction: Letters—Stories of Friendship	129
2. Dealing with Letters	131
3. Friendship and the Traditions of the Century	134
4. Individual Liberty in Epictetus’ Teaching	141
5. Writing Letters—Experiencing Friendship	145
6. The Carter-Talbot Relationship	152
Chapter Four: Elizabeth Carter and Samuel Johnson: Colleagues and Friends	181
1. Introduction	181

2. They Were Destined to be Intellectual Friends	191
3. Serving Community: Intellectual and Ethical Contributions	200
CONCLUSION	213
WORKS CITED	219

INTRODUCTION

*What can be said of so obscure an individual as I am?
And what do you think the world will care about me?*

Elizabeth Carter (Preface to *Letters*, 7)¹

Modern Western civilization and particularly its set of moral values are based upon ideas and institutions founded by ancient classical philosophies and developed during later periods of Western history, especially during the Enlightenment. The crucial role of literature in this process should not be underestimated. This study focuses on the ethical legacy one of the eighteenth-century intellectuals, Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), who presented her moral principles and faith in her poems and prose, including letters. Through these writings, Carter contributed significantly to the process of identifying lasting and important aspects of Western ethics. Among those moral principles, the approach to the role of women in society becomes the central concern of eighteenth-century women intellectuals. Even the writer's nephew, Montagu Pennington, who generally upholds the traditional patriarchal view of women, addresses Carter's belief "that women had not their proper station in society, and that their mental powers were not rated sufficiently high" (*Memoirs*, 447-448). For centuries, women's "station in society" was regulated by traditions according to which women were not equal to men; and ethically, it was acceptable for eighteenth-century British society to treat women as inferior to men. Certain historical circumstances—social, cultural, political, or economic—become the main reasons for the practice of this particular kind of relationship between male and female members of a society. However, this inequality also results from the absence of friendship between males and females, and it is a set of moral values that failed to encourage friendship between men and women. Throughout the history of Western ethics, the significance of friendship in founding a

¹ Montagu Pennington quotes Elizabeth Carter in his Preface to the first volume of *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot* (1809).

moral society was discussed over and over again,² but this belief in friendship between members of society did not expand to male and female relationships. I argue that Carter's entire life, devoted to friendship, as well as her ideas and principles of friendship, should be viewed as her reaction to the absence of friendship in human relationships.

Carter challenges the traditional approach to the status of women in a community and demonstrates a possibility of a different lifestyle for women. Carter ignores social restrictions by exercising her rights to study and then to become a well-known Greek scholar, a professional poet, and of course, the best friend to many eighteenth-century intellectuals. Carter's own image elevated women's position in eighteenth-century England. Her life-style proved to her contemporaries that women too could devote their lives to learning, and that the set of traditional ethical principles, developed over centuries to regulate a woman's status in her immediate family as well as in society could be questioned.

Of course, there were other professional female writers, female intellectuals, such as Katherine Philips (1632-1664), Aphra Behn (1640-1689), Anne Finch (1661-1720), Elizabeth Singer Rowe (1674-1737), Mary Astell (1666-1731), Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), or Carter's contemporaries, like Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800) and Catherine Talbot (1741-1770). However, Carter's life experience is an unusual case. She is a woman of high status who managed to become one of the most respected Greek scholars of the century. She consciously rejected marriage and chose to live independently "in a century when marriage was considered universally desirable for women—when marriage was almost their only guarantee of respectability" (Claudia Thomas 27). Unlike most women of her circle, she achieved a satisfying life not through marriage, but through learning, writing, and through her relationships with other intellectuals of the time.

² In the next section, I will refer to certain examples of these discussions.

By choosing life without marriage, Carter challenges not only traditions and customs, but also herself as an individual: it was extremely difficult for a woman in the eighteenth century to build an independent life. Such a challenging lifestyle does not go without physical and intellectual pain. By embracing all possible actual difficulties, all inevitable moral and intellectual pain, Carter establishes her own ethical principles according to which women can control their own lives. Carter's devotion to learning and to friendship is particularly important because the impact of Carter's views and life experience, introduced in her poems, prose, and in her relationship with other individuals, has persisted into our modern Western ethics. In other words, the identity of Western modern women is based on the moral principles developed in the frame of eighteenth-century ethical thought.

This study centers on one necessity of human existence, on one inevitable, important state of character—the experience of friendship—which has had a strong influence on the formation of the human moral world. Carter's image of a learned lady is a standing protest against women's position in society, and the study of her personal relationships with others presented in her poems and prose will explain the role of human relationship in founding and developing a moral society.

When it comes to the relationships between ethics, literature, and criticism, some modern scholars, like Robert Eaglestone in his *Ethical Criticism: Reading After Levinas*, question this relation and argues that “in the traditional model of ethical criticism both ‘ethical’ and ‘criticism’ are problematic” (35). Other scholars, like Martha Nussbaum, suggest that we consider the role and influence of literature on ethics. In her *The Fragility of Goodness* (1986), she views literary works as “an ethical reflection in their own right” (13). Eaglestone criticizes Nussbaum's view of the literary text according to which works of literature “confront and

explore problems about human beings... that a philosophical text might be able to omit or avoid” (37). His argument against Nussbaum’s approach to the text is based on the ideas developed by deconstructions: to him, Nussbaum offers “over-simplified understanding of the act of reading which is open to a wide-ranging critique” (46). This study advocates the neo-Aristotelians’ belief in inevitability of the direct relationships between literature and ethics.

One of the vivid examples of this case is the impact of Euripides’ drama *The Trojan Women* on the Greek audience. It is a fact that Euripides won the competition when he introduced his drama to the Greek audience. He became a winner of the competition because he managed to make his audience share the pain experienced by the characters. The literary work had a strong impact on the audience; the literary work made the audience respond to human sufferings, to human experience. This is the case when literature becomes part of human experience, literature makes the audience feel with characters, and we may suggest that literature promotes moral good, influences people’s ways of thinking. It is the creative power of Euripides’ play that helps the Greek audience to view and to internalize the reality of human sufferings caused by the aggression of the Greek army. This unquestionable historical fact demonstrates how literature can teach the audience to become and to be ethical.

The Concept of Friendship

Traditional philosophy views friendship as a form of virtue and emphasizes its necessity of human happiness. Socrates and Plato shared the view that “a good society could not be created without friends and loyal companions; friendship and its primary characteristic, love, were indispensable for moral thought and life” (Ashby 50). By founding the Academy, Plato wanted to establish a community where friends could meet to assist each other in the most important

matters of life. Aristotle recognizes two main sorts of human relations: “the relations that exist by virtue of being a part of political community” and “the relations of personal friendship” (Ashby 74). Although he divides human relations into two types, in both types of relations, the concept of friendship is a dominating factor: only through the principles of personal friendship, we learn how to build relations between members of society—moral society. And when it comes to the motives for friendship, Aristotle mentions only three types: one aims at pleasure, one aims at advantage, and the third at concern and care for the other’s own sake (Irwin 216). In Aristotle’s view, friendship serves as a source of personal happiness, a principal source of ethical ideas for founding moral good, moral environment.

In our everyday life within communities, we follow certain sets of ethical teachings because it is necessary to consider everyone’s well-being: we live, we act, and behave according to a certain system of ethical expectations, and friendship is a factor which establishes this ethical frame.

In these terms, Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) identifies friendship as a “unifying and harmonizing principle operating in the realm of men to promote concord” (Smith 25). Spenser is one of few writers who express the classical interpretation of friendship not in philosophical works or treatises, but in a literary text, in his epic, *The Faerie Queene* (1590). This literary work is devoted to the virtue of the individual, and Spenser’s focus on the conception of friendship becomes inevitable. In the tenth canto of the Fourth Book, Spenser presents friendship as an inevitable aspect of human life, as a divine power regulating human life, human relations. In order to demonstrate unquestionable important position of friendship in human existence, Spenser emphasizes the significance of its origin—its direct connection with “Great *Venus*, Queene of beautie and of grace” (4.10.44). Spenser writes:

Concord she cleeped was in common reed,
 Mother of blessed *Peace* and *Friendship* trew;
 They both her twins, both borne of heavenly seed,
 And she her selfe likewise divinely grew. (4.10.34)

In this presentation, Spencer relates friendship to Lady Concord, “Great Venus,” “Great God of men and women” (4.10.44) providing a necessary harmony and unity in the universe.

Friendship’s natural unifying power becomes a source of human happiness, a source of moral good. Spencer’s theory of friendship reflects the classical interpretation of friendship according to which friendship is based on virtue, on equality, and on similarity. Charles G. Smith’s *Spencer’s Theory of Friendship* offers the discussion of other ideas of friendship emphasized by Spencer, such as “friends have but one soul,” “a friend is a second self,” “False friendship cannot last,” “friends’ goods are common goods” (27). The study of the tenth canto of the Fourth Book shows the direct link between classical teaching of friendship and Spencer’s ideas of friendship.

However, all these definitions of friendship cannot fully present our real-life experience of friendship. In his reading of Adam Smith’s teaching related to the principles of morals, Ashby states that “the moral good must known in experience not in definition” (39). As a source of moral good, friendship also must be known and understood in experience, not in definitions or theory only. Literary works and thinkers of later periods tend to question these approaches to the concept of friendship by presenting friendship not in definitions and codes but in portraying the experience itself—the experience of friendship. As a moral experience, as an operation in the world of human relationship, friendship is constantly changing because society as a whole is changing. Under the new demands of time, individuals’ behavior in their relationships is not predictable: with inevitable changes in our political, economic, and cultural worlds, we have to

deal with new aspects of human relations. For example, the eighteenth century is known as a century of revolutionary changes in the public and private spheres. As the products of their own time, women writers react to existing social restrictions by expressing their personal life experience as well as their own experience of friendship through their poems.

This study will explore Elizabeth Carter's personal experience of friendship through examining literary texts—her poems and letters—as well as certain biographical facts in order to identify the writer's own specific ethical principles that guided her throughout her life. This study, moreover, will explore certain uncommon elements of friendship practiced by male and female intellectuals of the eighteenth century.

In eighteenth-century England, the concept of friendship plays its own crucial role in shaping a society's value system: new perspectives are brought into the notion of friendship. This particular century becomes a turning point in the process of interpreting friendship. The classical concept of friendship was not developed enough; in that frame of ethical thinking, the idea of friendship was associated only with a male relationship, and the concept of friendship did not extend to female individuals.

By the eighteenth century, in Western ethics, friendship was viewed as a unifying force between individuals—men and women, women and women—but in fact it was impossible to achieve this particular form of friendship in female and male relationships. For example, most eighteenth-century novels present the tie between a man and a woman as a unity based on marriage, or on a heterosexual romantic relationship.

Philosophers emphasized a necessary similarity and equality between friends, but they failed to see in women equal members of the community. This fact that ethical principles could not be applied to the female population of the state makes the interpretation or understanding of

friendship incomplete. With ideas of the Enlightenment and with the practice of friendship among male and female intellectuals of the eighteenth century, British society started to consider the possibility of friendship between women as well as between men and women. It is one of the main assumptions of the Enlightenment that the individual is the basic reality. If the individual is the basic reality, so the relationship between individuals becomes an important factor in creating an essential framework of ethics. And at this point, the usage “friendship between individuals” includes the understanding of friendship between both male and female members of community. This approach leads us to viewing the concept of friendship as a genderless factor, the relationship that brings people together for their common good.

Carter’s Personal Experience of Friendship

It is impossible to talk about Elizabeth Carter without mentioning her world of relationships that she developed not only with intellectuals of the eighteenth century, but also with close neighbors and family members. Carter’s works—her poems and prose—are primary sources to study the writer’s great interest in having the net of relationship with those individuals. For example, Carter’s personal letters³ demonstrate that Carter’s experience of friendship is based not just on care for others but also on her intellectual and individual needs. These letters present the nature of a woman who needs intellectual relationships, who exercises her right and capability to develop friendship, who finds in friendship the meaning of her life. Through these letters, we sense the significance of friendship for intellectual women and men;

³ *Letters from Mrs. Elizabeth Carter to Mrs. Montagu, between the years 1755 and 1800.* ed. Montagu Pennington. NY: AMS Press, 1973.

A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, from the year 1741 to 1770. NY: AMS Press, 1975.

Some additional letters were edited and published in 2005 by Gwen Hampshire in *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters*.

within this friendship, women are realizing themselves as individuals; within this friendship women are gaining their own voice, making society consider them differently, and recognize in them full members of society.

When it comes to her poetry, however, I am not the first to discuss Carter's poems addressed to friends. Sylvia Harcstark Myers' *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (1990) is considered one of the first studies on "the bluestocking circle."⁴ In the chapter "Elizabeth Carter's London Career," Myers introduces biographical facts of Carter's life; and in this young female poet, Myers discovers an individual who possesses a strong and unique personality: in spite of growing up "burdened by family responsibilities" (45), Carter continues to be an aggressive learner. The author presents Carter as an essayist, a translator, and a poet. Myers compares Carter's writing style with that of other authoritative women writers of England, such as Katherine Philips. Myers also focuses on Carter's poems devoted to her close friends and to her own father, Nicholas Carter, who played a significant role in his daughter's education and life. With his help and support, Carter became one of the recognized educated intellectual women who managed to build an independent life.

The subject of friendship is discussed in the next chapter of the book, "Chosen Friends: Jemima Campbell, later Marchioness Grey, Catherine Talbot, Elizabeth Carter, and Hester Mulso." Here, Myers concentrates specifically on friendship between these women-intellectuals.

Paula R. Backscheider's *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry* (1980) explores the forms in which women poets wrote. The author focuses on the major themes and

⁴ The term "bluestockings" refers to a circle of intellectuals—"men and women interested in literature and other intellectual matters... that flourished in England in the last half of the eighteenth century" (Myers, 2). Gary Kelly's general introduction to *Bluestocking Feminism: Writings of the Bluestocking Circle, 1738-1785* (1999) starts with his explanation of the "Bluestocking circle" which "came into being in the 1750s as informal gatherings of upper-class and professional middle-class men and women in the London homes of well-to-do society women" (ix).

kinds of friendship poems, written by Anne Finch, Elizabeth Carter, Mary Masters, Mary Jones, and Jane Brereton. Only one section of the chapter, “Retirement Poetry,” is devoted specifically to Elizabeth Carter’s retirement poems, and Backscheider refers to the poet’s presentation of friendship advocating the belief that, like men, women too have the need and capacity to exercise friendship.

In *Women’s Friendship in Literature* (1980), Janet Todd investigates the literary phenomenon of female friendship and emphasizes in the eighteenth-century novels five categories of friendship: sentimental, erotic, manipulative, political, and social. She also offers the discussion of heterosexual and parental relationships. In her analysis, Todd concentrates on the literary texts alone. Her discussions are related to fictional characters of literary works. For example, Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* becomes a primary source for the discussion of sentimental friendship. Todd’s work does not include Elizabeth Carter’s writings at all.

While Janet Todd’s discussions include novels of different writers of the eighteenth century, I will concentrate only on literary works—poems and prose—produced by Elizabeth Carter. While Todd talks about parental (mother-daughter) and heterosexual relationships, I will talk about a father-daughter friendship. It becomes necessary to emphasize Carter’s writings and specifically the poem devoted to her father—one of the best presentations of father-daughter friendship in eighteenth-century British literature.

Other writers, like Backscheider, build their discussion of friendship on the so-called “friendship poems.” In both cases, Todd and Backscheider develop their argument in a certain chronological order: they provide a clear structure by classifying different types of friendship or by dividing the themes of the poems into groups. This kind of structure helps to explain the main features of friendship between women-intellectuals. For instance, Backscheider classifies

Carter's poems and devotes to them only one section of one chapter, entitled, "Retirement Poetry." In these studies, Carter and her legacy are presented only as an example of the new circumstances developed in eighteenth-century England. These scholars have explored women's friendship and their poems on friendship, but nobody has written a full-length study of Carter and the concept of friendship. When it comes to the study of Elizabeth Carter's ethical legacy, the research must be focused only on Carter's ideas presented in her literary works. In my study, I am not surveying a certain group of poets; I am concentrating on one single author, Elizabeth Carter, and I am presenting this one particular author's legacy as one of the principal sources that establishes the ethics of friendship.

My work will extend beyond that of previous scholars in several ways. First, these scholars recognize the significance of literary appeal only of female friendship; and second, they look only at eighteenth-century literary texts such as novels and poems. My discussion of friendship does not end at female relationships. I will view certain types of relationships developed between Carter and both male and female intellectuals. Finally, my primary sources consist of not only Carter's poems, but also her prose including her letters. The writer's letters will become one of her major credible sources demonstrating that the literary appeal of friendship in Carter's works is based on the writer's own personal friendship experience.

Previous scholars codify, classify, and systemize the concept of friendship exercised by women-intellectuals of the eighteenth century. In my study, I will investigate specifically Elizabeth Carter's personal experience of friendship presented in her poems and letters. My goal is to focus on specific aspects of the poet's friendship, and her poems reflect those specific moments, specific nature of the poet's own experience of friendship.

In my study of Carter's experience of friendship, I am also interested in the actual impact of the friendship phenomena on Carter as an individual. I will discuss the influence of these phenomena both on Carter's personal ethical principles and on eighteenth-century intellectuals in general; Carter's life experience elevates women's status in society, forces her contemporaries to review their ethical standards and consider possible changes in ways of thinking.

My study will consist of four chapters. In the first chapter, "A Father-Daughter Relationship: A Principal Source of Moral Values," I will discuss Elizabeth Carter's relationship with her father Dr. Nicolas Carter. This discussion will center on a father-daughter relationship as Carter's first experience of friendship, as the root for intellectual relationships developed later in the writer's life. The primary sources for this discussion will be certain letters between the writer and her father as well as the writer's poems devoted to her father.

I found it necessary to include into this first chapter the discussion of Carter's critical approach to the institution of marriage as well as her personal decision not to marry. This necessity lies in the fact that Carter's view of women's traditional marital status was developed under the direct influence of Dr. Carter; it was he who contributed to young Elizabeth's intellectual and individual growth. It was he who supported her independent life style as an intellectual and as an individual. We will read Dr. Carter's letters where he indicates his trust in his daughter's judgment. We can suggest that without Dr. Carter's help, it was impossible for Elizabeth Carter to establish her intellectual and individual independence. Dr. Carter's close involvement with his daughter's intellectual and individual growth and their father-daughter intellectual and individual friendship served as a moral source of the poet's becoming and being an independent thinker. Carter's view presented in "A Dialogue" as well as her decision not to

marry proves Elizabeth's individual and intellectual power to reject women's traditional status in society.

In the second chapter, "Behind the Lines of Poetry: Elizabeth Carter and Intellectual Friendship," I will view Carter's friendship with her contemporary male and female intellectuals presented in her poetry. The analysis of three poems, devoted to Catherine Talbot (1721-1770), Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800), and the Earl of Bath (1684-1764), defines friendship as a source of intellectual and individual freedom.

The third chapter explores letters between Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot. Through these letters, I will examine the main feature of the Carter-Talbot intellectual and individual relationships to argue that by its nature their friendship was gender-free. I will argue that their friendship was not based on so-called certain female solidarity or mutual support to resist women's traditional social status. As Sara Broadie interprets Aristotle's view of the utility relationship, "mutual interest is not strong enough to survive the demise of the utility or the pleasure-relationship" since this type of relationship depends on individuals' changeable circumstances (*Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics*, 58). For Aristotle, the friendship based on mutual interest or on certain solidarity is unstable if compare it with other relationships, such as "personality-based friendship," "loving the other for who he is" (58). As Broadie emphasizes, Aristotle regards personality-based friendship "as the deepest, most stable, most satisfying kind, and the one that makes most difference to individual development" (58). I will argue that Carter-Talbot friendship was personality-based friendship or, as I present it, individual friendship. Moreover, in the Carter-Talbot friendship, we find a synthesis of their individual and intellectual relationships. This type of friendship was common among English male intellectuals of the eighteenth century. The Carter-Talbot friendship demonstrated that women similarly could

exercise intellectual and individual relationship. The Carter-Talbot friendship was *a male-like* intellectual and individual relationship. But, I suggest that intellectual and individual friendship exercised by Carter and Talbot should be considered gender-free.

The fourth chapter focuses on the relationship developed between Elizabeth Cater and Samuel Johnson. The Carter-Johnson friendship shows a particular aspect of male-female relationships: finding in friendship their social, intellectual, and individual freedom and equality. This equality leads us to another important idea, the idea of unbiased, gender-free friendship.

In my conclusion, I will analyze Elizabeth Carter's contribution to Western ethics by exercising a unique life style, which was an outstanding fact even for the British women intellectuals of the eighteenth century. I will view Carter not only as one of the female intellectuals of the century who questions the typical, traditional expectations of a woman's position in British society, but also as the exceptional female thinker of the century who challenges the Western concept of friendship itself by demonstrating new possibilities, new aspects of human relationships. Carter's pattern of human relationship is a specific friendship helping people to realize their own intellectual energy contributing to moral good, to happiness of human beings.

CHAPTER ONE

A Father-Daughter Relationship: A Principal Source of Moral Values

*Thou by whose Fondness, and Paternal Care
Distinguished Blessings glad my cheerful Days,
While first my Thoughts indulgent Heav'n revere,
Receive the second Tribute of my Praise.*
(“To The Rev. Dr. Carter,” 1-4)

*Good my lord!
You have begot me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honor you.*
(*King Lear*, 95-98)

*They were father and daughter and trusted friends,
taking care of each other's well-being.*
(Gwen Hampshire)

Introduction

This chapter introduces the story of a friendship between two individuals, two intellectuals of the eighteenth century—the poet, the philosopher, Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806) and her father, the Reverend Dr. Nicolas Carter (1687-1774), Perpetual Curate of the Church of St George the Martyr at Deal. The daughter, Elizabeth Carter, was one of the respected Greek scholars of the eighteenth century, and her translation of Epictetus remains popular among scholars of the twenty-first century. The father, Dr. Carter, was a graduate of Emanuel College in Cambridge and was considered a serious scholar in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. Later in his life, he became Rector of Woodchurch and of Ham as well as one of the six preachers in the Cathedral Church of Canterbury. His tracts of controversial divinity and a volume of his sermons demonstrate his deep knowledge of the Scriptures.⁵ Their experience of friendship offered a new frame of thought related to human relationships of the time: it challenged the eighteenth-century traditional approach to father-daughter relationships by

⁵ Montagu Pennington, M.A. *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter*. London: 1825, 4-6.

demonstrating the significant influence of this relationship on women's education as well as on women's positions in the family and in society. I will consider Dr. Carter's relationship with his daughter Elizabeth as gender-free because their relationship is free of the conventional restrictions of the time, limiting women's life-style and education choices. I will argue that this gender-free relationship between these two individuals became one of the vivid examples of an ethical human relationship—the profound force that was and is a necessary factor for establishing an ethical or moral environment not only in an immediate family, but also in the entire society as well.

In his division of human knowledge, Aristotle views ethics as one of the practical sciences. As Jonathan Barnes explains in his introduction to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, “the characteristic aim of studying ethics is not the acquisition of knowledge about action but action itself” (xvii). According to Aristotle, we study ethics “not in order to know what good men are like, but in order to act as good men act” (xvii). In this frame of thought, good men's acts include the interest of others and the interest of community through the benefit of each individual. In the eighteenth century, when women did not have access to a formal education, Dr. Carter's decision to give his sons and daughters the same classical education became an ethical statement. By his personal act, he was doing something good, something necessary in order to lead to something positive for others, and for the society at large. At all levels of eighteenth-century British society, Dr. Carter's equal treatment of his sons and daughters was an unusual fact, and his behavior as a father was unexpected. However, his children's intellectual growth, particularly Elizabeth's intellectual fame, justified Dr. Carter's equal treatment of his male and female children.

With this progressive approach to his children's education, Dr. Carter constituted a new culture of eighteenth-century British society—a culture of gender-free relationships, gender-free friendships not only between parents and their children, but also between children themselves. In Dr. Carter's family, everyone was important, loved and considered. The atmosphere of mutual respect, care, and high expectations in intellectual and ethical realms helped every child of Dr. Carter to become a successful individual. In one of the letters to her brother James, Elizabeth wrote to express her happiness for his achievements at work (Hampshire 60).⁶ The poet's strong interest in her brother's success was much more than traditional sisterly love and support. In another case, Elizabeth Carter offered "to take upon herself the sole care of the education of this her youngest brother [Henry]" (Pennington 157). Dr. Carter himself began Henry's education: he was his youngest son by his second wife. However, some years later, his poor health did not allow him to complete his task. So, Elizabeth took full responsibility to prepare her brother for Cambridge. "With unwearied pains, and the most maternal attention, notwithstanding an aching head, and the variety of her own studies, she completed her task" (Pennington 157). In 1756, Henry was entered at Cambridge. The poet equally supported her sisters. She wished her sister Margaret would devote herself to study and offered to live with her and share her fortunes (Pennington 8). Like her father, Elizabeth was deeply interested in intellectual growth of her siblings, and like her father, she played the role of their mentor. The presence of such an authoritative *female mentor* in the family was uncommon in the culture of eighteenth-century British society; usually, only educated male authorities in the family—a father or a brother—could become mentors of their female family members. Elizabeth's care for her siblings reminds us of Dr. Carter's care for Elizabeth when she needed his support in her studies.

⁶ Elizabeth Carter's brothers Nicolas and James died young in foreign service, Lieutenants in the Royal Navy (Pennington 5).

Dr. Carter's every child—male or female—should be considered a success story, a contribution to society. By his first wife, Dr. Carter had five children: Elizabeth, John, Nicholas, James, and Margaret. By his second wife, he had two children: Mary (Polly) and Henry.⁷ As Montagu Pennington, the nephew and the executor of Elizabeth Carter, informs us, John, the eldest son, was known in his community as a magistrate, and a scholar, and Henry became “a respectable clergyman in Berkshire” (7). We know almost nothing about Polly's achievements in life,⁸ but we know relatively more about Margaret, who like her sister, was offered a classical education. Based on these facts, we may suggest that it was against Dr. Carter's ethical principles to single out his elder daughter Elizabeth because she was smarter than her siblings. All three daughters were equally loved and cherished by their father, and their education was one of Dr. Carter's main priorities.

The necessity of improvement of female education was not a new idea among Dr. Carter's contemporaries. The discussion of this subject takes us back to an earlier period, when Mary Astell (1666-1731), one of the most theologically serious and philosophically competent theorists of her age, published *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694-1697), eventually turning it into a work consisting of two different parts. In the first part of the work, the author presents her project to establish a religious community for ladies. Although the proposal was fairly conventional, it caused extremely negative reactions from the public. The second part of her

⁷ Elizabeth Carter's nephew Montagu Pennington could have provided more detailed information about Dr. Carter's children. Pennington believed that it would be improper to talk about those (children) who were still living. In his narration, Pennington provides us with certain facts related to the life of some family members. He says almost nothing, for example, about Mary (Polly)—Dr. Carter's daughter by his second wife (*Memoirs*, 5-7).

Sylvia Myers offers more complete information about Dr. Carter's children: she provides names of all seven children, including two from his second marriage (*The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-century England*, 45).

Probably by mistake, Gwen Hampshire mentions that Dr. Carter had four children from his second wife and does not provide their names (*Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters*, 16).

⁸ The limited information about Elizabeth Carter's half sister Mary (Polly) can be explained by her early death. Polly was married to Dr. Andrew Douglas (Myers 307).

work becomes the author's response to that negation: she presents a full-scale defense of women's intellectual equality. In Western culture, Mary Astell remains one of the first advocates of women's right to equal education, but her audience's severe reaction to her proposal demonstrates the role of traditions dominating specifically women's education in eighteenth-century British society. Almost a hundred years after Mary Astell's work was published, British society still held traditional expectations when it came to female education.

The nature of the real environment of that period could be diagnosed by Dr. John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (1774),⁹ where the author sentimentalizes the father-daughter relationship. The author's introduction to his work starts with the following paragraph:

My Dear Girls,

You had the misfortune to be deprived of your mother, at a time of life when you were insensible of your loss, and could not receive little benefit, either from her instruction, or her example.—Before this comes to your hands, you will likewise have lost your father. (2)

This opening paragraph is very appealing to the author's contemporary audience: it seems that no one would question this belief that young ladies must be instructed mainly by their mothers, who had experience of a female adult life. However, in Dr. Gregory's case, a mother's instructions to regulate her daughters' lives are replaced by their father's. His view of women's role reflects the

⁹ John Gregory (1724-1773), physician and writer, who married Elizabeth, the youngest daughter of William Forbes. They had three daughters and three sons. After his wife's death in 1761, Gregory wrote *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters*. His intention was to give this text to his two surviving daughters. After John Gregory's death, however, his son James Gregory published his father's work in 1774. This conduct literature became very popular and went through many editions and translations (*ODNB*).

eighteenth-century male approach to women's state in society: young ladies must live, act and behave according to certain expectations of their community.

As it is mentioned in his Preface, Dr. Gregory, the speaker, is “a tender father in a declining state of health” (v) whose instructions must be followed not only by his own daughters but also by other young ladies in order to improve themselves. Dr. Gregory claims that he knows “mankind too well”: he knows “their falsehood, their dissipation, their coldness to all the duties of friendship and humanity” (2). The dying father, who had to leave his daughters behind, is deeply concerned with his daughters’ “safety.” Based on his knowledge of mankind, on his understanding of women’s position in society, this physician intended to teach his daughters how to build a secure female life in Britain—one of the advanced societies of the eighteenth century.

Throughout all four chapters—“Religion,” “Conduct and Behavior,” “Amusement,” and “Friendship, Love, Marriage”—Dr. Gregory consistently emphasizes a woman’s vulnerability at every aspect or at every stage of her life. The first chapter, “Religion,” for instance, starts with the discussion of “certain differences” between men and women in “their natural character and education” (9). He believes that the female child is different from the male child in her needs, and the reason for women’s vulnerability lies within those differences. Dr. Gregory views women’s life as “a life of suffering” (11). He states: “You cannot plunge into business, or dissipate yourselves in pleasure and riot, as men too often do, when under the pressure of misfortunes” (11). Even when it comes to friendship, the author warns his daughters: “Thousands of women of the best hearts and finest parts have been ruined by men who approached them under the specious name of friendship” (75). Then, the speaker explains:

The temper and dispositions of the heart in your sex make you enter more readily and warmly into friendships than men. Your natural propensity to it is so strong

that you often run into intimacies which you soon have sufficient cause to repent of; and this makes your friendships so very fluctuating. (73)

A woman's entire life was codified: she was told what to do when it comes to her religious practices, or to her friendship experience, or to her own marriage. Dr. Gregory sincerely believed that his instructions would help young ladies to regulate their lives, to deal with their "life of suffering."

Dr. Gregory did not offer a special chapter devoted to young ladies' education. Instead, almost in every chapter of his book, he offered his recommendations on what kind of books his daughters must read, or to what extent young ladies must educate themselves. In the chapter on "Religion," the author orders his daughters to "avoid all books, and all conversation, that tend to shake" their faith "on those great points of religion" which must serve them "to regulate" their conduct (13-14). In the chapter on "Amusement," he expressed with great cautiousness his view "in regard to books" by stating the possibility for young ladies to read books of history or of any art or science, but immediately, in his next sentence, he expressed his concerns:

The whole volume of Nature lies open to your eye, and furnishes an infinite variety of entertainment. If I was sure that Nature had given you such strong principles of taste and sentiment as would remain with you, and influence your future conduct with the utmost pleasure would I endeavour to direct your reading in such a way as might form that taste to the utmost perfection of truth and elegance...I want to know what Nature has made you, and to perfect you on her plan. (54-55)

Dr. Gregory believed that the reading list for young ladies must be regulated too: it must be regulated according to "what Nature has made [them]." He suggested that, unlike men, women

do not have the ability to read and interpret texts independently: they must be led by a loving father who would tell them what to read and how to read. Women cannot be as independent as men. Women are not capable to stand the reality of life; they must be led by men.

In the chapter “Conduct and Behaviour,” Dr. Gregory admits that his daughters “may perhaps think” that their father wants “to throw every spark of nature” out of their composition, and to make them “entirely artificial” (45). Next, he attempts to convince his readers that his intention is “far from it” (45):

I wish you to possess the most perfect simplicity of heart and manners. I think you may possess dignity without pride, affability without meanness, and simple elegance without affectation. Milton had my idea, when he says of Eve, “Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eyes, / In every gesture dignity and love.” (46)

In his reference to John Milton’s lines from *Paradise Lost*, Dr. Gregory recognizes feminine beauty and its significance in a man’s life. The author attempts to support the idea that by nature women’s act and behavior must be different from those of men: women’s special place and role in society are different from men’s. Women have to recognize and to consider certain limits in their education, in their relationships with others people, and in their marital status.

Almost two decades later after Dr. Gregory’s book was published, Mary Wollstonecraft the author of two *Vindications* (1790, 1792),¹⁰ attacks “all the writers who have written on the subject of female education and manners” (*A Vindication of Rights of Woman*, 129).¹¹ Among other writers, the author analyzes particularly Dr. Gregory’s tendency “to render women more artificial, weak characters...more useless members of society” (129). Wollstonecraft’s sharp

¹⁰Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)

¹¹ Wollstonecraft, Mary. *The Vindications: the Rights of Men and the Rights of Woman*. NY: Broadview Press, 1997, 129.

criticism demonstrates the continuity of the historical clash between two moral worlds—the past and the present: traditional moral values were challenged by progressive ideas of the present time.

Unlike Dr. Gregory and Wollstonecraft, Dr. Nicholas Carter did not write a book or a treatise to introduce his own beliefs related to women's position in the eighteenth-century British society or to instruct parents how to treat their young sons and daughters. Instead, he demonstrated his views and applied his beliefs to real-life circumstances by offering to his own four sons and three daughters equal educational and intellectual opportunities. In Aristotle's terms, it was building an ideal relationship with all his children even if he had to act against the traditions viewing a female child's position in the family and in the community as inferior. Dr. Carter served his community by challenging those traditions, by supporting and encouraging all his three daughters' desire for knowledge: Elizabeth Carter's presence itself as a scholar and as a poet was a significant contribution to the eighteenth-century ethic.

Margaret Carter's life experience or life style became another fact justifying Dr. Carter's ways of raising his female children. Like Elizabeth, Margaret had her chance to receive a classical education. In December 1752, Elizabeth wrote to Miss Talbot: "My sister Margaret is studying, or rather seizing upon, Greek. She did not know the letters till after Michaelmas, and already construes it so well as is really surprising. But she always had, and still retains, a quickness of understanding almost beyond any thing I ever met with" (Pennington 7). We also know that Elizabeth Carter wrote letters to her sister Margaret in Latin: one of those letters written in Latin is introduced by Hampshire.¹² These facts demonstrate that Margaret also had a classical education however; however, unlike Elizabeth, she chose to marry and become a mother. She married the Reverend Dr. Thomas Pennington, and evidently this marriage was

¹² Gwen Hampshire's *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters*, 60.

based on mutual attraction. Margaret did not become a professional poet or a translator; she did not devote her life to learning as much as her eldest sister. Pennington describes her as “one of the best of mothers”¹³ and then he states: “In learning, however, she was far from being deficient, being a very good Latin and French, and tolerable Greek and Italian scholar, with some knowledge also of Hebrew” (7). This woman with classical education wanted to have her own family, her own children, and was ready to deal with challenges related to a family life, such as the loss of their son John Carter Pennington who was baptized 31 May 1756 and buried 28 April 1761 (Hampshire 60). This tragedy in the family had a strong impact on the relationship between Elizabeth Carter and Margaret’s other son, Montagu Pennington, who became the poet’s executor. Margaret does not represent the traditional women of the eighteenth century, although she followed her own desires and chose a different life style than her eldest sister Elizabeth. Dr. Carter knew and considered his children’s capabilities and desires: he gave his children the freedom of choice. Not every educated woman should become a scholar. It is exactly the case with educated men: not every educated man promises to become a scholar, a poet, or a translator.

My focus on a gender-free father-daughter relationship aims to explain two factors: Dr. Carter’s reasoning in building a gender-free relationship with his daughter; and the moral significance of his actions not only for his own daughter, but also for his community at large. Dr. Carter’s power is in his moral actions. As an outstanding father-figure, Dr. Carter contributed significantly to his daughter’s intellectual growth as well as to her individual happiness. Along with classical education, Dr. Carter offered her an independent life in London. He gave her full freedom to live according to her own principles, built under the direct influence of Dr. Carter’s beliefs. In one of his letters to Elizabeth, he states: “My exceeding fondness of you must necessarily make me anxious and fearful; but it does not prevent me from being convinced that I

¹³ Montagu Pennington, the executor of Elizabeth Carter was Margaret’s son.

may safely leave a great deal to your own judgment” (qtd. in Pennington 29). This single sentence from Dr. Carter’s letter proves not only his trust in his daughter, his love and care for her, but also the ethical norms established between these two individuals. The strong impact that Dr. Carter had on Elizabeth’s life-style, on her status that she gained among intellectuals of the century, suggests that in the frame of Aristotle’s interpretation of ethics, Dr. Carter is the most ethical man of his time, who was capable of developing one of the forms of ethical friendships to face his moral duties as an individual and as a father.

Dealing with Facts: “They Were Father and Daughter and Trusted Friends”

Only three sources present and discuss certain biographical facts related to Elizabeth Carter’s relationship with her father, Dr. Carter: (1) the poet’s nephew, Montagu Pennington’s *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter* (1825); (2) Sylvia Harcstark Myers’ *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (1990); and (3) Gwen Hampshire’s *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters* (2005). Pennington traces the poet’s life in a chronological order, and only some of the information that he presents may shed light on this father-daughter relationship. However, Pennington’s presentation of the poet’s biography is dominated by his own traditional patriarchal view. His choice and interpretation of biographical facts reflect his concern with Elizabeth Carter’s image: he wants to create the “right” image of the poet, the image that he believed his audience expected. In Myers’ work, only the second chapter, “Elizabeth Carter’s London Career,” briefly mentions the positive role that Dr. Carter played in his daughter’s life. Hampshire also presents a brief discussion of the relationship between Elizabeth Carter and her

father. Their brief discussions of this father-daughter relationship are almost a restatement of what Pennington already had presented in his *Memoirs*.

However, to a certain extent, these materials serve as reliable sources to explore the relationship between the poet and her father. What makes these brief discussions valuable is that the facts they present are based on letters by Dr. Carter to his daughter or by Elizabeth Carter to her father. All three authors refer to excerpts from Dr. Carter's or Elizabeth Carter's letters in order to develop their discussions.¹⁴ For instance, each author focuses on Elizabeth Carter's childhood when "she had misfortune to lose her mother" (Pennington 8). In Myers' words, "Elizabeth grew up burdened with family responsibilities" (45). Hampshire suggests that "Miss Carter might so easily have been required to devote herself to taking the place of the mother whom the family had lost, and to assisting her stepmother" (17). During this particularly difficult period of the poet's life, as an eldest child of the family, the ten-year-old Elizabeth learns to face family responsibilities. It was also a challenging period for Dr. Carter, whose first priority becomes his daughter's intellectual growth.

Elizabeth's future completely depended on Dr. Carter's approach to his daughter's situation. After the death of the mother, the oldest child of the family, Elizabeth, was expected to take care of the small children. Probably, in the case with any other family, "the domestic life for the rest of her days" (Myers 17) could be the direct and acceptable consequence. The traditional approach to the happiness of young girls, like Elizabeth, did not give them many options. Left without a mother, she had to help her father to raise the children, and then, later in her life, she had to choose one of the available marriage proposals in order to gain that particular happiness or that particular status, designed for young ladies like her. Most young ladies' happiness or their

¹⁴ Dr. Carter's letters to Elizabeth Carter, written through the years from 8 October 1729 to 26, May 1761, are in a private collection (Hampshire 17).

position in society was closely related to their marital status. So, a good father had to arrange for his daughter a successful marriage, a good husband who was expected to provide for his wife throughout her entire life. According to the common practical, conservative expectations, there must be always someone who will take care of a female individual if it was in her destiny to experience all three major stages of her life: to be someone's daughter, then someone's wife, and eventually to become someone's mother. Unlike traditional fathers, Dr. Carter acted differently: he anticipated his daughter's intellectual needs, shared her thoughts and let her "independent Spirit soar" (19).¹⁵ He provided every opportunity for Elizabeth to follow her own beliefs.

Dr. Carter did not share those traditional views of women's position in society. He refused to treat Elizabeth as a typical young lady who has no choice but to face very few options offered by the traditions of her community. Dr. Carter was the first person in his daughter's life who recognized in her an individual who, like any male member of the society, should exercise freedom of choice when it comes to the development of her own life-style.

The relationship between Dr. Carter and his daughter Elizabeth went beyond the traditional father-daughter relationship. As a loving and caring father, he was a good observer and knew his daughter's personality better than anyone else. In October 1729, when Elizabeth was only twelve years old, Dr. Carter wrote to her from Bath :¹⁶

And I must do you ye Justice to say, yt. Your Manner of writing is
praise-worthy I cd. not forbear showing your Letter to Sr. George,
who commended it extremely. One of your Age cd. spel so exactly &
choose such proper Expressions. (qtd. in Hampshire 17)

¹⁵ Elizabeth Carter's poem "To the Reverend Dr. Carter" was first published in *Poems on Several Occasions* (1762).

¹⁶ Myers & Hampshire both refer to this particular letter written by Dr. Nicholas Carter from Bath where he had accompanied his patron and friend Sir George Oxenden; and evidently, Elizabeth remained with the rest of the family at home, at Deal, in the county of Kent.

These few lines present the authority of the father, who takes his twelve-year-old daughter's success very seriously and encourages her to learn. In this authoritative voice, we sense the happiness of a man who is very proud of his daughter and deeply interested in her education. We see in Dr. Carter an outstanding father, who recognized Elizabeth's worth.

As Myers explains, "He was wise enough to perceive the quality of his daughter's mind and personality from an early age, and to give her unlimited opportunities to develop and use her talents well" (17). The more he was getting to know Elizabeth as an individual, the more their relationship was turning into a special intellectual and individual friendship.

It was a moral good that a father was not blinded by the strong traditions of his times. Dr. Carter could see more than any other good father who sincerely was interested in his daughter's happiness no matter what. He could soar beyond his time: as a progressive thinker, he believed more than anyone else that the gender factor does not make one less human than another. By this progressive approach to the role of women in society, Dr. Carter questioned traditions, which are in their own turn already considered as moral good. Elizabeth Carter's achievements later in her life as an intellectual demonstrate that Dr. Carter was right in making his choices to raise his daughter. As an independent thinker, Dr. Carter was led by his own progressive ideas: he trusted his own beliefs and decided to follow them and to fight for them. It did not take long for Dr. Carter to recognize and to respect his daughter's natural rights in making her own life-choices. He believed it was his moral duty to give Elizabeth every opportunity to exercise her freedom in building her own life.

Dr. Carter's treatment of his daughter has a specific feature which demonstrates how he managed to regulate his influence on his daughter. He always gave her his advice, and then "left her to follow her own inclination" (Pennington 28). Dr. Carter's approach to Elizabeth's strong

desire for knowledge, more specifically to her laborious studies and obvious neglect of her own health prove him being a sensitive father. Of course, as a father, he was worried about Elizabeth's health, but he would never prevent her from studying. Pennington writes:

She rose very early, generally between four and five o'clock; and this custom she continued through life....When young, she also sat up very late, so that her father, in one of his letters, commends her for having formed a resolution of going to bed not later than twelve o'clock, and desires her to adhere to it. (22)

Elizabeth's strong desire for knowledge is proved not only by her daily laborious studies, but also by her readiness to sacrifice even her own health for the sake of learning. She completely ignored the real possibility of damaging her health. In these circumstances, any other traditional father without fail would prevent his daughter from getting up so early and going to bed so late. However, Dr. Carter always understood and supported Elizabeth's interest in learning. In Pennington's narration, we infer the father who respects his daughter's choice, who has no intention whatsoever to prevent her from studying: only due to his concerns about her health, he attempts to regulate his daughter's daily schedule for her studies by expressing his wish to see Elizabeth "going to bed not later than twelve o'clock." Always, in their relationship, "there was much respect and affection between them" (Hampshire 18).

The spring of 1738 was a turning point in twenty-one-year-old Elizabeth Carter's life; it was the beginning of her independent London career. Pennington, and the two scholars, Myers and Hampshire, refer to this particular period when Elizabeth Carter had her first independent trip to London—the trip, arranged and supported by her father. Myers mentions that Dr. Carter's motives to send his daughter to London are not clear, but that trip was the start of Elizabeth's independent life in London, which became possible only because of her father's full support.

Hampshire views this fact as Dr. Carter's extraordinary gift to his daughter: "He [Dr. Carter] gave her [Elizabeth Carter] freedom and made arrangements for her, to go to London, alone, to live" (19). Dr. Carter believed that his daughter would benefit from this opportunity and stood by his daughter's decision. Myers writes: "[I]t was unusual for a respectable young woman to be permitted the opportunity to work in London as a woman of letters, but Elizabeth Carter was probably given that opportunity because of the special views and hopes of her father" (46). It was the father who lets his daughter Elizabeth taste the power and the role of individual and intellectual freedoms and experience the impact of this freedom on the quality of human life. It was he who introduced her to the world around her. It was he who introduced her to Edward Cave¹⁷, the editor of *Gentleman's Magazine*, where Elizabeth Carter's first poems were published. The relationship with Cave led Elizabeth Carter to the relationships with other intellectuals of that period.

Dr. Carter's belief in Elizabeth's independent life in London became a significant fact not only for his daughter's intellectual and individual growth, but also for the entire British intellectual community. People who knew Dr. Carter's family were inclined to believe that the reason for Elizabeth's stay in London was a marriage in the near future. Even for their close family friends, this particular interpretation of Elizabeth's independent London trip was the only one acceptable and understandable expectation. The fact that a young lady may go to London for her intellectual needs was unheard of. Often, Dr. Carter had to face and react to the misinterpretation of his daughter's decision to live in London by herself. Once in Canterbury, Dr. Carter had dinner with his friend Dr. Lynch. Their conversation turned to speculations related to

¹⁷ In *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters*, Gwen Hampshire suggests that "Dr. N. Carter may have known Edward Cave through James Abree, printer and bookseller in Canterbury, who was Cave's agent for distribution of the *Gentlemen's Magazine* in Kent" (19). It was Edward Cave who printed a collection of Dr. Carter's sermons.

Elizabeth's life in London. Dr. Carter answered briefly that she was in London "to improve herself" (29). Dr. Carter introduced to his community a new ethical approach to women's position in society. He fought for this idea by directly facing people's negative reactions to his treatment of his daughter.

Dr. Carter was a father-architect of the moral environment built in his own family where he could happily and successfully raise his children. His full contribution to all his children's success and happiness was based on human relationship—on friendship. In that moral environment, mutual love and care between all and every family member was taken for granted. Once again, we recall Elizabeth's decision to tutor her half- brother Henry to prepare him to enter to university. Throughout her life, Elizabeth Carter's first priority always was her obligations before her immediate family members. The personal life-experience of Dr. Carter's every child, and particularly Elizabeth's, explains how human relationships, based on mutual love and care, can become a principal source of human happiness.

Another ethical factor of Elizabeth's friendship within the family confirms that she never neglected her family responsibilities. It was a time when Elizabeth had to go out of her way to take care of her father's house at Deal. To one of her friends, who disapproved this action, Carter wrote to express her own approach to the issue. Here, we listen to Elizabeth's own voice:

I am much obliged to you for the kind partiality which makes you regret my giving up my time to domestic economy. Indeed I have but very little employment of that kind in a very private and retired family. Yet it is proper that I should be rather more confined at home, and I cannot be so much at the disposal of my friends, as when my sister supplied my place. As to any thing of this kind hurting the dignity of my head, I have no idea of it, even if the head was of much more

consequence than I feel it to be. The true post of honor consists in the discharge of those duties, what ever they happen to be, which arises from that situation in which Providence has fixed us, and which we may be assured is the very situation best calculated for virtue and our happiness. (qtd. in Pennington 243-244)

Carter does not mention that the discussion is related to taking care of her father's house. Instead, she uses a very general term "domestic economy." The subject becomes "the true post of honor" when life circumstances, "what ever they happen to be," test an individual's moral principles, an individual's best calculation for virtue and happiness. In this letter to her friend, Elizabeth Carter expresses her care for Dr. Carter, her concerns with his well being. Taking care of her father's house becomes her first priority because it is necessary for her father, for her friend. Elizabeth believes that her action is "proper," and that giving up her time "to domestic economy" is nothing else but facing her duty. However, this "duty" should not be viewed as a duty of a thankful daughter. For Elizabeth Carter, it was about dealing with different situations fixed for her by Providence when an individual is expected to act according to moral values: her readiness to take care of her father's house was her moral or ethical duty. The poet accepts her moral duties with great joy. In taking responsibilities and following duties of their father-daughter relationship, Elizabeth achieves not only moral satisfaction, but also happiness.

Carter's correspondence serves as a valuable source to study her experience of friendship with her father although these available letters (with few exceptions) do not address directly the father-daughter relationship. Those letters present biographical facts and events, which help us to develop certain understanding of their relationship. However, Elizabeth Carter's poem to her father offers more specific traits of this friendship: the poet expresses her own thoughts of her father, the role of their friendship in her happiness. The poem is about human happiness, and this

state of human happiness became possible only because of the friendship between two individuals.

Elizabeth Carter to Her Father

A collection of Elizabeth Carter's works, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1762),¹⁸ includes a poem, "To the Reverend Dr. Carter," devoted to the friendship built and developed between the poet and her own father. The poem reflects almost every aspect of their father-daughter relationship: through the poet's own thoughts of her father, we learn about a specific role of the father in the poet's life, about their mutual respect, love and care. The text's high density of closely set ideas demonstrates the intense nature of this father-daughter friendship and serves as an invitation to step into the world of unique human relationships.

Elizabeth Carter's poem has an epigraph—"Causa fuit Pater his"¹⁹—lines from Horace's satire²⁰ where the Latin poet praises his father as a freed slave who gave his child the best education. These two literary works reflect the reality of human experience, the life experience of actual individuals who lived in different periods and whose happiness similarly was based mainly on their fathers' positive role in their lives. Both poems are literary representations of the fact that "paternal care" helps young individuals avoid all social barriers and achieve position or status among intellectuals of their times. However, Elizabeth Carter's presentation of the relationship with her father has characteristics of its own: in the eighteenth-century frame of

¹⁸Both Montagu Pennington and Myers talk about this edition of Elizabeth Carter's poems. However, in 1738, Elizabeth Carter published a very small collection of poems. Myers provides more information on that edition than Pennington. According to Pennington, "None of the poems contained in it appeared in the edition generally called the first," which was published in 1762 in *Gentleman's Magazine* (*Memoirs*, 11). According to Myers, *Poems Upon Particular Occasions* was published in 1738 by Cave: it was a slim quarto of Elizabeth Carter's poem. Neither author's nor publisher's name appeared on the title (*The Bluestocking Circle*, 51).

¹⁹"I owe this to my father." (Horace, *Satires*, I 6, 1.71)

²⁰Horace's *Satires*, Book 1, number 6.

strong traditions, the friendship between Elizabeth Carter and her father served as a principal source of moral values.

This father-daughter relationship is associated with Aristotle's description of the perfect or an ideal friendship, which is based on goodness: "Only the friendship of those, who are good and similar in their goodness, is perfect" (*The Nicomachean Ethics*, 205). This perfect friendship becomes possible only between individuals who are good in themselves: "those who desire the good of their friends for the friends' sake that are most truly friends because each loves the other for what he is, and not for any incidental quality" (205). Aristotle also mentions that "such friendships are rare because men of this kind are few" (206). The nature of the friendship between Elizabeth Carter and her father proves that both these individuals belong to those few who contribute to moral good. This study does not aim to prove that Aristotle's view of the perfect friendship between good moral men ideally reflects the nature of this father-daughter relationship. This study's aim is through Carters' experience of friendship to explore in depth Aristotle's notion of friendship. In other words, Aristotle's teaching presents only a theoretical approach to human relationships, while Dr. Carter's relationship with his daughter offers the real circumstances of human existence, when specific actions of specific individuals lead an entire society to moral progress. From this point of view, Elizabeth Carter's poem, as the only literary presentation of their father-daughter relationship, will help us to understand the nature of this special human relationship and its significance in achieving moral good and human happiness.

Mutual Love and Care: the Essentials of Friendship

Elizabeth Carter's poem "To the Rev. Dr. Carter" explains the ethics of their father-daughter relationship—the relationship which is based on goodness or on moral good. One of the

central ideas, developed throughout the poem, is that mutual love and care in human relationships serve as basis for that moral good.

Thou by whose Fondness and paternal Care
Distinguished Blessing glad my cheerful Days,
While first my Thoughts indulgent Heav'n revere,
Receive the second Tribute of my Praise. (1-4)

The poet emphasizes her father's "Fondness" and "paternal Care" for her, for his own daughter, and relates the "cheerful Days" of her past life to the constant presence of her father's "Fondness" and "paternal Care." If the poet's usage of "Fondness" refers to paternal love, and in her turn, the poet offers the father "the second Tribute"—her daughter's "Praise"—then this father-daughter relationship offers nothing new and should not be considered as something extraordinary: their mutual love and care is morally expected, and it is a universally accepted tendency to view father-daughter relationships as natural, biological bonds.

One of the famous literary presentations of this belief takes us to an earlier period of British literature, the sixteenth century: the plot of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* is based on father-daughter relationships. Cordelia's feeling for her father is a literary presentation of a divine father-daughter relationship. She addresses her father:

Good my Lord!
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honor you. (*King Lear*, 95-98)

Cordelia believes that her experience of love for her father is a natural bond. According to her, it is her duty to love her father, and to honor him because, as she puts it, "You have begot me, bred

me, loved me.” Cordelia’s approach to a father-daughter relationship is associated with Elizabeth Carter’s sense of duty before her father. As a daughter, Elizabeth too views her father’s paternal love and care as the source of her happiness, and in return, she presents to him her poem, the tribute of her praise.

However, Shakespeare questions the notion of a daughter’s natural duty to love and to honor the father by introducing King Lear’s two other daughters who feel no obligations to take care of their father. By presenting two completely opposite father-daughter relationships, by contrasting sisters’ behavior/attitude toward their father, Shakespeare demonstrates that a daughter’s duty to love and to honor the father should not be viewed as an expected or a necessary response to the father’s paternal love and care.

Now, the question is how Cordelia turns out to be a highly ethical and caring daughter while her sisters experience nothing else but indifference toward their father. Why is Cordelia so different from her sisters in treating her father? Why does taking care of her father become Cordelia’s first priority? The first reaction to this sharp contrast between sisters’ behavior is seeing/considering Cordelia as a better person: “she is good,” “she is moral.” Then, the aim is to find out the source of being a good daughter, a daughter who is willing to take care of her father, who is willing to put her father’s well being first, even before her own interest. The common response to these questions will be the following: along with paternal love and care, parents must establish and exercise certain moral principles to influence their children’s way of thinking, behaving, and acting.

Something profoundly different was achieved in the relationship between Lear and his daughter Cordelia, and in their own ways, they have developed over time special expectations. Finding out that “something profoundly different” will lead us to the reason, which makes their

relationship highly ethical—the relationship that becomes a source of human happiness.

However, Shakespeare does not let us know how relationships between Lear and his daughters were developed. We may suggest that Lear did not hold the same relationship with all his children as Dr. Carter did; and it is clear that the relationship between Lear and Cordelia was special for both of them.

In contrast to Shakespeare's drama, Elizabeth Carter's poem focuses on the process of developing their father-daughter relationship, on the characteristics that built this friendship. Mutual love and care between a father and a daughter is a striking, common feature bridging the two cases of father-daughter relationships: Shakespeare's Cordelia with her father and Elizabeth Carter's personal experience with her father, described in the poem. Carter's poetical presentation of her own friendship with her father explains the nature of an ideal father-daughter relationship, the reason (factors/characteristics/features) that makes a father-daughter relationship special and unique.

It is obvious that paternal love and care are essential factors in every child's life: without parents' support, children would have a slim chance to survive. Carter's poem to her father notes a different kind of paternal love and care: the poet's father goes beyond his natural instinct to help his children survive. His paternal love turns into a strong power capable of producing a moral environment, moral good, and moral characters.

Mutual fondness, love, respect, and sensitive care between two individuals, presented in such a perfect balance within the first four lines, continue to dominate throughout the entire poem and make us believe that their mutual bond cannot be based only on the fact that these two individuals are related through blood. To view this friendship as just a father-daughter relationship means to diminish the significance of this ideal pattern of human relationship.

Carter's poetic presentation of her father-daughter relationship makes clear that it was her father's "Fondness" that founded and then developed an ideal relationship between the poet and her father. He achieves becoming his daughter's best friend by putting everything he had in her well-being at every stage of her life.

In the opening line, the poet emphasizes the two words—"Fondness" and "Care"—to signify her father's love and "paternal Care." While the word "Care" comes with an adjective "paternal," the word "Fondness" stands by itself and means more than just paternal love. The entry in the *OED* offers certain interpretations, such as "affection," "tenderness," "a strong inclination." Elizabeth Carter chooses the word "Fondness" to express her father's feelings toward her. In the poet's usage, "Fondness" should be interpreted as an emotional affection, joy. Dr. Carter's feelings for Elizabeth seem very personal: he not only loves his daughter as a father, but also likes her company and enjoys their relationship. He sees in her a valuable and a lovable individual.

If the first two lines are about Dr. Carter's love and care for his daughter, the next two lines are about the poet's own thoughts of her father: "While first my Thoughts indulgent Heav'n revere / Receive the second Tribute of my Praise" (3-4). The poet's first "Thoughts" are related to divine power, and her "second Tribute" is offered to her father. Although Elizabeth Carter's tribute to her father reminds us of Cordelia's duty to love and to honor her father, the poet focuses her readers' attention on the parallel between her first thoughts of Heaven and her second tribute to her own father. The poet provides a parallel between two authorities: a divine authority of God and earthly authority of her father. For the poet, the presence of these two powers—one a divine figure, and another her own father, the earthly figure—is equally

significant. This parallel explains how the poet views her father, how highly she, the daughter, values him, his presence, and his friendship.

Similar in Their Goodness

Elizabeth Carter's poem to her father remains the only credible source offering us through their father-daughter friendship the opportunity to study both, the father and the daughter, as individuals, as human beings. In her poem, Elizabeth Carter speaks what she feels and gives her inner compulsion.

Thy Hand my infant Mind to Science form'd,
And gently let it thro' the thorny Road:
With Love of Wisdom, and of Virtue warm'd,
And turn'd from idle Toys to real Good. (5-8)

These lines present one of the most important stages of their relationship: He was a father who directly influenced his daughter's "infant Mind" by creating/planting in her a strong desire for knowledge, a great interest in learning. Desire for knowledge, or her interest in learning, became one of the main factors shared by these two individuals.

Dr. Carter invested his own mental, emotional, and spiritual power to educate his Elizabeth. The poet lets us sense her father's beliefs and principles dominating the moral environment in Dr. Carter's big family: he strongly believed in the necessity of education for all his children, and he started to fulfill his important task from the early stages of their lives. Dr. Carter was facing his moral obligations by sharing his knowledge with his own daughter.

The poet devotes certain lines to her father's direct role in her education. The poet's "infant Mind" was "to Science formed" by her father's "Hand." The same hand "gently led" the

poet “thro’ the thorny Road” (6). This particular line with the specific expression “the thorny Road” tells us what kind of role Dr. Carter played in Elizabeth’s education: he was regulating his daughter’s learning process. The quality of the poet’s classical education depended on the regulation of the learning process: in what chronological order and to what extent this education must be presented. Dr. Carter personally taught his daughter Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and the Scriptures. He also “arranged for Elizabeth to be taught French by M. Le Sueur, a Huguenot refugee minister in Canterbury, and she taught herself Italian, Spanish, German, Portuguese (later in life), and Arabic, which she could just read with a dictionary” (Hampshire 18).

The source of Elizabeth Carter’s success as a scholar, a poet, and a translator is not only the education she received, but also the virtue and moral values taught by Dr. Carter. The poet learned from her father “Love of Wisdom, and of Virtue” which helped her to turn “from idle Toys to real Good.” “Wisdom” here stands for “Mind,” while “Virtue” stands for Spirituality. Teaching Wisdom and Virtue was another regulating factor of Dr. Carter’s teaching process. Dr. Carter viewed teaching moral values as an inseparable part of the learning process. The poet restates her father’s call for balance in the learning process: “Love of Wisdom and of Virtue” is equally important as love of Science.

Throughout her entire life, the balance between the great love for learning and “Love of Wisdom, and of Virtue” continued to remain a very important evidence of Elizabeth Carter’s set of moral principles. For instance, the poet restates her father’s principles by demonstrating that, like her father, she learned to value and to understand the role and the power of education:

O Gift beyond Ambition’s giddy Aim,
Superior to the envy’d Blaze of Wealth,
The loudest Triumphs of applauding Fame,

And every Joy of idly lavish'd Health. (9-12)

To receive an education is a gift, and the poet believes that education makes human life meaningful. For her, education is more important than “Wealth,” “Fame,” and even human “Health” (8-12). In the case of the poet’s personal experience, the learning process itself becomes a profound source of reason for her happiness. This particular happiness was built by Dr. Carter. It was Dr. Carter’s moral obligation to think about his daughter’s well-being, about his daughter’s happiness: by offering her an opportunity to study and to become an educated young woman, he was giving her the reason to be happy.

Myers generalizes the case when the presence of an educated father or brother “might make it possible for a girl growing up in England during the 1720s and 1730s to receive a careful, sometimes even a solid, education” (16). Other scholars, like Gina Luria in her “Book Review” (1978) and Irene Q. Brown in her “Domesticity, Feminism, and Friendship” (1982), more specifically discuss certain changes related to young women’s position in the upper-class eighteenth-century English family. Luria views this male mentors’ support “for women living in sex-stratified cultures” as “the honorable alliance possible between men and women which has served at least in part, to counteract just those societal constraints against the female mind” (*Signs*, 376). Brown states that “the ideal rational domesticity helped to liberate the individual within a supportive family framework” (415). Myers concludes that these male mentors, fathers and brothers, “were influential in helping these girls to read and to study” (16). These scholars’ studies serve as a general explanation of new attitudes toward women’s position within the family and to certain extent outside of the family circle. The father-daughter relationship between Dr. Carter and Elizabeth Carter offers us much more.

This father-daughter friendship is uncommonly moral by its nature. Dr. Carter was not only his daughter's first teacher, but also a friend whom she could fully trust. He treated her as an equal to himself. The poet refers to this specific aspect of their friendship in her poem:

N'er did thy Voice assume a Master's Pow'r,
Nor force Assent to what thy Precepts taught;
But bid my independent Spirit soar,
In all the Freedom of unfetter'd Thought. (17-20)

In a traditional father-daughter relationship, a father's voice was considered as a master's voice: a father had "a Master's Pow'r" over his own daughter. The poet's usage of expressions like "unfettered Thought" is associated with slavery, which is a violation of human rights. The poet contrasts two opposite states of being: first, exercising "Master's Power" over someone or depriving someone of his freedom and second, being invited to experience an "independent Spirit," "Freedom of unfettered Thought" (19-20). The poet's strong desire for freedom of thought is compared to a slave's need for freedom. The poet's father bid her "independent Spirit soar/In all the Freedom of unfetter'd Thought." These lines remind us of certain events taking place in the poet's life, such as gaining her father's support to have an independent life in London or rejecting "worthy" marriage proposals.

One specific example from Elizabeth Carter's life experience proves Dr. Carter's tendency to respect his daughter's independent spirit. Dr. Carter expected Elizabeth to make money and to live well because of her classical education, her capability to create poetry, and her knowledge of Greek and other languages. Sir George Oxenden offered Dr. Carter to find her

preferment at the Court of George II (Myers 47).²¹ Dr. Carter's support of his idea once again demonstrates his genuine view of his daughter as an equal to male individuals: he believed that Elizabeth, like any male member of her community, has to take the advantage of her position—the real opportunity to improve her own financial situation in life. Dr. Carter and his daughter had different approaches to making money through or by using education, however. As a clergyman with a small income and a large family, Dr. Carter was being practical: learning German would help her to make money, but Elizabeth's reason to learn German was different. She did not look at her knowledge of German as a source to make money. When Elizabeth Carter did not like the idea of working for the royal family and declined it,²² the father chose to respect and to support his daughter's decision as he always did in other cases, such as her rejections of marriage proposals.

Having her father's support in most critical moments of her life tells us something else: the concept of “freedom of choice” remained one of the main aspects of their relationship. Dr. Carter was not a patriarchal father to exercise his “master power” over his daughter's destiny: he always recognized her right to “freedom of choice” even in those cases when he needed his daughter's financial help, extra money to regulate his large family's well being. The father's responsibility to preserve his daughter's right to exercise freedom of choice makes their friendship unique and serves as another explanation why later in the poem the poet associates the significance of her father's role in her life with the significance of the impact “that sacred Law” (23) had on her. Their father-daughter friendship proves the existence of a new kind of

²¹ Montagu Pennington also refers to this case by mentioning that some of Mrs. Carter's friends arranged for her to get into the Princess of Wales's household. Then, he presents Miss Talbot's letter where she is begging Elizabeth Carter not to refuse such a place (*Memoirs*, 182).

²² Montagu Pennington presents Elizabeth Carter's letter to Miss Talbot in which the poet explains why she is “absolutely unfit” for this position (*Memoirs*, 182-183).

father-daughter relationship within the frame of Christian thought, but outside of the traditionally exercised patriarchal father-daughter relationship.

The next lines of the poem state the difference between the patriarchal father-daughter relationship and the poet's own relationship with her father: the author refers to the traditional father-daughter relationship as "blind Constraint" (21) while in her own experience, her duties were fixed by the "sacred Law" (23). The following lines discuss the father's role in the establishment of the poet's moral principles:

Nor e'er by blind Constraint and servile Awe,

Compell'd to act a cold external Part:

But fixt my Duties by that sacred Law,

That rules the secret Movements of the Heart. (21-24)

By "that sacred Law," the poet means moral principles. By "the secret Movement of the Heart," the poet means human emotions, desires. The poet refers to the necessity of regulating the human emotional state by "that sacred Law." She talks about the achievement of another balance between human desires and moral principles. Elizabeth Carter learned from her father how, according to "that sacred Law," to fix her own duties as a daughter, as a sister, and as a young woman. Like her father, Elizabeth Carter recognizes the power of both "the secret Movement of the Heart," and "that sacred Law."

Another interpretation of these lines is related to Dr. Carter's teaching his daughter not to follow religious or traditional expectations blindly when it comes to fixing personal duties as an individual. For them, there is no authority except "that sacred Law," and Dr. Carter follows that law when it comes to his parental duties. For example, by offering his daughter (like any male child) the best education available for her generation, he challenges the world around him: he

proved that it is practical for the entire society to review the ways of raising children both male and female. He has demonstrated the rightness of his choices by the examples of his own children. His children grew by living and studying under the direct influence of their father's ethical beliefs, particularly when it comes to their education and to their duties as members of family or community. This father-daughter relationship and friendship helped both parties to soar beyond the frame of traditional principles and to offer different interpretations of "that sacred Law" which is above conventional regulations of life, and which offers equal rights to both men and women.

With these ideas, the poet leads us to lines praising "*Law of Liberty*."

Blest *Law of Liberty*! with gentle Lead

To regulate our erring Nature giv'n,

And vindicate, from slavish human Dread,

The unreserved Obedience due to Heav'n. (25-28)

The poet centers the ability of a human being to become an independent thinker. These lines are also about the regulating "our erring Nature giv'n" "with gentle Lead." Nothing, neither "our erring" nor "slavish human Dread" should prevent us from exercising free thinking. Both Dr. Carter and Elizabeth Carter possessed deep knowledge of classic religions, including Christianity, and they learned to value greatly an intellectual and individual freedom in thinking. They both were intellectuals who proved by their life experience that it is necessary to question and challenge traditional expectations in order to create, to produce, or to lead to something good and moral.

In the poem's final lines, once again, the poet emphasizes the significance of their friendship, the friendship (in Aristotle's words) between two "good men," between two good

individuals. The poet's strong need for and trust in her father are very striking. The latter was gained over the years throughout their friendship—the meaning of the poet's life:

Still be that sacred Law my faithful Guide,
 Conduct my Actions, and my Soul engage:
 Then, ev'ry generous Care, thy Youth apply'd
 Shall form the Comfort of declining Age. (29-32)

In these final lines, once again, the role of her father is elevated and presented as a divine power. The analogy between the authority of “that sacred Law” and her father's role throughout her entire life demonstrates the power of this friendship: she considers him to represent “that sacred Law” and recognizes in him her “faithful Guide.” She trusts him as she trusts “that sacred Law.”

Twice in the poem, Elizabeth Carter refers to “sacred Law” (23, 29) as opposed to religious and cultural practices. The poet values “sacred Law” very highly, and its usage may explain the poet's view of her father's ethical role in her life. Dr. Carter was “that sacred Law” for his daughter. In August 1738, in her letter to Thomas Birch²³, the poet writes:

If I have any natural gift, it is right that it should be attributed to God All-mighty
 (from whom every cometh good gift). If, on the contrary, I seem to have
 improved this gift in any way, the credit for it is due to the care and attention of
 my most loving father, who when I was still a child, fearful of the difficulty and
 novelty of the task, led me by examples and encouragement to the study of the
 humanities, and supported me until such time as I should be able to swim by

²³ Thomas Birch (1705-1766) was the author of many historical, biographical, and editorial works. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society, a member of the Society for the Encouragement of Learning, and a trustee of the British Museum. He had been a Quaker and school usher, but in 1728 was ordained in the Church of England under the patronage of Sir Philip Yorke. The same year, he married the daughter of the Reverend Mr. Cox, but she died within a year. (Hampshire, *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806*, 21-22)

myself without assistance. You see how little remains for me to boast of.
(Hampshire 50)²⁴

This sincere revelation demonstrates Elizabeth Carter's extreme modesty, and by this explanation, she hoped to end Thomas Birch's constant praise of her as a gifted individual. However, there is no doubt that the poet openly lays out her actual ideas and feelings toward her father's role in her life. The letter confirms the reality presented in the poem. It is the case when the poet's life experience, and generally human experience, is presented in art through literary work.

Letters: Reflection of Friendship

Elizabeth Carter's letters²⁵ do not lie: they present the poet's real position, the poet's experience as a human being. In 1766, the poet wrote to her nephew:

I am perfectly easy in regard to your promise about my letters at present. You may perhaps think it a foolish solicitude about a thing of very little consequence, that I should make a point of their not being shewn now. Indeed I cannot very well explain my own feeling about it. I only know that I could no more write freely to you, with a view to my letters being seen, than I could talk freely when I knew a third person overheard me. (Pennington 20)

Later in her life once again, the poet discusses the same matter in another letter by stating that "I do not deem any opinion of mine of consequence enough to be brought as an authority, and you have more than once heard me declare my great aversion to being quoted, or having any part of

²⁴ Elizabeth Carter wrote this letter to Thomas Birch in Latin. Hampshire presents the translation of the Latin text in *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters* (48-50).

²⁵ In the third chapter, "Elizabeth Carter: Friendship and Letters" (123-176), I will discuss a role and significance of Elizabeth Carter's letters in her experience of friendship.

my letters seen by any body” (Pennington 20). These extracts prove Elizabeth Carter’s strong desire to keep her letters private. The poet wants to be free and open in her letters to her friends and family members, and in order to exercise this freedom and openness in writing, the author has to believe that her letters will be read by the addressees only: she considered every single letter extremely personal and private.

Montagu Pennington published Elizabeth Carter’s letters only after her death in 1806: *Memoirs of the Life of Elizabeth Carter* (1807) with the reference to certain letters written to or by Elizabeth Carter, *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot* (1808), and *Letters from Mrs. Elizabeth Carter to Mrs. Montague* (1817).²⁶ In *Memoirs*, Pennington attempts to convince his readers that he treated his aunt’s letter in accordance with the poet’s own instructions. However, he fails to mention any specific aspects of those instructions. We may suggest that by the late period of her life, it was possible that Elizabeth Carter reconciled her approach to those personal letters and found some of them suitable for public eye, for her contemporary and future audience.

Pennington enjoys his authority over the poet’s letters: he overemphasized his own role to demonstrate that he does his best to follow his aunt’s instructions in dealing with her letters.²⁷ It is not clear whether or not he wants to justify his own liberty in dealing with Elizabeth Carter’s letters. However, at this point, it is convincing that the tone and the voice present in these letters belong to Elizabeth Carter, and it is safe to conclude that the poet’s letters are the sincere presentation of her thoughts and feelings.

²⁶ Gwen Hampshire’s introduction to *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters* (15).

²⁷ When Montagu Pennington published Elizabeth Carter’s letters, he did not save their manuscripts, their original texts/copies. However, their contextual comparison and contrast to other letters, written by the poet’s father or by the poet herself, helps us to develop clear understanding of the situations that poet was dealing with.

Writing letters became a common practice among intellectuals of the eighteenth century: through letters they managed to establish and to develop their relationships—their friendships. Men and women of letters did not mind the public eye seeing their letters. Those writers viewed public curiosity toward their private correspondence as a possibility to gain public attention and fame. For instance, Elizabeth (Robinson) Montagu used her correspondence to express her ideas related to literature. One of her friends, Gilbert West, thought highly of her letters, and he decided to show one particular letter devoted to an analysis of the “impieties” of Lord Bolingbroke to Archbishop Thomas Herring (Myers 180). It was possible for West to share Elizabeth Montagu’s letter with the Archbishop because, evidently, Montague did not mind it. In another letter to West, she expressed her “views on Voltaire versus Shakespeare which were to become the subject of her book” (Myers 180). Elizabeth Montagu’s letters served for the author as an opportunity to exercise her pen as a critic of literary works. Among other professional writers who polished the text of their letters to make them suitable for the public eye was Alexander Pope. In his introduction to *Alexander Pope: Selected Letters* (2000), Howard Erskine-Hill states: “The collected edition of Pope’s correspondence runs to five volumes.... Pope is the first English poet to publish his own correspondence in his lifetime to a substantial degree.... Pope wanted to vindicate himself and to display the best face of himself to the world” (xiii, xix).²⁸

Elizabeth Carter’s position, however, in writing letters was in contrast to this tradition: every letter was written to a specific individual. For the poet, the process of writing letters to her friends was the experience of meeting, seeing, or visiting friends: writing those letters helped the poet to experience her friends’ presence. Those letters were like having close and open conversations with her dear friends. In her conversation-letters to her friends, Elizabeth Carter

²⁸ Erskine-Hill, Howard. Ed. *Alexander Pope: Selected Letters*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000, xiii-xxiii.

tended to be very direct and open. This tendency warrants that the letter written to Thomas Birch in August 1738 also reflects Elizabeth Carter's warm feelings toward this man.²⁹ The twenty-one-year-old poet emphasizes her own view of him, her own understanding of him:

... how great an honor it is to be praised by such a man, as you; a man, distinguished by all the gifts of knowledge, a man who has drawn forth for us the treasures of antiquity, and summoned men, once illustrious for their virtue but now long buried in death and oblivion, to come forth into the light once more, and, as it were, to live again. Happy Britannia, who boasts of you as a son; but oh! Happier Ireland, which is embellished with the agreeableness of your manners and with distinguished learning. (Hampshire 50)

This particular part of the letter reveals a mutual attraction between these two intellectuals. In "Birch, Johnson, and Elizabeth Carter," Edward Ruhe refers to this letter to analyze the Carter-Birch relationship. He expresses his immediate reaction to this letter in the following statement: "Eliza's impeccable tone in parrying Birch's compliments carries well in the English translation" (494).³⁰ This letter, like any other letter written by Elizabeth Carter to her friends, directly presents the author's beliefs, thoughts, and true feelings. The author of the letter recognizes in Birch a man of knowledge, who brings closer to his contemporary audience the treasures of antiquity. She is proud of him; she is proud to have him as a close friend. She considers his writings as a valuable contribution to British culture: "Happy Britannia" is proud to have a son like him. Elizabeth Carter finds it necessary to emphasize his connection to Ireland by stating that "Happier Ireland" has such a man of learning. It was necessary for the poet to show her understanding and care because the two were friends: she fully supported his intentions and

²⁹ In later period of her life, Elizabeth Carter interrupted her relationship with Thomas Birch.

³⁰ Edward Ruhe's "Birch, Johnson, and Elizabeth Carter: An Episode of 1738-1739" (1958) analyzes facts in regards to the relationships between the three intellectuals.

interests related to Ireland. She knows him not only as one of the most educated men of the time, but also as an individual who was interested in contributing to well-being of people of Ireland. Birch's ties and interest in Ireland are valued and shared by Elizabeth.

“Nobody knows what may happen; I never said I would not marry”³¹

In August 1738, Elizabeth Carter wrote to Thomas Birch³² who was invited to Ireland by “The Incorporate Society in Dublin for promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland”.³³ Their relationship was developed into something more than just a friendship between two intellectuals. The specific nature of their relationship becomes obvious from Birch's need to explain to Elizabeth that the plan to go to Ireland “had been abandoned in favor of his staying in London to work on *The Heads of Illustrious Persons in Great Britain*... and on his *History of the Royal Society of London*” (qtd in Hampshire 50). The more important fact is Dr. Carter's reaction to this news: it proves the special relationship existed between the poet and Birch. On 16 April 1739, Dr. Carter wrote to his daughter: “I could not bare the Thots of parting with you into Ireland: But as that scheme is now laid aside by him, I have no further objection, if he [Thomas Birch] be your choice” (qtd in Hampshire 50). From Dr. Carter's words, it becomes obvious that Thomas Birch wanted to marry Elizabeth Carter.

Dr. Carter's approach to Elizabeth's decision on possible marriage proposals opens another significant side of this uncommon father-daughter relationship: the high level of ethics demonstrated in dealing with his daughter's marriage proposals. Dr. Carter wanted his daughter

³¹ Elizabeth Carter made this statement (qtd. in Pennington 33).

Gwen Hampshire also refers to the same statement of Elizabeth Carter in the introduction to *Elizabeth Carter 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters* (32).

³²I introduced Thomas Birch earlier in this chapter, page 54.

³³Gwen Hampshire refers to Birch's diary to inform that Thomas Birch visited Dr. Thomas Rundle, Bishop of Derry twice during the year of 1737, and in August 1738 Birch still expected to go to Ireland (49).

to be married, and he wanted the choice to be hers. However, he was not indifferent to his daughter's choices. In Pennington's words "Miss Carter should have offers of marriage, and some of them even advantageous ones... and still she took no step without her father's advice" (*Memoirs*, 28). Every time, when there was a marriage proposal, the father would not hesitate to let her know his opinion about the man she may choose. In Birch's case, Dr. Carter was against their marriage because of his possible decision to take a position offered him in Ireland.

However, Dr. Carter is very direct in his statements, such as "I have no further objection, if he be your choice" (50). He was always aware of his daughter's relationship with a man who had an intention to marry her. Their tendency to share their personal matters openly and their need to consider and to respect each other's opinion characterize this relationship as a friendship between two close individuals who rely on each other and who find absolute comfort in their friendship. This quality of friendship was achieved despite their being father and daughter and despite the age difference between them. Their friendship was free of any traditional formality or sort of distance expected between a father and a daughter: this formality would not let young girls share with their fathers their personal relationship with men. Dr. Carter and his daughter were free in their friendship: their relationship was free of any constraints forced on them by fixed gender roles.

Dr. Carter's practicality forces him to talk to his daughter about marriage, which may provide her with the conventional social and financial stability that most women of the eighteenth century needed. Dr. Carter's family was increasing, and Elizabeth "with all her learning and merit, had no support but from him" (Pennington 28). As Pennington explains, Dr. Carter believed that Elizabeth should marry because in the case of his death, she would be left

unprovided for (28). Dr. Carter's letter in reference to another marriage proposal supports Pennington's interpretation of the situation:

I must do you the justice to say, that I think you are an exception. I am extremely unwilling to cross your inclination in any thing, because your behavior to me is more than unexceptionable. I leave you, therefore, to act agreeably to your own judgment. My exceeding fondness of you must necessarily make me anxious and fearful; but it does not prevent me from being convinced that I may safely leave a great deal to your own judgment. (Pennington 29)

Dr. Carter wanted Elizabeth to be married because traditionally marriage is expected to give a woman a certain social and financial status, some sort of social and financial stability. He was concerned with his daughter's future situation. Pennington refers to Dr. Carter's own words: "He said, though he was able and willing to maintain her [Elizabeth Carter] while he lived, should he die and leave her unprovided for, her situation would have been very painful and distressing" (Memoirs, 28). However, it was ethically necessary for Dr. Carter to put his daughter's position on this marriage proposal above all other concerns. Dr. Carter left to her to choose a man, and at the same time, he never hesitated to express his own view of his daughter's choice.

The question of Elizabeth Carter's marriage was one of the most crucial points in their father-daughter relationship: Dr. Carter's approach to this sensitive issue helps us to see new features or aspects of their father-daughter friendship. Elizabeth Carter had multiple marriage proposals. Pennington mentions a gentleman "who made her an offer of marriage: and to whom she appears so far to have formed an attachment, as to induce her at least to hesitate some time before she gave her final answer" (29). Concerning this marriage proposal, Dr. Carter wrote to his daughter:

I am informed, that Mr. _____ is very desirous of seeing me; and things are so circumstanced, that I fear I shall be much censured if I do not go to London.

However, I will wait till I hear from you, and then determine accordingly.

You had my sentiments in a letter wrote to you yesterday. I have since received an extremely advantageous account of Mr. _____, in circumstances, person, character, &c. There are valuable things; and you cannot think it strange that I wish you could make them agreeable to you in the person that Gentleman. I will lay no commands upon you, because it is more immediately your own affair, and for life: but you ought certainly to consider with a great attention, before you reject an offer, far more advantageous in appearance than any other you can ever expect. You may always depend upon my indulgence; but do not let my indulgence mislead you. If you cannot bring your mind to a compliance, I and all your friends will be sorry for your missing so good a prospect: but I will give you no uneasiness. Consult calmly what you think will be for your own good; and may God direct you to come to that final resolution which will prove best for you.

(qtd. in Pennington 30)

This letter explains the father's position toward his daughter's marriage proposal: he wants her to accept this proposal because of this gentleman's "extremely advantageous account." He does not want her to miss this real opportunity of a good marriage. Elizabeth Carter's acceptance of this proposal would make her father extremely happy, and there was a possibility that Elizabeth might say "yes" to this marriage just to meet her father's expectations. However, Dr. Carter would not let it happen: he would not allow her to accept this proposal just because of his high opinion of Mr. _____ or just because of her father's wish to see his daughter married. He

believes she should think about what will make her happy, she has to do what will make her comfortable with her decision. He does his best to convince Elizabeth that nothing is more important than her own good. He states, “I will wait till I hear from you, and then determine accordingly” (30). Dr. Carter first wants to know Elizabeth’s decision, and then he would decide to meet with this gentleman: his meeting with Mr. _____ depends on his daughter’s final decision about this proposal. The father emphasizes that his parental authority should not limit her freedom of choice: “I will lay no commands upon you, because it is more immediately your own affair, and for life” (30). It does not matter how much the father wants to see his daughter married, he will favor her choice no matter what.

Dr. Carter expects Elizabeth to realize the full responsibility in making her choices and decisions. By letting his daughter exercise her freedom of choice, he is developing her sense of responsibility, which will guide her throughout her entire life. He has a strong influence on her, and she values her father’s opinion very much, but he rejects forcing his authority, his influence upon her. It must be her free choice, and he will accept her choice, even her choice to remain unmarried.

However, after all these reservations, Elizabeth Carter chose not to marry, and Dr. Carter respected her decision. In 1738, he wrote to Elizabeth: “If you intend never to marry, as I think you plainly intimate in one of your letters, then you certainly ought to live retired, and not appear in the world with an expense which is reasonable upon the prospect of getting a husband, but not otherwise” (Pennington 33). In spite of multiple marriage proposals, in spite of her experience of close personal relationship with men, Elizabeth Carter remained unmarried. In spite of his strong desire to see his daughter married, Dr. Carter respected her decision not to marry. Once again, he

proves being the closest friend of his own daughter by offering her his full support and understanding.

The father's readiness to understand and to support his daughter's decision to remain unmarried suggests that their view of the institution of marriage has a common ground. Dr. Carter knew very well the position of a married woman in the family: by marrying a man, a woman became obligated to devote her life to her husband and to her children. According to eighteenth-century social and cultural norms, women had to belong to a family in order to be respected and accepted by their community. To consider the idea of an independent woman was a violation of those traditional norms and was associated with something negative, immoral, or unethical. Dr. Carter and Elizabeth Carter recognized women's natural right not to marry or to remain unmarried. To challenge basic traditions applied to women's life became possible because of the father-daughter friendship. There was no way for Elizabeth to exercise her right to remain unmarried without her father's support. They believed that this institution of marriage does not embrace a woman's right as an individual.

In *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: the Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (1999), Catherine Belsey traces the history of the institution of marriage: she focuses on specific periods of the history to demonstrate how people's view of marriage was changing over time under certain circumstances, under the influence of ideas dominating that period. As Belsey explains, "Most noble marriages in middle ages were arranged in the interest of property" and marriage was not valued highly by medieval Catholicism. In addition to the practice of loveless marriages in medieval upper social class, celibacy was advocated as the best way of perfection: "The monastic ideal of chastity was a renunciation of the flesh and of the values of this world" (Belsey 19). The Reformation changed this position radically and

established a culture of family values: “Monasticism was no longer an option ... the Reformers advocated marriage ... as the foundation of parenthood” (19). By the seventeenth century, “the love between husband and wife is an analogue for the love of God” (20). Belsey refers then to the definition of marriage described by Robert Croft or established by Thomas Becon. In 1638, Croft wrote:

There is no pleasure in the world like of the sweet society of lovers in the way of marriage, and of a loving husband and wife.... By this blest union the number of parents, friends, and kindred is increased. It may be an occasion of sweet and lovely children, who in after times may be a great felicity and joy to them
(qtd. in Belsey 20)

According to Becon’s definition of marriage, the married state is “an high, holy and blessed order of life, ordained by not of man, but of God” (qtd. in Belsey 22). The main idea of these definitions is that a true and a sincere romantic love relationship between a man and a woman can take place only within marriage. These definitions of marriage served to institutionalize the natural physical attraction between individuals to establish the social order. Belsey writes: “Proponents of family values insist that the loving nuclear family is ordained by God—or his Enlightenment surrogate, nature—as the only proper location of desire” (21). A man and a woman may love one another only in the frame of marriage. As Besley states, “This ideal of the loving nuclear family reached its fully developed form in the eighteenth century” (21). Belsey recognizes the fact that at the individual level, families can be warm and nurturing. Elizabeth Carter’s statement “I never said I would not marry” (qtd. in Pennington 33) proves that the poet believed in possibility of happy, loving relationships within the nuclear family. However, Belsey continues her analysis by suggesting that “it is worth bearing in mind that unpaid parental labour,

supremely the work required for the socialization of children, saves the state a great deal of money” (21). A state or government uses individuals’ physical desire and attraction to one another to make it part of legal system. In other words, by following the expectations of the institution of marriage, men and women serve the regulatory system of the state. By establishing the institution of marriage, church and state gain their control over the individuals’ personal relationship, and “commonly conceal behind closed doors all kinds of subjugation and suffering, not to mention ill treatment of the elderly and infirm” (22). These “sufferings,” referred to by Belsey, include women’s position in the stage of marriage. Even in the *Bluestocking Circle*, marriage was viewed as a settlement all women should aim at: by becoming wives and mothers, women could manage to become useful members of society (Myers 85). Elizabeth Montagu’s personal experience of entering marriage confirms Myers’ belief that women “could raise themselves by marrying men who had more money or higher status than they” (85).³⁴ In *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (1977), Lawrence Stone claims that by the middle of the eighteenth century “falling in love” may not have been a common practice (272-273).

One may ask: “Could men and women of the eighteenth century, who married, see themselves as friends?” Every aspect of the institution of marriage, developed by the mid of the eighteenth century, suggests that marriage served to establish legal ties and legal obligations between men and women rather than friendship. Marriage served as a contract between a man and a woman, and both parties had to consider and to act according to expectations stated in that contract. A traditional view of women’s role in a community influenced the content of that contract which could not guarantee individuals’ freedom and equality. Friendship consists of

³⁴ In *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England*, Sylvia Harcstark Myers offers biographical facts related to Elizabeth Montagu’s personal experience of entering to marriage (88-104).

specific elements, and at least two of them—freedom and equality—are the essential factors constituting friendship. Friendship will not last if it lacks equality and individual freedom. In Carter’s day, most men and women, who married, could not see themselves as friends because of lack of ethics in their husband and wife relationships.

In her writings, Elizabeth Carter questioned the ideal of the eighteenth century married state. The poet anticipated the possibility of the real limitations she might face if she chose to marry: she would not jeopardize her intellectual life or the relationships she had developed with her friends. From Carter’s letter written in May 24, 1744, we sense her anger caused by a friend’s marriage. At four o’clock in the morning, the poet wrote to Catherine Talbot: “I have read in a book, that people when they marry are dead and buried to all former attachments” (Letters, 56).³⁵ It is upsetting for Elizabeth Carter to face limitations in the relationship with her friends due to or as a result of marriage. Marriage of the friend is equal to the death of the friend. Marriage might limit or end friendship between individuals. In May 1751, the poet once again conveys similar thoughts:

If I have suffered from the troubles of others, who have more sense, more understanding and more virtues than I might reasonably have expected to find, what might I not have suffered from a husband! Perhaps be needlessly thwarted and contradicted in every innocent enjoyment of life: involvement in all his schemes, right or wrong, and perhaps not allowed the liberty of even silently seeming to disapprove them! (Hampshire 33)

The poet is ready to embrace any kind of troubles, but not sufferings from a husband, from marriage. Marriage makes it difficult for women to preserve the quality of their intellectual life.

³⁵ Elizabeth Carter wrote this letter to Talbot in 1744, and I refer to this passage in the third chapter “Elizabeth Carter: Friendship and Letters” in my discussion of the Carter-Talbot friendship.

Marriage is expected to change or at least to influence women's life style, their principles, habits, or personalities.

Elizabeth Carter viewed this kind of relationship between husband and wife as an ethical issue. The poet believed that women's intellectual growth should not be compromised because of their marriage: when a woman enters into a marital relationship, all her intellectual needs, "all former attachments" must be considered by her new family, and particularly by her husband. In "A Dialogue" (1762), Elizabeth Carter addressed this lack of ethics in a human relationship, and this poetic treatment of the subject may serve as the author's explanation for her choice not to marry.

However, my close reading of Carter's "A Dialogue" should start with the analysis of this poem offered by the two scholars: Carolyn Williams³⁶ and Lisa Freeman.³⁷ In "Poetry, Pudding, and Epictetus: The Consistency of Elizabeth Carter," Williams provides certain historical context for Carter's "Dialogue" by referring to two versions of the Body-Soul dialogue by Andrew Marvel and Francis Quarles (1635). While in their poems, Carter's predecessors express "the possibility that the material world has something desirable to offer" (13), Carter's "A Dialogue," however, describes the poet's struggle to balance established social expectations and her passion for learning. Williams connects the poem's context with the poet's biographical facts: "Having devoted her daylight hours to family affairs, she pored over the learned languages far into the night, taking snuff to keep awake" (6). Williams finds in Carter's "Dialogue" a developing pattern of conflict and reconciliation that reveals intricate connections "between pudding and philosophy" (3), between the poet's intellectual needs and her domestic duties.

³⁶ Carolyn Williams' "Poetry, Pudding, and Epictetus: The Consistency of Elizabeth Carter" was published in *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon* (1996).

³⁷ Lisa Freeman's "'A Dialogue': Elizabeth Carter's Passion for the Female Mind" is presented in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making A Canon, 1730-1820* (1999).

In “‘A Dialogue’: Elizabeth Carter’s Passion for the Female Mind,” Freeman offers a different reading of the poem. In her view, “A Dialogue” expresses Carter’s passion for the female mind and her emphasis on its vulnerability. Freeman supports this idea by referring to Carter’s letters to Elizabeth Montagu where Carter often expressed her belief that “the mind constitutes the essence of the female soul” (53). Freeman’s next observation deals with Platonic origins of the poem: “It rests on Plato’s division of the ideal from real, of form from matter, of being from becoming, and of the immortal from the mortal” (51). The author explains the influence of Plato’s view of “the body as a prison to the soul” (51) on the formation of Christian doctrine: “the antagonism between the body and the soul was a direct result of the Original Sin” (52). According to Freeman’s reading, in Carter’s version, this antagonism was used to express “an antagonistic struggle for power between husband and wife, and places the question of lawful possession at the centre of this dispute” (54). In this dispute “the mind invokes the Platonic conception of the body as prison or slave-master to the soul” (55), but throughout the entire poem, we see her (mind) “both strong and independent” (55). Carter’s passion for the female mind should be considered one of the central aspects of the poem. This particular intention of the poet is demonstrated by the author’s choice to feminize mind.³⁸

A Husband and Wife Relationship: An Ethical Issue

Jennifer Keith believes that “A Dialogue” presents a provocative “power struggle between sexes,” “Body and Mind quarrel over differences” (59). A poem reflects Carter’s view of a husband and wife relationship in the eighteenth-century British society. The poet develops a

³⁸ Dr. Carter’s letter to Elizabeth, written on February 12, 1741, expresses his first reaction to “A Dialogue”: he understood the goal of the poem as “to teach us that the mind is the better part” (*Bluestocking Feminism*, 445). Dr. Carter’s interpretation suggests that “A Dialogue” demonstrate the poet’s passion not just for female mind, but for human mind in general

well-balanced and well-reasoned argument against mistreatment of women—a subject that was challenging and difficult to argue. However, the poet presented her case in an easily readable text: the simplicity of the text and the setting give certain lightness to this hard issue.

Says *Body* to *Mind*, 'Tis amazing to see,
 We're so nearly related yet never agree,
 But lead a most wrangling strange sort of a Life,
 As great Plagues to each other as Husband and Wife. (1-4)

In this poetic treatment, the poet wanted her contemporaries to see a husband and wife relationship first of all as a human relationship, the relationship between two individuals, the relationship which is free of legal, social, or cultural obligations. The writer achieved this goal by creating a dual analogy. Immediately in the opening lines, the poet refers (only once) to the pattern of a husband and wife relationship as an analogy for the main subject of the poem: Body and Mind. In other words, the Body and Mind interaction is compared to a husband and wife relation. This analogy has its strong impact on readers' reception of the context itself: it contributes to the creation of textual duality. The poet creates a very strong association between the two different kinds of relationships: the dialogue between Body and Mind turns into the dialogue between husband and wife, and at the same time, a typical husband and wife interaction reflects the human body and mind interaction. It is a key point for the audience to see the Body-Mind relationship as an analogy for the husband-wife relationship because this particular parallel structure presents the husband-wife relationship outside of its legal or social scheme. This duality helps readers to view the husband-wife relationship not as social, political or economic, but as a human relationship. This is a relationship that lacks ethics, lacks friendship. The poet calls for

friendship between husband and wife, the friendship that provide a specific moral source generating positive changes in human relationships and in human life.

This literary work reflects the poet's view of the state of a married woman although, contextually, the poem is based on the duality of the body and mind relation—the classical concept coming from the ancient world. The interplay of the two parallel subject lines dominates throughout the entire poem: a) the interaction between the two personified (mental and physical) states of human existence—Body and Mind; b) the interaction of two individuals—husband and wife.

The poem starts with the complaints of Body: the dominating masculine voice throughout the entire poem expresses his own unhappiness with the fact that they (body and mind) never agree although they are related. He does not like the relationship they have, and he views their life as “a most wrangling strange sort of a Life” (3). To him, his experience of this kind of relationship is not right, and he compares their unhappy relationship to the husband and wife relationship. By this analogy, the poet explains the position of a married woman in the eighteenth century.

The assumption that the human body and mind must coexist in harmony changed over time, and different interpretations of the interaction between the human mind and body were developed. For instance, in the traditional Christian view, the mind was always viewed as a masculine factor, a ruler of the body, while the body was considered feminine and inferior to the mind: the body is expected to obey the mind. Elizabeth Carter reversed the classical presentation of body and mind relation: the poet overemphasizes the dominating power of the body over mind. By turning the mind into a feminine factor, the poet rejects the traditional Christian

interpretation of the interaction between the body and mind.³⁹ By reversing roles of the Body and Mind prescribed by the Christian traditions, the poet claims women's rights for intellectual growth and elevates women's place and position in society. The next central element of this setting is that Mind, as a female character, becomes a representation of the poet herself who had a passion for learning and especially for astronomy, which remained one of her favorite subjects. The poet decides to create her own image of a married woman who had to deal with dilemma to make her choice between her obligations as a wife and as an intellectual. In order to reject obligations forced upon women by the institution of marriage, the poet does not want to focus on someone else's life experience, but on her own imagined marriage. She anticipates and imagines what would happen if she chooses to marry. Finally, we have to mention that Elizabeth Carter, who had to deal with severe headaches⁴⁰ constantly interrupting her studies, demonstrates in her poem how the quality of human mental state depends on the body's physical state. From her own experience, the poet believes that the body and mind can oppose one another.

Body continues his speech by blaming Mind in his dissatisfaction with their life style:

The Fault's all your own, who with flagrant Oppression,
 Encroach every Day on my lawful Possession.
 The best room in my House you have seized for your own,
 And turn'd the whole Tenement quite upside down,
 While you hourly call in a disorderly Crew

³⁹ Elizabeth Carter reverses the Christian interpretation of the roles of body and mind by turning mind into feminine character and body into masculine character. She was a very religious person who was proud being a Christian. Her open minded approach to the husband and wife relationship reminds us of deeply religious John Milton who argues against certain aspects of the institution of marriage. Like Milton, Elizabeth Carter would question traditional concepts through reasoning and relying on principles of Sacred Law.

⁴⁰ Over the years, Elizabeth Carter developed severe headaches. Pennington believed that this headache "was brought on by watching and laborious study" (*Memoirs* 104). As he explains, Carter's studies were never remitted, "yet some interruption to them was given by the headache," and those headaches frequently prevented Carter from her readings (104).

Of vagabond Rogues, who have nothing to do

But to run in and out, hurry scurry, and keep

Such a horrid Uproar, I can't get sleep. (5-12)

Body is disturbed by the impact that Mind has on his life style: she occupies the best room in his house, and her actions, her behavior and habits destroy the peace of his daily life. By referring to his "lawful Possession," Body claims his legal authority and rights to set rules and to put things in order. Body expects his legal authority and rights to be respected and considered.

There is my Kitchen sometimes is as empty as Sound,

I call for my Servants, not one's to be found:

They all are sent out on your Ladyship's Errand,

To fetch some more riotous Guests in, I warrant!

And since Things are growing, I see, worse and worse,

I'm determined to force you to alter your course. (13-18)

He was left by himself, and there is nobody to take his orders or to serve his needs: his kitchen is empty as sound, and his servants are not available because Mind takes the liberty to send them out. The line, "They all are sent out on your Ladyship's Errand" (15), helps us once again to associate this body-mind interaction with a husband-wife relationship. The impression is that Body is irritated by the fact that Mind has her own world, and sometimes he does not see himself as a part of that world. Body believes that this situation must be changed, and it is his responsibility to make "Things" right. He directly states his right and power to force Mind to alter her course (18).

In the next lines, the poet resumes her relationship with readers: "Poor *Mind*, who heard all with extreme Moderation/Thought it Time to speak, and make her Allegation" (18-20). The

significance of these lines is that they express the poet's sympathy for Mind. These lines prove the poet's full understanding of a woman's position in her relationship with her husband, in her state of marriage. Through Body's claims, the poet introduces established family values and expectations enforced or legalized by the institution of marriage.

The current definitions of three terms—mind, soul, and body—in Carter's day support the complexity of the text. Johnson's *Dictionary* presents the essential sense of the word *mind* as "the intellectual power." This particular usage becomes the author's most important and dominating point in this text. In her analysis of this poem, Keith quotes Carter's own words that "nothing which my eyes could survey, was of equal dignity with the human mind... How vast are the capacity of soul..." (57). The emphasis is on the significance and on the centrality of intellectual power in human life. According to Johnson's *Dictionary*, *mind* also was often used "for the soul giving life," "for spirit, angels, and intelligences". In Carter's usage of this term, we find the synthesis of these elements. The term *mind* stands not only for the intellectual power, but also for human soul and spirit. Johnson interprets the term soul as "the immaterial and immortal spirit of man," interior power," "active power," "a familiar appellation expressing the qualities of the mind". Carter applies the interaction between these similarities in the usage of both terms—*mind* and *soul*—to achieve her goal: the poet personifies *mind* to voice women's right to education and to friendship.

The spiritual aspect of the term *mind* becomes even more vivid in contrast to the term *body*. In Johnson's entry, *body* signifies "the material substance of an animal, opposed to the immaterial soul," "reality, opposed to representation." Johnson's focus on antonyms serves best to explain the Body-Mind relationship. This dialogue presents the clash of two opposing views: one represents the established institution while other questions and resists this institution.

Elizabeth Carter argues against the principles of the institution of marriage by letting Mind voice her own view of her situation:

Tis I, that, methinks, have most Cause to complain,
 Who am cramped and confined like a Slave in a Chain.
 I did not step out, on some weighty Affairs,
 To visit, last Night, my good Friends in the Stars,
 When, before I was got half as high as the Moon,
 You dispatched Pain and *Languour* to hurry me down;
Vi & Armis they seiz'd me, in Midst of my Flight,
 And shut me in Caverns as dark as the Night. (21-28)

A woman's position in marriage is viewed as the position of "a Slave in a Chain" (22). In eighteenth-century British society, it is expected that the actions and behavior of married women must be regulated by their husbands. Married women are not free individuals and do not belong to themselves. The female character presented in "Dialogue," Mind, has a very elevated intellectual life, and last night when she was visiting her good friends in the Stars, the physical pain forced her to hurry down. The pain "seiz'd" her in the "Midst" of her "Flight" (24-27). Mind reasons her actions and advocates her right to be an independent thinker and to exercise her intellectual activities. Without intellectual activity, existence itself, life itself becomes a dark world, dark as "the Night" (28). Body interrupts Mind:

'Twas no more, reply'd Body, than what you deserved,
 While you rambled Abroad, I at home was half starved:
 And, unless I had closely confined you in Hold,
 You had left me to perish with Hunger and Cold. (29-32)

Body's response shows that for him the most important factors are his own needs. He continues to accuse Mind of failing to meet his needs, and he states that she deserves what she gets because she put her intellectual life above her obligations to take care of him. By marriage husband and wife are obligated to be in a certain relationship based on legal contract. "A Dialogue" helps us to understand the nature of a husband-wife relationship, the nature of so-called "family values" established in England by the late eighteenth century.

In the final lines, Elizabeth Carter resists the power of traditions having women depend on their husbands' mercy. Specific usages, such as "Slavery abolish" (36), or "my Chains" (38) build not just the analogy between the position of women and the position of slaves. By this analogy, the author attacks a larger world of human relationships. She fights for human relationships allowing people to recognize and to respect everyone's individual's right for education and independent intellectual life.

"I have a Friend," she states, and that Friend is presented as a power capable of ending this "Slavery."

I have a Friend, answers *Mind*, who, tho' slow, is yet sure,
 And will rid me, at last, of your insolent Power:
 Will knock down your mud Walls, the whole Fabric demolish,
 And at once your strong Holds and my Slavery abolish:
 And while in the Dust your dull Reins decay,
 I shall snap off my Chains and fly freely away. (33-38)

Considering the poet's spirituality, we may anticipate what kind of power this "Friend" represents: it is possible that by "Friend," the poet refers to the conception of death, or to God.

Carter's own understanding of death may help us to interpret what kind of power the poet refers to in these final lines of the poem.

The poet was a devoted Christian, and as the Christian philosophy teaches, there is life after death: our earthly body will decay while our soul will move into immortality. However, people cope with death differently: not everyone can comprehend the afterlife and an individual's role in it. One of those individuals was the poet's own sister Margaret. Elizabeth Carter's poem to her sister, "Ay! Why with restless, anxious search explore" (1762), "deals with Margaret's anxious concern with death; the poet assures her that she must submit to God and let what must die, die" (Myers 173). Another case demonstrating Elizabeth Carter's view of death is expressed when the poet was dealing with the death of her dear friend Miss Talbot. In her letter to Mrs. Vesey, she wrote: "It pleased God to remove her [Miss Talbot's] spotless soul from its mortal sufferings, to that heaven for which her whole life had been an uninterrupted preparation" (*Memoirs*, 409). Elizabeth Carter genuinely believed in life after death: she was never afraid of death. This readiness to face death was based not only on her knowledge of Christian philosophy, but also of other classical teachings. In her own words, religion became the leading principle of her mind (*Memoirs* 407).

Elizabeth Carter's use of death as the Friend completes the duality of the text. The speaker, Mind, is immortal. So, it is a matter of time when Mind will be taken to a different world and will be freed of earthly sufferings. That transition of Mind from one world to another should not be considered as death—death, which is similar to that of Body. There is no death of Mind, there is the death of Body.

There is another intention in Elizabeth Carter's use of the word Friend as a higher power capable of freeing a human being from earthly sufferings: this particular usage is associated with

the concept of friendship. It is a fact that friendship was another leading principle of the poet's life. The author uses "Friend" to refer to an ethical human relationship, the human relationship based on high level ethical principles. One of those moral principles turning human relationships into friendship is the capability of putting someone's interest above one's own.

The most important aspects of Elizabeth Carter's life were her intellectual growth and her relationship with her friends. She was in love more than once, and she had a number of serious marriage proposals. However, she decides to remain unmarried. Unlike most women of her time, she could afford to do that. Elizabeth Carter did not have to marry in order to gain male protection in her life. As a young woman, she always had her own father as the best friend and as the best male protection upon whom she could rely. The poet did not have to marry in order to gain certain financial stability: she built her own financial stability by writing. She did not have to marry in order to raise her status in society because she herself established ethical standards to reach the highest status in eighteenth-century England. However, it was Dr. Carter's friendship which helped the poet to become one of the most powerful intellectuals of the time.

Dr. Carter and Elizabeth Carter both had power not to follow certain traditional values, which needed to be changed and replaced by ethically higher morals. In supporting his daughter's decision to remain unmarried, Dr. Carter offered new views of woman's life. First, a relationship of true love can be experienced outside of marriage. Second, not all true love relationships should end in marriage. Third, individuals should not enter marriage because of convenience or because of financial or social status. Fourth, as a female representative of the first generation of Bluestockings, by exercising an independent intellectual life, Elizabeth Carter demonstrated that women are capable of devoting their lives to learning.

This factor should be considered as an ethical influence on the way women themselves were viewing their own life. Lawrence Stone stresses the importance of the Bluestockings “as leaders of salons which included the most distinguished intellects and wits of London” (341) and “the change in women’s consciousness from a humiliating sense of their educational inferiority in 1700 to a proud claim of educational superiority in 1810” (359). However, according to Myers, although Stone recognizes the change in women’s attitudes toward their education, he claims that “the bluestockings had no real influence” (*The Bluestocking Circle*, ix). Positive changes in human relationships do not come by themselves: someone has to challenge the traditional mistreatment of others by demonstrating higher ethic in human relationship. Dr. Nicholas Carter and his daughter Elizabeth Carter founded and developed higher moral values in human relationship, and their father-daughter friendship became a symbol at least for intellectuals who followed their steps. Elizabeth Carter’s ethical legacy was her presence as one of the best educated scholars in eighteenth-century British society, her rejection of the standard or traditional male attitude toward woman’s intellectual capacities. Carter’s ethical legacy was the fact that she always followed her own moral principles believing that they would improve the quality of human life.

Stone’s belief that the bluestocking had no real influence leads us to another possible view that Dr. Carter’s relationship with Elizabeth had no influence whatsoever on society. This point of view takes us to Sara Broadie’s comments on differences between Aristotle’s ethics and modern ethics. First, the major topic of modern ethics, the justification of morality, is no part of Aristotle’s ethical agenda (*NE*, 17). Second, Aristotle turns his back on another subject of the modern ethics—uncovering principles or right action (*NE*, 17). Unlike modern ethics, Aristotle’s teaching of chief good does not advocate to establish or to justify the standard for

right action (*NE*, 17). Broadie states that Aristotle's moral philosophy does not provide guidelines for conduct in general; a good Aristotelian agent, a wise and excellent agent must see for himself what to do in the particular situation (*NE*, 17). Although the bluestocking circle or Carter's experience of friendship did not become a turning point in British culture, their ethical significance and role should not be underestimated. Both of them should be considered, in Broadie's words, good Aristotelian agents who knew what to do.

CHAPTER TWO

Behind the Lines of Poetry: Elizabeth Carter and Intellectual Friendship

Introduction

On December 20, 1777, before leaving Deal for London, Elizabeth Carter wrote to Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to explain the motives bringing her to London: “Dr. Johnson says, ‘London is the land for ideas,’ and I say it is the land of friendship” (*Letters*, 52). One of the main reasons for the poet’s annual visits to London was her close relationship with the intellectuals of the time. Her friends gave the meaning to her life; they became main contributors to the happiest moments of the poet’s life. Elizabeth Carter valued her intellectual friendships as the necessity, as the irreplaceable factor of her life experience, of her happiness: in this network of her friendship, the poet exercised her intellectual, moral, and spiritual freedom. She shared with her friends her ideas, thoughts, feelings, as well as her grief, difficulties, sufferings. As a woman intellectual, she was respected, valued, understood, and accepted as an outstanding contributor to public ethics, to public moral good and values. With them, Carter created her world of independent minds within which she could function as a thinker. Among them, Carter felt needed, valued, and loved. The poet enjoyed this intellectual freedom within her network of friends where there was no male or female friendship, but just friendship. The poet chose her friends based not on gender or social level, but on their individual qualities.

The ethical legitimacy of finding intellectual freedom in a gender-free intellectual friendship, exercised and experienced by Elizabeth Carter, was the heritage received directly from Dr. Nicolas Carter’s⁴¹ teaching. It was he who taught Elizabeth Carter the significance of friendship in human happiness. It was he who became and remained the real force behind his daughter’s relationships with her intellectual friends; he set his daughter on the road of this

⁴¹ Chapter One, “A Father-Daughter Relationship: A principal Source of Moral Values.”

ethical friendship leading the poet to an intellectual freedom. The poet's entire network of relationships should be viewed as the continuity of Dr. Carter's ethical legacy. However, Carter's own contribution to that ethical legacy is significant. The poet's relationships with her intellectual friends, such as Samuel Johnson, Elizabeth Montagu, Catherine Talbot, and the Earl of Bath, may explain the role and place of human relationship in building moral values and principles. Carter's writings—particularly her poems and letters—reflect the poet's experience and her view of friendship.

In *Women's Friendship in Literature* (1980), Janet Todd discusses literary presentation of female friendships by classifying them as sentimental, erotic, manipulative, political, and social. The author selects certain literary works—both English and French novels—to focus on the literary treatment of female friendship in a patriarchal context. According to her observation of these narrations, Todd analyzes female friendship in the frame of five different categories. Sentimental friendship, full of enthusiasm and emotions, is viewed as “a close, effusive tie reveling in rapture and rhetoric,” while erotic relationship is based on physical love (3). Within the manipulative friendship, one woman uses another to gain certain profit; one woman controls another and enjoys in the control (4). Political friendship requires individuals to take action against the social system, while social friendship, as a nurturing tie, does not put women against society, but rather smoothes “their passage within it” (4). In *The Bluestocking Circle*, Sylvia Harcstark Myers characterizes the relationships among female members of the Bluestockings as supportive because, as the author explains, “real-life relationships” consist of a mixture of elements (10).

Todd's study deals with the image of women created or developed in fiction. I focus on Elizabeth Carter's own real-life experience of friendship presented in her poems and letters.

Carter's literary treatment of her relationships with her intellectual friends offers the reality of life, lived and experienced; this is a profoundly different kind of human relationship, which cannot fit in Todd's classification of female friendship in novels. Carter's relationships with her friends are free of erotic, political, or manipulative elements. Myers' view of Bluestocking relationships as "supportive" reflects only partially that intellectual friendship among members of Bluestocking Circle. As a representative of the first generation of the Bluestockings, Elizabeth Carter's relationship with her intellectual friends is more than supportive. In "Salonieres and Bluestockings," Evelyn Gordon Bodek emphasizes differences between members of the French literary salons and the English Bluestockings and states that the Bluestockings challenged the idea of women's inferiority by claiming intelligence for women (*Feminist Studies*, 185-99).⁴² Friendship between the eighteenth-century women-intellectuals who claimed intelligence for women must contain other moral features or qualities than supportiveness. I am interested in the nature of this powerful human relationship allowing Carter to find in friendship her own happiness—her freedom and independence as a thinker and as an individual. Based on Carter's experience of friendship, I will argue that, for Carter, establishing human relationships means establishing ethical principles, moral values shaping up ways of living, acting, behaving, and working. Only in this world of moral values, individuals achieve the highest intellectual and ethical satisfaction—the satisfaction that is necessary for human happiness. In her experience of friendship, in defining her world of moral values, Carter finds individual, spiritual, and intellectual freedom. Finding freedom in relationships with her intellectual friends becomes a key aspect of the poet's individual, spiritual, moral, and intellectual satisfaction.

⁴² Evelyn Gordon Bodek. "Salonieres and Bluestockings: Educated Obsolescence and Germinating Feminism," *Feminist Studies*, 3 (Spring-Summer 1976), 185-199.

Defining Friendship: Intellectual and Individual Freedom

Whereas it was essentially Dr. Carter who influenced his daughter's intellectual growth, in a later period of the poet's life, her friends to a significant extent encouraged and inspired Elizabeth's intellectual progress. The poet's network of intellectual friends guaranteed an ideal professional environment that stimulated, encouraged, and nurtured the poet's individual and intellectual growth. The aspects of relationships with her intellectual friends became the subject of Carter's poetry. Her friends were the poet's first audience, first readers. Among London friends, it was Edward Cave who decided to publish young Elizabeth Carter's works in the *Gentleman's Magazine*; in 1738, Carter's first published poems appeared under the signature of "Eliza." Later in her life, it was Samuel Johnson who was interested in Carter's essays for his *Rambler*. Both male and female friends stimulated the poet to dedicate her poems to friends, such as to Miss Lynch⁴³ ("While thus my Thoughts their softest Sense express"), to Mr. Wright, the astronomer ("While clear Night, and eve'ry Thought serene"),⁴⁴ or to Catherine Talbot ("How Sweet the Calm of this sequester'd sea"). When it comes to Carter's translation of *The Moral Discourses of Epictetus* (1758), once again we have to recognize the role of the poet's friends who encouraged and convinced her to translate this work. As Pennington states, the translation of Epictetus' works "was not originally designed for publication; and therefore at first some chapters were omitted, as not being likely to give her friends any pleasure, which were afterwards translated, and added in their proper place" (*Memoirs*, 159). One of those friends was Talbot, well-known editor of works produced by her intellectual friends. Pennington believed

⁴³ Elizabeth Carter wrote several poems devoted to Misses Lynch. In this particular poem, published in 1743, Carter refers to the daughter of physician Dr. George Lynch. (*Bluestocking Feminism*, 446)

⁴⁴ In line 45 of this poem, the author states: "To thee, Endymion, I devote my Song". According to Pennington, Endymion should be considered as Mr. Thomas Wright, the Astronomer (II, 28).

that Carter agreed to translate Epictetus' works because of Talbot's desire "enforced by the Bishop of Oxford"⁴⁵ (*Memoirs*, 159). As Judith Hawley mentions in her end notes to the introduction to *Bluestocking Feminism*, Carter's "translation of Epictetus was impelled by friendly concern for Catherine Talbot's state of mind after the death of Mrs. Secker"⁴⁶ (xviii). On December 22, 1755, Elizabeth Carter writes to Talbot from Deal:

By this time dear Miss Talbot, I hoped to have sent you the Introduction.⁴⁷ ...
 God forbid that it should now be necessary for me to study the Sacred Writing in order to glory in their excellence, and discover their superiority to all others; or that I should think of making the comparison against which you caution me.
 (*Letters*, 213)

This letter is one of many other letters revealing Carter's freedom in sharing with her friends issues related to her major scholarly work—her translation of Epictetus' works from the Greek. Talbot was very much involved with Carter's translation: the detailed discussion of Carter's work demonstrates the poet's need of her friend as a critical reader. On August 12, 1757, Carter writes to Talbot on the same subject:

...I cannot write you a diffuse paragraph upon the 37th page of Epictetus. The chapter is very difficult, and always puzzled me. However, I think more than glimpse of meaning in the passage you mention. (*Letters*, 225)

These intensive discussions of challenging passages from writings of the philosopher Epictetus appear to be daily regular conversations between the two scholars. Pennington tells us how

⁴⁵Thomas Secker (1693-1768), archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop of Oxford, was the mentor of Catherine Talbot (Myers 64).

⁴⁶Catherine Benson, the sister of Thomas Secker's friend Martin. Thomas Secker proposed to her in April 1725. Before this marriage took place, it was Catherine Benson who decided to share her life with Edward Talbot's widow who later gave a birth to her daughter Catherine Talbot (*ODNB*).

⁴⁷Elizabeth Carter started her translation of Epictetus in 1749, and it was published in 1758. Here, the poet mentions her own introduction to works of Epictetus.

Carter was sending the passages of her translation “as fast as it was finished, for the entertainment of Miss Talbot and to receive the Bishop’s corrections” (*Memoirs*, 159). Carter needed this professional environment to function as an intellectual, to create ideas or meanings, to share her knowledge, her own principles with those who valued her as a scholar, as a poet, and as a philosopher.

Carter’s decision to translate Epictetus, however, was based not only on her friends’ needs, encouragement, and support, but also on the poet’s own strong belief in the necessity of this translation. As a Greek scholar, Carter herself was not satisfied with the translations of Epictetus’ works available then to the British public, and she made it her personal responsibility to produce a professional translation of the text to serve the intellectual needs of the eighteenth-century British society. Carter’s intellectual friends believed that she was the best candidate to fulfill this hard task. However, the most important factor was Carter’s self-confidence in her capacity to produce the best translation of Epictetus’ works. The fourth chapter of this dissertation will deal with Carter’s other, equally important, motives or reasons to invest her time and knowledge to translate Epictetus to meet not only her friends’ expectations, but also her own spiritual needs.

Carter’s intellectual growth was a significant part of her friendship experience; and this aspect of human relationship was found by traditional philosophy to be necessary for personal intellectual growth in friendship. Teachings of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle help us to understand the role and place of a personal intellectual growth in human relationships. Socrates’ confession of ignorance⁴⁸ explains to us two beliefs. First, it is impossible to come up with a certain foolproof philosophical system to find the truth, so each person must understand with his

⁴⁸ Socrates’ confession of ignorance: “I know that I know nothing.”

own mind what to accept and what to reject.⁴⁹ Second, if men were aware of their ignorance, they would be driven by the desire for the truth (38). In both cases, the great thinker believed that men must search for truth, for education, for knowledge. Plato devoted his life to establish the Academy (the Hecademus Grove), to constitute a community where friends could meet, assisting each other in the most important matters of life (50). In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle relates friendship as one of the major goods playing a significant role in happiness—the chief human good. In Sara Broadie’s interpretation, the Aristotelian definition of the chief good is “activity of reasons in accordance with excellence, in a complete life” (12). For Aristotle, the best kind of friendship must go along with intellectual work.

Aristotle believed that friendship is “a kind of excellence” and “very necessary for living” (Rowe 208). He states that “no one would choose to live without friends” and then elaborates on different reasons leading to the necessity of having friends: wealthy people need to protect their prosperity and need to be praised, while people in poverty look at their friends as the only refuge (Rowe, 209). Based on this emphasis on friendship, we suggest that good human relationships help individuals to build a better life in many ways: economical, cultural, social, and financial. Elizabeth Carter’s experience of friendship offers us a completely different type of human relationship where the involved parties are not interested in any kind of material gain or profit. It was the relationship of intellectuals with mutual respect, affection, love and care whose purpose was to influence minds, to bring progressive changes into human relationships, which will lead to the progress of society at large.

⁴⁹ In her introduction to *All Works of Epictetus*, Elizabeth Carter compares Socrates’ doctrine with Stoicism to advocate a constant search for a better information. She writes:

“Socrates, who had, of all Mankind, the fairest Pretensions to set up for an Instructor and Reformer of the World, confessed, that he knew nothing, referred to Tradition, and acknowledged the Want of a superior Guide: and there a remarkable Passage in *Epictetus*, in which he represents it, as the Office of his supreme God, or One deputed by Him, to appear among Mankind, as a Teacher and Example. (27)

Elizabeth Carter's intellectual friendship contains all these three factors recognized by traditional philosophy. First, as an intellectual whose life was devoted to learning, Carter never stopped searching for the truth. To find the truth, the poet develops her own philosophical system, which rests on her genuine belief in education, in morality, and in spirituality. Second, as a member of the first generation of the Bluestocking circle, the poet had an intellectual environment where thinkers of her time could meet each other to share ideas. Plato's Academy proved the necessity of intellectual relationships between the well educated men of a community. In his letter to Lady Hesketh, William Cowper (1731-1800) referred to Elizabeth Robinson Montagu's rooms as "Mrs. Montagu's Academy" (*Selected Letters*). Carter's network of intellectual friends allows her to have her own intellectual environment as a necessary space for "the life of the mind" (Myers).⁵⁰ On November 23, 1777, the poet wrote to her friend Elizabeth Montagu:

O dear, O dear, how pretty we look, and what brave things has Mr. Johnson said of us! Indeed, my dear friend, I am just as sensible to present fame as you can be. Your Virgil and your Horace may talk what they will of posterity, but I think it is much better to be celebrated by the men, women, and children, among whom one is actually living and looking. One thing is very particularly agreeable to my heart, that it seems to be a decided point, that you and I are always to figure in the literary world together, and that from the classical poet, the water drinking rhymes, to the highest dispenser of human fame, Dr. Johnson's pocket book. It is perfectly well understood, that we are to make our appearance in the same piece. I

⁵⁰ Sylvia Harcstark Myers' *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (1990).

am mortified, however, that we do not in this last display of our persons and talents stand in the same corner. (Carter, *Letters* (1817), 47)

This public recognition by intellectual friends is what these two learned women needed to establish their own place, or in Carter's expression, their own "station" among intellectuals of the time. Samuel Johnson's evaluation of these women's extraordinary intellectual worth justifies their dedication to learning and proves that they have gained a high status among intellectuals of the time. Third, Elizabeth Carter's experience of intellectual friendship proves the possibility of the best kind of friendship between individuals: in Aristotle's words, the poet's intellectual friendship goes along with her intellectual work.

Friendship and learning became leading factors of Carter's life experience.

The poet achieves her happiness, "a chief good," by improving herself through education. As Bodek explains, "Most of the Bluestockings were, as children, extremely self-disciplined, and loved learning for its own sake—traits that carried over into their adult lives" (190). Carter was one of those Bluestockings, who devoted her life to learning and for whom love for learning was one of the essential aspects of human happiness, of human existence. Another strong reason for Carter's happiness was close relationships with intellectual friends who loved her, valued her, and respected her. The poet views human relationship as a necessary factor of human happiness; it is a network of her intellectual friends that made it possible for Carter to produce something good for her community. Finally, Carter's intellectual friendship guaranteed her personal intellectual freedom—the freedom, which can be gained only among intellectual friends.

Finding intellectual freedom in friendship was a challenge thrown to the face of the eighteenth-century British society where "the social and sexual hierarchy became firmly

established” (Mary Stanyon 2).⁵¹ To exercise an intellectual friendship allowing intellectual freedom was a part of the unconventional lifestyle developed by Elizabeth Carter. By practicing intellectual friendship, particularly “at a time when women were, on the whole, invisible in intellectual circles” (Stanyon 2), Carter served her community well: she called for enshrining “women’s power in their virtue and ability to improve society, morally and spiritually” (Stanyon 4). Carter’s notions of happiness and intellectual friendship constitute the poet’s ethical legacy. For her, intellectual growth and intellectual freedom are closely related to individual happiness and ethics. From this point of view, the poet’s experience of intellectual friendship represents her world of moral values, her ethical legacy.

Carter’s experience of intellectual friendship played a crucial ethical role in bringing positive changes to society. Carter had demonstrated successfully that, like men, women too might devote their lives to knowledge, that women too might develop a knowledge-based lifestyle. In “Confined and Exposed: Elizabeth Carter’s Classical Translations,” Jennifer Wallace states:

The study of classics in the eighteenth century was strictly organized according to gender. It was absolutely central to the education of boys... In contrast, Latin and Greek were not taught to girls formally at schools, and women could only learn the languages through being taught informally by their fathers or by family friends. (315-316).

Stanyon characterizes the eighteenth-century British society as a community where “[i]nstitutions of higher education were closed to women” (5), where some educated women were forced even to hide their knowledge of Latin (5) because “too much learning was a distinct

⁵¹ Mary Stanyon. “Elizabeth Carter—A Woman of Her Time.” *Women’s Studies, Occasional Papers*, No.17, University of Kent, 1990.

handicap” (4). Sarah Fielding’s novel *The Adventures of David Simple* offers vivid example of a typical approach to female education: Cynthia, the main female character in the novel, tells us the story of her life:

I loved reading and had a great Desire of attaining Knowledge; but whenever I asked any Questions of any kind whatsoever, I was always told, Such Things were not proper for Girls of my Age to know: If I was pleased with any Book above the most silly Story or Romance, it was taken from me. For Miss must not enquire too far into Things, it would turn her Brain; she had better mind her Needle-work, and such Things as were useful for Women; reading and poring in Books, would never get me a Husband. (Fielding 92)

In their works, Janet Todd and Mary Stanyon both refer to this part of Cynthia’s story to emphasize a society’s low expectations of women’s education. In *The Sign of Angellica*, Todd discusses one of the main aspects of this set of traditional expectations in regard to women’s education, “domestic duties must always come before intellectual pursuits” (120). In Stanyon’s words, “woman was seen in terms of how it could improve life for a man” (4). A young lady’s life had to be built around one single purpose—to get a husband. Too much education could diminish that possibility, and could make a young lady less attractive in that market. In those circumstances, Carter’s eagerness to study stands as a strong argument against the public’s low expectations of female intellectual capacity. In addition, she has demonstrated that, like men, women too might develop intellectual friendships, and these friendships beyond the boundaries of male friendship: Carter’s network of friends includes not only women but men too. Her ability to develop intellectual friendship became a serious challenge to traditions stipulating that women were not expected to use the “pen’s power” or to develop gender-free friendships with

intellectuals of their time. Carter's violation of traditional expectations was an ethical act; she forced the public to accept her as a learned woman, to witness her capability of becoming a scholar, and finally to recognize her right to education. Carter's life story became undeniable proof that women could achieve their professional goal and happiness without having a husband.

To Her Friends: Catherine Talbot, Elizabeth Montagu, and the Earl of Bath

The publication of Elizabeth Carter's *Poems on Several Occasions* (1762) included poems devoted to her intellectual friends, such as Catherine Talbot, Elizabeth Montagu,⁵² and Sir William Pulteney, Earl of Bath. The poet wrote these poems to express her feelings and thoughts regarding her closest intellectual friends. As individuals, they had significant differences in their life-styles and in their characters, but all of them believed in and enjoyed learning: their strong desire for attaining knowledge created the inevitable need for a professional environment that could be guaranteed only by intellectual friends.

Catherine Talbot, for instance, belonged to "a higher class than Elizabeth Carter, having aristocratic and high clerical connections" (Myers 61). Unlike Carter, Talbot was fatherless; Edward Talbot died of smallpox five months before his daughter's birth. However, Talbot was raised and provided for throughout her life by her father's close friend, Thomas Secker (1693-1768), distinguished scholar and cleric, Archbishop of Canterbury. As Pennington reports, since 1725, after Thomas Secker's marriage to Mrs. Catherine Benson, Mrs. and Miss Talbot had no other home than Dr. Secker's house (*Memoirs*, 97). Like Carter, young Catherine Talbot loved learning and later in her life always had encouragement from her male and female friends to publish and to demonstrate her learning. For instance, Carter believed in Talbot's

⁵² Elizabeth Carter devoted to Elizabeth Montagu two of her poems published in *Poems on Several Occasions* (1762): "Where are those Hours, on rosy Pinions, borne" and "No more, my Friend, pursue a distant Theme."

professionalism as a writer, and there was no doubt in her mind that Talbot's works were worthy to be published. In 1750s, when Talbot repeatedly asked Carter about the translation of Epictetus' works, Carter in her turn pressured Talbot about her new writings. On September 21, 1753, Carter wrote to Talbot: "I hope a few of your leisure hours will be bestowed on that most excellent green book which I so sincerely wish to have the world the better for" (*Letters*, 141). In November 1753, Talbot answered to Carter's enquires about the green book from Percy Lodge:⁵³

I have remembered my promise faithfully—but am just as far from performing it as I was last year. I have read it carefully, but can find no order, no connection in it. It wants an introduction—so it is returned to the *considering drawer*, with many of its ancestors. I attempted once or twice to ask questions about it, but being referred to some other time, that other time has never come.... But if I gain great strength, spirits, courage, and diligence, in this happy retreat from my every care and every interruption, you may possibly hear a better account of me and them. (*Letters*, 145)

From this response we sense that there were certain reasons why she stopped writing. It could be her life style; she belonged to a high social group of British society, and, probably, her writing was often interrupted by her duties as a member of that social class. Here, in Percy Lodge, Talbot was free of her daily duties, care, and interruptions. Now, she hoped to regain her strength and spirit in order to be able to write again. She wanted to write; she wanted to impress her friend, Carter, by "a better account" of herself and the green book.

In December 10, 1753, in another letter to Talbot, Carter resumed the subject of that neglected *green book*:

⁵³ Percy Lodge is a geographical location, country, where Miss Talbot spent some time on her own. On November 12, 1753, Talbot wrote to Carter: "My Lord and my mother brought me here six days ago, and here they kindly left me yesterday to spend, I hope, a fortnight" (*Letters*, 143).

It is to be hoped my Lord and Mrs. Talbot will not think of sending for you from Percy Logde till all the old boxes and papers are burnt.... These vile papers harassed you to death; harassed you to death.... And it cruelly caused the vexatious neglect of my favorite point, the green book; but it is really intolerable of you not to let the world be somewhat the better for you. (*Letters*, 147)

Carter continued to pressure Talbot to work on her own writings. She believed in the moral good of Talbot's works, and she expected Talbot to serve her community by publicizing her writings. Moreover, Carter wanted Talbot to resume her writings because the intellectual activity could free her from the melancholy developed over the death of Mrs. Secker. Some scholars believed that "Talbot, obsessed with self-improvement, did not feel equal to the task of improving the world" (*Bluestocking Feminism*, 7). However, on January 19, 1754, Talbot presented her own explanation: "I can really not find any [time] for the green book at present, but it is not out of my mind, and I have even put down some hints for future use" (*Letters*, 153). Another letter to Carter tells us something else. On July 10, 1754, Talbot reacted to Carter's request to publish her works: "Who is so proper to set the example of that charity which you so strongly recommended as yourself? Who so capable of conveying that instruction, which might be so widely circulated by this means?" (*Letters*, 176). This dialogue between Carter and Talbot demonstrates the differences in their characters. Talbot's tremendous hesitation and caution before the public were based on a lack of self-confidence. In contrast, Carter was confident in her writings and always ready to publish them. Talbot showed extreme sensitivity toward the subject of publicizing her works. The third chapter of this dissertation will deal with both—with the personal reasons for Talbot's melancholy developed over years and with Carter's role and place in Talbot's personal

and professional life. Unfortunately, unlike Carter, Talbot continued to resist publicizing her works. After her death in 1770, it was Carter who published Talbot's works at her own expense.

Like Carter and Talbot, Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu was a woman of independent mind who developed lasting friendships with her contemporary intellectuals of both sexes. Montagu was the first organizer of the Bluestocking gatherings: "She was responsible for creating a literary community of both sexes which forged new links between learning and virtue in the public imagination" (*Bluestocking Feminism*, Ivi). Unlike Carter, both Talbot and Montagu were always interested in having families. On August 5, 1742, Elizabeth Robinson married Edward Montagu (1692-1775) who was "a Member of Parliament and a man of business with extensive properties in Yorkshire" (Myers 97). She decided to marry this fifty-year-old bachelor, "although she did not have a particular high opinion of men or the institution of marriage" (*ODNB*). In 1738, she had written to the duchess of Portland explaining what kind of husband she expected to have:

He should have a great deal of sense and prudence to direct and instruct me, much wit to divert me, beauty to please me, good humor to indulge me in the right, and reprove me gently when I am in the wrong: money enough to afford me more than I can want, and as much as I can wish; and constancy to like me as long as other people do. (R. B. Jonson 41-42)

Her view did not change, and her marriage was a well-calculated decision promising her the solid financial stability for the rest of her life. Elizabeth Montagu's London "parties started as literary breakfasts, but by 1760 become large evening assemblies or conversation parties at which card playing and heavy drinking were barred" (*ODNB*). Elizabeth Montagu was known not only as a hostess of these bluestocking gatherings, but also published works, such as *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* (1769). In short, Mrs. Montagu demonstrated

her capability and talent in regulating the diversity of her responsibilities as an intellectual, a wife, and a woman of business.

Among Carter's male intellectual friends, Sir William Pulteney, the Earl of Bath (1684-1764), a well educated and a well known politician of his time, became one of those male friends to whom she devoted a poem. Carter's poem proves that the poet valued her relationship with Sir William Pulteney as an extremely significant friendship. They both loved learning, and throughout their lives remained fighters for their beliefs and principles. Finally, he was one of Carter's male friends who recognized in Carter an equal intellectual friend.

As Bodek states, "Bluestocking friendships dissolved individual differences of personality, belief, age, and social status" (193). It was true not only for Bluestocking friendship, but also for Carter's personal relationships with her intellectual friends in general. While the English salon lasted a very short time "from about 1750 to about 1790" (Bodek 187), Carter's intellectual friendships were life-long. On June 13, 1755, Carter wrote to Talbot: "Almost the only motive of my ever taking a pen into my hand, is the hope of preserving a place in the remembrance of some few friends by whom I cannot bear the thoughts of being forgot" (*Letters*, 208). Once again, here we recognize the poet's tendency to address openly her personal relationships with her friends and explain the significance of these ties in both women's lives. Indeed, this statement leaves no doubt that Carter cherished and valued her friends' presence in her life, and, in this case, Talbot's presence. Carter's poems, devoted to intellectuals of her circle, demonstrate that these relationships go beyond the boundaries of the Bluestocking Circle. Of course, intellectual ties between members of the Bluestockings played its own constructive role in holding this circle together. For example, Myers's emphasis on the supportiveness of Bluestocking friendship is based on the facts of mutual support demonstrated by members of this

circle. For Elizabeth Carter, however, her personal relationships with friends were more important and more significant than her being a part of this informal society of intellectuals. Still, we have to admit that it is impossible to talk about Bluestockings without mentioning Elizabeth Carter: she is considered as one of the most important figures of that circle. For the poet, the notion of the friendship is bigger than her or her friends' roles and activities in the Bluestocking movement. Carter's relationships with her friends, such as Talbot, Montagu, or Bath, were not solely based on the Bluestocking network. Carter's intellectual relationships were developed independently into one of the most progressive forms of human relationships. In fact, the power of friendship, the intellectual interactions, developed between Carter and her friends contributed to the establishment of the Bluestocking Circle. In short, this network within the Bluestocking group was based on common solidarity of members-intellectuals; it was a public display of morally good human relationships. In Carter's own world, however, friendship was based not only on intellectuality and professionalism, but also on spirituality, on mutual personal attraction, love, and care. Based on intellectual and personal attractions, Carter's individual relationships have own specific features generating a strong ethical impact on the poet's life. And, the study of Carter's life experience, specifically, her experience of friendship, will help us to view these intellectual relationships as a significant contribution to the progress of human relationship at large.

"To Miss Talbot" (1762)

The poem "To Miss Talbot" presents one of those moments when the author enjoys the evening view of her native seashore at Deal. The epigraph to this poem, the line in Greek from Theocritus— "Calm is the sea, and hushed is every wind"— prepares us to anticipate the setting

of the scene. The first impression is that the contrast between the beauty of the calm sea and the power of a strong wind will become a main subject of the text. It is well known that Carter loved to walk for long hours by herself along the seaside in Deal. Sometimes she took a long walk to visit her friends in a neighboring village. To sing the beauty of the sea view is not a surprising subject for the poet who grew up and lived in a town next to the sea. However, in the second part of the poem, the author presents her main concern—the absence of her dear friend. The author's thoughts of her friend explain the nature of the Carter-Talbot friendship.

The opening lines present a very lively picture of the evening sea:

How sweet the Calm of this sequester'd Shore,
 Where ebbing Waters musically roll:
 And Solitude, and silent Eve Restore
 The philosophic Temper of the Soul. (1-4)

This happy moment of the poet's life tells us about the poet's deep understanding and passionate love of nature, her joy of watching the view of "this sequester'd Shore" (1) and listening to the music of rolling water. However, almost every moment of the poet's experience of happiness is reflected by her own intellectual activity. Carter's love of nature and love of learning are equally powerful factors in her personal nature. Some scholars, however, view the poet's passions as the two powerful forces struggling with each other and claim that "A Dialogue" reflects this struggle between the poet's love for knowledge and love for nature. For instance, in "Elizabeth Carter—A Woman of Her Time," Stanyon writes: "Elizabeth's walking... was the great balance to her intellectual pursuits, perhaps the contrast of which inspired one of her best known poems 'A Dialogue'" (9). According to this approach, body represents the poet's love for nature while mind presents her love for knowledge. But this particular interpretation misreads the poem. "A

Dialogue” is not about the clash between the author’s love for knowledge and love for nature. Throughout her entire life, Carter’s love for nature and love for learning functioned in a perfect balance and harmony: she mastered her ability to establish that necessary balance from her early years. Contextually, “A Dialogue” centers on the clash between the poet’s passion for knowledge and a physical pain⁵⁴—the forcing power of body over mind. In Carter’s world her love for nature and her love for learning are not in contrast, but in harmony.

In “To Miss Talbot,” Carter also follows her tendency to show her appreciation of the natural world around her. However, here her love of nature is in harmony with her intellectual needs. Even during those moments when Elizabeth Carter, as is her tendency, enjoys the beauty of her native seashore, her happiness arises from the speaker’s intellectual needs, intellectual friends. Carter’s emotional and mental states are in harmony: both her sense of the beauty of nature and her joy of thinking of her dear friend become the principal sources of the author’s happiness. In other words, the reason for her happiness is not only the beauty of this evening calm sea, but the fact that this “Solitude, and silent Eve Restore” (3) something very important—“The philosophic Temper of the Soul” (4). By this phrase, the poet considers the philosophical temper of the mind. Although the poet’s mental and emotional states are in a parallel act throughout the entire poem, the author chooses to use the word *soul* instead of *mind*. The word soul is used to express two senses or ideas: human spirituality and human mind. The sense of spirituality comes from the word’s essential meaning while the sense of the human mind comes from “the philosophical” (4). In Elizabeth Carter’s world of philosophical thoughts, her happiness, her friendship, her intellectuality and spirituality are not separable. The beauty of this shore goes hand in hand with the poet’s intellectual activity. This happiness leads the poet to

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Carter developed over time a severe headache forcing her to interrupt her studies. This fact suggests a real possibility that in “A Dialogue” the poet describes her experience of that physical pain.

thoughts of her intellectual friend; it is necessary for the poet to share with her dear friend “the philosophic temper” of her mind. In her happiness, the poet feels the presence of nature, intellectuality, and spirituality.

The next lines praise “declining day” (6), a “sympathetic quiet” (7) evening, opposed to an aggressive dynamic of the busy day:

The sighing Gale, whose Murmurs lull to Rest
The busy Tumult of declining Day,
To sympathetic Quiet soothes the Breast,
And ev’ry wild Emotion dies away. (5-8)

These lines present facts of human experience. Daytime worries and emotions come to rest by the end of the day. While “the sighing Gale” (5), a strong wind, refers to emotions, “the busy Tumult of declining Day” (6) might be interpreted as real-life challenges an individual faces in daily life. For the poet, the calm of her native shore is “sweet” (1) and “sympathetic” (7). This peaceful view of nature “soothes the Breast” (7); and then the poet’s very conclusive statement comes: “ev’ry Emotion dies away” (8). The poet builds the analogy between facts taking place in nature and in human life experience. After a busy day, there is a need for peaceful time, for rest.

Farewell the Objects of diurnal Care,
Your Task be ended with the setting Sun:
Let all be undisturbed Vacation here,
While o’er yon Wave ascends the peaceful Moon. (9-12)

The poet emphasizes the contrast in temper between daytime and nighttime. The poet loves the presence of “the peaceful Moon” because it ends all earthly cares, and now the speaker belongs to her thoughts.

In the next lines, Carter tells us about the impact these “beauteous Visions” have on her mind and soul:

What beauteous Visions o’er the soften’d Heart,
 In this still Moment all their Charms diffuse,
 Serener Joys, and brighter Hopes impart,
 And cheer the Soul with more than mortal Views. (13-16)

The poet praises this moment of inspiration to create a poem to voice her thoughts and feelings. She is happy to occupy herself, her soul with things (values) “more than mortal Views” (16). It is a moment of both spiritual and intellectual inspiration. The poet is inspired by the powerful memory of her friend.

Here, faithful Mem’ry wakens her Pow’rs,
 She bids her fair ideal Forms ascend,
 Ans quick to ev’ry gladden’d Thought restores
 The social Virtue, the absent Friend. (17-20)

The poet provides the parallel between changes in nature and changes in human experience: ascending moon and ascending mind and soul. The emphasis is on the power of mind. The peaceful Moon takes over all earthly worries and cares, and similarly, ascending powerful mind—“faithful Mem’ry waken all her Pow’rs” (17), “her fair ideal Forms” (18)—takes over “moral Views” (16). Intellectuality is above everything else.

However, this beauty, this view of nature and this moment of joy are lacking something very important:

Come*****[Musidora], come, and with me share
 The sober Pleasures of his solemn Scene,

While no rude Tempest clouds the ruffled Air,
 But all like these, id smiling and serene. (21-24)

To feel or to experience the absence of the friend becomes the central point of these lines. The necessity of the friend's presence is the idea presented by the author. For Carter, that peaceful time is time spent with a friend allowing the poet to exercise her free mind.

The next lines of "To Miss Talbot" indicate a certain spiritual aspect of this friendship—finding their free space among the stars:

Come, while the cool, the solitary Hours
 Each foolish Care, and giddy Wish control,
 With all thy soft Persuasion's wonted Pow'rs,
 Beyond the Stars transport my Listening Soul. (25-28)

The friend's presence elevates the poet above mortality of human existence, above "each foolish Care, and giddy Wish control" (26). The friend's presence allows the poet to experience her spiritual freedom by transporting the poet's listening soul beyond the stars. She is happy among stars with her friends. Finding freedom among the stars reminds us again of "A Dialogue," where the poet refers to death as a very powerful friend who will save her (mind) from abusive body (husband) by taking her away to skies. In "To Miss Talbot," however, the poet refers to her friend as a divine power capable of elevating her to the stars while in "A Dialogue," the poet mentions her fiends, but they are absent:

I did step out, on some weighty Affairs,
 To visit, Lat night, my good Friends in the Stars,
 When before I was got half as high as the Moon,
 You dispatched *Pain* and *Languor* to hurry me down;

Vi & Armis they seized me, in Midst of my Flight,

And shut me on Cavern as dark as the Night. (“A Dialogue” 23-28)

As in “To Miss Talbot,” here, in “A Dialogue,” the factor of friendship is also closely associated with the poet’s spirituality: friends make her happy, friends allow the poet to experience intellectual and spiritual freedom by transferring her to a different world, to a better world among the stars. The main difference however, is the absence of friends. The speaker in “A Dialogue” attempts to reach her friends, but “pain and languor” seize her and force her to come back on earth. There is a presence of the physical force depriving the speaker from having friendship. While “A Dialogue” presents human life without the experience of friendship, “To Miss Talbot” presents human life with the experience of friendship.

Another common feature associating these two poems is the fine usage line between the words *mind* and *soul*. In “A Dialogue,” Carter feminizes the mind to emphasize a woman’s intellectual capacity and need for intellectual freedom. In both poems, Carter does not draw a clear line between the usages of these words—*mind* and *soul*. Sometimes mind and soul are used interchangeably with the same meaning. For instance, in “To Miss Talbot,” the poet refers to her own “listening soul” waiting for the friend to come. In this case, the poet’s usage of the word soul could be interpreted in two different ways. It is possible that by “my listening soul,” Carter means not just soul but mind too. At the same time, we may suggest that by “my listening soul,” the poet means just soul with religious connotation. It is possible that the eighteenth-century usage of soul and mind do not distinguish the difference between these two phrases. It is possible that for the poet soul and mind are closely related factors, and it was the poet’s intention to create certain flexibility in interpretation of the text.

In the final lines, the poet develops another contrast—the contrast between the earthly world and an ideal world; while earthly life is mortal, temporary and empty, that “better Portion in the Skies” is eternal, ideal.

Oft, when on Earth detained by empty Show,
 Thy Voice has taught the Trifler how to rise;
 Taught her to look with Scorn on Things below,
 And seek her better Portion in the Skies. (29-32)

The poet’s strong desire is to rise above and look “with Scorn on things below” (31). This rising is closely related to the presence of a dear friend. For the poet, being with a friend is equal to being in an ideal world. The notion of friendship is associated with an ideal world, with a divine power.

One of the consistent features of Carter’s poetry is the duality of usages, when a word or an idea expresses dual meaning. For example, in “Dialogue” through dual usages Carter develops the two parallel plots: the Body-Mind relationship and the Husband-Wife relationship. In these final lines of “To Miss Talbot,” the effect of the same kind of dual usages becomes obvious.

Come: and the sacred Eloquence repeat:
 The World shall vanish at it’s gentle Sound,
 Angelic Forms shall visit this Retreat,
 And op’ning Heaven diffuse it’s Glories round. (32-36)

Carter exercises dual usages to tell us that the presence of her friend is equal to the presence of a divine power. The poet calls for a friend because under the sacred power of this friend’s presence “The World shall vanish” (35) before them and “op’ning Heaven diffuse it’s Glories round” (36).

The fact that Carter views a friend as a divine power tells us how much the poet values her intellectual friends. Having said that, it is quite understandable and acceptable that the friendship with intellectuals, like Miss Talbot, allowed Carter to find her ideal world on the earth. This ideal world that she needed could not be reached without the presence of dear friends. Friendship allowed Carter to realize herself as an individual and as an intellectual, and because of her relationships with her friends, she could ignore those who did not understand her independent life-style, her long walks by herself, and of course her use of a pen.

Carter could not only ignore general public expectations, but most importantly publicize her own views on human life and human relationships by writing poems devoted to her personal experience of friendship. She believed in herself and in those choices she had to make in her life. Once, when Carter was preparing a poem (“No more my Friend, pursue a distant Theme”) to publish, she asked Montagu “whether or not she should prefix her name to it” (*Bluestocking Feminism*, 551). Carter’s decision to include Montagu’s name in the title of the poem was based on the poet’s strong desire to tell the world the story of the Carter-Montagu friendship. However, she was well aware of possible misinterpretations of certain usages within the text:

I am a little afraid the second stanza may give some offense to the good people upon the pantiles [i.e. in Tunbridge Wells], who may not find out its meaning without this signification: though most people, I think, who know us, can be in no doubt to whom, it is address. I shall put no names to any of the rest except my Lord Bath’s” (*Letters*, vol. 1, 137-138).

Carter does not mind publicizing her intellectual friendship, and she is ready to include a person’s name to whom the poem was addressed. However, she became very sensitive to the possibility of some misinterpretation of certain lines; she could not allow herself to cause even a

minor harm to the name or image of her friend. The poet shares with the public her experience of friendship and wants the public to know about the impact friendship makes on people's lives. She was confident in her writings, in her ideas. At the same time, Carter knows that she is dealing with two kind of audience: both the general public and the circle of her intellectual friends. She was sure that her friends would not fail to interpret the text according to her own expectations. On the one hand, Carter was confident in her writings, actions, and principles. On the other hand, she demonstrated her ethical relationship with Montagu by asking her permission to mention her name in the title of the poem. In terms of dealing with two different audiences, Carter's poems on friendship show that a power of human relationships generates another power—power to challenge exhausted traditions and offer new approaches leading to the progress in human relationships.

Carter's poems on friendship are united by the author's main purposes—to educate the public about intellectuality, about a high level of ethics in human relationships, and finally, about the fact that good human relationships lead to good human life in a community.

It is true that the subject of friendship as well as ideas related to human happiness unites Carter's poems devoted to her friends. The poet also never repeats herself in presenting her relationship with her intellectual friends; each poem reflects a real-life friendship experience, a unique example of an ethical teaching of human relationship. These poems present examples of good (moral) and positive human relationships making positive difference in human life. The next two poems, "To Mrs. Montagu" and "To the Earl of Bath," present other unique and significant relationships.

"To Mrs. Montagu" (1762)

Carter starts this poem with her recollection of happy hours spent with another dear friend, Montagu. The poet's experience of happiness is related directly to her relationship with this particular intellectual friend:

Where are those Hours, on rosy Pinions borne,
Which brought to ev'ry guiltless Wish Success?
When Pleasure gladden'd each returning Morn,
And ev'ry Ev'ning clos'd in Calms of Peace. (1-4)

With this opening, the poet takes a reverse strategy in presenting this particular intellectual friendship. Her happy thoughts of her friend help the poet to sense the beauty of the world around; it is a pleasure to meet "each returning Morn" (3) and observe evening with "Calms of Peace" (4). Their views of nature, of the physical world, reflect their state of happiness. Knowing this particular feature of human nature, the poet presents the happy state of her inner world through the description of mornings and evenings. As in the poem "To Miss Talbot," here, once again, Carter creates ideal relations or connections between the state of human happiness and human's state or way of viewing nature.

The sadness caused by the separation of these two friends is also particular. The poet's recall of past happiness seems like the rebirth of those happy hours spent with a dear friend. Carter's sadness contains in itself different and sometimes opposite features. For example, the poet's love and care for Mrs. Montagu, the poet's state of being without her friend, the poet's experience of human loneliness—all these factors go along with her reexperience of friendship. In this sadness, we sense the poet's joy in memories of a good friend.

How smil'd each Object, when by Friendship led,
Thro' flow'ry Paths we wander'd unconfin'd:

Enjoy'd each airy Hill, or solemn Shade,
 And left the bustling empty World behind. (5-8)

The poet explains and demonstrates the role and the significance of human relationships in human happiness, in human life. Friendship is the source of human happiness. It is a friendship that leads us to understanding the beauty of the objects around us. Friendship has a strong impact on the human mental and emotional state: because of friendship the poet enjoyed “each airy Hill, or solemn Shade,” and because of friendship the poet and her friend feel themselves in a better environment, because of friendship both friends see themselves outside of “the bustling empty World” (8).

In the third stanza, the poet explains the role of friendship in the poet's own intellectual and social needs, which make “The Noon-day Sky” look brighter and “the silent Moon” peaceful.

With philosophic, social Sense survey'd
 The Noon-day Sky in brighter Colours shone:
 And softer o'er the dewy Landscape play'd
 The peaceful Radiance of the silent Moon. (9-12)

The first line of this stanza is associated with the line from the poem “To Miss Talbot” where the poet enjoys the beauty of the silent evening that restores “The philosophic Temper of the Soul” (4). The role of intellectual activity in human relationship is emphasized in both poems. In “To Miss Talbot,” it is the beauty of evening that restores the memory of the poet's intellectual friend. In “To Mrs. Montagu,” the poet reverses the case by demonstrating that those intellectual ties between the friends make the world around us beautiful.

With the next stanza, the poet shares with us her current or present situation, the experience of being without her friend. Now, the poet tells us about how it feels when those happy hours are vanished:

Those Hours are vanish'd with the changing Year,
And dark December clouds the Summer Scene:
Perhaps, alas! for ever vanish'd here,
No more to bless distinguish'd Life again. (13-16)

Carter struggles with this separation from her friend and protests this reality by not accepting it. Again, the poet builds an analogy to express her disagreement with not having a chance to see a friend: “Dark December clouds the Summer Scene” (14) conveys the poet’s emotional state. It is rare to have dark December clouds in summer time. The poet cannot make peace with the fact that her friendship was taken away by life circumstances.

However, Carter finds a strong reason to stand this separation—a long-lasting impact of this friendship:

Yet not like those by thoughtless Folly drown'd,
In blank Oblivion's sullen, stagnant Deep,
Where, never more to pass their fated Bound,
Their Ruins of neglected Being sleep. (17-20)

Carter does not consider her past friendship experience as “like those by thoughtless Folly drown'd” (17). The poet claims that her friendship is not the case “where, never more to pass their fated Bound/their Ruins of neglected Being sleep” (20). Now, the poet explains *why* her friendship is still very important:

But lasting Traces mark the happier Hours,

Which active Zeal in Life's great Task employs:

Which Science from the Waste of Time secures,

Or various Fancy gratefully enjoys. (21-24)

The poet's past experience of friendship continues to have its impact on her life. The mutual intellectual attraction between the two friends would not let die the relationship born years ago. This friendship based on intellectual relationship gave these women a chance to share their knowledge and common interests. This kind of intellectual sharing brought them even closer and turned their relationship into long lasting friendship. Within this relationship, both women gained self-confidence and learned to believe in themselves as intellectuals. Now, when years have passed, the poet's feelings and thoughts of her friend continue to bring happiness to her life.

The final lines present the poet's view of friendship:

O still be ours to each Improvement giv'n,

Which Friendship doubly to the Heart endears:

Those Hours, when banish'd hence, shall fly to Heav'n,

And claim the Promise of eternal Years. (25-28)

The poet believes in friendship as the necessity to improve human life. Friendship is moral and good. Even if friendship is banished by a change of circumstances, it will gain eternal years promised by divine power.

Carter's poems devoted to friendship share certain common features, such as manifestations of friendship. For instance, even though "To Mrs. Montagu" was addressed to a specific friend, what the author says in this poem about friendship is true for every single relationship developed between the poet and her intellectual friends. Almost in every poem devoted to her friends, Carter views friendship as a morally necessary aspect of human life: it has

a divine power to bring individuals together, to give individuals what the society or the community fails to give. Because of the role of friendship in human happiness, Carter considered friendship as a gift from God, as a chance for people to improve their lives. To develop good relationships means to do something good and moral.

To consider friendship as a principal source of moral good becomes the central idea of Carter's poems devoted to her personal relationships with both male and female intellectuals of the time. The next poem, "To the Earl of Bath," also presents the poet's experience of friendship; in this poem, however, the author does not concentrate on the relationship itself, but on this male friend's individuality, on specific features of his personality. In other words, contextually, "To the Earl of Bath" is different from those two—"To Miss Talbot" and "To Mrs. Montagu." If the two poems—"To Miss Talbot" and "To Mrs. Montagu"—present Carter's relationship with her two female intellectual friends, the poem "To the Earl of Bath" praises a specific individual character. However, despite its contextual difference, "To the Earl of Bath" reflects the poet's relationship with Lord Bath. Carter experienced deep respect for him. They were good friends with an unconventional relationship based on their mutual love and care. In their friendship, they were free of obligations to follow social expectations in regard to male and female relationships. Due to their friendship, both intellectuals felt free to share ideas, to travel together and to treat each other as equals: they considered each other as valuable intellectuals and individuals. In this unconventional friendship, gender issues did not exist.

"To the Earl of Bath" (1762)

"To the Earl of Bath" is about Elizabeth Carter's friend, Sir William Pulteney, the First Earl of Bath, a well-known and well-educated English Whig statesman who would fight for his

strong beliefs regarding public good. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1705 to 1742, named Earl of Bath in 1742 by King George II. Pulteney was actively involved in political debates carried out on the pages of the periodical *The Craftsman*. Pulteney's sudden death in 1764 interrupted the four-year-old friendship. During the short friendship, he and Carter managed to develop a unique relationship based on mutual attraction and love as intellectuals and as individuals. It was Carter's intention and goal to publicize her deep respect and care for this scholarly man and brilliant orator who used his seat in a political arena to argue against his political opponents, such as Sir Robert Walpole (1721-1742), the first lord of the treasury and chancellor of Exchequer. In "To the Earl of Bath," the poet demonstrates her knowledge of him as an individual, and her personal fascination by him led the poet to an idea to publicize her thoughts of him. The poet decided first to devote a single poem and then to dedicate to him *Poems on Several Occasions* not because of his fame and authority, but because of her trust in him as one of the intellectuals of their time.

Before analyzing Carter's poem, we must discuss some aspects of Lord Bath's controversial reputation as a politician and as an individual. The beginning of his political career was promising. It was 1708 when Pulteney "fell into the orbit" of two rising stars—Thomas Wharton, first Earl of Wharton, and Robert Walpole (*the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*). Pulteney had close political relationships with these two public figures. In 1712, he supported Walpole against charges of corruption relating to government army contracts, and later, when Walpole was sent to the Tower, kept in close touch with him (*ODNB*). However, Pulteney never failed to prove that he was a thinking follower of Walpole. For example, in 1718, Pulteney refused to join Walpole by "voting with Tories to reduce the standing army" (*ODNB*).

In *A Woman of Wit and Wisdom* (1906), Alice C.C. Gaussen⁵⁵ states that Lord Bath “was not moved by any personal enmity to Sir Robert Walpole, or ambitious views of supplanting him,” Lord Bath liked this man, “but disliked his measures” (212). Pulteney always was following his own understandings, beliefs and uncompromised principal moral values. It is no wonder that after twelve years of his loyalty to Sir Robert Walpole, Pulteney becomes his prominent opponent. In 1720, when Walpole gained back his leading role at the Treasury, he offered Pulteney a peerage, a position that the latter refused to take. Pulteney “may have felt that Walpole was deliberately sidelining him as a dangerous rival for power” (*ODNB*). This case is viewed by many as the beginning of mutual distrust between these two politicians. Pulteney watched closely every step taken by the Walpole ministry. He was constantly challenging government proposals and its current foreign policy. For instance, in 1733, Pulteney became a leading opponent of Walpole’s excise scheme, introduced into parliament. Walpole lost this battle and was forced to withdraw his proposal.

At the time of his death, Pulteney was one of the richest men in England. His estate and investments were “estimated between 600,000 and 1.2 million” (*ODNB*). Gaussen believed that “Lord Bath was accused by his enemies of an undue love of money, that instinct of accumulation often the besetting sin of really great men. But many stories told to his disadvantage reflect on his accusers” (208). Among other stories, she focuses on Lord Chesterfield’s case:

Lord Chesterfield desired to purchase from him [Lord Bath] the land that lay between Chesterfield House and Hyde Park, in order that his view might not be obstructed. To oblige him, Lord Bath agreed to sell it for 3,000 *L.*, although with the general rage for building the land was worth more. Lord Chesterfield made “a

⁵⁵ In *A Woman of Wit and Wisdom* (1906), Alice C. C. Gaussen does not provide any references. The sources of the author’s claims are unknown to modern readers.

heavy outcry” against Lord Bath’s avarice and extortion, but at length agreed to pay the money, and then, regardless of his view, immediately resold the land to a builder for 5,000 *L*. (Gaussen 208-209)

This story suggests how others could easily manipulate Pulteney’s decency and honesty. The *ODNB* offers certain biographical facts explaining the sources of Pulteney’s wealth and reasoning to suggest that in his political battles he served not his personal financial gain, but a public good. In 1711, the death of Henry Guy, the former secretary of Treasury, a close friend of the family, left Pulteney “independently rich” (*ODNB*). Pulteney managed to sell his shares of the South Sea Company just before the bubble burst, demonstrating his understanding of public finance (*ODNB*). Also, he inherited from his father “a life interest in the London estates”(*ODNB*), which gave him chance to build his London house. Pulteney’s solid financial stability allowed him to fight freely for his beliefs; with his wealth he did not have to compromise his political views and values.

It is understandable and acceptable that, as a statesman, a man of knowledge, he finds it necessary to challenge other political views. One aspect of this circumstance is clear: Pulteney was a fighter for his beliefs. By being a strong opponent of different political groups in English parliament, Pulteney followed his own principles to fulfill his duty as a representative of his own people. In most cases, the controversial views of Pulteney, as a political figure, are based on personal contemporary interpretation of his character. Keeping in mind the fact that Pulteney was in the middle of a political power struggle, the negative comments regarding his political reputation raise certain skepticism. This brief observation of Pulteney as a statesman and as a public figure demonstrates his active involvement in political and intellectual progress of the eighteenth-century British society. However, his enemies managed to question his reputation. As

in any world of political games, to question someone's role and significance in the political arena should be considered as an inevitable consequence of being a powerful political figure.

"To the Earl of Bath" demonstrates that Carter knew Bath not only as politician and statesman, but also as an individual. The detailed presentation of the Earl of Bath's personal character shows the poet's deep knowledge of his individuality. Only a very close friend could possess this kind of deep knowledge of him. During the poet's visits to London, she was accustomed to Lord Bath's society at Mrs. Montagu's house (Gaussen 202). We also know that Carter spent the summer of 1761 in the company of Mrs. Montagu, Lord Bath, and Lord Lyttelton at Tunbridge Wells. *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, offers us the following information:

In his widowhood Bath spent much time in the company of such bluestockings as Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), daughter of the Revd Nicolas Carter, and Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1780), wife of Edward Montagu. He continued to travel with such respectable and cultured women, including a trip to Spa, in the Austrian Netherlands, and the Rhine in June-September 1763, when he was described as being the life and soul of a party of very fashionable people. (*ODNB*, 555)

When it comes to Lord Bath's qualities as an individual, Gaussen writes: "His [Earl of Bath's] wit, strong sense, knowledge of the world, and charm of manner made him the admiration of society, but he often declared he spent no time so happily as in the company of Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter" (202). These facts suggest that Carter's poem "To the Earl of Bath" reflects the real nature of Lord Bath's character. Like all of Carter's works of literature, this poem too is concerned with the poet's own beliefs: she describes Lord Bath in accordance with her knowledge of him, in accordance with her beliefs of him. Carter's poem provides a specific

source to learn about Lord Bath as an ideal statesman with a spotless reputation; the poet introduces him as a man of virtue who lived and worked according to his highly ethical principles, one who would never compromise his public duties and responsibilities before the people. The poem “To the Earl of Bath” presents Sir William Pulteney in light of Carter’s view of him:

Bright are the Beams meridian Suns diffuse,
 Yet drooping Nature mourns their Force severe:
 And hails the gentle Fall of Ev’ning Dews,
 Whose cooling Drops the wither’d World repair. (1-4)

As is her tendency, Carter starts the poem with the description of her view of nature. The poet draws our attention to the actions of forces in nature. Powerful bright beams of the sun diffuse and take over the world around, and then this severe force is replaced by the gentle fall of evening dews to repair the world. This natural dynamic of the day consists of the two major stages. First, the rising sun spreads its bright beams all over the world; this is an active and productive period of the day. Second, the declining part of the day brings cooling drops; the world rests to be repaired by the gentle fall of evening dews.

Carter finds the similar changes in human life. The observation of power shifts leads the poet to the facts of inevitable changes in human life. The description of changes within the one single day is presented as an analogy for inevitable changes taking place in human life. The next reason for this analogy is the parallel structure of the first lines in both stanzas:

Bright is our mortal Being’s Noon-tide State,
 The glowing Breast when new-born Spirits fire:
 When vast Designs th’aspiring Soul elate,

And fair Achievements every Wish inspire. (5-8)

Brightness of the sun's light is compared with brightness of an individual's "Noon-tide State" (5), which is a productive period of human life when an individual is full of energy ("new-born Spirits fire") to act to achieve every wish.

The next lines reflect a certain stage of human life when an individual is experiencing the most productive period of his or her life:

While unrelax'd the Springs of Action play,
And gay Success on raptur'd Fancy smiles,
She bids all Dangers and all Doubts give way,
To crown the Hero's, or the Statesman's toils. (9-12)

The usage "unrelax'd the Springs of Action play" (9) refers to the nature of a human being when an individual is full of energy and spirit to work hard in order to succeed. This natural power of a man bids all possible dangers he might face in his strife. This particular time of a man's life is a nature's gift, a chance for an individual to become a hero, or a statesman. And the nature herself would "crown the Hero's, or the Statesman's toils" (12).

In the following stanza, the poet generalizes the challenges of human life, the difficulties that every man faces throughout his life time:

Untaught what cross Events the Wise confound,
How Time and Chance the boast of Power deride,
Exulting Hope o'erleaps the fated Bound,
By Imperfection fixt to human Pride. (13-16)

Ways of living are untaught; however, there is a possibility to gain wisdom and to defeat the challenge. Sometimes "Time and Chance the boast of Power deride" (14), and "Exulting Hope

overleaps the fated Bound” (15). After this generalization, the poet refers directly to the aspects of her hero’s life:

Subdu’d at length beneath laborious Life,
 With Passion struggling, and by Care deprest,
 In peaceful Age, that ends the various Strife,
 The harass’d Virtues gladly sink to Rest. (17-20)

His current state is his peaceful age: now, his laborious life, struggling passion, the various strife, harassed virtues sink to rest. Once, he conquered the world with the force of laborious life, with the force of his passion. Through “the various Strife” (19), he achieved a glory of being one of the outstanding statesmen as well as intellectuals of his own people. He stood by his moral values and principles that were harassed, questioned, and challenged. Now, all his struggles are behind him and his virtues “gladly sink to Rest” (20). However, this peaceful age, this rest has a specific nature of its own:

Yet not in flow’ry Indolence reclin’d,
 They waste the important Gift of sober Hours:
 To ev’ry State has Heav’n it’s Task assign’d,
 To eve’ry Task assign’d its needful Pow’rs. (21-24)

The poet emphasizes the significance of not wasting “the important gift of sober Hours” (22). Those hours are given by God; every state of life has its own task assigned by Heaven. To fulfill this task, this moral obligation became the purpose of this man’s life. Lines 23 and 24 present one aspect of the poet’s concept of virtue—to follow religious instruction is not enough to purify the soul. It is necessary to take personal responsibility to determine the task of every state, the task assigned by moral values. In September 6, 1763, Carter wrote to Elizabeth Vesey:

The most active genius will never be in danger of languishing for want of employment, while it is engaged in unravelling the sophistries of passion, detecting the fallacies of the heart, examining the motives of action, and determining the duties which results from every particular situation. (*Memoirs*, 361-362)

Personal responsibility in determining personal duties in every particular situation means to be virtuous, means to live and act according to moral principles, to sacred law. Therefore, the next lines introduce one of the poet's beliefs, living by sacred law is morally opposed to earthly pleasures:

Within the fun'ral Cypress awful Gloom,
 Shall Pleasure her fantastic Garlands wreath?
 Shall giddy Mirth profane the neighb'ring Tomb,
 And Folly riot in the Vale of Death? (25-28)

Carter wants us to view earthly pleasures as a possible misleading aspect of moral life. However, the poet does not reject the quality of earthly life. Her intellectual and social activities prove the poet's tendency to entertain herself by having the quality of time with her friends. She rejects not a productive mirth, but "giddy mirth" (27), empty and dizzy mirth, which profanes or treats sacred or moral principles with contempt. By introducing Pulteney's virtuous life, Carter calls to follow her friend's steps and consider moral tasks assigned by heaven. In other words, the poet advocates her hero's choice to avoid empty earthly pleasures and value long days given by Heaven for better purpose—to purify "the blemish'd soul for Heaven" (32):

For better Purposes, to favour'd Man
 Is Length of Days, tremendous Blessing! Given;

To regulate our Life's disorder'd Plan,
 And purify the blemish'd Soul for Heav'n. (29-32)

Human life must be regulated by tasks assigned to purify the soul. The poet shares her friend's view of human life as a chance to prepare oneself for death—for the end of earthly life, for Heaven. However, it becomes necessary for the poet to warn us of the possibility to be misled by passions, by “perplex[ing] defective virtue's genuine Scheme” (35):

For oft, alas! Amidst our fairest Aim,
 The busy Passions mix their fatal Art,
 Perplex defective Virtue's genuine Scheme,
 And slily warp the unsuspecting Heart. (33-36)

This stanza contains very important usages, such as “perplex defective virtue's genuine Scheme” (35). According to the essential interpretation of the last two lines of this stanza, the correct understanding of virtue will protect “the unsuspecting heart” (36) from being misled. Literally, these lines present one of Carter's principal beliefs: the necessity of being virtuous, exercising the set of moral principles assigned by sacred law and not being misled by emotions, by passions. Carter coins her own understanding of virtue. She develops her own set of moral principles according to which she lived and worked throughout her life.

The study of Carter's relationships with her intellectual friends helps us to understand the poet's set of moral values, specially the poet's concept of virtue, the concept of being virtuous. For instance, Carter's poems devoted to her intellectual friends present variety of characters, and the poet developed a specific friendship with each of them. However, despite obvious differences in personal characters, every friend managed to develop a virtuous life. Carter tells the stories of virtuous life.

Although Carter was considered a deeply religious person, her understanding of virtue is not based only on following religious instructions. The poet does not offer a ready-to-use set of instructions on how to become a virtuous man or woman. For the poet, being a virtuous man is not an easy task because it is up to every person to develop a set of moral principles based on the best and most advanced knowledge of moral teachings and values.

In “To the Earl of Bath,” Carter does not idealize human life and does not simplify the process of developing a virtuous life. Being virtuous is so difficult that only few people can pass “the simple Path of Duty” (39):

Oft too, by inconsistent Crouds misled,
Our devious Steps thro’ winding Mazes stray:
How few the simple Path of Duty tread,
And steadfast keep their Heav’n-directed Way! (37-40)

It is challenging to become a virtuous man; it is challenging to follow ways and tasks assigned by divine power. The author wants her readers to understand that making right choices is a crucial aspect of moral good, of ethics, and there is no chance to test the choice until the time comes when the experience of that “unpassion’d Age”(41) “detects the specious fallacies of youth” (42). Only then, it is possible to realize the real value of choices we made:

With calm Severity, unpassion’d Age
Detects the specious Fallacies of Youth:
Reviews the Motives, which no more engage,
And weighs each Action in the Scale of Truth. (41-44)

This “unpassion’d age” is presented as a moment of revealing the truth about the motives for each action. This “unpassioned age” does not offer a chance to fix mistakes:

The Soul no more on mortal Good relies,
 But nobler Objects urge her Hopes and Fears,
 And, sick of Folly, Views no tempting Prize
 Beneath the radiant Circle of the Stars. (45-49)

Carter wants her audience to search for ways to become virtuous. She introduces her hero as a symbol, as an example of a virtuous man. The story of this man's life is not a poet's creation, but the historical fact, a real-life experience of a man who lived and worked according to his own set of moral values. Carter's presentation of this man shows that it is possible to have a virtuous life. She considered her friend a blessed man because he managed to improve his life with cautious steps, not violating moral principles.

How blest, who thus by added Years improv'd,
 With cautious Steps their lengthen'd Journey tread:
 And, from the Task of sultry Life remov'd,
 Converse with Wisdom in it's Eve'ning Shade. (49-52)

Now, the poet addresses the divine power to ask "gracious Heaven" (53) to give her friend the "cheerful Peace" (54) he deserves. The significance of these lines and these prayers is that here in this stanza the poet led us to realize her sincere love and care for this man.

Such, gracious Heav'n! be *Pulteney's* setting Day,
 And cheerful Peace it's various Labours close:
 May no dark Cloud obscure it's soften'd Ray,
 Nor ruffling Tempest shake it's calm Repose. (53-56)

Our information of the Carter-Bath friendship is limited, but, as these lines suggest, Carter loves this man as an intellectual, as a statesman, as an individual and as a friend. The poet prays

“gracious Heaven” to protect her friend from difficulties of life, from dark clouds. In her poem, Carter humanizes Lord Bath by asking divine power to protect him. Despite Lord Bath’s wealth and fame, Carter views him as a human being who like any other man needs to be protected by friends and divine power. She finds it necessary to ask for clear skies over her friends. She considers him a good man whose spirit would never decay, whose intellectual fire would inspire others.

Amidst the Waste of Years, preserve intire
The undecaying Spirit’s nobler Part,
The vivid Spark of intellectual Fire,
And all the gentler Graces of the heart. (57-60)

In the last stanza, the poet presents the final stage of her friend’s earthly life, “when he sinks beneath the common Doom” (61):

When late he sinks beneath the common Doom,
May sacred Hope attend his parting Breath:
May Virtue gild his Passage to the Tomb,
And powerful Faith disarm the Dart of Death. (61-64)

His virtuous life gives him a power to “disarm the Dart of Death” (64). He is ready to face his death. Carter’s approach to her friend’s death is not negative: in this context, he is not afraid of death. In her friend’s case, death is considered as a reward for a man who lived according to the task of Heaven. For Carter, this friend’s death means his gain of eternal happiness in Heaven.

It is not unusual that Carter discusses here the subject of death. Carter and the Earl of Bath became friends in 1760, when he was already retired. However, the subject of his death is a symbolic one. Although they were friends and Carter was aware of his health condition, his

death was sudden and unexpected. A year before his death, Carter, Montagu, and Barth had enjoyed an excursion to Spa. In her letter to Mrs. Vesey, Carter mentioned his good health: “My Lord Bath and Mrs. Montagu are surprisingly the better for their excursion, indeed they are much the youngest and healthiest of our whole party” (*Memoirs*, 362). This comment suggests that the presentation of the subject of death in this poem has nothing to do with the poet’s anticipation of her friend’s death.

The subject of death becomes one of the central themes of Carter’s poetry in general. For instance, “A Dialogue,” “To Miss Talbot,” “To Mrs. Montagu,” and “To the Earl of Bath” share the subject of death. In all these poems, the concept of death is presented as a positive aspect of human life. In “A Dialogue,” for example, death is a friend who will free the mind from its prison—the body. The final lines of “To Miss Talbot” emphasize a crucial role of the friend in the poet’s life experience or in the poet’s experience of happiness. The poet calls for her friend:

Come: and the sacred Eloquence repeat:

The World shall vanish at it’s gentle Sound,

Angelic Forms shall visit this Retreat,

And op’ning Heaven diffuse it’s Glories round. (“To Miss Talbot,” 33-36)

The presence of the friend frees the poet from this earthly world. When these two friends are together, their earthly world is vanishing: they are transferred to a different world, to a better world. The description of this better world where angelic forms are visiting this retreat and glories of Heaven are diffusing around reminds us of the Christian belief in an afterlife existence. As in “A Dialogue,” the poet’s friend is presented as a powerful force capable of elevating both of them to Heaven. This image of “ope’ning Heaven” refers to the end of human earthly

existence and the start of a new stage. The final stanza of “To Mrs. Montagu,” also refers to the stage when human life comes to its end:

O still be ours to each Improvement giv’n,
Which Friendship doubly to the Heart endears:
Those Hours, when banish’d hence, shall fly to Heav’n,
And claim Promise of eternal Years. (“To Mrs. Montagu,” 25-28)

Their friendship, their togetherness improves these two friends’ lives, their relationship helps them to gain their place in Heaven, their exercise of friendship give them right to claim “eternal Years” (28). The time to claim those eternal years comes when an individual’s life comes to its end.

In her approach to the subject of death, Carter demonstrates her strong belief in the moral aspect of human life. Carter’s intellectual friends contributed in their own ways to the moral good of their communities. Each of these intellectuals managed to develop a specific ethical approach to every moment of living and acting. In each relationship, we witness a selfless approach to personal moral responsibilities before immediate family members, before friends, and before the general public. For each of these intellectuals, the interest of others comes first. Miss Talbot could not force herself to publish her writings because of her high standards of being a writer. She never stopped her self-education, or self-improvement in order to reach the right to publicize her ideas. Mrs. Montagu’s support of other female intellectuals, her being a “queen of Blues” shows her dedication to public good. The Earl of Bath could have had a more comfortable earthly life if he could have compromised with his political opponents. All these three friends of Carter believed in their moral duties and responsibilities to contribute to the public moral good. In the frame of the eighteenth century, the ethical or moral aspects of their

intellectual and individual life were closely related to their religious beliefs. Based on this association, Carter's strong belief in her friends' eternal happiness is justified. Carter's relationships with her intellectual friends set high standards for moral and ethical human relationship. Through her literary works, the poet introduces her personal experience of intellectual friendship as a fact, as an example of virtuous life: her poems on friendship should be considered as intellectually progressive moral teachings of her century. Carter's experience of intellectual and individual friendship suggests that human relationships based on intellectuality and virtue may become a principal source of moral good.

However, the complete understanding of Carter's ethical teaching can be achieved not only by the study of her poetry on human relationships, but also by the study of the poet's personal correspondence with her intellectual friends: this correspondence reveals important specific details of their relationships in everyday lives. The significance of Carter's poems on friendship is that they present the writer's conclusive understanding of her own experience of intellectual friendship. They are like statues or monuments symbolizing the significance of human relationships in human life. They are works of art eternalizing and immortalizing an ideal or good human relationship as a divine power. Letters between Carter and her friends, however, offer a chain of specific daily details and facts related to the poet's experience of intellectual friendship. Stanyon analyzes the significance of letter-writings in women's lives, finding those letters as a "direct access to women's daily lives and most importantly personal thoughts" (1). However, letters between Carter and her male and female intellectual friends offer much more. They let us observe not only women's daily lives and their personal thoughts, but also the actual process of how this or other relationship was developed over the years. Letters between Carter and her friends serve as a solid background for Carter's poems on friendship. Carter's poems are

works of art presenting the poet's individual relationships with her friends. Letters reflect facts and features of the poet's experience of friendship, and that is why letters reveal aspects of Carter's ethical legacy.

No doubt, Elizabeth Carter's poetry explains the main aspects of an ideal friendship, good human relationships. However, the study of Carter's experience of friendship must include personal letters between the poet and her intellectual friends. Carter's poetry does not present every relationship developed by the poet: she did not devote a poem to every friend. Her poetry left out other important relationships between Carter and some of her intellectual friends. For instance, Carter's relationships with Samuel Johnson can be studied by their correspondence only. Moreover, even the poems devoted to her friends do not cover all aspects of Carter's experience of friendship. Carter's relationship with the Earl of Bath was not fully presented in the poem "To the Earl of Bath." But this poem remains the only solid source telling us about the friendship between the poet and Lord Bath because Lord Bath's letters to Carter "were found after her decease, but she had written a memorandum that they were to be destroyed, and they were burnt by her executor" (Gaussen 202). It is not unusual that Carter directed her nephew to destroy the letters. After all, it was her right to destroy or save those letters. My argument is that those letters could have helped us to develop full understanding of Carter-Lord Bath relationship: the absence of those letters limits our information significantly. Stanyon claims that Lord Bath wanted to marry Carter (11). No doubt, Carter and Lord Bath had a special relationship. However, the remaining fact is that without their letters it is impossible to develop a full picture of this friendship. The case of this particular friendship between Carter and Lord Bath demonstrates that letters between the poet and her friends should be considered as an irreplaceable source for the full study of Carter's intellectual relationships.

It becomes necessary to devote the next chapter to letters between Carter and her friends in order to develop a better sense, a better understanding of the poet's experience of intellectual friendship. Those letters reflect directly the poet's experience of human relationships and help us to understand the ethical or moral impact of friendships on human life.

CHAPTER THREE

Elizabeth Carter: Friendship and Letters

....the letters told....tales of loss and betrayal, tales of friendship
and community, tales of youth and innocence and privilege, tales
as of aging and despair and poverty...

Temma Berg (*The Lives and Letters*, 5)

Introduction: Letters—Stories of Friendship

Before reading and analyzing Elizabeth Carter's and her friends' letters we must look at the facts demonstrating how these intellectuals' correspondence was maintained and handled both during the poet's life time and after her death in 1806. Preserving letters was a very sensitive issue for Carter; they possessed facts of human relationships made possible by intellectuals of the time. It is no wonder that Carter and her friends cherished and tended to preserve their letters. They made copies of letters written to or received from friends. For example, the fifty-eight letters to Mrs. Hannah Underdown⁵⁶, dated from March 1738 to April 1742, (now in a private collection) are preserved in copies, in Carter's own handwriting (Hampshire 24). Saving or copying letters was not an unusual practice in eighteenth-century England, but as intellectuals of the time, Carter and her friends had their own reasons to do so. During Carter's life time, none of her or her friends' letters were published; and I argue that Carter saved every single letter but did not seek to publish them because of that intellectual, spiritual, and individual freedom the letters disclose. After Carter's death in 1806, Pennington inherited the poet's entire correspondence, including her letters to Talbot and Montagu. He wrote *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter with a New Edition of her Poems* presenting a certain account of Carter's life. He also was responsible for publishing for the first time letters between Carter and her friends. In *Memoirs*, Pennington discusses Carter's approach to the idea

⁵⁶ Gwen Hampshire's work, *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished Letters* (2005), includes those fifty-eight letters from Elizabeth Carter to Hannah Underdown.

of publishing her correspondence. He states, “Mrs. Carter expressed a wish to her executor that her letters should not be published” (20); he refers to two letters addressed to the poet’s friends (but he does not mention their names). In the first letter, written in 1762, Carter explained:

I am perfectly easy in regard to your promise about my letters at present. You may perhaps think it a foolish solicitude about a thing of very little consequence, that I should make a point of their not being shewn now. Indeed I cannot very well explain my own feeling about it. I only know that I could no more write freely when I knew a third person overheard me. (*Memoirs* 20)

Four years later, in 1766, Carter once again resumes the subject by stating that “I do not dream any opinion of mine of consequence enough to be brought as an authority, and you have more than once heard me declare my great aversion to being quoted, or having any part of my letters seen by any body” (*Memoirs*, 20). It was quite understandable that Carter did not want to publicize her own as well as her friends’ letters because she needed to be free in expressing herself within those personal and confidential letters. Only in those letters to friends, Carter could exercise the intellectual, spiritual, and individual freedom necessary for her happiness. Carter would never limit that freedom, the essence of her happiness. Letters became a valuable possession containing the records of their unique relationships. Possession of those letters also signified the possession of friendship.

Dealing with Letters

Over the years, for Carter and her friends, dealing with letters presenting their experience of intellectual friendship became a complicated task. Those letters reflected aspects of different understanding of ethics in human relationship. Today, we look at them as a source demonstrating life experience of a group of intellectuals who went beyond traditional practices and established different moral principles in human relationships. For instance, only in those letters, we sense Carter's exercise of gender-free friendship, which should be considered a challenge for traditionally exercised gender-based human relationships. For Carter, those letters were more than the records of actual event or interactions within friendships. Over years, those letters became the only factor providing a bridge between Carter and her friends, between now and then, between the poet's present and past. However, spirituality and ethics were not the only forces behind Carter's decision to save those letters. Carter believed that her experience of friendship was a right one, a moral one; she viewed her relationships with her friends as a source generating certain friendship with its specific expectations which were different from the traditional standards and expectations exercised in Carter's contemporary eighteenth-century England.

Letters in her possession contained the detailed record of their intellectual, individual, and spiritual ties. She valued letters not just as a good friend or as an individual who enjoyed friendship, but as an intellectual, who had a moral responsibility to pass to the next generation a set of ethical principles established within the relationships with her friends. In other words, Carter had to consider publishing a certain part of her correspondence in order to serve her community as an intellectual.

Carter met her intellectual and moral obligations by allowing Pennington to publish, for example, letters to Montagu and Talbot. In his preface to *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot* (1809), Pennington writes:

Mrs. Carter neither required from him,⁵⁷ nor gave him any directions about her Letters, but that he would dispose of them according as they were labeled; some to be destroyed, and others to be returned to the writers if living, or in some instances, to their representatives. This was of course complied with, but still a great number remained both from and to her, which were left entirely to his discretion. (*Letters*, iv)

Pennington wants to justify his approach to Carter's letters. He believed that Carter trusted his judgment and gave him the right to do whatever he believed right in handling the letters. In the next page of the same preface, Pennington states:

If Mrs. Carter had not chosen that he should exercise his own judgment about these and her other Letters, she would either have destroyed them herself, or have given him some directions about them. (*Letters*, v)

Although Pennington tends to overemphasize Carter's trust in his judgment in handling "a great number" of her letters, we have strong reasons to question his judgment in dealing with the poet's correspondence. For example, one of the main problems was his personal decision to destroy the manuscript of letters after publishing them. He also destroyed letters between Carter and Lord Bath, claiming that it was done according to the poet's own instructions (*Memoirs*). In his own defense, Pennington mentions that Carter could but did not destroy letters herself because she trusted him and left him to do this job. We may suggest that Carter herself could have destroyed those letters to and from Bath if she believed in the necessity of doing so.

⁵⁷ In his preface, Montagu Pennington refers to himself in a third person.

However, she continued to possess them throughout her life. Pennington's explanation is questionable. It is possible that Pennington's decision to destroy those letters was related to his intention to fix or to guard Carter's reputation or her public image according to his own understanding of public expectations.

In his preface to *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss. Catherine Talbot*, Pennington refers to a brief dialogue between Carter and himself. He "mentioned to her his design of writing some account of her life" (7). Carter thanked him "for his kind intention" and added: "What can be said of so obscure an individual as I am? And what do you think the world will care about me?" (7). From Carter's reaction to Pennington's suggestion to write about her life, we sense Carter's indifference toward public opinion about her after her death. This indifference may come from her being extremely modest, or from her being a deeply religious individual who trusts in Providence, and looks down on earthly concerns. It is also possible that Carter did not take Pennington's idea seriously. She loved him as her nephew, and she wanted him to become her executor upon her death. She trusted him to follow her instructions. But we can see that he was an extremely traditional and conservative individual, and these inclinations probably influenced his heavy editing of Carter's correspondence.

Moreover, there is a possibility that Carter did not finish reviewing her correspondence. As Pennington states, only a certain part of her correspondence was marked with instructions while a great number of letters remained unmarked. This circumstance leaves certain questions open. Pennington handled Carter's letters according to his own judgment, which could be opposite to Carter's. He made it difficult for a modern reader to know Carter's intentions.

Even considering Pennington's heavy editing of the poet's correspondence, modern readers can sense through letters between Carter and her friends the essence of their intellectual

friendship. To understand better Carter's legacy of friendship and ethics revealed in her letters, I will focus on Carter's relationships with two of her intellectual friends: Catherine Talbot and Samuel Johnson. Their friendships were built not only on their common intellectual interests, needs and goals, on their mutual respect and care, but also on a particular mutual love, mutual attraction. This particular love and attraction reminds us of love and "Fondness"⁵⁸ between Dr. Nicholas Carter and his daughter Elizabeth Carter. It was the ethical legacy he passed to his daughter to value human relationships and to find happiness in friendship. Carter's letters to her friends reflect the poet's ability to love and care for the other.

The letters of these intellectuals contain important details of their real lives, of every single friendship developed within their network. For them, letter writing became a necessary everyday activity to generate, to develop, and to share serious discussions. These letters introduce to us a set of moral values and principles applied to their relationships. These and other features cannot be always directly presented in or sensed through Carter's poetry on friendship, but they can be easily sensed through her and her friends' letters. Indeed, letters can lead us to the full understanding of Carter's experience of specific friendship and moral standards established between the poet and her intellectual friends.

Friendship and the Traditions of the Century

The correspondence between Carter and her friends tells us more about their relationships than Carter's actual poems on friendship. For instance, while the poems demonstrate human happiness based on finding intellectual and individual freedom in friendship, the letters explain one of the main ethical principles of Carter's friendship: the ethical essentiality of individual

⁵⁸ In her poem devoted to her father Dr. Nicholas Carter, Elizabeth Carter uses this expression to characterize their father-daughter relationship.

liberty and independence in human relationships and human happiness. Carter believed in a necessity of individual liberty and independence in establishing, developing, and achieving friendship and happiness; in her view, only individual liberty and independence empower men and women to build happiness through friendship. Carter's experience and understanding of friendship was not a traditional one—the one that was expected and exercised by eighteenth-century British women. To understand the ethical significance of Carter's experience of friendship, we have to focus on the century's traditions as they relate to women's exercise of friendship.

In the first chapter of this work, "A Father-Daughter Relationship," I referred to Dr. John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughter*,⁵⁹ which teaches young ladies to regulate their lives by following religious instructions and building a successful marriage. Throughout the entire work, consisting of four chapters—"Religion," "Conduct and Behavior," "Amusement," and "Friendship, Love, Marriage,"—the author emphasizes women's vulnerability based on differences between men and women: differences in their needs, and specifically in "their natural character and education" (9). By his statement, "I want to know what Nature has made you, and to perfect you on her plan" (55), Gregory insisted in an intellectual and social inequality between men and women based on "their [women's] natural character" (9). The work underlined the author's two main ideas: women's incapability of studying as much as men do; and women's incapability of exercising friendship in a male manner. Dr. Gregory's teaching reflects a traditional role of a woman in her immediate family; it was a common belief that women's

⁵⁹ I refer to Dr. John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy of His Daughters* (1774) in the first chapter "A Father-Daughter Relationship: A Principal Source of Moral Values" (27-29) to explain traditional father-daughter relationships exercised in eighteenth century British society.

education should be limited and regulated, and women's experience of friendship must be limited to the relationships with their husbands.

Dr. Gregory had his predecessors of the period—male authors of conduct literature addressed to young women. Every single work of this literature, such as Wetenhall Wilkes' *Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady* (1740), William Kenrick's *The Whole Duty of Woman* (1753), Thomas Marriot's *Female Conduct* (1759), and James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1766), was the reestablishment of women's intellectual, individual, and social inferiority to men. However, in 1773, one of Carter's intellectual friends, Hester Mulso Chapone (1727-1801), offered to a reading public her *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, which became extremely popular and was published "fifty seven times between 1773-1851" (*Bluestockings Feminism*, 257). *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* consisted of ten letters addressed to her young niece and served as another advice literary text, but this time, written by a woman.

The first three letters instruct young ladies to regulate their religious studies. Both the fourth and the fifth letters focus on the regulation of affection. While letter six teaches how to regulate the temper, letter seven discusses economy, which is, in Chapone's own words, "so essential to her [a woman's] performing properly the duties of a wife and of a mother" (316). The rest of the letters deal with other subjects, such as politeness, accomplishments, manners, studying geography and history. Even just by the subjects of these letters, we may suggest that Chapone's text is more direct, specific and detailed than Dr. Gregory's. In Sylvia Myers' words, "its directness, simplicity, social conservatism, and piety made it an acceptable tool to help women educate themselves" (235). However, in general features, she reminds us of Dr. Gregory when he emphasizes the crucial role religion and religious instructions play in young

women's lives. She recalls Dr. Gregory once again when she centralizes the significance of marriage in women's lives. In her discussion of women's education, however, Chapone conveys her respect for women and her belief in women's individual and intellectual power—in women's capability to educate themselves. In her analysis of Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, Myers writes:

She [Chapone] was not an innovator who would demand a regular education for girls after fifteen. But she encouraged girls to make that afford for themselves.

Mrs. Chapone was not content, furthermore, with slight, or 'potted' knowledge.

She wished her niece to study thoughtfully and critically on her own. (235)

Chapone did not call for women's extensive education, but she expanded that traditional intellectual and social frame within which women could function. For example, she advocates the knowledge of foreign languages, particularly the French tongue, because of its universality; and immediately after, the author states: "I believe there are more agreeable books of female literature in French than in any other languages" (331). Chapone's reference to "female literature" shows her tendency to stay within the traditional frame of female education. For her, reading is "indispensably necessary to the due cultivation of your [a young lady's] mind" (332), and at the same time, she states that "a competent share of reading" must be "well chosen and properly regulated" (330). Chapone accepts not only a limited education for women, but also that women had only limited access to friendship. She writes:

The highest kind of friendship is indeed confined to one;--I mean the conjugal—which, in its perfection, is so entire and absolute an union, of interest, will, and affection, as no other connection can stand in competition with. (300)

Chapone suggests that a male-female friendship should be exercised only between husband and wife. This view puts marriage in the center of women's lives; only through marriage can women achieve their individual happiness and their experience of "the highest kind of friendship" (300). Her discussion of female friendship also reflects traditional expectations. For example, Chapone advised her niece to choose "some person of riper years and judgment, whose good-nature and worthy principles may assure you of her readiness to do your service, and of her candour and condescension toward you" (292). Chapone believed in friendship between women of different ages because the elder "will be able to advise and to improve you [young ones]" (293). Chapone argues against the friendship between women of the same age because "equality of age, and exact similarity of disposition" disqualify friends "for assisting each other in moral improvements, or supplying each other's defects" (292).

In *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, Chapone struggles with the traditional expectations limiting women's right to education; she calls for women's self-education, but not for a regular education. She is aware of a real possibility for a woman to receive a classical education, equal to male education, but she chooses not to challenge traditional views toward young ladies' intellectual and individual needs. Of course, Chapone was aware of intellectual friendships between Carter and Talbot, or between Carter and Montagu. She also knew well about the Carter-Johnson friendship. In 1760, just before Chapone's own marriage, a dialogue took place between her and Carter. Chapone expressed her hope that Carter would join her "in the most perfect dissent from an opinion of your [Carter's] favorite [Samuel] Johnson that a married woman can have no friendship but with her husband" (*Bluestocking Feminism*, 416-417). In this conversation, Chapone argues against Johnson's statement and expresses her belief that she, as a married woman, will continue relationships with her intellectual friends. Chapone's

position in this conversation opposes her view of female friendship advocated in *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*. In other words, in her real life experience, Chapone exercises intellectual friendships with individuals other than her husband. However, in her literary advice work, she supports traditional views by advocating a possibility of the best form of friendship only within a husband-wife relationship. This brief review of one of the popular epistolary works of the period proves that traditional view of women's position in a society continued to have a strong impact not only on general public but also on intellectuals.

Carter's entire life style opposed eighteenth-century traditional views of women's role and place in a society. She wrote no epistolary work that taught young women to regulate and to improve their lives through extensive education and human relationships. However, it was she who introduced to her community the ethical philosophy of Stoicism through her translation of Epictetus' works from Greek into English. Carter's belief in Christian doctrine was not based solely on her knowledge of Christian theology, but also on her deep knowledge of ancient philosophies and religious practices. Carter's interest in Epictetus' teaching was related to his ideas of individual liberty and independence as the basic ethical or moral source of human happiness. From early stages of her life, Carter started to exercise her individual freedom and independence because of her father, Dr. Nicholas Carter's support. Carter associated her exercise of independent life with Epictetus's ideas of individual liberty and independence.

Letters between Carter and her friends reflect their extensive education and friendship based on individual liberty and independence. Their liberty and independence contributed to the environment within those letters. For example, on May 1744, Carter wrote to Talbot: "I propose to do myself the pleasure of breakfasting with you some morning in Oxfordshire, from whence I shall proceed to dine with Miss Ward in London, drink tea with Miss Lynch in Canterbury, and

dream of you all the same night at Deal” (*Letters*, 59). That is how Carter wanted to live her day or every day; her high spirits and strong desire to share her day with friends demonstrates that friendship empowers Carter and her friends and elevates them above earthly common human relationships, built as a common practice among people to gain necessary support of one another to do better in facing daily challenges of life experience. These letters reflect the atmosphere of human relationships leading us to a belief that Carter’s experience of friendship was the experience of one of the forms of ideal friendship in the classical sense. In her letter to Carter on June 27, 1744, Talbot refers to their relationship as an ideal friendship although they both have to deal with the reality of circumstances: “.... why then, my dear Miss Carter, we must lower our ideas of friendship to the pitch of common life” (*Letters*, 61). They believe that they have an ideal friendship that should not be lowered "to the pitch of common life" (61). Both Carter and Talbot consider their relationship as an ideal friendship.

Long and intensive discussions developed through these letters demonstrate that no social rules or traditional expectations could constrain Carter’s ethical principles of friendship. Carter’s experience underlines that power of friendship, which was stronger than any social or cultural codes. Carter’s friendship, according to her own standards of human relationships, was not based on women’s solidarity, or mutual support, but on individual liberty and independence.⁶⁰ First, Carter managed to exercise her individual and intellectual liberty. She was financially independent because of her father’s support. She was intellectually independent because of her classical education. Her individual independent character was developed under the direct influence of her father Dr. Nicholas Carter. As I discussed in the first chapter, Dr. Carter never considered his daughters as inferiors to his sons. Elizabeth always saw herself equal to her

⁶⁰ The ethical significance of individual liberty and independence in human life and friendship will be discussed in the section "The Carter-Talbot Relationship" of this third chapter.

brothers or to any other male member of her community. All these aspects of her life contributed to Carter's individual or intellectual liberty and gave her a chance to develop friendship with individuals she likes. Carter's independence gave her a chance to develop a special form of friendship, which was based on individual and intellectual equality.

Second, Carter's relationships with her intellectual friends should be considered gender-free friendships. She developed friendships with both male and female intellectuals of the time. At least these two basic factors give us reason to view Carter's experience of friendship as more progressive than traditional forms of friendship exercised by most eighteenth-century British women. In their relationships, Carter and her friends violated the traditional standards, the established codes of conduct between individuals.

Individual Liberty in Epictetus' Teachings

When it comes to Carter's view of individual liberty as a classic scholar, we have to focus on Carter's critical reading of Stoic philosophy, which unlike Christian doctrine does not teach the immortality of soul or the belief in future rewards or punishments. Plainly stated, in Stoicism "personal existence is lost in Death" (*All the Works of Epictetus*, 20). Carter's introduction to her translation of *All Works of Epictetus* (1758) becomes an argument about the superiority of Christianity to Stoicism. To support this claim, Carter questions certain beliefs of Stoic teachings, such as "that the human souls are literally parts of the Deity"(25). She writes:

...by debasing Men's Ideas of the divine Dignity, and teaching them to think themselves essentially as good as He [Stoicism], nourished in their Minds an irreligious and fatal Presumption. Far differently the Christian System represents Mankind, not as a part of the essence, but a Work of the Hand of God.... The

Stoic Philosophy insults human Nature, and discourages all our Attempts, by enjoying and promising a Perfection in this Life, of which we feel ourselves incapable. The Christian religion shows Compassion to our Weakness, by prescribing to us only the practicable Task of aiming continually at further Improvements; and animates our Endeavors, by the Promise of a divine Aid, equal to every Trial. (26)

Before analyzing Carter's comments on this particular belief of Stoicism—that there is God in every man—we have to refer to Carter's own statement in regard to the Stoic scheme of theology: "The writing of the first Founders of the Stoic Philosophy, who treated expressly on Physiology and Metaphysics, are now lost: and all that can be known of their Doctrine is from Fragments, and the Accounts given of them by other Authors" (16). Having a full text of Stoic teachings could give us better understanding of this popular Stoic sect founded, as Carter mentions, by Zeno about three hundred years before the Christian era (13). However, based on her study of these fragments and accounts of other authors, Carter believes that the Stoics recognize the existence of one supreme God, "incorruptible, unoriginated, immortal, rational, and perfect in Intelligence and Happiness: unsusceptible of all Evil: governing the World, and everything in it" (17). In other words, Stoic teaching includes the existence of one supreme God, and at the same time views every man as a part of the essence. Carter considers this Stoic belief as an insult to human nature because it discourages men's attempt to achieve perfection in this life. Carter finds this Stoic philosophy, this interpretation of human existence "shocking and hurtful" (25) because it does not offer any compassion to human weakness. Carter's concern indicates the role of religion in helping people to cope with the difficulties of their lives.

As a scholar, a writer, and a thinker of the period, Carter took into consideration her audience's intellectual capacity. Based on the audience's level of education and preparation, Carter had to deal with two kinds of readers: one was an independent reader, the other was relatively incompetent and needed directions to regulate the reading process itself. In eighteenth-century England religion continued to be a very sensitive issue.

As a deeply religious person, as a genuine believer in Christian doctrine, Carter considered it her personal moral obligation not to let her contemporary audience be confused by those "shocking and hurting" ideas developed by Stoic thinkers. In other words, Carter had to argue the superiority of Christianity to Stoicism because she could not afford any misinterpretation or misuse of her translation by her contemporary audience. By arguing the superiority of Christianity to Stoicism in her introduction, Carter empowers her readers' ability to judge this philosophy critically. In 1755, Carter wrote to Talbot:

Though I cannot help, in some instances, entertaining a more favorable opinion of him than you do, the probability which the Bishop of Oxford and you seem to think there may be of his doing mischief, fills me with uneasiness and scruples. You say, indeed, that with proper notes and animadversions, the translation may be an excellent work. But it is surely a dangerous experiment to administer poison to try the force of the antidote. (*Memoirs*, 199)

This discussion between Carter and Talbot shows that they both are concerned with how this text will influence the minds of the people. Carter wrote her introduction out of necessity. However, in this letter, we sense Carter's deep interest in Epictetus' teachings. For example, according to Carter's own explanation, Epictetus' moral philosophy "may be read with a great Advantage, as containing excellent Rules of Self-government, and of social Behavior; of a noble Reliance on

the Aid and Protection of Heaven” (27). Carter’s letters to Talbot reveal Carter’s attraction to Epictetus not only because of his practical rules of self government, but also because of the love of liberty advocated by the Stoic set of moral values. By viewing every man as a part of the essence, Stoics empower men; it was their way of encouraging people to withstand difficulties of their lives. By considering themselves as powerful as God, people could bear burdens of human existence; they could be encouraged to achieve Godly happiness, wisdom, intelligence, and of course, personal liberty and independence. In Chapter VIII, Book II, Epictetus states: “God is beneficial. Good is also beneficial. It should seem, then, that where the Essence of God is, here too in the Essence of Good” (112). In other words, the idea of being a part of God leads individuals to become intellectually good, ethical, and independent.

Love of liberty leads to another belief advocated by Epictetus’ teaching: committing suicide for freeing oneself from sufferings of human existence. In Book I, Chapter XXIV, “How we are to struggle with Difficulties,” Epictetus states:

But, remember the principal thing; That the Door is open. Do not be more fearful than Children; but as they, when the play doth not please them, say; ‘I will play no longer;’ so do you in the same Case, say; ‘I will play no longer;’ and go: but if you stay, do not complain. (81)

In Carter’s view, facing and dealing with the difficulties of life means being a virtuous man, while Stoics, by allowing a man to commit suicide, recognize the necessity of exercising individual liberty in making life choices. Epictetus himself chooses to stay in play despite (in Stoics’ term) “external inconveniences” caused by circumstances of his life.⁶¹ In other words, it was Epictetus’s own free will to face and deal with the difficulties of his life. He knows that “the

⁶¹ Elizabeth Carter presents “very few particulars of the life of Epictetus” within the section 39 of her introduction to her translation of the *All the Works of Epictetus* (29).

door is open,” but he chooses life; he exercises his individual liberty to bear life’s challenges. In a Stoic sense, the permission of suicide is not about choosing life or death; it is about having and being able to exercise one’s own individual liberty.

Writing Letters—Experiencing Friendship

In December 1740, Elizabeth Carter wrote to Mrs. Hannah Underdown:⁶² “I am half drowned in ink. I have been writing Letters by the Dozen and have a hundred more to write so I am afraid I must be shorter in my present Epistle than I could desire” (Gwen Hampshire 100). Letter writing became a significant part of Carter’s experience of relationships with her intellectual and non-intellectual friends. In his preface to *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Carter and Miss Talbot*, Montagu Pennington refers to a great number of letters both from and to Carter, left to his discretion (iv). As Mary Stanyon suggests, “it has been fashionable for women to correspond with each other” and “through Elizabeth Carter’s letters... one is able to gain the best account of her life and achievements” (1). However, the content of letters between Carter and her friends proves that they wrote to each other not because of fashion, but because of their intellectual and individual needs. On September 1763, Carter wrote to her friend Elizabeth Vesey: “Thinking, my dear Mrs. Vesey,⁶³ must always tend to peace, when....it is exercised under an awful sense of the presence of the Supreme Being” (*Letters*, 361). In the case of Carter and her friends, the practice of letter writing between them has the same effect: exercising a free mind within letters gave them intellectual, individual, and spiritual satisfaction.

⁶² The friendship between Elizabeth Carter and Hannah Underdown is briefly mentioned in Gwen Hampshire’s introduction to *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806* (2005). In Kent, the two families—the Carters and the Underdowns—lived relatively near to each other and were extremely close as friends (Hampshire 24-25).

⁶³ Elizabeth Vesey (1715-1791), like Elizabeth Montagu, was the organizer of Bluestocking gatherings. In *Bluestocking Letters* (1926), R. Brimley Johnson describes a Bluestocking party organized by E. Vesey (111).

The previous chapter, “Behind the Lines of Poetry: Elizabeth Carter and Intellectual Friendship,” emphasized one particular aspect of friendship between the poet and her friends—the establishment and the development of intellectual and individual freedom within relationships. If it is understood and accepted that Carter and her friends find intellectual and individual freedom in their friendships, then no doubt, to a significant extent, their correspondence reflects their freedoms. In other words, the necessity of writing letters was based not on the fashion of letter writing, but on Carter’s as well as her friends’ intellectual needs to exercise a free mind. Letter writing allowed them to create a certain social space of their own—the ideal realm for exercising or practicing highly ethical human relationships.

Letter-writing played a crucial role in maintaining these relationships. First, for Carter and her friends, writing letters or receiving them was equal to seeing or meeting a friend. Living far from each other and dealing with difficulties of traveling between her native Deal and London, or between other regions of the country, led Carter and her friends to develop their relationships through letters. By writing letters, these friends managed to eliminate distances between physical locations and to keep their relationships alive. However, eliminating distances between physical locations was not the only reason for practicing letter writing.

Thus the necessity to experience a friend’s presence is revealed not only in poems but in letters, too. On one occasion, Carter wrote to Elizabeth Montagu: “I must beg you to feel a greater tenderness for my care of mind than for my pocket, and never again suffer the consideration of postage to prevent my hearing from you... I do not wish you to write to me long letters... only let me know how you do...” (*Letters*, 12). Even during her trip to Spa in 1763 with her friends Montagu and Lord Bath, Carter longed for her friends left at Deal. Almost on an everyday basis, she wrote to them, sharing her daily observations of people and places she

visited. Long pages of Carter's letters of this time tell us of not only the poet's thoughts about cultures and societies introduced to her, but also of her love and care for the friends left behind. On August 6, 1763, Carter wrote from Spa to Catherine Talbot: "... No amusement here can prevent my thinking with joy of my return to my friends at Deal" (*Memoirs*, 319). In her next letter to Talbot, from Spa on August 10, 1763, Carter again referred to her strong desire to see friends: "In spite of all the honors and amusements of Spa I look forward with great delight to seeing my friends at Deal again" (*Memoirs*, 320). Carter misses her friends at Deal although her trip to Spa was one of her most memorable and important trips⁶⁴ of her life. Carter's eagerness to see her friends proves the author's view of friendship as a principal source of human happiness.

On October 6, 1776, the poet wrote from Deal to her friend Mrs. Montagu who was then in Paris: "[My] heart rejoices in the near prospect of your return to England, and I shall be quite happy when I can feel you are at no greater distance from me than Hill-street... I certainly shall attempt to get a glimpse of you while you are at Dover" (9). These lines reflect the speaker's emotional experience—affection, joy, happiness caused by the anticipation of the friend's return to England, by the feeling of her friend's presence in "no greater distance... than Hill-street." Such a strong need to see a friend tells us about a specific aspect of Carter's friendship—to find joy and happiness in relationships with people, with friends. In her experience of friendship, the poet defines one of the best patterns of human relationships dominated by genuine tenderness, fondness, and affection.

Stanyon was right in stating that letters help us to gain the best account of Carter's life and achievements (1). However, my interest in Carter's correspondence is not just to find out the

⁶⁴ Elizabeth Carter's trip to Spa in 1763 has significance of its own. First, it was an educational experience personally to observe cultural aspects of European countries. Second, she located herself in the international arena and met with people of high social status. It was her direct interaction with the world beyond England. This trip gave her chance to observe the current political, economical and religious state of countries such as Germany, Holland, and France.

poet's achievements or a certain biographical account but her values and principles applied to the relationships with her friends. As Temma Berg puts it in *The Lives and Letters of an Eighteenth-Century Circle of Acquaintance* (2006), letters tell us "tale of friendship and community"(5). Carter's letters tell us a true story of unique relationships, offering us Carter's set of moral values and principles.

First, as we seen, in Carter's view, the highest conceivable good was individual and intellectual liberty. The social reality of the time could not offer women of learning the opportunity to achieve this liberty. At every stage of her intellectual growth, she had to overcome a set of social and moral obstacles composed by traditional customs, relationships, and institutions. The public's skepticism toward educated women was a leading factor of the eighteenth-century social environment. "Carter had to deal with prejudices against educated women manifested themselves not only just in overt criticism and satire, but also implicitly in eulogies of her prodigious talents" (*Bluestocking Feminism*, xiv). The Carter-Talbot letters reveal this aspect of social reality when the two writers discuss the publication of their own works. Carter's and her friends' strength was growing from their social conscientiousness, from their own sense of right and wrong; as intellectuals, they believed in their duties to resist the superficiality, narrowness, and injustices of society. Through their writings, they developed the logic of moral discourse to influence people's ways of thinking.

Second, letters reveal the significance of individual liberty. Carter and her friends could experience their individual freedom or liberty only in their letters, which served as conversations with friends. For instance, Lord Bath could exercise his intellectual and individual freedom in his letters to Carter, in those conversations with a special friend who would understand the other one without fail. It is a fact that Pennington or Carter herself did not let those memories be

publicized. In this regard, it is safe to suggest that intellectual and individual independence, exercised by Carter throughout her entire life, became a serious challenge for the majority of the population, for those who believed in traditions, in their righteousness and ethics.

Within those traditions, women's inequality to men was an ethical norm. The reason for this traditional view was her nature as a human being; it was a commonly accepted belief that natural differences between men and women make women inferior to men. In his *Sermons to Young Women* Fordyce states:

...it is manifest that the nature and situation of the men are very different. Their constitution of mind, no less of body, is for the most part hardy and rough. By means of both, by the demands of life, and by the impulse of passion, they are engaged in a vast diversity of pursuits, from which your sex are precluded by decorum, by softness, and by fear. (121)

Based on these traditional beliefs, women were not encouraged to pursue extensive education. Male writers, such as Gregory, Marriot, and Fordyce, sought to regulate women's lives, including their exercise of friendship. Traditional moralists tended to regulate both education and friendship, which should be considered as main factors contributing to an individual's personal and intellectual growth. With these dominating beliefs, a general public remained too traditional to appreciate the principles of Carter's life style, freedom of thoughts and feelings openly discussed between her and her intellectual friends. In their friendship and in letters they managed to find that necessary individual liberty which was refused, rejected or made impossible by the social system or expectations of the time. Carter found in friendship her freedom and happiness as an individual and as an intellectual.

Their friendship becomes a source that generates ideas of a better community, a better social system, which resists the existing traditional one. Their friendship makes them capable of rejecting old ways of living and thinking; their friendship generates and develops more progressive ideas to improve human relationships and that means human life at large.

Third, Carter's experience of friendship became not only a principal source for her personal intellectual and individual freedom and happiness, but also a sort of social space necessary for her spiritual growth. Spirituality remained an inevitable factor of Carter's experience of friendship. This aspect can be easily recognized in her poems as well as in her letters. As a deeply religious intellectual, Carter's love of God was a liberating force—the force that liberated her from earthly worries. Carter's experience of friendship had the same impact on her life. She viewed her friendship as a source of human happiness, as a divine factor, as a divine power on earth, as a gift of God. Both her religious beliefs and her friendship work hand in hand. Friendship must be a divine power because, like Providence, it has a strong impact on human life. On August 25, 1777, Carter wrote from Deal to Montagu: "...we feel the inexpressible delight which arises from a consciousness that our heart is in its best disposition, both with regard to the Supreme Being, and our friends" (*Letters*, 36).

Carter's view of friendship as a spiritual and divine power reminds us of her poems devoted to friends where the author's knowledge and interest in astronomy becomes one of the dominating features of the text. We find the same idea in Carter's poetry on friendship; almost in every poem devoted to a friend, the poet presents friendship as a divine power. However, we are dealing with an intellectual who devoted her entire life to learning; no wonder that Carter's spiritual view of friendship rests not only on her knowledge of theology, but on her knowledge of astronomy. In her letters as well as in her poems, the poet's spirituality and deep interest in

astronomy are at play. In one of her letters to Thomas Wright,⁶⁵ Carter writes: “I am not much devoted to these earthly entertainments of assemblies & c. but I still retain a very regard to the stars. Does not Venus make a fine appearance? You cannot think how I long for a telescope” (*Memoirs* 27). Carter’s passion for astronomy and her spirituality are not separable in “A Dialogue”. In Carter’s analogy, the state of being among stars and the state of being among friends are exchangeable. Each time, when Carter devotes long hours to her friends by writing to them, her spirituality and her intellectuality are at play: the experience of letter writing elevates the poet to a different world, to the world of friends, to the world of the stars. In her poem “To Miss Talbot,” Carter states:

Oft when on Earth detained by empty Show,
Thy Voice has taught the Trifler how to rise;
Taught her to look with Scorn in Things below,
And seek her better Portion in the Skies. (29-32)

These lines reflect Carter’s spirituality, her tendency to associate her spiritual world with the skies. This tendency was based not only on Carter’s knowledge of theology, but also on her knowledge of astronomy. Carter was fascinated by this relatively new science. Carter’s interest in astronomy was just another proof of her passion for knowledge, her love for learning. Her possession of this knowledge also was liberating aspect of her life. With her intellectual interest in astronomy, she could manage to cross the border of the known world and reach the world beyond. These lines also express the poet’s strong desire for her friend’s presence. Being with a friend changes the world around and allows both of them to rise and to become a part of a better world in the skies. Finally, Carter’s experience of friendship presented in these lines reflects her

⁶⁵ Thomas Wright (1711-1786) was a well-known astronomer of that time, the author of *Physical and Mathematical Elements of Astronomy*. In 1750, he published his *Theory of the Universe* (Letters, 1).

thoughts and feelings experienced in letter writing. Letter writing allows Carter to experience her friend's presence. Letter writing prevents interruptions in relationships between Carter and her friends. Letter writing makes Carter and her friends available for one another. Letter writing not only maintains relationships, but also generates friendship and its ethics. In this regard, letter writing becomes spiritual and intellectual experience.

The Carter-Talbot Relationship

I am greatly inclined to be an advocate for the happiness of human life.

(Carter, *Letters*, 67)

Meeting For the First Time

Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806) and Catherine Talbot (1720-1770) met for the first time in February 1741, and their thirty years of correspondence began in August 1741.

From the first stage of the Carter-Talbot relationship, it becomes clear that we are dealing with an unusual type of friendship serving both parties as a principal source of human happiness. The power of Carter's eagerness to meet with Talbot is striking. The poet's deep interest in Talbot's personality became the dominating subject of her letters to intellectual and non-intellectual friends, such as Thomas Wright and Hannah Underdown. *A Series Letters between Mrs.*

Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot includes some of the poet's letters to Wright as an introduction to the Carter-Talbot relationship.

Thomas Wright, a well-known astronomer of that time, taught both Carter and Talbot mathematics and astronomy. As a friend to both Carter and Talbot, he supported and believed in their mutual attraction. Eventually, it was Wright who formally introduced them to each other in one of the London gatherings at Mrs. Rooke's residence. Carter herself views Wright's role in

her relationship with Talbot as the Mercury between the two stars, two goddesses (Hampshire 102). In January 14, 1741, Wright wrote to Carter: “Miss Talbot is as desirous of seeing you, and as impatient as you can possibly be of seeing her” (*Letters*, 1). Within the same month, in January 28, 1741, Carter wrote back to Wright:

Miss Talbot is absolutely my passion; I think of her all day, dream of her all night, and one way or other introduce her into every subject I talk of ... Is there no possibility of my conversing with Miss Talbot... You will see her tomorrow (a happiness I envy you much more than all your possessions in the skies). Pray make her a thousand compliments and apologies for my haunting her in the manner I have done, and still intend to do, though I am afraid she will think me as troublesome as an evil genius, a species of being she never could be acquainted with before... I could dwell on this subject for ever, but must descend from the stars and... in the language of mere mortals acquaint you that... Mrs. Rooke bids me tell you, she desires your company to hold a consultation upon the screen, and hopes you will bring half the stars in the firmament along with you to fix upon it, not forgetting the sun, moon, and other planets” (*Letters*, 4-5)

This letter presents Carter within the network of her friends who feel with her and respond to her thoughts and needs. Carter shares with her friends her feelings toward Talbot openly and directly. Wright takes personal responsibility to talk to Talbot about Carter’s eagerness to meet with her, and then in his letter, writes to Carter about Talbot’s interest and desire to establish a relationship with her. Mrs. Rooke’s home becomes the place where for the first time Carter and

Talbot formally met and were introduced to each other.⁶⁶ It seems that without her friends' understanding and involvement, Carter and Talbot never could arrange a meeting.

Sharing her thoughts of Talbot with Wright seems to be a natural outcome because he was a friend to both Carter and Talbot; and Myers' view of Carter's "Miss Talbot is absolutely my passion" (*Letters*, 4-5) "as a romantic exaggeration written to entertain Thomas Wight" (68) becomes to a certain extent a reasonable and understandable explanation. However, Carter shares her feelings about Talbot not only with Wright, or Rooke, but also with Underdown, who does not belong to the circle of London friends. In December 1740, Carter wrote to her:

I am in a very restless and impatient persuit of a young Lady whom I have been in Quest of for these 2 or 3 years. ... But was more successful last Sunday at Church for I had engaged the Verger to place me in the next pew to her, and there... I had the pleasure of looking her out of Countenance. She is very well acquainted with my Name and... we had a perfect Knowledge of each other. But this I fear transient view has only served to increase my Impatience of being better acquainted with her. But this I fear is impossible tho' Mrs. Rooke advises me not to despair. (Hampshire 101)

As Hampshire informs us, the contents of Carter's letters to Underdown are different from those written to her intellectual friends: "They were not written as serious discussion, but as means of preserving the contact and close friendship" (27). We have to consider the fact that every friendship developed by Carter has its own significance for the poet; and her relationship with Underdown is equally important as her relationships with intellectual friends. For instance,

⁶⁶ According to Montagu Pennington, Carter and Talbot first met at Mrs. Rooke's house, St. Laurence, near Canterbury (*Letters*, 3). Sylvia Myers argues that they met in London at Mrs. Rooke's residence since they both were in London in that winter of 1741 (68). Hampshire supports Myers' belief that Carter and Talbot met for the first time in London at Mrs. Rooke's residence (101).

Carter's letters to Underdown, preserved in a private collection, are copies "in Carter's hand" (Hampshire 24). Although letter copying was not unusual practice in eighteenth-century England, Carter's case should be considered as something more than just a common exercise of letter copying.⁶⁷ The fact that the poet invests her time to rewrite to save copies of those letters leads us at least to two conclusions. First, Carter develops strong ties with this particular friend regardless of her level of education or intellectuality. Second, Carter shares her feelings toward Talbot with Underdown not because of the need to entertain her reader, but because of her own strong desire to gain Talbot's friendship. Carter's desire to share her thoughts of Talbot with both Wright and Underdown should be considered as a sign of Carter's devotion to her friends and friendship, her tendency openly and sincerely to share with her friends her concerns. The poet's letters to Wright and to Underdown express Carter's obvious happiness knowing Talbot; she likes her as an individual, she admires her, and to gain her friendship becomes Carter's goal.

On one Sunday, December 1740, Carter and Talbot accidentally came face to face at the church. Carter describes this meeting in her letter to Underdown on January 3, 1741:

My joy was beyond all expression to see her come alone. Imagine to yourself the Situation of two persons who had heard a great many fine Things of each other and never had opportunity of speaking but innumerable Difficulties to oppose it. She smiled and I smiled, she blushed and I blushed, and she looked silly and I looked silly. Well this intercourse of mutual Confusion lasted all Church time and when it was over I was in no small difficulty how to act not knowing whether it might on some Accounts be proper to speak. At length she prettily delivered me

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Carter's father Dr. Carter mentions in his letter to Elizabeth how Mrs. Underdown was deeply upset when Elizabeth left Deal for London (Hampshire 25). Another example of their close relationship is that when Carter was away in London, Mrs. Underdown and her three-year-old daughter had supper with Dr. Carter to celebrate Elizabeth's birthday (Hampshire 25). No doubt the friendship between Elizabeth Carter and Mrs. Underdown was special and personal.

from this Embarras by dropping her Fan into my pew and in giving it to her I ventured to utter 3 words and a half which she answered in two, and I believe our Conference lasted about 5 minutes. We have both separately confessed to Mercury we were in so much confusion that we knew not what we said which much diverts him. He laughs heartily about it and says two great wits never meet but they talk Nonsense.⁶⁸ (*Unpublished Letters*, 102)

It is easy to associate this “situation of two persons” with a typical love story of two individuals of the opposite sex where a close sensual relationship often becomes inevitable. Carter herself refers to their mutual attraction as “a perfect Romance, but whether it will end like other Romances on a happy Conclusion is yet a secret in the Cabinet of Fate” (*Unpublished Letters*, 102). In her letter to Underdown, the poet herself admits that by this long description of Sunday’s incident she meant to entertain her. However, immediately in her next paragraph the poet states: “Mercury...gives me Hopes we may still compass our Scheme. But when or where! This World was made for Cesar!” (*Unpublished Letters*, 103). This dominating playful tone of these letters or the poet’s desire to entertain her friends-readers should not distract us from sensing Carter’s genuine passion, love and care for Talbot.

We have to consider Carter’s moral principles according to which she would not exaggerate her feelings toward Talbot (or toward any other friend) in order to entertain others. First, letters between Carter and her friends reflected their intellectuality, and the discussions presented in those letters were devoted to the subjects of different fields of study, such as ancient and modern literature, philosophy, history, and, of course, friendship. Second, these letters tell us also about Carter’s genuine love and care for her friends. In January 6, 1773, Carter wrote to Elizabeth Montagu: “I trust I am perfectly resigned to the Divine will; but the heart must feel

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Carter refers to this Sunday incident in her letter to Wright on January 28, 1741 (*Letters*, 2)

both its own distresses, and the distresses of those it love” (*Letters*, 59-60). In another letter, Carter wrote to Talbot about Hester Mulso (later Chapone):

Did I never tell you any thing about Miss Mulso? O but I will, for she seems to be a person worthy your inquiry. Mr. Duncombe procured me the pleasure of her acquaintance during the race week we were at Canterbury, and I found her even more amiable than he had represented; she has an uncommon solidity and exactness of understanding, I was greatly charmed with her, and saw her as often as I could in the short time I was in Canterbury. I have since received two letters from her; and Mr. Duncombe has promised to show me those she wrote to Mr. Richardson; he very kindly often gives me accounts of the clever people that fall in his way. (*Letters*, 373-373)

Clearly, Carter was very happy to introduce Mulso to Talbot. They both show their interest in Mulso’s letters⁶⁹ to Samuel Richardson. Sharing intellectual friends was a tendency among Carter’s friends. This brief information about the beginning of the Carter-Chapone friendship helps us to anticipate the code of conduct between Carter and her intellectual friends. For Carter, it was unethical to allow herself to play with, to use, to compromise, or to abuse her thoughts of friends, her relationships with them or her state of feelings with regard to her friends just to gain the attention of her other friends-readers. Certain features of her character, such as her openness and directness in expressing herself, distinguished her from other intellectuals of her time. In her letters to Wright and Underdown, Carter spoke her mind. She believed in significance and the necessity of their relationship for both; she saw in Talbot a great personality and a great intellectual. She believed that their friendship would be a source of their happiness.

⁶⁹ Hester Mulso Chapone (1727-1801) wrote letters to Samuel Richardson. Later, those letters were published in 1807 under the title “Letters on Filial Obedience.”

Carter and Talbot: Love and Friendship

The Oxford English Dictionary presents a range of interpretations of the word “love.” In its essential sense, “love” is “a state of feeling with regard to a person’s welfare, a pleasure in his or her presence... deep affection, strong emotional attachment.” In Christian use, “love” is interpreted as “the benevolence and affection of God; the affectionate devotion due to God, regard and consideration prompted by a sense of a common relationship to God” (*OED*). Finally, the word “love” expresses “the feeling of attachment which is based on sexual qualities, sexual passion combined with liking and concern for the other” (*OED*). The Carter-Talbot relationship is associated with “a state of feeling with regard to a person’s welfare” (*OED*). Their letters demonstrate their mutual passion based on mutual desire to experience a friend’s presence.

For the general public of the eighteenth-century British society, only the mutual attraction between two individuals of opposite sex was considered a norm. In the public eye, a romantic relationship meant “the feeling of attachment... based on sexual qualities” (*OED*), and this kind of relationship could be developed only between a man and a woman. A possibility of other type of romantic relationship, the relationship free of sexual qualities, was not even taken into consideration. It was a strong belief that romantic relationship must be based on physical attraction. Eighteenth-century England was not ready to accept a possibility of romantic relationship without any elements of sexual attraction. When it came to close and intimate relationships between individuals of the same sex, Carter’s contemporaries could view that interaction only as sexual or erotic.

For instance, in September 1750, Mrs. Montagu wrote to Sarah Robinson about the scandal of a friendship between two women who made their affection noticeable. Montagu

believed that this kind of report gave people opportunity to make up lies (Myers 18). The Carter-Talbot friendship belonged to neither of these types of human relationships set by a traditional public. In her introduction to *The Bluestocking Circle* (1990), Myers states:

In general, the bluestockings resisted the erotic element although they were aware of its importance to other members of their society. They particularly disliked conventional male “gallantry” in which women were treated in a flattering way as sex objects. As respectable women of the eighteenth century, committed to virtue and chastity, the bluestockings resisted the intrusion of eroticism into both their male and female friendships. (17)

However, intellectual women of the Bluestocking circle were concerning themselves with possible rumors, or lies, made up by people. According to a twentieth-century feminist view, female friendship may lead to distortions about friendship among women in general (Myers 18). Certain biographical facts prove Carter’s interest in men. For example, we know about Carter’s friendship with Thomas Birch whose “goal probably was marriage (he had been a widower for almost ten years), but at that time he had no settled prospects” (Myers 105). In the summer of 1739, Carter ended her relationship with Birch by leaving London for Deal, and she “never went back to working at St John’s Gate” (Myers 107). In 1749, Carter had another marriage proposal offered by John Dalton. According to Pennington, “this gentlemen she might possibly have accepted, had he not published some verses” (*Memoirs*, 29). Myers states that those verses “were an exchange between Dalton and Mrs. Henrietta Knight, later Lady Luxborough” (109). Rumors gave Carter reason to decline Dalton’s offer. Another case was Carter’s friendship with Lord Bath. We do not have the Carter-Bath correspondence, but we know that they had developed intellectual and individual friendship, which was very important for both Carter and

Lord Bath. Myers writes: “He enjoyed her knowledge of Greek and sent messages to her in Greek via Mrs. Montagu” (246). He was a friend to whom Carter devoted a poem; he was a friend to whom she dedicated her publication of *Poems on Several Occasions* in 1762. All these facts suggest that the Carter-Talbot friendship was full of romantic, but free of erotic elements.

Celia A. Easton defines Carter’s friendship as Uranian friendship in “Were the Bluestockings Queer?” (1998). Easton finds the direct link between Carter’s ideas of superior friendship and the male orientation of Uranian love emphasizing “the pursuit of wisdom over pleasure,” described in Plato’s *Symposium* (258). As Easton argues, Carter, in her poems on friendship “acknowledges [Katherine] Phillip's legitimating of women's friendships but she also explores Plato's homoerotic models directly" (269). Although “homosexuality as a category of identity is a recent invention” (258), Easton views Carter’s friendship poetry as “a model of lesbian eroticism ” (258). Then, Easton explains: “To speak of Elizabeth Carter as a lesbian is not to claim discovery of her sexual practices, but rather to read her works as expressions of a woman’s desire—rather than mere affection—for another woman” (258). Easton finds a parallel between the two models of presentations of human relationships: Carter’s model of lesbian eroticism and Plato’s “man-boy love” or “Uranian Love” when the relationship pursues wisdom rather than pleasure. Plato uses “Uranian Love” as a model to express his view of ideal friendship, and Carter applies the principles of “Uranian Love” to her own loving friendship to express her experience of ideal friendship. As Easton states, in Carter’s poems desire is not transformed into action (274). In other words, Carter searched for and found in the Greek homosexual-pederastic model a certain way to explain “how her mind can merge with that of the object of her love” (272). Easton complicates her argument by focusing on Carter’s poetry on friendship only as a special form of expression of ideal friendship. My aim in referring to

Easton's argument is not to support or to question her analogy between two models of expression of friendship: Plato's and Carter's. My interest in Easton's argument is that, like Myers, Easton too argues against viewing Carter's relationships with her female friends as lesbian friendships.

Easton's analysis of Carter's friendship poetry acknowledges a superiority of friendship between Carter and her female friends. The Carter-Talbot friendship challenged the traditional view of human relationships, particularly the relationship between two individuals, two intellectuals. When Carter started to show her interest in Talbot, they both were already famous intellectuals of the day. Talbot's fame started to grow in 1730, when she visited Bath and soon anonymous poems celebrating her beauty and wit appeared for the first time. Within the Seckers' household Talbot "was encouraged in her friendship, talents, and pleasures and was viewed as a delightful prodigy, whose letters and verses were circulated" (*ODNB*). By 1741, Carter already was a well-known writer, poet, and translator. The main reason for these two women's mutual attraction was their intellectuality. Carter and Talbot both were interested in having a close relationship because they both sensed the worthy nature of the other, and this passionate attraction between the two seems natural. They wanted to meet and to develop a close personal relationship because they both saw in that possible relationship the joy of their lives. As modern readers, we may claim that the Carter-Talbot friendship had a strong impact not only on these two individuals' personally, but also on society at large. Both Carter and Talbot contributed to intellectual growth of their community by writing essays for Samuel Johnson's *Rambler*, by encouraging each another to produce literary works. Their friendship led Carter to translate works of Epictetus from Greek into English. Their friendship led to the publication of Talbot's works after her death. Finally, their interest in learning, their intellectuality and friendship introduced to the British public a different view of human relationships. With her love for

Talbot, Carter presents a specific type of human relationship where a mutual love and care become the foundation of their strong human ties. Their friendship was free of not only sexual qualities, but also a so-called female solidarity, which is often emphasized in the current view of female friendship within the bluestocking circle. With her love for Talbot, Carter makes us believe in a possibility of experience of love between the two intellectuals without any sexual or social commitment. Their relationship became the manifestation of a strong friendship based on genuine mutual love and care.

Friendship: Intellectual and Individual Independence

With regard to the first meeting between Carter and Talbot, Gwen Hampshire emphasizes its significance for Carter:

When the wished-for introduction to Miss Talbot took place on 25 January 1741, another and very different world opened to her: the social, literary, and bluestocking world which welcomed her and brought her introductions to so many friends, and even, on one occasion, to the Queen. (19)

In my observation of the Carter-Talbot relationship, however, I will focus not on this “very different world opened” to Carter, but on the Carter-Talbot friendship, specifically on qualities making their relationship unique.

No doubt their friendship led Carter to a reliable connection with the higher ranks of eighteenth-century British society. Some scholars tend to focus on Carter’s personal benefit gained as a result of her friendship with Talbot. For example, Gaussen describes Carter’s stay in Canterbury, at the Lambeth Palace of Archbishop Secker:

Mrs. Carter was lodged in one of the towers, and the only occupant of that side of the palace which is separated from the rest of the house by the chapel.... The prospect from one of her windows was a long green court, terminated by the gateway.... She delighted in rambling through the long, narrow Gothic passages... During her visits to Lambeth Elizabeth Carter joined the daily family readings of English authors... (80)

This description emphasizes ideal living conditions offered to Carter by Secker. Probably, Carter did enjoy these ideal accommodations and hospitality of Secker although the reason for Carter's happiness was not the comfort and the beauty of the place but Talbot's presence. Thomas Secker's connection, however, offered a real opportunity for Carter to work for the royal family. Though Talbot believed that Carter must appreciate and consider this possibility, Carter disagreed and declined the offer. Thomas Secker's higher social status played no role whatsoever in the establishment of the Carter-Talbot relationship.

Their letters show that Carter and Talbot were preoccupied with the intellectual and spiritual aspects of human life. From the first stage of their correspondence, Carter and Talbot establish their tendency to develop intellectual discussions and arguments related to classical and modern literature, to ancient and contemporary philosophy, to human relationships, and specifically to friendship, and ethics. "I intend to look over the two last volumes of *Pamela*," writes Carter to Talbot on August 4, 1742, from Deal (*Letters*, 21). Then, she refers to "some pretty criticism on the *Distressed Mother*, a play" which Carter never could bring herself to like (*Letters*, 20). Carter compares these two works and states: "But, I have some curiosity to see what so accurate a judge as *Pamela* can say about it" (*Letters*, 20). On October 20, 1742, Talbot writes to Carter about her study of Machiavel: "...besides his writing such excellent Italian, there

is a strength and spirit of good sense in his reflections upon Livy particularly” (*Letters*, 22). On January 1, 1743, Carter thanks Talbot for recommending to read Henry Fielding’s *Joseph*

Andrews:

I have to thank you for the perfectly agreeable entertainment I have met in reading Joseph Andrews, as it was your recommendation that first tempted me to enquire after it...The author has touched some particular instances of inhumanity which can only be hit in this kind of writing. (*Letters*, 24)

In the same letter, Carter asks her friend for Italian epistolary writings:

I should be extremely obliged to you if you would let me know if there be any collection of Italian Letters, for I do not remember ever to have heard of any. I have some inclination to attempt at writing this language, which would be a difficult task without some such assistance, as I never learnt to speak it. (*Letters*, 25)

To this request, Talbot replies that she found volumes of Italian letters, “but very few among them likely to please so good a taste as your’s” (*Letters*, 26). Talbot ends her letter by asking Carter to recommend a book for their family readings (*Letters*, 40). As we see, the passion for learning reveals itself as the most dominating force in their epistolary intellectual arguments as well as in their intellectual friendship. For instance, in spite of its sarcasm, the next paragraph from Carter’s letter expresses the poet’s confession how she can get easily involved with the study of different fields:

However, I am too inconstant in my folies to apprehend being long under the power of any one; the present ‘tis probable will be of no very long duration, but soon give place to something new, and perhaps the next account of me may be

that I am learning the Chinese language, or studying Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas. (*Letters*, 25)

With her typical playful tone, Carter views the dynamics of her learning habits and principles as being inconsistent in her activities. In reality, however, this inconsistency tells us about Carter's consistency in her passion for learning; as in any other aspect of her life, here in her daily studies too, the poet demonstrates her exercise of uncompromised individual liberty and freedom.

In her turn, on October 5, 1743, Talbot writes to Carter: "If you ever read Montaigne pray tell me what you think of him. To me he seems infinitely amusing. His character lively and original, and with right and serious principles would have deserved esteem as well as liking" (*Letters*, 39). These examples of intellectual exchange from their letters prove that the relation between Carter and Talbot was one of kinship of spirit and intelligence. It is no wonder that their friendship lasted throughout their lives. Their genuine love for learning and exercise of friendship made them different from most women (and men) who lived according to traditional expectations, such as limited education, limited exercise of friendship, and life devoted to marriage. Hester Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* presents traditional instructions to regulate women's lives. Pennington refers to Carter's belief "that women had not their proper station in society, and that their mental powers were not rated sufficiently high" (*Memoirs*, 447). Carter and Talbot were eighteenth-century British intellectuals who devoted their lives to learning, writing, and friendship. By their intellectual and individual lives, they violated traditional expectations regarding human relationships; they resisted a traditional belief in a female dependence and demonstrated a woman's capacity for individual development.

Both *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and *Bluestocking Feminism* (1999) introduce Talbot as author and scholar who was well educated in classical, English, French, and

Italian literature, history, drawing, painting, music and astronomy. Both sources present almost the same information regarding Talbot's intellectual and individual life. However, thirty years of correspondence between Carter and Talbot serves as the best source for the study not only of their life experiences, but also of their intellectual and ethical views reflected in their friendship.

In their letters, Carter and Talbot lead long discussions by sharing their own understanding of human relationships. For example, one of the first Carter-Talbot discussions of friendship, developed through three letters, proves Carter's belief in the ethical role of individual liberty in human relationships. If Carter's friendship poetry explains the ethical role of exercising individual and intellectual freedom within friendship, letters develop this idea to a greater extent by viewing individual liberty and independence as the ethical essence of human life and human relationships. This essentiality of individual liberty and independence in establishing, developing and maintaining a friendship becomes a specific ethical feature of Carter's experience of friendship. She believed that without individual liberty and independence, friendship cannot be established and maintained.

This particular discussion of friendship started with Carter's strong reaction to the fact that one of her close friends was getting married. At four in the morning on May 24, 1744, Carter began her letter to Talbot to express her grief and frustration caused by her friends' decision to marry:

.... a person for whom I have a great love was going to be married; and ... people when they marry are dead and buried to all former attachments; I could not think of resigning a friendship which constitutes some of the brightest intervals of my life without a very severe uneasiness; for to converse with her in the dull, formal,

indifferent way of a common acquaintance, was a change I could not think of with any degree of temper. (*Letters*, 56-57)

Carter's reaction her friend's marriage was understandable. She knew well that society expects women to devote their lives to marriage. Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* centered marriage as the purpose of women's lives. The author writes: "The state of matrimony is necessary to the support, order, and comfort of society" (120). Carter viewed her friend's marriage as the end of their friendship. Her statement, "I could not think of resigning a friendship" (*Letters*, 56), shows how it was unbearable for Carter to witness the loss of a friend in this manner, a friend who chose to give up her own individual liberty, independence, and friendship to gain the status of a married woman. Marriage could change the lives of most women by limiting their individual freedom and independence. This limitation deprived women of their "former attachments," one of which was friendship. Carter considered individual liberty as an ethical essence not only of human life but also of human relationship—friendship.

Talbot's reaction to a friend's marriage is less vivid than Carter's. To Talbot, marriage is a natural event. So, she suggests: "If you do not like this scheme, you must turn Roman Catholic, and go into the convent, where you may have a whole sisterhood of friends secluded from the rest of the world" (*Letters*, 61). However, Talbot knew that this mentioned sisterhood has nothing in common whatsoever with the kind of relationships that they exercised. In her rhetorical question "why then, my dear Miss Carter, we must e'en lower our ideas of friendship to pitch of common life?" (*Letters*, 61), she asks to consider the reality of their existence even if that reality opposes their ideas of friendship. Of course, in Talbot's view, their friendship was special; and she was not willing to compromise or lower their ideas of friendship to meet traditional expectations under ant circumstances. However, she believes that she and her friend

Carter have to deal with circumstances and to accept the reality, the possibility of a friend's decision to marry and the possibility of finding happiness in marriage. Talbot believes in enduring friendships even when those friends enter in matrimony.

In her answer to Carter's letter, Talbot advises Carter to be happy for a friend who found her own happiness in choosing and marrying a man. Talbot did not see in a newly married friend one who is an "unfaithful friend forsake the society of spinsters" (*Letters*, 60). Unlike Carter, Talbot generalized her belief in a possibility of married women to exercise the relationships with their former or new friends. Next, Talbot found it necessary to tell Carter about her friendship with a friend who had been married for several years now:

One of my most favorite, most amiable friends has been married for several years, and I experience that the difference of circumstances make an alteration in the ease and frequency of our seeing one another, which robs me of the gayest, happiest moments I ever enjoyed. But our affection for one another continues the same it ever was; and indeed if ever do, many people instead of one had a right to share it with me, I should feel not the least jealousy, as I have no notion of monopolies in friendship... I see her happy, I see her act becomingly in her station, we sometimes lament the distance that it puts between us, but are upon the whole mighty reasonable people, and very well satisfied that every thing should be as it is. (*Letters*, 62)

Both Carter and Talbot lived in a society where for women immediate family members come first. The social code of human relationship dictates women to put their relationship with husbands first. It was very challenging for eighteenth-century married women of any social or economic class to maintain a friendship with those outside of the family. Talbot yields to this

reality and accepts things as they are while Carter remains skeptical to the idea that a married person, particularly a woman, will continue to exercise, in Carter's words, "all former attachments" in marital status. More importantly, Carter believes that by depriving themselves of the relationships with former friends, women deprive themselves of the happiness that can be gained only within the experience of friendship. It was an undeniable fact that, after marriage, not every woman could continue relationships with former dear friends.

Carter was aware of the possibility of continuing intellectual friendships after marriage. She herself had developed successful intellectual and individual friendship with her married friends, such as Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Vesey. Why would the case with this particular friend of Carter be different? Carter's letter to Talbot from Deal on July 20, 1744 presents her explanation.

First, we learn that this friend of Carter "possesses every amiable quality" (65), and this fact gave Carter "the uneasiness" (65). Second, Carter believed that her friend's case would not be parallel to the case of Talbot's friends: "... could I flatter myself the case would be parallel to what you describe... I am persuaded that it would be quite different" (65). Carter had strong reasons to believe that her friend's marriage will minimize their liberty to continue their relationships. In the same letter, Carter wrote: "I... am so real a friend of to universal liberty, that I make a scruple of keeping birds in a cage" (*Letters*, 65). Carter fought for their friendship, the friendship which cannot be achieved without individual liberty and independence. At the end of her letter, Carter stated that she is "greatly inclined to be an advocate for the happiness of human life" (*Letters*, 67).

On July 20, 1744, Carter writes from Deal to thank Talbot for her letter and resumes the subject:

.... thank you for the serious part of your Letter , which I hope will contribute to make me wiser and better: of which to my sorrow there is abundant need. I must however in justice to myself tell you it was not from a contracted principle of monopolizing a person who I think possesses every amiable quality that gave me the uneasiness I troubled you with; for her favourites always become mine, and could I flatter myself the case would be parallel to what you describe, I could bear it with tolerable tranquility, but I am persuaded it would be quite different.

(Letters, 66)

Carter lets her friend know that still she is dealing with grief caused by her friend's marriage. She expresses her sincere thanks to Talbot for sharing her view, which she hopes will make her (Carter) wiser and better. No doubt Carter means what she states; she finds Talbot's approach to the issue reasonable. However, Carter would not stop there although she accepts Talbot's explanation. In Carter's own words, Talbot's advice is equally good and "I [Carter] shall pay a much greater regard to it than if it was dictated by Seneca or Epictetus" (*Letters, 66*). Once again the poet's sense of humor should not distract us from her principal belief in the ethical role of individual liberty and independence. Although Carter does respect her friend Talbot's approach to the issue, her reference to Seneca and Epictetus are not accidental. With this consideration, we have to focus on the final paragraph of Carter's letter:

I am greatly inclined to be an advocate for the happiness of human life, and you will allow my opinion to be tolerably impartial, when I tell you that I am at this moment talking in downright contradiction to what I feel, however—luckily for you, the want of frank puts an end to my speculations, for I believe all the

philosophy I might utter in another sheet would not be worth sixpence to you.

(Letters, 67)

Carter considers herself as an advocate for the happiness of human life. Her views of human happiness, her views of the place and the role of a friendship in human life, are based on a specific factor possessed by Carter. She managed to develop her own individual and intellectual liberty and independence throughout her entire life. She does not believe life can be happy and moral without the individual freedom allowing individuals to maintain independent thought. Married women could not have that individual freedom just by loving and taking care of family members. By compromising freedom that is generated by friendship, women deprive themselves of happiness in their lives.

Dr. Carter gave his young daughter every opportunity for intellectual and individual growth even when she was a child. Throughout her entire life, and beginning with the support of her father, Elizabeth exercised her intellectual and individual freedom devoting her life to gaining knowledge and friendship. Her independent London life allowed her to benefit from her individual liberty as an intellectual woman. Carter's strong desire to build a close relationship with Talbot was the sign of her individual liberty and independence, which she demonstrated her also as a female writer when she devotes her poems to her male and female friends to express openly her personal experience of friendship.

Talbot too valued individual freedom and independence. She was not happy with her obligations to participate in the high society. She loved learning and writing, but she could not devote her time to these intellectual pursuits because those around her often lower expectations. Her desires to read and to write were not the only problems. The fundamental problem remained the fact that she was not able to afford an independent life. The sensitive issue that Talbot had to

deal with was her situation of being in Secker's household. Living under the protection of Secker deprived Talbot not only from that necessary freedom generating individual happiness, it cast her as dependent and damaged her self-confidence. For example, she was not brave enough to publish her works; her standards were too high and she thought her works were not good enough to make them public. Her decision to reject a possible marriage⁷⁰ was also related to her position in society. Myers presents the translation of some parts of Talbot's letter written to George Berkeley in French:

Poor so lovable and so beloved, mine is going to reply to you. What do you speak of Presumption? You do me too much honour. According to the world there will be enough Objections on two sides. Alas, it is enough that they are insurmountable—But in my small self I judge entirely differently from the World: I see you far above all which I can value, and I thank you sincerely for an action which becomes you well—That is all that needs to be said. (114)

Talbot expresses her disappointment in this world and refers to the real circumstances making their marriage impossible. As Myers suggests, Catherine chose his happiness and his well being above her own interest: "She [Catherine Talbot] was afraid of spoiling better prospects for him" (114). To an extent we have to agree with Myers that "His [George Berkeley's] happiness came first" (114). However, Talbot's rejection of this marriage was also the rejection of her own happiness, and the main reason for this rejection was not the age difference, not that she put his happiness first; objections on both sides were based on her financial dependency. Talbot did not

⁷⁰ In 1758, George Berkeley proposed marriage to Catherine Talbot. His father, Bishop George Berkeley was a friend of Thomas Secker. Bishop Berkeley's family moved to England from Ireland in 1752. Catherine Talbot and his son George became close friends.

believe in the possibility of marrying for love because of her profound financial dependency on Secker.

Carter in contrast possessed self-confidence as a writer, as a poet, and as a scholar. She believed in herself not only as an intellectual but as an individual too. She rejected marriage proposals because she could. It was her personal decision never to marry because marriage would almost certainly deprive her of relationships with her dear friends and deny that freedom and independence that she achieved through hard work. Talbot wanted to marry, but she did not believe in its possibility because of her financial dependency. Carter had serious marriage proposals, but she deliberately chose not to marry. Talbot believed in the institution of marriage while Carter questioned this established institution at least for her own case. Talbot's rejection of marriage was based on her low self-confidence, Carter's was based on her strong belief in happiness which can be gained by individual and intellectual friendship.

These characteristic differences between Carter and Talbot can be explained by how they were brought up. Indeed, these differences between these two women intellectuals help us to recognize a father's role in his daughter's life. If Talbot had had a father like Dr. Nicholas Carter, her life might have developed differently. However, it should be recalled that Dr. Carter's other daughter, Margaret, who was, it seems, a faster learner than her sister Elizabeth, preferred a married state to an independent intellectual life. In other words, in Elizabeth Carter, we have to recognize an individual who would not choose dependency over personal freedom and independence (even when her own sister made choices counter to her own).

Despite differences in their choices, both Carter and Talbot view their friendship as a main source of their happiness. They could freely discuss their differences with each other and find comfort in doing so. Whatever they could not find in a society at large, they could find in

their friendship. They were creators of this special type of relationship allowing them to achieve their intellectual, spiritual, and individual happiness. Carter and Talbot considered their friendship as one of the best forms of human relationships.

Friendship: Ethical Experience

It was their individual liberty and independence that made the intellectuals like Carter and Talbot exercise their free minds and develop a set of moral values according to which they themselves lived and worked, and expected the same pattern of ethical behavior from others. Their letters reveal precise ethical standards for every intellectual. For example, on August 10, 1763, Carter wrote to Talbot from Spa:

I met with a striking instance of this to-day, in a German lady, who was mentioning the death of Abel,⁷¹ which she had read only in the French translation; on my testifying some surprise at this, she declared she did not understand her own language well enough to be able to read the original, and this laudable ignorance of their mother tongue is really the case with many of them. (*Memoirs*, 322)

In another letter from Spa, on August 10, 1763, Carter wrote to Talbot: “I shall be particularly glad to see Aix la Chappelle, as it is the place where Charlemagne was buried, which renders I much more the object of my curiosity, than its being the place where the present Emperors are crowned” (*Memoirs*, 320). These two letters let us sense Carter’s value of an individual with a worthy character. Both Carter and Talbot shared this view to value the worth of individuals according to their moral principles. It was ethically unacceptable for Carter or for Talbot to

⁷¹ Salomon Gessner (1730-1788) was a Swiss writer, translator, painter, and the author of the epic poem *Der Tod Abels* (1758)—a very popular literary work in eighteenth-century Europe.

justify one's choice to ignore the mother tongue. We have to mention that Talbot taught herself German and was able to read *The Death of Abel* (*Der Tod Abels*) in its original text. This German lady would never understand the unethical aspect of the issue: it was unethical for someone not to read one's own native tongue. In the second example, the poet demonstrates her respect for those who contributed to welfare of people. She expresses her indifference toward emperors who take the symbolic seat of the legendary hero who united Europe. Once again, through Carter's comments about the facts she witnessed, we sense their ethical principles; Carter and Talbot did not care to which social group an individual belongs, they did care, however, for an individual's intellectual values.

The next ethical feature of the Carter-Talbot friendship was selflessness. In nearly every letter, we see the dominating aspect of the conversation—the care for a friend. In August 4, 1742, Carter wrote to Talbot:

Nothing could be a more seasonable revival to my spirit than your Letter, for at the same time I received it, I was sadly depressed at parting from Miss _____, with whom I had spent four or five delightful months at _____, a place I never yet could quit with any tolerable degree of resignation. It will be perfect charity in you, my dear Miss Talbot, to furnish me with some salutary philosophical remedies in this exigence, for my own little stock I quite exhausted. (*Letters* 18)

The absence of a friend causes a pain. In this letter, Carter shares her pain as a result of departure of another friend. Parting from friends has powerful impact on Carter's emotional state, her mood, and her spirit. However, Carter gains the presence of another friend, Talbot, who revived her spirit. We find a similar situation in Talbot's letter.

Talbot's letter to Carter written on June 1, 1742, starts with the following statement: "In a time when my health and spirits were too weak to receive much pleasure from any thing, I received a most obliging Letter from dear Miss Carter, that gave me a great deal" (*Letters*, 14). Carter knew that her friends needed her as much as she needed them. By writing letters she was making herself available to them. It is no wonder then that among Talbot's friends, only Carter knew about her having cancer. Talbot kept secret her health condition and chose to tell nobody but Carter. It is also significant and quite telling that Talbot dies of cancer on January 9, 1770, in the presence of Elizabeth Carter. This specific intimacy and trust explain the two factors: first, a significant role of friendship in lives of both Carter and Talbot, and second, Carter's special role in Talbot's life as well as Talbot's role in Carter's life.

From the Carter-Talbot letters we infer not only their intellectual and moral principles, but also view the depth of personal human ties. In letters, they could share and freely discuss their ideas as well as literary matters or personal problems and difficulties. Carter complained to her friend, for example, that she had been prevented from taking her walks⁷² because of the opinions of other people: people would think that it was too cold to walk (Myers 72). This detail demonstrates Carter's experience of dealing with societal norms restricting women's actions. In her turn, Catherine Talbot, in Bishop Secker's household, believed that she did not belong to herself. On October 26, 1747, Talbot wrote to Carter: "I have many little impertinent avocations that call me off from every employment I could be fond of; and I feel the shortness of time most uneasily, certainly for no other reason than because I do not know to make the best use of what I have" (*Letters*, 222). As Myers states, Talbot "lacked control over her life" (72) because of her financial dependency on Secker. Talbot was subject to social codes and expectations while

⁷² Elizabeth Carter loved the interaction with nature. She very much enjoyed taking long walks to visit her friends in neighboring towns.

Carter was relatively free of similar obligations and continued to exercise her independent life. In their letters, Carter and her friends discuss those problems not just as women dealing with common difficulties, but as intellectuals who question and challenge those societal rules forced upon all women. In her vitality, Carter never stopped taking long walks along her native beach. In her own ways, Talbot never stopped resisting her obligations to participate in activities of the higher social group to which she belonged.

Gender-Free Friendship

The Carter-Talbot friendship proved the possibility of a certain type of friendship between intellectuals regardless of their gender and their social differences and based only on love, care, and concern for the other. This ethical principle of their friendship—a need or a desire to do something good for other—reminds us of Epictetus’ moral philosophy: that the subject of human desire and action must be good (*All the Works of Epictetus*). This basic ethical principle of human relationships is always present in Carter’s personal experience of friendship. To a significant extent, Carter’s decision to translate Epictetus’s works from the Greek into English was guided by her desire to better Talbot’s needs. Although Talbot never had a chance to learn Greek or Latin, she possessed the knowledge of ancient philosophers. Talbot encouraged Carter to translate Epictetus because available translations of Epictetus’ works were not satisfactory. In 1748, when Talbot was grieving over Mrs. Secker’s death, Carter promises to translate the ancient Greek philosopher’s works. Carter’s purpose was to free Talbot from her melancholic thoughts. And she achieved her goal. Talbot became a mediator between Carter and Secker, who became the poet’s mentor at the start of the project. As her translation was in progress, she sent portions to Talbot and to her mother who both enjoyed the work. Most importantly, Talbot was

deeply involved with Carter's translation. It was Carter's tendency to think of her friends' needs, even if she herself was extremely busy with multiple family duties and responsibilities. We consider Carter as a more powerful and more independent individual than Talbot. It was Carter who lived independently in London, who dined with her intellectual friends like Edward Cave, Thomas Birch, Samuel Johnson and Hannah More. It was Carter who had no problem with publicizing her literary works. It was Carter who travelled independently between her native Deal and London or Canterbury to visit her friends. However, by pressuring Carter to translate ancient Greek text, Talbot served her friend very well; it was this translation that led to the poet's financial independency. In other words, in her turn, Talbot served Carter by encouraging her to translate and then publish Epictetus' works. Carter's Epictetus was a success, and the author's financial situation was improved so significantly that she could buy a house in Deal.

These details of the Carter-Talbot relationship show the principles of their friendship and the ethical impact of intellectual friendship on human life. Their mutual intellectual interest, their mutual care and respect were at play when they supported each other's intellectual and individual needs. It was difficult for Carter to complete her project because of many obligations she had within her family, such as tutoring her brother Henry. In addition, Carter had to deal with her severe headaches. However, for Carter, it was her moral obligation to complete the translation of Epictetus because it was her friend's expectation. The Carter-Talbot friendship led to the creation of something good, something moral for the entire society. It is a power of friendship that generates moral acts, the exigence for contributing to moral good, to benefit of individuals and of society at large.

Modern scholars characterize relationships between women-poets as a female friendship. In the Carter-Talbot case, however, I argue that their friendship was based on the fact that they

were women writers who faced and dealt with common difficulties. I claim that it was not a friendship based on women's solidarity against existing social deprivations. Their friendship is not a gender-based relationship. Their friendship is gender-free. Their friendship has all necessary elements to be called an intellectual friendship with no gender attachment.

The idea of a gender-free friendship relied on Carter's personal belief in a factor of gender-free intellect. By her love for learning, by her scholarly achievements, Carter proved women's capability for intellectual growth. When it comes to mind, there is no gender factor. On May 10, 1778, Carter wrote to Elizabeth Montagu to address the specific problem related to the ethics of human relationships in regard female intellectuality. The "company of scholars and authors," described by Carter in 1778 clearly reveals the need for reform:

As if the two sexes had been in a state of war, the gentlemen ranged themselves on one side of the room, where they talked their own talk, and left us poor ladies to twirl our shuttles, and amuse each other, by conversing as we could. By what little I could overhear, our opposites were discoursing on the old English poets, and this subject did not seem so much beyond a female capacity but that we might have been indulged with a share in it. (*Letters*, 68)

Carter resists accepting the reality of the social state: she rejects this unethical behavior of men to isolate women in those traditional intellectual gatherings. A gender-based approach to an individual's intellectual capabilities violates the basic ethical norms of human relationships. Carter's own life—her possession of classical education, her individual liberty and independence—exemplify gender free intellectual relationship.

The next chapter will examine Carter's friendship with Johnson. We will see no gender-based friendship exercised between them. It is safe to suggest that Carter was a better-educated

individual than most of the male intellectuals of the time. Her argument with Secker about incorrect interpretation of certain expressions from Homer's *Iliad*⁷³ gives us a strong reason to believe that in her intellectuality and education, she was equal to the best educated men of the eighteenth century. The poet's relationship with Johnson demonstrates Carter's equal love for both male and female friends. In her relations with Johnson we observe the same code of conduct, the same ethical standards applied to the Carter-Talbot friendship.

⁷³ In *Memoirs*, Pennington refers to this incidence to emphasize Elizabeth Carter's "knowledge of Greek construction which she had acquired by study": "She gave a striking proof in her detection of an error, into which every translator of Homer has fallen in the word govern a dative case, which it never does" (13-14). In the same footnote, Pennington mentions: "There some interesting letters on this subject between her, Archbishop Secker, and Dr. Salter, of the Charter-house; and his Grace was convinced by her argument" (14).

CHAPTER FOUR

Elizabeth Carter and Samuel Johnson: Colleagues and Friends

Life has no pleasure higher or nobler than that of friendship.

Samuel Johnson (The *Idler*, Number 23)

To live in friendship, is to have the same desires and the same aversions.

Samuel Johnson
(The *Rambler*, Number 64)

Introduction

Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall (1751-1831),⁷⁴ who knew Elizabeth Carter and Samuel Johnson well, refers to Carter as “the only woman who was qualified to meet Johnson on equal terms” (*Doctor Johnson and the Fair Sex*, 108). Claudia Thomas, the scholar of our days, claims that “While not ‘the Queen of the Bluestockings,’ Carter was the most scholarly of Johnson’s female contemporaries, and her career forms a revealing parallel to his” (19). The friendship that developed between Carter and Johnson should be viewed as a case study, as a real life experience teaching us about ethics in human relationships. Their friendship demonstrated that a relationship based on intellectual and moral virtues can become a principal ethical source of human happiness.

Books about Carter or Johnson, published during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, such as *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter* by Montagu Pennington, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* by John Hawkins, *Life of Johnson* by James Boswell, *Bluestocking Circle* by Sylvia H. Myers, *Doctor Johnson and the Fair Sex* by W. H. Graig and *Bluestocking Feminism* edited by Judith Hawley, offer only a few isolated facts related to the

⁷⁴ In Boswell’s *Life of Johnson: An Edition of the Original Manuscript* (1994), we find Boswell’s reference to Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall (1751-1831) as the author of *Tour Through Some of the Northern Parts of Europe*, the third edition of which was published in 1776 (195).

Carter-Johnson relationship. Johnson's famous statement "My old friend, Mrs. Carter, could make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus" (*Life of Johnson*, 123)⁷⁵ praising Carter's domestic and intellectual skills was restated in both *Bluestocking Feminism* (x) and *Doctor Johnson and the Fair Sex* (108). Both Myers in her *Bluestocking Circle* and Pennington in his *Memoirs* comment on Carter's and Johnson's contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the late 1730s. Hawkins, in *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, mentions a well-known fact—Carter's two essays written for the *Rambler*. These isolated remarks offer very limited information related to the Carter-Johnson relationship. So far, there has been no scholarly work focusing specifically on their friendship. When it comes to their correspondence, it becomes clear that Carter and Johnson did not write to each other much, but they saw each other whenever Carter was in London.⁷⁶ Graig quotes Johnson's remark regarding one occasion of the Carter-Johnson meetings:⁷⁷ "I dined yesterday at Mrs. Garrick's with Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Miss Fanny Burney. Three such women are not to be found" (108). During Carter's annual London visits, this kind of intellectual meeting took place on a regular basis, but no records of their discussions or specific aspects of those meetings are available today. However, even these isolated comments and a limited number of personal letters reveal ethical aspects of the intellectual and individual friendship between Carter and Johnson. These two contemporaries were intellectual and individual friends despite differences in their gender and wealth. This fact by itself was an ethical act. By exercising their friendship, Carter and Johnson demonstrated the possibility of

⁷⁵ In Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, we find relatively broader context of Samuel Johnson's comment regarding his old friend Elizabeth Carter: "A man is in general better when he has a good dinner upon his table than when his wife talks Greek. My old friend, Mrs. Carter, could make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus" (123). In his *Doctor Johnson and the Fair Sex* (1895), W. H. Graig quotes Johnson's same comment (108).

⁷⁶ In March 1738, with the support of her father, Elizabeth Carter started her independent life in London. On June 2, 1739, she decided to return to her native Deal. However, she was back in London next winter. Starting from this period, it was Carter's tendency to spend every winter in London, among her friends.

⁷⁷ The same information is presented in Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (123).

intellectual and individual friendship, the ethical aspect of which was the rejection of gender and class differences between individuals. This possibility to reject gender or class differences in male-female relationships was actualized because the Carter-Johnson friendship fully relied on their intellectual, educational, moral and spiritual equality.

Intellectually, Johnson viewed Carter as an equal to himself. As he stated in the *Rambler* number 64, “friendship is seldom lasting but between equals, or where the superiority of one side is reduced by some equivalent advantage on the other” (344). Johnson believed Carter to be one of the most educated intellectuals of his time; and he recognized in her a talented scholar, a poet, and a writer, a translator, an essayist, and, finally, a friend. As intellectuals, they had a high opinion of each another throughout their adult lives. Once, in his discussion of a scholar who understood Greek better than anyone he had known, Johnson added “except Elizabeth Carter” (Graig 29). What Johnson thought of Carter is important because, as it is mentioned in *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology* (2004), “no other eighteenth-century writer quite matches Dr. Johnson’s literary range and intensity of moral vision” (280). In April 1738, Johnson wrote to Edward Cave: “I have compos’d a Greek Epigram⁷⁸ to Eliza,⁷⁹ and think She ought to be celebrated in as many different Languages as Lewis le Grand” (*The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, 17). Likewise, Carter’s opinion of Johnson is revealed in her letters, such as one she wrote to Elizabeth Montagu on November 23, 1777: “O dear, O dear, how pretty we look, and what brave things has Mr. Johnson said of us! ...I think it is much better to be celebrated by the

⁷⁸ Sylvia Myers presents the third English translation of this Greek Epigram ascribed to Samuel Johnson (*The Bluestocking Circle*, 50).

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Carter’s first poems were published in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1734 under the pseudonym “Eliza” (*Memoirs*, 37).

The Life of Samuel Johnson, edited by O.M. Brack, Jr., presents the same information: “Elizabeth Carter began publishing poetry in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in November 1734” (380).

men, women, and children, among whom one is actually living and looking” (*Letters*, 47).⁸⁰

Carter’s excitement about Johnson’s praise of them as intellectuals shows the significance of Dr. Johnson’s opinion in the eighteenth-century British public. However, having a mutual intellectual respect for each another was not the only ethical aspect of their relationship. Carter and Johnson developed a high esteem for each other and conscientiousness in carrying out the duties of friendship.

Moreover, although Carter and Johnson belonged to the same social group, their families’ financial situations differed. Elizabeth Carter’s father, a country clergyman, had a large family, but he managed to give to all of his male and female children a good classical education. As we have discussed in chapter one, Dr. Carter, a well-educated intellectual, was involved personally with the education of his four sons and three daughters. As a father, he was able to provide for his large family. Young Elizabeth could start and develop her independent life in London because of her father’s moral and financial support. Samuel Johnson’s case, however, was far different. Johnson’s father was a bookseller who could afford only his son’s traditional classical education at the Lichfield grammar school. Johnson’s classmate and, later, his biographer, John Hawkins, recalls the two years of Johnson’s work in his father’s business after finishing his school education (6). Hawkins also recalls the circumstances that led Johnson to Pembroke College in Oxford. As he explains, a gentleman at Linchfield, Andrew Corbet, offered to pay for the formal college education of both his own son and Johnson. According to their agreement, Johnson had to help Corbet’s son in his studies. On October 31, 1728, both Johnson and Corbet entered Pembroke College in Oxford. A year later, however, Johnson was out of financial support because his schoolmate Corbet left the college. Johnson’s own parents could not support

⁸⁰ Earlier, in the second chapter of this dissertation, I referred to this letter written by Elizabeth Carter to Elizabeth Montague on November 23, 1777.

his college education, and, finally, after a little more than a year of study, Johnson left the college and never came back. The following note from *An Annotated Anthology* explains very well that Johnson was continually short of money: “The fact that he [Johnson] produced some of his best works under commercial pressure in order to earn a living challenged Pope and Swift’s image of the slipshod, ignorant Grub Street hack” (*Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, 280). Johnson’s financial struggles ended in 1762, when King George III granted him an annual pension of 300 pounds. Johnson had to make his living through writing while, as a young woman, Carter always had her father’s financial support, and, therefore, did not have to write in order to make a living. Their intellectual friendship took Carter and Johnson beyond obvious differences between their financial circumstances. It was their intellectual power, the “union of [their] minds” (the *Rambler*, number 64) that resisted not only aspects of social and gender differences but also financial inequalities between individuals. They lived in friendship, and that means they had “the same desires and the same aversions” (the *Rambler*, number 64).

In addition, the nature of their approach to each other leads us to viewing the Carter-Johnson relationship as a gender-free friendship, capable of erasing all social or cultural, and gender differences between individuals. When Johnson and Carter first met, Johnson already was a married man while Carter was single. Carter had relationships with other contemporary male intellectuals, such as Thomas Birch. As Myers informs us, Birch’s diaries (now in the British Library) contain records of the Carter-Birch meetings during the months of the London season of 1738-1739 (*The Bluestocking Circle*, 54). Birch presented to the *History of the Works of the Learned* his review of Carter’s translation of Algarotti’s *Il Newtonianismo*. His public praise of Carter’s intellectuality led to certain tension between them. Myers writes: “Elizabeth Carter hated flattery. She even felt that Johnson’s appreciations in his epigram, ‘Ad Elisam’, had been

too strong” (56). Dr. Nicolas Carter was worried about his daughter’s reputation, and decided to come to London. Gwen Hampshire writes: “The three [Dr. Carter, Elizabeth Carter, and Thomas Birch] dined together on 9 April 1739. Miss Carter was clearly troubled, worried by the decision hanging over her” (23). In June 1739, Carter left London for Deal, and her relationship with Birch ended. Edward Ruhe views the Carter-Birch relationship as the story of “a true courtship of an intelligent young lady of twenty, notable for her learning and for her aversion to marriage, by an older scholar-clergyman resolved to end ten years of widowerhood” (491).⁸¹ In the Carter-Birch relationship, we observe a different kind of experience: intellectual attraction between individuals does not always guarantee gender-free friendship. The Carter-Johnson relationship, however, was uncommon and gender-free, particularly if we consider the fact that Johnson was a married man.

Finally, in the Carter-Johnson relationship, the coexistence of individual and intellectual independence becomes a significant moral factor of friendship. Elizabeth Carter’s independent London life began in 1738; with the help of her father, she moved from her native Deal to London. Her father and Edward Cave were friends; and probably, at first, in London, Elizabeth stayed with the family of Cave, the editor, the printer, the publisher, and the proprietor of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*. Carter’s independent London life offered her a new network of intellectuals. In regard to this period, Montagu Pennington explains: “Mr. Cave was much connected with the literary world, and his friendship for Mrs. Carter was the means of introducing her to many authors and scholars of note; among these was Mr., afterwards Dr. Johnson” (*Memoirs*, 38-39). By 1738, Carter, like Johnson, lived independently in London, and

⁸¹ Edward Ruhe’s “Birch, Johnson, and Elizabeth Carter: An Episode of 1738-1739” introduces certain facts concerning the relationships between Birch, Johnson, and Elizabeth Carter. The author focuses on the beginning of the Johnson-Birch friendship as well as on Elizabeth Carter’s presence in their relationships. The article was published in *PMLA* v.73, No. 5, Part 1 (December 1958), 491-500.

they both already were contributing to *The Gentleman's Magazine*. It was during this period when Cave introduced Carter to Johnson. Years later, in January 1756, Johnson wrote to Carter: “I owed him [Cave] much, for to him I owe that I have known you” (*The Letters*, 126).⁸² No doubt Johnson's statement from his letter reflects his true, deep respect and feelings toward Carter; he was an intellectual who spoke his mind and wrote to his friends only “when he [had] something to say” (Philip B. Daghlion 109). In this letter, we sense Johnson's need to let Carter know about the significance of their friendship for him personally. Most contemporary intellectuals, as Montagu Pennington admits, knew Carter and Johnson as intimate friends (*Memoirs*, 58) while others considered Carter to be Johnson's old friend. Their friendship, however, was more than just old, or intimate.

The Carter-Johnson relationship challenged the eighteenth-century traditional view of human relationship. The experience of the Carter-Johnson relationship claimed that specific aspects of human ties, such as a consideration of individual and intellectual liberty, the necessity of individual and intellectual equality, and the fact of mutual love and care, turn friendship into a moral source of human happiness. In other words, the moral essence of the Carter-Johnson experience of friendship is built upon their individual and intellectual independence. Both Carter and Johnson were equal in their abilities to exercise individual liberty and independence.⁸³

⁸² Later in this chapter, pages 191-192, I refer to a full text of this short letter by Samuel Johnson to Elizabeth Carter.

⁸³ In his *Rambler* number 64 and *Idler* number 24, by advocating basic forms of friendship, Samuel Johnson educates general public about usefulness of good human relationships in dealing with life difficulties.

In *Rambler* number 64, Johnson emphasizes elements of human relationships such as mutual esteem, love, and care as well as equality and virtue, making friendship useful to community. In *Idler* number 24, Johnson explains to his audience how to preserve friendship; he discusses so-called “enemies” of friendship and “the most fatal disease of friendship”—gradual decay (74). However, Johnson does not refer to friendship as a source of individual and intellectual freedom and independence although his personal experience of intellectual and individual friendship was based on his intellectual and individual freedom and independence.

Now, we may conclude that the Carter-Johnson friendship was a gender-free friendship based on their intellectual and individual equality and independence. As we observed in previous chapters, the essentiality of intellectual and individual equality and independence is present, as an inevitable factor, in every relationship developed between Carter and her friends. In the Carter-Johnson relationship, however, this factor of equality and independence reaches its highest point. I do not intend to diminish the role and the significance of Carter's friendship with other intellectuals. I do, however, intend to point out the characteristics of the Carter-Johnson friendship that distinguish it from all Carter's other friendships.

Equality and independence were revealed more vividly in the Carter-Johnson friendship than in any other relationship developed within the circle of Carter's friends. In her network, there was no other relationship that could permit Carter to experience so fully her own intellectual and individual equality with men. That sense of equality became a generating source for Carter's professionalism. A brief look back on Dr. Carter's role in young Elizabeth's life reveals a man who was an architect of his daughter's future independent life and career. The Carter-Johnson relationship would become a part of Carter's space of intellectual productivity; in their friendship, Carter and Johnson developed mutual expectations to practice their intellectual abilities to serve a public as equal professionals. And they both did so by contributing works to Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine* in the 1730s and to the *Rambler* in the 1750s. This professionalism indicates Carter's individual and intellectual equality to men. Her two *Rambler* essays (XLIV and C)⁸⁴ reveal the writer's ethics, her intention, and her professional goal which are exactly the reflection of Johnson's ethical legacy. This legacy or this goal can be best

⁸⁴ Carter's decision to include her two *Rambler* essays into her last edition, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1762) indicates that the author viewed these essays as worthy product of her intellectual work.

expressed by Judith Hawley words that Carter's writings, specifically her two *Rambler* essays, are "at the service of the entertainment and improvements of others" (*Bluestocking Feminism*, xvii).

One of the outcomes of the Carter-Talbot relationships was Carter's decision to translate and to publish Epictetus' works. However, we have to mention that Carter's essential purpose in this project was to offer her friend Talbot a better translation of this ancient text. Talbot's lack of independency had a strong impact on Talbot's productivity as a writer. It was Carter who constantly attempted to convince Talbot to write. As we discussed in chapters two and three, the intellectual and individual relationships between Carter and Talbot had their own characteristics, contributing to happiness of both intellectuals. However, the presence of Johnson's friendship itself contributed to Carter's professional productivity.⁸⁵

Carter's friendship with Lord Bath was another important intellectual relationship, having its own significance for both of them. Lord Bath valued his friendship with Carter and encouraged Carter to publish her poems.⁸⁶ However, in this case too, the difference between two friendships—the Carter-Lord Bath and the Carter-Johnson—becomes obvious. Myers' observation helps us to sense that difference. In *The Bluestocking Circle*, she writes:

Lord Bath himself was ambivalent about Elizabeth Carter's learning. He enjoyed her knowledge of Greek and sent messages to her in Greek and via Mrs. Montagu. But he also felt that her learning must be in some way responsible for her headaches, and if she gave up her learning, and acquired a gentleman friend, her health would improve. (Myers 246)

⁸⁵ Although Johnson's influence on Carter's productivity is a recognized fact, she was not one of those female writers who learned from Johnson. As an independent thinker, Carter reveals herself in her writings, such as her comments on Johnson's Shakespeare.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Carter's *Poems on Several Occasion*, published in 1762, was dedicated to Lord Bath.

We may believe in Lord Bath's good intention and sincere care for his friend Carter. We must also believe that the Carter-Lord Bath friendship was not gender-free. The Carter-Lord Bath correspondence is not available for modern readers because Carter instructed Pennington to destroy all the letters between them.⁸⁷ Carter's eagerness to eliminate those letters suggests that the Carter-Lord Bath friendship was personal, special and complicated for both of them. No doubt, their friendship was intellectual and individual, but not gender-free. Lord Bath failed to see Carter equal to men. Although he was aware of Carter's intellectual power, a factor of her being a female writer had a strong impact on Lord Bath's view of her. In contrast to Lord Bath, Johnson would understand Carter's passion for learning, her devotion to intellectual life, and her cope with severe headaches for sake of intellectual and individual freedom. Johnson took for granted his friend Carter's intellectual professionalism as equal to his own. Intellectuals, like Johnson and Carter would not give up their intellectual needs even for the sake of their health. Johnson's genuine trust in Carter's intellectual professionalism was based on his belief in intellectual equality between men and women. This belief in women's intellectuality was uncommon among male intellectuals of the century. For instance, although Lord Bath, or Secker himself recognized Carter's outstanding education and intellectuality, they both viewed her case as unusual. For Johnson, however, Carter's or any other woman's intellectual activity was not surprising at all.

In some cases, however, Boswell's *Life of Johnson* may create a different impression that Johnson tented to make dismissive remarks about women. In *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, John A. Vance ends his entry "James Boswell" with the following statement: "Regardless of how many errors, omissions, false, impressions, and other forms of inaccuracy one may discover in its pages, Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* remains a classic of English literature" (45). This

⁸⁷ In the second chapter of this dissertation (pages 125-126), I address this issue briefly.

possibility to discover errors and inaccuracy in Boswell's presentation of Johnson supports our skepticism toward Johnson's reputation created by Boswell. Most importantly, Johnson's own life style and his life choices, as well as his eagerness to support female writers, strongly oppose Johnson's negative reputation prescribed to him by Boswell. His ethical principles toward women can be sensed at least from one of his critical remarks in regards to Milton's *Paradise Lost*: "Both before and after the Fall the superiority of Adam is diligently sustained" (*The Lives of The Poets*, 186). This and other observations of Johnson led him to his belief that Milton "thought woman made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion" (*The Lives of The Poets*, 171). This particular criticism of Milton's approach to women introduces Johnson as an advocate of women's right. But these statements, Johnson resists a traditional interpretation of a woman's position in a community. Like his friend Carter, Johnson views women as equals to men.

They Were Destined to be Intellectual Friends

Who is there whom you cannot influence?
Samuel Johnson (*The Letters*, 126)

In "Confined and Exposed: Elizabeth Carter's Classical Translations," Jennifer Wallace mentions: "Having arrived at the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Carter found herself in the atmosphere of a male club, where the performance of masculine sociability and discourse was essential" (318). Johnson was one of the main contributors to this atmosphere. From the first stage of their relationship, it became clear that Carter and Johnson were destined to establish an intellectual friendship. Their common passion for learning and writing led both intellectuals to St. John's Gate, Cave's editorial offices for *The Gentleman's Magazine*, established in 1731. Carter was only twenty-one when her relationship with Johnson began growing into something special; it

was she who immediately recognized in Johnson a worthy man of learning and virtue. Carter shared her view of young Johnson with her father, and on January 25, 1738, Dr. Carter wrote to Elizabeth: “You mention Johnson; but that is a name with which I am utterly unacquainted. Neither his scholastic, critical, or poetical character ever reached my ears. I a little suspect his judgment, if he is very fond of Martial” (*Memoirs*, 39). Dr. Carter’s response to his daughter’s letter tells us about young Elizabeth’s deep respect for Johnson as a promising intellectual whose fame and recognition would come. In his turn, Johnson shows his interest in Carter’s works. For instance, in November 1738, in his letter to Cave, Johnson recommended the publication of Carter’s translation of Jean Pierre de Crousaz’s work on Pope’s *Essay on Man* (*Examen de L’Essai de M. Pope sur L’Homme*, published in 1737). To emphasize the significance of this polemical work, Johnson wrote to Cave: “I think that Examen should be pushed forward with the utmost expedition. Thus, This day etc. An Examen of Mr. Pope’s Essay etc. containing a succinct account of the Philosophy of Mr. Leibnitz on the System of the Fatalist, with a confutation of their opinions, and an Illustration of the doctrine of Freewill; [with what else you think proper]” (*The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, 20). Cave printed Carter’s translation of the *Examen* during the same month, November 1738,⁸⁸ but the name of a translator was not mentioned.

It was not unusual for eighteenth-century intellectuals, both men and women, to publish their works anonymously. However, it is possible that, in cases of the eighteenth-century women intellectuals, one of the reasons for the anonymity of their publications was a growing public skepticism toward female writers. However, James Boswell offers a different explanation. He refers to Cave’s letter to Thomas Birch written on November 28, 1738: “Mr. Johnson advises

⁸⁸ Montagu Pennington presents the title-page of Carter’s translation as “An Examination of Mr. Pope’s Essay on Man: translated from the French of M. Crousaz, M.R.A. of Science at Paris and Bourdeaux; and Professor of Philosophy and Mathematics at Lausanne” (*Memoirs*, 42-43).

Miss C[arter] to undertake a translation of *Boethius de Cons.* because there is prose & verse, and to put her name to it when published” (*Life of Johnson*, 96). Then Boswell continues, stating that this “advice was not followed probably from an apprehension that the work was not sufficiently popular for an extensive sale” (96).

Although this publication did not include the translator’s name, we have to agree with Pennington that this work introduced Carter to the world as a writer in prose (*Memoirs*, 42). And, our focus is rather on Johnson’s role in Carter’s translation of Crousaz’s *Examen* than on the anonymity of this publication. First, it is not accidental that both Carter and Johnson were involved with the translation of Crousaz’s works: the *Examen* by Carter, and the *Commentaire* by Johnson. Second, Johnson took responsibility to write annotations to both works. Although the translation of *Commentaire* was published a year later than the *Examen*, the Carter-Johnson involvement with this project proves their common intellectual interests and goals. They both knew the intellectual needs of their community, and they both took responsibility, in this case, to translate the polemical text from French into English to serve the British public. Carter and Johnson were equals when it came to their level of education and writing abilities, as well as to their sense of moral duty.

The relationship between Carter and Johnson continued to have its own place and role in both writers’ lives. They remained good friends till Johnson’s death. In 1749, Johnson organized his Ivy Lane Club for weekly meetings with his friends, taking place on every Tuesday. As James Clifford states, “There can be no doubt of the importance of the Ivy Lane Club to Johnson during this difficult period,” and “for all concerned, the Tuesday gatherings must have been a rewarding experience” (44). However, it seems Johnson’s experience of Carter’s friendship had significance of its own. Although Johnson had a large circle of friends, he “kept closely in touch

with his old employer Cave, and through him with others he had first known at St. John's Gate, Thomas Birch, Elizabeth Carter, and Mrs. Masters" (Clifford 44). Johnson had other female intellectual friends for whom he had respect, care and love. For instance, Johnson always assisted Charlotte Lennox in publicizing her works. Another friend, Anna Williams, lived at Johnson's house and had his support. He was a friend to female writers, and he did what he could in order to help those who looked for his help. In Carter's case, however, Johnson's relationship with her was of a different nature. The main source of that special nature of their relationship was the level of Carter's intellectual independency.

As we know, Carter and Johnson did not write to each other much, but they never stopped being intellectual friends. We have Johnson's one letter addressed to Carter, on January 14, 1756, to ask her to support Anna Williams.⁸⁹ This particular letter was first presented in Pennington's *Memoirs* (40-41). Later, in 1992, this letter was included in *The Letters of Samuel Johnson* edited by Bruce Redford. On Wednesday, January 14, 1756, Johnson wrote to Carter: "Madam: From the liberty of writing to you if I have been hitherto deterred by the fear of your understanding I am now encouraged to it by the confidence of your goodness" (*The Letters*, 126). It was a letter of a man expressing his strong desire to do something good, something right. He was writing to his friend, who would understand, support and share his wishes:

I am soliciting a benefit for Miss [Anna] Williams, and beg that if you can by letters influence any in her favour, and who is there whom you cannot influence? You will be pleased to patronize her on this occasion. You see the time is short and as you were not in town I did not till this day, remember that you might help us, or recollect how widely and how rapidly light is diffused. (*The Letters*, 126)

⁸⁹ Samuel Johnson refers to Anna Williams in his letters to both Elizabeth Carter and Thomas Birch. On January 9, 1756, Johnson asks Birch for his help with a benefit for "a Gentle-woman of Learning, distressed by blindness" (*The Letters*, 124).

This brief note suggests Johnson's trust in Carter's goodness; the desire to do something good becomes a unifying factor between these two. Johnson's ethical necessity to support his friend Anna Williams becomes Carter's ethical duty too. In this particular aspect, we associate the Carter-Johnson relationship with the friendship described by Johnson in his epigraph to the *Rambler* number 64: "To live in friendship, is to have the same desires and the same aversions" (339).

This letter, however, is not just about soliciting a benefit for a friend. Johnson has something else to say to Carter. He recalls their common intellectual friend, publisher of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Edward Cave, who was instrumental in publishing works of young intellectuals Carter and Johnson:

To every Joy is appended a Sorrow. The name of Miss Carter introduces the memory of Cave. Poor dear Cave I owed him much, for to him I owe that I have known you. He died, I am afraid, unexpectedly to himself, yet surely unburthened with any great crime, and for the positive duties of religion, I have yet no right to condemn him for neglect. I am, with respect which I neither owe nor pay to any other.⁹⁰ (*The Letters*, 126)

Johnson's sensitive reference to the memory of Cave explains the significance of intellectual friends and friendship in their lives. Johnson's grief is a sign of very close intellectual and individual ties between friends of their circle. Johnson is thankful to Cave for introducing Carter to him. Johnson writes what he means; and what he means includes his deep respect for Carter and his happiness in knowing her. Most importantly, it is clear that Johnson misses Carter and that he needs her presence, her intellectual and moral support.

⁹⁰ Earlier in this chapter, pages 181-182, I referred to one statement from this part of Johnson's letter.

Johnson always could rely on Carter's unquestionable trust and support in the intellectual community of eighteenth-century England. She became one of those voices telling the truth about Johnson while some of their contemporaries viewed Johnson as an intellectual dictator. In his *Rambler* number 208, we find this particular usage, "an intellectual dictator," by Johnson who anticipated his opponents' possible interpretation of his *Rambler* essays and found it necessary to offer his explanation:

As it has been my principal design to inculcate wisdom and piety, I have allotted few papers to the idle sports of imagination. Some, perhaps, may be found.... that the severity of dictatorial instruction has been too seldom relieved, and that he is driven by the sternness of the *Rambler's* philosophy to cheerful and airy companions" (the *Rambler*, number 208).

As one of the respected minds of the time, Johnson trusted in his own judgment based on his deep knowledge of a subject. Moreover, as Pennington mentions, Carter believed in Johnson's "constant attendance to religious duties, and the soundness of his moral principles" (*Memoirs*, 41). Johnson's intellectual activities reflected his intellectual responsibilities within his community. He believed in his intellectual legacy, in the moral good of his own works; however, he could get upset when people did not appreciate his contribution to "wisdom and piety." In those moments of sadness, Johnson had support of friends like Carter. Pennington refers to one conversation between Carter and Johnson during which Carter stated her opinion of him directly to Johnson himself. He listened to her and then took her hands and asked her with eagerness: "You know this to be true, and testify it to the world when I am gone" (*Memoirs*, 41). It seems Johnson, an authority who himself contributed significantly to his community's intellectual and moral improvement, needed Carter's intellectual and individual support. Johnson's need of

Carter's support is not surprising if we consider the fact that they both equally believed in serving a reading community by facing their own intellectual and moral responsibilities in their own ways. For Carter, it was her direct moral obligation to stand by her intellectual friend, whose ethical legacy served as a principal source of moral values.

In *Memoirs*, Pennington tells us about Carter's anger resulting from attacks on Johnson after the publication of his edition of Shakespeare: "Carter's indignation had been roused, as far as her usual mildness could allow it to be, by the violent attacks on her old and respected friend Dr. Johnson in consequences of his edition of Shakespeare" (*Memoirs*, 397). On November 25, 1765, Carter wrote to Talbot from Deal:

Have you not felt a high degree of indignation of the scandalous ribaldry with which Mr. Johnson has been treated in the papers? I have not read his Shakespeare, for my copy is in town: but whatever fault the critics may find in it, surely nothing of this kind can at all excuse such treatment of an author, who in other works has deserved so much honour. As I do not recollect any instance in which Mr. Johnson has employed his learning and his genius to expose ignorance or insult dullness; but, on the contrary, has I think, been remarkably candid and tender, this unprovoked malice against him is the more abominable. Do pray be very angry about it: I am outrageous. (*Memoirs*, 398)

Johnson consciously devoted his life to learning and writing because he believed in the moral good of literary intelligence. His works had a great impact on minds of the reading population. Johnson was proud of his *Rambler* essays. In W. J. Bate's words, "We often think of the *Rambler* as consisting in the main of direct moral essays" (xxvi). Bate compares the *Rambler*

with the *Spectator* ⁹¹ and views both of them as the periodical essays. He considers the *Spectator* as “the true literary ancestry of the *Rambler*” (xxvii). In regard to the *Spectator*, Donald F. Bond explains:

In subject-matter the periodical essay ranged from reflection on the latest happening in London or Paris to contemplation of the universe and man’s place in it. Because of the many letters from readers which it received and published, it combined the voice of the author with the widest form of audience participation. (xiii).

In contrast to the *Spectator*, the *Rambler* was “so much more serious in tone and weighty in thought”, and in other words, Johnson “transcended that form” (Bate xxvii). The variety of subjects presented in the *Rambler* explains Johnson’s concerns and deep care for people’s daily issues. Attacking Johnson, in Carter’s own words, “an author, who in other works has deserved so much honour” (*Memoirs*, 398), was considered by Carter an unethical act. Her anger, caused by the unjust treatment of Johnson, the writer of this authority, was an ethical reaction to the unethical behavior of their contemporary intellectuals.

The unethical nature of the critical attacks made on Johnson becomes clear from Carter’s reference to two gentlemen who led a public dispute related to Johnson’s edition of Shakespeare.

Pennington quotes Carter:

I am quiet enough, however, as to the dispute between Dr. L. and the B. of G. (Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester) ⁹² who, as he is the genuine successor of Ishmael, must be content to take his fate. I am very sorry, however, he has met

⁹¹ Joseph Addison and Sir. Richard Steele founded the *Spectator* (1711-1712), a daily publication of periodical essays.

⁹² William Warburton (1698-1779), bishop of Gloucester and religious controversialist, published his edition of Shakespeare in 1747 (Hawkins 396, 552).

with the chastisement he too well deserves from one of his own order. It is a pity they did not both battle it out in Greek, which is the best language for a hearty scold. (*Memoirs*, 399)

Carter's comments on Johnson's attackers put emphasis on their lack of education. She underlines their intellectual incompetence to demonstrate that these individuals do not have intellectual or moral authority to judge Johnson's work.

Carter continued her defense of Johnson's authority as a writer and as a thinker in one of her miscellaneous prose works: "On Johnson's Shakespeare" (1766).⁹³ Her comments on Johnson's wrong judgment were very specific. For instance, Carter wrote:

[...] he has neglected entering into the characteristic excellencies of his author, and indeed has considered the plays of which he gives some general idea, in so confused and superficial a way, that he has often, I think, given a wrong judgment. (Carter 420)

Carter's account of Johnson's note ends with the following statement: "Yet, Mr. Johnson may fairly allege, that this is the only circumstance on which he had any right to be severe" (420). By her direct and open discussion of Johnson's wrong judgments, Carter demonstrated the baseless attack on Johnson.

Carter's defense of her friend's intellectual authority reminds us of the conversion that took place between Carter and Johnson when he asked Carter to testify the truth about him to the world (*Memoirs*, 41). Carter always carried out Johnson's requests. Even after Johnson's death, Carter continued to follow writings related to her friend. In Brack's introduction to *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, we read: "Elizabeth Carter... preferred Hawkins' account to both James

⁹³ As it is explained in *Bluestocking Feminism*, "On Johnson's Shakespeare" was first published in *Memoirs*, vol. 2, in *Extracts from some of Mrs. Carter's Letters on Subject of Taste and Literature*. The original text is no longer available (463).

Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1786) and Hester Lynch Piozzi's *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson, LLD* (1786)" (Brack, xxxi). On June 22, 1787, Carter wrote to her friend Elizabeth Montagu: "Have you read Sir John Hawkins's Life of Dr. Johnson? I have just finished it, and it much less exceptionable than the other two. Indeed there are but very few passages that are likely to give pain to any one. His character of Dr. Johnson is impartially, and very decently and candidly represented (*Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Mrs. Montagu*, 270-271).

Serving Community: Intellectual and Ethical Contributions

The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing.

Samuel Johnson (*Preface* 1765, 15)

It is always a writer's duty to make the world better.

Samuel Johnson (*Preface* 1765, 19)

In one of her letters to Carter, Hester Mulso Chapone summarized an argument that took place between Samuel Johnson and herself. It was a time when Johnson and Anna Williams were visiting Samuel Richardson. On July 10, 1753, Chapone wrote to Carter:

I had the assurance to dispute with him [Johnson] on the subject of human malignity, and wondered to hear a man who by his actions shows so much benevolence, maintain that the human heart is naturally malevolent, and that all the benevolence we see in the few who are good, is acquired by reason and religion... I entirely disagreed with him, being, as you know, fully persuaded that benevolence, or the love of our fellow-creatures, is as much a part of our nature as self love, and that it cannot be suppressed or extinguished without great violence from the force of other passions. I told him I suspected him of these bad notions

from some of his *Ramblers*, and had accused him to you; but that you persuaded me I had mistaken his sense. To which he answered, that if he had betrayed such sentiments in the *Ramblers*, it was not with design, for that he believed the doctrine of human malevolence, though a true one, is not a useful one, and ought not to be published to the world. Is there any truth that would not be useful or that should not be known? (*Posthumous Works of Mrs. Chapone*, 72-74)

Clifford refers to this letter to emphasize Johnson's belief that "through God, goodness could be attained" (120). Our purpose, however, is to focus on Johnson's reaction to Chapone's reading of certain *Rambler* essays and sensing the author's view of malevolence as a fact of human nature. It was not Johnson's intention to publicize this particular "not useful" view because he believed in a man's ability to learn to be moral, to learn to do good. His intention was to follow his duty as a writer: "to make the world better" (*Preface 1765*, 19). Johnson's eagerness to present in his writings only useful ideas tells us about another of his beliefs—the education of the public through literature. He believed in an intellectual power of his own works to influence people's moral principles.

Johnson's own view of the *Rambler*'s role expresses only a part of the author's contribution to the community's intellectual and ethical growth. In his final *Rambler* essay, number 208, Johnson wrote:

The essays professedly serious, if I have been able to execute my own intentions, will be found exactly conformable to the precepts of Christianity, without any accommodation to the licentiousness and levity of the present age. I therefore look back on this part of my work with pleasure, which no blame or praise or man shall diminish or augment. I shall never envy the honours which wit and learning

obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the writers who have given ardour to virtue, and confidence to truth. (*The Rambler*, 320)

Johnson looked back at the *Rambler* with pleasure because he believed in its usefulness, in its ethical influence on his audience. Through the *Rambler* essays, Johnson voiced social and cultural issues, called for active critical thinking, and eventually could lead to positive social changes. In the preface to his edition of Shakespeare, Johnson states: “It is always a writer’s duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place” (*Preface* 1765, 19). In other words, Johnson believed in a possibility to make the world better through literature.

The significance of Johnson’s moral and intellectual influence on minds can be explained by one of his contemporary readers’ view of his authority. Boswell introduces to us Sir David Dalrymple, one of the Judges of Scotland, by the title of Lord Hailes. On July 7, 1763, Dalrymple wrote to Boswell:

It gives me pleasure to think that you have obtained the friendship of Mr. Samuel Johnson. He is one of the best moral writers which England has produced. At the same time I envy you the free and undisguised converse with such a Man. May I beg you to present my best respects to him, and also to assure him of the veneration which I entertain for the Author of the Rambler and of Rasselas. Let me recommend this last work to you; With the Rambler you certainly are acquainted. In Rasselas you will see a tender-hearted Operator, who probes the wound only to heal it. Swift on the contrary, mangles human nature. He cuts and slashes, as if he took pleasure in the operation, like the tyrant who said *Ita feri ut se sentiat emori*. (*Life of Johnson*, 302)

In Boswell's view, this letter was a "just and well-turned complement" giving Johnson much satisfaction (*Life of Johnson*, 302). For us, however, this letter is also a fact showing a strong impact that a literary text has on minds. This fact of intellectual influence and power was typical for both Johnson and Carter.

The strong impact that intellectual and ethical contributions have on the moral growth of a society can be sensed from Dr. James Beattie's⁹⁴ message presented in his letter to Mrs.

Montagu:

Mr. Dilly will also send you a copy of this book addressed to Mrs. Carter, which I must beg, Madam, you will take the trouble to forward to her, with some apology, to make it acceptable to her. It is a tribute of respect and gratitude which I owe to her extraordinary genius and virtue, and to the pleasure and instruction I have received from her writings. (*Memoir*, 469)

Dr. Beattie's belief in Carter's intellectual and individual influence reflects a society's need to receive "the pleasure and instruction" of intellectual writings (469). And once again, we recall Johnson's *Preface 1765* where the author claimed: "The end of writing is to instruct" (15).

Both Carter and Johnson believed that literary works contributed to intellectual growth of individuals and of society at large. The fact of finding intellectual and moral satisfaction in their writings explains Carter's decision to reprint her two *Rambler* essays (numbers 44 and 100) in

⁹⁴As it is mentioned in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, James Beattie (1735-1803) was a poet and moral philosopher, the author of *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Skepticism* (1770) as well as *Elements of Moral Science* (1790-1793). In 1771, when the second edition of his essays was published, the book had made him one of the most celebrated authors in Great Britain (*DLB*).

Montagu Pennington, however, refers to Beattie as an intellectual who participated in London gatherings if he was in town (*Memoirs*, 468).

Poems on Several Occasions, a final publication of her works in 1762. In his introduction to *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*, Donald Greene refers to Johnson's contribution to the education of the general public. He writes: "Johnson helped to convert from a rather dreary collection of reprints from current newspapers to the prototype of the modern 'intellectual' journal, designed to inform and stimulate the minds of the educated and educable general public" (*Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*, xii). Regarding Johnson's *Rambler*, John Hawkins, in *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, states: "In the whole series of those papers we know with certainty of only four that were not of his [Samuel Johnson's] own writing. Of these No. 30, was sent by Mrs. Catherine Talbot, ...No.97, by Richardson... and numbers 44 and 100, by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter of Deal..." (164).⁹⁵ Hawkins's intention was to emphasize Johnson's extreme productivity as a writer and as a thinker to influence minds by addressing everyday issues effecting the entire nation. My intention, however, is to focus on Carter's contribution to the *Rambler*.

Through the *Rambler*, Johnson opened the door for intellectuals to exercise the power of the prose essay to influence the moral expectations of the community. Johnson's circle of intellectual friends was concerned with the community's intellectual growth. The total of two hundred and eight *Rambler* essays includes subject matter such as interpersonal relations, literary criticism, general human psychology, and of course morality. However, only Elizabeth Carter, Catherine Talbot, Hester Chapone, and Samuel Richardson became directly involved by writing for the *Rambler*. Carter's being one of the few contributors, participating in Johnson's project by actually writing for the *Rambler*, explains one specific factor of the Carter-Johnson friendship—sharing responsibilities in leading public discussions regarding social, legal, and moral issues of

⁹⁵ In *A Woman of Wit and Wisdom*, Alice C. C. Gaussen states: "Dr. Johnson received no assistance [writing for *The Rambler*] writing except four letters in No. 10, by Mrs. Chapone; No. 30, by Catherine Talbot; No. 97 by Samuel Richardson, and Nos.44 and 100 by Elizabeth Carter" (173).

the time. Carter believed in the ethical significance of the *Rambler*, and by sharing her friend's labor in serving their community, she followed her moral obligations to invest her knowledge and beliefs to contribute to the ethical growth of her community. It is not surprising that, as it was suggested in *Bluestocking Feminism* (1999), Carter "may have drafted more essays for Johnson which remained unpublished," but regarding 44 and 100, "she was sufficiently proud of her *Rambler* papers to reprint them in *Poems on Several Occasions*" (409).

Both Carter and Talbot were extremely disappointed to witness the end of this periodical journal. With his *Rambler* project, Johnson wanted "to be numbered among the writers who have given ardour to virtue, and confidence to truth" (*Rambler*, number 208). For Johnson and his intellectual friends, Saturday, March 14, 1752, was a sad day, when the *Rambler*'s last essay, number 208, appeared with the following opening paragraph:

Time, which puts an End to all human Pleasures and Sorrows, has likewise concluded the Labours of the Rambler. Having supported for two Years, the anxious Employment of periodical Writer, and multiplied my Essay to six volumes. I have now determined to desist. (*Rambler*, number 208)

Carter's reaction to the cancellation of the *Rambler* reveals pain of an intellectual who understands and hopelessly laments the public's failure to appreciate something good that was created for its intellectual and moral benefit. Johnson's epigraph for this last essay expresses the author's intellectual pain:

Begone, ye blockheads, Heraclitus cries,
And leave my labours to the learn'd and wise,
By wit, by knowledge, studious be read,

I scorn the multitude, alive and dead.⁹⁶ (*Rambler*, number 208)

Through Heraclitus' cry, Johnson anticipates and shares his friends' intellectual pain too.

In *Dr. Johnson and the Fair Sex*, W.H. Graig explains that Carter did her best to advance the interest of the journal, which had become unpopular because of Johnson's use of so many "hard words," and then he quotes her: "Many a battle for him I have fought in the country, but with little success" (106). Carter and Johnson equally cared and fought for the ethical significance and legacy of the *Rambler*. Their fight for the *Rambler* takes us back to John Milton's definition of virtue—the virtue that must be tested and exercised. In his *Areopagitica*, Milton writes:

I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. (*The Riverside Milton*, 1006)

To produce his *Rambler* papers was a very important task for Johnson and his friends; before starting this project, Johnson needed to write his prayer to ask God for help. It was his act of virtue, the virtue that was going to be exercised and tested. As Carter stated in her *Rambler* essay, "society is the true Sphere of human Virtue" (*Bluestocking Feminism*, 414).

The Rambler, Virtue, and "The Art of Bearing Calamities"

In her *Rambler* essay, Number XLIV (No.44), published on Saturday, August 18, 1750, Carter fulfills responsibilities to educate her audience, the general public, about a correct interpretation and understanding of religious expectations. The argument is built on the contrast of the two approaches to the religious duties that must be followed by men. The first set of ideas rejects human happiness and advocates human misery as "the Duty of all sublunary Beings," and

⁹⁶ These lines belong to Greek poet Diogenes Laertus.

views “Enjoyment as an Offence to the Deity” (Carter 412). This misinterpretation of religious duty is advocated by, as Carter chooses to call it, Superstition. She targets the large portion of her contemporary audience that needs intellectual help to regulate their lives within the frame of moral instructions.

Superstition views a man as a “rash unthinking Mortal” who must know that “pleasure was not designed the portion of human life,” and “man was born to mourn and to be wretched” (Carter 411). The narrator, a listener of Superstition’s speech, is terrified. Carter describes the narrator’s emotional reaction to Superstition’s view of human life in order to stimulate her audience’s critical thinking and reasoning:

This melancholy Picture of Life quite sunk my Spirit, and seem to annihilate every Principle of Joy within me. I threw myself beneath a blasted Yew, where the Winds blew cold and dismal round my Head, and dreadful Apprehensions chilled my Heart. Here I resolved to lie till the Hand of Death... should put an End the Miseries of a Life so deplorably wretched. (Carter 412)

Carter addresses misinterpretations of religious duty that turn human life into miserable existence. However, Carter’s main emphasis is on the opposite view of religious beliefs presented and explained by the second speaker, by “Religion” itself:

My name is Religion. I am the Offspring of Truth, and the Parent of Benevolence, Hope, and Joy. That Monster, from whose Power I have freed you, is called Superstition. She is the Child of Discontent, and her Followers are Fear and Sorrow. (Carter 412)

Through this second speaker in the dialogue, Carter voices her own understanding of Christian moral philosophy according to which human happiness must be based on virtue. By contrasting

these two views of life, Carter leads a public discussion: the interpretation of Christian moral philosophy. She invites her audience to free themselves from misinterpretations of religious duties and find happiness in the virtuous life. She writes:

Infinite Goodness is the Source of created Existence. The proper Tendency of every rational Being, from highest Order of raptured Seraphs to the meanest Rank of Men, is to rise incessantly from lower Degree of Happiness to higher, and each have Faculties assigned them for various Orders of Delight. (Carter 413)

By emphasizing happiness as a principal aspect of human life, Carter fights “the gloomy Doctrines of Superstition” (414). By human happiness, the author means “the enjoyment of a reasonable Being” (413), the enjoyment that is based on virtue.

Carter refers to virtue as a main source of human happiness, as a man’s moral duty. Her explanation of the direct link between human happiness and virtue is her intellectual and moral contribution to her audience’s ethical education:

Society is the true Sphere of human Virtue. In social active life, Difficulties will occur; Restraints of many Kinds will be necessary; and studying to behave right in respect of these, is a Discipline of the human Heart useful to other, and improving to itself. Suffering is not Duty, but where it is necessary to avoid Guilt, or to do Good; nor is Pleasure a Crime, but where it strengthens the Influence of bad Inclinations, or lessens the generous Activity of Virtue. (Carter 414)

Carter’s specific explanation of moral philosophy is well developed and accessible for the general public. She discusses the major aspects of human life, such as dealing with difficulties of life, gaining a discipline of the human heart, choosing suffering if it is necessary for moral good, welcoming pleasure if it does not lessen “the generous Activity of Virtue” (Carter 414). By

publicizing her intellectual approach to religious expectations, Carter equipped her readers with just moral instructions to achieve happiness.

Carter and Johnson shared and followed the same principles through their lives not only as devoted Christians, but also as intellectuals. It is their classical education and their deep knowledge of ancient religions that give them the intellectual and moral authority to teach educable contemporaries to understand the necessity of doing moral good, or the necessity of being virtuous; following moral or ethical obligations is the only factor leading men to their happiness. As Johnson states in Sermon 5, “we fail of being happy, because we determine to obtain felicity by means different from those which God hath appointed” (*Sermons*, 58). The central subject of this Sermon 5, as well as his *Rambler* essay number 32, (Saturday, July 7, 1750), is miseries of human life, in Johnson’s own words, “the art of bearing calamities” (*The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, 174). This subject is directly associated with ideas discussed in Carter’s *Rambler* essay as well as in her introduction to Epictetus’ works. It was not a simple coincidence that Johnson’s *Rambler* essay, number 32, appeared under the title of “The Vanity of Stoicism” or just “Stoicism.” Eight years before Carter’s translation of Epictetus’s works was published, Johnson addressed Stoic moral philosophy in regard to human sufferings. Johnson’s ideas presented in these two works are directly associated with Carter’s idea developed in both her introduction to Epictetus’ works as well as her *Rambler* essay number 44.

In Johnson’s “Stoicism” (*Rambler* essay number 32) and his Sermon 5, we recognize the same tendency of Carter: intellectual explanation or understanding of moral philosophy becomes a necessity to regulate men’s lives. In Sermon 5, Johnson addresses a major concern of his audience: how to deal with the sufferings of human life. He develops the idea that human suffering can be avoided or regulated by knowing and understanding the reasons causing those

miseries. In order to deal with life's difficulties, Johnson calls for "a calm and impartial attention to religion and to reason" (*Sermons*, 55). He presents his argument in the following statement:

It will appear upon examination that though the world be full of misery and disorder, yet God is not to be charged with disregard of his creation; that if we suffer, we suffer by our own fault, and that 'he has done right, but we have done wickedly'. (*Sermons*, 55)

Johnson sees life's sufferings as a direct consequence of men's wrong doing. He writes, "To avoid misery we must avoid sin" (*Sermons*, 55). Johnson puts emphasis on a man's ability to reason and his moral responsibilities. He explains that man's mortality is "the effect of the divine decree, but that he was deprived of life unjustly is the crime of his enemies" (*Sermons*, 56). Johnson believes in every man's power to achieve happiness through doing moral good: "It is in our power to be virtuous, it is in our power to be happy" (*Sermons*, 55). Believing in man's power to achieve his happiness was one of the significant ethical aspects of the Carter-Johnson moral legacy.

Another work of Johnson, his *Rambler* essay "Stoicism" (number 32), reminds us of Carter's critical approach to the stoic philosophers' treatment of the fact of human suffering. Like Carter, he also argues the superiority of the Christian religion. Johnson questions the stoic belief that miseries of human life, such as "pain, poverty, loss of friends, exile, and violent death" (174), should not be considered as a category of evils. As Johnson explains, for the stoics, these challenges of human existence are not "among the objects of terror or anxiety" (174). According to the doctrine of their sect, the stoics exempt themselves from "sensibilities of unenlightened mortals" and "proclaimed themselves exalted...above the reach of those miseries which embitter life to the rest of the world" (174). Johnson contrasts this "wild enthusiastic

virtue” (175) to his own moral principles. He believed in the necessity to develop “the art of bearing calamities” (174) based on knowledge, reasoning, and morality. He argues that “one of the principal topics of moral instruction is the art of bearing calamities,” and it is “the duty of every man to furnish his mind with those principles that may enable him to act under it with decency and propriety” (174).

Johnson’s particular statement, to furnish minds with moral principles (174) in order to enable them to act under those principles, conveys both writers’ main concern: influence minds to elevate moral and intellectual standards and expectations of society. The significance of their intellectual and moral contribution is in the fact that ideas and interpretations developed by Carter and Johnson are not based only on Christian doctrine; their ideas and principles reflect their exceptional intellectuality and individuality. In other words, Carter and Johnson advocate morality or ethics based on the interaction between religion and intellectuality.

A set of moral values established on the interaction between religion and intellectuality takes society to a different level of ethics in the social sphere. It was their classical education, their knowledge of world literature and ideas that led Carter and Johnson to a better understanding of principles of human life. Their view of human life, as well as their own life styles, reflected both their education and morality. They did exercise that intellectual friendship, which became a source of moral good and human happiness. Carter’s belief that “society is the true Sphere of human Virtue” (Carter 414) contains in itself other elements of virtue, such as intellectual friendship. The experience of living in a community, the experience of being a part of a society, means the experience of relationships. If the central idea of virtue is doing something good for another, then no doubt the Carter-Johnson friendship, as a source of moral good in relationships, is one of the forms of virtue. If, as Carter and Johnson argue in their

writings, virtue is the source of human happiness, so the ethical and intellectual friendship should be viewed as a principal source of human happiness too.

CONCLUSION

In “Elizabeth Carter’s Legacy: Friendship and Ethics,” I bring to light Carter’s own experience of intellectual and individual friendship, which serves as a principal source of her happiness and a subject of her writing. Friendship had a strong impact on the lives of Carter and her friends because their friendship offered them qualities of human existence, such as intellectual and individual freedom and equality. By exercising liberty and equality within their friendship, Carter and her friends rejected current beliefs and promoted different, more progressive, moral values, rejecting male superiority over female in human relationships. Their friendship, based on mutual intellectual trust and interest, liberty and equality, points to the need for changes in traditions and customs of the century. However, eighteenth-century British society, as the regulating system, did not apply those principles of Carter’s ethical legacy to their codes of human relationships. Carter’s ethical principles of unbiased friendship based on intellectual and individual freedom could be practiced only within a network of her own intellectual and individual friends. The fact that society at large was not influenced by Carter’s ethical views cannot diminish the significance of her real life experience demonstrating a direct link between ethics of human relationships and human happiness. Their friendship became a space for intellectual productivity, a space for exercising ethics of human relationships. Carter’s experience of friendship was a real life experience proving friendship as a source of education or literary activity, as a source of moral values or ethics, and consequently as a source of unbiased and gender free human relationships.

Carter’s life experience, specifically her exercise of human relationships, did not fit the eighteenth-century ethics of human relationships, particularly given the position of women at the time. In a society where the public considered women intellectually inferior to men, where

women did not have access to formal education, Carter managed not only to receive a classical education, but also to become one of the foremost Greek scholars of the century. During her lifetime, it was every woman's social and moral obligation to serve a husband and children. In his introduction to *Eighteenth Century Women Poets* (1990), for example, Roger Lonsdale states: "By the mid-century there was a growing consensus that women deserved an improved education, if only to fit them to be better wives and mothers, and there was increasing sympathy for women writers, within certain limits" (xxx). Even by the end of the eighteenth century, despite the increasing number of female writers and readers, this approach to a woman's position in a society continued to dominate minds of the British public. Carter, however, chose not to marry but to develop an independent life style. Her love for learning and individual liberty influenced her experience of friendship within which she established and developed her intellectual and individual freedom, opposed those traditions that rejected women's right to education and to friendship.

Carter becomes a symbol of moral good. Her practice of intellectual friendship, and her eagerness to gain intellectual and individual freedom, was an ethical challenge and an ethical act; her devotion to learning and to friendship not only contributed to the poet's own personal happiness and formed the basis of her literary activities, but also contributed to ethics of human relationships at large. She proved that women too are capable of intellectual activities and a friendship based on intellectual and social equality and independence. Her demonstration of intellectual and social equality between men and women belies the traditional gender factor in human relationships. She was much ahead of her time by practicing independent and intellectual life and genderless friendship.

The architect of Carter's progressive principles was Dr. Nicolas Carter, the poet's father. Their friendship grew beyond eighteenth-century traditional father-daughter relationships. Dr. Carter personally contributed to Elizabeth's classical education, trusted his daughter's judgment and supported her choice of an independent life in London. Their father-daughter relationship established different kinds of moral obligations, moral duties that must be fulfilled by a father. As a father, Dr. Carter was different from his contemporaries in regard to his treatment of his daughters. By letting all his children, male and female, receive a classical education of the time, Dr. Carter questioned the traditional approach to the role of women in society. By supporting his daughter's independence, Dr. Carter demonstrated his belief in equality between men and women. He acted not only as a personal tutor and educator of his own daughters, but also as a caring friend who would put their interest before his own. Their personal or individual friendship becomes even more obvious when Dr. Carter supported Elizabeth's decision not to marry. In his biographical introduction to the section on Elizabeth Carter, Lonsdale mentions Dr. Carter's pressure on Elizabeth in regards to her consideration of proposed marriage (165). Dr. Carter's letter to Elizabeth explains the nature of this pressure: "My exceeding fondness of you must necessarily make me anxious and fearful; but it does not prevent me from being convinced that I may safely leave a great deal to your own judgment (*Memoirs*, 29). Dr. Carter trusted his daughter's judgment, and his pressure on Elizabeth was based on his concerns for her future well being. As Pennington refers to Dr. Carter own words, "should he die and leave her unprovided for, her situation would have been very painful and distressing" (*Memoirs*, 28). Once again, we may conclude that Dr. Carter and his daughter were not only fond of each another, but respectful of each other's wishes.

Dr. Carter's equal approach to both his male and female children was an ethical act to achieve this kind of special human tie, a father-daughter friendship—the friendship generating a different moral approach to a female child—a gender-free approach. By demonstrating a possibility for women to study and to live independently, Dr. Carter contributed to the establishment of ethics in father-daughter relationships. Although, similar to Elizabeth's case, Dr. Carter's ethics in raising his children had no impact on the tendency of traditional father-daughter relationships, the practice of human relationships in this family proved to all observers that women are not inferior to men. Dr. Carter's gender-free approach to his children's education was a moral claim: it was not about women being inferior to men; it was about the absence of friendship in traditional father-daughter relationships.

In Dr. Carter's relationship with Elizabeth, we see two individuals who developed intellectual and personal friendship, which can be easily sensed from Carter's poem devoted to her father, from certain biographical facts, and from some of their personal letters available for the modern readers. It is necessary to mention that we do not have the access to the personal letters between Dr. Cartier and Elizabeth Carter; they are now in a private collection, and the study of those letters may explain other aspects and principles of this father-daughter friendship.

Letters between Elizabeth Carter and her intellectual friends as well as her poetry devoted to friendship demonstrate how Carter carries on her father's ethical legacy and develops her own relationships with intellectual friends, such as Catherine Talbot, Elizabeth Montague, Lord Bath, and Samuel Johnson. The analysis of these poems and selected letters from Carter's correspondence explains Carter's view of friendship as the necessity, as the irreplaceable factor of her intellectual and individual happiness; only in this network of friends, could the poet exercise her intellectual freedom. From this specific view of Carter, we may conclude that within

her friendship, Carter found the world of independent minds—the world where she felt needed, valued, and loved. This experience of happiness within friendship is presented in Carter’s poetry devoted to her friends. The analysis of specific poems reveals the central element of Carter’s genderless friendship: the presence of intellectual and individual freedom. This belief takes us to Aristotle’s teaching: friendship is “a kind of excellence” and “very necessary for living” (Rowe 208).

Letters between Carter and her friends serve as one of the most valuable sources of information. The Carter-Talbot personal correspondence, included into this study, focuses on their intellectual friendship. Access to personal letters between these two writers helps to identify their individual differences, their common goals when it comes to their intellectual and moral duties. Every single friendship in Carter’s life experience had its own world and features, and the Carter-Talbot friendship has a story of its own too. We observed how Carter and Talbot cope with realities of their existence, with intellectual and individual limitations dictated by traditions and customs; yet through friendship, they managed to achieve their individual and intellectual liberty.

However, it is impossible to cover all aspects of Carter’s experience of friendship even when we deal just with one single story of intellectual friendship. There are more stories to explore in these extraordinary human relationships exercised by Carter and her friends. For instance, a further study of the Carter-Talbot relationships might tell us more about both writers’ individual characteristics as well as their ethical principles. This study deals only with certain numbers of the Carter-Talbot letters to emphasize their intellectual and individual friendship.

The Carter-Montagu and the Carter-Lord Bath relationships require a full study. Since we do not treat relationships between female intellectuals as gender-based or female friendship, the

Carter-Montagu ties become another story of friendship deserving scholars' attention. Carter's poem devoted to Montagu expresses only certain aspects of their relationships. The Carter-Montagu friendship needs to be studied further through their personal letters. Lastly, the Carter-Montagu friendship leads us to the Carter-Lord Bath relationship; Lord Bath was a good friend to both Carter and Montagu, and this subject should be further explored in reference to lives of Carter, Montagu, and Lord Bath.

The discussion of individual liberty in Epictetus' teaching reveals Carter's strong belief in intellectual and individual freedom as a foundation of the writer's moral philosophy. A necessity of individual liberty in human relationships and happiness, expressed in Stoic moral philosophy, attracted not only Carter, but her contemporary intellectuals too. Carter's translation of Epictetus' works deserves further attention of scholars at least to understand the popularity of this work to the eighteenth-century reading public.

Samuel Johnson's discussion of this subject in his *Rambler* essay on Stoicism, tells us not only about stoicism's popularity, but also about a common intellectual interest of Carter and Johnson. The Carter-Johnson friendship, more than any other previously discussed relationships in this work, demonstrates an ethical necessity of intellectual and individual equality and independence within the genderless friendship. The Carter-Johnson friendship did not recognize social restrictions or divisions when it came to their intellectual and individual relationships. Their friendship was based on intellectuality and ethics; and the combination of these two elements becomes a moral foundation for one of the progressive forms of human relationships.

Works Cited

Agorni, Mirella. "The Voice of the Translatress: from Aphra Behn to Elizabeth Carter."

Yearbook of English Studies 28 (1998): 181-95.

_____. "Women Manipulating Translation in the Eighteenth Century: The Case of Elizabeth Carter." *Knowledge of Translator*. NY: Lewiston, 1996, 323.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. ed. Jonathan Barnes. New York: Penguin Books, 1976.

_____. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. ed. Richard McKeon, trans. W.D Ross. New York: Random House, 1966.

_____. *Nicomachean Ethics: Books II-IV*. Trans. C. C. W. Taylor. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006.

_____. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Christopher Rowe. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

Ashby, Warren. *A Comprehensive History of Western Ethics: What Do We Believe?* NY: Prometheus Books, 1997.

Asma, Stephen T. "Ancient Antidotes for Timeless Troubles." *The Chronicle Review*. May 8, 2009, 11-13.

Backscheider, Paula R. *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2005.

Bate, W.J. and Albrecht B. Strauss. Eds. *The Rambler*. Volumes 1, New Haven: Yale UP, 1969, xxi-xL.

Belsey, Catherine. *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: the Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture*. London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1999.

Berg, Temma. *The Lives and Letters of an Eighteenth-Century Circle of Acquaintance*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2006.

- Blathwayt, Janice Elaine. "More than Distinguished for 'Piety and Virtue': New Perspectives on Elizabeth Carter." *The Humanities and Social Sciences* 63. 9 (2002): 3386, York U, 2002.
- Bluestocking Feminism: Writings of the Bluestocking Circle, 1738- 1785*. Volumes 1, 2, 3, London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999.
- Bodek, G. Evelyn. "Salonieres and Bluestockings: Educated Obsolescence and Germinating Feminism." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 3, No. ¾ (Spring-Summer, 1976), 185-199.
- Boswell, James. *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, rev. L.F. Powell. Oxford: Oxford UP, III, 1934.
- Boswell, James. *Life of Johnson: An Edition of the Original Manuscript*. Ed. Marshall Waingrow, Vol. I, New Haven: Yale UP, 1994.
- Brack, Gae Annette. "Samuel Johnson and Four Literary Women." Dissertation, *Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1979.
- Bressler, Charles. *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999.
- Brimley, Johnson, R. *Bluestocking Letters*. London: John Lane The Bodley Head LTD., 1926.
- Broadie, Sarah. "Philosophical Introduction." *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
- Brown, Q. Irene. "Domesticity, Feminism, and Friendship: Female Aristocratic Culture and Marriage in England, 1660-1760", *Journal of Family History*, 7 (1982), 406-24.
- Curran, Stuart. "Dynamics of Female Friendship in the later Eighteenth Century," *Nineteenth Century Contexts*, 23.2 (2001): 221-39.

Carter, Elizabeth. *Elizabeth Carter, 1717-1806: An Edition of Some Unpublished*

Letters. ed. Gwen Hampshire, Newark: U of Delaware P, 2005.

_____ *A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss*

Catherine Talbot. NY: AMS Press, 1975.

_____ *Letters from Mrs. Elizabeth Carter to Mrs. Montague, between*

the years 1755 & 1800. Ed., NY: AMS Press, 1973.

_____ "A Dialogue," "To the Reverend Dr. Carter," "To Miss Talbot," and "To Mrs.

Montagu." *Bluestocking Feminism: Writings of the Bluestocking Circle, 1738-1785*, ed.

Judith Hawley. London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999, 353, 367, 368, 372.

_____ "On Johnson's Shakespeare," "The Rambler, number XLIV." *Bluestocking*

Feminism: Writings of the Bluestocking Circle, 1738-1785, ed. Judith Hawley. London:

Pickering & Chatto, 1999, 440.

Clery, E. J. Basingstoke. *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth Century England:*

Literature, Commerce and Luxury. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillian, 2004.

Clifford, James L. *Dictionary Johnson: Samuel Johnson's Middle Years*. New York:

McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979.

Chapone, Hester. *Posthumous Works of Mrs. Chapone*. London: V1, 1807.

_____ *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*. in *Bluestocking Feminism: Writing of*

the Bluestocking Circle, 1738-1785. V 3, ed. Rhoda Zuk, London: Pickering & Chatto,

1999, 316.

Donald, Bond F. Ed. *The Spectator*. Volume 1, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1965, xiii-xix.

Dorr, Priscilla. "Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806)." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*

5.1 (1986): 138-40.

- Eagleton, Robert. *Ethical Criticism: Reading After Levinas*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997.
- Easton, Celia A. "Were the Bluestockings Queer? Elizabeth Carter's Uranian Friendships." *Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual* 9 (1998): 257-94.
- Epictetus. *All the Works of Epictetus, Which Are Now Extant: Consisting of His Discourses, Preserved by Arrian, in Four Books, the Enchiridion, and...* Trans. Elizabeth Carter. London: 1768.
- Freeman, Lisa A. "'A Dialogue': Eighteenth Century's Passion for the Female Mind." *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon, 1730-1820*. ed. Isobel Armstrong & Virginia Blain. NY: St. Martin's, 1999, 50-63.
- Fielding, Sarah. *The Adventures of David Simple*. NY: Penguin Books, 2002.
- Gaussen, C.C. Alice. *A Woman of Wit and Wisdom: a Memoir of Elizabeth Carter, one of the 'Bas Bleu' Society (1717-1806)*. London: Smith, Elder, & CO., 1906.
- Gregory, John. *A Father's Legacy to His Daughter*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1974.
- Graig, H. W. *Doctor Johnson and the Fair Sex: A Study of Contrasts*. London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1895.
- Greene, Donald. ed. *Samuel Johnson: The Major Works*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984.
- Hawkins, John. *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* ed. O. M. Brack. Athens: U of Georgia Press, 2009.
- Hawley, Judith. Ed. *Bluestocking Feminism: Writing of the Bluestocking Circle, 1738-1785*. Introduction to volume 2, London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999.
- Heller, Deborah. "Subjectivity Unbound: Elizabeth Vesey as the Sylph in Bluestocking

Correspondence.” *Reconsidering the Bluestockings*. San Marino: Huntington Library, 2003.

Hudson, Nicholas. *Samuel Johnson and Eighteenth-Century Thought*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.

Irwin, Terence. *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.

Johnson, R. Brimley. *Bluestocking Letters*. London: John Lane the Bodley Head LTD, 1926.

Johnson, Samuel. *Sermons. Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*. XIV, New Haven: Yale UP, 1978.

_____ *The Rambler. The Yale Edition of the Works of Johnson*. V. New Haven: Yale UP, 1969.

_____ “Sermon 5.” *The Riverside Milton*. Roy Flannagan ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998, 1006

_____ “The Rambler. No. 208”. *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*. V, New Haven: Yale UP.1969, 31

_____ “The Rambler. No.32”. *The Yale Edition of the Works of Johnson*. III, New Haven: Yale UP, 1969, 174-179.

_____ *Sermons. Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*. XIV, New Haven: Yale UP, 1978, 53-64.

_____ *The Rambler. No. The Yale Edition of the Works of Johnson*. V. New Haven: Yale UP, 1969, 315.

_____ *The Lives of The Poets*. Ed. John H. Middendorf. Volume 21, New Haven: Yale UP. 2010, 171, 186.

- Keith, Jennifer M. "Elizabeth Carter," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, volume 109, *Eighteenth-Century British Poets*, 2nd series, Ed. John Sitter. Detroit: Gale, 1991, 54-63.
- Kelly, Gary. "Bluestocking Feminism and Writing in Context." General Introduction to *Bluestocking Feminism: Writing of the Bluestocking Circle, 1738-1785*, volume 1, gen. ed. Gary Kelly. London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999.
- King, James & Charles Ryskamp. eds. *William Cowper: Selected Letters*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- King, Everard H. "James Beattie" in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Volume 109, *Eighteenth Century British Poets*, 2nd series. Ed. John Sitter. Detroit: Gale, 1991, 21-31.
- Larson, Jil. *Ethics and Narrative in the English Novel, 1880-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Lonsdale, Roger. Ed. *Eighteenth Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990.
- Luria, Gina. "Book Review", *Signs*, 4 (1978), 374-80.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *A Short History of Ethics*. NY: Macmillan, 1966.
- Myers, H. Sylvia. *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth Century England*. Oxford: OUP, Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Magrath, Jane. "Rags of Mortality: Negotiating the Body in the Bluestocking Letters." *Huntington Library Quarterly: Studies in English and American History and Literature* 65 (1-2). (2002): 235-56.
- Martin, Reginald. "Elizabeth Carter: Found Poet of the 18th Century." *Publication of the Arkansas Philological Association* 11. 2 (1985): 49-64.
- Milton, John. "Areopagitica" *The Riverside Milton*. Ed. Roy Flannagan. New York:

- Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.
- More, Hannah. "The Bas Blue" *The Works of Hannah More: Poems*. v.1, London: Cadel and Devies, 1818.
- Nussbaum, Martha. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. "Pulteney, William, Earl of Bath." Volume 45, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004, 550-557.
- _____. "John Gregory." Volume 23, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004, 676-677.
- Pennington, Montague. *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter with a New Edition of her Poems*. London: James Cawthorn, 1825.
- Ronnick, Michele Valerie. "Epictetus' Liberation of Elizabeth Carter." *Studies in the Classical Tradition* 18 (1995): 69-72.
- Ruhe, Edward. "Birch, Johnson, and Elizabeth Carter: An Episode of 1738-1739," *PMLA*, vol. 73, NO. 5, Part 1 (Dec., 1958), 491-500.
- Smith, Charles. *Spenser's Theory of Friendship*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935.
- Spencer, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A. C. Hamilton. New York: Longman, 1997, 502.
- Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Ed. D.D. Raphael & A.L. Macfie. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976, 109-110.
- Spacks, Patricia Meyer. "Female Rhetoric," *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*. ed. Shari Benstock. Chapel Hill: UNCP, 1988, 177-191.

Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

Stanyon, Mary. "Elizabeth Carter: A Woman of her Time." *Women's Studies, Occasional Papers*, No.17, U of Kent, 1990.

Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex, and Marriage*. NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977.

Todd, Janet. *Women's Friendship in Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

_____. *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800*. NY: Columbia UP, 1989.

Thomas, Claudia. "Samuel Johnson and Elizabeth Carter: Pudding, Epictetus, and the Accomplished Woman." *South Central Review* 9. 14 (1992): 18-30.

_____. "'Th'Instructive Moral, And Important Thought': Elizabeth Carter Reads Pope, Johnson, and Epictetus." in *The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual*, 4 (1991): 137-69.

Vance, John. "James Boswell," *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Eighteenth-Century Literary Biographers*. Volume 142, ed. Steven Serafin, Detroit: Gale, 1994, 30-45.

Wallace, Jennifer. "Confined and Exposed: Elizabeth Carter's Classical Translations." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 22.2 (2003): 315-34.

Williams, D. Carolyn. "Poetry, Pudding, and Epictetus: The Consistency of Elizabeth Carter," in *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*, ed. Alvaro Ribeiro, SJ, and James G. Basker. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1996, 3-24.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Men and A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Eds. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf. NY: Broadview Literary Texts, 1997.